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AN EXPLORATION ON THE CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUTH IN LESBIANS, GAYS, BISEXUALS, TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX RELATIONSHIPS AT MKHUHLU LOCATION, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

By

Mohale Robert

(11603230)

Dissertation for the Master's Degree in Gender Studies (MGS)

In the

Institute for Youth and Gender studies

School of Human and Social Sciences

University of Venda

Limpopo

South Africa

Supervisor: Prof. T.D Thobejane

Co-supervisor: Dr. T. Chari

2017

DECLARATION

I, MOHALE ROBERT, hereby declare that this research proposal entitled the exploration on the challenges faced by youth in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) relationship is written and submitted by me to the University of Venda in partial fulfilment of the Master's degree in Gender studies, is my true work. No part of this research paper has been submitted for the purpose of a degree at this or any other institution. All the literature sources in this document have been acknowledged.

Student Signature ………………………   Date………………………….

ABSTRACT

This study seek to explore the challenges that are faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) relationships at Mkhuhlu location. The study argues that this cohort, just like any other, should be afforded human rights, and the choice to be in lesbians, gays, bisexual, transgender and intersex relationships. Research has shown that those who believe sexual orientation is inborn are more likely to have tolerant attitudes towards lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people, whereas those who believe it is a choice have less tolerant attitudes. The study was undertaken at Mkhuhlu location and the respondents were males and females in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships. A feminist epistemological approach to doing research guided the process of data collection while also employing a qualitative approach in interpreting the data. An exploratory design was used to gain a broader understanding in the challenges that youth in lesbians, gays, bisexual, transgender and intersex relationships are faced with every day. A Sample of 10 respondents from Mkhuhlu location was selected. Non-probability sampling was used and snow-ball sampling method was also used to draw the required sample. The data was collected through the use of guided unstructured interviews.

The findings in this study reveal that LGBTI youth have faced various challenges in their daily lives. LGBTI people face considerable levels of stigmatization, discrimination and harassment in their daily lives. These challenges have negative impact in the lives of LGBTI youth and also bring various emotions, which include intense sadness, anxiety, loneliness, discomfort in social situations, and feeling overwhelmed. The study also found that there are strategies that can be employed in order to alleviate the challenges of LGBTI youth, through education the misperception that LGBTI sexual interest is uncommon and sinful may be corrected if realistic, developmentally appropriate sex education is made accessible to the public.

Key words: Sexual orientation, Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender and Intersex.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and background of the problem

Lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex youth are more likely to experience intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and the threat of violence due to their sexual orientation than those that identify themselves as heterosexuals. This is due to homophobia the fear or hatred of lesbians, gays, bisexual, transgender and intersex people (Alexander and Miselis, 2007). Some of the factors that may reinforce homophobia are moral or social values, religious, and political beliefs of a dominant group, which in this case are heterosexuals. Social values define those patterns of behaviour that when everybody in a society follows them they lead to the well-being of the collective. The social values are part of the culture of people. "When you change the values of a people you also change an aspect of the culture of these people" (Murray, 2000).

Lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships is a global issue and different countries have different views and laws around it. Human rights violations targeted at people because of their sexual orientation are a global phenomenon. They include sexual assault, rape, torture and murder, as well as denial of employment, education and other basic rights (Lewis, 2008).

The sexual orientation of a people is part of their culture and is determined by the values of that culture with regard to sexual conduct that is considered acceptable, correct or good versus sexual conduct which is considered unacceptable, incorrect or bad (Skidmore, Linsenmeier and Bailey, 2006). In most societies the sexual orientation which is regarded as normal is heterosexual behaviour which is valued as acceptable, correct, or good while the homosexual behaviour is valued as unacceptable, incorrect or bad. The challenge however is the fact that there is no concrete evidence on the causes of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships.

Lesbians, gays, bisexual, transgender and intersexuals who live in countries where it is regarded legal and those who live in countries where it is illegal all face challenges. This

research seeks to investigate challenges that are faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships at Mkhuhlu location, Mpumalanga province, South Africa.

According to Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar and Azrael (2009) the same sex relationships may be etymologically traced to the Greek and Latin hybrid with "homos", deriving from the Greek word for "same" thus, connoting sexual acts and affections between members of the same sex. Gay generally refers to male homosexuals but is sometimes used in a broader sense to refer to all homosexuals. In the context of sexuality, lesbianism denotes female homosexuals. Contrary to popular opinion, the word "homosexuality" was coined not by psychiatrists or scientist, but by a person who was fighting for the lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex rights (Gramick, 2014). It was first seen in public print in 1869 when it appeared in two anonymous pamphlets. Those pamphlets were published as a method of fighting against the criminalization of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships in the newly formed Federation of the Northern German States. In the first part of the twentieth century journalists readily adopted the term and made it available for use in everyday language while psychiatry circles continued to use the term "sexual perversion" (Pachankis and Godfried, 2006).

Rivers and Carragher (2008) stated that discrimination against lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people is underpinned by hetero-normativity, the idea, dominant in most societies, that heterosexuality is the only 'normal' sexual orientation, only sexual or marital relations between women and men are acceptable (Pearson, Muller and Wilkinson, 2007). In many places, women and men who transcend these norms or challenge these roles face discrimination and violence.

In at least 76 United Nation member countries, discriminatory laws criminalise private, consensual same-sex relationships, exposing millions of individuals to the risk of arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment and even, in at least five countries, the death penalty is imposed on lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people (United Nation Development Funds for Lesbian, Gays, Bisexual and Transgender, 2013). Criminalization of consensual same-sex conduct violates the rights to privacy and to freedom from discrimination, both protected under international law and places states in material breach of their obligation to protect the human rights of all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity (Poteat and Espelage, 2007). In Muslim nations such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, gays and lesbians are punished with death (United Nation Development Funds for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual

and Transgender, 2013). Though lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships is illegal in most of the nations around the world, there are some countries where lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation is fully protected.

In countries, such as Uruguay, France, Argentina, Netherland, Belgium, Canada, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Portugal, Brazil, France, Argentina and Denmark homosexuality has been legalized. On the African continent, there are countries that have legalised lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships. These are countries such as Madagascar, Congo, South Africa, Central African Republic, Cape Verde, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire and Rwanda (Weida and Stolley 2013)

In December 2000, the Netherlands became the first country to legalise same-sex marriage when the Dutch parliament passed, by a three-to-one margin, a landmark bill allowing lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex practices. The legislation gave same-sex couples the right to marry, divorce and to adopt children. The legislation altered a single sentence in the existing civil marriage statute, which now reads, "A marriage can be contracted by two people of different or same sex" (Fecteau, 2011, p. 56).

The only opposition in parliament came from the Christian Democratic Party, which at the time was not part of the governing coalition. After the law came into effect, the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, which then represented about 12% of the country's population, announced that individual congregations could decide whether to conduct same-sex marriage ceremonies or not. Although Muslim and conservative Christian groups continue to oppose the law, same-sex marriage is widely accepted by the Dutch public (Beckstead, 2010).

According to Wilbur, Ryan and Marksamer (2006), Africa is a competitive arena for violation of the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people. Lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex live in perpetual fear of victimisation, and suffer prejudice, rape, torture, beatings, criminal prosecutions and executions. In most parts of Africa, the abuse of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex is official and institutionalised. In most African countries the space for sexual freedom remains constricted, with sexual minorities still being denied their fundamental rights throughout the continent. In 37 of 54 African countries, laws exist that criminalise lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships. Most of these laws date back to British colonial rule and have been retained after independence (Fecteau, 2011). There are some African countries which, though they do not criminalise lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships simply deny its existence in

their midst altogether and call it a foreign phenomenon. South Africa is recommended as the only African country that constitutionally guarantees the right to sexual orientation (Constitution of South Africa, 1996: s 9(3).

Some African nations already punish lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships with death. Mauritania and Swaziland also impose the death penalty by default (Lewis, 2008). In Uganda and Kenya lesbians, gays, bisexuals, a transgender and intersex relationship is against the law and is punishable by life imprisonment. Many hate crimes are being committed against lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people in Africa. Even in South Africa where lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships is legalised hate crimes still take place and at times go unpunished (United Nation Development Funds for Lesbian, Gays, Bisexual and Transgender, 2013).

In Uganda, heterosexism is deeply shaped by notions of the patriarchal system that promotes heteronormativity (Boyd, 2013). The Ugandan government criminalise lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships through a law adopted on February 24, 2014, and signed by President Yoweri Museveni. Under this law, an offence of being in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships is punishable on conviction by a fourteen-year prison term (Biryabarema, 2014). An attempt to commit such an offence is punishable on conviction by a seven-year prison term. Aggravated lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships, which includes recidivism, is punishable by up to life in prison (Government of Uganda, 2014).

Zimbabwe criminalises same-sex relations. Even though the new constitution guarantees rights such as equality and non-discrimination, it is silent on specific rights for the lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community. President Robert Mugabe is considered one of Africa's most virulently anti-lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex leaders and has said "lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex have no human rights" and lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people are "worse than pigs and dogs" (Goddard, 2014).

On December 1, 2006, the South African government passed the Union Bill, which legalised same-sex marriage, making South Africa the first African nation to do so (Alexander and Miselis, 2010). This made lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex couples achieve parity with heterosexual couples for the first time. South Africa is thus commended for its peaceful and

rapid transformation to becoming an open society, founded on democratic values and a constitution that enshrines the principles of human dignity, freedom, equality, and social justice.

However, in stark contrast with policy and legislative guarantees for fundamental human rights, endemic crime and violence continue to dominate the country's landscape. Homophobia and discrimination against lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex still persists in South African (Gevisser and Cameron, 2011). Gays and lesbian youth are still being bullied and workers are still confronted with homophobic sentiments (Butler and Astbury, 2008).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Despite the legality of gay marriages and an increase in social acceptance, sections of the South African society still harbour anti-LGBTI sentiments. Lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships remain a tabooed subject among some communities and this leads to further misconception and prejudice. This could be a result of homophobia; that is the way people are oppressed based on their sexual orientation. Homophobia contributes to youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships to face numerous challenges on daily basis such as, sexual harassment, discrimination, prejudice and hate speech.

This challenge limits the ability to participate in or benefit from community programmes and creates a hostile or abusive environment. Yet in a democratic country every human being has the right to any sexual orientation, safety, security and to be free from all forms of prejudice, as enshrined in the South African Bill of Rights and Constitution (Act 108 of 1996). This study seeks to explore the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships and to suggest strategies that can alleviate these challenges.

1.3. Purpose   of the study

The aim of this study is to explore the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) relationships at Mkhuhlu location in Mpumalanga province, South Africa.

1.4. Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

➢ To explore the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships at   Mkhuhlu location.
➢ To probe the impact of the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships.
➢ To propose the strategies that can be employed to alleviate the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships.

1.5. Research questions

The following are research questions will be addressed in this study:

➢ What are the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships at Mkhuhlu location?
➢ What are the impacts of the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships?
➢ Which strategies can be employed to alleviate the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships?

