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Article

Acceptance of SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression): The Narratives of Maltana National High School Teachers

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Abstract

This study examined public school teachers' acceptance of students' SOGIE and its impact on creating an inclusive learning environment. Eight teachers from Maltana National High School were interviewed using a qualitative, phenomenological approach. The findings showed a strong commitment to inclusivity, with teachers prioritizing a discrimination-free classroom, implementing anti-bullying policies, and supporting SOGIE. The school emphasized continuous professional development and integrating gender-inclusive content into the curriculum. Despite challenges, the school demonstrated dedication to inclusivity, promoting equality, and supporting students' well-being. The study highlighted the need for enhancing classroom environments, strengthening anti-bullying measures, and providing additional SOGIE training for teachers.

Keywords
Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression, SOGIE, LGBTQ+ students.

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Introduction

Schools play a vital role in providing young people with essential knowledge and skills for personal development. However, promoting inclusive education is equally important to ensure every student feels heard and valued. Teachers can foster this by integrating equality and recognizing diversity in their practices.

The Department of Education has introduced "age-appropriate, developmental, and culturally sensitive sexuality education" in its K–12 Basic Education Curriculum, in response to the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law of 2012. Additionally, DepEd Order No. 32, S. 2017, establishes a Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy aimed at promoting gender equality and preventing discrimination (DepEd, 2017).

LGBTQ+ youth face significant challenges at school, with over 87% facing bullying and harassment (Kosciw et al., 2018). This victimization correlates with mental health issues and substance abuse. A substantial number of LGBTQ+ youth report derogatory comments about their gender identity and sexual orientation while at school. Unfortunately, there is often a gap between teachers' attitudes and their ability to implement LGBTQ+-inclusive instruction (Llego, 2022; Meyer et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2016).

Despite existing policies promoting inclusivity, discrimination against LGBTQ+ students continues, particularly at Maltana National High School, where teachers have noted an increase in such incidents. The school environment tends to be more tolerant than accepting, especially compared to colleges, and the lack of clear disciplinary guidelines further complicates the issue.

Ultimately, it is essential to understand how teachers navigate and contribute to creating inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ learners through their perspectives and experiences.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do teachers perceive students' Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE)?
2. How do teachers support students' SOGIE in terms of:
   2.1. implementing anti-bullying policies that recognize sexual orientation and gender identity?
   2.2. setting up systems for reporting harassment?
   2.3. providing teachers with proper training?
   2.4. ensuring the use of preferred names and pronouns? and
   2.5. implementing inclusive curricula?
3. What are the teachers' challenges in creating inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ students?

Literature Review

Teachers' Acceptance of Students SOGIE

Kosciw et al. (2020) underscores key conditions that enhance students' sense of safety and positivity in schools, including supportive clubs, LGBTQ+ representation in curricula, addressing biased remarks, responding effectively to harassment reports, and anti-bullying policies safeguarding sexual orientation and gender identity. Boyland et al. (2018) advocate for implementing best practices, such as inclusive anti-bullying policies, harassment reporting systems, staff training, non-discriminatory evaluations, respect for preferred names/pronouns, and inclusive curricula. Haslam et al. (2018) affirm the positive impact of inclusive environments on well-being and self-esteem, promoting acceptance and understanding. Tajfel and Turner (1979) stress recognizing each student's identity for a safe and inclusive environment.

Herman (2013) and Ryan (2010) highlight the benefits of inclusive education for gender identity and family acceptance. Banks (2016) and Greytak et al. (2016) support non-discrimination strategies for student engagement and success. Smith and Cooper (2019) emphasize teachers' role in championing inclusivity and equality. Overall, educators must actively create inclusive educational settings that prioritize acceptance, understanding, and support for all students.

Implementing Anti-Bullying Policies That Recognize Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Day, Fish et al. (2019) and Manitoba Education (2013) demonstrate that a positive school climate correlates with improved academic performance and student well-being. Meyer (2013) found that schools supporting LGBTQ+ students with anti-bullying policies and staff training had lower bullying rates and better academic outcomes. Smith (2014) emphasizes clear, inclusive policies to combat bullying effectively. Greytak, Kosciw, and Diaz (2013), supported by Kosciw et al. (2018) and Russell et al. (2019), highlight lower bullying rates and improved academic outcomes in schools with supportive environments and explicit anti-bullying policies. Hermann-Wilmarth and Ryan (2018) stress LGBTQ+-inclusive curricula to validate LGBTQ+ identities and foster empathy.

Fantus and Newman (2021) note educators' lack of intervention knowledge in homophobic victimization cases, suggesting ongoing training for LGBTQ+ awareness and inclusive practices as advised by Dragowski et al. (2016). Kosciw et al. (2016) and Langdon & Preble (2016) stress conscientious adult supervision, while the APA and NASP (2015) recommend providing gender-diverse students access to fitting facilities to reduce bullying. Butler (2011) and Kimmel (2018) emphasize inclusive policies' impact on challenging gender norms and preventing bullying, underscoring the necessity for comprehensive policies to safeguard all students and foster equality. Implementing and enforcing inclusive policies with effective prevention programs can create a school environment where gender norms are challenged, bullying is curtailed, and all students feel secure and respected.

Setting Up Systems for Reporting Harassment

Goodrich & Barnard (2019), collaboration among school districts, in-service training, and certification of school counselors, social workers, and teachers as "safe adults" can enhance inclusivity Service-based learning at LGBTQ+ organizations boosts teachers' skills and confidence with LGBTQ+ students (Coulter et al., 2021). GLSEN (2020) stresses comprehensive anti-bullying measures with transparent reporting processes and staff training. Waasdorp et

al. (2013) advocate for involving the school community in anti-bullying efforts with clear policies. Gaffney, Ttofi, and Farrington (2019) highlight positive school climates and supportive teacher-student relationships in reducing bullying. Espelage (2014) emphasizes effective harassment prevention systems for safe schools. Ttofi and Farrington's meta-analysis (2011) supports structured anti-bullying programs for improved school climates.

Providing LGBTQ students with information, support, and LGBTQ-friendly staff is crucial for their welfare (Greytak et al., 2016; Russell et al., 2018; Goodenow et al., 2016). Unreported incidents targeting LGBTQ students reveal fears of retribution or disclosure (Kennedy, Russom, & Kevorkian, 2018). Supporting LGBTQ students through trained staff, inclusive policies, and safe reporting mechanisms is vital for fostering a welcoming and secure educational environment.

Providing Teachers with Proper Training

Garcia et al. (2019) and Williams et al. (2020) highlight the positive effects of inclusive curriculum and supportive school environments on the mental health and academic success of LGBTQ+ students. Proper training and support for teachers are crucial for enhancing outcomes for LGBTQ+ students. Consistent intervention is needed to combat bias and harassment against the LGBTQ+ community (Kosciw et al., 2020).

Early intervention and changing attitudes among preservice teachers are essential for improving LGBTQ+ students' school experiences. Teachers with positive attitudes toward LGBTQ+ students create safe spaces, prevent homophobic behavior, address bullying, and act as allies (Goldstein-Schultz, 2022; Glikman & Elkayam, 2019; Nappa et al., 2018; Gastic & Elkayam, 2018; Johnson, 2009). Teacher training programs should focus on enhancing candidates' attitudes toward minority youth and promoting their role as allies (Fenaughty, 2019; Kosciw et al., 2020).

Espelage & Swearer (2017) underscore that educating and assessing staff attitudes toward bullying are vital in implementing anti-bullying policies. Training teachers on intervention techniques increases LGBTQ students' safety and well-being (Russell et al., 2019). Student education on preventing LGBTQ bullying has effectively reduced incidents of discrimination (Evans et al., 2014).

Swanson and Gettinger (2016) recommend training teachers to include and support LGBTQ+ students, as their success often hinges on school personnel support. However, personal beliefs can still hinder inclusion despite training and resources (Swanson & Gettinger, 2016).

Kwok (2018) argue that in incorporating LGBTQ+-related content, teachers should focus on supporting LGBTQ+ youth, sexual identity, and addressing anti-LGBTQ+ language Embracing diversity and creating inclusive environments that foster acceptance and support for all students are crucial for LGBTQ+ student well-being and academic achievement.

Ensuring the Use of Preferred Names and Pronouns

Orr et al. (2015) state that acknowledging students' preferred names and pronouns is crucial for empowering them and fostering respect within the school community School leaders should discuss and honor transgender and gender-nonconforming students' name preferences, in alignment with legal protections like Title IX (GLSEN, 2016; NEA, 2016). Respecting students' chosen names is vital for their well-being and identity affirmation (McLemore, 2015), despite

potential familial challenges. Refusal to use preferred names can be seen as a microaggression, necessitating a culture of inclusivity and respect within schools (Foreman, 2019).

