



BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

FACULTAD DE PUEBLA

**“Navigating Heteronormativity: The Impact of Societal Norms
on LGBTIQ+ Identity and Expression for future teachers”**

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of**

LICENCIADA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

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BENEMERITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE PUEBLA

FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

TESIS: Navigating Heteronormativity: The Impact of Societal Norms on LGBTIQ+

Identity and Expression for future teachers

PRESENTADA POR: Josefina Jancelly García González

COMO REQUISITO PARA OBTENER EL TITULO DE LICENCIADA EN LA

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the impact of heteronormativity on LGBTQ+ students and future teachers at the Faculty of Languages, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), Mexico. Grounded in intersectionality theory and narrative inquiry, the research examines how societal norms shape identity expression, emotional well-being, and inclusion in educational settings. Through biographic-narrative interviews with six LGBTQ+ participants, the study reveals three key themes: (1) family dynamics, where rejection or conditional acceptance exacerbates anxiety and self-esteem issues; (2) school environments, where bullying from peers and educators reinforces heteronormative expectations; and (3) future perspectives, highlighting participants' aspirations—and apprehensions—about fostering LGBTQ+ inclusivity as teachers.

Findings underscore systemic barriers, such as the erasure of queer histories in curricula and workplace discrimination against LGBTQ+ educators. Participants' narratives illustrate how clothing, behavior, and language become sites of negotiation between self-expression and societal conformity. Despite institutional challenges, the study identifies resilience strategies, including community support and advocacy for inclusive pedagogies.

The thesis concludes with recommendations for educator training, policy reforms, and curricular changes to disrupt heteronormativity in Mexican higher education. By centering marginalized voices, this research contributes to debates on equity in teacher preparation programs and calls for actionable steps toward safe, affirming academic spaces.

Keywords: Heteronormativity, LGBTQ+ inclusion, teacher education, intersectionality, Mexico.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to all the strong women in my family who have fought for their place in society, especially to my mother, who is my hero, and to my brother, who is not only my best friend but also a constant source of inspiration. His story has deeply influenced this project and has been a driving force behind my dedication to it.

Lastly, this is for all the queer folks out there. You are loved, you are seen, and your stories matter. May this work contribute to a more inclusive future where all voices are respected, heard, and valued.

Table of contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Definitions of terms | 9 |
| Chapter 1..... | 11 |
| 1.1 Introduction | 11 |
| 1.2 Statement of the problem | 12 |
| 1.3 Purpose of the study..... | 12 |
| 1.4 General objective..... | 13 |
| 1.5 Research questions | 14 |
| 1.6 Significance of the study..... | 14 |
| 1.7 Methodology..... | 15 |
| 1.7 Research content and organizations | 16 |
| Chapter II: Literature Review | 17 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 17 |
| 2.2 State of the art..... | 17 |
| 2.3 Exploring Heterosexuality in Society: Privilege and Intersectionality | 19 |
| 2.4 Beyond Expectations: Unpacking Heteronormativity, Behavior, Clothes, and Identity Complexity..... | 23 |
| 2.5 Beyond Norms: Navigating Diversity, Resilience, and Empowerment in 'Coming Out' Narratives | 25 |
| 2.6 The rainbow in a black and white society..... | 27 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 2.7 Unmasking LGBTQ+ Silencing: Schools, Historical Omissions, and the Vanishing of Queer Voices..... | 28 |
| Chapter III: Methodology..... | 35 |
| 3.1 Introduction | 35 |
| 3.2 Setting..... | 35 |
| 3.3 Participants..... | 37 |
| 3.4 Technique | 39 |
| 3.5 Procedure | 42 |
| 3.6 Conclusion..... | 44 |
| Chapter IV: Results..... | 46 |
| 4.1 Introduction | 46 |
| 4.2 Family Dynamics: The Impact of Family Bonds on LGBTQ+ Students..... | 47 |
| 4.3 School Environment: LGBTQ+ Students' Experiences Navigating Bullying and Inclusion | 58 |
| 4.4 Future Perspectives: Inclusion and LGBTQ+ Representation in Mexico—Participant Insights | 63 |
| 4.5 Conclusion..... | 69 |
| Chapter V: Conclusions..... | 70 |
| 5.1 Introduction | 70 |
| 5.2 Conclusions..... | 70 |
| 5.3 Implications..... | 79 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 5.4 Limitations of the Study | 81 |
| 5.5 Directions for further research..... | 81 |
| References | 83 |
| Appendix | 90 |
| Appendix A: Instrument..... | 90 |
| Appendix B: Author's Note..... | 92 |
| Appendix C: Transcriptions..... | 94 |

Definitions of terms

LGBTQ+: An abbreviation for *lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender,* and *queer/questioning*. The plus sign (+) represents the inclusion of other diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions within the community.

Lesbian: A person who identifies as a woman and is romantically or sexually attracted to other women.

Gay: A person who identifies as a man and is romantically or sexually attracted to other men.

Bisexual: A person who is romantically or sexually attracted to both men and women or to people of more than one gender

Transgender: A person whose gender identity differs from the one assigned to them at birth and culturally prescribed by society.

Queer: A term commonly used by individuals who may not identify as heterosexual. It is also employed as an exploration of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

Non-binary: A person whose gender identity does not exclusively align with being female or male.

Genderfluid: A person whose gender identity is not fixed and may change over time, allowing for a fluid experience of different gender preferences.

Intersex: A person born with physical or biological traits that do not fit typical definitions of male or female, which may include variations in chromosomes, hormones, or reproductive anatomy.

Asexual: A person who experiences little to no sexual or romantic attraction to any gender

Heteronormativity: “Heteronormativity, predicated on the gender binary, is the belief that being heterosexual (which is attraction only to a different gender) is the only normal and natural sexual orientation.” (Lane, 2021).

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

In the late hours of November 18th, 1901, police responded to complaints from neighbors regarding disruptive noises emanating from a particular residence. Upon arrival, law enforcement encountered 41 individuals dressed in attire traditionally associated with women – an act that led to their immediate arrest and subsequent public exposure. Dubbed *Los 41 Maricones* in newspaper headlines, these men endured public humiliation, underscoring the historical challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community within a heteronormative societal framework.

Fast forward 120 years, and while the methods of discrimination may have evolved, the underlying issues persist. A recent incident on August 25th, 2021, captured the essence of contemporary challenges. A student's request for inclusive language and pronoun respect on TikTok triggered not empathy but hostility from both society and the educational context, revealing the ongoing struggles faced by the LGBTQ+ community within the confines of a heteronormative environment.

Despite the temporal gap, the thread of cruel jokes and public humiliation remains intact. LGBTQ+ individuals continue to grapple with the fear of societal rejection, not only within their families but also among peers. The educational environment, with teachers playing a pivotal role, emerges as a critical battleground for fostering understanding and acceptance, challenging the prevailing heteronormative norms. To address this pervasive issue, teachers must be attuned to the diverse identities within their classrooms, fostering an environment where every student,

regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, feels acknowledged, included, and respected – ultimately striving to transform the classroom into a safe space.

1.2 Statement of the problem

People often judge each other based on how they look or act, driven by established ideas about what is considered normal. For example, if a man dresses and behaves traditionally masculine, it is hard for people to imagine he might not be heterosexual. On the flip side, if a man looks masculine but acts in ways seen as feminine, people might automatically assume something about his sexuality. These judgments come from deep-seated stereotypes that shape how we see others, and this is not exempt in certain societies

It's crucial to recognize that this way of thinking affects everyone. However, the LGBTQ+ community regularly faces these challenges, dealing with stereotypes about their non-heteronormative sexualities and societal expectations about how they should behave. The researcher, who has seen and experienced these issues over the years in academic settings, wants to delve into this topic at the Faculty of Languages at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Buap. The goal is to understand the emotional experiences of LGBTQ+ students in the prevalent heteronormative environment and the broader educational system.

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study aims to understand how being LGBTQ+ in a society that usually expects everyone to be heterosexual can affect people, particularly university students within a In the Mexican academic context, individuals who went through these experiences will be consulted to examine how growing up in a society that assumes everyone is straight influences them,

particularly in relation to school life. It is wanted to learn about the details of their experiences and see how these experiences shape who they are.

Additionally, this study wants to help students better grasp how important it is to include LGBTQ+ perspectives in school rules and teaching. By figuring out all the details and possible outcomes of this situation, it is expected to offer useful ideas that can guide future ways of teaching and school policies.

In summary, this research not only aims to understand the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in schools that usually assume everyone is straight but also to push for positive changes in how schools make rules, creating an environment that welcomes and supports all students, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.

1.4 General objective

To analyze how the heteronormative system affects the way LGBTQ+ undergraduate students from the Faculty of Languages of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla dress, behave, and feel within the academic environment, as well as the social challenges and changes they face.

1.4.1 Specific objectives

To identify the factors shaping LGBTQ+ undergraduate students' decisions regarding dress code and behavior within the heteronormative academic environment, focusing on societal expectations, peer influences, and personal experiences.

To examine the factors that influence the emotional well-being of LGBTQ+ undergraduate students from the Faculty of Languages within a heteronormative academic environment, particularly regarding self-esteem, anxiety, and sense of belonging.

1.5 Research questions

1. How does the heteronormative system affect the academic experience of LGBTQ+ undergraduate students from the Faculty of Languages of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla?
2. In what ways does the heteronormative academic environment influence LGBTQ+ students' dress code and behavioral choices?
3. How do LGBTQ+ undergraduate students from the Faculty of Languages perceive and experience emotions such as self-esteem, anxiety, and a sense of belonging in relation to the (lack of) inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community in the academic environment?

1.6 Significance of the study

When considering Mexican society, an initial perception might involve notions of helpfulness, kindness, and respect. While this may hold true on the surface, it is imperative to acknowledge a less apparent reality. Mexican society often struggles with the rejection of diversity, as evidenced by the prolonged resistance to concepts such as gay marriage, often justified by notions of 'unnaturalness' rooted in religious beliefs. This prevailing sentiment has profound implications, fostering an environment where individuals within the LGBTQ+ community may internalize a sense of wrongdoing.

The extent of this impact varies depending on the individual's environment and development within society. Nevertheless, the pervasive pattern of rejection and targeting of LGBTQ+ individuals in Mexican society demands acknowledgment. This study aims to emphasize the critical importance of fostering inclusivity, awareness, and empathy, particularly

among students within the LGBTQ+ community who have faced harmful stereotypes in educational settings.

Conducted within the Faculty of Languages, where participants are pursuing teaching degrees, this study recognizes the potential influence of educators in shaping a more tolerant and inclusive future. By cultivating awareness among future teachers about the harm brought by the absence of LGBTQ+ inclusion, there is an opportunity to mitigate harmful stereotypes, reduce instances of bullying, and alleviate rejection. Ultimately, this endeavor aspires to contribute to the creation of a school environment where future LGBTQ+ generations will be able to express themselves authentically without the fear of societal censure.

1.7 Methodology

This research will utilize a qualitative methodology, specifically narrative inquiry. Qualitative research explores social phenomena within their natural contexts, focusing on the *why* rather than the *what* and emphasizing individuals' lived experiences. Unlike quantitative methods, which rely on statistical analysis, qualitative research employs a variety of inquiry approaches, including biography, case study, discourse analysis, ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology. It collects non-numerical data, such as interviews, focus groups, documents, and cultural records (GCU, 2021).

Given the emotional and personal nature of the topic—particularly regarding LGBTQ+ students within the system—qualitative methods, especially narrative inquiry, are well-suited for this research. Narrative inquiry allows researchers to explore individual experiences and gain insights into the meanings behind those experiences, which may be overlooked through other methods. By focusing on personal perspectives through interviews, this approach helps create a

chronological narrative that captures both the emotional and practical aspects of participants' lives. This method, often referred to as biography, life history, or oral history, provides deep understanding into the lived experiences of individuals. Through narrative inquiry, this research aims to uncover the unique and personal stories of LGBTQ+ students.

1.7 Research content and organizations

This thesis is structured into five chapters. Chapter I has been used as an introduction, delineating the research topic, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the significance of the study, and the intended methodology. In Chapter II, a comprehensive review of pertinent literature from previous studies is undertaken. Chapter III elucidates the methodology and procedural framework adopted in this thesis. Moving to Chapter IV, the focus shifts to presenting results and their interpretation. Finally, Chapter V encapsulates the thesis with a conclusion, considerations of limitations, and recommendations for prospective research endeavors.

Chapter II: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, we dive into how students deal with the regular school system and how it affects their feelings. This chapter starts by looking into a great number of studies and insights regarding students' experiences. The goal of the literature review is to build a strong base for the upcoming discussions. We want to highlight the different aspects of students' emotional experiences in the school system.

2.2 State of the art

Exploring LGBTQ+ Representation in Education: A Comprehensive Overview:

Xia (2023) study within Chinese universities, focusing on Chinese literature, a notable gap emerges in the exploration of gay literature. Among the ten universities examined, most lack a dedicated syllabus on this topic. Only two offer an open syllabus primarily focused on English culture, with just two books addressing women's empowerment. The study employs a survey-based approach, specifically scrutinizing the curriculum of English literature courses. The goal is to understand how LGBT materials are integrated, along with examining teaching methods and recommended readings. This effort sheds light on the dynamics of including LGBT content in academic settings.

Maraoge (2023) essay proposes a solution by advocating for diverse perspectives in curricula, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of Mexican American queer boys. She highlights that this approach benefits not only LGBTQ+ students but also fosters understanding among all students. The essay is analyzed using queer pedagogy and anti-oppressive approaches, specifically focusing on silenced discourse. It's crucial to note that this essay was conducted in

Flemingsburg, providing additional context for exploring inclusive and anti-oppressive educational practices.

Despite progress, challenges persist. Lee (2023) discusses the opposition faced by the United Kingdom (UK) teachers when incorporating discussions on LGBT relationships, resulting in discomfort and hostility towards LGBTQ+ teachers. This study, conducted in the UK, explores the widespread moral panic surrounding topics related to the LGBTQ+ community and educators within this community.

Bautista and Enrique's (2023) research in Mexico, carried out at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) University in Mexico City, highlights the absence of recognition and protection of LGBTQ+ rights, fostering a hostile environment. This underscores the need for an ethical approach that acknowledges diverse experiences and ensures participant rights protection. The methodology employed was a documentary investigation of a critical and interpretive nature.

Espinoza Romero and Rodríguez Jiménez (2020) study sheds light on the challenges faced by sexually diverse university students, emphasizing the imperative for comprehensive government and institutional initiatives to ensure the complete integration and recognition of LGBTQ+ students in academic environments. This research is specifically conducted in the state of Sonora, Mexico, where 31 higher educational school students, reflecting diverse sexualities, provided empirical data for the study.

Similarly, in their 2022 study at Chiapas universities, Ruiz et al. (2022), found that LGBT students openly resist societal norms, aiming to create more democratic spaces. The research,

conducted in the state of Chiapas, Mexico, used qualitative methods and was analyzed through grounded theories for a comprehensive understanding.

These global and national perspectives provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges in implementing LGBTQ+ inclusion, highlighting a critical issue: the impact of insufficient inclusion on the emotional well-being of LGBTQ+ teachers and students. This study will build on these insights by investigating how these challenges specifically manifest in educational settings, thus bridging the gap between the identified issues and the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals. By examining how the lack of inclusion affects emotional dimensions, this research aims to contribute to the discourse on LGBTQ+ representation in education. The information from these perspectives supports this study by providing a foundational understanding of the issues at stake and illustrating the relevance of exploring these emotional impacts in greater depth.

2.3 Exploring Heterosexuality in Society: Privilege and Intersectionality

What does it mean to be heterosexual in society? Heterosexuality is defined by an individual's romantic or sexual preference for someone of a gender different from their own (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). This preference often conjures the stereotypical image of a white man attracted to a white woman. But why do we tend to make quick judgments about others based on their behavior or appearance upon first meeting them? It may be a common human tendency yet reflecting on the reasons behind this inclination is essential. Before delving into the concept of heterosexual privilege, it's crucial to establish an understanding of the theory of intersectionality. According to the Dictionary of Human Geography (2013), intersectionality theory posits that discrimination directed at various facets of an individual—such as race, gender,

class, disability, and sexuality—does not operate independently. Instead, these aspects interact, giving rise to unique expressions of social oppression (Rogers et al 2013) Expanding on this understanding, Nedera (2023) further elucidates that *intersectionality* encapsulates the diverse forms of discrimination individuals may encounter in their social interactions. In practical terms, this implies that an individual could simultaneously face multiple forms of discrimination, such as sexism, racism, and ableism. Aligning with this perspective, Jackson and Humphrey (2022) assert that intersectionality serves as a crucial framework for comprehending individuals' unique experiences, risks, and resiliencies. It unveils how characteristics like race, place, age, gender, and geography intersect within power structures, influencing the dynamics of power, privilege, disadvantage, and discrimination.

