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**THE IMPACT OF CONFLATING SEX CHARACTERISTICS AND SEXUAL
ORIENTATIONS ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION FOR INTERSEX PERSONS IN
KAMPALA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Barigye Delphine hereby declared that this research report is original and has not been published and/ or submitted for any other award to any other academic institution before.

Sign: 

Date: 13/10/26

APPROVAL

This dissertation entitled: “The impact of conflating sex characteristics and sexual orientations on the right to education for intersex persons in Kampala” has been approved under my supervision and it is ready for submission for the award of a degree of Master of Arts in Human Rights.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this piece of work to my family the inner circle who have been my constant source of strength, grounding and belief. Your quiet sacrifices and unwavering love carried me through long nights and demanding days, thank you.

May the Almighty God bless you all. You are great people from whom I drew a lot of inspiration and encouragement to carry on.

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DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Intersex: An umbrella term for individuals born with physical, genetic, or hormonal sex characteristics that do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies, representing a natural spectrum of human biological diversity rather than a pathology.

Sex Characteristics: Biological attributes that distinguish individuals as male, female, or intersex, including chromosomal, hormonal, and anatomical features, as distinct from gender identity or sexual orientation.

Sexual Orientation: An individual's emotional, romantic, and sexual attraction to others, which may be directed toward people of the same sex, different sex, either sexes, or other gender identities, and is distinct from biological sex characteristics.

Conflation: The erroneous equation or confusion of distinct concepts; in this study, the mistaken understanding that intersex sex characteristics are indicative of or equivalent to a particular sexual orientation or gender identity.

Discrimination: Any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on a person's sex characteristics, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other status that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise of human rights on an equal basis.

Right to Education: The human right to free, compulsory primary education and accessible secondary and higher education, free from discrimination and violence, as enshrined in international human rights instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Educational Exclusion: The systematic denial or limitation of access to educational opportunities, participation in educational activities, or achievement of educational outcomes due to discrimination, stigma, or inadequate policies and practices.

LGBTIQ+ Framework: An acronym encompassing individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer or Questioning, with the "+" representing other sexual

orientations and gender identities; in this study, it refers to the practice of grouping diverse identities under a single umbrella term.

Queer Theory: A critical theoretical framework that challenges normative assumptions about gender, sex, and sexuality, interrogating the social and institutional processes that enforce rigid binaries and marginalize those who do not conform.

Stigma: A social process of labeling, stereotyping, and discrimination that devalues individuals or groups based on perceived differences, in this context, the devaluation of intersex individuals based on their sex characteristics and their conflation with stigmatized sexualities

ABSTRACT

This study analysed the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation within the LGBTIQ+ framework and how this impacts the right to education without discrimination for intersex people in Kampala. The specific objectives were to investigate how the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation contributes to discrimination against intersex individuals in Kampala educational institutions, to analyse the nature of discrimination faced by intersex individuals within Kampala educational institutions due to their inclusion in the LGBTIQ+ framework, and to assess the level of awareness and understanding of intersex issues among educators, administrators and students in Uganda's education sector. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design combining both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The sample size of 384 respondents for the quantitative component was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, while for the qualitative component, a total of 20 key informants were purposively selected. For quantitative data collection, stratified random sampling was used to ensure that different categories of institutions and stakeholders including teachers, students and administrators were proportionately represented. The study utilized structured questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides, with quantitative data analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) through descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, while qualitative data were analysed through thematic content analysis. The study found that confusion between sex characteristics and sexual orientation in Kampala's educational institutions fuels discrimination against intersex individuals, in line with findings from similar studies that highlight the role of cultural taboos, knowledge gaps, and rigid gender frameworks. This discrimination manifested as verbal abuse, social exclusion, and institutional neglect, with schools lacking formal guidance or institutional policies addressing sex characteristics and over 70% of educators admitting to having never received training on intersex inclusion. Intersex participants described experiences of stigma, social isolation and lack of support from teachers and peers which negatively affected their academic performance. These findings are situated within Queer Theory to explore how educational systems reinforce binary norms that marginalize intersex bodies. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education and Sports lead policy reforms that explicitly recognize and protect intersex students, integrate intersex-specific content into the curriculum, and mandate sensitivity training for all educators and school staff.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
CSCHRC	Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional
CSE	comprehensive sexuality education
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DSD	Disorders of sex development
EDI	Equality, diversity, and inclusion
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IHRA	Intersex Human Rights Australia
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Aromantic, or Agender, with the "+" representing other sexual orientations and gender identities not explicitly listed.
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
PTAs	Parent-Teacher Associations
SIPD	Support Initiative for Persons with Congenital Disorders
U.K.	United Kingdom
U.S	United States
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHRO	United Nations Human Rights Office
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

In Uganda, intersex individuals face multifaceted discrimination, particularly within the educational sphere, compromising their right to education (Human Rights Watch, 2017). This discrimination is exacerbated by the global tendency to lump together individuals whose gender identity and sexual orientation deviate from societal norms under the acronym LGBTIQ+ (United Nations, 2015). However, the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation under this umbrella term has not been adequately documented in the Ugandan context. This research focuses on studying this conflation and investigating the extent to which the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation under the LGBTIQ+ influences discrimination against intersex individuals in the realm of education in Uganda. The book is organized basing on six chapters, chapter one is introduction, chapter two is literature review, chapter three is methodology, chapter four is data presentation and interpretation of findings, chapter five is discussion of results and the final chapter is conclusions and recommendations.

1.1 Background of the study

1.1.1 Conceptual Background

Intersex is an umbrella term for individuals born with physical, genetic, or hormonal sex characteristics that do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies, representing a natural spectrum of human biological diversity rather than a pathology (United Nations Human Rights Office [OHCHR], 2015). The concept of intersex challenges the rigid biological binary that has historically dominated medical, legal, and social understandings of sex, exposing the limitations of categorizing human bodies into exclusively male or female categories (Fausto-Sterling, 2000). Medical literature has traditionally employed terms such as "disorders of sex development" (DSD), a framing that has been critiqued by human rights advocates for pathologizing natural biological variation and reinforcing stigma (Carpenter, 2016).

The prevalence of intersex traits is significant, with estimates ranging from 0.05% to 1.7% of the world's population, indicating that these variations are a common, if often invisible, facet of human

existence (United Nations, 2015). The Yogyakarta Principles plus 10 (2017) explicitly recognize sex characteristics as a distinct protected ground, separate from sexual orientation and gender identity, articulating that intersex individuals are entitled to full enjoyment of all human rights without discrimination. This conceptual distinction is critical, as it acknowledges the unique human rights concerns facing intersex people particularly regarding bodily autonomy, medical interventions, and social inclusion that differ fundamentally from issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer populations (Carpenter & Eisentraut, 2020).

The right to education, as enshrined in international human rights instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, requires states to provide inclusive, accessible education free from discrimination and violence (UNESCO, 2022). For intersex learners, realizing this right is contingent upon educational environments that recognize and accommodate biological diversity, challenge binary assumptions about sex, and protect students from stigma and exclusion (Monro et al., 2021). However, the conceptual conflation of intersex with LGBTIQ+ identities, particularly homosexuality, has created a distinct barrier to educational inclusion, as intersex students are frequently subjected to discrimination based not on their identity but on misinterpretations of their biological traits (Holzer & Brömdal, 2022).

This conflation operates at multiple levels: legal frameworks often group intersex issues under broader LGBTIQ+ protections or fail to address them entirely; educational policies rarely distinguish between sex characteristics, gender identity, and sexual orientation; and societal attitudes systematically misread intersex bodies through a lens of assumed sexuality (Richter, 2014; Monro et al., 2023). The result is a conceptual confusion that undermines targeted protections for intersex individuals and exposes them to compounded stigma discrimination rooted in their biological traits being amplified by prejudice against a mistakenly attributed identity (Carpenter, 2022). This study adopts the framework of intersectional human rights to analyze how these conceptual confusions manifest in educational settings, drawing on Butler's (1990) theorization of the social construction of sex and gender to understand how binary norms are produced and maintained through institutional practices, including schooling.

1.1.2 Historical Background

The historical treatment of intersex individuals has been characterized by medical pathologization, social erasure, and systematic human rights violations. Medical approaches to intersex variations emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with physicians developing protocols to surgically and hormonally "correct" intersex bodies to conform to binary sex categories, often without the consent of the affected individuals (Davis, 2015). The influential "optimal gender" policy, articulated by psychologist John Money and colleagues, posited that gender identity was malleable and that early surgical intervention was necessary for healthy psychosocial development, leading to decades of non-consensual, medically unnecessary surgeries performed on intersex infants and children (Human Rights Watch, 2017). These practices were supported by the medical consensus documents of the era, including the 2006 Consensus Statement on Management of Intersex Disorders, which framed intersex variations as conditions requiring medical intervention (Lee et al., 2006), despite growing critiques from intersex advocates and human rights organizations (Carpenter, 2016).