Implementing Inclusive Curricula

Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan (2018) states that incorporating LGBTQ+ perspectives in education is vital for validating students' identities and fostering a sense of belonging among LGBTQ+ individuals. By creating inclusive spaces and integrating diverse perspectives into the curriculum, educators meet students' social identity needs and empower a diverse student body (Jetten et al., 2017). Children's literature, categorized as "mirror" and "window" books, plays a crucial role in allowing students to identify with characters like themselves while also gaining empathy and understanding of others' experiences (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2018).

To Day et al, (2018), educators are pivotal in modeling acceptance, challenging stigmas related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, and promoting inclusivity in the classroom Fostering inclusive school climates that affirm SOGIE significantly reduces mental health risks for LGBTQ+ students and enhances educational outcomes for all students (Meyer et al., 2015; Kosciw et al., 2018). The transformative impact of inclusive educational practices on students' academic and social-emotional well-being underscores the importance of embracing diversity and creating safe, inclusive learning environments.

Teachers' challenges in creating inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ students

Day, Fish et al. (2019), consistently highlights the positive impact of inclusive environments on LGBTQ+ students' well-being and academic outcomes Such environments, characterized by acceptance and support in various school spaces like classrooms and Gay-Straight Alliance clubs, play a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging and promoting positive experiences for LGBTQ+ individuals (Cardinal, 2021). Peer support initiatives are also essential, emphasizing the importance of creating safe and accepting school climates that significantly impact the mental health and academic success of LGBTQ youth (Bos, 2017).

Day, Fish et al. (2019), added that the detrimental effects of hostile learning environments on LGBTQ+ students underscore the urgent need for school reform to mitigate adverse consequences such as decreased self-esteem, increased victimization, compromised mental health, and lower academic achievement. Teachers' roles in promoting understanding, empathy, and respect among students are crucial in creating safe and inclusive environments where LGBTQ+ students feel valued and respected, especially those who do not conform to traditional gender roles (GLSEN, 2012).

Swanson et al. (2016), Supportive educators and peer acceptance from straight allies are instrumental in challenging stereotypes, enhancing safety, and fostering positive outcomes for LGBTQ+ students. Disclosure of gender or sexuality to peers, strong friendships, and mentorship programs have been associated with improved academic performance, reduced harassment, and increased school engagement among LGBTQ+ youth (Shelton & Lester, 2018; Drevon et al., 2016). Inclusive environments that accept and support LGBTQ+ students lead to better academic performance, increased school engagement, and enhanced social- emotional well-being (Colvin et al., 2019; Day, Fish et al., 2019).

Theoretical Framework

The research integrates Social Identity Theory (SIT) and the Social Ecological Model (SEM) to explore teachers' acceptance of LGBTQ+ students. SIT, by Tajfel and Turner (1979), emphasizes how teachers' social identities, influenced by factors like gender and occupation, shape their attitudes and interactions with LGBTQ+ students. Teachers from inclusive groups tend to exhibit positive behaviors, contrasting those from conservative backgrounds who may show less acceptance. In contrast, the SEM, introduced by Bronfenbrenner (1979), provides a holistic view of human behavior, considering interactions across individual, interpersonal, and societal levels. Teachers' acceptance of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE) diversity is influenced by interactions within the school community, with supportive relationships and inclusive norms fostering LGBTQ+ inclusion. By combining SIT and SEM, the research aims to elucidate how teachers' acceptance of SOGIE diversity contributes to creating inclusive educational environments, offering a nuanced understanding of the factors shaping teachers' behaviors and promoting inclusivity.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed qualitative research design, following Creswell's (2018) recommendations for exploring topics with limited existing knowledge. Through in-depth interviews with purposively selected teacher-participants, the research aimed to delve into their experiences and attitudes toward SOGIE diversity and inclusivity for LGBTQ+ learners. Utilizing the phenomenological approach and the Colaizzi seven-step method for data analysis, the study sought to uncover commonalities in experiences and emotions related to students' SOGIE. Data analysis was conducted using R Shiny, enabling the generation of reports organized by relevant themes and codes, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives and insights.

Participants

The research participants in this study were eight (8) public Junior High School teachers, regardless of their SOGIE. Using purposive sampling, they were selected from Maltana National High School in Tampakan, South Cotabato, Philippines. These teachers had at least three (3) or more years of teaching experience and had handled LGBTQ+ students during their teaching careers at Maltana National High School which shows that they can best provide the needed information.

Research Instruments

The study employed a pre-prepared interview guide to achieve the research objectives and address the problem statement. This interview guide was developed through a thorough review of relevant studies in literature. Rigorous measures were taken to ensure the instrument's reliability and validity through a comprehensive validation process. The tool was validated by the Public Schools District Supervisor of the Division of General Santos City, a Master Teacher I of Fatima National High School in General Santos City, and the Director of the Cultural Affairs and Alumni Relations Office at Mindanao State University, General Santos City. The collaboration of these validators ensured a careful examination and validation of the interview guide, guaranteeing its effectiveness in collecting accurate and insightful data.

In this study, an in-depth interview approach was utilized to gather data from teacher-respondents. This approach offered the flexibility needed to delve deeper into their experiences, perspectives, and challenges related to students’ SOGIE.

Data Gathering Procedure

To gather data for the research, a systematic process was followed. Formal permissions were secured from relevant authorities, starting with the superintendent and progressing to the school principal. Informed consent was obtained from teacher-participants after detailed explanations, with each participant signing a consent form for recorded interviews. An interview guideline was provided to guide discussions on SOGIE, ensuring thorough preparation. Data collection occurred through individual interviews conducted by the researcher in a private, comfortable setting, encouraging open dialogue. Audio recordings were used to accurately capture conversations, promoting transparency and respecting participants' autonomy while maintaining consistency in data collection.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were rigorously observed throughout the research process. Measures included maintaining participant anonymity by safeguarding personal information, ensuring voluntary participation without coercion or consequences, and granting participants the right to withdraw at any point. Data privacy was upheld through secure storage and adherence to data protection regulations. Informed consent procedures were followed, providing detailed information and outlining participant rights. Trustworthiness was prioritized, with the researcher focusing on reliability through transparent and unbiased data collection and analysis to ensure the validity of the study's findings.

Data Analysis

To explore the distinct perspectives and lived experiences of teachers regarding LGBTQ+ sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGIE), a thematic analysis based on Colaizzi's (1978) descriptive method was conducted. This qualitative process involves a seven-step procedure that emphasizes close engagement with the data (Morrow, Rodriguez & King, 2015). Initially, the researcher critically read participant accounts to gain familiarity and identify significant statements related to the phenomenon. These statements were then analyzed to formulate meanings and clustered into emerging themes, while maintaining awareness of personal biases. An exhaustive description was developed and condensed into a fundamental structure, which was subsequently verified by returning it to the participants for feedback.

To further enrich the qualitative analysis, R Shiny was utilized for its strengths in interactive data visualization and statistical analysis (Chang et al., 2021). This decision highlighted the aim of leveraging R Shiny’s advanced tools to provide a nuanced exploration of the data, transforming complex analyses into accessible visual representations. Consequently, this approach not only deepened the analysis but also aligned with the goal of delivering a detailed and insightful investigation into the subject matter, ensuring clarity and depth in the findings.

Results and Discussion

Teachers Perception of Students' SOGIE

In the section focusing on teachers' perceptions of students' Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE), educators' responses to diverse identities in their classrooms are examined. The section highlights a collective dedication to fostering respect, empathy, and non-discrimination, shaping an inclusive educational setting. By exploring themes related to acknowledging and supporting students' diverse SOGIE, the section aims to uncover educators' attitudes and practices in embracing the spectrum of identities present among students. Through this exploration, the section seeks to provide insights into the challenges and opportunities inherent in establishing a supportive and inclusive educational environment that honors and respects the varied SOGIE identities of students.

