

**CHALLENGES FACED BY GAY AND LESBIAN STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY  
OF LIMPOPO (TURFLOOP CAMPUS)**

by

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**THESIS**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

in the

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**(School of Social Sciences)**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**

Supervisor: **PROF K.NEL**

**2016**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I thank Professor Nel for her help and support in this endeavour. I would also like to thank my parents and friends who supported me. A further thank you to the participants in the study.

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that the thesis hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **ABSTRACT**

A qualitative study was conducted to investigate challenges faced by gay and lesbian students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus). Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. Purposive sampling (snowball sampling) was used to find participants for focus groups. Data were analysed using Thematic Content Analysis (TCA). The results of this study gave an insight into challenges faced by lesbian and gay students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus). It also indicated the impact of these challenges on their psychological, emotional and academic functioning. Results indicate that gay and lesbian students face a multitude of problems on campus environment which includes among other things bullying, discrimination, victimisation, abuse, academic disruption and derogatory remarks from their peers (heterosexual students) and staff members.

**KEYWORDS:** Homophobia, LGBTI, Discrimination, Prejudice, sexuality.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 General introduction

During the past decade an improvement has been seen in terms of attitudes towards homosexuality however, negative attitudes are still prevalent in many different forums, including schools and universities, with particular emphasis on traditional African communities (Mwaba, 2009; Kotch, 2014). Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) youth face extreme discrimination within educational settings, including tertiary institutions (Munoz-Plaza, Quinn & Rounds, 2002). Prevailing literature suggests that LGBTI youth are at great risk for a number of health issues, including suicidal ideation, para-suicide, bullying, harassment, substance misuse, homelessness and poor scholastic achievement (Munoz-Plaza et al., 2002).

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) individuals are also victims of general violence and crime. However, because they are stigmatised for their perceived sexual and gender anomaly, many of these crimes go unreported (Nel & Judge, 2008). According to Poteat (2007), many LGBTI students persistently report experiencing victimisation, ranging from verbal harassment to physical assault. Multiple psychological and social consequences have been reported resulting from this type of victimisation, which is homophobic in nature. This intolerance and stigmatisation leads young LGBTI individuals into absenteeism from school, not completing university degrees, social isolation and depression.

Kotch (2014), reports that many lesbians and gay men undergo sexual identity change during their university years where they accept and disclose their sexual orientation. Their research indicated that lesbian and gay students undergo a process which involves shifting their identity from a socially accepted heterosexual self to a socially undervalued, non-heterosexual lesbian or gay self. When these students reveal their sexual identities they often become victims of homophobic attacks.

According to Poteat (2007), social context and socialisation have been found to enforce homophobic prejudice. He notes that this is why conservative, traditional socialisation processes account for how children and adolescents form prejudicial attitudes towards homosexual individuals. It appears that context, “especially the level of perceived risk, greatly influences the

extent to which gay men and lesbian women choose to be open about their sexual identity” (Arndt & Debruin, 2006, p. 18). Furthermore, the social environment and prevailing paradigm of an existing culture has a strong impact on whether, and to what extent, an LGBTI individual reveals his or her sexual identity. Factors that encourage lesbian and gay students’ to reveal their sexual identity include: being around supportive people, finding the overall climate as supportive and having lesbian and gay role models in their environment (Arndt & De- Bruin, 2006; Kotch, 2014). Patriarchy, which exists in traditional societies, such as those in Africa, is often not supportive of LGBTI lifestyles (Ngcobo, 2007).

Herek and Glunt (1993), suggest that societal values, especially those instilled by religion are also important factors linked to the formation of attitudes and stereotypes about specific groups. Although it might be assumed that religious individuals are more accepting of difference, research has indicated otherwise. Specifically, homophobic standpoints may occur as a result of traditional religious values in many cultures. Fundamentally, those individuals who adhere to strict religious codes are frequently more homophobic than those who are not religious in anyway. Furthermore, Ngcobo (2007), states that discriminatory mind-sets can also result in prejudice, whereby negative attitudes emerge towards a person or group of people. This is seen in some cultural groups, and individuals, who do not encourage diverse sexual orientation. Religiosity often impacts negatively on opinions towards LGBTIs through various forms of discrimination. This has a harmful effect on their health (spiritual, physical and psychological), and well- being (Kotch, 2014).

## **1.2 Background to the study**

The rationale behind conducting this research study was prompted by a review of relevant literature and recent homophobic attacks occurring in Africa. In South Africa prejudice and hatred are strengthened by irresponsible homophobic statements and attacks, for example Eudy Simelane’s body was discovered in April 2008 at KwaThema. Simelane was beaten, gang-raped and stabbed twenty-five (25) times before being disposed of in a ditch (De Waal, 2012). Moreover, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) found that the South African Christian Arts Academy in Bloemfontein banned gays and lesbians from attending classes

(Littauer, 2013). It was thus considered relevant to investigate challenges faced by gay and lesbian students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus).

### **1.3 Research problem**

Homophobia implies a range of negative attitudes, behaviour(s) and feelings towards LGBTI people (Kotch, 2014; O'Higgins-Norman, 2009). Dislike of homosexuals is prevalent in university settings when the social context of the institution is patriarchal in nature (Butler & Astbury 2005; Larry, 2008). According to Larry (2008), in spite of reforms and an LGBTI friendly constitution, South African LGBTI individuals continue to fight against homophobia in their daily lives.

Negative attitudes and hostility towards homosexuality have often been part of the culture of many religious traditions, for instance, some forms of Christianity and Islam (Pardess, 2005). Traditional beliefs along with homophobic stereotypes have resulted in disturbing experiences for lesbian and gay youth in South Africa. Young lesbians, for instance, have been raped by older males to cure them of their perceived deviance (Butler & Astbury, 2005).

Isolation is faced by many LGBTI youth, resulting in mental health consequences such as internalised homophobia, suicidal-ideation and low self-esteem (Butler & Asbury, 2005; Kotch, 2014). Negative feelings experienced by LGBTI youth include guilt, feelings of sinfulness, fear, internal turmoil, helplessness, degradation, and humiliation. It is for this reason that LGBTI individuals perceive that it is often safer to remain invisible. They do this by not revealing their sexual identity (Butler & Astbury, 2005) which often leads to depression.

During the 50<sup>th</sup> General Meeting of the African National Congress (held in Mafikeng, December 1997), a promise was made to LGBTI youth to assure them of protection from discrimination (Butler & Astbury, 2005). However, feedback from homosexual South African youth demonstrates that they are not protected in their everyday social contexts (Human Rights Watch, 2003). For instance, Butler and Astbury (2005), report that LGBTI youth experience deep-seated homophobia within their school contexts. These youth reported that both staff and students are responsible for name calling, exclusion, and physical and emotional abuse.

The majority of studies researching LGBTI youth have focused on how heterosexual individuals feel about homosexuals (Arndt & De Bruin, 2006; Ilyayambwa, 2012; O’Higgins-Norman, 2009). Homosexual students are confronted by many challenges in a variety of contexts, which includes among others, academic institutions such as Universities, colleges and high schools. Challenges faced by homosexuals may fall into one of the following categories; academic, social, emotional and psychological. Moreover, D’Augelli, Grossman and Starks (2006), point out that homosexual students are harassed, threatened and many live in fear. Equally, O’Higgins-Norman (2009) points out that, homosexual students are at a greater risk for suicide, dropping-out of their studies and alcohol abuse.

Few investigations have explored the social, emotional, academic and psychological challenges from a homosexual point of view (Ngcobo, 2007). It is also true that many studies are quantitative in nature (Iraklis, 2010; Saraç, 2012), and very few are qualitative (Larry, 2008; Munoz-Plaza et al., 2002), thus revealing that more research, using this paradigm, needs to take place. No qualitative studies, investigating challenges faced by gay and lesbian students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus) could be found. It was thus considered to be an appropriate and relevant topic for investigation.

#### **1.4 Study aim**

The aim of this study is to:

1.4.1. Explore the social, psychological, emotional and academic challenges faced by homosexual students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus).

#### **1.5 Objectives**

The objectives of the study are to:

1.5.1 Explore social challenges gays and lesbian students face at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus).

1.5.2 Determine the emotional challenges gays and lesbian students experience at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus).

- 1.5.3 Inquire if challenges faced by gay and lesbian students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus) affect their studies.
- 1.5.4 Determine if challenges faced by gay and lesbian students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus) affect their psychological well-being.

## **1.6 Research questions**

- 1.6.1 Which social challenges do gay and lesbian students face at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus)?
- 1.6.2 What emotional challenges do gay and lesbian students experience at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus)?
- 1.6.3 What are the effects of social challenges faced by homosexuals on their academic performance at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus)?
- 1.6.4 What are the impacts of emotional challenges faced by homosexuals on their psychological well-being at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus)?

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

The study is important because it will increase the body of knowledge, specifically in-depth qualitative insights into the challenges faced by homosexuals, specifically gay and lesbian students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus). The study will further indicate any discrimination and victimisation experienced by gay and lesbian students. Moreover, results from the study will be given to relevant departments at the institution for instance, student counselling so that they will be aware of the challenges faced by gay and lesbian students on campus. Furthermore, through participation in the study gay and lesbian students will gain more insight with regard to the challenges they face as a result of their sexual orientation.

## **1.8 Summary**

The chapter attempts to give a general overview of the study. Furthermore, it provides the background, research problem, aim, objectives, research questions and the significance of the study. In chapter two, the theoretical framework used in the research will be described.

## CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework for the study which is Social Domain Theory (SDT) and also provides definitions of key concepts used in the investigation.

### 2.2 Operational definition of key concepts

- 2.2.1 **Homophobia:** A term used to describe fear, hatred and intolerance of people who sexually, emotionally, physically and romantically desires members of the same sex and is used as such in this study (Ilyayambwa, 2012).
- 2.2.2 **Homosexuality:** Refers to a sexual orientation whereby a person needs, desires, and responds towards other persons of the same gender and is used as such in this study (Ilyayambwa, 2012).
- 2.2.3 **Lesbian:** A lesbian refers to a woman who is emotionally, romantically, mentally and physically interested in other women and is used as such in this study (Ilyayambwa, 2012).
- 2.2.4 **LGBTI:** First used by Gundelroy (1989) an inclusive term, seen as non-discriminatory and objective, which is used to describe individuals who were previously referred to as either 'gay,' 'lesbian,' 'bi-sexual,' 'transgender,' and/or 'intersex.' This term is used in the study where appropriate as it is less discriminatory and more objective however, many studies use the terms gay and lesbian and they remain as stated. In the present study it is sometimes necessary to use the terms 'gay' and 'lesbian' and they are used as necessary.
- 2.2.5 **Gay:** Gay is a common term used to refer to a man who is emotionally, romantically, mentally and physically interested in and desires other men and is used as such in this study (Ilyayambwa, 2012).
- 2.2.6 **Violence:** Refers to a deliberate use of coercion or power which threatens another person and may result in injury, mal-development, psychological harm and deprivation and is used as such in this study (World Health Organisation, 1996).

### **2.3 Social Domain Theory (SDT) (Turiel, Hildebrandt & Wainryb, 1991)**

The research used Social Domain Theory (SDT) as a theoretical framework. Social Domain Theory (SDT) is concerned with how individuals reflect on, appraise, interpret, classify, and understand the social world (Richardson, Mulvey & Killen, 2012; Turiel, 1998). As such it is fundamentally suited for studying reasoning and analysing multidimensional and complex social issues such as sexual prejudice, as well as individual and contextual judgments concerning issues associated with sexual prejudice (Smetana, 2006).

Social Domain Theory (SDT) demonstrates that individuals integrate spheres of social knowledge when making social conclusions. Explicitly, according to SDT when social judgements are made, three domains are taken into consideration; the moral domain (which encompasses issues of fairness, justice, rights and welfare), the societal domain (which is concerned with customs, conventions and traditions) and the psychological domain, which consists of personal choice and individual discretion (Richardson et al., 2012).

Sexual prejudice is a very complicated phenomenon as described in the psychological literature. As such SDT was chosen for this study as it gives a foundation for understanding differences in beliefs about homosexuality and the manner in which heterosexual individuals behave towards LGBTI individuals. That is, it allows an understanding of heterogeneity in individuals' social judgement and social reasoning and the cognitive processes associated with such judgements, in this case anti-gay attitudes and stereotypes (Richardson et al., 2012; Turiel, 1998).

The theory also gives an understanding of issues that are related to the differences in individual's judgment's and thinking about homosexuality. The central idea of SDT is that, social judgments are multi-layered and draw from several conceptual frameworks or domains of social reasoning (Turiel, Hildebrandt & Wainryb, 1991). Therefore the theory can account for both the complexity and variation in reasoning both within and between individuals. The theory also gives an integrated framework for studying the relationship between social cognition and sexual prejudice (Smetana, 2006). Social Domain Theory (SDT) therefore points out that individuals integrate a number of spheres when formulating judgements and evaluations regarding their social world (Turiel, 1998).

The theory also highlights individuals' understanding of morality, that is their understanding of standards of conduct particular to a certain social group that arise to organise social interaction and social discourse. The theory also suggests that, spheres of social reasoning are different and they develop independently from one another, and they also arise out of different types of social interaction (Smetana, 2006).

Social Domain Theory (SDT) also states that, individuals beliefs, assumptions, and values about reality (informational assumptions) are part of individuals knowledge of the social world and by so doing contribute in the formation of social judgements. For example, some people consider homosexuality as psychologically deviant and unnatural, whereas others consider it as a natural form of sexual expression and such beliefs are based on culturally mediated information, such as opinions about the origins of homosexuality (Turiel et al., 1991). As such, individual assumptions about the naturalness and normality of homosexuality are interconnected with their judgements about the acceptability of homosexuality. However, such assumptions may or may not be associated with these judgements with regard to the treatment of gay and lesbian individuals (Richardson et al., 2012).

Social Domain Theory (SDT) suggests that when judgements are made in everyday situations individuals combine personal, conventional and moral issues in order to arrive at a judgement of the situation (Smetana, 2006). In fact, the use of SDT to understand peoples reasoning about sexuality provides evidence of the complicated nature of individual and inter-group relationships. Killen and Stangor (2006), support this statement by noting that attitudes displayed by children are a result of their social experience, which involves a wide range of social influence, taking into consideration the context and meaning ascribed to each situation.

The theory highlights the fact that stereotypical norms and moral concern both influence social reasoning from an early age and that decision making, with regard to social relationships, is determined by the complexity of the situation being evaluated as well as the evaluator's age (Killen, Margie & Sinno, 2005). Social Domain Theory (SDT) infers that, in more difficult and ambiguous or vague situations, adolescents tend to bring both moral and non-moral (for instance, stereotypes, norms, individual traits, attributes) concerns to bear on their judgements about social relationships (Richardson et al., 2012).

According to Turiel, et al. (1991), differences in social judgments, pertaining to LGBTI individuals, are related to an individual's factual assumptions regarding homosexuality as a form of sexual expression. This means that, whether someone regards homosexuality as psychologically deviant and unnatural or as a natural form of sexual expression will depend on that individual's factual assumptions.

Within SDT concepts of morality (issues of human welfare, rights and fairness) are distinguished from concepts of social conventions, which are the consensually determined standards of conduct specific to a given social group which promote group functioning and group identity. While morality and convention deal with aspects of interpersonal regulation, a third domain of personal issues refers to actions that comprise the private aspects of one's life and matters of preference and choice (Horn & Nucci, 2006; Richardson et al., 2012).

