

TITLE

Analysis of homophobia during physical education lessons in Spain

AUTHORS

Joaquín Piedra, *Department of Physical Education and Sport, University of Seville, Spain* jpiedra@us.es

Gonzalo Ramírez-Macías, *Department of Physical Education and Sport, University of Seville, Spain*
grm@us.es

Francis Ries, *Department of Physical Education and Sport, University of Seville, Spain* fries@us.es

Augusto R. Rodríguez-Sánchez, *CEP Fundación San Pablo Andalucía, Spain* rembrandt@us.es

ABSTRACT

While the study of homophobia in sport is a settled matter within the scientific background of various countries, there are not any Spanish studies analyzing and deepening into the situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual in an educational context. The present chapter is the result of a research conducted in Spain in relation to the opinions and beliefs about homosexuality during physical education lessons. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies have been applied to a sample of both physical education teachers and college-aged students. The results highlight that, as is the case of other countries, physical education teachers claim to have a sensitivity and respect for sexual diversity in the classroom. However, these statements are contradicted by other statements by the same teachers as well as by the opinions and beliefs of college-aged students, who often affirm that physical education lessons are still reproducing stereotypes and making an offensive use of language. Homophobic behaviors among students and even towards physical education teachers on occasion still take place in the classroom. As a result, this chapter brings attention to the need for more awareness and training of physical education teachers, providing them with appropriate strategies in this area. Furthermore, it is important to foster the study and the production of knowledge about homophobia in the field of physical education.

KEYWORDS

Homophobia, homosexuality, physical education, students, teachers

INTRODUCTION

The Spanish society is one of the pioneers in the world in regulating discriminatory behavior based on gender or sexual orientation. Legislation regulating the working, legal and family areas, has been developed in Spain in the last few years. In the educational area in particular the incorporation of equal opportunities to the curriculum has been present whenever legal modifications took place since the end of the twentieth century. However, the development of a legal framework that protects a person from possible sexist and homophobic attacks has not been coupled with a change of mentality within society. That is why this chapter aims to describe and discover the situation and management of discriminatory behavior based on sexual orientation within PE teachings in Spain. Sport and physical activity, as we will see later on, are some of the historical pillars of the patriarchy, which is reserved for heterosexual and masculine men. Learning about these perceptions will allow us to form an accurate diagnosis of the educational reality of physical education (PE), and to propose more efficient and realistic action steps.

The school, as a compulsory stage for everyone in advanced societies, is one of the social agents that has more influence and authority in forming the character and personality of boys and girls. That is why the action of the education system is necessary, if not mandatory, to eliminate the barriers, discrimination, and isolation that some social groups keep experiencing, whether due to their race, beliefs, gender, sexual orientation. Within the school, PE plays an important role because it helps to create the students' identity through their bodies. As Vidiella states [1], “embodiment is key to understand how individuals incorporate norms and/or resist them”. Body and movement play an important role in the relationship between pupils and the outside – the society. The teachings of PE, as a channel for education through the body, can and must work with special interest in the creation of the pupils' sexual identities. However, up until now PE has taken the role of imposing the objective attributes of the body in accordance with the ethical, aesthetical, moral and ideological principles of the ruling class, without taking any interest in diversity [2]. In this sense, teachers play a key role in the treatment of gender in PE [3], facilitating or hindering the creation of a safe and discrimination-free environment for all students. That is why this study analyzes not only the opinions and experiences of students, but

also takes into account the experiences and perceptions of PE teachers. If the barriers that boys and girls encounter in PE lessons to practice physical activities freely and safely are to be destroyed, then teachers can and must contribute courageously to fight against discriminatory behavior during their lessons.

Heteronormativity in Physical Education: crossing the red line

In 1991 the academician Michael Warner [4] coins the term heteronormativity to define the practices and institutions that legitimate and privilege heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships as fundamental and 'natural' among society [5]. There are two factors within this social regime, which pervade many social activities: homophobia and heterosexism. Various investigations link homophobic, heteronormative and sexual activities to the creation and maintenance of gender identities in occidental cultures [6].

Currently, homosexuality is a widely studied matter, and this keeps being the case in different scientific fields (medicine, psychology, sociology, and education). The definition of homosexuality has evolved since the term was first coined in the 70s. Linked to homosexuality we find the term homophobia, which can be defined as a strong irrational fear towards homosexual people [7]. However, Kimmel goes beyond when affirming “homophobia is the fear to be shown to ourselves and to the world that we do not achieve the standards, that we are not real men” [8]. This is to say, homophobia is not only the negative attitude towards the outside (gays, lesbians...), but it is also one's own fear of not being accepted by the community; a fear of not fulfilling the norms of masculinity or femininity.

Another pillar of heteronormativity is heterosexism. This term is defined as the belief that all people are heterosexuals, and that heterosexuality is the norm and what is acceptable, leaving homosexuality and other sexual orientations relegated to a devalued and discredited place because they surpass the limits of heteronormativity [7].

