



Gender variance and the role of the Educational
Psychologist (EP): An exploration of the perspectives of EPs
and Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) in Wales

Doctorate in Educational Psychology

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Declaration

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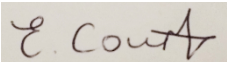
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This thesis is dedicated to Alex Wilson, who once told me the only thing stopping me was me. He never saw me start the doctorate process but his words undoubtedly motivated it.

Summary

This thesis is divided into three parts: a literature review, an empirical study and a critical appraisal. Part A, the literature review, aims to provide a broad perspective on the topic of Gender Variance (GV), including discussion of pertinent areas within the extant literature. The review begins by defining and exploring key terminology surrounding GV, as well as summarising pertinent theories and discourses linked to the outlined terminology. It proceeds to explore and critically appraise statistics surrounding the prevalence of GV for Children and Young People (CYP) in the UK, purported correlations with the wellbeing and mental health of those CYP and how these statistics have triggered government responses at a national and more localised level. The review concludes by exploring how the preceding sections potentially implicate Educational Psychologists (EPs) as a professional group that can offer support to Gender Variant (GV) CYP, despite a paucity of literature exploring the role of the EP within this area to date. The exposed gap within the literature presents the rationale for this research, leading to the conceptualisation of the research questions.

Part B, the empirical study, explores the constructs held by Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) and EPs within Wales in regards to GV and how they perceive the role of the EP in supporting CYP who may self-identify as GV. The empirical study provides a detailed overview of the research undertaken, including an outline of the methodology and method utilised followed by the findings from a thematic analysis of interview data from the seven TEPs/EPs who partook in this research. The findings are explored in relation to overarching strands of psychology thought to best capture the data set in its entirety.

Part C, the critical appraisal, presents a reflective and reflexive account of the research journey undertaken through considered focus on two areas: the self as research practitioner and the contribution to knowledge and practice. The decisions taken throughout each stage of the research development are reflected upon, acknowledging how the researcher's values, beliefs and experiences may have influenced the end research before consideration of how this research may have future relevance to the researcher's own practice and the wider EP profession.

Contents

Declaration	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Summary	iii
Contents	iv
List of appendices	vii
List of tables	viii
List of figures	x
Abbreviations	xi
PART ONE: MAJOR LITERATURE REVIEW	12
1 Introduction	13
1.1 Structure of literature review	13
1.2 Description of key sources	14
1.3 Identification of studies relevant for this research	15
1.4 Inclusion/exclusion criteria	15
2 Terminology	15
2.1 Gender: A contested ground	15
2.1.1 Gender as a biological given	16
2.1.2 Gender as a construction of society	17
2.1.2.1 Troubling gender: concepts of 'performativity' and the 'heterosexual matrix'	17
2.1.3 Gender: Taking the middle ground	19
2.2 Identity	20
2.2.1 Gender identity	21
2.2.2 Theories of gender identity development	22
2.2.3 Critique of GI theories: Restoring the complexity	23
2.3 Transgender: Beneath the umbrella	25
2.4 Gender variance	25
2.5 Language as actor	26
2.5.1 Links to social constructionism	26
2.5.2 The dangers of language	27

2.5.3	Labelling theories: Who wins?	28
3	Literature surrounding CYP who are GV: current statistics and reported impact	29
3.1	Current statistics	29
3.2	Reported impact on CYP	30
3.3	'My daughter's gender is not the problem...it's everything else around her that's a problem' (Pyne, 2014, p.4)	31
4	The political landscape: 'A call to action'	32
4.1	UK legislation	32
4.1.1	The Human Rights Act (1998)	32
4.1.2	The Gender Recognition Act (2004)	32
4.1.3	The Equality Act (2010)	33
4.2	A narrower focus: The Welsh context	33
5	The role of the EP	34
5.1	International research evidence	35
5.2	UK research evidence	38
6	Rationale for thesis	39
6.1	Rationale	39
6.2	Research questions	40
	References	41
	PART 2: EMPIRICAL STUDY	50
	Abstract	51
1	Introduction	52
1.1	Research questions	55
2	Methodology	55
2.1	Ontology/ Epistemology	55
2.2	Design	55
2.3	Data collection	56
2.4	Participants	56
2.5	Procedure	57

2.6	Analysis	57
2.7	Ethical considerations	59
2.8	Evidencing 'trustworthiness'	59
3	Results	59
3.1	Language as actor	61
3.2	Change	65
3.3	Navigating child identity development	67
3.4	Interview as an active site of reflection/discovery	69
3.5	Emerging area of practice	71
3.6	Facilitators of a role	77
3.7	Barriers of a role	80
3.8	Future work	84
4	Discussion	86
4.1	Research questions	86
4.2	Links to previous research	87
4.3	Social constructionism	88
4.4	Systemic thinking	88
4.5	Theories of change	89
4.6	Personal construct psychology	89
4.7	Strengths and limitations of the research	90
4.8	Implications for EP practice	92
4.9	Conclusion	95
	References	96
	PART 3: CRITICAL APPRAISAL	102
1	Introduction	103
2	Research development	103
2.1	Inception of research idea	103
2.2	Development of research idea: exploration of the extant literature	104
2.3	Researcher positioning	106

3	Methodological considerations	107
3.1	Ontology	107
3.2	Epistemology	108
3.3	Qualitative methodology	108
3.4	Data collection method: semi-structured interviews	109
3.5	Method of data analysis: Thematic analysis	110
3.6	Participants	111
3.7	Data collection	113
3.8	Data analysis	114
4	Contribution to knowledge	116
4.1	Contribution to literature	116
4.2	Contribution to professional practice	117
4.3	Contribution to future research	118
4.4	Personal reflections on research and practice	119
	References	121
	Appendices	125
	Appendix A: Details of electronic literature search	
	Appendix B: Interview schedule	
	Appendix C: Gatekeeper letter	
	Appendix D: Information sheet	
	Appendix E: Consent form	
	Appendix F: Debrief form	
	Appendix G: Transcription key	
	Appendix H: Thematic Analysis Process	
	Appendix I: Key ethical consideration and how they were addressed	
	Appendix J: Use of Yardley's (2000/2008) criteria to evaluate trustworthiness of own research	
	Appendix K: Full size overarching map	
	Appendix L: Example transcript with initial noticings and codes	
	Appendix M: Example table of collated evidence for the global theme 'facilitators of role'	

List of tables

Table 1.	Participant demographics
Table 2.	Language as actor: illustrative data extract
Table 3.	Heteronormativity in action
Table 4.	Institutional heteronormativity
Table 5.	Navigating the binary
Table 6.	Construction of the 'other'
Table 7.	Constructions of GV located in context
Table 8.	Troubling gender
Table 9.	Readiness for change
Table 10.	Barriers to change
Table 11.	Impact of change
Table 12.	Childhood as a time of exploration
Table 13.	Childhood as a time of exploration: difficulty
Table 14.	Persistence over time
Table 15.	Appropriate age to explore GV and/or address more widely
Table 16.	GID as distinct
Table 17.	Influences on GID
Table 18.	Interview as an active site for participants and researcher
Table 19.	Emerging area of practice: illustrative data extract
Table 20.	Level of certainty around area: illustrative data extract
Table 21.	Factors impacting level of certainty around GV
Table 22.	Variation of views relating to level of certainty around area
Table 23.	Participant 1: sources of influence on personal constructions
Table 24.	Sources of influence on EP views
Table 25.	Research evidence as a source of influence
Table 26.	Personal views dominating
Table 27.	The need for objectivity
Table 28.	Impact of practice on self
Table 29.	Tools/approaches that could be used in practice
Table 30.	Psychology as a distinct contribution
Table 31.	EP role as multi-faceted
Table 32.	EP role to support identity development
Table 33.	Working systemically

Table 34.	Placement within systems (home & school)
Table 35.	Definition of the EP
Table 36.	Search for the expert other
Table 37.	Positioning of the EP
Table 38.	Reactive V proactive response
Table 39.	Support required by TEPs/EPs
Table 40.	Subjective boundaries around role
Table 41.	Making the CYP visible
Table 42.	Barriers to the voice of the child
Table 43.	Promoting inclusion
Table 44.	Multi-agency approach
Table 45.	Creating space: illustrative data extract
Table 46.	Origins of change
Table 47.	Perceived strengths and limitations of the research
Table 48.	Implications for EP practice

List of Figures

- Figure 1. Procedure for interviews
- Figure 2. Overarching thematic map
- Figure 3. Thematic map for research question 1. 'What constructs do EPs and TEPs within Wales hold in relation to GV?'
- Figure 4. Thematic map for secondary research question i. 'What level of experience do EPs and TEPs within Wales currently have in supporting CYP who express GV?'
- Figure 5. Thematic map for secondary research question ii. 'What role do EPs/TEPs within Wales perceive themselves holding in relation to GV?'

Abbreviations

GV	Gender Variance/ Gender Variant
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
LA	Local Authority
CYP	Child or young person
GIDS	Gender Identity Development Service
GI	Gender Identity
GID	Gender Identity Disorder
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist
EP	Educational Psychologist
SEP	Senior Educational Psychologist
PEP	Principal Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
TA	Thematic Analysis
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual
ICD	International Classification of Diseases
CID	Child Identity Development



Gender variance and the role of the Educational Psychologist (EP): An exploration of the perspectives of EPs and Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) in Wales

Part 1: Major literature review

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1 Introduction

The term 'gender variance' (GV) has been defined in reference to practices or behaviours which may be deemed to fall outside the norms expected for a CYP's biological sex (Brill & Pepper, 2008). Within contemporary discourse, the area of GV is receiving ever-increasing attention (Yavuz, 2016; Losty & O' Connor, 2018), highlighting the multiplicity of ways in which people now self-identify their gender, beyond a binary system of male/female. Increased visibility of GV is coupled with reports indicating a significant rise in the numbers of CYP self-identifying as GV (House of Commons, 2015) and/or seeking support from GID services (Bonfatto & Crasnow, 2018), alongside a growing body of academic literature pertaining to LGBT psychology (Chung & Klann, 2015).

With increased visibility and research come new challenges for politics, governments and the law (Whittle, 2006). Within the UK and Wales more specifically, legislation and policy is emerging to advocate for those who self-identify as GV, with some focus being placed on an educational context. This has potential implications for professional groups such as EPs, who work across the educational range of 0-25 (AEP/WAG, 2016). At this juncture, it seems important to gain an understanding of how EPs and TEPs are perceiving this 'paradigm shift' (Pyne, 2014, p.1) and their potential role in supporting CYP who self-identify as GV.

1.1 Structure of the literature review

This literature review will begin by defining and exploring key terminology surrounding GV as well as summarising pertinent theories and discourses linked to the outlined terminology. This section aims to provide a broad overview of the key information directly related to the specific area of focus within this research project. As such, it is acknowledged that this thesis does not allow for a thorough interrogation of the literature pertaining to gender or theories of GI development, nor is that its aim. Rather, the following subsections afford an insight into the historical debates that have influenced current perspectives, policy and legislation around GV, to inform the subsequent sections of the literature review. It is further acknowledged from the outset of this project that, within the area of GV, language use is neither stable (Whittle, 2006) nor neutral (Valentine, 2007). As such, the impact of language will also be considered within section two and related to labelling theories. Linked to a recognition of the significance of language and in keeping with the rationale to use the

term 'GV' throughout this thesis (see section 2.4), the researcher will utilise the pronouns 'they' and 'their' throughout the literature review when self-identification and choice of pronoun has not been made explicit. Where an author has stated a pronoun preference, in line with their GI or the reported GI or those they refer to, this will be affirmed and reported accordingly.

The review will proceed to highlight and critically appraise statistics surrounding the prevalence of GV for CYP in the UK, purported correlations with the wellbeing and mental health of those CYP and how these statistics have triggered government responses at a national and more localised level. The review will culminate by outlining how this area of knowledge and the reported impact on CYP not only bears relevance to the role of EPs but potentially highlights them as a professional group suitably placed to support CYP and the systems within which they are embedded. The limited evidence base surrounding the role of EPs in supporting CYP who self-identify as GV will be discussed and appraised to offer the rationale and aims of this research project, thus seeking to address the gap exposed.

Within qualitative research, value is placed on the subjectivity and reflexivity of the researcher, acknowledging that, as researchers, we bring our own histories, values and assumptions into the research process (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The need to position oneself is acknowledged and will be addressed within part three, the critical appraisal.

1.2 Description of Key sources

Literature was obtained from online databases including PsycINFO, Web of Science, ERIC and ASSIA. These databases were purposely selected due to their focus within the social sciences or remit as multi-disciplinary, thereby better enabling access to literature pertaining to EPs. A search on Google Scholar was also completed to cross-reference literature obtained and ensure vital sources were not omitted. Due to the diversity of language used to describe GV, a variation of search terms was used, namely: GV, transgender, gender non-conforming, gender fluid and non-binary. These terms were used in combination with EPs, educational professionals and educational personnel. Usage of terms other than EP were employed in recognition that databases may use varying terms to encapsulate professional groups and obscure terminology (Green, Johnson & Adams, 2006). An initial search was completed in September-October 2017 and repeated in August 2018.

1.3 Identification of studies relevant for this research

The literature searches outlined above revealed a paucity of research relating to the role of EPs in supporting CYP who self-identify as GV (See Appendix A for details of searches). The limited research base available curtailed the ability to complete a systematic review (Boland, Cherry & Dickson, 2017) and dictated a narrative review, aiming to provide a broad perspective on the selected topic of focus, including discussion of pertinent issues within that area (Green et al, 2006). Complementary manual searches of reference lists from those articles/books identified and use of grey literature, following a 'backwards snowballing' technique (Wohlin, 2014), were utilised to identify relevant literature and embed as systematic a process as possible to the review being conducted.

1.4 Inclusion/ exclusion criteria

Studies were selected for inclusion if they were written in English, published between the years 2000-2018, were concerning children and young people specifically, as opposed to adults, and centred on the role of the EP in supporting CYP who were GV. Alternative conceptualisations of this title, for example school based psychologist, were also included due to variations in language use across countries. When discussing seminal theories or concepts within the area, literature outside of this time frame was incorporated, to accommodate historical perspectives that have shaped current understanding and policy.

2 Terminology

Within the field of gender and particularly in relation to GV, language is tentative and constantly shifting, in many respects because the meaning attached to the language is still being contested and negotiated (Valentine, 2007). The definitions chosen below represent the researcher's subjective understanding of the literature and the intended meaning of such definitions within this research.

2.1 Gender: A contested ground

DePalma (2013, p. 1) highlights that 'most people ... are altogether too sure about what gender is: there are two "opposite" sexes, man and woman, and gender is the

inevitable categorical expression of natural sex'. This stance reflects a historical, essentialist belief supposing gender is innate and fixed over time. Over the last six decades, the rise of third wave feminist, poststructuralist, queer (Stryker, 2008), social constructionist (Renold, 2005) and transgender theory (Whittle, 2006) has troubled this linear assumption, questioning the very ontology of gender itself. Whilst there are marked differences between these strands of thought, they arguably converge in the theorisation and deconstruction of the gender binary. Far from being a resolved issue, the essentialist/constructionist dichotomy continues to be a contested ground, influencing thought and understanding around GV (Newman, 2002).

2.1.1 Gender as a biological given

The essentialist view of sex and gender is argued to contain six principles:

1. There are two and only two genders;
2. Every human belongs to one and only one of these two genders;
3. Belonging to a gender is a permanent characteristic of a human being;
4. No one can belong to one gender at one time in life and to another gender at another time;
5. The gender to which a human belongs is determined biologically (male or female);
6. The gender to which a human belongs is not a matter of choice either by the person him/herself or by any other human (Ozar, 2006).

Such a position creates a biological dimorphism, in which humans are pre-determined as male or female, with no space in between these categories for divergence. Discussions and literature have existed across generations alluding to innate sex differences at the genetic, hormonal or anatomical (relating to brain structure specifically) level, to propagate the notion of an 'essential sex' difference (Fine, 2010; Baron-Cohen, 2003).

2.1.2 Gender as a construction of society

Literature emerging in the 1970s challenged the notion of gender as biologically determined and intrinsically linked to sex, articulating that instead, gender is socially constructed through cultural and discursive practices (Carrera, DePalma & Lameiras, 2012), being shaped and re-shaped within the societies in which people live (Renold, 2005). This process of socialisation is initiated from birth, with the assignment of sex becoming a cultural act, marking the start of a lifelong process of the interpellation of gender (DePalma, 2013; Butler, 1990).

Wiseman & Davidson (2012) offer support to the social construction of gender in articulating that the gender binary is a discourse deeply rooted within Western society, thus created by and perpetuated within that discourse. Anthropological research is often cited in relation to such a claim by providing evidence of significant cultural variation in gender systems and thus attitudes towards GV (Newman, 2002). The existence of biological variation across all vertebrate species in relation to the sex binary (Roughgarden, 2004) and divergent transgender experiences (Stryker, 2008) are presented as offering further support for a constructionist stance, by challenging the presumed relationship of a particularly sexed body with a particular gendered subjectivity (Carrera et al, 2012).

Butler (1990) and DePalma (2013) have each asserted that within the conceptualisation of gender as a social construct, intrinsic ties to sex become dislodged and thus lose meaning. In essence, it is only within language that gender becomes conceivable. This stance problematises the ontology of sex, questioning how it becomes known as scientific fact and whether it too is a social construct to represent and uphold the notion of biological continua as binary opposites (DePalma, 2013).

2.1.2.1 Troubling gender: Concepts of 'performativity' and the 'heterosexual matrix'

Two fundamental concepts arising from the work of Judith Butler – 'performativity' and the 'heterosexual matrix' – continue to pervade literature relating to the deconstruction of gender (Renold, 2005, Atkinson & DePalma, 2009).

Within the concept of performativity, Butler does not explore the individual but how the individual comes to assume their position as a subject (Salih, 2002). Rather than being something that each person has, Butler asserts that gender is something that is actively done by the person and done to the person, repeatedly, throughout everyday social and cultural practices in order to create a coherent and recognisable self within

society (Butler, 1990). This notion is proclaimed in the infamous quote by De Beauvoir (1997, p. 295), 'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman'.

Butler makes the individual active in the process of their gendering, whilst acknowledging that unlike actors, they may not always be conscious of the gender roles they play out or how such roles are enforced, because they have become so accustomed to them (Jules, 2008). The effect of performativity creates an illusion of an abiding gendered self, with the subject believing that in becoming gendered, gender was there all along (Butler, 1990; 1993a).

Butler rests on the theoretical framework of Foucault to explore how sex and gender are the regulatory effects of institutions, discourses and practices and created within what she terms a heterosexual matrix of power (1990, Salih, 2002). The 'heterosexual matrix' functions to produce hegemonic, normative notions of femininity and masculinity (DePalma & Atkinson, 2007), thus what is acceptable and deemed 'normal' to be a man or a woman within any given society. Influenced by Rich's (1980) notion of 'compulsory heterosexuality', Butler asserts that whilst sex, gender and sexual orientation are different aspects of human identity, they become entangled in the heterosexual matrix of socially constructed assumptions:

I use the term heterosexual matrix ... to designate that grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders, and desires are naturalized ... a hegemonic discursive/epistemological model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality. (Butler, 1990, p. 151)

Within the heterosexual matrix, propagating a strict binary, behaviours and practices falling outside of these norms are perceived as aberrant (Newman, 2002) and thus pathologised. Here a juxtaposition emerges, in which those who transgress the norms, presenting as 'unintelligible gender' (Butler, 1990), expose the illusion of gender at the same time as being 'othered' (Renold, 2005), and thus marginalised, within society on the basis of violating the very norms they disrupt. Butler (1993a) asserts that the necessity of an 'other', which is policed and shamed to substantiate the normative reference, exposes the instability of the heterosexual matrix,¹ highlighting that it is possible to re-construct identities in ways that challenge and subvert the existing power structures (Salih, 2002).

¹ Re-articulated as heterosexual hegemony in *Bodies That Matter* (1993a)

The term 'heteronormativity' is also used to explain the social production of binary gender, the privileging of heterosexuality and the ways in which alternatives to normative gender roles/expressions and non-heterosexualities become marginalised and positioned as 'abnormal' (Littleton-Smith, 2015). Literature exploring gender and education highlight schools as dominant heteronormative institutions, in which gender divisions pervade policy, discourse and practice, operating as sites in which the active policing of sex/gender norms takes place (DePalma & Atkinson, 2007; DePalma, 2013; Renold, 2005, 2006; Bowers et al, 2015; Jules, 2008; Carrera et al, 2012; Vantieghem & Van Houtte, 2018; Payne & Smith, 2014).

Scholars and theorists affiliated to a social constructionist stance argue that for change to occur there needs to be a process in which 'new imaginaries' (Carrera et al, 2012, p.1009) are formed, which move beyond the cultural and historical social imaginaries that have previously shaped westernized contexts. Specific to the context of education, DePalma (2013, pp.12/13) calls for people to actively engage in a troubling of the constructions/discourses surrounding sex and gender by employing the term 'trans' as a verb and actively 'trans-ing *the* [sic] curriculum'. In effect, calling on people to lose their gender expertise (Butler, 2006).

2.1.3 Gender: taking the middle ground

Within the polarity of the essentialists and social constructionists emerges literature critiquing both sides of the dichotomy, suggesting that neither side can claim full authority.

Critics of the essentialist argument highlight that a fatal flaw within this stance is the existence of exceptional gender expressions, also encapsulating the term 'intersex'² (Serano, 2007; Sytsma, 2006; Newman, 2002; Ozar, 2006; Preves, 2014), described as the biological condition of being 'in between' male and female (Sytsma, 2006). The occurrence of exceptional gender expressions falling outside the boundaries of male/female calls into question the parameters established for innate gender. Whilst some essentialists have argued that these exceptional gender expressions represent anomalies (as articulated by Roughgarden, 2009), it is proposed that the frequency

² Intersex now more commonly referred to as disorders of sex development (DSD), following a consensus statement in 2006 (Pasterski, Prentice & Hughes, 2010).

with which such 'anomalies' occur far exceeds what would be expected should they only represent genetic outliers (Serano, 2007; Preves, 2014).

The social constructionist stance does not escape critique in relation to exceptional gender expressions either, on the grounds that it negates the presence of biology entirely and thus cannot account for GV people's experiences of an essential self, self-described as innate and existing outside of, and in spite of, socialisation (Monro, 2005; Serano, 2007). Additional critiques of poststructuralist, transgender theory in particular, are its lack of consideration for the potential need for gender categorisation on a social level, in order to facilitate communication, and a reliance on the binary within discussions of its deconstruction, potentially reinforcing its legitimacy (Monro, 2005).

Whilst there may be an arguable need for gender categorisation, theorists within gender have started questioning whether this has to be binary categorisation, instead viewing gender on a spectrum (Monro, 2005; Serano, 2007; Carrera et al, 2012; Sargeant, 2019). Monro (2005) in particular calls for a gender pluralist, flexible model of gender that acknowledges the deconstruction of sex and gender, making visible their discursive production, as well as accounting for all exceptional gender expressions and recognising a need for a linguistic system that can accommodate these expressions. The establishment of a middle ground thus seeks to acknowledge the complex interplay of biological, psychological and societal factors (Iantaffi & Barker, 2018) at play when discussing one's gender.

2.2 Identity

Identity has been defined as 'an attempt to understand the entity that, ideally, enables one to move with purpose and direction in life and with a sense of internal coherence and continuity over time and space' (Kroger, 2017, p. 3). Developing an understanding of one's identity, which then remains stable within continual change, permits one to describe and express oneself to others (Kaltiala-Heino et al, 2018).

Pivotal to understanding identity and its development has been the work of Erikson (1963, 1968) and the continuation of his work by Marcia (1966; Marcia et al, 1993). They outline the process of identity formation, in which a person explores and subsequently commits to identity-defining roles and values across a number of life domains, for example nationality, religion, ethnicity and occupation (Steensma et al, 2013). Whilst both Erikson and Marcia highlight adolescence as a fundamental time for

identity formation and integration, it is acknowledged that identity is never resolved once and for all, rather it remains malleable and thus subject to modifications throughout adult life (Kroger, 2017). This links to a fundamental understanding within Erikson's work (1963) regarding the multilateral nature of identity formation, involving interacting forces at the biological, psychological and social levels, which can present ongoing challenge to a person and their conceptualisation of their own identity throughout their life course.

2.2.1 Gender Identity

One's GI is a component embroiled within one's overall identity, used to define a person's internalised sense of self as male, female or another gender (Iantaffi & Barker, 2018). Whilst a person's GI can reflect one's biological sex, it can also diverge (Brill & Pepper, 2008).

Alongside the conceptualisation and theorisation of the term identity, the emergence of GI is relatively recent in respect of historiography. One of the earliest recorded origins of the term was in the 60s, within the work of John Money (1994), a modern sexologist involved in the establishment and operation of the John Hopkins University, conducting sex reassignment surgery. The purpose of its emergence was to distinguish between the biological and physical aspects of an individual (one's sex), and their socialised behaviour (one's gender). Money introduced the dual concept of GI and gender role,³ exerting that GI was the private manifestation of one's gender role and conversely one's gender role was the public manifestation of GI (Steensma et al, 2013).

The postulation of a fixed congruence between GI and gender role has been challenged by those who identify as GV. For example, Serano (2007) a self-identifying transsexual woman, professed experiencing a dissonance between the gender consciously chosen to be identified with and explicitly expressed to others and the 'subconscious sex' (p. 78) that reflected how she internally felt. Serano describes never having the quintessential 'trans experience' of having always felt female, with this gradually coming into consciousness over time. Thus whilst her GI was shifting alongside this process of consciousness, it was not explicitly revealed and made congruent with her gender role until later in adolescence. Ahmed (2006) asserts the

³ Gender role in this context refers to an externalized expression of one's gender, which could imply clothing, hairstyles, mannerisms, how we speak, how we play and our social interactions and roles. This is typically referred to now as gender expression (Brill & Pepper, 2008)

importance of phenomenology to queer studies and through Serano's account, the importance of lived experience can be seen, allowing further exploration and critique of prevailing understandings of GI. Within current research, the concepts of GI and gender expression are referred to independently, in acknowledgement of reports from those who self-identify as GV (Steensma et al, 2013).

2.2.2 Theories of gender identity development

Historical literature concerning normative GI development holds the prevailing assumption that one's sex, GI and gender expression/roles typically develop in congruence to each other (Cohen-Kettenis & Pfäfflin, 2003). As such it reports behavioural presentations of infants, proposed to evidence a child's growing understanding of one's own and others gender. For example, it is thought that most children develop the ability to label their own and other's gender between 18-24 months (Steensma et al, 2013). This ability is linked to increased gender-based preferences, for example a preference for stereotyped toys (Martin & Ruble, 2010).

Theories from differing psychological paradigms have been proposed and studied in relation to GI development (Kaltiala-Heino et al, 2018). One such example within a cognitive developmental framework is Kohlberg's theory of gender constancy (1966). Leaning on a Piagetian framework, Kohlberg proposed a staged process of GI development, directly correlated with age-related changes in cognitive development. For Kohlberg, GI first develops in the preschool years, with children beginning to differentiate others and identify with their own gender (gender labelling), moving to a growing awareness that gender remains a stable aspect of identity across the lifespan (gender stability), culminating in an appreciation that this fixed nature of gender remains, despite alterations at a superficial or behavioural level (gender constancy, approximately 5-7 years)⁴.

Alternative theories of GI development based within psychodynamic, psychosocial and biological schools of thought have also been proposed in relation to GI development. In turn, GV development, GI or gendered behaviour outside of what is culturally deemed typical for one's assigned sex, has also been theorized to derive from deviations in each of these domains (Gray, Carter & Levitt, 2012). Whilst there is not

⁴ It is noted that there are variable opinions on the age at which children will reach each of these stages, due to differences in the definition of the concepts and methods of measurement (Cohen-Kettenis & Pfäfflin (2003)

scope to cover each in detail within this review,⁵ research considering the development of GI has articulated a lack of robust evidence to legitimise any discrete paradigm in isolation (Gregor et al, 2016; Steensma et al, 2013; Kaltiana-Heino et al, 2018), moving toward a conceptualisation of GI development as a complex interplay of bio-psycho-social processes (Kaltiana-Heino et al, 2018) that cannot easily be demarcated.