Furthermore, central to this theoretical framework is the role played by information and/or factual assumptions in generating judgments (Wainryb, 1991). In case of homosexuality for example, individual's judgments about whether or not homosexuality is right or wrong is based on concepts regarding homosexuality as a natural or normal expression of human sexuality. This is in turn, informed by the individual's adherence to particular religious or cultural ideologies (Turiel et al., 1991).

## **2.4 Summary**

In this chapter, an attempt was made to define the key concepts as well as the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter 3 gives an overview of literature relevant to the study.

## **CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter gives an overview of older, recent and contemporary literature linked to the topic. A range of literature has been included to indicate that many of the findings in older research are similar to those in more recent research. This suggests that discrimination and stigmatisation for LGBTIs is still an issue in 21<sup>st</sup> century society. Although this research focuses on gays and lesbians much of the literature refers to LGBTI individuals (which includes lesbians and gays), thus literature using this acronym is used in the study.

### **3.2 Campus environment**

Schools and other educational contexts are often the first sites of victimisation for LGBTI youth (D'Augelli et al., 2006; SAHRC, 2007). Homosexual students have been found to encounter challenges on university campuses because of how they are perceived and treated. This occurs because of their sexual orientation and/or the way they express their gender or gender identity (Aspenlieder, Buchanan, McDougall, & Sippola, 2009; Tetreault, Fette, Meidlinger & Hope, 2013; Rankin, 2005; Renn, 2010; Toomey, Ryan, Diaz, Card & Russell, 2010).

Challenges experienced by homosexuals can prevent them from achieving academic success and engaging fully in campus endeavours (Rankin, 2005; Toomey et al., 2010). Failure of academic success may also be precipitated by fear, anxiety and isolation that LGBTI individuals face at school and as a result, they may be unable to learn and cope effectively (Crothers, 2007). For example, it has been reported that sexual minority youth are ridiculed by other teens in academic settings. As such it becomes difficult for LGBTI youth to perform well academically because of the academic environment whereby they attend their lectures with fear of their safety and emotional wellbeing (Fisher, Poirier & Blau, 2012; Savin-Williams, 1994).

Students who attend school in unfriendly environments are more likely to alienate themselves from these homophobic environments by being absent or dropping out (Aragon, Poteat, & Espelage, 2014; Burgess, 1999; Lozier & Beckman, 2012). To elaborate on school difficulties faced by LGBTI youth, Elia (1993), conducted a study in the United States of America (USA) with a sample of 7000 LGBTI youth. The focus of the study was on defining and discussing

various forms of homophobia in the high school environment and exploring the ways in which homophobia negatively influenced all high school students. It was found that eighty percent (80%) of participants demonstrated a decline in academic performance, forty percent (40%) had truancy problems and thirty percent (30%) dropped out of school. Similarly a study by Sears (1991) found out that ninety-seven percent (97%) of the LGBTI students reported negative attitudes among their classmates and more than fifty percent (50%) reported fear of being harassed and as such they feared disclosing their sexual orientation at school. Rankin (1998) also adds to challenges experienced by LGBTI youth where he found out in his study that LGBTI individuals are targets of harassment, violence, and derogatory comments more than their non-LGBTI counterparts. In a more recent survey In New York (USA), using a sample of seven thousand LGBTI students, Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, and Bartkiewicz (2010) found evidence of homophobia. Eighty four percent (84%) of the sample reported being verbally harassed, forty percent (40%) reported being physically harassed, and eighteen percent (18%) reported being physically assaulted at school within the last year (before the survey was undertaken), based on actual or perceived sexual orientation. Additionally, of the students who reported harassment experiences to school staff, one third said no subsequent school action was taken. Furthermore, LGBTI students were four times more likely than heterosexual students to report missing at least one day off school in the month before the survey took place, because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable.

A study conducted by Tetreault et al. (2013), at a tertiary institution in New York (USA), investigated the perceptions of campus environment relative to sexual minorities. Data was collected through an online survey to assess students' perceptions of campus climate relating to LGBTI students. Multiple regression analysis was used. Results indicated that perceptions of a hostile campus climate were predicted by unfair treatment by instructors. Other results found that anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex (LGBTI) bias resulted in LGBTI students hiding their sexual identity from other students and staff. Both male and female homosexuals were more likely to perceive their campus environments negatively than heterosexuals, not only because they are bullied and discriminated against but also because they receive less support from their peers, academic and support staff (D'Augelli et al., 2006).

Furthermore, it is apparent based on literature that, educational environments for LGBTIs are generally negative in nature (D'Augelli et al., 2006; Kotch, 2014). For example, A study carried out in New York (USA) by the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (2010), found out that, most LGBTI scholars perceived schools as unsafe because of their sexual orientation, and over one-third felt insecure because of their gender identity. This supports results from an earlier study by Herek (1986), at Yale University where two hundred and fifteen Yale University students and alumni consisting of LGBTI individuals were surveyed. It was found that individuals who identified sexual minorities experienced high levels of discrimination and prejudice due to their sexual orientation.

In line with Herek (1986) and D'Augelli et al. (2006), a study was conducted by Bortolin, Adam and McCauley (2013), where lesbian, gay and bisexual youth were interviewed to assess their perceptions of the school climate relating to homophobia. It was found that LGBTI youth did not disclose their sexuality in high school due to fear of reprisals from friends, family and peers. It was also found out that those who came out (told people about their same sex attraction) during high school were often verbally and physically harassed. Male participants in the study, regardless of whether they disclosed their sexuality or not, were harassed verbally and physically during their high school years. Moreover, participants reported a range of verbal reactions commonly used such as *faggot* or *queer* amongst their peers. They reported to disliking these words intensely.

A study was conducted by Strayhon and Mullins (2012), at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville (USA), investigating challenges that Black gay male undergraduates confront in campus residence halls. Interviews were used with twenty nine (29) participants. Black gay men reported varied encounters of subtle and overt forms of racism particularly from White peers. Homophobia among same-race male peers was also encountered. Homophobia was also reported in administrative and academic staff.

Stewart (2010), points out that LGBTI students are more likely to be victims of unwelcoming and unfriendly educational experiences than their heterosexual counterparts. Due to their on-going marginalisation, LGBTI youth are frequent targets of discrimination by students as well as those who should be protecting them (for instance, teachers and police). Moreover, Savin-Williams (2001) and Jacob (2013), point out that, in university settings students identified by

others as LGBTI students face challenges as a result of longstanding prejudice and discrimination. He further points out that LGBTI students are at a greater risk for victimisation and harassment and are thus more likely to suffer emotional and behavioural symptoms.

A study by Garber (2002) also indicated that LGBTI individuals are marginalised on campuses. Harassment and violence of these individuals was also found on campuses where he researched the topic. Similarly, a study by Waldo (1998), found out that LGBTI individuals rated campus climates lower than their non-LGBTI counterparts and always reported some forms of harassment and physical violence. These studies are supported by a study by Lozier and Beckman (2012) who found that harassment and intimidation encountered by LGBTI individuals in school setting creates an environment that is unsafe and unsupportive of academic and social achievement.

A major study on campus environment was conducted by a research group at the University of Georgia (UGA) in 2002. The research assessed campus environment for LGBTI students. Data was collected from eighty two students who self-identified as LGBTI. The study found out that ninety percent (90%) of the respondents reported hearing anti-gay remarks or jokes and seventy five percent (75%) of respondents knew someone who had been verbally harassed because of sexual orientation. The study concluded that almost half of the respondents had experienced some form of prejudice on campus. Additionally, half of the participants also reported that they did not feel safe.

These results were supported in a study by Rankin (2003), across fourteen tertiary education campuses in the USA. The researcher completed the study with a sample of 1,669 self-identified LGBTIs. The aim of the research was to examine the educational climate for LGBTI individuals and their perceptions of institutional responses to homosexual issues. The study revealed that thirty-three percent (33%) of the undergraduate male LGBTIs students experienced harassment. Derogatory remarks were more prevalent constituting eighty-nine percent (89%). Other forms of threats includes spoken harassment which constituted forty-eight percent (48%), anti-LGBTI graffiti constituting thirty-nine percent (39%), written comments constituting thirty-three percent (33%), and physical assault reported only by eleven participants. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of those who experienced harassment indicated students as the source of harassment. Moreover, the study indicated that twenty percent (20%) of the participants feared for their safety as a result of

their sexual orientation. Fifty-one percent (51%) tried to hide their sexual orientation with the aim of avoiding intimidation. This study was one of the first to suggest that campus climate perpetuates challenges (social and academic) experienced by LGBTI individuals as a result of their sexual orientation. As a result of this study many American campuses initiated policies and awareness campaigns to address the issue of inhospitable campus climate.

In a recent study Renn (2010), reports that a ground-breaking research report by Campus Pride, a non-governmental organisation dedicated to the creation of safer campus environment for LGBTI students, in the USA, presented a comprehensive review of the experiences of LGBTIs on college campuses. This study allowed the comparison of data across higher education institutions. The report surveyed over five thousand (5000) LGBTI students of every race, colour and ethnicity, from multiple institutions, with the aim of understanding campus environment for LGBTI individuals. It was found out that colleges and universities fail to provide LGBTI individuals with an environment that is safe and secure which is necessary for learning. This finding supports those of Rankin (2003).

Due to hostile school environments many LGBTI individuals prefer to keep their sexual identities secret. Remaining in the so called *closet* may also be due to uncertainty with regard to the coming out process where people, who are attracted to the same sex, reveal their sexual identity to peers, friends and family. It can also be seen as a defence mechanism which can reduce stress as well as a mechanism to retain school friends that may otherwise not be willing to be friends with them because of their sexual identity (Tati, 2009). Hostile school environments may lead to psychological problems such as social isolation, reluctance to participate in school based activities and even dropping out of school (Hunter & Schaecher, 1987; Tati, 2009). Furthermore, many sexual minority students perceive school environment as unsafe, and thus their focus turns from academic achievement to survival (Tati, 2009; Weiler, 2004).

Even though school environments are often hostile for LGBTI individuals some take a stance of being open and visible in their same sex attraction and as a result they are confronted by negativity and harassment from their fellow students (Morrow, 2004). Thus, sexual minority students have been found to report more emotional and behavioural difficulties than their heterosexual counterparts, among the reported problems are truancy, high rates of substance abuse, prostitution, running away from home and encounters with law enforcement (Savin-

Williams, 2001). Moreover, sexual minority students report experiencing psychological challenges including depression, helplessness, hopelessness, worthlessness, alienation, extreme loneliness and having suicidal ideas (Lozier and Beckman, 2012; Savin-Williams, 2001).

### **3.3 Recommendations from the literature regarding the promotion of safe campus environment for LGBTI individuals**

There has been a rise in literature regarding the promotion of safe campus environment for LGBTI individuals and each of these studies has offered recommendations with regard to the promotion of such an environment. For example, in the USA, the Governor's Office of the State of Massachusetts (1993), advocated that additional education and advocacy was needed to ensure that sexual minorities were not subjected to insensitivity, harassment, and violence. In line with the latter recommendation, Human Rights Watch (2001), recommended that LGBTI students should be protected by laws and policies at all levels, for example, at the school district levels in the USA. In later research in the USA, Biegel and Kuehl (2010), recommend that local, state and national policy makers should implement recommendations defining the language to be used on policy documents related to LGBTI individuals.

In a study conducted by the National Association of School Psychologists in America (2011, p. 1), it was recommended that:

“Education and advocacy must be used to reduce discrimination and harassment against LGBTI youth by students and staff and promote positive social–emotional and educational development.”

It was also noted that individual and systems-level advocacy, education and specific intervention efforts are needed to create safe and supportive schools for LGBTI youth. These include the following strategies amongst others: establishing and enforcing comprehensive non-discrimination and anti-bullying policies that include LGBTI issues, educating students and staff, intervening directly with perpetrators, providing intervention and support for those students targeted for harassment and intimidation and those exploring their sexuality or gender identity, promote societal and familial attitudes and behaviours that affirm the dignity and rights within educational environments of LGBTI youth and recognising strengths and resilience.

A study conducted by Jacobs (2011) at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, which focused on the development of LGBTI *Safe Zones* in tertiary institutions recommended that, universities should provide safe zones for LGBTI students where they have the opportunity to learn, in a safe environment. It was noted in the study that safe zones provide LGBTI students with a space in which they can access information, speak to an empathic peer and even report incidences of homophobia.

In Stonewall's (2012, p. 23), school study in the USA it was recommended that:

“Schools should take steps to prevent and respond to homophobic bullying, and positively addresses and teaches about gay people and issues, this will reduce homophobic bullying and create a positive learning environment for lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils.”

It was pointed that bullying and harassment must be dealt with quickly and that staff members must be equipped to deal with homophobic incidents.

A study was conducted by Mavhandu-Mudzusi and Netshandam (2013), at the University of South Africa (UNISA), which investigated the experience of LGBTI students registered at a rural institution in the country. Data was collected through two focus groups, each consisting of eight people and twelve individual face to face interviews. It was recommended that programmes for social behaviour change focusing on advocacy, education and support should be implemented at the institution. The programme, it was recommended, should target the following a) the entire university community in order to improve awareness and to address issues of stigma and discrimination in terms of LGBTI students; b) to health care providers, within the university community, in order to ensure they have relevant information in order to provide LGBTI relevant services and c) a programme should also be targeted at the LGBTI community within the university in order to improve their knowledge and know their rights. It was suggested that this would help empower them in dealing with stigma and discrimination. Pereira and Rodrigues (2015), in a similar study, recommended that more emphasis should be placed on suicide prevention for younger LGBTI individuals in such programmes.

### **3.4 Common psychological problems encountered by Lesbians, Gays, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex persons (LGBTI).**

#### **3.4.1 Emotional problems**

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) individuals are confronted by multitude of challenges which may result in increased risk for negative mental health outcomes which in turn affects their emotional functioning (Graham, Bradford, de Vries, & Garofalo, 2011; Wernick, Kulick & Inglehart, 2014). Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) individuals are also confronted by stress related to whether to disclose their sexual orientation to friends, which also has an impact on their emotional functioning. As a result of so called *disclosure stress*, LGBTI individuals live in fear that their sexual identity might be discovered before they are ready to disclose it (Morrow, 2004; Wernick et al., 2014). This type of stress is perpetuated by fear of social ridicule, harassment, lack of acceptance and fear of violence. This supports a study conducted by Savin-Williams (1994), where ninety five percent (95%) of LGBTI individuals reported feeling emotionally isolated.

#### **3.4.2 Isolation**

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) individuals are confronted with a variety of challenges which leaves them vulnerable to isolation. Those who decide to remain invisible from their peers, with the aim of avoiding to call attention to their sexual orientation, further perpetuate their isolation. Moreover, some isolate themselves with the aim of avoiding rejection and being ridiculed (Morrow, 2004). Isolation can also precipitate LGBTI individuals to a multitude of problems such as limited educational attainment, substance abuse, low self-esteem and depression (Morrow, 2004; Pereira & Rodrigues 2015).

#### **3.4.3 Internalisation of homophobia**

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex individuals are likely to internalise negative messages portrayed by heterosexual society (the mainstream) as a result of their sexual orientation. Mainstream society keeps using judgemental terms such as *faggot, queer and lesbo*. Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) individuals have a tendency to take these messages and internalise them and often find it difficult to confront the actual meaning of

these terms. At some point they have to confront these meanings and have to deal with the emotional effect they have. Unchallenged internalised homophobia places LGBTI youth at a high risk of psychological problems such as depression, suicide, substance abuse and contributes to suicide attempts (Morrow, 2004; Pereira & Rodrigues 2015).