1.6. Significance of the study

The outcome of this research is vital to the Mkhuhlu community and the general populace in South Africa. This means that the Mkhuhlu community and the community will have a better understanding of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships. The study is going to benefit the community members and other academics, mainly young people by putting the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships on the spotlight.

This study will also serve as source of information to lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex youth on the challenges that they may encounter at Mkhuhlu location. In this respect, every aspect of the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships can be dealt with effectively in order to come with preventive measures.

This research will also serve as a revelation to most youth community about the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships. At a national level, policy makers need to know about challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships at Mkhuhlu location in order to effectively device the preventive measures.

1.7. Definition of operational terms.

Bisexual

Bisexual refers to people who experience sexual and emotional attractions and feelings for people of different genders at some point during their lives (Cochran and Mays, 2011). In the context of this study bisexuals are people who is either a gay or lesbian and also have sexual and emotional attractions and feelings of the person of the opposite sex.

Homophobia

This is the irrational fear or hatred of, or discrimination towards people who are gay or lesbian (Bailey, 2003). According to this study, homophobia means discrimination and negative discourses about gays and lesbians and the belief that homosexuality is inappropriate.

Heterosexuality

Refers to an enduring pattern of or disposition to experience sexual, affectionate, physical or romantic attractions to a person of the opposite sex (Mwanawine, 2012). Heterosexuals are individuals who are considered by the society as "straight", they follow the norm set by the society for people who stick to their biological sex.

Gay

It is referred to a man who is attracted emotionally, romantically and physically to other men. Some women prefer to use this term to describe themselves, but it is more typically used by and about men (Currier, 2011).

Lesbian

Refers to a woman who is attracted emotionally, romantically, and physically to other women (Reagan, 2005).

Intersex

An intersex human or other animal is one possessing any of several variations in sex characteristics including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals that do not fit the typical definitions for male or female bodies (Mufweba, 2010).

Sexual orientation

It is the process wherein a person is attracted to another person emotionally, romantically and physically. Categories of sexual orientation include heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, transgender and intersex, and can be fluid over time (Harry, 2003).

Transgender

Transgender people are people who identify as a gender other than the one typically associated with the sex they are assigned at birth (Reynolds and Hanjorgiris, 2014). In the context of this study transgender people are people who assume the opposite sex other than the biological assigned, some go through surgical processes to change their sex.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses related literature on lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex and the challenges faced by LGBTI youth. The study discusses the contributory factors, public awareness, public attitude, religious, traditional, psychological, urban and rural views regarding lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation. Some of the aspects which will be reviewed are the evolution of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex rights in South Africa.

2.2 Concept of LGBTI

LGBTI is an initialize that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex. The initialize LGBTI is intended to emphasize a diversity of sexuality and gender identity based cultures and is sometimes used to refer to anyone who is non-heterosexual, instead of exclusively to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. (Luirink, 2000). Whether or not LGBTI people openly identify themselves may depend on whether they live in a discriminatory environment, as well as the status of LGBTI rights where one lives.

Before the sexual revolution of the 1960s, there was no common non-insulting vocabulary for non-heterosexuality; the closest such term, "third gender", traces back to the 1860s but never gained wide acceptance (Murray and Roscoe, 2012). The first widely used term, homosexual, was thought to carry negative connotations and tended to be replaced by homophile in the 1950s and 1960s, and subsequently gay in the 1970s. As lesbians forged more public identities, the phrase "gay and lesbian" became more common (Pearson, 2011).

Lesbians who held a more essentialist view that they had been born lesbian and used the descriptor "lesbian" to define sexual attraction, often considered the separatist, angry opinions of lesbian feminists to be harmful to the cause of gay rights. This was soon followed by bisexual, transgender and intersex people also seeking recognition as legitimate categories within the larger community (Maurer, Clemons and Whalen, 2008).

2.3. Contributory factors of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships.

There is no consensus among scientists about the exact reasons why an individual develops a heterosexual, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation. Most researchers who examined the possible genetic, hormonal, developmental, social, and cultural influences on sexual orientation states that sexual orientation develops primarily as a result of environmental influences and early experiences, meaning that the environment where one is raised plays a major role in one's sexual orientation (Wysocki, 2008). This means that being a lesbian, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex is influenced by environmental factors or is a person's choice. The idea that being lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex is a choice is offensive and hurtful to those who have these desires (Durell, Chiong and Battle, 2007). This is because most people judge being lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex as a choice which is against the values and norms of the society. This explanation, though incomplete and misleading, is extremely widespread.

According to Dane (2007) the culture in which a person grows can influence their behaviour. At one extreme, in some cultures LGBTI is so uncommon that their language has no word to describe it. Reynolds and Hanjorgiris (2014) suggest that LGBTI sexual orientations develop in response to a deficit in early bonding with the same sex parent. If the child feels unaccepted in the pre-adolescent phase, he or she may look for affirmation in relationships with the same sex once sexual maturity has been reached. There are clearly individuals from such backgrounds who do not develop a LGBTI orientation and others from different backgrounds who do (Murray, 2008).

Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar and Azrael (2009) states that biological factors essentially dictate a persons sexuality. This means that genes and hormones determine sexual orientation. Biological perspectives focus on the possible roles of evolution, genetics, and hormonal influences in shaping sexual orientation (Harren, 2009). This means that people are born gay. Attractions and desires are like feelings; they come from deep within us and are not a conscious choice on our part (Almeida, *et al,* 2009). This study agrees with the above statement, because some gays have women's qualities while some lesbians have men's characteristics. For example, the way gays walk, talk resembles female mannerisms.

According to Herek, Chopp and Strohl (2007) once suggested that LGBTI are hormonally different to heterosexuals. Prenatal hormonal exposure to sex hormones does influence brain development, giving rise to the possibility that it could affect sexual orientation. Some studies have reported possible correlations between brain structure and sexual orientation, as well as suggesting that LGBTI people have an increased level of left-handedness. Hopkins (2006) reported that an area of the hypothalamus was smaller in women and homosexual men than in heterosexual men, but many commentators have criticised the methods used in the study. There have been some suggestions that a feature in the brain called the anterior commissure varies in size between heterosexuals and LGBTI people (Brocks, 2006). While genes clearly have some bearing on behaviour, in the case of LGBTI sexuality, the evidence suggests that the genetic influence is only one factor.

Although the common explanations of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation are not accurate, however, the biological position is the one that is promoted by the lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex community. This is because if the public is aware that the contributory factors towards lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation are biological they will tolerate and embrace the lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex community (Rathus, Nevid, and Fichner-Rathus, 2011).. The biological explanation is used to do just that. In the media and popular culture it seems to be assumed and implied that LGBTI are simply born that way. Flawed research studies are often cited as evidence for the biological basis of LGBTI (Harren, 2004).Many LGBTI will not entertain the idea that it is not biologically based and any other explanation is often perceived as a threat to their cause. However, no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation is determined by any factor or factors.

2.4. Historical Perspectives on lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientations.

Lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation has existed throughout history. There have been different attitudes towards lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientations. Hence open encouragement in some societies, but in most societies, this behaviour has been condemned. While lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex

orientation has mostly been condemned, this was not always the case. In Greece, it was common for established males to form sexual relationships with adolescent males up to about the age of growing their first beard. "Romans described highly feminine gay men who dressed flamboyantly, had showy hair styles and mannerisms and who cruised certain neighbourhoods, searching for partners" (Rathus, et al 2011).

The Bible has many verses that explain what people of that time thought about lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation. Ezekiel 16:49-50 declares the people of Sodom as 'haughty' and 'detestable'. Leviticus 18:20 refers to homosexuality as an 'abomination'. Other religions, mostly Christian, Jewish and Moslem also feel the same way about same sex sexual relationships (Mwaba, 2009).

2.5. The influence of heterosexual culture

Culture is the complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs, habits and capabilities acquired by man or woman as a member of society. In South Africa, culture is reflected as interlaid by class structure, racial heritage, religious, historical relevance and language (Rieger, Linsenmeier, Gygax and Bailey, 2008). Many people experience culture as a way of life. However, it may also be experienced as a productive process which provides an individual with the tools to master the world.

In the area of 'sexuality', culture provides us with an unquestionable acceptance of sexual instinct. Through socialization, culture presents clear images and ideas of acceptable sexual behavior through culture, sex becomes instutionalized or ritualized and ultimately imprints upon our minds a dominant sexual ideology (Day and Schoenrade, 2011).

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexuals, Transgender and Intersex attitude and behavior in culture is unconsciously influenced and limited by the heterosexual ideology and practices of the culture in which that person resides. LGBTI relationships are the rejection of a traditional, dominant sexual ideology, seen to be heterosexual and male orientated. At times LGBTI is perceived to upset the dominant sexual ideology and confuses major issues like heterosexuality, which are ordained by nature and seen to be natural and normal (Rieger, Linsenmeier, Gygax and Bailey, 2008).

2.6 The LGBTI relationships in African context

According to Jenkins (2010), argues that LGBTI relationship was foreign to Africa. Aside from wrongly attributing LGBTI relationships to the Arabic pederasty culture, Jenkins cites as evidence the killing of early converts to Christianity in the 1880s, known as the Uganda Martyrs after they refused to engage in same-sex relations with their King, Kabaka Mwanga. Jenkins' argument, however, is refuted by Ugandan pastor Martin Ssempa, who contends that homosexuality existed in Africa long before colonialism (Savin-Williams, 2011).

Ssempa (2005) argues that he was also engaged in same-sex relationship. Ugandan Anglican bishop Wilson Mutebi also insisted that those who say LGBTI relationship is foreign are telling lies (Mutebi, 2009). In addition to this, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni claimed to know of two kings and one chief who were in LGBTI relationship long before colonialism. He further noted that in pre-colonial Uganda LGBTI were not persecuted, discriminated or killed (Courson and Farris, 2012).

President Museveni's claims are enlightening on two levels aside from proving that violent homophobia is new to post-colonial Africa, Museveni shows how many African societies dealt with same-sex relations they turned a blind eye to it (Savin-Williams, 2011). Szymanski (2015) in his study reveals that same-sex relations were socially acceptable. Aside from noting that same gender marriages between males were at par with heterosexual marriages. Ssempa (2005) shows that lesbianism was cautiously practiced. Based on Szymanski (2015) argument the LGBTI relationships were traditionally acceptable in Africa.

According to Sharpe (2002), the criminalization of LGBTI relationship relate to King Henry VIII of England in the sixteenth century. Sharpe maintains that Henry made indecency and unnatural acts among men a capital offense rather than a sin. Unfortunately, this law was exported to all British colonies from India to Africa.

Ellis and Vasseur (2000) noted that enforced harsh laws rooted in religious language. Ellis and Vasseur also cited the 1868 execution of Hogoza in Kwazulu Natal here in South Africa, for committing the detestable and abominable crime of anal intercourse among Christians. Ellis and Vasseur (2000) conclude that pre-colonial Africa was open to sexual diversity. Savin-Williams (2011) argue complained that Africans who engaged in same-sex relations expressed no strong shame or guilt about it.