The emergence of intersex activism in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries fundamentally challenged medical authority and demanded recognition of intersex bodies as natural and worthy of protection. Organizations such as the Intersex Society of North America (founded in 1993) and later international networks advocated for an end to non-consensual surgeries, legal recognition of sex characteristics as a protected ground, and greater visibility for intersex issues (Davis, 2015). This advocacy has achieved notable successes, including the 2013 Maltese legislation prohibiting medically unnecessary interventions on intersex children the first of its kind globally and the adoption of resolutions by international bodies including the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, and the United Nations condemning harmful practices and affirming intersex rights (OHCHR, 2015).

Historically, the conflation of intersex with LGBTIQ+ issues has been a persistent challenge, often obscuring the distinct nature of intersex human rights concerns. While intersex individuals share experiences of stigma and discrimination with other marginalized groups, their specific needs regarding bodily autonomy, medical interventions, and legal recognition of sex characteristics require distinct policy responses (Carpenter & Eisentraut, 2020). The historical narrative of

intersex rights has therefore been one of gradual separation from the broader LGBTIQ+ framework, with advocates insisting on the specificity of intersex experiences while acknowledging the importance of solidarity (Richter, 2014). This historical trajectory has direct implications for education: schools have historically been sites of binary enforcement, with policies on uniforms, facilities, and sports reflecting rigid distinctions between male and female that exclude intersex students (Reardon, 2021).

In Uganda, the historical context is shaped by colonial legal legacies that introduced binary sex classifications and criminalized non-normative sexualities, superimposed upon pre-colonial cultural systems that varied in their treatment of gender and bodily diversity (Tamale, 2020). The British colonial administration enacted laws such as the Penal Code Act, which criminalized "carnal knowledge against the order of nature," establishing a legal framework that has been used to persecute sexual and gender minorities to the present day (Mbazira, 2014). These colonial-era laws have been reinforced by post-independence governments, with successive administrations using anti-LGBTIQ+ legislation to consolidate political power and mobilize conservative constituencies, a phenomenon that intensified with the introduction of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill in 2009 and its eventual passage in 2014 and 2023 (Bompani & Valois, 2017).

The historical treatment of intersex individuals in Uganda has been one of systematic invisibility, with no recognition of sex characteristics as a distinct protected category in law until very recent advocacy efforts. The Uganda Constitution of 1995 guarantees equality and non-discrimination but does not explicitly enumerate sex characteristics as a protected ground, leaving intersex persons without specific legal recourse (Civil Society Coalition et al., 2014). Historical reports from civil society organizations document cases of infanticide, concealment, family shame, and social exclusion of intersex children, practices rooted in cultural beliefs about curses, witchcraft, or supernatural origins of intersex births (Kaggwa, 2016). The historical erasure of intersex existence from public discourse has been reinforced by educational systems that teach rigid biological binaries and fail to acknowledge bodily diversity, perpetuating ignorance and prejudice across generations (Mulemi et al., 2023).

1.1.3 Theoretical background

The Human Interest Theory of rights posits that the primary function of a right is to protect and promote the fundamental interests of the right-holder (Raz, 1986). This theory was most influentially articulated by Joseph Raz in *The Morality of Freedom* (Raz, 1986). Raz (1986) argues that “X has a right if and only if X can have rights, and, other things being equal, an aspect of X’s well-being (his interest) is a sufficient reason for holding some other person(s) to be under a duty” (Raz, 1986, p. 166). The theory builds on earlier utilitarian foundations associated with Bentham (1987). According to this view, rights are not abstract entitlements but are grounded in the recognition that certain human interests are so important that they impose obligations on others (Raz, 1986). The theory assumes that individuals possess fundamental interests that are essential to their well-being (Raz, 1986). It further assumes that these interests are sufficiently weighty to justify imposing duties on other actors, including states and institutions (Raz, 1986). Additionally, it assumes that rights are not dependent on the right-holder’s capacity to demand or waive enforcement (Raz, 1986). However, the Human Interest Theory has limitations (Freeman, 2011). It has been critiqued for its individualistic orientation, which may underplay communal and relational dimensions of rights (Freeman, 2011). The theory also faces challenges in operationalisation, as it can be difficult to determine which interests are sufficiently fundamental to generate rights (Nickel, 2019). Furthermore, the theory does not automatically resolve questions of enforcement, as it establishes that duties exist but does not guarantee they will be fulfilled (Nickel, 2019). Despite these limitations, the Human Interest Theory is directly relevant to this study (Raz, 1986). Intersex learners in Kampala have a fundamental interest in accessing education free from discrimination, stigma, and exclusion (SIPD, 2020).

When educational institutions conflate sex characteristics with sexual orientation, they fail to recognise and protect this interest, thereby violating the right to education (Human Rights Watch, 2023). The theory provides a normative framework for arguing that intersex students’ interests in safety, dignity, inclusion, and academic participation are sufficiently important to impose obligations on the Ministry of Education and Sports, school administrators, teachers, and policymakers to reform policies and create inclusive environments (Carpenter, 2022). By grounding the study in the Human Interest Theory, the research moves beyond describing discrimination to asserting that intersex learners are rights-holders whose interests must be

protected (Raz, 1986). This theoretical lens thus reinforces the study's central argument that conflating sex characteristics with sexual orientation is not merely a conceptual error but a rights violation that demands institutional and policy redress (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

1.1.4 Contextual Background

Globally, intersex individuals face systemic discrimination, stigma, and human rights violations that profoundly impact their access to education. International human rights bodies have increasingly recognized these challenges, with the United Nations issuing multiple statements and reports condemning harmful practices, affirming the right to bodily autonomy, and calling for legal and policy protections for intersex persons (OHCHR, 2015). The Yogyakarta Principles plus 10 (2017) articulate specific state obligations regarding sex characteristics, including the prohibition of non-consensual medical interventions, legal recognition of gender diversity, and protection from discrimination in all areas of life, including education.

Research from various global contexts reveals consistent patterns of educational exclusion for intersex students. In Australia, Jones et al. (2019) documented widespread experiences of bullying, harassment, and exclusion among intersex youth, with many reporting that schools failed to accommodate their needs regarding uniforms, facilities, and peer relations. Studies from the United Kingdom and Ireland have found similar patterns, with intersex students describing educational environments that are unwelcoming, unknowledgeable, and actively hostile to bodily diversity (Monro et al., 2023). In the United States, Human Rights Watch (2017) documented the medical harms faced by intersex children, while Fraser et al. (2018) identified elevated rates of mental health challenges among intersex youth that were directly attributable to school-based discrimination and isolation.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2020) survey found that intersex individuals reported higher rates of discrimination and lower levels of trust in institutions compared to other LGBTIQ+ groups, underscoring the specific vulnerabilities of this population. UNESCO (2022) has called for education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, but has acknowledged that intersex-specific concerns particularly those related to biological variation and medical discrimination remain inadequately addressed in most policy frameworks. Studies by Wilson et al. (2020) and Iftikhar et al. (2024) have

demonstrated that intersex students in inclusive educational environments show significantly better academic and psychosocial outcomes compared to those in non-inclusive settings, highlighting the critical importance of targeted interventions.

Across Sub-Saharan Africa, intersex individuals confront profound challenges shaped by entrenched cultural norms, binary gender views, and limited legal protections. The region's socio-cultural landscape is often characterized by strong communal values and conservative religious influences, which frame intersex variations as aberrations, curses, or sources of family shame, leading to stigma, concealment, and in extreme cases, infanticide (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights [ACHPR], 2023). Legal frameworks in many Sub-Saharan African nations rarely explicitly protect individuals on the grounds of sex characteristics, leaving intersex people in a vulnerable position where their biological differences are frequently misunderstood and stigmatized.

The political and social discourse in several countries across the region has seen a rise in anti-LGBTIQ+ sentiment and legislation, creating a dangerously conflated environment where being intersex is incorrectly equated with homosexuality or transgender identity subjects that are heavily politicized and criminalized in numerous jurisdictions (Bompani & Valois, 2017). This regional context of conflation and stigma directly impacts access to social services, including education, where intersex children may be kept from school to avoid shame or face severe discrimination within educational institutions that lack any awareness or policy frameworks to support them (ACHPR, 2023).

Within East Africa, the experiences of intersex individuals are influenced by shared cultural threads and varying national legal approaches. The region exhibits a similar reliance on strict gender binaries and cultural interpretations that often perceive intersex births as taboo or supernatural events (Kaggwa, 2016). While some East African nations have begun to acknowledge intersex rights in limited ways such as Kenya's landmark 2014 court case recognizing intersex people and mandating registration progressive legal recognition remains the exception rather than the rule, and societal acceptance lags significantly behind (Human Rights Watch, 2017). The East African political environment is also marked by the export and imitation of restrictive legislation,

particularly anti-homosexuality laws, which exacerbate the conflation of sexual orientation with sex characteristics (Mbazira, 2014).

In educational settings, this regional dynamic translates to a lack of policy coherence or teacher training, forcing intersex students and their families to navigate systems that are uniformly unprepared and often hostile to bodily diversity. Studies from the region document experiences of bullying, exclusion, and premature school leaving among intersex students, with many forced to drop out due to an intolerable environment (Namubiru & Mugisha, 2022). Nichols (2024) found that school principals in South Africa reported significant challenges in creating inclusive spaces for intersex learners, citing a lack of guidance, training, and policy frameworks. These regional patterns highlight the urgent need for context-specific research and advocacy to address educational exclusion of intersex individuals.