2.2.3 Critique of GI theories: restoring the complexity

In reviewing the emergence of GI and theories detailing its development in CYP, a critique emerges in their convergence around the gender binary and essentialist presumption of a male/female dichotomy (Steensma et al, 2013; Diamond & Butterworth, 2008). Within such constructions of gender development, those who exist outside of this dichotomy in their self-identified GI inevitably become 'abnormal'. In support of this argument, Newman (2002) discusses the then diagnostic category of GID within the DSM-IV, marking incongruence between one's GI and their biological sex at birth as a medical condition within a mental health discourse. Newman (2002) articulates that the very existence of the diagnostic category GID, within westernized cultures, determines that gender-atypical behaviour is by definition pathological and thus reinforces a binary gender system. This critique gains momentum when reviewing recent amendments to classification systems. Within the DSM-V, GID was replaced with the term gender dysphoria, to avoid pathologising identity, and within the forthcoming ICM-11 it is proposed that all diagnoses relating to GI will be re-conceptualised under the new term gender incongruence (Kaltiala-Heino et al, 2018). Despite such amendments, the continued categorization of GI variants as 'mentally disordered' remains a highly controversial and contested area (Meyer-Bahlburg, 2010).

A potential pathologisation of those who diverge from the norm in their GI draws further questions when comparing against the theorisation of identity more widely. Erikson (1963) in particular highlights the lifelong construction of one's identity, and both Erikson and Marcia highlight the stage of 'moratorium', in which people actively explore and consider identity defining adult roles and values, as being crucial to optimal identity development (Kroger, 2017). Thus, one could argue that a search for a meaningful GI, moving outside of the binary, is both normative and developmentally appropriate. Within the area of GI, however, such exploration is placed within a

⁵ See Steensma et al (2013), Kaltiana-Heino et al (2018) and Cohen-Kettenis & Pfäfflin (2003) for discussion of pertinent theories within GI and GV development.

medicalised discourse, suggestive of a problem that needs to be fixed. The rigidity of this binary model of gender is also in contention with the proposed ongoing fluidity of identity development more widely.

Stryker (2006) posits that when reviewing the literature around this area, one needs to be aware of national contexts and how GV is represented. She highlights that academia focused around those who are GV in the UK has tended to be more policy driven and focused on legal or medical issues. The proposal that GI emerged out of a need to be able to conceptualise and thus treat those who wished to undergo gender reassignment, based on the dissonance felt between their GI and assigned gender at birth, could therefore be argued to have established GV within a medicalised discourse and consequently set a path for the cultural lens through which it would be viewed. The medicalised process raises its own complexity, whereby those seeking medical intervention have to enter a process of categorisation associated with the pathologisation of GV, in order for their GI to eventually be affirmed (House of Commons report, 2015). There is further contention within academic literature relating to the medicalisation of GV.⁶ For example, it is asserted that not all individuals who self-identify as GV experience a full cross-gender identity or always require clinical assistance (Diamond & Butterworth, 2008). Furthermore, not all who self-identify outside of the hegemonic binary experience distress in this divergence, and as such would not potentially seek nor require a diagnosis of gender dysphoria and/or medical intervention (Cohen-Kettenis & Pfäfflin, 2010). It could therefore be hypothesized that the rooting of GI within a medicalised discourse places a disproportionate focus and foregrounded presumption around physical transition, again reinforcing a binary view of GI. Wiseman & Davidson (2011) challenge the binary discourse, asserting that as long as discourse is binary, research and arguably practice will continue to focus on the differences between males and females and develop knowledge and truth relative to that strict dichotomy.

Over recent years, the dimensionality and diversity of GI has received increasing attention (Steensma et al, 2013; Losty & O'Connor, 2018; Meyer-Bahlburg, 2010; Cohen-Kettenis & Pfäfflin, 2010), moving away from a dichotomous model to the notion of GI as multiple and fluid. For example, Ehrensaft (2012) presents an example of gender therapy that operates on the premise that gender is a three-dimensional web spun by the CYP based on threads of their nature, nurture and culture. Ehrensaft

⁶ See Meyer-Bahlburg, 2010 for a discussion on the debates relating to categorizing GV within a psychiatric framework.

proposes that therapy with GV CYP should endeavour to accommodate the individual 'creative' expression of GI, rather than curtailing that expression, marking it as deviant if it operates outside of a constructed boundary. Thus, there is an acceptance of gender fluidity and a movement away from an individual deficit model, to the presumption of a social deficit model.

Whilst the debates within gender and GI are far from resolved, the theorisation and critique of their boundaries has created a space in which the multiplicity of gender can be discussed.

2.3 Transgender: Beneath the umbrella

The word 'transgender' is often used as an umbrella term to refer to those whose GI is not consistent with their assigned sex at birth or reflects other variations on the gender spectrum (Chung & Klann, 2015). For example, Bockting (2008) discusses a sample of 1,229 US transgendered persons who were asked to describe their transgender label. Whilst many labels fell within the binary of male/female (for example: female-to-male, displaced male, formerly transsexual), other responses reflected a wider continuum outside of this dichotomy (for example: shemale, gender neutral, 3rd gender, bigender, gender queer and in-between and beyond).

The term transgender first came into formal usage in 1998 within a parliamentary discussion group, in an attempt to apply as inclusive a term as possible to legislation (Whittle, 2006). Critique of such an endeavour asserts that inclusivity may erase the complexities of those underlying labels supposedly captured within the overarching term transgender (Valentine, 2007), thereby erasing individuals' lived experience and how each individual may self-identify (Iantaffi & Barker, 2018; Yavuz, 2016).

2.4 Gender variance

In addressing the critique of the transgender label, the term 'GV', is an alternative way of encapsulating those who challenge gender expectations (Pyne, 2014) in their GI or gender expression. Use of this term allows each individual to then self-select the label that fits them, rather than having this label placed on them by others. This term has been actively chosen throughout this research project to reflect the highlighted disputes within language use and the significance of self-identification with a label that resonates with and reflects ones GI. It is acknowledged, however, that the term GV is

not neutral and carries historical and cultural meanings, (Valentine, 2007) with other alternatives, for example gender independent and gender non-conforming (Pyne, 2014), also arising amidst the emergence of alternative conceptualisations of gender and GI (see sections 2.1 and 2.2).

2.5 Language as actor

At the origin of the subsections surrounding pertinent terminology is an illumination of the power of language, not just as a means of offering a shared understanding but also in its role as actor (Pyne, 2014), active in mobilising and dictating social action (Gilbert, 2000; Whittle, 2006; Wiseman & Davidson, 2012). As Valentine (2007, p.243) cautions, we 'must constantly attend to the politics of language – not just for its content but for its capacity to constitute the world in particular ways'.

2.5.1 Links to social constructionism

The centrality of language within the area of GV relates to core assumptions within a social constructionist perspective (Burr, 2015). Two of the four assumptions reflect that:

- i. Knowledge is sustained by social processes
- ii. Knowledge and social action go together

Underlying these assumptions is the belief that common ways of understanding and deriving meaning about the world are constructed by and within people, with language in particular providing a framework of meaning for individuals. As Burr (2015, p.10) articulates:

'we are born into a world where the conceptual framework and categories used by the people in our culture already exist...concepts and categories are acquired by each person as they develop the use of language and are thus reproduced everyday by those who share a culture and a language.'

Within this line of argument, people cannot pre-exist language, rather they acclimatise to and acquire the language of the context they live within as they grow. How we come to understand and view the world through language then dictates and sustains a pattern of social action, thereby excluding alternatives. Within the area of GV, this can arguably be seen in the dominant historical, medicalised discourse precipitating the

need for medical professionals to offer treatment in its varying forms and a wider association of GV with mental health. Challenges to the established discourses and their consequential actions has resulted in movement from a discourse of disorder to one of diversity, and subsequently from treatment to affirmation (Pyne, 2014).

Constructions of the world and social action are also bound within power relations and what is permissible for different people to do (Burr, 2015). This links to a third assumption within social constructionism, emphasizing historical and cultural specificity. Within this assumption is an acknowledgement that where and when we are in the world influences our understanding of the world. This recognition that ways of understanding are specific to cultures, as well as created by those cultures, places an importance on being constantly vigilant to the social, political and economic discourses that may be maintaining particular ways of understanding.

Burr (2015) highlights that language, and words more specifically, change their meaning over time and are therefore always contestable. In this sense, words are not only the origin of identity construction but the catalyst for change in how one's identity is known and presented to others. The language used within the area of GV is acknowledged as fluid, consistently changing depending on context, culture and time (Iantaffi & Barker, 2018; Jules, 2008) and also shaped by those who operate language as a means of social activism and personal identification (Valentine, 2007). Because language is not fixed, it can present as a source of uncertainty for people (Iantaffi & Barker, 2018) whilst also becoming a potential site of disagreement or conflict (Burr, 2015).

2.5.2 The dangers of language

'The normal is never labelled, only variations from the norm are labelled'.

(Gilbert, 2000, p.1)

Debates surrounding gender highlight language as a potential source of empowerment (for example, Losty & O'Connor, 2018), enabling people to self-identify and reclaim identities that previously oppressed (Valentine, 2007), whilst also having the potential to be divisive through the very existence of terminology that highlights difference amongst people (Butler, 1993b & 2006; Renold, 2006; Lyttleton-Smith, 2015). As Gilbert (2000) asserts, the identified group is so identified in order that they can become an object of discourse.

Whilst all may accept the initial labelling process, what follows is a process of discussion and appropriation of that label by the signified group. Identity politics operates on the basis of reclaiming, re-describing or transforming the connotations associated with a label and fighting for the associated rights of that label (Heyes, 2018), but Butler (1993b) highlights the inherent risk attached to this process if one does not know how a label will come to be signified in the future. Divergence of language within GV to date has highlighted an instability in labels and associated meanings of such labels (Valentine, 2007), as well as the consistent risk of discrimination and violence attached to claiming a GV identity label (Whittle & Stryker, 2006).

Slavoj Žižek (2008) offers an additional account of the potential danger within language in his discrimination between obvious signals of violence, for example acts of crime or terrorism, labelled 'subjective violence', and the more subtle sources of violence, labelled 'objective violence'. One variation of objective violence is in symbolic form and operational through language. Žižek claims this to be an invisible form of violence that becomes visible through the more overt examples of subjective violence. Within this rationale, the very act of naming something is potentially an act of violence in its simplification of the designated thing, treating it as similar to all others within the established category. In relation to the area of GV, labelling another and placing an assumption of heterogeneity on all within that designated category could have potential ramifications on an individual's sense of identity as well as their, or a collective's, response to such classification.⁷

2.5.3 Labelling theories: who wins?

The associated dangers outlined in relation to language link to labelling theories, proposed within the field of psychology, that question the beneficiaries of labels and the potential consequences of labelling (Becker, 1963; Gove, 1980). Gold & Richards (2012) define labelling as the assignment of a descriptor to an individual based on selected behavioural and/or physical characteristics. Omitted from this description is the caveat that those labels are often the recognition of difference and making salient

⁷ It is noted that Žižek's argument, and Burr's (2015) discussion of Social Constructionism could bear similarity to other theories, for example symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934). Burr (2015) acknowledges drawing influence from this sociological perspective in her writing, suggesting a value in taking a multi-disciplinary approach to further explore and reflect upon gender and GV. This stance is supported by Butler (1990) in her assertion that the complexity of gender requires an interdisciplinary approach.

those differences to others (Green et al, 2005). Becker's labelling theory (1963) highlights how labels can influence the perception of both the individual and other members of society surrounding that individual. Thus the label operates and manifests through an interactional process amongst people. In the context of GV, the process of attributing or claiming labels can therefore mark one as different to or deviant in comparison to others. This impacts on how that individual is perceived by those in their direct and indirect environment and, if internalised, may produce a self-fulfilling prophecy of making the individual with the label feel as though their identity is in some way aberrant for falling outside a normative framework. Within labelling literature, the process of assigning a label can result in stereotyping, separation, status loss, discrimination, powerlessness and oppression (Link & Phelan, 2001).

3 Literature surrounding CYP who are GV: Current statistics and reported impact

3.1. Current statistics

Across Western societies there has been a recognition of the increased visibility of GV identities (Losty & O'Connor, 2018; Yavuz, 2016), potentially indicating that they are now being seen as more normative expressions of gender. Whilst there is no conclusive evidence to support a link to prevalence rates (Kalitola-Heino et al, 2018), research indicates that there have been considerable increases in adolescent referrals to specialist GIDSs over the last decade across Europe and North America (Kaltiala-Heino et al, 2018; Steensma et al, 2013). Within a UK specific context, research from the Tavistock centre, currently the only UK NHS provision available for CYP with GV, also report high volumes of referrals alongside a change in the nature of referrals received (Bonfatto & Crasnow, 2018). Where there used to be a higher volume of assigned males at birth attending the service, there are now higher percentages of assigned females, a significant number of which also have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition.

These numbers, however, may not be truly representative of the numbers of CYP who self-identify as GV. Hellen (2009) proposes two categories of GV children: apparent and non-apparent. Those reflected in prevalence rates are often those who seek medical assistance or feel comfortable acknowledging their GI (apparent). The prevalence rates may be markedly different should those who are non-apparent, due to not feeling the need to seek medical assistance or not yet feeling able to disclose

their GI to others (Kennedy & Hellen, 2010), also be considered. The reasons underpinning changes noted in referrals have been speculated upon but are as yet unknown (Kaltiala-Heino et al, 2018). Bonfatto & Crasnow (2018) critique a focus on prevalence rates, asserting that it obscures the wider picture of young people on a search for meaningful identities. Taken further, the quantification of difference possibly perpetuates a discourse of non-normative behaviour for what may be normative exploration within development. Such thinking links to identity theorists, such as Erikson (See section 2.2), who highlight exploration as crucial to optimum identity development.

3.2 Reported impact on CYP

Whilst there may be contention around a focus on numbers, research relating to those who self-identify as GV consistently reports that the emotional wellbeing of these CYP is at greater risk than comparative peers (Bowskill, 2017; Connolly et al, 2016; BPS, 2012; Chung & Klann, 2015; Yavuz, 2016; Riggs, Ansara & Treharne, 2015; Kaltiala-Heino et al, 2018; Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2015). In a systematic review exploring the mental health of transgender youth, Connolly et al. (2016) reported that transgender youth have higher rates of depression, suicidality, self-harm and eating disorders when compared to non-transgender youth. Additional research has highlighted higher rates of anxiety, meeting thresholds of clinical significance (Kaltiala-Heino et al, 2018).

Outside of clinical samples, the Stonewall School Report Cymru (2017), which sought the views of Welsh lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) CYP aged 11-19 regarding their secondary school experience⁸, reported that 73% of transgender pupils had experienced bullying within school, with 40% of transgender pupils stating that they do not feel safe within school and 63% stating that they do not feel part of their school community. In addition, 77% self-identified transgender students reported deliberately harming themselves, with 41% disclosing that they had attempted to take their own life.

Emerging research has identified a correlation between CYP who self-identify as GV and reduced rates of academic functioning (Vantieghem & Van Houte, 2018). Whilst there has been limited research exploring the academic performance of GV CYP and their progression into work life, it is posited that with the aforementioned associated

⁸ Only data relating to self-identified transgender CYP, from the overall sample of LGBT CYP from the Stonewall School Report Cymru (2017) are reported within this literature review.

links to poor mental health and wellbeing, additional needs regarding education are likely to exist (Kaltiala-Heino et al, 2018).

3.3 'My daughter's gender is not the problem... it's everything else around her that's a problem' (Pyne, 2014, p.4)

Whilst literature exists attesting to the associated impacts of GV on CYP, Kaltiala-Heino et al (2018) exert caution in the level to which they attribute all difficulties to one's GV, outlining that CYP may have unrelated difficulties that also require attention. The appropriateness of a holistic framework is further revealed in discussions of factors that may be sustaining a correlation between GV and poor mental health outcomes, with Gray et al (2012) locating a child's ecology as the mediator within this relationship.

Exploring this interplay further, Riggs et al. (2015) describe two theoretical frameworks of cisgenderism and decompensation that are linked to the mental health outcomes of GV youth. They describe cisgenderism as the ideology that delegitimises people's own understandings of their genders and bodies and can be demonstrated in varying forms, such as the pathologising of variance or misgendering of people's self-identified genders and bodies. Decompensation describes the process by which a GV person is no longer able to psychologically compensate for the cumulative effects of cisgenderism. These theories suggest that the response of those around the CYP to their GV identity and the CYP's perception of those responses are pertinent factors in mental health outcomes.

These frameworks receive some support from research exploring the risk and protective factors for CYP who are GV. In relation to risk factors, it is thought that the pressure felt to conceal one's true identity has been linked to poor emotional and mental health (Yavuz, 2016). Within a school context, Riggs & Bartholomaeus (2015) identify that a key barrier to the inclusion of GV CYP is the level of understanding school staff have around GI and whether or not GV is positively included within policies and practices. When exploring protective factors, Ehrensaft (2012) reports that those CYP who receive support from their families show better mental health functioning, with Riggs et al. (2015) highlighting social support and community connectedness as buffers against the impact of discrimination. In revealing the potential influence of the ecological systems within which CYP are nested, an argument emerges that the focus of intervention does not have to rest solely on the child, implying that they or their GV

are a problem, but instead should concentrate on the social systems each child navigates (Pyne, 2014; Yavuz, 2016).

4 The political landscape: 'A call to action'

Whittle (2006) asserts that with increased visibility and research come new challenges for politics, governments and the law. The findings within the Stonewall School Report Cymru (2017) in particular, were a self-declared call to action to all those involved in shaping, delivering and overseeing the learning experience of future generations.

4.1 UK legislation

Within UK politics, steps have arguably been taken to address such a call (Lyttleton-Smith, 2015), with those who self-identify as GV being afforded protection under The Human Rights Act (1998), The Gender Recognition Act (2004) and The Equality Act (2010). The remit of each of these key pieces of legislation will briefly be explored.

4.1.1 The Human Rights Act (1998)

This act incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law and outlines the fundamental rights and freedoms to which each individual within the UK is entitled. Article 14 of the act in particular offers protection against discrimination, stipulating that everyone's rights are equal and that people should not be treated unfairly on individual grounds, for example one's gender.

4.1.2 The Gender Recognition Act (2004)

With the establishment of this act, those whose birth is registered in the UK are able to have their affirmed (or so-termed 'acquired' under the act) gender recorded on their birth certificate. This process is open to those who are 18 plus, have been given a diagnosis of gender dysphoria as stipulated under the DSM-V and have lived fully in their acquired gender for at least two years.

4.1.3 The Equality Act (2010)

The protected characteristic of 'gender reassignment' under The Equality Act (2010) offers those who self-identify as GV (termed transsexual under the act) protection in their own right for the first time. The Equality Act extends protection to CYP, meaning that it is unlawful for schools to treat a pupil less favourably because of their gender reassignment. To be protected from gender reassignment discrimination, a CYP does not have to be undergoing any specific treatment or surgery but rather must be 'proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex' (Equality Act, Chapter 1, Section 7.1). For a GV CYP proposing or taking steps to live in the opposite gender, this may present to others as a CYP choosing to express their GI through clothing or pronoun choice.

Whilst such legislation exists, the Transgender Equality First Report 2015-2016 (House of Commons, 2015) highlights that the equality sought through these pieces of legislation does not equate with the lived experience of people who are GV, including CYP, or those who support and advocate for them. The Gender Recognition Act, for example, has received specific critique due to not acknowledging GIs outside of the binary (House of Commons, 2015), for being a 'bureaucratic, expensive and intrusive' process (gov.uk, 2018) and for only applying to those aged 18 plus. Repeated calls to update the act were answered by the UK government in 2018, through a consultation process in which individuals were asked to submit their views on how to reform the legal recognition process (gov.uk, 2018). Despite its recent emergence, The Equality Act (2010) has also received criticism for not clarifying those persons who are covered under the 'transsexual' label, and for usage of the terminology gender reassignment to denote the protected characteristic, arguing that this is better reflected in the wording GI.

Specific to a school context and thus CYP, the House of Commons report (2015) highlighted that despite legislation in place, there remain gender divisions operating across the whole of the school system, alongside a 'lack of even basic understanding of gender variance within many education professionals' (p.72).

4.2 A narrower focus: The Welsh context

Within Wales, where education has devolved status, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) has adopted The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) as the basis of all its policy making with children. This endorsement of the

UNCRC (1989) indicates an approach to education that aims toward a social justice model, embedding equalities and human rights throughout the curriculum. Most recently, two reports have been produced and presented to the WAG on the future of the sex and relationships curriculum in Wales (Renold & McGeeney, 2017a; Renold & McGeeney, 2017b)⁹. These reports were requested to help inform the future development of a sex and relationships education curriculum, intended to sit within the health and wellbeing area of learning experience, as outlined in the 'Successful Futures' report (Donaldson, 2015).

Within these reports, it is acknowledged that LGBT CYP's needs, particularly in relation to gender and sexual diversity, are not being met and/or represented in Welsh educational settings. Furthermore, it was highlighted that a lack of professional training within the area of sex and relationships education more widely, means that teachers are often poorly equipped to deliver a curriculum or respond to potential concerns in relation to equality issues (Renold & McGeeney, 2017a). Acknowledging schools as a key site for learning and experience of gender, the reports recommend a sex and relationships curriculum that is rights and gender equity based, in line with recommendations from the European Network of Ombudspersons for children (2017), stipulating that all children have the right to high quality, holistic and inclusive education about sexualities and relationships. Within the recommendations posed is an urgent appeal for professional training, with the stipulation that 'successful high quality SRE in all schools depends upon having a well-trained and confident workforce' (Renold & McGeeney, 2017a, p.93). Within political landscapes that are shifting in acknowledgement of GV, a question can be posed to all educational professional groups who work with CYP regarding how equipped they are to meet such change, and what role they envisage assuming?

5 The role of the EP

According to the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP/WAG 2016, p.2), EPs work with CYP to support their 'development, wellbeing, resilience, learning and achievement' across the 0-25 age range. Given the previous associated impacts on GV CYP's health and wellbeing and potentially their educational outcomes, this definition of EPs indicates that they could be a professional group who have much to offer this

⁹ Sex and Relationships Education currently under consultation, with a proposed name change to Relationships and Sexuality Education (WAG, 2019)

population. There is however a dearth of literature attesting to the role of the EP within this specific context.

The literature review outlined in sections 1.2 -1.4 identified a limited number of international and UK-based studies pertaining to EPs supporting GV CYP. The findings obtained will be discussed and appraised to offer an insight into current perspectives regarding the remit of the psychologist role. It is noted that when centring on international research evidence there are varying terms used to classify educational professionals who apply psychology within a school context. These terms are used in accordance with the country of origin and as stipulated in the research selected. It is acknowledged that the terms and subsequent roles may offer points of divergence from that of a TEP/EP within a UK context. Their inclusion, however, offers a wider discussion of the ways in which the psychologist role, its function and the competencies required to engage with GV CYP have been conceptualized and explored to date.

5.1 International research evidence

A vast proportion of the international evidence located has studied and attempted to gain an understanding of the current attitudes and beliefs of practicing school psychologists toward GV and their perceived role in supporting CYP who self-identify as GV. Rationales centre on the relative novelty of GV within practice (De Jong, 2015), and a recognition that whilst school psychologists may be ideally placed to support and advocate for GV CYP, they are not immune to their own socio-cultural contexts, containing negative attitudes and a lack of understanding around GV (Bowers et al, 2015).

Riggs & Bartholomaeus (2015) report on the results of two Australian surveys; one focused on cisgender¹⁰ parents of transgender children, and one focused on the capacity of cisgender school counsellors and psychologists to work with GV individuals. Despite parents reporting largely negative experiences with counsellors, the professional sample indicates a high level of accurate clinical knowledge and confidence to support GV individuals and moderate levels of acceptance of GV individuals. Gender and religiosity significantly impacted on participants' ratings within the survey, indicating that they could shape the consequent service provided.

¹⁰ The term cisgender is used to refer to people who are not GV and who identify with the gender normatively expected of their assigned sex (Riggs & Sion, 2017).

Specifically, participants who were more religious were less accepting of GV individuals, and male participants reported feeling less confident or willing to provide support.

Gender as a variable has been further explored by Riggs & Sion (2017) within an American context, obtaining similar results. Across three studies, cisgender men were found to have more negative or less positive attitudes towards GV CYP. Within this study it was hypothesised that cisgender men are more susceptible to pervading gender ideologies surrounding hegemonic masculinity and that negative responses reflect a desire to maintain the existing normative understandings of gender.

Bowers et al (2015) conduct a similar study to Riggs & Bartholomaeus (2015) within an American context. In a questionnaire with 246 respondents, they found that overall, participants endorse positive attitudes towards GV CYP. 83.7% of respondents were willing or very willing to address the needs of GV CYP, although there was variance in overall scores between participants. Further results detail that those psychologists with more experience of working with GV CYP (1-5 encounters) were more comfortable addressing the needs of those students, and those with greater self-reported levels of confidence exhibited more positive attitudes towards this population.

These findings potentially relate to research by Payne & Smith (2014) within an American context. They found that fear and anxiety are common initial educator responses to the presence of a GV CYP disrupting the gender binary. This fear/anxiety response has multiple origins including: not knowing what to do; lack of preparation; lack of policy and procedure to follow; fear of a response that may be 'wrong'; and being seen to be supporting or endorsing GV, which may not be acceptable to wider society. It is noted that this research focuses on students within elementary school,¹¹ with a wider discussion on the additional barriers presented by this age group, which may have impacted on findings. The research, however, offers a potential explanation for a link between one's feelings, self-reported levels of confidence and competence and one's subsequent action.

Focusing more specifically on roles that psychologists could assume in supporting GV CYP, Whitman, Horn & Boyd (2007) highlight how psychologists are well positioned to offer training to school based professionals, with Riggs & Bartholomaeus (2015) also suggesting a role in ensuring the inclusion of GV parents and staff by assisting in the

¹¹ Termed primary school in UK

creation of more inclusive school spaces, advocating for policies promoting inclusion and broadening the language used to discuss families within the school curriculum.

A call for professional training is acknowledged within a vast proportion of the international literature (Borough et al, 2015; Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2015; Bowers et al, 2015; De Jong, 2014, 2017). Specifically, Riggs & Bartholomaeus (2015) highlight that school psychologists have typically received minimal or no training in working with GV CYP, and that in light of some of the factors impacting on professionals' attitudes and views of GV, training should address psychologists' awareness of their own understandings and beliefs about gender. Case, Stewart & Tittsworth (2009, p.117) acknowledge a need for GV content within psychology courses specifically, asserting that the 'invisibility of transgender people within psychology courses allows for the perpetuation of myths, stereotypes and oppression of this particular population'.

Since the publication of Case's, Stewart's & Tittsworth's article, steps have arguably been taken to address this gap, with the American Psychological Association endorsing guidelines for psychological practice with transgender and gender nonconforming people (APA, 2015), and specific guidance emerging suggesting how these guidelines could be implemented in practice to ensure culturally responsive practice for GV individuals (Singh & Dickey, 2016). To further ensure appropriate cultural competence for psychologists working in the US,¹² Boroughs et al. (2015) outline 28 recommendations of minimum standards required across various levels of training. These recommendations interlink key concepts from the three-domain model of cultural competence outlined by Sue et al. (2009), focusing on practitioners having: an awareness of their own beliefs, biases and attitudes; knowledge and understanding of the cultural group; and the skills and tools to be able to provide culturally sensitive assessment and intervention. Key to Boroughs et al.'s (2015) article is the rationale that as society changes, so must the competencies of professionals to ensure effective service provision.

Whilst the research described offers some understanding of the roles that could be assumed by psychologists and the prerequisites necessary to take up such a role, limitations centre on the difficulty demarcating the specific views of psychologists within studies. For example, in a sample of 304, Riggs & Bartholomaeus (2015) state that 28 of those respondents held a role in a school context and only 12 respondents

¹² Cultural competence is defined as one having the necessary understanding of cultural influences to provide appropriate care for patients from a diverse cultural group, which may or may not differ from the background of the clinician (Boroughs et al, 2015).

used the title psychologist, yet their findings were generalised to all counsellors and school psychologists. A further critique arises in the reliance on surveys or questionnaires to yield data. Whilst these can result in greater response rates, it is more difficult to ascertain a depth of understanding regarding the reported views and attitudes of practicing psychologists.

5.2 UK research evidence

The literature review revealed only two articles within a UK context that directly address the role of the EP with GV CYP (Yavuz, 2016; Bowskill, 2017), with both highlighting the potential for positive contribution from EPs as a professional group.