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In African Christian Ethics, published by Zondervan, an evangelical press, argues that in Nigeria until the 1970s homosexuals (yan daudu) danced annually in the public square (Olive, 2010). But Courson and Farris (2012) argument that we had no homosexuality in Africa, is chanted by politicians, scholars, pastors and lay people alike, and it is often accompanied by the similarly accusation that homosexuality is a western perversion imposed upon or adopted by African populations. This is especially used by repressive authorities or unpopular governments (Olive, 2010).

According to a Malawian, Seodi White, the national coordinator for Women and Law in Southern Africa, contends that African governments employ LGBTI to deflect Western government's criticisms of their bad governance (Courson and Farris, 2012).   Although Robert Mugabe's use of homophobia to win popular support is well publicized, Nigeria's president Goodluck Jonathan and Uganda's president Yoweri Museveni employed LGBTI to remain in power. But this thought is expanded to include the argument that western gays in conjunction with Africa's sexual minority are recruiting children into LGBTI relationship. President Museveni, for instance, accepts the existence of homosexuality in Africa before colonialism, but opposes it on the premise of saving children from being ''recruited'' into homosexuality (Wong, McCreary, Carpenter, Engle and Korchynsky, 2014).

Ugandan Minister of Ethics and Integrity, threatened to ban over 38 organizations from recruiting children into homosexuality (Courson and Farris, 2012). Moreover, the recent passage of anti-homosexuality laws in Nigeria and Russia curbs advocacy on sexual rights as the way of protecting children from homosexual recruiters.

Regardless, such views are publicized by conservative pastors and the local media. For example, outspoken Anglican Archbishops Henry Orombi of Uganda and Peter Akinola of Nigeria believe that homosexuality grows with recruitment (Olive, 2010).

 said that prior to the 1990s, in Africa same-sex sexual expression was not publicly discussed. However, the growth of conservative Christianity, democratization, and globalization introduced a new political dispensation, in which sexual politics plays a definite role.

2.7 Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender and Intersex relationships in a global context

Attitudes to LGBTI relationships divide Africa from the rest of the world. According to Pew 2013, most European Union countries accept LGBTI relationships. Spain leads with eighty-eight percent, followed by Germany with eighty-seven percent, the Czech Republic with eighty percent, France with seventy-seven percent, Britain with seventy-six percent, and Italy with seventy-four percent (Pew, 2013). Relatedly, eighty percent of Canadians and sixty percent of Americans accept homosexuality. In South America, however, Argentina leads with seventy-four percent, followed by Chile with sixty-eight percent, Mexico with sixty-one percent, and then Brazil with sixty-percent. In contrast, in sub-Saharan Africa, at least nine-in-ten in Nigeria (98%), Senegal (96%), Ghana (96%), Uganda (96%) and Kenya (90%) believe that Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender and Intersex relationships should not be accepted by society.

Even in South Africa where, unlike in many other African countries, Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender and Intersex relationships acts are legal and discrimination based on sexual orientation is unconstitutional, 61% say homosexuality should not be accepted by society, while just 32% say it should be accepted (Pew Forum, 2013). This survey showed no change in Nigeria, which registered ninety-eight percent (Pew Forum, 2006).

In Kenya, however, the survey showed an eight point decrease from ninety-eight percent in 2006 (Pew Forum, 2006), to ninety percent in 2013. While the 2013 survey was based on the general population, its findings are strikingly similar to the 2011 Pew Global Survey of Evangelical Protestant Leaders who attended the 2010 Evangelical Lausanne Conference in Cape Town where the American Christian Right ex-gay group which believes that prayers and therapy can cure LGBTI interest. Among evangelical leaders, ninety-eight percent of Africans and eighty-seven percent of Americans were opposed to LGBTI relationship (Pew Forum, 2011).

The survey also showed that fifty-eight percent of global South leaders felt that their influence is growing in their respective countries (Pew Forum, 2013). In contrast, sixty-six percent of global North evangelical leaders thought they were losing influence. Particularly, eighty-two percent of U.S. leaders said they are losing influence in the United States, while only 17% think evangelicals are gaining influence' (Pew Forum, 2011). Despite advancement in same-sex rights in America, U.S. evangelicals are not just less accepting of LGBT people than other western nations, but closer to Africa than to South America, where the disapproval is only forty-five percent. Amidst their warning influence in North America, the U.S. conservatives are

refocusing their resources on the global South to remain relevant to global Christianity (Pew Forum 2013).

2.8. Psychological Perspectives on lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientations.

Psychology was one of the first disciplines to study lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation as a discrete phenomenon. The first attempts to classify lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation as a disease were made by the fledgeling European sexologist movement in the late 19th century (Barnes and Meyer, 2012). In the last two decades of the 19th century, a different view began to predominate in medical and psychiatric circles, judging such behaviour as indicative of a type of person with a defined and relatively stable sexual orientation. This could be the cause of all the challenges faced by the lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships because people tend to judge lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex as people who have the mental impairment or abnormality (Lidderdale, Croteau, Anderson, Tovar-Murray and Davis, 2007).

The classification began to be subjected to critical scrutiny. The studies and subsequent research consistently failed to produce any empirical or scientific basis for regarding lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation as a disorder or abnormality, rather than a normal and healthy sexual orientation. As results from such research accumulated, professionals in medicine, mental health and the behavioural and social sciences reached the conclusion that it was inaccurate to classify lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation as a mental disorder (Rathus, *et al,* 2011).

This was done because lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientations imply no impairment in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social or vocational capabilities. After thoroughly reviewing the scientific data, the American Psychological Association urged all mental health professionals to take the lead in removing the stigma of mental illness that had long been associated with lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientations. Although the American Psychological Association urged that mental illness should be removed in relation to lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation, many people still hold negative attitudes towards lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex community (Lewis, 2008).

Mental health professionals and researchers have recognised that being lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex poses no inherent obstacle to leading a happy, healthy, and productive life and that most gay and lesbian people function well in the full areas of social institutions and interpersonal relationships (Olive, 2010). However, the experiences of discrimination in society and possible rejection by friends, families, and others, such as employers, means that some lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex experience a greater than expected prevalence of mental health difficulties and substance misuse problems (Piacenti, 2011). Most lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people who seek psychotherapy do so for the same reasons as heterosexual people (stress, relationship difficulties, difficulty adjusting to social or work situations, etc.).

2.9. Public awareness of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation.

Generational differences, family mobility, and the influence of the dominant culture through education, media, and other forces have an impact on the degree to which each person follows family traditions (Schmidt, 2006). Media is one of the sources which spread information quickly to the public. Most television channels air shows that either have lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex actors, or actors who portray lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation characters. It is common to see these characters on television, but it was quite alarming back in the early 1970s. This simply means that because of media, the public is now aware of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex. Television programmes and advertising reflect and perpetuate social beliefs and cultural values and there is a significant impact of television viewing on people (Bryant and Zillman, 2002). This study supports the view that media can influence the public to tolerate and respect gays and lesbians. Media play a role in not only reflecting societal values, but also in helping to create and mould values.

2.10. Public attitude towards lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation.

Societal values, especially as determined by religion, are important factors related to the formation of attitudes and stereotypes about specific groups. Homophobic attitudes may result from societal values and religious factors (Evans, 2006). Barnes and Meyer (2012) also supported Evans (2006) by saying that societal attitudes toward lesbians, gays, bisexuals,

transgender and intersex vary in different cultures, as do attitudes toward sexual desire activity, and relationships in general. All cultures have their own values regarding appropriate and inappropriate sexuality; some sanction same-sex love and sexuality while others may disapprove such activities. Previous studies, have found that individuals who are more religious have more conservative religious beliefs and those that attend church frequently are more homophobic (Davis, 2003). Lance (2002) conducted research on students perceptions of the degree to which the campus is accepting, supportive (or otherwise) of lesbian and gay male students and their concerns. Findings from the study indicate that heterosexual students with strong religious convictions demonstrated less favourable views toward lesbian and gay male students

Little information is available on the relationship between race and attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. The research evidence that suggests that attitudes held by white and black heterosexuals towards lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex differ is mixed. Savage and Schanding (2013) found that black heterosexuals have significantly more negative attitudes towards lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex than do white heterosexuals, whereas Hudson and Rickets (2004) and Evans (2006) found the opposite results. Considering the role of the race with regards to attitudes towards lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex is important given evidence that concepts related to sexual orientation are culturally and historically defined (Waldo, 1998). Measuring the attitudes towards lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex, finding the most significant predictors of homophobia, and documenting attitudes towards lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex within South African communities, is a critical step towards a healthy community climate (Davis, 2003).

2.11. Public acceptance on lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. However, many South Africans still hold negative beliefs and attitudes toward homosexuals and same-sex marriage. Reluctance to embrace lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation may be because of traditional and religious beliefs which still consider lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships taboo or ungodly or a sin (Mwaba, 2009). However, South Africa is a constitutional democracy and people should

just accept the lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation. Therefore, violating lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex right is a criminal offence.

Some communities in South Africa are slowly coming to terms with lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation and are beginning to view lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex as equal members of the community. However, societal values, especially as determined by religion, are important factors related to the formation of acceptance, attitudes and stereotypes about specific groups. Homophobic attitudes may result from societal values and religious factors (Reynolds and Hanjorgiris, 2014).

Mental health difficulties can cause lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex youth not to perform effectively in their daily lives and in community development projects. It can also cause employees to be unproductive in the workplace. Societal acceptance of non-heterosexual orientations such as lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation is lowest in Asian and African countries and is highest in Europe, Australia, and the Americas (Young, 2010). Western society has become increasingly accepting of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation over the past few decades. Lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex continued to be characterised as un-African. These assertions of un-Africanness conceal moral and cultural views that African societies are somehow unique and therefore immune to what is perceived to be a Western and European import (Whitley, 2013).

The systematic accusation made by several African leaders over the years has fuelled these perceptions and South Africans are divided in their acceptance of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex (LGBTI). As the incidents of hate crime against homosexuals bashing attest, the victory of constitutional equality clearly does not guarantee to end the social discrimination against homosexuality (Poteat, Espelage, and Koenig, 2009).

2.12. Religious views on lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) orientation.

The Bible is at the centre of all the questions concerning lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex rights. Religious practitioners look to it for answers pertaining to these issues. There are several verses in the Bible that have caused controversy, but there are two in specific that have raised more flags than the others. The first is Leviticus 18:22 and it states, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination". The other verse among the most controversial is Genesis 2:24 and it states, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his

mother, and shall leave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Religious leaders and believers argue that these verses are proof that lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation are an abomination and ungodly, therefore should not be permitted (Pearson, 2011).

The researcher believes that at the time the Bible was written, there was no solid or concrete information concerning lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation. Therefore, the religious leaders should be educated on lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation so that they may consider the contributory factors towards lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex before they regard it as sinful. Religious leaders should understand that if someone is born lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex that person will not be able to change his or her sexual orientation. God created everything in this world for a purpose. That means that even lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex are created for a purpose. If the respective religious leaders tolerate, respect and acknowledge that lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex are serving their purpose then their followers will be able to tolerate, respect and understand homosexuals (Blake, 2004).