There have been many studies on homosexuality and education since the 80s. As Ayvazo and Sutherland state [9], PE is one of the areas within the school that needs most development,

because it is the area where we encounter the most hostile climate towards homosexuality [10-11-12]. Besides, the increase in the practice of sport, as well as the wider presence of sport in the media, result in more boys and girls becoming influenced and absorbed by this patriarchal ideology. As Ayvazo and Sutherland [9] and Dowling [13] affirm, the stereotyped images of homophobia and homosexuality, and that of masculinity and femininity, have been historically accentuated in the context of sport, and continuing nowadays.

The investigation into homosexuality in the field of PE started with the research by Griffin [14] on homosexual teachers. This research delved into the development of sexual orientations, and found that homosexuals negotiated their sexual orientation in the school through a large spectrum of possibilities, from exposing and publicly defending their homosexuality to hiding it. Later on, the research done by Clarke [15] on lesbian teachers highlighted that the sports culture discriminates between heterosexual and homosexual women so as to preserve the hegemony, thus creating an environment where homosexual women suffer sexual assaults, which forces them to stay invisible and hiding [16], or as Sykes affirm, they stay silenced by the heteronormativity [17-18]. The stereotypes linked to homosexuality, such as promiscuity or pedophilia, have in some cases generated patterns of harassment and discrimination towards homosexual teachers, who have been labeled in many cases as perverted because of working with children. In order to avoid this, lesbian teachers in PE tend to develop those attributes traditionally assigned to women, reaching what is known as hyperfemininity [15-21]. In many cases, homosexual teachers admit to having kept a more distant relationship with their pupils than their heterosexual counterparts, to avoid suspicions [22].

The social advances and the historical struggle for the rights of the minorities have allowed in many countries the creation of a legal framework that defends and covers sexual minorities. This change may make us think that currently, in many advanced countries, people belonging to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual community (LGBT) can carry out their daily life with more guarantees than a few years ago. However, not everything has been accomplished. On one hand, many countries have not experienced this legal advancement. In a research carried out in Turkey, the investigator Saraç shows the persistence of negative attitudes towards LGBT people among the future teachers of PE, and these attitudes are accentuated in the

case of men [23]. On the other hand, despite the social and legal advances, those belonging to the LGBT community keep suffering attacks and keep being victims of negative attitudes in the field of PE, as it is shown in the research by White, Oswalt, Wyatt and Peterson in the American context [24].

Focusing on the research about teachers of PE we find studies that analyze their perception of homosexuality. In this sense, Morrow and Gill [25] observed the perceptions of PE teachers on homophobia and heterosexism, finding that homophobic behavior are commonplace among Secondary Schools in the US, and that teachers, in the students' opinion, fail in their attempt to create an inclusive environment during their lessons [26]. In this same line, the recent research by Piedra, Rodríguez-Sánchez, Ries and Ramírez-Macías highlights that, according to students, PE teachers are not very aware of homophobic behavior taking place during their lessons, generally taking meager steps to overcome discriminatory behavior that may arise during their lessons [27].

In the last few years several researchers have pointed out that the most basic and habitual way of oppressing homosexuals in the school in general (and in PE in particular) is the use of language as an attacking tool [28-29-30]. However, the possibility of using homophobic language in a non-pejorative way, according to cultural context, has arisen among some academic circles [31]. This statement is born from the belief that in different advanced societies homophobia is decreasing thanks to the legal and social progresses that have taken place [32]. In this regard, in a qualitative research on Spanish teachers, Piedra, Ramírez-Macías and Latorre highlight the disparity of opinions regarding whether the Spanish PE climate is hostile or inclusive towards sexual minorities [33].

In their research on sexual sensitivity in the school, the US investigators McCaughtry, Dillon, Jones and Smigell [11], and previously others [15-19-34], acknowledge the importance of the role of PE teachers as an agent involved in this change of sensitivity – this is to say, towards the acknowledgement of the rights of homosexual people. In their review of research on homophobia in the teachings of PE, Ayvazo and Sutherland [9], as well as Clarke [35], suggest teachers to demonstrate an inclusive behavior in the classroom, to appreciate the different sexual

orientations, and to work towards respect among each other in the classroom in order eradicate homophobia. Equally, these authors underline the need to improve the training of future PE teachers, so that they acquire the needed experiences and tools in order to reduce negative attitudes in the classroom [23]. However, many teachers prefer to ignore homophobic behavior that arises during their lessons by not acting in a specific manner, alleging in some cases that it is not part of their jobs, because it is an issue already overcome in society [19-33].

Focusing on the research on PE students, we find the study by Larsson, Fagrell and Redelius, who, in their analysis of PE from the queer theory, emphasize that the image of queer students is excluded and marginalized within the heterosexual matrix of PE [36]. When asked, the students highlight the validity of heteronorms among PE teachings, which force boys and girls to act in a certain way, always within the boundaries of heterosexuality [22], and without trespassing the red line so as to avoid being labeled as 'abnormal' [37]. In the North-American context, the only piece of work that focuses on students among the sample is the research carried out by Morrow and Gill, which shows in its results that PE students have at some point being aware of homophobic and heterosexist behavior, both towards students and towards PE teachers, mainly through the use of language [25]. In this same sense, in Spain, the research from Blández, Fernández and Sierra, highlights the use of homophobic language to insult those boys and girls who do not fulfill the typical attributes of their gender [39].