2.3.1 The Importance of Intersectionality

Nedera (2023) emphasizes the significance of understanding intersectionality, particularly in the context of gender equality. A limited comprehension of this concept may exacerbate challenges faced by those experiencing disadvantage due to various forms of discrimination. In alignment with this perspective, intersectionality is a framework that describes how overlapping social identities relate to structures of oppression. Crenshaw (1989), who originally coined the term to highlight how different forms of discrimination intersect, explains this concept as essential for understanding complex social identities. According to an article published by the Vice-President Finance and Operations at the University of British Columbia (2024), intersectionality reveals that these intersecting identities result in distinct experiences, opportunities, and challenges. Oppression, therefore, cannot be reduced to a single aspect of identity; rather, each form of oppression is interconnected and shapes the others. Recognizing

and comprehending intersectionality becomes imperative in addressing the overlapping biases individuals encounter in their day-to-day existence.

2.3.2 The Privileges of Being White and Heterosexual

In contemporary society, certain privileges are inherently associated with being a white heterosexual man. Notably, white supremacy, characterized by beliefs and ideologies asserting the inherent superiority of lighter-skinned individuals over other racial groups, exemplifies one facet of these privileges (Jenkins, 2024). Historical events substantiate this claim. For instance, the institution of slavery in the USA from 1619 to 1865, the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890, the Acteal Massacre in 1997, and more recent incidents like the tragic event involving George Floyd in 2020. On the other hand, it is observed instances that challenge and resist such privileges, such as the Stonewall riots in 1969, the case of Tommy Barwick in London in 2018, the case of Paola Buenrostro in 2016, and the recent case of Ociel Baena in 2023. What do these tragic historical events have in common? The people involved did not fit the archetype of white heterosexual individuals. While understanding the privileges associated with being a white heterosexual man is crucial, it is equally imperative to delve into the concept of white privilege. Kendall (2002) sheds light on the challenges of perceiving this privilege, emphasizing its visibility for those not granted such advantages.

2.3.3 White Privilege

Kendall (2002) emphasizes that privilege, particularly in the context of white or male privilege, can be challenging to perceive for those born with inherent access to power and resources. However, it becomes unmistakable for individuals who were not granted such privileges. According to Toronto Metropolitan University's Office of the Vice-President, Equity

and Community Inclusion (2018), white privilege is a socio-political concept that implies power, privilege, and benefits for a specific segment of the population among groups in societies and countries worldwide.. For example, (Huerta, 2022), in his book *Orgullo Prieto*, (2022) recounts a situation where he is in an expensive hospital, and a security guard approaches him, asking, "You're only here to get some people?" Huerta responds, "No, I'm a patient; you don't think prietos like me can pay for a hospital like this?" (Huerta, 2022, p. 224). As we explore white privilege, it's essential to broaden our understanding of privilege to encompass gender identity. The concept of cisgender privilege, as described by Gülgöz et al. (2019), reveals how societal expectations shape behaviors associated with assigned gender at birth.

2.3.4 Cisgender Privilege

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) *Cisgender* refers to individuals who identify with the gender assigned to them at birth. Gülgöz et al. (2019) observed that children begin to display gendered behaviors as they grasp societal expectations, attitudes, and behaviors linked to their assigned gender at birth. This learning process involves aligning their behavior with what society deems suitable for men and women. For instance, (Killerman, 2011). *30+ Examples of Cisgender Privileges*, outlines various instances of cisgender privilege, such as strangers not assuming your genitalia or asking intrusive questions about your sex life, respecting the name you provide without inquiring about your *real name*, refraining from assuming your mental health status, and allowing you to purchase gender-appropriate clothing without undue scrutiny, among other examples

2.4 Beyond Expectations: Unpacking Heteronormativity, Behavior, Clothes, and Identity Complexity

As the significance of intersectionality and the privileges associated with being white and heterosexual are examined, a moment of reflection is warranted: have you ever wondered why there is an automatic assumption that someone is heterosexual simply because they conform to societal norms? It goes beyond behavior—factors like clothing and attitude also contribute to the assumptions we make about someone's sexuality. This exploration invites to reconsider these assumptions, fostering a deeper understanding of the complexities that shape our perceptions of identity. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA, 2009), heteronormativity can be defined as the coherent belief that assumes heterosexuality is natural, privileged, and superior to any other sexuality. “Heteronormativity encompasses norms and values that structure gender and sexuality, thereby placing a high premium on compulsory heterosexuality and patriarchy” (Tadele, 2011, p. 458). In simpler terms, heteronormativity can be defined as the societal assumption that heterosexuality is the 'natural' or default sexuality.

2.4.1 Dynamics of Influence: Unmasking the Impact of Gender Roles and Stereotypes on Relationships

According to Payne (2024), gender roles are socially or culturally determined expectations regarding behaviors, attitudes, and characteristics based on gender. Duvaux (2024) emphasizes that traditional gender roles encompass societal expectations for the conduct of men and women. Women are often stereotypically associated with qualities like gentleness and caregiving, frequently adopting the role of caretaker, while men are commonly perceived as more dominant. These ingrained gender roles extend beyond behaviors to shape assumptions about earnings, clothing, job choices, personality traits, hobbies, sexuality, and more. In a study

conducted by Siegel and Meunier (2019), focusing on non-disclosing behaviorally bisexual men, participants tended to perceive men as sexually adventurous, assertive, aggressive, dominant, and less interested in emotional connections. Conversely, they viewed women as sexually reserved, passive, submissive, and more inclined toward committed intimate relationships than mere sexual gratification. This study concludes that gender stereotypes wield substantial influence over the formation and dynamics of relationships, extending beyond heterosexual (men–women) relationships to same-sex relationships involving men. These enduring stereotypes persist, exerting considerable influence on individuals' preferences and behaviors, highlighting the lasting impact of societal expectations across various relationship dynamics. Furthermore, the sexual diversity of individuals is often constrained by stereotypes, limiting the experience, enjoyment, and full development of sexuality, particularly for heterosexual men (Greenberg et al., 2017).

2.4.2 Fashion's Impact: Unveiling the Power of Clothing on Cognition and Society

Jarrett (2012) introduced the concept of *Enclothed Cognition*, delving into the impact of clothing choices on cognitive processes. The researchers emphasized that clothing could have profound psychological and behavioral consequences for individuals, leading to the conclusion that it exerts a distinct influence on wearers. Coined to elucidate the systematic impact of clothing on psychological processes, *enclothed cognition* is central to a proposed framework seeking to unify prior research and comprehensively encompass the diverse effects of clothing on individuals. This framework posits that enclothed cognition arises from the simultaneous interplay of two independent factors—the symbolic significance of attire and the sensory experience of wearing it (Adam and Galinsky, 2012). In a related study, Moreno and Bovio

(2018) explored the impact of fashion photography on societal perceptions. Their study, titled *Educación, cultura, estereotipos, cuerpo, género y diferencias sociales en la fotografía de moda*. (Education, culture, stereotypes, body, gender, and social differences in fashion photography), sheds light on the concept of the *Fashion photography device* as a powerful means of communication influencing society through clothing representation. The study highlights the imposition of discourse present in these images, affecting perceptions of physical beauty and contributing to health issues like anorexia and bulimia among adolescents striving to conform to fashion stereotypes. Fashion photographic communication constructs idealizing messages for various social groups, fragmenting, and discriminating against society based on factors such as ethnicity, social class, and gender. The study concludes by proposing critical interpretation as a potential solution, encouraging individuals to scrutinize these images that often attempt to transform people into unattainable ideals presented by those perceived as superior. Clothing holds significant meaning as it shapes first impressions, reflects personal identity, and influences how society perceives and addresses individuals. For LGBTQ+ individuals, clothing choices can have a profound impact, particularly within the educational context, where they are often shaped by societal expectations and heteronormativity. Having examined the dimensions of privilege and societal expectations, it is now explored how heteronormativity shapes identity, behaviors, and clothing choices, and its effect on LGBTQ+ individuals in educational settings.

2.5 Beyond Norms: Navigating Diversity, Resilience, and Empowerment in 'Coming Out' Narratives

In the exploration, it becomes evident that societal norms, encompassing gender roles, sexuality, privileges, and behavioral expectations, endeavor to confine individuals within predetermined boxes. However, the inherent diversity of human experience resists such

constraints. The complexity of human existence defies categorizations, highlighting the rich tapestry within each person. As the discussion progresses, this work seeks to delve deeper into the multifaceted nature of human identity and to challenge the limitations imposed by societal norms. Drawing insights from a study by Lopes and Jaspal (2024), it is revealed that the recollection of a significant *coming out* experience—the process of disclosing one's LGBTQ+ identity to others—holds the potential to impact identity processes and psychological well-being in lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals.

This research emphasizes that stressors such as discrimination and rejection, when coupled with the prominence of negative coming-out memories, can evoke feelings of identity threat and subsequent distress. These findings underscore the crucial need to actively confront homonegativity, fostering more positive and accepting responses to coming-out experiences. Negative reactions often stem from a lack of awareness about sexual diversity, emphasizing the necessity for early education promoting inclusivity in sexuality and relationships. Educational institutions and community centers play pivotal roles in championing inclusivity and acceptance. Equally important is the support provided to parents whose children come out, empowering them to be understanding and supportive figures in their children's lives. The *coming out* process can be influenced by various factors such as age, religion, disability, ethnicity, and LGBTQ+ identity (Kusen, 2022). It is important to highlight that the decision to come out is a deeply personal one. Additionally, Escamilla (2021) shares the empowering story of Kenya Cuevas in *Forbes México*, highlighting Cuevas's resilience and pursuit of happiness in the face of challenges. The article underscores the notion that empowerment and joy can be powerful forms of resistance and vindication against adversity. Take Kenya Cuevas, a Trans activist in Mexico and founder of the House of Tiresias Doll whose coming out story began at the age of 9 when she decided to leave

her house to be her true self, a choice her family and society initially resisted. Kenya's identity has been challenged by the police and society multiple times, yet she stands as a testament to challenging societal norms. Her journey exemplifies the resilience required to defy societal expectations and embrace one's authentic self.

2.6 The rainbow in a black and white society

What does it mean to be queer? Originally employed as a derogatory term for homosexuality, *queer* has evolved over the years. The LGBTQ+ community has reclaimed and embraced this term, using it as an umbrella to encompass diverse groups of individuals who may feel marginalized by mainstream culture. In this inclusive space, people often adopt terms that align with and express their unique sexual identities. This shift reflects a transformative perspective emerging from contemporary LGBTQ+ studies, as explored by Jagose (1996) in *Queer Theory*, published by the University of Melbourne Press. The term *faggot* resonates widely with this homophobic group and is commonly used as an insult towards men who, although not homosexual, exhibit behaviors considered "effeminate." What gay man hasn't been labeled a *faggot* or some variant of this word at some point? It is essential to always evaluate the intention behind an insult and the context in which it is uttered. The unique strategy of reclaiming these terms can be effective in countering homophobic attacks; however, it is important to remember that such acts are reportable, and there is legislation in place that protects the LGBTQ+ community (Lambda Legal, 2023).

This phenomenon extends beyond societal boundaries and manifests within the school context. Both students and teachers can be subjected to harmful name-calling, which can significantly affect their personal development and well-being. It is essential that educational

institutions adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards such behavior. The negative effects of homophobic slurs can compromise students' mental health and interfere with their academic performance. Therefore, schools bear the responsibility of promoting inclusion and fostering respect for all identities. Name-calling, regardless of the target—be it LGBTQ+ individuals or others—must be firmly addressed to ensure the creation of a safe and supportive learning environment.

2.7 Unmasking LGBTQ+ Silencing: Schools, Historical Omissions, and the Vanishing of Queer Voices

In exploring this extensive topic, it is crucial to emphasize the intrinsic roles these concepts play within the educational system, specifically in the Mexican context. How do these varied concepts converge to elucidate the central issues addressed in this study? Reflecting on historical events such as the Massacre in the Great Temple of Tenochtitlan, *the Porfiriato* era, figures like Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa, or pivotal moments like the independence of Mexico, a striking commonality emerges – the absence of LGBTQ+ representation. For profound comprehension, an exclusive interview by García (2023) with Pedro Luna Paiz, a historian at the Universidad Iberoamericana, showcased on *Homosensual*, provides valuable insights into the life of Ignacio de la Torre y Mier. Ignacio, renowned for marrying Porfirio Díaz's daughter, grappled with persistent rumors regarding his sexuality, allegedly maintaining multiple lovers, including the illustrious Emiliano Zapata. Despite his entanglement in the historic *Dance of the 41*, Ignacio, shielded by his status, managed to elude persecution.

Almazán (2023). to this historical tapestry, revelations from the book *The Album of Amada Díaz*, crafted by Ricardo Orozco and extrapolated from the diaries of the dictator's

daughter, propose a potential encounter between Zapata and Ignacio de la Torre y Mier in 1906. This purported meeting transpired when the Caudillo del Sur toiled in the stables of the San Carlos Borromeo ranch. Captivated by Zapata, De la Torre brought him to work on his ranch in the capital. The narrative suggests that it was here that Amanda Díaz bore witness to them engaging a relationship in the stables. The speculations regarding their romance gained traction when Porfirio Díaz's son-in-law faced imprisonment under the directive of Venustiano Carranza. Yet, it was through Zapata's intervention that he ultimately secured his release. The conjectures about Emiliano Zapata's personal life deepened further upon the revelation that his right-hand man was Manuel Palafox, a known homosexual who served as the Secretary of Agriculture and Colonization. Palafox made significant contributions, including founding the National Rural Credit Bank and creating regional agricultural schools and a national factory of agricultural implements. However, due to the swirling rumors about Zapata's sexuality, he decided to distance Palafox from his inner circle.

Another significant figure in Zapata's inner circle was General Amelio Robles Avila, whom Zapata recognized as a trans man (García, 2023). As observed, Emiliano Zapata maintained close connections with individuals from the LGBTQ+ community. Yet, none of these characters find mention in mainstream history books, despite their substantial contributions to Mexico. Even the potential bisexuality of Emiliano Zapata remains obscured. It is crucial to acknowledge that the historical narrative often erases queer figures or their queer identity (because some may be talked about and even famous, yet their queer identity is not mentioned). Such as, Achilles and Patroclus, Alexander the Great, and Leonardo Da Vinci, among others. Such omissions contribute to the erasure of LGBTQ+ history, hindering the possibility of fostering a more inclusive and tolerant society.

2.7.1 Unveiling the Rainbow Mosaic: A Comprehensive Analysis of LGBTI+ Demographics in Mexico - Findings from ENDISEG 2021

The National Survey on Sexual and Gender Diversity (ENDISEG 2021) is a statistical initiative created by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) to gather information about the sexual characteristics, sexual orientation, and gender identity of individuals aged 15 and above. The primary objective of this survey is to recognize and understand the LGBTI+ population, encompassing individuals with both normative and unconventional sexual orientations and/or gender identities. Among the findings, these are the following outcomes:

- In Mexico, approximately five million people identify as part of the LGBTI+ population (equivalent to 5.1% of the population aged 15 and older), indicating that one in 20 people identifies with this population.
- The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or other sexual orientation (LGB+) community numbers 4.6 million, representing 4.8% of people aged 15 and over.
- The Transgender, Transsexual or other gender identity that does not match the sex assigned at birth population reaches 909 thousand people, which is equivalent to 0.9% of people aged 15 years and over.
- The State of Mexico has the highest concentration of LGBTI+ population, with 490 thousand people, followed by Mexico City with 311 thousand people and The state of Veracruz with 308 thousand.
- Colima has the highest percentage of LGBTI+ population, with 8.7%, followed by Yucatán and Querétaro, with 8.3% and 8.2%, respectively.

- Of the total LGBTI+ population, 64.9% are single, while 30.6% are united or married.
- 67.5% of people who identify as LGBTI+ are between 15 and 29 years old, and 20.3% are between 30 and 44 years old.

2.7.2 Diversity Unveiled: Exploring LGBTI+ Presence and Educational Resilience in Mexico

In 2021, Mexico's population aged 15 years and older was estimated to be 97.2 million. Of this population, 5.0 million individuals self-identify as LGBTI+, representing 5.1% of the total. Within this group, 81.8% identify as LGBTI+ due to their sexual orientation, 7.6% due to their gender identity, and 10.6% due to both factors (INEGI, 2021). Verduzco et al. (2021) highlighted the remarkable resilience and adaptability of educational institutions, which have created alternative spaces for exploring queerness and sexuality despite existing policies and structures. Their study revealed a diverse range of polysemic and heterogeneous narratives within schools and universities. This diversity revealed two distinct positions: respect and recognition, each offering unique perspectives on sexual diversity, often accompanied by explicit forms of hostility. Zabalgoitia (2019) highlighted the revolutionary impact of gender studies on the understanding of historiography and culture in Mexico. This intrinsic connection between gender and politics plays a crucial role in shaping the educational environment, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive analysis in this area. The intersection of masculinities with various areas of study signals the emergence of a comprehensive field of research, revealing new perspectives on significant historical moments and places, as categorized by emerging themes such as homo-sociality and the reproduction of domination.