Internalised homophobia has also been linked to suicidal ideation. A study conducted by Pereira and Rodrigues (2015) in Portugal, with a sample of three hundred and eighty nine participants, evaluated the relationship between internalized homophobia and suicidal ideation in young LGBTI and heterosexual youths had the following results. It was found that lesbian and homosexual youth had stronger internalized homophobia, while young bisexuals had higher levels of suicidal ideation. The youth who had not disclosed their sexual orientation still experienced discrimination as their peers guessed their sexual orientation. These youngsters also had higher levels of suicidal ideation.

### **3.5 Experiences of homosexual individuals in residences and lecture halls**

Campus residence and lecture halls represent another important site for exploring homophobic experiences (Strayhon & Mullins, 2012). The authors found that residences and lecture halls were the main areas in the university environment where homophobic attacks took place.

Residence halls have been found to play a major role in promoting homophobia however, they have also been found to promote the coming out process of LGBTI individuals, depending on the climate in the residence. Evans and Broido (1999) examined the coming out process experienced by twenty LGBTI students in the residence halls of a major research institution in the USA. The students ranged in age from eighteen to twenty six years and included ten men and ten women. The researcher found that residences were very influential in terms of the promotion of homophobic attitudes. Conversely, LGBTI students pointed out that when they lived in a residence, with supportive people and LGBTI role models, they were more able to tell others about their sexual identity. Nevertheless, some participants pointed out that lack of support in many residences discouraged other LGBTI students from disclosing their sexual identity. Participants also reported that coming out to their roommates was very challenging regardless of the sexual orientation of the roommate.

Garvey, Jason and Susan (2015) conducted a study in a number of unidentified community colleges in the USA. Their study investigated how campus climate affected LGBTI students. The results of the study indicated that classroom climate played a large role in determining students' perceptions of their environment, lecturers and peers. In a hostile classroom environment, LGBTI individuals face discrimination and harassment from peers, and perceived discrimination from lecturing staff, the opposite of which is true of an accepting classroom (lecture hall) environment.

### **3.6 Homosexual studies in the South African context**

A study carried out by Tati (2009), at the University of Western Cape (South Africa), exploring the experiences of black lesbian students, revealed that the heterosexual student community at the university was not as homophobic as anecdotal evidence suggested. The findings indicated that personal narratives shared by participants highlighted that the university community was open to various identities and they were also non-judgemental. However, in another study at schools in the Western Cape region participants reported hearing negative or homophobic comments from other scholars and school staff, such as "*Zetabane, Moffie or Fag*" (Gay and Lesbian Network, 2010, p. 35).

Another study conducted by Msibi (2012), in Kwazulu-Natal explored how sexually marginalised black high school students from conservative backgrounds deal with their same sex attraction. The study found that in the school context fear and lack of understanding about different types of sexuality led to discrimination against homosexual learners. This research suggested that this discrimination and stigmatisation occur in institutions of higher learning in the province. Moreover, in the school contexts that were researched, LGBTI scholars reported that they were harassed on a daily basis by other students because of their sexual orientation (Killen & Stangor, 2006).

It has also been found that, in South Africa, socially constructed negative attitudes and myths together with stigmatisation of alternative sexual orientations are internalised by LGBTIs. This internalisation causes distress, anxiety, depression, social isolation, relationship difficulties, substance abuse and other mental health problems (Pachankis & Goldfried, 2004).

A study conducted at Rhodes University indicated that seventy-six percent (76%) of gay men in the survey had experienced verbal abuse, twenty-six percent (26%) had been threatened with violence and seventeen percent (17%) had their belongings damaged. The majority of the gay men in the study, sixty-six percent (66%) had tried to conceal their sexual orientation to avoid harassment and forty-two percent (42%) had made specific life changes (for instance, not revealing their sexual identity and taking women out) to avoid discrimination and harassment (Hattingh, 1994). In line with Hattingh's (1994) study, in a 2002-2004 survey which had a sample of two hundred and eight six participants who shared similar experiences. One hundred and forty five of the black lesbians interviewed in Gauteng, that is thirty-six percent (36%) of the sample, reported experiences of verbal abuse, fifteen-percent (15%) reported physical abuse and ten percent (10%) experienced sexual abuse or rape. In a later study by Currier (2011) the majority of the black gay males surveyed (88%) reported verbal abuse, fifteen percent (15%) reported physical abuse and nine percent (9%) reported sexual abuse or rape. Furthermore, there are various documented studies in Africa that report cases of homophobic violence, rape and harassment targeting LGBTI persons who challenge the so-called normal gender roles (Human Rights Watch, 2003b; Lynch & Van Zyl, 2013).

A study by Ngcobo (2007), at a rural tertiary institution in Kwa-ZuluNatal, South Africa that has an intake that is made up of Africans from traditional backgrounds, found that victimisation of LGBTI existed on the campus. Homophobia, discrimination, lack of respect for dissimilarities, violation of LGBTIs constitutional rights and stigmatisation were commonplace on the campus.

According to Currier (2011), LGBTI hate crimes are strengthened by strong authoritative permission against transgression of prescribed gendered roles. This authoritative permission is used to discipline gender non-conformity and deviations from heterosexuality in the South African context. A study by Nel and Judge (2008), which was conducted in Gauteng province, South Africa, revealed the nature and frequency of prejudice motivated hate speech and victimisation against LGBTIs. Furthermore, the majority of open LGBTI persons had experienced some form of victimisation, such as verbal abuse, threats, being chased or followed, or being spat at. The findings from this study also noted that higher levels of outness (that is, not being afraid to openly display one's homosexual orientation) and challenging patriarchal gender roles were linked to increased rates of homophobic attacks.

Herek, Gillis and Cogan (1997), note that higher levels of psychological distress have been found to accompany homophobic hate crimes. Their study which was conducted in California (USA), revealed that gays and lesbians who experience hate crime reported more symptoms of anxiety, Post-Traumatic Stress disorder (PTSD), depression and anger than persons who experienced non-sexual gender identity crimes, this study inform us that homophobic hate crimes also takes place around the world.

Some studies have also explored experiences of homosexuals in South African Universities, for example A study carried out by Graziano (2004), at Stellenbosch University (South Africa), explored the opinions and beliefs of twenty gay and lesbian students. The findings revealed that some of the gay and lesbian participants remained silent about their sexual orientation due to an unfriendly campus atmosphere and fear of victimisation and discrimination. In line with Graziano's (2004) study, a study was carried out by Msibi (2012), in Kwazulu-Natal (South Africa). The study had 114 participants that included teachers, school learners and pre-service teachers. The study explored how sexually marginalised black high-school students from conservative schooling contexts in KwaZulu-Natal experienced schooling. The study revealed that homosexual youth had negative experiences of schooling. Negative experiences reported included punitive actions, derogatory language, and pushing which led to physical violence which was perpetuated by their peers and teachers. The study also revealed that homosexual learners resisted portraying a positive self-image of their own homosexuality which they used as a mechanism for coping with their peers perceptions of homophobia.

Teachers have also been found to reinforce condemnation of LGBTIs. A study conducted by Bhana (2012), at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, gathered data through focus group interviews with twenty five teachers. The aim of the study was to explore positions through which teachers give meaning to homosexuals (gays and lesbians) at school. The study revealed that silencing homophobia, denying its existence in the curriculum and religious prohibitions were among the dominant issues that perpetuated homophobia at the institution.

Another study carried out by Mwaba (2009), at the University of Western Cape (South Africa) looked at the attitudes and beliefs of South African students regarding homosexuality and same-sex marriage. A survey was used among one hundred and fifty undergraduate students. Results indicated that seventy-one percent (71%) of the sample viewed same-sex marriages as abnormal.

Forty percent (40%) supported discrimination towards homosexuals, with forty-six percent (46%) of the sample stating that homosexuals should be denied the right to adopt children.

On 1 December 2006, South Africa became the fifth country to legalise same-sex marriage. This took place after the constitutional court ruled that the existing legal definition of marriage was in conflict with the constitution because gays and lesbians were denied the rights granted to heterosexuals (Ilyayambwa, 2012). Despite developments made by the South African legal system, LGBTI persons often experience combined forms of discrimination on one or more of the listed grounds according to section 9(3) of the Constitution for example, race, sex, gender, marital status and sexual orientation (Isaack, 2007).

Studies have revealed that lesbians in South Africa are subjected to much more physical violence than heterosexual women (Child Information Gateway, 2011). The phenomenon of corrective rape has been reported in South Africa in many areas amongst township-dwelling black lesbian women (Mufweba, 2003). Moreover, in South Africa it was reported that two lesbians were brutally raped and murdered in Soweto on 7 July 2007 (Campaign, 2007). Furthermore, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2007, a black lesbian, Thokozane Qwabe's body (23), was found in Ladysmith, KwaZuluNatal. In another attack in March 2006, a 19 year-old black lesbian (Zoliswa Nkonyana), was attacked and murdered by a mob in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, because of her sexual orientation (Triangle Project, 2006).

Research findings in South Africa suggest that black lesbians, specifically in townships, where they are seen to challenge patriarchal gender norms, are increasingly targeted for rape. Of the forty six black women interviewed, forty-one percent (41%) had been raped, nine percent (9%) were survivors of attempted rape, thirty-seven percent (37%) had been assaulted and seventeen percent (17%) were verbally abused. Most survivors know their perpetrators, who are often a family member, friend or neighbour (Smith, 2004).

It is evident from the literature that traditional beliefs, religion, lack of understanding of sexual difference and patriarchal norms play a major role in perpetuating the social, psychological, emotional and educational challenges faced by homosexuals in educational environments.

### **3.7 Attitudes towards homosexuality**

A study was conducted by Saraç (2012), at Mersin University (Turkey) with a sample of one hundred and forty nine men and ninety seven women, which explored physical education majors' attitudes toward lesbians and gays. The short form of Attitudes towards Lesbian and Gay Men Scale was used. The study found that female students' had more positive attitudes toward gay men compared to males however, male and female students' attitudes towards lesbians were similar (negative). An earlier study at the same university conducted by Gelbal and Duyan (2006), found that female university students had relatively positive attitudes toward gay men and lesbians when compared to male students. Male students were also found to have more negative attitudes toward gay men when compared to female students.

The notion that females hold positive attitudes towards homosexuals is also elaborated by Clift's (1988) early study, investigating the attitudes of eighty first year students in a college of higher education towards homosexuals, lesbian women, gay men and homosexuality generally using specially constructed scales. His findings were supported by Saraç's (2012) and Gelbal and Duyan's (2006) studies which reported significant sex differences in attitudes with males being less tolerant than females towards homosexuality.

Iraklis (2010), carried out a study of attitudes towards lesbian and gay men using a scale created by Herek (1994). The study examined heterosexual Greek students' attitudes towards gay men and lesbians. Findings suggest that negative attitudes are more strongly held by people who score high on religiosity and people who report no contact with lesbians and/or gay men. The results also indicated that heterosexual men held strong negative attitudes towards male homosexuality. An earlier study by Arndt (2006) was conducted at the University of Johannesburg in Gauteng using the same scale. The results indicated that heterosexual students hold negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men particularly those students with a strong religiosity.

Bullying and harassment have also been found to be the most prevalent form of anti-gay behaviour in many educational settings across the world. A study conducted by Horn (2006) in the USA in schools and higher education colleges noted that younger heterosexual adolescents report being less comfortable interacting with gay and lesbians and they were more likely to

judge and tease LGBTI peers. Older adolescents were more likely to try and rationalise bullying and judgmental behaviours towards LGBTI's.

A study by Kwok, Wu and Shardlow (2013) investigated attitudes toward lesbians and gay Men amongst Chinese social work students. All participants were ethnic Chinese and identified themselves as exclusively heterosexual. Close to half of them identified themselves as Christians and a few identified themselves as Buddhist. Others reported that they had no religious affiliation. It was found out that the students' attitudes were generally favourable toward lesbians and gay males. However, students with Christian beliefs tended to hold negative attitudes, though exposure to sexual diversity training was found to be significantly associated with attitudes becoming more favourable.

Although not a separate and distinct phenomenon from the high incidence of gender-based violence in the country, it was also reported that highly visibly gay, lesbian or transgender people were more often the targets of homophobic violence (Smith, 2004). The above mentioned study clearly shows that South Africa is patriarchal in nature and that when heterosexual students go to tertiary institutions they continue to reinforce patriarchal attitudes which create an unfavourable learning environment for homosexuals.

### **3.8 Coping mechanisms used by LGBTI individuals**

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) youth face a range of challenges in addition to numerous stressors faced by their heterosexual counterparts (McDavitt, Iverson, Kubicek, Weiss, Wong & Kipke, 2008). One of the most overwhelming stressors within the lives of these youth is the heterosexual ideological system that discriminates and stigmatises non-heterosexual relationships and identity (Herek, 1990).

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) have been found to adopt a variety of coping mechanisms to overcome such stressors. Regardless of coping styles mentioned in the literature, very little is still known about the actual strategies used by LGBTI youth to cope with anti-gay behaviour (Perrin, Cohen, Gold, Ryan, 2004; Savin-Williams & Schorzman, 2004). However, qualitative studies have emerged which indicated that this group use similar strategies in multiple contexts (Wilson & Miller, 2002). Among the strategies mentioned are:

- Denial - refusal to acknowledge something because it is painful, distressing or threatening (Butler & Astbury, n.d). For instance, sexual identity different to the mainstream.
- Suppression- refers to conscious postponement of conflict or discomfort (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). In this case individuals do not consciously recognise their sexual identity.
- Compensation - refers to psychological counterbalancing of perceived weaknesses by emphasising strength (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). Individuals with different sexual identities to the mainstream overcompensate by over-emphasising strengths for instance, very theatrical gay men.
- Sublimation - displaying of unacceptable impulses in a more acceptable way (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). For instance, individuals attracted to one sex may say they are attracted to both sexes which is more acceptable.
- Undoing - reversal of behaviours or thoughts that are considered unacceptable by deliberately expressing thoughts or behaviours which are overly acceptable (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). For instance, individuals who commit violence against LGBTIs who want to have same – sex relationships.
- Displacement - redirecting thoughts, feelings and impulses from the source of the discomfort to a less threatening one (Butler & Astbury, n.d). An individual may not have relationships and become addicted to drugs or computer games as they see this as less threatening than their differing sexual identity.
- Rationalization-involves the use of rational explanation to justify beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). This usually starts with, “I am not gay, I don’t know what happened, I was drunk,” or rationalisations to that effect.
- Avoidance - involves careful management of unacceptable and uncomfortable situations to reduce anxiety or exposure to threatening situations (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex individuals may never tell their families about their sexual orientation, in some case they marry, as they find reality too intimidating.

### **3.8.1 Literature on commonly used coping strategies**

A high proportion of literature on lesbian and gay men subjected to bullying, harassment and physical abuse in multiple settings has been documented (Rivers & D'Augelli, 2001). Such discrimination and abuse have been found to be accompanied by stress and varying degrees of psychological demands (Lozier and Beckman, 2012); Ramefedi, Farrow & Deisher, 2002). As a result, remaining in closet has been found to be one of the coping strategies used by gay and lesbian individuals (Lewis, 2003). For example, gay men may comment about an attractive woman while in company of heterosexuals or they may even invite heterosexual males to accompany them to functions in order to hide their sexual orientation as well as to avoid anti-gay discrimination (Woods & Lucas, 1993). Being closeted (not admitting to being gay) as a coping mechanism however has been found to have negative consequences which includes among others, deprivation of spontaneity required in interpersonal relationships (Greene, 1993; Ryan, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2009).