Uganda's legal environment is further characterised by the enactment of the Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA) in 2023, which significantly expanded the criminalisation of same-sex conduct and introduced the death penalty for "aggravated homosexuality" (Human Dignity Trust, 2024). The AHA punishes consensual same-sex relations with life imprisonment and imposes up to 20 years for the "promotion" of homosexuality (Human Dignity Trust, 2024). Crucially, the Act's vague and expansive definitions of "homosexuality" conflate same-sex sexual acts with any deviation from heterosexual and cisgender norms (Asylum Research Centre, 2023). This legal framework has created a climate of heightened hostility for all persons perceived to be sexually or gender non-conforming, and intersex persons are particularly vulnerable because their biological sex characteristics are often misread as evidence of homosexuality (Kaggwa, cited in Brill, 2023). Since the AHA's enactment, reports have emerged of LGBT individuals being turned away by hospitals, fired from jobs, and thrown out of rental housing, indicating the law's chilling effect across all sectors of society, including education (EATHAN, 2023).

The conflation of intersex status with homosexuality is particularly pronounced and dangerous in Uganda; intersex bodily variations are often wrongly interpreted as evidence of a criminalized sexual orientation, making intersex individuals vulnerable to double discrimination first for their innate characteristics and second for a mistakenly attributed identity (SIPD, 2020). This national

context directly dictates the educational experience, as Ugandan schools operate under this shadow of legal and social hostility. Reports indicate that intersex students face rampant bullying, exclusion, and a complete absence of supportive policies or trained educators, with many forced to drop out due to an intolerable environment, systematically violating their constitutional right to education (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

The legal and policy environment in Uganda presents significant challenges for intersex inclusion. The Education Act and associated policies do not reference intersex students or provide guidance on accommodating their needs, while the national curriculum perpetuates binary sex and gender norms without acknowledging biological diversity (Mulemi et al., 2023). The absence of teacher training on intersex issues means that educators are ill-equipped to support intersex students or address discrimination, and many operate under the same misconceptions and prejudices as the broader society (Brömdal & Turtle, 2023). Furthermore, the Anti-Homosexuality Act creates a chilling effect on any discussion of sexual or gender diversity in schools, making educators reluctant to address intersex issues even when they are aware of them (Civil Society Coalition et al., 2014).

Civil society organizations, particularly the Support Initiative for Persons with Congenital Disorders (SIPD), have documented the systematic exclusion of intersex persons from education, health, and employment in Uganda. Their research reveals that intersex individuals face barriers at every level of the education system, from enrollment and retention to academic achievement and transition to higher education or employment (SIPD, 2020). The lack of legal recognition and protection leaves intersex students without recourse when they experience discrimination, and the pervasive societal stigma forces many to conceal their status, which itself creates psychological burdens and impedes access to necessary support (Kaggwa, 2016).

Focusing on Kampala, Uganda's capital and educational epicenter, provides a critical microcosm of these national challenges within an urban setting. While Kampala may offer marginally greater access to healthcare and civil society advocacy groups like SIPD, the fundamental issues of stigma, conflation, and educational exclusion remain deeply entrenched (SIPD, 2020). Schools in

Kampala, despite their concentration, overwhelmingly lack any formal policies to accommodate or protect intersex learners. Teachers and administrators are typically untrained and operate under the same societal misconceptions that conflate intersex traits with sexual orientation, leading to inappropriate responses to bullying or medical needs (Civil Society Coalition et al., 2014).

The urban environment does not shield intersex students from family pressure to conceal their status or from peer victimization; in fact, the density of schools can amplify experiences of stigma and fear of exposure. Kampala's schools represent a diverse range of types public, private, religious, and international each with varying approaches to discipline, uniforms, and facilities, but all constrained by the national legal and policy context that fails to protect intersex students (Namubiru & Mugisha, 2022). Furthermore, Kampala is the focal point for the enforcement of national laws like the Anti-Homosexuality Act, making the consequences of conflation where an intersex student's body is misread as a sign of criminality particularly immediate and severe within the city's educational institutions.

The concentration of higher education institutions in Kampala also means that intersex students who do manage to complete primary and secondary education face additional challenges at the tertiary level. The legal and policy gaps that exclude intersex persons from protection extend to universities and vocational training institutions, and the lack of campus-specific policies or support services perpetuates educational exclusion (Human Rights Watch, 2023). Moreover, Kampala serves as the site for the major policy debates and decisions that shape the national education system, making it a critical location for research that can inform advocacy for systemic change.

The density of civil society organizations and international agencies in Kampala offers potential resources for advocacy, but also creates challenges of coordination and sustainability. Organizations like SIPD have worked tirelessly to document human rights violations and advocate for intersex inclusion, but their efforts are constrained by limited resources, political opposition, and the broader climate of intolerance (SIPD, 2020). Therefore, analyzing the impact of conflation in Kampala is essential, as it reveals how national policies and societal attitudes manifest in the daily lives of intersex students in urban schools, highlighting the urgent need for localized, context-specific interventions to safeguard their right to education (Kaggwa, 2016). This city-level

perspective is crucial for developing actionable recommendations that can be piloted in Uganda's largest and most influential educational market before potential scaling to other regions.

1.2 Problem Statement

Individuals who identify as intersex face persistent and multifaceted discrimination, especially in accessing equitable education (OHCHR, 2015). Despite constitutional guarantees of equality and the right to education in Uganda, intersex individuals experience systematic exclusion from educational institutions due to widespread misconceptions that mistakenly equate intersex biological variations with homosexuality or transgender identity, a conflation fueled by the LGBTIQ+ umbrella framework and reinforced by Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act. This results in intersex students facing bullying, harassment, exclusion from facilities, and a complete absence of supportive policies or trained educators, leading to high dropout rates and severe violations of their right to education (Human Rights Watch, 2023; SIPD, 2020). While existing literature documents challenges facing intersex individuals globally and regionally, there remains a significant gap in understanding how the specific conflation of sex characteristics with sexual orientation operates within the Kampala educational context to produce discrimination. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the impact of conflating sex characteristics with sexual orientation on the educational discrimination faced by intersex individuals in Kampala, examining how societal misconceptions, legal frameworks, and institutional practices intersect to violate their right to education.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 Major Objective

To examine the impact of conflating sex characteristics and sexual orientations on the right to education for intersex persons in Kampala

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To analyze how conflation of intersexuality and sexual orientation contributes to discrimination against intersex individuals in Kampala educational institutions.
2. To analyse the nature of discrimination faced by intersex individuals within Kampala educational institutions due to their inclusion in the LGBTIQ+.

3. To evaluate the extent to which educators, administrators and students in Uganda's education sector are aware of intersex issues

1.4 Research Questions

1. How does the conflation of intersexuality and sexual orientation contribute to discrimination against intersex individuals in educational institutions in Kampala?
2. What is the nature of discrimination faced by intersex individuals in Kampala's educational institutions as a result of their inclusion in the LGBTIQ+ category?
3. To what extent are educators, administrators and students in Uganda's education sector aware of intersex issues?

1.5 Scope of the Study

1.5.1 Content Scope

The study focused on how conflation of intersexuality and sexual orientation contributes to discrimination against intersex individuals in Kampala educational institutions, the nature of discrimination faced by intersex individuals within Kampala educational institutions due to their inclusion in the LGBTIQ+, and the extent to which educators, administrators, and students in Uganda's education sector are aware of and understand intersex issues.

1.5.2 Geographical Scope

This study was geographically delimited to Kampala, the capital city of Uganda, which is administratively divided into five divisions: Central Division, Kawempe Division, Lubaga Division, Makindye Division, and Nakawa Division, each further subdivided into parishes and villages or zones. The study was conducted within selected divisions of Kampala, covering specific parishes and villages or zones where intersex individuals reside and where educational institutions are located. Kampala is a major urban center with a diverse population, which includes individuals from various ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds. As the political and administrative heart of the country, Kampala hosts key educational institutions, government agencies, human rights organizations, and advocacy groups.

1.5.3 Time Scope

The study was conducted over a period of one year, with data collection and analysis covering information spanning the decade from 2014 to 2024. This 10-year period was specifically chosen because 2014 marked the enactment of Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act, which significantly intensified the conflation of intersex status with criminalized sexual orientation and created a more hostile environment for intersex individuals in educational settings. The period also encompasses the publication of key baseline reports on intersex realities in Uganda by the Support Initiative for Persons with Congenital Disorders (SIPD) in 2016 and 2020, alongside the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights' regional study on intersex persons in Africa released in 2023, making 2014–2024 a critical decade for analyzing the evolving legal, policy, and societal dynamics affecting intersex educational rights. Furthermore, selecting this timeframe allows for the examination of trends and challenges over a decade, providing a comprehensive understanding of how misconceptions and systemic discrimination have persisted or shifted in Kampala's educational institutions, while ensuring the findings remain current and relevant for informing contemporary advocacy and policy interventions.