METHODOLOGY

To carry out this research we counted on the participation of 789 individuals, out of which 619 were university students and 170 were PE teachers from Primary or Secondary school.

The students belonged to the Universities of Seville, Vigo and A Coruña in Spain. 70.4% of them were men and 29.6% were women, averaging 22 years of age, with a range between 18 and 50 years. No direct assessments of current students were carried out because of the many limitations and difficulties involved with directly assessing Secondary Education students, especially on such a delicate topic. Instead, we sampled college-age adults. Furthermore, this

sampling allows for comparison with the original study of Morrow and Gill (2003), where only college students participated.

Relating to the PE teachers, 106 of them were men and 64 were women. They averaged 40.6 years of age, with a range between 20 and 60 years. The participating teachers (81 from Primary School, 59 from Secondary School, and 30 from High School) imparted their lessons in several Andalusian and Galician cities.

The first questions of the questionnaires for both PE students and teachers obtained data relating to their gender, age, and sexual orientation, as well as regarding the province where they had completed their Secondary School studies (from 12 to 16 years of age). The students indicated how many years had lapsed since they finished Secondary School, and the type of school in which they studied. Lastly, they were asked about the gender of their last PE teacher at that stage. The participating teachers indicated the type of school and the level at which they taught. Finally, they were asked about how many years they had been teaching, and whether they participated in activities and/or tasks related to coeducation.

The first 11 items of Morrow and Gill's questionnaire [25] were used in order to assess the perception of homophobia and heterosexism in PE among the students, to obtain information about the perception of heterosexist and homophobic behavior among students, and between students and their PE teachers. The first 10 items asked students to identify to what extent they witnessed or experienced heterosexism and homophobia. The second section of the original questionnaire (items 11-15) assesses to what degree their PE teachers generated a harmless space for gay and lesbian students. As the concern of the present study was only to assess the participants' perceptions, we only included question 11 from the second section of the original questionnaire, as it assesses the use of inclusive language by the students. The structure of the original questionnaire was maintained so that the items show on a Likert-type scale from 1 ("many times") to 4 ("never"). We maintained the original structure for item 11, which was part of the second subscale of the original questionnaire by Morrow and Gill [25] – this is, a Likert-type scale from 1 to 5.

The first 12 items of Morrow and Gill's questionnaire [25] were used in order to measure the perception of homophobia and heterosexism in PE among the teachers, so as to collect information about the teachers' perceptions of heterosexist and homophobic behavior among students, between students and PE teachers, and among peers.

The following definitions are included in order to clarify concepts and ensure the understanding of both questionnaires:

-Heterosexist behavior, which is the behavior that assumes that all students are heterosexual, such as the statements and activities that assume that everyone lives in a traditional family or that they date people of the opposite gender.

-Homophobic behavior, which is the behavior directed towards students who are believed to be gay or lesbians, or towards the people or organizations that support those students. Such behavior includes insults or physical attacks.

-Inclusive behavior, which is the behavior that purposefully includes all students, including gays or lesbians.

In order to obtain the data, teachers from the Department of Physical Education and Sport from the Universities of Seville, Vigo and A Coruña were contacted. Permission had been requested previously from the Administration of the departments in order to distribute the questionnaire. The sample has been obtained on an anonymous and voluntary basis. The collection of the data took place during the second quarter of the academic year 2011/2012. All the students answered the questions voluntarily during the lessons with the participant teachers, and they had previously signed an informed consent form. PE teachers participating in the study were contacted by email to complete the questionnaire online, and to participate in the interviews.

The back-translation method [39] was used for the translation of both questionnaires. Both questionnaires were analyzed in the matter of their legibility, angle and understandability before they were translated. To create the pilot research, the items were translated from English into Spanish by four native Spanish speakers independently, all of them specialists in Sport

Sciences. The resulting discrepancies among the translations were widely discussed to develop a preliminary Spanish version of the questionnaires. Four native English speakers subsequently translated the preliminary Spanish version of the questionnaires into English. Further discussions took place to reach consensus about the back-translations. The comparability and similitude of interpretability [39] between the original text and the back-translations was then discussed, and the remaining discrepancies were corrected. Next, the translated versions were handed to four bilingual PE teachers, unfamiliar with the original English version, who translated again the items from Spanish into English. The original English version and the back-translation from Spanish were again compared to spot any significant differences.

The results of the pilot study indicated a reliability of $\alpha=.718$ for the complete scale of the students' questionnaire and a reliability of $\alpha=.681$ for the teachers' questionnaire. Item 7 was eliminated from the teachers' questionnaire and the reliability increased to $\alpha=.757$. Once all the data was collected, the reliability of the instruments was calculated again. The coefficient of Cronbach alpha increased slightly to $\alpha=.737$ (students' questionnaire) and to $\alpha=.787$ (teachers questionnaire); McMillan sets the acceptable degree of reliability between $\alpha=.700$ and $\alpha=.900$ [40]. The statistical software package SPSS 22 for Windows was used to carry out the descriptive analysis of the data and the analysis of the reliability of the questionnaire.