Providing an overview of GV, Yavuz (2016) asserts that EPs are more likely than ever to encounter such casework through their role with schools, as evidenced by statistics of year-on-year increases in referrals to specialist services supporting GI within the UK (GIDS, 2016). Yavuz (2016) further notes that EPs are ideally placed to intervene via their positioning across the three levels of child and family; school and education authority/council as well as working within key sites in which the communal construction and learning of masculinity and femininity take place, namely: the family, the peer group and the school. Through the use of three practice examples, Yavuz (2016) details potential roles for EPs in working with GV CYP, including: a role to educate and supportively challenge school and classroom practices where pupils are categorised by gender; work to destigmatise the idea of GV through the introduction of research and training; encouraging the use of appropriate language use by all; promoting acceptance across schools by supporting the development of inclusion policies; raising awareness of the environmental needs within school provisions at a LA level and supporting the development of LA guidance.

Bowskill's (2017) research explores how educational professionals can improve the outcomes for transgender CYP. Key findings pertinent to the role of the EP suggested that they could play a key role in challenging negative systems within a school whilst also offering reassurance, teaching and support to school staff, so that they can formulate next steps in supporting GV CYP. Additional roles centred on the EP as a professional who could signpost, co-ordinate action and obtain the views of CYP, if this task had not already been completed. Whilst this research is vital in illuminating the area of GV, it is also limited in its ability to specifically explore the role of the EP, partly due to the conflated sample, comprising GV adults, a clinical psychologist, three

teachers, one teaching assistant, two youth workers and three EPs, and a consequent focus on educational professionals more widely.

Whilst Yavuz (2016) and Bowskill (2017) highlight a role for the EP, they also acknowledge a lack of specialised knowledge around GV and a scarcity of specific guidance for EPs (Bowskill, 2017) that would further facilitate them assuming a role. Bowskill (2017) refers to guidance from the British Psychological Society (2012), encouraging professionals to seek training in sexual and gender minority issues, to work in an affirmative manner and to reflect on their own beliefs around these issues, with Bowskill (2017) further stipulating the need for EPs to consider these areas within their own practice. These recommendations map the affirmative action outlined within an American context, attempting to further ensure a level of cultural competence amongst practitioners. Of relevance to this aim is a caution highlighted by Sami Timini (2005) in his discussion of practitioners supporting CYP in the identification and treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Timini (2005, p. vii) states 'I realised the whole profession is built on subjective opinion masquerading as fact', and asserts that all professionals working with children consequently need to engage in an examination of their own values and beliefs, in acknowledgement that they may be unconsciously impacting on thinking and action in direct practitioner work. Whilst Timini's focus is not related to EPs or GV CYP, his address holds value within this literature review and thesis, not only questioning whether EPs engage in reflective and reflexive practice in relation to their day-to-day work, but in tentatively beginning an exploration of EPs' constructions around GV CYP and the role of the EP in supporting this population.

6 Rationale for thesis

6.1 Rationale

The foregoing literature review has highlighted rapid changes concerning the conceptualisation of gender, the language relating to gender and GV, legislation and policy to protect GV CYP and the acknowledgement of professional groups potentially implicated in affirming and supporting GV CYP within a school context. TEPs/EPs make up one such professional group, and through their positioning and job description appear well placed to assume a role within this area. The review of international and UK literature, however, highlights the paucity of research exploring the remits of this

role and how it is being actioned in practice, with no research specifically focused on EPs within Wales.

The review of previous literature has furthermore consistently highlighted an onus on psychologists to be reflective and reflexive practitioners. Understanding how EPs currently construct and understand GV within the Welsh context may therefore assist with creating a dialogue about the perceived role of the EP, whilst concurrently exploring the support needed in order to assume any identified role. The limitations highlighted in relation to international literature have been acknowledged, with this research consequently focusing exclusively on the views of TEPs/EPs as a sample group. Furthermore, this research aims to achieve a deeper understanding of practitioner's constructions, regarding the highlighted paradigm shifts and their own individual perceptions relating to the role of the EP in supporting GV CYP.

6.2 Research questions

One overarching research question has been devised to direct this aim, underpinned by two secondary research questions which aim to afford deeper exploration of the primary research question:

1. What constructs do EPs and TEPs within Wales hold in relation to GV?
 - i. What level of experience do EPs and TEPs within Wales currently have in supporting CYP who express GV?
 - ii. What role do EPs/TEPs within Wales perceive themselves holding in relation to GV?

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Gender variance and the role of the Educational Psychologist (EP): An exploration of the perspectives of EPs and Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) in Wales

Part 2: Empirical study

(Word count: 6557)

Abstract

Aim: This research aims to provide an in-depth exploration of the constructs TEPs and EPs within Wales hold in relation to supporting children and young people who self-identify as gender variant.

Rationale: Within contemporary discourse, the area of Gender Variance is receiving ever-increasing attention (Yavuz, 2016; Losty & O' Connor, 2018), highlighting the multiplicity of ways in which people now self-identify their gender, beyond a binary system of male/female. With increased visibility come new challenges for politics, governments and the law (Whittle, 2006). Within the UK and Wales more specifically, legislation and policy is emerging to advocate for those who self-identify as gender variant, with some focus being placed on an educational context. This has potential implications for professional groups such as EPs, who work across the educational range of 0 – 25 (AEP/WAG, 2016). At this juncture, it seems important to gain an understanding of how EPs and TEPs are perceiving this 'paradigm shift' (Pyne, 2014, p.1) and their potential role in supporting children and young people who self-identify as gender variant.

Findings: Through the qualitative analysis of interview data, using thematic analysis, the following global themes were actively labelled by the researcher: language as actor; navigating child identity development; change; interview as an active site of reflection/discovery; emerging area of practice; facilitators of a role; barriers to a role and future work.

Conclusions: the findings and limitations of this project are discussed, with reference to implications for future research and Educational Psychology practice.

1 Introduction

Terminology

DePalma (2013, p. 1) highlights that 'most people ... are altogether too sure about what gender is: there are two 'opposite' sexes, man and woman, and gender is the inevitable categorical expression of natural sex'. This stance reflects a historical, essentialist belief supposing gender is innate and fixed over time. Over the last five to six decades, the rise of third wave feminist, poststructuralist, queer (Stryker, 2008), social constructionist (Renold, 2005) and transgender theory (Whittle, 2006) has troubled this linear assumption, leading to a proposal that gender would be better conceptualised as a continuum (Monro, 2005; Serano, 2007; Carrera et al, 2012; Sargeant, 2019).

Gender identity refers to a person's internalised sense of self (Iantaffi & Barker, 2018). Whilst this can reflect a person's biological sex, one's GI can also differ (Brill & Pepper, 2008). Within the literature, 'transgender' is often used as an umbrella term to refer to those whose GI is not consistent with their assigned sex at birth or reflects other variations on the gender spectrum (Chung & Klunn, 2015). There is, however, contention over applying this label widely if it does not align with the way in which an individual self-identifies (Iantaffi & Barker, 2018; Yavuz, 2016). The term 'gender variance', referring to practices or behaviours which may be deemed to fall outside of the norms expected for a CYP's biological sex (Brill & Pepper, 2008), can alternatively encapsulate those who identify as the opposite gender to that assigned at birth, via biological sex, and a wide spectrum of other identities that may represent those who are neither male or female, between genders or a combination of genders. This allows for each individual to self-select the label that fits them.

Within the field of gender and particularly in relation to GV, language is tentative and constantly shifting, in many respects because the meaning attached to the language is still being contested and negotiated (Valentine, 2007). Such changing terminology can ignite uncertainty in others and reinforces the importance and power within language (Burr, 2015). Debates surrounding gender highlight language as a source of empowerment in enabling people to self-identify and reclaim identities that previously oppressed, whilst also having the potential to be divisive, through the very existence of terminology that highlights difference amongst people (Butler, 1993; Butler 2006). The impact felt by those who subvert the norm in their self-reported gender identities reflect the potential ramifications of discourse that centres on a binary definition of

gender, thereby creating and potentially pathologising the other who does not fit within its boundaries.

Literature surrounding GV: reported impact on CYP

Literature relating to minority groups, including those who self-identify as GV, consistently reports that the emotional wellbeing of these CYP is at greater risk than comparative peers (for example: Bowskill, 2017; Connolly et al, 2016; British Psychological Society, 2012; Kaltiala-Heino et al, 2018). The Stonewall School Report Cymru (2017), which sought the views of Welsh lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) CYP aged 11-19 regarding their secondary school experience¹³, reported that 73% of transgender pupils had experienced bullying within school, with 40% of transgender pupils stating that they do not feel safe within school and 63% stating that they do not feel part of their school community. In addition, 77% self-identified transgender students reported deliberately harming themselves, with 41% disclosing that they had attempted to take their own life.

The political landscape: 'a call to action'

The findings within the Stonewall School Report Cymru (2017) were a self-declared call to action to all those involved in shaping, delivering and overseeing the learning experience of future generations. Within UK politics, steps have arguably been taken to address such a call (Lyttleton-Smith, 2015). GV children and young people are now afforded protection under The Human Rights Act (1998), The Gender Recognition Act (2004) and The Equality Act (2010). Whilst such legislation exists, however, the Transgender Equality First Report 2015-2016 (House of Commons, 2015) highlighted that the equality sought through such legislation does not equate with the lived experience of GV CYP and adults or those who support and advocate for them. Specific to CYP, it was highlighted that there are gender divisions operating across the whole of the school system alongside a lack of basic understanding of GV amongst many educational professionals.

Within Wales, where education has devolved status, two reports have recently been produced and presented to the Welsh Assembly Government on the future of the sex

¹³ Only data relating to self-identified transgender CYP, from the overall sample of LGBT CYP from the Stonewall School Report Cymru (2017), are reported within this literature review.

and relationships (SRE) curriculum in Wales (Renold & McGeeney, 2017a; Renold & McGeeney, 2017b¹⁴). These reports were requested to help inform the future development of a SRE curriculum intended to sit within the health and wellbeing area of learning experience, as outlined in the 'Successful Futures' report (Donaldson, 2015). Within such reports there was acknowledgement that LGBT CYP's needs, particularly in relation to gender and sexual diversity, are not being met within educational settings. Acknowledging schools as a key site for learning and experience of gender, the reports recommend a SRE curriculum that is rights and gender equity based. Within such recommendations is an urgent appeal for professional training to support such a curriculum. Within political landscapes that are changing in acknowledgement of GV, a question can be posed to all educational professional groups who work with CYP, regarding how equipped they are to meet such change and what role they envisage assuming?

The role of the EP

According to the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP/WAG 2016, p.2), EPs in Wales work with CYP to support 'development, wellbeing, resilience, learning and achievement' across the 0-25 age range. This definition of EPs indicates that they could be a professional group who have much to offer in supporting CYP who identify as GV. There is, however, a dearth of literature attesting to the potential role of the EP in this context, with no research specifically focused on EPs within Wales. This is alongside a lack of specific guidance for EPs to utilise (Bowskill, 2017).

The two articles, from a UK context, which directly address the role of the EP with GV CYP (Yavuz, 2016; Bowskill, 2017) both highlight the potential for positive contribution from EPs. Both Yavuz (2016) and Bowskill (2017), however, acknowledge a lack of specialised knowledge around GV that would allow EPs to assume such a role. Bowskill (2017) refers to guidance from the BPS (2012), which encourages professionals to seek training in sexual and gender minority issues, to work in an affirmative manner and to reflect on their own beliefs around these issues. It is in this last stipulation for EPs to be reflective and reflexive practitioners that a potential starting point for this project is born. Understanding how EPs currently construct and understand GV may

¹⁴ Sex and Relationships Education currently under consultation, with a proposed name change to Relationships and Sexuality Education (WAG, 2019)

assist with creating a dialogue about the perceived role of the EP whilst concurrently exploring the support needed in order to assume any identified role.

1.1 Research questions

Prompted by the preceding literature review, the aim of this research is to explore the constructs that EPs and TEPs within Wales hold in relation to supporting CYP who may self-identify as GV. One overarching research question has been devised to direct this aim, underpinned by two secondary research questions seeking to afford deeper exploration of the primary research question:

1. What constructs do EPs and TEPs within Wales hold in relation to GV?
 - i. What level of experience do EPs and TEPs within Wales currently have in supporting CYP who express GV?
 - ii. What role do EPs/TEPs within Wales perceive themselves holding in relation to GV?

2 Methodology

2.1 Ontology/Epistemology

This research is rooted in a relativist ontology that presupposes reality to be multiple and relational, firmly based in a social context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). As such, there is no fixed truth that can be objectively investigated, separate from people. The epistemological stance lies within a social constructionist paradigm, highlighting the importance of the relational and dialogic, with language (both verbal and non-verbal) playing a fundamental role in how people co-construct meaning within any lived experience (Burr, 2015). This stance reflects current conceptions of gender outlined within this document as socially, culturally and temporally situated, with language acting as a powerful force driving such constructions.

2.2 Design

A qualitative methodology was employed, in line with the outlined ontological and epistemological stance. Such a methodology prioritises data that is rich in description, places an emphasis on the individual perspective and seeks to describe and understand

the varying realities of participants, rather than create generalisable knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017).

2.3 Data collection

An epistemological assumption within social constructionism states that the researcher and participant are interlocked in an interactive process; each influencing the other (Mertens, 2015). Such an assumption thereby dictates an interactive mode of data collection. Within qualitative research, the semi-structured interview is the most widely used method of data collection (Willig, 2013), adhering to the defining characteristics of qualitative research, whilst also being compatible with multiple methods of data analysis. A semi-structured rather than unstructured interview was selected in order to create a balance between ensuring a level of control within interview, in line with the proposed research questions, and affording the interviewee space to navigate the topic as they wished, to generate novel insights. The interview schedule (See Appendix B) was constructed following a review of the literature and was checked with an external party prior to use. This process led to a revision of the interview schedule, whereby a definition of GV was offered to participants rather than requested. This use of a stimulus is a way of encouraging discourse within a topic (Willig, 2013) and was deemed particularly valid, due to the complexity of language inherent within this area. The interview schedule was designed to guide but not constrain conversation, with additional prompts or questions asked based on the offerings of participants during interviews, in keeping with recommended practice (Howitt, 2016).

2.4 Participants

Seven TEPs/EPs, practicing in different locations throughout Wales, were recruited through purposive sampling. The aim was to select a non-representative sample from the wider base of practicing EPs/ TEPs in Wales, in order to illicit a depth of understanding surrounding the constructs held in relation to GV (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). EPs and TEPs were considered as one group for inclusion, due to the researcher's regard for professional practice as a learning continuum, with each EP/TEP continuously reflecting on practice and developing in role. This stance is reinforced by definitions of professional competence as developmental, impermanent and context-dependent (Roberts et al, 2005), and an emphasis on continuing professional development and ongoing supervision by the British Psychological Society

and Association of Educational Psychologists (BPS, 2018; AEP/WAG, 2016). No additional prescriptions were placed on participants, for example gender or age. It was also not mandatory for participants to have had experience of working with CYP who are GV, thereby preserving the nature of this study as an exploration of constructs currently held by EPs and TEPs. Table 1 presents the pertinent participant demographics.

Participant	Current role
1	TEP
2	TEP
3	EP
4	EP
5	PEP
6	SEP
7	EP

Table 1: Participant demographics

2.5 Procedure

The procedure followed for all interviews is outlined in Figure 1 (overleaf).

2.6 Analysis

TA was chosen to identify, analyse and report the themes representative of the entire data set. TA was selected due to it being identified as a useful analytical approach in circumstances such as interviews, where the data consists of detailed textual information (Howitt, 2016). Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013) also advocate for TA as a flexible approach that is not rooted to any particular ontological or epistemological position.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim, in accordance with guidance for orthographic transcription by Braun & Clarke (2013, see Appendix G for transcription key). The six-phase procedure outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013, see appendix H) was used to guide data analysis, thereby imposing a systematic approach to TA (Howitt, 2016).

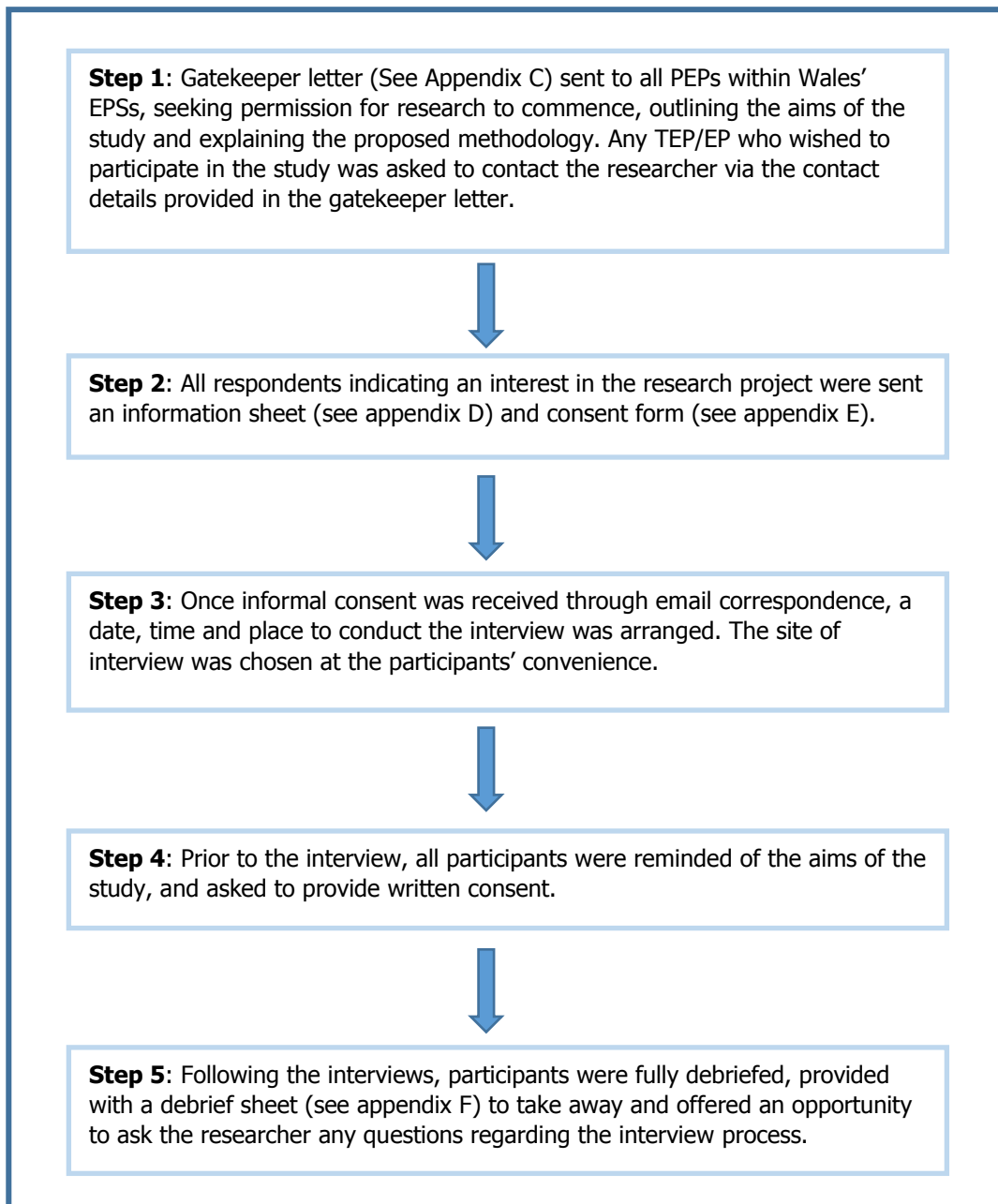


Figure 1: Procedure for interviews

Themes were identified in an inductive manner, based in the participants' constructions, in line with the exploratory nature of this research enquiry. Themes were analysed at a latent level, acknowledging the interpretive nature of attempting to understand the semantic level of the data within the interviews conducted, and thus the active role of the researcher in constructing meaning within the data collected (Taylor & Ussher, 2001).

The use of thematic network maps (Attride-Sterling, 2001) was employed to aid the sorting of the data set into global, organizing and basic themes and to provide a visual representation of themes generated.

2.7 Ethical consideration

Prior to completion of this research, ethical approval was granted by Cardiff University ethics committee. Key ethical considerations and how they were addressed are outlined in Appendix I.

2.8 Evidencing 'trustworthiness'

The four principles outlined by Yardley (2000, 2008) to evaluate the quality of qualitative research, namely: sensitivity to context; commitment and rigour; transparency and coherence and impact and importance were employed and reflected upon within this research process (see appendix J). Authors within qualitative research highlight the necessity of evidencing rigour and therefore utility of the research findings within qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Yardley 2000, 2008). However, there is contention within the literature relating to the application of terms like 'validity' to assess quality, due to its connotations to a more positivist tradition, in search of truth (Rolfe, 2006). The term 'trustworthiness' can be used as an alternative, which Sandelowski (1993, p. 2) justifies 'becomes a matter of persuasion whereby the scientist is viewed as having made those practices visible and, therefore, auditable' instead.¹⁵

3 Results

Throughout the analysis process it was felt that the themes created mapped the research questions outlined at the start of the research process and could thus offer a structure within which all themes could be nested. It is however acknowledged that there are varying points of permeation and influence between several themes, which is potentially reflective of the diversity of opinion generated and the overall complexity of the area

¹⁵ It is acknowledged that there is dispute within the literature about whether it is appropriate to have predetermined criteria for judging qualitative research (Rolfe, 2006). Within this line of argument is the assertion that the quality of a research study is revealed in its write up and appraised by the reader. Thus, whilst appendix J offers the researchers own considerations, in an endeavour to preserve quality within the research process, it is acknowledged that this is subject to its own bias and may be evaluated differently by those who read it.

being explored. These intersections are evidenced in an overarching thematic map (See Figure 2¹⁶).

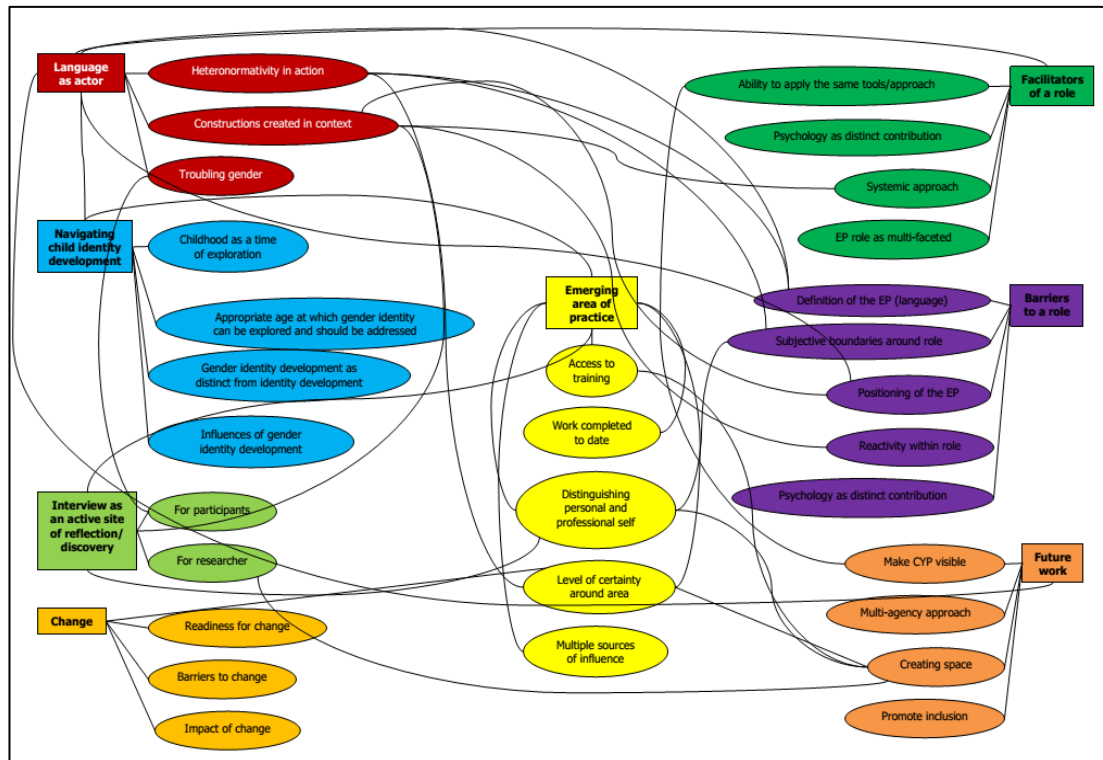


Figure 2: Overarching thematic map

Each theme will be explored in turn to illuminate the researcher’s sense-making of the participant’s constructions, with example data extracts selected to evidence each theme.¹⁷ It is noted that the interpretive nature of qualitative research, in which the researcher is made active (Braun & Clarke, 2013), denoted that whilst all themes derived from the body of data collected, the themes were actively interpreted by the researcher rather than being explicitly revealed by the participants throughout interview. The depiction of the researcher as active in this way is in accordance with the ontology and epistemology detailed in section 2.1.

Within part 1, the significance of language use was discussed in relation to GV, with the potential for language to not only offer meaning but to constitute the world in particular ways (see section 2.5). Resultantly, a conscious choice to not personalise the participants was made by the researcher, with the removal of names and pronouns from all data

¹⁶ See Appendix K for full size overarching thematic map

¹⁷ All data extracts used relate to the initial transcripts (with transcription key). These can be found on the encrypted USB stick attached, within the folder ‘phase 1 of analysis.’ Appendix L affords the reader further detail on phases one and two of the data analysis process, through an example transcript with initial noticing’s and coding attached. Appendix M contains an example of the collated evidence for the theme ‘facilitators of a role’, evidencing the latter stages of the data analysis process. Readers are guided to the encrypted USB stick attached for full data pertaining to all phases of data analysis detailed in Appendix H.

extracts. This decision was taken in an endeavour to protect against an additional layer of gendering that may occur at the level of the reader, which in turn may influence their interpretation of the data presented.

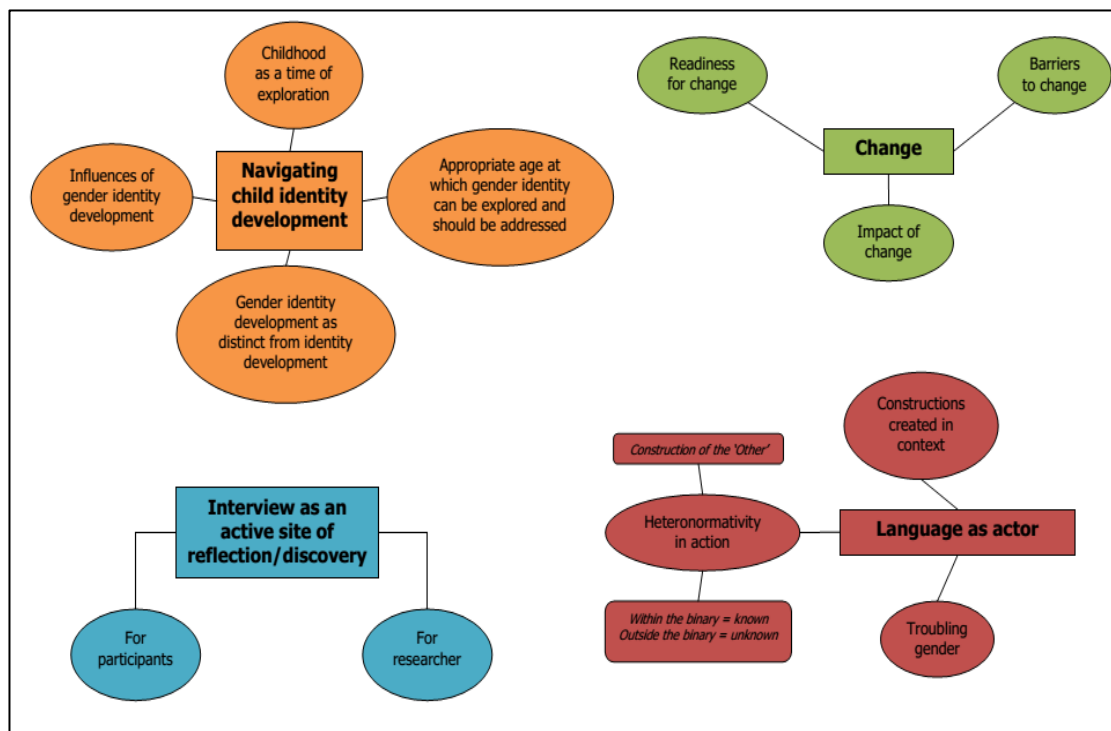


Figure 3. Thematic map for research question 1. 'What constructs do EPs and TEPs within Wales hold in relation to GV?'