2.13. Rural and urban society views on lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation.

Traditional societies explained lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation in terms of cultural and religious beliefs which still consider lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships a taboo or a sin. Most societies do not accept lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex practice; they are marginalised and discriminated against. This makes lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex fears to disclose their sexual orientation to society (Sager, Schlimmer and Hellmann, 2011). This might be because of the lake of resources in comparison to urban societies, the internet and libraries where information concerning the contributory factors towards lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation can be accessed are lacking in rural communities.

In rural communities, if lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex disclose their sexual orientation they will be discriminated against in the society and possibly suffer rejection by friends, families and others (Charney, 2005). An urban society is a place where people of different cultures stay. For example, in South Africa, Johannesburg is an urban metropolis which accommodates people of different cultures and different nations. This makes the urban societies

disregard any traditional values or norms. Some urban societies view lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation as a normal sexual practice and do not discriminate or marginalise them.

Most lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people move from rural to urban settings to escape the sexual and social constraints of traditional life (Fisher, Komosa-Hawkins, Saldana, Thomas, Hsiao, Rauld and Miller, 2008). They play a major role in transforming the city and in creating a urban ethos. The urban societies are sites for the construction of much contemporary lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex culture. Parallels between socio-psychological and geographical itineraries have been drawn in which isolated and lonely rural lesbians, gays, bisexuals; transgender and intersex move to urban centres to explore their same-sex desires and come to feel part of a community in the urban space (Herek and Capitanio, 2013).

2.14. Theoretical framework.

This study is informed by the educational theory, the standpoint theory, the biological constructivism, and social constructivism theory. The biological constructivism perspective focuses on the possible roles of evolution, genetics, and hormonal influences in shaping sexual orientation (Harren, 2004). This means that people are born gay. It also stresses the point that attractions and desires are like feelings; they come from deep within us and are not a conscious choice on our part.

In contrast to the biological constructivism perspective, the social construction and socialisation theory argue that gender may be something we are, but is something learnt. Gender is not fixed as stated by biological construction theory, but it is instilled in the human psyche through socialisation. This theory further argues that society creates the definitions and boundaries of gender and the norms of social interactions, and social institutions, provide the social control that fits us into these definitions and boundaries. Socialisation Theory focuses on explaining gender through the effects of learning about gender, learning how to "be a man" or "act like a lady" (Harren, 2009). However, there is no concrete evidence or consensus among scientists about the exact reasons why an individual develops a heterosexual, bisexual, gay, or lesbian orientation. Both the biological constructivism and social constructivism theory are still criticised.

This study will be based on educational theory and the stand point theory as the main theories guiding the study. The educational theory postulated by Reagan (2005) states that education is in a sense a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training or research. Unks (2008) states that educational theory has a significant role in raising awareness to young people concerning sexuality; therefore it has to be included in high school curricular.

The standpoint theory agrees with the educational theory. The Standpoint theory is a feminist theoretical perspective which argues that knowledge stems from the social position. The theory emerged from the Marxist argument that people from an oppressed class have special access to knowledge that is not available to those from a privileged class (Hesse and Sharlene, 2014). This means if education about sexuality is to be included in school curricular, homosexuals must also be consulted to get in-depth information and understanding than to conduct studies among general populace and come up with conclusions.

If the oppressed group can be consulted to share their knowledge and be included in school curricular it will create a positive impact on attitude and behaviour of understanding sexuality. The misperception that homosexual interest is uncommon and sinful may be corrected if realistic, developmentally appropriate sex education is included in school curricular (Graves, 2015). The researcher chooses these theories because of the contributory factors towards the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships is the lake of concrete information on its contributory factors. Therefore, using the above-mentioned theories the public can gain a vast knowledge regarding the lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex orientation which might change the misconception and attitudes of the public.

Chapter 3

Research design and methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter seeks to outline the research methods that were used in this study. The researcher utilised the qualitative approach in the study. The researcher also employs interviews to obtain information from the participants. The chapter will focused on how the participants were selected, ethical considerations, data collection, the interview process and the research instruments and data analysis.

3.2. Research design

Research design refers to the plan, structure and strategy of the investigation use to obtain answers to the research question or problem (Neuman, 2011). It enables the researcher to anticipate what appropriate research design should be employed to ensure the validity of the research results. This study employ an explorative research design to explore challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships.

3.3   Research methodology

The qualitative research approach was used to fulfil the objectives of the study because it allows the subject being studied to provide better and richer answers to the questions given to them by the researcher (Babbie, 2014). The greatest strength of the qualitative approach is its ability to have in-depth explorations and descriptions giving the researcher greater understanding of the phenomenon under study. De Vos, Strydom, Founche and Delport (2011), points out that qualitative researcher is primarily interested in the meaning subjects give to their life experience. This approach is chosen because it allows the researcher to ask the participants open-ended questions, where they can elaborate in their own words on their experiences of the problem of the study. The feminist epistemological approach was also used in jointly with a qualitative approach. One of the main goals of feminist epistemological approach is to support social justice and social transformation; this study seeks to redress inequities and social injustices that

continue to undermine and even destroy the lives of the oppressed (Hesse and Sharlene, 2014).

A feminist scholar should speak out on the experiences born from reality. As Carol and Pollard (2014) argue that second generation feminist researcher standpoint was different from observer ones and their knowledge was also different from the spectator knowledge. They carried out their research for women's liberation and in order to use this research for women. They defended the approach of speaking out against speaking for (Carol and Pollard, 2014). This research has the second generation feminist researcher standpoint and would like to speak out on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individual experiences instead of speaking for them. Whereas this research makes use of mainstream methods in the social sciences, it also investigates, from the critical viewpoint of feminism.

The data on discrimination and harassment against LGBT individuals and other oppressed groups can be collected through feminist method, which is obtaining knowledge directly by listening to the respondents who are experiencing these negative treatments. In order to reach real knowledge, about the challenges faced by LGBTI individuals the researcher used the feminist method and methodology.

Feminist researchers use all the formerly used methods, but how they employ these traditional research techniques and these methods of gathering and processing data is new and strikingly different. They listen carefully to how respondents think about their experiences. They observe the behaviour of individuals that traditional social scientists have not considered to be significant (Collins, 2004). They seek new and unrecognized patterns in the data. In order to understand the challenges that faced by LGBTI youth, I have chosen to conduct my research from a feminist point of view, and listen to the life experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals and filter this data employing the feminist method. For this reason, qualitative research methodology through in-depth interviews is used in this research.

3.4. Study population

According to Bryman (2012), population refers to a collection of subjects, events, objects or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying. In this study the populations is all youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) relationships between 15 and 35, years at Mkhuhlu location. This population was

chosen because the researcher seeks to explore the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships at Mkhuhlu location, Mpumalanga province.

3.5. Sampling procedure

Sampling is the process of selecting units or object when it is impossible to have knowledge of a larger collection of these objects (Neuman, 2011). People and organisations from a population of interest so can be selected we can fairly generalise the results back to the population where the sample was chosen. De Vos *et al* (2011) noted that sampling entails taking a smaller number of units of a population having characteristics of that total population. In short, sampling entails selecting the unit number of participants for a study from a population. This research has used non-probability sampling.

Non-probability sampling is defined by Creswell (2013) as any kind of sampling where the selection of elements is not determined by the principle of randomness. According to Flick (2006), non-probability sampling is a technique where the sample is selected in a process that does not give every individual of the population an equal chance of being selected. In non-probability sampling, the odds of selecting a particular individual are not known because the researcher does not know the population size or its members (Babbie, 2014). Not every individual have an equal chance of being selected because the researcher only needs to select those with most desired characteristics of the phenomenon to be investigated. The researcher used snowball sampling which is a sub-type of non-probability sampling.

Snowball sampling is defined as a non-random sample in which the researcher begins with one case and then based on the information about interrelationships from that case, identifies other cases, and repeats the process again and again (Neuman, 2011). This sampling type was used given that the researcher does not know the actual young people who are in LGBTI relationships. In this respect, the researcher was able to meet the first respondent. After gathering data from this respondent, the researcher then asks to be referred to another respondent who meets the same characteristics of the phenomenon under investigation. In this study, the researcher identified one or few young people who are in a LGBTI relationship. Then those respondents led the researcher to other respondents who are in a LGBTI relationship. This technique allowed the researcher to identify hidden participants. The researcher interviewed respondents until he gets saturated data.

3.6. Data collection method.

Data collection methods are techniques used by the researcher to obtain information from the participants using different methods (Mogorosi, 2010). For this study, the researcher have used unstructured interviews as a data collection technique. An interview is either a written document or oral set of questions in chronological order with the intention of investigating a research study through respondents or subjects of the study (Creswell, 2011). This technique was ideal for this research because it allowed the researcher to ask pre-planned questions and the participants were reporting back. Moreover, interviews allowed the researcher to get explanations, opinions as well as descriptions and feelings of the respondents. The researcher chose to use the interview for collecting data from the core sample because it is an effective tool for collecting data to gain in-depth information and insight about the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationship at Mkhuhlu location.

This research study used unstructured interviews as an instrument for data collection. An unstructured interview allowed the researcher to use open-ended questions and offers the researcher an opportunity to probe more. These interviews were conducted on a face to face basis with the respondents. The researcher had drafted some guiding questions to be used in the interview session. For example, a question such as "When did you start to experience LGBTI practice?" "What is your experience of being LGBTI relationship in this location?" However, the researcher was able to ask some probing questions in a bid to get clarification as well as getting an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships at Mkhuhlu location.

3.7. Data analysis

Data analysis is defined as a category, ordering, manipulating and summarising data to address research questions (De Vos *et al*, 2011). Other scholars Bryard and Heineken (2006) noted that it is the process whereby the data is categorised according to its meanings and patterns. Creswell (2012) noted that the data analysis process involves several activities simultaneously which include collecting the data, sifting through the information as well as making sense of the data collected. For this study, thematic data analysis was used in order to understand and acquire in-depth information on the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships at Mkhuhlu location.

The researcher used the thematic analytical approach to analyse the data. The thematic analytical approach includes the following steps:

- **Becoming familiar with the data**

The researcher familiarised himself with the depth and breadth of the content by reading the entire data set at least twice before beginning to code, as the ideas, and the identification of possible patterns were shaped in the process of reading through.

- **Transcription of verbal data**

Transcription of verbal data informs the early stages of analysis, and the researcher developed a far more thorough understanding of the data through having transcribed it. Furthermore, the close attention needed to transcribe data facilitated the close reading and interpretative skills needed to analyse the data (Creswell, 2012).

- **Generating initial codes**

The data was initially coded and collated, and there were long list of the different codes the researcher has identified across the data set. This phase, which re-focuses the analysis at the broader level of themes, rather than codes, involved sorting the different codes into potential themes, and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes.

- **Reviewing themes**

The researcher devises a set of themes which was refined during the process. During this phase, some themes were collapsed into each other, while others broken down into separate themes.

