Teaching gender concepts to boys in high school:

Male teachers' perspectives

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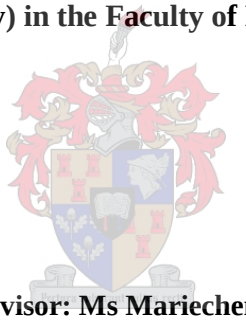
Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education (Educational Psychology) in the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University.



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December 2019

Declaration

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Date: December 2019

ABSTRACT

Life Orientation (LO) is a compulsory subject in primary and secondary South African schools as contained in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum document. The LO curriculum requires inter alia the teaching of gender and gender concepts. These concepts are important for successful development during adolescence, a stage where adolescents are tasked with resolving a conflict of identity versus role confusion. Gender identity forms an integral component of self-understanding, as well as how one understands others. Gender holds lifelong implications in the personal, social, family, home, and school contexts. Social constructionists argue that gender identity is shaped by many cultural and social influences, including the school environment. These various influences produce society-specific gender norms.

This study explored how male LO teachers in the Senior and FET phases conceive, interpret, and enact their roles as educators of high school boys, particularly in facilitating the learning of gender and gender concepts as referred to in the CAPS curriculum. The study explored how these male teachers understand gender, and how these understandings influenced the ways in which they engaged with and modelled gender in their classes.

The study was qualitative in nature and was guided by a basic interpretive design situated within an interpretivist research paradigm. As a limited research study, six LO teachers (male) voluntarily completed a self-administered questionnaire consisting of basic demographic data as well as open-ended questions. Semi-structured individual interviews of 45-60 minutes followed the questionnaires to explore emergent topics in depth. Themes were generated via a systematic process of thematic analysis, which consisted of coding answers to the open-ended questions and interview transcripts. These codes were subsequently arranged into patterns and subthemes that finally formed overarching themes.

Some of the major findings of this study include that male teachers grappled with the nature of gender, alternating between views of gender as fixed, fluid and performative, and viewing gender as a life path and signifier of character. Teachers advocated for greater time to be allocated in the school schedule for deeper, longer-term and more comprehensive engagement with gender and gender concepts. Other significant findings included that teachers incorporate personal life experiences and embody personal values during the teaching of gender, with heterosexual-identified teachers evincing greater comfort with referencing their personal, intimate life than gay-identified teachers. Teachers indicated a general discomfort with claiming a role modelling function to boys, possibly due to the construction of LO as a nurturing subject associated with female teachers. Despite this reluctance, many participants indicated a clear need to support their boy learners, including those whom they perceived to be facing sexual and gender identity questions. Teachers also voiced significant barriers to teaching gender concepts, including barriers in the school environment, from parents and due to the diminished status of Life Orientation in the school system.

Keywords: gender, gender identity, sexuality, adolescence, Life Orientation, education, diversity, teacher

OPSOMMING

Lewensoriëntering (LO) is ‘n verpligte vak in die Kurrikulum en Assesseringsbeleidsverklaring (KABV) vir primêre en sekondêre Suid Afrikaanse skole. Die dokument omskryf die kurrikulum vir grade R-12. Die LO kurrikulum vereis onder andere dat gender en genderkonsepte onderrig moet word. Hierdie konsepte is belangrik vir suksesvolle ontwikkeling gedurende adolessensie wanneer jongmense voor die taak gestel word om die konflik te hanteer wat tussen identiteitsverwerwing en rolverwarring mag ontstaan. Gender identiteit vorm ‘n integrale komponent van selfinsig asook in die verstaan van ander. Gender het lewenslange implikasies binne persoonlike-, sosiale-, gesins-, huis- en skoolkonstekste. Sosiale konstruksioniste argumenteer dat gender identiteit gevorm word deur verskeie kulturele en sosiale invloede onder andere ook in die skool omgewing. Hierdie verskeie invloede produseer gender norme wat eie is tot ‘n gegewe samelewing.

Hierdie studie het die wyses waarop manlike LO onderwysers binne die Senior en FET fases gender en gender konsepte verstaan, interpreteer, en hul rolle uitlewe as onderwysers van manlike adolessente, ondersoek. Daar is veral gefokus op die deelnemers se fasilitering van leer tydens die onderrig van gender en genderkonsepte soos omskryf in die KABV kurrikulum. Die studie het ondersoek hoe manlike onderwysers gender verstaan, en hoe hierdie begrip die wyse waarop hulle met die konsep van gender omgaan mag affekteer asook hoe gender gemodelleer word in die klaskamer.

Die kwalitatiewe studie is uitgevoer binne ‘n basiese interpretatiewe navorsingsontwerp, gelei deur ‘n interpretavistiese navorsingsparadigma. As ‘n beperkte navorsingstudie (50%), het ses manlike LO onderwysers vrywilliglik ‘n self-geadministreerde vraelys voltooi, wat basiese demografiese data ingesluit het asook ‘n aantal oop vrae oor die onderwerp. Semi-gestruktureerde individuele onderhoude van ongeveer 45-60 minute het gevolg op die vraelyste, om ontluikende onderwerpe in meer diepte te ondersoek. Temas is gegenereer via ‘n sistematiese proses van tematiese analise wat die kodering van die antwoorde op die oop vrae en die transkripsies van die onderhoude ingesluit het. Daarna is die kodes gerangskik in patrone en sub-temas om uiteindelik tot die finale oorkoepelende temas aanleiding te gee.

Van die vernaamste bevindinge was dat manlike onderwysers onseker voorgekom het oor die aard van gender, met wisselende opinies tussen gender as klinkklaar, vloeibaar, performatief, gender as ‘n lewenspad, en ook as aanduider van karakter. Onderwysers bepleit meer tyd binne die skoolprogram vir meer omvattende, in-diepte en langtermyn omgaan met hierdie konsepte. Ander belangrike bevindinge was dat onderwysers persoonlike lewenservaringe insluit in hul onderrig van gender en dat persoonlike waardes onderrig beïnvloed. Onderwysers wat identifiseer as heteroseksueel het met groter gemak verwys na hul persoonlike en intieme lewens as onderwysers wat identifiseer as gay. Onderwysers het in die algemeen ongemak aangedui wanneer rolmodellering aan seuns ter sprake gekom het. Dit mag wees omdat LO in die algemeen gesien word word as ‘n versorgingsvak wat tradisioneel met vroue onderwysers geassosieer word. Ondanks hierdie huiwering het meeste deelnemers tog ‘n duidelike behoefte getoon daaraan om seuns te

ondersteun, veral diegene by wie hulle vrae oor seksuele en gender identiteitskwessies vermoed. Onderwysers het ook aansienlike hindernisse geïdentifiseer in die onderrig van gender konsepte, insluitend hindernisse in die skoolomgewing, vanaf ouers, en die status van Lewensoriëntering as skoolvak wat gesien word as van minder waarde as ander skoolvakke in die skoolsisteem.

Sleutelwoorde: gender, gender identiteit, seksualiteit, adolessensie, Lewensoriëntering, opvoedkunde, diversiteit, onderwyser, Suid-Afrika

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Ms Mariechen Perold, for her expert guidance, infinite patience, and gentle hand in helping me to produce this thesis under some very difficult circumstances. Ms Perold, the many late nights, revision after revision, draft after draft, was made all the more bearable by your kindness and generosity of spirit.

To my supervisor, Ms Carla Feenstra: I owe you a debt of gratitude for your generosity with your time, particularly your eagle-eyed laser vision that was of such a great help to me in ensuring proper technical care of this dissertation.

To my parents, Dr Christo and Leonore van der Walt, for their unwavering support and encouragement, and putting up with my moody sleep-deprived self!

Finally, to Grant Andrews, for ‘talking me off the cliff’ so many times: you are constantly by my side and offer unfailing support and encouragement, and never waver in your faith in me for one minute. I would not have been able to do this without you and am very grateful for what we have.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

"There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results." (Butler, 1999, p. 33).

Gender identity forms an integral component to understanding oneself and others. Gender is such a fundamental and formative part of identity that in some parts of the world expectant mothers celebrate "gender reveal parties" (Bank, Delamont, & Marshall, 2007; Gieseler, 2017) to inform their family and community of their unborn child's sex, based on physical and biological features. Butler (1993, as cited in Salih, 2002) argues that the phrase uttered by a doctor or nurse at the first reading of an infant's gender, namely, "It's a boy/ girl!", inscribes an understanding of gender on the person of the infant which predetermines many aspects of his or her life. The assigned gender and resultant identity conferred to the person holds lifelong implications, personal and social, in the family and the home context (Berger, 2016; Disch & Hawkesworth, 2016), and at school (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998).

The gender identity of a person may differ from the sex which was initially named based only on physical appearance. In light of the above it would be prudent to explore different factors that may influence the gender identity of a young person. A variety of cultural, political, educational and social factors have been identified in this regard (Bank et al., 2007). The specific field of education provides a space where the factors referred to above are present. Recent research has found for instance that boys and girls are treated differently in a number of ways by their teachers. According to Salkind (2008) teachers tend to encourage boys to be more active and outspoken. Lindsey (2015) concurs and suggests that girls are often encouraged to be docile, passive, receptive and prosocial.

However, these researchers caution that more research is needed to assess the influence that expectations based on gender, roles associated with gender, and gender socialisation in educational contexts may have on the educational and psychological trajectories of identity formation in young people, particularly in boys. There is a body of knowledge that suggests that the influence of gender expectations across the early developmental lifespan may silence the voices of boys and men in certain educational and social spaces (Higgins, Hoffman, & Dworkin, 2010). Within the South African context, Hearn and Morrell's work (2012) discussed how boys and men deny and suppress vulnerable emotions deemed 'feminine', and express negative views of girls and women, partly as a function of how boys and men are socialised into certain gender roles and expectations.

The hiring practices of teachers based on their gender reflects these assumptions. In the South African educational context, a study conducted by Moosa and Bhana (2017) found that male teachers were often considered to be more effective disciplinarians, to be stand-in role models for absent fathers and to be able to model masculine attributes such as dominance, assertiveness and power. However, little research has been done on the effectiveness of male teachers in gender socialisation and the education of boys in South African contexts (Hearn, in Shefer, Ratele, Strebel, Shabalala, & Buikema, 2007) . While men are considered to be significant role players in aiding healthy development of school children, men are more likely to be hired to teach adolescents than preschool or primary school-aged children (Moosa & Bhana, 2017). These employment practices may be tied to the perception that learners in the lower grades require a more nurturing approach, whilst older learners need a 'firm hand' (Connell, 2000; Butler, Alpaslan, Strümpher, & Astbury, 2003), with the guiding assumption that women are comparatively better suited to nurture learners while men are better suited to discipline learners. These hiring practices, in part determined by the age of the learners, carry inherent gender-based assumptions that may affect the teaching and modelling of gender.

Gender is explicitly taught in South Africa's public school curriculum (Department of Basic Education [DoBE], 2011b), a topic further explored on pp. 31-33. The national education policy document entitled *Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement* (CAPS) prescribes learning areas for primary and high school learners to be covered in each school subject on an annual basis. Life Orientation (LO), one of the four compulsory subjects for all South African learners, lists gender a number of times as a pertinent issue to be dealt with in LO (DoBE, 2011b). The subject is defined by the DoBE (2011b, p.8) as "the study of the self in relation to others and to society", "to live meaningfully and successfully in a rapidly changing society", and aims to apply a "holistic approach to the personal, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, motor and physical growth and development of learners". The subject aims to teach learners to become more aware of themselves as members of society, to live meaningful and successful lives, and to help learners develop in a healthy way in various domains, including the personal, social, and intellectual.

These outcomes may therefore indicate that the subject is aimed at equipping learners with the necessary skills, values, attitudes, and knowledge to become psychologically healthy, well-rounded individuals that can contribute to their society and country. However, as identity formation remains a crucial developmental task especially for the adolescent, the personal, social and emotional components to adolescent development are also negotiated in relation to available role models, including teachers (Lee, 2003; McLean & Syed, 2014). The research into the ways in which teachers may act as role models to boys, in addition to the prescribed gender-related content to be taught in schools, arguably entails that high school male teachers could affect boys' understandings around gender to a significant degree.

The CAPS LO curriculum for the Senior Phase (Grade 7-9) as well as the Further Education and Training Phase (FET) (Grade 10-12), includes various references to concepts related to power and gender. These

references include “power relations and gender roles”, “masculinity [and] femininity”, “stereotypical views of gender roles and responsibilities”, “gender roles and their effect on general well-being”, and “the influence of gender inequality on relationships and general well-being” (DoBE, 2011a). Furthermore, LO teachers in these phases are expected to facilitate understanding of ‘“power, power relations, masculinity, femininity and gender” (DoBE, 2011b, p. 12) and the “differences between a man and a woman: reproduction and roles in the community, stereotypical views of gender roles and responsibilities, as well as gender differences in participation in physical activities” (DoBEb, 2011b, p. 12). Finally, the CAPS Senior and FET LO curriculum refers to “unequal power relations, power inequality, power balance and power struggle between genders: abuse of power towards an individual (physical abuse), in family (incest), cultural (different mourning periods for males and females), social (domestic violence and sexual violence/rape) and work settings (sexual harassment)” (DoBEb, 2011b, p. 20).

As seen above, the South African national curriculum prioritises educating learners to be conscious of gender-related power imbalances, gender roles, and the effects of gender on mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Ideally, the LO teacher facilitates the learner’s understanding around dynamic concepts regarding gender and its effects on holistic well-being.

Considering the above, two important questions arise. Firstly, what do LO teachers consider their responsibilities as those appointed by government for the gender education of youth? Secondly, are LO teachers mindful of the processes of gender identity development specifically amongst adolescent boys and of what might constitute a healthy gender identity developmental pathway? As discussed earlier, understanding gender is part of the CAPS LO curriculum, and gender modelling by male teachers to high school boys is often seen as positive for their development. For this reason, this study explores how male LO teachers experience and perceive “teaching gender” and how they understand their roles as gender models to adolescent boys.

Rotenberg (2010) and others state that, upon entering high school, adolescents face the crucial developmental task of crystallising their self-concepts, which is subject to a myriad of influences, including feedback from their peers (Rotenberg, 2010), parents (Hornby, 2011) and to an important extent their teachers (Hornby, 2011; Lee, 2003; Rapee, Wignall, Spence, Lyneham, & Cobham, 2008). The attitudes of teachers to their roles in adolescent identity formation and gender learning have not received much attention in research (Francis & Msibi, 2011; Francis 2010; 2012).

While there have been theories arguing for a biological basis to explain the divergence in the behaviour of boys and girls (Udry, 1994) and to understand gender as biologically defined (LeVay, 2016; Rahman & Wilson, 2003), the past decades have seen a greater understanding of masculine and feminine gender identities as social constructs. This has brought about certain cultural, ideological, political, and social shifts, particularly around issues of transgender identities and feminist perspectives. While taking

cognisance of the debates around biological determinants of gender, this study will focus on exploring the socialisation and teaching of gender and the perceived effect that this can have on gender identity construction and performance.

In addition, and as a caveat to the discussion of gender identity construction, it is important to note that masculinity is not a singular concept, and various masculinities exist within hierarchies of power. Understandings and enactments of gender, including masculinity, are not universal and homogeneous. Connell (2000) considers the dominant form of masculinity, conceived as hegemonic masculinity, as surviving by subordinating and marginalising other forms of masculinity. In South African society, hegemonic masculinity typically dictates that men should be dominant at all costs in gender relations (Ratele, 2006). Men are socialised to be stoic and in control, to shun emotionality, to avoid physical affection with the same sex, and to be sexually predatory (Ratele, 2015). These gender constructions could serve to reinforce toxic masculinity (Barker & Ricardo, 2005), a form of masculinity that can be harmful to the individual and to society through aggression, violent behaviour and emotional repression. This may lead to some of the social ills and psychological problems highlighted below that disproportionately affect boys and men (Meissner, Bantjes, & Kagee, 2016).

Young men who adhere to these prescriptions of a hyper-accentuated form of masculinity are more prone to perpetrate physical and sexual gender-based violence (Shefer & Macleod, 2015). Young men who adhere to hegemonic masculinity are more likely to suffer from depression, suicidal ideation and behaviour, substance use and abuse, risky behaviour, and truancy (Berger, 2016; Canetto, 1997; Disch & Hawkesworth, 2016; Kail, 2012; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2014). In fact, suicide is construed as a masculine act by some young men (Canetto 1992; Canetto 1997), and within the South African context, completed suicide is understood as an act of “regaining control”, “asserting power” and to “feel strong” by some young men (Meissner et al., 2016). Young men that aspire to idealised constructs of masculinity, including presenting as dominant, in control, and powerful, are also vulnerable to detrimental mental health effects (Eagly, Beall, & Sternberg, 2005; Meissner et al., 2016).

These varied consequences of toxic masculinity are not adequately addressed in educational settings. Generally, gender power imbalances and related inequalities are positioned in the CAPS document as mostly adversely affecting girl learners; however, young men who aspire to idealised constructs of masculinity, including presenting as dominant, in control, and powerful, are also vulnerable to detrimental mental health effects (Meissner et al., 2016). Since adolescence is an important phase in identity development, including gender identity development, studying the role of gender learning during this phase in the educational setting could offer rich data and deepen understanding of the fostering of masculinities in the South African setting. Research could illuminate the ways in which male teachers view their roles in facilitating gender identity development in adolescent boys, as well as how educational settings and practices possibly contribute to the construction of toxic masculinity or to countering it.

School textbooks typically portray boys as excelling in traditionally male careers and enjoying their resultant rewards, while their roles as sons and future fathers receive scant to no attention (Shefer & Macleod, 2015). Therefore, occupying roles related to financial and career success receives disproportionate attention, while relational roles and their importance seem to enjoy little attention or prominence in textbook portrayals of the ideal boy and man (Bank et al., 2007). Different approaches towards girls by teachers may also contribute to boys' understanding of stereotypical masculinities. Girls are shown to receive less interaction time with teachers, and are called on less during class to offer answers to teachers' questions (Kail, 2012; Richards & Barker, 2015; Salkind, 2008). This suggests that several factors within the formal education system, including the curriculum, traditional role expectations, and differential treatment by teachers may influence boys' understandings of themselves. These factors thus might reproduce behavioural and psychological differences between boys and girls.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

While there are research studies exploring the teaching of LO in topics like sexuality (Francis, 2012), sexually transmitted diseases (Magnani et al., 2005), and teenage pregnancy (Shefer, Bhana, & Morell, 2013; Shefer & Macleod, 2015), very few studies examine the perceptions of LO teachers on teaching adolescent boys about gender and gender-related constructs as outlined in the CAPS LO Senior and FET curriculum. The current LO curriculum in South Africa requires teachers to help facilitate learners' understandings of gender as it relates to ideas of power, gender roles, masculinity and femininity. However, currently prescribed LO textbooks provide very little guidance around how this process should or could be facilitated.

The LO teacher therefore plays a critical role in deciding personally how issues of gender, gender identity development, masculinity, femininity, power, and gender roles can be presented to learners. Social scientists are increasingly describing gender as not an essentialist, inflexible, or rigid dimension of personal identity, but rather as a socially constructed, fluid, and mutable dimension of one's identity (Disch & Hawkesworth, 2016). Thus, there might be a valuable role for teachers to play in modelling gender and reconstructing social understandings of gender, particularly in South African settings where toxic masculinity is linked to the spread of HIV, gender-based violence and psychological problems for boys and men (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). In light of the above, understanding the way that gender is currently taught and modelled, particularly during adolescence, can offer insights for possible interventions to aid gender equity and can serve as resistance to toxic forms of masculinity.

It would also seem as though masculinity and femininity are still presented in the CAPS curriculum as binary and opposing positions. The contemporary understanding of gender as fluid, mutable, and socially constructed (Francis, 2012; Hearn & Morrell, 2012; Lindsey, 2015) does not seem to be reflected in the phrasing of gender and gender-related concepts in the CAPS Senior and FET LO curriculum. This limited

view of gender expression might affect the way that gender is taught in the LO classroom in South Africa. According to Ratele (2015) the field of gender studies in the last few decades has commonly focused on issues related to women and girls. While the fields of public health, sociology, psychology, and gender and feminist studies have started to pay significantly more attention to boys and men within the context of gender (Eagly et al., 2005; Fausto-Sterling, 1992; Higgins et al., 2010; Lindsey, 2015) there still appears to be a general disinclination to focus a critical lens on boys and men. It seems as though there remains a paucity in studies exploring boys' gender identity construction. This research thus adds to this growing field with a particular focus on how gender is understood in educational settings in South Africa.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS THAT WILL GUIDE THE STUDY

This research therefore focuses on how male LO teachers in the Senior and FET phases conceive, interpret, and enact their roles as teachers of high school boys in facilitating the learning of gender and gender-related concepts, as referred to in the CAPS curriculum. The research focuses on how these male teachers understand gender, and how this understanding influences the ways in which they engage with the topic of gender in their classes.

The research study is therefore guided by the following primary research question:

How do high school male LO teachers understand the concept of gender and other gender-related concepts as listed in the CAPS LO Senior and FET curriculum?

In order to gain richer insight, the following sub-questions are explored:

1. *How have the participant teachers developed their understandings of gender?*
2. *How do male teachers see their own gender identities as impacting on their roles as LO teachers?*
3. *How do participant teachers teach gender and related concepts to boys?*

1.4 RESEARCH PARADIGM, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.4.1 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm provides a "model or framework for observation and understanding, which shapes both what we see and how we understand [social life]" (Babbie, 2012, p. 31). By clarifying the research paradigm, the researcher is able to communicate their "basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigation" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). The current study is qualitative in nature and guided by an interpretivist paradigm, which holds that reality is not singular but plural, and therefore open to multiple interpretations of events (Merriam, 2009). The researcher acknowledges that subjectivity is inherent to a person's meaning-making process and that objectivity is not the goal (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). A researcher operating in the interpretivist paradigm does not believe that knowledge can be 'found' or 'discovered'; rather, knowledge is created actively between the participants and their interactions with

the world around them. The researcher is also a participant in this knowledge creation, making meaning of their[1] own world and interpreting the meaning constructed by participants. For this reason, the researcher should be mindful and interrogative of their own biases and make them explicitly known (Krauss, 2005).

Corbetta (2003) explains that what can be known in the world is the product of the meaning attached to phenomena by the meaning maker. Gender is not a global, stable construct free from culture, but rather a complex, layered construct that is informed by the individual's idiosyncratic meaning making that is constructed from their own life experiences and perceptions (Bank, 2007). This study explores the ways male teachers conceive, interpret, and enact their roles as teachers of male high school boys in facilitating the learning of gender and gender-related concepts, as referred to in the CAPS curriculum. This study also explores their understandings of the roles they may play as gender models to adolescent boys. For these reasons, the theoretical framework of this study includes social constructionism, Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, Erik Erikson's theory of moral development in the context of child and adolescent gender identity formation, and the social learning theory of gender-role development.

1.4.2 Research Design

A study's research design links the research questions with the execution of the project (Mouton & Babbie, 2001), and clarifies the research framework within which data will be collected and processed. According to Dey (1993) qualitative analysis is valuable, as it yields important and thorough information about the participants that are being studied. A qualitative approach to research is focused on obtaining data that can be decoded, coded, transcribed, translated, or in some other way capture and describe meaning (Dey, 1993) that can yield valuable information about the participants' views, in this case, on gender and gender-related concepts.

A basic interpretive design is concerned with experience, interpretation, and meaning of phenomena (Henning, 2004) and therefore lends itself to qualitative research. This study is primarily concerned with the meaning that male LO teachers attribute to gender and gender related concepts and their teaching, or lack of teaching, thereof. The researcher extracted and interpreted that meaning during the analysis of the data in this study.

1.4.3 Research Methodology

It is imperative that research be ethical, rigorous, and credible (Merriam, 2009). For this reason, the processes of data collection and data analysis should be clear and in line with the researcher's selected research paradigm.

[1] The singular form of their/them/they will be used throughout this thesis as pronouns for individuals in order to avoid using the gendered terms "he" or "she", unless the preferred gender identification of the individual is indicated. This will serve to avoid unnecessary gender labelling and gender exclusive language.

1.4.3.1 Sampling.

Non-probability sampling is frequently used in qualitative research designs, and purposive sampling is one such technique (Babbie, 2012). Purposive sampling refers to the researcher purposefully basing his research sample on pre-selected criteria as they believe that these criteria will yield data that are most useful and representative of the purposes of the study (Babbie, 2012). Convenient sampling refers to a method of sampling that is convenient for the researcher to use due to convenient proximity and accessibility of participants (Babbie, 2012). Both purposive and convenient sampling techniques were used to meet the aims of this research. The criteria for recruiting were based on the following: male LO teachers, preferably working at the time the interviews were conducted, employed at private or public high schools, where they teach any or all of Grade 8-12 boys. The researcher approached a range of schools in the Johannesburg North District and the Johannesburg Central District to ensure that he was able to travel to the schools easily in order to conduct interviews at the place of work of the teachers, which limited the time commitment which participants had to make for the study.

The limited scope of this study only allowed for a small subset of LO teachers to be studied. Participants were required to be male and to have taught at least one year of LO according to the CAPS curriculum to high school boys. While the small sample size limits the generalisability of the study, this narrow focus was chosen to ensure that meaningful and detailed data could be extracted about views on gender in LO education, which hopefully provide useful reference points for future researchers.

1.4.3.2 Data collection techniques.

Various data collection techniques that serve various research purposes are employed when conducting qualitative research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). Self-administered questionnaires and in-depth individual interviews were selected as data collection techniques for the purposes of this study.

The questionnaire contained questions that were framed in an open-ended manner, offering several advantages. They included the following: participants were allowed time for reflection, they were allowed to give voice to their thoughts and feelings in their own chosen terms, and no limits were set in the way they could answer questions, in contrast to response categories which are set in advance (Given, 2008). However, the researcher had to be mindful of the level of intrusion that questionnaires may have imposed upon the participant's lives, notably in terms of their privacy being invaded, the amount of time commitment involved, and the level of threat and sensitivity the questions may have posed (Given, 2008).

The data collection process was therefore conducted as follows: in line with the ethical approval requirements, the researcher contacted principals from public and private high schools to request permission to recruit participants from the staff at their respective schools. After the researcher received the permission letters from the public high school principals, permission was obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE).

Consenting participants were asked to complete questionnaires consisting of 5 demographic questions and 10 open-ended questions. These questions were designed in an open-ended fashion to allow for respondents to explore their own perspectives (Payne & Payne, 2004), which is a data gathering method that is in line with the interpretivist research paradigm.

Next, individual interviews of approximately 45-60 minutes each were conducted with participants based on a semi-structured interview schedule. Interviews, according to Patton (2002), provide the researcher with an opportunity to explore the rich, inner world of the interviewees. The direct personal contact afforded by interviews allowed for the researcher and the research participants to explore the research topic with the help of open-ended questions (Patton, 2002). Recurring themes that emerged from the questionnaires served as a guide in the design of the interview schedule.

1.4.3.3 Data analysis.

Patton (2002) considers the process of data analysis as the ordering of chaotic data with the goal of extracting meaning. Braun and Clarke (2006) consider thematic analysis to be an essential method of qualitative data analysis. They outline a six-step process to conduct thematic analysis, including familiarising oneself with the data (comprised of the completed questionnaires and transcripts of the individual interviews), generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finally producing the research report or thesis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This methodology is compatible with a constructivist paradigm in psychological research that can yield "rich and detailed, yet complex data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006p. 78). However, it is important to be clear about the assumptions that inform the research. Braun and Clarke (2006) caution novice researchers to ground their thematic analysis in their theoretical framework in order to make their theoretical assumptions explicit and their analyses transparent. For the purpose of this proposed study, a theme is defined as "something important about the data in relation to the research question(s), and presents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.82, emphasis added).

The data analysis was couched in a basic interpretivist framework and design, and constituted the decoding and encoding of data, organising the codes into patterns, organising the patterns into themes, revisiting the original data to verify the accuracy and validity of the themes generated, and finally the defining and naming of the data. These processes are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

1.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is imperative that research be conducted in accordance with clear ethical guidelines in the interest of producing trustworthy results and to avoid harming participants, particularly human participants. In order to meet these standards, the researcher endeavoured at all times to treat participants with dignity, respect, and to honour their privacy and anonymity (Merriam, 2009). Written permission to recruit participants was

obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education and the principals of the respective schools. In satisfaction of the "justice" principle (Allan, 2009), the participation of male LO teachers was sought and voluntarily contracted through an individual informed consent form. The consent form stipulated the nature and purpose of the study, that participation was voluntary, that confidentiality was guaranteed, and that participants could withdraw from the interviews and research process at any time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Participants were required to complete a questionnaire which was emailed to them upon obtaining their consent to obtain their email addresses. Participants were asked to sign the consent form before the questionnaires were sent out and before interviews were scheduled.

Allan's principle of nonmaleficence bears mentioning (2009). There is the possibility that participating in studies of this nature may have caused the participants to experience discomfort and that they may have required debriefing. Some of the schools that employ the teachers have access to counselling services in their schools, and the researcher offered a reminder of such services to the relevant research participants. Details of Lifeline, a service that offers free counseling and psychosocial support, were made available on all consent forms for participants, even those who had access to counselling services at their schools.

In order to maintain anonymity, the participants themselves and the schools at which they work were assigned pseudonyms which are referred to during the presentation of findings. The interviews took place in a private room at the respective schools or in a suitably private setting convenient to participants, and the researcher took every precaution to ensure that the interview was not interrupted at any stage.

The interviews were audio recorded on a digital voice recorder and transcribed verbatim on the researcher's personal computer, and these transcriptions are protected by passwords and two-factor authentication. Only the principal researcher has the password. The transcriptions and voice recordings are kept in a securely locked filing cabinet in the researcher's private office for a period of five years after which they will be destroyed. The names of the participating teachers and schools were deleted from all transcripts, and have not been used in the resulting thesis and will be used in any other publication. The data were only shared with the two supervisors of this study.

The participants were also informed that information gained during the study may be used for publication, but that neither their names, the schools at which they teach nor any other type of identifying information will be disclosed in such publications.

1.6 ENSURING TRUSTWORTHINESS

For the research to be meaningful and of a high quality, it is crucial to ensure trustworthiness by verifying that data were collected in a consistent and transparent manner (Babbie, 2012). Data verification refers to ensuring that the data collected are reliable and valid, and that the data contribute to the rigour of the study (Babbie, 2012). The researcher strove to meet impeccable standards of trustworthiness by referring to

Lincoln and Guba's concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (1985, as cited in Babbie, 2012). These strategies for ensuring trustworthiness are discussed in Chapter 3.

1.7 MY POSITION AS RESEARCHER

It is important for a qualitative researcher to be aware and critical of their own worldviews, beliefs, values, and life experiences, as researchers rely in large part on their own perspectives for data collection and data analysis (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, one should be aware of one's own subjectivity and its role in conducting qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Ongoing self-reflexivity during the research process is crucial in order to reduce possible bias brought upon by subjectivity.

With this in mind, I would like to shed light on my own position as researcher. Earlier in my career I was a high school teacher for a brief period of time, and taught History, Afrikaans, and LO. I taught boys from Grade 8-12, and observed how boys would 'gender shame' one another, i.e., insult one another's interests, abilities on the sports field, mannerisms, and appearance on the basis of not conforming to masculine ideals. Insults such as "you throw like a girl", "that's so gay", "moffie" and "sissy" were commonplace. Given the detrimental effects that such bullying behaviours can have on the self-esteem of boys in a critical developmental period in their lives (Crooks & Baur, 2013), I wondered if teachers found this concerning on any level. I observed my male colleagues subscribing to harsh, punitive, verbally assaulting and threatening codes of discipline administered particularly with the boys, and I was concerned at how commonplace such teacher conduct appeared to be.

Furthermore, I worked as a trainer and educator in the fields of gender and sexuality diversity at a university in the Western Cape, and one of my roles included that of group counselling facilitator for queer-identified men. The men were mostly in the age range of 18-24, who shared experiences of being marginalised and "othered" by mainstream university life and society in general.

These experiences helped to shape my own perspectives on gender, gender roles, and other gender concepts. By acknowledging my own possible bias, I hope to reduce its impact on my data analysis by critically engaging with my own positions, perspectives, and ideas around these concepts. Additionally, I also believe that my above-mentioned work experience has enriched this study as I was able to draw upon preexisting experience, knowledge, skills, and ideas.

1.8 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

1.8.1 Adolescent

Adolescence is a specific life stage between childhood and adulthood marked by the onset of puberty (Berger, 2016) that typically spans the ages of 12 to 20. This life stage is further discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2.