3.1 Language as actor

Throughout the interviews, participants reflected on the language used when discussing GV and its pertinence in dictating social action. For example, in revealing their own understanding of GV, participant 1 highlighted:

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
<p>P1: Yes I was thinking about this idea that with gender variance the kind of child or the young person it might be kind of fluid or they might be um not fit within one particular thing or another and so we have got quite a kind of like varied and loose definition on purpose I think</p> <p>EC¹⁸: Yeah</p>	<p>Transcript 1: 14 - 18</p>

¹⁸ Throughout the results section the use of 'EC' refers to the researcher and the utterances made by the researcher within data extracts selected.

P1: to try and take into account this kind of wide spectrum	
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Table 2: Language as actor: illustrative data extract

Participant 1 encapsulates how the very definition of GV implies a sense of movement, which reaffirms the notion of a spectrum when discussing one's GI. This influences how they perceive and understand the topic area.

The theme of language as active in creating and sustaining constructions around the topic of GV is further encapsulated in the organising themes of 'heteronormativity in action', 'constructions created in context' and 'troubling gender'.

Heteronormativity in action

The participants language choices implied there are prevailing norms in existence around gender, specific to the linear association of birth sex dictating gender, which will be revealed in one's gender expression and thus inform social roles that can be assumed.

Heteronormativity in action	Supporting extract
Gender expression revealing gender identity	P2: and I suppose I was thinking about a child that I'd taught and he was a boy {EC – mm} but he had long hair and his mother had given him this sort of androgynous name he looked like a girl because he was only about five or six years old <i>Transcript 2: 8-10</i>
Prescribed gender at birth setting social expectations for gender expressions and gender roles	P7: I mean I'm not the most girly girl by a long way (.) so I think that feeds into that idea of there's a real pressure on society I feel to if you're female you have to do that package you know you've got to do that package of behaviours you wear those clothes and you have those jobs and if you're male you have the other options <i>Transcript 7: 62 - 65</i>

Table 3: Heteronormativity in action

Participant 3 highlighted how the school and the LA can exemplify institutional heteronormativity in the way gender divisions operate across their systems.

Heteronormativity in action	Supporting extract
Within the LA	P3: um I kind of then started thinking about our data collection and what sort of data we are collecting on our kids because when we do our end of year analysis we split male female and we look at how many male referrals we have had and how many female referrals we've had <i>Transcript 3: 29 - 34</i>
Within schools	P3: Um I I worry sometimes about the messages that primary school children get EC: Yeah

	<p>P3: about gender and the((pause)) and still about all sorts of things like sports teams and participation very ((pause)) dichotomous roles for girls and boys and participation for girls in STEM subjects and all those sorts of gender issues I worry about the messages we give our very young children about gender and I don't think I don't think enough is being done to widen those conversations</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 3: 317 - 321</i></p>
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Table 4: Institutional heteronormativity

Whilst the discourse of some participants reflected an adherence to and maintenance of the norm, in this case the gender binary, participant 6 in particular began dismantling these norms to reveal their potential function within society. Their stance suggested that people seek to maintain the norm because it is something that is known and thus navigable. To move or be placed outside the dichotomous binary is to be within unknown territory, generating uncertainty.

Navigating the binary	Supporting extract
<p>Within the binary = known, outside the binary = unknown</p>	<p>P6: the information I have from schools [...] you know with people who are transgender male to female or female to male you make a decision about what pronoun you want to use and that's the pronoun you want to use</p> <p>EC: Yeah</p> <p>P6: Um you know you make a decision about the name you want to use and that's the name you want to use and they've had young people in primary school who you know want to be he or she one he one day she the next they don't staff don't quite know where they stand they don't want to offend the young person the children don't know where they stand so they can become a little more standoffish</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 6: 80 - 86</i></p> <p>P6: people just like a bit of certainty and if somebody is presenting with uncertainty I think people find it hard to manage</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 6: 109 - 110</i></p>

Table 5: Navigating the binary

Perceived movement outside the binary resulted in the construction of the 'other' who does not fit the boundaries of established discourses.

Construction of the 'other'	Supporting extracts
<p>Boy 'othered'. Implication that he must be something different because his gender expression indicates female not male.</p>	<p>P4: the boy told me I said ('what do you want to do') he said ('when I grow up') he said ('I want to be a princess and dance around in pink') he told me and that's all he wanted to do he just wanted to play with princesses he hated he didn't want to be he would have come in school you know mum would have let him mum was completely and utterly accepting of it</p>

	<p>EC: yeah</p> <p>P4: he just wanted to twirl around not dance around twirl around he wanted to twirl around in pink and he was just clearly somewhere on that fluid -</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 4: 99 - 105</i></p>
Limited discourse in society creates a search for the 'other'	<p>P6: I think if you don't fall into that it might lead you to question well I I can't be a girl you know or for example I hated shopping and I never used to think oh I'm a rubbish woman I hate shopping but I just thought I was someone who didn't like shopping I didn't then think therefore I must be a man or I must be a boy because I don't like this and I don't want to do that</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 6: 22 - 24</i></p>

Table 6: Construction of the 'other'

This construction of the 'other' is interpreted as both a means of the CYP legitimising their place within society, by finding a label or identity that fits, and as serving a function in terms of retaining established norms.

Constructions created in context

Not only was language established as active in creating and further shaping constructions within the interviews, it was also highlighted as changeable across contexts and time.

Location of construction	Supporting extract
School context as dictating perception of child and GV	<p>P3: Because one was a very very small church school very small very religious and the other was a normal sort of primary school</p> <p>EC: So very different dynamics within the schools as well</p> <p>P3: Yeah yeah yeah and that all affects the problem or problem in quotes air quotes is seen or how the child is viewed doesn't it</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 3: 152 - 154</i></p>
Construction as temporal and variable across generations	<p>P2: I've met a few people who are perhaps of an older generation who would have a very ('oh I don't believe in all of this nonsense') sort of attitude</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 2: 119 - 120</i></p>
Local communities/cultures	<p>P7: I suppose the greater acceptance is a bit paradoxical as well though isn't it because in some sections of society yeah total acceptance in others just total bewilderment so there isn't obviously the acceptance isn't as widespread as the increased awareness</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 7: 17 - 19</i></p>

Table 7: Constructions of GV located in context

Troubling gender

Variability in constructions resulted in a troubling of gender, in which some participants began questioning the established binary.

Question	Supporting excerpt
<p>How do we construct gender roles/ expectations? How subjective are the boundaries surrounding them?</p>	<p>P2: it's the norms expectations part which maybe is a little problematic because you know to what extent ((pause)) what is falling outside the norms expectations for someone's biological sex because if you ask me what the norms or expectations are for a man or what the norms and expectations are for a woman well ((laughs)) if you are asking me sort of flippantly then I would give you a very stereotypical response um if you were asking me genuinely and we were going to have a deep conversation about it then I would argue that there are that there should be none</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 2: 35 - 39</i></p>
<p>What does it mean to be male or female? Is that fixed?</p> <p><i>(This troubling of gender was explicitly discussed by Participant 7 in her linking of GV with increased numbers of girls who are also diagnosed with autism.)</i></p>	<p>P7: there's a certain amount of research on the ((pause)) um ((pause)) gender roles and uh girls with autism and um ((pause)) I am forgetting the actual technical name I want ((pause)) gender dysphoria there you go in girls with autism and I find that fascinating because I feel it's almost like their logical minds are looking at society and going right that's how society works those are the rules the rules are if you are a girl you must dress like this and they're rejecting it but then there are there seem to be I wonder if there is an element of rejecting it the whole package because they see it coming as a whole package</p> <p>EC: Yeah</p> <p>P7: rather than it being I can choose those clothes I can choose that job I can choose those hairstyles I can choose these different ways of walking talking which are all so gendered but they see what society does which is put them at poles apart</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 7: 67 -75</i></p>

Table 8: Troubling gender

3.2 Change

In discussing thoughts and viewpoints around GV and gender more widely, participants alluded to a theme of change occurring for all and the inherent difficulties within a change process. Participant 3 in particular made reference to how others' readiness to move with societal change impacts upon their ability to engage in the change process¹⁹.

Readiness for change	Supporting extracts
<p>Within systems</p>	<p>P3: Yeah yeah it's part of your own awareness isn't it and then knowing when's the right time to tackle that for people {EC – mm} knowing what sort of people you work with and knowing the sort of environment you are working in and how ready</p>

¹⁹ Readiness to change was interpreted as residing in one's own constructions around GV.

	<p>schools are to hear those sorts of messages because they're not they are so not ready to hear those sorts of messages or have those sort of discussions a lot of them</p> <p><i>Transcript 3: 78 - 80</i></p>
Within families	<p>P3: I've got a vague recollection that in one of the cases the issue is still fairly problematic for the parents who were a bit more closed minded to the issues the other parents were obviously fine they dealt with it in their own time and the little boy is fine he is flourishing but the other one is still, today you know fairly problematic he's in secondary school now and still finds some of those things quite challenging</p> <p><i>Transcript 3: 185 - 188</i></p>

Table 9: Readiness for change

Participant 3 acknowledged the complexity of change within a system, which can be impacted by the varying barriers perceived to exist within individual systems.

Barriers to change	Supporting extracts
Religion	<p>EC: but did it ever become anything more systemic [...]</p> <p>P3: Because one was a very very small church school very small very religious and the other was a normal sort of primary school</p> <p><i>Transcript 3: 148 - 152</i></p>
Systemic barriers (schools)	<p>P3: then of course you worry about the amount of stuff teachers have to teach our kids ((laughs)) and you think oh goodness me you ask them to fit that in and they are just going to go up the wall</p> <p><i>Transcript 3: 341 - 342</i></p>
Adolescence	<p>P6: his point was when it comes to puberty and if this young person was changing with the boys with breasts and looking biologically like a female the other young boys of thirteen fourteen he was worried about how they would you know how they would manage because they would obviously have their eyes drawn to bits of the body you know</p> <p><i>Transcript 6: 237 - 239</i></p>

Table 10: Barriers to change

If these barriers are overcome and change is implemented, a further consideration is the impact of change, which can ripple throughout systems.

Impact of change	Supporting extracts
Within peer groups	<p>P5: but the other thing that I remember came out in that one particular situation was the impact on the other children as well and how is that handled because I remember meeting with another parent of a child in a class where this had happened and they'd said it um had affected her little boy quite a lot because this child was that little boy's best friend but then there was a change and they didn't they felt they had lost their friend and they didn't know how to handle it</p> <p><i>Transcript 5: 241 - 244</i></p>
Within family	<p>P6: she does try to remember to say he but you can just see it doesn't flow naturally I mean you know he's been her daughter for fourteen years</p>

	<p>EC: yeah</p> <p>P6: You can't it's hard to suddenly say wipe out those fourteen years of history</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 6: 136 - 139</i></p>
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Table 11: Impact of change

At each level, those around the GV CYP may find a need to re-position themselves and negotiate their own sense of loss in relation to the change.

3.3 Navigating child identity development

A questioning of CID was pertinent within interviews. All participants highlighted childhood as a time of exploration in which CYP navigate and construct their own identities. As part of this, the participants highlighted behaviours and practices that may indicate GV being encapsulated within this period of exploration.

Childhood as a time of exploration	Supporting extracts
Pre-adolescence	<p>P5: I think a lot of young children it's a developmental stage isn't it where they explore sort of their identities through different um behaviours or dressing up</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 5: 17 - 18</i></p>
Adolescence	<p>P1: so I just saw it personally as these young teenagers exploring who they are and and the time at school and these kind of that age range being part of the process of navigating who they are and who they might want to be as an adult</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 1: 49 - 51</i></p>

Table 12: Childhood as a time of exploration

Whilst participants acknowledged the potential for exploration, participant 6 highlighted a difficulty within identity exploration being other people surrounding the CYP making judgements on what is real or not real.

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
<p>EC: like you said is it that period of just exploring in general that comes with childhood and then when is it something else or</p> <p>P6: Yeah I think so and there's something about and I suppose we judge that that's what's difficult we judge whether it's something else by how enduring it is</p>	<p>Transcript 6: 162 - 164</p>

Table 13: Childhood as a time of exploration: difficulty

Participant 6 specifies time, specifically persistence of behaviours or practices over time, which may indicate GV as being removed from this exploration within childhood. Persistence over time was a factor that was not only deemed pertinent to other participants in making such a distinction but something that they felt was needed in order to validate that GV existed.

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
P5: any sort of exploration to support the person in doing it in a safe environment so within the home but then you know not taking that into other environments at that stage unless its persistent consistent and something else	Transcript 5: 43 - 44

Table 14: Persistence over time

Within discussions surrounding exploration during childhood, participants also questioned the appropriate age at which CYP should be allowed to explore their GI and/or when this topic should be discussed more widely.

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
P5: yeah and I don't know that answer at the moment but I would think it would be not under four because I don't know ((pause)) or it might be but you wouldn't be fully going along with it at that age because there are lots of other issues with gender at that age aren't there um so you would have to measure your responses wouldn't you really	Transcript 5: 93 - 95
P3: hopefully with the new strand that's coming into the Welsh curriculum the emphasis on emotional and social wellbeing hopefully at some point somebody is going to go ('okay let's have a bit of a gender component gender discussion some sort of P.S.H.E type discussions for the children') because even very young children can process stuff like that and it shouldn't be left to secondary schools to think about it	Transcript 3: 337 - 339
P2: it kind of depends on the age of the child as well I mean if it was teenagers then I definitely think it would be appropriate to address it in P.S.H.E and so forth	Transcript 2: 214 - 216

Table 15: Appropriate age to explore/address GV

A variety of constructions were presented in relation to this theme suggesting that rather than being an area of consensus, it was one of uncertainty. A sense of diversity amongst participants prevailed in the organizing theme of 'gender identity as distinct' in which a dichotomy was formed between some participants who articulated GI as something that becomes fixed once formed, to others who suggested it is fluid over time.

Gender Identity development as distinct	Supporting extracts
Distinct part of identity development: becoming fixed	P5: at a younger age there is a lot about children forming their own gender identity isn't there and exploring with all those roles you know when they are little and dressing up

	<p>EC: Yeah</p> <p>P5: and gradually they become more aware don't they and decide</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 5: 33 – 36</i></p>
Within overall identity development: Fluid	<p>P6: and aren't we all questioning our identity anyway about not just what gender we are but we are questioning you know all sorts of things about ourselves you know am I a nice person am I not a nice person am I a ((pause)) you know it's one of many our gender is part of lots of things about our personality and our identity</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 6: 166 – 168</i></p>

Table 16: GID as distinct

The level of questioning and variation of opinion expressed in relation to GID was partly instigated by the participant's recognition that CYP are not autonomous within this area. Rather there are varying influences surrounding them that impact on their self-identified GI.

Influences on gender identity development	Supporting extracts
Home	<p>P5: because of that I read up and there was there was definitely things about roles within families at a young age and I think it's maybe not it's not for all but I think it's something you need we need to think about and consider isn't it how children establish their roles within families if there's been bereavements or loss or you know some attachment or whatever</p> <p>EC: Yeah</p> <p>P5: you know it's not just as straight forward as gender variance is it at that young age later on yes but at that young age I do think we shape children a lot</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 5: 107 - 112</i></p>
Peers	<p>EC: you said about wider social networks as well didn't you so peer influence</p> <p>P4: Yeah and they are very involved they are very involved in like um an alternative comic scene so a lot of their friends are very very a lot of them are non-binary lots of their friends are gender non-binary</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 4: 178 - 180</i></p>
Society	<p>this whole sort of you know gender variance fluidity thing is bound up (.) and let's face it (.) it is about this definition practices and behaviours is about all our expectations of children and what they do related to gender isn't it</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 7 – 316 - 318</i></p>

Table 17: Influences on GID

3.4 Interview as an active site of reflection/discovery

In exploring the constructions EPs/TEPs held in relation to GV it became apparent to the researcher that the interview itself became an active site of reflection and discovery

highlighting the potential for fluidity in thinking around this area, dependent on social context.

Interview as an active site	Supporting Extract
For Participants	<p>P3: Yeah I wouldn't even know how the rest of my team feels about this to be honest {EC – ah okay} I don't know if you had any volunteers I did pass it on to the rest of my team but I don't know if you had any volunteers ((laughs)) but I wouldn't know what they thought about it to be honest {EC- mm okay} which is quite interesting I probably should ask</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 3: 248 – 250</i></p>
For researcher	<p>EC: That's quite interesting because <u>I relate</u> in the sense of like you said we are still navigating what our roles could possibly be</p> <p>P1: Yeah</p> <p>EC: and that being quite open-ended anyway</p> <p>P1: yeah</p> <p>EC: so then defining roles from the outset is really hard but actually</p> <p>P1: exactly</p> <p>EC: what is the purpose of that as well I guess if it is so open and fluid and we can navigate and define those roles as we go {P1 – hmm} sorry I think I just waffled on ((laughs))</p> <p>P1: No no it was very true you know I certainly agree with that</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 1: 122 - 129</i></p>

Table 18: Interview as an active site for Participants and researcher

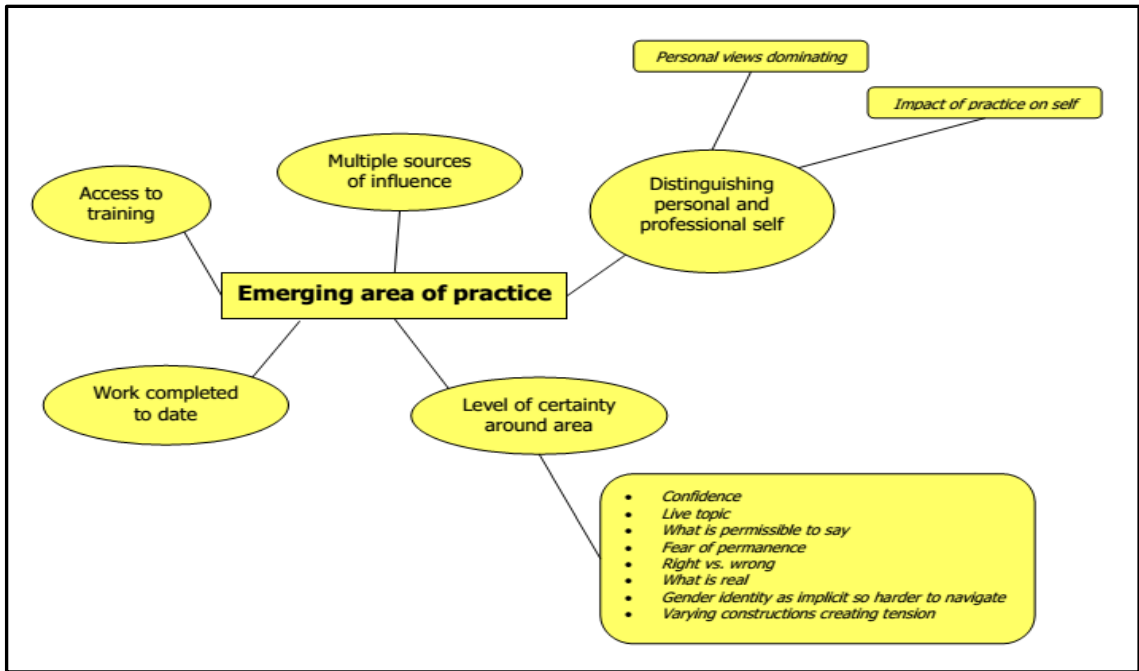


Figure 4. Thematic map for secondary research question i. 'what level of experience do EPs and TEPs within Wales currently have in supporting CYP who express GV?'

3.5 Emerging area of practice

When considering their own levels of experience in relation to GV, all but one participant acknowledged that this was an emerging area of practice for them.

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
P3: think there was and I can't remember how long ago it was maybe a year maybe a year ago a series of newspaper articles probably in the Independent I should imagine [...] and I hadn't particularly thought about the issue before then if I am honest	Transcript 3: 16 - 21

Table 19: Emerging area of practice: illustrative data extract

This theme was linked to the participant's current levels of training and experience within role. Two of seven indicated that they had received training on GV. Four participants highlighted some experience of casework surrounding GV within their LAs, either directly or indirectly through speaking to other colleagues who held cases. For all but one, this experience was limited in its remit.

The level of training and or/experience encountered by participants impacted on the level of certainty they felt in navigating this area in a professional capacity. For example, Participant 2 articulated:

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
<p>P2: I do not feel trained to deal with it even in the slightest because we have not had any training, even within the E.P course about gender variance at all</p> <p>EC: Okay</p> <p>P2: so I would not feel qualified to help that young person</p>	Transcript 2: 168 - 171

Table 20: Level of certainty around area: illustrative data extract

Numerous other factors also contributed to a sense of uncertainty around the area of GV for participants:

Factor	Supporting extract	Explanatory information²⁰
Confidence	<p>P2: So it's that's what I mean when I say that it's difficult it's not something where I feel confident of my own views and opinions and that they would stand up</p> <p>EC: Yeah</p> <p>P2: under any sort of examination <i>Transcript 2: 124 - 127</i></p>	Lack of confidence in own views around GV impacting on how confident/competent participant feels to act. In this example that action relates to challenging others' constructions around GV.
Topic as 'live'	<p>P5: it is a it's a hot topic isn't it <i>Transcript 5: 49</i></p> <p>P5: It could be a political topic as well couldn't it <i>Transcript 5: 252</i></p>	Increased visibility of topic means that there is an increased focus on how people are responding to this area.
What is permissible to say?	<p>P6: You know it's one of those like subjects where you just think uh I'm just going to say nothing you know <i>Transcript 6: 146</i></p> <p>P2: It's a difficult topic so you can't really just chat about it informally day to day on a corridor because people aren't I don't feel that level of information underpinning is there <i>Transcript 2: 105 - 106</i></p>	The uncertainty people feel around the language to use within the area, or what is acceptable to say, impacts on their ability to approach the topic. Some participants alluded to GV as a hidden topic because of this level of uncertainty around what can be spoken.
Fear of permanence	<p>P4: some of them are very vulnerable children and it worries me how easily they could be drawn into a world that they could not get out of if they wanted to <i>Transcript 4: 15 - 16</i></p> <p>P7: I'm assuming a lot of the issue is at the ((pause)) just basic social behaviours end and it's clearly when we're talking about surgery</p>	Factor linked to a physical transition and the fear of permanence surrounding a medical intervention. This fed into a level of caution around the topic and heightened uncertainty, in terms of the participant's being able to support.

²⁰ This column has been added to aid the readers understanding of the researcher's analysis, given the volume of data that has been condensed within this section

	<p>or hormone treatments or whatever it gets it gets a lot more serious because you are talking about irreversible decisions or ones that have quite profound effects</p> <p><i>Transcript 7: 355 - 357</i></p>	
Right v wrong	<p>P5: I think people are concerned aren't they I get the impression that schools are concerned that they do the right thing um ((pause)) not sure how to put this ((pause)) they don't want to be seen ((pause)) it's hard to put it in to words but it's about it's about balance it's about supporting them in the right way</p> <p><i>Transcript 5: 71 - 73</i></p>	<p>Links to what is permissible to say and 'live' topic. People are worried about consequences to their actions and want to ensure that their response will be perceived as 'right' by others. Also a suggestion that there is a right response and that there is an authority dictating what this right response is.</p>
What is real?	<p>P6: but I definitely think there are people who do feel they are neither one or the other or who are questioning but I do sometimes wonder if some of those people might be questioning due to the uh limited gender roles the discourse available in society as a whole so I think there's like two groups some who always felt that way who had a very strong feeling that they don't fit in their body they've never felt quite right and comfortable then I think there's a whole group of people who probably would have historically say girls would have called themselves tomboys</p> <p>EC: Yeah</p> <p>P6: and then kind of come to the reasoning that just because you want to do X things that doesn't mean you're not a girl so I think there's probably two overlapping groups</p> <p><i>Transcript 6: 7 - 15</i></p>	<p>All participants acknowledged GV as being real but some participants queried what GV is. Participant 6 articulated this as linked to a separation between those who have always felt variant and those whose variance emerges because of the limited discourses in society that places constraints around how they can identify. Restrictive discourses force them to search for an identity that fits. A querying of what is real and not real heightened the level of difficulty felt around navigating this topic.</p>
Gender identity as implicit and so harder to navigate	<p>P6: in the primary school they went by what the young person was wearing</p> <p>EC: Yeah</p> <p>P6: But some days he would come in dressed as a boy going ('no, I am a girl today')</p> <p><i>Transcript 6: 88 - 91</i></p>	<p>Gender identity as something internal and felt so not necessarily explicit to others. Without this explicitness people become unsure about how to respond appropriately or support the CYP.</p>
Varying constructions creating tension	<p>P2: I think it would be quite difficult in practice if you went to a school which was feeling very ambivalent about the whole thing and if the parents were also feeling very ambivalent about the whole thing I</p>	<p>Varying constructions are perceived to exist, which can be polarized in their origin. Such diverging viewpoints can make this area a site of tension and/or conflict which is perceived to be difficult to navigate.</p>

	think emotions and judgements and that sort of thing could be running quite high and I think that in practice I would find that quite difficult to navigate <i>Transcript 2: 268 - 270</i>	
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Table 21: Factors impacting level of certainty around GV

The factors outlined represent what emerged from the data set in its entirety, but it is acknowledged that there was variation expressed between participants regarding these factors. Table 17 highlights such variation:

Participant	Level of training/experience	Views around level of certainty
1	EC: And have you had any previous training or specific education around gender P1: No none at all <i>Transcript 1: 40 - 43</i>	P1: I think at the moment I would feel quite confident to go ahead and take this on as a piece of casework but perhaps that is a false sense of confidence ((laughs)) <i>Transcript 1: 86 - 87</i>

Table 22: Variation of views relating to level of certainty around area

This variation appeared to be linked to multiple sources of influence upon constructions. For example, Participant 1 acknowledged previous lived experience and their personal stance around the topic that mitigated their fear around approaching work within the area.

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
P1: It's probably my past experiences in school and because I helped support people umm when I was a teacher and I didn't have any particular training then and everything went fine I don't feel like it's a scary unknown area that I immediately must have training and support for to be able to deal with	Transcript 1: 148 - 150

Table 23: Participant 1: sources of influence on personal constructions

When looking across the data set the following sources of influence were reflected in how the participants were thinking and consequently spoke about GV:

Source of influence	Supporting extract
Mass media/ reading of non-academic sources	EC: And when you said from your understanding of gender variance where's that sort of come from P3: Oh all sorts of places really lots of reading lots of watching <i>Louis Theroux</i> programmes ((laughs)) lots of um lots of magazine articles and TV documentaries not too much professional reading to be honest but lots of general knowledge

	<p>EC: Yeah and a lot of like mass media exposure</p> <p>P3: Yeah yeah yeah I think so <i>Transcript 3: 9 – 13</i></p>
Lived experience	<p>P4: I just know what my friend's daughter's going through just how difficult it is and what a big big thing it is and it's not been thought of lightly you know <i>Transcript 4: 208 - 210</i></p> <p>P7: I do think that I actually do think that (.) I haven't thought about this before (.) that my background as an English teacher is relevant because you study language and teaching A level language with language and gender and being aware of how expectations about gender are so heavily written into language <i>Transcript 7: 24 – 26</i></p>
Own research (linking to shifts in constructions around gender stereotypes)	<p>P2: I have also recently been doing some research around dads and fathers and how men feel sort of confined by certain stereotypical ideas about what their roles are as well and how that can be really paralysing for them if they feel that they don't fit into those roles <i>Transcript 2: 50 – 54</i></p>

Table 24: Sources of influence on EP views

In considering sources of influence shaping views around the topic, many participants highlighted that research was perceived as 'knowledge' and central to their practice, but there was a distinct divergence between this held belief and their use of research in practice, when faced with this area of work. For example, participant 6 stated:

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
P6: I haven't gone to E.P in practice that hasn't been a source of information for me [...] you know sometimes a academic study is not always the easiest thing to read is it	Transcript 6: 523 - 531

Table 25: Research evidence as a source of influence

This lack of reference to objective sources feeds into the organizing theme of distinguishing between the personal and the professional self. Through the views presented, it was interpreted that the participant's personal views, or the wider personal views of EPs on the topic, had the potential to dominate their approach to professional practice.

