






KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION OF TRAINEE TEACHERS TOWARDS THE LGBTQ + COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

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This research investigated the level of knowledge and perceptions of trainee teachers towards the LGBTQ + community. In order to achieve this, a descriptive study was carried out, with the objective of becoming aware of the expectations and preconceptions held by trainee teachers in the fourth year of their degree course in Primary and Infant Education during the 2018-2019 session. In addition, limitations of the educational approach and the keys to awareness and acceptance in school, of sexual and gender diversity, were also investigated. In order to collect the data a questionnaire instrument was used and a discussion group was also identified. The key results revealed that trainee teachers do understand the reality of this community and are disposed in favour of the acceptance of sexual and gender diversity in the classroom. In fact, they demonstrated the need for important training in order to provide an effective approach to sexually related material.

Contribution/Originality: This study helps to make visible how education professionals are not trained to recognize and work on sexual and gender diversity in the classroom and avoid lesbo/homo/bi/transphobic behaviours that resulting in not achieving equality and real inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sexual and gender diversity have shaped human diversity and gained importance in terms of models and types of relationships between people. This increase in awareness and social tolerance has helped further in progressive acceptance of sexual diversity and the rejection of the hetero-normal cultural model which promotes homophobic and transphobic behaviour. One proof of this is the appearance of movements and associations which represent communities of different orientation, and sexual and gender identities such as the LGBTQ+ movement.. LGBTQ+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Q can stand for Questioning or Queer or sometimes both. LGBTQ+ is now a commonly used term in community; often also termed as “Queer Community” or “Rainbow Community” to describe LGBTQ+ people. Though these terms are always evolving, they encompass a diverse range of sexual identities and orientations whose common denominator is lack of social acceptance and integration.

This study reveals the need to approach a theme which continues to provoke discussion and controversy.. During the literature review it has been proven that, studies about LGBTQ+ community and about the attitudes and teacher training in sex education, continues to be scarce. However, the social and educational response towards this community has made it necessary to give voice to the achievement and integration of this community in the mainstream (Gilad, 2014).

The focus of this research was to provide an appropriate and need-specific response, trying to become aware of the actual training required, and the expectations and qualifications of trainee teachers in Infant and Primary School Teaching degrees at University of La Laguna. The objective was to improve the reality of sexual and gender diversity within the educational context. This study emanates from the urgent and much needed task of understanding and evaluating the awareness, expectations, attitudes, existing prejudices amongst the trainee and practising teachers in order to plan future training in an appropriate and effective manner.

This descriptive study intended to explore, detail, analyse and discover the nature of the training, attitudes and expectation of the trainee teachers towards the LGBTQ+ community. Through the telling of their experiences, sexual orientation and different educational reality, it has become possible to make visible a reality that is steadily becoming more obvious, widespread and socially unacceptable.

2. PREJUDICE TOWARDS SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY

In the past, homosexuality was considered a sin. Heterosexuality was considered to be the only form of human sexual expression, based on the idea of reproduction being an intrinsic part of any species, making it different from homosexuality (Morgan and Nerison, 1993). A relationship between two people of the same sex was considered for years as an illness or a vice (Bayer, 1981).

Nowadays homophobic attitudes towards people who have a different sexual orientation to heterosexuality still exist (Simonsen *et al.*, 2000). Although the majority of countries in the West punish homophobic aggression and discrimination, through constitutional laws and international agreements which fall under the protection of Human Rights (Castañeda, 2006). There are still incidents of lesbo/homo/transphobic situations which create distance from the LGBTQ+ community, (Alemán, 2008; Gallardo, 2019).

In reality there is no given equality for reasons of sexual orientation or expression of gender identity as a consequence of attitudes, stereotypes and social prejudices, which are identified with the “sexually and genre diverse population” (Romero and Montenegro, 2018) in a position of multiple discrimination which contributes to the construction of areas of inequality and social marginalisation. Cardenas and Barrientos (2008); Pérez-Jorge (2010) and Gallardo (2019) refer to this attitude as a form of social qualification of people, objects or groups, which implies ideas, thoughts and behaviours which can be positive or negative. In this way, three fundamental formative dimensions can be identified: a) cognitive (stereotypes); affective (prejudices) and behavioural (discrimination) (Pérez-Jorge, 2010; Gallardo, 2019).