Eliminating item 7 from the teachers' questionnaire meant that this scale was configured for the same items as the students' questionnaire, but from the perspective of PE teachers, rendering the questionnaires comparable.

The interviews and their design

Interviews with Primary and Secondary School PE teachers of both genders were carried out in order to delve into the subject of our research. The selection of the participants in this study of qualitative-type cases has been intentional [41], and based on criteria that determine the inclusion of a certain type of individual among the sample [42]. The following are the criteria used for inclusion:

- Current PE teachers with at least five years of experience.

- Specific initial PE training.
- Two age groups: 30 to 40 years of age, and older than 40. Besides, each group included at least one woman.
- Teachers of Primary or Secondary Schools. In fact, in order to reach an equal distribution of the sample, five of them had to teach at Primary Schools, and five of them had to teach at Secondary Schools.

Following the above criteria, the chosen participants were two women and eight men. They averaged 38.5 years, ranging between 34 and 57 years. Seven teachers worked at state schools, and three teachers worked at private or subsidized schools.

The design of the current qualitative investigation contains a hermeneutical phenomenological angle, focusing on describing the experiences lived by a person or by a group of people regarding a concept or phenomenon [43]. The semi-structured personal interview and the content analysis were applied in order to collect the data and to analyze the information. The transcription of the interviews was carried out with Express Scribe, while the software for qualitative analysis ATLAS.ti (6.2 version) was used to analyze the content.

The interviews were divided in two parts: firstly, there was a group of questions regarding training, professional experience, perception of orthodox masculinity, conflicts in relation with orthodox masculinity, perception of homosexuality in society and behavior related to homosexuality. Secondly, there was an open end to the interview, where the interviewed had the opportunity to talk about any aspect that they considered relevant. Two pilot interviews were carried out by each of the interviewers in order to unify the criteria in relation to the development protocol.

The analysis of the content through ATLAS.ti 6.2 was carried out according to the following steps:

- The system of categories was defined according to the dimensions used in the interviews and the proposals made in previous studies by Gill, Morrow, Collins, Lucey and Schultz; Wickens and Sandlin; Anderson; and Soler [26-32-44-45-46].

- Three experts corrected the system of categories.
- A definite system of categories was established.
- Training was carried out at the preparation stage, based on the individual coding by three investigators of the four pilot interviews, with the aim of reaching the necessary reliability (correlation index among investigators of 0,8 or higher).
- Each of the investigators individually coded the interviews of the selected sample. Next, it was confirmed that there was an average correlation index of 0,86 among the coders.
- A reduction, layout and transformation of the data, and the obtainment and verification of the conclusions took place at the stage of analysis and interpretation of the data. Relationships between the categories of analysis were looked for with the help of the application Query Tool from ATLAS.ti 6.2, and the networks, which represent the relationships between categories, were represented with Networks [41].

The triangulation developed at the end of this qualitative research conforms with the triangulation of the data, since it allowed for working with different sources (interviews and questionnaires). To collect information and relevant points it was necessary the closer participation of the researchers alongside the individuals subject of our research [47].

RESULTS

In relation to the characteristics of the participants it is necessary to bring attention to, that their age was grouped in ranges, in order to avoid an excessive scattering of the data. The ranges were designed to suit teachers and students specifically. Therefore, it is observed that the largest percentage of teachers is found between the ranges 31 to 40 years and 41 to 50 years (42.4% and 30.6%, respectively), while the ranges 20 to 30 years and 51 to 60 years show a noticeably lower frequency (11.8% and 15.3%, respectively). About students, 45.9% of them fall within the range 18 to 21 years and 41.8% within the range 22 to 24 years. The rest of ranges contain a number of individuals noticeably lower (10.5% for the range 25 to 30 years, and scarcely 1.8% for individuals older than 30).

With reference to gender stratification, 80.4% of the sample of 68.7% men who participated in the questionnaire are students, while 19.6% of them are teachers. About the percentage of women who are part of the sample (31.3%), 74.1% of them are students and 25.9% are teachers.

In regard to the sexual orientation of the sample, most of them define themselves as heterosexuals (96.9%); homosexuals represent 1.8%, and “other sexual orientations” has the lowest value at 1.3%. It needs to be stated that both students and teachers present similar percentages defining themselves as heterosexual (97% and 96.4%, respectively). Out of the homosexual group, 1.6% are students, while 2.4% of them are teachers. There are similar percentages for both students and teachers who defined themselves as within the “other sexual orientations” category (1.3% for students and 1.2% for teachers).