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
P3: people don't think about it enough definitely and when it does come along people are very there are lots of personal issues that come to the surface I guess for various reasons	Transcript 3: 56 - 58

and people don't think about it as much as they should It shouldn't be a surprise	
P4: but it just worries me that we are going to lose real ones in this and that in itself is probably a problematic statement isn't it we are just going to lose real ones EC: When you said that that in itself is a problematic statement what did you mean by that P4: Because it's like suggesting they're not real and they are and who am I to make that decision	Transcript 4: 188 - 191

Table 26: Personal views dominating

The excerpts presented suggested a level of vulnerability for the participants if and when their personal views dominated without recourse to an objective source. This was exemplified by participant 7 in their reminder:

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
P7: Yes but then again we do need our informed reasoned action don't we	Transcript 7: 250

Table 27: The need for objectivity

This potential for vulnerability was reinforced by participant 3 in their personal recognition of work within this area having an impact on not only their constructions but further permeating their personal life:

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
P3: you have to challenge your own prejudices [...] and your own biases and your own cognitive thoughts about the issue so yeah lots of thinking about my own two children and what if's you know how would you deal with that as a parent how would you actually deal with that as a parent if that was you EC: EC: Yeah P3: Um definitely changed the way I talk to my children about topics like that	Transcript 3: 198 - 203

Table 28: Impact of practice on self

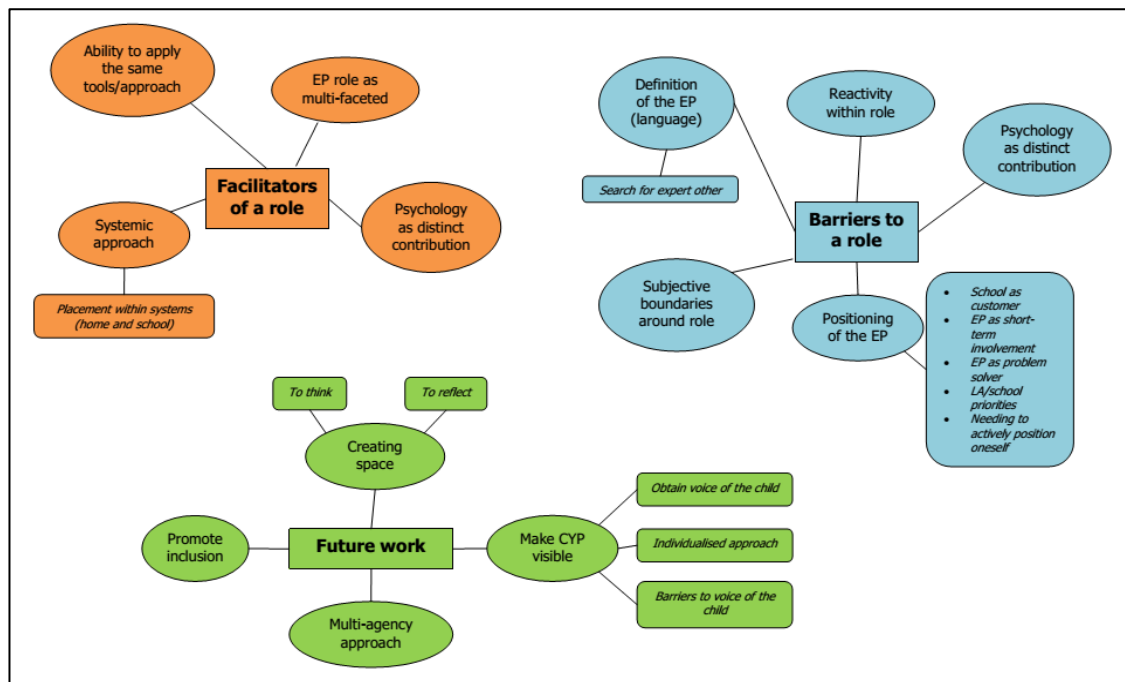


Figure: 5. Thematic map for secondary research question ii. 'What role do EPs/TEPs within Wales perceive themselves holding in relation to GV?'

3.6 Facilitators of a role

In considering roles that could potentially be assumed by an EP in practice around this area, Participant's highlighted numerous aspects of current practice that were conducive to them supporting CYP who self-identify as GV.

Tool/approach	Supporting evidence
Use of re-framing	P7: so in a sense this fits in this is just a different in many ways a different variation of very similar problems you have with schools often where the re-framing is part of the trick isn't it <i>Transcript 7: 231 – 232</i>
Consultation	P3: Through consultation I mean we work in a consultation model so we don't really do anything else to be honest <i>Transcript 3: 111</i>
Personal Construct Psychology	P3: Yeah I did some drawing with the children kinetic family drawing those sort of P.C.P type of techniques really just to explore their view of themselves and their place in the world <i>Transcript 3: 158 – 159</i>
Person Centred Practices	P4: It's like <i>person centred planning</i> it's all of those things and what works to make however those symptoms be manageable in school <i>Transcript 4: 269 – 270</i>
Same principles/approach driving work	P1: I have said that from the beginning I think within reason I would try and treat this just the same as any case <i>Transcript 1: 142</i>

Table 29: Tools/approaches that could be used in practice

In addition to utilising current skills, Participant 5 highlighted the distinct contribution of psychology that could be offered by EPs to support knowledge development in this area.

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
<p>P5: what about understanding the overall understanding of it and how it fits in with children and development I think that's missing</p> <p>EC: That's not happening</p> <p>P5: No no so who would do that probably Ed Psychs maybe I don't know</p> <p>EC: What do you think do you think that that could be a role for -</p> <p>P5: ((in overlap)) Yeah it could be a role for Ed Psychs cos who else knows about that and how the psychology of it all would come together</p>	<p>Transcript 5: 218 - 223</p>

Table 30: Psychology as distinct contribution

Alternatively, participant 1 postulated that the EP role itself is multi-faceted and can be shaped in a fluid manner by the TEP/ EP in context.

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
<p>P1: I do see the role of the E.P as being very multifaceted and context dependent and so until I really would think or have a case in front of me and really get an idea of who the people were what the situation was what the context is it would be difficult for me to say ('oh I'd take this specific role')</p>	<p>Transcript 1: 109 - 111</p>

Table 31: EP role as multifaceted

This line of thinking was extended to argue that EPs already have a role in shaping identity development, which this area of work fits within.

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
<p>P1: I think part of our multi-faceted role might be helping young people to navigate their own way through life and I think this is certainly something where EPs can support young people</p>	<p>Transcript 1: 162 - 166</p>

Table 32: EP role to support identity development already

It was reflected throughout the interviews that EPs do and could work systemically, in varying ways, to support change in relation to GV.

Working systemically	Supporting extract
Supporting home/school	P7: you know it's all about really supporting the school and also supporting the family to an extent <i>Transcript 7: 140 - 141</i>
Training/ policy development	P2: Yeah there could be a role there for E.Ps when it comes to INSET training yeah and looking at policies <i>Transcript 2: 263</i> P7: looking at maybe the systemic things in the school such as why can't girls wear shorts I don't know you know silly things like that but I think hopefully a lot of places have moved on from that now but um ((pause)) just what their expectations of gender are and how that might be fuelling unhappiness discontent or whatever <i>Transcript 7: 220 - 222</i>
Embedded within EP led initiatives already operating	P5: Yeah yeah and we have got the <i>ELSA</i> training as well haven't we so that's all about emotional wellbeing isn't it somebody supportive within school that they could go to um and those emotional those <i>ELSAs</i> are ((pause)) you know they have been trained up in areas of emotional wellbeing haven't they maybe this is an area we could include actually <i>Transcript 5: 297 - 299</i>
Physical environment of school	P3: definitely yeah twilight sessions SENCo meetings ALNCo meetings head teacher meetings there is probably even a bloody role for us to comment on school buildings do you know what I mean <i>Transcript 3: 284 - 285</i>

Table 33: Working systemically

TEPs/EPs role, as intrinsically linked to families and schools, means that they may be ideally located to develop relationships with CYP and the systems around them as well as engage in some of the complexities this area of work raises:

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
P6: but if you had a particularly resistant school who just see [...] um you know they might find it easier to work with an E.P who they are familiar with from a school's perspective and not feel as though they've got a oh you know they would say that they've got that agenda perhaps they see us as more neutral	Transcript 6: 547 - 552
P6: E.Ps are good at where there are disagreements between schools and young people and families you know where there is some sort of need for coming together or to find a shared path	Transcript 6: 545-546

Table 34: Placement within systems (home and school) as conducive to a role

3.7 Barriers to role

Participants also alluded to varying factors that could potentially present a barrier to TEPs/EPs assuming a role in supporting GV CYP. One such barrier related to the definition of the role of the EP as specific to education and learning.

Definition of the EP	Supporting extracts
Boundary created in regards to the role of the EP by the very connotations in language	<p>P4: because <u>we are Educational Psychologists</u> isn't it it's around how it's affecting them in education {EC – hmm} so in terms of what's going on in the background that's a medical issue isn't it</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Transcript 4: 286 - 288</i></p> <p>P7: Yeah so you know I suppose always often what it comes back to is thinking about what's the barrier to learning</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Transcript 7: 209</i></p>

Table 35: Definition of the EP

In the excerpt presented by participant 4 language again becomes active, not only in creating a boundary around the EP and their role but in encouraging a search for a more expert other who is perceived to be better positioned to respond within this area, based on their job title. For participant 4 that link was a medical one but other participants discussed their conceptualisation of the expert other.

Search for the expert other	Supporting extracts
Within Mental health remit. Power and limitations of language exposed in the challenge of whether this is a mental health issue.	<p>EC: And did that become a part of their work or was it seen as a separate issue and not part of their work</p> <p>P5: I think that came under CAMHS yeah</p> <p>EC: So it was referred to CAMHS</p> <p>P5: Yeah not sure if that's right though</p> <p>EC: In what way</p> <p>P5: Well is it identi ((pause)) CAMHS is mental health isn't it I suppose its emotional wellbeing so I suppose that's appropriate but it's not a mental health issue is it</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Transcript 5: 174 - 180</i></p>
Organisations/support groups as expert other	<p>Yes because like I said I have had a couple of schools on my patch um who have asked me for advice I have mostly signposted because we have got [name and location removed for anonymity] and they are incredibly supportive so I tend to for that kind of practical and they are much more au fait with the you know with what how to approach</p>

	things and experienced so I haven't had much hands on to do with young people <i>Transcript 6: 176 - 179</i>
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Table 36: Search for the expert other

The centrality of language was further evidenced to the researcher in terms of how it was instrumental in the positioning of the EP, which in turn impacted on roles available to assume. Table 37 highlights the varying ways the TEP/EP becomes positioned by schools, the LA or the self.

Positioning of the EP	Supporting extracts
School as a customer	P3: yeah I would definitely have gone if there was some training around or equally I would put a package together if schools were asking for some training with those sorts of issues I would go and find out and do the research necessary to put a training package together <i>Transcript 3: 55 - 57</i>
EP as short term involvement	P3: I found it very interesting {EC – mm} but it was no more than probably three meetings for each of the cases I would have thought <i>Transcript 3: 115 - 116</i>
EP as problem solver (unless a problem is actively constructed and taken to the EP within formalised planning meetings, for example, role potentially does not become available. Issue of 'problem' being constructed to be brought to the EP)	EC: how did they how did those referrals come about was that something to do with gender variance or - P4: No the one my colleague was working on was behaviour so it was around just concerning some concerning behaviour <i>Transcript 4: 92 - 93</i> P7: there are in fact a couple of children not to say children I know of I don't know them a couple of children in my schools who I know are living in the opposite gender {EC – mm} to that assigned but it just seems to be fine it doesn't seem no ((pause)) no concerns have been raised by the school <i>Transcript 7: 152 - 154</i>
LA/School priorities	P3: but it's that long C.P.D list of things that you wish you knew isn't it um and priorities and I ((pause))I can't see it being a massive priority here if I'm honest I don't know why EC: Yeah P3: Maybe because we just haven't had many children like that I don't know <i>Participant 3: 271 - 275</i>
Needing to actively re-position oneself (process of re-positioning as potentially opening opportunities for the EP to be constructed as having a role in supporting CYP who are GV).	P6: I suppose it's whether <i>Umbrella Cymru</i> could realise that we are there to support the situation as well from a slightly different angle from them because we've got the education how the education system works background <i>Transcript 6: 347 - 349</i>

	<p>P6: but because of my role as senior I do things like our equalities return to Stonewall every year and I'm writing the on a working party writing our transgender guidelines so I suppose I have ended up being the person in the team who has got that knowledge I suppose</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 6: 179 - 180</i></p>
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Table 37: Positioning of the EP

A further barrier was presented by participants in the EPS often being reactive within their work, not only to casework, as presented, but to societal changes.

Reactive v proactive response	Supporting extracts
EP as reactive	<p>P3: I think it waits yeah I think everything that E.Ps do you know if it's one that's not a routine day in day out bread and butter case it waits until it crops up across your desk and then its ('oh crikey, I need to have a think about this now. I need to really think about what I do here')</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 3: 254 - 259</i></p> <p>P5: The way I feel about it now is that there is some training out there if you want to if you want to go and find it</p> <p>EC: Yep</p> <p>P5: but it it's come to the forefront and therefore everyone has got to have a policy on it ((pause)) so that's what's happening ((laughs)) everyone's got to have a policy so we are doing a county policy because everyone has to have a policy</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 5: 215 - 218</i></p>
Needing a proactive response	<p>P2: what you need to do is as a system be having that conversation all the time even though perhaps you don't know that you have got any children like that</p> <p>EC: Yep</p> <p>P2: in your school or same goes for any gay children or whatever the issue is be constantly having that conversation be constantly using those using gender neutral language for example</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Transcript 2: 218 - 222</i></p>

Table 38: Reactive v proactive response

In exploring potential roles, several participants highlighted the need for support to be able to occupy a role with CYP who self-identify as GV, potentially implicating capacity as a barrier.

Support required by TEPs/EPs	Supporting extracts
Supervision	<p>P7: I think it would always be a supervision thing without a doubt and then I mean that could signpost further or you</p>

	<p>know who might already I mean I don't know who in the team already has experience of this so they might have resources you know in terms of things to read ideas</p> <p><i>Transcript 7: 376 - 378</i></p>
Training	<p>P5: well I suppose for Ed Psychs I mean I went on that training so I suppose Ed Psych's going on training to find out more isn't it and reading around the it's not just about that it's about the psychology of the role of identity and gender identity in children how that develops</p> <p><i>Transcript 5: 211 - 213</i></p>
Time for reading	<p>P1: I would want to do a bit of reading around it just in case there is something you know that I might have missed because I am not familiar with it</p> <p><i>Transcript 1: 95 - 96</i></p>

Table 39: Support required by TEPs/EPs

A final organizing theme of subjective boundaries around the EP role was interpreted by the researcher, due to the marked variations in the perceptions of a role being available to EPs and what that role might look like.

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
<p>P1: I think this is certainly something where E.Ps can support young people so I wouldn't say this is something that E.Ps shouldn't get involved with or can't have some sort of positive impact with</p>	<p>Transcript 1: 163 - 164</p>
<p>P7: I suppose it depends at the level they are seeing what difficulties the child is having so you know if it's just a child who wants to be called a different name or wear different clothes if that's the only issue (.) and it's difficult to compartmentalize these things (.) that might be easier to re-frame or to explore in terms of well is that a difficulty for the school what do you know what do the parents think if they want a different name call them a different name it's kind of polite isn't it to call people what they want to be called {EC - mm} but I think you know the further it becomes an issue for the child the more you know that research would need to be done in terms of background reading</p> <p>EC: Yeah</p> <p>P7: making sure you are giving the correct advice</p>	<p>Transcript 7: 252 - 259</p>
<p>P2: if it landed on my desk saying as in that was a problem it was something that the teachers had identified perhaps if the child was a bit younger like if they were four and the teacher was sort of like ('oh my gosh, this child keeps saying that they are a boy and actually they are a girl, I am going to send them to this Educational Psychologist') <u>then</u> I am not sure if I don't know if the Educational Psychologist would be the right person to deal with it {EC- mm okay} if the gender variance in itself was being flagged up as the problem I think if there was bullying or something related to it then I think the E.P could step in but if the gender variance is the difficulty then I don't think I would take on the case</p>	<p>Transcript 2: 150 - 156</p>

Table 40: Subjective boundaries around role

3.8 Future work

Where work had yet to be undertaken or was in its infancy, discussion within interview centred on what roles could be occupied and/or expanded in the future by TEPs/EPs. Key to these discussions was a focus on making the CYP visible within any work completed. As participant 3 (Transcript 3, 170 – 171) expressed:

'It always helps for the adults to come down to the child's level and see it through the child's eyes, definitely'

Key to achieving this aim was ensuring work was individualised to the child and that TEPs/EPs obtained the voice of the child within their work.

Making the CYP visible	Supporting extracts
Individualised approach	<p>P6: but what I have realised is other than the the you know transgender and gender fluid people have you know rights and you have to protect those rights that's that's the core that's the unmoveable</p> <p>EC: yeah</p> <p>P6: but how that may play out in different for each individual child or young person might be different <i>Transcript 6: 322 - 326</i></p>
Voice of the child	<p>P1: I would probably just spend a lot of time thinking about how I could really talk to the young person and get to know them and try to get an idea of what they are experiencing and what it means to them I suppose rather than just what it means to the school. <i>Transcript 1: 73 - 75</i></p>

Table 41: Making the CYP visible

Whilst the voice of the child was articulated as being central, varying obstacles to truly capturing the voice of the child were presented throughout interviews.

Barriers to the voice of the child	Supporting extracts
Power dynamics between staff and CYP	<p>P2: because I think I think that's the only way you are ever going to know how to help young people is actually hearing from them but it's hard isn't it when you are a child to say that sort of stuff to a teacher <i>Transcript 2: 91 - 93</i></p>
Re-interpretation of CYP's views	<p>P3: with the child's permission we shared the drawings we show the parents the drawings we talk about what we think I always ask the parents to interpret what they think the drawing means ('can you tell me a bit about this, what do you think this means for little johnny') um they put their own spin on it they see what they want to see in the drawings <i>Transcript 3: 164 - 166</i></p>
Age of the child	<p>P3: So two very different sorts of experiences and at that stage because the children were so young it was</p>

	more about working with the parents {EC – mm, yeah} and the school <i>Transcript 3: 101- 102</i>
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Table 42: Barriers to the voice of the child

A further role centred on promoting inclusion to better enable an acceptance of diversity and an understanding of GV.

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
P3: a strand about tolerance as well isn't there a strand about tolerance and diversity and accepting people for individuals and you can weave that in easily to sort of the emotional health and wellbeing curriculum without necessarily going into too much detail but but that would be a big part tolerance and accepting and appreciating people for individuals I would think	Transcript 3: 367 - 369

Table 43: Promoting Inclusion

It was highlighted that it may be helpful to adopt a multi-agency approach and link up with agencies in order to further the development of this work.

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
I think in relation to how we move forward it's got to be multi-agency hasn't it because there's lots lots of different agencies that possibly are going to be involved so it's important that we all work together isn't it	Transcript 5: 314 - 315

Table 44: multi-agency approach

Outside of a direct role for the TEP/EP, Participants alluded to the want for a safe space, in which to begin talking about and reflecting on this area of work.

Data extract	Location (Transcript number and line reference)
P2: and I would like to have that conversation that I mentioned earlier like it would be good for teachers to have it would be good to have that space to talk about it	Transcript 2: 196 - 197

Table 45: Creating space: illustrative data extract

In considering the function of such a space, participants expressed how reflection and conversation around this area could be the origins of change for people. Whilst these

benefits were not always directly referenced in relation to dialogue between EPs, it is arguable that the benefits would pertain across all conversations and also be an origin of change for TEPs/EPs.

Origins of change	Supporting extracts
Conversation	P4: there's training coming up about it and we've got a draft policy coming out which is why I definitely need that sort of thing now which is where although I worry about it it's a really good thing that we are having these conversations now <i>Transcript 4: 296 – 298</i>
Reflection	P7: I wonder if there's a role for training as well just in terms of just that awareness of and again it's the re-framing isn't it getting people to actually think about things differently getting getting people to think about things at all sometimes <i>Transcript 7: 296 – 297</i>

Table 46: Origins of change

4 Discussion

This thesis aimed to explore the constructions of TEPs/EPs regarding GV and how they perceive the role of the EP. Pertinent to the findings is an acknowledgement that there is marked variance between the participant's constructions, resulting in multiple themes and points of divergence within those themes. The complexity of the data collected (See Figure 2) is considered potentially representative of the convolution inherent within gender and GI, and the debates that have circulated within these topics for the past five to six decades. As such, it is difficult to address each point of divergence in detail. This discussion instead will seek to review the findings, with respect to the literature and in light of the research questions posed at the origin of the study, highlighting those areas and the related theory perceived to best capture the data set in its entirety.

4.1 Research questions

An overarching research question was posed, seeking to explore the constructions held by TEPs and EPs, within Wales, in relation to GV. Four global themes were identified, circumnavigating: the importance of language in dictating social action; a questioning of childhood identity development and what this both should and is perceived to encompass; the notion of a change process for all; and the interview site as live in challenging and consequently further shaping both the participant's and researcher's constructions of GV.

Two secondary research questions underpinned the overarching research question. The global theme, 'emerging area of practice', was labelled in relation to the level of experience reported by participants. The organising themes of 'access to training' and 'work completed to date' identified limited training and professional-based experience for most participants, which had varying impacts on the level of certainty they felt around this area of work. Participants also reported varying sources of influence on their constructions around the area of GV, with the potential for subjectivity dominating responses being captured within the organising theme 'distinguishing between the personal and professional self'. In relation to perceptions of an EP role, participants articulated that whilst there are many facilitators of a role there are also perceived barriers to those roles being assumed. Roles that could be undertaken in the future and what may be required to enable TEPs/EPS to occupy such roles were also explored.

4.2 Links to previous research

Considering the extant literature, there are potentially many consistencies with previous theoretical literature and/or research findings. For example, some participant's discourse in relation to a linearity between sex, GI and gender expression/role, as depicted within the organising theme 'heteronormativity in action', relates to Butler's (1990) conceptualisation of a heterosexual matrix, in which normative notions of masculinity and femininity are produced and perpetuated within cultures. Participant three's discussion of gender divisions within schools and LA, as part of their operational functioning, similarly links to literature relating to institutional heteronormativity (for example, DePalma & Atkinson, 2007; DePalma, 2013; Renold, 2005, 2006) and the notion that normative conceptualisations of gender can become, albeit sometimes unconsciously, sustaining and self-replicating (Atkinson & DePalma, 2009).

In relation to the role of the EP, the basic theme of 'placement within systems (home and school)', within the global theme 'facilitators of a role', supports Yavuz's (2016) assertion that EPs are ideally positioned to assume a role in supporting CYP who self-identify as GV. In addition, some areas noted within the organizing themes 'ability to apply the same tools/approach', 'working systemically' and the global theme 'future work' share similarities with international and UK-based research exploring the role of the EP within this area (Yavuz, 2016; Bowskill, 2017; Whitman et al, 2007; Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2015).

Whilst other similarities and divergences to the extant literature were noted, these may not be sufficient to fully capture and explore the data set in its entirety. It was alternatively felt that, by assuming a 'meta' perspective, several overarching strands of psychology could capture and further illuminate the interview data, namely: social constructionism, systemic thinking, theories of change and personal construct psychology. Each will be explored briefly, with the caveat that these are not intended to resolve or provide certainty in relation to this research or the topic of GV, rather they represent further reflection on the findings obtained.

4.3 Social Constructionism

The global theme 'language as actor' reflected the centrality of language within the interviews as a source of meaning for the participants, as well as its ability to constitute and dictate social action. How each of the participants constructed the topic of GV, and articulated that within interview, was intrinsically linked to how they then perceived themselves occupying a role. Thus whilst this notion was articulated within the theme 'language as actor', it pervaded and was expressed in other themes. Participants' accounts indicated that their constructions were influenced by lived experience and shaped within the contexts in which they were embedded. Furthermore, their constructions appeared fluid, with some participants articulating fluctuations in their own constructions, as well as these constructions being challenged and further consolidated within the interview itself.

These findings can be captured within the core assumptions of social constructionism (Burr, 2015): knowledge is sustained by social processes, knowledge and social action go together and the way in which we understand the world is historically and culturally specific. Key to these assumptions is language, which has performative functioning.

4.4 Systemic thinking

Linked to the theory of social constructionism is the acknowledgement of the wider social context of a person. The term feedback loops within systemic thinking (Dowling, 2001) can help us to conceptualise how the people surrounding the participants, and the ecologies within which they are nested, shape the way they think and act in relation to GV, in an interactional exchange. To varying extents, participants voiced factors potentially impacting their or others' positioning, including: adherence to a normative conceptualisation of the gender binary; LA/school priorities; religion; and the

wider political climate. Thus, whilst some factors may create a need to respond and a consideration of how EPs can act (for example, political climate), other factors potentially create a barrier to that very action (for example, LA priorities).

Within the themes 'heteronormativity in action', 'levels of certainty' and 'change' is a potential articulation of the discomfort felt when what is 'known' becomes troubled. This links to Monro's (2005) assertion that gender categorisation may have a level of functionality, in maintaining a coherence within societies, which one can then communicate within. The concept of homeostasis (Dowling, 2001), depicting a tendency of systems to resist change in order to maintain its equilibrium, could possibly support understanding around why some, who hold the binary closely, appear to resist the notion of GV and actively fight to maintain their normative framework. In regards to the participants' discourse, this is articulated more so in relation to others they have either worked alongside or supported within professional roles.

4.5 Theories of change

Specifically linked to the global theme of 'change' was one's potential readiness to engage in a change process. Theories of change, like Prochaska and DiClemente's (1983) trans-theoretical model of change, can potentially be utilised in supporting an understanding of this theme in its discussion of the initial stages of change, termed pre-contemplation and contemplation. Located at the level of cognitive processes, pre-contemplation depicts someone who is not currently ready to engage in or considering change with contemplation reflecting an ambivalence in relation to that change. This model recognises that different people may be in different stages of readiness for change at any one point in time. In relation to GV CYP, it is possible that the CYP expressing GV may be further in their readiness for change, whilst others in their wider ecology may be closer to the initial stages of pre-contemplation and contemplation. This supposition is interlinked with the concept of homeostasis, in which one's stage of readiness can potentially be perceived to others as resistance to change or pathologising of variance and conceivably recognises the need to meet each person at their individualised stage of change, in order to effectively support.

4.6 Personal construct psychology

Integrated with the theories outlined and permeating the global themes within this research is the emotive response of participants. This was named in the organizing

theme 'level of certainty' and captured in the varying ways participants articulated reacting to the topic of GV as they negotiated, and at times reconstructed, their individual points of view. Payne & Smith (2014) designated the emotional response of their participants as 'the big freak out', conveying that fear and anxiety are common initial educator responses to a disruption of the binary position, originating from factors such as lack of preparation and/or policy and procedure to follow.

Serano (2007, p.85) discusses her own experience of cognitive dissonance²¹ in the disconnect felt between 'subconsciously seeing myself as female whilst consciously dealing with the fact that I was male'. In the varying emotive responses of the participants it is possible to assert that others within the ecology of the CYP also experience cognitive dissonance, as their normative constructions of gender are troubled, through the presentation of something that is yet solidified in the language they use to find meaning. Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 1955) formulates that people need to be able to predict their environment and that change threatens that need for consistency. Thus, when a person experiences cognitive dissonance there is a motivation to resolve that emotional response and return to a homeostatic state. The global theme 'interview as an active site' can possibly be explained as an example of the troubling of gender occurring, as participants actively reflect on their own constructions and/or lived experience.

Whilst that emotional state may bring discomfort and uncertainty, DePalma (2013) proposes that within an interrogation of taken for granted assumptions, there is a need to adopt a stance of uncertainty and a willingness to potentially leave questions unresolved. The organising theme 'creating space' would potentially afford participants an ongoing opportunity to engage with the complexity of GV, and is potentially required within DePalma's argument, prior to seeking resolution to the questions being asked.