Stereotypes are widespread beliefs (generally mistaken) which define the members of a group (Alemany-Arrebola *et al.*, 2017; Gallardo, 2019). Prejudices make reference to the generalised stereotypes aimed at a person who is seen as different and are characterised by being positive or negative (Acuña-Ruiz and Vargas, 2006; Gallardo, 2019). Discrimination is linked with despotism and the dishonour of certain communities (Gallardo, 2019); (Puyol, 2006).

Despite the legislative and social advances that have been achieved in material dealing with sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression of gender, there still exists prejudice towards sexually and genre diverse population (Romero and Montenegro, 2018) generating in its turn homophobic and transphobic attitudes. In the same way, Brown (1998) established two categories of prejudice: first, the aversive, which refers to the anxiety demonstrated by people when they come into contact with the objects of their prejudice, and second, the violation of the rights of the community (Coello *et al.*, 2013).

The term homophobia has existed since the end of the 60s, defined as the rejection and disdain of heterosexuals towards a person in terms of their sexual identity (Viñuales, 2002). Borrillo (2001) and Penna (2013) have described their various types: a) *cognitive or social homophobia* which refers to those prejudices or preconceived ideas ascribed to homosexual people, and which involves a negative perspective on homosexuality; b) *affective or psychological homophobia*, characterised by the expression of feelings of rejection towards homosexuality in situations which involve physical contact or feelings of unease when seeing affection displayed in public between two people of the same sex; c) *behavioural homophobia*, which refers to the behaviour demonstrated by people towards homosexuals, from making fun of them up to different types of aggression; and, d) *liberal homophobia*, which refers to people who accept and respect this community privately, that is to say, without any visible or public manifestation.

For Cornejo (2012), expressions such as “lesbian”, “fag” or “dyke” are clear examples of affective or psychological homophobia and cognitive or social homophobia. The results of the study carried out by Galán *et al.* (2007) in Gran Canaria and Madrid show the non-existence of any difference between affective, cognitive and liberal homophobia amongst a student population of different nationalities. In addition, it was observed that these students felt uncomfortable in the presence of any peers who were identified as sexually and gender diverse (affective and behavioural homophobia).

However, Barrientos and Cárdenas (2013) defined transphobia or sexual prejudice (cited in Otero and Casado-Neira (2016)) towards transsexual people as that which “consists of hostile attitudes towards people who diverge from traditional heterosexuality (...) and this is also mentioned by Cruz (2002) and Mercado (2009) (cited in Otero and Casado-Neira (2016)). These studies reveal that these attitudes can manifest themselves “in different dimensions – individual, governmental and socio-cultural – and family, political, institutional, educational, workplace and social/friendship areas. This has a direct effect on public health due to the repercussions felt on the quality of life of transsexual people through the mechanisms of exclusion and hatred produced by others” (p.942).

Hence, the acceptance of diversity in sexual orientation and gender expressions has two sides; a) *subjective and/or personal* (self-acceptance, assimilation of the situation and the ability to make it public) and b) *objective and social* (recognition of the sexual orientation and identity of a person, on behalf of society as part of social identity, taking into consideration their possibilities and rights). This division is vital for the co-existence of the different forms of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression of gender without losing personal identity.

The rejection of another person because they have a quality or special feature which falls out of the norm, away from what has previously been established, has often been named the spread of stigma. In their research, Barón *et al.* (2013) alluded to the spread of stigma in reference to people who have moved away from heterosexuality. Toro-Alfonso and Varas-Díaz (2004) too supported the same idea, stating that rejection is distancing from everything that has been established traditionally by society. Pichardo (2012) believes that stigma can be overcome when people have information, knowledge and personal or close references.

In Spain the work of Pichardo (2011) revealed a large gap in the knowledge about the sexual and gender diverse population. There is a lack of visibility of sexual orientation, gender identities or expressions of gender; often insults seen as a form of demonstrating homophobia/transphobia; Moreover, the discrimination against people in favour of this community and threats and aggression against those considered different are clear expressions and examples of the social rejection of this community.

The studies undertaken in Spain also brought to light some relevant variables; a) gender; b) religion; c) culture; d) family; and e) social relationships, with reference to the image that the youth have about sexual and gender diversity (Generelo and Pichardo, 2005; Galán *et al.*, 2007; AMLEGA, 2011; López, 2013; Robles-Reina, 2014).