The results obtained through the comparison between the students' and the teachers' answers to the questionnaires are shown below:

[Table 1. Relative frequencies of answers]

Differences can be appreciated ($p=.000$) between the answers given by students and teachers when observing heterosexist behavior (item_2), where teachers report to have been witnesses of heterosexist behavior more frequently (50.3% of their answers comprise “many times” and “sometimes”, against a 32.3% of the students' answers). In this sense, a more precise diagnosis made by teachers about such behavior allows for their intervention:

“I dialog, even more, I am very critical, very critical, I mean... I try to stop them... and not only do I try to stop that person, but also everybody else; so that everybody becomes aware I try to stop them as soon as I see a sexual stereotype arising.” (interview_2, personal communication, 20 March 2012).

“Perhaps, to give you an example on the opposite direction, for instance I do not force but I do recommend as necessary after practicing PE, right? to groom oneself and so. And once I had to speak up because there was the comment of a boy who said that grooming was a girls' thing. I mean, [I speak up] more in the stereotyped sense of what is masculine and feminine, to the other extreme of metrosexual and all that is in fashion nowadays, which in that sense it is not seen, it is not perceived at that age.” (interview_2, personal communication, 20 March 2012).

“No, look, if it's a one-off I barely give it importance, I try to make them see that it does not have to be that way, but oh well. If I then see that the same boy or girl does it again, then I call them in and try to speak with them. If the matter is more serious, I would then not go down to the schoolyard or I would go down later, and I organize something like a debate or an assembly so that all students can give their opinion about what happened.” (interview_4, personal communication, 29 March 2012).

On the other hand, there are also differences in the answers obtained when observing homophobic behavior from student to student (item_3; $p=.000$), where 64.1% of the students replied “many times” and “sometimes”, against 55.9% of the teachers' answers. This is coherent because the students of the sample belong to the context defined in the item. The following accounts from teachers serve to illustrate it:

“Actually, yes. Not this year, but last year I did have a grade, a second [grade] of Secondary School, a first [grade] of Secondary School, where there is in fact a boy who seems a bit effeminate, a boy who is always with the girls. The truth is that I noticed that, and I had to... he has had problems with the rest of the classmates and we had to put a stop to the matter and speak about it, and attend some meetings, and clarify many things. Yes... in fact there are some of them in this school.” (interview_3, personal communication, 8 February 2012).

“Well, yes, I think that [it happens] less frequently. I think that [it happens] less frequently. Since you are a child you observe, at least when I was a child we did, the

opinions... this is, [the opinions] of what we did when we were kids are totally different than what exists nowadays. The boys seem to be more conscious of this. There is still some boy a bit behind, I think that it is because of the family, that influences them.” (interview_3, personal communication, 8 February 2012).

“But in the school environment I think that education in that sense has in fact advanced a lot, because the children who show that feminine tendency, well, no, they don't have the same problems as before.” (interview_5, personal communication, 17 April 2012).

“Me, generally, uh... when it's an insult and it has escalated into a conflict... generally I try at the end of the lesson that the two boys, or the boy and the girl, resolve the problem they have had. [I try to] make them see that that is not the way, and I try that they resolve it.” (interview 10, personal communication, 16 April 2012).

In relation to the experience of homophobic behavior from student to student (item_5), even though the answers cluster around the low frequencies, there seems to be a noticeable and significant difference ($p=.000$) between the answers given by students and teachers, in regard to how frequently they experienced such behavior, the students being those who experienced it more frequently (the answers “many times” and “sometimes” amount to 15% in the case of the students, against 2.4% of the teachers' answers).

About the use of homophobic language (item_7), the students show a significantly larger value ($p=.000$) than that of the teachers (the answers “many times” and “sometimes” amount to 24.5% in the case of the students, against 3.6% of the teachers' answers), despite the fact that both groups present larger percentages for the answers “few times” and “never” (a total of 75.5% for both options combined in the case of the students, and 96.5% in the case of the teachers).

Concerning the use of sexist comments with a homophobic intention (item_8), students seem to do that significantly more ($p=.000$) than teachers, as 7.2% of the students answer “many times” and 17.3% answer “sometimes”, against 0% and 3.1% of the teachers' answers, respectively. It is necessary to emphasize that there is the possibility that in some cases a

pejorative language is used and the participants in the conversation do not interpret it as vexatious, but simply as matter of slang and purely conjunctural:

“I have many gay and lesbian friends, sometimes I say to my friend “mate, batty boy”, to my homosexual friend, and there is no problem. I don't think that it's vexatious all the time, it's just a figure of speech, or a way to communicate.” (interview_1, personal communication, 8 February 2012).

“...in some occasion some guy called another guy batty boy... I separated those who were fighting, I asked them what the matter was, and when you listen for a while hearing 'batty boy' is the same as hearing 'asshole', 'idiot'... there isn't a meaning for the word.” (interview_9), personal communication, 23 February 2012).

These differences are also observed ($p=.000$) relating to the use of heterosexist comments (item_9) and about the use of the term 'normal' (item_10) among students against the teachers' answers (the data for the students show 43.4% in regard to heterosexist comments and 38.2% about use of the term 'normal' when adding up the categories “many times” and “sometimes”, against 25.6% and 11.9% of the answers given by teachers, respectively). In this sense, teachers understand the concept 'normality' in a wider and less discriminatory way:

“Yes, yes. In fact... and those who stand out are a bit like... those who stand out are perhaps those with effeminate manners. There are sporadic cases that may be... that look more like... those who seem effeminate, who are not necessarily gay or homosexual, nor do they have that tendency, or they do.” (interview_2, personal communication, 20 March 2012).