4.7 Strengths and limitations of the research

Perceived strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This research builds and extends on a small body of literature that is beginning to explore the role of the EP in supporting CYP who identify as GV within a UK context (Yavuz, 2016; Bowskill, 2017). It is furthermore the first study, to the researcher's

²¹ Described by Serano (2007, p. 85) as the 'mental tension and stress that occur in a person's mind when they find themselves holding two contradictory thoughts or views simultaneously.

knowledge, to explore a Welsh context specifically. Given the legislative and policy changes outlined in the literature review, this research is arguably a timely contribution.

- In seeking to address the identified limitations within the extant literature, this research consisted of a sample solely comprised of TEPs/EPs, exploring their perspective of this area.
- The use of a qualitative methodology, and furthermore a semi-structured interview method of data collection, allowed for rich first person accounts that could be driven by the participants' understanding of the topic and aspects that they deemed pertinent. As such, the diversity of experience and viewpoints represented in the findings could be seen.
- This research further develops the rationale for the role of the EP in supporting CYP who self-identify as GV and extends thinking to also consider potential barriers to TEPs/EPs assuming a role.

Perceived limitations²²

- This research samples a minority of TEPs/EPs practicing across Wales. From the outset of this research it was asserted that the findings would not be considered generalisable or representative of all EPs across Wales. Instead what this research potentially affords is a point of reference, for other EPs to consider similarities and differences relative to the idiographic accounts of the participants within this research, thus still retaining use in contributing to wider knowledge (Braun & Clarke, 2013).
- Within the data collection process a decision was taken to not introduce a further process of gendering by asking and therefore providing details about participant's gender or GI. Given the focus on subjectivity within the findings, it could be postulated that how each participant self-identified impacted on their constructions and thereby has the potential to filter, consciously or unconsciously, into their constructions relating to practice. It is arguable that the research therefore would have benefitted from accounting for how each participant viewed their own gender and GI.
- Following a review of the interview questions with an external party, a further decision was taken to introduce a definition of GV as a stimulus for conversation. This was to alleviate discomfort within the interview process and ensure that the environment was conducive to further exploration of the topic. Following all interviews, the researcher reflected on the potential impact of a definition, considering if it had been perceived as the 'correct' definition by all, thus curtailing wider discussions of how this label may be constructed. The basic themes of 'what is permissible to say?' and 'right v wrong' reinforced the potential of this limitation of the study.
- Whilst the diversity of views represented in this study could be seen as a strength and a further representation of the inherent complexity within this emerging area of practice, it is

²² The perceived limitations have potential implications for future research, which will be explored more fully in part 3.

acknowledged that the analysis and reporting of such diversity, within the narrowly defined confines of this report, potentially risks losing some of the individual nuances captured.

Table 47: Perceived strengths and limitations of research

4.8 Implications for EP practice

Whilst this research cannot be deemed generalisable to wider EP practice, authors argue for a utility within qualitative research in its capacity to increase our understanding of a particular issue or create new understandings (Yardley, 2000; Braun & Clarke, 2013). When looking specifically at the potential for 'new understandings' regarding the role of the EP in supporting GV CYP, the following tentative considerations are offered.

Area of consideration	Implication for EP Practice
<p>Through the research process it transpired that participants were often being led by a level of subjectivity, without always having recourse to more objective informed reasoned action. This was often occurring at an implicit level, with participants espousing a reliance and value on research without looking to this for guidance in practice (Aygyris & Schon, 1977). This finding was captured in the organizing theme 'distinguishing between the personal and professional self' and further revealed in the emergence of themes relating to the 'interview as an active site of reflection/discovery' and 'creating space,' both of which alluding to the value and potential need for spaces in which TEPs/EPs can reflect on their constructions around GV and the subsequent roles they could assume given such constructions.</p>	<p>This finding reflects an ongoing call on EPs to be reflective and reflexive practitioners (Fox, 2011; Bowskill, 2017; BPS, 2012) and links to Timini's (2005) caution that professionals need to understand the value base driving the profession, and each individual within such professions, before trying to treat a population. Within an emerging area of practice the need for such reflection arguably becomes more pertinent. Use of individual and peer supervision, to explore this emerging area of practice, could potentially offer a means of safeguarding against subjective practice by affording exploration of one's own views prior to, and during, engagement in practice.</p>
<p>Five of seven participants indicated that they had received no training in relation to GV and one participant, who had accessed training, had actively sought further</p>	<p>The findings suggest that there is potentially an onus on EPs, and consequently EPS's, to access training on areas of practice in which little is known</p>

<p>information, based on their own personal experiences.</p>	<p>about but could arise within their day to day practice. This reflects international research detailing cultural competence (Sue et al, 2009) and the necessity of professionals to review the competencies required of professionals to achieve such competencies as society changes, thus ensuring effective service provision (Boroughs et al. 2015).</p> <p>Such a training need could potentially be pertinent for doctoral training courses preparing individuals for the EP role and practicing EPs.</p>
<p>The views of EPs highlighted that the profession not only potentially has much to offer in supporting CYP who self-identify as GV, but that to do so would mean employing old tools in new ways rather than seeking new tools to equip them to fulfil a stated role. The potential roles for the EP were outlined in the global theme 'facilitators of a role'.</p>	<p>The views obtained suggest that if the tools already exist, what is required is for TEPs/EPs to seek to creatively apply these tools to new settings. Cameron (2006) discusses the onus on EPs to evidence, employ, and explicitly promote the psychology underpinning their work. It was discussed by participant 5 that psychology is a distinct contribution EPs can offer to others. Within the area of GI and gender more widely sharing 'big ideas' (Cameron, 2006), in the form of giving psychological theory and research surrounding this area away, could potentially be a way in which EPs can actively work with GV CYP and the surrounding systems.</p>
<p>Participant 6 presented a departure from other participants in being the only EP who had sought and was thus engaging in a role around supporting GV CYP on a routine basis. The organising theme of 'EP role as multi-faceted', representing the voice of participant 1, also highlighted that the boundaries around an EP role are potentially not foreclosed.</p>	<p>There is arguably a need for EPs to make themselves visible as a professional group who can assume a role within this area of work. Fox (2013) highlights that the discourse about EPs gives meaning to who we are, thus positioning us within the systems in which we work. However these positions can be transitory, with Beal, Chilokoa & Ladark (2017) further asserting that changes within the cultural context,</p>

	<p>specifically in relation to changing legislation and policy around education, present opportunities for further discussion and reflection around what the role of the EP could and should be. Utilising Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Model (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994), EPs could potentially work at the exosystem level to actively re-position themselves within LA’s and in respect to schools, raising awareness of support they could offer. At a macro level, the emergence of new policy and curriculum within Wales presents a timely opportunity for EPs to assert at government level, how the profession could support GV CYP and a wider agenda in relation to a SRE curriculum.</p> <p>Whilst the Chronosystem indicates that sociohistorical changes marks a focus on GV within EP work as timely in today’s society, the additional organizing themes captured within ‘barriers to a role’ would need to be explored and considered, to address systemic factors at the micro, meso and exosystem impeding EPs actively repositioning themselves within a given LA.</p>
<p>Within the global theme of ‘barriers to a role’ some of the participants discussed the search for an expert other, due to the perceptions of the EP title and its purposed boundaries and also in the suggestion of a more suitable other whose title and position made them better equipped to assume a role. This is potentially linked to previous research outlining a historic linking of GV</p>	<p>Future research could further explore the role of the EP in supporting GV CYP and research regarding how this is enacted and perceived by relevant stakeholders, in an attempt to open a discourse within the profession that has arguably yet to fully begin²³. Beyond this, there potentially exists a need for the development of EP specific guidance to support the</p>

²³ It is noted that there have been recent attempts to widen discourse around GV within the EP profession, for example the UCL Leading Edge Day conference in April 2019, titled ‘Gender Diversity’. This discussion, however, has yet to fully permeate academic literature and remains in its infancy.

<p>with mental health due to a westernized discourse around the gender binary (Newman, 2002). Through the process of analysis, it is argued that this link is also influenced by the participant's levels of certainty around the topic, with those participants who expressed views relating to the basic themes underpinning 'level of certainty around area' also seeking an expert other. <i>(As acknowledged in the results section, this link did not exist for all participants)</i></p>	<p>development and delivery of evidence based practice.</p>
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Table 48: Implications for EP practice

4.9 Conclusion

This research offers an in-depth exploration of the constructs held by TEPs and EPs within Wales regarding support for CYP who may self-identify as GV. The constructions of the seven participants varied considerably, potentially reflective of the complexities inherent within the areas of gender and GV more widely, and indicative of this area as an emerging field within EP practice. Whilst the accounts of the participants indicated that EPs are professionals that could occupy roles to support GV CYP, and those within the wider ecology of the CYP, this research has also identified multiple perceived barriers to those roles readily being assumed. Rather than finding resolution to the initial research questions, this exploration has alluded toward further complexity. Arguably, there now needs to be continued engagement with this complexity before definitive roles for the EP can be established. The four overarching strands of psychology, identified within the discussion in relation to the research findings, potentially offer conceptual frameworks to support EP thinking, as they continue their engagement with this area of practice.

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Gender variance and the role of the Educational Psychologist (EP): An exploration of the perspectives of EPs and Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) in Wales

Part 3: Critical appraisal

(Word count: 6561)

1 Introduction

This critical review will present a reflective and reflexive account of the research journey undertaken, analysing both the contribution to knowledge and practice that this research potentially offers, and the self as research practitioner. I will reflect upon the decisions taken throughout each stage of the research development, acknowledging how my own values, beliefs and experiences may have influenced the end research. Conversely, I will also reflect on how this research may have a bearing on my future professional practice as well as implicating points of consideration for the wider professional base.

2 Research development

2.1 Inception of research idea

The inception of GV as a possible focal point for research was through a presentation I was asked to deliver within a university session. As part of a wider group, we were given the title of 'gender and social constructionism', choosing to focus our discussion on transgenderism. The remit of focus, chosen by myself within the presentation, was to explore the role of the EP in relation to this topic. My initial search spurred a wider interest in gender and how it operates within society at a seemingly unconscious level. Beyond a learning activity, engaging in this reading became an active process of me reflecting on my own understanding of gender. In Butler's (1990) words, my own troubling of gender began, with its consequent instability becoming more visible.

An experience during my first year placement consolidated the area of GV as my thesis topic. During a peer supervision session, an EP discussed a piece of statutory work that they had been allocated, centring on a 17 year old natal male who had historically stated that they had felt that their GI was not in line with their biological sex. The CYP's GI had not previously been affirmed by those surrounding them. The EP discussed current concerns in relation to mental health and wellbeing, due to the CYP no longer leaving the home or engaging in further education. In bringing the piece of casework to peer supervision, the EP requested advice on how to gather the views of this CYP and which tools may be appropriate to achieve this aim. A discourse emerged that it was not appropriate for the EP to explore the child's GI at this stage despite the acknowledgement that this could be causal, at least in part, to the CYP's current presentation. Potentially primed by the aforementioned reading I had engaged in, I queried this response. In particular, I questioned that if refusing to ask the question

signalled to this CYP another person or professional dismissing, and in turn potentially pathologising, their internalised sense of self. Further discussion clarified that it was not deemed appropriate to enter into such conversations that could not be resolved or supported on an ongoing basis by the EP. This situation generated questions for me around the area of GV, the role of the EP and how both were potentially converging within that specific context. Namely, I questioned what was different about the area of GV curtailing a role for the EP and was this response consistent across EPs in other services?

2.2 Development of research idea: exploration of the extant literature

An initial literature search revealed that there was a dearth of research related specifically to the role of the EP. The paucity of research not only exposed a gap in the extant literature but presented the difficulty of narrowing the gap to a conceivable research project, within the timescale afforded. As Robson & McCarten (2016) articulate in their discussion of real world research, one has to decide what it is one wants to gather information about whilst acknowledging any constraints, in terms of time and resources available, to engage in a study.

Yavuz's (2016) article was initially the only article of relevance found within a UK context with Bowskill's (2017) article published as I was conducting my initial search. Yavuz's article centred on providing an overview of the area to inform practitioners before detailing three case studies specific to EP practice. Conversely, Bowskill's article related to a wider consideration of educational professionals, although some research findings explored the role of the EP, due to the sample being part comprised by active practitioners.

Of interest within both articles was an acknowledgement that there was a lack of specific guidance for EPs to direct and inform practice. Pertinent to this reflection was Bowskill's iteration of the importance of reflective and reflexive practice within the area of GV, as advocated by the British Psychological Society (2012). This point resonated with me, due to a long held interest and belief in supervision and the need for protected spaces to not only reflect on practice but also on the bi-directional impact of one's views on practice and one's practice on views. Considering the reflections raised by the initial literature search and these key articles, I felt that my research should centre on gaining a depth of understanding from the sole perspective of EPs in practice, recognising that this discussion was not taking place within the literature and

arguably should precede engaging with stakeholders and clients about their perceptions regarding the role of the EP or their direct experience of this role to date.²⁴

Whilst compiling my ethics proposal, I debated varying methods to access EP views and their consequent alignment with my ontological and epistemological stance (to be explored in 3.1). I initially considered a UK wide questionnaire with follow up interviews. During supervision I discussed this option and reflected if in seeking breadth of response in this manner I was actually addressing the questions I had articulated of the exposed gap. I also deliberated if a questionnaire fell within a positivist paradigm, with its associated implication that by achieving firm quantitative data surrounding EPs constructions on the topic, their experience and confidence levels, I would somehow be lead to a truth. I decided to explore participant's constructions solely through interviews, with a personal reflection, that as a method of data collection, interviews would allow me to unpick the 'why' around any viewpoints presented by participants.

As I negotiated these decisions I found the Welsh Government proposals around the SRE curriculum in Wales (Renold & McGeeney, 2017a; Renold & McGeeney, 2017b). In reading these reports I felt I had found a unique context in which I could contain my research, exploring specifically how Welsh EPs were perceiving the so called 'paradigm shift' (Pyne, 2014, p.1) surrounding GV and how positioned they were to respond, given a timely legislative backdrop.

From the outset of the research I felt that my exploration could only be strengthened by the inclusion of TEPs in the participant pool, alongside qualified EPs. I recognise how my own current position as a TEP may bias this stance but reflect on times throughout my trainee experience where there appears to have been a demarcation, whether implicit or explicit, between TEPs and EPs despite them often engaging in similar casework, resulting in similar ethical considerations and similar possibilities or barriers within the change process. When I considered GV as an emerging topic in educational psychology practice (Gibbs et al, 2017) this reflection felt more pertinent, with me wondering if trainees and EPs were more resolutely within a state of equilibrium, in terms of negotiating a role and determining how this may look in practice. I felt that my rationale was strengthened by consideration of the ongoing learning continuum within the EP profession, thereby negating division of EPs and TEPs

²⁴ Whilst there is limited academic literature available at present in relation to the role of the EP, attempts to initiate and engage in discussion about the role of the EP in supporting GV CYP are arguably beginning to emerge (UCL Leading Edge Day: 'Gender Diversity', April 2019).

into distinct categories, and the onus placed on practitioners to continuously engage in reflective practice (BPS, 2018; AEP/WAG, 2016).

2.3 Researcher positioning

Kirby & McKenna (1989) state that who you are has a central place in the research process, necessitating researchers start a discussion of the research journey from where they are. This stance is furthered by Braun & Clarke's (2013) discussion of the subjectivity and reflexivity of the researcher, acknowledging a need for the researcher to remain critically reflexive about the ways in which their own subjectivity filters into the research process. Resultantly, it seems pertinent for me to position myself, thus making visible my personal self.

I identify as a white, heterosexual female, using the pronouns 'she' and 'her', thereby remaining within a Westernized conceptualisation of binary gender (Newman, 2002). My knowledge of GV is not borne out of lived experience but rather has been instigated by a desire to further understand this area, to better ensure effective practice delivery and support to GV CYP and their families.

At the origin of this research project and at varying time points throughout its completion I have reflected on and questioned what it means to have legitimacy to conduct research in a given area. This questioning has been propagated by discussion within the transgender academic community implying an in group bias, in which lived experience is a necessary prerequisite to write and research on the area (Whittle, 2006). Richards (2016) further argues that historically, research conducted by psychologists has been undertaken on transgender subjects rather than with them. Whilst my research sought to interview TEPs/EPs, it felt pertinent to hold these cautions and recognise a potential vulnerability within contentious topics, requiring care by the researcher.

Linked to the previous consideration, I have contemplated specifically what my outsider status meant to this project and how it would be perceived by others, especially those who identify as GV. This fed into ontological considerations and permeated the design of the project, with me endeavouring to establish a piece of research that did not in any way further marginalise a marginalised community. However, there is contention within research literature around one's status as outsider precluding one from researching a particular area. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) explore possible advantages to outsider status, including being distanced from the topic and

thus potentially able to see connections, causal patterns or influences that someone internal to the experience may not so readily see. Braun & Clarke (2013) further state that within any research there are likely to be varying insider and outsider positions and through engaging with qualitative research, one can be afforded a privileged insight into worlds one may have no direct experience of. I questioned and rationalised if my attempt to better inform my own practice as a TEP and EP in the future, to ensure support to CYP who self-identify as GV, therefore provided a legitimate basis for research.

3 Methodological considerations

3.1 Ontology

My reading of gender and GI and my consequent growing understanding of the literature influenced the positioning of this research within a relativist ontology, presupposing reality to be multiple and relational, thus occurring within social contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Adopting a relativist stance would thereby allow for the subjective TEP/EP constructions of gender and GV to be heard, acknowledging that each participant's historiography, their immediate context and the wider socioeconomic context in which they live may influence diverging realities and thereby conceptualisations of this topic.

Linked to discussions raised in section 2.3., regarding my own positioning within the research, my ontological stance was influenced by Merten's (2015) consideration of a transformative paradigm, which questions the equal validity of constructions if they result in the continued oppression and marginalization of minority groups. The transformative paradigm instead emphasizes that what will be real for each participant may be influenced by cultural and historical structures, which need to be critically examined in order to explore the role they play in maintaining oppressive practices. I considered how my own axiology (Mertens, 2015) about what was right and ethical was potentially influencing my ontological positioning. Whilst I acknowledged the need to retain my own ethical integrity within the research, I chose not to rest my ontology within this paradigm, acknowledging that my research was not directly with those who self-identify as GV and that I could not presume that participants would have a non-affirmative stance requiring such protection to be embedded within my research. It also seemed counter-intuitive to potentially curtail views within an exploratory piece of research, when to hear such views may hold merit in and of itself.

In a discussion of various paradigms, Mertens (2015) highlights that there is a growing acknowledgement of the permeability of paradigmatic positions, potentially blurring the lines of seemingly bounded positions. Thus it becomes possible to conceive of talking across paradigms and recognizing how thought and one's world view may not be strictly polarized. This position is contested (Mertens, 2015) but resonated in my consideration of alternative ontological positions, including a critical realist stance, in which a reality is deemed to exist although it cannot be perfectly understood (Groff, 2004). Whilst I felt that I could justify a relativist position it seems pertinent to acknowledge that such decisions are not always clearly demarcated nor their overlaps with other paradigms fully explored.

3.2 Epistemology

My relativist ontology fed into a social constructionist epistemological stance, highlighting the importance of the relational and dialogic, with language (both verbal and non-verbal) playing a fundamental role in how people co-construct meaning within any lived experience (Burr, 2015). This stance reflects current conceptions of gender outlined within the literature review as socially, culturally and temporally situated and in particular reflects the strong connotations of language as a powerful force, both constraining and presenting possibilities for how people come to understand GV and in turn self-identify.

A social constructionist position further acknowledged the interactive process occurring between the researcher and participants through data collection, highlighting that knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process, and that via the research process, my attempt to understand the complexities of lived experience from the viewpoint of the participants may be impacted by my own subjectivity (Mertens, 2015, to be considered further in section 3.7).

3.3 Qualitative methodology

In line with the outlined ontological and epistemological stance a qualitative methodology was employed. Literature asserts that qualitative research is typically concerned with data that is rich in description, places an emphasis on the individual perspective and seeks to describe and understand the varying realities of participants, rather than create generalisable knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Braun & Clarke (2013) further assert that a deeper understanding of a phenomenon can be obtained

through a qualitative, as opposed to quantitative methodology, by allowing exploration of the complexity of people's meanings, given shape through language. When considering the contested area of gender and the acknowledged fluidity of language within GV, as the meaning attached to such language is continually negotiated (Valentine, 2007), a methodology that could acknowledge and hold such complexity felt not only valid but imperative.

3.4 Data collection method: semi-structured interviews

Within qualitative research the interview is regarded as a common data collection method (Howitt, 2016; Mertens, 2015; Braun & Clarke, 2013) due to its ability to generate extensive and rich data from participants (Howitt, 2016), capturing their experiences and/or perspectives in their language, relating to a topic of the researcher's choosing (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The semi-structured interview is deemed to be the dominant form selected for qualitative interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2013), necessitating that the researcher prepares an interview guide prior to commencing the interviews in order to direct their aim, in line with the proposed research questions. This format appealed to me, adding structure to the process whilst also retaining the ability for participants to lead the interview. Within this flexibility, participants could potentially re-define the topic based on their own constructions (Willig, 2013), presenting opportunities for novel insights to be generated throughout the data collection process.

I alternatively considered focus groups as a method of data collection, due to them also being advocated for within qualitative research (Howitt, 2016; Braun & Clarke, 2013). This method appealed in its ability to bring together a pool of participants, in this case TEPs and/or EPs, and engage in a preliminary exploration of the topic area (Howitt, 2016), recognising that the social context may generate novel understandings and insights. However, a pertinent ethical consideration within this research project was the potential impact of engaging in thoughtful reflection around an area that had not previously been considered in such a way (Rosetto, 2014). It felt important to retain respect for the participants in regards to this unknown entity, especially given my findings throughout the literature review that GV was very much an emerging area of practice within educational psychology and not one in which discussion had pervaded academic literature to date. Semi-structured interviews offer a protected forum for open discussion around sensitive issues (Braun & Clarke, 2013), thus better preserving ethicality.

Prior to completing my interviews, I checked the questions with an external party. This was advocated for within the literature as part of preparatory work, with the understanding that planning potentially better affords the researcher to build trust and rapport with the participant throughout interview (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Howitt, 2016). Within this process, I reflected on how I could potentially make participants feel by asking them for their definition of GV or what this term meant to them. Within a contested and politicised topic, I felt that this could possibly foreclose conversation or indicate to participants that there was a correct response I was searching for. Willig (2013) discusses the merit of using a stimulus within an interview in order to encourage rich and varied accounts. Resultantly, I took a definition of GV from Yavuz's (2016) article to use as such a stimulus within the introductory questions of the interview. Throughout the analysis process, I reflected on how initial responses from participants, to the stimulus, were typically in agreement with its remit. Whilst this may have legitimately captured their thoughts around the topic, I questioned if the stimulus too served to suggest a correct or accurate definition of GV, which participants then centred discussion around. The final basic themes of 'live topic', 'what is permissible to say' and 'right v wrong' potentially support this construction. Arguably the interview schedule, and consequent data collected, could have been strengthened by offering a stimulus after gaining participants' initial thoughts around the topic.

3.5 Method of data analysis: Thematic Analysis

TA is defined as a method for 'identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data' (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297). In being free from theoretical commitments (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013), it offers a flexible method that can be applied to varying paradigms rather than being rooted to a particular theoretical framework, as is for instance Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA, Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Thus it seemed that TA could offer an accessible and systematic procedure for generating themes from the data collected (Howitt, 2016; Braun & Clarke, 2013), through the application of Braun & Clarke's six step procedure (2006, 2013)²⁵.

Alternative methods of data analysis were also considered, including IPA and Grounded Theory (GT). IPA positions itself within the theoretical confines of phenomenology,

²⁵ See Appendix H for my own application of this criteria within this research project.

illuminating and exploring idiographic lived experience (Smith et al. 2009). Whilst there were elements of IPA that could have held merit as a method of data analysis within this project, I specifically placed no emphasis on participants having had prior lived experience of GV, within a personal or professional capacity. Incorporating this criteria when selecting participants retained the focus of my research as an initial exploration of constructs held by TEPs/EPs in relation to this area and aligned with the previous research, positing that whilst EPs may be well positioned to engage in this work, they may not have had extensive professional experience within it yet (Yavuz, 2016; Bowskill, 2017). GT seeks to provide a means of inductively generating theories from research, respecting the messiness of real data and grounding the theory within such data, whilst simultaneously affording the researcher a robust and trustworthy process within which to conduct this analysis (Sutcliffe, 2017). Whilst GT can usefully be applied to areas in which little is currently known (Timonen, Foley & Conlon, 2018), thus readily transferable to the role of EPs in supporting GV CYP, it was acknowledged that the end goal for this research project was not to create a theory or a new framework within which to conceptualise this research question. Furthermore, I posit that to do so may seek to reduce an inherent complexity within the topic that needs to first be acknowledged and explored prior to being reduced.

3.6 Participants

Qualitative research is typically equated with a smaller sample size than those reported within quantitative research, with 6-10 being deemed a sufficient number when conducting interviews, using TA as a method of data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Through purposive sampling, seven participants were recruited and comprised the end sample. The inclusion criteria stipulated only that participants had to be TEPs or EPs currently practicing within Wales, thus retaining the nature of the study as an exploration of current views held by TEPs/EPs.

In seeking a Welsh sample and wanting to best enable access to all Welsh TEPs/EPs within Wales, the decision was taken to access participants through PEPs within EPSs as opposed to other avenues, for example EPNET. This process was also in line with ethical considerations by further ensuring the remit of the study was fully communicated to PEPs and participants, given that interviews often took place within EPSs, at the convenience of participants. Initial interest resulted in 11 responses. Two people withdrew their expression of interest upon clarifying that their views could not be shared through questionnaire format and two participants further withdrew due to

time pressures within role. The remaining seven participants comprised the end sample. Throughout the recruitment process, I considered if the participants represented a self-selecting sample, whereby those who were actively interested in the topic of GV came forward. Whilst this was reflected upon, I concurrently held in mind my own ontology and epistemology that did not place authority on a particular stance or truth but rather sought to explore and gain understanding regarding the individual constructions of each participant (Mertens, 2015).

By focusing my research interest on TEPs/EPs constructions I acknowledged the potential that I would have had previous contact with some of the participants. Considering the end sample, one participant was unknown to me prior to the research beginning, two were known by name or through limited communication, one was a TEP from the same university course but there had been limited contact/communication prior to interview and three were more familiar to myself. This familiarity arose from two participants practicing within a service in which I had previously completed my first year placement and one being a TEP within my cohort. Braun & Clarke (2013) stipulate that it is acceptable to interview someone known to you within qualitative research, as long as the dual relationship entered into is acknowledged and protected against. All participants interviewed volunteered to participate through the process outlined in Figure 1 (pg. 58), as opposed to being sought through any established relationship, and the interview schedule created (see appendix B) was flexibly followed for all participants. In acknowledgement of the need to engage in reflective practice and recognise my own reflexivity, supervision was routinely sought and a research journal maintained. I further followed the guidance by Yardley (2000, 2008) in an attempt to embed rigour and trustworthiness within the research process, including data collection and data analysis.

Throughout the research process I reflected on the international research literature relating to psychologists working with GV CYP. Some of this research sought detail on the gender and self-identification of its participants, in recognition that these factors may hold bearing on their constructions of the topic (for example, Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2015). This data was often obtained through questionnaires and used within a positivist framework, equating demographics with outcomes, based on calculations of statistical frequency. Thus, within the research by Riggs & Bartholomaeus (2015), gender became a factor of interest, with males reportedly being less confident and less willing to offer support to GV CYP. Within my research, I chose to not obtain this data during interviews, unless it naturally occurred, as well as actively omitting details of the names and gender from the results process. This

decision was taken to preclude a potential process of gendering, in which readers may make assumptions about the data, based on a participant's gender. Whilst I feel that this stance was justified, the organizing theme of distinguishing 'personal and professional self' in particular, raised a question about subjectivity and its inherent appearance, whether it is explicitly gathered during the research process or not. Given the exploratory nature of this study and the lack of prior literature circumnavigating the constructions of EPs in relation to supporting GV CYP, the extent to which subjectivity may dominate, and the factors relevant to that, arguably could not have been anticipated. Research by Bowskill (2017) and Timini (2005) in particular, alluded to the need to explore one's own values and beliefs and how they may impact upon professional practice. This research project sought to address this calling by instigating an initial exploration of TEP/EP constructions in relation to GV and the role of the EP in supporting GV CYP. Future research however may benefit from ascertaining how participants self-identify as well as how they have experienced gendering within their immediate context, in acknowledgement that such factors may be pertinent to and implicate practice.