A strong correlation has also been found to exist between gay related stress and engagement in self-destructive behaviour such as alcohol use, drug use and risky sexual behaviour (unplanned and unprotected sex). However, alcohol and drug abuse are commonly used coping methods amongst LGBTI individuals compared to their heterosexual counterpart (Reed, Prado, Matsumoto & Amaro, 2010). Engagement in risky sexual behaviour as a result of drug abuse has been found to result in potential psychological and physical consequences. For example, a study conducted by Amirkhanian (2009) in Russia where four separate groups of sexually active homosexual men were used as participants, found high rates of HIV infection among the gay community. Significantly it was found that two thirds of the participants reported engaging in risky sexual behaviour following the use of substances.

To support the latter study, a study was conducted by Reed et al. (2010), at an unnamed university in Boston (USA), using a random sample drawn from the universities entire undergraduate population (nine hundred and ninety eight participants). The study evaluated alcohol and drug use in gay, lesbian and bisexual college students, and the negative consequences thereof. It also looked at whether safety and stress issues due to sexual orientation can be correlated with substance abuse among these individuals. The results of the study

indicated that gay, lesbian, and bisexual students reported more alcohol and drug abuse (used as coping mechanisms) as well as negative consequences from this substance abuse than their heterosexual counterpart classmates. A correlation was found between alcohol and drug abuse among non-heterosexual students and stress as a result of feeling unsafe on campus premises because of their sexual orientation.

Amirkhanian (2009) and Reed et al., (2010), reviewed research about gay Latino drug users. A professional translator was used to transcribe the accounts from Spanish to English. The results from both studies found multiple reasons for drug use among homosexuals which included, among others, coping with sexual identity and reducing sexual inhibitions. Interestingly one of the findings from the reviews was the commonality of situations in which Latino men used drugs namely in social settings when they first *came out* and to enhance sex.

### **3.9 Discrimination**

Discrimination can be described as inappropriate and potentially unfair treatment of individuals due to group membership, in case of this research being a member of the homosexual community. It also involves active negative behaviour toward a member of a group, denying individuals or group's equality of treatment and biased behaviour towards that group, which includes actions that directly harm or disadvantage them while favouring one's own group (National Association of School Psychologists, 2012).

Discrimination can take many forms and, in the case of homosexuality on campuses, it can be direct, for example when a member of hostel staff refuses to serve someone because of their sexual orientation or indirect, when it occurs in a more subtle form (for instance, not mixing with another student because they are *different*). Regardless of whether it is direct or indirect, discrimination can affect people in various ways from a minor annoyance to having a devastating impact on the individual's psychological well-being (European Union Charter, 2015).

### **3.9.1 Discrimination against LGBTI individuals**

It is evident from the literature that LGBTI individuals experience stigma and discrimination due to their sexual orientation (Choi, Han, Paul & Ayala, 2011). According to Subhrajit (2014) for LGBTI individuals, stigma and discrimination occurs daily in all aspects of their life. This is elaborated by the 2013 Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union [FRA] (2013) survey on LGBTI discrimination. The survey revealed that more LGBTIs have experienced discrimination or harassment on the grounds of their sexual orientation than their heterosexual counterparts.

Equally, a national survey conducted by Kosciw, Greytak, Palmer, & Boesen (2014), which constituted of over seven thousand participants between the ages of thirteen and twenty one years, from fifty states in the USA found the following. Fifty-five point five percent (55.5%) of LGBTI participants surveyed reported personally experiencing LGBTI-related discriminatory practices at school, eighteen point one percent (18.1%) of participants were prohibited from attending a dance or function with someone of the same gender, seventeen point five percent (17.5%) of participants were prohibited from discussing or even writing about LGBTI topics in school assignments and fifteen point five percent (15.5%) of participants were prevented from wearing clothing or items supporting LGBTI issues and nine point two percent (9.2%) of participants reported being disciplined for simply identifying as LGBTI. Furthermore, as a result forty-two point three percent (42.3%) of participants were more than three times likely to have missed school in the past month, had lower school grades than their heterosexual peers and had lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression than their heterosexual peers.

The aforementioned research is supported by a survey by the Equality Challenge Unit (2009), in the USA, where significant levels of negative treatment and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation from peers, tutors and lecturers and support staff were reported in educational institutions. It is evident that students who experience discrimination have also been found to experience negative mental, academic, health and social outcomes (National Association of School Psychologists, 2012). This is supported by results of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer youth (2013) which indicated that discrimination has a wide range of impacts on LGBTIs. The found that thirteen percent (13%) of LGBTI youths reported

that they had changed school because of discrimination, forty-nine percent (49%) missed class more than once, sixty-nine percent (69%) struggled to concentrate, sixty-two percent (62%) chose not to participate in questions or class discussions, fifty-seven percent (57%) achieved lower results in school and did not feel they acquired the skills they should have.

It is evident that discrimination not only denies LGBTI individuals equal access to key social activities but it also marginalizes them and makes them vulnerable to becoming socially excluded from mainstream society (Subhrajit, 2014).

### **3.10 Stereotyping**

Stereotyping occurs when the perception an individual has in relation to another is category based. That is, individuals judge the other on the basis of what they *think* they know about the category to which the other belongs. Of importance during stereotyping is the fact that individuals are perceived in a specific way because they are a member of a particular group, such as an ethnic or sexual minority group (Matusitz, 2012).

#### **3.10.1 Stereotyping of LGBTI individuals**

A report by the National report on homophobic attitudes and stereotypes among young people NISO project (2009), analysed homophobic attitudes and stereotypes in Belgium, Estonia, Italy and the Netherlands. It concluded that LGBTI individuals were subjected to social exclusion and discrimination. It was also found that in these countries schools were still considered unsafe for LGBTI students. Such homophobic attitudes were fuelled by stereotypes, which included amongst others seeing homosexuality as an unnatural sexual expression, viewing homosexuality as linked to illness, and the lack of masculinity in gay males and lack of femininity in lesbians due to their appearance (for instance, lack of make-up and clothes) and other aspects of their characters. Such stereotypes have been found to have an effect on LGBTI individuals which includes feeling excluded and threatened. These stereotypes also have a negative impact on the individual's acceptance of their homosexuality which stimulates a sense of insecurity or depression, feelings of shame and other mental health problems (National Association of School Psychologists, 2012).

### **3.11 Summary**

This chapter summarised recent and older literature pertaining to the study topic. Chapter 4 will describe, in detail, how the present study was carried out.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the research methodology used in the investigation. This includes the research design, sampling, data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations that were used in the study.

### **4.2 Research design**

The research approach was qualitative in nature. Qualitative approaches are concerned with understanding human behaviour from the perspectives of the people involved, therefore they use language to record aspects of social reality (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2012). Furthermore, qualitative research is broadly defined, as "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 17).

### **4.3 Area of study**

The study was conducted at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus), situated at Turfloop, Sovenga in Polokwane, Capricorn area, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

### **4.4 Population and sample**

The sample was drawn from the population of gay and lesbian students (specifically, the LGBTI society) at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus). Preliminary enquiries were carried out and did not reveal the presence of Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex individuals at the University of Limpopo. Therefore, the focus of the study was on gays and lesbians.

### **4.5 Sampling method**

The study used non-probability sampling method. The sampling technique used in this study was snowball sampling. With this technique (snowball), the researcher made initial contact with a person who had characteristics relevant to the research topic and was then referred to others

(Bryman, 2012). In this study, the researcher approached the LGBTI society on campus and first made contact with an individual who was willing to participate. The individual referred the researcher to other gay and lesbian individuals who were asked if they would be willing to participate in the research.

#### **4.6 Data collection**

Focus groups were used for data collection because they allowed interaction between the researcher and the participants and amongst the participants themselves (Marczyk, DeMateo & Festinger, 2005). This approach facilitated the establishment of rapport. Moreover, the focus groups were chosen for the research because they provide an open, unrestricting platform for individuals who want to discuss and share ideas and opinions. Participants in focus groups are usually people who share particular characteristics (in this case the key factor is sexual orientation) or interests that are relevant to the topic under investigation. Participants were recruited as noted under sampling (4.5).

A focus group is composed of six to ten participants. In the study it was anticipated that three focus groups would be used, however, the researcher was unable to conduct the third focus group because of lack of members. It is unclear why some lesbian and gay males did not want to participate in the study. It may be that some gay and lesbian males did not want to be identified for fear of their sexuality becoming known, or perhaps they did not trust the heterosexual researcher.

The first focus group consisted of six participants (three gay males and three lesbian women) and the second focus group consisted of seven participants (three gay males and four lesbian women). The groups composed of between six and ten participants because less than six pose a restriction in terms of diversity of opinions and more than ten pose limitations in terms of opinion expression (Marczyk, et al., 2005). The researcher selected a quiet, comfortable and non-threatening environment where the focus group sessions took place. With the participants permission an audio recorder was used to record sessions.

The researcher first established rapport during sessions in order to allow a smooth interview process. Rapport is a state of mutual trust and responsiveness between individuals or groups of

people (Shenton, 2004). Everything concerning the research was explained to the participants before the interviews began. A semi-structured interview schedule was used so that the researcher was able to remain focused (Goldfinger & Pomerantz, 2014). Each focus group session took one and half hours, ten minutes was used to build rapport at the beginning of the session and ten minutes at the end of the session was used to de-brief participants. After the focus group sessions, the researcher set up another appointment with participants in order to give them feedback regarding the research. This assisted in validating the research findings. The language used at the sessions was English as it is the medium of learning at the institution. Participants were informed that if they needed counselling or therapy after the sessions they would be referred to appropriate professionals on campus. None of the participants requested this help and noted that they were able to face any uncomfortable feelings during the de-briefing and follow up session.

#### **4.7 Data analysis**

Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) was used to analyse data. Thematic content analysis has been defined “as an analysis technique for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) is used to elaborate on themes through interpretation of the in-depth experience of participants. To support valid and reliable inferences TCA involves a set of systematic and transparent procedures for processing data.

The following steps adapted from Braun and Clark (2006) were followed when using TCA:

##### **4.7.1 Familiarisation with the data**

At this phase the data was read over and over again while searching for patterns. It was important to read the overall data set at least once before beginning to code, as ideas and identification of possible patterns were shaped as the data was read. Then the data was transcribed into written form (Braun & Clark, 2006).

#### **4.7.2 Generating initial codes**

After familiarisation with the data occurred; a list of ideas was generated. The next step was the production of initial codes from the data. The codes identified a feature of the data that appeared interesting to the analyst, and referred to the most basic elements of the raw data. All actual data extracts were coded, and collated together within each code.

#### **4.7.3 Searching for themes**

When all data were coded and collated, the different codes were sorted and identified into potential themes. Collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes was then undertaken. The researcher analysed the codes and considered how different codes could be combined to form an all-embracing theme. The themes were then arranged into themes and sub-themes. Furthermore, the data was colour coded for ease of reference (please see Appendix B).

#### **4.7.4 Reviewing themes**

Themes that emerged from the data were then reviewed and refined. All collated extracts for each theme was read and considered as to whether they appeared to form a coherent pattern.

#### **4.7.5 Defining and naming themes**

Themes were defined and further refined. Defining and refining refers to identifying the essence of what each theme is about and determining what aspect of the data each theme captured.

#### **4.7.6 Production of the report**

The researcher made a final analysis and wrote the report, or in this instance, the analysis for the dissertation. The researcher provided a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the story of the data, within and across the themes.

### **4.8 Reliability and validity**

To ensure reliability in qualitative research, examination of trustworthiness is crucial. To ensure reliability during the research, two concepts were adapted from (Shenton, 2004).

### **4.8.1 Credibility**

To ensure credibility the researcher adopted well recognised research methods, debriefed participants and also described the phenomenon under scrutiny (Shenton, 2004).

### **4.8.2 Confirmability**

The researcher was aware of his beliefs and assumptions and ensured that they did not affect the research process. He also recognised shortcomings in the research methods and their potential effects and minimised them for instance, administrator bias which meant that he had to conduct the focus groups in as similar a manner as he could (Shenton, 2004).

Creswell and Miller (2000), suggest that validity is affected by the researcher's perception of validity in the study and his/her choice of paradigm assumption, by so doing the researcher did the following in order to enhance validity.

4.8.2.4 Gave a description of the method used and the way data was collected in order to allow comparison with the existing studies.

4.8.2.5 Mentioned the number of participants in the study (sample size) and the number of researchers involved in the study (in this case one researcher conducted the study with guidance from a supervisor).

4.8.2.6 The length of the interviews was also given.

### **4.9 Bias**

To minimise bias during this study, the following was ensured:

4.9.3 The researcher did not assist nor give cues to how he (the researcher) would like questions answered.

4.9.4 The researcher adhered to the ethical standards when interpreting data as well as during the interview session.

4.9.5 Always consulted with the supervisor from time to time for guidance.

4.9.7 The interview sessions took place at the same time and place (though on different days) to avoid separate time intervals that may have impacted on the research process.

4.9.8 The researcher also listened attentively to participants and recorded everything participants said and took field notes recording their non-verbal behaviour.

## **4.10 Ethical considerations**

### **4.10.1 Confidentiality**

In every study undertaken protection of confidential information of participants is essential (Babbie & Mouton, 2010). Confidentiality was ensured by making sure that none of the participant's information was discussed with anyone else. A covering letter, explaining the reason for the study was provided.

### **4.10.2 Informed consent**

Informed consent is a norm in which subjects participate in the study voluntarily with a full understanding of the possible risks involved. In every research investigation that is undertaken participants are needed for data collection thus their informed consent is crucial in research (Babbie & Mouton, 2010). In this study, participants were provided with all the details of the study and their consent was obtained.

### **4.10.3 No harm to participants**

Social research should never subject people to harm. It is the responsibility of the researcher to look for subtle dangers and guard against them (Babbie & Mouton, 2010). The researcher kept this in mind when undertaking the study. The supervisors name and contact details were given to participants so that if they felt anxious or uncomfortable after the interviews they could contact her and be referred to an appropriate professional if necessary.

## **4.11 Summary**

This chapter described the research design and how the research was operationalised. Chapter5 will provide the study results and analysis.

## **CHAPTER 5: STUDY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents an analysis of data and a discussion of results. Themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data are clearly presented. Thematic Content Analysis was used to interpret data. Three (3) or more statements from focus group members will be used to illustrate themes.

### **5.2 Presentation of research findings**

Demographic information of the participants will be presented first in a tabular format followed by emerging themes and sub-themes with a brief discussion of each. Themes and sub-themes will then be summarised in a tabular format for ease of presentation. Themes and sub-themes are also discussed in terms of the theoretical framework and research questions. For anonymity preservation, participants are coded with numbers from 1 to 3 and/or 4, for example, gay male 1, focus group 1; with the acronym GM1 (focus group 1) [G=Gay, M=Male, 1=first participant, 2=second participant, etcetera] and lesbian female 1, (focus group 1); with the acronym LF1 (focus group 1) [L=Lesbian, F=Female, 1=first participant, 2=second participant, etcetera].

#### **5.2.1 Discussion of results in terms of the study framework:**

Discussion of results is undertaken using Social Domain Theory (SDT), which was chosen for this study because it gives an understanding of issues that are related to the differences in individual judgment and thinking about homosexuality. Social Domain Theory (SDT) points out that individual's judgements are multifaceted, which means that they can be drawn from different domains. This implies that people integrate their interpersonal, moral, conventional and cultural values to bear on the situation. In other words, different factors influence people's judgements when confronted with homosexuality. Social Domain Theory (Turiel et al., 1991; Smetana, 2006) is used to discuss the results using the following concepts aligned to the theory.