1.8.2 Identity

According to the *American Psychological Association's Dictionary of Psychology* (2013), identity can be understood as a person's sense of self that is physically, psychologically, and interpersonally separate and distinguishable from another person. In the context of adolescent identity, it would be useful for the purposes of this study to view identity through a developmental lens. Adolescents are involved in a search for identity, driven by a need to establish a self-concept and guided by questions such as, "Who am I?" (Berger, 2016). Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1998, in Berger, 2016) conceptualised adolescence as a stage where young people accept and reject some norms passed along by their parents, peers, teachers and other agents in social and cultural institutions in a quest to forge their own identity. Identity can therefore be seen as a fluid construct in developmental psychology where the adolescent is impressionable to external influences in forging their self-concept, including the effects of their teachers.

1.8.3 Sex

A person's biological sex refers to their biological maleness or femaleness (Crooks & Baur, 2013). This encompasses their genetic sex which is determined by their chromosomes, and their anatomical sex, which refers to the obvious physical characteristics that distinguish male persons from female persons.

1.8.4 Gender

The *American Psychological Association* (2015) describes gender as the sense of being male, female, or other. Gender should not be confused with sex, which refers specifically to the "biological aspects of maleness or femaleness, whereas gender implies the psychological, behavioural, social, and cultural aspects of being male or female (i.e. masculinity or femininity)" (APA, 2015, p. 450). A person's sex can therefore be seen as the physical, biological markers of maleness or femaleness, while a person's gender refers to broader psychological, behavioural, social, and cultural implications brought upon by the expectations imposed by being born as male or female, which leads to society-specific constructions of masculinity or femininity. Ember and Ember (2003) point out that most societies have two genders, but others have even more. This indicates the culturally specific understandings of gender and the flexibility inherent in these concepts. For the purposes of this study's interpretivist paradigm, it is essential to remain open to a variety of perspectives on gender offered by participants.

1.8.5 Gender identity

Gender identity refers to a person's subjective, personal sense of being male or female (Crooks & Baur, 2013). Crooks and Baur (2013) explain that most people recognise their "maleness" or "femaleness" within the first few years of life, but for some people, it is considerably harder to reconcile their biological sex with their gender identity. To illustrate: in the example of a child born biologically male, their personal, subjective sense of their maleness or femaleness might lead to them being more comfortable as identifying

as female. Gender identity could also include categories such as transgender, nonbinary, twospirit, genderqueer and various other understandings of gender identity that are becoming more widely recognised.

1.8.6 Sexuality

In somewhat broad terms, Carroll (2018, p. 4) defines sexuality as "a general term for the feelings and behaviors of human beings concerning (sexual activity)". Sexuality is therefore differentiated from one's gender identity, as the former refers to the thoughts, feelings, behaviours, and attitudes towards one's own sexual activity, while the latter refers to one's subjective sense of being a boy and a man or a girl and a woman. This distinction is important to bear in mind as these two concepts are commonly confused and used interchangeably (Carroll, 2018). It is also worth noting that one's gender identity can be linked to one's understanding of expression of one's sexuality; for example, certain constructions of masculinity imply compulsory heterosexuality (Konik & Stewart, 2004).

1.8.7 Gender roles

Crooks and Baur (2013) defines gender roles as certain behaviours, attitudes, values, and interests that are understood as being normal, appropriate, and expected for a particular sex within a particular society. Certain behaviours and attitudes that are considered appropriate within a particular society at a particular point in time for biologically male-born persons is considered *masculinity*, and *femininity* for biologically female born persons (Crooks & Baur, 2013). This points to the fluidity of gender across different cultures and challenges essentialist gender notions, i.e., the idea that certain behaviours are "inherent" and "innate" exclusively based on a person's biological sex (Richards & Barker, 2015).

1.8.8 Heterosexism

Heterosexism is defined by Chesir-Teran (2003, p. 267) as a "process that systematically privileges heterosexuality relative to homosexuality, based on the assumption that heterosexuality, as well as heterosexual power and privilege are the norm and the ideal". Heterosexism is distinguished from "homophobia" in the sense that while definitions of homophobia include powerful emotional reactions of "disgust" and "fear" (Chesir-Teran, 2003) in an interpersonal context, heterosexism points to structural power dynamics favouring and privileging heterosexuality as evidenced in social contexts or institutions, such as schools. Heterosexism also rests on the assumption that all people are heterosexual and that heterosexuality is "natural" whereas homosexuality is a "choice", which has the effect of erasing same-sex sexualities in the context of social institutions. This can also be linked to what is termed "compulsory heterosexuality" (Rich, 1980) where heterosexuality is normalised and expected, and same-sex sexualities are made to be invisible or socially excluded. Finally, another linked concept is heteropatriarchy, defined by Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill as "the social systems in which heterosexuality and patriarchy are perceived as normal and natural, and in which other configurations are perceived as abnormal, aberrant, and abhorrent" (2013, p. 13).

1.8.9 Queer

As defined by Andrews (2018, p. 44) the term "queer" refers "to individuals who are part of sexual and gender minority groups, or those with nonnormative gender expressions and same-sex sexual behaviours, desires and identities". This conceptualisation of nonnormative sexual and gender minority groups is useful in the sense that it offers a broad umbrella of these identities without a self-conscious need to stringently label and constrict sexual and gender identities.

1.8.10 Teacher

South Africa's Department of Basic Education makes use of the term 'educator' to describe a person that offers professional educational services to other persons, in a school and outside of a school (DoBE, 2010). For this study, a "teacher" will only refer to a person who is or has been employed at a school, thereby excluding persons teaching in other contexts.

1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1: Contextualisation and rationale of the research study

Chapter 1 includes the introduction of the study that comprises the background, rationale, research questions, a brief discussion about the research design, methodological and ethical considerations.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical frameworks guiding the research study. A critical overview of relevant literature pertaining to the research topic is also provided, including male adolescent gender identity development, South African masculinities, and gender concepts as set out in the CAPS Senior and FET LO curriculum.

Chapter 3: Research methodology, design, and process

Chapter 3 discusses the research process by describing the different features of a qualitative research study, including the paradigm, design, and research methodology. Research procedures including participant selection, data analysis and ethical concerns will also be discussed in depth.

Chapter 4: Research findings

Chapter 4 includes a presentation and a detailed discussion of research findings, as well as a thorough analysis and discussion of the themes and subthemes which were generated.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, limitations and future research

The final chapter presents concluding remarks on the findings of the study and places them in the context of the research problem and extant literature on the topic. Limitations of the study are also discussed and further research into fields related to this study are recommended.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this research study was to investigate how male LO teachers who teach boys in the Senior and FET phases conceive, interpret, and enact their roles in facilitating the learning of gender concepts. A literature review was conducted in order to provide an overview of similar studies in order to shed light on the ongoing dialogue in the literature around this topic. In addition to the aforementioned overarching goals, a literature review helps to contextualise the research study at hand (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The literature review of this study explores important concepts and related studies which underpin and inform the current research; the topics reviewed are outlined below.

As the current study looked at how South African male LO teachers understand their role in teaching gender concepts to high school boys, this chapter firstly presents the theories informing this exploration of the topic. These theories include social constructionism, Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, Erik Erikson's theory of moral development in the context of child and adolescent gender identity formation, and the social learning theory of gender-role development. Following the theoretical framework, the concepts of adolescent identity construction, gender and masculinities are explored as they are outlined and interconnected within literature, particularly during the developmental stage of adolescence. Thirdly, the impact of identity, gender and masculinities within the school context is explored in relevant literature. Fourthly, the study also looks at the LO curriculum's particular focus on gender, and what this means in terms of the Constitutional imperative of fostering equality and ensuring non-discrimination.

South African and global literature on understanding and teaching gender concepts in schools are explored, and relevant studies on teaching LO are discussed to contextualise the current study on the perspectives of teachers. Studies on the role that male teachers can play in teaching adolescent boys are then summarised to show the significance of the current study in academic discourse, and the role of male teachers as 'gender models' to boys. The particular challenges of South African LO teachers are then examined, looking at how teachers' attitudes, their lack of relevant training and the contexts of South African schools might be challenges to effectively teaching gender.

Finally, a critique of the gaps in knowledge and an argument about how the current study can serve to address these gaps are presented. The review concludes by arguing that teaching gender may provide a platform for addressing the harmful effects of toxic masculinity on adolescent boys, enhance the process of identity formation in adolescent boys, and thereby aid the development of a more equitable society by addressing gender inequities.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR UNDERSTANDING GENDER

Social constructionism provides the main theoretical framework that informs this study. This section presents an outline of the usefulness of social constructionism as it pertains to this research by discussing its four underlying assumptions. Firstly, social constructionism assumes that all people hold certain taken-for-granted assumptions about themselves, others, and their world, knowingly or unknowingly, and a critical stance towards such knowledges will disentangle these assumptions and allow for broader perspectives (Babbie 2012; Gergen, 1985). Secondly, one's understanding of oneself, others, and one's world are situated within specific contexts of culture, place and time (Babbie 2012; Gergen, 1985). A third assumption is the idea that individuals actively construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct knowledges through ongoing interactions with their social worlds, by for example sharing stories or having conversations (Merriam, 2009). Finally, social constructionism holds that knowledge and social action are intertwined, meaning that the type and context of the knowledge we construct will lead to actions that maintain some knowledges and discard others (Merriam, 2009). Such a framework is useful in studies of how gender as a social construct is taught, and how the meaning of gender is embedded in particular social settings.

Social constructionism also links to an ontology of gender which is elucidated by Butler (1993, as cited in Salih, 2002). Butler claims that humans are not born as women or men, but that one "becomes" a man or woman in a process that has no beginning nor end, which is therefore a process of "doing" and not "being". Butler therefore abandons essentialistic notions of gender which portray male and female bodies as inherently "feminine" and "masculine" (1993, as cited in Salih, 2002). Gender is not predetermined through any "natural order", but, rather, it is performative in the sense that gender consists of acts which are repeatedly performed. These acts congeal into a general understanding of what women are and what men are, specifically in social terms. In this sense, gender only comes into being through actions and performativity, and it can only be known and reproduced through mimicking gender models (Butler, 1993, as cited in Salih, 2002).

Of importance to this study is the possibility that teachers may fulfil this role of gender models to children, at times unknowingly. Blakemore (2003) explains that children as young as 2-years-old show a recognition of gender differences and norms. When these norms are violated, by for example observing a boy playing with a doll, perceptions of how girls and boys should behave are reinforced through evaluative comments made by parents, teachers, family member, or other adult figures in the child's immediate environment (Bussey & Bandura, 2003). This theory also links with the social learning theory of gender-role development, where gender is formed through a process of learning through social interactions, which is discussed further below. Blakemore (2003) also notes that some studies have found that boys are evaluated more harshly if they violate gender norms than girls are, particularly by male adult figures such as fathers (Bussey & Bandura, 2003). In addition, Blakemore (2003) points to some studies that show that increasingly negative judgements are experienced with increasing age. This is an important framework for

this study as it highlights the role of male LO teachers as gender models or as teachers of gender, emphasising that gender is not something that is essentialistic, but rather a set of ideas that are performed and repeatedly enacted over the course of time. Additionally, this framing allows for ideas of gender to be unlearned or challenged in different social settings.

Kohlberg (1966, as cited in Lerner, 2004) provides a theory of moral development in children that offers an explanation of the integration of gender identity into the child's overall personal identity. This theory positions gender identity development in children as operating through three stages. The first stage is *gender labelling*, where 2- to 3-year-old children recognise that other children are either a boy or girl, and are able to associate with their own preference. The second stage is *gender stability*, where preschool children understand that boys become men and girls become women. However, between the age range of 4 to 7, most children view and understand femaleness and maleness as inalterable, and that a boy cannot become a girl, or a girl a boy, based on personal wishes or from one context to another. This means the child has entered a phase of *gender constancy* (Kohlberg, 1966, as cited in Lerner, 2004). Kohlberg's theory points to the gradual incorporation of gender concepts into a child's understanding of his identity, which aligns with the relative constancy that adolescents attribute to gender. This developmental theory is useful in framing how gender becomes reified for children, but importantly it might not be fully applicable to a modern context as it does not address the possibility of diverse gender expressions, gender dysphoria or gender experimentation later in the young person's development.

It would also be useful to refer to the so-called social learning theory of gender-role development, which holds that gender roles are learned through reinforcement, punishment, and modeling (Bussey & Bandura, 2004; Hyde, 2014). From a very young age, children are rewarded for displaying gender-linked behaviour that is considered appropriate by their host culture, and punished when they do not display these behaviours. Television, media, video games, books, films, and observation of same-sex adult role models serve to guide this identity formation (Hockenbury, Hockenbury, & Toussaint, 2015). Children observe behaviours displayed by adults with significant roles in their lives and come to understand through these observations that certain behaviours are more acceptable and socially sanctioned than others, thereby incentivising gender-linked behaviours that are considered appropriate and expected in their culture.

These social constructionist theories are used to frame understandings of gender development in the current study, but the theories are also nuanced by including perspectives from theories that have particular bearing on masculinities and on gender performativity, as well as theories which extend beyond basic childhood identity formation into the adolescent and adult stages of life. These latter perspectives serve to account for more diverse gender expressions and also highlight the importance of sexuality in gender development. Theories of masculinities and adolescent identity formation are outlined in the section that follows.

2.3 UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENT IDENTITY FORMATION, MASCULINITIES AND GENDER

Gender is a basic building block of identity, and identity formation is a crucial developmental task of the adolescent (Bank et al, 2007; Gieseler, 2017). The operational definition utilised in Chapter 1 is useful in understanding this stage of development, where "identity" in the adolescent context is conceptualised as a fluid construct where the adolescent is impressionable to external agents, such as parents and teachers, in forging their self-concept. Many researchers have looked at the dynamics of gender and identity formation and these factors are especially relevant within the school context as sites of socialisation into "appropriate" gender roles (Berger, 2016; Disch & Hawkesworth, 2016; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998).

These studies point to a process of gender socialisation (Pearce, 2006), which is a process that normalises or "conventionalises" certain behaviours for particular genders, even when these behaviours may be highly problematic, including violence being seen as a conventional aspect of certain masculinities (Pearce, 2006). Bussey and Bandura (1999) also point out that the individual's self-concept is negotiated around the observation of gender models, same-gender peers or role models who demonstrate the norms and conventions which the individual is meant to exhibit as a male or female. Boys pay more attention to gender models than do girls (Bussey & Bandura, 1999), and the researchers suggest that this could be due to boys facing harsher punishments or judgements for violating gender norms, and that boys seem to emulate aggressive models at a greater rate than girls. It can therefore be argued that boys are socialised to adopt violent, aggressive behaviours, which is an underlying foundation for "toxic masculinity", which will be discussed later in this chapter. This framing of boys' emulation of gender models is significant in highlighting the role that male LO teachers can have in the development of adolescent boys.

It is important to understand how masculinities have been theorised, particularly in relation to risk-taking or problem behaviour in boys and men. Raewyn Connell theorised masculinities as constructed differently in different cultures and times (Connell, 2001). She notes that not all expressions of masculinity are equal, but that there are hierarchies of masculinity, where certain expressions are more valued. The type of masculinity which gains the highest status in a given society is known as hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2001), which is associated with men who are dominant in their specific societies. According to Connell (1995, as cited in Coles, 2009, p. 31) "hegemonic masculinity" is a "culturally exalted" form of masculinity, and Connell emphasises that its existence necessitates the subordination of femininity and masculinities that are perceived to be inferior or weaker. Importantly, hegemonic masculinities are mutable, and in part dependent on the challenge posed by subordinated masculinities (Coles, 2009). However, hegemonic masculinity is not necessarily the most common form of masculinity in a given society, and it does not preclude other forms of masculinity co-existing with hegemonic masculinity (Coles, 2009). Connell (2001) states that hegemonic masculinity is typically supported by three pillars, namely the domination of women, a hierarchy of dominance amongst men, and the stigmatisation of homosexuality among men (Kupers,

2005). Connell (2001) argues that men who do not meet certain criteria of masculinity are disdained, and such disdain is built into idealised cultural constructions of masculinity. By denouncing such men, a proclamation of membership to the dominant masculinity is expressed.

Masculinities often consist of traits associated with ideal maleness in a specific time and place, and machismo, domination of women, aggressiveness and predatory sexuality are often culturally valued and desirable, even if socially destructive (Kupers, 2005). Certain adverse social effects result, including gender-based harassment and violence, homophobia, transphobia, and distinctly worse mental health outcomes for boys and men (Bhana, 2012; Haider, 2016; Kupers, 2005). When these behaviours are adopted by boys and men to an extreme degree, they can be regarded as "socially regressive male traits", also termed "toxic masculinity" (Kupers, 2005). While toxic masculinity is an extreme form of socially dominant masculine expression in patriarchal societies, it is fairly widespread in South Africa and globally. Research (Bank et al., 2007; Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Eagley at al., 2005; Jewkes & Morrell; 2010) persistently points to the relationship of being a woman and the higher degree of oppression suffered. However, it seems as though there is a notable lack of research which takes a critical look at the ways young men are adversely affected by their gender roles or gender expectations, particularly with reference to toxic masculinity.

Morrell (2012) focuses on South African hegemonic masculinity, and considers the harmful elements that have become normative in South African masculinities, including violence, a highly patriarchal social structure, and exaggerated gender and racial inequities. Donaldson (1993, in Morrell, 1998, p. 608) considers hegemonic masculinity to be "exclusive, anxiety-provoking, internally and hierarchically differentiated, brutal, and violent" and its defining features are "misogyny, homophobia, racism and compulsory heterosexuality". Morrell, Jewkes, and Lindegger (2013) point out that South African masculinities have been marked by race and class, where extreme poverty disables black African men from fulfilling the traditional role of provider, which might be experienced as emasculating and an attack on their self-esteem. Men, Morrell (2000) writes, have primarily and implicitly been labelled as "the problem" in the name of women's "upliftment". This understanding of men, as will be shown later, is also encoded into school curricula which discuss gender, and might reproduce problematic concepts of masculinity and femininity to teachers and learners.

Hypermasculine and toxic masculine gender identity constructs in adolescents are closely linked to compromised mental health and wide-ranging adverse outcomes such as substance abuse, depression, suicide ideation and completion (Bank et al., 2007; Canetto, 1992, 1997; Easton, Renner, & O'Leary., 2013), as well as psychosocial problems such as early sexual debut and unplanned early parenthood (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). These forms of masculinity are also linked to abusive behaviours such as gender-based violence, homophobic and transphobic bullying (Butler, Alpaslan, Strümpher, & Astbury, 2003; Francis, 2012), dating violence, and physical aggression (Hearn & Morrell, 2012). Other adverse outcomes of hypermasculine gender identity include academic-related problems, such as underachievement, truancy,

expulsion, and negative attitudes towards education and teachers (Shefer, Bhana, & Morrell, 2013; Shefer & Macleod, 2015).

Meissner et al. (2016) point out that 80% of South African suicide completers are male, and support Courtenay's findings (2003) that men's mental health is at least partially compromised by masculine gender norms. In Meissner et al.'s study (2016) of a group of young men reflecting on suicide, the researchers found that some men considered suicide completion as an act of valour, indicating agency. In addition, suicide is seen to be in line with South African hegemonic masculinity gender roles and positive attributes such as power and achievement (Hearn & Morrell, 2012; Ratele, 2006; Walker, 2006). Meissner et al.'s study (2016) indicates that young men closely link extremely self-destructive acts, such as suicide, with an idealised form of masculinity. This indicates a need for greater investigation of how young men arrive at these ideas and how they form or learn the types of masculinities which valourise these behaviours.

However, different masculinities have emerged with much greater social status and focus in recent years. Walker (2005) writes of "constitutional sexualities" and masculinities. This can be defined as democracy-based, "impeccably liberal" masculinities, where men are providers for their families, good fathers and husbands, and are non-violent. These masculinities can be contrasted with the "heroic struggle masculinities" of the 1980s in South Africa, where violence against an oppressive regime was legitimised and lauded, and afforded young men validation and political status. In South Africa, Walker (2005) argues, men are now permitted to develop reflexive and introspective masculinities, where masculinities embedded in violence, sexual and otherwise, are rejected. This reflects the unique trajectory and historical context of the development of South African masculinities, where "struggle masculinities" seemed to have somewhat given way to reflexive and introspective masculinities, where the markers of the "real man" or hegemonic masculinity are less clear. While these masculinities might be more permissible than in the past, it is still debatable whether these reconfigurations of masculinity have become dominant within South Africa. South Africa remains to be a country with sexual and physical violence at some of the highest rates in the world, with 3-4% of young men reported as rape victims (Hawkes & Buse, 2013), and the homicide rate for boys nearly double the rate than that of girls (Van Niekerk, Tonsing, Seedat, Jacobs, Ratele & McClure, 2015) .

Of particular note, based on the concepts of gender discussed above, is the fact that gender is often intimately linked to ideas of sexuality and sexual behaviour. Connell (2001) highlights how hegemonic masculinities are often contrasted with perceived feminine gender expressions, which are often located in same-sex attracted men. Masculinity is thus constructed in relation to gay, bisexual or other queer identities, and the way that these sexual minorities are conceptualised have important implications for masculine gender expression within particular societies. Additionally, as has been demonstrated, sexual practices are also important in constructions of masculinity, such as dominant and predatory heterosexual sexual behaviour being associated with hegemonic masculinity. For this reason, the discussions of gender in this study will also include ideas around sexuality diversity and sexual practices amongst boys and men,

particularly as it relates to the school context and the subject of LO. The ideas of gender and sexuality education will be used in conjunction, as masculinity is often defined by sexual prowess and heterosexuality (Kupers, 2005). Thus, education about gender and gender roles necessitates discussions of elements of sexuality, particularly for gender and sexual minorities who might be excluded from hegemonic masculinity.

As this study focuses on male adolescent gender identity formation and the role of the school as an institution where gender is constructed, including the male LO teacher's role as a gender model and mediator, the theories of gender discussed above will be employed to explore psychosocial gender development and how this affects the individual's mental health and identity formation. The adolescent life stage, which is the focus of this study, will be outlined below as it relates to gender identity formation.

2.3.1 Gender identity development for boys during adolescence

The adolescent developmental phase has been thoroughly described in the literature, notably in the field of developmental psychology. As this study looks at the identity formation in the context of gender during the adolescent stage, it is fitting to consult the field of developmental psychology. Valuable contributions on gender identity formation from biological perspectives have been made (Lindsey, 2015; Saewyc, 2017; Udry, 1994), but as this study centres on the relationship between high school boys and their male teachers, and how this relationship facilitates understanding of gender constructs, attention will be focused on the social influences of gender identity formation.

Berk (2014) broadly defines the adolescence phase as between the ages of 11 to 18 years, marked by the transition from childhood to adulthood. Puberty facilitates the process of sexual maturation, and rapid growth spurts develop the child's body into that of an adult. Psychologically, children begin to differentiate themselves from their family by seeking greater autonomy through setting personal values and goals (Meeus, Iedema, Helsen, & Vollebergh, 1999; Berk, 2014). Adolescent develop abstract thinking skills, a marked shift from more concrete thought processes in the childhood years. These more advanced cognitive abilities of the developing adolescent assist in their psychosocial task of identity formation (Erikson, 1968, as cited in Berk, 2014). Sroufe, Cooper and DeHart (2000) discuss the "fragility of the self", referring to adolescents embarking on a journey of self-discovery where the self is not yet completely developed and understood by adolescents, but rather a developing construct which is "tentative and uncertain" (Sroufe et al., 2000, p. 547). Adolescents' strengthening cognitive abilities enable them to construct a sense of who they are and who they would like to become (Mosham, 2011) by thinking about the ways that they are different from other individuals, the ways in which they relate to others, and their burgeoning understanding that their identity is more fluid and changeable than during the childhood years (Sroufe et al., 2000). Eventually, a more integrated, cohesive construction of their personal identity emerges.

In addition to cognitive developments that refine an adolescent's identity, ongoing social interactions and relationships constitute another important developmental influence. Shaffer (2013) refers to the concept of relational self-worth, where adolescents construct ongoing identity formation by learning to view themselves through their interpersonal interactions with others, including teachers. Adolescents compare their developing life perspectives with those of others, which helps to shape their own identity (Sroufe et al., 2000).

Erik Erikson discusses the identity crisis experienced by adolescents (1998, in Berger, 2016). Erikson considered the specific challenges faced by adolescents in terms of forging a healthy self-concept and identity. He points out how physical changes brought along by puberty lead to sexual interest, which is cast by most societies as an adult behaviour. This is concomitant with parental and peer pressures to adopt more adult-like behaviours, yet the adolescent still copes with restrictive limits set on their behaviours by parents and their school environment (Sroufe et al., 2000). This in-between developmental stage requires adolescents to resolve their identity conflict. The level of commitment to identity formation varies, and can be divided into four categories, namely: *Identity diffusion* (no exploration or commitment); *foreclosure* (commitment without exploration); *moratorium* (exploration without commitment); and *achievement* (exploration followed by achievement). Adolescents may experiment with different identity roles in order to arrive at a stable identity as they emerge as adults, which, as discussed above, can also be mediated by the perspectives of those they regularly interact with socially, including teachers and parents. Sroufe et al. (2000) point out that successful identity achievement is greatly aided by adult role models who had resolved their own adolescent identity crises successfully. This might imply that male teachers who experienced such a successful resolution of adolescent identity crisis are in better positions to be role models to adolescent boys.

Shaffer (2013) discussed certain domains of influence on an adolescent's identity, including cognitive, parenting, and socio-cultural influences. Cognitively, adolescents who are able to form hypotheses about the future are better able to imagine their own future selves, thereby resolving their identity crisis. In the parenting domain, adolescents who are extremely close to their parents might fear their rejection, which leads to an inability to question parental authority and a failure to separate their identities from their parents. Finally, in the socio-cultural domain, adolescents in nonindustrialised nations or working-class communities might unquestioningly adopt identities available to them by for instance becoming a farmer if their parents are farmers. This might indicate that adolescents living in rural, informal and working-class contexts, as many South Africans do, are more receptive to socio-cultural influences which shape their future selves, instead of being afforded the deep introspection which some of their peers living in affluent and highly industrialised communities enjoy.

Norris et al. (2008) looked at identity construction among adolescent South Africans and explored to what extent adolescents rely on gender, age, and other constructs in their understandings of their own sense of

what it means to be South African. Norris et al. (2008) found that these aforementioned identity variables interact with the adolescent's social world to create a personal identity. Thus, the psychological and the social domains are intertwined in identity formation, and external factors can have a great influence on the consolidation of an individual's identity. This discussion is relevant to the current study, as it shows the impact that other actors and environmental factors can have on the development of an adolescent's self-concept in terms of gender.

Saewyc (2017) speaks from a global perspective, and makes the important argument that gender plays a significant and impactful role in identity development. Saewyc (2017) points out that regardless of a country's level of industrialisation and wealth, all countries have established and time-honoured gender norms that have a direct influence on the degree of opportunity, health, and development made available to adolescents.

A further study which supports the cultural and social impacts on identity formation is provided by Thom and Coetzee (2004), who researched the identity development of black and white South African adolescents. Some of the findings revealed that adolescent identity development is in part dependent on positive role models in conjunction with cultural identity. In the school context, this could support the role that teachers play in impacting on the identity development of adolescents, and also emphasises the importance of culturally relevant, inclusive and affirming pedagogies.

2.3.2. Gender differences for adolescent boys and girls

The gender differences in identity formation have been highlighted by researchers like Rayle (2005), who conducted a study to examine the extent to which female and male adolescents think of themselves as "mattering" to their families. The researchers found that female adolescents believe that they mattered more in general to their families than did their male counterparts; however, the researchers also found that adolescent boys regarded mattering to their families as less important to their well-being than do their female counterparts. The authors argue that this may be due in part to learned social roles and that this is not necessarily an accurate indicator of not mattering to one's family. The study demonstrates how gender roles impact on social identity formation, and how social expectations might impact on ideas of self-worth and self-concept, as well as the value placed on family relationships by adolescent boys.

Gender socialisation during adolescence can also lead to increased risks and behavioural differences for young people. Magidson et al. (2017) points to the importance of late adolescence, particularly the ages of 16-18, as a period where boys and girls become markedly more susceptible to the use of alcohol and other substances. Magidson et al. (2017) found that boys were more likely to use alcohol and other drugs when they are sexually active, showing how different risky behaviours are often linked for adolescent boys, and that integrated approaches are required to address problem behaviours which seem to be influenced by gender.

Priess, Lindberg, and Hyde (2009) examined the theory that boys and girls are pressured to adopt gender-stereotypical behaviours and identities. The authors argue that it may be socially acceptable for girls to adopt masculine-typical behaviours, such as being more confident, competitive, adopting a leadership role, and participating in sports. In contrast, it may be less acceptable, and even discouraged, for boys to adopt more feminine-typical behaviours and traits, including gentleness, kindness, concern for others, and emotional expression.

These links between gender and adolescent identity formation demonstrate that particular forms of hegemonic masculinities might be reinforced in ways that impact on the emotional and behavioural development of many boys. This framework highlights the significance of studies into adolescent boys and how they are socialised in various spaces to reflect versions of masculinity. The studies show how this developmental stage is precarious and challenging for many boys, and how gender socialisation is an important factor in how boys develop into adulthood and might adopt problem behaviours. When boys are discouraged from "feminine" traits like emotional expression and gentleness, this could be understood as linked to the many negative mental health outcomes outlined earlier in this chapter which boys and men suffer from in greater numbers than their female counterparts.

2.4 MASCULINITIES AND THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

In addition to the social, behavioural and cultural factors which are involved in the way that gender affects identity formation, academic achievement and the mental health status of adolescents may in part be influenced by their socialisation around gender (Bank et al, 2007). Studies have indicated that gender has many implications for an adolescent's developmental trajectory, particularly affecting the level of academic achievement and the quality of their mental health, both factors which are significant in the field of educational psychology (Salkind, 2008; Ehrensaft, 2016).

The desire of learners to engage with gender in the school setting is highlighted by Martino (1999), who interviewed high school boys in Britain about their views on the curriculum. Some of the participants advocated for critical thinking of masculinity to be incorporated into the curriculum, as well as opportunities for greater reflexivity about their masculinity, gender identity, and behaviours related to their masculinity. Martino (1999) argues that opportunities for reflexivity around masculinity, and importantly questions around hegemonic masculinity, should be incorporated into the school curriculum. Martino (1999) additionally points out that such reflexive practices will help to enhance empathy among learners as well as interrogate heterosexist and homophobic thoughts and behaviours which have been learnt.

Although gender studies have traditionally focused on women in patriarchal and oppressive contexts, Weaver-Hightower (2003) points out that gender inequity is not a result of deficiency of girls; rather, it is a reflection of problematic masculinities and femininities. This allows for all actors in an environment like the school to be held accountable for gender-based issues which may disempower adolescent learners. In

the South African school setting, Donohue and Bornman (2014) discusses the viewpoint that free, quality, and equal education is a South African human rights issue. Donohue and Bornman (2014) points out that these policies are formalised in White Paper 6: Special Needs Education (2001), where discrimination of learners on the basis of gender, among many other identity markers, is expressly prohibited. Thus, recognising the contributions of gender expectations and expressions of people of all genders is an important step in addressing socio-cultural issues that affect education. This study aims to offer a perspective on the gender expectations of boys in particular, and on the specific contributions that male LO teachers can make in rethinking and addressing the understanding of gender for boys in high school settings.

Mayeza (2017) highlights that gender is firmly held in consciousness by both boys and girls, that norms typically constructed in the primary school years carry over to the high school years, and that these norms are stringently policed. The violation of these gender norms leads to bullying, ridicule, and ostracisation (Mayeza, 2017). For boys, Archer and Yamashita (2003) mentions that the construction of masculine adolescent identities has often rested upon cultural notions of the romanticised "bad boy" that is anti-schoolwork. This might lead to boys internalising the notion that schoolwork is of little value and might not align with idealised masculine gender expression.

High school represents a practice ground for boys and girls to explore and reinforce their gender expressions (Richards & Barker, 2015). Richards (2015) shows that boys who excel at sports, specifically competitive team sports, are worshipped, yet boys who excel academically are not rewarded with the same type of adulation or afforded the same type of cultural worth. This gender framework constructs the school setting as a site where boys are expected to practice behaviours that devalue schoolwork and inflate sporting achievement.

These various pressures faced by adolescent boys in different contexts demonstrate how gender is an important and often highly challenging component of identity formation during adolescence, particularly in schools. The following section will look at how gender constructs involve specific contextual dynamics for South African men, and then this will be explored in detail for adolescent boys within the South African school setting.

2.4.1 Gender socialisation and masculinities in South Africa

Many studies have looked at gender development in adolescence and how the social setting impacts on gender identities. In South Africa, researchers have highlighted the components of hegemonic masculinities and linked these to prevalent social issues such as gendered violence and sexual abuse. The studies particularly revealed how heterosexuality was associated with ideal masculine expression, which could impact on the types of attitudes and behaviours that young people express about their own sexuality or about their peers who are part of minority groups in terms of gender and sexuality. These studies will be discussed below.