- a) With reference to gender Hinrichs and Rosenberg (2002) made reference to the acceptance of people regardless of their sexual orientation, stating that heterosexual people are the most prejudiced. Toro-Alfonso and Varas-Díaz (2004) and López (2013) stated that men are the most prejudiced towards homosexuals.

- b) With reference to religion, [Morrison and Morrison \(2002\)](#) discovered that high indices of prejudice are to be found in people with conservative politics, strong religious beliefs and a high level of sexism. In the same vein [Rodríguez and Squiablo \(2014\)](#) as well as [Newmanxy \(2002\)](#) and [Toro-Alfonso and Varas-Díaz \(2004\)](#) stated that the most fervent were the most prejudiced towards people of diverse sexual orientation.
- c) People from other cultural contexts had a more negative attitude than the Spanish population. In relation to the latter, the second generation has less negative attitudes and adapted themselves more easily to their preferred context ([López, 2013](#)).
- d) [López \(2013\)](#) highlighted the fact that youngsters from families who rejected people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, were more prejudiced; they had more negative stereotypes and were more intolerant than those who showed respect and acceptance.
- e) Finally, in terms of contact with people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, [Eurobarómetro \(2008\)](#) states that those people who know or have contact with members of this same community demonstrate a more favourable attitude. [Toro-Alfonso and Varas-Díaz \(2004\)](#); [Pérez-Jorge \(2010\)](#) and [Pérez-Jorge et al. \(2017\)](#) also demonstrate that if adequate and positive prior relationships exist with the sexual and gender diverse population, the level of negative and prejudiced attitudes is lower.

3. SEXUAL AFFECTIVE EDUCATION IN CLASSROOMS AS PART OF LEARNING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Society is in a constant state of flux. Despite this, in many cases, it isolates and does not pay attention to the real needs of students, [Ketz \(2013\)](#). For this reason, it is fundamental that teachers should be aware of and open the doors to diversity, particularly to sexual diversity, given that in the majority of cases this sinks into the background or is just ignored ([Ramos, 2008](#); [Pérez-Jorge et al., 2016](#)).

Schools are a crucial element in the development of attitudes and behaviours towards this community, with a series of values and conduct which can help to strengthen personality. Practically, stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes towards sexually diverse people have their roots in schools ([Blaya et al., 2007](#)). For this reason it is vital that education professionals receive training and are updated in sexual-affective educational material ([Pichardo, 2009](#)). It is very important that teachers are made aware and are educated and appropriately trained in affective sexual education ([Martínez et al., 2011](#)).

Sex education is considered a “taboo” in educational and family environment, an issue which generates more discrimination and violence in school environment ([ILGA-EURPE, 2015](#)). For this reason it is vital that sexual and gender diversity is shown to be part of real life, presenting it as another attribute and characteristic of a person ([López, 2013](#)). It should be presented as an objective/social dimension which recognises the sexual orientation and identity of a person, on behalf of society, contemplating their possibilities and rights. In this way society gets prepared to reinforce, help, protect and educate the realm of sexuality, offering models of respect towards those of diverse orientation, gender identity or expression of gender. For this the teacher needs to change their attitude towards sex education ([López, 2005](#)) in order to move forward towards breaking the stigma and helping to make visible the different ways of gender dissent.

[Sousa et al. \(2016\)](#) think that schools contain a plurality of people of sexual orientation and gender identity which is different from the heterosexual model. There is however still a little interest left in addressing sexual and gender diversity resulting from lack of knowledge or poor teacher training. Teachers do not address the issue within curricular planning. In addition its rejection by curriculum management teams and even families make this issue gets isolated and sporadic. It highlights the disconnection and ignorance, in relation to the demands of society towards inclusion of affective-sexual education in classrooms. The involvement of the entire school community is therefore essential for effective inclusion of affective-sexual education in schools. [Serrate \(2007\)](#) rightly suggests that schools need to provide spaces which facilitates attitudes and behaviours of co-operation and respect, in order

to help students develop fully and achieve optimal academic content. UNESCO (2001) too had reiterated that diversity needs to be helped and celebrated in the school community, avoiding in this way negative attitudes and responses towards racial, social, ethnic, religious or gender diversity (Vitello and Mithaug, 1998).