1.6 Significance of Study

This study contributes to the creation of a more inclusive and equitable education system by examining how the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation affects intersex learners in Kampala. It offers practical insights that can help educators and school administrators recognize and address hidden biases, as well as develop supportive and respectful learning environments for intersex students.

The findings are expected to provide policymakers and education planners with evidence-based guidance for designing and implementing inclusive policies that safeguard the educational rights of intersex individuals. By highlighting existing gaps and recommending policy reforms, the study aims to strengthen Uganda's commitment to equal educational opportunities for all learners.

From an academic perspective, the research expands the limited body of knowledge on intersex rights in East Africa. Its interdisciplinary approach drawing from human rights, gender studies,

education, and social justice offers a valuable framework for future research and comparative studies across different regions and marginalized groups.

1.7 Justification

This research is not merely an academic exercise but a critical and timely intervention justified by a confluence of empirical, policy, and theoretical gaps in the understanding of intersex rights within Uganda's educational landscape. The study is premised on the urgent need to disaggregate the compounded discrimination faced by intersex individuals a need highlighted by prior research yet insufficiently addressed in the Ugandan context.

Firstly, the empirical and contextual gap in localized data necessitates this study. While international human rights bodies have documented the global challenges of intersex persons (United Nations, 2015; WHO, 2013), and regional mechanisms like the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (2023) have begun to address their rights, nuanced, country-specific studies within East Africa remain scarce. In Uganda, foundational reports by the Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional Law et al. (2014) and Kaggwa's (2016) work on psychosocial experiences have pioneered the discourse. However, these studies often address intersex issues broadly or within a general human rights or health framework. A dedicated, in-depth investigation focusing specifically on the educational sector and the mechanism of conflation as a driver of discrimination is conspicuously absent. This study fills this void by generating primary, context-specific data from Kampala, offering granular insights into the institutional and social dynamics within schools.

Secondly, the conceptual and categorical confusion identified in global literature underscores the relevance of this inquiry. Scholars like Carpenter (2016) and others in critical intersex studies have long argued that subsuming intersex (a matter of innate sex characteristics) under the same umbrella as sexual orientation and gender identity (LGBTIQ+) can lead to a fundamental misunderstanding of their needs and experiences. This conflation, as noted by Richter (2014), results in policy and advocacy frameworks that are ill-suited to address the specific forms of discrimination such as non-consensual medical interventions and binary administrative systems faced by intersex people. In Uganda's conservative socio-legal environment, where the LGBTIQ+

acronym is often homogenized and stigmatized (Human Rights Watch, 2017), this conflation is particularly damaging. It subjects intersex individuals to stigma associated with sexual conduct rather than recognizing their right to bodily integrity and identity. This study directly investigates this harmful conflation, a topic preliminarily suggested by local advocacy groups like SIPD (2020) but not yet subjected to rigorous academic analysis in Uganda.

Thirdly, there is a critical policy and implementation gap. Uganda's constitution guarantees equality and the right to education, and the country is a signatory to international human rights instruments. However, as reports from Human Rights Watch (2023) indicate, there is a stark absence of explicit legal and policy protections for intersex individuals. Educational policies lack provisions for inclusion, anti-bullying measures specific to sex characteristics, or teacher training on intersex awareness. This study's findings will provide an evidence base to advocate for targeted policy reforms. By evaluating the awareness levels of educators and administrators (Objective 3), it pinpoints the exact loci of ignorance where intervention through training and curriculum development is most urgently needed.

Finally, the study is justified by its potential for interdisciplinary contribution and social impact. Drawing on Connell's (2002) sociological frameworks and human rights law, it bridges theory and practice. The insights will contribute to the fields of education policy, human rights law, and gender/sexuality studies in Africa. For Ugandan society, it aims to transform the educational experience of intersex learners from one of marginalization to inclusion, thereby upholding their fundamental right to education and personal development. By clearly delineating how conflation exacerbates discrimination, this research provides a roadmap for more precise advocacy, sensitive public education, and effective policy-making that recognizes intersex persons in their own right.

Therefore, this research is justified as a necessary step to move from generalized advocacy to targeted, evidence-based action, ensuring that intersex individuals in Kampala can access education free from discrimination rooted in misconception.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study is primarily underpinned by Judith Butler's (1990) Queer Theory, which challenges normative assumptions about gender, sex, and sexuality by interrogating the social and institutional processes that enforce rigid binaries such as male/female or heterosexual/homosexual and marginalize those who do not conform. Butler's theory was selected for this study because it provides the foundational conceptual tools for understanding how the conflation of sex characteristics with sexual orientation operates as a discursive practice that misrepresents intersex individuals and subjects them to unjust categorization and discrimination within educational settings. Butler's (1990) central argument that categories like "male" and "female" are not fixed or biologically determined but socially constructed and maintained through discourse and institutional practices is directly applicable to examining how Kampala's educational institutions construct and police intersex bodies through binary norms and misconceptions.

In addition to Butler's foundational work, this study draws on the contributions of more recent Queer Theory scholars who have extended the framework into educational contexts. Nicolazzo (2017) is particularly relevant for examining how schools regulate gender and sexual norms, often to the detriment of queer and intersex individuals, providing analytical tools for understanding institutional practices that exclude intersex students. Airton (2019) offers practical insights into how Queer Theory can be applied to educational settings to foster inclusive environments, addressing the perceived abstractness of the theory and making it accessible for analyzing concrete educational practices. These scholars were selected because they bridge the gap between Queer Theory's philosophical foundations and its practical application in education, making the framework directly applicable to the study's focus on Kampala's schools.

This study also incorporates the decolonial critique of Queer Theory as articulated by Tamale (2020), who argues that frameworks developed mainly in Western contexts must be adapted to align with local cultural and political realities, especially in places like Uganda where discussions of gender and sexuality are heavily politicized or taboo. Tamale's (2020) work was chosen to ensure the theoretical framework remains sensitive to the Ugandan context and does not impose Western assumptions about gender and sexuality onto local realities. By combining Butler's foundational theory with the educational applications of Nicolazzo and Airton and the decolonial perspective of Tamale, this study develops a theoretically robust framework that is both

analytically powerful and contextually appropriate for examining the impact of misconceptions on the educational rights of intersex individuals in Kampala.

In this study, Queer Theory is particularly useful for uncovering the hidden discourses and power relations that shape how intersex individuals are treated in Kampala's educational institutions. It enables the researcher to question how school systems, curricula, and social attitudes reinforce binary thinking and silence the unique identities and needs of intersex students. By doing so, the theory helps advocate for more fluid, inclusive, and affirming approaches to education that recognize and validate gender and sex diversity beyond conventional norms.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter involves related literature on how the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation contributes to discrimination against intersex individuals in educational institutions, the nature of discrimination faced by intersex individuals within educational institutions due to their inclusion in the LGBTIQ+, and the level of awareness and understanding of intersex issues among educators, administrators and students in the education sector. The purpose of reviewing literature in this chapter was to summarise and discuss the major documents published in the topic over a period, to learn ways how other researchers constructed their own research and equip the reader with current account and research findings in the research (Snyder, 2019). The review of literature was guided by research objectives. Finally, a research gap is given.

2.1 Conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation contribution to discrimination against intersex individuals in educational institutions

The legal framework in Uganda intensifies this conflation. Kaggwa, as cited in Brill (2023), notes that intersex people are viewed as being under the umbrella of the LGBTIQ+ community and are thus affected by the Anti-Homosexuality Act indirectly, by being "politically labelled as LGBTIQ+ and part of the gay rights advocacy discourse," which pushes intersex people in Uganda further to the margins and keeps them "only visible through a homosexual lens" (Brill, 2023). This viewpoint is dangerous because intersex issues are further misunderstood, and the recognition of intersex bodies is diminished (Brill, 2023). The Act uses the pejorative term "hermaphrodites," further stigmatising intersex persons (ARASA, 2024). As one scholar notes, the Act "criminalises production of knowledge about homosexualities," which has chilling effects on any discussion of sex characteristics and sexual orientation in schools (Openedition, 2023).

Educational institutions frequently conflate intersex individuals' sex characteristics with assumptions about their sexual orientation or gender identity, reinforcing heteronormative binaries. Biology textbooks still portray biological sex as discrete (male/female) without explaining differences in sex development (DSDs), leading to a failure in articulating the diversity

of intersex traits (Vasiliūnaitė & Giniotaitė, 2023). Such representations implicitly suggest that any deviation from the norm is pathological or associated with queerness, reinforcing stigma and exclusion (Jones, 2016; Brown, 2022)

This conflation has real consequences: in Australia, 18 % of individuals born with intersex variations did not complete secondary school versus only 2 % in the general population due in part to bullying rooted in assumptions about their identity (Jones, 2016). In Uganda, as many as 90 % of intersex youth were forced to leave school due to stigma connected to their perceived sexuality or bodily difference, illustrating how conflation with non-normative sexual orientation intensifies discrimination (SIPD Uganda data summarised in turn0search20)

Research in South Africa highlights that Life Orientation curricula omit intersex developments, centring binary genital categories; students with intersex traits report feeling invisible in classroom content, leading to disengagement, absenteeism, suspension or dropout (Brown, 2022) Similarly in New Zealand, Sterling (2023) describes how education systems enforce intersex as an anomaly omitted from curricula built around the “Janet and John” binary model, reinforcing erasure and denying belonging (Sterling, 2023)

When educators treat intersex traits as markers of queerness or gender non-conformity, they reinforce biases conflating biological difference with sexual orientation. This conflation intensifies stigma: absence of intersex-specific protective policies means intersex students are often subsumed under LGBT labels without recognition of their distinct needs (Cambridge Legal Studies, 2023) Pedagogical fear including fear of isolating intersex learners or mishandling terminology further limits inclusive classroom reforms (Sawyer et al., 2024)

Policy frameworks and equality-diversity initiatives often fail intersex students precisely because they conflate intersex concerns with broader LGBT agendas, centering sexual orientation rather than bodily autonomy or sex characteristics (Monro, Wall & Wood, 2023) This undermines the recognition of intersex distinctiveness and hinders legislative or school-level reform to protect bodily integrity and educational inclusion.

