



Degree Thesis

Master's level (Second cycle)

Combating Gender-Based Violence through Education

Bekämpa mäns våld mot kvinnor genom utbildning

An interview study with educators in Gauteng, South Africa, about Gender-Based Violence in the Life Orientation curriculum

En intervjustudie med lärare i Gauteng, Syd Afrika, om mäns våld mot kvinnor i läroplanen för Livsorientering

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Abstract

Background

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a global problem rooted in gender inequality. South Africa has exceptionally high rates of GBV. Despite the fact that Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) has been taught as part of the school subject Life Orientation to teach topics like gender equality, studies have demonstrated inconsistent implementation of this curriculum.

Aim

To investigate Life Orientation educators' experiences of teaching the curriculum in relation to GBV and gender equality and managing the issue of GBV in public schools located in the Gauteng province, South Africa, and gain information about the challenges educators experience and what they think is needed to actively work towards preventing GBV in schools.

Research Design

A qualitative research design was utilised.

Method

Twelve participants were interviewed online using a semi-structured interview guide. The data was transcribed, coded, and analysed using inductive thematic analysis.

Results

The results indicate that the participating educators experience various challenges and have diverse views on potential improvements. Limited educational and training resources, deep-rooted views of gender roles and cultural traditions, limited recognition of the subject's importance by educational authorities, as well as uncertainty regarding existing school GBV policies are crucial findings on how the educators experience teaching GBV.

Conclusion

This study identified challenges and the potential benefits of improved educator training to address the topic of GBV, more detailed coverage of GBV in the curriculum, increased awareness surrounding GBV and allocating more time to these concepts.

Keywords: education, gender-based violence, gender equality, life orientation curriculum, sustainability

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Glossary of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DBE	Department of Basic Education
FET	Further Education and Training
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LO	Life Orientation
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Material
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSP	National Strategic Plan
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
SBST	School Based Support Team
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SRGBV	School-Related Gender-Based Violence
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a major public health issue globally and especially in South Africa. Schools are ideal institutions where the prevailing perceptions surrounding GBV can be challenged, but where, instead, these potentially harmful perceptions are often perpetuated.

Both authors of this study have a keen interest in sexual health and rights. One of the authors is a South African citizen with a background working as a speech therapist in the public-school setting. During this time, she developed an interest in sexuality education and pursued further studies in this field. The other author is a social worker and educator from Sweden who has spent the last years studying and working with sexual education projects in Catalunya. GBV is a topic that both authors are intensely interested in. They hope to work towards the emergence of a generation where GBV will be eradicated.

Background

Gender-Based Violence as a Global Issue and Agenda 2030

GBV is the most widespread and socially tolerated violation of human rights, which disproportionately impacts girls and women and has negative consequences on their sexual and reproductive health (SRH). SRH is defined as physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being in relation to sexuality and the reproductive system. It also includes the possibility of sexual experiences free from coercion, discrimination, and violence (WHO, 2006). GBV is considered a public health issue with pervasive mental, physical, and psychological consequences that affects people of all genders worldwide (WHO, 2016). Before the COVID-19 crisis, the World Health Organisation reported that 35% women worldwide had experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point during their lifetime, this being the leading cause of death among women aged 16-44 years (2013). The number of cases not being reported due to a lack of knowledge of what harassment or illegitimate behaviour entails, or an accustomed acceptance of violence, could be even more prominent. This causes significant barriers and limited access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) (UNFPA, 2010).

GBV and risks related to SRHR originate from the issue of gender inequality. Political, economic, and social equality between women and men has demonstrated positive effects on all aspects of sustainable development. The United Nations (UN) refers to gender equality as women's and men's equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities in all areas of life,

irrespective of their gender. This also includes attitudes and norms that influence the everyday lives of women, men, and people of other genders.

GBV is not only a matter of the impact of violence on individual women but reflects a bigger issue of justice and democracy and poses a threat to societal development (WHO, 2013). The gravity of this is demonstrated in its relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Addressing GBV ties in with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 - Good health and well-being; SDG 4 - Quality education; and SDG 5 - Gender equality (UN, 2015). Specifically, SDG 5 aims to end all forms of violence, exploitation and discrimination against women and girls.

Eliminating GBV is also tied to the advancement of women's universal health and well-being (UN Women, 2018). The UN (n.d.) identified GBV as a major obstacle in achieving gender equality. There is a clear link between sexual violence against women and SRH problems, such as unintended pregnancy, early pregnancy, and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) (Grose, Chen, Roof, Rachel & Yount, 2021). The UN spotlights the potential of education to build knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes essential to countering GBV (n.d.). Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the occurrences of GBV increased drastically, leading to GBV being labelled as the 'shadow pandemic' by the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed (UN Woman, 2020).



Figure 1: Sustainable Development Goals

(UN, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030.html>)

Gender-Based Violence in the Context of South Africa

In discussing violence or the demographics of South Africa, it is important to acknowledge the history of apartheid. Apartheid was an ideology of economic, social, and geographic separation based on race which was introduced by the ruling government in 1948. The system of apartheid was implicitly designed to empower the white minority and to disempower non-white South Africans. The black population, who accounted for the majority of the population, were most severely discriminated against (Cornish-Jenkins, 2016). The end of apartheid was marked by the African National Congress coming into power as the new ruling political party in 1994 after the first democratic election. Since this time, the South African constitution underwent major progressive reformations with an emphasis on equal human rights for all citizens. Despite this, the legacy of apartheid is evident to date as the country continues working to rectify the inequalities of the past. In the wake of apartheid, South Africa has one of the most unequal societies in the world with high rates of poverty and low levels of education (Everatt, 2014). As Katuma, Cheruiyot and Mushongera (2019) describe it, “the previously disadvantaged black population continues to feel the regressive effects of such a policy more than 20 years since the dawn of democratic South Africa”.

In 2010 the World Population Review (2021) reported that South Africa had the highest reported cases of rape in the world, at 132.4 incidents per 100,000 people. This was revised to 72.1 per 100 000 people in 2019-20 (Clifford, 2021). It is estimated that only one out of every 25 women who have been raped report this crime to the police, indicating that these figures are likely under representative (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013). Statistics such as these, in combination with shocking individual cases of femicide, have led to GBV being declared a national crisis (Mogoathle, 2019).

During the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, there was a global rise in GBV as pre-existing social, political, and economic inequalities fell under increased pressure. According to Amnesty International (2021), police reported more than 2 300 cases of GBV during the first nine days of the national lockdown. The same report stated that 21 women and children were murdered by intimate partners in South Africa by the mid-June 2020. This rise in GBV happened to coincide with the release of South Africa’s first Gender-based Violence and Femicide National Strategic Plan (GBVF-NSP) in April 2020, bringing the issue of GBV increasingly to the forefront.

A country liberated from GBV and femicide is what the NSP (Interim Steering Committee, 2020) aims for. Many civil society organisations (CSOs) have been established in South Africa with the aim of providing relief for and the prevention of GBV. One such project, the Teenz Alliance Project, is designed to prevent GBV with a clear focus on empowering girls and making communities safer for them (POWA, 2018).

Many of the existing GBV prevention strategies are focused on changing the behaviour of survivors and victims, rather than changing the perpetrators' behaviour and views. This view is slowly starting to shift. In 2020, Ronald Lamola, the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, asserted the importance of addressing toxic masculinity and destructive stereotypes as the main root of GBV (DoJ & CD, 2020).

The Role of Education in Combating GBV

UNICEF created a worldwide consensus stating that “Education is a force for social change and the single most vital element in combating poverty, empowering women and safeguarding children [...]” (1999). Consequently, SDG Target 4.7 also aims to promote learners' knowledge of sustainable development, human rights, gender equality and non-violence through education (UN, 2015). Children are surrounded by many influences in society, for example, family, media, and educators, which shape their views on GBV. It is during school years that children's understanding of social interactions develop and the school contributes to teaching much more than just what is in the curriculum. The need for Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) to be of a high quality becomes clear in view of the societal problems linked to poor sexuality education, such as sexual harassment at school, as well as sexual violence against young people, women and in intimate relationships. Education is an explicit opportunity to convey the principles of respect and tolerance, which promote gender equality and reduce harassment and violence.