Affective-sexual education demands appropriate teacher training in order to meet the demands of students. Therefore, professionals must be properly prepared to recognize sexual and gender diversity and prevent the risks associated with the presence of lesbo/homo/transphobic behaviours in school and in society (González, 2017). Educational systems need to promote equal opportunities in school, being aware of the existence of gender diversity and cultures, a diversity that should be proposed as a useful strategy to promote the principle of equality between children (López, 2013).

However, academic professionals are not prepared to recognize sexual and gender diversity in the classroom in order to prevent lesbo/homo/transphobic behaviour and rejection of sexually and generically diverse people (Gallardo and Escolano, 2009). It is essential that they know how to appreciate the value of heterogender and be aware of the importance of having information about sexuality, including, among others, the orientation and development of identity and generation of behaviours, roles, knowledge and attitudes to sex, to break with misconceptions and stereotypes (Booth and Ainscow, 2011) towards sexual diversity. It is vitally important that professionals know how to act in sexual harassment situations. Hence teachers, students and family should be sensitized about the consequences of these behaviours (Gallardo and Escolano, 2009).

Having shown that schools do not promote affective-sexual education and are not aware of this reality (González, 2017), as a result the content in relation to sex, gender, orientation and gender identity, etc. remain invisible to students. From this perspective, we need a model that promotes co-education and does not generate prejudice, but emphasizes the need to incorporate resources that cover the different ways of living sexually. The education system must provide comprehensive sex education as the right of all people (without discrimination) (Garzón, 2016).

4. METHOD

4.1. Problem and Objectives

The focus of this study centred on problems arising from sexual and gender diversity in schools and colleges, as it affects the whole society, and has a worrying effect on the social reality of students. For this reason, teachers must have sufficient and adequate training to ensure respect for the LGBTQ+ community and the peaceful coexistence of students regardless of their sexual orientation and identity.

The literature review carried out on teacher training focussed on paying appropriate attention to the LGBTQ+ community found very few studies based on specific training of teachers. Hence, it was essential to set feasible, clear and meaningful objectives (Buendía *et al.*, 1998) in order to address them from the point of view of the educational community itself. The objectives of the research can be found in Table 1.

4.2. Participants

This study adopted a non-probabilistic sample selection process and selected a total of 188 participants (trainee teachers) from the degrees of Infant and Primary Education, with ages between 20 and 33 and who had chosen the optional course of “*Specific Needs in Educational Support-I*” in their fourth year, one of the few subjects that focused on the educational response to diversity.

To identify the discussion group, a purposive sample was created through the collaboration of trainee teachers and practising teachers. Table 2 presents a summary of the profiles of participants. “Pn” is used where “P” refers to “teacher” and “n” to the number of the participant. This is intended to provide a clear method of identification of the opinions of these participants based on their profile and sexual identity.

Table-1. The relationship between the objective and the questions in the study.

General objectives	Specific objectives	Study questions
Be aware of the expectations and perceptions of trainee teacher in respect of the LGBTQ + community in the areas of Health, Employment, Entertainment, Education and Sport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the level of knowledge of trainee teachers in respect of the LGBTQ + community (cognitive homophobia). Be aware of the feelings of trainee teacher towards the LGBTQ + community (affective homophobia) Be aware of the predisposition and behaviour of trainee teachers when interacting with the LGBTQ + community (Behavioural homophobia). Disposition towards the LGBTQ + community in private and non-visible contexts (liberal homophobia). Disposition towards the acceptance and normalisation of the sexual identity of LGBTQ + people (Normalisation of homophobia). To be aware of the stigmas related to the acceptance of sexual and gender diversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are trainee teachers aware of the social reality of the LGBTQ + community in terms of the cognitive, affective, behavioural and liberal dimensions? Are trainee teachers disposed towards demonstrating their acceptance of the sexual and gender orientation of LGBTQ + students?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be aware of the principal limitations understood by trainee teachers in addressing sexual and gender diversity education. To investigate the keys to raising awareness and acceptance of sexual diversity in the classroom as a method of improving the acceptance of the sexual orientation and identity of students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be aware of the stigmas related to the acceptance of sexual diversity. Delve into the training given to Primary and Infant school teachers in relation to classroom intervention with the LGBTQ + community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do trainee teachers consider themselves to be prepared to intervene in the classroom, addressing affective sexual education and providing responses to this?