- It gives a foundation for understanding differences in people's beliefs about homosexuality and the manner in which they behave towards LGBTI individuals.

- It allows us to understand heterogeneity in individuals' social judgement and social reasoning and the cognitive processes associated with such judgements.
- It highlights us that, stereotypic norms and moral concern influence social reasoning from an early age.
- It also enlightens us of the role played by information and/or factual assumptions in generating judgments.
- It also informs us of the impact of individual's adherence to particular religious or cultural ideologies when confronted with homosexuality.

The research is also discussed in terms of the study research questions:

- Which social challenges do gay and lesbian students face at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus)?
- What emotional challenges do gay and lesbian students experience at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus)?
- What are the effects of challenges faced by homosexuals on their academic performance at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus)?
- What are the impacts of challenges faced by homosexuals on their psychological well-being at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus)?

### 5.2.2 Demographic information

**Table 1:** Demographic information of Gay and Lesbian students who participated in focus group 1

Gender	Number	Age	Level of study
Male	3	21, 22 & 24	2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup>
Female	3	22, 23 & 25	2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup>

**Table 2:** Demographic information of Gay and Lesbian students who participated in focus group 2

Gender	Number	Age	Level of study
Male	3	20, 22 & 24	1 <sup>st</sup> , 1 <sup>st</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup>
Female	4	21, 22, 22 & 24	2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup>

Only two students who participated in the study were postgraduates, the others were undergraduates. A discussion aimed at building rapport was undertaken before the focus group started. A semi-structured questionnaire was used and probing of answers was undertaken when the researcher had to clarify specific issues (please see Appendix A). During the first focus group, three male and three females were used for data collection. In the second focus group three males and four females were used for data collection because the researcher did not manage to get enough participants.

### **5.2.3 Presentation of themes arising from the data**

Themes that emerged out of a reading and re-reading of the transcripts are presented in this section.

#### **Theme 1: Bullying**

Prevailing literature suggests that LGBTI youth are at great risk for a number of health issues which some of these issues are being brought about by bullying they encounter as a result of their sexual orientation (Munoz-Plaza et al., 2002). For example, Fisher et al. (2012, p.161), point out that “unsafe school environments where harassment and bullying goes uncontested, can result in a variety of challenges for all students, especially LGBTI students.” As such, bullying has been found to be one of the most prevalent forms of anti-gay behaviour in many educational settings across the world. This theme arose out of responses given by lesbian and gay students’ that described how they are treated on campus by heterosexual students who are their peers. Therefore, these individuals assume that homosexuality is not natural and their perception that homosexuality is not normal is interconnected with their judgement about the acceptability of homosexuality in terms of SDT (Turiel, et al., 1991). They have negative appraisal and this has

an impact on the treatment of gay and lesbian people. This theme emerged from responses such as the following:

*“Some [heterosexual males] threaten us saying that we take their girls. They also promise to beat us up”* [LF1, focus group 1].

*“I still remember in 2012 there were this other two guys they forced to kiss me, like thoroughly kiss me”* [LF1, focus group 2].

*“.....once my gay friend was sitting on the window and the other guy pulled him with his legs”* [GM1, focus group 1].

*“It also happens a lot that straight guys on campus will be saying to me as a lesbian, babes you are nice you know that?”, another time i took of my vest, and a guy saw me and he said, you say you are a lesbian, one day I will force myself on you”* [LF1, focus group 2].

In terms of the research question, “What are the impacts of challenges faced by homosexuals on their psychological well-being at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus).” It seems that these participants have encountered discrimination and stigmatisation which has very likely had an impact on their psychological wellbeing. This supports research findings by Lozier and Beckman (2012).

This theme is further elaborated by the following sub-themes:

### **Sub-theme 1.1: Teasing**

Butler and Astbury (2005), report that LGBTI youth experience deep-seated homophobia within their school contexts. These youth report that both staff and students are responsible for name calling, exclusion, and physical and emotional abuse. This sub-theme emanated from the majority of participants responses which noted that teasing was reported as one of their challenges in their everyday life and interactions with their heterosexual counterparts. It seems that individual beliefs, assumptions, and values about reality (informational assumptions) are part of a heterosexual individual’s knowledge of the social world. This leads them to form social

judgements which have a bearing on the treatment of their homosexual peers as pointed out by SDT (Turiel et al., 1991). This sub-theme emerged from responses such as the following:

*“Students are always having some kind of teasing especially boys. They will be teasing you on how you’re walking and staff. When they see me walking with a girl they will be like, oh, nice couple or they will just grab that girl just to tease me “or something” [LF1, focus group1].*

*“The way we dress actually.....immediately boys starts seeing me they will whistle” [GM1, focus group 1].*

*“Teasing is what they do the most. They will be saying you are a girl not a guy” [LF2, focus group 1].*

*“.....when they are in a group they do a lot of teasing.....”[GM1, focus group 1].*

*“I remember this other day when I was going to write on the board, there was this guy talking to his friend and he was like, “is she a man” [LF1, focus group 1].*

*“Problem starts after they [heterosexual males] are drunk or something, because sometimes midnight they will come and knock at my door, calling names” [GM1, focus group 1].*

*“They will just be saying sister to me especially boys but girls are fine” [GM1, focus group 1].*

*“Sister is what I receive the most” [GM2, focus group 1].*

*“Even at high school they used to call me by names, like “lepanzi” and even during my first year and it really got to me” [LF1, focus group 1].*

*“Well when they say “zetabane”, gay, those kinds of things.....”[GM3, focus group 1].*

*“I have encountered this other situation today whereby some guys who were with his friends were like hello “sesi buti (sister-brother)” [GM3, focus group 2].*

*“I remember the other day we were going for practical’s and they started to tease me by saying you know what, if we were in Tzaneen we were just going to throw you in a pit toilet. They were just criticising me to an extent where I felt like I can just spot on a taxi and come back to turf” [GM2, focus group 1].*

*“...but something what I come across most is that I have a straight friend, she has a nice body, she is beautiful, so everytime when I walk with her most of the guys give me probs” [LF1, focus group 1].*

*“Guys sometimes even girls they always say things. Girls will be saying “until you feel it you will be on our side” and guys will just say the same that you are that way because you haven’t been with me, you haven’t felt it” [LF2, focus group 1].*

*“.....people were teasing me like, if you say you are a guy why do you have all those stuff for girls. Then I started to change the way I walk and I started to walk in an inferior way” [LF2, focus group 1].*

*“”.....when he reported to the residence manager the residence manager told him that, he is not a sister. They said he should stop being a sister and be a man [GM1, focus group 1].*

*“As for me they say I am stupid. They say I am a fool why will I prefer to have intercourse with a man not a girl [GM2, focus group 1].*

In terms of the research question, “What emotional challenges do gay and lesbian students experience at the University of Limpopo (Turffloep Campus)?” It seems that for participants teasing and the treatment they receive from their heterosexuals peers within the university premises has an impact on their emotional functioning as it affects their self-confidence and self-esteem. This is likely to lead to isolation, feelings of worthlessness and powerlessness. This supports research by Butler and Asbury (2005) and Pereira and Rodrigues (2015) who found that lesbian and gay students suffered the same feelings.

## **Sub-theme 1.2: Academic disruption**

Schools and other educational contexts are often the first sites of victimisation for LGBTI youth (D'Augelli et al., 2006). Savin-Williams (1994), found that sexual minority youth are ridiculed by other teens in academic settings. Crothers (2007) adds that failure of academic success may also be precipitated by fear, anxiety and isolation that LGBTI individuals face at academic institutions. This can have a negative impact on academic outcomes due to poor attendance and levels of aspiration and raise mental health concerns such as increased anxiety or reduced self-esteem (Fisher et al., 2012). As such it becomes difficult for LGBTI youth to learn, cope and perform well academically because of the hostile academic environment. They attend their lectures with fear for their safety and emotional wellbeing

This sub-theme arose out of homophobic experiences that participants reported to have experienced in lecture halls. The following responses elaborate on this sub-theme:

*“Even when I was in secondary before I came to University of Limpopo it was very difficult for me. I remember I would even switch schools just to get away from the criticisms and go to another school..... Even when I got here [at the University of Limpopo], it was very difficult”* [GM3, focus group 1].

*“There is this other course called Sociology, they do sexuality in this course and when they talk about lesbians all people just look at me..... And I no longer attend the module when they are on that chapter”* [LF2, focus group 1].

*“With me is the fact that, i can't be late like a normal guy in class, if a normal guy is late, he will just walk in and seat down, but with me the whole lecture has to stop, that is the only part that i don't like about attending classes”* [GM2, focus group 2].

*“Even a lesbian being late is just like that, actually it's even worse”* [LF4, focus group 2].

*“.....I no longer concentrate and I no longer go to class”* [GM1, focus group 1].

In terms of the research question, “What are the effects of challenges faced by homosexual students on their academic performance at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus)?” It

appears that these participants use avoidance (Sadock & Sadock, 2007), whereby they avoid classes where issues of sexuality are being taught because people will be looking at them when the lecturer speaks. They do not arrive late in class because they will be laughed at and they find it difficult to concentrate (Equality Challenge Unit, 2009) as they feel that their heterosexual classmates constantly look at them.

### **Sub-theme 1.3: Substance abuse**

Gay and lesbian students reported that other students make derogatory remarks especially when they are under the influence of substances or alcohol. This theme emerged from responses such as the following:

*“Problem starts after they are drunk or something, because sometimes midnight they will come and knock at my door, calling names blah blah!”* [GM1, focus group 1].

*“One of my friends told me that he was also attacked at MBF residence due to his sexual orientation because when people are drunk that’s when they express their feelings”* [GM2, focus group 1].

*“.....there are people who are so homophobic that when they are drunk they can even bite you”* [GM2, focus group 2].

In terms of the research question, “Which social challenges do gay and lesbian students face at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus)?” It seems that for these participants, the use of substances by their fellow heterosexual students seems to fuel homophobia, which has an impact on social interactions (National Association of School Psychologists, 2012) among heterosexual and homosexual students as when heterosexuals are under the influence of substances they ridicule LGBTI peers. As such LGBTI youth have to live in fear and be cautious when they are around and interact with heterosexuals who are under the influence of substances.

## **Theme 2: Discrimination**

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) youth face extreme discrimination within educational settings, including tertiary institutions (Munoz-Plaza, Quinn & Rounds, 2002; Wernick et al., 2014). This theme ascended from the participants' responses of discriminative incidences they encountered on campus. This theme emerged from responses such as the following:

*"I'm not using showers or something, I use basin in my room cause when I go to the shower they are complaining"* [GM1, focus group 1].

*"Uhm...maybe for instance, you are not interested in a relationship with them [lecturers] and then you are prejudiced when it comes to your academia. So that is what I have experienced"* [GM1, focus group 2].

*"You know what I experienced yesterday, yesterday was a business day at galla dinner at multipurpose centre (MPC) and we were ushered to table those round tables and I was with these two classmates of mine and then me, there were guys there and they ushered me to stay with them, the guys just left and said, "we don't wanna stay with people who are devil worshippers"* [LF1, focus group 2].

In terms of the research question, "Which social challenges do gay and lesbian students face at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus)?" These participants have faced discriminatory incidences on campus which may be a result of myths that are associated with their sexual orientation. This supports research by Pachankis and Goldfried (2004).

This theme is elaborated by the following sub-themes:

### **Sub-theme 2.1: Harassment**

Bontempo and D'Augelli (2002) and Wernick et al. (2014), report that sexual minority students are perceived as being different by the school community and this provides a platform for harassment and victimization which includes among others, verbal and physical harassment, threats, and intimidation. This sub-theme arose from reported experiences encountered by participants on campus where harassment was evident. Heterosexual students' assumptions about

the lack of naturalness and normality of homosexuality are interconnected with their judgements and treatment of homosexuals as noted in SDT (Turiel et al., 1991). This sub-theme arose from responses such as the following:

*“I also used to be harassed during bashes. That is why now I don’t attend bashes alone anymore because I still remember in 2012 there were this other two guys they forced to kiss me, like thoroughly kiss me. Nowadays I don’t go to bashes alone I go with friends”* [LF1, focus group 2].

*“.....sometimes you find out that when you pass on the corridors, guys just hold you and say, “sister I want to talk to you”, and why do they have to talk to me while touching me.... and as soon as they find out that you are a lesbian they start to touch you saying “my sister, you mean that you don’t feel anything” trying to prove if you are a lesbian or not”* [LF4, focus group 2].

*“The other thing guys do is that they pretend to be your friend, and obviously hugs are normal, but then they take advantage of that, when you hug them they then start touching you”* [LF4, focus group 2].

In terms of the research question, “What emotional challenges do gay and lesbian students experience at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus)?” It seems that for these participants verbal and physical harassment by their heterosexual counterparts is a clear indication of disapproval of homosexual behaviour. This has an impact on the psychological and emotional well-being (Lozier and Beckman, 2012) of gay and lesbian students because they use avoidance as a coping mechanism (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). In this instance, they start to avoid some university events to evade previously encountered homophobic incidences during such events (Lozier & Beckman, 2012).

### **Sub-theme 2.2: Victimization**

Graziano (2005) and Choi et al. (2011), point out that gay and lesbians are among those victimized at a higher rate than their heterosexual counterpart in college and university campuses. Multiple psychological and social consequences have been reported to result from this type of victimisation, which is homophobic in nature. This intolerance and stigmatisation leads

young LGBTI individuals to truancy from school, not completing university degrees, depression, and social isolation. This theme emerged from responses such as the following:

*“They also swear at me saying I’m taking their women”* [LF1, focus group 2].

*“I was with my gay friend at MBA [residence] and some guys [heterosexual males] were trying to attack us. When we went out they were saying whatever they thought was good for them through the window. We thought to ourselves, we are coming back, and when we went back as we got there one guy got guts enough to verbally attack us.....”* [GM3, focus group 2].

*“..... you say you are a lesbian, one day I will force myself on you.....”*[LF1, focus group 2].

*“.....we all know of the gay incident that happened at MBF where a gay was beaten up because he was gay”* [GM2, focus group 2].

*“.....somewhere this year we were coming back from pride. The following day it was said that a lesbian was raped. In a form of wanting to correct her, “corrective rape”* [LF2, focus group 1].

*“There is victimisation as a student by a lecturer for a personal reason that they have”* [GM1, focus group 2].

*“One of my friends told me that he was also attacked at MBF residence due to his sexual orientation”* [GM2, focus group 1].

*“He was beaten and he got injured on the leg”* [GM2, focus group 1].

In terms of the research question, “What are the impacts of challenges faced by homosexuals on their psychological well-being at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus)” Homosexual students are victimised by their heterosexual counterparts (Pereira & Rodrigues 2015). This victimisation is used to intimidate homosexual individuals. This has an impact on gay and lesbian students’ psychological well-being.