According to Ratele (2015) gender studies in the last few decades have commonly focused on issues related to women and girls. While the fields of public health, sociology, psychology, and gender and feminist studies have started to pay significantly more attention to boys and men within the context of gender, a disinclination to focus a critical lens on boys and men in the South African educational context appears to exist. There is thus a paucity of research in South African masculinities.

Magovcevic and Addis (2008) found male gender role socialisation espouses "stoicism, independence, physical toughness, restrictive emotional expression, competition, and the avoidance of anything 'feminine'" (p. 118). Easton et al. (2013) point out that recent research has revealed that exceedingly rigid adherence to such masculine norms are positively correlated with psychological distress, such as depression, anxiety, hostility, suicidal thoughts, and engaging in violently dominant sexual practices (Moosa, 2016). In addition, socially and culturally endorsed character traits such as "stoicism" for men are possible predictors for a man's inability to recognise his own depression (Seidler, Dawes, Rice, Oliffe, & Dhillon, 2016). Similarly, in the school context, masculinity which is characterised by dominance, assertiveness, and a lack of emotion are strong predictors of homophobic attitudes among boys (Birket, 2015). While symptoms of depression and suicide ideation are reported as being higher in girls than in boys in many countries (Butcher, 2017), depression is more strongly linked to school-related stress for boys than girls, and depression is more likely to be misdiagnosed as anger for boys than girls (Pollack, 2006). Additionally, Pollack's research (2006) found that boys who felt more pressured into conforming to traditional male gender norms are more prone to depression.

Kalichman et al. (2005) examined the adherence that South African men and women hold toward rape myths and traditional gender roles in a sample of 415 men and 127 women. The researchers found widespread acceptance of traditional concepts of masculinity and femininity among both female and male participants, reinforcing hegemonic ideals. An important finding from their sample of men was that 16% of the men indicated a history of sexual abuse. Of the total sample, 10% of men also indicated perpetrating forced sexual intercourse. These high rates of sexual abuse in South Africa could impact on the gender and sexual identity development of adolescents, and should be an important consideration in how school curricula address issues of gender in the country. It also emphasises the need for sensitivity in teachers who teach content that might be distressing to some learners, such as discussions of sexual abuse and gendered violence.

In addition, certain idealised forms of masculinity are aspired to in specific South African cultures, including the concept of *isoka*. This concept refers to a heterosexual Zulu man that is envied and admired by his peers for his sexual conquests, virility, and desirability (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012). Another variation on this idea is that a successful man is able to seduce a woman and exercise dominance and control by being able to 'keep them' (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010, p.5), which again points to the centrality of heterosexuality as the norm and ideal in South African society. Other displays of South African manhood include risk-

taking behaviours such as driving fast cars and heavy alcohol consumption, which might align with the theoretical concept of toxic masculinity as it manifests in the South African setting. The research of Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell and Dunkle (2011) points to how at-risk young South African men join gangs and exert violence on women in an attempt to display gendered power. Boys who are in gangs are vulnerable to school dropout, and boys who do not conform to gender stereotypes are vulnerable in the school environment as they often face bullying and ostracisation, which also shows a strong correlation to school dropout (Haberland & Rogow, 2015).

Peacock (2004) conducted a study to look at the work done in a male youth outreach programme formed to curb the tide of the HIV epidemic in order to reduce gender-based violence in South Africa, called Men as Partners. Peacock (2004) and the other researchers involved in the study observed that traditional gender roles put young men and boys under pressure to view health-seeking behaviour as weak, and to equate a range of risky behaviours as manly, including substance abuse, violence, and other delinquent behaviours. There also exists tremendous societal pressure on young men to refuse domestic work, even in their own households (Peacock 2004).

The prevalent issue of gender-based violence has also been linked to gendered differences within the school context, where particularly masculinities have been problematised for the way they perpetuate patterns of violence. To explore this phenomenon, Leach and Humphreys (2007) researched the different forms of violence in schools in developing countries, and noted that while male-teacher-on-female-learner violence might be construed as a cultural practice to "train" young girls into becoming obedient housewives in adulthood, male-teacher-on-male-learner violence can in turn be construed as the older male asserting his dominance on the younger male, as well as a "toughening up process as rite of passage into malehood" (Leach & Humphreys, 2007, p. 56). This problematic relationship where male teachers use violence in ways to "teach gender" or reinforce gender dynamics could be damaging to the identity development of young people as well as to their academic achievement if the school setting becomes a space of violence. In contrast, female teachers verbally scold their male learners as a disciplinary measure, mindful of the possibility that a physical form of punishment might be interpreted as a challenge by their male learners to their perceived masculine superiority (Leach & Humphreys, 2007).

Another form of violence in the school setting of the developing world includes homophobic taunts, which serve to enforce heterosexual boundaries and police nonnormative gender and sexual behaviour (Morrell, 1998). Furthermore, Morrell (2001) explains that male teachers in South Africa have also expressed unhappiness with the democracy-era prohibition of corporal punishment, as it is felt that their authority has come to an end. The link between authoritative masculinity and physical violence or control can be seen as linked to hegemonic and toxic masculinity, and might impact on how male teachers in South Africa see their roles as gender models.

Studies have shown that addressing trauma might also be an important component of healthy sexual and gender development, and might be a factor in addressing forms of violence. Trauma in the early childhood of boys leads to greater difficulty in forming nurturing and emotionally supportive attachment relationships to women (Jewkes et al., 2011). Coupled with adult caregivers and teachers socialising boys from an early age to suppress vulnerable emotions, this could lead to the formation of a toxic masculinity. Jewkes et al. (2011) points out that most serial male rapists offend for the first time during their teenage years, and that many of these young boys have been exposed to trauma in their childhood. It is thus important for gender models to challenge the ideals of men's gender socialisation. In other words, teachers need to recognise the way that adolescence is an important stage of gender development, and need to address ideas of masculinity as linked to sexual entitlement, gender hierarchies, and the legitimacy of punishment and use of violence to assert power over women and other men. The school setting can thus provide an important space for renegotiating gender norms.

Bhana and Pattman (2009) point to problematic constructions of South African heterosexual masculinity. In their research, they point to the belief that men's sexual urges are uncontrollable, and the idea that for many men in the country, multiple sex partners signify sexual prowess and dominance over girls and women. Girls' particular vulnerability to HIV infection points to a greater need for research into the gender and sexuality constructions of South African boys (Bhana & Pattman, 2009). Risk-taking behaviour is strongly predicated upon the ways in which boys construct their masculinity, including associating masculinity with multiple partners, violence, and dominating girls and other boys (Bhana & Pattman, 2009).

Pattman (2006) points out that problematic gender relations characterised by power differentials are often produced in the high school environment. This suggests a need for gender sensitive teacher training and reflexive teaching practices that are mindful of gender dynamics. The research outlined above highlights how significant the school setting can be in addressing gendered identity development, specifically as it applies to the widespread violence, gender-based harm and sexual dominance that are prevalent in South Africa and linked to hegemonic masculinities in the country.

These factors in the South African setting demonstrate how masculinities have been problematised, particularly in formal educational environments but also within broader society. The following section will focus on the South African school setting and ways in which gender is socially constructed within schools.

2.4.2 Schools as sites of gender bias and hegemonic gender roles

Researchers have looked closely at the constructions and dynamics of gender and sexuality within the South African school setting. These studies help to illuminate the role of LO in addressing many of the issues which present around gender expectations and gender norms in the country. The school setting can be an important site where gender differences find expression, as well as a site where gender stereotypes can

either be reinforced or resisted. The role of gender on academic achievement, school experiences and attitudes towards gender and sexual minorities in school settings are outlined in the studies below.

Ngabaza, Shefer and Macleod (2015) looked at how the sexuality component of LO served to reinforce dominant discourses around sexuality and gender. High school learners participated and shared their views in the study, revealing opinions that often served to marginalise gender and sexual minorities. Ngabaza et al. (2016) found that both boys and girls who have same-sex relationships are judged as "offending God's nature" by their peers.

Bayat, Louw, and Rena (2014) looked at socio-economic factors that affect the educational achievement of boys and girls. They found that overcrowded homes lead to a greater risk of sexual abuse for both boys and girls, a widespread social factor that was linked to psychological distress and lower educational achievement. Additionally, South African high school girls face gender-based violence by boys and male teachers (Bhana, 2012a). Sexually abusive male teachers are often an enactment of "provider masculinity" (Bhana, 2012a, p. 355) where they use their higher status, money and other forms of currency to maintain positions of power over learners. These teachers might act as gender models of toxic masculinity for boys in the school setting. While common conceptions of gender violence often overwhelmingly conceive of girls or women as victims of sexual abuse, the findings by Bayat et al. (2014) and Kalichman et al. (2005) show that boys' exposure to sexual abuse should also be considered as an important factor in their psychological and physical wellbeing, as well as a component that impacts on their academic achievement.

It is important to note that teachers might display attitudes that reinforce hegemonic masculinity. In turn, this might impact on how they conceive, interpret, and enact their roles as teachers of high school boys in facilitating the learning of gender concepts in schools. Epstein (1997) studied the practices of teachers within schools and identifies teaching practices that lead to compulsory heterosexuality, "exaggerated femininities", and the reproduction and reinforcement of "macho" versions of masculinity. Epstein (1997) shows that boys who "appear masculine", namely those boys who are tall, have muscular builds or broad shoulders, are less likely to be bullied by both teachers and their fellow learners. The unconscious bias towards idealised masculinity, especially when displayed by teachers, is important in understanding teachers as gender models and how their modelling can reinforce certain gender expectations in learners.

Similarly, Martino and Frank (2006) remark upon the so-called "feminising" impact that the declining number of male teachers has on the gender identities of boys. The assumptions underlying this "feminising" influence include women's capacity to nurture, which seems to be directly at odds with the expectations of hegemonic masculinity in male teachers and learners. Male teachers who the researchers interviewed for this study reflected on their own tendencies to compensate for gendered behaviours that were out of line with dominant expressions of hegemonic masculinities, such as not participating in sports. Skelton (2003) also remarks on this attempt to counteract the "feminisation" effect. This "feminising" factor could be

significant in the way that male teachers deal with gender concepts or teach and model gender to their male learners.

To demonstrate the damaging effects of gender bias in teachers, Bhana, Morrell, Shefer, and Ngabaza (2010) researched the attitudes of teachers towards pregnant teenage girls and to what extent teacher attitudes towards gender affect their treatment of girls, including the support they provide to the young girls like providing homework. Bhana et al. (2010) found that some teachers were harshly critical of girls who were visibly pregnant, yet the boy fathers rarely faced similar treatment. Bhana et al. (2010) explained that there were some teachers capable of demonstrating care and support, and that training and development in terms of gender role stereotypes and traditional expectations of men and women equality could strengthen these supportive capacities.

Similarly, Varga (2003) recounts how one of her high school girl participants accused pregnant high school learners of "giving the school a bad name" in her study exploring adolescent child-bearing in KwaZulu-Natal. Varga (2003) found that gender roles play a significant function in determining adolescent sexual behaviours, and as a result recommended that gender be positioned as a mediating factor in programmes aimed at reducing teenage pregnancy. Researchers explained that programmes aimed at educating high school boys about family and parenthood might arguably lead to stronger male parenting skills and reduce teenage pregnancy (Varga, 2003).

Epstein, Kehily, Mac An Ghaill, and Redman (2001) remark that the prioritisation of sports and resultant funding allocated to sports fields can reflect gendered power relations, which in turn can signify and reify masculinities and femininities. In this instance, school team sports, which can be seen as the socially sanctioned release of aggressive and hostile emotions in boys, are valourised, which reflects another ideal of hegemonic masculinity. The school can be a site where gender differences are reinforced, and this could serve to ostracise those who do not adhere to the requirements of hegemonic gender roles. Morrell et al. (2013, p. 12) speak of "school gender regimes", where "constructions of masculinity [...] create and reproduce conditions of male dominance [...] particularly on grounds of race and sexual orientation, [where] some boys and men are marginalized and subordinated".

Schools thus are complex sites of gender learning and negotiation, with multiple actors reinforcing gender roles and expectations. The following section will look particularly at how the subject LO is meant to address teaching gender according to the CAPS curriculum, and also considers the role of male LO teachers in acting as gender models to boys who are exposed to the gender socialisation discussed above.

2.5 LIFE ORIENTATION AND APPROACHES TO TEACHING GENDER

At the beginning of the democratic dispensation with the fall of apartheid, South Africa redesigned the school curriculum to emphasise values of inclusivity, mutual respect, responsible citizenship, and diversity. The school subject of LO was introduced as part of the Curriculum 2005 framework released by the Department of Education in 1997. Rooth (2005) highlights how LO is particularly concerned with promoting human rights and gender equity. Rooth (2005) explains that the outcomes of the LO curriculum are rooted in South Africa's Constitution, and that the subject is meant to promote "non-discriminatory and democratic behaviour" (p. 18).

As a compulsory subject for Grade 1-12 learners, the conceptualisation and design of LO included a lengthy review process where different actors could offer input (Chrishom, 2005). These actors included the ruling African National Congress, teacher unions, and university-based intellectuals, who became unified in their vision of this subject being a "secular, humanist, rights-based curriculum that recognizes the diversity of South Africans", including on the grounds of sexuality and gender (Chrisholm, 2005, p. 96). One of the overarching aims of LO has been to "promote social justice, human rights, and inclusiveness" (DoBE, 2011b, p. 5) in all primary and secondary schools, in an effort to improve the quality of life for South African learners. Furthermore LO teachers are required to produce "balanced and confident learners", "just and democratic citizens" who are developing "holistically" in order to facilitate "personal well-being" within the context of "gender", "gender roles", "power struggles between the genders" and "femininity" and "masculinity", as outlined in the CAPS FET LO curriculum (DoBE, 2011b). It is important to consider how LO teachers understand their specific roles in gender education, given that it is part of the compulsory curriculum.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), also known as the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (January 2012), is South Africa's working public education curriculum for primary and secondary schools, and lists the following topics to be covered in the Senior Phase (DoBE, 2011b, p. 8):

1. Development of the self in society
2. Health, social and environmental responsibility
3. Constitutional rights and responsibilities
4. Physical education
5. World of work

The topics to be covered in the curriculum in the FET Phase are as follows:

1. Development of the self in society
2. Social and environmental responsibility
3. Democracy and human rights
4. Careers and career choices
5. Study skills
6. Physical education

The LO curriculum in both the Senior Phase (Grade 7-9) and Further Education and Training Phase (Grade 10-12) mention "gender" and "sex" concepts or related concepts and ideas for the purposes of clarifying to the teacher what should be taught in these areas. Each instance of the words "gender" and "sex" have been tabled and listed in an appendix to this research report (Appendix G). A shortened version highlighting the essence of how a teacher is to approach and teach gender concepts is offered below (Table 2.1), followed by a brief analysis of the implications of how gender and sex are framed in the curriculum.

Please note that even though Grade 7 is part of the Senior Phase, as this study focuses on high school LO teachers, and Grade 7 falls is the final primary school year, references to "gender" and "sex" in the Grade 7 LO curriculum will not be included.

Table 2.1: Summary of prescribed CAPS LO Senior and FET Phase content featuring gender concepts

Topic	**Phase**	
	Senior: Grade 8-9	**FET: Grade 10-12**
Development of the self in society	• Gr 8: Social, societal impact on sexuality development, identity formation • Gr 9: Sexual behaviour and physical, reproductive, emotional 'consequences', 'dealing with' sexual behaviour, including abstinence, where to find 'help' &	• Gr 10: Decision-making regarding sexuality, effect of power relations and 'gender roles' on 'health and well-being', recreation and physical activity across genders • Gr 10: Adolescence physical and developmental changes, including 'sexual interest'

	'support'	• Gr 10: Values & strategies to make 'responsible' decisions regarding sexuality • Gr 10: Define power and gender concepts, 'differences' between men and women, stereotypical gender roles and responsibilities, influence of gender inequality on well-being • Gr 11: Risky sexual behaviours, STIs, HIV, teenage pregnancy • Gr 11: Gender roles and the effect on well-being • Gr 11: Power imbalance between 'genders' and effects, including sexual violence, sexual harassment • Gr 12: Lifestyle diseases as a result of gender: STIs, HIV/AIDS, unsafe sexual behaviours
Constitutional rights and responsibilities	• Gr 8: Gender-based violence, including legal aspects and effects on female victims, and 'respect for differences' • Gr 9: Respect for HIV-infected & affected people; celebrating national holidays, including 'Women's Day' • Gr 9: Importance of role models in community emphasised	
Democracy and human		• Gr 10: Redress of gender bias in sport • Gr 10: Diversity, human rights violations

rights		in context of gender • Gr 12: Recreation & physical activity 'across genders' • Gr 10: Prejudice and bias against women, causes thereof, championing human and women's rights

The CAPS curriculum for Grade 8 and 9 learners makes reference to gender-based violence and its victims. It exclusively refers to the "effects on female victims", and within the same block of time allocated to cover these topics, the importance of "role models" are emphasised under the topic of "Development of the self in society", specifically in the context of "unsafe practices" and "individual responsibility". In the FET phase, the sexuality and gender of adolescents seem to be closely linked together, and concepts such as "gender roles" are introduced, as well as "gender inequality", "power relations", and the so-called "power struggle between genders". It seems to be taken for granted that there are only two gender categories to speak of, and the somewhat disorganised and unclear language choices imply that a "struggle" between "genders" is unavoidable. This somewhat uncritical and outdated approach to understanding and teaching gender does not seem to equip male LO teachers to deliver content that is sensitive to contemporary developments regarding gender and gender identity.

Gender is referred to in binary terms that relate to "femininity" and "masculinity". This implies that the biological sex of maleness is expressed as a singular form of masculinity, and the biological sex of femaleness is expressed as a singular form of femininity. It is however important to note that in a country with as many diverse cultures as South Africa, gender differences are nuanced and therefore one cannot presume that there is a monolithic and all-encompassing expression of gender (Connell, 2000). The contemporary understanding of gender as fluid, mutable, and socially constructed (Francis, 2012; Hearn & Morrell, 2012; Lindsey, 2015) does not seem to be reflected in the phrasing of gender and gender-related concepts in the CAPS Senior and FET LO curricula. This limiting view of gender expression might affect the way that gender is taught in the LO classroom in South Africa.

Theron and Dalzell (2006) conducted a study with Grade 9 learners in the Vaal district to determine their ranked preferences in terms of skills and knowledge they would like to attain from LO as a subject. The Grade 9 learners indicated that acquiring coping skills for diversity and prejudice, including facing sexism, ranked among their top learning requirement from LO (Theron & Dalzell, 2006). This suggests that LO learners seek to understand matters relating to gender-based prejudice, which would require a teacher that is able to navigate this topic sensitively.

The role of the LO teacher has been studied by various researchers. Prinsloo (2007) points to the importance of the character of LO teachers, emphasising a positive value system in order for the teaching of LO to be successful, among other characteristics. Magano (2011) looked at the perceptions held by Grade 12 learners of their LO teacher and class atmosphere. The research revealed that learners valued the interactional nature of the classroom context, and enjoyed the opportunity to voice their opinions and to feel heard, especially when the discussion was facilitated by a caring teacher. Furthermore, Pillay (2012) conducted a study to gain insight into the key qualities needed by LO teachers to make a positive impact on the lives of their learners. The study revealed that LO teachers are required to be skilled lay counsellors and career guidance teachers, and, importantly, to promote healthy school environments and diverse cultures. In addition, LO teachers should possess the ability to deal with challenges, including learners living with HIV/AIDS, and should be open, trustworthy, nonjudgmental and value confidentiality (Pillay, 2012).

In light of the earlier framework of the interplay between gender and sexuality, many studies have specifically looked at the role of sexuality education in the LO curriculum, which will provide context for the current study. It is also important to consider the role of sexuality in the context of perceptions held by male LO teachers concerning the teaching of gender, as it has been illustrated above in Table 2.1 that gender and sexuality concepts are often intertwined. Various studies which specifically look at the role of gender and sexuality education in the LO classroom will be outlined below.

Caldwell et al. (2004) points out that one of the intervention areas for LO is to help adolescents fill their leisure time with activities that promote identity, emotional self-regulation, and experimenting in a healthy way with one's sexuality and social life. LO teachers are thus offered sites of intervention in the adolescent's developing sexuality and social life. Potgieter (2012) studied a wide array of LO textbooks in order to determine equal representation of sexual and gender minorities. Despite South Africa's Constitution declaring all persons equal before the law regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation, Potgieter (2012) found that people from gender and sexual minority groups were sparsely represented. This is hardly surprising, as the examination of the LO Senior and FET curricula above demonstrated that there is no set curriculum content mandating teachers to address the realities of these minority groups. This also undermines the DoBE's mission of realising full inclusivity and social justice for all South Africans.

Additionally, Francis (2010) looked critically at the sexuality education component of the LO subject area, and considered whether the sexual education needs of young people were met, whether the school environment was a suitable setting, and how teachers implemented and framed the pedagogy and content of such programmes. Francis (2010) points out that the sexuality education component of LO has largely been relegated to warning youths of the dangers of HIV, and does not include comprehensive discussions of sexual and gender diversity.

Sexuality and gender education might be impacted by the approaches and attitudes of teachers. Rooth (2005) closely explored how teachers and learners view LO. One of the problems the study revealed is that teachers struggle to reconcile their own typically conservative moral and religious ideologies with the liberal Constitution-based principles of inclusivity and social justice. A study by DePalma and Francis (2014) also explored how LO teachers inculcated certain tenets of heteronormativity as they teach sexuality education. This included casting boys as sexually predatory, and treating this as part of normative male sexuality. These attitudes might serve to further reinforce aspects of toxic masculinity and reinforce strict gender roles that cast men and boys as aggressors and girls and women as victims.

In addition, teaching learners about sexual and gender diversity is also affected by the attitudes of teachers. Butler et al. (2003) interviewed South Africans aged 16-21 who identify as gay or lesbian, and these young people recounted times of oppression, harassment inflicted by peers and teachers alike, rejection, and isolation. These adolescents felt that this poor treatment was a result of homophobic attitudes.

While attitudes might play a large role in the teaching of gender and sexuality components of the LO curriculum, Reygan and Francis (2015) explored how certain emotional states also affect teachers when teaching sexual and gender diversity. The research found that participants displayed strongly negative emotions, experienced discomfort, and revealed their own unconscious perpetuation of heterosexism and homophobia when asked about teaching these topics.

While many teachers display emotional and attitudinal barriers to teaching gender and sexuality, particularly in the context of diverse communities (Reygan & Francis, 2015), studies have also questioned which teachers are effectively able to address these topics. Helleve, Flisher, Onya, Mũkoma, and Klepp (2011) interviewed Grade 8 and Grade 9 teachers to explore their views on the desirable characteristics of a LO teacher that teaches HIV/AIDS and sexuality. Participants emphasised the importance of personality characteristics, including openness, flexibility, and the ability to normalise. Teachers also highlighted the role of life experience, such as being married or not, and teachers' comfort level with their own sexuality. The ability to tolerate embarrassment and shame that some invasive questions might cause was also mentioned by the teachers. Others pointed to the role played by the teachers' gender, with one male teacher participant finding it more difficult to discuss sexuality with learners as a male, than the degree of difficulty he suspects his female colleagues experience.

These characteristics are all significant for the current study, and will be used to frame the methodology undertaken in exploring the perceptions of male LO teachers and their views on teaching gender to boys. Additionally, in light of the various challenges highlighted in the review of literature outlined above, the important factor of the teacher's gender will be considered, particularly based on the fact that male teachers might have different experiences in teaching gender in the LO curriculum than female teachers.

2.6 A CRITICAL VIEW OF TEACHING GENDER CONCEPTS WITHIN THE LO CURRICULUM

The previous sections have shown how the school is an important site of gender socialisation, and how it is often a site where hegemonic masculinities and patriarchal power dynamics are reinforced by teachers and learners alike. The LO curriculum is meant to address ideas of gender in ways that promote South African democratic ideals like equality, non-discrimination and the protection of gender and sexual minorities. This final section of the literature review will closely explore challenges experienced by LO teachers in South Africa and how the subjects of gender and sexuality are approached.

The current concepts contained within the CAPS document might already frame teaching gender in a way that is highly problematic. Simmonds (2014) points out that the National Curriculum Statement and the CAPS documents portray gender in a negative light, arguing that phrasing such as “gender inequality”, “sexual abuse”, “sexually transmitted infections”, “sexual harassment”, “rape”, “unhealthy sexual behaviour”, “gender stereotyping”, “sexism” and “gender imbalances” reflects poorly on women and suggests that women are disempowered as a given in the South African context. Additionally, Simmonds (2014) argues that a narrow, binary-based view on gender is constructed in the curriculum documents, with an urgent call to action to prevent “violence against women” positioning only women as “victims” of gender-based violence, and that men are by default necessarily the perpetrators. These constructions in official policy documents appear to ignore sexual and gender minorities, portraying gender instead as innately and biologically either male or female. The framing also might reinforce ideas of hegemonic gender roles which do not allow for the renegotiation of gender in the classroom setting when prescribed topics might be heterosexist and essentialist in terms of gender.

The role of LO teachers is also often one that is unclear, and many teachers are not trained for the challenges of discussing ideas of gender and sexuality. As Francis (2013) points out, it is not uncommon for those who teach LO in schools to have been drawn from a pool of other teaching areas, including religious education, physical education, languages and social sciences. While these teaching areas are reflective of much of the compulsory curriculum content of LO, having these teaching backgrounds is not sufficient for teaching gender concepts set out in the way prescribed by the CAPS curriculum. Using evidence that LO teachers have received little training in this specific learning area, Francis (2013) points out that their lack of preparation, coupled with the controversial nature of gender and sexuality education, leads to conflict for teachers. A discrepancy exists between the importance of teaching gender concepts, bolstered by liberal, secular, and progressive understandings, and teachers’ own values (Ferguson & Roux, 2003), which might be comparatively more conservative or traditional as it pertains to gender concepts.

In a study, Smith and Harrison (2013) noted that teachers and principals tend to construct the sexuality of adolescents as a reflection of the morality of a community. Teachers often negatively judged teenagers who

they viewed to be sexually active, with the result that high school boys and girls were seen to be representative of the lack of moral values of their communities. For this reason, LO gender concepts were often ignored as teachers saw these topics as irrelevant. This observation made by Smith and Harrison (2013) underscores the strong link between gender and sexuality in the perspectives of teachers.

There is however evidence that better-trained teachers were able to display attitudes and behaviours that were more conducive to teaching gender in open, progressive ways. Francis (2012) notes that teachers who are knowledgeable about the Constitution's non-discrimination policies, as well as the social, medical, and legal issues that gender and sexual minorities face, are more likely to question the assumptions that they hold, and are more likely to encourage classroom discussion around gender and sexuality diversity. Furthermore, Chikoko, Gilmour, Harber, and Serf (2011) explains that while controversial subject matter related to topics such as gender are often seen by teachers as necessary topics to address in classrooms, various obstacles prevent this from happening, including a shortage of time, content-heavy curricula, and a lack of training. Making gender a priority in educational contexts, and providing appropriate training for teachers, might serve to address many of the challenges which plague LO teachers in South Africa, and help to curb many of the social issues which are related to toxic masculinities in particular (Ratele, 2015; Shefer & Macleod, 2015).

The issues of representation and diversity within the LO curriculum are also vitally important in addressing challenges to teaching gender in ways that align with Constitutional values. Wilmot (2014) conducted a content analysis study to examine the representations of gender and sexual minorities in Grade 10 LO textbooks, and depictions of homosexuality only accompanied 2% of the illustrations. In these examples, same-sex behaviours were explicitly linked with sexual abuse, and heteronormativity and heterosexuality were valourised in contrast. These were clear and consistent themes in the textbooks to the exclusion of themes like women empowerment and the linking of human rights to sexual and gender minorities. The lack of appropriate materials, thus, could also be a factor in the limiting approach that LO teachers take to teaching gender concepts.

Social factors also impact on classroom practices. Swanepoel (2005) notes that South Africa's gender discourse is still marked by male dominance, which enforces traditional gender expectations and interferes with the teaching of gender concepts that should be rooted in gender equality, as per the CAPS curriculum. Furthermore, Swanepoel (2005) points to the religious and personal background of teachers as influencing their willingness or lack of willingness to teach gender equality and sex education. Swanepoel (2005) also discussed the dissatisfaction of teachers with the limited teacher training and support to teach subject matter that is controversial, causes them discomfort, and might pose professional consequences, such as backlash from the respective schools that employ the teachers. This research suggests that a whole-community approach, where all role players acknowledge the importance of gender and sexuality education, should be undertaken in schools, and that teachers should not be seen as solely responsible for this important aspect

of adolescent education and socialisation. Arendse's (2014) interviews of LO teachers, exploring their ability to implement the "active citizenship" component of the LO curriculum, corroborated this finding, with the teachers interviewed arguing that insufficient teacher training and support leads to poorer teaching outcomes.

Furthermore, Wasserman's (2014) research into the experiencers of LO teachers and their understanding of context in the implementation of the curriculum reveals that some LO teachers expressed wishes for greater "moral" content in the curriculum. A frustration with the "lack of time" required to allow deeper exploration of "deep topics" was also a strong theme with these teachers.

The various studies outlined here show that many teachers are aware of the importance of topics like gender and sexuality, and that they recognise the desire of learners to engage on these topics, but that they might not feel equipped to address them as they lack training, community buy-in and time to do so. However, this should also be considered in light of the conservative outlook around sexuality, gender, and matters of morality that many teachers demonstrate.

2.7 CONCLUSION

The focus of this study is how male LO teachers conceive, interpret, and enact their roles as teachers of male high school boys in learning gender concepts. In this literature review, the researcher has endeavoured to contextualise this study by looking at adolescent identity construction, gender, masculinities, and specifically masculinities within the educational and school environments, as well as LO's curriculum focus on gender and its Constitutional basis of non-discrimination. Relevant theories were discussed in order to offer a framework for understanding these concepts, including social constructionism, Butler's theory of gender performativity, Kohlberg's three stages of gender development, and the social-learning theory of gender-role development.

The literature review placed emphasis on recent developing perspectives that gender identity, including masculinity, exists in multiple forms, and that it can be viewed as more fluid and mutable when looked at through a social constructionist lens. The chapter noted how the enactment of certain types of masculinities can be toxic, whereby women are sexually objectified and men who are considered as falling short of certain ideals are subordinated, violence is praised, and health-seeking behaviour is considered weak. In addition, research showed that the cultural endorsement of such toxic masculinities can be harmful to the mental health of adolescent high school boys. In this life stage, boys grapple with a need to establish a coherent, cohesive self-concept and identity, and their personal identity is in part formed by their interactions with others, including their teachers. Adolescents are better enabled to form a healthy self-concept if they have role models who have successfully navigated the establishment of a healthy self-concept in their own lives. However, certain teachers display attitudes that reinforce toxic hegemonic masculinity. Research has also shown that boys have a need to talk about their gender, identity, and masculinity.

The chapter also outlined how LO has been conceptualised as an opportunity to provide Constitution-based non-discrimination, and fully participative learners who are to be taught the value of social justice and inclusivity, including respecting minority groups such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans*[2] (LGBT+) persons. However, research indicated that numerous teachers found it difficult to teach some of these topics due to socially conservative attitudes, discomfort with the topics, and a lack of teacher training.

The literature revealed that learners are keen to discuss these "uncomfortable" issues related to gender and identity, provided their teacher is flexible, comfortable with their own identity, can normalise certain difficult content, and can tolerate embarrassment. This points to the value that male LO teachers can provide when it comes to the gender and sex education of boy learners, acting as both gender models and as facilitators of thinking around gender and sexuality concepts.

In the following chapter, the theoretical framework developed in this chapter will be used to discuss the research methodology employed in this study in order to explore and answer the research questions set out in Chapter 1.

[2] *The asterisk at the end of the LGBT acronym acknowledges that multiple identities exist within these sexual and gender identities.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research in this study was conducted using qualitative research methods. Research was undertaken from the interpretivist paradigm and the data collection methods of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used. A thematic analysis process was employed to analyse and interpret the data extracted from the interviews. These methodologies and a detailed discussion of the research design and instruments will be presented in this chapter. Ethical considerations and the validity and reliability of the data collection and analyses were considered in order to ensure that the principles of good research design were followed.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) assert that qualitative researchers are observers that seek to make the world visible and understandable through various methods. These methods include interviews, conversations, as well as studying phenomena and the meaning people attach to these phenomena. Creswell (2013, in Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 8) expands on this definition to note that the final research report should include the "voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change".