Table 1. Teachers Perception on Students' SOGIE

Emerging Theme	Core Ideas	Qualitative Statement
Understanding SOGIE of Students	No discrimination based on chosen sexual orientation due to awareness;	*"Since aware kami, so wala naming discrimination sa kanilang piniling sexual orientation"*
	Classmates are aware and observant of each other's actions and SOGIE.	*"Makita mo naman doon kung may mali sa ginagawa nila. So far, sa klasi ang mga classmate naman nila aware naman kung ano sila"*
	Essential to respect students' identities without causing shame.	*"Very important to acknowledge and respect students regardless of their identity. Kasi identity nila yan. Atsaka, hindi sila pwede na mapahiya"*
	The inherent nature of SOGIE cannot be changed.	*"Kahit na ano pa siguro ang gawin natin, hindi na siguro sa magbago kasi that is part na sa kanila" and "nasa dugo na rin nila"*
	Accept students' feelings and actions, and take responsibility as a teacher,	*"Because as a teacher, you need to accept their feelings, you need to accept how they treat people, and you need to be responsible for their actions"*
	Guiding students towards understanding their identity as shaped by higher beliefs,	*"I tend to guide them, encourage them that they should have their identity according to how we are made by our father almighty"*
	Waiting for students to initiate conversation before providing advice or answers	*"I just wait for them to open up. I don't tell them what to do first. I tell them what to do first. But I wait for them to open up and talk to me before I interact with them, what they want me to advise or answer to their questions"*
	Respecting diverse SOGIE as a matter of personality	*"every student has his own or its own identity" and "it is very important to show respect in their identity because it is their personality"*
	Approach students' sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression (SOGIE) without judgment	*we are not in the authority to judge, there is no discrimination, and everyone deserves respect"*
	Acknowledge students without criticism, focusing on education.	*"It is important to recognize and acknowledge them and we are not here to criticize them, but to educate them"*
	adapting trends to relate to students' feelings,	*"teachers also adopt some of the trends so that we can also relate to the feelings of our students"*
	No judgment towards students' feelings and identities	*"For me, I don't judge the child because that's how they feel"*

Perceiving SOGIE of Students	Respecting students' self-identification	*"For me, there is no such... if how they identified themselves, that is how I perceive them to be as my students"*
	Students may be in denial or fear judgment while accepting their SOGIE,	*"They're still in the grey part of their lives on accepting themselves and there are still denial stages where they might not accept the community, or they might be afraid of their family, or they might be judged"*
	Validate students' reactions to ensure they feel valued and respected	*"We should validate that all their reactions are okay" and "we should make them feel that they are valued and respected"*
Promoting Inclusion	Treat all students equally, regardless of gender	*"kung anong treatment mo kay Pedro, ganun din kay Juan, regardless kung anong gender niya"*
	Equal treatment for all, Building connections by meeting students at their level during conversations	*"If they are good, it's okay. Kung ano ang treatment sa isa, yun din sa lahat. Equal lang. For one, it's good for everyone"*
	Implementing inclusive practices	*"Meaning, I don't promote gender bias, and my strategy, my practices, is that equal treatment for all"*
	Professional responsibilities	*"I can't impose my belief into there, but I think I have the right also to educate them on what is the proper identity they have to take"*
Promoting Equality	Waiting for students to initiate conversation before providing advice or answers	*"I just wait for them to open up. I don't tell them what to do first. I tell them what to do first. But I wait for them to open up and talk to me before I interact with them, what they want me to advise or answer to their questions"*
	Non-discrimination, Removing barriers to openness	*"teachers by far don't discriminate sa mga students, especially for those who are part of the LGBTQ+"*

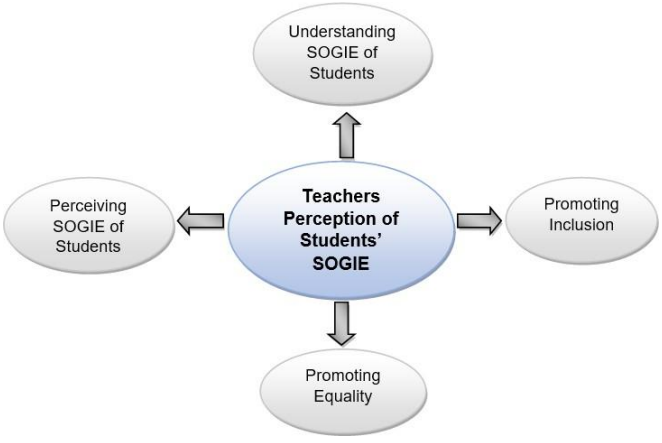

Figure 1. Emerging Themes on the Teachers Perception of Students' SOGIE

Theme 1: Understanding SOGIE of Students.

The passage highlights the increasing importance of understanding and respecting Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE) in educational environments. It emphasizes the crucial role educators and peers play in creating inclusive and welcoming spaces for all students. Teachers are now focusing on acknowledging and supporting diverse student identities to ensure that every individual feels valued and accepted. This shift towards awareness and respect for SOGIE aims to prevent discrimination, foster understanding, and promote a supportive classroom environment where all students are appreciated for who they are. Both Informants 1 and 8 underscore how this awareness contributes to a culture of inclusivity and mutual support among classmates. The discussion also touches on the fact that SOGIE is a natural and unchanging part of who a person is. Teachers recognize their role goes beyond just teaching; they are also there to support their students' emotional and social needs. Informant 2 emphasizes the importance of accepting students as they are and offering thoughtful guidance. Teachers also provide guidance that respects both personal beliefs and broader societal views without imposing these views on students. Informant 5 explains how they help students understand their identities in a respectful and inclusive way.

Respecting different SOGIE is also crucial for recognizing and valuing each student's unique personality. Informant 6 notes the importance of respecting each student's identity as a fundamental human right. Research by educational psychologists and sociologists, exemplified in the works of Dr. Kimberly A. Rapp and Dr. Elizabeth Meyer, underscores the positive impact of teachers fostering respect and understanding for students' Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE). Studies indicate that such efforts lead to increased feelings of safety and inclusion among students, positively influencing both academic performance and overall well-being (Rapp, 2020; Meyer, 2019). This research narrative emphasizes the importance of empathy, understanding, and profound respect in education regarding SOGIE. By cultivating environments where students feel valued and secure, teachers play a pivotal role in not only imparting academic knowledge but also in shaping a future where diversity and personal identity are deeply respected and celebrated.

Theme 2: Perceiving SOGIE of Students.

Educators are evolving their methods to engage with students regarding their Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE) with compassion and education, moving away from judgment or criticism. Teachers are striving to understand and affirm each student's individual identity, creating an educational environment that prioritizes understanding over condemnation. Informant 3 highlights the importance of recognizing students' identities and emphasizes education's role in cultivating an inclusive atmosphere that respects and nurtures every student's self-expression. Additionally, teachers are keeping up with contemporary trends to better connect with and understand their students' emotional experiences. Informant 3 talks about the importance of being updated with these trends to establish a more empathetic and relevant dialogue. This strategy helps teachers grasp the feelings and cultural contexts of their students, enhancing their ability to meet educational and emotional needs effectively.

Respecting students' self-identification is another critical aspect. Informant 7 emphasizes the need for educators to respect how students choose to identify themselves, considering this self-identification as crucial for effective interaction. This practice is vital for creating a sense of belonging and acceptance in the classroom.

Furthermore, empathy towards students' SOGIE is crucial. Informant 4 highlights the emotional complexities that some students navigate, such as dealing with denial or fear of judgment from their families or peers. These insights underline the necessity for educators to approach these situations with deep empathy and understanding. The insights from teachers on perceiving students' SOGIE reflect a comprehensive approach that is empathetic, understanding, and committed to providing education free from judgment. By acknowledging identities, adapting communication styles, respecting self-identification, and showing empathy, educators are crafting an environment where all students feel recognized and supported. The effectiveness of such strategies is supported by academic research, such as the works of Dr. Jody L. Herman and Dr. Caitlin Ryan. Herman's studies on gender identity in educational settings and Ryan's work on family acceptance and its impact on the health and well-being of LGBT youth both emphasize the positive outcomes of inclusive and supportive educational practices (Herman, 2013; Ryan, 2010).

Theme 3: Promoting inclusion.
Explores how teachers create classroom environments where every student feels respected and included. This approach involves equal treatment, active listening, and fostering respect, ensuring that education is accessible and supportive for all students, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

In the theme of "Promoting Inclusion," educators focus on ensuring that all students receive equal treatment and opportunities, regardless of gender. This approach is crucial in building a classroom environment that supports diversity and promotes equality. Informant 2 emphasizes the importance of providing consistent treatment to all students, illustrating this with the phrase, This highlights the necessity of fairness in student interactions. This principle of equal treatment is echoed by Informant 4, who states that what is good for one student should be good for all, thereby reinforcing the notion that equality forms the basis of all educational interactions and helps build meaningful connections among students.

Moreover, promoting gender equality is explicitly addressed by Informant 8, who asserts a commitment to non-biased educational practices and states, Informant 6 discusses the delicate balance of guidance and professional responsibilities, noting the importance of educating students on identity issues without imposing personal beliefs. This reflects a nuanced understanding of the educator's role in guiding students through their personal and social development in a respectful and supportive manner.

In conclusion, these educators highlight a committed approach to fostering an inclusive educational environment where equality and respect are paramount. Their insights underscore the importance of equal treatment, the promotion of gender equality, and the careful balance of providing guidance while respecting student autonomy. Research by scholars such as Banks (2016) supports these practices, demonstrating that inclusive educational strategies enhance student engagement and success. Banks' work emphasizes the critical role of educators in shaping environments that reflect and celebrate diversity, thus promoting a more equitable society.