### Theme 3: Religion

Herek and Glunt (1993) and the NISO Project (2009), report that societal values, especially as instilled by religion, are important factors associated with the formation of attitudes and stereotypes about specific groups. Fundamentally, those individuals who adhere to strict religious codes are frequently more homophobic than those who are not religious in anyway. As such individual's judgements about whether or not homosexuality is right or wrong is based on concepts regarding homosexuality as a natural or normal expression of human sexuality which is informed by the individual's adherence to particular religious or cultural ideology as underpinned by SDT (Turiel et al., 1991). This theme emerged from responses such as the following:

*".....most people they are always all about this biblical things. They will check scriptures in a way that they want to criticise us .....they will just go for all those scriptures that will tell that ok eh!, no homosexuals whatever, in Genesis and Leviticus whatever. When they point out those scriptures I will feel like eish, I am not part of God's plans" [LF1, focus group 1].*

*".....lecturer will raise something relating to homosexuals and one will comment that gays are cursed" [GM2, focus group 1].*

*"I was with my roommate the other day and we were going downstairs. When we are going down I met this guy he is a friend of mine. Then this other guy came out of his room and he saw me and this other guy talking to me. So the guy who came out of the room attacked the guy who was talking to me and asked him why was he talking to a gay and he said I am no longer going to talk to you cause you talk to gays and I said excuse me and he turned back on me and say "fire fire fire (referring to hell fire -a product of the devil)" [GM2, focus group 1].*

*".....others will tell you that you are going to die and you will go to hell....." [LF4, focus group 2].*

*".....there are those who are very homophobic, who deem us as devil worshipers..... they will be like "fire"....." [GM3, focus group 2].*

*“Even Christians who claim they are all holy and that, I remember this other case whereby this other guy was telling me how unholy we are and how God doesn’t like us.....”*[GM3, focus group 2].

*“.....yesterday was a business day at gala dinner at multipurpose centre (MPC) and we were ushered to table those round tables and I was with these two classmates of mine and then me, there were guys there and they ushered me to stay with them, the guys just left and said, “we don’t want to stay with people who are devil worshippers, we are so Christians and they were international students.....”*[LF1, focus group 2].

*“Sometimes I try to convince myself using some of scriptures saying that, “they are judging” but at the end they got too many scriptures and they are attacking and when I turn to those scriptures I see that the scriptures are on their side. I just feel down* [LF1, focus group 1].

In terms of the research question, “What emotional challenges do gay and lesbian students experience at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus)?” It seems that for some Lesbian and Gay participants, biblical scriptures are used by heterosexuals to justify and fuel homophobic behaviour, attitudes and attacks. This supports research by Bhana (2012) who found religiosity fuelled homophobia. This obviously has an impact on gay and lesbian students emotional well-being because they feel friendless and alone which may lead to other psychological problems such as depression, hopelessness and worthlessness (Pereira & Rodrigues 2015).

#### **Theme 4: Acceptance versus non-acceptance**

Saraç (2012) reported that female university students had relatively positive attitudes toward gay men and lesbians as compared to male students. Male students were found to have more negative attitudes toward gay men as compared to female students. This theme emerged from responses such as the following:

*“Girls are all over me”* [LF2, focus group 1].

*“To me girls are friendly and I can do a lot of things with them unlike guys”* [GM2, focus group 1].

*“.....Most heterosexual girls are so gay friendly.....”*[GM3, focus group 2].

*“.....girls are fine”* [GM1, focus group 1].

*“.....it’s very funny cause they should be fighting with us because we are taking their man, but otherwise they are so fine”* [GM3, focus group 2].

It seems that for these participants, heterosexual females are more accepting than heterosexual males because they can interact with them while feeling at ease, without fear of discrimination and victimisation. In terms of the research question, “Which social challenges do gay and lesbian students face at the University of Limpopo (Turffloep campus)?” For lesbian and gay participants, it seems that negative treatment that they receive from their heterosexual peers makes it difficult to interact with them. Additionally, it seems that spheres of social reasoning are different and they develop out of their patriarchal social context according to SDT (Smetana, 2006).

### **Theme 5: Staying in the closet**

Arndt and Debruin (2006, p. 18), point out that the level of perceived risk, greatly impacts on the extent to which gay men and lesbian women choose to be “open about their sexual identity.” Weiler (2004), notes that as a result of hostile educational environments it is not surprising that many LGBTI individuals prefer to keep their sexual identities secret. Equally, Rivers and D’Augelli (2001), point out that LGBTI youth are at an increased risk for emotional and physical rejection by their families and may become homeless as a result of disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity. This often results in the young LGBTI individuals remaining silent without any support network (Bortolin et al., 2013; Fisher, Poirier & Blau, 2012). Remaining in the closet may also be due to uncertainty with regard to the coming out process. It can also be seen as a defence mechanism to reduce gay related stress and to avoid harm. It can also be due to fear of being treated badly (D’Augelli et al., 2006). This theme emerged from responses such as the following:

*“I can say not everyone know about my sexuality, only my roommate and my few friends, so I can’t say I am experiencing any homophobic attack of some sort” [GM3, focus group 1].*

*“They are not homophobic towards me because they don’t know about me” [LF4, focus group 2].*

*“When I got to Turfloop, I was very conspicuous with my sexuality, not a lot of people knew, you try and make it a point that not a lot of people know about your sexuality” [GM1, focus group 2].*

In terms of the research question, “What are the impacts of challenges faced by homosexuals on their psychological well-being at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus)?” It seems that for these participants remaining in the closet minimises homophobic attacks. However, in addition to it being a defence mechanism, this type of defence mechanism has also been found to have a negative impact on LGBTIs psychological wellbeing. This is because LGBTIs do not live freely, which in turn, creates more psychological problems (Butler, n.d), such as internalised self-hate.

### **Theme 6: Emotional and behavioural challenges**

Savin-Williams (2001) and Lozier and Beckman (2012), point out that sexual minority students have been found to report more emotional and behavioural difficulties than their opposite (heterosexual) sexual counterparts. Sexual minority students report experiencing psychological challenges which include amongst others depression, helplessness, fear, low self-esteem, hopelessness, worthlessness, alienation, extreme loneliness and having suicidal ideas. It appears that these emotional and behavioural problems arise as a result of how heterosexual individuals behave and treat LGBTI students on campus, as underpinned by the SDT (Turiel, 1998). This theme emerged from responses such as the following:

*“I haven’t experienced corrective rape but it’s just out there, I know and I get all nervous knowing that it’s out there, everyone wants to correct us. Well that one is out so I can say I am scared I don’t want to lie” [LF2, focus group 1].*

*“My self- esteem dropped and I started walking alone and being alone” [LF1, focus group 1].*

*“When I was still in the closet I really had suicidal thoughts” [GM3, focus group 1].*

*“When I got here [at the University of Limpopo], it was very difficult I even thought of committing suicide.”*

*“I also don’t feel safe in my residence” [GM2, focus group 1].*

*“Such things provoke and awaken the hulk in me, but sometimes they are those comments that will hit your spot” [LF4, focus group 2].*

*“They will be like you will see I will get her even though she is like that. That’s irritating and hurtful because they are acting like they can’t see you, you can’t be recognised, they don’t see what you are” [LF1, focus group 1].*

*“.....I feel like I am not appreciated or acceptable” [GM1, focus group 1].*

*“I used to hate my body, obviously I had to hate it because it was against my feelings, my everything, everything about me. I was ashamed of it, it was just not a good thing for me” [LF2, focus group 1].*

In terms of the research question, “What emotional challenges do gay and lesbian students experience at the University of Limpopo (Turffloop Campus)?” It seems that for these participants, homophobic attacks encountered on campus bring about multiple psychological and emotional problems such as living in anxiety, poor self-esteem, suicidal thoughts and feeling unsafe on campus. This supports research by Fisher et al., (2012).

### **Theme 7: Psycho-education**

This theme emanated from the participant responses as well as from recommendations made by the participants stating that they believe psycho-education can help heterosexual individuals learn more about differences in sexuality. Psycho-education may also facilitate behaviour change (Lozier and Beckman, 2012; Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Netshandam, 2013). This theme emerged from responses and recommendations such as the following:

*“People should get close to LGBTI people and learn about them, if they learn about us their behaviour towards us might change” [GM1, Focus group 2].*

*“A lot of education towards fellow community members as in, the rest of the student body and the institution” [GM1, focus group 2].*

*“People need to be educated, the university in some way or another needs to ensure that students are sensitised on issues that affect LGBTI all the time” [GM1, focus group 2].*

*“There still needs to be a lot of education towards fellow community members as in, the rest of the student body and the institution so that we walk in one accord towards the emancipation of people” [GM1, focus group 2].*

In terms of the research question, “What are the impacts of challenges faced by homosexuals on their psychological well-being at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus),” the following was found. For these participants, it was thought that psycho-educating members of the university community would equip them with knowledge about differences in sexuality. It was hoped this would reduce homophobic behaviour and enhance the psychological wellbeing of LGBTIs generally. This, it was suggested, would in turn lead to a better campus environment and an improvement in conditions for academic learning for LGBTI students. This supports research by Stonewall (2012) who noted that this type of intervention would lead to a more positive campus environment for LGBTI individuals.

#### **5.2.4 Tabular format of emerging themes**

The themes are presented, as a summary, in a tabular format to help clarify the aforementioned interpretation (Table 3). See appendix A for a verbatim transcript of colour coded responses.

**Table 3: Emerging themes**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub –themes</b>	<b>Brief description</b>
1. <b>Bullying</b>		The theme bullying arose out of lesbian and gay students’ responses that described how they are treated on campus by their fellow heterosexual students. This theme is elaborated by the following sub-themes.
	1.1 <b>Teasing</b>	The sub-theme teasing emanated from the majority of participants responses whereby teasing was reported as one of the challenges in their everyday life and interaction with their fellow heterosexual students on campus environment.
	1.2 <b>Academic disruption</b>	The sub-theme academic disruption arose from homophobic experiences that participants reportedly experienced in lecture halls.
	1.3 <b>Substance abuse</b>	The sub-theme substance abuse emerged out of the participants’ description of homophobic experiences that they encountered within the university premises following substance use by their fellow heterosexual students.
2. <b>Discrimination</b>		The theme discrimination ascended from the participants responses of incidences on campus where discrimination was evident. This theme is elaborated by the following sub-themes.
	2.1 <b>Harassment</b>	The sub-theme harassment stemmed from the experiences encountered by participants where harassment was evident within the campus premises.
	2.2 <b>Victimisation</b>	The sub-theme arose from participants experiences on campus where they reportedly faced victimisation as a result of their sexual orientation.
3. <b>Religion</b>		The theme religion emerged from most participants reported experiences regarding how religion is used to justify homophobic attacks.

4. Accepting versus non-accepting		The theme emerged from the positive experiences that gay and lesbian students reported regarding heterosexual females.
5. Staying in the closet		The theme remaining in the closet appeared from the experiences that gay and lesbian students gave regarding better treatment they receive if people do not know about their sexuality.
6. Emotional and behavioural challenges		The theme emanated from the description of the emotional and behavioural consequences that participants gave as a result of homophobia.
7. Psycho-education		The theme psycho-education arose from the responses given by participants. Some students mentioned that there needs to be more education so that students and the university community are sensitised on issues that affect homosexual students.

### 5.3 Research conclusion

The results of this study underpinned results from previous research, both old and new, pertaining to challenges faced by gay and lesbian students (Arndt & Debruin, 2006; Bhana, 2012; Fisher, Poirier & Blau, 2012; Morrow, 2004; Pereira & Rodrigues, 2015; Stonewall, 2012; Tetreault et al., 2013; Wernick et al., 2014). Challenges reported in these studies were also noted in the present study. The research indicates that LGBTI students (in this instance, lesbian and gay) experience a variety of challenges such as discrimination, teasing, behavioural problems, name calling, harassment, victimisation and abuse from both their peers and staff. This has an impact on their psychological functioning and well-being, academic work, emotional functioning and their everyday interactions.

Nonetheless, Participants reported heterosexual females as more accepting than their heterosexual male counterparts. More explicitly, participants described heterosexual females as more understanding, friendly and easy to get along with. Conversely, participants described heterosexual males as discriminatory and less understanding. As such, most male participants kept their sexual orientation a secret especially when in the company of heterosexual males, due to fear of reprisal. However, female participants felt able to reveal their sexual orientation to other heterosexual or lesbian females.

Participants also reported multiple incidences (mainly in residences) where the participants' heterosexual counterparts used religious ideologies to rationalise homophobic attacks. There were also various incidents (during bashes or parties) reported where heterosexual males used coercion and teasing to disparage male homosexuals. There were also incidents for instance, during gala dinners when a gay or lesbian served as a waiter, that participants were publicly ridiculed. They found this very distressing. They reported feeling alienated, belittled and unappreciated. Bullying in the form of teasing also affected their self-esteem which led to feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness.

Additionally, participants reported that their peers tend to express more homophobic comments following the use of substances. Essentially, when heterosexuals are under the influence of substances they tend to become more homophobic and are more likely to make disparaging comments or resort to physical or verbal abuse. Participants indicated that they had also experienced challenges, especially in lecture halls of verbal abuse, which disrupted their studies. To stop this they sometimes missed lectures or arrived early in class as if they did not walk into the lecture hall when others were seated they were not verbally abused. These experiences are very likely to have an impact on their psychological functioning and well-being.

Furthermore, most lesbian and gay participants indicated that religion (Christian) was used by their heterosexual peers to validate their homophobic attacks, which further perpetuated their emotional distress.

Participants also made some recommendations with regard to interventions which could help lessen homophobia at the University of Limpopo (Turffloop Campus). The participants reported that there were no policies in place at the university to help them, which they felt created a

platform for homophobic attacks, either verbal or physical. Participants indicated that there were various incidents that took place on campus premises which were reported to management however, nothing was done with regard to the report. Because of this most participants felt very unsafe and unprotected. As a result they made several proposals. One key recommendation made by participants was that the whole university community (both students and staff members) should be educated in terms of sexual difference. It was suggested that this would empower people in terms of being able to recognise that sexual difference is natural and that it would help people understand LGBTIs more. Alternatively, it was recommended that people should also try to befriend known LGBTI individuals which it was thought would help them realise that differing sexualities are, in fact, normal.

## **CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH LIMITATIONS, STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter gives a summary of the research limitations, strengths and recommendations for future research in the field of homosexuality at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus).

### **6.2 Study strengths**

The major strengths of the study are as follows:

- 6.2.5 The study used semi-structured interviews to keep the researcher focused.
- 6.2.6 Lesbian and gay students were asked directly about the challenges they experience on campus.
- 6.2.7 The study also used focus groups whereby interaction was allowed between the researcher and the participants and among the participants themselves. Additionally, focus groups also allowed participants to discuss and share ideas and opinions amongst themselves.
- 6.2.8 The study used an appropriate mode of analysis namely Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) as well as appropriate theoretical framework namely the Social Domain Theory (SDT) as a guide.

### **6.3 Study limitations**

The major limitations of the study were:

- 6.3.5 Difficulty getting participants for the third focus group. That is, at first it was anticipated that three focus groups would be used however; only two focus groups were used. This may have been because of the researcher's heterosexual orientation. Essentially some LGBTI community members did not want to speak to the heterosexual researcher.
- 6.3.6 Only Gay and Lesbian students participated in the study as no Bi-sexual, Transgender or Intersex participants were identified.

- 6.3.7 It was also anticipated that equal number of both gay and lesbian participants would be used in all focus groups, for equal gender representation however, due to difficulty finding gay participants in the second focus group there were more lesbian participants.
- 6.3.8 Furthermore, the study was a qualitative one thus generalisations about findings could not be.

## **6.5 Study recommendations**

- 6.5.1 A larger quantitative study using random sample should be conducted at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus).
- 6.5.2 Workshops should be offered to both staff and students so that they can learn more about differing sexuality.
- 6.5.3 A study using individual interviews should be conducted at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus). This would enable the collection of more in depth information pertaining to the experiences and challenges faced by Gays and Lesbians on the campus.
- 6.5.4 Challenges identified in the study should be addressed by the university administration and student bodies at the University of Limpopo.