Despite these advances, the text highlights the absence of a cultural theory of education that examines how masculinizing national, political, and educational projects intersect in higher education, particularly in relation to sexual diversity. This gap in theory means that the complexities of how gender and education are intertwined remain underexplored. (Martínez and Serrano, 2019).

In conclusion, this section extensively delved into the multifaceted dimensions of heterosexuality, intersectionality, privilege, and societal expectations, with a specific focus on LGBTQ+ issues within the Mexican context. It underscored the pivotal significance of comprehending intersectionality, elucidating how it molds distinct experiences of discrimination. The exploration extended to the nuanced concept of white and heterosexual privilege, tracing its historical roots. The narrative further navigated through the profound influence of gender roles, stereotypes, and clothing choices on individual identity. A central theme emphasized the imperative to challenge prevailing societal norms, shining a light on the pervasive impact of heteronormativity. It was important to mention the historical oversights concerning LGBTQ+ figures and meticulously dissect the outcomes from the National Survey on Sexual and Gender Diversity (ENDISEG 2021) in Mexico. Additionally, it acknowledged the resilience demonstrated by educational institutions, showcasing their adaptability in creating alternative spaces, such as LGBTQ+ student organizations, workshops, and support networks, for the exploration of queerness and sexuality. A poignant reflection emerged regarding the absence of a cultural theory of education addressing the intricate interplay between masculinizing national, political, and educational projects in higher education.

In conclusion, this section emphasizes the multifaceted dimensions of heterosexuality, intersectionality, privilege, and societal expectations, with a specific focus on LGBTQ+ issues

within the Mexican context. Understanding intersectionality is crucial for our faculty as it highlights how different forms of discrimination intersect, shaping the unique experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals. This insight is fundamental for recognizing and addressing the nuanced challenges faced by our students and staff.

The exploration of white and heterosexual privilege, tracing its historical roots, is particularly relevant to our faculty context, as it helps illuminate the ways in which these privileges shape the experiences of both students and educators, impacting inclusivity and diversity within our institution. It underscores the importance of acknowledging these privileges in developing inclusive policies and practices within our institution. The profound influence of gender roles, stereotypes, and clothing choices on individual identity is directly linked to our efforts in creating a supportive environment that respects diverse expressions of identity. A central theme emphasized was the imperative to challenge prevailing societal norms and the pervasive impact of heteronormativity. This understanding is vital for our faculty as education strives to promote equity and inclusion, which may require not only recognizing but actively challenging preconceived ideas. Additionally, the historical oversights concerning LGBTQ+ figures and the analysis of the National Survey on Sexual and Gender Diversity (ENDISEG 2021) in Mexico offer valuable context for understanding the current state of LGBTQ+ representation within our faculty. This data informs the approach to addressing gaps and improving our support systems.

The resilience demonstrated by educational institutions in adapting to the exploration of queerness and sexuality is a testament to the potential for growth within our faculty. By creating alternative spaces and addressing cultural and educational dynamics, we can enhance our support for LGBTQ+ individuals. The importance of this research lies in its alignment with the Faculty

of Languages BUAP's mission to develop ethical teachers who show respect for diversity, foster inclusive environments, and promote equality in education.

Before they become educators, students must have the opportunity to thrive in a safe environment where they can express themselves freely. This foundational experience is crucial for them to later foster similar safe spaces as future teachers, thereby continuing the cycle of inclusivity and support.

Finally, reflecting on the absence of a cultural theory of education that addresses the intersection of masculinizing national, political, and educational projects in higher education highlights the need for a more inclusive framework within our faculty. This conclusion encapsulates the diverse themes discussed, offering a nuanced understanding of how these social and cultural dynamics shape our approach to fostering a more inclusive and supportive academic environment.

Chapter III: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to delineate the methodology employed in this research. It begins with a discussion of the setting, focusing on the context in which the research will take place, specifically at the Faculty of Languages BUAP. Following this, the approach is elucidated, clarifying whether the research will adopt a qualitative or quantitative stance. Subsequently, the method section outlines the chosen methodology for conducting the research. The chapter then transitions to a discussion of the participants, detailing the selection process for individuals involved in the study. Moving forward, the technique to be utilized in gathering information from participants is addressed. This is followed by an exploration of the instruments utilized in the research. Finally, the chapter concludes with an overview of the procedural steps involved in the development and implementation of the research instrument.

3.2 Setting

This research will be conducted at the Faculty of Languages at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), a public institution located in Puebla, Mexico. The Faculty of Languages offers undergraduate and graduate programs focused on language teaching, translation, applied linguistics, and language education research. It is known for preparing future educators in languages such as English, French, German, and Italian. As of 2024, the faculty hosts approximately 2,000 students across its programs, with the Bachelor's Degree in English Language Teaching being one of its most prominent and populated programs.

The choice of this setting is deliberate, given its role in shaping future English educators and its influence on the development of professional identity within an academic environment.

This space not only reflects the academic demands of language teaching but also mirrors broader societal values, including gender norms and expectations around behavior and identity.

It is crucial to acknowledge potential challenges in conducting this research. Firstly, not all individuals may feel comfortable openly discussing their sexuality, which could pose obstacles to data collection. Furthermore, some participants might be reluctant to confront the deeply rooted heteronormative system prevalent in Mexican society, fearing judgment or repercussions for advocating LGBTQ+ inclusivity within educational practices. This reluctance may be influenced by a variety of factors, including those impacting students' self-esteem, anxiety, and sense of belonging.

3.2.1 Method

To explore the intricate dynamics of heteronormativity within educational settings, this study employs a qualitative methodology, incorporating two approaches: Biographic-Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) and narrative interviewing. These methods facilitate a comprehensive analysis of participants' experiences and perceptions regarding the impact of the heteronormative school environment. Firstly, the Biographic-Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM), as advocated by Corbally and O'Neill (2014), will serve as a foundational framework for data collection and analysis. BNIM enables participants to articulate their life and illness experiences in narrative form, providing rich insights into the complexities of their lived realities. Utilizing BNIM, it is aimed to delve deeply into participants' narratives, uncovering nuanced understandings of how heteronormativity shapes their experiences within the school context.

Additionally, narrative research methods will be employed to complement the BNIM approach. Narrative interviewing, as by Chase (2005), involves encouraging participants to share their personal experiences through multiple lenses and voices. Through narrative interviews, this research intends to capture the diverse perspectives and lived experiences of participants, focusing on themes such as dress codes, behavioral choices, emotional well-being, and sense of belonging within the heteronormative school environment.

Data collection will involve conducting one-on-one narrative interviews with selected participants. These interviews will be semi-structured, allowing for flexibility while ensuring that key themes related to heteronormativity are explored in depth. Interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to capture participants' narratives accurately. Data analysis will be conducted using thematic analysis, following the guidelines outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This iterative process involves identifying patterns, themes, and meanings within the collected narratives. Through careful coding and interpretation, it is aimed to elucidate the various ways in which heteronormativity influences students' experiences and perceptions within the school environment. Overall, the combined use of BNIM and narrative research methods will provide a robust foundation for exploring the multifaceted nature of heteronormativity and its impact on students' lives. By centering participants' voices and experiences, this study seeks to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on LGBTQ+ inclusion and diversity within educational contexts.

3.3 Participants

The primary focus of this study is to explore the impact of heteronormativity on students' self-esteem, levels of anxiety, and sense of belonging within the school environment.

Additionally, it is aimed to understand the factors guiding students' decisions regarding dress codes and behavior amidst the backdrop of heteronormativity. For this study, participants were selected based on their identification with diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, deviating from traditional societal norms. It is essential to include individuals who may experience marginalization due to their gender or sexual identity.

A non-probabilistic purposive sampling method was employed for participant selection in this study. This approach was chosen due to the specific characteristics and experiences the participants could offer regarding heteronormativity, gender identity, and emotional well-being within the educational context. Suri (2011) discusses how purposeful sampling is employed in qualitative research synthesis to select information-rich cases for in-depth study.

The total number of participants was six, with ages ranging from approximately 20 to 28 years old. The group consisted mostly of males and two females. Notably, Participant 5 now identifies as a transgender woman, having recently begun her gender transition (see Appendix B).

Participants were selected at different stages of their academic journey: Participant 1 was in semester 6; Participant 2, semester 8; Participant 3, semester 8; Participant 4 had already graduated; and Participants 5 and 6 were in semester 6. It is also relevant to mention that these interviews were recorded and transcribed two years ago, meaning their academic progress may have since changed.

The sample was intentionally constructed to reflect a range of perspectives on gender identity and sexual orientation. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), purposive sampling enables researchers to “intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central

phenomenon” (p. 159), which was essential for capturing the diversity of gender-related experiences among future educators.

While acknowledging that heteronormativity can also influence individuals who conform to societal norms, our study primarily seeks to amplify the voices of LGBTQ+ individuals who may face unique challenges within the educational setting. It is important to recognize that recruitment from marginalized communities may present challenges, including concerns about privacy, confidentiality, and potential stigmatization. To address these concerns, appropriate measures will be implemented to ensure participants' comfort, safety, and anonymity throughout the research process. In Chapter II, concepts such as *white privilege* and *cisgender and privilege*, acknowledging their potential impact on individuals' experiences within the educational context. By recognizing these privileges, it is aimed to create a more inclusive and equitable research environment.

While the focus of this study centers on LGBTQ+ students, it is not intended to prioritize or diminish the experiences of other marginalized groups. Rather, it seeks to amplify voices that may be underrepresented in academic research and contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities of heteronormativity within educational settings.

3.4 Technique

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d), a narrative is defined as "a story or a description of a series of events". Narrative interviewing operates on a similar principle, prompting participants to articulate their encounters with diverse phenomena or events and communicate this narrative to the researcher. Such interviews aim to gain insights into an individual's specific experiences by eliciting narrative responses (Dixon, 2018). These narratives

typically provide a succinct overview of events connected by a common theme or significance. Moreover, the life interview method, as described by Newcastle University (n.d.), involves questioning participants to narrate their life journey to the interviewer, guiding them through their life events based on their perspective.

This technique finds application across various disciplines including sociology, geography, medical sciences, linguistics, history, and gender studies. Given the focus of this study on specific aspects regarding dress codes and behavior, including societal expectations, peer influences, and personal experiences, narrative interviewing emerges as the most suitable method to obtain the desired information. By allowing participants to share their lived experiences in their own words, narrative interviewing provides a rich and nuanced understanding of the impact of heteronormativity within educational settings.

Additionally, the life interview method offers a complementary approach to exploring participants' experiences over time, allowing for a deeper exploration of how societal norms and personal experiences intersect and evolve over the course of an individual's life. Specifically, the study aims to identify factors influencing the emotional well-being of students within the heteronormative school environment, focusing on aspects such as self-esteem, anxiety, and a sense of belonging. It also seeks to identify factors shaping students' decisions regarding dress codes and behavior in the heteronormative school environment, exploring elements such as societal expectations, peer influences, and personal experiences.

Through the application of narrative interviewing and life interviews, we aim to capture the diverse perspectives and experiences of participants, contributing to a more holistic understanding of the issues at hand.

3.4.1 Instrument

Biographic interviews are a qualitative research method used to explore how individuals construct meaning from their life experiences specifically towards social, cultural, and historical contexts. This approach emphasizes the subjective perspective of the interviewee, allowing for a rich understanding of how personal identities and social realities are shaped over time. In-depth interviewing is a qualitative method used to explore participants' perspectives and experiences in detail (Johnson, 2001). This method is particularly effective for examining processes related to identity, gender, migration, and social transformation. One widely used model is the Biographic-Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM), developed by Wengraf (2001), which begins with a single open-ended question and encourages uninterrupted narration. This technique captures the individual's voice while situating it within a broader societal structure. Ethical considerations are essential when using this method, especially when dealing with vulnerable populations or sensitive topics, as it requires a high degree of reflexivity and care from the researcher. Biographic interviews are thus a powerful tool for generating deep, contextualized insights into lived experiences.

In adopting biographic interviews as a methodological approach, the primary objective is to establish a profound rapport with research participants, facilitating an in-depth exploration of specific aspects of their lived experiences, particularly regarding their sexuality or gender identities within the context of prevailing heteronormative norms. This methodological choice is rooted in a desire to unravel the intricate interplay between participants' life trajectories and the pervasive influence of heteronormative frameworks. By engaging participants in reflective narratives about their personal histories, this approach provides valuable insights into the nuanced manifestations of heteronormativity within their lived realities. Moreover, by sensitively

attending to the emotional dimensions inherent in participants' recollections, this methodological framework enables a deeper understanding of the emotional significance underlying these formative experiences.

In the design of these interviews, considerable adjustments were made to ensure the elicitation of desired information. Given the broad scope of the topic, questions needed refinement to home in on pertinent details. Through iterative revisions, the final version of the interview instrument successfully captured the targeted information (see Appendix A).

Notably, the interview design aimed to create a safe and inclusive environment, acknowledging the sensitivity surrounding discussions of sexuality and gender identity. Participants were respectfully asked to share this information along with their preferred pronouns, thereby fostering a comfortable atmosphere for dialogue. Additionally, recognizing potential privacy concerns, participants were given the option to use a nickname instead of their real name. It is crucial to underscore that the intent behind these interviews is not to infringe upon participants' privacy but rather to explore their narratives with utmost sensitivity and respect.

3.5 Procedure

The primary instrument used in this research was a semi-structured interview focused on participants' experiences with society and the coming-out process. The interview protocol underwent multiple revisions, informed by a pilot phase conducted with one participant who was interviewed several times, and by expert review, until the final version of the questions was established. The purpose of the interviews was to gather in-depth information relevant to the thesis topic. Given the existing bond between the researcher and the participants, the interviews

often extended over long periods and naturally flowed through various stages of their personal narratives. Some participants shared deeply emotional and painful stories, which is why interviews were conducted in private, one-on-one settings designed to create a safe space where participants felt comfortable expressing themselves openly. The interviewer also adapted to the participants' academic schedules, as their voices were central to the research. Although other potential participants were initially considered, some of their interviews were conducted in group settings and lacked a personal connection with the researcher. As a result, their contributions were less intimate, and thus, they were excluded from the final analysis to preserve the depth and authenticity of the narratives presented.

Following ethical considerations, before conducting interviews, participants were respectfully approached regarding the prospect of audio recording sessions. This methodological step was undertaken with the explicit purpose of ensuring comprehensive documentation of participants' narratives, thereby facilitating accurate transcription and subsequent analysis (see Appendix C).

The interviews were recorded using a Samsung A32 mobile phone and later transcribed into a written document to facilitate better access and analysis of the participants' testimonies. All participants gave their full informed consent for the use of the recorded material. Although pseudonyms were offered to protect their identities, each participant chose to use their real name. Particular care was taken to respect and consistently use each participant's chosen pronouns throughout the transcription and analysis process, in alignment with ethical research practices that prioritize the dignity and identity of LGBTQ+ individuals.

3.6 Conclusion

This study aims to explore the impact of heteronormativity on students' emotional well-being and decision-making within the educational environment. The research is conducted within the Faculty of Languages at BUAP, selected for its relevance to the training of future English educators. Employing a qualitative approach, the study utilizes two methods: Biographic-Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) and narrative interviewing. These approaches allow for a comprehensive analysis of participants' experiences and perceptions related to heteronormativity.

Chapter 2 establishes a theoretical framework that critically examines how heteronormativity influences educational settings. Significant contributions include Bautista (2023) *Estereotipos y prejuicios sobre la homosexualidad*, which highlights the lack of recognition and protection for LGBTQ+ rights, contributing to a hostile environment. This underscores the need for an ethical approach that acknowledges diverse experiences and safeguards participant rights. Ruiz et al (2022) study, *Resistencias LGBT en universidades de Chiapas, México: más allá de la víctima pasiva*, reveals how students resist and challenge heteronormative systems, demonstrating resilience rather than passivity. Additionally, Romero and Jiménez (2020) research, *Estudiantes LGBT+ y profesores universitarios. Prácticas de inclusión y exclusión en la educación superior*, investigates the dynamics between university professors and LGBT+ students. Their findings indicate that professors often misuse their authority, imposing heteronormative norms that lead to discrimination and marginalization, negatively impacting students' academic performance and emotional well-being.

These studies highlight the effects of heteronormative assumptions and practices on students' identities, emotional well-being, and behavioral choices. They emphasize the importance of examining these dynamics within specific educational contexts, such as the

Faculty of Languages at BUAP, where future educators are trained. Building on insights from Chapter 2, this study employs the Biographic-Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) and narrative research methods to investigate into participants' narratives, aiming to gain a deeper understanding of their lived experiences. Through narrative and life interviews, it seeks to capture diverse perspectives on dress codes, behavioral choices, emotional well-being, and sense of belonging within a heteronormative educational environment.