Table-2. Discussion groups participant data.

Participant	Age	Sexual Orientation	Identification (PN)
Practising teacher	38	Homosexual	P1
Practising teacher	48	Heterosexual	P2
Trainee teacher	21	Heterosexual	P3
Trainee teacher	26	Bisexual	P4
Trainee teacher	23	Currently undefined sexual identity	P5
Trainee teacher	22	Currently undefined sexual identity	P6
Trainee teacher	21	Heterosexual	P7

4.3. Instruments and Techniques

a) Questionnaire

The “*Questionnaire about attitudes to the LGBTQ + (CA- LGBTQ +) community*” created by Pérez-Jorge and Márquez-Domínguez (2018) was used in this piece of research, based on the literature review of current work. It was an *Ad Hoc* test, which took as its references the questionnaire of Pérez-Jorge (2010); Penna (2015); Robles-Reina *et al.* (2017) and Generelo and Pichardo (2006). See Table 3.

Table-3. The relationship between the instrument and the sources consulted for its construction.

Questionnaire	Instruments
<i>Questionnaire about attitudes towards the LGBTQ + (CA-LGBTQ +) community</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Questionnaire about attitudes towards diversity in the classroom (Pérez-Jorge, 2010) 2. Questionnaire about Homophobia in University classrooms (Penna, 2015) 3. Questionnaire on prejudices and social distance towards gays and lesbians (Robles-Reina <i>et al.</i>, 2017) 4. Questionnaire about Adolescence and minority sexualities (Generelo and Pichardo, 2006)

It should be noted that the questionnaire consisted of a total of 31 items, using a unipolar Likert scale with six levels of answers which reflected the largest or smallest level of agreement in relation to the opinions about their way of thinking, feeling or behaving towards the LGBTQ + community in specific situations related to assumptions about ideas, contact interaction and relationship expressed in each item. The internal consistency coefficient Alfa Cronbach was used for the reliability assessment of the CA- LGBTQ +. This procedure was applied to all 31 items that formed the questionnaire obtaining a value of 0.773.

To reduce the scale based on the established theoretical dimensions, an analysis of the main components was carried out using the factor analysis of the scale, resulting in six factors that explained 53.25% of the variance as shown in Table 4. The questionnaire data analysis was carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows, V.25.

Table-4. Relationship between the factors and items in the instrument.

Factors	Items
Cognitive Homophobia(F1)	2,7,8,13,14,22,28
Affective Homophobia (F2)	1,9
Behavioural Homophobia (F3)	3,15
Liberal Homophobia (F4)	29,30
Normalisation of Homophobia (F5)	4,5,6,10,11,16,17,18,19,20,21,31
Spread of Stigma (F6)	12,23,24,25,26,27

b) Discussion Group

This discussion group intended to deepen the social reality of the LGBTQ + group collectively and obtain quality data that confirmed, clarified, explained or deepened aspects relevant to the study (Krueger, 1991). For this purpose, practising teachers and trainee teachers of different sexual orientation participated. The following topics were discussed: (a) the possibility of the existence of attitudes and prejudices towards the LGBTQ + community and factors that may influence this community; (b) preparation of future teachers to address affective-sexual education in classrooms; (c) the role of the school management in this matter and (d) input of opinions or issues of interest to participants.

The analysis of data collected from the questionnaire was carried out by analysing content based on the theoretical dimensions considered in the questionnaire and based on the experience, training, roles and roles of teachers in relation to the response to the diversity given from the centres. The discussion group structure related to the question topics is stated in Table 5.

Table-5. Relationship between the questions and items from the group discussion.

Type of question	Items
Warm-up questions	Awareness, attitudes and prejudices about the LGBTQ + community.
Central questions for research	Training in sexual education. Role of the school in the inclusion of the LGBTQ + community. Reduction of aggressive and homophobic behaviour.
Closing questions	Providing new data and clarifying what was raised in the discussion group.

5. RESULTS

The result analysis was structured and ordered based on the six extracted and established factors. See Table 6 for the mean scores and typical deviations for each of the factors.

Table-6. Typical mean and deviations of CA- LGBTQ + factors.