Theme 4: Promoting Equality.
This focus on active listening and creating a respectful classroom environment, are key strategies employed by educators to foster an inclusive and equitable atmosphere for all students, including those from the LGBTQ+ community.
Informant 5 discusses the importance of active listening, a technique that involves waiting for students to initiate conversations before offering advice or responses. This approach allows students to feel heard and valued, encouraging them to share their thoughts and concerns in their own time, which can be

particularly empowering for those who may feel marginalized or hesitant to speak up. By prioritizing listening to immediate advice, educators create a space where students can express themselves freely and safely, promoting a sense of trust and respect.

Moreover, Informant 7 highlights the commitment to non-discrimination within the classroom, emphasizing that educators strive to remove any barriers to openness. This includes actively avoiding any form of bias against students based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. The emphasis on non-discrimination is crucial, as it underpins the school's broader commitment to equality and ensures that all students, regardless of their background or identity, can participate fully and confidently in their educational journey.

Educators' conscientious efforts emphasize active listening, and a firm stand against discrimination to create an inclusive school environment that upholds the dignity and rights of all students. Research by Greytak et al. (2016) confirms that schools fostering non-discrimination and emphasizing respectful communication enhance student safety and well-being, particularly for LGBTQ+ individuals, promoting a positive school climate and aligning with broader goals of equity and inclusion. Insights from teachers at Maltana National High School in Tampakan reveal a steadfast commitment to supporting students' Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE) by fostering respect, empathy, and eliminating discrimination, stressing the importance of recognizing each student's unique identity and creating a safe and inclusive learning space. These educators collectively advocate for inclusiveness and equality, ensuring that every student, regardless of their SOGIE, feels valued and supported. Their dedication aligns with the Inclusive Education Model's principles, emphasizing the acknowledgment of individual identities and the provision of equitable opportunities for all learners, fostering personal and academic growth while highlighting the critical role of inclusivity in education.

Table 2. Teachers' Support On Students' SOGIE in Terms of Implementing Anti-Bullying Policies That Recognize Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Emerging Theme	Core Ideas	Qualitative Statement
Advocacy for inclusive policies	Raising awareness	*"Meron kami orientation dito sa school, sir, about sa mga bullying."*
	Inclusive of all genders	*"Meron kami gender development and equality... Itong bullying policies ay para sa lahat ng gender, sir."*
	Unwavering support for the implementation of gender equality policies	*"I will support what is the implementation about the gender equality and without reservation."*
	Promote gender equality and challenge traditional gender roles	*"Para ma feel ng mga boys na ito talaga ang work naming, pantay."*
	Ensuring that the anti-bullying policy is clearly inclusive and addresses bullying concerns regardless of gender	*"The school has an anti-bullying policy. But it is not clear if that anti-bullying policy is for the other gender."*
	Emphasize the importance of continuously improving policies to address any gaps or limitations	*"The school has anti-bullying policy but it has no clear directive kulang ito by para sa other gender also.."*
	Active implementation of anti-bullying policies,	*"Meron pong anti-bullying policy sa school. And gina implement talaga naming sya sir."*
	The agreement and adherence to SOGIE-related policies	*"Lahat naman ay agree sa rules sa regulation sa classroom lalo na sa SOGIE."*
	Ensuring that all members of the	*"In our student handbook, this anti-bullying is*

Protection of Students' Rights	school community are aware of its existence and contents; respects and safeguards the dignity of every student	*nandoon talaga itong anti-bullying.."*
	Prioritize the well-being, dignity, and rights of all students, irrespective of their background, gender, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic	*"If there are students who are victims of bullying, we reprimand the students who are doing the act, especially bullying."*
	Ensuring equal protection and support for every student, irrespective of their SOGIE.	*"CPP, Child Protection Policy, is for all. No matter what is your identity, as long as you are part of the school I always remind them of the Anti-Bullying Act... and also their boundaries given that they are students."*



Figure 2. Emerging Themes on Teachers' Support on Students' SOGIE in Terms of Implementing Anti-Bullying Policies that Recognize Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Theme 1: Advocacy for Inclusive Policies.
It revolves around educators' efforts to ensure school policies are comprehensive and actively promote gender equality and protect all students. This advocacy is particularly evident in the ways schools address bullying through orientations and policy enhancements.

Educators are raising awareness about bullying with specific orientations aimed at educating students about its implications and harms. Informant 2 highlights the school's proactive approach in holding orientations focused on bullying. Furthermore, efforts are made to ensure these policies are inclusive of all genders, with Informant 3 mentioning the integration of gender development and equality into bullying policies.

Support for implementing gender equality policies is strong among educators. For example, Informant 3 expresses a commitment to supporting these measures without reservation. Additionally, efforts to break down gender stereotypes are underscored by Informant 4, who promotes gender equality to challenge traditional roles, ensuring boys feel included in these initiatives. However, challenges remain, particularly regarding policy clarity and applicability. Informant 5 notes that while the school has an anti-bullying policy, it's unclear whether this policy adequately covers all genders. Informant 7 suggests that while policies are in place, they often lack specific directives for full effectiveness across genders, highlighting the need for ongoing improvements in policy formulation.

These educators highlight a committed move towards more inclusive and effective school policies. The significance of these strategies is supported by educational policy research, such as the works of Judith Butler, who discusses the impact of inclusive policies on gender norms (Butler, 2011), and Michael Kimmel, who explores the prevention of bullying in schools (Kimmel, 2018). Their research emphasizes that comprehensive, clear, and inclusive policies are essential for protecting and including all students, fostering an environment of equality and respect.

Theme 2: Protection of Students' Rights.

Educators emphasize the proactive enforcement of anti-bullying policies and the upholding of dignity and rights for all students, which is essential for creating a safe and supportive school environment. Teachers play a key role in the active implementation of these policies. As Informant 1 illustrates, schools are not just adopting anti-bullying measures but are actively enforcing them to ensure a safe environment for students. This proactive enforcement is vital for maintaining a positive and secure school climate.

Further, adherence to SOGIE-related policies is crucial. According to Informant 3, these policies are clearly outlined in the student handbook, ensuring that all school community members are aware of and understand their importance. This helps protect every student's dignity and promotes an inclusive atmosphere.

The protection of students also involves addressing incidents of bullying effectively. Informant 6 highlights how schools prioritize the well-being and rights of bullying victims, ensuring that offenders are appropriately reprimanded, and that justice is promptly served.

Moreover, as Informant 8 notes, the Child Protection Policy (CPP) embodies a comprehensive approach to safeguarding student rights, ensuring equal protection and support for every student, regardless of their identity. This inclusive policy underscores the school's commitment to a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, reinforcing safety and equality for all.

In conclusion, the dedication of educators to enforce these protective policies underscores their pivotal role in fostering a safe educational environment. This approach is supported by research, such as that conducted by Olweus (1993) and more recent studies by Espelage and Swearer (2016). These studies affirm that well- implemented school-based bullying prevention programs can significantly reduce bullying behaviors and enhance the overall school climate.

Table 3. Teachers' Support on Students' SOGIE in Terms of Setting Up Systems for Reporting Harassment

Emerging Theme	Core Ideas	Qualitative Statement
Creating Supportive Framework for	Structured response and resolution process	*"If meron man, as adviser, kami po muna na adviser nag aayos. If hindi ma resolve, ererefer na ito sa guidance naming at kung hindi parin, iaakyat ito sa principal."*
	Step in the school's policy for addressing issues	*"First, it should be settled inside the classroom"*
	Having established mechanisms for reporting, step-by-step approach	*"I report about the bullying, sir, about sa mga SOGIE natin. So, sometimes meron. Yes, yes, meron harassment."*
	Structured system for reporting and channeling incidents	*"We have our own system of channeling and reporting incidents whether that is SOGIE or not related."*

Harassment reporting in School	Handling reports of harassment	*"They are well-informed of the policy that if ever there are harassments being done to them, they have to inform the teacher immediately so that it will be acted upon."*
	Importance of communication and reassurance	*"I talk to them that if they have problem, you share to me or to other and don't be afraid in sharing your thoughts and feelings."*
Creating a responsive framework	Multi-tiered support system designed to address and resolve complaints effectively;	*"Here in our school, the first step, if there is a complaint about that, is the teacher and the students, then teacher and parents, teacher together with the advisor. Teacher and parents together with our guidance counselor."*
	Structured pathways available for students and parents to address such issues,	*"The school has system of reporting harassment and discrimination."*
	Escalation process involving various school authorities	*"If the guidance counselor can't do it, teacher together with the parents, with the guidance counselor, together with the prefect of the school."*
	Allowing students to seek help from any teacher they feel comfortable with.	*"If ang students meron problema ngunit hindi siya comfortable magsabi sa kanyang adviser, pwede siyang mag open up sa ibang teachers."*
	Alternative communication methods	*"If they can't say it in person, we encourage them to chat or text."*



Figure 3. Emerging Themes on Teachers' Support on Students' SOGIE in Terms of Setting-Up Systems for Reporting Harassment

Theme 1: Creating Supportive Framework for Harassment Reporting in School. Underscores the importance of structured and communicative approaches educators employ to effectively handle harassment within educational settings.