The framework established by the authors guides our investigation into how heteronormative pressures and expectations shape students' experiences in the Faculty of Languages. This study focuses on participants representing diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, aiming to amplify the voices of LGBTQ+ individuals who may face unique challenges within educational settings. Measures were implemented to address concerns regarding privacy, confidentiality, and potential stigmatization among marginalized communities. The research questions guiding this study center on understanding the influences of heteronormativity on students' dress codes and behavioral choices, as well as their emotional experiences within the school environment. By centering participants' voices and experiences, this study aims to contribute valuable insights to discussions on LGBTQ+ inclusion and diversity in education.

In summary, this research seeks to illuminate the multifaceted nature of heteronormativity and its impact on students' lives. By linking the theoretical framework established in Chapter 2 with empirical evidence from our study, we strive to advance understanding and promote inclusivity within educational contexts. Through a rigorous methodological approach and a commitment to ethical practices, this study aims to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for all students within the Faculty of Languages at BUAP.

Chapter IV: Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of interview results concerning participants' experiences of discovering their sexuality and gender within Mexican culture. The chapter is structured into three main categories, which emerged from the analysis of the data by the initial pilot interview was conducted with one participant and primarily focused on his family's reaction to his sexual orientation. As the conversation progressed naturally, the topic shifted toward his school environment. This transition was influenced by the researcher's own experiences in educational settings, having witnessed instances of bullying disguised as jokes. The participant shared his personal experiences with bullying during both high school and part of college, which became a pivotal element in shaping the final interview guide.

These narratives highlighted the importance of exploring not only the family dynamics and their responses but also how these individuals navigated the school environment, particularly regarding the presence or absence of support from peers and educators.

Given that the study takes place within the Faculty of Languages—a space dedicated to preparing future educators—it became essential to investigate how these participants, as future teachers, envision their roles in leading classrooms and fostering inclusive environments.

As a result, the final interview structure was organized into three main sections:

- **Family Dynamics:** This section explores participants' experiences growing up within their families, examining their relationships and any issues related to homophobia encountered within the family unit, behavior and clothing.

- **School Environment:** This part focuses on participants' experiences in Mexican schools, investigating any instances of homophobia or discrimination from classmates and teachers.
- **Future Perspectives:** The final section addresses participants' future aspirations as educators, including their intentions to incorporate LGBTQ+ inclusion in their future teaching.

Through these sections, the chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how cultural and institutional factors have shaped participants' experiences and perspectives.

4.2 Family Dynamics: The Impact of Family Bonds on LGBTQ+ Students

In the initial section of the interview, participants were asked to discuss their family environment. Specifically, they were prompted to share their experiences with coming out, as well as their relationship with their parents regarding their sexuality or gender identity.

Participant 1 recounts his coming out experience, noting that he consistently felt "different," though he struggled to identify the reasons behind these feelings at the time. He also highlights the lack of representation and role models during his coming out process at the age of 15, describing this period as "the most challenging experience I have ever faced."

Participant 1 reflects on the difficulties of coming out to his family and expresses his disappointment with their lack of support:

"It was a disappointment for my mother and me being gay. I did hope for her support, but I did not have it."

This statement reveals the participant's profound sense of disillusionment with his family's reaction, as they failed to provide the anticipated support. The disappointment stems from the family's inability to accept his sexual orientation, which suggests a conflict between their expectations and his reality. Furthermore, *Participant 1* underscores the emotional difficulty of facing such rejection at the age of 15, highlighting a lack of coping mechanisms and support systems—such as a supportive family environment—that are crucial during this formative period.

Participant 2 recalls recognizing from a young age that there was something *different* about him, as he found himself attracted to both genders. However, he did not fully acknowledge or act on these feelings until he entered college, where he felt freer to explore his identity. *Participant 2* also mentions his initial fear of disclosing his sexuality to his family due to concerns about potential rejection. Despite these fears, once he came out, he received unconditional support from his family, regardless of his sexual orientation.

Participant 3 reflected on her early awareness of feeling different, stating:

"I liked boys and I liked girls, but I had no interest in having a relationship with them. It was confusing. I didn't know how to describe it, and when I tried to express how I felt, people told me I should wait to meet someone. I didn't want to meet someone."

At the age of 18, *Participant 3* began to explore the LGBTQ+ community and discovered the concept of asexuality. She found that the asexual label resonated with her experiences and provided a sense of validation and belonging, as it accurately reflected her own feelings.

However, her journey of self-discovery and coming out to her mother was fraught with difficulties. *Participant 3* reported that her mother's response to her disclosure of attraction to

both genders, followed by her identification as asexual, was one of profound disappointment.

Participant 3 recalled her mother's reaction:

“You’ve had boyfriends before! Don’t come here and say stupid things.”

This response left *Participant 3* feeling particularly hurt, as she noted:

“I’m accustomed to people dismissing the legitimacy of my sexuality, but hearing such dismissive comments from my own mother was deeply painful.”

Participant 4 reported that they had been aware of their attraction to boys from a young age and did not experience significant issues with their family regarding their sexuality, as the family tended to avoid addressing or acknowledging it. The challenges emerged when *Participant 4* began performing in Drag. They noted:

“The problem started when I began to dress as a girl. If my family had an issue with my being gay, I wouldn’t know because they never addressed it; they were simply uncomfortable.”

Participant 4 expressed that their interest in Drag was driven by admiration for the art form rather than a mere expression of gender identity.

Initially, *Participant 4*'s mother supported their Drag performance. However, this support changed when the mother asked *Participant 4* to leave the house due to the discomfort expressed by their siblings and stepfather. *Participant 4* described this experience as “devastating,” highlighting the emotional impact of being expelled from their home under such circumstances.

Participant 5 reported that coming out to his family was relatively smooth, as his family has consistently demonstrated openness and acceptance regarding gender and sexuality. He noted that having a family member who had previously come out likely contributed to creating a more supportive and secure environment for his own disclosure. As *Participant 5* explained:

“I already had family members who are part of the LGBTQ+ community, so I suppose that is why my parents were more supportive of me.”

Participant 6 shared that he initially identified as attracted to girls before realizing he was a transgender man. He described coming out to his family as "challenging" due to their lack of understanding about his gender identity. *As Participant 6* noted,

“I think I have an issue with them because they do not understand something different.”

Based on the statements from this section of the interview, which address family support in relation to feelings of acceptance, it is crucial to explore how these dynamics develop in various contexts. Each participant has a unique story and context, and their family reactions differ accordingly. Given the sensitivity of this topic, it is essential to respect their individual experiences and consider the extent of information that could be analyzed.

In the following sections, the theoretical framework will be applied to further understand these family dynamics. This framework will help contextualize the participants' experiences and link them to broader societal patterns. The insights gained from examining family support will also inform the analysis of experiences within educational settings and future aspirations.

4.2.1 Family Reactions and Support Expectations

Most participants described their experiences using the term *different*, a term that reflects the heteronormative standards that position heterosexuality as the normative benchmark. In this context, the use of *different* underscores a sense of deviation from these normative expectations, highlighting feelings of abnormality or exclusion.

Section 2.3.4 of Chapter II addresses cisgender privilege, defined as the advantages experienced by individuals whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth.

This privilege involves conforming one's behavior to societal expectations deemed appropriate for each gender. Such a system is pervasive and challenging to navigate unless one belongs to a marginalized group. This concept is further explored in Section 2.3, *Exploring Heterosexuality in Society: Privilege and Intersectionality*, which examines the privileges associated with whiteness and heterosexuality. This discussion emphasizes how societal acceptance and privileges are often contingent upon adherence to established norms. In Mexican society, for instance, children are socialized within a framework of rigid binary notions of right and wrong, which reinforces these norms and associated privileges. Consequently, deviations from these societal expectations can lead to significant challenges and experiences of discrimination.

Given this context, it is essential to consider the implications for individuals belonging to marginalized groups. What effects does having a family member in such a group have on familial dynamics and attitudes? Can stereotypes be challenged and overcome, and is there a force more potent than familial love in addressing these issues?

According to the American Psychiatric Association (2000), the family's response to an LGBTQ+ child significantly impacts their well-being. LGBTQ+ youth who face rejection from their parents are at a higher risk for mental health issues, including depression, substance abuse, and suicidal tendencies, compared to their peers from accepting families. This highlights the critical importance of familial acceptance in protecting the mental health and overall well-being of LGBTQ+ individuals. Many participants reported a *fear* of disclosing their sexuality to family members, particularly parents, and expressed feelings of "disappointment" regarding their families' reactions.

It is important to acknowledge the presence of privilege within the LGBTQ+ community as well. While the discussion often centers on the privileges associated with being white and

heterosexual, it is equally crucial to recognize that being a gay, white individual also confers certain privileges. However, these privileges can be significantly diminished as additional layers of intersectionality—such as race, gender identity, or socioeconomic status—are added to one's identity. This complexity underscores the nuanced ways in which privilege operates, even within marginalized communities, and how it can shape access to opportunities and experiences.

In this context, some participants experienced the *privilege* of growing up in supportive families where they felt safe to come out. However, it is crucial to recognize that this situation is not common. Many LGBTQ+ individuals often do not receive such support, with their families frequently choosing to *ignore* rather than acknowledge their sexuality. This lack of acceptance can significantly impact their sense of belonging and well-being.

4.2.2 Gender Normativity: Societal Expectations for Masculine and Feminine Behavior

In Section 2.4 of Chapter II, titled *Beyond Expectations: Unpacking Heteronormativity, Behavior, Clothing, and Identity Complexity*, there is an in-depth examination of how societal expectations shape gender roles, behavior, and clothing, influencing individual identity and gender expression.

Payne (2024) explains that gender roles are socially or culturally defined expectations regarding behaviors, attitudes, and characteristics associated with gender. Duvaux (2024) elaborates that traditional gender roles dictate how men and women should behave—women are often stereotyped as gentle and nurturing, typically assuming caregiving roles, while men are viewed as dominant. These entrenched roles extend beyond behavior to influence perceptions of earnings, clothing, job choices, personality traits, hobbies, and sexuality.

Building on this, Section 2.4.2, *Fashion's Impact: Unveiling the Power of Clothing on Cognition and Society*, examines how clothing influences cognitive processes and behavior. The concept of *Enclothed Cognition*, introduced by Jarrett (2012), suggests that clothing holds significant psychological power, shaped by its symbolic meaning and the sensory experience of wearing it (Adam and Galinsky, 2012). In the context of our interviews, participants shared how their clothing choices were often influenced by societal expectations and the pressures to conform to specific standards of beauty and behavior. Moreno and Bovio (2018) explored how fashion photography reinforces these societal perceptions, contributing to the reinforcement of stereotypes and ideals of physical beauty. This aligns with interviewees' reflections on the struggle to fit into idealized gender norms, particularly those related to ethnicity, social class, and gender. The research highlights the need for critical interpretation to counteract the damaging effects of such representations, a notion echoed by the participants who expressed a desire for more inclusive and diverse portrayals of identity in fashion.

4.2.2.1 Challenging Gender Norms: Clothing Choices and Identity

Expression

In this section, focused on family dynamics, stereotypes related to sexuality are examined. Participants were asked about their clothing and behavior in society, particularly in relation to how their families reacted to these expressions. This exploration reveals the complex interplay between societal norms, gender expression, and family expectations.

It is important to say that most of them stated that they use the clothes according to cisgender system, in other words they dress according to the gender they were assigned to since birth and most of them mentioned that they were comfortable using those clothes.

However, some participants such as 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 have established that they do not like gender rules, so they go against it.

Participant 1 shared that he experimented with clothing and makeup typically associated with a gender different from his own, which he identifies as male. Although he enjoyed this experimentation, he ultimately preferred clothing that aligns with traditional masculine norms. He does not dislike clothing deemed *feminine*, but he feels more comfortable in *masculine* attire.

Participant 3 recounted her childhood experience of wearing baggy and comfortable clothing, which suited her growing body. However, she faced derogatory comments, such as being called *machorra* (a term used to insult women perceived as masculine or attracted to other women) and being mocked as a *man*. Distressed by these insults, she opted for more traditionally feminine clothing and makeup. While she now prefers and feels more comfortable in this feminine style, she remains frustrated by the disconnect between her appearance and her sexual orientation. Despite identifying as both bisexual and asexual, she often encounters disbelief due to her feminine appearance. Many people assume she is heterosexual and tend to sexualize her, which conflicts with her true identity. As she put it:

“I’d rather keep my sexuality to myself because as soon as I share it, no one believes me or they want to sexualize me.”

Participant 4 expressed discomfort with traditional male clothing, leading him to experiment with feminine attire. While he ultimately prefers the comfort of male clothing for everyday wear, he enjoys using makeup to enhance his appearance and boost his self-esteem. Additionally, when performing as a drag queen, he embraces feminine clothing that aligns with his stage persona, highlighting his appreciation for gender expression through performance.

Participant 5 expressed a strong enjoyment in experimenting with gender through clothing and makeup, despite identifying as male. He mentioned that he does not perceive gender in his clothing or makeup choices, selecting items based on personal preference rather than gender norms. This approach often leads to ambiguity about his gender, which he finds satisfying because it allows him to explore and express a non-binary or gender-fluid identity.

Participant 6 reported having to conform to established stereotypes of masculinity in order to be accepted as male. He described facing numerous challenges and pressures to "prove" his masculinity, as he often encounters difficulties with others who question or doubt his gender identity. This struggle highlights the broader societal expectations placed on individuals to adhere to traditional gender norms.

The exploration of clothing choices among participants reveals a spectrum of experiences with gender expression. Some participants adhere to the cisgender norms established from birth, finding comfort in conventional gendered attire. Others, however, challenge these norms, embracing the notion that clothing need not be gender specific. For instance, *Participant 6* encounters significant challenges in navigating societal expectations, as he feels compelled to conform to traditional masculine standards to be recognized and respected according to his gender identity.

It is important to consider the nuanced privileges within the LGBTQ+ community, particularly concerning gender identity and transition. Individuals who transition at a young age may experience fewer obstacles related to visibility and social acceptance. Conversely, those who commence their transition in adulthood may face difficulties due to less immediate visibility of their gender identity changes. Respect for each individual's self-identified gender is imperative

to transcending entrenched stereotypes and societal expectations, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and equitable social environment.

4.2.2.2 Navigating Gender Norms: Mannerisms and Behavioral Expressions in LGBTQ+ Identities

Discussing behavior and mannerisms is crucial as many LGBTQ+ individuals, though not universally, display traits that challenge traditional gender norms. For example, it is not uncommon for men to exhibit behaviors culturally deemed *feminine*. This exploration reveals how such mannerisms play a significant role in expressing and navigating LGBTQ+ identities.

In this study, participants who addressed these topics shared insights into their behaviors. Participant 1 mentioned that his close circle consists mainly of women and LGBTQ+ individuals, where he feels free to express behaviors considered feminine. However, this freedom is limited to social settings with friends. In his daily life and within his nuclear family, he avoids exhibiting these behaviors, except with his sister, who he feels understands him. Despite this, he has faced ridicule from others for his feminine mannerisms. Moreover, his attempts to display these behaviors in front of his parents have been met with disapproval, with his parents urging him to *behave* according to traditional masculine norms.

Participant 3 reported that her personality is perceived as overly feminine, influenced by LGBTQ+ media and her close friends. She observed:

“People don’t find me odd when I act feminine, but I’ve noticed that they either really appreciate it or laugh at how feminine I am.”

She also mentioned that her mother occasionally mocks her for her feminine behavior, noting that her mother feels uncomfortable with it due to her own more masculine self-perception.

Participants 4 and 5 also discussed their feminine behaviors. *Participant 5* indicated that his family does not mind his feminine expressions. In contrast, *Participant 4* recounted that, although his mother initially tolerated his behavior, she eventually asked him to leave her house. She had previously ignored or questioned his sexual preferences but only voiced her discomfort with his mannerisms when she asked him to leave.

To conclude this section, it is important to acknowledge the complexity and sensitivity of the topic, particularly due to the unresolved issues many participants face regarding their experiences with coming out to their families. Despite these challenges, it is commendable to see their resilience and progress toward a more positive state. The significance of creating safe spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals cannot be overstated, with the family ideally being the primary source of support. However, not all participants received the support they needed from their families. Some experienced varying levels of acceptance, while others faced continued resistance or indifference, often with the expectation to *not display their identity in front of others*. This ongoing lack of support can impact on their social lives and their performance in academic or social settings.

The role of clothing in this context is also notable, as it often reflects how individuals present themselves to the world. For example, *Participant 5* demonstrates a disregard for societal judgments about his clothing choices, while *Participant 3* felt compelled to adopt a more traditionally feminine appearance to avoid childhood insults. It is crucial to respect everyone's

unique journey and acknowledge that not all participants receive support from their nuclear families, which are often considered the most fundamental support system.

4.3 School Environment: LGBTQ+ Students' Experiences Navigating Bullying and Inclusion

In this section, participants discuss their experiences within the school environment, specifically addressing instances of bullying related to their gender identity or sexuality.