Life Orientation is a compulsory school subject in all South African public schools, which aims to equip learners with skills to navigate the world, including personal development, social relations and responsibilities, human rights and physical education. In order to specialise in Life Orientation, educators choose Psychology as one of their majors during their undergraduate studies. These educators utilise the Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) provided to themselves and the learners in the form of prescribed textbooks to teach the subject, as well as following the Department of Basic Education (DBE) prescribed Curriculum and Assessment

Policy Statement (CAPS) policy document and adhering to the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) for assessments and pacing (DBE, 2021 & Hariram, 2020).

The Life Orientation curriculum has been identified as an ideal setting for sexuality education, aimed at addressing the high rates of HIV/AIDS, GBV and early pregnancies in South Africa (Shefer & Macleod, 2015). This led to the introduction of CSE into the Life Orientation curriculum in South African public schools in 2000 by the Department of Basic Education, which has been intermittently met with controversy by both parents and educators (DBE, 2019^{1&2}). As reported by Leach (2002, as cited in De Lange, Mitchell & Bhana, 2012), the school environment in South Africa is a setting where GBV often persists and where unequal gender roles are constructed.

Review of CSE in South African Schools

In a report concerning the progress of policies on the prevention of GBV in South African schools, Parkes (2015) points out the harmful gender stereotypes and norms, which have allowed GBV to continue over generations. She highlights the correlation between increased rates of violence and unequal gender relations, which are further exacerbated by other inequalities, including poverty and sexuality. This correlation begins to allude to the importance of teaching gender equality as a way to counteract the generational perpetuation of GBV.

Another study by Mayeza and Bhana (2017) investigated early signs of gender inequality and violence among primary school learners and the impact of these behaviours being overlooked by educators. They identified that hegemonic masculinities were dominant and often reinforced in the school setting from a young age, commenting on the intersection between poverty and violence. Mayeza and Bhana further found that gendered violence among primary school children was often dismissed by educators as they believed that the learners were too ‘young and innocent’ to be aware of gender dynamics. This led to the violent behaviour towards girls and non-dominant boys being ascribed by the educators to ‘normal’ fighting and play amongst children, despite the educators themselves earlier identifying the behaviour as problematic. This thinking undermines the influence of gendered socialisation on children’s behaviour. The study demonstrates how easily detrimental behaviour can be misinterpreted and overlooked by educators in settings where children are in the process of developing an understanding of power hierarchies and further highlights the need for educators to be sensitised to the issue and effects of gender inequality at every age.

Despite the intended focus of the CSE curriculum on gender equality and challenging harmful gender norms, research on learners' experience has shown that the way in which the curriculum is taught more often reinforces unhealthy gender norms by perpetuating the narrative of male dominance, placing the responsibility of reproductive health and safety on females and placing the focus of sexuality education on the cautionary problematizing of sexual encounters, rather than engaging with learners' needs (Ngabaza, Shefer, & Macleod, 2016). A report on violence in South African schools found that if educators don't receive specific training on gender, they are likely to reproduce, rather than to challenge, gender stereotypes (Mncube & Harber, 2013). This then leads to the continued justification for gender inequality and the harassment of women.

Furthermore, there is a large body of research which indicates that, despite the specificity of the CSE curriculum, educators tend to focus on teaching the material that they feel comfortable with and impose their own values and beliefs on what they teach to learners. This undermines the efforts to combat the pertinent social issues in the country and leaves the next generation at risk of experiencing the same fate as the ones before – high rates of early pregnancy, HIV transmission, and falling victim to or perpetrating acts of GBV.

Problem statement

GBV is a serious threat to the human rights of South Africans. The current approach to addressing GBV in South Africa focuses on the persecution of perpetrators, as well as on providing psychological support to survivors. Little research has been conducted on GBV prevention by means of education on respectful relationships or facilitating changes in behaviour, despite the GBV conceivably being more of a moral issue than a policy issue. This highlights the general reactive, rather than proactive approach that has thus far been taken in the fight against GBV.

The CSE curriculum poses an opportunity to engage learners on the topics of GBV and gender equality, but studies show that it is often not implemented as it was intended, resulting in missed opportunities to change the mindset of impressionable learners. As educators interact with students on a daily basis, they could play an essential part in school-based preventive work.

Aim

The aim of this study is to investigate Life Orientation educators' experiences of teaching the curriculum in relation to GBV and gender equality and managing the issue of GBV in public schools located in the Gauteng province, South Africa, and gain information about the challenges educators experience and what they think is needed to actively work towards preventing GBV in schools.

Methodology

Research Design

A qualitative study design was applied (Paley, 2010), using an interpretative approach, to explore and understand the participants' self-reported experiences. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with educators using an interview guide to obtain detailed descriptions from the educators about their experiences teaching GBV.

Research Methods

Sampling Sites

The research site was selected based on the high rates of reported GBV that occur in the Gauteng province in South Africa. Despite being the smallest province, comprising only 1,5% of the land area, Gauteng disproportionately accounted for 25,3% of the country's population in 2017 (Alexander, 2019). As depicted in Figure 2 below, it is the province with the highest population density, despite its small size.

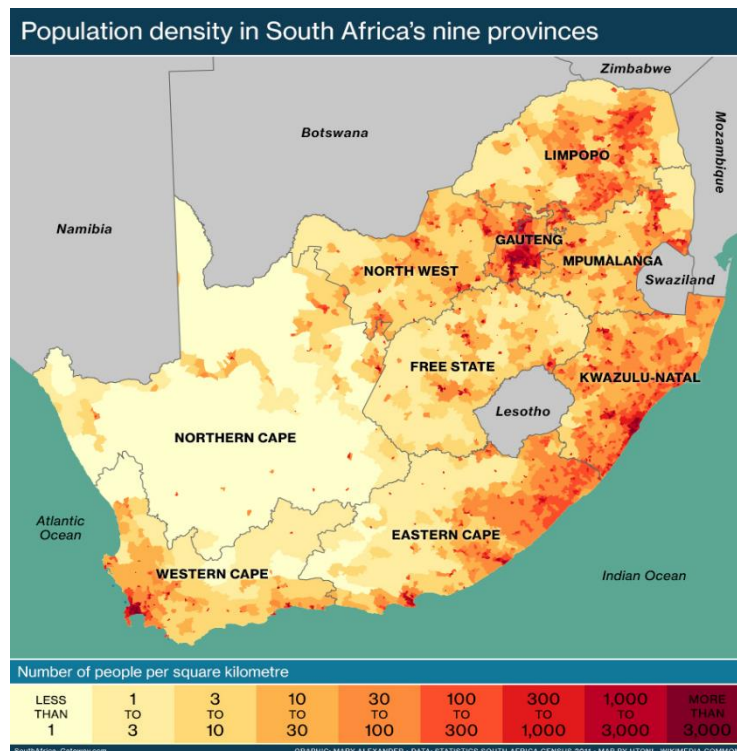


Figure 2: Population density of Gauteng as compared to other provinces

(Alexander, 2019, https://southafrica-info.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/South_Africa_population_density_provinces.jpg)

The Apartheid legacy of spatial segregation is still evident in the distribution of poverty within Gauteng. In their study on the concentration of multidimensional poverty in Gauteng, researchers Katuma, Cheruiyot and Mushongera (2019) identified that, despite being the province with the country's highest economic contribution, Gauteng had large income discrepancies and poverty across different locations.

Although statistics of GBV vary between sources, Gauteng had the highest rates of occurrence for both rape and sexual assault, according to the South African Police Force crime statistics for 2019 to 2020, as compared to the other eight provinces in South Africa (SAPS, 2020).

Participant Recruitment

Twelve research participants were recruited using purposeful selection. The selection criteria included educators teaching Senior Phase or Further Education and Training (FET) learners (grades 7-12) and with a minimum of 6 months teaching experience, as detailed in Table 1 below. Participants were recruited by reaching out to public schools in Gauteng and requesting that they send a notification, stating the purpose of the study, the participant criteria and

requesting for volunteers. When this resulted in limited success, the researchers also contacted Life Orientation subject heads at the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) to disseminate information about the study to relevant educators. Additionally, social media was used as a channel to reach independent Life Orientation educators who were interested in participating. Participants then self-selected and initiated contact with the researchers. The total number of participants required to achieve insightful data for this study was estimated to be three to ten participants, which was achieved (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Table 1: Participant Selection Criteria and Rationale

Selection Criteria	Details	Rationale
Age Group of Life Orientation Learners	Senior Phase and FET educators	Due to content in the Curriculum, this is the phase in which GBV is mentioned and discussed the most.
Teaching Experience	Minimum 6 months	To ensure educators have experience teaching at a school and are familiar with the curriculum.
Location	The Gauteng province	Gauteng is the province with highest documented GBV.
Type of School	Public schools	The CSE curriculum is taught routinely in the subject of Life Orientation in public schools, whereas private schools can follow other curriculums.