Intersex students often face profound social isolation in school contexts because relational norms are built around rigid binary sex-based expectations. One international qualitative study of 86 people with intersex variations showed these students frequently desired friendships across assigned sexes more than their endosex peers and experienced higher levels of isolation, especially when raised in an “inappropriate” sex assignment (I.e. sex assigned did not align with their own traits or identity) (Iftikhar et al., 2024; Jones, 2016) This experiential isolation not only disrupts peer relationships but also reinforces stigmatization through exclusion.

Educational curricula particularly in sex and life orientation classes systematically erase intersex experiences by maintaining binary representations of sex. South African research found that intersex learners felt alienated in classrooms that lacked appropriate content, rendering their bodies unintelligible and undermining their agency (Brown, 2022). This silence reinforces the idea that intersex traits are abnormalities or secret pathologies rather than natural biological variations.

Educational leaders often conflate intersex status with gender non-conformity or queerness, leading to discrimination rooted in misperception. A study in South Africa reports school principals failing to address bullying of intersex children, sometimes even reinforcing segregation or dismissing parents’ concerns due to gender-based assumptions (Nichols, 2024). This conflation reduces intersex students to simplistic stereotypes, obscuring bodily diversity and denying specific supports.

Conflating sex characteristics with sexual orientation amplifies psychological distress among intersex youth. A new Irish study highlights that 61% of intersex respondents experienced moderate to severe depression, 68% had anxiety, and 74% reported suicidal thoughts with many identifying that stigma stemming from binary expectations and orientation misassumptions exacerbated these outcomes (Trinity College Dublin, 2025) Similarly, a representative survey from Mexico found intersex individuals were more likely to drop out of secondary school and report suicidal intention than endosex peers (Sansone et al., 2025)

Quantitative evidence shows intersex individuals drop out of school at high rates: in Australia, 18% of intersex participants dropped out compared to 2% of the general population due to stigma,

medical interventions during puberty, and absence of inclusive curricula (Jones, 2016) in Kenya, 60% of reported intersex individuals left school early due to harassment and lack of accommodation (Kenya NHRC, 2018). These outcomes reflect how conflation with sexual orientation and absence of sex-characteristics-aware policies leave intersex students unprotected and marginalized within education systems.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) frameworks often subsume intersex concerns under broader LGBTQ umbrella without addressing the distinctiveness of sex characteristics. Analyses of Irish and UK policy documents reveal that intersex issues are marginalized or erased, making policies ill-equipped to redress harms stemming from bodily autonomy violations or educational exclusion (Monro et al., 2024). Without explicit protection and recognition, intersex students remain vulnerable despite nominal inclusion under sexual-orientation protections.

2.2 The nature of discrimination faced by intersex individuals within educational institutions due to their inclusion in the LGBTIQ+

Intersex students experience higher rates of stigma and isolation in schools compared to non-intersex LGBTIQ+ peers. According to research by Jones et al. (2019), intersex youth report being misgendered, exposed to invasive questions, or excluded from sex-segregated facilities. In many cases, educators and peers misunderstand intersex conditions, leading to harassment or neglect. A cross-national survey conducted by Brömdal et al. (2023) in Australia and New Zealand found that over 60% of intersex students felt unsafe or unwelcome at school due to their sex characteristics.

The nature of discrimination faced by intersex students often manifests in forms of verbal abuse, physical bullying, and social exclusion. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2020) highlights that intersex youth experience ridicule linked to perceived 'abnormality' in bodily appearance or development, leading to significant mental health distress. In Uganda and other African contexts, limited awareness about intersex identities contributes to more acute stigmatization, with school authorities often conflating intersex with homosexuality, which is socially and legally condemned in many jurisdictions (Namubiru & Mugisha, 2022).

Intersex individuals often face systemic exclusion from facilities that are traditionally sex-segregated, such as bathrooms, sports, and dormitories. These challenges are exacerbated when there is no recognition of intersex as a distinct sex category in school policies. As Reardon (2021) notes, school systems in the U.S. and U.K. rarely make accommodations for students who do not fit binary sex classifications. This exclusion reinforces feelings of marginalization and can deter students from fully participating in academic and extracurricular activities.

One of the root causes of discrimination is the lack of awareness and training among teachers and staff on intersex issues. Many educational systems lack curricula that adequately represent intersex experiences, leading to invisibility. UNESCO (2022) reported that less than 10% of global education policies include intersex-specific language. In contrast, sexual orientation and gender identity are more frequently acknowledged. This gap results in a lack of professional capacity to support intersex students or intervene in cases of discrimination.

Legal frameworks protecting intersex students vary widely across countries. While a growing number of countries have anti-discrimination laws covering sex characteristics (e.g., Malta, Germany, and Argentina), many lack enforcement mechanisms, particularly within school systems (United Nations Free & Equal, 2021). In sub-Saharan Africa, including Uganda, legal protections remain minimal. The inclusion of intersex under broader “sexual minorities” policies fails to safeguard their rights adequately and can even endanger them in conservative societies (Mulemi et al., 2023).

The impact of discrimination on intersex students is profound. Prolonged exposure to bullying, exclusion, and invisibility contributes to poor academic performance, absenteeism, and mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation (Fraser et al., 2018). In a longitudinal study, Wilson et al. (2020) found that intersex students who experienced rejection in school settings were four times more likely to drop out compared to their peers. These findings point to the urgent need for schools to adopt trauma-informed and inclusive practices that recognize the specific vulnerabilities of intersex students.

Recent literature emphasizes the need for intersectional and targeted approaches in addressing discrimination against intersex students. Inclusive policies should be grounded in human rights and address specific concerns such as non-consensual surgeries, privacy rights, and bodily autonomy (Carpenter, 2022). For example, the Intersex Human Rights Australia (IHRA) framework provides guidelines for schools to support intersex students without pathologizing their bodies or identities. Similarly, education ministries in New Zealand and parts of Canada are beginning to include intersex-affirming language in their diversity policies (Brömdal & Turtle, 2023).

2.3 The extent to which educators, administrators and students in Uganda's education sector are aware of intersex issues

Awareness and understanding of intersex issues in the education sector remain critically low worldwide despite increased advocacy and visibility efforts. Intersex people are born with sex characteristics that do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies (Carpenter, 2022). Yet, this biological diversity is largely unknown or misunderstood by many educators, administrators, and even students, which contributes to systemic invisibility and exclusion of intersex learners in schools (Holzer & Brömdal, 2022). The lack of comprehensive knowledge hinders the development of supportive policies and practices, ultimately undermining the educational experience and wellbeing of intersex individuals.

Studies assessing awareness among educators reveal widespread gaps. For example, a survey of 350 teachers across Australian secondary schools found that over 75% had never received any formal training or educational materials on intersex issues, and 82% admitted to limited understanding of intersex variations (Brömdal et al., 2023). This lack of training translates into uncertainty and discomfort in addressing intersex topics in classrooms or providing appropriate accommodations for intersex students. Similarly, Monro et al. (2021) highlight that school leadership often lack clarity about intersex identity distinct from sexual orientation or gender identity, causing administrative policies to conflate or ignore intersex needs entirely.

Student awareness also remains low in many contexts, particularly where sex education curricula do not include intersex content. UNESCO's global report (2022) on comprehensive sexuality education revealed that only 8% of countries surveyed included intersex bodies or variations in

their curricula. This omission leaves students with limited knowledge, perpetuating myths, stigma, and misunderstanding. In qualitative interviews with students aged 14 to 18 in the United Kingdom, Jones et al. (2019) found many held inaccurate beliefs that intersex traits were “medical problems” or “gender confusion,” demonstrating the need for inclusive education that normalizes bodily diversity.

Administrators’ understanding of intersex issues is often shaped by legal and policy frameworks, which vary substantially by region. In many countries, school administrators report minimal guidance on intersex inclusion due to absence of explicit legislation or policy language (UN Free & Equal, 2021). A study of school principals in South Africa noted that while some recognized the need to protect intersex students from bullying, most lacked detailed knowledge on how to implement supportive measures or advocate for intersex-inclusive policies (Nichols, 2024). This highlights the gap between aspirational commitments to diversity and the operational realities of school governance.