- **Defining and naming themes**

The researcher had a satisfactory thematic map of the data. The researcher then defined and further refined the themes that were analysed. Define and refine refers to identifying the 'essence' of what each theme is about, and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures. It is important not to try to get a theme to do too much, or to be too diverse and complex.

- **Producing the report**

It is important that the analysis provides a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the story the data tell within and across themes. The write-up provides sufficient evidence of the themes within the data.

3.8. Delimitations of the study

Delimitation is defined as boundaries that are set by the researcher to narrow the topic studied and include elements in the study that the researchers can control (Creswell, 2013). The study was confined only to youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex relationships who are residing at Mkhuhlu location.

3.9. Limitations

My research had some limitations. It was harder for me to reach LGBTI youth since they are invisible in all spheres in the society and they were more afraid about an interview. Because of this limitation, data collecting period took a longer time than I had planned. The other limitation was that I reached people from similar areas and that had a similar experiences of life, since I had to use the snowball method to reach the respondents.

Additionally, I had some difficulties in the voice recordings period. Some of the respondents preferred that I not record some comments. One of the gay respondents wanted me to erase the voice record after deciphering. He was anxious that his parents would be aware of his sexual orientation. So I had to write the comments on my computer and this made it difficult to keep the conversation mood of the interview.

Most of the respondents were talkative, friendly and seemed to enjoy telling their personal experiences to me (only some parts of the experience). Some of them said that they have not thought about these issues before and the questions made them think; sometimes, we waited for a while and take a break in order to give the respondents time to think. But at that point, another limitation was formed again. Some of the respondents got bored in a very short time with the reason of not having enough time or giving this kind of interviews so often. While this kind of situations sometimes decreased the quality of the conversation, sometimes the respondents stopped me and summarized all the discrimination experiences as a full-fledged story and this made my interviewing process more efficient and shorter.

My heterosexual identity was a limitation for me in the interviewing period. Because of my heterosexual identity, some of the respondents had prejudgments about me in terms of thinking that I would have homophobic ideas, I would not know their culture, even that I needed training about LGBTI issues and homophobia.

During the conversations, I sometimes identified my sexual orientation. Sometimes, I was asked and sometimes I needed to refer to it. One of the reasons for this was to set aside any questionable state regarding my sexual orientation. My point of departure being the argument put forth in this study, I sometimes felt that they were trying to analyze my sexual orientation and I came over this questionable situation by talking about my girlfriend. The other reason of disclosing my heterosexual identity was to give a message that yes, I am a heterosexual and I am doing this research, in order not to benefit from the questions situation in terms of my sexual orientation, but to speak out the issues faced by LGBTI community.

I also was careful about my physical movements so as not to humiliate the respondents and to avoid senseless stigmatization. For example, while talking with a gay respondent, I was careful not to fix my shirt or trouser, because movements like that might send homophobic signals to the respondents, since I knew that these behaviours are the most annoying and most frequently done when a gay comes out. This kind of movements might disturb LGBTI members as they are only recognized for their sexual identity, instead of their total personality since those behaviours refers to the stigmas in people's minds. This was a limitation for me because as a heterosexual and because of the possible prejudgments, I needed to be more careful not to introduce myself in the wrong way and I was uncomfortable at times.

3.10. Ethical considerations

According to Neuman (2013), ethics are a set of moral principles that are suggested by an individual or group. These moral principles are subsequently widely accepted and offer rules and behaviour all expectations about a correct conduct towards experimental subjects, respondents, sponsors, and other researchers. To ensure that the researcher is ethical the following ethics were considered: informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, and avoidance of harm.

3.10.1 Avoidance of harm

One of the crucial ethical considerations is the avoidance of harm to participants which entails that when exploring sensitive issues in a qualitative study, the researcher was aware of the impact that the questions and other issues discussed during research may have on the participants (Creswell, 2013). Everything people do in life can possibly harm someone either in a physical or emotional manner. Therefore, it was the duty of the researcher to consider risks against the significance and possible benefits of the study (Babbie and Mouton, 2009). The researcher offered protection to participants within all possible sensible limits from any form of physical discomfort that could arises from the study.

3.10.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an ethical requirement in research, that information provided by the participants; particularly the sensitive and personal information should be protected and should not be made available to anyone other than the researcher (Babbie, 2014). The researcher assured the participants that their names will not appear on the information they given and that the information will be kept confidential and used only for the study.

3.10.3 Informed consent

Informed consent refers to a process whereby a researcher equips the potential participants with the clear, detailed, and factual information about the study, its methods, risks and its benefits together with the assurance of voluntary participation and the freedom to withdraw from the study without any penalties (Neuman, 2013). In this study the researcher explained to the participants the purpose and objectives of the study and that their participation is voluntary. The participants were also informed that they are free to withdraw from the study if they do not feel comfortable to continue with the study (Bless *et al,* 2006).

3.10.4 Voluntary participation

Voluntary participation is defined as the participant's rights to freely choose to subject themselves to the research study without being forced by anyone (Gray, 2009). To ensure this

ethical consideration the researcher ensured that every participant is well informed that their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw from the study at any time as they wish.

3.10.5 Anonymity

This ethical consideration means that the participants remain nameless, that their identity is protected from disclosure (Bryman, 2012). It was the duty of the researcher to ensure that the identity of the participants is not revealed. This helps to avoid any uncomfortable feeling by the participants. Participants feel comfortable if they know that their identity will not be revealed to the public and that increases the validity of data. To ensure that the participants remain anonymous when gathering data, the researcher did not use the real names of the participants. Instead the pseudopodia, codes names or numbers were used to refer to the participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND DISCUSSION

4. Introduction

The chapter presents the data on exploration on the challenges faced by youth in lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) relationships. The researcher used an unstructured interview schedule to collect data. The researcher will present ten sections of the instrument which are as follows; the biographical information of the respondents, how the participants started practicing LGBTI sexual orientation, societal attitude towards LGBTI people, factors that led these youth to be in LGBTI relationship, challenges that are faced by youth in LGBTI relationship, contributory factors of the challenges faced by LGBTI youth, the effects of the challenges faced by LGBTI youth, strategies that can be employed in order to alleviate the challenges faced by LGBTI youth, the correlation between religion and gender relations and the government and non-governmental organization intervention in protecting the rights of the LGBTI community. The presentation of the data of the biography of the participants was done in a tabular form and the rest of the themes in a narrative form.

4.1. Participants biographic information.

This section consists of the profile information for 10 Lesbians, Gays, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex youth who participated in this study. The biographical information of the respondents is presented according to their age, gender, level of study, ethnicity, living arrangement and the religion. This biographical information is presented below in table 4.1

Table 4.1

The biographic information of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender and Intersex youth residing at Mkhuhlu location who participated in this study.

Respondents	Age.	Gender.	Ethnicity.	Sexual orientation	Religion.
Respondent A	25 – 30	Female	Tsonga	Lesbian	Christian
Respondent B	20 – 25	Male	Tsonga	Gay	Neutral
Respondent C	15 - 20	Female	Tsonga	Lesbian	African religion
Respondent D	25 - 30	Male	Swati	Gay	African religion

Respondent E	20 - 25	Female	Swati	Bisexual	Neutral
Respondent F	25 - 30	Male	Tsonga	Gay	Neutral
Respondent G	30 - 35	Female	Tsonga	Lesbian	Christian
Respondent H	25 - 30	Female	Swati	Transgender	Neutral
Respondent I	20 - 25	Female	Swati	Lesbian	Christian
Respondent J	30 - 35	Female	Tsonga	Lesbian	Neutral

Table 4.1 indicates that the ages of the respondents in the study ranges between 15 and 35 years. Concerning the ethnicity of the respondents, respondents are from two different ethnic groups which are *Xistonga* and *Isiswati*. The gender of respondents consists of three males and seven females. The respondents practice different sexual orientation. They also belong to different religious groups while others do not belong in any religion; therefore they regard themselves as neutral or non-religious.

The personal details of youth in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex relationships are presented in table 4.1 above. The names of respondents have not been mentioned for confidentiality reasons. The researcher labelled participants as A, B, C, D and so on. Seven females and three males' youth who are in the LGBTI relationships were interviewed. The personal information has assisted in providing brief biographic information on the youth in LGBTI relationships. On the personal information, the researcher looked at the age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and religion of the respondents.

The age range of the respondents was from 15 to 35 years. The respondents are seven females and three males. The respondents are practicing different sexual orientations; there are six lesbians, two gays and two bisexuals. Concerning the ethnicity of the respondents, respondents are from two different ethnic groups which are *Xistonga* and *Isiswati*. The respondents also belong to different religion while others do not believe in any religious groups; therefore they regard themselves as neutral.

Another aspect which was looked at in the study was the level of education. From the educational achievement, the majority (6 out of 10) of the respondents received higher school education whilst a minority of (4 of 10) respondents received a tertiary education. Those who attended tertiary education stated that they were more comfortable at tertiary institution than being at high school education.

4.2. Explain how you started practicing LGBTI

Respondents were asked how they started practicing LGBTI relationships. All participants had given their responses. The findings in this section show that some participants practicing LGBTI relationships is something that they were born with, since they were born they never had a romantic relationship with someone of an opposite gender. Below are some quotations of what different LGBTI youth said.

"Being a lesbian is something that I was born with. Ever since when I was born and my childhood I use to socialize with girls without having romantic relationship with them. Therefore I realize that I don't have romantic relationship with boys and I started to propose girls as they were the only ones that I was having romantic feelings for. And I was lucky to find those who were having the same feeling as mine, and then we started to have romantic relationship with those girls", (Respondent A).

"Being a gay is something that I was born with, simply because since I was born I never had a romantic feeling for girls. My sexual partners were boys and are the only ones that I'm having romantic feeling for. Since when I was born I've never had a sexual relationship with guys", (Respondent D).

"I was born a lesbian. As I grew up, I found myself being attracted to ladies. I started by just kissing ladies as I was not sure and confused by my sexual orientation, was I lesbian? My first sexual encounter was with a girl and grew up as a tomboy, then I thought of myself as a guy and I started proposing ladies", (Respondent G).

The findings indicates that majority of LGBTI are being born with that particular sexual orientation. Most LGBTI members seem to be comfortable with the idea that they are born that way. This might be because most people judge LGBTI attraction as a choice which is against the values and norms of the society. Therefore if the society knows that being an LGBTI is something that people are born with the misperception that it is uncommon, unAfrican and sinful can be corrected.

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However there are some respondents who are practicing LGBTI relationships after they got into heterosexual relationships. This are respondents who said that being on LGBTI relationships is something they have chosen, unlike those who were born with it, who never dated someone of an opposite gender. These respondents they started by having romantic relationships with someone of an opposite gender, then at the later stage those romantic feelings of an opposite gender fades away and they develop the feelings of someone of the same gender.

> *"Being a gay is something that I choose. This is simply because the place that*
> *I grew in there were a lots of gays who were successful then I thought that even*
> *myself if I want to be successful I have to practice LGBTI relationship. However,*
> *I was practicing heterosexuality before I decided to become a gay. Those gays*
> *they used to sleep with young boys and give them lots of money after. Then I've*
> *realize that if I become a gay I will be rich soon. Then I stated practicing it and*
> *even now I'm a complete gay",* (Respondent F).