Data Collection

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the interviews were conducted and recorded over secure Zoom and encrypted WhatsApp audio calls, excluding video. Interviews were managed by both researchers simultaneously, enabling one to interact with the participant and the other to monitor the recording, in turn. An interview guide developed by the researchers, in line with the study aim and research questions, was used for data collection (see Appendix A). The equipment used for conducting and recording the interviews were personal computers. The average duration of the interviews was approximately 45 minutes.

Pre-testing of Interview Guide

Two interviews were conducted to examine how the questions were perceived and if ambiguities occurred. The pre-testing results showed a need to clarify some terms and questions to more accessible English. Please see table 2 below for the resulting alterations. The concept of GBV varied between interviewees, so the researchers decided to start the interviews in the main study by providing a definition of GBV.

Table 2: Interview Guide Question Alterations

Change	Pre-Test Question/ Phrasing	Revised Question/ Phrasing
1	Surrounding	Concerning
2	What could be added to the curriculum that could be beneficial to addressing Gender-Based Violence?	What content on Gender-Based Violence would you say is missing from the curriculum?
3	Do you have access to competence development within the topic of Gender-Based Violence from your workplace?	Have you been offered training on the topic of Gender-Based Violence from your school or the department of education?
4	What do you think is the most important to talk about when discussing Gender-Based Violence with children?	What do you find are the most important topics to address when discussing gender equality with learners?
5	How well equipped do you feel to discuss and talk about ...	Do you feel comfortable to discuss and talk about ...
6	Which other settings do you think Gender-Based Violence could be taught and discussed, other than in Life Orientation, in order to reach the learners?	Except in Life Orientation class, in which other contexts do you think Gender-Based Violence could be taught and discussed in school?
7	How do you think it is convenient to deal with attitudes and behaviours in schools that don't match with the curriculum's common values?	What actions or measures would be most effective to deal with discriminatory attitudes and behaviours in schools that threaten gender equality?
8	How can a school be made a safer place for girls/female learners, behaviourally and socially?	How can the school be made a safer place for the learners and educators, in policy and behaviour?

Thematic Content Analysis

Thematic analysis is a flexible method of qualitative data analysis that identifies patterns in the data and is not associated with a particular theoretical perspective (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The interviews were first transcribed using speech-to-text transcription software and reviewed by the researchers for accuracy. Thereafter the interview data was analysed through a six-step process (Braun & Clarke, 2006), as exemplified in Table 3. Step 1: All the interview transcripts were read through so that the researchers could familiarise themselves with the data and develop an initial understanding of the overall views of participants. During this step general trends in the data, such as 'positive' and 'negative' participant experiences, came to light. Step 2: The interviews were manually coded by the researchers using NVivo data analysis software. The process of coding refers to identifying all the comprising fragments of meaning from the data and assigning codes, or descriptors to them. Since no predetermined set of codes was used, the researchers made use of open coding which developed dynamically throughout the data analysis process. All transcripts were coded in duplicate as both researchers separately identified points of interest and recurring topics and ascribed codes to them, such as 'Prevention', 'Suggestions' and 'Policies'. Step 3: The codes were then compared and discussed between the two researchers so that overlapping patterns significant to the study's aim could be identified, grouped, and subsequently used to develop overarching themes. Overall, the researchers had

significant congruence between their respectively identified codes. Occasional discrepancies surrounding the phrasing of certain codes was discussed until the most fitting phrasing was identified and used going forward. Step 4: The themes were then reviewed to determine whether there was any overlap between themes which could be merged and whether there were any emerging subthemes. Step 5: The essence of the main themes and subthemes was then collaboratively identified and defined by the two researchers. This step was revised three times with input from the researchers' supervisor. Step 6: The themes were interpreted and explained in the results and discussion sections. Inductive thematic analysis was applied to allow for interpretation and reporting on emerging themes that arose from the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The participants' perspectives were studied in relation to how they expressed themselves and the researchers strived to find the core of both their individual and shared experiences.

Table 3: Systematic Representation of Data Analysis

Step 1	Original Excerpt from Transcript	"Ja, but Ma'am, women must work in the house and the man must go out and work". And then at the other half of the class, and especially the girls, would be like, "No, but it has to be equal, equal, equal".
Step 2	Initial Code	Gender roles
	Modified Code	Gender equality discrepancy
Step 3	Initial Category (later Subcategory)	Perceptions of Gender Equality
Step 4	Merged in Broader Category	Learners' Perceptions on Topics
Step 5	Sub-Theme Identified	Learners' Views on Gender Equality
	Theme Identified	Challenges Experienced by Participants
Step 6	Interpretation & Write up	Please see relevant theme in Results section

Ethical Considerations

Various measures were taken to assure that the research study met the highest ethical requirements. The Helsinki Declaration (WMA, 2013) was consulted during the study design process. The researchers continuously monitored that the expected benefits for the participants outweighed the potential risks involved.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa under the application number REC1/17/02/21 (see Appendix D). As part of the application process, the researchers completed a short online course to ensure that the relevant laws and

regulations relating to the collection of empirical data in South Africa would be followed. Further permission was granted by the GDE for the recruitment and interviewing of the educators who fall under their jurisdiction (see Appendix E).

Efforts were made to recruit participants in an unbiased manner. After the selection criteria was disseminated to educators, they could volunteer for participation by self-initiating contact with the researchers. Emphasis was placed on free and voluntary participation with the right to withdraw at any point during the study. Informed consent was obtained, both in writing and verbally, after the potential risks, benefits and duration of the study was presented (please see Appendix B for consent forms).

The researchers considered the possibility that the interviews could trigger uncomfortable emotions or memories for the participants and were prepared to provide support in such cases. In collaboration with POWA, the contact details for both POWA and the GBV Command Centre were provided to all participants for assistance and counselling services.

No personally identifying information was used in the collection, analysis, interpretation or reporting of the data. Instead, participants were assigned participant numbers to help distinguish between them, e.g., Participant 1 = P1, Participant 2 = P2, etc.

For the storing of the research data, both the South African Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) and the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) were consulted. As both the audio files and the interview transcriptions were digital, these files were kept in password protected folders on the researchers' personal computers and were anonymised to a point where they cannot be un-anonymised (POPIA, 2019). Files shared virtually between the two researchers, were done over a secure channel which only the two researchers had access to. The informed consent forms were the only identifying information which was captured and will be destroyed after the results of the study have been published and disseminated to the participants. The consent forms were stored separately from the interview recordings and transcriptions to further assure anonymity. In accordance with Dalarna University's requirements, all data collected will be stored for 10 years, after which time it will be destroyed.

Results

The results below were based on the data collected from the individual interviews conducted with twelve participants over a period of five months. Given the nature of the recruitment method, these participants worked in different schools and had varied backgrounds. This anonymous background information is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Participant and School Characteristics

CHARACTERISTICS		COMBINED DATA REPRESENTATION
Educator s	No. Years Teaching LO	Range: 6 months – 35 years Mean experience: 9.3 years Combined experience: 111.5 years
	Home Language	Range: Xitsonga, isiZulu, Afrikaans, Sotho, Sepedi
	Qualification	Range: PGCE, Higher Teacher's Diploma, Bachelor's in Education, Honours & Master's in Education Majority: B. Ed
	Specialisation	8/12 Participants: Life Orientation/ Psychology/ Life Skills Additional: English, Afrikaans, Social Studies, Consumer Studies, Maths, African Languages, Geography, History, Sotho, Biology/ Life Sciences
	Phase Studied	Range: Intermediate, Senior & FET
	Teaching LO to Grades	Range: Grade 7 – 12
School s	District	Range: Tshwane West, Tshwane North, Sedibeng West, Johannesburg Central, Johannesburg North
	Type of Public School	Self-described as: LSEN schools, Township schools, Section 21 schools, Quintile 4 & 5 schools
	Hostel (Residential school)	No: 10/12 Yes: 2/12
	No. Learners in LO Class	Range: 16 – 87 /class Mean: 40 /class
	No. Learners in School	Range: 209 – 2000 Mean: 1107
	Learner Demographics	Range self-described as: Multiracial & multicultural, informal settlements/ townships, unemployed parents, poor to middle class learners, some Afrikaans schools

Three dominant themes emerged during thematic content analysis of the interview data: 1. Participants' Experiences Managing GBV and the Curriculum Content, 2. Challenges Experienced by Participants, and 3. Participants' Suggestions for Preventing GBV. These, along with their subthemes are represented in Figure 3 and are discussed below.