At the core of this system is an internal resolution mechanism, as outlined by Informant 1, who describes a process where advisers first attempt to address issues, escalating them to the guidance department and, if unresolved, to the principal. This tiered approach ensures that problems are addressed promptly and at the closest level to where they occur. Informant 8 reinforces this by emphasizing the importance of trying to settle matters within the classroom before involving higher authorities, which helps in quick resolution and minimizes disruptions.

To support this internal mechanism, schools have established structured reporting systems. For instance, Informant 2 discusses specific procedures for reporting bullying incidents related to SOGIE, highlighting that these mechanisms are in place and active. Informant 5 further confirms the existence of a structured system for documenting and channeling incidents, ensuring all reports are formally recorded and followed up.

Communication is a pivotal element of this framework. According to Informant 6, students are well-informed about the policies and encouraged to report any incidents of harassment promptly. This ensures immediate action and reinforces the support system in place. Informant 7 speaks about fostering an environment of openness, encouraging students to freely share their concerns, assuring them that their voices are heard and acted upon.

These teacher informants' insights reveal a layered approach to managing harassment reporting in schools, combining structured processes with open communication. Such a system not only facilitates swift action but also supports the emotional and psychological well-being of students. This approach aligns with recent research, such as the findings by Espelage (2014), who emphasizes that effective harassment prevention and reporting systems contribute significantly to creating safe school environments. Additionally, Ttofi and Farrington's (2011) meta-analysis supports the effectiveness of school-based anti-bullying programs, highlighting that well-structured and properly communicated policies are crucial in reducing bullying and improving school climate.

Theme 2: Creating a Responsive Framework.
Focuses on the structured and empathetic strategies that schools use to manage complaints of harassment and discrimination effectively. This approach involves both escalation and mediation strategies to ensure that all complaints are addressed in a manner that supports the well-being of the students.

The escalation strategy in place is multi-tiered, beginning with the teacher and the student, and potentially involving parents, advisors, and the guidance counselor as needed. Informant 3 describes a process where issues are first addressed at the teacher-student level and then escalated to include more stakeholders, such as parents and school counselors, to ensure a comprehensive approach to resolving complaints. This system underscores the school's commitment to addressing issues thoroughly and involves various authorities to provide multiple perspectives and solutions.

Additionally, the school has structured pathways for reporting harassment and discrimination, ensuring that these serious issues are addressed through formal and recognized channels. This structured approach is crucial for maintaining an orderly and effective response system that respects the rights and dignity of all involved.

Mediation strategies also play a vital role in this framework. Informant 4 highlights the flexibility of this system, where students have the option to seek help from any teacher, they feel comfortable with, not just their assigned adviser. This ensures that students can approach someone they trust, facilitating more open and effective communication.

The insights from these educators reveal a layered and thoughtful approach to handling complaints within schools, balancing structured escalation with flexible mediation strategies. This dual approach not only ensures that issues are addressed efficiently and thoroughly but also supports the emotional comfort of students, allowing them to seek help in a way that feels safe to them.

Research supports the effectiveness of such comprehensive response frameworks in schools. According to Cornell and Limber (2015), well-designed reporting and mediation systems significantly enhance the capacity of schools to manage conflicts and reduce bullying, reinforcing the importance of these methods in creating a supportive school environment. In addition, by prioritizing the emotional well-being and safety of students through effective complaint handling, schools can proactively address issues, build positive relationships, and

create a conducive learning environment for all.

Table 4. Teachers' Support on Students' SOGIE in Terms of Providing Teachers with Proper Training

Emerging Theme	Core Ideas	Qualitative Statement
Enhancing School Climate	School's initiative	*"Meron pong school base gender and development, naga conduct sila during capacity building."*
	Personal growth in awareness	*"Effective naman sya sir para sa akin. Naging anu sya, naging aware ako sa kung anong nilalaman nitong SOGIE."*
	Academic exposure serves as a form of professional development	*"In my PhD in SKSU, we have our subject, gender and development, one subject in one semester."*
	Effective professional development on SOGIE	*"We are very much oriented about what are the things that we should not do inside the classroom with regards to the students, dealing with the students."*
	Equipping teachers with the knowledge	*'We had a topic there about gender and equality. About the rights of the children.'*
	Lack of formal training on SOGIE	*'wala siyang formal talaga na training.'*
	More in-depth training	*"It was just one topic, SOGIE. But what we talked about was just the introduction"*
	Need for continued education on SOGIE issues	*"We are still trying to educate ourselves."*
	Gap in professional development opportunities focused on SOGIE	*"I haven't joined any professional development about SOGIE."*
	Lack of depth and focus specifically on SOGIE-related issues	*"The NSET, there are the anti-bullying, they tackle the anti-bullying, but it is not that, what is it? It is not that deep and it is not that focused on SOGIE."*
	Superficial approach to SOGIE-specific content	*"About sa sex… sa ano lang, sir, sa gender and development, pero for the, ano, (SOGIE) parang, ano, light light lang.*
	Area for improvement to better support LGBTQ+ students	*So far, as I remember sir, there's no topic being discuss about or focus in SOGIE."*

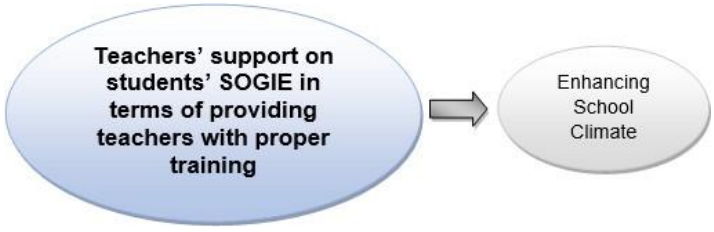

Figure 4. Emerging Theme on Teachers' Support on Students' SOGIE in Terms of Providing Teachers with Proper Training

Theme 1: Enhancing School Climate.

Strengthening the school climate involves creating a more inclusive, supportive, and aware educational environment, particularly in addressing the needs and challenges faced by LGBTQ+ students. This effort is rooted in providing teachers with thorough training and continuous professional development on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE). The aim is to move beyond superficial treatments of SOGIE-specific content towards a deep, nuanced understanding that bridges existing gaps in professional development. By committing to this ongoing educational process, schools can foster personal growth and awareness among educators, laying the foundation for a climate of inclusivity and support. This holistic approach not only benefits LGBTQ+ students but also enriches the educational environment for all students, enhancing the school climate as a place of learning and growth for everyone.

At the heart of this dialogue is Informant 1, who brings to light the efficacy of school-based initiatives in fostering initial awareness and exposure to SOGIE. At the heart of this dialogue is Informant 1, who brings to light the efficacy of school-based initiatives in fostering initial awareness and exposure to SOGIE. This educator's reflection on participating in capacity-building activities and engaging with hired resource persons underscores the transformative power of such initiatives in enhancing personal awareness and pedagogical practices related to SOGIE.

Similarly, Informant 8's journey through formal education, specifically a gender and development course during their Ph.D., anchors the argument for the foundational role of academic exposure in embedding SOGIE concepts within the professional development of educators. These accounts collectively stress the importance of initial exposure to SOGIE as a cornerstone for building an educational environment that is both inclusive and supportive. The narrative further unfolds through Informant 3, who shares insights into the practical application of SOGIE education within professional development frameworks. By highlighting orientations around appropriate behaviors and discussions on gender and equality, this informant signals the existence of SOGIE-focused professional development that, despite its presence, requires deeper engagement and broader coverage to support LGBTQ+ students fully. Informants 4 and 6 then guide us into the challenges and gaps in formal training and professional development concerning SOGIE.

These educators articulate a compelling need for ongoing educational efforts, from the acknowledgment of minimal formal training to the critique of anti-bullying programs for their lack of depth and focus on SOGIE. Such efforts are essential for equipping educators with a comprehensive understanding and the capability to navigate the complexities of SOGIE, ultimately fostering a genuinely inclusive educational setting. Within this context, Informant 7’s perspective on the importance of inclusivity training shines a light on the evolving understanding of gender. This reflection on the benefits of inclusivity training beyond traditional gender binaries encapsulates the essence of contemporary SOGIE education, emphasizing the need for an educational paradigm that embraces the full spectrum of gender diversity. Moreover, Informants 2 and 5 voice their concerns over the superficial treatment of SOGIE-specific content, calling for a more in-depth exploration and focused discussions on SOGIE topics.