3.7 Data collection

The process of conducting interviews was pertinent to me, reiterating the pervasiveness of the subjective and intersubjective in qualitative research. Of particular significance was an immediate recognition of the power within the interview site, for both myself and the participants. This was reflected in the organizing themes of 'interview as an active site of reflection/discovery' and 'creating space' in which the centrality of a protected space, where participants could explore their views of the topic and the inherent meanings attached to those views, gained importance. For some, they reflected on how this was the first time they had explored and confronted their own constructions and biases in the moment. I was not set apart from this process and reflected on how, at times, this process of consciously troubling my own constructions entered into the dialogue and became live within the interview space. Finlay (2002) cites Beer (1997) in her discussion of the practice of reflexivity within qualitative research, highlighting that the research process itself has the potential to transform the very phenomenon being studied, changing people and their perception of their experience rather than simply reflecting it. I questioned if in offering a space to reflect on one's views and one's practice, the interview had become a change process

in itself, potentially augmenting participant's constructions of the topic under study, or at least exposing them for further reflection.

This consideration was amplified in the participant's change in conversation following interview. Whilst this could not be compiled within data analysis, it was noted through entries in my reflective journal that participants welcomed further discussion post interview, and appeared to continue reflecting upon and developing their constructions regarding the topic. Willig (2013) asserts that the process of participating in the interview may engage the interviewees in a process of reflecting on aspects of their experience in new ways after the interview, a point further articulated by Rosetto (2014) in her interest in how the research process, when honed toward thoughtful reflection from participants, can produce positive change.

3.8 Data analysis

I found the analysis of my data not only the most time consuming element within the research process but also the most challenging. Through reflection, I feel my challenge lay in dealing with the complexity of the data, given its diversity amongst participants. During analysis I contemplated how I needed to condense this intricacy so that it could be adequately represented to the reader. Over time however I considered if this complexity was pertinent to the very topic of GV being explored and linked to its recent prevalence in public consciousness. It therefore felt authentic to represent the 'messiness' of the data within the overarching thematic map, noting the permeations between themes, that mirrored the participant's vocalisation of and subsequent confrontation with their own constructions around the topic area.

The diversity encountered in participant's views impacted my analysis in different ways. Firstly, it meant that some themes, for example the organising theme of 'EP role as multifaceted', was based on thin data. Within my reflective journal and during supervision I reflected on this and whether certain themes should consequently be 'let go' (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.230). Beutow's (2010) reconceptualization of TA as saliency analysis however provided justification for capturing elements that represented what was most meaningful within the data, not just occurring with greater frequency. Beutow's paper supported me to retain conviction around the awareness of what was pertinent within individual participant's constructions throughout interview and thus arguably important in addressing the research questions.

Secondly, the diversity of views and consequent points of divergence within my results meant that many salient points of discussion were possibly lost in the remits placed around the empirical paper. One example of this lay within the organizing theme 'impact of change', depicting how all those within the wider ecology of the child have to re-position themselves and their relationship with the CYP who is GV, undergoing their own simultaneous change process. Specifically, one participant discussed a friend whose child self-identified as GV. Whilst parents were supportive, the participant discussed the mother being unable to erase the fourteen years of history, in which she conceived of her child in a different way. When considering links to psychological literature this theme in particular resonated with me, drawing parallels with theories of grief (Lev, 2004) and the poststructuralist Derrida's aporia of mourning, in which he alludes to the paradoxical task of letting go whilst still remembering (Reynolds,2019).²⁶ This theme is partly addressed within the discussion section of the empirical paper, through a focus on the initial emotional responses to GV and the notion of a change process for all, but I feel there was the potential for a much wider depth of exploration, pertaining to the rawness of emotion and its pertinence to both those within the microsystem of the child and the professionals sought to support GV, who consequently also have to navigate a change process.

Braun & Clarke (2013) highlight that what we as individual researchers notice in our data is likely to be what is salient to us as people, based on lived experience, and within the research process, the academic literature we are exposed to. Thus the selection, naming and reporting of themes is very much an active process, one I owned and acknowledged at the outset of my discussion, recognising that the story I have told with the data may not align with the story that would have been told by another researcher with the same data set. However I feel that engaging in a rigorous process of data analysis and applying guidance within TA and qualitative research to ensure this (Yardley 2000, 2008; Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013, see Appendices H & J), meant that the end analysis generated could be mapped to the data collected and thus be justified as representative of the participant's constructions. It was acknowledged within part two that there is dispute in relation to the appropriateness of the researcher establishing criteria of quality within their research (Rolfe, 2006). This line of thinking maps contention within qualitative research, relating to what criteria is sufficient to achieve such an aim (Braun & Clarke (2013). I felt that the use of Yardley's criteria enabled me to better ensure rigour within my own research, by

²⁶ My thanks and acknowledgement go to Dr. Michael Graham for his discussion of Derrida, prompting my own links to the participant's accounts and my reflections in this section

providing a tangible framework to follow, whilst concurrently holding the view that the assessment of whether quality had been established may be for others to appraise.

4 Contribution to knowledge

4.1 Contribution to the literature

This research builds and extends on a small body of literature beginning to explore the role of the EP in supporting CYP who identify as GV within a UK context (Yavuz, 2016; Bowskill, 2017) and furthermore adds a novel contribution by being the first study (to my knowledge) situated specifically within a Welsh context. Given the legislative and policy changes outlined in the literature review, relating to GV at both a UK and Welsh level, this research is arguably a timely contribution within an area of growing visibility in Westernized societies (Losty & O'Connor, 2018).

In addressing the limitations exposed from the aforementioned articles within the UK literature base to date, this research further presents the first empirical study within a UK context that explores the role of the EP, in supporting CYP who self-identify as GV, solely from the perspective of those currently within the professional base, recognising that this perspective may differ to other educational based professionals and should thus be explored in isolation.

Linking to the previous acknowledgement, in attempting to gain a depth of understanding from TEPs and EPs, this research seeks to go beyond surface level responses and explore what underpins the varying constructions of TEPs/EPs in relation to this area and how they were formed. This is distinguishable from much of the international research cited, (Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2015; Riggs & Sion, 2017; Bowers et al, 2015). It is noted that these studies potentially sought a breadth of understanding and used alternative questionnaire methods of data collection to achieve an alternative aim. However, attempting to ask the 'why' in relation to professionals' stance around a topic as well as 'what' that stance is, arguably enriches the literature base.

Focusing specifically on TEPs and EPs constructions and gaining a depth of understanding around the meanings within these viewpoints, this research further develops the rationale for the role of the EP within an emerging area of practice. This research indicates that EPs could be a profession that has much to offer CYP who are GV and the surrounding ecosystem in which these CYP are embedded. Beyond this, the research extends thinking to also consider the barriers that may be in place to

TEPs/EPs assuming such a role. Understanding the factors TEPs and EPs perceive to be impeding professional practice in this area is vital to any identified role being assumed and/or developed in the future.

4.2 Contribution to professional practice

In keeping with the ontological and epistemological positions assumed, it is not possible nor was it ever intended that the findings from this research would be representative of or generalisable to the wider EP base. However within qualitative research, authors argue for a specific utility to this methodology, in its capacity to increase our understanding of a particular issue or create new understandings (Yardley, 2000; Braun & Clarke, 2013). Throughout the body of the empirical paper I offered tentative considerations of the 'new understandings' generated by the findings of this research and their potential implications in relation to the role of the EP in practice. Whilst it is not possible to elaborate on each of these considerations in detail, I will reflect on some key findings, detailing why these were more striking to me following the research process.

Throughout analysis and within the discussion I reflected on how the emotional response of individuals permeated the global themes outlined and became significant for the participants interviewed. This was named in the organizing theme 'level of certainty' and captured in the varying ways participants articulated reacting to the topic of GV as they negotiated, and at times reconstructed, their individual points of view. This response linked to previous literature by Payne & Smith (2014) detailing 'the big freak out' of educational professionals to the presence of GV CYP in their classrooms. I took interest in this reaction, acknowledging that it varied markedly in its intensity amongst the participants interviewed, but still questioning the potential impact it could have in practice. If it is acknowledged that there is a level of cognitive dissonance generated in people, as their normative constructions of gender are troubled in the very presentation of something that is not yet fully solidified in the language used to communicate that meaning, then there is a need to acknowledge a potential vulnerability within the profession, if this process operates outside of a protected forum initially. The additional organizing theme of 'distinguishing between the personal and professional self', detailing the dominance of the subjective over the objective amongst participants, feeds into this vulnerability and reverberates the ongoing call on EPs to be reflective and reflexive practitioners (Fox, 2011; Bowskill, 2017; BPS, 2012). Bennett (2017) questions if EPs ethical sensitivities fade through insufficient critical self-

reflection and articulates that for ethical professional practice to persist, there is a requirement for sufficient supervisory practices that allow us to negotiate our own responses. Thus there is a pertinent need for TEPs and EPs to gain training in GV and access spaces in which they can trouble their own constructions prior to engaging in 'live' practice with varying stakeholders. In discussing the importance of reflection, Beal, Chilokoa & Ladak (2017) articulate that to exist it requires space in the present and the promise of space in the future and thus there is an onus on EPSs and doctoral training courses, preparing EPs of the future, to afford protective spaces to engage in such practice.

The basic theme of 'needing to actively position oneself' spoke to participant six in particular, who was distinguished from other participants in the role she assumed, supporting work around equality and consequently CYP who are GV. Given the varying ways in which it was articulated that EPs could facilitate a role within the research findings, this theme more acutely drove me to consider the need for EPs to make themselves visible as a professional group within areas that their skill set readily applies. Whilst my research speaks to GV specifically, this is a finding that echoes the words of researchers across other domains. Roffey, Hobbs & Kitching (2018) for example assert that unless the profession makes it known the roles that can form a valid and useful part of their offer to schools then they will remain limited to the roles currently conceived of them. This is potentially articulated in the basic themes underpinning 'positioning of the EP', in which stakeholders around the EPS are active in constructing what the role becomes and thus what it cannot be. Without actively positioning ourselves and reconstructing with stakeholders what the EP role can and should look like, within socio-political changes, we are at risk of allowing others to do this in our absence (Allen & Hardy, 2013). The changes at a political level within Wales therefore present a timely opportunity for EPs to assert to others how the EP profession could support

4.3 Contribution to future research

Whilst this research has further opened discussion surrounding the role of the EP in relation to GV, this remains a research area in its infancy. Further research is required to explore the constructs of TEPs and EPs generally across the UK. Given the emphasis on the immediate context of the EPs, both in shaping their constructions and limiting their roles, it could be beneficial for future research to engage in localised explorations of TEP/EP constructions within single EPSs, through the use of semi-structured

interviews or focus groups. Such research could then not only explore the unique barriers to assuming a role, for each EPS, but also begin a process of co-constructing how localised barriers can be broken down.

In line with Yavuz's article, there is a value in EPs who have engaged in practice with GV CYP outlining and sharing that practice with others to inform future work. Thus, position papers and case studies could usefully contribute to and further develop the current literature base.

Once further discussion and reflection has occurred within the profession, there is a need to address the gap of stakeholder perceptions, not only in regards to the role of the EP in supporting GV CYP but also how that role to date has been experienced. It was alluded to within the research findings that vast differences can exist in the constructions of schools, parents, other professional groups and most importantly the CYP themselves, relating to GV. Including these active parties in an evaluation of the contribution that could be offered by EPs is therefore vital in ensuring 'live' needs are identified and supported in a manner most conducive to the wellbeing of GV CYP.

4.4 Personal reflections on research and practice

Throughout my research I acknowledged a growing awareness of my own constructions surrounding the areas of gender and GV. Merten (2015) discusses a reciprocal interaction within qualitative research between the researcher and the research itself, with the participants, data or extant literature becoming pertinent in that exchange at varying time points. Mirroring research cited in the field of gender, such as De Palma (2013), I became acutely aware over time of an increasing consciousness of being gendered and doing gender, as opposed to simply having gender, as I continued to question and explore the area. This realisation echoes Braun & Clarke's (2013) position that whilst I am an outsider in respect of GV, I hold insider status in terms of doing and being gendered. With hindsight, whilst I worried about my relative outsider status, I considered if, within the confines of my own research, I was an insider all along. Through my trainee position, I aligned somewhat with the participants, enabling me to enter into a process of reflection and discovery with them. To counter this influence, I acknowledged my own subjectivity throughout the research process, and endeavoured to explicitly label this within my reporting of the study.

In respect of my own professional practice, this research began illuminating questions that I had begun to ask about the profession and continue to reflect upon. I have

considered my own need to consistently challenge and ask the wider questions of the profession to myself more critically, ensuring that I trouble how I am positioned as a TEP and future EP, acknowledging that to do so may better enable areas of work, like that of supporting CYP who are GV, to emerge.

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Appendix A: Details of electronic literature searches

Search Terms	Number of hits			
	PsycINFO	Web of Science	ERIC	ASSIA
"Gender variance"	155	132	36	124
"Gender variance" AND "Educational Psychologists*"	1	1	1	4
"Gender variance" AND "Educational Professional*" AND "Educational Personnel"	2	0	0	1
"Transgender" AND "Educational Psychologists*"	2	7	1	2
"Transgender" AND "Educational Professional*" AND "Educational personnel"	28	40	0	4
"Gender non-conforming" AND "Educational Psychologists*"	0	0	0	0
"Gender non-conforming" AND "Educational Professional*" AND "Educational personnel"	2	0	0	0
"Gender fluid" AND "Educational Psychologists*" AND "Educational Professional*" AND "Educational personnel"	0	0	0	0
"Non-binary" AND "Educational Psychologists*" AND "Educational Professional*" AND "Educational personnel"	0	0	0	0

Appendix B: Interview Schedule

Introductory questions:

What is your current role?

What is your Educational/ professional background up to now?

[*The following excerpt will be offered to participants to guide the discussion (taken from Yavuz, 2016):*

'Gender variance refers to practices or behaviours which may be deemed to fall outside the...norms/expectations for a child or young person's biological sex.....Gender variance....is much more fluid and includes individuals who might feel that they do not fit into current expectations of their assigned gender, they might feel both male and female, they might feel neither male nor female or they might have a fluid gender identity meaning that how they feel can vary.'

What are your initial thoughts/beliefs in relation to this definition?

Possible prompts: Where do these come from? What has impacted on your views?

What, if any, previous training/education have you experienced around the subject of gender?

Possible prompts: How did this training/education come about? (E.g. mandatory, part of training, personally sought out) How has this training influenced you?

Have you had any experience of case work with children and young people who are gender variant?

If yes, possible questions include:

How did you prepare for this case?

What were your thoughts at the outset of this casework?

What role did you undertake during this case?

What tools/literature supported this work?

What were the outcomes relating to this work?

What personal impact did this casework have on you, if any?

What challenges, if any, did this casework present for you (personal or professional)?

What, if anything, could support you with future work with children and young people who are gender variant?

If no, possible questions include:

If you were to be presented with a piece of casework tomorrow by a school, requesting support for a pupil or young person who was gender variant, what would your initial thoughts be?

How would you approach this piece of casework?

How confident would you feel in your ability to complete this casework?

What role/s do you think you could undertake within the case?

What might help to support you in facilitating that role?

Outside of your own experience, do you have any other thoughts regarding potential roles for EPs/TEPs in supporting children/young people and schools within this area?

Possible prompt: What do you think would help support EPs/ TEPs to work in this way?

Is there anything that you wish to add that we have not already covered?

Possible additional prompts:

Can you tell me more about that?

What do you mean by?

Appendix C

Gatekeeper letter

Cardiff University Centre for Human Developmental Sciences
School of Psychology
Park Place
Cardiff
CF10 3AT

Address

Date

Dear *Contact*,

My name is Emma Court and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist at Cardiff University. As part of my doctorate, I am completing a research project exploring Educational Psychologists' (EPs) and Trainee Educational Psychologists' (TEPs) constructs in regards to supporting children and young people (CYP) who are gender variant.

Research indicates that gender variance is becoming increasingly visible within the UK. This research sits alongside a reported year on year increase in referrals to specialist services that support children who do not identify with their biological sex and/or assigned gender at birth. The UK Government and Welsh Government specifically are responding to such changes, with policies and legislation emerging to support those CYP who self-identify as gender variant. One example is the recent report produced in 2017 to inform proposed changes to the Sex and Relationships Curriculum within Wales. There is currently a lack of literature from an EP perspective in relation to gender variance, both in how EPs perceive such social change and the role they could take in supporting CYP who are gender variant. Of the literature that exists, there is nothing that focuses on the views of Welsh EPs. My research project, 'Gender variance and the role of the Educational Psychologist (EP): Perspectives of EPs and Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) in Wales', aims to address this gap. This project is being supervised by a professional tutor on the Doctorate of Educational Psychology course at Cardiff University, Dale Bartle, and has been approved by the ethics panel at Cardiff University.

I am writing to enquire whether you or any EPs or TEPs within your service would be willing to participate in this project. I have included further information below outlining what would be involved in this project. If anyone from your service is interested in taking part, please could

you forward their contact details to me by e-mail (Courtel@cardiff.ac.uk) so that I can provide them with further information.

Many thanks in advance for your consideration of this project. Please let me know if you require additional information.

Kind Regards,

Emma Court

Emma Court

Trainee Educational Psychologist

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School of Psychology Research Ethics

Committee

Information Sheet

Title of project: Gender variance and the role of the Educational Psychologist (EP):
Perspectives of EPs and Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) in Wales

What will the project involve?

Should you agree, I will be seeking to recruit any EPs or TEPs who would be willing to give up their time to discuss their thoughts around gender variance and how they perceive the role of the EP within this area. There is no requirement for those who volunteer to have had previous experience of CYP who self-identify as gender variant, thereby preserving

the nature of this study as an exploration of constructs currently held by EPs and TEPs in regards to this work. I anticipate these discussions lasting up to one hour. This could be at a time that was most convenient for the person in question and will be agreed via email in advance. During that time, I will ask a series of questions to elicit the EPs/TEPs views of the areas outlined above.

How will the information be kept?

Everything that is discussed within the interviews will be recorded via Dictaphone and held confidentially by myself for a period of two weeks. During those two weeks the EP/TEP will be able to access their data and/or request that the data is destroyed. Following the period of two weeks, the information will be transcribed and anonymised. Once transcribed, the initial recording will be deleted and it will no longer be possible to access the individual data.

What will happen to the information gathered?

The information from the proposed interview, along with accounts from any other EPs/TEPs, will be analysed to explore any themes. This data will be written up as part of a report for my doctoral studies. This information may form the basis of a research paper which will potentially be submitted for publication. Upon completion, a brief summary of the findings will be sent to all participants.

The right to withdraw

Taking part in this discussion is entirely voluntary and the EP/TEP will be informed that they can leave at any time or refuse to answer a particular question should they so wish. Following the interview the EP/TEP can request to withdraw their data, without providing a reason for a period of two weeks, before transcription takes place.

This project has been reviewed and ethically approved by the School Research Ethics Committee at Cardiff University. Should you have any complaints about this research you can contact psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk. The data controller is Cardiff University and the Data Protection Officer is Matt Cooper CooperM1@cardiff.ac.uk. The lawful basis for the processing of the data you provide is consent.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet

Appendix D

Information Sheet

Title of project: Gender variance and the role of the Educational Psychologist (EP): Perspectives of EPs and Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) in Wales

My name is Emma Court and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist at Cardiff University. As part of my doctorate, I am completing a research project exploring Educational Psychologists' (EPs) and Trainee Educational Psychologists' (TEPs) constructs in regards to supporting children and young people (CYP) who are gender variant.

You have received this information sheet as I am hoping to recruit EPs and TEPs, currently working within Wales, who would be willing to participate in this research.

Aim of the project

Research indicates that gender variance is becoming increasingly visible within the UK. This research sits alongside a reported year on year increase in referrals to specialist services that support children who do not identify with their biological sex and/or assigned gender at birth. The UK Government and Welsh Government specifically are responding to such changes, with policies and legislation emerging to support those CYP who self-identify as gender variant. One example is the recent report produced in 2017 to inform proposed changes to the Sex and Relationships Curriculum within Wales. There is currently a lack of literature from an EP perspective in relation to gender variance, both in how EPs perceive such social change and the role they could take in supporting CYP who are gender variant. Of the literature that exists, there is nothing that focuses on the views of Welsh EPs. My research project aims to address this gap.

What will the project involve?

Should you agree to take part, the research will involve taking part in an interview lasting approximately one hour of your time. During that time, I will ask questions to explore your views around gender variance and how you perceive the role of the EP within this area. There is no requirement that you will have previous experience of CYP who self-identify as gender variant, thereby preserving the nature of this study as an exploration of constructs

currently held by EPs and TEPs in regards to this work. This discussion could take place at a time and place that is most convenient for you and will be agreed via email in advance.

How will the information be kept?

Everything that is discussed within the interview will be recorded via Dictaphone and held confidentially by myself for a period of two weeks. During those two weeks you will be able to access your data and/or request that the data is destroyed. Following the period of two weeks, the information will be transcribed and anonymised. Once transcribed, the initial recording will be deleted and it will no longer be possible to access the individual data.

What will happen to the information gathered?

The information from the proposed interview, along with accounts from any other EPs/TEPs, will be analysed to explore any themes. This data will be written up as part of a report for my doctoral studies. This information may form the basis of a research paper which will potentially be submitted for publication. Upon completion of my thesis, a short summary of the findings will be forwarded to all participants.

The right to withdraw

Taking part in this discussion is entirely voluntary. You have the right to leave the interview at any time or refuse to answer a particular question should you so wish. I will remind you of this prior to the interview taking place. Following the interview you can request to withdraw your data, without providing a reason, for a period of two weeks before transcription takes place.

This project has been reviewed and ethically approved by the School Research Ethics Committee at Cardiff University. Should you have any complaints about this research you can contact psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk. The data controller is Cardiff University and the Data Protection Officer is Matt Cooper CooperM1@cardiff.ac.uk. The lawful basis for the processing of the data you provide is consent.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet

Emma Court
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Appendix E

Consent Form

Please read the following statements:

- I have read the information sheet regarding this study and I understand what this study is about.
- I understand that taking part in this study involves completing an interview with Emma Court, Trainee, Educational Psychologist, discussing my views in regards to gender variance and how they I see the role of the EP within this area. This will take approximately one hour of my time.
- I agree to liaise with the researcher to identify a suitable time and room for the interview to take place.
- I understand that taking part is voluntary. This means that I don't have to take part if I don't want to and I can leave the discussion or not answer a question at any time, without giving a reason.
- I understand that the information provided by me will be recorded via Dictaphone and held confidentially, such that only Emma Court (researcher) can trace this information back to me individually.
- I understand that my data will be anonymised within two weeks of the interview taking place and that after this point no-one will be able to trace my information back to me. After two weeks, the recording will be deleted/destroyed.
- I understand that I can ask for the information I provide to be deleted/destroyed at any time up until the data has been anonymised and I can have access to the information up until the date that all data has been anonymised.
- I understand that at the end of the study I will be provided with additional information and feedback about the purpose of the study.
- In understand that upon completion of this thesis I will be provided with a short summary of the findings.
- I am aware that the information I provide may form the basis of a research paper which may be submitted for publication.
- I understand that if I want to talk to someone about the study I can contact Emma or her supervisor, Dr. Dale Bartle (Research Supervisor, Cardiff University).
- I understand that if I want to make a complaint in relation to this study I can contact psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk.
- The data controller is Cardiff University and the Data Protection Officer is Matt Cooper CooperM1@cardiff.ac.uk . The lawful basis for the processing of the data you provide is consent.

I (NAME) consent to participate in the study conducted by Emma Court, School of Psychology, Cardiff University, under the supervision of Dr Dale Bartle.

Signed..... Date.....

****Please return this form to Emma Court as soon as possible**

Appendix F

Gender variance and the role of the Educational Psychologist (EP): Perspectives of EPs and Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) in Wales

Debrief Sheet

Thank you very much for giving up your time to take part in this research. The aim of this project is to explore the constructions of EPs and TEPs within Wales in regards to gender variance and how they perceive the role of the EP within this ever emerging area. Given the lack of literature, specifically from the perspective of Welsh EPs, it is hoped that this project can help gather further information about how EPs, as a professional group, may be able to support children and young people who self-identify as gender variant.

All data that you have provided will be held confidentially by myself for a period of two weeks. During that two weeks you will be able to access your data and/or request that your data is destroyed. Following a period of two weeks, your information will be transcribed and anonymised so that it cannot be traced back to you individually. Once transcribed, the initial recording will be deleted and it will no longer be possible to access your individual data. The information from the interview you have just completed, along with accounts from any other EPs/ TEPs, will be analysed to explore any themes. This data will be written up as part of a report for my doctoral studies. This information may form the basis of a research paper which will potentially be submitted for publication.

If you have any questions regarding our discussion today, please feel free to ask me them now or to contact me at a later date. I will respond to any question as soon as I can. Upon completion of my thesis I will send you a summary of my findings. If you would like any further information in regards to this area of research, please feel free to email me on the contact details provided below.

Should you have any complaints about this research you can contact psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk. The data controller is Cardiff University and the Data Protection Officer is Matt Cooper CooperM1@cardiff.ac.uk. The lawful basis for the processing of the data you provide is consent.

Kind Regards,

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Appendix G: Transcription key

Transcription of all interview material was completed in accordance with guidance provided by Braun & Clarke (2013) for orthographic transcription. All transcripts were anonymised, with names, places of organisations or any other material that could possibly identify participants removed and/or replaced with brackets, with a reference provided to retain the meaning of the sentence, for example (name of service).

The following transcript notation system was used consistently throughout transcription of all interviews and is provided to clearly guide the reader through phase 1 of the analysis process outlined in Appendix H:

Notation used	Meaning
[...]	redacted passages (Start of interviews relating to work history)
(.)	Short pause (second or less)
((Pause))	Significant pause, lasting a few seconds or more
((laughs))	Speaker laughing
((laughter))	Participant and research laughing
((inaudible))	Word/brief phrase unclear
Brief non-verbal utterances, for example, erm, um, mm-hm	Non-verbal utterances are spelt as felt best to that specific part of the interview.
- (dash)	Cut off speech
<u>Underlining</u>	Emphasis
((in overlap))	Overlapping speech
('')	Use of brackets and inverted commas to signal reported speech
<i>Italics</i>	Names of media (for example; television programmes, books, magazines, organisations or public figures) or programmes/terminology used within Educational Psychology practice
Acronyms/abbreviations	Acronyms pronounced as a string of letters are separated by full stops, for example B.P.S. Those pronounced as words are not, for example, INSET
Square brackets []	Own explanatory comments/observations from listening to the transcript
Curly brackets {}	Used within monologues to represent the non-verbal utterances of the other speaker, for example {p1 – yeah}

Appendix H: Thematic Analysis process

Phase 1	<p>Familiarisation with the data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At point of data collection, reflexive journal used to take notes surrounding initial thoughts and feelings generated throughout each interview. • Data was transcribed from each interview, anonymising all data (See Appendix G for transcription key and USB attached for full transcriptions). Again, initial thoughts pertaining to the data were recorded. • Transcripts were read and re-read three times with 'initial noticings' within the data documented on the transcript.
Phase 2	<p>Generating initial codes (across entire data set)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each transcription was looked at individually with interesting features of the data coded on the transcript material. At this stage coding captured all salient aspects of data across the entire data set • All instances of individual codes across the data set were extracted and saved to individual word documents. • Transcriptions re-read to ensure all instances of codes were captured and that all initial codes were represented
Phase 3	<p>Searching for themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All data was reviewed to identify any salient, common or significant themes. Use of Attride-Sterling's (2001) thematic network mapping technique to organise themes into basic, organizing and global themes. • Segments of text relating to each global theme were grouped together in a new word document. • Manual thematic maps created to diagram connections throughout process
Phase 4	<p>Reviewing themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All themes were re-checked against the evidence collected from the entire data set to ensure internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity as well as ensuring they pertained to the participant's views in each data item.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout process smaller themes were 'let go' (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.230) if they did not fit within the overall analysis as relevant to the research questions and larger organizing themes were collapsed to better represent the data. • Themes generated and data extracts supporting themes checked with second researcher to ensure they retained integrity to the original data and that a coherent pattern was apparent. • Electronic thematic network maps created representing themes generated for each research question.
Phase 5	<p>Defining and naming themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All theme titles reviewed to ensure that they held an organizing function, capturing something meaningful about the data. • All global, organizing and basic themes were defined to state what was unique and specific about each.
Phase 6	<p>Writing the report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Themes and evidence were discussed in relation to the research questions posed and the extant literature. • Data extracts selected to provide evidence of themes generated.