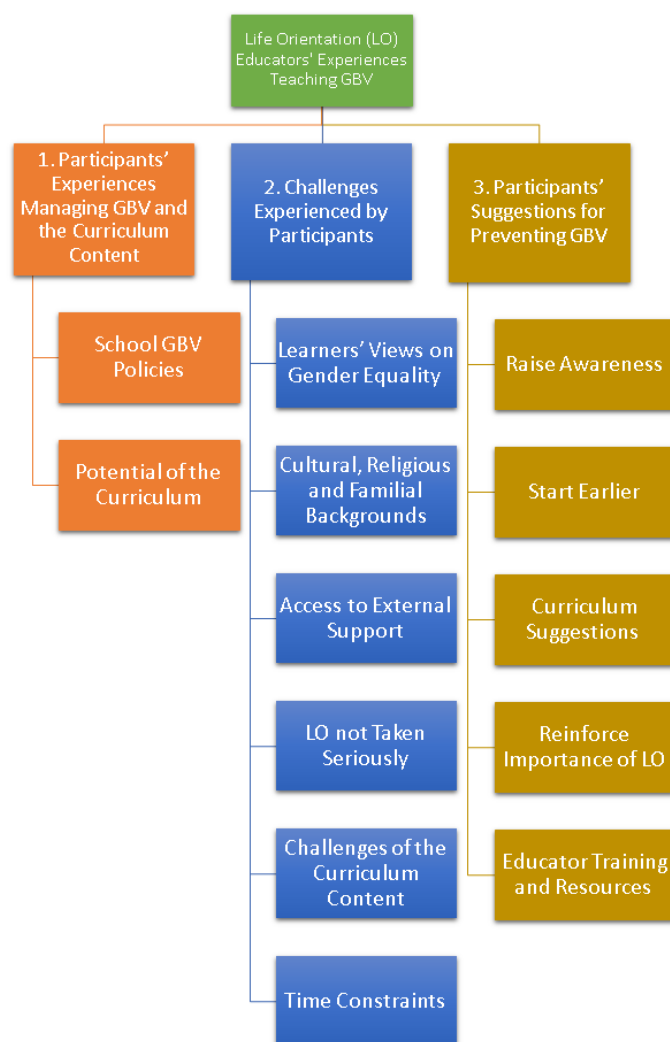


Figure 3: Flow Chart of Themes and Subthemes

1. Participants' Experience Managing GBV and the Curriculum Content

The participants were asked about the GBV policies at their schools that could help guide the management of GBV cases. The results indicated that most of the participants were not aware of any definitive policies in place to follow when GBV occurs at their schools. P5, explained their school had no specific GBV policy but they would follow the bullying policy in such cases. P2 and P9 stated that the Code of Conduct is applied when learners mistreat each other

at the school. P3, P4 and P7 mentioned alternative pathways to follow, including consulting the SBST and the Constitution of South Africa. Regarding the impact of having policies, P11 stated: “Obviously, policy won't prevent certain bad things to happen, but the minute people know that there will be action taken against those that harm other people then that way it would be safer for them.”

When asked about their experiences teaching the content of the Life Orientation curriculum, participants identified some of the potentials of the subject. Two participants mentioned that the case studies and examples in the textbooks are useful in helping the learners relate to the content, as well as aiding educators in initiating discussions about the topic of GBV. As P8 said, “... the case study is the one that is guiding you as a teacher to continue.” Three participants mentioned the benefits of using examples that reflect the learners’ own reality that they can apply in their lives. They felt this was more effective than reading the coursebook.

Eleven of the twelve participants reported that the Life Orientation curriculum has some positive effect on learners’ thinking and behaviour. They stated that this is reflected in decreased reported incidents of GBV at school, and that when incidents do occur, educators are able to reason with learners about their behaviour by referring to the content discussed in class. However, six participants acknowledged that the degree of impact depends greatly on how relevant learners feel the content is to their lives. As P11 phrased it, “If it [curriculum content] is related to them [learners], it does have an impact. But if they think they just have to learn it and reproduce it in a test, then that's it.”

2. Challenges Experienced by Participants

Each of the educators who participated in the study mentioned challenges related to teaching Life Orientation. The most prominent challenges included learners’ conflicting stereotyped attitudes, time and financial constraints and limited training, as discussed below.

The first challenge, identified by half of the participants, was that the learners they teach have strong, differing views on gender equality. This often results in tumultuous arguments between learners, as stated by P1 and P8. P2 mentioned that this makes it harder for educators to discuss these topics. “... the boys feel that they’re superior and the girls are inferior, so it's very hard. They think that the girls don't have a place in society, their place is just in the kitchen.” - P2

P8 described the resistance that learners may have to the topic of gender equality due to their inherent opinions, as some learners don't agree that women can be equal to men. P5 exemplified opposing arguments encountered in class where the boys feel that women should stay at home while men go work, to which the girls retorted that everything should be "equal". P10 stated that the way that girls are sometimes spoken to in conservative Afrikaans communities where women are seen as weaker, is "shocking".

P1 expressed that the boys act as if they can do anything, making jokes and overpowering the girls. Conversely, P3 and P5 mentioned that the girls sometimes believe it is fine for girls to bully and hit boys. P4 had similar views and stated that, in society, it is usually men who dominate over women, but that in primary school, girls usually have more power than boys. She could not account for what causes this perceived shift of power in later years.

The second challenge, discussed by five participants, was the difficulty posed by cultural and familial beliefs that perpetuate GBV and resist change through education. P1 mentioned that abuse often starts at home and is then brought to school by learners who are affected by it. P10 stated: "... when a child sees that it's okay in the house for the father to beat up the mom, he thinks that's the way it's supposed to be. So, it goes from generation to generation....". This view was echoed by P2. Additionally, P10 discussed the roles that poverty, unemployment and alcohol consumption play in the perpetuation of violence in South Africa, reflecting on how these frustrations lead to a negative cycle where violent manners are initiated.

Social values of further concern were the societal expectations placed on children from an early age, such as those stating that men need to be the "providers". P12 felt that patriarchal values were a large contributor to these issues, as quoted below. This was supported by P8 who stated that in some cultures, women are expected to be submissive. As P9 stated, "... it has a long history and the deep stereotypes. To change that, make a paradigm shift, will definitely be a process, not an event."

"I usually think of GBV stemming from old traditions and what our family members, specifically the male figures, have taught us and passed down through the generations, and I say especially amongst us black people . . . you have men telling their children that they're supposed to be providers and if you can't provide then you are seen as 'less man'." - P12

Another obstacle to educating learners on GBV and gender equality is the fact that many of these topics are not considered appropriate to discuss at home which, as P6 mentioned, makes it difficult for learners to feel comfortable talking about these topics in class. P9 stated, “It’s like a taboo in African culture. So, we teachers are starting where there is no foundation.” P12 mentioned not feeling comfortable going into detail with certain topics because of the risk of infringing on the learners’ religious beliefs.

The third challenge which participants discussed was the differing availability of external support for GBV education. Some participants mentioned that their schools have previously invited external organisations to speak to learners about GBV, however, both due to Covid-19 and financial restraints, this practice had become less frequent. Another participant mentioned that their school makes use of guest speakers, but not on the topic of GBV.

P2 mentioned that their school cannot afford to pay speakers and therefore does not have access to these services. This contrasted with the experiences of P3, who stated that multiple Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) were involved at their school, including Moja Love, Love Life and Save the Children. Three participants mentioned making use of community resources, including the police, social workers, priests, and youth volunteers, to help address topics that aren’t covered in the Life Orientation curriculum. P3 expressed a preference for asking speakers from townships to come speak about how GBV affected their lives, as these speakers are more relatable to the learners.