The researcher's aim was to develop a deeper understanding of how male LO teachers in the Senior and FET phases conceive, interpret, and enact their roles as teachers of high school boys in facilitating the learning of gender and gender-related concepts. An overarching objective was to understand how LO teachers think of gender concepts and the teaching of gender to boys, and to develop an understanding of how that meaning was constructed as well as how it may affect pedagogical approaches in LO. In approaching these research aims, it is necessary to discuss the selected research paradigm and the appropriateness of the research design for working with the type of data that was collected and analysed in this study.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm provides a "model or framework for observation and understanding, which shapes both what we see and how we understand [social life]" (Babbie, 2012, p. 31). By clarifying the research paradigm, the researcher is able to communicate a "basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigation" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). The purpose of this study was to describe, understand, and interpret how male LO teachers understand their role in teaching gender and gender concepts to high school boys. For this reason, the interpretivist paradigm informed the design of the current study. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) describes the purpose of a study based on a basic interpretivist research paradigm as being to "understand, describe, [and] interpret" (p. 12) social phenomena. Furthermore, a basic interpretivist paradigm holds that reality is not singular but plural, and therefore open to multiple interpretations of events or phenomena (Merriam, 2009). It was not the researcher's intention to reflect an objective, singular reality

in this research, but instead to understand how teachers might have varied and multilayered perspectives even when they were observing or interacting with the same phenomena or concepts. Therefore, a basic interpretivist design was well suited for the research in order to understand how the participants experience their realities.

Within this paradigm, the researcher acknowledges that subjectivity is inherent to a person's meaning-making process and that objectivity is not the goal (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). A researcher operating in the interpretivist paradigm does not believe that knowledge can be "found" or "discovered"; rather, knowledge is created actively between the participants and their interactions with the world around them. The researcher is also a participant in this knowledge creation, making meaning of their own world and interpreting the meaning constructed by participants. For this reason, the researcher should be thoughtful and interrogative of their own biases and make them explicitly known (Krauss, 2005). This paradigm thus stresses the importance of the researcher's reflexivity, which was outlined in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

Corbetta (2003) explains that what can be known in the world is the product of the meaning attached to phenomena by the meaning maker. Gender is not a global, stable construct that is free from culture, but rather a complex, layered construct that is informed by the individual's idiosyncratic meaning making that develops from their own life experiences and perceptions (Bank, Delamont, & Marshall, 2007). This study explored the ways male LO teachers understand gender and gender concepts as listed in the CAPS LO Senior and FET curriculum, as well as how the meaning-making by the teachers might affect the way they fulfill the requirement to teach gender concepts in LO. This study also explored their understandings of the roles they may play as gender models to adolescent boys. The interpretivist paradigm was thus appropriate to extract and analyse the type of qualitative data that the study investigated, and allowed for the complexity and subjectivity of gender to be respected through acknowledging that participants create their own meanings around these concepts.

3.3 ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

3.3.1 Ontology: Relativism

The concept of "ontology" in social science research is concerned with the ideas of which concepts, objects, and entities exist, how they exist in the world, and what the nature of reality is (Jupp, 2006). Questions that guide an exploration of ontology could include the following: "What is there to know?" (Willig, 2008); "What are 'things'?"; "What can we know to be real?"; and, "How can we categorise these 'things', objects, or entities?" By way of example, basic feminist theory would consider patriarchal social relations and the detrimental effects on primarily girls and women as social structures that do exist, and therefore this would be a core ontological assumption in many feminist approaches (Jupp, 2006).

Different ontological frameworks exist, and Willig (2008) broadly categorises ontologies into "realist" ontologies and "relativist" ontologies. While realists argue that the world consists of predictable structures that are underpinned by cause-and-effect relationships observable in a reality "out there", relativists reject this view, and perceive the world to be less bound by predictable rules and laws. Instead, relativists observe a plurality of interpretations to perceive and explain social realities.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher adopted the ontological position of relativism, as the research is concerned with how male LO teachers conceive, interpret, and enact their role as teachers of high school boys in facilitating the learning of gender concepts. It is not the researcher's belief that there exists a singular, objective, uncontested reality shared by all participants. Rather, the researcher accepts the position that the participants produce frameworks for understanding based on their individual experiences, learning, background, and other tools for understanding and perceiving their world, and one set of frameworks does not necessarily enjoy a particular superiority or greater validity than those produced by others.

3.3.2 Epistemology: Interpretive Orientation and Social Constructionism

While ontology is concerned with questions surrounding the nature of reality and which entities can be known to exist, epistemology centres around the following questions: "What is known? What is the known? What is knowledge?" (Given, 2008, p. 264) and "Whose knowledge?". To rephrase, epistemology is concerned with what it is that constitutes knowledge and understanding, and what the nature of this knowledge is. Epistemology thus refers to a foundational philosophical set of assumptions of the nature of knowledge, the manner in which knowledge comes into being, and how we "come to know things to be true or real" (Barker, Pistrang, & Elliott, 2016). The researcher's epistemological position also reveals their relationship with what they consider to be real and true (Terre Blanche et al., 2006), as it is dependent on their own beliefs about how knowledge is theorised and constructed (Coolican, 2014). A researcher's epistemological assumptions inform their research methods and their own production of knowledge (Willig, 2008).

Two broad epistemological orientations exist. A positivist epistemological orientation assumes that knowledge exists "out there", and that it is "observable, stable, and measurable" (Merriam, 2009, p. 8). In contrast, an interpretive orientation considers reality to be the product of social actors interacting with their social environments and constructing realities as a consequence. This epistemology holds that reality is plural, and that reality is not directly observable (Jupp, 2006). Reality, therefore, is constructed and not found "out there".

Social constructionism, a branch of interpretive epistemology, informed the epistemological orientation of this study. Three assumptions underlying social constructionism can be linked to this research, namely: people hold certain taken-for-granted assumptions about themselves, others, and their world; one's worldview is culture- and time-specific; and people construct, deconstruct, and discard knowledges through

ongoing interactions with their social worlds. This epistemological orientation also allowed for this study to pay particular attention to the link between teachers' understandings of gender concepts and the ways they report teaching these concepts in the LO classrooms, as meaning and action are intimately linked.

In addition, this orientation links to post-structuralist ontological and epistemological assumptions held by Butler in her writings on gender (1993, as cited in Salih, 2002), where phenomena that are being studied are deconstructed, problematised and questioned (Merriam, 2009). Butler (1993, as cited in Salih, 2002) claims that gender is not predetermined through any "natural order"; but rather that it is performative in the sense that gender consists of acts which are repeatedly performed, and these acts then congeal into a general understanding of what women are and what men are. In this sense, gender only comes into being through actions and performativity, and it can only be known and reproduced through mimicking gender models (Butler, 1993, as cited in Salih, 2002). This is an important framework for this study which highlights the role of male LO teachers as gender models or as teachers of gender, emphasising that gender is not something that is essentialistic in nature, but rather a set of ideas that are performed and repeatedly enacted over the course of time.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.4.1 Methodology: Qualitative research method

It is imperative that research be ethical, rigorous and credible (Merriam, 2009). For this reason, the processes of data collection and data analysis should be clear and in line with the researcher's selected research paradigm.

Quantitative research methods are focused on collecting data based on observable phenomena in order to quantify, classify and categorise data (Creswell, 2017 & Creswell). In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research seeks to understand human experiences and how meaning is socially constructed at a certain time and place, and within a certain society. A qualitative approach to research is focused on obtaining data that can be decoded, transcribed, translated, or in some way captured with the purpose of deriving meaning from in-depth analysis (Dey, 1993). This contrasts with investigating the frequency of occurrence of a particular phenomenon, as is common in quantitative studies (Merriam, 2015). According to Dey (1993), qualitative analysis is valuable as it yields important and thorough information about participants. For this study, qualitative research methods can yield valuable information about the participants' views on gender and gender concepts, as these methods render systems of meaning as ultimately subjective and personal (Dey, 1993).

Furthermore, a basic interpretive design is concerned with experience, interpretation and the meaning of phenomena (Henning, 2004) and therefore lends itself to qualitative research. This construction of meaning is a collaborative process, as the researcher's understanding of the participants' points of view is important.

The researcher remains the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2015), and should acknowledge this role and its inherent limitations. This study is primarily concerned with the meaning that male LO teachers attribute to gender and gender related concepts and their teaching thereof. As the researcher, I endeavoured to uncover this meaning whilst remaining cognisant of my own positionality during the collection and analysis of the data.

Merriam (2015) points to significant advantages of qualitative research, which include the following: the framework enables the researcher to be "immediately responsive and adaptive" (p. 16); the researcher is able to understand the participants both verbally and nonverbally; and the researcher can process, clarify, summarise, and check the accuracy of their interpretation of the interview immediately (Merriam, 2015).

Disadvantages include shortcomings and biases held by the researcher, consciously or unconsciously. Instead of denying these biases, Merriam (2015) advises the researcher to clarify and foreground these biases in relation to the theoretical framework, research aims, and research interest, and furthermore to be transparent in terms of how these biases may shape the collection and analysis of data. The researcher labored to remain aware of how his own gender and sexual identity, as well as his past work in the field of transformation activism, may impact his own perceptions of the data collection and analysis process. He endeavoured to address these possible biases by remaining in open and honest consultation with his supervisors, who helped him to identify strands of thought that might be subjectively informed by his own identity and activist past,

Additionally, the labour-intensive process of collecting and analysing qualitative data often prevents the researcher from obtaining a wide sample (Merriam, 2015). This research study stated at the outset that the data collected will only yield an analysis that applies to the sample itself, and is not necessarily suited for broad generalisation.

Qualitative research adopts an *inductive* approach to analysis, which means that the data collected are organised into themes, categories, concepts, and hypotheses. These organising frames allow the researcher to have the option of devising their own theory to offer an explanatory framework for phenomena that are not widely studied (Merriam, 2015), or to find commonalities over a range of datasets or even various research projects. The qualitative methods adopted for data collection were questionnaires and interviews, and data were analysed through a thematic analysis process. These qualitative research methods will be discussed in the sections that follow.

3.4.2 Data collection: Questionnaire

Individual self-administered questionnaires and in-depth individual interviews were selected as data collection techniques. Jupp (2006) defines a questionnaire as "a set of carefully designed questions given in exactly the same form to a group of people in order to collect data about some topic(s) in which the researcher is interested" (p. 252). Jupp (2006) continues to point out that a questionnaire alone cannot fully

capture the essence of social phenomena and is therefore incomplete if used as the sole data collection method in qualitative studies. In this research study, however, the questionnaires were used as a preliminary data collection tool to help frame the individualised interviews of the respective participants, which added depth and dimension to the data collected and addressed this disadvantage of questionnaires.

The demographic section of the questionnaire included seven basic questions (see Appendix E). The second section in the questionnaire contained ten questions that were framed in an open-ended manner (see Appendix E), which offered several advantages. The advantages of open-ended questions include that participants are allowed time for reflection, and they are allowed to voice their thoughts and feelings in their own chosen terms (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Additionally, no limits are set in the way they can answer questions, in contrast to response categories or Likert scales which are set in advance (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The open-ended questions, freedom of expression, and representation of one's individual perspectives and worldviews are hallmarks of the qualitative and basic interpretivist research designs.

It is however important that the researcher be mindful of the level of intrusion that questionnaires may impose upon participants, in terms of their privacy being invaded, the time commitment involved, and the level of threat and sensitivity the questions may pose (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). To account for these potential weaknesses, participants were given both a hard copy and an electronic copy of the questionnaires, and offered two weeks to complete the questionnaires and send them back to the researcher, electronically or in hard copy, as per their preference. Additionally, the electronic copy allowed for no space constraints, as participants could share as much as they liked per question, and the process allowed for ample time for participants to provide their responses.

3.4.3 Data collection: Interviews

Interviews consist of gathering data in the form of the interviewer asking a series of questions of the interviewee, who provides answers (Jupp, 2006). Interviews are conducted in a back-and-forth manner unlike questionnaires which are required to be completed then returned. Interviews can be conducted either face-to-face or across various forms of media such as telephone, video conferencing or email. According to Patton (2002), this data collection method provides the interviewer with an opportunity to explore the rich, inner world of the interviewees, thereby respecting the core aim of understanding individual human research typically associated with qualitative research (Creswell, 2017). Interviews offer the distinct advantage of enabling the researcher to follow up on previous responses provided by participants (Jupp, 2006); in this case, questions could be framed around the responses in questionnaires.

The direct personal contact afforded by interviews allows for the researcher and the research participants to explore the research topic in real time, and this flexibility allows the participant to flesh out their perspectives, which can be aided by the researcher's use of open-ended questions (Patton, 2002). Recurring

themes that emerged from the questionnaires in the previous step of the research process supplemented the design of the interview schedule in the current study.

For the purposes of this study, a face-to-face, semi-structured interview method was selected (see Appendix F). This gave the researcher the chance to develop rapport with participants and to observe how participants reacted to questions in terms of body language, tone of voice and other non-verbal responses. These non-verbal elements were captured by the researcher in field notes following the interviews, which were consulted during the data analysis stage, therefore forming part of the data gathered. The research setting and ethical considerations of this data collection method will be explored later in this chapter.

3.4.3.1 Semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews constitute a type of interview methodology that blends structured and unstructured interviews (Merriam, 2015). Questions were guided by certain pre-identified issues to be explored in order to address the specific research questions, although not necessarily in a predetermined, fixed sequence. Merriam (2015) comments that this format "allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (p. 111). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) caution the interviewer against excessive flexibility in the sequence and wording of the semi-structured interview, as this might reduce the degree of comparability between the responses. In an attempt to avoid this potential weakness, the researcher was mindful to steer the conversation to the research topic at hand in order to cover the same basic questions of the overarching schedule designed for this study. In addition, the methodology allowed the space for follow-up questions in order to explore unexpected lines of discussion or to ask for clarity, as well as allowing participants to provide information that they felt was relevant and to jointly lead the direction of discussion at times.

Interviews were recorded by means of a digital voice recorder, and thereafter transcribed verbatim by the researcher into the word processing software Microsoft Word. The quality of the recordings was maintained through the high-quality digital voice recorder employed and through positioning the device close to the participants throughout the interview process to accurately capture the responses, but if any sound was still inaudible in the final recordings, these were marked "(inaudible)" in the transcript.

Transcripts were then analysed using thematic analysis, and field notes produced throughout the interview process were consulted in order to supplement the analyses derived from transcripts. The thematic analysis approach is outlined in the following section.

3.4.4 Data analysis: Thematic analysis

Given (2008, p. 463) offers the following definition of 'thematic analysis':

> Themes express meaningful patterns, stances of the participants, or concerns. Themes may be qualitatively distinct from one another. A theme is kept close to the text, and textual examples of the theme are required to identify another portion of text exemplifying the same theme.

From the above, it is clear that thematic analysis is primarily concerned with identifying and describing patterns across data sets (Given, 2008). Braun and Clarke (2006) consider thematic analysis to be an essential method of qualitative data analysis. This methodology is compatible with a constructivist paradigm in psychological research that can yield "rich and detailed, yet complex data" (p. 78). However, it is important to be clear about the assumptions that inform the research. Braun and Clarke (2006) caution novice researchers to ground their thematic analyses in their theoretical frameworks in order to make their theoretical assumptions explicit and their analyses transparent. For the purposes of this study, a theme is defined as "something important about the data in relation to the research question(s), and [that] presents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.82).

Braun and Clarke (2006) outline a six-step process to conduct thematic analysis, including familiarising oneself with the data (in this case comprised of the completed questionnaires and transcripts of the individual interviews), generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finally producing the research report or thesis. Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) succinctly explain that a code is "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 3). In this study, the researcher considers coding to be first and foremost an act of interpretation that ultimately rests on the researcher's understanding of the data, pointing to the researcher's subjectivity that is inherently built into this research methodology.

Throughout a lengthy process of developing, highlighting, discarding, and managing generated codes, categories and ideas, a final set of themes are generated (Miles et al., 2014). The researcher reflects on a piece of data in order to subjectively tease out its essential, core meaning, and proceeds to label this unit of meaning, which will, through an iterative and multi-cycle process, yield categories that ultimately comprise the themes. A theme, therefore, is a move from the particular code to the general patterns between codes, and themes organise ideas that recur into coherent wholes that offer unified meanings of perceptions and experiences. The thematic analysis process affords the researcher the opportunity to find patterns across the various data sets collected. This adds to the richness of the analysis, and allows for meaningful interpretations and conclusions to be drawn in ways that bring data sets into conversation with one another.

The following section of this chapter will report how participants were selected and expand on the research setting and its importance in ensuring that the data gathered are consistent, valid and reliable.

3.5 RESEARCH SETTING AND PARTICIPANT SELECTION

3.5.1 Research setting

Babbie (2012) remarks that the research setting, or the location of the interview, is an important consideration as it might influence the conduct of the participant, the researcher, or both. The research was challenged by the fact that the prospective research participants frequently mentioned how frenzied, unpredictable, and demanding their schedules as teachers were. For this reason, every effort was made to meet the participants for the interviews in a way that was convenient for them, both in terms of time and location, while simultaneously being mindful not to compromise the privacy and confidentiality of the interviews.

Interviews were conducted at the school sites during teachers' non-teaching periods or immediately after their school day came to an end. The one participant who was no longer teaching was interviewed in a suitably private setting convenient to them. Despite the researcher's efforts to ensure that interviews continued uninterrupted from beginning to end, there were rare interruptions of the school-based interviews. One staff member arranged for the staff room to be unoccupied during the scheduled interview; however, at one stage, a colleague entered the staff room unannounced. Two teachers informed the researcher that they had to attend short meetings after the interviews had commenced, without prior warning, and on another occasion, a learner knocked on the classroom door requiring the teacher's assistance. The researcher was careful to pause the recording during these rare instances to preserve the privacy and confidentiality of both the participants and the other parties involved. The possibility of these interruptions was taken into account by the researcher, but the convenience to the participants was treated as paramount in the decision to conduct interviews at schools, so as to ensure their participation despite their busy schedules.

3.5.2 Participant selection method

Non-probability sampling is frequently used in qualitative research designs, and purposive sampling is one such technique (Babbie, 2012). Purposive sampling refers to the researcher purposefully basing their research sample on pre-selected criteria as they believe that these criteria will yield data that are most useful and representative for the purposes of their study (Babbie, 2012).

Convenient sampling refers to a method of sampling that is convenient for the researcher to use due to the proximity and accessibility of participants (Babbie, 2012). The criteria for recruiting were based on the following: participants must have been working as, or previously-employed as, male LO teachers following the CAPS curriculum at private and/ or public high schools, where they teach or had taught any or all of Grade 8-12 boys. This would ensure that the participants had taught a minimum of one full year of LO in the Senior or FET phase to high school boys. The researcher approached a range of public and private high

schools in the Johannesburg and greater Johannesburg areas; however, only public high schools in the Johannesburg North District and the Johannesburg Central District volunteered their participation.

The limited scope of this study only allowed for a small subset of six LO teachers to be studied. While the small number of participants limited the generalisability of the study, this narrow focus ensured that meaningful and detailed data could be extracted, which will hopefully provide a useful reference point for future research on these topics.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS AND INSTRUMENTS

Various data collection techniques that serve various research purposes are employed when conducting qualitative research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). As discussed earlier in this chapter, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data in this study. The data collection process and instruments will be described in detail below.

3.6.1 Data collection process

The data collection process was conducted as follows: in line with the ethical approval requirements, the researcher contacted principals from public and private high schools that were situated conveniently for easy access, to request permission to recruit participants from the staff at their respective schools. After the researcher received the permission letters from the high school principals, permission from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) was obtained.

Following approval from the Departmental Ethics Screening Committee, the Research Ethics Committee (Appendix B), the respective high school principals (Appendix C), and the Gauteng Department of Education (Appendix A), the researcher invited the male LO teachers among the staff at each respective school to attend a brief meeting during breaktime or immediately after the end of the school day, where the proposed study and process was explained to them in person, and where their voluntary participation was requested. Participants were handed a hard copy of both the consent form (Appendix D) and a hard copy of the questionnaire (Appendix E). The principals and secretaries were informed about the proposed meetings and their cooperation was obtained in organising these meetings. During the meeting, the researcher obtained the email addresses of the potential participants in person and emailed the participants the consent form and the questionnaire. The researcher requested that the consent form and questionnaire be emailed back to them at their earliest convenience. Some participants, however, elected to provide the researcher with the signed consent form and questionnaire in person upon the second meeting. Anonymity of participants and confidentiality were enhanced as final consent was obtained directly from individual participants.

The open-ended questions section of the questionnaire allowed for participants to explore and present their own perspectives (Payne & Payne, 2004). This is a data gathering method that is in line with the

interpretivist research paradigm. Finally, the researcher scheduled individual meetings with the research participants and conducted individual interviews of approximately 45-60 minutes each, based on a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix F).

3.6.2 Data collection instruments

As discussed above, the data collection instruments consisted of self-administered questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and a research journal containing field notes. The questionnaires provided preliminary data for analysis and were administered prior to the in-person interviews, to help guide the semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire and interview schedule are attached to this study as Appendix E and Appendix F respectively.

3.6.3 Data analysis

As described above, the method of data analysis was a thematic analysis of data obtained through both the questionnaires and the interview transcripts. Additionally, field notes were consulted in order to supplement these analyses with observations that were relevant to the meaning-making processes of participants, such as observations of body language and tone of voice during interviews, the school environment and the researcher's reflexivity on the research process.

3.7 QUALITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE DATA

In order to ensure the quality and trustworthiness of the collection and analysis of data, which is considered an ethical duty of a researcher and enhances the scientific rigour of the study, a researcher is obliged to collect data in a consistent and transparent manner (Babbie, 2012).

The researcher strove to meet impeccable standards of trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba's concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (1985, as cited in Babbie, 2012) offer a framework to guide the researcher into meeting these standards of trustworthiness. A discussion of the researcher's strategies to achieve these standards will be presented below.

3.7.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the "methodological procedures and sources used to establish a high degree of harmony between the participants' expressions and the researcher's interpretations of them" (Given, 2008, p. 138). A research study with a sufficient degree of credibility ensures that appropriate participants and data collection methodology were selected to address the given topic and research questions, and that participants felt comfortable enough to provide open, honest, and complete responses.

Strategies to achieve credibility included building rapport with participants to facilitate a comfortable atmosphere conducive to open and honest responses, conducting the interviews in a private setting to secure confidentiality, and using the words of participants as much as possible in the findings of this thesis. In

addition, the researcher endeavoured to look at the data from multiple perspectives to gain a holistic, integrated perspective, and the researcher used multiple sources of data (Given, 2008).

3.7.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to research findings and conclusions that can be transferred to broader contexts or be used to inform future research. The researcher can increase transferability by selecting participants that are closely matched to the context being studied, and considering the "contextual boundaries" of the findings (Given, 2008, p. 886). The participants are members of the population group being studied: namely, male LO teachers with a minimum of one year of teaching LO from the CAPS curriculum to high school boys. The contexts of the participants are described in Chapter 4 to help readers determine if the findings are transferable to their contexts. The findings may not be directly transferable, but the researcher strove to provide thick descriptions in order to inform further study of the research topic and help the reader determine the degree of transferability of the research process to their own context.

3.7.3 Dependability

Dependability of the data is contingent on the researcher's ability to avoid errors in conceptualising the study, collecting, analysing, and interpreting data, and reporting results. Williams (2011, as cited in Babbie, 2012) advocates for the use of an audit trail that consists of reflective notes and commentary on the raw data to enable other researchers to replicate the study and to strengthen the dependability of the data. Various sections of the interview transcripts are attached as Appendix I and Appendix J, which demonstrated how data were analysed thematically. This aids the dependability of the researchers as readers will be able to see the links that the researcher has drawn between raw data and the findings. A thorough description of the research methodology has also been presented in this chapter in order to enable future researchers to replicate the study.

3.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the process by which the researcher ensures that their interpretations of the participants' constructions are in line with the participants' perspectives and that the research findings are grounded in the subjective understandings of the research participants (Given, 2008). Strategies that have been used to reduce bias include ongoing self-reflection and field notes collected in a research journal, data verification strategies such as data triangulation, consultation with supervisors about the data analysis, and the provision of data analysis examples in this thesis. Data have been triangulated by comparing data from questionnaires, interview transcripts and field notes. These data sets were also closely compared to similar studies and relevant literature as outlined in Chapter 2 of this thesis in order to confirm the findings.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A researcher follows a clear set of ethical guidelines when conducting research of any type to produce trustworthy results, but also to avoid harming research participants, especially when humans are involved (Shenton, 2004; Barker et al., 2016). Allan (2009) discusses strict ethical principles that a researcher should adhere to, including autonomy, respect for the dignity of people, non-maleficence, beneficence, justice and confidentiality and the right to privacy. These considerations will be addressed in the following sections of this chapter in order to outline how the current study adheres to ethical requirements of good qualitative research.

3.8.1 Autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons

In order to meet these standards, the researcher endeavoured to ensure that all participants were treated with dignity and respect, and that their privacy and anonymity were honoured (Merriam, 2009). Participants were told in person that they were free to refuse to answer specific questions during any part of the research process, and that they could end the individual interviews at any point, for any reason with no consequences.

3.8.2 Non-maleficence and beneficence

Allan's principle of non-maleficence (2009), or causing no harm to participants, is an important ethical consideration in research involving human participants. A possibility existed that participating in this study may have caused the participants to experience discomfort and that they may have required debriefing. The researcher ascertained that some of the schools that employ the teachers have access to counselling services at their schools, and the researcher offered a reminder of such services to the relevant research participants. Details of free counseling services at Lifeline were made available on all consent forms for participants, even those who have access to counselling services at their schools.

3.8.3 Confidentiality and the right to privacy

Participation of male LO teachers had been sought and potential participants were voluntarily contracted through an individual informed consent form. The consent form (see Appendix C) stipulates the nature and purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, that confidentiality was to be upheld, and that participants could withdraw from the interviews and research process at any time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

In order to maintain anonymity of participants, the schools at which they had worked as well as the participants themselves were assigned pseudonyms which will be referred to during the presentation of findings. The interviews took place in private classrooms and staff rooms after school hours at the respective schools. The one participant who was not currently teaching was interviewed in a suitably private setting convenient to them. The researcher attempted to prevent any interruptions by requesting the participant to book a private room, staff room, or classroom that will not be interrupted. However, due to the busy and dynamic environment of a high school setting, the interview process was at times interrupted by learners or

teachers. During these interruptions, the interview recording was paused and resumed as soon as the interruption ceased.

The interviews were audio recorded on a digital voice recorder and transcribed verbatim on the researcher's personal computer, and these transcriptions are protected by passwords and two-factor authentication. Only the principal researcher has the password to access these files. The transcriptions and voice recordings will be kept in a securely locked filing cabinet in the researcher's private office for a period of five years after which they will be destroyed. The names of the participating teachers and schools have been deleted from all transcripts, and were not used in this thesis nor will it be used in any other publication. The data were shared only with the two supervisors of this study.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the research paradigm, research design, data collection process, and the process of ensuring the quality and trustworthiness of the data and the research findings. Additionally, the chapter outlined the ethical considerations that were taken into account to ensure trustworthy results, which demonstrated that every precaution was taken by the researcher to avoid harming any of the participants.

In summary, the research was guided by a basic interpretivist research paradigm and qualitative research methods were used to collect and analyse data. Participants were recruited by contacting schools in the Johannesburg North District and the Johannesburg Central District, and criteria for selection included having taught LO to high school boys according to the CAPS curriculum for a minimum of one year. Only one participant deviated slightly from the profile as he was not currently employed as a teacher, but had taught LO to high school boys in the past. The data collection methods comprised of questionnaires and six individual interviews that followed a semi-structured interview schedule. The interviews were subsequently transcribed verbatim and the data underwent an iterative process of coding. Thematic analysis constituted the method of data analysis. The findings of the research will be presented and discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of the thematic analysis to answer the identified research questions discussed in Chapter 1. These questions are: How do male LO teachers develop their understandings of gender, how is this notion of gender tied to the development of masculinity, and how do participant teachers teach gender and gender concepts to high school boys? In more succinct terms, the overarching research question seeks to understand how male LO teachers in the Senior and FET phases conceive, interpret, and enact their roles as educators of adolescent boys in facilitating the learning of gender and gender concepts, as referred to in the CAPS curriculum. Discussions of the themes and subthemes are blended with the reporting of the findings in this chapter.

The study included six participants who are referred to in the data analysis by pseudonyms. All but one of the participants were employed at schools in Johannesburg at the time of data collection, as the sixth participant was not teaching at the time but had previously taught LO to high school boys. A brief description of each participant is given below to provide context. The following information emerged from the demographic questions in the questionnaires or during the course of the interviews, and was volunteered by the participants.

The first participant, Paul, is in his twenties. He accumulated one year of teaching experience, and is currently practicing as a clinical psychologist. Paul worked at a co-ed high school and expressed in his interview that he faced a "toxic" school environment where he felt surveilled and restricted in terms of what he could teach in his LO lessons, with specific regard to sexuality and gender. Paul identifies as gay, which he experienced as a factor in how he was treated at his school, and which appeared to have a significant influence on his understanding and teaching of gender concepts.

The second participant, Trevor, is in his forties. He has taught LO to high school boys and girls for three years, and is currently teaching at a co-ed high school. Trevor is married and has indicated that he is a father of girls. Trevor is strongly influenced by his Christian faith and says that his previous work with youth in his church helps him to have more empathy with his learners.

The third participant, Benjamin, is in his forties. He has taught LO for five years at a high school, and is currently teaching at a co-ed high school. Benjamin expressed being guided by his Christian faith, and explained that he worked as a pastor for many years before starting his teaching career. He sees teaching as a "calling".

The fourth participant, Dumisane, is in his twenties, and he has taught LO to high school boys and girls for four years. He is currently teaching at a co-ed high school. Dumisane identifies as gay, and explains that he

often considers himself to be "genderless" in his teaching approach in order to spark critical thinking in his learners and to avoid misrepresenting men or women.

The fifth participant, Richard, is in his twenties, and he has taught LO for 1 ½ years. He is currently teaching at a co-ed high school. Richard explained that he was trained in physical education, and that LO was not his primary subject specialisation.

Finally, the sixth participant, Francois, is in his twenties. He has taught LO to high school boys and girls for 2 years, and is currently teaching at a co-ed high school. Francois noted his same-sex sexuality in the interview, but often explained that he resists labels for gender and sexuality and feels them unnecessary.

Five broad themes were generated in the data coding and analysis. Through a process of repeated reentry into and coding of the raw data, each of these five themes were assigned different codes which were placed next to relevant data points in a spreadsheet. Each theme was colour-coded in order to easily cross-reference data points and to compare and contrast responses related to each theme, as well as to continuously cross-reference generated patterns and themes with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The following list identifies each broad theme, as well as providing the code assigned to each theme in brackets, and listing the colour which was used to code the data. Refer to Appendix H for a graphical presentation of the generated themes and subthemes, and to Appendix I for a clear outline of the themes, concepts and codes generated from the data:

> Theme 1- Teachers grappling with the nature of gender (Shortened to *Gender Concepts*, or GC, and coded in yellow)
>
> Theme 2- Teachers' personal values: Conflicts and synergies in teaching gender (Shortened to Personal Values, or PV, and coded in blue)
>
> Theme 3- Empathy and caring in teaching gender (Shortened to *Empathy* & Caring, or EC, and coded in green)
>
> Theme 4- Being a male LO teacher: Expectations and alienation (Shortened to Male Teacher, or MT, and coded in orange)
>
> Theme 5- Getting in trouble and facing boundaries to teaching (Shortened to Trouble & Boundaries, or TB, and coded in pink)

These five themes are explored separately in this chapter in order to unpack the synergies and contrasts in the ways that participants voiced their ideas. The first theme discussed below is how gender concepts are understood by participants, as this theme lays the foundation for the teaching of gender and is informative of how male teachers understand their roles as gender models to male learners. By tracing the ways that participants understood gender themselves, including their understandings of what gender is, what gender

roles are and how many genders there are, the data suggested that there were important parallels between the understandings of gender and how these teachers approached teaching gender in the classroom.

4.2. THEME 1 - TEACHERS GRAPPLING WITH THE NATURE OF GENDER (GC)

The first theme generated from the data revealed complex, contradictory and shifting perspectives of gender concepts held by participants. Participants presented various ideas of what gender is and how it impacts on the lives of learners, particularly boys. The different perspectives situated gender in relation to biological sex and sexuality, and indicated how participants grappled with the way gender is linked to performativity and choice. Participants also suggested that gender was linked to particular values such as strength and respect. Understanding how the participants view gender illuminates how they see themselves as gender models to boys and provides context to how the teachers teach gender concepts in the classroom.