Participant 1 reported experiencing significant challenges during high school, including frequent instances of bullying from both peers and educators. However, this participant noted a positive shift in their college experience, where they encountered a more inclusive and accepting environment regarding their sexuality. They remarked:

"In college, there is a diverse population, and it seems redundant to target someone based on their sexuality or gender."

Despite this improvement, *Participant 1* observed that within the Faculty of Languages, there has been a lack of representation and inclusion of non-traditional pronouns such as *elle* in academic settings. They recounted an incident where a faculty member made a disparaging remark about such pronouns, which elicited laughter from other students and caused discomfort. *Participant 1* expressed frustration over the discrepancy between the institution's advocacy for linguistic diversity and its failure to respect and validate the pronouns of LGBTQ+ individuals. They noted the paradox that, while newly coined terms like *chale* are readily accepted, inclusive language practices are often mocked. *Participant 1* stated:

"People are somewhat permitted to harass the LGBTQ+ community. It is troubling that such discrimination is normalized."

Participant 1 also indicated a strong preference for more inclusive and respectful approaches from educators.

Participant 2 reported a positive experience regarding their sexuality while in college, noting that they felt secure and unthreatened in expressing their identity. They indicated that the college environment was supportive of their sexuality, clothing choices, and behavior.

Participant 2 recounted a notable instance where a faculty member used the pronoun *elle*, which they found affirming and indicative of the teacher's awareness of diverse sexualities and identities among students.

Participant 2 speculated that some educators might be hesitant to incorporate inclusive practices in their classrooms due to concerns about job security or potential conflicts with parents. They expressed a desire for more widespread adoption of inclusive language and practices by teachers, emphasizing that such measures could significantly enhance students' sense of belonging and safety. As *Participant 2* stated:

“Inclusive practices can make students feel like they belong and would be profoundly meaningful.”

Participant 3 shared that, throughout her life, she has selectively disclosed her bisexuality and asexuality, revealing her bisexuality to a limited circle due to concerns about being ridiculed for also identifying as asexual. She expressed apprehension about facing negative judgments, stating:

“I would be targeted as weird and I don't want to deal with that kind of problem.”

Participant 3 reported experiencing derogatory comments about her appearance, which she describes as *masculine*. She noted receiving the insult *machorra*, which led her to modify her clothing and adopt a more traditionally feminine appearance in response to social pressure.

However, she had a positive experience with a professor member in the Faculty of Languages who inquired about her pronouns. *Participant 3* was particularly impressed by this gesture, considering the teacher's age of 50, which she found unusual given the lack of acceptance often seen in individuals of that generation. The teacher's use of gender-inclusive language, such as referring to "boyfriend or girlfriend" irrespective of gender, was appreciated by *Participant 3*, who expressed a desire for more inclusive practices in educational settings. She stated:

"I was happy about it and would like to see this type of inclusion more often in classes."

Participant 4 reported experiencing bullying both from classmates and teachers during his time in middle school and high school, often encountering the derogatory term *maricón*, which is used to insult men who are attracted to other men or who display behaviors deemed *feminine*. *Participant 4* admitted that he was unaware of the term's meaning during his childhood and was surprised to discover that it was being used against him.

He noted a lack of inclusivity in the classroom, stating that none of his teachers incorporated inclusive practices into their lessons. *Participant 4* expressed disappointment that educators did not intervene to address or defend against the bullying he faced, reflecting on how such support could have positively impacted his experience. He stated:

"I think it could have saved me from a lot of troubles, but they didn't care. I understand I wasn't their problem, but I would have defended someone who was being bullied."

Participant 5 shared that while attending a private school, he generally did not face bullying from teachers, but he recalls an incident during a parent-teacher meeting where a parent complained about him wearing makeup as a child. His mother defended him, stating:

“My son can wear whatever he likes. As long as I am paying for his education, you have no say in this matter.”

Participant 5 expressed appreciation for his mother’s support, noting that he did not receive further comments about his makeup after this incident. Although he faced bullying for other reasons, it was not related to his sexuality. He also recounted an experience at the Faculty of Languages where he dressed as a drag queen and received praise from a teacher for his bravery. *Participant 5* expressed a desire for teachers to incorporate more inclusive practices into their teaching.

Participant 6 reported experiencing bullying even before coming out as a transgender man during high school. He recounted instances where he was the subject of ridicule, including a particular incident where a classmate publicly referred to him as a girl. When he confronted the classmate, she denied making the comment, demonstrating how people often retract their statements when confronted. Additionally, he mentioned that his classmates created a WhatsApp group to discuss and speculate about his gender, which he found deeply insulting.

Participant 6 noted that, generally, teachers at the Faculty of Languages respect his chosen name and gender. However, he had an encounter with one teacher who refused to acknowledge his identity. He remarked:

“People often misgender me, and even the use of incorrect pronouns can significantly impact my day.”

He expressed a desire for greater openness and respect from teachers towards individuals like him.

4.3.1 From Exclusion to Inclusion: LGBTQ+ Students' Experiences in School Environments

The data indicates that most participants experienced bullying during their childhood, not only from peers but also from educators. This lack of intervention when offensive language is used or when students are targeted affects their sense of worth and contributes to a perception that rejection and discrimination are acceptable. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2024), bullying significantly increases the risk of depression, suicidal ideation, substance misuse, and unsafe sexual behaviors among all youth. For LGBTQ+ youth, these risks are notably higher, as they face greater rates of victimization and discrimination, which can also negatively impact their academic performance and overall well-being.

This risk is exacerbated when combined with inadequate family support, creating a particularly precarious situation for LGBTQ+ students.

The participants' accounts reflect that they experienced significant bullying at a young age, characterized by verbal, physical, or social aggression among students, often targeting individuals based on their real or perceived sexual orientation, or that of a relative or friend. In some cases, bullying occurs with different motivations, such as increasing status within a group, but still centers on the perceived vulnerability of the victim's sexual orientation. Homophobic bullying in the Mexican context can involve derogatory terms like *maricón*, *marimacha*, and *joto*, or escalate to more severe forms of violence.

Pendharkar (2023) highlights that “dress codes have emerged as an equity issue after reports that Black students, girls, and LGBTQ students across the country are disproportionately affected by school dress codes.” (para. 2) The absence of supportive policies means that students struggle to express their gender identity or sexuality comfortably within the school environment. Instead of fostering a supportive atmosphere, schools often place blame on students who are bullied and impose inadequate consequences for perpetrators.

The experience of *Participant 4* with the term *maricón* illustrates the intersection of familial and societal influences on bullying. The use of derogatory language learned from family settings perpetuates a cycle of discrimination within broader social contexts. This demonstrates the need for comprehensive strategies to break this cycle and promote inclusivity.

The observation of *Participant 2* underscores the challenges faced by educators who may fear repercussions such as job loss or conflicts with parents when attempting to implement inclusive practices. However, as authorities within educational settings, educators must not contribute to the problem. It is essential for them to actively engage in educational initiatives and foster a respectful and supportive environment for all students.

4.4 Future Perspectives: Inclusion and LGBTQ+ Representation in Mexico—

Participant Insights

This section explores the current state of inclusion in Mexico, focusing on the experiences and perspectives of participants from the LGBTQ+ community regarding inclusion within educational contexts.

Participant 1 reflects on the challenges facing LGBTQ+ inclusion in Mexico, noting that despite the introduction of neutral uniforms, there has been limited progress in broader

inclusivity. They highlight an intersectional issue within the LGBTQ+ community, pointing out that gay individuals who are white and conform to traditional masculine behaviors often receive more respect and acceptance compared to other members of the LGBTQ+ spectrum. As

Participant 1 observes:

"People like me still have to fight for representation in various spheres like movies, schools, and books. And this is primarily for gay people—there are many other identities within the LGBTQ+ community that face even greater challenges. For example, representation often prioritizes white, cisgender individuals, leaving out people of color and those with diverse gender identities. It's frustrating because media and institutions celebrate progress, but they still exclude many of us."

Participant 1 also discusses their experiences with teaching, expressing reluctance to incorporate inclusive practices due to fears of job loss and negative reactions from students. They recounted a specific instance where they tried to use inclusive language with a student, stating:

"I attempted to introduce inclusivity by saying 'Imagine if you have a girlfriend.' The negative reaction I received made me hesitant to address gender diversity further. Even though I believe using terms like *elle* would be beneficial, I worry that it might lead others to question my professionalism. I felt uncomfortable and decided not to pursue it further in that class."

Participant 1 expressed a desire for a supportive work environment where they could freely implement inclusive practices. They mentioned a particular interest in working in Puebla, where Nahuatl is spoken, but also noted concerns about potential rejection due to their sexuality. They find the city environment more open-minded but still feel uncertain about the acceptance of inclusive practices in more traditional settings.

Participant 2 envisions a future in which inclusion evolves incrementally, driven by increased openness about sexuality and gender. He believes that creating a safe environment for individuals to freely express their identities is crucial. *Participant 2* underscores the significance of educating individuals on issues such as homophobia and transphobia. He acknowledges that his current approach to inclusion has primarily addressed diverse family structures, such as single-parent households, but has not yet specifically included same-sex parent families. Moving forward, he aims to cultivate an inclusive atmosphere where students feel comfortable and secure in expressing their sexuality and gender identities. He asserts:

"I am committed to creating a safe environment where all individuals can openly express their sexuality or gender without fear of discrimination. I will not permit any form of discrimination."

Participant 3 expresses concern about the state of inclusion in Mexico. She notes a discrepancy between the rhetoric of inclusivity and the actual openness of society. Despite claims of increased inclusiveness, she observes that many individuals do not embody these values in practice. *Participant 3* explains that she does not incorporate inclusive practices in her classes due to fears of job insecurity.

She recounts her experiences working with supervisors who held homophobic attitudes, though they were unaware of her own sexuality due to her presenting as heterosexual. She describes these experiences as distressing, noting that she faced hostile environments where queer individuals were frequently disparaged. She felt constrained by these circumstances, as advocating for LGBTQ+ inclusion could jeopardize her employment.

Participant 3 recalls a specific incident that highlights her struggles with this issue. She describes a situation in which she attempted to integrate LGBTQ+ inclusivity into her teaching. After accepting a teaching position and conducting a class on family structures, she included a queer family in her lesson. This choice led to significant backlash from the employer, who accused her of trying to *confuse kids*. This response was a catalyst for her, triggering a strong emotional reaction and a sense of catharsis. Despite defending her work and engaging in a confrontation with the employer, she remains resolute in her belief that standing up for inclusivity is crucial, even if it involves personal risk.

Participant 3 aspires to work in an environment where she can authentically express her identity and support the identities of others without fear of reprisal. She emphasizes the need for workplaces that are genuinely inclusive, allowing individuals to be themselves without risking their employment.

Participant 4 reflects on the gradual progress of inclusion in Mexico, acknowledging the steps that have been taken and expressing hope for continued advancement towards a future where individuals can live without being targets of bullying.

Participant 4 has actively integrated LGBTQ+ inclusion into their teaching practices. They consistently inquire about students' preferred pronouns and provide inclusive examples, using phrases such as: *Imagine you have a boyfriend or girlfriend*. They are deliberate in avoiding the reinforcement of heteronormative assumptions regarding students' sexuality or gender. Participant 4 reports that their students have consistently responded positively to these inclusive practices, attributing the absence of negative reactions to either the students' age or their shared queer identities. They value this positive reception and have not encountered any adverse responses in their classroom.

Looking to the future, *Participant 4* expresses a commitment to maintaining an inclusive approach in their teaching. They emphasize that they have always been open about their own sexuality and gender and desire the same openness for young queer individuals. They believe that through education, they can contribute to shaping a generation that is more respectful and inclusive of diverse identities. They are driven by the conviction that no one should feel ashamed of expressing their true selves or loving whom they choose.

Participants 5 and *6* both acknowledge that progress towards inclusion is slow. Although neither has begun teaching classes yet, both have expressed a commitment to incorporate inclusive practices into their future teaching. They are determined to foster an inclusive environment once they start their careers.

4.4.1 Historical Erasure and Modern Challenges: LGBTQ+ Representation and Advocacy in Mexico

As examined in Chapter II, Section 2.7, *Unmasking LGBTQ+ Silencing: Schools, Historical Omissions, and the Vanishing of Queer Voices*, the Mexican educational system often neglects LGBTQ+ representation. Historical events and figures, including the Massacre at the Great Temple of Tenochtitlan, the Porfiriato era, and leaders such as Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa, consistently lack LGBTQ+ narratives. Historian Pedro Luna Paiz's (2023) interview highlights Ignacio de la Torre y Mier, who, despite rumors surrounding his sexuality and involvement in the *Dance of the 41*, remained protected by his elite social status. Additionally, Ricardo Orozco's (2023) *The Album of Amada Díaz* suggests a possible romantic link between Zapata and De la Torre. Speculation also includes Zapata's associations with Manuel Palafox, a known homosexual, and General Amelio Robles Avila, a trans man recognized by Zapata. Despite their significant contributions, these LGBTQ+ figures are largely

omitted from mainstream historical accounts, reflecting a broader erasure of queer histories. This erasure hinders progress towards a more inclusive and tolerant society.

Although many historical figures identified as LGBTQ+, their sexualities are often minimized or ignored in educational contexts. While some may argue that historical significance should be independent of personal identity, in a traditionally sexist and homophobic society like Mexico's, representation remains crucial. Recognizing LGBTQ+ identities, along with other marginalized groups, is essential for fostering inclusion in educational settings, media, and broader society.

Furthermore, participants' fears of job loss when advocating for LGBTQ+ inclusion highlight the significant risks involved in challenging societal norms. This fear underscores the broader difficulties of promoting inclusion in contexts where such advocacy can endanger employment.

Research demonstrates that LGBTQI+-inclusive education reduces mental health disparities. A landmark study found that LGBTQ+ youth in non-affirming environments are 2–3 times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers (Russell and Fish, 2016). In Mexico, 61% of LGBTQI+ students report bullying linked to their identity (UNESCO, 2019), exacerbating these risks. Despite this, LGBTQ+ inclusion faces societal resistance, particularly in Mexico, where traditional heteronormative norms prevail. Factors contributing to this resistance include misunderstanding and the perpetuation of myths, such as the *gay agenda* promoted by some religious groups, which erroneously suggest that queer individuals aim to convert others. As noted by Ganna et al. (2019), “There is no ‘gay gene.’ There is no ‘straight gene.’ Sexuality is just complex” (p. 1). Sexuality is not a choice but an inherent aspect of identity.

For society to advance towards greater understanding and acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities, educators play a crucial role. Their efforts in combating LGBTQ+ bullying and promoting inclusivity are vital. Interviews with participants emphasize this responsibility, underscoring the need for educational practices that support and protect all students.

4.5 Conclusion

Most participants reported experiencing homophobia during their early years, even before they fully understood their sexuality or gender. They encountered derogatory terms such as *maricón* and *marimacha* based on their appearance or behavior, whether perceived as "feminine" or "masculine." In Mexico, there is a cultural tolerance for mocking individuals who deviate from normative behaviors, which exacerbates these issues.

Participants not only faced familial rejection but also endured bullying at school, where violence was perpetrated by both peers and teachers. Despite expressing a strong desire to incorporate LGBTQ+ inclusive practices into their future classrooms, many participants expressed apprehension due to the persistent homophobia in professional environments. They feared job loss and societal judgment, which compels LGBTQ+ individuals to conform to "appropriate" behaviors or dress codes as a means of self-protection.

Chapter V: Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the concluding reflections on the research, evaluating whether the initial research questions have been addressed throughout the thesis. Additionally, it discusses the implications of the findings, acknowledges the limitations encountered, and offers recommendations for future researchers interested in exploring this topic further.

5.2 Conclusions

At the outset of this research, I anticipated significant challenges, not because of the subject's perceived taboo, but due to the emotional and psychological weight of addressing rejection and deeply personal narratives. My close relationships with individuals within the LGBTQ+ community gave me insight into the profound struggles they face, particularly during the coming out process. These challenges resonated with me personally, as I have witnessed the difficulties of navigating unsupportive environments firsthand.

Growing up within the same societal framework, I have my own personal connection to these issues. My brother's experience of rejection within our family deeply impacted on me. Although I initially lacked a thorough understanding of LGBTQ+ issues, my commitment to supporting my brother motivated me to confront these challenges directly. This personal involvement has shaped my perspective and approach to this research in meaningful ways.

My experiences have underscored the persistent lack of inclusion and the daily discrimination that many individuals endure. Observations within educational and familial contexts highlight how people often feel compelled to suppress their true identities to maintain

familial harmony. As the saying goes, *You don't truly understand the problem until it becomes your own.*

Exploring the diverse concepts within the LGBTQ+ community required significant self-education on topics I was previously unfamiliar with. Engaging with my participants and hearing their deeply personal and often painful stories provided invaluable insights. These interviews frequently led me to reflect on the kind of society we are building for future generations. It became evident that fostering an environment where children feel secure and accepted—regardless of their feelings, interests, or self-expression—is essential for creating a more inclusive and supportive society.