Another source of support that some participants’ schools had access to was social workers. However, these appeared to be in the minority, as P4 sadly pointed out. This inconsistency was explained by P10: “... schools don’t pay for social workers anymore. They used to. Our school employed somebody, so the governing body is paying for it, not the department of education. And a lot of schools don’t have that kind of money to employ a social worker.”

The fourth challenge, and an emergent finding of this study, was that five participants expressed feeling that the subject of Life Orientation is not taken seriously. This was described by P3 as follows: “I feel that they [the department of education] don’t take Life Orientation, or the content that we teach in Life Orientation seriously. Because from the upper structure, it’s not

taken seriously to the lower structures.” Participants expressed that these views bleed down to the learners, who in turn also do not see the subject as a valuable learning opportunity.

Four participants mentioned that many educators who teach the subject do not take it seriously either. P5 stated that these educators often tell the learners to read through the work on their own. This is reportedly a result of the fact that many educators who are teaching Life Orientation did not specialise in the subject but are allocated to teach it if they have space in their timetables. P5 explained that " ...[if] I have a period open and they would give me an LO period. So, nobody really wants to do the work or do extra, but if you do it you can really have an impact on learner's life."

Aspects of the curriculum content emerged as the fifth challenge. When asked whether GBV and gender equality were included in the curriculum, as well as the extent to which these topics are covered, participants were divided on this. There was a notable difference in opinion between participants teaching different grades, with the high school educators citing its inclusion more often. P3 responded, "Yes, it is. We even have it on our annual teaching plans that we teach them how to prevent GBV in grade 10, and also in grade 11." P10 stated that GBV is covered in detail in grade 12. Conversely, P2, a grade 7 educator, stated that the types of abuse covered in the curriculum does not include GBV. She further said that: "It just addresses the behaviours, the abuses that happen in the classroom and in the school, not GBV in home or anywhere else. So, it's not enough content in the curriculum."

Overall, the participants felt that GBV was covered in the curriculum, but that the prevention of GBV and the topic of gender equality were not directly or sufficiently addressed. P5 stated that the CAPS document does not provide enough detail, but that it is supplemented by the textbooks. P2 commented that GBV is not explicitly covered in the grade 7 curriculum and that it is just a topic which is informally discussed in class when it comes up in the news. P5 described the GBV coverage in the curriculum as follows: "It's more of how it affects the person and what to do if it is happening to you and, especially the textbooks we use currently, they give like a page full of numbers you can call and safe houses they can go, but they don't really give how to prevent it."

The sixth challenge identified was curricular time constraints. Some participants considered the time allocated to Life Orientation to be insufficient to discuss these complex issues in-depth.

P6 expressed that the learners don't learn to apply the lessons to their lives due to the curriculum being rigid and having to cover so many themes and since the focus from the department is on tests results and completing assignments. P7 described Life Orientation as a subject where, instead of focusing on the values and changes that the content could lead to, it is just viewed as something to study to pass the exam, without any deeper awareness.

3. Participants' Suggestions for Preventing GBV

The participants discussed various actions that could be incorporated on different levels to prevent GBV. These included raising awareness, various curriculum suggestions and improved educator training.

One of the most prevailing thoughts that emerged on how to combat GBV was to raise awareness by explaining the types of GBV and how to prevent these on different levels. P9 suggested that GBV should be approached in the same way that HIV was, where educators were encouraged to mention HIV in all classes so that the learners would have an increased awareness of its danger and how to prevent it. These views were echoed by P1 who said: "...in all the subjects GBV must be talked about. They should include a syllabus on it because it must be emphasised." While discussing in which other school subjects the themes of GBV and gender equality could be incorporated, most participants suggested English and other language classes. History, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences were also frequently mentioned while Arts and Culture and Maths were mentioned to a lesser degree. P8 argued for the teaching of GBV in local vernacular as follows: "So (that) they can understand it clearly. Like isiZulu and Sotho, Xhosa." Furthermore, when discussing educator training, P6 expressed that: "Not only Life Orientation educators, I think all the staff should be educated on this."

School-based contexts, outside of the classroom, were also suggested for raising awareness. Two participants mentioned the potential of peer education and support groups. They reasoned that it could provide learners with opportunities to discuss current issues in society and learn from each other. P2 mentioned that gender equality could also be addressed through awareness days and exercises. P1 also suggested less separation by gender in all school activities, including sports and seating. She explained her reasoning as, "if they can come together and do these things together maybe they will learn to accept each other more."

A second suggestion that most participants agreed on was that GBV could be discussed and incorporated earlier to have a preventive and empowering effect on the learners. P1 stated that learners should be taught about GBV from an early age of 7-8 years. P5 suggested starting at grade 1 to “instil the values of equality and respecting one another”. P6 referred to helping learners identify different forms of GBV to be able to speak out about it as early as possible. P6 explained that many children experience GBV without realising it, without being able to verbalise the situation. Both P4 and P10 said that children who lived in households with GBV will learn that violence is the norm, therefore, GBV should be addressed at a younger age to break that cycle - they cannot be too young to learn about it if it is affecting their lives.

The third set of suggestion were related to curriculum changes. Participants advocated that GBV should be discussed more extensively and in-depth in the curriculum. P12 said that GBV comprises only a paragraph in the textbooks and P7 explained that the description is neither broad nor explained in a way that learners could understand its variations. P2 stated that GBV is not addressed enough, and the reason is its only covered in one paragraph so that the learners can describe it in an exam, as opposed to really understanding it. P6 and P7 stated that GBV should be incorporated more in the curriculum, while P2 was of the opinion that gender equality should be a topic in Life Orientation on its own. She explained that in this way, the focus can be on what GBV is and who the perpetrators and victims are. P3 accorded and expressed that stereotypes and bias should be the focus factors when discussing GBV with the learners. Another prominent opinion was that the prevention of GBV should also be included in the Life Orientation curriculum.

Another suggestion that was made by some of the participants regarding the curriculum, was that “boys’ issues” should also be explicitly covered in the curriculum. They mentioned that a lot of societal pressure is placed on boys to be strong, unemotional, and to be the “providers” for their families, all while facing abuse and discrimination themselves. P4 argued that boys are not taught coping skills and that their emotional intelligence is often neglected, resulting in boys (and later men) who express their frustration through violence instead of verbal communication.

P3, a high school educator, expressed that the content of the curriculum was satisfactory, but he advocated to expand the hours allocated to Life Orientation, declaring that the time currently allocated is insufficient and demotivating. P7 added, “We see the learners, three periods in a week, they call it the Annual Teaching Plan, that's the curriculum, basically made provision

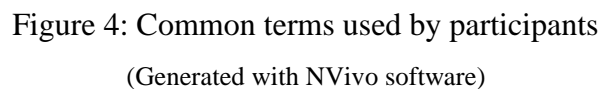
for... you tell the children what it is. And you have a class discussion, and you bring in a case study... And once you've done that you move on. So, I don't think it's sufficient.”

A fourth suggestion was to reinforce the importance of Life Orientation. P4 stated that the awareness of GBV can only increase when the Life Orientation subject, and educators, are treated as a matter of importance. P5 expressed wishing that the Department of Education would invest more in the expertise of Life Orientation educators through broader training, stating that this would affirm to both the learners and the educators the importance of the subject. P10 expressed the wish for Life Orientation to be taken more seriously and that the department should help educators with teaching resources. Participants also highlighted the importance of employing educators who specialised in the subject to teach it.

A fifth change idea which emerged was related to educator training and resources. Only four of the twelve participants stated that they had received any training on topics related to GBV, such as HIV, sexuality, and appropriate conduct at school. Only one of these participants, P3, had undergone capacity building that specifically addressed teaching GBV to learners, as he stated: "We did have a number of developmental workshops of gender-based violence, equality, and sexuality". In contrast, eight of the participants stated that they were not aware of any workshops or training programs on the topic of GBV that they could access. Two participants mentioned that they were due to receive training on topics related to GBV but that the workshops were cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

P5 stated that the department could help by giving educators more training and resources, such as manuals or video clips. P6 expressed the benefits if the department could offer training on GBV to all educators, not only those teaching Life Orientation, to know what to do if they encounter learners who are victims of GBV. P6 emphasised that untrained educators could do more harm to learners if they provide uninformed advice. She further suggested: "...we can have seminars whereby schools organise people, or the department organises such seminars, to come and deliver talks and speak to the children and hear how they also feel about it.”