## **6.5 Summary**

This chapter summarised the study strengths and weaknesses and made recommendations for future research at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus).

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## **Appendix A: Focus group questions**

The researcher will identify himself to the whole group. The researcher will then give each participant an opportunity to introduce themselves. This will give participants a smooth, welcoming and comfortable environment and will enhance rapport between the researcher and the participants. The researcher will then introduce the topic to the participants and briefly elaborate what the research is all about.

Interviews elicit a lot of information; of which some may need a lot of time to analyse and by so doing the researcher will conduct the research with this in mind. The researcher will also probe where necessary in order to get clarity and elicit further relevant information.

The questions were developed using Turiel, Hildebrandt and Wainryb (1991) Social Domain Theory) as a guide.

### **Questions (probing will take place dependent on the answers which are forthcoming).**

1. Can you describe to me how the University of Limpopo community is treating you as a homosexual, focusing specifically on other students and academic staff?
2. Tell me about any form of violence that you encountered on campus as a result of your sexual orientation?
3. Tell me about comments that you received on campus as a result of your sexual orientation?
4. What do these comments make you think of doing?
5. Tell me about how heterosexual males treat you as a homosexual/lesbian/gay?
6. Tell me about how heterosexual females treat you as a homosexual/lesbian/gay?
7. Has your sexual orientation interfered with your studies in anyway? If you think it has please explain to me how?
8. At any stage have you felt unwelcome at the University of Limpopo?
9. Would anyone like to add anything about the topic that we have been discussing?
10. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

## Appendix B: Transcript of focus group responses and coding

In each focus group, participants are coded with numbers from 1 to 3 (refer to 5.2 for detailed description) to make it easy to identify who the response belong to.

### Acronyms (the following acronyms will used for both focus group 1 and focus group 2)

- **GM 1 (focus group 1)** = [G=Gay, M=Male, 1=first participant, 2=second participant etc.].
- **LF 1 (focus group 1)** = [L=Lesbian, F=Female, 1=first participant, 2=second participant etc.].

### Responses from 1<sup>st</sup> focus group verbatim with grammatical errors.

#### QUESTION 1: Can you describe to me how the University of Limpopo community is treating you as a homosexual, focusing specifically on other students and academic staff?

*Answer: Academically so, me I haven't been experiencing any problems, but the students are always having some kind of teasing especially boys. They will be teasing you on how you're walking and staff. When they see me walking with a girl they will be like, oh, nice couple or they will just grab that girl just to tease me or something. But me so far I don't like to entertain them [LF1, focus group1].*

*Answer: Well I might say that, all the challenges I am facing is that, uhm! there are a lot of guys who always approach me and obviously they know what I am who I am with, but they always approach me like they are just betting, like bet with their friends. They will be like you will see I will get her even though she is like that. That's irritating and hurtful because they are acting like they can't see you, you can't be recognised, they don't see what you are.*

*The other challenge I am facing is that most people they are always all about this biblical things. They will check scriptures in a way that they want to criticise us. Well myself I just feel is painful, it seems like God doesn't love me cause they will just go for all those scriptures that will tell that ok eh!, no homosexuals whatever, in Genesis and Leviticus whatever. When they point out those scriptures I will feel like eish, I am not part of God's plans*

*(Probing- how does that make you feel)- Answer: I am feeling like I am not God's plans. I am not trying to feel this way. Sometimes I try to convince myself using some of scriptures saying that, "they are judging" but at the end they got too many scriptures and they are attacking and when I turn to those scriptures I see that the scriptures are on their side. I just feel down [LF1, focus group 1].*

*Answer: Me, academically I'm fine, I'm gay yes and I stay at male residence they know. Problem starts after they are drunk or something, cause sometimes midnight they will come and knock at my door, calling names blah blah!. Im not using showers or something, I use basin in my room cause when I go to the shower they are complaining. The way we dress actually, myself when I wear something I want to express myself, however immediately boys starts seeing me they will whistle.*

*(Probing- how does that make you feel)- Answer: "I feel like I am not appreciated or acceptable [GM1, focus group 1].*

*Answer: Academically well in my class, lectures are fine, no problem but my classmate. Of course they are Social Workers to be but they still got some problems with homosexuality because of homosexuality.. a lecturer will raise something relating to homosexuals and one will comment that gays are cursed. I remember the other day we were going for practical's and they started to tease me by saying you know what if we were in Tzaneen we were just going to throw you in a pit toilet. They were just criticising me to an extent where I felt like I can just spot on a taxi and come back to turf. They were just criticising me all of them in the taxi and I just sat down and told myself that I am just going to do my school work.*

*When coming back to the community of the University, well, sometimes is very hard. But myself I am too user, I don't lose confidence, whatever they say when they bully me, they will say it and they will finish [GM2, focus group 1].*

*Answer: Myself I don't experience any problems, my lectures are ok, and academically everything is fine. Well people whisper things behind my back, as long as they don't say it to my face [LF3, focus group 1].*

**Answer:** *Well, they do not treat me very bad. I can say not everyone know about my sexuality, only my roommate and my few friends, so I can't say I am experiencing any homophobic attack of some sort.*

(Probing - do you think they are not homophobic because they don't know your sexuality and if they were to know how do you think they will react?)- **Answer:** *Eish, I don't know, because my accounting lecturer is also a lesbian [GM3, focus group 1].*

**QUESTION 2: Tell me about any form of violence that you encountered on campus as a result of your sexual orientation?**

**Answer:** *None thus far [LF1, focus group 1].*

**Answer:** *I never experienced it myself but, somewhere this year we were coming back from pride. The following day it was said that a lesbian was raped. In a form of wanting to correct her "corrective rape". I haven't experienced corrective rape but it's just out there, I know and I get all nervous knowing that it's out there, everyone wants to correct us. Well that one is out so I can say I am scared I don't want to lie [LF2, focus group 1].*

**Answer:** *One residence manager once my gay friend was sitting on the window and the other guy pulled him with his legs and when he reported to the residence manager the residence manager told him that, he is not a sister. They said he should stop being a sister and be a man [GM1, focus group 1].*

**Answer:** *Well myself I was with my roommate the other day and we were going downstairs. When we are going down I met this guy he is a friend of mine. Then this other guy came out of his room and he saw me and this other guy talking to me. So the guy who came out of the room attacked the guy who was talking to me and asked him why was he talking to a gay and he said I am no longer going to talk to you cause you talk to gays and I said excuse me and he turned back on me and say "fire firefire"! And he became violent. One of my friends told me that he was also attacked at MBF residence due to his sexual orientation because when people are drunk that's when they express their feelings. I also don't feel safe in my residence.*

(Probing- was he beaten or verbally attacked) Answer: *He was beaten and he got injured on the leg.*

(Probing- how bad was it)- Answer: *Not severe and I didn't do anything about it [GM2, focus group 1].*

**QUESTION 3: Tell me about comments that you received on campus as a result of your sexual orientation?**

Answer: *As for myself, I never experience much but something that I come across most is that I have a straight friend, she has a nice body, she is beautiful, so everytime when I walk with her most of the guys give me probs. Like yoh, that girl is hot [LF1, focus group 1].*

Answer: *Guys sometimes even girls they always say things. Girls will be saying "until you feel it you will be on our side" and guys will just say the same that you are that way because you haven't been with me, you haven't felt it [LF2, focus group 1].*

Answer: *They will just be saying sister to me especially boys but girls are fine [GM1, focus group 1].*

Answer: *Sister is what I we receive the most. But sometimes I receive good comments [GM2, focus group 1].*

**QUESTION 4: What do these comments make you think of doing?**

Answer: *even me at high school they used to call me by names, like "lepanzi" and even during my first year and it really got to me. My self- esteem dropped and I started walking alone and being alone and stuff. Then I came across this girl she is also a lesbian, she told me a lot about lesbianism, I started walking with her and she boosted my self-esteem [LF1, focus group 1].*

Answer: *Well with me, well what I did, I used to hate my body*

(Probing-what made you to hate your body) Answer: *obviously I had to hate it because it was against my feelings, my everything, everything about me. I was ashamed of it was just not a good thing for me. I then told my twin brother because people were teasing me like, if you say you are*

a guy why do you have all those stuff for girls. Then I started to change the way I walk and I started to walk in an inferior way [LF2, focus group 1].

Answer: *I just say that's how they see me and just let it go [GM1, focus group 1].*

Answer: *when I was still in the closet I had really suicidal thoughts.*

(Probing- you become suicidal when they does what to you?) Answer: *Well when they say "zetabane", gay, those kind of things and even the pressure, the criticism that I was receiving but I was still in denial actually. Even when I was in secondary before I came to University of Limpopo it was very difficult for me. I remember I would even switch schools just to get away from the criticisms and go to another school. Even when I got here [at the University of Limpopo], it was very difficult I even thought of committing suicide. I remember I saw my first psychologist the other day and yah it was very difficult, it was never easy [GM3, focus group 1].*

**QUESTION 5: Tell me about how heterosexual males treat you as a homosexual/lesbian/gay?**

Answer: *To me they are all about proving a point by trying to speak with me. All they want is just to prove a point. And I feel like I will rebel. Some they threaten us saying that we take their girls. They also promise to beat us up [LF1, focus group 1].*

Answer: *Teasing is what they do the most. They will be saying you are a girl not a guy [LF2, focus group 1].*

Answer: *Well males are secretive in a way. Because when they are in a group they do a lot of teasing but when they are alone they don't do much [GM1, focus group 1].*

Answer: *As for me they say I am stupid. They say I am a fool why will I prefer to have intercourse with a man not a girl. They also flirt with me and call me with sweet names like my cornflower and when I flirt back they will just say, I was kidding [GM2, focus group 1].*

**QUESTION 6: Tell me about how heterosexual females treat you as a homosexual/lesbian/gay?**

Answer: *For me they just ask me how we do it.*

(Probing-how do you do what?) Answer: *Intercourse and my response is I can't tell you I can show you. And they will all just step back. However sometimes they [girls] just lead me on.*

(Probing – how do they do that?) Answer: *They become friendlier and it is a challenge [LF1, focus group 1].*

Answer: *As for me, they [girls] are all over me. However, they don't ask me why I date girls but they rather ask other girls why they are dating me, why can't they go for a guy or something [LF2, focus group 1].*

Answer: *As for me I am friendly, but sometimes I'm pissed off if a girl says you're just a cute handsome guy, like you're wasting your beauty [GM1, focus group 1].*

Answer: *To me girls are friendly and I can do a lot of things with them unlike guys [GM2, focus group 1].*

**QUESTION 7: Has your sexual orientation interfered with your studies in anyway? If you think it has please explain to me how?**

Answer: *For me in class I only speak to one girl who is my friend the rest of the class are scared of me and they don't talk to me. I remember this other day when I was going to write on the board, there was this guy talking to his friend and he was like, "is she a man" [LF1, focus group 1].*

Answer: *It affects me in a way that, there is this other course called Sociology, they do sexuality in this course and when they talk about lesbians all people just look at me. And I no longer attend the module when they are on that chapter [LF2, focus group 1].*

Answer: *It started this year, I have five crushes in class but they don't know. Sometimes when I am sitting in class one of the guys I have a crush on will come and sit on my left hand side and*

*the other will set on my right hand side and as such I no longer concentrate and I no longer go to class [GM1, focus group 1].*

**Answer:** *No, as for me I just wear my stilettos' and a skirt and go to present. Nobody will tell me anything.*

(Probing-however, what do they [classmates] do or say when you're wearing your skirts and stiletto's?) **Answer:** *They will just laugh and whistle [GM2, focus group 1].*

**QUESTION 8: At any stage have you felt unwelcome at the University of Limpopo?**

**Answer:** No [LF1, focus group 1].

**Answer:** No [LF2, focus group 1].

**Answer:** No [GM1, focus group 1].

**Answer:** No [GMS2, focus group 1].

**Responses from 2<sup>nd</sup> focus group verbatim with grammatical errors.**

**Acronyms**

- **GM 1 (focus group 2)** = [G=Gay, M=Male, 1=first participant, 2=second participant etc.]
- **LF1 (focus group 2)** = [L=Lesbian, F=Female, 1=first participant, 2=second participant etc.]

**QUESTION 1: Can you describe to me how the University of Limpopo community is treating you as a homosexual, focusing specifically on other students and academic staff?**

**Answer:** *Uhm...since my stay in this institution, I cannot lie and say I have faced any form of segregation and abuse of any sort. What I can say is that we do get homophobic statements which are addressed to you, but personally for me the way I deal with it might be different from the way others deal with it. But I have been fortunate enough to have met people in my life who I have made friends...who are educated enough and informed enough to understand homosexuality.*

*On the part of academic staff or university staff, there is comments that are made during classes, there is victimization as a student by a lecturer for a personal reason that they have. Uhm...maybe for instance, you are not interested in a relationship with them and then you are prejudiced when it comes to your academia. So that is what I have experienced.*

**(Probing- and how does that make you feel knowing that your lecturer prejudice you because you just don't want to have a relationship with them?)- Answer:** *It is saddening, because, uhm.....at the end of the day you are the one paying for school fees and then they have a duty towards you as your educator to give you what is due to what the person actually studied, and this is what is deserved of you and then when that is not done, it is demoralising, it is upsetting, and because of avoiding even further segregation or prejudice, it is difficult for a student to take further steps or maybe what makes it even difficult is there is no sense of security around the issue because you've came to university and then you find that there has been cases like that before and then you ask yourself, if there has been cases like that before why is that educator, lecturer or staff member still around [GM1, focus group 2].*

**Answer:** *Actually for me I don't have any problem with my academic lectures, when I come there I need assistance they just assist me and then as for the UL community, actually I just don't know, because like I am adjusting to the fact that every time I pass people will talk about me. But I don't know if they are talking negative things or positive things, but I'm used to the fact that whenever I am moving around campus people will talk behind my back, gossip, laugh and stuff, I'm used to it [LF1, focus group 2].*

**Answer:** *Uhm...is the same as what they said. Uhm...certain lecturers are just not good to us and some of them are ok with it. But either way there is always something negative to everything for me you know. There has to be yang to yang all the time, not everyone can accept us and we should also accept that not everyone can accept us; they have their own pathetic reasons, but they are reasons at the end, so yah...the community, the academic is all the same to me, they are those that like you and there are those that don't, it all comes down to you, do you care...when you don't care it doesn't matter [LF2, focus group 2].*

**Answer:** *As for me I am just comfortable.*

**(Probing- nothing is bothering you)- Answer:** *Yes, nothing bothers me. Even though I have never experienced any negative whatever, but we all know of the gay incident that happened at MBF where a gay was beaten up because of he was gay. We can say that there are people who are so homophobic that when they are drunk they can even bite you [GM2, focus group 2].*

**(Probing- so how does the MBF incident make you the LGBTI community members feel?)- One gay following up on the probing responded as follows:** *The incident at MBF was a very saddening experience, as a community member, because you imagine yourself in the shoes of the person as if it was you who were victimised. It wasn't nice to hear about it and it wasn't pleasant at all. So I remember when we started the society that was one of our mandates, and because of bureaucracy, we failed dismally in trying to address the situation with the higher power within the institution. It was something that needed serious attention, we couldn't wait for the second person to be victimised before it is seen as being serious, because we wanted to have preventative measures in place and it was very sad to see that those people walked away with "murder" [GM1, focus group 2].*

**Answer:** *I have been in situations where people are being people. When it comes to lecturers, it's true that there are those who are homophobic and staff, but some are just ok with it [LF3, focus group 2].*

**Answer:** *It's the same thing as he said, yah, there are lecturers who are homophobic, but then when it comes to me they don't say anything. It's not like you will come out and say, "hi, I am lesbian" no, if they know you to that extend or they research about you, then they will know but they won't ask.*

**(Probing- are you saying that they are not homophobic because they don't know about you?)- Answer:** *they are not homophobic towards me because they don't know about me. Being them homophobic towards others I don't know, but then to me, I don't know because I haven't. Even students, students are students just like kids, they accept things, others don't understand, others will ask you stupid questions, others will ask you why, others will tell you that you are going to die and you will go to hell, but it's all still the same [LF4, focus group 2].*

**Answer:** Well with academic and staff, I never encountered any homophobic lecturer. Like they are cool because it's obvious that I am gay and they can see but then I haven't encountered any sort of bad treatment from them but with students it's an obvious case and as she said (referring to a fellow lesbian), they say whatever they say and you care or you don't care, it's up to you.