Note: It is acknowledged that whilst the phases outlined suggest linearity, data analysis is acknowledged as a recursive process with movement back and forth between these phases.

Appendix I: Key ethical considerations and how they were addressed

Ethical Consideration	How this has been addressed
Informed consent	<p>The researcher informed the participants of the objectives of the study and clearly explained what participation would entail (see Appendix D & E). Gatekeeper's permission and informed consent was sought prior to completion of interviews (both informally, via email, and formally through written consent).</p>
Risk of harm	<p>Although it was deemed unlikely that the questions posed would result in negative affect, the researcher was aware that asking participants to engage in thoughtful reflection in an area that they may not have previously considered could have a residual impact (Rosetto, 2014). In acknowledgement of this the researcher ensured that the consent and information sheets highlighted the voluntary nature of the study and the area to be discussed in interview. Participants were informed and reminded of their right to withdraw and to refuse to answer a particular question or probe throughout the interview. At the end of the interview, the participants were offered an opportunity to ask any questions or to contact the researcher at a future date should questions arise. All participants were told that they would be provided with a summary of the findings and be offered the opportunity to contact the researcher for further information regarding the subject matter should they so wish.</p>
Confidentiality/anonymity	<p>The researcher stipulated to participants, during the interview and via the information sheet and consent form, that their data would be held confidentially for a period of two weeks. During that time they were able to access their data and request that it be destroyed. Following a period of two weeks, participants were informed that their data would be transcribed and anonymised so that they could not be identified. After this process they were informed that they would be unable to access their data. No participants requested that their data be destroyed.</p> <p>All personal data relating to individual participant's was anonymised during transcription. Individuals were referred to</p>

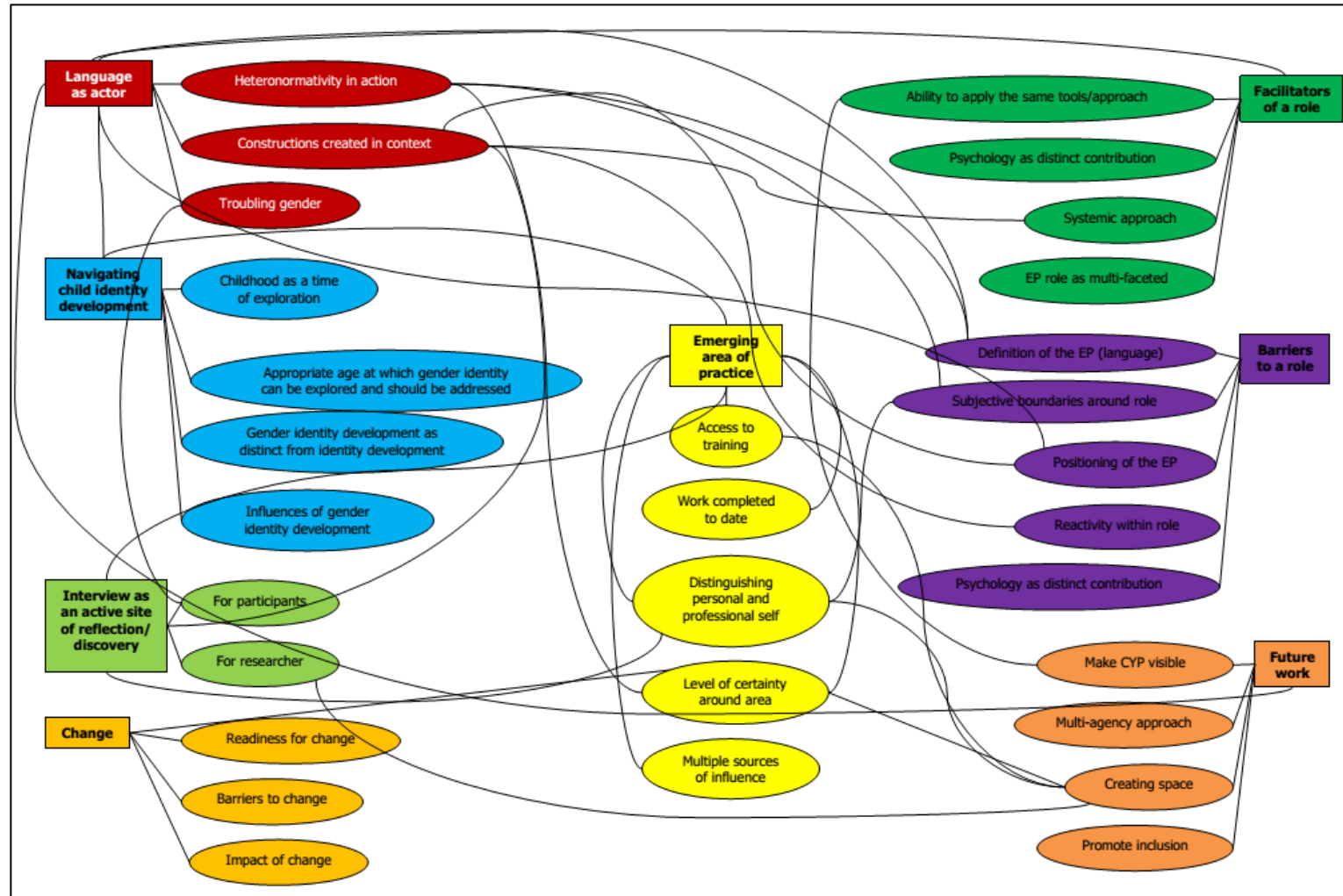
	by a participant number during the report writing phase to further retain anonymity and prevent a bias in reading the data, should a further process of gendering be embedded into the data by pseudonyms.
Communication	In line with the researcher's epistemological stance, it was deemed important to select a methodology that allowed full exploration of each participant's constructs whilst additionally offering a safe space for EPs and TEPs to engage in such an activity. 1-1 interviews were chosen to potentially offer a communication channel and space for thoughtful reflection.
Right to withdraw	The participants were reminded of their right to withdraw at the point of informal informed consent (agreement to participate electronically via email) and at the start of the interview process in which signed consent was obtained.
Debrief	All participants received a debriefing sheet (See Appendix F) outlining the aims of the research, providing contact details should they have further questions or queries and informed that they would receive a summary of findings following completion of the research project.

Appendix J: Use of Yardley’s (2000/2008) criteria to evaluate trustworthiness of own research

Yardley’s Criterion	How these were met by the researcher
Sensitivity to context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extensive literature review was conducted exploring some of the theories and discourses that have influenced and shaped literature relating to gender and gender variance, including discussion of the tensions within such historical perspectives. The remit of this literature review was fully outlined to the reader within sections 1.2 – 1.4. • All interviews were conducted in a location of the participant’s choosing, in order to better ensure their comfort during the interview process. Comfort and a reduction of anxiety was further considered through the use of a stimulus within the interview. A semi-structured interview schedule was created with open ended questions, which allowed each participant to guide the interview, according to areas of pertinence and relevance to them (Appendix B). • Embedded within the interviews was an exploration of participant’s own constructions regarding the area of gender variance and what each participant felt may be influencing those constructions. Part 2 and 3 further acknowledged socio-cultural factors that may be pertinent to participant’s constructions, as emerging through analysis and comparison with theoretical literature. • Sensitivity to data – Use of Braun & Clarke’s six phase guidelines to ensure that the themes generated linked back to the participants, whilst acknowledging a level of interpretation through latent analysis (See Appendix H). • Explicit ontology and epistemology that recognised the relational between the researcher and the participants and how that is instrumental in the construction of knowledge throughout the research process. Within part 3, discussion of the ethical considerations made in relation to the researcher’s ontological position, again considering the socio—cultural and political context regarding gender variance at present.

Commitment & rigour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven interviews were conducted, in line with guidance regarding sample sizes for qualitative research, using Thematic Analysis as a source of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Process of reflection, within supervision, on information gathered within interviews and whether it afforded material sufficient for a comprehensive analysis. • Use of Braun & Clarke's (2006; 2013) guidance for a TA analysis, as outlined in Appendix H).
Transparency & coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each step of the research process, from inception to the end report has been outlined in detail throughout part 2 and part 3, including appendices, all original transcripts and documents created, relating to each stage of the analysis. For example, coding with relevant excerpts from the transcripts. • Themes generated and data extracts supporting themes checked with second researcher to ensure they retained integrity to the original data and that a coherent pattern was apparent. • The explicit positioning of the researcher was explored in detail within part 3, making visible the researcher as active at each stage of the research process. Furthermore, the use of a reflective journal throughout the research process as well as continued critical appraisal of how the researcher's own subjectivity potentially impacted on and was impacted by the research process within part 3, addresses the centrality of reflection and reflexivity within qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013).
Impact & importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'usefulness' of the research for Educational Psychologists in practice is fully explored within part 2 and 3 of the written report, alongside acknowledgements of the limitations of the research.

Appendix K: Full size overarching thematic map



Appendix L: Example transcript extract with initial noticings and codes

File: Transcript 1 – Participant 1

Speaker	Transcript	Initial 'noticings'	Initial coding
EC	[...] Right what I am going to do then is this is an extract that just gives a definition of uh gender variance so if you just have a little read through of that so this is from um an article written by an educational psychologist ((pause)) let me know once you have finished.		
P1	Mm-hmm ((pause)) okay		
EC	So after reading that initial extract what are your initial thoughts around that definition		
P1	Um [extended non-verbal utterance] that seemed to fit with what I would understand gender variance to be and I think my first thoughts went to how I might approach that as an E.P and how much we talk about um possibly challenging what people think of as the norm and how much we how much time we might spend kind of re-framing people's ideas	Fitting own view – belief that gender variance is real Questioning how to approach area of work – reflection in action. Potential uncertainty around how to approach? Use of 'we'- profession as a collective Assumed core role re-framing – challenging norms. Implication that others may not align with this definition or need views re-framing?	Gender variance as real Interview as reflective space? Challenging norms/re-framing

EC	Hmm		
P1	And so possibly if we are working with others around the young person that might have very fixed ideas about what what gender is or what is expected from certain people possibly part of our practice might be to kind of help re-frame that depending again upon what the young person feels and wants and needs and so on	Role of EP to re-frame where views are fixed. Expectation that they may be fixed? <i>Fixed views v fluid views</i> . Widening of discussion to gender Understanding of gender categories linked to associated expectations of people YP views central and directing work	Own assumptions impacting/feeding into work? Role of EP – Re-framing Gender norms/expectations Voice of the child
EC	So part of your approach as an E.P there, or as trainee at the minute would be looking at re-framing if other people had different -		
P1	Yes I was thinking about this idea that with gender variance the kind of child or the young person it might be kind of fluid or they might be um not fit within one particular thing or another and so we have got quite a kind of like varied and loose definition on purpose I think	Hesitancy/tentativeness in speech? Links to uncertainty around topic or a worry around voicing own views? Loose definition purposeful to incorporate all – reflects notion of gender on a spectrum. Very word fluid implies movement/change	Hesitancy/uncertainty around topic? Language as meaning
EC	Yeah		
P1	to try and take into account this kind of wide spectrum {EC – mm} but one of the things it made me think of is possibly other people that might have particular fixed views or very kind of set and rigid views about what gender means what expected behaviour that then relates to and possibly part of	Variation of views – notion of rigidity (stuckness, unchanging) – implication of right and wrong? Need to move them to	Rigid views as wrong – right v wrong Role of EP – re-frame constructions Norms and expectations – heteronormativity in action

	<p>our role as an E.P might be working around re-framing what their constructions are of what gender is and how that this child or young person may need to be supported or might need to be helped to be included but again I am talking quite general terms and and like anything you would think how does this fit into the context and grand scheme of things</p>	<p>a different way of thinking. 'rigid views' judgement within. If views rigid then they are restricted and potentially not correct Views linked to expected behaviour – linear path (heteronormativity in action) Wider role relating to views on gender and associated roles – social constructionism Inclusion of YP who sits outside their viewpoint. Marginalised Holism – Systemic thinking. Reflecting part of role to assess what is happening in context</p>	<p>Re-framing gender – moving outside of the norms Inclusion of CYP – role Marginalisation of 'other' Systemic approach</p>
EC	<p>And like you mentioned didn't you about the individual child so based on what they wanted</p>		
P1	<p>Exactly</p>		
EC	<p>From the situation as well and what their expectations were and how they wanted to approach that with others.</p>		
P1	<p>Exactly and I think that would probably be my first port of call as it were to go and actually talk to this young person and so on</p>	<p>Child 1st – validation of voice of the child</p>	<p>Hearing the voice of the child</p>
EC	<p>You mentioned as well that it kind of fitted with what your understanding was of gender variance {P1 – Mm} when you first read the definition before you read that what would you have said your initial understanding was -</p>		

<p>P1</p>	<p>Um ((pause)) So rather than gender being a binary construct and there just being male and female and having very set um traits I suppose within each one of those two different labels from what I've understood before and I haven't you know read that widely myself or had huge amounts of experiences but from what I do understand is that there is a lot more kind</p>	<p>Away from the binary – fluid view of gender</p> <p>Insecurity here? Reading and experience</p> <p>Fluidity – what exists between binary male and female</p>	<p>Gender on a spectrum</p> <p>Uncertainty around topic – Own knowledge</p>
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Appendix M: Example table of collated evidence for the theme ‘facilitators of role’

Complete coding process: Mapping codes to data extracts²⁷

Research Q.3: What role do EPs and TEPs within Wales perceive themselves holding in relation to gender variance?

Global theme: Facilitators of role

Code	location	Data extract
Organizing theme: EP role as multi-faceted	P1: 109 - 111	I do see the role of the E.P as being very multifaceted and context dependent and so until I really would think or have a case in front of me and really get an idea of who the people were what the situation was what the context is it would be difficult for me to say (‘oh I’d take this specific role’)
	P1: 121	I think I would be open to adopting lots and lots of different roles depending upon what I thought was appropriate
Basic theme: EP role already exists to support identity development	P1: 162 - 166	I think part of our multi-faceted role might be helping young people to navigate their own way through life and I think this is certainly something where EPs can support young people so I wouldn’t say this is something that EPs shouldn’t get involved with or can’t have some sort of positive impact with I certainly think that we as professionals can help support young people but I would see it as just another aspect of a young person’s life that we might help support along with literacy or self-esteem or all the other kind of things that we support young people with throughout their lives
	P3: 158 - 159	Yeah I did some drawing with the children <i>kinetic family</i> drawing those sort of P.C.P type of techniques really just to explore their view of themselves and their place in the world
Organizing theme: Ability to apply same tools/approach <i>Re-framing</i>	P1: 10 - 11	if we are working with others around the young person that might have very fixed ideas about what what gender is or what is expected from certain people possibly part of our practice might be to kind of help re-frame that
	P1: 18 – 20	is possibly other people that might have particular fixed views or very kind of set and rigid views about what gender means what expected behaviour that then relates to and possibly part of our role as an E.P might be working around re-framing what their constructions are of what gender is

²⁷ All references for participants’ and line numbers pertain to the initial transcripts found within the folder ‘phase 1’ on the encrypted USB sticks.

	<p>P3: 120 - 123</p> <p>P6: 360 – 365</p> <p>P7: 210 - 215</p> <p>P7: 231 - 232</p> <p>P1: 67</p> <p>P1: 111 - 113</p>	<p>P3: very important that the schools were there to hear the messages hear the right messages and hear the parents genuine concerns or the parents total embrace of what was happening</p> <p>EC: Yeah</p> <p>P3: So that the school were hearing the right messages and not seeing this child as deviant or weird or bizarre or</p> <p>interestingly one primary school tried to refer a transgender youngster into our nurture group and when we read the case history and the behaviour there weren't really any issues around the child's social skills or the behaviour the only issue was this young person was transgender so I went in to do the visit with school and helped them to think about you know what was it they were really asking for you know and they wanted some emotional support for this young person to feel good about themselves I said ('well surely not making them do a nurture class for that there are other ways we can do that')</p> <p>P7: you know does it need discussing and then it can be looking at you know is it a matter of social relationships is it a matter of emotional health and wellbeing and in a sense some of those taking it apart like that that could be the point of intervention really rather than gender variance being the problem</p> <p>EC: yeah</p> <p>P7: It's gender variance isn't a problem is it it's the ((pause))you know there are problems associated with it such as you know emotional health</p> <p>so in a sense this fits in this is just a different in many ways a different variation of very similar problems you have with schools often where the re-framing is part of the trick isn't it</p> <p>I would probably treat it almost like any of my other cases</p> <p>I think I would try and base it as I would with any case upon who are the people involved what are the systems involved what are all the different roles that I might take and how might I negotiate these what are the roles other people might take so I would find it hard to say something specific</p>
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	P1: 135 – 138	I suppose going to the literature and going to my supervisor would be the two things that I would do almost for any case at this stage is that I think if we were talking about any particular topic that I come across I seek some level of support um from those two areas regardless of whether it was about gender variance or anything else really
	P1: 142	I have said that from the beginning I think within reason I would try and treat this just the same as any case
	P3: 111 - 113	Through consultation I mean we work in a consultation model so we don't really do anything else to be honest um um and observation of the children in class and discussion with the children lots of drawing lots of talking to the children and then consultation with the parents and with the school
	P3: 158 - 159	Yeah I did some drawing with the children kinetic family drawing those sort of P.C.P type of techniques really just to explore their view of themselves and their place in the world
	P3: 308	I don't think it would be anything massively different from what we do for anything else if I'm honest
	P4: 269 270	it's like <i>person centred planning</i> it's all of those things and what works to make however those symptoms be manageable in school
	P4: 285 - 286	it would just be through consultation right what are the concerns how do we deal with them when it's slightly better on a scale of nought to ten when it get better where would you like to be just all of those sort of key consultation skills
	P7: 201 - 202	I would imagine a piece of work like that depending on specifics the actual work would be that discussion rather than going in and doing anything
	P7: 322 - 324	So one way of seeing this is a child with the problem and for this particular problem this is what you do because that's what it says in the code book it's here's some thinking tools maybe even using those thinking tools you can come up with some solutions yourself or actually remove the problems by just thinking and doing things differently
<i>Collaborative approach</i>	P1: 96 - 98	as I said before the main thing for me would still be finding out what does this mean for the young person you know how are they experiencing things how might

	<p>P3: 142 - 143</p> <p>P5: 263 - 266</p>	<p>that affect how we think about their needs for the case and how we kind of approach what we might be doing together</p> <p>getting them and the school to work together on the issue and to make it better for the child and make the child happier if possible</p> <p>EC: To link up with other agencies</p> <p>P5: Yeah, and sort of be part of that process of providing the psychology of providing the understanding</p> <p>EC: I think it would be a learning process all together so I think that yeah they could link up because they have the psychology background haven't they and it would be about learning together with other agencies and um it's not going in with full understanding and wisdom is it it's about all going in together and saying ('well what about this area do we need to find out more about this area maybe that could influence it') so I think it's working together and learning together</p>
<p>Organizing theme: Psychology as distinct contribution</p> <p><i>Psychology as a change agent</i></p>	<p>P5: 124 - 126</p> <p>P5: 183 - 185</p> <p>P5: 211 - 213</p>	<p>differences between the males and females in that situation and how they feel that it should be handled and um them wanting to be supportive and not understanding the psychology of the situation which leads to one outcome rather than another or the opposite it's very complicated</p> <p>I think it should be a team of people really I think there needs to be training for schools parents ((pause)) um I suppose the options are through CAMHS aren't they to look at different options but in school I would think probably the Ed Psych would be involved wouldn't they to support schools in ((pause)) I don't know in understanding the psychology of it all really I suppose</p> <p>well I suppose for Ed Psychs I mean I went on that training so I suppose Ed Psych's going on training to find out more isn't it and reading around the it's not just about that it's about the psychology of the role of identity and gender identity in children how that develops it's about that as well</p>

	<p>P5: 218 - 223</p> <p>P7: 264 - 265</p>	<p>P5: what about understanding the overall understanding of it and how it fits in with children and development I think that's missing</p> <p>EC: That's not happening</p> <p>P5: No no so who would do that probably Ed Psychs maybe I don't know</p> <p>EC: What do you think do you think that that could be a role for -</p> <p>P5: ((in overlap)) Yeah it could be a role for Ed Psychs cos who else knows about that and how the psychology of it all would come together so maybe it's about us working with people like Viva</p> <p>I would be quite happy to say ('look do X Y and Z for now ((pause)) but this is something I need to get more info on')</p>
<p>Organizing theme: Working systemically</p>	<p>P1: 21 -22</p> <p>P1: 110 - 111</p> <p>P2: 214</p> <p>P2: 218 - 222</p> <p>P2: 247 - 251</p>	<p>but again I am talking quite general terms and and like anything you would think how does this fit into the context and grand scheme of things</p> <p>until I really would think or have a case in front of me and really get an idea of who the people were what the situation was what the context is it would be difficult for me to say ('oh I'd take this specific role')</p> <p>I think I would recommend some sort of awareness raising in the school</p> <p>P2: what you need to do is as a system be having that conversation all the time even though perhaps you don't know that you have got any children like that</p> <p>EC: Yep</p> <p>P2: in your school or same goes for any gay children or whatever the issue is be constantly having that conversation be constantly using those using gender neutral language for example</p> <p>P2: so what I was saying earlier about maybe a school needing to take a systemic approach to make sure that these children aren't alienated</p> <p>EC: Yeah</p> <p>P2: just even through trying to do a good thing like holding an assembly or P.S.H.E lessons specifically on</p>

		something I feel that that is an area that an E.P can help with making sure the school is a more inclusive environment
	P2: 263	Yeah there could be a role there for E.Ps when it comes to INSET training yeah and looking at policies
	P3: 302	Possibly some mentoring to the school's counselling service
	P5: 282 - 284	it's the whole school agenda isn't it wellbeing which is part of it really isn't it it's about acceptance of differences and everybody supporting each other isn't it and it's about the way we speak within that environment to children isn't it so that we are accepting of differences
	P5: 297 - 299	Yeah yeah and we have got the <i>ELSA</i> training as well haven't we so that's all about emotional wellbeing isn't it somebody supportive within school that they could go to um and those emotional those <i>ELSA</i> 's are ((pause)) you know they have been trained up in areas of emotional wellbeing haven't they maybe this is an area we could include actually
	P6: 453 - 454	so they are looking at it as a whole school thing and I would like to see our transgender thing is going to be something needs to happen at a strategic level making sure schools understand their responsibilities
	P6: 456 - 457	there needs to be training for every teacher so everybody can you know so there's that level of having whole school strategic stuff training for all staff
	P6: 498 - 499	P6: so hopefully it will be an authority wide rather than a because the youth service are involved it's going to be an authority wide young people's toolkit EC: Yeah P6: rather than a school's toolkit
	P7: 220 - 222	looking at maybe the systemic things in the school such as why can't girls wear shorts I don't know you know silly things like that but I think hopefully a lot of places have moved on from that now but um ((pause)) just what their expectations of gender are and how that might be fuelling unhappiness discontent or whatever
	P7: 295 - 297	so I wonder if there's a role for training as well just in terms of just that awareness of and again it's the re-framing isn't it getting people to actually think about things differently

	P3: 284 - 285	definitely yeah twilight sessions SENCo meetings ALNCo meetings head teacher meetings there is probably even a bloody role for us to comment on school buildings do you know what I mean
	P7: 140 - 141	you know it's all about really supporting the school and also supporting the family to an extent
<p>Basic theme: Placement within systems (home and school) as conducive to a role</p> <p><i>Can individualise work to context when know setting</i></p>	P3: 78 - 80	it's part of your own awareness isn't it and then knowing when's the right time to tackle that for people {EC – mm} knowing what sort of people you work with and knowing the sort of environment you are working in and how ready schools are to hear those sorts of messages because they're not they are so not ready to hear those sorts of messages or have those sort of discussions a lot of them
	P7: 187 - 190	it gets them exploring the situation it makes it easier to get them to explore the situation I suppose you could do that one on one but it's easier I find it easier in a team and get them to think about a specific situation rather than thinking there's a one size fits all solution {EC – mm} to their problem
	P7: 228 – 232	<p>P&: I'm like flipping in my mind through all my ALNCo's (.) I have twenty one (.)</p> <p>EC: That's a lot to flip through</p> <p>P7: I have twenty one schools but um you know they are very different so in a sense this fits in this is just a different in many ways a different variation of very similar problems you have with schools often where the re-framing is part of the trick isn't it</p>
	P7: 282 284	so I suppose with the school it will be thinking more a lot more or at least in part in terms of the systemic things you know how the school operates and how they are going to respond to cases you know examples of gender fluidity {EC – mm} and what they need to change to just to stop it being an issue
	P5: 192 - 195	<p>P5: to support them because I think people are a bit you know schools can be a bit frightened of the topic can't they really I suppose</p> <p>EC: Yeah</p>

<p><i>Support to parents</i></p>	<p>P6: 14</p>	<p>P5: frightened of doing the wrong thing frightened of doing the right ((pause)) frightened of doing the wrong thing really or saying the wrong thing</p>
	<p>P6: 320 - 322</p>	<p>I have had a couple of schools on my patch um who have asked me for advice</p> <p>The schools kind of in one way want a 'you must do this' [EC – mm] but again people like certainty don't they {EC – yeah} we must do this and we can't do that this is the authority and we will back you because schools always like to know that if they have you know the angry mob with their pitchforks outside the school what's going to be the local authority position you know so they want that certainty</p>
	<p>P6: 387 - 393</p>	<p>P6: Well there was this talk in the working party about having a flow chart of you know like a transgender 101 You know do this do that do the other ((laughs)) and this was a school who had already said it's very individualised I said ('can you write me this flow chart') and what we came up with was perhaps a series of questions you know have you spoken to the young person about their wishes and views have you spoken to the parents if the young person is over you know under sixteen you know have you decided this have you decided whether you need to involve</p> <p>EC: Yeah</p> <p>P6: I think we are probably going to put down a series of questions</p>
	<p>P6: 547 - 552</p>	<p>P6: but if you had a particularly resistant school who just see I don't know not that I'm aware of this having happened and it will be interesting when I meet [name] I'm going to ask him um from <i>Umbrella</i> tomorrow you know are there schools that he has found particularly challenging to work with</p> <p>EC: Yeah</p> <p>P6: um you know they might find it easier to work with an E.P who they are familiar with from a school's perspective and not feel as though they've got a oh you know they would say that they've got that agenda perhaps they see us as more neutral</p>
	<p>P3: 98 - 102</p>	<p>P3: and and helping the parents to work through some of those because one set of parents was very angry and upset and confused and the other set of parents were</p>

<p><i>Navigate systemic tension</i></p>		<p>very open and willing to embrace whatever the child presented them with</p> <p>EC: yeah</p> <p>P3: So two very different sorts of experiences and at that stage because the children were so young it was more about working with the parents {EC – mm, yeah} and the school</p>
	<p>P4: 126 - 127</p>	<p>chatted to mum and made sure that mum was definitely connected to the right people we did a bit of an internet search together and just made sure that she was in contact</p>
	<p>P6: 149 – 150</p>	<p>the first transgender person I came across in professionally you know I had school kind of asked ('what should we do?')</p>
	<p>P6: 334 - 337</p>	<p>P6: but inevitably with schools agreements with schools tend to be in favour of what the school wants you know for the E.P role in general parents often feel on a back foot and don't want to rock the boat and so they might be saying ('oh that's fine')</p> <p>EC: ((in overlap)) but whether it is</p> <p>P6: but whether that is fine or how that makes the young person feel you know ((pause)) it might be an under truce</p>
	<p>P4: 221 - 223</p>	<p>but they think that the dad was really struggling with that and then that was causing sort of tensions in the family and that was maybe upsetting the behaviour of this boy and that it was just about where to go and how to support mum that's how it came about in peer supervision how to support the mum to manage the dad's reaction to the boy</p>
	<p>P6: 545 - 546</p>	<p>E.Ps are good at where there are disagreements between schools and young people and families you know where there is some sort of need for coming together or to find a shared path</p>
	<p>P6: 340 - 342</p>	<p>I think if the school and family were finding it hard to negotiate um you know the first port of call would be to call in an organisation maybe Umbrella because of their experience but they've got a very set view on how you know probably the right view they might not have the understanding of the school context so it might become something that we work out together</p>