To conclude the results, a word cloud (Figure 4) has been included of the most common words used by the participants throughout the interviews.



Summary of Main Results

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Results Discussion

A) More Detailed Curriculum Coverage

Based on the results, it can be deduced that the Life Orientation teaching material lacks broad definitions of what GBV is, in which forms it can take place and how it can be prevented. This was also reflected in the participants' varied views on what GBV entails. Along with the insufficient coverage of GBV, the lack of material to empower boys was also pointed out. Many educators spoke about gender roles already existing in the school and boys seeing themselves as superior and, as Parkes (2015) highlighted, gender stereotypes is the basis for the continuing existence of GBV. This is concerning when considering the UNFPA report (2010) showing that a lack of recognition of what GBV is causes many cases to pass by unnoticed and causes a lack of awareness.

As was mentioned earlier in this paper, many of the current GBV intervention programs in South Africa target women, rather than the perpetrators of GBV. Keller et al. (2017) developed a successful intervention program to improve boys' attitudes towards GBV in Kenya. They outlined areas considered to be important for GBV prevention programs aimed at boys, including promoting gender equitable relationships, helping boys identify what consent is and when it has been given, addressing the perception of social norms, as well as encouraging and practicing bystander intervention when acts of GBV are witnessed. This supports the views of the educators in this study who felt that more in-depth discussion of these complex topics is required to enact social change and that boys need to be empowered in the fight against GBV.

The curriculum content aimed at altering personal beliefs and values needs to be developed and implemented in a culturally appropriate way, in collaboration with the communities where these issues are most prominent. This is likely to improve the sensitivity and acceptance of these changes (Durrani and Halai, 2020). As the participants of this study noted, learners internalise the content better when it relates to their lived experiences.

It can therefore be concluded that it would be beneficial for the Life Orientation curriculum content to be expanded to include a more diverse description of GBV, as well as gender equality, and what it entails, to include the prevention of GBV, to address boys' issues and empowerment and to allow for a more comprehensive discussion of these topics in class.

B) Increase Awareness

A second prominent finding of this study was that the participants felt that GBV awareness needs to be increased by addressing it in different settings in the schools, in addition to the Life Orientation curriculum, as well as during different life stages. Through providing specialisation for educators, then the educators will not dismiss what they see and assume that the learners are too young to understand (Mayeza and Bhana, 2017).

Many of the educators in this study felt that GBV and associated topics should be introduced in earlier grades. In their review on engaging boys and men in sexual violence prevention, Ricardo, Eads and Barker (2011) explained the need for early intervention. They highlighted that intervention needs to take place before boys are socialised to develop harmful beliefs about violence towards women, and that this timeframe is at an earlier stage than is currently targeted by most GBV prevention programs. This finding is also consistent with Mayeza and Bhana's (2017) school study which showed how stereotypes and hegemonic masculinity are constructed and established in primary school.

Multiple educators also suggested that GBV should be covered in other subjects, such as languages, and in other contexts within the school, such as student clubs. Educators also gave some examples of how they used social media and the internet to look for examples and discussion points that the learners can connect with more easily, such as celebrities that they admire.

The spoken absence from 8 of the educators on written policy's does not necessarily mean that the schools to follow up such findings adequately, rather it could be that the educators are not aware of it and that would be crucial to adjust.

An issue as pervasive, serious, and resistant to change as GBV requires a comprehensive approach and needs to be tackled at different levels; both formal and informal. As can be seen in results, most educators explicitly suggested that GBV and gender equality should be brought up much earlier than when it currently is. These may be important aspects to consider for the future planning of school-based GBV prevention.

C) Educator Training

The third noteworthy finding was that very few participants in this study had received training on how to teach the CSE curriculum and more specifically, GBV or gender equality. Considering the sensitive nature of the content matter and the strong, opposing beliefs held by learners, some educators did not feel confident discussing these important topics in class. They also expressed that when these topics were addressed, heated and disruptive debates would ensue between learners.

Durrani and Halai (2020) adopted a postcolonial perspective in analysing the literature on gender equality in education and identified various concerns surrounding the dangers of educators not being properly trained in this area. They stated that schools often inadvertently reinforce gender power relations; an issue that was also noted in this study through the comments of some of the educators. They further stated that the school environment tends to neglect gender diversity and non-binary gender identities. Durrani and Halai also cautioned that educator training can only be effective if the instructors themselves also undergo comprehensive training which challenges them to address their biases and reconstruct their views of gender dynamics. All these factors need to be considered when equipping educators to sensitively address GBV in class.

As proposed by the study participants, it could therefore be beneficial to the educators and learners if all Life Orientation educators and all school-based staff receive comprehensive training on how to best initiate and facilitate balanced discussions in class on these important topics, as well as how to manage cases of School-Related GBV. The researchers have listed potentially useful resources for educator training and materials on the topic of GBV in Appendix C.

Methodological and Ethical Discussion

While conducting this study, some unexpected obstacles arose in relation to participant recruitment strategies and inclusion criteria, which required alteration of the original method.

The first alteration was the geographic location. Initially the researchers intended to focus on low-income areas of Gauteng, due to the correlation between poverty and higher rates of GBV (Peterman, Roy & Ranganathan, 2019). Nine low-income areas within the province were

identified based on a study by Kutumba, Cheruiyot and Mushongera (2019). However, after twice reaching out to 84 schools in these areas and receiving limited responses, the selection criteria was altered to include the entire Gauteng province.

The initial plan was to use a secure Zoom channel to perform and record the online interviews, however this application was not accessible for all the educators. Therefore, WhatsApp, which is also an encrypted channel, was used when educators preferred so.

In order to submit the signed consent forms, the participants were asked to print, sign, and scan them, for which the researchers offered to cover the cost. As printer accessibility was a difficulty for some participants, the researchers decided to let them sign it virtually and send a photo directly from their phones.

Due to these obstacles, updated ethical clearance needed to be obtained from the ethics committee. This was in addition to an initial delay in the approval of ethical clearance, which caused a major delay in data collection. A final factor that delayed the process of data collection was the occurrence of a school holiday, a week after ethical clearance was obtained.

The research methods applied had several strengths. The fact that the interview guide was semi-structured allowed for detailed data collection using follow up questions throughout the interview, while still providing enough structure to make the results comparable. The participants comprised of men and women of different ages and from different cultural backgrounds and represented public schools from different districts in the Gauteng Province (see Table 4 above). This diversity is an important facet in qualitative studies with an explorative attending. In addition to the previously mentioned ethical considerations, the researchers increased the participants' anonymity by not transcribing their names or using the video function during the virtual interviews and audio recordings.

As with all research, there were some limitations. This study only involved educators from public schools, and the researchers think it could be interesting to further explore the experiences from private schools. The data was collected through interviewing educators individually and virtually. The collected data could have been verified by also using observations of educators' educational practices and could have been strengthened through

further focus group discussions. We encourage further studies using a combination of different methodologies.

Although this study included data from 12 different educators, it cannot be assumed that the results are representative of the experiences of all educators in Gauteng or South Africa. The findings in this study, as in other qualitative studies, do not claim to be generalisable. However, given the analogous results of this study, it could be an indication that the identified issues warrant further investigation. Per example, the majority of participants indicated that they are lacking specific training or preparation to discuss and feel comfortable with the subject, which suggests that it could be helpful to offer this to educators. A nationally representative study with statistical representative potential would be appropriate to investigate whether the training of the Life Orientation educators on battling the topic of GBV in class is sufficient.

Within this study every effort was made to maintain trustworthiness of the research. Trustworthiness refers to the degree of confidence in the collected data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of the study (Borg & Gericke, 2021, Cohen, et.al, 2011). To ensure trustworthiness four aspects are considered particularly important: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Cohen, et.al, 2011). Credibility demonstrates the truth value and was ensured through the participant selection, by including educators from both genders, with distinct study backgrounds and varied work experience in different districts of Gauteng. Credibility was further strengthened by including original quotes in the study.

Transferability in qualitative research means the findings can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other respondents and can be ensured by describing the methods and analytical process as transparently as possible so that others can review if the results are transferable (Cohen, et.al, 2011). With the given description of this research's process and focus on education and GBV, this study could be transferred to other school settings or countries.