The finding in this section is in line with Wysocki (2008) who stated that there is no consensus among scientist on the contributory factors to LGBTI sexuality. The study have also found that individual have different experience on the contributory factors towards LGBTI relationships. The study have found that other respondents have said that being in LGBTI sexual interest is something that they were born with it, since they have never had feelings for a person of the opposite sex. However, other respondents indicated that being a LGBTI was by choice.

4.3. Societal attitude towards LGBTI

The findings in this section indicates that attitudes held by individuals toward lesbians, gay, bisexuals, transgender and intersex are mainly based on social and cultural factors. The study found that many societies still view LGBTI relationship as a taboo or a deviation from the norms and values of the societies. The study have also found that heterosexuals with positive attitudes towards LGBTI are more likely to be young, non-religious, well-educated, politically liberal, does not support traditional gender roles and have close personal contact with LGBTI.

*"Christians in our society are mostly the one who are having negative
attitude towards LGBTI, this is because they rely on the bible to differentiate the
good and the bad. They view LGBTI relationship as a sin or ungodly"* (Respondent H).

*"Traditional leaders in my community have negative attitude towards LGBTI
and this has an influence at the rest of the community members"* (Respondent I).

*"Society views youth in LGBTI relationships as people with mental illness" (Respondent
G).*

*"Most societies holds negative attitude towards negative attitudes towards
because of the traditional gender roles. Every parent expect to have a grandchild
and if their child is at LGBTI relationship, they will not have one"* (Respondent J).

*"The society sees LGBTI relationship as something wrong, because they think that
being an LGBTI is rebellious to the values and norms of the society"* (Respondent E).

*"The societal attitude towards LGBTI have been changed through time mostly
in urban areas, they don't care about the sexuality of an individual"* (Respondent C).

*"In a society where the population is educated they have tolerant attitude toward LGBTI,
this is a society where young people are the dominant group"* (Respondent B).

Although many societies held negative attitude towards LGBTI relationships, certain societies are found to accept LGBTI more than others. It is through participants B and J that is evident that tolerant attitudes towards LGBTI have been increasing with time, this mostly occurs in urban areas. The people living in urban setting they don't really consider the traditional gender rules and they are from different a religious and cultural group, which makes the population to practice various and flexible sexual orientation.

The findings in this study are in contrast with Morgan, Mancl, Kaffar and Ferreira (2011) argument that in poorer countries with high levels of religiosity, few believe homosexuality should be accepted by society. Age is also a factor in several countries, with younger respondents offering far more tolerant views than older ones. The findings in this study is also supported by Wickens and Sandlin (2010) who stated that it is difficult for LGBTI people to be out in rural areas. Cities are more conducive to allowing LGBTI people select which areas of their life they wish to be out in and to whom they are out to, friends, to family or neighbours. This

is more difficult in rural areas where being out in one domain. This is the reason most rural LGBTI people are more likely to leave the place of their birth than the general population.

4.4. Factors that caused or contributed in you to be in LGBTI relationships.

The findings in this section prove that there are various factors that contribute in someone to be in LGBTI relationships. The findings indicate that all respondent gave responses based on their knowledge and experiences on what contributed or influenced them to be in LGBTI relationships. The biological factor seems to be the one dominating, since most respondent said that they were born that way. Below are responses given by the respondents.

> *"Biological factor, simply because I've never had feelings for boys. I find myself being comfortable when I'm with my same sex partner and even when boys propose I don't have feelings for them at all"* (Respondent I).

> *"Biological factors, this is simply because since when I was born I've never had a romantic feeling towards ladies"* (Respondent A).

The findings are consistent with Rathus, et al (2011), biological perspective which is focusing on the possible roles of evolution, genetics, and hormonal influences in shaping sexual orientation. It also states that attractions and desires are like feelings. They come from deep within us and are not a conscious choice on our part. This simply means that people are born LGBTI. This study agrees with the above statement, simply because some LGBTI have qualities of the person of opposite gender. For example the way gays walk, talk resembles female mannerisms and vice versa.

However some respondents stated that they are practicing LGBTI relationships simply because of environmental factors. There are respondents who are in LGBTI relationship because they admire those rich or successful people who are already in LGBTI relationship. They are in a transactional LGBTI relationship, meaning that they get some benefits for just being with LGBTI person. The following are the responses of the participants:

> "*The place where I grew up there were lots of gays and they are rich. Therefore I grew up having that wish that I also want to be gay so that I can be rich too"* (Respondent B).

"It all started when an LGBTI person came and propose and promise to pay
me whenever we spend time together. So I had to cheat for my girlfriend to
get the benefit to buy whatever that I want" (Respondent F)

The findings in this section also support Harren, (2004), theory is that LGBTI attractions develop primarily as a result of environmental influences and early experiences. This simply means that being an LGBTI is an influence of environment or as one's choice. However the idea that being an LGBTI is a choice is offensive and hurtful to majority of those who have these desires. This is because most people judge LGBTI as a choice which is against the values and norms of the society. This explanation, though incomplete and misleading, is extremely widespread across South African communities. The biological factor as contributory to the LGBTI relationship seems to be the one being supported by many LGBTI communities. Simply because once it is understood that the desire is an inborn in nature they are not going to be discriminated or judged.

4.5. The challenges that are faced by youth in LGBTI relationships

This section is about the challenges that are faced by LGBTI community. The aim of the section is to investigate the different challenges that are faced by gays and lesbians community. The findings in this section show that the LGBTI people face various difficulties by growing up in a society where heterosexuality is regarded as the only acceptable orientation and LGBTI is regarded as deviant. They continue to face discrimination and exclusion across the world in all spheres of life. Homophobic violence and abuse targeting LGBT people occur on a regular basis.

The findings of this study indicate that marginalization is at the root of exclusion from fulfilling social lives at individual, interpersonal and societal levels. People who are marginalized have little control over their lives and in development programmes; they may become stigmatized and also receive negative public attitudes. Below is what some respondents said.

"*I was kicked out of leadership position at boys' choir group at church. They*
mentioned that they want to be led by a really man by a gay" (Respondent D).

"My parents refused to buy me a cell phone, telling me that if I need a cell phone
I have to a straight woman. They further said that as long I am still a lesbian
I am not their child" (Respondent A)

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The above findings indicate that the LGBTI youth opportunities to make social contributions are limited and they may develop low self-confidence and self-esteem and may become isolated.

Moreover, another difficulties faced by youth in LGBTI relationships homelessness. Homelessness seems to be contributing in creating more challenges for the LGBTI community which include lack of housing and services that meet their specific needs. For example, many LGBTI youth who grew in rural areas they often run to urban areas for comfort and freedom. Homeless LGBTI youth are without economic support, often engage in drug use and risky sexual behaviours, and they also risk developing mental health disorders. Because of homeless LGBTI youth miss out on education and social support. Below is what they said.

> "*I left home because my parents were always telling me that I am a disgrace in the family*" (Respondent H).

The study found that LGBTI homeless youth are vulnerable to victimization, including robbery, rape, and assault. Therefore, in order to survive they engage themselves in high risky sexual behavior; including prostitution, which drives them further onto the margins of society and can expose them to greatly elevated risk for HIV. The findings in this section are in line with Cole (2012) who stated that homeless LGBTI youth miss out on education and social support during critical formative years more than half of homeless LGBTI youth report experiencing discrimination from peers. These circumstances create a state of loneliness and isolation for them. Cole (2007) explains that rejected LGBTI youths generally do not learn how to build a relationship with peers or families.

The findings in this section also reveal that LGBTI youth experience psychological stress. LGBTI people face considerable levels of stigmatization, discrimination and harassment in their daily lives. These challenges might bring various emotions, which include intense sadness, anxiety, loneliness, discomfort in social situations, and feeling overwhelmed. A number of factors may contribute to this, from living in an often homophobic society to facing family rejection to being closeted in some or all aspects of life. Mental disorders are not symptoms of sexual orientation, but rather they are symptoms of discrimination and fear of discrimination.

The majorities of LGBTI people learn to cope with this, particularly when they have the support of family and friends, and participate with LGBTI organizations and social networks. However, a significant number of LGBTI people, most particularly younger LGBTI people, had to cope with stigmatization, discrimination and harassment without support. Many also faced additional stress from experiences such as very high levels of homophobic bullying in schools and physical and verbal attacks. This had a negative impact on their mental health, leading to significant levels of psychological distress, self-harm and suicidal thoughts.

The findings in this study show that due to violence, social rejection, and isolation, the LGBTI community experiences higher rates of anxiety, mood and substance use disorders, and suicidal thoughts. This study supports Sharpe (2009) who reported that LGBTI people as a whole are more vulnerable to psychological distress. There is a large body of evidence which supports the claim that poor emotional health can be as a result of homophobic attitudes and heterosexism in society leading to lowered self-esteem and confidence and increased stress particularly for young gay women (Kwon, 2013). LGBT has become a widely accepted designation for minorities based on sexual and gender orientation.

4.6. Factors contributing or leading to challenges faced by LGBTI youth

This section presents the reasons that lead or contribute to the challenges that faced by LGBTI community. The main purpose was to investigate the different reasons or factors that might be the roots of the challenges that faced by LGBTI youth. The respondents have stated various ideas, but the dominant idea was religion being the roots of the challenges that faced by the LGBTI youth. Religion is clearly a factor in the recent rise in opposition to gay marriage. Below are the responses that the respondents gave.

> *"Religion is the cause of most of the challenges that the LGBTI youth are faced with. Because the bible has various scriptures that state that being an LGBTI is sinful and ungodly"* (Respondent F).

> *"Churches are one of the institutions which continue to prohibit the LGBTI sexual Orientation"* (Respondent C).

"Bible is the book which distinguishes the good and bad in relation to societal norms and moral values. Therefore, if community members still believes in it, they are definitely not going to accommodate LGBTI as it is regarded a sin in the bible" (Respondent J).

"Norms and moral values of the society contributes on the challenge faced by LGBTI community, because they regard and LGBTI people as deviating from the accepted morals" (Respondent G).

However some respondents have stated that lack of adequate knowledge is another factor that contributes in the challenges that the LGBTI youth are faced with. There is no consensus between the idea that being LGBTI is something which a person is born with or is a choice.

"Lack of concrete information concerning the formation of LGBTI sexual orientation is another factor which leads to the challenges that are faced by LGBTI youth" (Respondent B).

"People think that being an LGBTI is a curse, simply because they don't really know why LGBTI community exits" (Respondent E).

It is through respondents A and D that the weakness of enforcing the South African constitution is evident.

"In South Africa the LGBTI sexual orientation is legalized. However, most of the LGBTI people are being discriminated against and raped and the perpetrators goes unpunished, this makes the public continuing to discriminate the LGBTL" (Respondent D)

"The constitution of South Africa states that being an LGBTI is legal, but the government institution's which supposed to protected and uphold the constitution are the one which discriminate the LGBTI communities. They are failing to lead by example" (Respondent A).