The different subthemes which were generated and which will be explored in the following section are: gender is fixed; gender is linked to sexuality; masculinity is often pathologised and boys/men are excluded socially and educationally in gender conversations; gender is reinforced through performative acts; gender and sexuality are "choices"; and finally, gender is linked to character, respect, values and lifelong growth and development.

4.2.1. Biological gender, social gender, and sexuality

While many participants showed an awareness of the difference between gender and biological sex, they also often explained that the distinction was not always clear in social settings. There was often a bias in conceptions of gender to see the distinction between "masculine" and "feminine" as fixed. Paul pointed out that the research questions for this study might have reproduced this bias, and challenged the question of how male students should be taught gender concepts:

> *Even in relation to that question, that question comes with a particular bias that exists. [...] it's the way we see man and woman. So I do believe there's something restrictive about it, so…. the idea of gender, particularly in relation to the way it's taught is very black and white. It's very male and female.* (Paul, line 20)

Paul criticised the teaching of gender as conducted in binary, absolutist terms, devoid of nuance and flexibility. He expressed discomfort with how instructions are presented to learners, suggesting a conflict with his own values.

Later, the participant added that ideas of gender binaries and the fixed nature of maleness and femaleness *"comes from somewhere"* (Paul, line 36). He appears to imply that there is inherent essentialism in gender. He also implies that his own way of viewing gender is different from the views of others, and noted that he

intends to speak about how *"other [LO] teachers"* (Paul, line 36) view gender. Therefore, he differentiated himself in some way from the majority of LO teachers and sought to define a more flexible understanding of gender than is generally used in the LO classroom. Paul suggests that the LO curriculum and the views of teachers might be quite conservative in relation to gender, and that there is a need to challenge this.

This perspective was echoed by Dumisane, who is also a self-identified gay teacher like Paul. Dumisane explained that he challenges gender binaries in his teaching: *"I always take the standpoint of I'm a genderless person. So I don't have to make it about, so I'm for women and for men"* (Dumisane, line 34). It appears that in an effort to be inclusive and comprehensive in teaching gender concepts, Dumisane considered it necessary to present the identity of "genderless". Dumisane suggests that one's fixture in the world as either a man or a woman appears to exert unwanted influence on the teacher's perceived ability to teach gender concepts. This supports Paul's contention that gender is presented as binary and fixed in the classroom and that this is in need of amendment.

However, despite these two teachers seeking to collapse the boundaries of gender and to emphasise gender inclusive approaches, there were also more rigid concepts of gender expressed. Richard made a strong link between gendered behaviour and biological sex. When Richard was asked to explain why he noted that boys tend to get in trouble more in the classroom, he explained: *"I think that the way they are programmed, they're just more... energetic and boisterous, all over the place [...] the way that genetics are, they generally are [more energetic]"* (Richard, line 124). Amongst the various participants, there would be efforts to resist the delineating power of gender and the rigid differentiation of boys and girls; however, this effort was at times contrasted with statements such as the one provided by Richard above.

Many participants seemed uncertain of how to define gender, and their statements were often contradictory and unclear, including whether gender should be a factor in educational or social settings at all. This might indicate a reluctance of these male LO teachers to engage directly with gender. It might also suggest that these teachers lack clarity in understanding gender as related to their roles as LO teachers, even when the LO curriculum specifically calls for education around gender concepts.

All six participants noted a strong link between gender and sexuality, or referred to diverse gender and sexuality expressions when responding to questions. It is important and telling that none of the preset questions in the semi-structured interview schedule contained references to nonnormative gender and sexual identities (see Appendix F). Whenever reference was made to diverse sexuality and diverse gender identities, these were raised by the participants themselves in relation to questions of gender, strongly suggesting that participants viewed the ideas of gender and sexuality as intimately linked. This link is strongly supported by the literature outlined in Chapter 2 (Connell, 2001; Kupers, 2005).

Francois seemed to initially link gender and sexuality, delving into a discussion of sexuality when asked to define what the different genders are. When asked to elaborate on this link between sexuality and gender,

Francois explained: *"Sexuality is the fact that you are a human being and that you are sexual in some way. It is how you are created [...] so sexual orientation, gender, both aspects of sexuality"* (Francois, line 21). Benjamin adds: *"In most teenage boys, [gender and sexuality] are basically the same thing"* (Benjamin, line 76). These claims demonstrate the perceived intimate interplay between gender and sexuality, and how in the view of some of the participants, the two concepts often seem interchangeable.

Francois's insistent claim that gender, sexuality, and biology are intrinsically intertwined contradicted claims where he stated that he believes *"it is also actually unnecessary to gender label people"* (line 29) as *"you should look at them as an individual"* (line 29). It appears that the participant was able to identify constituents of what makes up a person, namely the relationship between gender, sexuality, and biology, but despite identifying these core dimensions to individual identity, he resisted labelling them. This suggests that there is an inherent discomfort with the labelling of the self, particularly personal and "controversial" aspect of the self such as sexual orientation and gender identity, perhaps in an effort to escape the limiting nature of labels. This raises the question of whether the teacher would be comfortable discussing these issues in a forthright and honest manner in a classroom, especially as he resisted recognising and acknowledging differences in gender.

4.2.2. Fluidity, diversity, and performativity

In contrast to the ideas of gender as fixed or intrinsically linked to sex or sexuality, participants were able to express an understanding of gender as fluid, diverse, and existing on a spectrum. In addition, a number of participants raised the idea of gender as linked to "choice" and as performative in nature (further discussed on p. 60), which challenges the idea of concrete gender roles.

Francois highlighted this idea of gender as a spectrum: *"Well obviously you have sex, biological sex, male or female, depending on your sexual reproductive organs, but gender is what you identify as [...] So it exists on a spectrum"* (line 11). Francois explicitly distanced gender from sex and suggested that gender can exist beyond the male/female binary. When asked to discuss his understanding in broad terms of gender, Francois first identified two biological sexes and then linked gender to a form of self-identification. This participant, who also later volunteered that he is gay, at times contradicted himself by evincing a need to eschew gender and sexual identity labels, yet simultaneously clearly demarcating certain bodies and psychological identities as being clear and distinct constructs. This might suggest that some male teachers who do not identify as heterosexual can conceive and interpret gender concepts in ways dissimilar to their heterosexual counterparts, as all three gay-identified teachers in this study exhibited more fluid understandings of gender.

Benjamin acknowledged gender and sexuality diversity, explicitly linking this to the idea of choice. He appeared to see himself as a facilitator to inform learners of possible consequences of making the "choice" to be gender nonconforming or to accept their same-sex sexualities, and explained that he brought this topic up with learners: *"And then you [...] say, 'Listen, if you're going that way, listen there's going to be*

consequences as much as there are, yes it's your choice. [...] but there most probably will be family members that will start excluding you" (Benjamin, line 312). The participant seems to be aware of the need that some boys might have to reveal their sexual orientation to others, but also considered it his obligation to "warn" the boys of the "consequences", which include possible peer and family rejection. This can be seen as evidence of empathy and concern for the wellbeing of boys, despite the foreboding tone.

However, Benjamin was committed to teaching his learners that gender should be inclusive, especially for those who do not fit traditional gender roles. He explained that he resists exclusionary gender constructions: "*it's not this or this, the end, thanks for playing. And if you don't fit this mold then actually, please go and do your thing somewhere else"* (line 140).

The importance to come out of the closet as a person embarking on gender and/or sexual self-discovery is well documented (Naidoo, 2014; Ryan, Russell, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2010; Sandfort, Bos, Knox, & Reddy, 2016). The identification, labelling and framing of one's own sexual and gender identity, especially if nonnormative, equips the young person with a voice, and allows for more direct moral and social support from those who identify similarly (Crooks & Baur, 2013). Despite these benefits to coming out and using language to affirm one's identity, these are considered as unnecessary gender labelling by Francois and Dumisane, and both indicated a need to eschew labels that denote nonnormative gender and sexual identities. This might indicate a reluctance to address these issues in the classroom, and also might hinder open conversations about gender diversity, a lesson activity which most participants prized highly as a means of learning about gender concepts. Benjamin's tone of warning indicates a level of care for learners with nonnormative gender and sexual identities, but might also impact on how these topics are discussed in the classroom by creating an atmosphere of trepidation and social stigma.

Interestingly, the three teachers who do not self-identify as gay or who specifically refer to their opposite-sex relationships, namely Trevor, Benjamin and Richard, all make reference to discourses of "choice", "choosing" or "deciding" on gender when this relates to gender nonconforming learners, and Richard says that the "decision" of others should not be "forced" upon him or made his "problem". This discourse of choice in terms of gender identity, notably absent from the gay-identified teachers, might also link to more fixed ideas of gender differences. "Choice" is only present when traditional gender norms or roles are challenged and not when these norms are enacted by the individual. Thus, masculinity is situated as natural and inherent in male bodies, and femininity in female bodies, with no "choice" involved, linking to the biological conception of gender (LeVay, 2016; Rahman & Wilson, 2003). This construction, while often not overtly voiced in homophobic, transphobic or otherwise exclusionary terms by the participants, might reveal assumptions based on gender norms and thus unwittingly impact on how gender and sexuality are taught in the LO classroom.

The idea of gender as something that needs to be reinforced through 'performativity' was also strongly highlighted by multiple participants, evoking Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity (1993, as cited in Salih, 2002). When asked what he considers masculinity to be, Paul offered the following:

> *I think it's a social construct based on [...] behaviours, emotional expressions, and physical representations of yourself [...] like in relation to strength, toughness, sturdiness, lack of emotional expression, capacity to earn money and look after families, like these kinds of things has been quite important but it's [...] created I think by us.* (Paul, line 246)

Paul reflected that masculinity is an idea that is constructed by a specific society with certain prescriptions attached, linking to the social constructionist theoretical underpinnings of this study (Babbie, 2012). Notably, Paul did not refer to boys, girls, men or women when discussing masculinity, indicating an understanding that masculinity is a set of ideas that can be embodied by any person.

Benjamin explained that gender roles are often enacted out of a sense of playing a role or living up to the expectations of society, and often reproduce male dominance or hegemonic masculinities. These gender expectations are again performed by men who might not even "agree with it" but are socially coerced to reproduce gender norms: *"[Men are] expected to dictate what happens in the household [and] to take control [...] even often if they don't 100% agree […] they sort of participate in it because it's the role that they see that they should be playing"* (Benjamin, line 14). Benjamin (line 22) explains that *"It takes a very strong individual to say, 'No, I'm not doing that''*. It appears that gender is construed by this participant as a series of repetitive, performative acts emanating from a context of prescriptive hegemonic masculinity, again echoing Butler's (1993, as cited in Salih, 2002) conception of gender performativity. Additionally, the idea of strength as linked to resisting gender roles is important, indicating how these roles are conceived as powerful and prescriptive in ways that are difficult to disrupt or resist.

Trevor seems to struggle to define clear gender roles, hinting that he wants his own daughters to resist roles that might be oppressive to women:

> *I've just got girls. So my, how I would expect the girls to behave [...] is not to be [...] so gender roles does not speak of submissiveness from a female's point of view. Gender role on the male side, it isn't controlling or domineering. Okay, so if I had to reverse those, you know, I think [that] both genders share common roles. [...] I don't want to go back to the traditional view of things, but [for women] it would be more nurturing and caring.* (Trevor, line 60)

The participant appeared to struggle when asked to discuss his point of view on gender roles. He went on to list a number of gender-stereotypical traits of the two putative genders and asserted that these are attributes that *do not* define gender, or should not. He vacillated, suggesting discomfort with the task of delineating the typical sets of behaviours ascribed to men and women. He also seemed to be uncertain of

how to reconcile a more traditional mindset with recent developments and broadened understandings of gender, and the validity or usefulness of the roles ascribed. This suggests that the participant may hold latent, unacknowledged traditionalist views of gender and its associated roles. He struggled to reconcile this with his need to care and empathise for boys whom he perceived to be adversely affected by rapid social changes and gender norms, and to come to terms with a more flexible understanding of gender and its associated roles.

Dumisane extended this discussion of gender roles by referring to his own gender performativity through his style of dress and how this impacted the perceived way that learners responded to him: *"When I am at work I try and dress as professionally as possible. [...] The reason why I don't [dress casually] is because I know I look young. And I don't want the kids to have a perception that I'm inferior"* (Dumisane, line 207). The participant seemed to vacillate in his positionality in terms of gender and its meaning. At various points in the interview, he discussed being "genderless", but still having to display and enact male gender identity, and linked youthful age and appearance with inferiority in the eyes of learners when asked about his masculinity.

Trevor reflected on the meaning of gender and persons of transgender identity, with respect to Olympic medalist Caitlyn Jenner who revealed her transgender identity in 2015, and opined:

> *We could [...] possibly use that and say: 'What do you guys think about this, he's a transgender? He was a very masculine man competing in the Olympics, he had a very successful family. But now he's made a decision to become a female. What do you guys think?'*

Trevor linked sporting achievements and fathering children directly with masculinity, and framed Jenner's gender identity as a choice and decision, a recurring discourse with some participants. Furthermore, Trevor suggested that the physical body is the ultimate identifier of gender identity, and that gender can only be altered or understood differently when concomitantly altered on the physical body. This link of masculine gender performance to physical prowess and appearance indicates a gendered understanding of the body. Additionally, the participant's use of terminology is telling about his constructions of gender, using the masculine pronoun "he" throughout the extract. This indicates that the gender assigned at birth or the biological gender is dominant in Trevor's view, and that he still views Jenner as male. The idea of the somehow thwarted "successful family" is also significant, seemingly negating familial or parental "success" for those with nonnormative gendered identities.

Trevor also offered the following in his questionnaire response about what high school boys should know about gender:

> *I believe they should be taught the responsibilities that come with gender [...] specifically their own gender. I believe that they should know that gender is not only about roles and makeup, but [...] is in fact an action. And they should be taught how to carry out their gender roles.* (Trevor, line 154)

Again, the theme of gender as performative is highlighted, and the participant suggested that there might be more socially acceptable ways to "*carry out their gender roles*" (Trevor, line 154). When asked about this response in his interview, Trevor showed reluctance concerning traditional gender roles, and explained: *"[Not to] negate [...] what I said about the gender roles becoming a little more untraditional [...the] whole idea of separating the classes is that you can give the [...] initial grounding of what, as a male, I'm supposed to behave this way"* (Trevor, 157). The participant explicitly linked gender to performative acts, with the performance suggesting and enacting gender. It appears that in Trevor's view, gender can be taught, and that something which at times is framed as essentialistic by participants can also be communicated through instruction in the classroom, especially when classes are separated by gender. In the view of some participants, bodies can be modified to represent gender, and for Trevor, it appears that behaviour can be modified in order to perform one's gender, similar to Dumisane's view of one's style of dress representing gender.

This framing constructs gender as a conscious choice which must be reenacted in order to reify one's gender identity, and as something which can be taught through instruction on gender roles. Trevor explicitly framed gender as a choice, even using the verb "transgendering" to describe a learner who was ostensibly gender transitioning. The uncertainty of gender-identifying the learner is clear in Trevor's language, and he also evokes discourses of confusion, freedom, and agency in gender identity which might be at odds with the fixed view of gender. The theory of social constructionism can be linked to Trevor's understanding of how understandings of gender are embedded through social acts (Merriam, 2009; Babbie 2012). Relevant phrases are emboldened in the extended extract below to demonstrate Trevor's often contradictory view of gender performativity:

> *So I'll give you an example of what's happening with one of my Grade 8s at the moment. She's* ***transgendering****… And that's very* ***new to this school environment****. So we were* ***coached and we were, I wouldn't say coach****, we were advised that, you know, when addressing this* ***particular young individual****, that we refer to her as him, and rather than saying her name, mention the boy's name that she prefers. So when it comes to, and there's a number of other times that have come in, where kids have either been* ***confused*** *about where they are at, from a gender point of view, what which one seems to be more they* ***feel strongly for, or opposed to****. [...] I think the reasoning is because I think there [is] a* ***lot more freedom to think about that****… the kids have a lot more freedom to think about their gender in a different way than in the traditional roles that you know, male and female. (Trevor, line 21)*

The participant linked a "traditional view" of gender to the phenomenon of a "young individual" "transgendering". This could be seen as a link to the next major theme explored in this chapter, namely the conflict of personal values and the teaching role, and how gender concepts have changed in "modern times" (Code PV6). This includes the mainstreaming of gender fluidity. The "loosening" of rigid gender binary categories - male and female - is equated with "choice" and "freedom", which arguably suggests the erasure

of trans identities and a lack of acknowledgement of the deeply personal and affecting nature of gender identity, or ignorance of the potential distress or negative social effects of gender dysphoria.

Trevor reflected further on the aspect of choice and agency in gender, and how this might even conflict with personal and religious values:

> *...if that's the choice that they make, [it] is the choice that they make. My role is to, and this is where I think either the fatherly instinct steps in as well as the teacher, and then I think, maturity, you know, blending those three together, my role is to help them to see a) the consequences, help them to understand the… the result or the consequence of their action, because they do have the right to make decisions, but the decisions might not necessarily be based on, you know, maturity or necessarily facts. So, I don't mind the fact that, you know, I have a young lady in my class who's wanting to become a man or a boy. So that doesn't, doesn't, doesn't affect me as a person.* (Trevor, line 26)

Trevor reinforced the notion that to self-identify with a gender that is socially viewed as not congruent with one's biological sex is a matter of choice, and he seemed comfortable endorsing something that is framed to be a choice. The implication here is also that cisgender identification is *not* a choice, and that there might be something "natural" or essentialistic in identifying with the gender and enacting the gender roles that are socially viewed as congruent with biological sex. He did, however, seem to display concern and care for the hypothetical transgender learner, communicating that the social consequences of transitioning are beyond the learner's grasp and that they would need assistance, linking to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development as negotiated partly in relation to trusted adults (Erikson, 1998, as cited in Berger, 2016). Gender, according to this participant, might then be an ongoing cognitive process that only seems to be realised when the individual has reached cognitive maturity.

Trevor's apparent unease may therefore be superseded with his need to be a caring, protective, and guiding teacher. Additionally, he is highlighting the importance of the teacher role in gender negotiation for adolescents who might not have reached this level of "maturity" in order to make informed gender "choices". While this framing might be problematic, especially in terms of affirming transgender identities, it is very informative about the perspective of this teacher in terms of his role as gender facilitator and gender model. These aspects are explored in detail later in this chapter.

Richard, who earlier expressed fixed ideas of gender binaries, also brought up the idea of choice when discussing transgender students, explaining: *"I'm still with the idea that there are only two genders. But someone deciding to be another gender does not affect me in any way, so, why should [...] I be worried by it? As long as they don't go and force something on me"* (Richard, line 162). In contrast to Paul, Trevor and Francois, whose discussion around boys and transgender identities were characterised by care, concern, and a need a to be a positive guiding influence in navigating a marginalised identity, this participant seemed more inclined to personalise a hypothetical child's transgender identity by imagining in which ways he

might personally feel imposed upon. This framing might link to Connell's (theory of hegemonic masculinity which is negotiated in opposition to subordinated masculinities such as same-sex attracted males or transgender individuals. By distancing himself from hypothetical gender nonconforming people, Richard might be demonstrating his own form of masculinity which might be confronted by something being "force[d]" on him.

The notion that "it doesn't affect me" was also one expressed by Trevor, which might run counter to the need of these participants to engage boys in a relational way as part of their pedagogy. Richard evinced a reluctance to discuss issues of diverse gender identities and possibly also gender nonconforming behaviours, which might affect the way he addresses gender in the classroom, as will be outlined in the next theme discussed in this chapter.

4.2.3. Gender as life path

A further element of the performative nature of gender and gender as "choice", is how adhering to certain gender roles was understood by participants as demonstrating good character. Gender was framed as a process which is lifelong and marked by certain milestones, each of which is an embodiment of being a good "man", "husband" or "father". The participants also noted that boys need foundational structure in their formative years in terms of how to enact these gender roles. Effectively, there might be an element of benevolent paternalism in how some participants view gender diversity, essentially "warning" young people about the "consequences" of being gender nonconforming. In contrast, and as a complication to this simplistic perspective, even making the "choice" to be gender nonconforming is framed as "strength" and "courage". The data suggest that having a "gender path" and an assertiveness about gender performance is framed as a virtuous and positive part of self-identification.

Trevor unpacked this understanding of gender as a "life path" and highlighted that a positive gender identification is a personal and individual pursuit, explaining that gender identity development should be "progressive": *"So progressive, but in a positive way. So it needs to be constantly growing, you need to be growing in your gender role [...] because it can go one [way] or the other"* (Trevor, line 168). Trevor reflected that, despite the essentialism attributed to gender and gender roles by participants at times, including Trevor himself, gender is "constantly growing" and that it can "go one or the other way". These gender paths would be the results of boys' gender role enactment, in line with theoretical understandings of adolescent gender development discussed in Chapter 2 (Kohlberg, 1966, as cited in Lerner, 2004).

Dumisane detailed a similar process of self-discovery around sexuality when asked about gender development. He reflected on the gender and sexual identity development of a learner in his class, who had privately disclosed to Dumisane that he is attracted to neither men nor women: *"when you have that 'aha!' moment. Like I really like girls but [not] to that extent, and that maybe it's because I've never been intimate with a girl. [...He] can change his mind [...] and he must feel that it's fine"* (Dumisane, line 109).

Dumisane's experience of resolving his own sexual and gender identity arguably places him in a position of being a more effective role model to high school boys, as pointed out by Sroufe et al. (2000). Dumisane conceived of sexual orientation as a defining route in terms of where one's life path might lead, and also emphasised that the learner can "change his mind" whenever he would like to. This suggests that the participant believes that one's sexual orientation and gender identity are self-determined and a "work-in-progress", or part of a process of becoming (Butler, 1990). Dumisane also suggests that a boy has agency in this regard. Again, this view differs from the fixed views of gender and sexuality espoused by other participants like Trevor and Richard, which will be shown in later sections of this chapter to link to their pedagogical approaches.

Dumisane explained how his own gender expression was shaped by the way he was "taught gender" and masculine gender roles, even when he resists restrictive gender roles himself:

> *Yes, we were taught to be chivalrous [...] even today, I cannot walk [...] through a door before a woman. It's just not me. [...] It's definitely ingrained in me. It's something that I can't help. [...] and I always refer to females as ma'ams. [...] And some of the female teachers here say no you don't have to call me ma'am, you can call me [by my name] or whatever, but I actually can't. (Dumisane, 192)*

Ironically, the participant considered benevolent behaviour, such as making way for a woman, as ingrained and ultimately an act of chivalry and consideration for women; yet, despite the women's protestations, the same women that he believes he is being considerate of, he claimed to be incapable of unlearning these behaviours. This framing suggests that men have fixed learned behaviours that are extremely difficult to unlearn and which might be "positive" enactments of masculinity (Glick & Fiske, 1996). This may suggest that men's behaviours which are learned in apparent service to women might be a type of gender performance.

The various views of gender discussed in this section exposed the complexity of this concept for the teachers who participated in this study, and show how they negotiate this important part of their role as LO teachers. Understanding how the participants see gender is important in order to unpack how they understand their roles as gender models and how they are able to translate these understandings into pedagogical practices that can benefit male learners. This section has highlighted that different participants offer wide-ranging views of what gender is and how to identify and define masculinity. Some participants saw gender as fixed and binary, while others emphasised fluidity and performativity in gender (Butler, 1993, as cited in Salih, 2002). The data analysis revealed significant tensions and contradictions in the way that these male teachers understood gender, such as those who were sympathetic to transgender people still misgendering these individuals. Many participants saw gender as developmental in nature, and as a lifelong and virtuous path that required instruction to be successfully navigated.

The following section discusses the theme of how teachers bring personal values into their teaching roles, and how they use personal experiences and perspectives to inform the ways that they teach gender concepts in the LO classroom. The section demonstrates how understandings of gender have a profound impact on the way that teachers navigate the tensions between their own values and what they are required to teach in the LO curriculum.

4.3. THEME 2 - TEACHERS' PERSONAL VALUES: CONFLICTS AND SYNERGIES IN TEACHING GENDER (PV)

One of the dominant themes generated in the data coding and analysis is the contrast or synergy between personal values and the teaching of gender in LO. This theme presented in various ways in the data. Teachers expressed how their own personal opinions, beliefs or convictions had to be negotiated in the classroom setting in order to present certain topics to learners around gender, including Francois, Richard and Trevor. In addition, participants noted how they had to demonstrate respect for the opinions of learners and to ensure that learners could have their voices heard. Religious ideas and cultural beliefs were strongly present in this theme. Finally, the element of teachers seeing their role as a neutral facilitator of discussions around gender was also identified in the data, and teachers expressed many strategies that they use in classrooms in order to broaden thinking around gender amongst learners. These aspects are discussed in the following section in order to demonstrate the tensions that often exist in the LO classroom where teachers' personal values need to be negotiated in relation to course material.

4.3.1. Personal Experiences

Participants often expressed that their personal lives were relevant to the way they approached teaching gender concepts in the LO classroom. Francois explained that *"as a teacher your experiences and your personality definitely has an effect on you. [...] I think it's because I myself label myself [as gay], I labelled myself, always, and I realise it's not necessary*" (line 57). This participant, who referenced his sexual orientation of his own accord, considers intimate aspects of a teacher's identity as having a definite effect on their understanding of gender and therefore also on their teaching of gender concepts in the classroom. Despite acknowledging this, the participant also repeatedly asserted the perceived importance of not revealing one's own sexual identity to learners, in contrast to teachers who had opposite-sex partners.

Teachers who freely volunteered information about their home and family life to the interviewer, with specific reference to their female partners, evinced no discernible discomfort or reluctance to cite personal home and family experiences to boys in their efforts to teach gender concepts. As Trevor explained: *"I've often use[d] my wife as an example. I often share about my family. [My wife] has phenomenal skills in finance and budgeting [...], so I said [I] bring the money in [and my wife] brings in the financial expertise"* (Trevor, line 95). The participant's casual reference to his wife during class time reflects the inculcation of heteronormativity in the classroom as discussed by DePalma and Francis (2014b). Trevor uses the mundane

and everyday example of taking care of financial matters, which illustrates the normalised and heterosexist underpinnings of the teacher's beliefs in terms of gender and how to teach it (Martino, 1999; Chesir-Teran, 2003). The gay-identified teachers repeatedly indicated a reluctance to refer to their own personal lives to learners, whereas Trevor in contrast appears not to consider the potentially exclusionary impact of his heterosexual presence in the classroom. This demonstrates the way that gender diversity might still be challenging to discuss outright in many South African classrooms (Francis, 2012), and compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1980) appears to still be the norm in these settings.

4.3.2. Neutrality and facilitative roles

A number of participants indicated a need to convey factual information to learners concerning gender and sexuality. Participants implied that although their own personal values might be in conflict with the prescribed content, they are nevertheless able to maintain distance between their own personal beliefs and the curriculum. Trevor's teaching of gender concepts in the class with a gender transitioning learner serves as an example, where he stated that he ultimately wanted to address the concept of gender diversity, albeit reluctantly:

> *I will probably never engage him, you know, on that. But while I'm teaching [...] gender concepts and gender roles, you know, a topic like that will come up where people do transgender, and I would like very much to be a soundboard that if they asked questions about it, you know, and I can answer it in such a way that is neutral, it gives them space to make their own conclusions and draw their own deductions.* (Trevor, line 27)

Despite Trevor's apparent unwillingness to directly approach the learner who is gender transitioning, he nevertheless indicated a desire to be a "sounding board". He demonstrated a willingness and a need to offer "neutral" information, perhaps implying that the young learner might not have accurate or complete information regarding their process of transitioning. This indicates the fuzzy, flexible, and fluid nature of thinking around gender for learners as well as for teachers. Facts are not readily apparent, and sources of understanding gender are multiple, which requires male teachers to navigate this sensitive and provocative topic even when many of them have not received appropriate sensitisation training (Bhana, 2010; Francis, 2013). Trevor's reluctance in some areas and his "indirect" approach speak to this lack of clarity in terms of how to address gender in the LO classroom.

Similar to the "sounding board" that Trevor wants to create, Richard shared that LO teachers should remain "open-minded" as this will allow for learners to develop their own ideas about gender roles and how they enact or perform gender: "*if you go [in] close-minded […] and you only try to force your ideas about gender roles and gender onto the kids [...] you don't get them to decide for themselves and that can become negative towards either gender"* (Richard, line 77). While Richard seemed to value learners' opinions on gender, his discourse still seems to indicate a fixed binary as he considered learners' reactions to "either of the

genders". In addition, Richard also brought up his personal convictions around gender, discounting the idea that there is a spectrum of genders or that people can be transgender. This links to Francis's (2013) study that finds that some teachers insert their values on learners around gender and sexuality in South African schools. When Richard noted that he discussed gender as fixed with his learners, he explained: *"And I taught it to the kids, they were all along similar ideas about [transgender identities] as I am, that there are two genders"* (Richard, line 170). Richard seems to disallow a space for thinking and reflecting on intimate topics related to identity, such as gender and sexuality, in stark contrast to other teachers, who frequently cited the importance of creating "thinking spaces" (discussed in theme 4 of this chapter). This type of teaching style might discount the teacher's role in influencing the ideas of learners by perhaps not being willing to engage in ideas that broaden traditional, binary understandings of gender.

Additionally, the assumption that learners were "all along similar ideas" (Richard, line 170) might silence the voices of learners who would disagree with the authoritative teacher figure since the participant suggested that gender was taught in terms of fixed, binary concepts. Richard further noted that his personal perspective might be contrary to the types of instruction prescribed in the LO classroom: *"I also think that my views may not exactly conform to what should be taught. So I also try and avoid that based on just, sort of, sticking to what should be taught, rather [...] than what I think should be taught"* (Richard, line 248). By avoiding particular discussions or not teaching beyond the scope of what "should be taught", Richard might not allow for gender to be explored in a nuanced way, which might reproduce limiting ideas about transgender identities or gender nonconforming behaviour.

Some participants vigorously emphasised the importance of learners building self-knowledge and coming to terms with their individual identities, specifically the gender and sexuality aspects of their identities. The teachers saw themselves as facilitators of this process, and particularly recognised the importance of this process for the healthy development of young people, as highlighted in the study by Martino (1999). Dumisane explained that self-knowledge, in the context of the discussion of gender, was vital for understanding many other roles: *"[...] the most important thing is if you don't know yourself, you will [not] know what career you want [and] how you identify yourself in a society [and] ever have any sort of political [or] financial points of view or [...] standing"* (line 112). Dumisane discussed his role as teacher, specifically in reference to the emphasis he placed on helping boys come to terms with the gender and sexual dimensions of their identity. He seems to be communicating an earnest imperative to help boys explore and realise their identity, which is also considered by him to be pivotal in terms of achieving career and financial success.

Benjamin reiterated this facilitation role by reflecting on his own idea of what constitutes an ideal lesson when teaching boys about gender: *"In a perfect world [...] to open a discussion up where people feel that they can maybe voice their opinion, but the teacher's going to protect them if they say something"* (Benjamin, line 366). The teacher considered a space for reflection among learners and himself as the

facilitator as an ideal LO lesson for boys. It appears that the participants are particularly invested in the idea that open, free, unfiltered, non-judgmental dialogue will be an effective classroom atmosphere that is conducive to learning about gender concepts (Lee, 2003). It seems here as if teachers facilitate gender development of young people in lessons about gender concepts; that they no longer act only as neutral participants or sources of information, but are protective of learners, reflective of humanist values, and provoke thought and self-reflection in learners. This framing was markedly different from the teacher only pursuing neutrality or avoiding certain topics.

Francois elaborated on this facilitator role by infusing classroom discussions with problem-based scenarios intended to challenge and expand the thinking of his learners as they reflect on their own gender. He introduced to his learners the hypothetical situation of heterosexuality being discriminated against in society as a thought experiment so the learners could consider their attitudes towards gender and sexual minorities: *"I will tell them what is your thinking around [if] people start beating you up because you're straight? I ask them what if being straight is wrong and you had to come out [as] straight and your parents hate you?"* (Francois, line 219). Benjamin also explained that he used contextual examples to help learners think through issues of gender and sexuality, referring to homophobic leaders in Brazil who were challenged by recent court rulings. These types of thought experiments, hypothetical scenarios and contextual discussions are strategies to challenge heterosexist ideas and to broaden discussions of gender and sexuality for these teachers, and in this way they can prompt discussion and thinking that reflect humanistic and inclusive values in their learners (DoBE, 2011a).