Factors	Mean (\bar{x})	Sd
Cognitive Homophobia (F1)	5.37	0.43
Affective Homophobia (F2)	3.57	0.56
Behavioural Homophobia (F3)	5.22	0.99
Liberal Homophobia (F4)	5.70	0.50
Normalisation of Homophobia (F5)	4.64	0.44
Spread of Stigma (F6)	5.22	0.87

In general, it was observed that all factors had high means value except (F2) and (F5) that had the lowest values on the scale, which suggests the trainee teachers showing feelings of rejection towards situations of cohabitation or relationship between LGBTQ + people and towards the normalization of sexuality.

5.1. Analysis of the Differences of Opinions of the Teacher in Training (Ca- Lgtbiq+) in Respect of the Independent Variables

Listed below are the results related to the opinions collected through the CA-LGBTQ+ questionnaire given to trainee teachers. It should be noted that only the data that showed significant difference were included in the content analysis.

The opinions of trainee teachers in the fourth year of the degree course in Infant and Primary Education were compared with the factors set out above in Table 6 : (F1) cognitive homophobia, relate to prejudices or preconceived ideas towards homosexual people; (F2) affective homophobia, concerned with feelings of acceptance of situations of coexistence or relationships between LGBTQ+ people; (F3) behavioural homophobia, seen as an expression of behaviour and behaviours towards LGBTQ+ people; (F4) liberal homophobia, related to the idea of respect for the community in the private sphere, without visible and/or public manifestations; (F5) normalisation of homophobia, was seen as normalisation of sexuality; and, (F6) the spread of stigma, referred to the acceptance of the person for possessing qualities or particularities attributed to his sexual condition or identity.

Parametric hypothesis contrast tests were also used to perform this analysis, namely Student's T-test for independent samples of the variables (gender, collective knowledge, LGBTQ+ knowledge, (e.g.,whether you have heard of the community), year of completion of the degree, age, marital status, religious practice and sexual identity).

5.1.1. Gender Differences

Based on the results, significant gender differences were observed in factors of cognitive homophobia, prejudice or preconceived ideas towards homosexual people (F1) ($\bar{X}_h=5.63$), behavioural homophobia, behaviour towards LGBTQ+ (F3) people ($\bar{X}_h=5.60$), and the spread of stigma, acceptance of the person by possessing qualities or particularities attributed to his or her sexual status or identity (F6) ($\bar{X}_h=5.48$). In this sense, men seemed to show a greater prejudice or preconceived ideas than women towards homosexual people; a worse behaviour towards LGBTQ+ people and less willingness to accept people for possessing qualities or characteristics attributed to their sexual status or identity.

5.1.2. Differences Depending on Whether they had heard of the LGBTQ+ Community

With regard to the trainee teachers who had heard of the community and, alluded to the normalisation of sexuality (F5) ($\bar{X}=4.81$), there was evidence that teachers who had not heard of homophobia showed higher than average scores and showed a greater degree of agreement with the normalisation of homophobia.

5.1.3. Differences Depending on whether they know What the Acronym LGBTQ+ Means

With regards to the identification of the meaning of the acronym LGBTQ+, there were differences in relation to the acceptance of the community in the private sphere, without visible and/or public statements (F4) ($\bar{X}=5.79$). In this sense the teachers, if they identified the meaning of the acronyms, presented better willingness to accept the community in the private sphere.

5.1.4. Differences in the Year of Degree Completion

In relation to the year of degree completion, it was possible to see the existence of significant differences between 2018 ($\bar{X}=3.43$) and 2019 ($\bar{X}=3.09$). The teachers of the last year expressed worse feelings and willingness to accept situations of coexistence or relationships between LGBTQ+ people.

5.1.5. Differences Based on Age

Taking into account the age of participants, significant differences could be found, with respect to the person's acceptance of possessing qualities or particularities attributed to their sexual status or identity (F6) amongst teachers over 21 years of age ($\bar{X}=5.40$) and teachers up to 21 years of age ($\bar{X}=5.09$).

5.1.6. Differences in Marital Status

With regard to marital status of participants, the differences focused on married people, specifically showing more prejudices and preconceived ideas towards homosexuality (F1) ($\bar{X}=5.36$) than singles ($\bar{X}=5.56$) and on acceptance of the community in the private sphere, without visible and/or public manifestations (F4) ($\bar{X}=5.70$) versus singles ($\bar{X}=5.00$). In relation to the feelings of acceptance of situations of coexistence or relationship between LGBTQ+ people (F2), they were better valued by single teachers ($\bar{X}=4.28$) than by married teachers ($\bar{X}=4.00$).