4.7. Effects of the challenges faced by LGBTI youth.

The findings in this section show increasing trends with regards to psychological well-being and mental health issues, such as depression, suicidal ideation, substance abuse, and self-harm among LGBTI youth than their heterosexual counterparts. The study also found that LGBTI youth drop out of school due to the discrimination they are faced with in school atmosphere. This negative impact could result in decreased productivity or efficiency resulting from emotional trauma, non-cohesive team work, poor communication or destructive conflict among community members.

"I had sleepless nights because of the discrimination that I was faced with on daily basis" (Respondent C)

"I was once raped simply because I am a lesbian. The incident led me to commit suicide" (Respondent H).

"I dropped out of school because my classmates use to make funny comments about my sexuality" (Respondent I).

"I have to quit school, because it was mentally and physically stressful for me to go to that school. I had very little dedication to the school's agendas because school was not a safe, healthy, or productive learning environment" (Respondent A).

The study also found that physical abuse against LGBTI youths usually occurs due to disregarded harassment. LGBTI youths had an enormous psychological impact on them, mainly because the physical abuse followed constant verbal and non-physical harassment that occurs daily.

"I used to be verbal harassed which grew to physical abuse. I got hit in the back of my head with a stone while going to a mini-super market" (Respondent D).

"I suffered a lots of verbal assault and students were throwing items at me and making offensive comments because of my sexuality" (Respondent J).

"I had to leave home because of the conflict with my family members, and they   were always blaming me for the conflict" (Respondent F).

"I have faced discrimination and harassment which made me feel like I am backed up into a corner and so sad that ill cry. This led me turn to drugs and alcohol" (Respondent E).

The findings in this section is in line with Human Rights Watch (2001) which implies that verbal and physical violence is a tension that LGBTI youths have gotten accustomed to; however, it is damaging to their psychological wellbeing. Many of the LGBTI youths participated in this study have reported symptoms of depression such as sleeplessness, excessive sleep, loss of appetite and feeling of hopelessness. The study indicates that the lack of support from parents or family can possibly make them feel like there is no hope of ever living a happy life and being productive.

4.8. Strategies that can be employed to alleviate these challenges faced by LGBTI.

The findings indicate that there are various strategies that can be employed in order to alleviate the challenges faced by LGBTI youth. These strategies can be applied in different spheres in the country. Below are the comments given by the participants.

"Educating public about sexuality can be a strategy that can alleviate the   challenges that are faced by LGBTI youth" (Respondent G).

"Adding the sexuality in school curricular can help to equip school kids with useful information about sexuality at a younger age. Through this the wide spread misperception that sexuality interest is uncommon and sinful maybe corrected by including realistic, developmental and appropriate sex   education curricular   in schools" (Respondent A).

"Workshops to educate religious leaders pertaining sexuality can also be productive strategy to alleviate the challenges faced by the LGBTI youth. Religious leaders have the power to influence the attitudes and beliefs of the public" (Respondent J).

"Awareness campaign to clearly address the contributory factors to LGBTI and give people the idea that they are harmless to society can alleviate the challenges" (Respondent D).

"Peer education about sexuality at youth development centers can be a useful strategy to alleviate these challenges that LGBTI youth faced" (Respondent B).

"Media is the most powerful means to either affect or influence a person's belief. With more media exposure on unconventional sexual orientation, more awareness on the matter can be communicated and shared. This can help to alleviate the challenges faced by LGBTI youth in the country" (Respondent F).

The findings indicate that there is a need for a serious intervention in order to alleviate the challenges faced by LGBTI. Mainly there is need to educate the public about sexuality. Through education the misperception that being an LGBTI is a sin or ungodly can be corrected. For this educational intervention to be effective it needed to include in a school curricular, since is the environment where young people spent most of their time. The study also found that there is a need for awareness campaign. Media can be one of the sources which can be used to raise awareness about sexuality.

4.9. Religious role in gender relations

This section presents the finding on the role that religion plays on gender relations. The findings in this study shows that religion plays an important role on gender relations. The matter of fact is that societies usually use the bible to differential the good and the bad conducts. Therefore, since the bibles have many scriptures which regard the LGBTI relationships as a sin, bad and ungodly, this has a major influence on the perception and attitude of the society towards the LGBTI community. Community members tend to have negative attitude towards LGBTI people, because of the bible influence. Below are the responses from the respondents.

"Yes religion plays an important role on gender relations. Due to the verses that are in the bible which are against LGBTI community, the society chooses those verses to judge LGBTI people" (Respondent D).

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"Religion is one of the spheres that doesn't support or promote LGBTI relationships, since they say that is a sin. Some religion, such as Islam they punish LGBTI people through death. This shows that religion have major influences on sexuality" (Respondent G).

"Religion plays a negative role on gender relations, simple because bible is an patriarchal book. Therefore, since it is used to judge the good and the bad it is always biased, and it does the same in relation to sexual orientations" (Respondent F).

"Religion is at the forefront on the factors that contributes on the challenges that are face with the LGBTI community; they judge LGBTI relationship as a sin without looking at the contributory factors of LGBTI Interests" (Respondent H).

"Yes, religion plays an important negative role on gender relations, since there lots of churches that do not accept LGBTI people, because of their sexuality" (Respondent E).

"Religion is the roots of widespread rejection in nations where religion is important in people's lives. For instance, there is acceptance of LGBTI in countries where religion is less central in people's lives, such American countries" (Respondent A).

The findings indicate that religion plays an important role on gender relations. However, the role that it plays condemns the LGBTI relationships. South African is a religions nation and people judgements and beliefs are rooted in a bible. These findings support the literature that is found in Evans (2006) who argues that religion is the root of discrimination against the LGBTI community. This shows that LGBTI people have challenges when it comes to belonging to a religion. This also culminates into challenges that are faced by LGBTI community.

4.10. The government and non-government interventions on protecting the rights of LGBTI community.

The findings in this section indicate that the government has the constitution which protects the rights of the LGBTI community. Even though the constitution has a policy which protects the LGBTI community, but they are not doing enough to enforce the protection of the LGBTI community. The LGBTI community still faced with various challenges across the country. This is evident that the government is not doing enough to protect the LGBTI community. Different views are presented below.

"Most cases of rape are being reported by lesbians and the justice system
it doesn't applied equal as in the situation wherein a heterosexual girl
is raped" (Respondent J).

"The government is not doing enough since they don't raise awareness about
the rights and existences of LGBTI in different sphere of government" (Respondent G).

"The government is not setting an example by giving harsh sentences to the perpetrators
*who violates or abuse the LGBTI community" (*Responded B)

However, the are other respondent who stated that the government is doing enough in protecting the rights of LGBTI community mostly in the urban areas compare to the rural areas. The findings also indicate that there is an increasing number of people in this country who are beginning to love, appreciate and harmonise the LGBTI community.

 "*The government is doing enough, it managed to legalize homosexuality*
practice it is doing enough, as compare to other African nations" (Respondent I).

"Government has done enough to modify their laws so that LGBTI people will   have
full equality in our society and in civil marriage. The individuals are the one violating
these rights" (Respondent E).

There are some respondents who indicated that non-governmental organization appears to be playing a vital role in promoting and protecting the LGBTI community. The non-governmental organizations are the one organizing the LGBTI awareness campaign around the world.

"*I think it is only the non-governmental organization which advocates for the interest*
of the LGBTI community. This is because mainly it is an international non-governmental
organization which goes around the world and raise awareness about LGBTI
communities" (Respondent C).

"Non-governmental organizations are doing enough to protect the rights of the
the LGBTI community. This is because there are lot of non-governmental

organizations worldwide which are advocating and raising awareness about issues faced by LGBTI communities worldwide" (Respondent A).

The findings indicate that respondents have different view pertaining the government and non-governmental effort on protecting the LGBTI community. Some participants said that the government is not doing enough to protect the rights of LGBTI community, specifically in South Africa. This is because of the lack of campaign that seeks to promote the awareness of LGBTI communities. However, other respondents indicated that the government is doing enough for LGBTI community since it is legal and they can also get married.

4.11. Discussion of the results.

The chapter presented the study findings on the challenges that are faced by LGBTI youth at Mkhuhlu location. The components embodied in the chapter were the ten sections of the instrument, which were the biographical information of the respondents, how they started practicing LGBTI relationship, societal attitude towards LGBTI, contributory factors leading to LGBTI practice, the challenges faced by youth in LGBTI relationship, factors leading or contributing to the challenges faced by LGBTI youth, effects of the challenges faced by LGBTI youth, strategies that can be employed in order to alleviate these challenges, the religious role in gender relation and the government and non-governmental intervention in protecting the LGBTI community. The data was presented in both tabular and narrative form.

The key findings of this section are that there are several contributory factors that led to LGBTI practice. Most of the respondents stated that being an LGBTI is something they were born with it. This is because they have never had feelings for the person of opposite sex and they only have feelings for a person of the same sex. The LGBTI community they prefer the idea that being an LGBTI is an inborn. The truth of the matter is that if the public can know that being an LGBTI is an inborn, they are not going to be judgmental and all the issues faced by LGBTI community will not exists. This finding supports the literature available on Rathus et al (2011) which state that LGBTI is essentially dictated by biological factors. This simply means that genes, brain structure and hormones determine sexual orientation. The findings from the respondents and findings from collected data on this section are similar.

The other respondents indicated that environmental factors also have an influence in being in LGBTI relationship. These findings support Harren (2004) who stated that LGBTI attractions

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develop primarily as a result environmental influences and early experiences. Although many LGBTI does not concur with environmental factors influence. This is because being an LGBTI is seen as deviating from the normal values and norms of the society.

The other findings of this study were that many societies still holds negative attitudes towards LGBTI people. The reason that contributes in this negative attitude is that there is no concrete evidence on the causes of an LGBTI relationship. Therefore, many people think that being an LGBTI means being stigmatized, censured, immoral, abnormal, sinner and any other thing which has a negative meaning. The LGBTI are regarded as people who are deviating from the values and norms of the society. If the public knew that being an LGBTI is something that people are born with these negative attitude would have not been existed. However, there attitude at rural and urban areas are different. The study found that the urban area, young people and people with low religious beliefs have tolerant towards the LGBTI community.

The study also found that there are several factors contributing or leading to the challenges faced by LGBTI community. The bible is at the center of the factors that contributes in the challenges faced by LGBTI community. There are many scriptures in the bible which condemns the LGBTI practice. The church leaders use bible to teach the congregation about the good and bad things. This makes the public to judge the LGBTI community based on the bible. The other factor which contributes on the challenges faced by LGBTI people is the lack of information on the causes of LGBTI attractions. The fact that there is no concrete information on the actual cause of LGBTI attraction causes confusion in understanding the LGBTI community. People use whatever idea that suit them to judge the LGBTI community and this causes an increase in the challenges that they are faced with.

The findings in this chapter were that LGBTI community faces various challenges such as stigmatization, rape, sexual harassment, discrimination, hatred, religion exclusion irrespective of their different culture or ethnic groups. These findings illustrate that LGBTI are extremely vulnerable group as they live as second citizens and confined. This might be because they are a minority group, and some community members claim that being homosexual is by choice. This is a problem because they think those homosexuals are deviating from the values and norms of the society. These issues are rooted in the fact that there is no concrete evidence on the possible causes of the LGBTI interest. Therefore, the public uses any view which may suit their religious or cultural practices to judge the LGBTI community. The findings are in line with

Gevisser and Cameron (2012) observes that in South LGBTI people have historically been the victims of discriminatory practice.