Regarding the primary research question posed in the first chapter: *How does the heteronormative system affect the academic experience of LGBTQ+ undergraduate students from the Faculty of Languages of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla?* The findings confirm that the heteronormative system has had a profound impact on the participants' experiences. Several participants reported being bullied by their peers due to their sexual orientation, gender expression, or clothing choices. Insults such as *maricón* and *machorra* were commonly directed at them, and their mannerisms were often mocked. In many cases, teachers did not intervene; in fact, some participants stated that certain teachers either ignored the bullying or even reinforced it, allowing the hostile environment to persist.

Furthermore, participants highlighted the absence of LGBTQ+ inclusion in the educational curriculum. This includes the omission of key figures in Mexican history and culture who belonged to the LGBTQ+ community, which contributes to the perception that these identities are deviant or separate from the rest of society.

This societal pressure has influenced their social behavior, often leading them to conceal aspects of their identity in order to navigate a heteronormative world. For example, *Participant 3* shared that she hides her sexual orientation to avoid bullying, while *Participant 1* expressed fear about future professional environments being unsafe due to his identity.

There is clearly a lack of institutional inclusion—not only in general educational contexts but also within the Faculty of Languages itself. Although some teachers voluntarily use inclusive language or ask students for their pronouns, these actions are not mandated by any official protocol. While some participants acknowledged feeling safer within the Faculty compared to other spaces, the overall inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals remains limited and inconsistent.

In conclusion, the Faculty of Languages, like many educational institutions, still upholds heteronormative norms in both its structure and daily practices. However, participants emphasized that this is not an isolated issue—it is systemic, extending across various levels of education. The continued presence of bullying and exclusion has left a significant emotional impact on LGBTQ+ students. Despite these challenges, participants expressed hope for a more inclusive future, one in which safe spaces are not the exception but the standard.

Participants in this research described their experiences as being shaped by the prevailing cisgender and heteronormative systems. They noted that these systems influence how they navigate their academic and social environments, often requiring them to conform to established norms to avoid standing out or facing backlash.

For the second questions: *In what ways does the heteronormative academic environment influence LGBTQ+ students' dress code and behavioral choices?* The heteronormative academic environment places significant pressure on students to conform to traditional gender norms. For

instance, *Participant 3* began dressing in a more traditionally feminine way due to peer bullying, despite her personal preference for wearing baggy clothes. Similarly, *Participant 6*, a trans man, feels compelled to constantly assert his masculinity—avoiding feminine terms and engaging in stereotypically masculine behaviors—in order to have his pronouns respected by others.

This pressure often leads participants to hide aspects of themselves in an attempt to protect their emotional well-being and avoid rejection. While *Participant 5* has the support of her mother, she still faces criticism and consequences for wearing makeup. *Participant 1*, on the other hand, suppresses his feminine mannerisms during family gatherings out of fear of being rejected. This illustrates a clear double standard: masculinity in women is often ridiculed, while femininity in men is pathologized and automatically linked to sexual orientation.

Participants have also described various strategies of adaptation. For example, *Participant 4*, a drag performer, wears masculine clothing in daily life but adopts feminine attire when performing. *Participant 2* shared that they feel freer to experiment with clothing within the Faculty of Languages, but still avoid doing so in family settings. *Participant 5* intentionally dresses in gender-neutral clothing and wears makeup as an act of resistance against gender stereotypes, regardless of the stares or comments.

None of the participants mentioned the existence of an inclusive dress code at BUAP. Additionally, some teachers have been reported to openly mock the use of *elle* as a pronoun or reinforce heteronormativity by dividing students strictly into "men" and "women."

In summary, students' ability to express their identities freely remains limited. Society continues to punish those who deviate from conventional gender expressions, enforcing strict behavioral expectations: femininity is accepted in women and masculinity in men, but any

deviation is met with ridicule or rejection. This dynamic has clearly impacted participants' psychological well-being and influenced the way they view themselves and the world around them.

There is a clear lack of institutional protocols guiding both teachers and students toward greater tolerance and understanding of diverse gender expressions. The Faculty of Languages still has much to improve in fostering a truly inclusive environment.

For the last question of this research: *How do LGBTQ+ undergraduate students from the Faculty of Languages perceive and experience emotions such as self-esteem, anxiety, and a sense of belonging in relation to the (lack of) inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community in the academic environment?* The testimonies of the participants reveal that the lack of LGBTQ+ inclusion within the Faculty of Languages has a significant emotional impact, particularly on their self-esteem, anxiety levels, and sense of belonging. Internalized stigma is a recurrent theme, especially among those who have faced rejection in their personal lives. *Participant 1*, for example, was dismissed by his family due to his sexual orientation, while *Participant 3* experienced mockery from her mother after coming out as asexual. These experiences led both to feelings of diminished self-worth and to questioning whether they had the right to occupy academic spaces.

Family rejection and peer pressure have also influenced how participants present themselves. *Participant 3*, despite preferring baggy clothing, felt compelled to adopt more traditionally feminine clothing after enduring repeated insults from peers. This shift in appearance was not a matter of choice but of survival within a system that rewards conformity and punishes gender non-conformity. In contrast, *Participant 5* reported a higher level of self-

esteem thanks to her family's support, highlighting how affirmation at home can act as a buffer against institutional exclusion.

Anxiety was also commonly reported and often linked to the fear of exposure and rejection. *Participant 1* avoided defending the use of the inclusive pronoun *elle* in class, fearing ridicule or social tension, which in turn created emotional stress and limited his class participation. *Participants 4* and *6* described experiencing anxiety attacks during work or academic presentations, especially when they feared being ridiculed or misunderstood. *Participant 3*, who continues to hide her sexual orientation, shared that this concealment led to feelings of anxiety and isolation. These examples show how the constant need to monitor one's language, appearance, and behavior leads to a persistent emotional toll.

A deeper issue arises around the lack of belonging within academic spaces. While some individual teachers use inclusive language, such acts remain isolated and are not part of an institutional commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion. *Participant 2* observed that these efforts are tokenistic rather than systemic, and *Participant 1* noted that grammar rules often take precedence over human dignity in the classroom. The absence of LGBTQ+ content in the curriculum further erodes the sense of belonging. *Participant 4*, a drag performer, expressed that their artistic expression was ignored in academic discussions, indicating a lack of recognition for queer cultural contributions.

Participants often find safer and more affirming spaces outside the classroom, usually within their friend groups, rather than through official university channels. While the Faculty of Languages publicly celebrates cultural diversity, this diversity does not seem to extend to gender and sexual identity. For example, *Participant 1* described being silenced when trying to express a

queer perspective, pointing to a contradiction between the Faculty's stated values and students' lived experiences.

The following patterns help illustrate how emotional responses are directly tied to the lack of LGBTQ+ inclusion in the academic environment:

- **Low Self-Esteem:** Triggered by family rejection and institutional pressure to conform to gender norms. For example, *Participant 3* felt compelled to alter her clothing style to appear more feminine, despite her personal comfort and identity.
- **Anxiety:** Stemmed from fear of bullying and the potential professional consequences for openly queer teachers. *Participant 1*, for instance, avoided using or defending the inclusive pronoun *elle* to prevent conflict or exposure.
- **Eroded Sense of Belonging:** A result of the absence of LGBTQ+ content in the curriculum and lack of institutional recognition of queer identities. *Participant 4* felt their drag performance was dismissed rather than celebrated, highlighting the invisibility of non-normative expressions in academic discourse.

In closing, the heteronormative academic environment pathologizes LGBTQ+ identities by linking emotional well-being to invisibility and conditional acceptance. Self-esteem becomes tied to the ability to pass as cisgender and heterosexual, anxiety stems from constant self-monitoring, and belonging is often only granted to those who remain silent or conform. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the Faculty of Languages implement affirmative counseling services for queer students, integrate LGBTQ+ topics and authors into the curriculum, and establish accountability measures to address anti-LGBTQ+ behavior. *Participants 1* and *6* specifically called for clear policies and consequences for teachers or students who perpetuate discriminatory language. Without such reforms, LGBTQ+ students will

continue to navigate an environment that undermines their identity, their emotional health, and their right to exist fully within academic spaces.

The concept of *sense of belonging* was indirectly mentioned, particularly in the context of workplace fears and the need for a supportive, inclusive environment. While participants expressed a desire for inclusivity, many also highlighted the anxiety tied to potential rejection, making the need for supportive environments even more crucial.

It is also worth noting that several participants entrusted me with deep personal information regarding their familial relationships. Out of respect for their privacy, I have chosen to keep these details confidential. However, it is clear that these experiences profoundly affected their self-esteem and how they present themselves to the world.

The consequences of familial rejection are particularly impactful for students navigating school environments. When family support is present and creates a safe space, negative comments or insults—often directed at LGBTQ+ individuals—lose their potency. Moreover, individuals who experience rejection or discrimination may find solace and support in friendships or within the broader LGBTQ+ community.

While some participants found acceptance and support within their families, others relied on friendships or LGBTQ+ networks to cope with exclusion. This external support plays a crucial role in helping them navigate and reduce the emotional harm caused by discrimination. It is important to note that, in this study, only six individuals were interviewed, and just two of them reported receiving support from their families. The remaining four did not share the same experience. This disparity highlights how familial rejection remains a persistent issue for many LGBTQ+ individuals. Even within such a small sample, the prevalence of rejection is alarming

and invites deeper reflection on the broader societal conditions that allow these patterns to continue. It raises an important question: what are we doing as a society to truly support LGBTQ+ people beyond superficial inclusion?

As educators, it is crucial to approach such situations with openness and sensitivity. According to INEGI (2021), Mexico's population aged 15 and older is approximately 97.2 million, with 5.0 million individuals identifying as LGBTI+, making up 5.1% of the population. Of these, 81.8% identify as LGBTI+ due to their sexual orientation, 7.6% due to their gender identity, and 10.6% due to both factors. These numbers are likely to have increased in recent years. Recognizing this diversity is vital, as many students within this community face rejection and marginalization from society, peers, and sometimes even from educators. Addressing and understanding these issues is crucial for fostering a truly inclusive and supportive educational environment.

It is crucial to highlight that the participants in this study are future educators who will continue to navigate a heteronormative society. However, fostering true inclusion is challenging unless they have a secure, supportive workplace where they can express themselves freely without fear of job loss or facing conflicts with parents, students, or colleagues. Creating such an environment is essential for these future teachers to confidently advocate for inclusivity in their classrooms.

Beyond their professional roles, these challenges also have a profound impact on their well-being as individuals. Constantly navigating environments where their identities are questioned or invalidated can lead to heightened anxiety, low self-esteem, and a diminished sense of belonging. Moreover, exposure to discrimination—whether through direct insults, microaggressions, or systemic exclusion—can contribute to mental health struggles such as

depression. Ensuring inclusive and affirming spaces is not just a professional necessity; it is vital for their overall well-being and ability to thrive both personally and professionally.

5.3 Implications

The findings of this research have significant implications for educational institutions, educators, and policymakers aiming to create inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ students. It is clear that the heteronormative structures in place within schools and other educational spaces influence not only students' dress codes and behaviors but also their emotional well-being and self-expression. By failing to actively include LGBTQ+ perspectives and support systems, institutions risk perpetuating environments where students feel unsafe, marginalized, and unable to fully express their identities.

One of the key implications is the urgent need for professional development programs that educate teachers and school administrators on LGBTQ+ issues. Training programs should be focusing on building awareness around heteronormative biases, fostering empathy, and equipping educators with strategies to support LGBTQ+ students effectively. This can lead to a more inclusive and respectful school culture where diversity is embraced rather than suppressed.

Additionally, this research underscores the importance of implementing clear policies within schools that protect the rights of LGBTQ+ students and teachers. Policies addressing bullying, discrimination, and harassment should explicitly include protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity, ensuring a safer environment for everyone.

For future teachers, the implications of this research are profound. Participants expressed their desire to include LGBTQ+ perspectives in their future classrooms, but many also voiced concerns about potential backlash from colleagues, parents, or administrators. This highlights the

necessity for institutional support, including clear guidelines and protections that empower educators to promote inclusivity without fear of losing their jobs or facing personal and professional consequences.

The findings are particularly relevant to the Faculty of Languages at BUAP, where future educators are trained to shape the next generation of teachers. As these students will soon enter educational environments where they will encounter diverse student populations, it is essential that the faculty fosters an inclusive atmosphere that prepares them to address LGBTQ+ issues confidently and respectfully. This research suggests that, by promoting inclusivity and supporting LGBTQ+ identities, the faculty can equip future educators with the tools to create safe and supportive classrooms.

On a societal level, the findings reveal that familial and societal rejection of LGBTQ+ individuals has lasting effects on their mental health and sense of belonging. Schools can play a pivotal role in counteracting these negative experiences by becoming spaces where LGBTQ+ students feel validated and supported. By creating more inclusive school environments, educational systems can help reduce the emotional and psychological toll of marginalization, contributing to healthier and more positive outcomes for students.

Lastly, the implications extend beyond the classroom to policymakers. Governments and education departments must prioritize LGBTQ+ inclusion in school curricula, develop teacher support programs, and establish accountability measures to ensure that policies aimed at protecting LGBTQ+ individuals are fully enforced. By doing so, they will contribute to the broader goal of creating a more equitable and inclusive society.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

Given the sensitive nature of the topic, it was prioritized to create a safe and respectful environment for my participants throughout the research process. Although full consent was granted to use the information provided, it was chosen to withhold certain deeply personal details out of respect for their privacy. The complexity of this subject posed unique challenges, as it encompasses a wide range of experiences and issues. Particular attention was given to the experiences of Participant 6, a transgender man who has encountered significant interpersonal discrimination. However, expanding on every aspect of his and other participants' stories would have rendered the research unmanageable. Therefore, the scope was narrowed while still aiming to provide a comprehensive analysis of the key issues.

This balancing act was essential to ensure that the study remained focused, while also acknowledging the diverse and nuanced realities faced by individuals within the LGBTQ+ community.

5.5 Directions for further research

For future research, it is strongly recommend focusing on a single topic to explore it in greater depth. In my study, it was chosen to cover what it is considered the most important aspects for this research topic—creating safe spaces and fostering inclusion for future LGBTQ+ educators. However, there are countless other topics that could be examined further. For example, issues surrounding expectations of masculinity or femininity could be explored in more detail. One participant mentioned experiencing hyper-femininity and how it was either laughed off or ignored, while others discussed the hyper sexualization often imposed on bisexual individuals.

The experiences of transgender participants, such as the concept of *cis-passing* or *trans-passing* (when a transgender individual is perceived by society as their gender identity), offer another avenue for deeper investigation. Additionally, the vast topic of intersectionality highlights the numerous societal challenges that individuals within the LGBTQ+ community face, and it deserves more extensive research.

It is recommended to build a strong, trusting relationship with participants, as this will encourage them to share more openly. Furthermore, it is essential to thoroughly investigate and understand the unique contexts each participant brings to the table. Doing so will enrich the research process and ensure that the complexity of their experiences is fully captured.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Instrument

Can you share your experience of coming out, including the circumstances and reactions from those you disclosed to?

Do you feel comfortable dressing according to the gender norms assigned to you at birth? Why or why not?

Can you describe how your family reacts to the way you dress or express your gender? Have these reactions influenced your choices?

Have you ever experienced bullying or discrimination in school because of your gender identity or sexuality? What happened?

Do you feel that your current academic environment is inclusive and respectful of diverse identities? Why or why not?

Do you think some teachers avoid inclusive practices? If so, why do you think that happens?

What would you like teachers to understand or do better when it comes to supporting LGBTQ+ students?

How do you feel about LGBTQ+ inclusion in Mexico?

Have you ever given classes? If yes, have you ever asked your students for their pronouns or tried to include anything related to the LGBTQ+ community in your teaching?

If fear of losing your job wasn't an issue, would you include LGBTQ+ topics in your classes? If so, what are your plans as a future teacher regarding this concern?

Appendix B: Author's Note:

This instrument was revised multiple times to ensure that the questions aligned with the core focus of this study. During some interviews, I asked additional follow-up questions to better understand the context and gather information relevant to the research objectives.

It is important to acknowledge that most of the participants share a close relationship with me. For that reason, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the trust they placed in me by allowing their personal stories to be included in this work. I am deeply committed to treating their narratives with care, respect, and responsibility.

The data collected is primarily discussed in Chapters II and IV. While additional information was shared during the interviews, I have chosen to present the content in a clear and concise manner, respecting the participants' privacy and emotional safety.

Many of these narratives were difficult to listen to, especially due to my personal connection with the participants. I would like to emphasize that Participant 5 began her transition after the interview and while I initially referred to her using incorrect pronouns, this was not intentional. I have made every effort to acknowledge and correct this within the final version of this work.