Benjamin also noted that he did not often receive direct questions from learners about their identities, but since he had created an enabling and open space in the classroom, his learners were free to ask questions that might otherwise have been difficult to ask: *"So they'll ask, 'Sir, you know for gay marriage, what happens there?' And so a lot of them are also curious, but they need a place to ask, they'll never ask their friends that because, phew, no."* The participant discussed how boys do not directly approach him about certain identity struggles, but suggested that by asking tangential questions, they were indirectly seeking guidance and advice. The suggestion that boys cannot ask friends about these questions demonstrates the significant role that the male LO teacher can play for boys. When the teacher is a trusted figure who is seen not to judge learners, he can act as a source of information for boys who are curious about gender and sexuality (Francis, 2012).

When reflecting on what boys need to know about gender, Paul mentioned the following as he also reflected on the important role that the teacher can play, especially for learners who are gender or sexual minorities:

> *I think that like especially minority groups need a voice in the classroom, and that voice can't be theirs often. So it might be the case of the educator takes on kind of an advocacy role by [reflecting] voices [of] potentially marginalised minority groups.* (Paul, line 259)

Paul expanded on the notion of facilitating identity exploration and understanding of his learners by supporting the idea of the teacher as advocate, particularly of marginalised groups, who might offer guidance and a safe space for learners to express their feelings and experiences (Francis & Msibi, 2011). The personal values reflected here seem to allow for the teacher to take on additional roles of facilitating healthy identity development and advocating for inclusivity by incorporating "voices" that are not often heard in the classroom.

Trevor similarly discussed the role of the teacher in helping learners come to terms with their own personhood and gender by framing the role of the teacher as a facilitator and mediator, particularly when receiving conflicting messages from the media and facing social pressure: *"That [gap] is where teachers come in [...] there are two realities [between media and social pressure]. But in the middle is where you need to find yourself so [...] that you are true to who you are as a person and your gender"* (Trevor, line 186). The idea of being "true to who [one is]" is important in this extract, demonstrating how some teachers recognise that they can be facilitators of identity development for adolescent boys, and demonstrating how these teachers are affirming and supporting of the identities of learners.

Benjamin extended this as he discussed the way he would handle a situation if a boy who is dealing with questions relating to his sexual orientation were to approach him: *"I often will say, 'You're asking [...] vague questions. So I don't mind answering, but here's something else here? I'm not pushing [...] I'll give you the answers that I know. If I don't know, I will find out for you.'* Benjamin appears to offer both informational and emotional support for a boy who appeals to him for guidance.

There seems to be a keen awareness in some participants of the sensitive and often deeply emotionally vulnerable nature of gender and sexuality for boys. The role of the male teacher as facilitator of gender development was also recognised and put at the forefront of the teacher's role by participants Paul, Trevor and Benjamin. The values of some teachers might be reflected in more gender-affirming pedagogical practices where gender and sexuality diversity are treated with respect, while others seem to demonstrate practices that do not allow for open conversation of gender and sexuality diversity, such as Richard. The teachers all seemed to highlight how LO teachers are influenced in various ways by their own personal values or the values of other teachers, parents, religious institutions, culture or even the learners themselves.

4.3.3. Sex, religion and personal values

The conflict of personal values and the teaching role is also present in terms of sexual behaviour. Francois expressed disapproval that young people are having sex, but that this does not stop him from teaching about sex since he would then be "doing them a disservice": *"Sadly most people, they start early now, and it's bad, I feel that you shouldn't be having sex [at] 16 because you're not ready [...] but it is happening [...] if we don't educate them, then we are doing them a disservice"* (Francois, line 83). Francois also highlighted how he is respectful of the personal beliefs of learners and tries to reinforce their right to their opinions and

beliefs: *"I always end up telling them that you have the right to believe what you believe. It's not wrong believing what you believe"* (line 223).

Trevor discussed the perceived 'freedom' enjoyed by learners today, and when prompted, also discussed his personal feelings on the matter. He exposed how he has to work to negotiate his multiple roles as well as his personal values in the classroom when teaching about sex, gender and sexuality: *"I'm putting aside [...] the religious leanings, I guess, I am, I'm fine with that. Because if that's the choice that they make, [it] is the choice that they make. [...] my role is to help them to see [various aspects of the topic]"* (Trevor, line 26). The participant was reluctant to completely discount the influence of his "religious leanings" on his values when it comes to the nonnormative gender identities of young learners. Instead, he claimed to inhabit a "fatherly role", suggesting that a young learner that is "transgendering", or solidifying or concretising their gender identity, needs paternal guidance and support.

At various points during the interviews, participants invoked the topic of religion as a reference point when exploring their understanding and teaching of gender concepts, either referring to their own religious beliefs, like Trevor in the above quote, or referring to the religious values that learners encounter in their surroundings. Francois notes: "*I think judging [gay men] that it's because of the society we live in regarding culture. We have [a] very conservative culture, and [the] effect religion has on this country. So, predominantly we are Christian in this country"* (Francois, line 227). Francois continues: **"***It all depends on what kind of Christian you are, but I think in a lot of religious texts, gay people are prosecuted [sic]"* (line 235). This gay-identified participant considers a mainstream, organised religion as persecutory of gay people, which supports assertions made by another gay-identified participant, Paul. Paul explained that the head of his LO program at his school was forthright with her discrimination against him: *"She told me that she, she disagreed with my sexuality, told me that like it was against her religious beliefs. Okay. She was already setting the stage for the educator under management to be oppressed"* (line 338). Paul seemed to feel surveilled by the head of LO at his school, where religion is used as a pretext to question learners about what Paul teaches in his classrooms as well as other forms of surveillance. The impact of religion, thus, is not simply felt at a social level, but also seems to be a presence within the school setting and to directly impact on teaching (Francis, 2013).

Other participants, however, who indicated a history of working evangelically with young people and who indicated their heterosexual orientation, offered contrasting views and were even able to see religion as supporting their more affirming styles of teaching. Trevor (line 9) noted:

> *I think [my youth work in church] guides my approach to the youth, not necessarily the way I think about them, because that could be [...] disjointed, but it helps me to approach them with a lot more empathy and sympathy and understanding. [...] I don't want to get to that space where I impose [...] a belief system or a moral system on to them, because of my involvement in [the church...] it guides me, if that makes sense.*

In contrast to the previous participants' view that religion permits persecutory and judgmental practices and beliefs towards gay people, this participant claimed that his religious orientation and work in his church led to a more empathic and sympathetic teaching approach. While Trevor acknowledged that religion might lead to negative perceptions of gender and sexual minorities, he allowed for the values of caring and empathy inherent in many religious beliefs to supersede potential judgment. Personal values allowed Trevor to strengthen his role as an LO teacher and to teach gender concepts in ways that are ostensibly more inclusive and compassionate.

Benjamin similarly explained that although he was a pastor for many years, he was cognisant of the diversity of beliefs in the classroom: *"I think specifically as an LO teacher, you've got to be very careful. I mean we deal with people that have very different views to me, and not only in sexuality, but religious"* (line 190). He explained that he had *"seen the damage that in my opinion that some very conservative religious people have done"* (line 188). It would appear that in terms of religion and its intersection with sexual and gender diversity, participants were cognisant of its effects on the classroom discussions surrounding intimate aspects of the identity of learners. It seems that personal values are at play when it comes to approaching the teaching of gender concepts as it applies to diverse groups, with regard to religion and its perceived approval or disapproval of diversity in this context. It furthermore appears that some teachers were able to view their religious backgrounds as potentially complementary to their teaching roles.

The above discussion demonstrates that personal values seem to have a strong impact on the teaching of gender and gender concepts, and teachers either found their life experiences and values to be in conflict with or to complement their teaching roles. Some teachers understood themselves as facilitators of gender learning, and offered teaching approaches that encouraged critical thought around gender as well as open conversation with learners. In this regard, many teachers demonstrated deep levels of empathy and care for their learners, which often overrode any personal convictions that might not have been as accepting of gender and sexuality diversity. This prominent theme of empathy and care will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

4.4. THEME 3 - EMPATHY AND CARE (EC)

Most teachers in this study expressed a deep care for the well-being and development of their learners, and demonstrated empathy for young boys negotiating their gender expression and gender identity. The participants often showed how empathy and caring are, in their view, an integral part of being an LO teacher, where many topics in the curriculum call for sensitivity and consideration for the mental health and holistic development of learners (DoBE, 2011b). These themes are discussed in this section to show how these male teachers approach their roles of working with complex gender concepts in the LO classroom.

4.4.1. Sensitivity

Being sensitive to the perspectives and emotional lives of learners was emphasised by many teachers. Paul reflected on different perspectives and viewpoints on gender, and demonstrated the need to be careful and considerate when teaching gender concepts in the LO curriculum:

> *So while my view might be a little bit less binary… perhaps there is something a little bit reparative or useful in the teacher not being so gendered. So whether it's [a] male or female teacher, the content can come across gently and thoughtfully in a way that allows an inkling or [...] learning to happen in a way that's careful. I don't believe it is taken up that way. Not very [often] by schools, I mean, by the curriculum, the teachers, society, it all makes this kind of… difficult. (line 42)*

Paul expressed a need to be deliberate and thoughtful in his approach to the teaching of gender. He indicated the perceived resistance of the curriculum, teachers, and society to allow for such expanded, deliberate thinking and care in the LO classroom. Paul suggests that a teacher's style and handling of sensitive topics relating to gender may be rehabilitative when done in a way that respects the emotional experiences of learners. This framing emphasises the importance of this formative process for adolescents, and particularly shows an awareness in this participant of how certain ways of teaching gender can cause harm or distress to young boys (Easton et al., 2013), whereas other ways might be conduits to healing. This framing also evokes the theory of ethics of care, which holds that human beings are driven by the need to connect to and relate to others, and exist in a state of interdependence (Gilligan, 1982). Paul demonstrated this care for his learners, and resisted views of masculinity which might be at odds with emotional connection.

Paul, who had recently started practicing as a clinical psychologist, reflected on the shortcomings of teacher training in building sensitivity: *"I think [...] my training as a teacher [has] not really touched upon [...] the truth, true sensitivities of people in general"* (Paul, line 92). The participant identified the lack of teacher sensitisation training as a shortcoming, and possibly in conflict with his own desire to be sensitive to the experiences of marginalised persons. Paul's need to be careful and considerate in the teaching of LO again links to his own past feelings of isolation in the school he taught at, where he felt surveilled by other teachers and where certain topics and certain approaches were seen as taboo in the LO classroom.

The idea of empathy and care is also important in how teachers deal with learners who are gender nonconforming or who are part of gender or sexual minority groups. Benjamin discussed a Grade 11 boy at his school who he believed was gay, and who seemed to be comfortable with his sexuality. Benjamin expressed a lot of admiration for the learner in addition to concern, as he noted (line 90): *"He does bear a bit of a brunt."* Benjamin often noted how the boy is strong, and elaborated: *"to take a stand in grade 11, you're 16- to 17-years-old. And to say, 'No I'm not doing what everybody else is doing.' I think takes a lot because I think [that] most teenagers fear being different"* (line 96). Benjamin evokes the discourse of strength of character in gender identification (Meissner et al., 2016) and this time the strength is embodied in "difference". The sense of admiration and the ability to inhabit the lived experience of this learner who

might be marginalised indicates the teacher's sensitivity and awareness of the struggles of gender and sexual minorities in heteropatriarchal contexts (Connell, 2000; Arvin et al., 2013).

These types of reflections were notably absent from Richard, who assumed that learners "*were all along similar lines*" with his fixed ideas of gender, as discussed above. His apparent unwillingness to engage in meaningful discussion around gender seemed to constrict the thinking space to delve into the intricacies of gender and diverse gender identities in the classroom, an atmosphere so highly valued by Paul and Benjamin. Richard seemed to eject space for empathy, care or compassion in his immediate assertion that learners should not *"go and tell [him] that there are several genders, make something [his] problem, because they have this [desire] to become transgender"* (Richard, line 166). This telling statement shows Richard's reluctance to empathise with transgender learners, suggesting that this engagement is seen as a "problem" that is imposed on him, and could explain the very different discourses around care which he demonstrated from other teachers in the study.

Paul reflected on the ability of male LO teachers to be sensitive, saying that his experience had been that many LO teachers lack the ability to demonstrate care in the LO classroom: *"I just think male teachers or male LO teachers aren't as... they are honest, but they're not [...] sensitive. And it's so difficult for them to detach from the fact that they are male when teaching Life Orientation"* (line 128). Paul expressed a perceived disconnect between being male and teaching LO, and later asserted that male LO teachers reflected *"fix[ed] ideas of what a male is, or should be, still in their lessons"* (line 132). These rigid ideas of gender and the need to enact and embody particular forms of male identity are constructed as being at odds with being an empathetic and caring LO teacher.

4.4.2. Support, tolerance and understanding

Paul elaborates on how boys might have very little space in their lives where they are allowed to explore diverse gender expression or to diverge from traditional gender roles and expectations around their masculinity. Authority figures and peers are shown to reinforce in young boys what Paul referred to as "toxic masculinity":

> *Do those people - they could be educators, parents, they could be peers, or adults that appear in their lives, and do they allow space for like, gentleness and thoughtfulness and kind of affect states [that] might traditionally be thought of as weak, or are all those boys subjected to [...] what I would probably consider like a toxic masculinity where [...] it's a certain way of being, it's rigid. There's a need to be strong, to reject feeling, to reject thoughtfulness.* (Paul, line 116)

Paul explained how the adults in positions of authority in the lives of the learners often do not permit thoughtful, reflective states of mind, which could be construed as a "weakness" for males. He contrasted these reflective states with what he refers to as "toxic masculinity", a topic outlined in Chapter 2 (Barker & Ricardo, 2005) and further explored in theme 4 of this chapter. Paul sees toxic masculinity as the rejection of tender feelings, reflection, and "weakness" or vulnerability, and indicates that toxic masculinity is

incompatible with psychological well-being, an idea supported by Donaldson's research (1993 as cited in Morrell, 1998). This concern for the mental health of male learners and a recognition of the safe space that the LO classroom can offer boys demonstrates Paul's empathy and care, particularly for boys who might not find rigid and traditional masculinity as congruent with their own gender identities. This care, sensitivity and reflection in teaching practices are found by Pillay (2012) to be key qualities needed by an LO teacher to have a positive impact on learners in fostering healthy school environments (Jacobs, 2011).

Similarly, Benjamin recognised the importance of demonstrating support in the LO classroom. He explained that while he tried to remain open to the opinions of learners, he brought values of acceptance into the classroom: *"I tend to be as open as possible with them. But yes, I do preach tolerance, and I do preach understanding*" (Benjamin, line 192). Benjamin elaborated by explaining that his religious beliefs factor strongly into his teaching practices through the values he models and through his desire to help and support learners: *"I teach because I think I can help, and there's very few people that you help by smashing [...and] by belittling them"* (line 208). Benjamin framed his teaching role as supporting and helping learners, and sought to avoid marginalising or "belittling" boys with diverse gender expression.

Benjamin explained that he created the space for reflection with his male learners around sexuality whenever they referred to being gay in a negative light: *"My role in that moment is to get them to think about it, because the only way to break a stereotype is to get people to think about it"* (Benjamin, line 38). Benjamin expressed his commitment to challenging stereotypes and creating a supportive environment, and encouraged reflection when learners displayed homophobic attitudes.

Benjamin also explained that he understood teaching as a calling which requires care and dedication: "*It is a very difficult occupation [...] people [don't] understand unless they do it [...] you have to be very dedicated 'cause there's times when you walk out and think, 'What am I doing?' [...] you have to be almost called"* (line 234). To Benjamin, it appears that teaching is a profession marked by hardships requiring dedication, patience, and an earnest willingness to help. The idea of teaching as a calling and as an occupation done for the good of others is a framing that is congruent with the levels of empathy and care which Benjamin exhibits in his teaching philosophy.

Paul noted that his approach to the colleague who tried to limit his scope in the LO classroom was to frame his lessons from a shared value, namely "love". Paul tried to create common ground with the teacher who had discriminated against him because of her religious beliefs: ***"****I had this kind of thought that [the head of LO] might be a bit more thoughtful around these things. And start it with love. So we're teaching on that"* (Paul, line 59). The participant is resisting the perceived limitations of the LO curriculum in terms of creating a permissive, freeing space for learners of transgender identities by attempting to be thoughtful and creative in his pedagogical approach; he believes that love is a universal unifier that does not know prejudice or exclusion. Thus, while Paul was discouraged from teaching in ways that were accepting of

gender and sexuality diversity, he still attempted to create a safe space for learners to feel accepted and cared for, and tried to persuade the teacher who discriminated against him by appealing to the shared value of love.

4.4.3. Diversity of care needs in girls and boys

At times during the interviews, participants sidetracked direct questions related to boys and delved into general discussions of sexuality, sex and gender instead. When asked about the significance of teaching gender to male learners, participants often demonstrated empathy and care for learners generally, or would focus specifically on ideas of care linked to female or transgender learners. However, as previously discussed, research by Seidler et al. (2016) points to the correlation between culturally reinforced "masculine" traits of stoicism and an inability to recognise depression, as well as depression typically being misdiagnosed as anger in boys. This might contribute to teachers demonstrating a lack of direct concern for the wellbeing of boys and their gender development.

Francois quite overtly displayed this tendency of not recognising the needs of boys, often reiterating that he did not believe in gender distinctions, and moving discussions away from boys and male learners in his responses. He explained at one point: *"I think there shouldn't be a difference between the values boys and girls learn. There should also not be a difference how you teach boys about sex and how you teach girls about sex"* (Francois, line 29). The participant chooses to collapse these ideas and appears to find no difference in teaching boys and girls, and does not reflect on the specific gender challenges which boys might face.

Even after the interviewer attempted to redirect the discussion to boys, Paul similarly turned a discussion about being sensitive to the needs of boy learners into a discussion about the needs of girl learners. The interaction with the interviewer and Paul is reproduced below (line 91):

> *Interviewer: So you mentioned earlier, you spoke about the needs of female learners? What about the needs of male... of the boys, the high school boys?*
> *Paul: I mean, all of them, like, all of the identifications... So I guess what I was thinking about in relation to females, and ja, certainly, there might be kind of a propensity to think of women as kind of the vulnerable group in relation to like, sexual [...] sexualisation, their sexualities, of course, and so [on] and so on that [...] we're thinking [...] how can one be sensitive to female learners?*

When pointedly asked about the specific needs of boys in relation to gender and sexuality concepts, the participant seemed to resist the identification of a particular gender, namely boys, whilst acknowledging that there is a tendency to consider girls as more vulnerable and in need of more thoughtful, sensitive care than boys. Simmonds (2014) argues that the gender-binary terminology used in the CAPS LO curriculum, as well as the urgent calls of action to prevent violence only against women, framed women as

disempowered and default victims. Paul's indicated need to be sensitive towards girls, perhaps more instinctively so than towards boys, might reflect Simmonds's (2014) argument.

Similar to Paul, Dumisane also seemed to find it difficult to focus the topic of discussion on his perceptions of boy learners. However, Dumisane reflected on women's vulnerability to gender-based violence when asked to elaborate on his idea that the experiences of boy and girl learners are different. He offered the following: "*[...] I think having gone through that experience of being sexually abused [myself], I kind of needed to understand how does the other gender [...] what is their experience of that?"* (Dumisane, line 50). The participant shared a deeply personal, affecting childhood experience with the interviewer. He proceeded to explain that his experience of being sexually victimised as a boy led to a need to develop a better understanding of the sexual victimisation that girls go through.

These examples could indicate a resistance in all of these participants to think critically about the particular challenges which boys face. Instead, they seemed to consider questions of gender and negative gendered experiences as only affecting girls, women and transgender individuals. Research overwhelmingly supports the notion that women and transgender people are most adversely affected by gender-based violence and suffer gender discrimination disproportionately in patriarchal societies (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2017; Helgeson, 2016; Saewyc, 2017). However, there seems to be a negation of the effects of gendered harm on boys and men, and a general reluctance to situate gender as a site of struggle, conflict, hurt and abuse for boys. This might impact on how male teachers address gender with boys in the LO classroom, which will be explored further in themes 4 and 5.

While there was a general reluctance to critically reflect on boys as negatively affected by gender, this was contrasted with the support teachers demonstrated for boys who were gender nonconforming or sexual minorities. Benjamin explained that he ensures that boys know his unwavering support and presence in their lives: "*I think, 'There's nothing that you can say in this environment that really is going to mean that I'm going to walk away from you.' Yes, I think that you need to know that*" (line 330). The teacher is unequivocally indicating support of boys that reveal their queer sexualities to him, and clearly places a high premium on unconditional acceptance. In support of this teacher's statement, Konik and Stewart's research (2004) indicates that sexual-minority-identified persons emphasised the importance of support for their sexual identity, and this support from Benjamin could have a profound effect on queer learners he teaches.

Participants also expressed a concern for the self-esteem struggles that boys might face, particularly in terms of boys who may have gender and sexuality identity questions. Paul noted: *"[gender education in LO] might [...] alleviate something that people are sitting with [and] help them understand it […]*" (line 289) indicating that boys might bring uncertainties and struggles into the LO classroom which the teacher could help to address.

Other participants expressed concern that the representation of gender-based violence, particularly its depiction of men as perpetrators and women as victims, might shape the boys' self-esteem in ways that are harmful. Dumisane explained: *"But if you had to constantly read about how you as a male is the oppressive one [...]. And how do they deal with it? You know, so we can teach that*" (line 91). Dumisane expressed concern for the impact he suspects that certain gender-based violence discourses might have on the developing self-concept of boys. In line with Dumisane's concern, Trevor also referenced the "men are trash" Twitter hashtag as potentially damaging to boys' self-esteem. Dumisane suggested that while the LO classroom should be informative and honest, there should also be an awareness of the psychological development of boys' self-image in relation to the way that gender topics are discussed.

The theme of empathy and caring demonstrates a strong involvement of many male LO teachers in the personal identity development of their learners. The theme also highlights how elements of empathy might create significantly different classroom spaces for learners, at times being very open and accepting when teachers recognised the challenges of learners with diverse gender identities, and at other times potentially stifling and limiting when teachers had fixed ideas of gender. Gilligan's theory of ethics of care (1982), emphasising the interrelatedness and interdependence of human beings driven by the need to connect to others, is reflected in the caring and sensitive approach demonstrated by some of the male teachers. The following section explores the theme of the gendered identity of the male teacher and how he understands his own gender as impacting on teaching in the LO classroom.

4.5. THEME 4 - MALE LO TEACHERS: EXPECTATIONS AND ALIENATION (MT)

Participants were asked specifically to consider their own gender and how this might impact on their teaching of gender concepts to boys. The positionality of male LO teachers linked to various sub themes that were generated in the data analysis. These themes included the ability of men to relate to boy learners in ways believed to be unique and allowing for more frank and forthright discussions of gender at times.

However, despite references to greater insight and pedagogical affordances which male teachers possessed in relation to boy learners, some teachers also expressed that the gender of the teacher makes no difference to how they teach. Often, participants pointed to limitations which male teachers faced in certain contexts, especially in terms of the "caring" subject of Life Orientation which might call for types of engagement that run counter to traditional conceptions of masculinity. These themes are explored in the following section to provide insight into the particular positions of male teachers in the LO classroom.

4.5.1. Male teachers relating to boy learners

Trevor reflected on how being a man could be an asset in teaching male learners, since male teachers could bring their own life experience to offer different levels of engagement and types of instruction to male

learners than female teachers could: *"And I think [a] male who […] is more, I think understanding or caring or patient or [...] has got a life experience behind them would offer more value to teaching boys [...] than possibly a female"* (line 186). Trevor seems to suggest that men hold certain advantages when teaching boys gender concepts. Notably, men have the lived experiences of being a boy and a man, and male gender as a consistent and fixed identity running the lifespan is better understood and managed over time, an idea which links to the discussion of gender as life path in theme 1 of this chapter. The framing could also link to Bussey and Bandura's (2004) social learning theory of gender-role development, where gender models or authority figures can influence a child's gender development. Additionally, it may suggest gender is understood as a lived identity, fleshed out and rounded out by life experience, and not, as Trevor had suggested elsewhere, assigned and fixed at birth.

Richard underscored this idea when asked to elaborate about his suggestion that male teachers can relate to male students better: *"I think they can, especially towards male students who may have issues where they… are too shy to go and speak to a female teacher about [it] and they'd rather speak to a male teacher*" (line 321). Richard (line 325) listed the following "issues" when asked what might make a male learner "too shy" to discuss topics with a female teacher: "*Sexual issues. Body issues. [...] Health issues*' ' Issues related to physical appearance, sexuality, and health are foregrounded as areas in which male teachers can be better sources of guidance to boys when compared to female teachers. This suggests that intimate physical knowledge is shared by members of the same gender; gender can therefore be better understood and "taught" to members of the same gender when lived and experienced in a specific gender-assigned body.

This view was reinforced by Dumisane. Dumisane explained that he was assigned to teach girl learners, and a female teacher was assigned to teach boy learners, and he related an experience of teaching LO to girls: "*when it came to issues of sexual identity and sexual health, and [...] risky behavior, it was quite difficult because I don't have as much knowledge about the female body as my female teacher has"* (line 160). Dumisane originally spoke of presenting as "genderless" in the classroom, but it appears that there are certain boundaries that he was not comfortable crossing, and where he was more inclined to trust a woman's perspective by virtue of the fact that she inhabits a female body.

When asked, participants offered a variety of answers concerning the differences between what male and female LO teachers can offer boys. When Paul was asked whether male and female teachers can or should teach gender differently, he reflected:

> *[A] female student [...] may very well need certain things to be handled by a female teacher purely because of the way that [...] she has learned and [...] what might be intrusive for her. So I guess my ambivalent answer is both yes and no. Like, yes. In relation to how learners [are] feeling comfortable, or intruded upon. And no, because if we are doing that are we not also perpetuating that... Even just in my talking how the split is about the man as dangerous, and the woman as safe.* (line 5)

The participant appears to understand on an intellectual level why girl learners would prefer "certain things to be handled by a female teacher", as the intervention by a male teacher might be experienced as intrusive. He appears to analyse a latent assumption introduced by this reflection, namely that women are safe and trustworthy with intimate matters, while men are intrusive and dangerous. Paul seems to grapple with his ambivalence in perpetuating gender stereotypes with this line of thinking. This idea of men as "dangerous" might also link to Trevor's clarification that male teachers could offer better instruction in the LO classroom if they are "understanding", "caring or patient". This suggests that only a particular orientation is important in male teachers in order to relate to learners, particularly male learners, and that this might not always be the norm for male teachers.

4.5.2. Teachers' own gender and teaching LO

Richard seemed less willing to grapple with the complexity of gender, and instead seemed to rely on an essentialist view that women are better instructors of gender concepts. Richard moved the conversation to a discussion of girl learners, and framed female teachers as "nurturing" and "mother figure[s]" (line 92). Collapsing the concept of gender instruction to only focus on women's issues is again apparent, and Richard seems to suggest a disconnect between male teachers and gender education: "*And kids look up to the woman mother figure to explain all that [gender] stuff to them and [...] girls [will] often be shy to go and explain things to a male authority figure. Males aren't obviously that nurturing*" (Richard, line 192).

Richard appears to be unwilling to engage with gender topics on a deeper, reflective level. His inclination to relegate the teaching of gender to female teachers and classifying women as "the mother figure" and men as the "male authority figure[s]" who "aren't obviously nurturing" signifies his view of gender as a women's issue. The way that Richard discussed gender concepts seems to feed into his pedagogical approaches, and seems to signify that teaching gender might be incongruent with his gender expression as linked to a particular form of masculinity which is more authoritative and less "nurturing" (Meissner et al., 2016).

Benjamin discussed the perceived advantages that female teachers hold over male teachers, this time positioning sexual orientation and gender as considerations for the male learner when choosing whether to confide in a male or female teacher. Benjamin used the example of same-sex attracted boy learners feeling more comfortable speaking to female teachers, and opposite-sex attracted learners instead approaching a (presumably heterosexual) male teacher:

> *And even if there is a heterosexual male as well, it sometimes to go to a lady teacher and say something along those [lines] is very difficult. And often, we think of the homophobic area of it, but in some cases the gents who are battling with that area [of same-sex attraction] possibly would find it easier to talk to a lady staff member. Whereas, when males are battling with just normal heterosexuality, sometimes it is nice to talk to a male about this*. (Benjamin, line 393)

Pillay's findings (2012) that some male teachers believe female teachers find it easier to discuss sexuality with learners is echoed in Benjamin's discussion. Interestingly, Benjamin seems to suggest that boys who question whether they are same-sex attracted would prefer a female teacher confidant over a male teacher confidant, and that the inverse is true for boys who identify as heterosexual. This in effect serves to erase queer teachers on staff, male and female, and presupposes the heterosexuality of all teaching staff, which can be considered as heterosexist (Chesir-Teran, 2003). This assumption appears to be supported by the gay-identified teachers, who were shown in theme 2 to display significant reluctance in revealing details regarding their sexual orientation to their learners, unlike their heterosexual teacher counterparts. Additionally, the framing of sexuality by this participant already presupposes the types of interactions which might be invited from learners. Understanding heterosexuality as "normal", as Benjamin said in his extract, could signal that diverse sexualities are still relegated to the periphery of conversations which male teachers can have with learners, and thus might alienate queer or questioning young people.

With the above in mind, it would appear that Benjamin suggests that most female teachers rather than male teachers would be more receptive or comfortable with a boy consulting them about sexual identity matters. Gender as embodied by a teacher, then, can be an indicator of trust, confidence, and accepting attitudes towards sexual diversity of boys. Many teachers separated and then qualified the type of masculinity within male teachers that is conducive to open discussions about gender and sexuality. They often framed this type of masculinity as uncommon and out of the norm, positioning the majority of male LO teachers as potentially hostile to frank discussions of gender and sexuality.

4.5.3. Male teachers' experience of their own professional value and resistance

One of the dominant elements in the discussion of male LO teachers' experiences is the expectation that male teachers act as role models to boys, as well as models of gender behaviour that is appropriate in various settings. When asked about the role of male teachers, Paul made specific reference to the "hidden curriculum", which refers to "the norms, values and practices that are transmitted to students through modelling by preceptors and teachers, and decisions about curricular exclusions and inclusions" (Phillips, 2009, p. 847). Paul explained that the hidden curriculum could also include how to conduct oneself, and again evoked the subtheme of respect which was highlighted in how masculinity was framed by various teachers:

> *[Respect and proper male conduct] doesn't have to be [...] a direct [...] lesson. But like that could also be the way that their educators are seen to be respectful, to respect men and women and allow different gender identifications. And allow feeling, you know, that is perhaps more about what they observe to do, it was a way of being in the room."* (Paul, line 123)

Paul is suggesting that lessons to be learnt about respecting others, irrespective of gender, do not need to be formally captured in an explicit lesson plan. Rather, implicitly modelling these ways of being around

others appears to be a way of "teaching gender". Paul acknowledged that his role as teacher could include being a role model to his learners, but there is a reluctance and an unwillingness with this designation as "role model".

Similar to Paul, when asked if male teachers could act as role models, Richard resisted this classification, and instead said: "*It's sort of a leader in their lives. [...] rather someone who can be [a] role model but not necessarily role model, just someone who is there to support them [...] a base to work from*" (Richard, line 337). This reluctance to consider themselves as role models is significant. While these participants recognised that they can influence boys who observe their conduct and levels of "respect" towards others, which are important elements of gender identity as outlined in the first theme of this chapter, the participants do not wish to understand themselves as directly modelling behaviour for boys. Instead, they wish to act as "a base to work from", perhaps a constant source of support for learners.

At other times, some participants struggled to consider how their own gender impacted on their role in the LO classroom, even when they acknowledged their potential role as gender models to boys. Dumisane (line 270) voiced this ambivalence: "*It's very difficult to make it about men because [...] individually speaking, [...] I think this school has more LO male teachers than any other schools I have been. I've always been the only guy in the club*." The participant seems reluctant to explicitly speak for or represent men, saying that it is "difficult to make it about men". This point is also evidenced by his gender self-identification as "genderless", despite his pride in terms of how he enacts and displays his own gender identity through dress and "chivalrous" (Dumisane, line 192) behaviour. This might suggest that one's gender identity is multi-layered and that people are only comfortable in expressing and speaking of certain gender identity dimensions at certain times and in certain settings (Helleve et al., 2011). This could link to the contextual and mutable nature of gender as a social construct (Merriam, 2009), as well as Connell's (2000) framing of masculinities as constructed differently across different cultural and temporal contexts.

Additionally, there is the intimation that LO is a feminine domain and that Dumisane has often been the "*only guy in the club*" (line 270). This idea might indicate why the male teachers are ambivalent about their roles in various senses, such as Richard's assertion that he was trained for physical education and *"didn't train for LO*" (Richard, line 11), and his later assertion that gender might be better discussed by female teachers. In addition, Paul's point that learners might need certain topics to be "*handled by a female teacher*" (line 5) reinforces this framing. These assertions seem to alienate the male teacher from LO, and the ambivalence of the role of gender educator and being a "role model" might be linked to this sense of alienation.