These observations underscore a crucial demand for an educational approach that transcends rapid treatments, aiming for a curriculum that addresses SOGIE issues with the requisite depth, focus, and sensitivity. Reflecting on the insights shared by teachers at Maltana National High School, there's a clear need for an integrated approach to SOGIE education. This approach calls for raising awareness, providing comprehensive training, and filling educational gaps to create a supportive environment for LGBTQ+ students, benefiting the entire

school community. Recent studies support this approach, showing how inclusive education practices can improve the school climate for all students. For example, Jones et al. (2016) highlight the importance of understanding and supporting LGBTQ+ identities in academic frameworks. Similarly, Smith and Johnson (2018) emphasize the role of inclusive practices in promoting a sense of belonging among LGBTQ+ students, leading to better academic outcomes.

Furthermore, research by Garcia et al. (2019) and Williams et al. (2020) underscores the positive impact of inclusive curriculum and supportive school environments on LGBTQ+ students' mental health and academic achievement. These findings reinforce the need for schools to embrace diversity and create inclusive environments where all students feel accepted and supported.

Table 5. Teachers' Support on Students' SOGIE in Terms of Ensuring the Use of Preferred Names and Pronouns

Emerging Theme	Core Ideas	Qualitative Statement
Fostering an Environment of Respect and Inclusivity	Opting for first or last names as a universal approach to address students.	*"I don't ask them kung anong pronoun ang gusto nila kasi dito sa school, I usually call them by their first name or last name."*
	Uniform use of first names for all students to foster familiarity and equality	*"Kung ano yung first name nila, yun yung tawag ko. First name basis."*
	Using last names for all students as a professional standard	*"Regardless of their gender or how they wanted to be called, I call them by their last name."*
	Uses students' names for addressing them.	*"I prefer to call them by their names."*
	general practice of using last names for inclusivity	*"We only use two pronouns. He or she... Just to be safe and for the students in general, we call them by their last name."*
	Use of formal titles and family names to maintain respect and neutrality	*"In Maltana National high school, if you enter here as gay, you're still a he... it's the family name. Mr. Buenavista, Mr. Jose"*
	Directly inquiring about students' preferred names or titles, with a default to last names for safety and comfort	*"I ask them what, or how should I address them... they added also that if I will call them miss, it is ok also to them... but sometimes, to be safe, ginagamit na talaga yung last name."*
Balancing Inclusivity with Policy Adherence	Adhering to birth certificate names and biological gender for student addresses in high school.	*"I should address them according to their biological name such as in their birth certificate... But since they are still in high school, so it's better to address them according to their biological gender."*

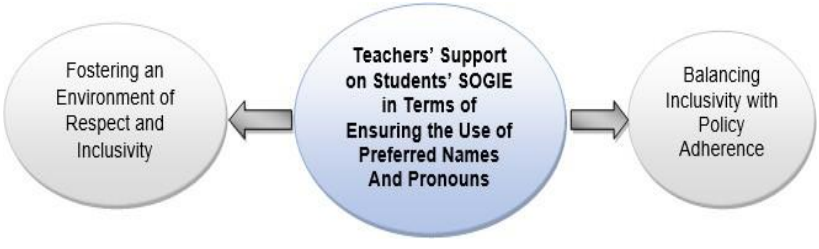

Figure 5. Emerging Themes on Teachers' Support on Students' SOGIE in Terms of Ensuring the Use of Preferred Names and Pronouns

Theme 1: Fostering an Environment of Respect and Inclusivity.

This concept revolves around implementing strategies prioritizing respect, inclusivity, and acknowledging each student's identity as fundamental to promoting a positive and welcoming school environment. Educators aim to create a climate where all students feel respected, valued, and comfortable Through various approaches— from the uniform use of first or last names to promote familiarity and equality to directly inquiring about students' preferred names or titles. Such practices reflect a commitment to respecting individual preferences and contribute to a broader effort to enhance the overall school climate, making it a more inclusive and supportive space for every student.

The array of educator strategies for using preferred names and pronouns unveils a thoughtful, layered approach to nurturing respect and inclusivity. Informants 1, 2, 5, and 6 prefer universal naming conventions, which they view as a straightforward means to foster community while upholding professionalism, sidestepping the complexities tied to gender identity.

These observations underscore a crucial demand for an educational approach that transcends cursory treatments, aiming for a curriculum that addresses SOGIE issues with the requisite depth, focus, and sensitivity.

On the other hand, Informants 3, 4, and 7 demonstrate a more deliberate stance, opting for last names or formal titles as a gesture of respect, simultaneously ensuring safety and maintaining decorum; notably, Informant 7 actively seeks out students' naming preferences, underscoring a personalized approach to respect.

The theme of fostering an environment of respect and inclusivity is evident in the strategies employed by educators to create a positive and welcoming school climate. The informants' perspectives showcase a range of approaches, each with its own considerations. Some prioritize universal naming conventions, using first or last names to promote familiarity and equality. Others take a more deliberate stance, opting for last names or formal titles as a gesture of respect and maintaining decorum. Notably, there are instances where educators actively seek out students' naming preferences, demonstrating a personalized approach to respect.

Ultimately, these strategies reflect a commitment to acknowledging and valuing each student's identity while contributing to a broader effort to enhance the school climate. By prioritizing respect and inclusivity, educators strive to create a safe and supportive space where all students feel respected, valued, and comfortable.

Balancing Inclusivity with Policy Adherence. The challenge is finding a middle ground between promoting inclusivity and adhering to standard policies. Specifically, it highlights the tension between institutional directives and the affirmation of personal identity.

Distinctly, Informant 8 leans on standard policies, aligning with birth certificate names and biological gender, a choice that spotlights the friction between institutional directives and the affirmation of personal identity.

Educators' diverse approaches to honoring students' preferred names and pronouns underscore a profound dedication to cultivating an inclusive and respectful educational setting, resonating with research like McLemore's (2015) study, which highlights the positive impact of recognizing chosen names on the mental well-being and identity affirmation of transgender youth. These practices are foundational in prioritizing the mental health and identity development of all students, going beyond policy to provide crucial support for student well-being.

Aligning with educators' experiences, this emphasis on ongoing dialogue, policy evolution, and comprehensive SOGIE awareness programs within educational frameworks stresses the urgent need for policies prioritizing SOGIE awareness to foster a genuinely inclusive, supportive, and respectful learning environment. This nuanced understanding advocates for proactive inclusivity, emphasizing that acknowledging students' preferred names and pronouns is essential not just for compliance but for promoting mental health, well-being, and acceptance, urging educational leaders and policymakers to integrate SOGIE awareness and respect for individual identity into educational policies and practices to ensure every student feels valued, understood, and supported.

Table 6. Teachers' Support on Students' SOGIE in Terms Implementing Inclusive Curricula

Emerging Theme	Core Ideas	Qualitative Statement
Promoting Inclusive Education	Emphasizing in lessons that all genders can excel in any field	*"Na touch ko din siya sa lesson lalo na sa mga students ko na mga gay na this kind of work is not only for female but for all gender. With this na highlight ko sila with their skills and craft at dahil ditto they have the opportunity to shine and be the leader"*
	Integrating gender inclusivity into lessons shows students that careers and roles are not gender-specific.	*"You can say that based on the model, she can be the photographer. She can be the makeup artist. Or she can be the model... Hindi lang pala sya pang lalaki o pambabae."*
	Incorporates LGBT+ topics in research to understand students' experiences	*"Sometimes, I use the LGBTQ in my research topics, different practical one. Kasi gusto ko rin malaman yung experiences nila."*
	SOGIE topics are occasionally covered in lessons related to sexuality.	*"Whenever we are talking about sexuality, so there are lessons sometimes that tend to touch about sexuality, so sometimes SOGIE is being tackled."*
	Embeds gender sensitivity and fair treatment in all educational activities and assessments	*"I always include in the lessons, in the curriculum, the gender sensitivity, and I mean fair treatment to everyone in the activities, in the recitation, in both types of assessments.*
Respectful Learning Environments	LGBTQ+ students are actively involved and often take leadership roles	*"Mostly, yung mga LGBT namin. Sila yung mga participative sa amin. For example, meron kaming mass dance. Sila pa yung mga leader naming*
	Welcoming all students without limitation to their abilities	*"Everybody is free and welcome when it comes to their studies dito sa school... I promote already an inclusive environment."*
	Perspective that fostering an inclusive environment within their classroom comes naturally and without issues.	*"I as a teacher don't find any challenge to create an inclusive environment because there is no problem at all... you already have an inclusive environment for them at the beginning of the school year."*

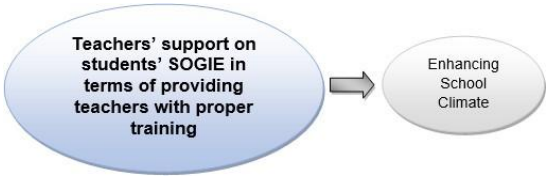

Figure 6. Emerging Themes on Teachers' Support on Students' SOGIE in Terms Implementing Inclusive Curricula

*Theme 1: Promoting Inclusive Education***.**

Educators are embracing inclusivity in their teaching methods, empowering students and promoting a curriculum that celebrates diversity across genders and sexual orientations. They are actively integrating lessons that challenge traditional gender norms, demonstrating that career opportunities and roles are not limited by gender stereotypes. For example, Informant 1 focuses on empowering students by highlighting their skills and leadership potential in traditionally gender-specific fields, boosting self-esteem and expanding students' career horizons. Similarly, Informant 4 uses practical examples to show that roles like photographers, makeup artists, or models are not restricted by gender, emphasizing that professions are open to all individuals, irrespective of gender.