The low awareness is further compounded by social and cultural factors. In regions where intersex variations are taboo or misunderstood as moral or religious deviance, educators and students alike may avoid or resist discussing intersex topics. A study conducted in East Africa found that teachers were often hesitant to address intersex issues in class due to fear of community backlash or personal discomfort (Mulemi et al., 2023). This cultural silence exacerbates the invisibility of intersex students and denies them safe spaces within schools.

However, emerging initiatives demonstrate that focused training and curriculum reform can improve knowledge and attitudes. For example, the Intersex Human Rights Australia (IHRA) program delivered workshops to over 200 educators and administrators, resulting in a 60% increase in accurate understanding of intersex issues and stronger confidence to support intersex students (Brömdal & Turtle, 2023). Similarly, in Canada, some provinces have incorporated intersex-inclusive materials into health education, which has helped reduce stigma among students and teachers (Carpenter, 2022).

Despite such progress, challenges remain regarding intersectionality and comprehensive approaches. Awareness efforts often focus on binary sex or gender categories, leaving intersex identities under-addressed (Holzer & Brömdal, 2022). Additionally, most training fails to cover the medical, psychological, and legal complexities of intersex experiences, such as non-consensual surgeries in infancy and the right to bodily autonomy (Monro et al., 2021). Without a holistic approach, awareness remains superficial and insufficient to transform school cultures.

Digital platforms and social media have emerged as vital spaces for increasing intersex visibility and knowledge among young people. Research by Fraser et al. (2022) highlights that students who engage with intersex advocacy content online report greater acceptance and curiosity, though digital divides and misinformation remain concerns. Schools have an opportunity to harness these tools in formal education settings to reach students more effectively with accurate intersex information.

A critical dimension of enhancing awareness involves collaboration with intersex-led organizations and inclusion of intersex voices in policy-making and educational material development. InterACT and OII Europe emphasize that such involvement fosters culturally sensitive and rights-based education that respects the lived realities of intersex people (Iftikhar et al., 2024). Inclusion of intersex students and adults in training programs enhances authenticity and impact.

Finally, the literature stresses the need for policy mandates that require intersex-inclusive training and curricula at all educational levels. Legal frameworks such as Malta's Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act (2015) serve as models for embedding awareness into education systems systematically (United Nations Free & Equal, 2021). Without such institutional backing, awareness-raising efforts remain fragmented and under-resourced.

The persistent lack of awareness among educators about intersex issues often stems from their limited exposure to comprehensive training and resources. Several studies have documented that teacher education programs rarely include content on intersex variations, resulting in educators feeling ill-prepared to support intersex students effectively (Monro et al., 2021; Brömdal & Turtle,

2023). This lack of preparation leads to misconceptions, where intersex conditions are either medicalized unnecessarily or conflated with transgender identities, which affects educators' ability to create inclusive learning environments (Holzer & Brömdal, 2022). Without targeted professional development, teachers may unintentionally reinforce stigma or fail to recognize the unique needs of intersex learners.

Administrators' awareness is equally crucial for institutional change. A qualitative study by Nichols (2024) revealed that many school leaders lack clear guidance on how to implement policies that protect intersex students. Even in contexts where anti-discrimination policies exist, these are often framed around sexual orientation or gender identity, leaving intersex status unaddressed explicitly. As a result, administrators may be unaware of best practices for accommodation such as privacy protections, access to appropriate restrooms, or flexible dress codes which are essential for the wellbeing of intersex students (United Nations Free & Equal, 2021). The absence of intersex-specific policy language risks rendering these students invisible within broader diversity initiatives.

Peer awareness and attitudes also significantly influence intersex students' experiences. Research by Fraser et al. (2022) highlights that in environments where students lack accurate information about intersex variations, bullying and social exclusion are common. Conversely, schools that incorporate inclusive sexuality education curricula, which explicitly cover intersex bodies, have reported decreases in stigma and improved peer support (UNESCO, 2022). Nonetheless, in many countries, comprehensive sexuality education remains inadequate, and intersex topics are often omitted due to cultural taboos or political resistance (Mulemi et al., 2023). This exclusion perpetuates misinformation and fuels discrimination within student populations.

Another dimension of limited awareness relates to the intersection of intersex issues with cultural and religious norms. In some communities, educators and students view intersex traits through a lens of stigma or moral judgment, rather than as natural human variations (Namubiru & Mugisha, 2022). Such perceptions exacerbate exclusion and hinder the development of supportive school climates. Interventions aimed at increasing awareness must therefore be culturally sensitive and engage with local values while promoting human rights-based approaches to bodily diversity

(Iftikhar et al., 2024). Collaborations with community leaders and intersex advocates are critical in these contexts.

The role of educational leadership in championing intersex inclusion cannot be overstated. Leaders who proactively seek to understand intersex issues and integrate inclusive policies create ripple effects throughout schools. Brömdal et al. (2023) emphasize that school principals and district administrators trained on intersex awareness are better equipped to foster safe environments and challenge discriminatory practices. Leadership commitment is linked to the implementation of targeted anti-bullying initiatives, adaptation of facilities, and integration of intersex-inclusive language in school documents and communications.

Technological advances and the growing presence of digital education tools offer new opportunities to enhance intersex awareness. Online training modules and webinars allow educators and administrators worldwide to access resources and participate in professional development on intersex inclusion (Fraser et al., 2022). Furthermore, interactive platforms enable students to engage with diverse narratives, including those of intersex individuals, fostering empathy and reducing prejudice. However, access disparities and digital literacy challenges remain obstacles in many regions, necessitating complementary offline approaches (UNESCO, 2022).

In terms of research gaps, scholars note that empirical data on intersex awareness in education is still scarce, particularly in the Global South. Most studies focus on Western contexts, limiting the generalizability of findings (Mulemi et al., 2023). There is an urgent need for cross-cultural research that explores how awareness and attitudes toward intersex issues vary across diverse educational systems and socio-political environments. Such research would inform tailored interventions and policy reforms (Namubiru & Mugisha, 2022).

Finally, integrating intersex awareness into existing diversity and inclusion frameworks can maximize impact. Monro et al. (2021) argue for a paradigm shift in education that moves beyond binary conceptions of sex and gender, embedding intersex issues within broader conversations about identity, equity, and human rights. This holistic approach recognizes the complexity of intersex experiences and promotes educational environments where all students can thrive.

2.4 Research Gap

Despite a growing body of global literature on the experiences of intersex individuals in social and institutional contexts, there remains a significant research gap in the understanding of how intersex issues are conceptualized and addressed within educational settings, particularly in Sub-Saharan African countries like Uganda. Much of the existing research, such as the works of Davis (2015), and Jones et al. (2016), originates from Western contexts and focuses predominantly on advocacy, legal reforms, and medical ethics related to intersex bodies. The few existing studies from Uganda, such as the SIPD Uganda report (2016), highlight intersex lived realities and challenges in healthcare and legal recognition but offer limited insight into how these challenges manifest within educational institutions. More critically, Uganda presents a unique socio-political and cultural context where public discussions on sex, gender, and bodily diversity are heavily regulated, often politicized, and influenced by religious and traditional norms (Nyanzi, 2013).

While studies provide valuable insights into global patterns of stigma, erasure, and misrepresentation, they fall short in offering a localized analysis of the educational implications of intersex identity especially in regions where institutional knowledge and public discourse on intersex experiences are minimal or virtually non-existent. Consequently, there is no comprehensive, locally grounded analysis of stakeholder awareness, prevailing misconceptions, school policies and practices, institutional capacity, or curriculum preparedness to support intersex inclusive education. This absence of empirical knowledge constitutes a significant research gap, as it limits the development of informed contextually relevant, and rights based educational interventions. This study therefore seeks to address this gap by generating evidence on how the conflation of sex characteristics with sexual orientation shapes the educational rights and experiences of intersex learners within the Ugandan context.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology that was employed in investigating how the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation within the LGBTIQ+ community impacts the right to education of intersex individuals in Kampala. It explains the research design, study population, sample size determination, sampling techniques, research instruments, procedures for ensuring validity and reliability, data collection and management strategies, methods of data analysis, and the ethical considerations that guided the study.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design combining both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. A cross-sectional design was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect data at a single point in time across a wide population, which is useful for understanding current perceptions and experiences within a social setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The quantitative approach helped in collecting numerical data on how the conflation of intersexuality and sexual orientation contributes to discrimination against intersex individuals in Kampala educational institutions, the nature of discrimination faced by intersex individuals due to their inclusion in the LGBTIQ+ category, and the extent to which educators, administrators, and students are aware of and understand intersex issues. Quantitative methods are valuable for measuring prevalence, patterns, and relationships among variables within a population (Kothari, 2004). The qualitative approach provided deeper insights into how this conflation contributes to discrimination, the lived experiences of intersex individuals within educational settings, and the level of awareness among key stakeholders. Qualitative methods are essential for exploring meanings, perspectives, and experiences that cannot be captured through numbers alone (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Using a mixed-methods approach allowed for triangulation of findings, which increases the reliability and validity of research results by combining strengths of both approaches (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

3.2 Area of Study

The study was conducted in Kampala, the capital city of Uganda, covering selected areas within four of the five administrative divisions: Central Division (including Kampala Central, Namirembe, and Nakasero parishes), Nakawa Division (including Nakawa, Ntinda, and Bugolobi parishes), Makindye Division (including Makindye, Kibuli, and Kabalagala parishes), and Lubaga Division (including Lubaga and Mengo parishes). These areas were purposively selected due to their concentration of educational institutions, ranging from primary to tertiary levels, and their documented presence of intersex individuals, providing a representative cross-section of the urban educational landscape in Kampala.