Concerning the use of inclusive language (item_11), a difference can be appreciated regarding the distribution of the frequencies of answer between both groups ($p=.000$), which is higher in the case of teachers (63.4% of them answer “always” and “frequently”, against 40.1% of the students). The following testimonial portrays such actions:

“But myself, trying not to hurt anyone's sensitivity, and without discriminating anyone, or in any case by way of positive discrimination, I would make an extra effort so that it was commonplace.” (interview_1, personal communication, 8 February 2012).

“No, look, if it's a one-off I barely give it importance, I try to make them see that it does not have to be that way, but oh well. If I then see that the same boy or girl does it again, then I call them in and try to speak with them. If the matter is more serious, I would then not go down to the schoolyard or I would go down later, and I organize something like a debate or an assembly so that all students can give their opinion about what happened.” (interview_4, personal communication, 29 March 2012).

“We don't tell children explicitly that we are working on this, or on coeducation, but whenever we speak, without having to repeat it too often, the language tries to be coeducational; so many times if you accidentally say “come'on, boys, let's go...” they ask you, “and what about the girls?”, because they are used to, even if we don't use those words, that we they are all equal.” (interview_7, personal communication, 26 March 2012).

Looking at the answers given by both groups according to their gender, the following data can be observed:

[Table 2. Results according to gender (men)]

[Table 3. Results according to gender (women)]

In relation to the presence of homophobic behavior from student to student (item_3) there are only noticeable differences in the case of men ($p=.001$), as male students are the ones who admit to having been witnesses of those behaviors (64.1% of them answer “many times” and “sometimes”, against 52.4% of the teachers). Even though this distribution is coherent in that the students are those who witness homophobic behavior from student to student (since they form part of the group), it also contrasts with the answers given by women, where the percentages are similar between themselves.

About the use of heterosexist comments (item_9), only in the case of men are there significant differences between the answers given by students and teachers ($p=.002$), where students make those comments more frequently (36.5% of them answer “many times” and “sometimes”, against 20.4% of the teachers).

The following tables show the analyzable data in regard to the aspects related to the groups' answers and their sexual orientation:

[Table 4. Results according to sexual orientation (heterosexual)]

[Table 5. Results according to sexual orientation (homosexual)]

[Table 6. Results according to sexual orientation (other sexual orientation)]

In regard to having been victim of homophobic behavior from teachers (item_6), there are significant differences ($p=.046$) for the homosexual community. In this way, those students who define themselves as homosexual have experienced such behavior to a larger degree than teachers have (20% answer “sometimes”, while most of the teachers' answers are “few times” and “never”).

With reference to making homophobic comments (item_7), a significant difference can be appreciated between heterosexual students and teachers ($p=.000$), where students make homophobic comments more often (24.6% of them, adding up the categories “many times” and “sometimes”).

Lastly, related the term “normal” used with heterosexist connotations (item_10), significant differences can be seen between heterosexual students and teachers ($p=.000$) and those belonging to other sexual orientations ($p=.019$).

DISCUSSION

PE is one of the subjects that most defends the traditional patriarchal model, where the LGBT community is not only marginalized, but also stigmatized. Research such as that of Ayvazo and Sutherland, Hemphill and Symons, McCaughtry et al. and O'Brien et al. highlight the hostile climate that exists in this subject with regard to homosexuality, and of course with the others sexual orientations apart from heterosexuality [9-10-11-12].

In this situation, obviously, the role of PE teachers is key; in fact, their role should be oriented towards creating in their lessons a climate that is safe and free of discrimination. To this effect, the first step is that they become aware of the problem. Thus, the results of this investigation conclude that male and female PE teachers in Spain are fairly aware of this reality during their lessons. In fact, over 79% admit to having been witnesses of heterosexist behavior from student to student “many” or “sometimes” (the two highest values of the scale of answers in the questionnaire), and also 56% of the teachers replied that they witnessed homophobic behavior among students by choosing one of the two highest values of the scale.

In this regard, it is striking the opposing view of the students, as the research by Piedra et al. concludes that the students believe that their teachers are not very conscious of this reality, and therefore they take few measures to revert the situation [27]. In this same line, but in the US context, speak Gill et al. [26]. However, if we analyze the results of our investigation in regard to heterosexist and homophobic behavior among students from the perspective of the students themselves, it can be concluded that there is an important level of similarity and complementation with the results obtained for the teachers. In fact, 79% of the students admitted to having been witnesses of heterosexist behavior among themselves “many” or “sometimes”, and around 64% of them chose one of the two highest values of the scale to state that they had been witnesses of homophobic behavior among students. This last figure, even though it is significantly different than that of the teachers (around 56%) obviously complements the teachers' figure, and their differences may be due to the level of privacy that exists in a group in relation to outsiders, as it would be in the case of teachers.