5.1.7. Difference in Religious Practices

With regard to religious practices of participants, it should be considered that 134 teachers stated that they were Christian. The remaining 54 were identified with another religion or simply did not manifest any religious identity. The differences focused mainly on the behaviour towards LGBTQ+ (F3) people ($\bar{X}=5.88$) and on the normalisation of sexuality (F5). The trainee teachers who stated that they were highly practising showed better behaviour and a better disposition towards the normalisation of sexuality ($\bar{X}=4.80$), compared to the scores obtained by the non-practitioners ($\bar{X}=4.62$). Nevertheless, with regard to the feelings and willingness to coexistence or relationships between LGBTQ+ people (F2), highly experienced teachers ($\bar{X}=2.00$) obtained lower average scores than those of less experienced practicing teachers ($\bar{X}=3.25$).

5.1.8. Differences Based on Sexual Orientation

In general, there were differences between trainee teachers who belonged to other sexual identities, with prejudices or preconceived ideas towards homosexual people (F1) ($\bar{X}=5.83$), in their behaviour towards LGBTQ+ people (F3) ($\bar{X}=5.86$), respect for the acceptance of the community in the private sphere, without visible and/or public manifestations (F4) ($\bar{X}=6.00$) and towards the normalisation of sexuality (F5) ($\bar{X}=4.73$). Trainee teachers belonging to other sexual identities had better scores than heterosexual teachers.

5.2. Results of the Group Discussion, Analysis of the Content

Table 7 shows the relationship between the dimensions of the discussion group and the results obtained. It shows how, in the area of attitudes and prejudices towards the LGBTQ+ community, cognitive homophobia is still present in the construction, and stereotyping, of the image of sexual and gender diversity; This result is linked to the ideas about the community since the elaboration of these lesbo/homo/bi/transphobic discourses derive from a visible ignorance about different gender expressions. This confirms the importance of the role of the family and the work of the school as allies in showing respect and supporting sexual and gender diversity, educating themselves, questioning the system and denouncing the structural violence towards the sexually and generically diverse population.

Table-7. Relationship between the dimensions of the group discussion and the results obtained.

Dimensions	Results
Ideas about the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness of the acronyms that make up the collective. • Labels make ways of being and feeling more visible in the world.
Attitudes and prejudices towards the LGBTQ + community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes and prejudices increase the intensity in defined situations. • Terms such as “gay” or “lesbian” continue to be regarded as offensive, as an insult.
Training and disposition towards to affective-sexual diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The demands of the reality of the community today are not met. • The University does not provide training in affective-sexual diversity education. • Lack of practical examples (supposed and good teaching practices). • Willingness to seek training, resources, courses, training, updating and permanent professional development.
Role of the family in relation to sexual diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family is fundamental in the life of the school and is considered a key element for the inclusion and acceptance of affective-sexual diversity. • The family has a duty to seek training in this issue as the lack of training influences the understanding of their children.
Role of the school in terms of sexual diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This remains a taboo subject, for the fear of what might be said or due to the need to change the mind-set. All of this contributes to internalization and changes the question for the future.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this section the main results of the study are linked to other relevant findings obtained in previous studies which have been referred to in the theoretical framework.

6.1. Expectations and Perceptions of Trainee Teachers towards the LGTBIQ+ Community

According to authors such as Gallardo (2019); Toro-Alfonso and Varas-Díaz (2004) and López (2013) situations of rejection towards people in the LGBTQ+ community are still occurring, mostly by males in terms of acceptance and prejudices towards gay people.

However, practising religious people have better values in terms of behaviour towards LGBTQ+ people and normalisation of sexuality. This fact coincides with the ideas of Rodríguez and Squiabro (2014) and Newmanxy (2002).

With regard to the family model based on male-female, this has been shown to demonstrate negative behaviour and feelings towards sexual diversity (F1 and F3), rejection of and discomfort with homosexuality (F2), acceptance of the community in the private sphere (F4) and homophobia in terms of the normalisation of sexuality (F5), according to Borrillo (2001); Penna (2013); Galán *et al.* (2007).