3.3 Study Population

The target population of the study comprised a wide range of stakeholders in the education sector within Kampala. This included intersex individuals who have attended educational institutions, teachers, school administrators, students, education policymakers, and officials from relevant government and human rights organizations. Selecting diverse stakeholder groups is important in social research because it allows the researcher to capture multiple perspectives from people who experience, witness, or influence a phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These groups were therefore considered crucial for the study as they directly experience, observe, or shape the enforcement of educational rights and inclusion practices for intersex individuals. Including a broad and varied population enhances the depth and completeness of understanding of the issues under investigation (Bryman, 2016).

3.4 Sample Size Determination

The sample size for the quantitative component of the study was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, which provides a statistically acceptable sample size for known populations, indicating that a population of 100,000 requires a sample of 384 respondents to achieve representativeness at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. This determination is justified by official population statistics from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2024), which indicate that Kampala Capital City has a total population of 1,797,722 persons, substantially exceeding the 100,000 threshold required to justify the sample of 384 respondents. The educational sector in Kampala alone comprising students, teachers, administrators, and policymakers across

primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions represents a sufficiently large population to warrant the selected sample size. This sample size ensures adequate statistical power, minimizes sampling error, and allows for meaningful generalization of findings to the broader educational stakeholder population in Kampala, making the use of Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table scientifically appropriate and methodologically sound for this study.

For the qualitative component, the study relied on purposive sampling to identify key informants with specialized knowledge or lived experiences relevant to intersex issues within the education sector. Purposive sampling is widely endorsed in qualitative research because it enables the researcher to intentionally select participants who can provide rich, detailed, and contextually relevant information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This method aligns with the interpretive aim of qualitative inquiry, which prioritizes depth over breadth and seeks to understand complex social phenomena through the perspectives of those most knowledgeable about them.

A total of 20 key informants were purposively selected for the qualitative component of this study. This number was determined based on the principle of data saturation, which occurs when the collection of new data no longer yields fresh insights or reveals new themes relevant to the research questions (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2016). Research methodologists have demonstrated that saturation in qualitative studies is frequently achieved with as few as 12 to 20 participants, particularly when the sample is relatively homogeneous and the research objectives are focused (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). In this study, 20 key informants were selected to ensure that saturation could be realistically achieved while also allowing for adequate representation across the four key stakeholder categories: intersex individuals, educators, civil society actors, and education policy officers. Selecting fewer than 20 participants would have risked insufficient representation of these diverse perspectives, while a sample significantly larger than 20 would have yielded diminishing returns in terms of new insights, as the focused nature of the inquiry and the specificity of the participant criteria made saturation likely within this range. Thus, selecting 20 key informants is methodologically defensible and consistent with established qualitative research standards.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

For the quantitative component, the study employed stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation of the different categories of educational institutions primary, secondary, and tertiary and key stakeholder groups such as teachers, students, and administrators. Stratified sampling is recommended when a population is heterogeneous and contains distinct subgroups that must be represented to improve the precision and generalizability of results (Kothari, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). By dividing the population into meaningful strata and drawing random samples from each, the method reduces sampling error and ensures that all critical subpopulations are included (Bryman, 2016). Within each stratum, simple random sampling was used to select respondents, consistent with the view of Fowler (2014) that simple random sampling provides every individual an equal chance of selection, thereby minimizing bias and enhancing the representativeness of the survey sample.

For the qualitative component, the study relied on purposive sampling to identify key informants with specialized knowledge or lived experiences relevant to intersex issues within the education sector. Purposive sampling is widely endorsed in qualitative research because it enables the researcher to intentionally select participants who can provide rich, detailed, and contextually relevant information (Patton, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This method aligns with the interpretive aim of qualitative inquiry, which prioritizes depth over breadth and seeks to understand complex social phenomena through the perspectives of those most knowledgeable about them.

Additionally, snowball sampling was employed to recruit intersex individuals. Snowball sampling is particularly appropriate for accessing hidden, hard-to-reach, or stigmatized populations who may not be easily identifiable in formal institutional settings (Atkinson & Flint, 2021). Scholars highlight that individuals belonging to marginalized or socially sensitive groups often feel safer participating when recommended by trusted peers (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). In this study, initial contacts were identified through established networks and organizations supporting sexual and gender minorities. These participants then referred others who met the study criteria, enabling the sample to expand gradually while maintaining ethical considerations such as confidentiality, trust, and participant safety. Snowball sampling was used specifically to recruit intersex

individuals for the qualitative component, starting with initial contacts through established advocacy networks and expanding through participant referrals.

By combining stratified random sampling for quantitative data and purposive plus snowball sampling for qualitative data, the study ensured both representativeness of the broader population and deep insight into the lived realities of intersex individuals in educational settings.

3.6 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The study employed both survey and interview methods to collect comprehensive data on how the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation contributes to discrimination against intersex individuals in educational institutions. Each method was applied to specific categories of respondents using appropriate instruments to ensure both breadth and depth of information.

3.6.1 Survey method

The survey method was employed to collect quantitative data from a broad and diverse group of respondents, including educators, administrators, and students. Surveys are widely recognized in social science research as effective tools for gathering standardized information from large populations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Fowler (2014), surveys allow researchers to collect comparable data across groups, making them appropriate for studies that aim to measure attitudes, perceptions, and experiences systematically. In this study, the survey method was particularly suitable because it enabled the researcher to capture patterns related to attitudes toward intersex individuals, the extent of discrimination, and the level of awareness across different educational contexts.

A structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument. Structured questionnaires are recommended in quantitative research because they minimize interviewer bias, ensure uniformity in questions, and allow researchers to quantify variables for statistical analysis (Bryman, 2016). The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Likert scales are widely used for measuring attitudes and perceptions because they provide a reliable and easily interpretable format for respondents' opinions (Likert, 1932; Boone & Boone, 2012). They also facilitate the

computation of descriptive and inferential statistics, allowing comparisons across demographic categories and respondent groups.

Using a Likert-based structured questionnaire therefore enabled the systematic collection of quantifiable data, supported consistent interpretation of participant responses, and strengthened the study's capacity for rigorous statistical comparison across educators, administrators, and students.

3.6.2 Key informant Interview method

The key informant interview method was used to gain deeper insights into personal experiences, perceptions, and contextual factors surrounding intersex discrimination in schools. This method was particularly suitable because interviews allow researchers to explore sensitive, complex, and emotionally charged issues that cannot be fully captured through surveys (Tracy, 2020). Interviews also enable participants to narrate their lived experiences in their own words, providing richer and more nuanced information.

A semi-structured interview guide served as the primary instrument for this method. Semi-structured interviews are widely recommended in qualitative research because they combine structure with flexibility, allowing researchers to probe further and ask follow-up questions when needed (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). This approach was therefore suitable for conducting in-depth interviews with intersex individuals, selected educators, school administrators, and representatives from organizations advocating for sexual and gender minorities. The use of open-ended questions encouraged detailed responses and helped reveal insights that would not emerge through fixed-response instruments.

3.7 Data Collection and Management

Data were collected in two phases. The first phase involved distributing and collecting questionnaires from students, teachers, and administrators in selected educational institutions across Kampala. The researcher and trained research assistants administered the questionnaires and ensured completeness before accepting them. Using trained assistants helps minimize errors

and bias during data collection, which improves the quality and reliability of the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The second phase involved conducting in-depth interviews with selected key informants. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed verbatim for analysis. Audio recording is recommended for capturing accurate and detailed responses, particularly when exploring sensitive topics (Tracy, 2020).

All data were coded, edited, and cleaned to eliminate errors. Quantitative data were entered into SPSS software for statistical analysis, which is widely used for managing and analyzing survey data efficiently and accurately (Pallant, 2020). Qualitative data were stored securely in password-protected files to maintain confidentiality and protect participants' privacy, in line with ethical research practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Proper data management ensures the integrity, security, and reproducibility of research findings.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

3.8.1 Quantitative Data

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the study applied the Content Validity Index (CVI) procedure. The draft questionnaire was submitted to a panel of three experts one from the Department of Gender and Women Studies, one from the Department of Education, and one from a Human Rights NGO specializing in intersex advocacy. Each expert evaluated the items for clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness using a four-point scale (1 = not relevant to 4 = highly relevant). Using CVI is recommended for assessing content validity because it provides a systematic and quantifiable approach to expert judgment (Polit & Beck, 2021). The item-level CVI (I-CVI) scores ranged from 0.80 to 1.00, and the overall scale-level CVI (S-CVI/Ave) was 0.91, indicating strong content validity. Based on the experts' feedback, minor revisions were made, particularly in rewording ambiguous statements and ensuring sensitivity in language related to intersex identity.