However, it needs to be highlighted that the significant differences are maintained in the case of men: students observe more of these behaviors among them; but there are not significant

differences in the case of women. This is, the percentage of homophobic behavior among students as perceived by female teachers is not significantly different than the homophobic behavior perceived by female students. The hypothesis that arises could be summed up by this question: are female teachers more aware of this problem than their male counterparts, and is that why their perception is more similar to the students' perception than to their peers'?

In any case, it is to be stressed the agreement between the results of this research on homophobia and heterosexism among students, and the results of the research by Piedra et al. in this regard [27]. While one of the studies takes on the perspective of students and teachers, and the other study takes exclusively on the perspective of students, they come to similar conclusions in relation to the perception of heterosexist and homophobic behavior from student to student.

Therefore, in spite of the students' opinion about the degree of awareness of their teachers on homophobia and heterosexism, there is in fact a great parity between teachers and students when perceiving such behavior among students. This is the case to such extent that, in the same line as the research by Morrow and Gill [25], this research confirms that PE teachers are very aware of the existence of homophobic and heterosexist behavior in PE.

Concerning heterosexist and homophobic behavior from students to PE teachers, several aspects stand out. On the one hand, there are noticeable differences between the data obtained for each of these behaviors, since there is a noticeable scattering of the data in the case of heterosexist behavior and a clear concentration of homophobic behavior for the values “few times” and particularly “never”. This may be possibly explained by the fact that socially heterosexism is still the norm and less problematic. However, there is more awareness about how derogatory and vexatious homophobic behavior is.

In this same line it needs to be stressed that teachers have been witnesses of heterosexist behavior from student to teacher in a larger percentage than students have, and the differences are significant. It is striking that teachers, who are outsiders to the students, are able to spot such behavior more often, when it comes from the students themselves. Possibly the lack of awareness of the students about how large a problem such behavior is, and as previously stated, the more

normal character of it, justify these results. Either way, the fact that teachers are more aware of this problem is a very positive piece of data, and as stated in the interviews, they start taking steps towards applying specific measures. It is true that they lack organization, systematization, and training on specific actions, but there is a certain level of awareness that invites to be optimistic.

On the other hand, it needs to be highlighted that teachers state that they have been witnesses of homophobic behavior from student to teacher to a lesser percentage than students have. These results are more expected and leveled than the previous ones, because few teachers and students state that they have been witness of such behavior. The fact that the highest values are those of the students may be due to the fact that they belong to the group from where homophobic behavior starts, and to which the teacher is an outsider. This context allows the 'peers' to share a level of information, which does not happen with the teachers, who, aside from not belonging to the private circle, represents a public authority whom obviously it is convenient not to offend to avoid consequences as a student. However, it is necessary to stress that teachers are aware that this type of behavior happens and they perceive that to be the case, even if to a lesser extent than students do.

Relating to personal experiences about homophobic behavior caused by teachers, there are very few cases, as it was to be expected; however there are significant differences between teachers and students within the homosexual community. This is to say that, significantly, homosexual students are more often victims of homophobic behavior from their teachers than teachers are victims of homophobic behavior from their peers. There is a clear conclusion when we look at this and couple it with the noticeable differences between homosexual teachers and students (in favor of the latter), regarding having been victims of homophobic behavior from other students: homosexual students experience homophobic behavior both from students and teachers to a larger extent than homosexual teachers do. The first affirmation, unfortunately, was to be expected, and it is the task of teachers to revert the situation; but the second affirmation is worrying, because it confirms the existence of homophobia in the teacher's doings, at least as perceived by homosexual students.

However, there is another aspect to be highlighted on the back of the previous argument: heterosexual teachers are the ones most aware of homophobic behavior towards them from other teachers, albeit without reaching significant differences and always on the lower percentages. In fact, no teachers who defined themselves as homosexual or belonging to other sexual orientation used any of the two highest values of the scale to indicate whether they had been victim of homophobic behavior from their peers. This situation becomes even more striking when they are asked whether they have been victims of homophobic behavior from students, because the percentage of heterosexual teachers who responded affirmatively doubles up for the two highest values of the scale, but none of the teachers who belong to the LGBT community answered “many times” or “few times”.

Looking at the data it may be asked: Do LGBT teachers tend to stay hidden or invisible, without calling attention about their sexual preference, in order not to create suspicions or be stigmatized by other teachers or their own students, and that is why the significant differences from homosexual students and heterosexual teachers? This hypothesis is supported by the results obtained in the research by Devis et al. [16], Sykes [18], Clarke [22] and Saraç [23]. However, there will need to be research that observes a larger sample of male and female PE teachers who belong to the LGBT community, because the reduced number of individuals belonging to the LGBT community who form part of this study limits the possibilities of generalizing the results, despite the differences pointed out.