I was particularly careful when handling stories that involved family rejection, especially that of Participant 6, who shared very sensitive experiences. I did my best to honor the pronouns provided by each participant at the beginning of the interview and to represent their experiences with the respect they deserve.

Each participant was informed that their responses would be used for academic purposes and were offered the choice of using a pseudonym. All chose to use their real names and gave

full consent for the inclusion of their testimonies. This work would not have been possible without their generosity, openness, and courage.

Appendix C: Transcriptions

Participant 1

Age:26

Pronouns: He/him

Sexual Orientation: Gay

Interviewer: Before we start this interview, I just want to let you know that it will be recorded. The information you share will be used only for the purpose of this thesis. If you feel uncomfortable with any question, we can skip it — and at the end of the day, it's completely your choice how much you want to share.

Participant 1: Okay

Interviewer: Let's start with the first question... Can you share your experience of coming out, including the circumstances and reactions from those you disclosed to?

Participant 1: Coming out to me...was a...challenge

Interviewer: Why?

Participant 1: It felt like hell...I came out when I was 15, I was a kid...I didn't know any better... I thought everything was going to be easy, many things happened in my life at that time...so I don't know why I decided to tell my mom about me being gay...I suppose I thought my mom was going to support me

Interviewer: and did she do that?

Participant 1: No, It was a disappointment for my mother and me being gay was something she did not expect I guess...

Interviewer: Did you feel disappointed by her lack of support?

Participant 1: Yes..I did hope for her support but I didn't have it...but she told me she respected me and... I suppose it's still a hard topic for her I guess...

Interviewer: do any other members of your family had the same reactions?

Participant 1: My older sister reacted pretty badly...even more than my mom..."You're going to hell" she told me stuff like that and my youngest sister...she was the only one that supported me so I guess I was not completely alone in this.

Interviewer: I'm sorry to hear that...

Participant 1: It's fine...I'm okay now.

Interviewer: Let's move to the next question... Do you feel comfortable dressing according to the gender norms assigned to you at birth? Why or why not?

Participant 1: Well...I had my questions about my gender...I experienced with clothing and makeup...I like that part of experimenting with gender...however, it was only a good experience I do like feminine clothing and makeup just not on me...I feel comfortable with the male clothing and that's how I identify

Interviewer: Can you describe how your family reacts to the way you dress or express your gender? Have these reactions influenced your choices?

Participant 1: Well...to be honest, I just act extra feminine if that's a way to say it when I'm around my female friends or my friends who are also part of the LGBTQ+ community...with my family...I act very masculine...though with my youngest sister I act feminine sometimes but it mostly masculine

Interviewer: You said that you only act feminine with your sister and your close friends who are females and part of the LGBTQ+ community

Participant 1: Yes

Interviewer: How about people outside your close circle... let's say classmates. Have you ever experienced bullying or discrimination in school because of your gender identity or sexuality? What happened?

Participant 1: Ah yes...of course...when I was in high school, I suffered bullying from my classmates and teachers..

Interviewer: Can you tell me more about that?

Participant 1: Yes...well mostly it was about the mocking of being gay...insults like joto, maricon etc...they used to say things about aids...that I had it and that I wanted to be a woman...it was always behind my back or on my face

Interviewer: Do you think they knew what they were doing, or it was just ignorance-

Participant 1: No way, they knew exactly what they were doing and how it will hurt me

Interviewer: Did any of your teachers ever step in when you were being bullied or mistreated? What impact did that have on you?

Participant 1: They knew but choose to ignore...I guess it's easier to ignore than to step out and help...and how impacted me...I don't know...I suppose I would have liked someone to care enough to protect me

Interviewer: Do you feel that your current academic environment is inclusive and respectful of diverse identities? Why or why not?

Participant 1: In college it was another thing...I was in another degree and I noticed I was the only gay person...then I drop out and I came back to the English teaching degree and I realized that there is a diverse population, and it seems redundant to target someone based on their sexuality or gender.

Interviewer: So you think in now times it...in a way to say it...there are more people who are more open of their gender and sexuality?

Participant 1: Ah yes

Interviewer: Why do you think it changed?

Participant 1: I guess...young people are being more open minded about gender and sexuality

Interviewer: Have you been mocked here in college for your sexuality?

Participant 1: No

Interviewer: Why do you think that is?

Participant 1: Everyone here is gay...well most of them

Interviewer: How about the teachers here in college... Do you feel that your current academic environment is inclusive and respectful of diverse identities? Why or why not?

Participant 1: mmm...well yes, there are some teachers here in the Faculty who ask for pronouns, but most of them just don't care I guess...there was one time when I was in class of Morphology and the teacher started to mock the inclusive language...which it's stupid because our degree focuses on language and the language is part of the speaker not the other way around...it's funny because we accept words like "chale" is well accepted by the language police but as soon it has to do with the LGBTQ+ community that completely drifts and people are somewhat permitted to harass the LGBTQ+ community. It is troubling that such discrimination is normalized

Interviewer: Do you think some teachers avoid inclusive practices? If so, why do you think that happens?

Participant 1: Yes...I suppose...it's the fear of being target...or also it might be something about the work environment

Interviewer: What would you like teachers to understand or do better when it comes to supporting LGBTQ+ students?

Participant 1: That many of us have scars from our families or other teachers and classmates...we just want someone to be kind and someone who says it's okay to be you, I support you...it cost nothing to ask for pronouns or to include LGBTQ+ examples or something like that

Interviewer: Why do you think the inclusion is important?

Participant 1: Because it open minds and show people respect...I would have liked my teachers to defend me and to ask anything about me being gay...but well...it is what it is I guess...

Interviewer: Would you like teachers to be more inclusive? Why yes or why not?

Participant 1: Yes...it might not seem like a lot, but it helps people like us to feel included and respected

Interviewer: How do you feel about LGBTQ+ inclusion in Mexico?

Participant 1: That lacks

Interviewer: Why is that?

Participant 1: People like me still have to fight for representation in various spheres like movies, schools, and books. And this is primarily for gay people—there are many other identities within the LGBTQ+ community that face even greater challenges. For example, representation often prioritizes white, cisgender individuals, leaving out people of color and those with diverse gender identities. It's frustrating because media and institutions celebrate progress, but they still exclude many of us

Interviewer: Do you think that will change?

Participant 1: I hope so

Interviewer: Have you ever given classes? If yes, have you ever asked your students for their pronouns or tried to include anything related to the LGBTQ+ community in your teaching?

Participant 1: Yes...I work as a teacher on my free time... I attempted to introduce inclusivity by saying 'Imagine if you have a girlfriend.' The negative reaction I received made me hesitant to address gender diversity further. Even though I believe using terms like 'elle' would be beneficial, I worry that it might lead others to question my professionalism. I felt uncomfortable and decided not to pursue it further in that class

Interviewer: Is it fair to say you stopped because of the reaction?

Participant 1: yes...I might lose my job so I decided to stop

Interviewer: If fear of losing your job wasn't an issue, would you include LGBTQ+ topics in your classes? If so, what are your plans as a future teacher regarding this concern?

Participant 1: If fear was no issue and if I have someone who is behind my back then yes...respecting my future as a teacher...I wish to give classes in Nahuatl communities but I am aware that people from these communities are not as open minded as the capital so I'm a little bit scared I must pretend to survive that environment.

Participant 2

Age: 25

Pronouns: He/him

Sexual preference: Bisexual

Interviewer: Before we start this interview, I just want to let you know that it will be recorded. The information you share will be used only for the purpose of this thesis. If you feel uncomfortable with any question, we can skip it — and at the end of the day, it's completely your choice how much you want to share.

Participant 2: Okay

Interviewer: So...Can you share your experience of coming out, including the circumstances and reactions from those you disclosed to?

Participant 2: I've always had this feeling that I was different from the rest of the kids...I liked boys but also girls...I tried to ignore it until I got into college and that's where I felt more free to experience...I was really scared of my family reaction because I was not really sure if they would accept me for who I am...I eventually came out and my family supported me

Interviewer: How about the dressing part. Do you feel comfortable dressing according to the gender norms assigned to you at birth? Why or why not?

Participant 2: Yes...I have always being comfortable regarding my gender, sometimes I like to wear makeup or use skirts but mostly I identify as a male and I dress up masculine

Interviewer: Can you describe how your family reacts to the way you dress or express your gender? Have these reactions influenced your choices?

Participant 2: They are okay with it because I mostly dress up with clothes that are considered masculine

Interviewer: Have you ever experienced bullying or discrimination in school because of your gender identity or sexuality? What happened?

Participant 2: When I was little yes from kids

Interviewer: What did they say to you?

Participant 2: Insults that are usual for homosexuals

Interviewer: Do you think these kids knew what they were doing or they just replied what they heard?

Participant 2: I think it was them repeating what they heard at home

Interviewer: Did any of your teachers ever step in when you were being bullied or mistreated? What impact did that have on you?

Participant 2: Not that I remember

Interviewer: Did the teacher say something to these kids?

Participant 2: I don't think so

Interviewer: And how about college. Did that change?

Participant 2: Yes, college to me was an eye opening...everything about college was new to me and I was surprised to see how many people were open about clothing, sexual preferences

Interviewer: Have you been mocked here in college for your sexuality?

Participant 2: No...here people are more open minded

Interviewer: How about the teachers...Do you feel that your current academic environment is inclusive and respectful of diverse identities? Why or why not?

Participant 2: Here in collage? I haven't listened to many of them being inclusive or open but once I heard a teacher using the inclusive language the "elle" I was surprised and I was happy about it

Interviewer: Okay...how about teachers. Do you think some teachers avoid inclusive practices? If so, why do you think that happens?

Participant 2: Yes...I think it's because of losing their job or also they might face problems with the parents and no one wants to deal with that

Interviewer: What would you like teachers to understand or do better when it comes to supporting LGBTQ+ students?

Participant 2: I think they should embrace the diversity in students and I would like to encourage them to use inclusive language. Inclusive practices can make students feel like they belong and would be profoundly meaningful

Interviewer: How do you feel about LGBTQ+ inclusion in Mexico?

Participant 2: I feel okay...I think it keeps going which is important

Interviewer: Have you ever given classes? If yes, have you ever asked your students for their pronouns or tried to include anything related to the LGBTQ+ community in your teaching?

Participant 2: I have not given classes...however, Yes, I would definitely include LGBTQ+ topics if I didn't have to worry about job security. I believe that inclusion is something we build gradually, and a big part of that is helping students feel safe to express who they are. So far, I've focused on representing different family structures like single-parent households, but I know I still need to include same-sex families more explicitly. As a future teacher, my plan is to create an inclusive classroom where we openly talk about sexuality and gender, and where there's no space for discrimination or fear. As a future teacher, I am committed to creating a safe environment where all individuals can openly express their sexuality or gender without fear of discrimination. I will not permit any form of discrimination

Participant 3

Age: 24

Pronouns: She/her

Sexual Orientation: Bisexual and Asexual

Interviewer: Before we start this interview, I just want to let you know that it will be recorded. The information you share will be used only for the purpose of this thesis. If you feel uncomfortable with any question, we can skip it — and at the end of the day, it's completely your choice how much you want to share.

Participant 3: Okay

Interviewer: Can you share your experience of coming out, including the circumstances and reactions from those you disclosed to?

Participant 3: Coming out...well I think I always knew I liked boys and girls since I was little but I had no interest in having a relationship with them. It was confusing. I didn't know how to describe it, and when I tried to express how I felt, people told me I should wait to meet someone. I didn't want to meet someone...when I was 18 I started to search the terms of the LGBTQ+ community I discovered the bisexual people and the asexual people I identify a lot with those two...regarding my coming out...well I tried to tell my mom I liked girls too and about my asexuality thing and she started to laughed she said "You've had boyfriends before! Don't come here and say stupid things" and that was pretty much of the issue haha...

Interviewer: That must have been harsh...how did you feel about that response?

Participant 3: Bad of course, the few people who I told did not believe either and I'm accustomed to people dismissing the legitimacy of my sexuality, but hearing such dismissive comments from my own mother was deeply painful

Interviewer: Why do you think they did not believe you?

Participant 3: Look at me...If you didn't know me would you think I'm part of the LGBTQ+ community? I know I don't look like it so I suppose that's why

Interviewer: Regarding that...Do you feel comfortable dressing according to the gender norms assigned to you at birth? Why or why not?

Participant 3: When I was little I dress up very masculine or what it is consider masculine...baggy clothes and not feminine at all

Interviewer: And what changed?

Participant 3: People mocking me...people used to tell me machorra...I heard one aunt telling the others that I liked girls in a bad way...which is true but it hurt haha...also my classmates did mock me saying I was a boy trapped in the body of a woman...I hated that. why people had to judge just for the way I dress?

Interviewer: You're right, it's not fair

Participant 3: I was tired of people judging me and telling me I liked girls...in that time I didn't want to accept it because my sister used to nag me and also to make me feel bad if I ever said I like girls...like one time. I was like what? 9 years old, I can assure you I had no romantic interest in anyone and I used to have my computer with a password and my sister totally entitled said she wanted to use my computer and I didn't want to because my password was my best

friend's name and I was shy about it...anyway, I remember she was with a friend and she started to nag me so I ended up telling her it was my best friend's name...she got so mad at me in front of her friend and said "what are you a lesbian?" and made a face so ugly that I got scared...I didn't even know what was a lesbian at that time

Interviewer: I'm sorry to hear that

Participant 3: It's fine...with time I was so tired of the same mock and when I was like 18, I started to be super feminine...you see me now...makeup and feminine clothing

Interviewer: Why did you decide to change?

Participant 3: Listening to people over and over assuming I like girls just because I was not feminine was exhausting I swear...So...you can say I changed because of the people

Interviewer: Are you happy with that decision?

Participant 3: In the beginning no...but then I found out about drags and how these people embrace femininity in another whole level...makeup on point and always cute dresses...boy being extremely feminine...I got interested...you can say I started to copy their mannerism...their makeup and their clothing...now I love being extremely feminine

Interviewer: That's a good thing then right?

Participant 3: In a way yes...but now people assume I'm heterosexual and that also bothers me

Interviewer: Would you like people to know about your bisexuality or your asexuality?

Participant 3: Honestly no

Interviewer: Why?

Participant 3: Because in the beginning it was a mocking about me being machorra and a lesbian and now it's about sexualizing me...I would be targeted as weird and I don't want to deal with that kind of problem.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Participant 3: Being a girl who is extremely feminine and bisexual, a huge target for repulsive men

Interviewer: Of course...would you like to tell me a little bit more about that?

Participant 3: The times I tried to tell people about my bisexuality or my asexuality people had this entitlement to tell me I was confused or that they did not believe...I didn't know they can tell my story better than me...I just gave up on the asexual thing but I tried to be open about my bisexuality and I just received comments from men and women not believing me and accusing me of cheating or something like that as if I was going to cheat on them with everyone...if it's not that is the questions mostly from men asking disgusting questions so I'd rather keep my sexuality to myself because as soon as I share it, no one believes me or they want to sexualize me.

Interviewer: that must be hard... Can you describe how your family reacts to the way you dress or express your gender? Have these reactions influenced your choices?

Participant 3: My family is impressed of how feminine I am now...they say I got prettier and even the way I speak I think it's more feminine...I suppose...well I have a lot influence of the drag queens how gay feminine men acts so I just act the same way

Interviewer: So you got inspired...how people or your family react to you femininity now?

Participant 3: People don't find me odd when I act feminine, but I've noticed that they either really appreciate it or laugh at how feminine I am

Interviewer: Why do you think is that?

Participant 3: I suppose it's because of the extra feminine and the gay mannerisms that I have...of course...if I was a man then I don't think I will have the same luck

Interviewer: Have you ever experienced bullying or discrimination in school because of your gender identity or sexuality? What happened?

Participant 3: mmm yes...Bullying was the bread of everyday...when I was little at least then it changed...no one did bully anymore but at least because I did not showed the same behavior of masculine if you want to see it that way

Interviewer: Did any of your teachers ever step in when you were being bullied or mistreated? What impact did that have on you?

Participant 3: Teachers? No one did say anything...rather teachers encourage students to get me into the "right" track

Interviewer: What do you mean right track?

Participant 3: Heterosexual

Interviewer: How about the teachers or classmates here in college... Do you feel that your current academic environment is inclusive and respectful of diverse identities? Why or why not?

Participant 3: Here in college...well...I think it is...I've heard some bad experiences from others but not mine...I was impressed when I was taking a class and a 50 year old teacher said something like "Do you have a girlfriend or boyfriend?" wow...mind blowing

Interviewer: Why is that?

Participant 3: You don't always find a 50 year old teacher being inclusive and worrying about the sexuality or wanting to include someone...I was very impressed... I was happy about it and would like to see this type of inclusion more often in classes

Interviewer: Do you think some teachers avoid inclusive practices? If so, why do you think that happens?

Participant 3: Yes...the fear of losing their job I think

Interviewer: What would you like teachers to understand or do better when it comes to supporting LGBTQ+ students?