Furthermore, the integration of LGBT+ topics into research is another facet of this inclusive approach. Informant 7 discusses using LGBTQ+ themes in research topics to better understand the experiences of these students, thereby informing teaching practices and making them more relevant and supportive of LGBTQ+ students' realities.

Gender sensitivity is also a significant focus in the curriculum. Informant 6 notes that SOGIE topics are occasionally discussed in lessons related to sexuality, which helps normalize these conversations and educates students on diversity and inclusion. Informant 8 elaborates on embedding gender sensitivity into all educational activities, ensuring fair treatment in every aspect of schooling—from classroom discussions and group activities to assessments. This systematic inclusion helps cultivate an environment where students learn to respect and value diversity from an early age.

Educators are actively fostering inclusivity by integrating diversity values alongside academic content, a practice supported by researchers like Banks (2016) advocating multicultural education to create inclusive classrooms. Their commitment to inclusive education aligns with societal trends towards diversity acceptance, resonating with Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory, which underscores the importance of validating individuals' identities. By creating inclusive environments, educators address students' social identity needs, fostering belonging and empowerment among diverse student populations (Jetten et al., 2017), ultimately enhancing academic outcomes while promoting social cohesion and equity in schools.

Theme 2: Respectful Learning Environments.

It highlights the efforts of educators to cultivate classrooms that not only welcome diversity but actively embrace the contributions of all students, including those from the LGBTQ+ community.

Educators are focused on creating environments where LGBTQ+ students are not only included but are also often seen in leadership roles. Informant 2 shares that LGBTQ+ students are highly participative and frequently lead activities such as mass dances, indicating that these students are recognized and valued for their contributions, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment.

Additionally, the commitment to inclusivity extends beyond specific groups; it encompasses all students, irrespective of their abilities. Informant 3 emphasizes that everyone is welcome and free to engage in their studies, promoting a genuinely inclusive school environment. This approach ensures that no student feels excluded or limited by their abilities, reinforcing the school's inclusive ethos.

Moreover, some educators, like Informant 5, express that creating an inclusive environment comes naturally and without significant challenges. This perspective suggests that inclusivity can be an integral part of the classroom culture from the beginning of the school year, establishing a norm where diversity is not just accepted but is a baseline expectation.

The educators' proactive stance in creating inclusive learning environments underscores a commitment to involving diverse student groups in leadership roles and embedding inclusivity throughout the educational experience. This dedication aligns with Nieto and Bode's (2018) research emphasizing schools' pivotal role in advancing educational equity and inclusivity, noting that fostering such environments benefits marginalized groups while enhancing the educational journey for all students, ultimately fostering a more just and cohesive society.

The theme of "Teachers' Perception on Students' SOGIE" signifies a substantial progression towards more inclusive educational environments that celebrate diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity. Teachers are implementing multifaceted strategies to ensure that LGBTQ+ students feel valued, respected, and included, including enforcing sensitive anti-bullying policies, establishing supportive frameworks, and delivering curricula that challenge gender norms. By prioritizing professional development, utilizing mediation strategies, and promoting inclusive educational practices, educators are not only preventing discrimination but also empowering students and creating a climate where identities are affirmed, rights are safeguarded, and research indicates positive impacts on academic and social outcomes for students.

Teachers' Challenges in Creating Inclusive Environments for LGBTQ+ Students

Creating a school where every LGBTQ+ student feels welcome and understood is a goal many teachers are working towards. They're finding that more students are okay with having LGBTQ+ classmates and are stepping up to support each other. However, teachers still face challenges like overcoming old biases and ensuring enough resources for everyone. This short look into their efforts shows how teachers are trying hard to make schools a place where everyone can feel safe and valued, no matter who they are.

Table 7. Teachers' Challenges in Creating Inclusive Environments for LGBTQ+ Students

Emerging Theme	Core Ideas	Qualitative Statement
Inclusive Educational Ecosystem	The school guidance supports students' freedom to choose their comfort level, including aspects like hairstyle, within school policies.	*"Yun na nga sir, sabi nga ng guidance natin na… na they are free to choose kung saan sila comfortable"*
	Children are accepting and accustomed to having LGBTQ classmates, normalizing their presence.	*"Kasi ang mga bata naman ay tanggap at sanay na sa mga kaklasi nila. Na nonormalize nalang na may kasama silang member of the LGBTQ"*
	Acceptance and contentment with the gender assigned to them at birth.	*"I don't see any hindrances in supporting these students because students have understood their limitation and they are grounded at their homes."*
	There is acceptance among the students themselves.	*"Here in the school, the school and the teachers are very supportive especially if that is for the good of the student's welfare."*
	Minimal support or changes related to gender inclusivity.	*"If meron man very minimal lang. Gaya nga ng sinabi ko dati yung sa CR naming. Gender neutral na sya."*

Inclusive Educational Ecosystem	Distancing from gossip and focuses on their role in promoting equality. Expressing concern about resource disparities among student groups but hope for improvements support system to cater to all learners' needs.	*"Hindi ko nandito para diyan... So dapat equal... para sa akin, ano yung performance ng bata. So, doon ako So, kailangan talaga namin yung mga materials na kailangan namin gagamitin sa pagtuturo. And then, since marami sila and we have limited resources, so doon na nagka-problema, sir"*
	Neither their colleagues nor the administrators exhibit negative reactions or biases when promoting inclusivity among students, regardless of gender.	*"from my colleague or from the administrator wala nman pong negative reaction or biases when it comes in promoting inclusivity sa mga students natin regardless their gender"*
	All students are allowed to join and participate in activities without any barriers;	*"Even in the room, in the activities, there is no barrier."*
	Lack of understanding and acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities among some individuals	*"There are really people who will say that because they do not understand what is the point or what they are."*
	Accepting unconventional expressions of gender or appearance might be challenging.	*"Because there in Maltana National High school, since it is still considered a rural area. So, they don't really accept really pagsexy, pangbabae wearing clothes in the room."*
	Colleagues are supportive of providing equality to all students regardless of gender.	*"The school and my coteachers are very supportive and they usually emphasize that we must provide equality to all students children regardless of their gender."*
	LGBTQ students actively lead and engage in activities, including training their peers.	*"Sila yung mga participative sa amin... Sila pa yung mga leader namin... Sila yung binibigyan namin ng chance na mag-train din sa classmate nila. To involve sa environment ng mga classmate nila."*
	Acknowledging biases against LGBTQ students and emphasizes the importance of removing barriers to their academic success.	*"Kasi, isa yung maka-affect sa academic ng bata. Kasi parang ma-behind sila, kasi, uyy… ayaw ko sa kanya. Ngayon, lalo na sa mga group-group, ayaw ko sa kanya kasi ganito siya."*
Supportive Educational Ecosystem	Commending co-teachers for their understanding and decision-making skills.	*"But with my co-teachers here, wala naman po barriers siguro. Lahat ng teachers dito, sir, sa Maltana National High School is very understandable sa mga decision-making"*
	Confidence in their ability to handle any potential challenges that may arise.	*"Wala ko na-encounter, and for me, if ever na meron, I think I can handle it. None"*
	Strong sense of unity and support among the teachers in their school.	*"For me, na, kasi parang lahat ng mga teachers doon, they are very united about gender sensitivity and then gender identity."*
	Not encountered significant challenges or difficulties in a particular area.	*"So far, based on my experience, I have not yet seen big challenges in that area."*
	They do not see a need to navigate or address any specific issues related to inclusion.	*"There is no challenge. I mean, I don't see it as a challenge or problem."*
	No significant challenges encountered;	*"So parang wala wala man ako na-encounter na challenge talaga"*
	Prioritizing the well-being and interests of students.	*"In DepEd, the mandate is we need to be pro students."*
	Sense of equality and inclusivity	*"Parang wala. Parang wala. Equal sila lahat"*

	among all students in their school;	
	LGBTQ+ students and others behave well in the school environment.	*"And they are not entitled one. Because their goal is to finish their studies."*



Figure 7. Emerging Themes on Teachers' Challenges in Creating Inclusive Environments for LGBTQ+ Students

Theme 1: Inclusive Educational Ecosystem.
The theme encapsulates schools' continual efforts and obstacles in fostering environments that embrace diversity, especially concerning sexual orientation and gender identity, aiming to normalize LGBTQ+ presence and promote a culture of acceptance and equality within educational settings. Informant 1 highlights the school's backing of students' choices such as hairstyle preferences, reflecting a shift towards increased personal freedom within school policies, alongside growing familiarity with LGBTQ+ classmates among children. Despite these positive developments, challenges persist notably in advancing gender inclusivity measures like the introduction of gender-neutral bathrooms, marking a significant but incremental step in enhancing inclusivity within schools.