But then yah...there are those who are very homophobic, who deem us as devil worshipers. Because when you pass by sometimes they will be like "fire"(religiosity fire and brimstone) and some will be like....uhm, for example, I have encountered this other situation today whereby some guy who were with his friends were like hi "sesi buti (sister-brother)". I just turned and tell him what I wanted to say and then I passed, and that just made me feel good about myself because we cannot always be all nice, they have to enjoy our bad side as well because they are also giving us trouble. So we have to be bad sometimes [GM3, focus group 2].

**Adding on the answers given for the probing that other homosexual students are not experiencing homophobia because other people don't know their sexuality this is what a gay student said:** to follow up on the question, of asking if when they do not know now and what's gonna happen if they know, when I got to Turfloop, I was very conspicuous with my sexuality, not a lot of people knew, you try and make it a point that not a lot of people know about your sexuality. Then you get to know what people in that environment prefer or their position with regard to sexuality, it was interesting to see that when you come out a good majority of people actually don't care whether you're straight or gay. That's one thing that I took for granted with this particular institution. Maybe it's because of its geographical nature and looking at the background of students whereby majority of students come from cultural backgrounds whereby homosexuality is shined upon [GM1, focus group 2].

**QUESTION 2: Tell me about any form of violence that you encountered on campus as a result of your sexual orientation?**

**Answer:** The only encounter of physical abuse that I know of, it is the MBF situation. With regard to verbal abuse, I can say that the majority of us have experienced it time and again, when you pass for instance what he experienced, when they said "sesi buti (sister brother)" when he passed (referring to my fellow gay) that is a derogatory term that was used and it did not sit well with him and that's some form of abuse. So this things that people would say sometimes

which are off putting, and which result in abuse, I can safely say that verbal does occur and it occur more often than not [GM1, focus group 2].

**Answer:** Harassment also comes from roommates and even if you have straight friends, one day they will be happy and the next day they will be like, actually don't you even think you can date a guy? I also used to be harassed in bashes, that is why now I don't attend bashes alone anymore because I still remember in 2012 there is this other two guys they forced to kiss me, like thoroughly kiss me Nowadays I don't go to bashes alone I go with friends. And we are getting used to such things [LF1, focus group 2].

**A gay student follows up and he says the following:** But you know what this is going to do all of this comments, because if now we condition ourselves to get used to them at some point they are so normal to us, we cannot differentiate between what is serious and what is not, who is joking and who is telling the truth. And then now when they come in with sexual violence and rape you, it's like I have been telling you. So that is why I am saying that education is very important. The people needs to be educated, the university some way or another needs to ensure that students are sensitised on issues that affect LGBTI all the time [GM1, focus group 2].

**Answer:** I haven't encountered any [LF2, focus group 2].

**Answer:** It's an everyday thing, verbal abuse is like there, I liked his [referring to a fellow gay student] point of saying that we should not always be those angels that always keep quiet and walk away, sometimes you should just say something, because I can imagine maybe you are using the same road every day to and from academic side, and if you keep meeting the same guys they gonna repeat the same behaviour, but the moment you stand up for yourself you are creating a line, next time you pass there is just gonna be silence [GM2, focus group 2].

**Answer:** Harassment in cases of, like during presentations we have to wear formal, and when you are in front there will be comments, whooo...your curves....whooo....your what what and there will be others saying don't say she is a lesbian, their conception of a lesbian is a girl who wants to be a boy, which is very wrong. and then sometimes you find out that when you pass on the corridors, guys just hold you and say, "sister I want to talk to you", and why do they have to talk to me while touching me.... And as soon as they find out that you are a lesbian they start to

touch you saying “my sister, you mean that you don’t feel anything” trying to prove if you’re lesbian or not [LF4, focus group 2].

Another gay student following on the question says the following: Guys like this line and is very popular, you will find a group of guys saying, “You are a guy and why do you need another guy” [GM3, focus group 2].

Another lesbian student has the following to say: I do get a lot of guys calling me, and one time my roommate gave my numbers to a guy and when the guy called me I told him that I don’t do guys [LF1, focus group 2].

Answer: On Thursday, I was with my gay friend at MBA and some guys were trying to attack us. When we went out they were saying whatever they thought was good for them through the window. We thought to ourselves, we are coming back, and when we went back as we got there one guy got guts enough to verbally attack us, but we stood up for ourselves and he was so defeated. As such, verbal is one of the famous I could say. Even Christians who claim they are all holy and that, I remember this other case whereby this other guy was telling me how unholy we are and how God doesn’t like us, and I said that just pray that you don’t have a gay or Lesbian child, and he just said I’m just gonna kill that child [GM3, focus group 2].

Following up on the story one gay said the following: When analysing the situation, in the world of utopia that is not something we would like to be associated with. So we would rather have a world where such does not have to happen. So there still need to be a lot of education towards fellow community members as in, the rest of the student body and the institution so that we walk in one accord towards the emancipation of people [GM1, focus group 2].

**QUESTION 3: Tell me about comments that you received on campus as a result of your sexual orientation?**

Answer: For me they don’t get into me, if you say a bad thing, next time I pass-by I am just gonna greet and they will go on and yell, I don’t have a problem. Actually they boost my self-confidence [LF1, focus group 2].

**QUESTION 4: What do these comments make you think of doing?**

**Answer:** *the only thing I ever think of is how great I am and one day they will swallow their words. Like, they inspire me to be a better person [GM1, focus group 2].*

**Answer:** *I, actually in a way comments help me to know who to talk to and who not to talk to [GM2, focus group 2].*

**Answer:** *In my case, I'm a very short person as you can see and i have a very short temper, so such things provoke and awaken the hulk in me, but sometimes they are those comments that will hit your spot [LF4, focus group 2].*

**QUESTION 5: Tell me about how heterosexual males treat you as a homosexual/lesbian/gay?**

**Answer:** *It also happens a lot that straight guys on campus will be saying to me as a lesbian, "babes you are nice you know that?", another time i took of my vest, and a guy saw me and he said, you say you are a lesbian, one day I will force myself on you. They also swear at me saying I'm taking their women. You know what I experienced yesterday, yesterday was a business day at galla dinner at multipurpose centre (MPC) and we were ushered to table those round tables and I was with these two classmates of mine and then me, there were guys there and they ushered me to stay with them, the guys just left and said, "we don't wanna stay with people who are devil worshippers, we are so Christians and they were international students, and I just said to my friends, we are not moving because they wanna move we gonna stay here, this is the table that has been shown to us and if they wanna act like that let them act like that [LF1, focus group 2].*

**Answer:** *They are saying we are taking all the hot girls in the world leaving them with ugly girls. They hate us to that extent. The other thing guys do is that they pretend to be your friend, and obviously hugs are normal, but then they take advantage of that, when you hug them they then start touching you. Is that thing of saying you don't trust anyone. The other thing guys like saying is that, they will ask you why you want to be a lesbian while you are so beautiful. As for me, my roommate will also ask me to try dating a guy once [LF4, focus group 2].*

**QUESTION 6: Tell me about how heterosexual females treat you as a homosexual/lesbian/gay?**

Answer: *Most heterosexual girls are so gay friendly, it's very funny cause they should be fighting with us because we are taking their man, but otherwise they are so fine [GM3, focus group 2].*

**QUESTION 7: Has your sexual orientation interfered with your studies in anyway? If you think it has please explain to me how?**

Answer: *With me is the fact that, i can't be late like a normal guy in class, if a normal guy is late, he will just walk in and seat down, but with me the whole lecture has to stop, that is the only part that i don't like about attending classes [GM2, focus group 2].*

Another lesbian student following up said the following: *Even a lesbian being late is just like that, actually it's even worse [LF4, focus group 2].*

Answer: *Some lecturers don't care if you are straight or not, as long as you give them what they want when it comes to academic work [LF4, focus group 2].*

**QUESTION 8: At any stage have you felt unwelcome at the University of Limpopo?**

Answer: *No, I own this place [LF1, focus group 2].*

Answer: *No, I love this place [GM2, focus group 2].*

Answer: *No, I like this place; I have it in my palm [LF4, focus group 2].*

**QUESTION 9: Is there anything you would like to ask me**

- Why did you choose this topic? – explanation given as to how important the topic is.
- As a student who is studying psychology right now, how do you embark on differentiating between the ways in which you perceived homosexuality when you were still young before you were interested in Psychology and now? I explained that I understood far more about homosexuality than before I undertook the study.
- From your viewpoint do you think homosexuality is a choice or something you are born with?

- Do you think you can just jump up and hug this guy, I mean if you have a homosexual kid? I responded that I would not disown any child of mine as sexuality is not chosen.

**The following are recommendations made by members of LGBTI community during data collection**

- People should get close to LGBTI people and learn about them, if they learn about us their behaviour towards us might change.
- A lot of education towards fellow community members as in, the rest of the student body and the institution.

**Appendix C: TREC ethics forms**

**APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE**

Date:.....

**FORM B – PART I**

**PROJECT TITLE: Challenges faced by Gay and Lesbian students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus)**

**PROJECT LEADER: D L Letsoalo**

**DECLARATION**

I, the signatory, hereby apply for approval to conduct research described in the attached research proposal and declare that:

1. I am fully aware of the guidelines and regulations for ethical research and that I will abide by these guidelines and regulations as set out in documents (available from the Secretary of the Ethics Committee); and
2. I undertake to provide every person who participates in this research project with the relevant information in Part III. Every participant will be requested to sign Part IV.

**Name of Researcher:** D L Letsoalo

**Signature:**.....

**Date:**.....

**For Official use by the Ethics Committee:**

Approved/Not approved

Remarks:.....

.....

Signature of Chairperson:.....

Date:.....

**FORM B - PART II**

**PROJECT TITLE: Challenges faced by Gay and Lesbian students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus)**

**PROJECT LEADER: D L Letsoalo**

Protocol for conducting research using human participants

1. Department: Psychology
2. Title of project: **Challenges faced by Gay and Lesbian students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus)**
3. Full name, surname and qualifications of project leader: Mr Daniel Letsoalo, M1 Masters in Clinical Psychology BA Honours Psychology
4. List the name(s) of all persons (Researchers and Technical Staff) involved with the project and identify their role(s) in the conduct of the experiment:

Name:	Qualifications:	Responsible for:
DL Letsoalo	completing MA Clin M	Carrying out research
5. Name and address of principal researcher: Mr DL Letsoalo, Stand no: 63 Spitzkop Village Ga-mamabolo 0777
6. Procedures to be followed: Semi-structured interview
7. Nature of discomfort: Re-living experiences associated with discrimination may be stressful and cause anxiety.
8. Description of the advantages that may be expected from the results of the study: A better understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by students who are gay or lesbian will be gained. Policies and/or procedures may be updated as a result of the study.

Signature of Project Leader:.....

Date:.....

## PART II

### INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

**PROJECT TITLE: Challenges faced by Gay and Lesbian students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus)**

**PROJECT LEADER: D L Letsoalo**

1. You are invited to participate in the following research project: **Challenges faced by Gay and Lesbian students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus)**
2. Participation in the project is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the project (without providing any reasons) at any time.
3. It is possible that you might not personally experience any advantages during the project, although the knowledge that may be accumulated through the project might prove advantageous to others.
4. You are encouraged to ask any questions that you might have in connection with this project at any stage. The project leader and her/his staff will gladly answer your question. They will also discuss the project in detail with you.
5. You may feel upset, anxious or stressed during the interview designed to help explore your experiences of being gay or lesbian on UL (Turfloop Campus). If you do, please inform me immediately or as soon as you feel able. You will be referred for counselling to appropriate professionals on campus to help you resolve these feelings.
6. Should you at any stage feel unhappy, uncomfortable or is concerned about the research, please contact **Ms Noko Shai-Ragoboya at the University of Limpopo, Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, tel: 015 268 2401.**

**PART IV**  
**CONSENT FORM**

**PROJECT TITLE: Challenges faced by Gay and Lesbian students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus)**

**PROJECT LEADER: D L Letsoalo**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the following project: **Challenges faced by Gay and Lesbian students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus)**

I realise that:

1. The study deals with feelings associated with my experience of being gay or lesbian on the UL (Turfloop Campus).
2. The procedure /treatment/interview may hold some risk for me that cannot be foreseen at this stage.
3. The Ethics Committee has approved that individuals may be approached to participate in the study.
4. The research project, i.e. the extent, aims and methods of the research, has been explained to me.
5. The project sets out the risks that can be reasonably expected as well as possible discomfort for persons participating in the research, an explanation of the anticipated advantages for myself or others that are reasonably expected from the research and alternative procedures that may be to my advantage.
6. I will be informed of any new information that may become available during the research that may influence my willingness to continue my participation.
7. Access to the records that pertain to my participation in the study will be restricted to persons directly involved in the research.
8. Any questions that I may have regarding the research, or related matters, will be answered by the researcher/s. You may contact my supervisor at: 2682944 or [knel@ul.ac.za](mailto:knel@ul.ac.za) or my-self (Letsoalo Daniel) at [daniellesibaletsoalo@gmail.com](mailto:daniellesibaletsoalo@gmail.com) if you need more information or feel uncomfortable with the research process at any time.

9. If I have any questions about, or problems regarding the study, or experience any undesirable effects, I may contact a member of the research team or Ms Noko Shai-Ragoboya.
10. Participation in this research is voluntary and I can withdraw my participation at any stage.
11. If any medical problem is identified at any stage during the research, or when I am vetted for participation, such condition will be discussed with me in confidence by a qualified person and/or I will be referred to my doctor.
12. I indemnify the University of Limpopo and all persons involved with the above project from any liability that may arise from my participation in the above project or that may be related to it, for whatever reasons, including negligence on the part of the mentioned persons.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHED PERSON

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

SIGNATURE OF PERSON THAT INFORMED  
THE RESEARCHED PERSON

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_

## **Appendix D: Editor's letter**

**Mr Louis Montcrieff Nel: PTC (Graaff-Reinet TC), DE (Paarl TC), BA Ed (UPE/NMMU), English Higher and Afrikaans Higher (CED)**

**07.2.2016**

I declare that I, Louis Montcrieff Nel, have proofread and edited the dissertation entitled: Challenges faced by Gay and Lesbian students at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus) written by Mr Daniel Letsoalo.

Mr Louis Montcrieff Nel taught (and lectured) in primary, high and tertiary education environments for a period of 30 years.

The dissertation was reasonably well written however, grammatical errors were found on pages: 1,2,4,7,8,11,12,14,16,17,18,28,29,32,33,34,35,36,44,45,50,54. These were corrected.

Mr Louis Montcrieff Nel