Participant 3: Inclusion is important...I wished at least one of my classmates or teachers would have understood about me instead of mocking me and creating me traumas

Interviewer: How do you feel about LGBTQ+ inclusion in Mexico?

Participant 3: It's going on the right track I guess...but still misses a lot of things

Interviewer: Why do you say that?

Participant 3: Many people brag about being open mind or that they respect until they face a student or a family member who is part of the LGBTQ+ community and that's where people show their true face with this

Interviewer: Do you think it will change?

Participant 3: Yes...but it's also our job to be part of the change

Interviewer: Have you ever given classes? If yes, have you ever asked your students for their pronouns or tried to include anything related to the LGBTQ+ community in your teaching?

Participant 3: I do give classes and yes I try to use inclusive language and also ask for pronouns

Interviewer: Do your students care or have you ever had a problem with it?

Participant 3: No...my students are more open minded and some of them are part of the community so...I have had problems with other teachers though

Interviewer: Why is that?

Participant 3: When I was giving my practices my supervisor said like "These people are the devil and want to make us join them into their cult" I was perplexed...I thank god he didn't know I was bisexual...otherwise...I don't know...perhaps I would have had a totally different experience...

Interviewer: that must have been hard

Participant 3: Also there was a time when I was going to work with someone and they ask me to make a presentation about family and I did it...on my way...including all types of family

the mom and dad, the dad and dad, mom and mom, only one mom or only one dad...you know all of them...anyway this teacher said he did want to talk with me and I said okay...he told me not to confuse kids with my presentation

Interviewer: Really? And how did you feel about that?

Participant 3: I almost screamed at him...he was not even paying me for my time and my material, and he felt entitled to tell me that stupid comment...who does he think he is? I told him it's my material you either like it or not...you're not even paying me and you're here telling me how to do my job? No way

Interviewer: That was brave...weren't you scared?

Participant 3: Yes haha...but it's fine...he was not even paying me...if it was a real job then I think it would have been a different story

Interviewer: If fear of losing your job wasn't an issue, would you include LGBTQ+ topics in your classes? If so, what are your plans as a future teacher regarding this concern?

Participant 3: Well let's say I have a stable job and they support me I would do that if not then I will be discrete and asking for pronouns or telling students do you have a girlfriend or boyfriend...something like that...I do that...but it's a coin in the air...some of them might react well or some of them not...either way...I hope to continue do that as a teacher

Participant 4

Age: 28

Pronouns: He/him

Sexual orientation: Gay

Interviewer: Before we start this interview, I just want to let you know that it will be recorded. The information you share will be used only for the purpose of this thesis. If you feel uncomfortable with any question, we can skip it — and at the end of the day, it's completely your choice how much you want to share.

Participant 4: Okay

Interviewer: Can you share your experience of coming out, including the circumstances and reactions from those you disclosed to?

Participant 4: I always knew I liked boys...since I was a little boy...I don't know how my family reacted because I never told them...it was like the huge elephant of the room that no one wanted to talk about... The problem started when I began to dress as a girl. If my family had an issue with my being gay, I wouldn't know because they never addressed it; they were simply uncomfortable

Interviewer: Why do you think it was an issue?

Participant 4: Perhaps they thought I was going to transition into a girl but in reality, I just liked the art of drag not the whole gender thing about being a woman

Interviewer: And did your mom accepted you as a drag queen?

Participant 4: No...she found out about me doing drag...she said it was fine...but later she told I had to leave the house because in her words I was disturbing the family peace and that I was going to confuse my siblings and my stepfather...so I left

Interviewer: I'm sorry to hear that

Participant 4: It's fine...It was devastating but well I'm okay now

Interviewer: Have you talked with your mom since then?

Participant 4: No

Interviewer: Okay...I'm sorry to hear that...let's move to another topic... Do you feel comfortable dressing according to the gender norms assigned to you at birth? Why or why not?

Participant 4: I've never really felt comfortable with traditional male clothing—it just didn't feel like me. That's why I started trying out more feminine pieces. Even though I usually stick to male clothing because it's more practical for daily life, I really enjoy using makeup. It helps me feel more confident and express a part of myself that's usually hidden. When I perform as a drag queen, that's when I fully embrace feminine clothing—it's a way for me to explore gender expression and connect with my stage persona in a creative and empowering way.

Interviewer: Can you describe how your family reacts to the way you dress or express your gender? Have these reactions influenced your choices?

Participant 4: At first, my mom didn't really say much about the way I acted or who I was attracted to—she would sometimes ignore it or ask questions, but nothing too direct. It wasn't until later, when she asked me to leave the house, that she expressed how uncomfortable she

actually was with how I behaved. That moment made it clear that her tolerance had limits, and it hurt to realize that my mannerisms were what ultimately pushed her to that point

Interviewer: Have you ever experienced bullying or discrimination in school because of your gender identity or sexuality? What happened?

Participant 4: Of course. Kids used to call me maricon all the time...I didn't even know what that meant until I was older

Interviewer: Do you think they also knew the meaning of the word or were they unaware of the word like you?

Participant 4: mmm...I think they knew because they called me like that because somehow I was "feminine" so of course they identify it because it was thought perhaps by the family or society

Interviewer: Were the teachers aware of this bullying towards you?

Participant 4: Of course

Interviewer: Did they do something about it?

Participant 4: No...they just let it happen... I think it could have saved me from a lot of trouble, but they didn't care. I understand I wasn't their problem, but I would have defended someone who was being bullied.

Interviewer: Do you feel that your current academic environment is inclusive and respectful of diverse identities? Why or why not?

Participant 4: Right now, it's fine...I have not encountered any type of discrimination here...though I notice teachers here are very close minded in terms of gender and sexuality

Interviewer: Have you had an experience with some of it?

Participant 4: Not directly towards me...but I heard a girl talking about her project and the uncomfortable looks of the teacher was gold

Interviewer: What was the project about?

Participant 4: LGBTQ+ of course

Interviewer: Do you think some teachers avoid inclusive practices? If so, why do you think that happens?

Participant 4: Yes...the reason...well we live in a homophobic country so there's your answer

Interviewer: What would you like teachers to understand or do better when it comes to supporting LGBTQ+ students?

Participant 4: Like I said...if someone would have defended me when I was being bullied by my classmates, I would have made a whole different story...so my advice is that you step out if you hear classmates mocking a student and even more if it's for their gender or sexuality...believe me...you will save a life

Interviewer: How do you feel about LGBTQ+ inclusion in Mexico?

Participant 4: I do think we've made some progress in terms of inclusion here in Mexico—things are definitely not the same as they were years ago. But there's still a long way to

go. I really hope that in the future, people can just live their lives without constantly worrying about being judged or bullied for who they are. That kind of change takes time, but I believe we're moving in the right direction

Interviewer: Have you ever given classes? If yes, have you ever asked your students for their pronouns or tried to include anything related to the LGBTQ+ community in your teaching?

Participant 4: In my classes, I always try to create an inclusive environment by asking students about their preferred pronouns and using examples that don't assume their gender or sexuality—like saying 'imagine you have a boyfriend or girlfriend.' I think it's important not to reinforce heteronormative ideas. So far, my students have responded really well, and I haven't had any negative reactions. I think their age and the fact that some of us share queer identities helps a lot. It makes the classroom feel like a safe space for everyone

Interviewer: If fear of losing your job wasn't an issue, would you include LGBTQ+ topics in your classes? If so, what are your plans as a future teacher regarding this concern?

Participant 4: I've always been open about my sexuality and gender, and I believe it's important for young queer people to have that same freedom. In my teaching, I'm committed to maintaining an inclusive approach because I see education as a powerful tool to shape a more respectful and accepting generation. No one should feel ashamed of who they are or who they love, and if I can help create that kind of environment in my classroom, then I know I'm doing something meaningful

Participant 5

Age: 23

Pronouns: They/them, she/her and he/him

Sexual preference: Trans, Heterosexual

NOTE: At the time of the interview, Participant 5 identified as gender fluid and used a range of pronouns, including he/him and they/them. She also identified as gay during this period. However, since the interview, she has begun her transition and now identifies as a transgender woman and a heterosexual. While the interview reflects her previous identity and includes the use of he/him or they/them pronouns, this note is provided out of respect for her current identity. It is important to note that at the time of the interview, her transition had not yet begun nor was it discussed.

Interviewer: Before we start this interview, I just want to let you know that it will be recorded. The information you share will be used only for the purpose of this thesis. If you feel uncomfortable with any question, we can skip it — and at the end of the day, it's completely your choice how much you want to share.

Participant 5: Sure

Interviewer: Can you share your experience of coming out, including the circumstances and reactions from those you disclosed to?

Participant 5: I've always knew I liked boys and my parents too because they never said anything about it they just let me be and experienced so I kind of never had to come out with them

Interviewer: Why do you think your parents were so supportive?

Participant 5: I already had family members who are part of the LGBTQ+ community, so I suppose that is why my parents were more supportive of me

Interviewer: So...in a way these past family members had already...in a way to say it paved the way for you?

Participant 5: You can say that

Interviewer: how about these family members before you? Did they have a rough path in their coming out?

Participant 5: I suppose they did...I know about some of them. but in my family, they are very open minded to I didn't have any problems, but I suppose the first time it was difficult for them

Interviewer: Do you feel comfortable dressing according to the gender norms assigned to you at birth? Why or why not?

Participant 5: Yes I do...I identify as gender fluid so I don't really care what pronoun people use with me...I like using makeup and dressing up according to how I am feeling today it can be a little masculine or a little bit more feminine...I like playing with gender and I like the fact that people don't know if I am a man or a woman it really depends of how feminine I want to be a day...you can say I move into the non-binary spectrum as well

Interviewer: Can you describe how your family reacts to the way you dress or express your gender? Have these reactions influenced your choices?

Participant 5: My family is okay with it; they support me, and they don't mind me being feminine and expressing myself through makeup and the way I dress

Interviewer: Have you ever experienced bullying or discrimination in school because of your gender identity or sexuality? What happened?

Participant 5: Not exactly with students but one time it was like a reunion with the parents and one parent complained about me using makeup...I have always used makeup even when I was little

Interviewer: How did you feel about that?

Participant 5: Well bad but my mom have always defended me so she told that parent "My son can wear whatever he likes. As long as I am paying for his education, you have no say in this matter."

Interviewer: That's sweet

Participant 5: I did received bullying from other types but not exactly about my sexual orientation or the way I dressed, people say it behind my back and I usually don't care what is being said behind my back so if they have a problem with me I just face them immediately and I notice people do not like face the words that they say behind my back

Interviewer: Do you feel that your current academic environment is inclusive and respectful of diverse identities? Why or why not?

Participant 5: Yes...right now it's better. I've seen more LGBTQ+ people, and I think they are being more open now in collage

Interviewer: how about the teachers?

Participant 5: well there was one time when I had to dress up as a drag queen for an activity for a class and the teacher praised me she said I was brave

Interviewer: That must have felt nice...besides this teacher...Do you think some teachers avoid inclusive practices? If so, why do you think that happens?

Participant 5: Yes...well I think it depends on the teacher but most of them do not want to get into trouble or they just don't care

Interviewer: What would you like teachers to understand or do better when it comes to supporting LGBTQ+ students?

Participant 5: Well...if you care makes a huge difference for people who feel like they do not belong...I think teacher should be more inclusive with people like us and defend us when they see other classmates mocking us...because many times they just ignore or laughed and they are being complicit with the situation...they are just becoming part of the problem instead of making solutions

Interviewer: How do you feel about LGBTQ+ inclusion in Mexico?

Participant 5: I haven't thought about it, but I guess we are making progress and our country really have good laws in protecting like the gender thing...however it's going slow...but little by little

Interviewer: Have you ever given classes? If yes, have you ever asked your students for their pronouns or tried to include anything related to the LGBTQ+ community in your teaching?

Participant 5: I have not given classes yet but if I had I would make sure to be inclusive with the students regarding their gender and their sexual preferences

Interviewer: If fear of losing your job wasn't an issue, would you include LGBTQ+ topics in your classes? If so, what are your plans as a future teacher regarding this concern?

Participant 5: I would like to be more inclusive for the future LGBTQ+ generations that are coming so they feel safe at least in the classroom with me

Participant 6

Age: 20

Pronouns: He/him

Sexual Orientation: Transgender, Bisexual

Interviewer: Before we start this interview, I just want to let you know that it will be recorded. The information you share will be used only for the purpose of this thesis. If you feel uncomfortable with any question, we can skip it — and at the end of the day, it's completely your choice how much you want to share.

Participant 6: Okay

Interviewer: Can you share your experience of coming out, including the circumstances and reactions from those you disclosed to?

Participant 6: Well...At first I thought I was only attracted to girls which was fine but after a while I realized I was not feeling comfortable with the gender I was assigned to...so I decided to transition to a man...with my family...well it was a huge challenge...my mom reacted pretty bad and she kicked me out...I had to go and live with my dad

Interviewer: How is your relationship with your mom now?

Participant 6: It's better but I don't think she understands

Interviewer: Why do you say that?

Participant 6: Because my gender is still an issue

Interviewer: Why do you think it's an issue?

Participant 6: I think I have an issue with them because they do not understand something different.

Interviewer: "Them" referring to your parents?

Participant 6: Yes

Interviewer: Do you feel comfortable dressing according to the gender norms assigned to you at birth? Why or why not? I know gender might be kind of difficult to address so if you want to we can skip this question

Participant 6: It's fine don't worry...well about the gender part...I feel comfortable now, I just started my transition so I'm trying to fit in everyway possible

Interviewer: To fit in?

Participant 6: the gender roles

Interviewer: Oh...do you feel like you have to fit into the gender roles or stereotypes?

Participant 6: Yes

Interviewer: Why is that?

Participant 6: Because well...somehow it feels like I must follow the stereotypes of being a man to fit into the society if you want to see it in a way it's like proving myself

Interviewer: Why do you feel like you have to prove yourself?

Participant 6: I have been misgender many times by other people, in order to not be misgender I have to act and dress up as man

Interviewer: Do you feel comfortable following these stereotypes?

Participant 6: Well...yes but not...I feel like society has already marked the stereotypes and the gender rules on both women and men so each one of us follow the gender rules depending on which gender we identify...in my case a man

Interviewer: Can you describe how your family reacts to the way you dress or express your gender? Have these reactions influenced your choices?

Participant 6: I suppose it's still an issue for them like I said but now it's better and if it had influenced me then I guess not I continue dressing up the way I want to

Interviewer: Have you ever experienced bullying or discrimination in school because of your gender identity or sexuality? What happened?

Participant 6: Yes...when I was in high school, I heard a girl saying that I was a girl and I confronted her about it

Interviewer: And did she say?

Participant 6: She denied it of course...but I heard it

Interviewer: Why do you think she denied it?

Participant 6: People like her always say things behind your back and as soon as you confront them about it then immediately, they act scared because they do not like conflict

Interviewer: Shame on her

Participant 6: There was also one time when my classmates created a WhatsApp group where they discuss if I was whether a woman or a man

Interviewer: And how did you find out?

Participant 6: I was on the group and they did not care about me being there...they just ask out of nowhere or discuss as if I was not there

Interviewer: Shame on them...do you think they did this because of ignorance towards your gender or-

Participant 6: It was ignorant of course...they were kids on high school so of course it's stupid but also, I was mad for it

Interviewer: Do you feel that your current academic environment is inclusive and respectful of diverse identities? Why or why not?

Participant 6: Well...yes however one time I got into a situation with a teacher

Interviewer: What happened?

Participant 6: I asked her to call me by my chosen name since in the list of BUAP they still haven't changed my name yet on the platforms so it appears my deadname...she said it wasn't her problem and until the BUAP did not change my name she will continue to use my deadname and well the incorrect pronouns as well

NOTE: Participant 6 refers to his deadname as the name he used prior to his transition. His chosen name reflects his affirmed gender identity and is the one he has used since transitioning.

Interviewer: That must have been so hard for you

Participant 6: It was but well...She's an older teacher so I can somehow understand

Interviewer: Do you think some teachers avoid inclusive practices? If so, why do you think that happens?

Participant 6: I suppose most of them but not all of them...many teachers here in the faculty have respected me when I ask him to use my chosen name and also use the correct pronouns

Interviewer: What would you like teachers to understand or do better when it comes to supporting LGBTQ+ students?

Participant 6: That it's very important for people like me who are transgenders to be asked about our pronouns so people do not misgender us...in my case People often misgender me, and even the use of incorrect pronouns can significantly impact my day

Interviewer: How do you feel about LGBTQ+ inclusion in Mexico?

Participant 6: It's okay but slow I guess

Interviewer: Have you ever given classes? If yes, have you ever asked your students for their pronouns or tried to include anything related to the LGBTQ+ community in your teaching?

Participant 6: I have not given classes yet but yes, I would like my students to feel safe and to be more open with me...I might find people like me, and I would definitely ask them about their pronouns and use inclusive language