Within the broader educational environment, Informant 3 speaks to the necessity of equal treatment and the importance of resources in teaching effectively, highlighting that disparities in resources can impact the support system for all learners. This points to the need for adequately equipped schools to ensure that no student group is left behind. Meanwhile, Informant 5 reinforces the idea of barrier-free participation in school activities, which contributes to an inclusive atmosphere. However, acceptance issues still surface, as noted by Informant 8, who points out the difficulties in challenging traditional gender norms and acceptance in more conservative or rural settings.

While progress is evident in creating inclusive educational ecosystems, significant challenges remain. Educators are tasked with not only fostering acceptance among students but also ensuring that the school infrastructure supports these inclusive goals. Research by scholars such as Kosciw et al. (2018) supports these observations, highlighting the importance of inclusive policies and practices in promoting positive outcomes for LGBTQ+ students. Their work shows that inclusive environments can significantly enhance student well-being and academic performance, underscoring the critical need for ongoing efforts in this area.

Theme 2: Supportive Educational Ecosystem.
It highlights the proactive and unified efforts by educators to foster an inclusive and supportive environment within schools, particularly focusing on gender sensitivity and inclusivity. Teachers play a pivotal role in this ecosystem, demonstrating a robust support system and effectively navigating and overcoming potential challenges related to inclusivity.

Informant 3 praises the understanding and decision-making abilities of their co-teachers at Maltana National High School, emphasizing that there are no significant barriers within their teaching community regarding decisions affecting gender sensitivity and inclusivity. This sentiment is echoed by

Informant 8, who expresses confidence in handling any potential challenges that may arise, suggests a proactive and capable approach to maintaining a supportive educational environment.

Moreover, there is a strong sense of unity among the teachers, as noted by an informant who observes that all teachers are united in their approach to gender sensitivity and identity. This collective commitment is crucial in creating a consistent and supportive atmosphere for all students.

In terms of navigating challenges, some informants indicate that they have not encountered significant difficulties in promoting inclusivity. Informant 6 shares that based on their experience, there have been no major challenges in this area, while Informant 7 also confirms a lack of significant challenges, reinforcing the notion that the current strategies and support systems in place are effective.

When it comes to overcoming challenges, the focus remains on prioritizing students' well-being and interests. Informant 6 mentions the Department of Education's mandate to be pro-student, which aligns with efforts to ensure equality and inclusivity across the student body. Informant 7 observes a sense of equality among all students, indicating that inclusivity efforts have been successful in creating an equitable learning environment. Furthermore, the behavior of LGBTQ+ students and their peers is noted to be conducive to a focused and respectful school environment, as all students are primarily concerned with completing their education.

Educators are instrumental in establishing supportive and inclusive environments within schools, emphasizing gender sensitivity and inclusivity to cultivate positive educational atmospheres. Their collective efforts, supported by research like Kosciw et al. (2018), highlight the profound impact of inclusive school climates on student well-being and academic success, especially for marginalized groups. Despite persistent challenges, educators actively work towards creating inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ students, aiming to normalize their presence and foster cultures of acceptance and equality through initiatives like supporting personal choices and implementing gender-neutral facilities. While progress is evident, obstacles such as limited resources, cultural resistance, and the need for enhanced gender inclusive support remain, underscoring the ongoing importance of educators in aligning school policies and infrastructure with inclusive goals. Recent studies by Day et al. (2018) and Greytak et al. (2016) further emphasize the critical role of LGBTQ+ inclusive environments in enhancing student safety, reducing bullying, and bolstering academic outcomes, reinforcing the continuous efforts in education to create welcoming spaces where every student feels valued and supported, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation

Conclusion and Recommendation

The following conclusions were made.

1. The perceptions of teachers on students' SOGIE at Maltana National High School in Tampakan, South Cotabato, indicate a solid dedication to inclusivity within the educational framework. The teachers at this institution prioritize creating a classroom environment that champions respect and empathy for diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions. Such a supportive atmosphere not only facilitates the integration of all students into the community but also is fundamental for their emotional and academic progress. Furthermore, the educators' commitment to fostering open dialogue and a trusting environment ensures that students can freely express their identities, contributing to their personal growth. This approach also upholds fairness and equality, thereby underlining the school's focus on the holistic well-being of its students.

2. Maltana National High School demonstrates a strong commitment to fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all students, regardless of their SOGIE, through solid anti-bullying policies and ongoing professional development for teachers on LGBTQ+ support. The school ensures that every student feels supported and safe by maintaining a robust system for reporting and addressing bullying incidents. While challenges exist in aligning inclusivity with school policies, particularly concerning students' preferred names and pronouns, the school's dedication to respecting individual identities within institutional guidelines showcases their unwavering commitment to inclusivity. Overall, Maltana National High School is actively advancing towards establishing an inclusive and supportive educational environment that effectively addresses the complexities of supporting students' SOGIE.

3. The teacher feedback from Maltana National High School highlights a dedicated effort to create a welcoming environment for LGBTQ+ students, aiming to overcome biases and provide equal opportunities for all. While existing policies support LGBTQ+ rights, teachers recognize the need to further embed inclusivity into the school culture. Despite challenges, a supportive and unified staff ethos aids in addressing issues effectively, fostering a nurturing space where all students, irrespective of gender identity or sexual orientation, can flourish. In essence, the collaborative endeavors at Maltana National High School exhibit a proactive stance towards cultivating an inclusive and supportive environment for diverse SOGIE students, evident through enhanced teacher training, robust anti-bullying measures, and a commitment to diversity. This steadfast dedication not only enhances the educational landscape but also establishes a framework for a respectful and inclusive community, positioning the school as a beacon for others striving to create environments where every student is embraced and empowered.

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby given;

1. Teachers should further strengthen the school's dedication to inclusivity, respect, and empathy within the educational framework. Teachers should continue prioritizing the creation of a supportive classroom environment that embraces diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions. Efforts should focus on fostering open dialogue and trust among students and educators to facilitate personal growth and academic progress. Upholding fairness and equality while prioritizing the holistic well-being of all students will reinforce the school's commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment.

2. The school must maintain and strengthen its commitment to creating a safe and welcoming environment for all students regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression. This can be attained by strengthening the implementation of anti-bullying regulations and guaranteeing that every student feels safe from any form of discrimination. Additionally, prioritizing professional development around SOGIE is crucial to improving the educational atmosphere. Teachers should receive ongoing training to support LGBTQ+ students better and promote inclusivity in the classroom. Furthermore, it is essential to address the challenges in balancing students' activities with school policies, particularly concerning using students' preferred names and pronouns. Maltana National High School can further enhance its inclusive teachers’ positive educational setting by continuously respecting individual identities while upholding institutional guidelines.

3. Regarding Teachers' challenges in creating inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ students, it is recommended to continue and strengthen efforts to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ students at Maltana National High School. This can be achieved by further addressing old biases and actively promoting inclusivity as a core part of the school culture. Teachers should receive ongoing training and support to overcome challenges and ensure equal student resources effectively. Thus, fostering a strong sense of unity and support among staff members will be the school's handling of any issues that arise and reinforcing its commitment to ensuring that every student feels valued and supported in their academic and personal endeavors, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

4. Maltana National High School needs to focus on inclusivity and support for LGBTQ+ students. The school can continue making progress by improving classroom environments, strengthening anti-bullying measures, providing more SOGIE training for teachers, and addressing biases. With these efforts, every student, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, will feel valued and supported, creating a better learning environment for all.

5. Further research should be conducted to better understand and accept students' sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression in schools. Future studies can look at how inclusive practices affect LGBTQ+ students' grades, mental health, and overall well-being in the long run. It's also important to explore effective ways to help LGBTQ+ students overcome challenges in school, so that educators and policymakers can create better support systems and policies.

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