The findings illustrate that the challenges faced by LGBTI people does not negatively affect them physically, but psychologically and social as well. The psychological effects of discrimination can further manifest in the form of stress and anxiety and may result in dissatisfaction and feeling misunderstood, pressured and detached. The findings are in line with Mayo (2013) who stated that the psychological effects of discrimination may be as serious as physical violence or even murder. Brocks (2006) also stated that individuals experiencing stress often struggle with negative feelings and emotions that have potential consequences for identity development and adjustment.

All members of these subgroups (LGBTI) are subject to similar prejudices rooted in beliefs and traditions about sexuality and gender. LGBTI people, as members of a social minority group, are suffering from various forms of socioeconomic and cultural injustice. The lacks of social recognition has an effect on the capacity of LGBTI people to fully access and enjoy their rights as citizens. They are more likely to experience intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and the threat of violence due to their sexual orientation, than those that identify themselves as heterosexual.

The study also found that due to the challenges faced by LGBTI people, they tend to have that perception that everybody will treat them as if they have the aspects of the stigmas associated with LGBTI people and prejudice events, refers to negative incidents, such as discrimination based on prejudice.

This section was about the strategies that can be employed in order to alleviate these challenges faced LGBTI community. The researcher asked respondents to give various strategies that they think can be useful to get rid of the challenges that they faced. The study also found that there are strategies that can be employed in order to alleviate the challenges faced by LGBTI community. Since most of the reasons are grounded on culture and religion, educating these institutions can be useful in alleviating the challenges that LGBTI people faced. These findings support the literature that is found in Unks (1995) which states that if schools have a curricular on sexuality; this can create a positive impact on attitude and behavior in understanding sexuality.

Through education, misperception that LGBTI sexual interest is uncommon and sinful may be corrected if realistic, developmentally appropriate sex education is made accessible to the public. Education is at the center of the strategies that can be useful in alleviating the challenges faced by LGBTI community. This is because lack of knowledge about sexuality is the main factor which fuel the challenges faced by the LGBTI community. The subjects of sexuality should be included in school curricular, since school is where young people spend most of their time. However, education should not be limited to young people; elderly people also need education in order for them to understand sexuality. The study also found that media can be a useful source to influence the attitude and beliefs of the public.

This section was to find out if there is a correlation between religion and gender relations. The key findings are that all respondents indicated that there is a correlation between religion and gender relations. These findings support the literature that is found in Evans (2006), who argues that religion is the root of discrimination against the LGBTI community. This shows that LGBTI people have challenges when it comes to belonging to a religion. This is because the religious guidance book called bible have many scriptures which condemns the LGBTI practice. The bible view LGBTI relationships as ungodly and a sin, and those who engage in it shall be punished by God. Therefore, the public tend to judge the LGBTI community based on the bible scriptures.

This section was to find out the views of LGBTI people whether the government and non-governmental organization are doing enough in protecting the LGBTI rights. The that government have done a good thing for legalizing the LGBTI practice, however they are not putting more effort in protecting the rights of the LGBTI community. The reasons being that it does not put full support in awareness campaign about LGBTI community and it does not take serious actions against people who abuse the rights of LGBTI community. Even though the government is not doing enough to protect the rights of LGBTI community, the non-governmental organization are at the fore front in advocating for the rights of LGBTI community worldwide.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and recommendations

5.1   Introduction.

This chapter focuses on the recommendations and conclusion of the study findings. The chapter gives an overview of the study and communicates the research findings which will make it valid academic work.

5.2   Overview of the study.

The study was about the challenges faced by LGBTI youth at Mkhuhlu location. The research was more focused on the experiences of LGBTI youth. The general assumption of the study is that LGBTI youth are experiencing challenges which hinder their full participation in their personal and social development.

The findings of the study show that respondents have diverse contributory factors leading them to be in an LGBTI relationships. Most of the respondents indicated that biological factors are the ones that are dominating in them being LGBTI, while others indicated that environmental factors also influence their sexual orientation. Most of the respondents denied that there are economic benefits associated with LGBTI practice and they argue that theirs is a normal biological sexual orientation. While others stated that they were influenced by economic benefits. This are usually the LGBTI youth who were heterosexual, then tend to be in a LGBTI relationship in order to benefit something.

The other key findings indicated that religious groups view LGBTI as a sin. This also culminates into challenges that are faced by LGBTI community. Other respondents indicated that the government is doing enough to protect the rights of LGBTI people, while others stated that the government is not doing enough. The non–governmental organisations seem to the one of the fore front of advocating for the LGBTI community. Although LGBTI are faced with various challenges, they are appreciating those who are different to them in terms of sexual orientation.

5.3   Implications of the findings.

The researcher found that LGBTI people face various challenges grounded on religion, norms and values of the societies. People tend to view and judge LGBTI community in relation to their

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own culture and religion. This makes them end up hating LGBTI people because their culture and religion do not approve the practice. People need to start accepting and embrace LGBTI people themselves, regardless of what the culture and religion say. The reasons being that the religious leaders and cultural expects have no concrete evidence on what really determine the sexuality of a person. Therefore, there is a need for educational intervention to intervene in order to alleviate the challenges that are faced by LGBTI community.

5.4 Conclusion.

We are born into a world which has a consciousness that is culturally constructed and in which hegemonic norms are determined by the values of society. These values vary from one culture to another. People who have the aspects which are associated with these norms are assumed to be normal in society. This normative understanding differentiates people thereby, causes the emergence of minority groups. Stereotypes of these minorities have been created by people who believe themselves to be dominant in society in this case the heterosexuals and assume that they have the right to define minorities which are LGBTI. Thus, stigmas cause prejudice, hostility and fear regarding these groups. All of these are the cause of discrimination against them, which is encountered and anticipated in all spheres of life.

The study shows that the issue of LGBTI community has become a dominant and pertinent one in the modern academic discourses in Africa, especially when there are ever-increasing numbers of people involved in such activities. The study showed that the challenges that are faced by LGBTI community are diverse, and that within this diversity, religion and traditional societal beliefs are at the core of the contributing factors.

The researcher found that LGBTI are faced with various challenges, which are grounded in culture and religion. These challenges include discrimination, sexual assault, rape, homophobia, torture and murder, as well as denial of employment, education and other basic rights. Discrimination against LGBTI people is underpinned by hetero-normatively. More often than not, these issues and problems are cantered on the oppression and liberation of LGBTI, on their widespread marginalization and invisibility.

LGBTI people are present at Mkhuhlu location, but they do not express themselves publicly because of the stigmatisation mentioned above. Homophobia is also prevalent as society with different cultures and religious groups cannot easily accommodate LGBTI community. Homophobia leads to various challenges that the LGBTI people are facing on a daily basis. Such problems include sexual harassment, hate speech, discrimination and prejudice. These challenges limit LGBTI people free participation in the community development projects as the environment forces them to operate like under-cover criminal gangs despite that South Africa is perceived to be a democratic country where every individual has rights to any sexual orientation.

The dominant idea in most societies is that heterosexuality is the only 'normal' sexual orientation, only sexual or marital relations between women and men are acceptable, and each sex has certain natural roles in life, the so-called gender roles. In many places, women and men who transgress these norms or challenge these roles face discrimination and violence. People view and judge LGBTI in the same way their culture and religion does. LGBTI is a universal phenomenon and is believed to have existed in Africa for centuries, but under much criticism and attack from those who do not share the same sexual orientation with LGBTI. Consequently, LGBTI is still shunned by the majority of South Africans across race, gender and culture. It is even difficult to disclose one's LGBTI orientation to family and friends. In most cases, families do not support LGBTI and sometimes they even expel them out of the home. It has been noted that although the South African constitution allows LGBTI, society continues to discriminate against them. In contrast with policy and legislative guarantees for fundamental human rights, endemic crime and violence continue to dominate the country's landscape. This study suggests that the members of religious community and the LGBTI community should learn to accept each other's differences and beliefs. Religions may need to consider that we are living in a democratic nation where any human being has a right to any sexual orientation.

This study supports existing research that indicates that heterosexism, discrimination, and harassment exists and needs to be addressed. The most common sense way to address this problem would be through educational institutions, which are where children and youth spend most of their formative years. Schools, colleges, and universities actively provide professional development training to their educators on various issues of importance, from new trends in education to school policies and procedures. This study reflects a need for more training of school personnel, religious leader and community leaders. This study provides data that

identifies areas of concern, the areas which need to be addressed by policy makers, community leaders and future researchers.

5.5   Recommendations of the study.

This section discusses the researcher's recommendations for the society, policy makers and future researchers.

5.5.1   Recommendations for the society.

The researcher recommends that people within the societies should appreciate and accommodate LGBTI people as they form part of the community. There is a need to celebrate unity in diversity as human beings are different and sexual orientation alone cannot be used as a caste to discriminate people. The study recommends that LGBTI people be treated equally by each individual in the communities since the government has granted everybody equal rights in this country. Though people have religion and culture there is a need to accept LGBTI people individually not because of what culture says. The researcher believes that the religious and cultural expects did not consider finding the contributory factors to LGBTI attraction before they judge it as a sinful, abnormal, ungodly and unAfrican. The study recommends that in order to alleviate the challenges faced by LGBTI people, there is a need of maximizing social support structures within the society.

5.5.2   Recommendations for the policy makers.

This study is not a study focusing on policy oriented solutions. However, I would like to mention some suggestions which may serve the solution of this problem. Based on the reviewed literature, the policy makers need to do their duty earnestly and lay strong punishment for those who abuse LGBTI rights and call them names. There should be penalties which should be laid by the policy makers for those people who exclude LGBTI people from their activities. Harsh punishment should be imposed on those who rape LGBTI, claiming that they want to change their sexuality. These incidents should be treated equally with the rape of heterosexual peoples. Policy institutions need to be well aware and well versed in LGBTI issues in order to be proactive in creating and maintaining safe and responsive environments for LGBTI youths, making sure that policies concerning LGBTI are in place and the information should be made available to the public.

5.5.3   Recommendations for future researchers.

Future researchers who may wish to do the same study need to involve more issues that concern gays and lesbians community. Researchers need to study more about this topic so that people who are still failing to accept LGBTI people start to understand LGBTI community.

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Appendix A: Letter of informed consent

My name is Mohale Robert. I am a registered student at the University of Venda for master's degree in Gender Studies. The research I am conducting focuses on exploring the challenges faced by youth in LGBTI relationship. I am inviting you to participate in this study. Please note that any information that you will provide will be treated as confidential and therefore will not be divulged to anyone. Your participation is voluntary, meaning to say you are free to pull out at any time should you feel uncomfortable during the course of the study.

Signature of researcher……………………………….   Date…………………………

I ……………………………….. have read and understood the contents and terms of this invitation to participate in this study. I hereby declare that I am voluntarily participating in this research.

Appendix B: Research instrument