Once the view of teachers and students regarding homophobia and heterosexism during PE lessons has been described, a question arises: how do those responsible for the subject act in this regard? This is to say, what do teachers do? The use of language stands out in this regard, because it is the main heteronormative tool, and, as it was to be expected (since stating what is politically correct is usual), the participant teachers indicate that they do not use homophobic insults, or sexist comments, or they have not considered only heterosexuality to be what is 'normal'. However, this same scenario does not occur in the case of the students, where homophobic and heterosexist language is clearly used more extensively; in fact, there are significant differences on the teachers' answers regarding the use of homophobic comments, the use of sexist comments with homophobic intentions, the use of heterosexist comments, the use of

the term 'normal' (assuming that heterosexuality is the norm) and, of course, the use of an inclusive language. In spite of this, and as a future subject of research, it would have to be considered whether the use of this type of language among students always has a pejorative intention, or as the research by McCormack [31] shows, it is used as part of the usual slang among students and it does not carry a vexatious intention.

Obviating McCormack's theory [31] as an explanation of the extended uses of homophobic and heteronormative language among students, there are clear differences from the way teachers use language. Teachers use a more inclusive, respectful and discrimination-free language. In fact, we should not expect otherwise, since their task as educators with a high level of training made these results predictable.

When looking deeper into the linguistic differences between students and teachers, we observe significant differences among men when making heterosexist comments, and a more frequent use of them by students. It is interesting that these differences do not exist in the case of women, this is, the percentage of female students who make heterosexist comments is not only smaller than the percentage of male students, but also it is not very different from the percentage of female teachers. Besides, as it can be deduced, those female teachers make comments of this kind less frequently than their male counterparts. In this way it again arises (and in fact it is complementary) the hypothesis regarding female teachers being more conscious of the problem, which could be extended to the female gender as a whole. Or perhaps here it transpires the heterosexist stereotype whereby the man is tough and strong, while the woman must be understanding and loving?

In any case, the fact is that the main tool for stigmatization for the LGBT community, language, is apparently taken well care of by teachers in order to free it from heteronormative influences. This situation, per se, could be key to create an inclusive climate during PE lessons. However, the research by Piedra et al. and by Gill et al. indicate that, according to students, PE teachers fail in their attempt to create a safe and inclusive environment for all pupils during their lessons [26-27]. If teachers are so cautious when using language, how come do they fail

miserably when creating an inclusive environment? Is it that perhaps, as pointed out earlier, the participant teachers answered in the “politically correct” way?

This striking divergence between the perspective of the students and the teachers call for new research to look into the daily reality of the matter rather than into each of the parties' perspective. In this way a clearer definition on how homophobia and heterosexism manifests in PE could be obtained, and from this starting point the measures in this regard would be more accurate.

As a corollary it is possible to state that, even though teachers and students are fairly conscious of heterosexist and homophobic behavior experienced by the *queer* collective during PE lessons, there is still some work to be done to propose effective measures to de-marginalized these students [37]. Besides, unfortunately, the case of *queer* teachers is even worst in that there is not a minimum level of awareness of the problem they live, which is why a first step to revert this reality has not been taken yet.

CONCLUSION

Our research fulfills the goal set, as it describes the discrimination based on sexual orientation, which occurs in PE lessons in Spain. In this regard it is observed that both male and female PE teachers are fairly aware of such reality during their lessons; in fact, there is parity between students and teachers when it comes to perceiving homophobic or heterosexist behavior among students. Homophobic or heterosexist behavior among teachers is significantly less frequent; obviously their role as educators and their position as public authority benefit the many differences in respect of the students. Perhaps the alarming thing would have been that there were not such differences, however there will be necessary to carry out further research using a sample of teachers and students belonging to the LGBT community, because they unfortunately tend to be victims of such behavior. Future research may confirm and complement this conclusion.

On the other hand, and relating to the management of such discrimination during PE lessons, it needs to be highlighted that language, as the main heteronormative and homophobic tool, is used by teachers in an inclusive way and respecting different sexual orientations – especially by women. However, it needs to be specified that there is the possibility that teachers may have transmitted a politically correct communication, and that they have not shared their true point of view about sexuality, the LGBT community, etc., for fear of oppression or criticism. That is why we propose that future investigations use qualitative methods to address this specific point, in order to describe more accurately and deeply the opinions of the teachers, and therefore confirm whether they are actually politically correct or they hide their true opinion.

With reference to the use of language among students, this research shows that a homophobic and heterosexist language is more commonly used; however further research will be needed to determine whether this language has a positive pejorative character or it is simply part of the slang of the group.

Finally, in the matter of implementing concrete measures to change this reality, it needs to be noted a lack of organization, systematization, and over all training for the teachers, when it comes down to specify actions that help to create a climate which is safe and free of discrimination during PE lessons. That is why, even though we have proposed some future actions, we think that the main action would be to investigate the daily reality in PE regarding homophobia and heterosexism, rather than the points of view and experiences of students and teachers; it would be a matter of studying the daily reality in situ, using direct observation, discussion groups. In this way a more clear definition of homophobic and heterosexist behavior in this subject could be obtained. From this point on, and taking into account the perceptions that the students and teachers stated in this research, specific measures to revert the current situation could be proposed, applied and evaluated.

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