Dependability and confirmability are essential when demonstrating that the results of the study are consistent and grounded in the collected data, and that they would be interpreted similarly if another researcher would do the same research. This shows the conclusions are not biased by the perceptions of the current researchers (Borg & Gericke, 2021, Cohen, et.al, 2011). To achieve this, the researchers in this study conducted the thematic analysis first separately and

then cooperatively. As described above, the interview guide was pre-tested to increase the trustworthiness of the study results.

The researchers were aware of the possibility of bias occurring during the interpretation of data according to each researcher's background, given as this sometimes differed from the participants' backgrounds. Therefore, the researchers were mindful of withholding their own assumptions and aimed to serve simply as a voice for the participants during the interpretation and reporting of the findings.

Data analysis and interpretation was conducted in duplicate to ensure consistency of the research findings. Furthermore, the integrity of the study was reviewed through continuous discussion of the study design and results with the researchers' supervisor, who is more experienced in the field of qualitative research in the field of education.

Conclusion and Implications

The researchers set out to investigate Life Orientation educators' experiences in teaching GBV, with an understanding of the power of education to engage young minds. South Africa is bound to see important social and educational changes regarding GBV when listening to the voices of the educators. Results from the educator interviews indicated that the topics of GBV and gender equality should be brought up in earlier grades, on developmentally adapted levels, while learners' perceptions are still forming. Considering the various cultures and religions practised in South Africa, it is observed that educators would benefit from receiving specific training to battle the topic of GBV in the classroom more uniformly. It would likely be beneficial if the content on GBV includes a broader definition, methods for prevention, actively addresses gender stereotypes and is more relatable to the learners. Finally, more time should be allocated to the discussion and implementation of these concepts, as opposed to a focus on marks.

In consideration of the findings above, the potential of these recommendations to help realise the SDGs related to health, education, and gender equality, and achieve improved SRH for the country's citizens, is clear. GBV continues to be a devastating issue for South Africa and the importance of quality education is pressing. This study hopes to make a small contribution to the fight against GBV.

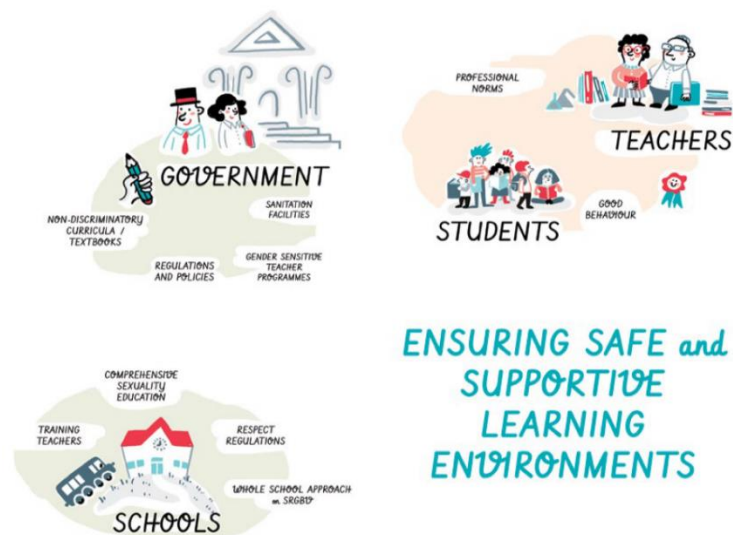


Figure 5: The multi-level responsibility of gender equality in schools
[\(https://gem-report-2017.unesco.org/en/chapter/gender_accountability_through_school/\)](https://gem-report-2017.unesco.org/en/chapter/gender_accountability_through_school/)

Suggestions for Future Research

The researchers suggest that future qualitative studies could be conducted in the remaining eight provinces of South Africa, as well as with private schools that offer Life Orientation, to determine the varied experiences of Life Orientation educators in different parts of the country. Furthermore, quantitative studies could be conducted to determine the most prominent issues and suggestions for improvements, informed by the findings of this study. It is also recommended that additional research can be conducted with learners, to determine their experiences of the GBV and gender equality content in the Life Orientation curriculum. Further beneficial could be for the Department of Education to ask educators about their specific training needs.

Statement of Inclusion: This study made use of the terms “women” and “men” to represent overarching groups involved in GBV, however the researchers would like to acknowledge the existence of multiple genders which are affected by GBV in different ways, the recognition of trans-women as women, and finally, the devastating way in which the LGBTQI+ community has been subjected to GBV.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in the study.

Conflicts of Interest: The researchers declare no conflict of interest.

Co-authors’ Work Contributions: As far as possible, both researchers contributed equally to the design of the study, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, write up of the results and the editing of the document.

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Appendix A – Interview Guide

The audio from the interview will be recorded, with your consent. The recording will be handled only by Nora and Tanya, the students, and no one else will have access to this data. You can withdraw your participation at any time without giving any reason.

Background Information

Participant Number:		Currently teaching grades:	
Years working as LO educator:		Does the school have a hostel?	
Educational background:		No. of student in whole school:	
No. of student in LO-class:		Type of school:	
Duration of Interview:		Date:	
Audio-recorded:		Interviewed by:	

B) Introduction

Purpose of the study to be revised and informed consent to be confirmed.

The definition of Gender-Based Violence includes violence or harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender, sexual orientation, or gender non-conforming behaviour. Gender-Based Violence can include sexual, physical, mental, and economic harm inflicted in private or public. This includes intimate partner violence and sexual violence as well. It can also take the form of threats, coercion, and manipulation, which can be harder to identify.

C) Opening Question

1. Have you had any training specific to teaching Comprehensive Sexuality Education and/or Gender Equality? If yes, please tell us what type of training and for how long?

D) Content Questions

Comprehensive Sexuality Education Curriculum

2. How does Comprehensive Sexuality Education curriculum address issues concerning Gender-Based Violence?
3. What content on Gender-Based Violence would you say is missing from the curriculum?
4. Is the prevention of Gender-Based Violence covered in the Curriculum?

5. Does your school make use of any external organisations or speakers to inform the learners about Gender Based Violence or gender equality?

Teaching Curriculum

6. What do you find are the most important topics to address when discussing gender equality with learners?
7. At what age is Gender Based Violence and gender equality initiated to discuss with the learners?
8. Do you experience any difficulties when teaching Comprehensive Sexuality Education? Please explain.
9. Do you feel comfortable to discuss and talk about gender norms, gender equality and Gender-Based Violence in your teaching?
10. Have you been offered training on the topic of Gender-Based Violence from your school or the department of education? If no, are you aware of any workshops or training on this topic that educators could attend?
11. Except in Life Orientation class, in which other contexts do you think Gender-Based Violence could be taught and discussed in school?

Learners' Experiences

12. Have you experienced that the content of the curriculum has an impact on the learners' behaviour, thinking or actions?

School-Related Gender-Based Violence

13. Do you consider Gender-Based Violence to be an issue among the learners in the school where you work?
14. Have you ever witnessed or experienced any violence, harassment or threats because of gender norms and stereotypes at the school? If yes, why do you think so?
15. Could you give some examples of what you would consider to be acts of Gender-Based Violence at schools?
16. Are you aware of any policies or systems in place for you to follow at your school if any incidences of Gender-Based Violence do occur?
17. What actions or measures would be most effective to deal with discriminatory attitudes and behaviours in schools that threaten gender equality?
18. How can the school be made a safer place for the learners and educators, in policy and behaviour?
19. Do you have any reflections or comments about the interview that you would like to add?

F) Closing Instructions

Thank you for taking the time to participate in our study. Your input is valued and greatly appreciated.

*Interview protocol layout based on Creswell & Creswell, 2018.

Appendix B – Information Letter and Consent Form

Information for Participants

Good day,

Our names are Tanya Robbertse and Nora Andersdotter and we are two Masters students in Global Sexual and Reproductive Health at the University of Dalarna in Sweden. As part of our studies, we are doing this research study titled *“Combating Gender Based Violence through Comprehensive Sexual Education”*.

Purpose

You are therefore invited to participate in our study. As you are an educator working in the public sector, your participation in the study will be valuable. The aim of the study is to explore the experiences and/or challenges of the Life Orientation educators in the Gauteng province while teaching and discussing gender equality as part of the current Comprehensive Sexuality Education curriculum. Violence towards women and girls is a growing problem and we would like to understand how education could combat this national issue.

Study Description

The study will be conducted in English through individual interviews with the researchers that will take place over Zoom. With your permission we would like to record the interview for the later data analysis. The interview will last around 60 minutes. All the interviews will then be transcribed and analysed to identify common themes, from which the results will be written up.