Looking at the normalisation of sexuality (F5), the results taken from the questionnaire showed better scores from teachers who had not heard of the LGBTQ+ community, as Pérez-Jorge (2010) states. Therefore, contact and

relationship with people in the LGBTQ+ community involves the acceptance and improvement of coexistence, as set out in the [Eurobarómetro \(2008\)](#).

Regarding the spread of stigma (F6), the trainee teachers who had heard of the community (via television, university or friends) accepted people as better, regardless of their orientation or sexual identity, contradicting [Barón et al. \(2013\)](#) and [Toro-Alfonso and Varas-Díaz \(2004\)](#). P1, claimed to be a positive and visible reference in his school, because of his sexual orientation, which has reduced the discriminatory behaviour and attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community.

6.2. Raising Awareness and Acceptance of Sexual Diversity in Schools as a Positive Element in the Acceptance of Sexual Orientation of Students

Different orientations and sexual identities have gone far from being a sin ([Morgan and Nerison, 1993](#)) to a way of being and feeling in the world. As P1 and P7 say, important social movements have emerged that support the community, with the aim of improving attitudes and behaviour toward them ([Morgan and Nerison, 1993](#)). Nevertheless, P4, P5 and P6 stated that they were not aware of the LGBTQ+ community, or at least the characteristics and type of some of its members, which denotes the lack of visibility of this community ([Pichardo, 2011](#)).

It can therefore be said that teachers in training are not trained to address affective-sexual education in the classroom ([Gilad, 2014](#)) and [Ketz \(2013\)](#). P1 and P6 also stated so and accepted that the university does not adequately train teachers; and that there is a lack of training and that the reality of sexual and gender diversity in classrooms is ignored.

[Sousa et al. \(2016\)](#) and [González \(2017\)](#) support this finding and highlight the idea of the lack of resources, knowledge and preparation of teachers to face affective-sexual education, which coincides with the thinking of P3 and P6. However, P4 was open to lifelong, continuous training and sees the need for teachers to be updated and receive professional development [Pichardo \(2009\)](#) and [Martínez et al. \(2011\)](#). Likewise, P1 referred to the fact that, once in school, there is a wide range of resources and associations, institutions, centres, etc. available for teachers.

As for the role of the school, P6 and P7 felt that it remains a taboo subject, suggesting a change of mind-set is needed. Thus, [Blaya et al. \(2007\)](#); [Serrate \(2007\)](#) and [Pérez-Jorge \(2010\)](#) had rightly considered the role of the school as a space to be vital for the full development of the students. Families also play a key role in the full development of the students : P7 believed that school-family work should be done in affective-sexual education. P1 stated that "families are trained in affective-sexual education at their school, since family-teachers -students form a fundamental tripod". [López \(2013\)](#); [Gallardo and Escolano \(2009\)](#) understood that diversity must be made more visible and be accepted by teachers and families and thus achieve the success of affective-sexual education.

In conclusion, we believe that teacher training should be monitored and improved, appropriate and inclusive vocabulary used, and more use made of educational opportunities to accept all forms of existence in the world, which will help make the reality of the LGBTQ+ community more visible and real.

7. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the results drawn from this study and its contrast with other bibliographic sources has allowed us to draw a series of conclusions as listed below:

- a) Men have greater prejudice towards homosexuality than women; they show less willingness to accept the LGBTQ+ community and worse behaviour towards the latter.
- b) Trainee teachers who consider themselves to be religious show negative feelings towards ideas about coexistence and relationships with people in the LGBTQ+ community.

- c) Sexual identity (heterosexuality) is decisive in relation to prejudices or preconceived ideas towards homosexual people in relation to the acceptance of coexistence or relationship between members of the LGBTQ+ community and in terms of silent respect towards LGBTQ+ people.
- d) Knowledge of the LGBTQ+ community and the availability of information about it (television, university and friends) makes trainee teachers more willing to accept it.
- e) There still exists a great lack of knowledge about the LGBTQ+ community and different sexual orientation and identities.
- f) The training given to university teachers in the degree course of Infant and Primary education does not address the educational reality in the field of affective-sexual education. Teachers do not have adequate training, information and knowledge in the field, stressing that it remains a taboo subject in schools.
- g) There are positive expectations among teachers towards continuous professional development and a concern and a willingness to train in the field of affective-sexual education.

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