This ambivalence seems more prevalent in younger participants, namely Paul, Dumisane, Richard and Francois, while participants Trevor and Benjamin appeared more confident in their roles as LO teachers. The latter two participants also highlighted the importance of life experience in their teaching roles, and

were less resistant to acting as role models and gender models. These parallels could indicate that teachers become more comfortable in their positions of teaching gender to boy learners as they bring longer-term life experiences as men and teachers into the classroom. This links with research done by Sroufe et al. (2000) pointing to adults being more effective role models when they have successfully resolved their own identities. The social learning theory of gender-role development discussed earlier (Bussey & Bandura, 2004; Hyde, 2014) also offers a helpful perspective to explain this phenomenon: some of the teachers imply that long-term accumulated life experiences as a man positions them as appropriate gender role models to boys, even if not explicitly discussed in these terms.

The male teachers reflected on their male identities in ways that mirror how they understood gender concepts as outlined in the first theme of this chapter. Often, they collapsed or ignored masculinity, framing it as unimportant in their teaching role, and at other times they essentialised masculinity and what it can bring to teaching in the LO classroom. The final theme discussed below will look at the various barriers that these teachers faced in their roles of teaching gender concepts to boys.

4.6. THEME 5 - EXPERIENCES OF GETTING IN TROUBLE AND FACING BOUNDARIES TO TEACHING (TB)

The previous sections of this findings chapter explored themes linked to individual components of this study's focus, looking at how gender concepts were understood, how personal values impact on the teaching role, how empathy and caring enter into pedagogical approaches, and the gendered roles and expectations of male teachers working with boy learners. The final theme generated in the data analysis specifically concerned the practice of teaching gender in the LO classroom. It was found that teachers expressed the idea of "getting in trouble" around their attempts to teach gender, or expressed significant boundaries that they experienced either within the classroom setting or in relation to parents, community influences, or other teachers and school administrators. Teachers discussed boundaries experienced in relation to the LO curriculum and its prescribed textbooks. Finally, another boundary and challenge faced by teachers was their own lack of training, knowledge or comfort with the topic of gender concepts and gender diversity and how to facilitate discussions of gender concepts. This final theme of getting in trouble and facing boundaries is explored below to draw together the various discussions throughout this chapter, and to highlight the ways in which teachers need various forms of support in teaching gender concepts to boys as outlined in the LO curriculum.

4.6.1. Not knowing how to deal with or discuss gender and sexuality

Many participants in the study expressed uncertainty about how to deal with gender issues in their school settings and indicated uncertainty around how to discuss topics of gender, perhaps cognisant that their training might not fully have prepared them for sensitive topics around gender (Francis, 2013). For example, Trevor's discussion of transgender identities and how these are linked to discourses of "confusion" does

not seem to demonstrate an understanding of the depth of lived experience intrinsically tied to a person's understanding of their gender identity and self-concept (Ehrensaft, 2016).

When this topic was followed up in the interview, and the binary of gender was questioned by the interviewer, Trevor's uncertainty around gender in relation to transgender identities became more apparent (line 36):

> *Interviewer: Maybe I could ask this, if there is a person in the girl's body, and she identifies and wishes to transition into a boy's body, what does that say about what makes a boy or what makes a girl, would you say?*
> *[long pause]*
> *Interviewer: It's difficult to find words to express…*
> *Trevor: Ja, you know, what makes the boy and what makes a girl...I'm not entirely sure.*

Participants were frequently cautious around their chosen terminology to describe gender and sexuality concepts, and often self-corrected, apologised, and second-guessed themselves (Gergen, 1985). Participants were uncertain if they were able to convey their opinions clearly and if they were making "sense" at times, such as participants Trevor, Benjamin, Dumisane and Richard. Richard often expressed that he did not know how to answer some questions about gender or sexuality, and Trevor demonstrated his own confusion around discussing gender by saying: *"How do I actually [I] don't know, you know… without, without putting gender roles in a traditional way, I don't know […] how to do that*" (Trevor, line 54). Participants showed a great deal of uncertainty. At times with Richard, the interviewer experienced this as causing a sense of exasperation, discomfort or a lack of willingness to engage. This might link to how Richard expressed more traditional views of gender, and might demonstrate that there is a sense of unease in deeply grappling with gender (Reygan & Francis, 2015).

In addition to participants being unsure of how to express themselves in terms of gender concepts, Paul was also critical of the use of the concepts of "gender" and "sexuality", and expressed concern around the conflation of these concepts and their entanglement with heterosexuality, ideas supported in the literature review (Arvin et al., 2013). This reinforces the uncertainty which these concepts represent in educational settings. Paul comments: "*And gender and sexuality can be conflated. And not always but they can. And I think there's a huge kind of invisibility of getting this out of the heteronormative way of thinking about gender and sexuality"* (line 93). When asked to name an example of "marginalised groups" that are affected by "rigid" thinking Paul referred to earlier, he continues this critical line of thinking and questions the utility and wisdom of applying labels which to him appear definitive and limiting (line 269):

> *These labels [...] like denigrate anything that stems [from] what might be the ideal box of being a man or a woman and that's why I guess my first answer was [...] I guess [I] couldn't really answer, because this is one of the dangers [...] when we have something [like] gender. I mean, it's like,*

> *man, a woman. It's dangerous. [...] because this is the language you use... Ja, there [are] biological sexes, I mean, that's not accounting for middle sex [sic] individuals that are born with both genitalia. But I mean what is gender? It's like something we put onto those biological parts of the body.*

Paul seems to suggest that identifying and labelling the gender of persons is an automatic process directly resulting from a person's biological sex (Udry, 1994), which he finds limiting as it effectively excludes intersex individuals. Paul also frequently commented on the importance of creating a thinking space where aspects of identity can be contemplated with the learners. Paul's tentative and cautious language might reflect his desire to create such a space with the learners and not to impose gender identities or labels. The refusal of his head teacher to allow such reflective spaces might be seen as stifling the important learning opportunities related to gender concepts. In social constructionist terms, Paul's desired teaching approach of gender concepts includes creating a safe, inclusive space that allows for thoughtful discussion, perhaps to uncover hidden and taken-for-granted assumptions about social categories through social interactions (Merriam, 2009).

Francois, with his often-voiced resistance to labels, supported the ideas of Paul by saying (line 41): *"I believe it shouldn't be labelled. I don't believe you should have homosexual, heterosexual, okay now sexual orientation...but I believe we do not need to classify people by gender. We should just look at them as an individual."* Francois was insistent that labels are limiting and should be removed from educational and social settings. However, Francois also seems to suggest that sexuality is innate, whereas gender is socially constructed (Bussey & Bandura, 2004; Ngabaza et al., 2016) and he does not articulate these differences. These conflicting ideas might impact on how gender is approached, and might link to why Francois cannot meaningfully reflect on how to teach gender concepts specifically to boy learners.

This common thread of uncertainty, tentativeness and hesitation around discussing issues of gender and sexuality could be a significant barrier in the teaching of gender concepts. Merriam's discussion of social constructionism (2009) is relevant here, as the above-mentioned gender and sexuality discourses employed by participants reflect the production and transmission of knowledge, where certain knowledges are maintained and others are discarded. When teachers feel uncertain, reluctant or ill-informed about how to think about gender or express gender concepts, their roles as educators could be impacted as they might inadvertently reproduce exclusionary constructions of gender to their learners.

In addition to the tentativeness around abstract gender concepts, the participants also showed barriers in terms of understanding the appropriateness of discussing their own identities and aspects of their personal lives in the classroom. One of the significant subthemes was that gay-identified or gender nonconforming teachers were especially hesitant to bring their personal experiences into the classroom. As discussed in theme 2 of this chapter, teachers who were in opposite-sex relationships often used their own personal heterosexual experiences as examples for boy learners when teaching gender concepts. They find these

examples to be assets in the classroom setting, feeling apparently little to no conflict about sharing intimate personal details with their learners.

Trevor expressed the importance of using these personal experiences which indicate his heterosexuality: *"sharing from personal experiences, where I felt like I disrespected my daughter, or I disrespected my wife, that's the only way to be able to bring it across in a practical manner*" (line 292). However, for teachers with same-sex sexualities, personal disclosure was a boundary that many expressed should not be crossed. Francois explained (line 157): *"I keep my personal life at home [...] they don't know anything about me actually [...] I always try to keep my home life at home [...] like my very personal things to me. I won't share that with the kids at all."* When asked under what circumstances it would be appropriate to discuss his own sexuality in the classroom to male learners, Francois responded:

> *I don't think in any [...] to be honest [...] when it comes to my sexuality I keep it to myself. I don't let the kids talk about theirs, I don't talk about mine. [...] I think it affects the way I teach boys and girls in the same way that I believe that I'm trying to get rid of the stigmas, and I'm trying to get rid of the labelling [...] it should not matter what you prefer, it should not matter what you think or how you feel. If you want to, if you feel you're in the wrong body, it should not matter, it should not be labelled, it should just be you.* (line 177)

The participant seems strongly focused on avoiding topics related to his own personal life, and when pressed, it appears that his sexual identity might be the driving factor in this decision. Perhaps in an effort to compensate for his active attempts to avoid disclosing details regarding his personal life, Francois goes to some lengths to discount the importance of coming to terms with one's own sexual identity through a process of identifying and naming it, despite his earlier protestations of wanting to be honest and unambiguous with the truth to learners. The reluctance of this teacher to directly engage with ideas of sexual diversity might indicate to learners that they are not free to discuss these topics, and might in effect create a stifling atmosphere in terms of gender education. Helleve et al. (2011) noted in their research that some teachers indicated that desirable characteristics of an LO teacher include a high comfort level with their own sexuality, which does not seem to be reflected by the gay teachers as evidenced by their resistance to discussing their sexual identity and personal lives.

Dumisane, also gay-identified, indicated that he was reluctant to correct students who assume that he is heterosexual. This reluctance might speak to a similar discomfort with self-disclosure, and might again serve to erase and marginalise queer sexualities in the school space.

4.6.2. LO curriculum, textbooks and status as school subject

Participants considered the textbooks and the curriculum to be lacking in some respects, which limited the ways they could offer gender education in their LO classes. When asked how LO textbooks depict individuals of gender and sexual minority groups, Francois explains: "*They're not really depicted at all.*

They [...] may mention that someone [is] quote unquote unnatural" (line 279). Francois's observations are supported by Potgieter's findings (2012) that sexual and gender minorities are sparsely represented in LO curricula and textbooks. This lack of representation suggests the marginalisation and stigmatisation faced by these minority groups (Butler et al., 2003).

Dumisane expresses dismay at the limitation of the textbook in terms of being outdated when it comes to HIV and recent treatments around sexual health:

> *I was discussing HIV and AIDS with my Grade 10s, and the textbook was so outdated [...], and actually I told the kids [...] do you know that there is new technology, new medication, when it comes to HIV and AIDS, the new ARV allows you to [...] be undetectable and [...] you won't pass the virus through to them? And I also told them about PEP and PrEP, so those are things that they don't know of, and the sort of the textbook I got [was outdated].* (Dumisane, line 21)

Similar to Francois, whose values guided him into not teaching behaviours which can be construed as "benevolent sexism", Dumisane eschewed conventional wisdom reflected in the "outdated" textbooks in favour of educating learners about recent developments in the fields of HIV and AIDS. He appears to overcome the limitations of the textbooks by being guided by his own knowledge and desire to inform learners. Dumisane's openness was outlined as a defining feature of teachers who can effectively teach topics of sexuality and HIV and AIDS (Helleve et al., 2011), and complemented his approach of being open-minded and nonjudgmental (Pillay, 2012). Francis (2012) found that teachers are more likely to critically reflect on their own points of view and to encourage critical discussions in the LO classroom when they are knowledgeable about the social and medical issues faced disproportionately by sexual and gender minorities. Importantly, Dumisane's knowledge was useful in countering the lack of information in the textbook, but teachers are rarely equipped with adequate training around these topics (Francis, 2013).

Richard offered the following comment as he reflected on the intersection between prescribed textbooks and his personal points of view (line 257): *"Like the textbook might say one thing but I disagree with it, so in certain circumstances I'll, I'll teach it, and then just get them to think about their opinions*." While Richard seems to have ideas that are in conflict with the textbook, for example indications that he believes in a strict binary between genders and gender roles, he suggests that he tries to remove his personal views from his teaching and teach according to the textbook. However, when there are topics he disagrees with, he seems to prompt further thought in learners, getting them to "think about their opinions", which Richard earlier explained were perceived as very similar to his own. This might reflect that Richard espouses ideas that are exclusionary to those with diverse gender expression, and that despite curricula calling for more inclusive ideas, subtle strategies might be employed to undermine a broader focus on gender. This emphasises the importance of adequate training for teachers, particularly sensitisation training (Bhana, 2012a; Francis, 2013), and highlights the need for updated curriculum materials in order to create inclusive classroom spaces.

Some of the participants discussed how LO was not taken seriously, either by their learners or within the sociopolitical context in South Africa. Dumisane specifically referred to the announcement by the Department of Basic Education that LO would be phased out of the FET curriculum, and would instead be replaced by a revised form of History (Harris, 2018).

Dumisane noted that LO can have a major impact on the lives of learners, but that learners often do not show dedication to the subject or take it seriously: *"[The] lessons that are taught in Life Orientations are so prevalent in [...] moving on with life after high school [...] a lot of kids take it for granted, because [...] of the amount of time that they come to Life Orientation in the week*" (Dumisane, line 31). The participant expressed disappointment at the prospect that LO will be discontinued. The lack of regard and stigma attached to LO might suggest a feeling of disempowerment and dejection for teachers, and might be felt as limiting the teachers in their ability to educate the boys regarding sexuality and gender.

Paul also noted that LO is "disregarded" by learners, as well as being treated as a less "serious" subject by the education system in the country as well as by teachers: *"It seems like [...] that might be [the] Department of Education's [...] doing. The exams aren't that serious. [...] I imagine there's something about [...] the way in which the teacher takes it up has a lot to do with how it's received*" (line 294). Paul examined multiple ways that LO is relegated to an inferior subject and not given the status and importance that he feels LO deserves. This might present a further barrier to teachers in the LO classroom, where the education system as a whole and learners studying the subject view LO as less worthy of their attention. The teachers demonstrate their awareness of the important and in many ways vital role that LO can play in the South African context (Rooth, 2005), and the possibility that the subject might be phased out is seen as a great loss. It would essentially entail that important sections of gender and sexuality education in the FET phase would be discarded, including topics like "health and wellbeing", "power relations", "gender inequality" and "risky sexual behaviours" as outlined in Chapter 2 for the curricula of grades 10-12 (DoBE, 2011b). Learners would thus be deprived of engaging with these important elements of gender and sexuality in their later adolescent years in the classroom, and would likely end their schooling careers without the reflective space which some of these teachers offer in the LO classroom.

4.6.3. Involvement of parents and school environment

Teachers expressed that teaching gender and sexuality concepts in LO might contradict with the values of the communities within which they work, for example, parents expressing discomfort with teachers touching on gender concepts in class. Francois noted that many parents do not want their children to have any education around sexuality, and that this required caution on his part: *"I'm very careful, because you have to be careful when teaching sexuality, because a lot of parents don't want their kids to know about it, which I think is stupid*" (Francois, line 70).

When asked why parents are resistant to teachers discussing concepts of sexuality and sexual health in the classroom, Francois reflected on the discourse of control and power (Shelton, Barnes, & Flint, 2019), and of a seeming distrust of teachers: *"They want to control what their kids know… [The] problem is they don't [teach] their kids about sex, because they are uncomfortable to do that"* (line 83). Parents are seen as wanting to exert control over the knowledge of their children in terms of gender and sexuality, and teachers risk getting in trouble for working beyond these narrow limits.

Benjamin also referred to "getting in trouble" when he challenged ideas of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1980). He noted that same-sex sexualities are often framed with great anxiety and an awareness that adults in the boys' lives would have strong negative reactions if the boys came out as gay, but that he chose to push these boundaries in his lessons:

> *Often if you ask the class, 'What is the worst thing you could ever tell your parents?' And it's a thing I do in all my classes, which sometimes gets me in trouble [...]. Most of them will say, 'To have to go and tell my mom and my dad that I'm gay.' Most of the guys will say that. The expectations on a gay boy is supposed to... Well, I think a lot of the guys leave him alone. Again, [...] they don't necessarily exclude him, but I think their life paradigm is just so different to what his is.* (Benjamin, line 28)

The extract from Benjamin centres the role of adults in "teaching gender", as parents are seen to negatively sanction gay identities, at least in the perspective of boy students. The risk of "get[ting] in trouble" is present, but Benjamin was driven by the desire to create a caring (Gilligan, 1982) and inclusive space in his classroom when he introduced topics of gender and sexuality.

Benjamin gave a further example of parents intervening in gender education: *"we were talking about female circumcision, and there was a grade 8 parent who thought that was not a topic that we should cover. [...] and I strongly disagree with it*" (Benjamin, line 304). The personal convictions of teachers that certain controversial, sensitive topics be addressed in the classroom, is challenged by parents who are less open to such discussions. This signals significant points of resistance faced by teachers, particularly in the realm of gender and how this relates to cultural practices. Prinsloo (2007) and Magano (2011) point out that learners prefer their LO teachers to be open-minded, to value teacher-learner interactions, and to create a caring, safe space to voice their opinions on sensitive topics. However, the discussion above speaks to the limits of teachers' influence in the classroom as the voices and needs of parents may impact the breadth and depth of the teaching.

Another factor of "getting in trouble" is experienced through the interventions and conflicts with other teachers. Francois explained that a colleague confiscated a condom from one of the learners, and when Francois questioned why this happened, the colleague told him that it is not "appropriate". Similarly, Paul

reflected on his attempt to introduce sexual and gender diversity into the classroom, and the reaction from colleagues and his principal, as the head of LO at his school told him:

> *'I will sit in your class, if you're going to make me do that. And I'll make sure you're teaching the curriculum requirements.' She would actually want lesson plans or asked after with pupils, how was I teaching. [...] I think the curriculum might indeed [lend] itself to having space or interpretation by the [...] teacher, the educator, but she disallowed it completely. And she was backed, not to put it all on her, she was certainly backed by the principal to that they didn't want that kind of discourse to enter their prestigious school.* (Paul, line 69)

Paul explained that during his teaching career, the teaching of content related to gender diversity was strictly monitored and surveilled by teachers with greater authority than what he held in the school. This suggests that teaching practices related to gender and sexuality carry consequences that school administrators see as requiring careful management, and that these practices or topics might be viewed as posing reputational harm to "prestigious" schools.

Paul often expressed how pressures existed in the school environment which limited his ability to teach effectively. The environmental factors might also play a pivotal role in how LO teachers are able to operate and teach at particular schools, specifically limiting teachers' abilities to be sensitive, thoughtful and caring in the classroom. Paul explained:

> *[M]y experience is that teaching [in] my particular high school teaching environment was quite toxic, it was difficult. So there was [...] really systems in play that like fight against you. And so it's hard to then be thoughtful and hold yourself in a particular kind of manner that [...] is thoughtful, ja, that isn't like explosive, impulsive, or because you're dealing with so much.* (Paul, line 134)

Paul positioned the experience of teaching at his high school in a context of facing "systems" that seem insurmountable and push the teacher to the point that his desire to be a thoughtful, reflective, caring teacher is compromised. These factors are especially significant in the LO classroom, where many participants highlighted that empathy and caring are important parts of doing their jobs effectively. Paul continued: "*[Teachers] get fed up with it, and even systems that they can't control, you know, that fight against [them...] I think often times that goes into the classroom with you subsequent to these interactions*" (line 140). Paul was acutely aware of the lack of control that seems to be a component of the teaching profession and of the school environment, and that reaching burnout seems inevitable; in the process, built up frustration is not released, and implicitly, can impact on work in the classroom. Reygan and Francis's observations (2015) that a teacher's emotional state affects their teaching support Paul's comments.

These barriers faced by teachers, in terms of their teaching of gender concepts or on their abilities to perform their duties effectively are important to consider, especially in terms of the considerable need for a subject

like LO in the South African context, where widespread gender-based discrimination, violence and oppression impact on the lives of many South Africans (Francis & Msibi, 2011; Gqola, 2007; Leach & Humphreys, 2007). These barriers need to be adequately addressed in order to ensure that teachers are fully equipped to discuss gender in meaningful ways that can positively impact on the lives of learners.

4.7 CONCLUSION

The various barriers and limitations to their work outlined in this final theme highlight the precarious positions of male LO teachers and how they might lack support and clarity in their roles. The widely varying positions explained by the participants in this study contribute to their experiences of not knowing enough, and may present as barriers as explained in the above section. These elements might call for reforms and a deeper consideration of how to train and equip these teachers, which will be addressed in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Additionally, should LO be phased out at the FET phase, it is important to consider how adolescents, like the adolescent boys who were the focus of this study, would have access to gender and sexuality education in ways that promote values of human rights, equality and safety. These topics will also be considered under recommendations offered in the concluding chapter.

Through the thematic analysis various findings were presented in this chapter which could have implications for broader understandings of how male LO teachers see their roles in teaching gender concepts to boys. The findings and recommendations are therefore discussed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This qualitative research study employed a basic interpretivist research paradigm. The theoretical orientation consisted of an integrated framework based on Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, Kohlberg's three stages of gender development, social constructionism, and the social-learning theory of gender-role development. The study's main aim was to explore male Life Orientation (LO) teachers' understandings of teaching gender concepts to high school boy learners, particularly with reference to the gender concepts outlined in the Senior (Grade 7-9) and Further Education and Training (FET) phases of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

As discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis, LO is defined by the South African Department of Basic Education (DoBE) (2011b, p.8) as "the study of the self in relation to others and to society", "to live meaningfully and successfully in a rapidly changing society", and aims to apply a "holistic approach to the personal, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, motor and physical growth and development of learners". Based on this focus it is clear that LO teachers are mandated to address topics of diversity and personal development. For this reason, the topic of gender is vitally important in the LO Senior and FET curriculum; in addition, these topics of instruction are closely aligned with the values of human rights and dignity espoused in the South African Constitution (Prinsloo, 2005).

In terms of the research methodology, the data collection methods consisted of questionnaires, field notes compiled by the researcher in his research journal, and semi-structured individual interviews which were analysed through thematic analysis. The researcher's thematic analysis was chiefly guided by the works of Braun and Clarke (2006; 2013) and Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). Participants were recruited from the Johannesburg North District and the Johannesburg Central District using purposive and convenience sampling.

Data were coded through an iterative, multi-cycle process, which generated 53 unique codes. The thematic analysis allowed these codes to be grouped into five themes which were generated by the researcher. These themes were identified with two-letter codes, namely:

Theme 1- Teachers grappling with the nature of gender (Shortened to *Gender Concepts,* or GC, and coded in yellow)

Theme 2- Teachers' personal values: Conflicts and synergies in teaching gender (Shortened to Personal Values, or PV, and coded in blue)

Theme 3- Empathy and caring in teaching gender (Shortened to *Empathy &* Caring, or EC, and coded in green)

Theme 4- Being a male LO teacher: Expectations and alienation (Shortened to Male Teacher, or MT, and coded in orange)

Theme 5- Getting in trouble and facing boundaries to teaching (Shortened to Trouble & Boundaries, or TB, and coded in pink)

The 53 codes were arranged under these five themes, and named according to which theme they corresponded with, for example GC1, GC2, and so forth. Through the thematic analysis various findings were made which could have implications for broader understandings of how male LO teachers see their roles in teaching gender concepts to boys.

In order to shed light on the research questions, the findings are presented briefly once more in relation to the main research question, which is:

How do high school male LO teachers understand the concept of gender and other gender-related concepts as listed in the CAPS LO Senior and FET curriculum?

A major finding was that teachers grappled with gender concepts in ways that evinced inner conflict and confusion. At times, it appeared as if some participants perceived gender within fixed, predetermined and binary categories. In these cases, the teaching of gender concepts to boys in the classroom seemed to be affected in subtle ways such as reinforcing gender binaries or avoiding issues of gender diversity. Some participants indicated complex, multi-layered understandings of gender and gender diversity, particularly in reference to learners who are not gender-conforming. These understandings appeared to be linked to values of social justice and orientations of support and caring. An analysis indicated that these teachers were more likely to create thinking spaces in the classroom, to demonstrate empathy and caring for boys whose gender and sexual identities are nonnormative, and to allow for more learner input into discussions concerning gender, rather than assuming that values were shared among teachers and learners.

At times, the concepts of gender and sexuality were conflated by some participants, which is a manifestation of the significant overlap between these concepts. In the context of a learner disclosing their transgender identity, two participants indicated a need to support and understand. However, gender was framed by these two participants as being defined by choices which may have significant consequences, such as familial and peer rejection. In tandem with this subtheme, some participants also considered gender to be linked to a boy's "life path", characterised by a series of choices which could indicate quality of character. Within this framing, the participants indicated that male teachers with their longer and richer life experience of being men could offer greater guidance to boys.

In addition to answering this main question, the sub-questions which guided the study are addressed below with reference to the remaining themes generated in the study.

How have the participant teachers developed their understandings of gender?

The study found that personal values had a considerable impact on how gender concepts were taught to boys in LO classrooms. Participants frequently mentioned learners with transgender identities when exploring their own ideas of gender. Gay-identified teachers were considerably more critical of gender and sexuality labels. Additionally, whilst teachers who indicated their heterosexuality displayed care and a need to understand transgender identities, they did not appear to be critical or to question the validity or necessity of gender and sexuality labels. The two participants who indicated that they were strongly guided by their Christian faith and previous youth-related church work, considered the teaching of gender concepts as supported by their faith-based values of nonjudgment, empathy and a need to provide emotional support to learners, particularly learners coming to terms with nonnormative gender and sexual identities.

How do male teachers see their own gender identities as impacting on their roles as LO teachers?

Some of the teachers saw themselves as able to relate to boy learners in terms of intimate body knowledge and issues of sexual health. In the context of teaching gender concepts to boys, some teachers implicitly linked their own heterosexual identity to teaching gender by frequently mentioning their opposite-sex intimate relationships in the classroom. In contrast, all of the gay-identified participants indicated that they intentionally did not disclose any personal details in the classroom setting that may indicate their same-sex sexualities. These contrasting approaches amongst teachers of different sexual orientations could be understood as heterosexist (Chesir-Teran, 2003). Essentially, queer identities are erased in the classroom space and framed as "inappropriate" for classroom discussion, a term used by some gay-identified participants to explain their intentional nondisclosure. Potentially, space for discussion is stifled and diverse identities might be erased through the avoidance of self-disclosure by these gay teachers, where heterosexual teachers consider such acts of self-disclosure as assets to their roles as LO teachers.

How do participant teachers teach gender and related concepts to boys?

Some of the participants appeared to value and prioritise the role of teachers as facilitators of gender development and of promoting progressive attitudes towards gender roles. These participants considered open, safe, and respectful classroom discussions as particularly effective in teaching gender concepts. This may reflect the need that participants had of deepening their own understandings of gender concepts outside of the classroom. In this vein, a consistent subtheme of the personal values held by most participants was a need to respect and understand gender concepts, particularly in terms of gender diversity. This was however voiced to varying degrees by participants and was not discussed at all by one participant, Richard, who understood gender as binary and fixed.

Another important finding that arose from the generated themes was the degree to which participants reflected on the importance of empathy and care in the teaching of gender concepts to boys. Facilitating the learning of gender concepts was considered by some participants to be more effective when conducted in a gentle, sensitive, and thoughtful manner, in particular when related to gender and sexual diversity.

Significantly, participants at times had to be redirected to focus the discussion on the experiences of boys, the research focus, as they frequently seemed to default to their empathy and care for girl and trans learners. This implies that boys are deemed to be less in need of empathy, thought, and care than girls, which might reinforce the stereotype that boys are less relationally inclined, and underestimate the level of empathy and care that boys may also need. Furthermore, despite the indicated support of some participants of gender-nonconforming boys, and demonstrated empathy in this regard, the disinclination to consider boys as a general category in terms of gendered harm is notable. Teachers seem to not adequately recognise the effects of gender-based harm inflicted on boys and men, and might obscure the struggle, conflict, hurt and abuse faced by boys. Some participants did, however, discuss their perception that the developing self-concepts of some boys might be harmed by gender-based violence discourses that universally portray boys and men as perpetrators. Despite many participants highlighting their empathy and care, personality traits such as empathy, caring, and thoughtfulness appeared to be perceived as contradictory to stereotypically masculine traits, reminiscent of 'toxic masculinity'.

Another finding of this research study was that some participants considered their own male gender as enabling them to relate to boys better than female teachers, particularly in intimate matters such as physical appearance, sexuality and health. This suggested that gender can be conceptualised as an inhabited, lived identity and become better understood, managed, and taught to boys as a result of these lived experiences. Similar to what was discussed under the theme of empathy and care, the participants related ideas of men as "dangerous" and women as "nurturing". The suggestion that male teachers were less suitable as confidants to boys who might disclose matters of sexual identity to them is reminiscent of notions of toxic masculinity. Instead, women were positioned as more "comfortable" with such a role. Additionally, some participants voiced reluctance to see themselves as role models to boys. It may therefore be inferred that the LO teaching role, with specific reference to teaching gender concepts to boys, might be resisted by male teachers, perhaps due to these notions of women being more suited to act as confidants or to be nurturing.

Another significant finding in this research study pointed to teachers "getting in trouble" when teaching gender in the classroom, or their struggles in navigating the perceived boundaries imposed by parents, community influences, other teachers and school administrations. Many participants noted that they were surveilled in terms of their teaching content by parents or other teachers, and that they were actively discouraged from discussing gender or sexuality topics with learners. Certain strategies were also linked to the threat of "getting in trouble", such as hypothetical discussions about coming out as gay. These restrictions reflect the challenges of teaching topics of gender and sexuality in South African schools in a largely conservative milieu (Francis & Msibi, 2011). Greater dialogue might be required between schools, parents and communities in order to enable teachers to effectively teach gender concepts to learners.

Participants seemed to note generational differences between themselves and their learners. They noted that learners are afforded great freedom in thinking and rethinking their gender and gender roles, and, at times,

participants compared this “freedom” to “confusion”, particularly in relation to transgender learners. This may imply that transgender children are understood as children grappling with confusion instead of children grappling with navigating their gender identity in a gender-binary world (Ehrensaft, 2016). This may also reflect the confusion, uncertainty, and tentativeness of the teachers in discussing gender concepts and gender diversity, and not necessarily the confusion of the learners. These assumptions are also arguably heterosexist in nature, implying that gender-conforming behaviours are linked to stability and that cisgender identities are authentic and not “confused”. It must also be noted that this framing may depict a lack of teacher training and sensitisation (Francis & Msibi, 2011).

The devaluing of LO as an important learning area by the national government appears to also have a trickle-down effect in the school environment, in terms of the relative lack of importance attached to LO by school administrators and by learners. Furthermore, LO textbooks which were experienced as limiting and not empowering in terms of facilitating the learning of gender concepts, resistant parents, colleagues, and school administrators, and the overwhelmingly personal nature of gender concepts were identified as further challenges and boundaried areas in teaching gender concepts. These realities faced by male LO teachers posed significant obstacles to the indicated need for empathy, care, thoughtful discussion, reflection, and safe spaces when teaching gender concepts to boys.

Lastly, a significant finding across the various themes discussed was that teachers require support and clear strategies, frameworks and training in order to teach gender concepts. Participants stressed the importance of teaching these gender concepts to adolescent learners and noted how they valued their roles as LO teachers, but the various barriers discussed above were obstacles to effective instruction in schools. South Africa faces particular challenges, with one of the highest rates of gender based violence and rape in the world (Kalichman et al., 2005), where toxic forms of masculinity are linked to negative health effects and social problems (Jewkes et al., 2011), and where gender and sexual minorities face significant oppression, violence and victimisation (Francis & Msibi, 2011). These phenomena necessitate more comprehensive gender education for teachers and learners.

Ignoring gender education in our classrooms could perpetuate these challenges and might fail to address the needs of young people in terms of their development. When boys are left out of these conversations, their potentially toxic behaviours might become normalised. They might be stripped of the opportunities to thoughtfully and sensitively reflect on their identities, and on how their self-concept is linked to gender expectations and gender roles. In the words of Francois, a participant in this study, when he discusses sex education, “*If we don't educate them, then we are doing them a disservice*.”

5.2. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

From the outset, it is clear that a small-scale qualitative research study which only comprises a sample of six research participants cannot possibly reflect the breadth and depth of South African LO teachers’

perspectives. The limited scope of this study is a limitation in the generalisability of the data. In addition, in keeping with the qualitative research tradition, the researcher made every effort to comprehensively and respectfully represent the voices of the research participants, but acknowledges that his own worldview, personal identity, and life experience may have shaped his data collection and analysis, likely in ways that are not apparent to him.