Risks and Benefits

You could potentially benefit from being given a platform to voice your opinions and experiences. During the pre-study phase, the participants reported no negative consequences as a result of participating in the study and positively reported on the experience of reflecting on their own teaching experiences.

In line with ethical recommendations, no payment will be provided for participation in this study. However, the costs incurred for participating in this study, such as internet costs, the researchers will cover that, in according to the TIE reimbursement model, meaning R133 per hour, per participant. Furthermore, the researchers acknowledge that the topic of Gender-Based Violence could be sensitive for some participants. Although there will be no questions asked about the participants’ personal experiences with Gender-Based Violence, contact details for counselling services will be provided at the conclusion of the interview for participants to make use of, if needed.

This research has been approved by the HSRC Research Ethics Committee (REC). If you have any complaints about ethical aspects of the research or feel that you have been harmed in any way by participating in this study, please call the HSRC’s toll-free ethics hotline 0800 212 123 (when phoned from a landline from within South Africa) or contact the Human Sciences Research Council REC Administrator, on Tel 012 302 2012 or e-mail research.ethics@hsrc.ac.za

Confidentiality

Great effort will be taken to maintain all participants' confidentiality. No personally identifiable information will be captured or stored. No individual will be identified in the results of the study. Recordings of the interviews, as well as the transcriptions will be stored on secured files on the researchers' computers. No files will be stored in hard copy.

Dalarna University is responsible for the processing of personal data in connection with the degree project. As a participant in the survey, you have according to The Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), the right to receive information about how your personal data will be processed. You also have the right to apply for a so-called register extract, and to have any errors corrected. For questions about the processing of personal data, you can turn to the University's data protection officer, on dataskydd@du.se.

Participation and Withdrawal

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are allowed to cancel your participation at any point throughout the research process, without explanation.

Questions and Approval

You are encouraged to ask any remaining questions about the study to the researchers in case any clarification is needed.

Findings and Feedback

If you would like to contact the researchers about the study after the interview for any questions or feedback, please contact us by sending an email to the contact details below. Otherwise, you will be informed about the study results and feedback once the study is completed.

Master's students:

Nora Andersdotter
Nora.andersdotter@gmail.com

Tanya Robbertse
tanya111.robberse@gmail.com

Supervisor:

Dr Farhana Borg
fbr@du.se

CONSENT FORMS



After you have read the above Information Letter, please print out and sign the consent forms below. Thereafter, please scan and email it to the researchers before the date of your interview.

Consent Form - Participation

I, _____, consent to participate in the abovementioned study. By signing this form, I acknowledge that the study proceedings, as well as the potential risks, voluntary participation and right to withdraw, has been explained to me and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions.

Date

Signature

Consent Form - Audio Recording & Transcription

I, _____, consent to the audio recording of my interview for the purpose of later transcription and data analysis.

I have been informed that this recording will not be shared with or listened to by any parties other than the two researchers involved. I have also been informed that neither my name nor any other identifying information will be connected with the audio recording or the interview transcript.

The recordings will be transcribed by the researchers and destroyed once the transcriptions have been completed. Written quotes from your interview may be reproduced in whole or in part in the write up and presentation of this study, but no identifying information (such as your name or voice) will be added.

By signing this form, I give permission for the researcher to audio record my interview as part of this research.

Date

Signature

Appendix C – Resources on GBV and Gender Equality for Educators

RESOURCE 1

Organisation: Department of Basic Education – South Africa

Hyperlink: <https://www.education.gov.za/Programmes/GenderBasedViolence.aspx>

Content: Downloadable workbooks, guides and handouts for learners and educators on the prevention of GBV and the reporting of GBV.

RESOURCE 2

Organisation: South African History Online

Hyperlink: <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/life-orientation-classroom-gender-based-violence-resource-pack>

Content: GBV Pack of information and activities, aligned with the CAPS curriculum.

RESOURCE 3

Organisation: VVOB – Education for Development

Resource Hyperlink: <https://www.vvob.org/en/news/grp4ece-toolkit>

Training Hyperlink: <https://learn.ecubed-dbe.org/vvob/courses/leading-a-gender-responsive-school-for-young-children/>

Content: Gender-responsive pedagogy for early childhood education toolkit and free online course in gender-responsive teaching.

Appendix D – Ethical clearance from HSRC



To: Ms Tanya Robbertse
Dalarna University
Norra Järnvägsgränd 20
Apartment Nr B:012
791 35
Falun
Dalarna
Sweden

Dear Ms Robbertse

Ethics Clearance of HSRC Research Ethics Committee Protocol No REC REC 1/17/02/21:
Combating Gender-Based Violence through Education

The HSRC REC has considered and noted your application dated 17 February 2021.

The study was provisionally approved pending appropriate responses to queries raised. Your responses dated 12 April 2021 to the queries raised on 01 March 2021 have been noted by the Research Ethics Committee.

The conditions have now been met and the study is given full ethics Approval and research may begin as from 20 April 2021.

This approval is valid for one year from (20 April 2021). To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, an application for recertification must be submitted to the HSRC REC on the appropriate HSRC form 2-3 months before the expiry date. Failure to do so will lead to an automatic lapse of ethics approval, which will need to be reported to study sponsors and relevant stakeholders.

Any amendments to this study, unless urgently required to ensure safety of participants, must be approved by HSRC REC prior to implementation.

Your acceptance of this approval denotes your compliance with South African National Research Ethics Guidelines (2015), South African National Good Clinical Practice Guidelines (2006) (if applicable) and with HSRC REC ethics requirements as contained in the HSRC REC Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedures, all available at

<http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/about/researchethics/documentation>.

HSRC Board: Prof. Mvuyo Tom (Chairperson), Prof. Lindiwe Zungu, Ms Precious Sibiya, Ms Nasima Badsha, Prof. Relebohile Moletsane, Advocate Roshan Dehal, Prof. Mark Bussin, Prof. Crain Soudien (CEO)

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Durban Office: The Atrium, 5th Floor, 430 Peter Mokaba Street, Berea, South Africa. PO Box 37429, Durban, South Africa. Tel: +27 31 242 5400 Fax: +27 31 242 5401

Pietermaritzburg Office: Old Bus Depot, Mbubu Road, Sweetwaters. PO Box 90, Msunduzi, 3200, South Africa.
Tel: +27 33 324 5000 Fax: +27 33 324 1131

The HSRC REC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-290808- 015). The HSRC REC has US Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) Federal-wide Assurance (FWA Organisation No. 0000 6347).

We wish you well with this study.

Yours sincerely,



Professor T. Rossouw

Chair: HSRC Research Ethics Committee

HSRC Board: Prof Mvuyo Tom (Chairperson), Prof Lindiwe Zungu, Ms Precious Sibiya, Ms Nasima Badsha, Prof. Relebohile Moletsane, Advocate Roshan Dehal, Prof. Mark Bussin, Prof. Crain Soudien (CEO)

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Appendix E – Approval from the Department of Education



GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

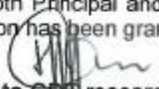
8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	25 January 2021
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2021– 30 September 2021 2021/15
Name of Researcher:	Andersdotter N and Robbertse T
Address of Researcher:	Nora Jarnvagsgatan 20 Falun Darana ,Sweden
Telephone Number:	+46 722 03 78 45 / +46 709 -79 86 55
Email address:	Nora.andersdotter@gmail.com tanya111.robberse@gmail.com
Research Topic:	Combating Gender Based Violence through Education –An interview study with teachers in Gauteng about CSE
Type of qualification	Masters in Global Sexual and Reproductive Health
Number and type of schools:	10 Primary Schools and 10 Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	15 Gauteng Districts

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

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

 01/02/2021

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

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. Because of COVID 19 pandemic researchers can **ONLY** collect data online, telephonically or may make arrangements for Zoom with the school Principal. Requests for such arrangements should be submitted to the GDE Education Research and Knowledge Management directorate. The approval letter will then indicate the type of arrangements that have been made with the school.
4. The Researchers are advised to make arrangements with the schools via Fax, email or telephonically with the Principal.
5. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
6. A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
7. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
8. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
9. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
10. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
11. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
12. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
13. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
14. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
15. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
16. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

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

Kind regards


Mr. Gumani Mukatuni

Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 01/02/2021