Participants were recruited from the Johannesburg North District and the Johannesburg Central District, which limited the range of participants, particularly in terms of socio-economic class. All of the participating schools were located in middle class areas, which does not reflect the diversity of South Africa's teachers. Consequently, the needs and perspectives of teachers catering to rural or township learners could not be represented.

Additionally, it would be remiss of the researcher to suggest that only male LO teachers model, teach, and enact understandings of gender to high school boys. Therefore, it needs to be acknowledged that gender concepts are also interpreted, understood, and conveyed through other school subjects, teachers, and elements in the educational environment which were not addressed in this study.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research study has strongly indicated that a person's understanding of gender and sexuality are deeply rooted in personal beliefs informed by culture, religion, and education. Given the wide-ranging and extensive reformulations and understandings of gender and sexuality in the last several years, most notably the phenomenon of children identifying as transgender at much earlier ages than before (Ehrensaft, 2016), it seems understandable that the participants in this study seemed at times confused, tentative in their language choice, and uncertain about how to approach the teaching of gender concepts. Whilst guided by care, empathy, and well-intentioned concern for their learners, some teachers appeared to be struggling with the comprehension of gender concepts themselves, which may impede effective learning in the classroom of these vital identity dimensions. This indicates the need for comprehensive training and guidance on how to best support learners who are minorities in terms of gender and sexuality, or who are gender nonconforming. Additional training in these areas might also include facilitating discussions around gender, sexuality, and diversity with parents and other role players in the schools' communities. Organisations which might offer guidance in implementing community dialogues in Johannesburg include Gay & Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA) and OUT.

Some teachers also voiced that the way that the LO curriculum instructs the teaching of gender concepts reflects limiting ideas of masculinity. This might reproduce a narrow representation of gender roles, and may even reproduce elements of toxic masculinity. A recommendation of this study is that the types of masculinities reflected in curricula be expanded, and, as discussed by the participant Paul, sensitive, emotional, thoughtful, and gentle masculinities also be highlighted as valid, important, and healthy. In order

to achieve this, it is recommended that the LO curriculum's conceptualisation and representation of gender concepts be broadened to reflect contemporary, expanded definitions of gender concepts and progressive masculinity.

This concluding chapter ends with a quote from Judith Butler (1999, p. 43), who references Simone de Beauvoir. The quote below refers to what it means to be a woman, but the discussion in this thesis shows that the quote can apply equally to a man:

> *"If [...] one is not born, but rather becomes a woman, it follows that woman itself is a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end. As an ongoing discursive practice, it is open to intervention and resignification*."

Butler argues that one becomes a woman, a *work-in-process*, and that this gender identity does not originate or end at any point. Butler's quote seems to resonate with a finding of this research study, which is that a boy's gender can be understood as a series of choices that line his life path, which shapes his quality of character and other important outcomes of his life. If gender is an ongoing process, open to interventions and resignification, then a boy's life path can be seen as open to intervention as well. These interventions and resignifications might be facilitated by teachers or other authoritative figures to help boys develop progressive gender identities and for boys to experience themselves authentically.

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APPENDIX A: GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	06 February 2019
Validity of Research Approval:	04 February 2019 – 30 September 2019 2018/393
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Research Topic:	Teaching Gender Concepts to Boys in High School: Male Teacher's Perspectives.
Type of qualification	Master's in Education
Number and type of schools:	Three Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Johannesburg North and Johannesburg Central

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

07/02/2019

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*
3. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
4. *A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.*
5. *The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.*
6. *Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*
7. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.*
8. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.*
9. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.*
10. *The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.*
11. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.*
12. *On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.*
13. *The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*
14. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.*

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

.....

Mr Gumani Mukatuni
Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 07/02/2019

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX B: NOTICE OF APPROVAL BY RESEARCH COMMITTEE

UNIVERSITEIT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC Humanities New Application Form

8 February 2019

Project number: 9017

Project Title: Teaching gender concepts to boys in high school: Male teachers' perspectives

Dear Mr Pieter Van der Walt

Your REC Humanities New Application Form submitted on **07 February 2019** was reviewed and approved by the REC: Humanities.

Please note the following for your approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
05 February 2019	04 February 2022

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number **(9017)** on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary)

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Proof of permission	Principal Permission Letter [redacted]	30/11/2018	1
Proof of permission	Principal Permission Letter: [redacted]	30/11/2018	1
Proof of permission	Principal Permission Letter: [redacted]	05/12/2018	1
Data collection tool	Interview Schedule	17/01/2019	Final
Data collection tool	Questionnaire	17/01/2019	Final
Informed Consent Form	Consent Form	06/02/2019	2
Research Protocol/Proposal	Vd Walt, PM, 14376318, Research Proposal, Feb 2019	06/02/2019	Final
Proof of permission	GDE Research Approval Letter	07/02/2019	1

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.
The Research Ethics Committee: Humanities complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2nd Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

Some of the general responsibilities investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

1.**Conducting the Research**. You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research. You must also ensure that the research is conducted within the standards of your field of research.

2.**Participant Enrollment**. You may not recruit or enroll participants prior to the REC approval date or after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the REC prior to their use.

3.**Informed Consent**. You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents/process, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least five (5) years.

4.**Continuing Review**.The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is **no grace period**. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, **it is your responsibility to submit the progress report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur**. If REC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrollment, and contact the REC office immediately.

5.**Amendments and Changes**.If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the REC for review using the current Amendment Form. You **may not initiate** any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written REC review and approval. **The only exception** is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

6.**Adverse or Unanticipated Events**.Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to Malene Fouche within **five** (5) days of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. All reportable events should be submitted to the REC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.

7.**Research Record Keeping**. You must keep the following research related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence from the REC

8.**Provision of Counselling or emergency support**. When a dedicated counsellor or psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

9.**Final reports**. When you have completed (no further participant enrollment, interactions or interventions) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the REC.

10.**On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits**. If you are notified that your research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, you must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF CONSENT FROM SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD / SCHOOL STAMP: _____

To whom it may concern Date: _____

As the principal of _____ I hereby acknowledge the request of Mr Pieter Malan van der Walt, MEdPsych student at the Department of Educational Psychology, Stellenbosch University, to conduct research at my school's premises with male Life orientation Teachers. Malan has informed me about the nature and purpose of his proposed research study. I hereby give Malan permission to approach Life Orientation teachers employed at this school regarding voluntary participation in his proposed research study. Once he has obtained ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of the Stellenbosch University he may communicate with teaching staff that comply with the selection criteria for the study.

School's name: _____

Principal name: _____

Principal's signature: _____

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD /

APPENDIX D: INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT

UNIVERSITEIT•STELLENBOSCH•UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TEACHING GENDER CONCEPTS TO BOYS IN HIGH SCHOOL:

MALE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

Dear Prospective Research Participant

My name is Malan van der Walt and I am completing my Masters in Educational Psychology at the Department of Educational Psychology, Stellenbosch University. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project entitled *Teaching gender concepts to boys in high school: Male teachers' perspectives*. The results of this study will contribute towards the completion of my master's thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because it requires the participation of male teachers employed at a high school that teaches male adolescents Life Orientation as prescribed in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project and don't hesitate to contact me if you require further explanation or clarification on any aspect of the study. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you can withdraw from participation at any time. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point during the research process, even if you do agree to take part.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of male Life Orientation teachers' perspectives on teaching gender to adolescent boys as prescribed by the CAPS curriculum.

2. PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you would be asked to do the following:

Step 1: Sign a form of consent to participate in the research

Once you have volunteered to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign this consent form.

Step 2: Questionnaire

Next, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire. I will ask your school's secretary to provide me with your email address in order to email you the questionnaire. The questionnaire will contain questions

concerning gender and teaching gender to adolescent boys. It will be completed anonymously and returned to the researcher at an agreed upon time. The questionnaire will ensure your anonymity and confidentiality.

Step 3: Individual interview

The researcher will conduct an interview of approximately 60 minutes with you to further explore topics of discussion that emerged from the questionnaire. This interview will also be audio recorded.

Step 4: Dissemination of data

Next, the researcher will transcribe the audio recordings of the interviews. The researcher will transcribe the interview himself manually. In order to confirm that the research participants approve of the accuracy of the data, the researcher will provide each participant with transcripts of the individual interview via email or hard copy, according to the research participants' preference. The participants will be invited to suggest any amendments that might improve upon the accuracy of the data before it will be used in the study. The transcriptions and voice recordings will be kept in a securely locked filing cabinet in the researcher's private office for a period of five years after which it will be destroyed.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

You will be asked questions relating to your understanding of gender and gender-related concepts as outlined in the CAPS Senior and FET LO Curriculum, and the teaching thereof. At the end of this consent form are the contact details of LifeLine, which is a service that offers free counselling and psychosocial support, in the event that this interview might stir up some uncomfortable feelings for you.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS AND SOCIETY

Research participants might gain insight from thinking more deeply about their engagement around concepts related to gender and the teaching thereof. Reflecting on these issues might serve to provide you with insight about your own teaching practices, and you might develop a deeper understanding of your strengths and areas of development as an LO teacher.

On an academic level, this research can potentially reveal the skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes of male teachers. This can yield insights that might aid curriculum revision and adaptation that can include the thoughts, feelings and lived experiences that male LO teachers have with regards to gender related concepts and the teaching thereof.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Participation is voluntary; therefore, no financial remuneration is offered to research participants.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with any participant or school will remain confidential and will be disclosed only in the rare event that it is required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of pseudonyms (fictitious names) that will replace the participant and the school's real name. The questionnaire will be completed anonymously.

The audio recordings will be stored on the researcher's personal computer in his private office in an electronic folder that is protected by a two-factor password that is only known to the researcher, and will only be shared with the researcher's supervisors, Ms Mariechen Perold and Ms Carla Feenstra. The transcripts of the interviews in paper form will be stored in the researcher's private office in a secure, locked filing cabinet. Depending on your choice, the transcripts can either be emailed to you or provided to you in hard copy with the purpose of providing you with the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the data. The findings of this research will be reported and published in a master's thesis that does not contain any data to identify you or your school. Any information that can identify you as a participant in this research study will be erased from the researcher's computer once the thesis has been completed.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this research study is entirely voluntary. Should you volunteer to be a participant, you may withdraw at any time without penalty or consequences of any kind. You are also not under any obligation to answer any of the questions that are posed to you. Additionally, the researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. You can notify me by email or by my contact number supplied directly below if you wish to withdraw your participation, and your data will then not be used in the research study in any way.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCHERS

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please feel free to contact the researchers:

Mr Malan van der Walt: 081 566 2713 or malanvdw@gmail.com;

Ms Mariechen Perold: 021 855 1781 or mdperold@sun.ac.za or mariechen@perold.co.za;

Ms Carla Feenstra: 021 808 2319 or carlaf@sun.ac.za

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without any penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this study.

If you have any further questions regarding the rights of research participants, please contact Ms Maléne Fouché (mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622) at the Division for Research Development, Stellenbosch University.

10. LIFELINE CONTACT DETAILS

LifeLine is a service that offers free counselling and psychosocial support in the event that this interview might stir up uncomfortable feelings for you. Please note the contact details:

Johannesburg

Crisis: 011 728 1347

WhatsApp Call Counselling Line: 065 989 9238

Physical Address:

2 The Avenue

Cnr Henrietta Street

Norwood

Johannesburg

Office: 011 728 1331

Email: lifeline@lifelinejhb.org.za

Website: http://www.lifelinejhb.org.za

DECLARATION BY RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

By signing below, I, _____, agree to take part in a research study entitled *Teaching gender concepts to boys in high school: Male teachers' perspectives,* conducted by *Malan van der Walt.*

I declare that:

- I have read this consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressured to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, or if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, as agreed to.
- All issues related to privacy and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide have been explained to my satisfaction.

Signed on _____ at _____

Name and surname of participant: _____

Signature of participant: _____

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____. _____ was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in _____ and no translator was used.

Name and surname of investigator: _____

Signature of investigator: _____

APPENDIX E: SELF-ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE

Teaching gender concepts to boys in high school:

Male teachers' perspectives

A research study conducted by Malan van der Walt

You have accepted an invitation to participate in a research project entitled *Teaching gender concepts to boys in high school: Male teachers' perspectives*, and the first part of your participation is to fill in this questionnaire. The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of male Life Orientation (LO) teachers' perspectives on teaching gender to high school boys as prescribed by the LO CAPS curriculum. This questionnaire is anonymous, and thus your right to confidentiality and privacy will be maintained and respected by the researcher.

A: Demographic Information - please indicate the following

1.1 Age: _____

1.2 Language of preference: _____

1.3 Educational qualifications: _____

1.4 Other qualifications: _____

1.5 Years teaching experience: _____

1.6 Years teaching LO CAPS curriculum: _____

1.7 High school subjects trained to teach, _____

or high school subjects you registered _____

to teach: _____

B: Open-ended Questions

Please write a paragraph for questions 2-10 below. You are welcome to be as honest and open as possible.

1. How many years have you taught LO *to boys* according to the CAPS curriculum at your current high school? _____.

2. How do you understand the concept of gender?

_____

_____

_____

_____.

3. Does the LO CAPS curriculum refer to gender and/or gender concepts in the Senior or FET band? If so, can you tell me what it is?

_____

_____

_____

_____.

4. How do you believe an LO teacher should approach teaching gender concepts to high school learners?

_____

_____

_____

_____.

5. How do you believe a male LO teacher should approach teaching gender concepts to high school boys?

_____

_____

_____

_____.

6. What do you think high school boys should know about gender?

_____

_____

_____

_____.

7. The LO CAPS curriculum mentions that learners should be 'sensitive to gender'. What do you think this means?

_____

_____

_____

_____.

8. The CAPS curriculum mentions 'gender inequality'. How do you understand this?

_____

_____

_____

_____.

9. What are your thoughts on the teaching of gender concepts in a co-educational classroom?

_____

_____

_____

_____.

10. How do you think male and female LO teachers teach gender concepts to high school boys and girls? If you think there are differences, please explain how and why.

_____

_____

_____

_____.

APPENDIX F: SEMI-STRUCTURED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Teaching gender concepts to boys in high school: Male teachers' perspectives

A research study conducted by Malan van der Walt

The researcher will thank participants for completing the questionnaire, and proceed with the interview, after again explaining concepts relating to confidentiality. An opportunity to ask questions will be provided.

Themes emergent from the questionnaire will then be asked, which may include:

- *The awareness and level of understanding that participants may have concerning gender concepts in the CAPS document*
- *The understanding that participants have of gender*
- *Differences between male and female teachers*
- *Differences between teaching high school boys and high school girls*
- *Being a role model for high school boys*

The following questions will also be asked:

1. Do you believe that male Life Orientation teachers can or should teach gender any differently than female Life Orientation teachers? If so, why?

2. How do you understand the adolescent developmental phase in male learners?

3. What are your thoughts on popular expectations that learners need role models, and that teachers should fulfil that role?

4. Please expand on your thoughts in (3) above while differentiating between male and female teachers, as well as male and female learners.

APPENDIX G: CAPS LIFE ORIENTATION SENIOR AND FET PHASE - GENDER CONCEPTS

National Curriculum Statement **Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: Life Orientation** **Senior Phase: Grade 7-9**		
	Excerpt (verbatim)	**Page**
Mentions of gender and sex concepts: **Grade 8-9**	"The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 serves the purposes of: equipping learners, irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender…"	4
	"The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 is based on the following principles: Human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice: infusing the principles and practices of social and environmental justice and human rights as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 is sensitive to issues of diversity such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age, disability and other factors"	4, 5
	Development of the self in society: • Concept: sexuality - Understanding one's sexuality: personal feelings that impact on sexuality- Influence of friends and peers on one's sexuality - Family and community norms that impact on sexuality- Cultural values that impact on sexuality- Social pressures including media that impact on sexuality- Problem-solving skills: identity formation and development	16
	Constitutional rights and responsibilities: ● Concept: gender equity- Gender equity issues in a variety of athletic and sport activities - Defining gender-based violence- Emotional, health and social impact of rape and gender-based violence - Prevention of violence against women: law on sexual	19

	offences- Sources of help for victims: safety for girls and women Constitutional rights and responsibilities ● Concept: cultural diversity in South Africa ○ Respect difference: culture, religion and gender	
Mentions of gender and sex concepts: **Grade 8-9**	Development of the self in society ● Sexual behaviour and sexual health: ○ Risk factors leading to unhealthy sexual behaviour ○ Unwanted results of unhealthy sexual behaviour: teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV and AIDS, low self-image and emotional scars- Factors that influence personal behaviour including family, friends, peers and community norms ○ Strategies to deal with unhealthy sexual behaviour: abstinence and change of behaviour ○ Protective factors, where to find help and support: community structures that offer protection or resilience against high risk behaviour ○ Adverse consequences and implications of teenage pregnancy for teenage parent(s) and the children born to teenagers	20
Mentions of gender and sex concepts: **Grade 8-9**	Constitutional rights and responsibilities ● Issues relating to citizens' rights and responsibilities: ○ Respect for others' rights: people living with different disabilities and HIV and AIDS (infected and affected)	21

	○ Celebrations of national and international days: Human Rights Day, Freedom Day, Heritage Day, Reconciliation Day, youth Day, Worker's Day, Women's Day, Africa Day, Nelson Mandela Day, World Refugee's Day and national health days	
	Constitutional rights and responsibilities ● Constitutional values as stated in the South African Constitution ○ Positive and negative role models ○ Role models for upholding constitutional values: parents and leaders in the community/society ○ Applying these values in daily life	21

National Curriculum Statement **Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: Life Orientation** **Senior Phase: Grade 10-12**		
	Excerpt (verbatim)	**Page**
	"The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 serves the purposes of: equipping learners, irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender…"	4
	"The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 is based on the following principles: ● Human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice: infusing the principles and practices of social and environmental justice and human rights as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 is sensitive to issues of diversity such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age,	4, 5

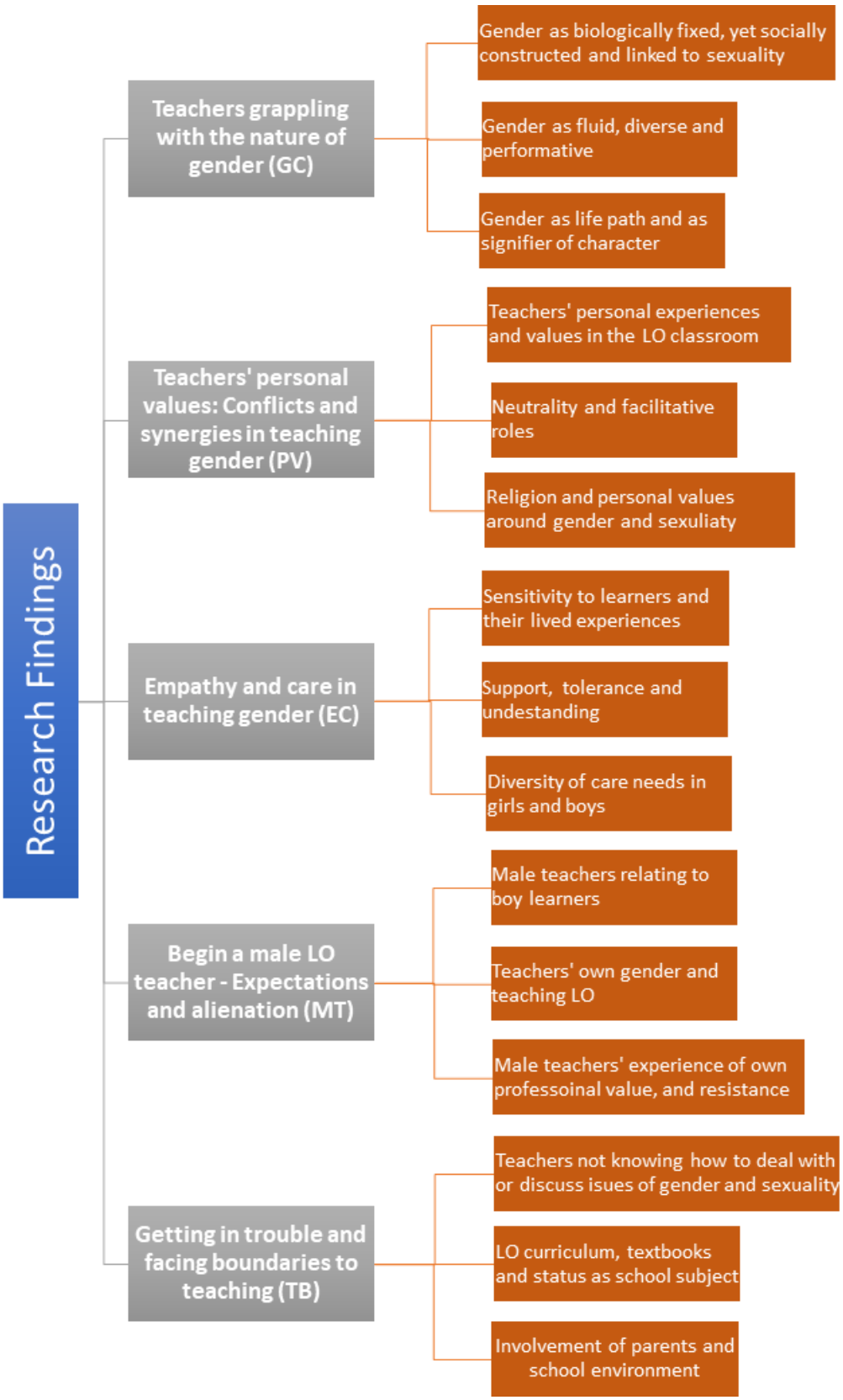
	disability and other factors”	
Mentions of gender and sex concepts: **Grade 10-12**	Development of the self in society ● Decision-making regarding sexuality ● Power, power relations and gender roles (Gr 10) ● Gender roles and their effects on health and well-being (Gr 11) ● ideologies, beliefs and worldviews on construction of recreation and physical activity across cultures and genders (Gr 12)	10
	Development of the self in society: ● Strategies to enhance self-awareness, self-esteem and self-development: factors influencing self-awareness and self-esteem including media ○ Acknowledge and respect the uniqueness of self and others and respect differences (race, gender and ability) ● Definition of concepts: power, power relations, masculinity, femininity and gender ○ Differences between a man and a woman: reproduction and roles in the community, stereotypical views of gender roles and responsibilities, gender differences in participation in physical activities ○ Influence of gender inequality on relationships and general well-being: sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy, violence, STIs including HIV and AIDS	12
Mentions of gender and sex concepts: Grade 10-12	Democracy and human rights: ● Concepts: diversity, discrimination and violations of human rights ○ Contexts: race, religion, culture, language, gender, age,	12

	rural/urban, xenophobia, human trafficking and HIV and AIDS status ● Bill of Rights, international Conventions and instruments: Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other bills, charters and protection agencies, rules, codes of conduct and laws ○ Types of discriminating behaviour and violations: incidences of discriminating behaviour and human rights violations in SA and globally ○ The nature and source of bias, prejudice and discrimination: impact of discrimination, oppression, bias, prejudice and violations of human rights on individuals and society ○ Challenging prejudice and discrimination: significant contributions by individuals and organisations to address human rights violations ○ Contemporary events showcasing the nature of a transforming South Africa: South African initiatives and campaigns, one's own position, actions and contribution in discussions, projects, campaigns and events which address discrimination and human rights violations, nation-building and protection agencies and their work	
Mentions of gender and sex concepts: Grade 10-12	Development of the self in society: ● Changes associated with development towards adulthood: adolescence to adulthood - ○ Physical changes: hormonal, increased growth rates, bodily proportions, secondary sex/gender characteristics, primary changes in the body (menstruation, ovulation and seed formation) and skin problems ● Emotional changes: maturing personality, depth and control of	15

Mentions of gender and sex concepts: Grade 10-12	emotions, feelings of insecurity, changing needs, interests, feelings, beliefs, values and sexual interest ● Values and strategies to make responsible decisions regarding sexuality and lifestyle choices to optimise personal potential ○ Behaviour that could lead to sexual intercourse and teenage pregnancy, sexual abuse and rape ○ Values such as respect for self and others, abstinence, self-control, right to privacy, right to protect oneself, right to say 'No' and taking responsibility for own actions ○ Skills such as self-awareness, critical thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, assertiveness, negotiations, communication, refusal, goal-setting and information gathering relating to sexuality and lifestyle choices ○ Where to find help regarding sexuality and lifestyle choices	
	Democracy and human rights ● Coverage of sport: Ways to redress bias ○ Gender, race, stereotyping and sporting codes	16
	Development of the self in society ● Risky behaviour and situations: personal safety, road use, substance use and abuse, sexual behaviour, risk of pregnancy, teenage suicides, hygiene and dietary behaviour, sexually-transmitted infections (STIs), HIV & AIDS and peer pressure	19
	Development of the self in society ● Gender roles and their effects on health and well-being: self, family and society ○ Unequal power relations, power inequality, power balance and	20

Mentions of gender and sex concepts: Grade 10-12	power struggle between genders: abuse of power towards an individual (physical abuse), in family (incest), cultural (different mourning periods for males and females), social (domestic violence and sexual violence/rape) and work settings (sexual harassment) ○ Negative effects on health and well-being ○ Addressing unequal power relations and power inequality between genders	
	Democracy and human rights ● Ideologies, beliefs and worldviews on recreation and physical activity across cultures and genders	22
	Development of the self in society ● Human factors that cause ill-health, accidents, crises and disasters: psychological, social, religious, cultural practices and different knowledge perspectives ○ Lifestyle diseases as a result of poverty and gender imbalances: cancer, hypertension, diseases of the heart and circulatory system, tuberculosis, sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS ○ Contributing factors: eating habits, lack of exercise, smoking, substance abuse and unsafe sexual behaviour	

APPENDIX H: RESEARCH FINDINGS ACCORDING TO THEMES AND SUBTHEMES



APPENDIX I: THEMES, SUBTHEMES, AND CODES

	Teachers grappling with the nature of gender		**Teachers' personal values: Conflicts and synergies in teaching gender**		**Empathy and care in teaching gender**		**Being a male LO teacher - Expectations and alienation**		**Getting in trouble and facing boundaries to teaching**
	GC		**PV**		**EC**		**MT**		**TB**
GC1	Gender is fixed	**PV1**	Personal Background/ life story and relevance to LO teaching	**EC1**	Sensitivity to learners and personal impact of their situations	**MT1**	Men understand certain things better	**TB1**	Not know how to deal with issues of gender/sexuality
GC2	Gender=sex	**PV2**	Opinions vs Facts in teaching	**EC2**	In the profession because they care - teaching as caring profession	**MT2**	Men cannot speak about certain things/ do certain things	**TB2**	Criticise LO curriculum
GC3	Gender=sexual orientation	**PV3**	Beliefs/ Convictions - "I don't personally agree"	**EC3**	Support: "I'll be there", "I'll be accepting"	**MT3**	Being a role model/ gender model	**TB3**	Limitations of textbooks
GC4	View of Young People	**PV4**	Religion	**EC4**	Passion vs Obligation	**MT4**	Gender of teacher makes no difference	**TB4**	Self-identified gay teachers say they shouldn't talk about personal life
GC5	"What About the Boys" Pathologising Masculinity and Exclusion of Male Learners	**PV5**	No bias/ honesty	**EC5**	Thinking Space/ reflection/ consideration/ thought	**MT5**	Male teacher as predatory/ pervert/ pedophile and not for young children	**TB5**	Knowledge of curriculum
GC6	Participants forget about "boys" aspect and focus on general discussion	**PV6**	Modern times/ nowadays	**EC6**	Should we care about boys? Trans or girls sensitivity	**MT6**	Male teacher as paternal figure	**TB6**	Controversy/ contradiction not wanting to offend
GC7	Identify sexual orientation themselves as related to gender	**PV7**	Differences from "other teachers"	**EC7**	Boys' self-esteem/ mental health	**MT7**	Men's innate/natural/ acquired authority	**TB7**	Language/ Terminology/ Tentativeness

GC8	Spectrum/ diversity of genders	**PV8**	Culture			**MT8**	Women's sexual abuse/traumatic is more traumatic	**TB8**	Not allowed to/ not permissible/ power to change or challenge
GC9	Gender performativity	**PV9**	Sexual health and responsibility in South Africa					**TB9**	Parents/ community
GC10	Gender as a choice	**PV10**	Hypotheticals as teaching strategy					**TB10**	Oppressed, beleaguered, overwhelmed teacher
GC11	Traditional' understanding of gender	**PV11**	Teacher as (gender identity) facilitator					**TB11**	LO stigma/ disregarded/ belittled
GC12	Conflicting messages	**PV12**	Identity Exploration of learners						
GC13	Gender understood as opposite to opposite sex								
GC14	Gender is character/destiny/ lifepath								
GC15	Indicated need to resist 'stereotypes'								

APPENDIX J: EXCERPT FROM INTERVIEW CODING (1)

Interviewer: What do you see as your role in that moment?	**EC5: thinking space, reflection, consideration, thought**
Participant: I think my role in that moment is to get them to think about it, because the only way to break a stereotype is to get people to think about it, I think. I think you know, and I don't think in that two minutes or whatever when it comes up, you can change anything, but possibly you can plant seeds. So, I tend to ask why? A lot of them tell you straight and say, "I'll be kicked out of my house. I dread to tell my parents that." I do think it's a place for me to say, "Listen guys, I understand that." But there are guys that choose to, and most of the time I say yes, but that's their choice. And I'm like, "Okay, brilliant." But I think then we need to accept them just like they accept you as a straight guy, and will probably respect you in most cases. I think it's a bit of needs to go the other way as well. So I do take that opportunity there 'cause I think it's important.	**GC10: Gender as choice** **PV11: Teacher as (gender identity) facilitator**
Interviewer: So you see it as an opportunity for engagement and reflection, and for them to think about what they're saying, and why they feel the way they feel?	**EC5: thinking space, reflection, consideration, thought**
Participant: I would hope so. I mean it's not in depth, it's not long. But I think it plants a seed in a lot of... I don't know when I say homophobic, I don't think they really fear it, but I just think they don't really think about their daily comments. So, to maybe just say, "Eh, guys listen, maybe it's not appropriate that language you're using."	**PV11: Teacher as (gender identity) facilitator**

APPENDIX K: EXCERPT FROM INTERVIEW CODING (2)

Dumisane: Okay. And, and even when there's more and more young teachers at this like, there's a lot more young teachers now. And even they get shocked, because they also get into the industry and they think that this is how you should dress and ((uh huh)) yeah, and I mean 21st century teacher is all about, I think teachers know it's more about I chose to become a teacher, I'm here to deliver the best content ever. It's not about how I look like, of course, when I am at work I try and dress as professionally as possible… because, not because I want to, not because I can't, I can't dress casually. I'm sure you've seen **some of the teachers here dress casually**. I can dress casually. The reason why I don't do it is because I know I look young. **And I don't want the kids to have a perception that I'm inferior**. **Researcher**: Okay, so, uhh a role model, male teacher is also one that appears a little bit older. It's not very young, as you said. **Interviewer:** No no no no. Uhm. Okay, the way I dress I've I've I've made a comparison of the two when I dress more casually the kids is very difficult to get the kids alive. I think it's more of a behavioral thing. The more professional I dress the more the kids are more well behaved because they can see, I think it kind of tells them what mood I'm in, I don't know perhaps but the kids know I'm 27 ((hmm)). They know that I'm 27, they know that I'm young. **I share my most of my life except for my sexuality and things like that.**	**GC9 (Gender performativity)** **PV7 (Different from 'other teachers')** **TB6 (Controversy/ Contradiction/Not wanting to offend** **GC9 (Gender performativity)** **TB4 (Self-identified gay teachers shouldn't talk about personal life)**

APPENDIX L:TURNITIN REPORT

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

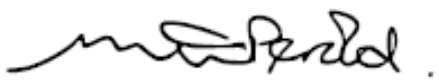
THESIS/DISSERTATION SUBMISSION

Student's surname:	Van der Walt		
Initials:	PM	**Student no.:**	14376318
Title of thesis/dissertation: Teaching gender concepts to boys in high school: Male teachers' perspectives			
Degree:	MEd in Educational Psychology		
Supervisor(s):	Ms Mariechen Perold supervisor Ms Carla Feenstra co-supervisor		

I confirm that:

- I and the co-supervisor(s) (if applicable) have read the final draft of the thesis/dissertation;
- The thesis/dissertation is ready for examination;
- The thesis/dissertation has been checked using anti-plagiarism software Turnitin.

Supervisor signature:



Date:

21 July 2019

Teaching gender concepts to boys in high school Male teachers' perspectives

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