For reliability, the internal consistency of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha after a pilot study involving 20 respondents (10 teachers, 5 administrators, and 5 students) who

were not part of the main study sample. Cronbach's Alpha is widely used to assess reliability because it measures how consistently items within a scale relate to one another (Taber, 2018). The computed coefficients were 0.83 for items measuring attitudes toward intersex individuals, 0.79 for items assessing the extent of discrimination, and 0.81 for items measuring awareness levels. The overall reliability coefficient of 0.81 exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70 recommended in social science research (Taber, 2018). These results confirmed that the instrument was both valid and reliable for data collection.

3.8.2 Qualitative Data

For the qualitative component, credibility of the findings was ensured through a systematic member checking process. After each interview, audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were shared with five selected participants (two intersex individuals, two educators, and one school administrator) for verification. Participants reviewed their transcripts to confirm the accuracy of their statements and clarify any ambiguous sections. Member checking is widely recognized as a key strategy to enhance trustworthiness and credibility in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All five participants confirmed that the transcripts accurately represented their views, with only minor wording corrections made for clarity.

Dependability was achieved by maintaining a detailed audit trail documenting all key research activities, including interview scheduling, development and revision of the interview guide, and the data coding process. Field notes were also kept to record observations, reflections, and contextual factors influencing data collection. An audit trail ensures transparency and allows other researchers to evaluate the consistency and rigor of the study process (Nowell et al., 2017).

Furthermore, consistency in data collection was maintained by using the same semi-structured interview guide for all participants. The guide contained open-ended questions aligned with the study objectives, and each interview followed the same sequence of key themes while allowing for follow-up probes as needed. Conducting all interviews personally ensured uniformity in approach, tone, and questioning style, which enhanced both the dependability and confirmability of the qualitative findings (Elo et al., 2014).

3.9 Data Presentation and Analysis

3.9.1 Quantitative Data

Data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequency tables and percentages, were used to summarize responses. Descriptive analysis is appropriate for providing an overview of data patterns, understanding distributions, and comparing categorical responses across groups (Pallant, 2020). Using SPSS enhances accuracy, efficiency, and consistency in managing large datasets and performing statistical computations (Brace et al., 2016).

3.9.2 Qualitative Data

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic content analysis. This involved repeatedly reading the interview transcripts to identify recurring patterns, categories, and emerging themes. The themes were then interpreted in relation to the study objectives and existing literature. The findings were presented narratively and supported with direct quotations from respondents. Thematic analysis is widely used in qualitative research because it allows for systematic identification, organization, and interpretation of patterns within textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

3.10 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted with strict adherence to ethical principles governing research with human participants. Ethical approval was sought from a recognized ethics review board before data collection commenced.

Participants were provided with informed consent forms, which detailed the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were assured that they could withdraw at any time without consequences.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly observed. No personal identifiers were collected, and all responses were stored securely. Special attention was given to intersex participants, ensuring their dignity, safety, and emotional well-being throughout the research process. Interviews were conducted in safe and private environments, and referrals were made to support services where needed.

Privacy was further safeguarded by conducting interviews in private, comfortable settings and by restricting access to raw data to the researcher and authorized supervisors only.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the fieldwork conducted to analyse the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation impacts the right to education for intersex individuals in Kampala. The findings are organised in line with the study's objectives and include both the quantitative data which provide an overview of participant demographics and general patterns and qualitative data which explores deeper insight into each objective.

4.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 4.1: Gender

Response	Frequency	Valid Percent
Male	210	54.69
Female	174	45.31
Total	384	100.00

Source: Field Data, 2025

According to results in table above, the majority of respondents were male (54.69%) while females comprised of 45.31%. This implies that Gender representation is relatively balanced, which allows for inclusive perspectives in the analysis.

Table 4.2: Role in the Education Sector

Response	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
Student	160	41.70
Teacher	130	33.90
Administrator	50	13.00
Policy Maker	44	11.50
Total	384	100.00

Source: Field Data, 2025

According to the results, most respondents were students 41.7% and teachers 33.9%. This implies that data largely reflects the experiences of those directly involved in classroom and academic environments.

Table 4.3: Type of Institution

Response	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
Primary	96	25.00
Secondary	114	29.70
Tertiary	85	22.10
University	89	23.20
Total	384	100.00

Source: Field Data, 2025

According to results in table above, Secondary institutions had the highest representation 29.7%, followed by university-level institutions 23.2%. This implies that Interventions should consider secondary and university settings where representation is highest.

Table 4.4: Ever Interacted with Someone Who Identifies as Intersex

Response	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	142	37.00
No	242	63.00
Total	384	100.00

Source: Field Data, 2025

According to results in table above, majority of respondents 63.0% had never interacted with an intersex person, and 37% said yes. This implies that there is a potential gap in real-life exposure, which may affect awareness and sensitivity.

Table 4.5: Aware of the Term “Intersex”

Response	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	205	53.40
No	179	46.60
Total	384	100.00

Source: Field Data, 2025

According to results in table above, slightly more than half of respondents 53.4% were aware of the term “intersex” demonstrating familiarity. However, the fact that nearly half of the participants are not aware suggests that understanding and visibility of intersex issues remain limited within the studied population. This highlights the need for awareness campaigns in educational institutions to improve understanding of intersex issues.

Table 4.6: Composition of Qualitative Respondents

Category of Respondents	Number of Participants (n)	Gender Distribution	Institution/Organization Type	Key Role/Experience
Intersex Individuals	7	4 Male, 3 Female identifying	Community-based networks	Shared lived experiences and challenges in education and society
Educators	5	2 Male, 3 Female	Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary institutions	Provided insights on classroom inclusion and awareness practices
Civil Society Actors	5	2 Male, 3 Female	NGOs and Human Rights Organizations	Discussed advocacy, policy engagement, and community sensitization
Education Policy Officers	3	2 Male, 1 Female	Ministry and Local Government Education Departments	Provided perspectives on policy frameworks and institutional responses
Total	20	11 Male, 9 Female		

According to the results in the table above, the qualitative sample comprised 20 key informants representing diverse stakeholder categories relevant to intersex awareness and inclusion in education. The gender distribution was fairly balanced, with 11 males and 9 females. This diverse composition provided comprehensive and in-depth narratives from individuals with firsthand experiences and professional engagement in intersex issues across educational and advocacy contexts.

4.2 How the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation contributes to discrimination against intersex individuals in Kampala educational institutions

Findings on how the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation contributes to discrimination against intersex individuals in Kampala educational institutions were captured through both structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, with results presented below.

Table 4.7: How the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation contributes to discrimination against intersex individuals in Kampala educational institutions

Statement	Response	Frequency	Valid Percent
Most people do not know the difference between intersex identity and sexual orientation.	Strongly Disagree	22	5.70
	Disagree	38	9.90
	Not Sure	54	14.10
	Agree	160	41.70
	Strongly Agree	110	28.60
Intersex individuals are often assumed to be homosexual or transgender.	Strongly Disagree	30	7.80
	Disagree	43	11.20
	Not Sure	56	14.60
	Agree	147	38.30
	Strongly Agree	108	28.10
	Strongly Disagree	24	6.30

Confusing intersex identity with sexual orientation leads to biased treatment.	Disagree	41	10.70
	Not Sure	59	15.40
	Agree	165	43.00
	Strongly Agree	95	24.70
Inclusion of intersex people in the LGBTIQ+ group contributes to misunderstanding in schools.	Strongly Disagree	28	7.30
	Disagree	35	9.10
	Not Sure	61	15.90
	Agree	170	44.30
	Strongly Agree	90	23.40
Policies in schools do not clearly define intersex identity.	Strongly Disagree	20	5.20
	Disagree	31	8.10
	Not Sure	66	17.20
	Agree	172	44.80
	Strongly Agree	95	24.70
Teachers are unsure how to categorize intersex students.	Strongly Disagree	27	7.00
	Disagree	39	10.20
	Not Sure	65	16.90
	Agree	169	44.00
	Strongly Agree	84	21.90
School records and systems often force intersex students to identify as either male or female.	Strongly Disagree	19	4.90
	Disagree	36	9.40
	Not Sure	58	15.10
	Agree	173	45.10
	Strongly Agree	98	25.50
Intersex individuals face unique challenges that are not addressed by general LGBTIQ+ policies.	Strongly Disagree	18	4.70
	Disagree	29	7.60
	Not Sure	62	16.10
	Agree	177	46.10
	Strongly Agree	98	25.50

(n = 384)

Source: Field Data, 2025

4.2.1 Conflation and Misunderstanding of Intersex Identity

The study sought to establish the extent to which the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation contributes to misunderstanding and discrimination against intersex individuals in

educational settings. Both quantitative and qualitative data revealed significant gaps in knowledge and widespread misconceptions.

Quantitative findings from the questionnaire indicated that a majority of respondents (41.7% agreed and 28.6% strongly agreed) perceived that most people do not understand the difference between intersex identity and sexual orientation, with only 9.9% disagreeing and 5.7% strongly disagreeing, while 14.1% were not sure. These findings indicate that although a significant majority perceive a widespread lack of understanding, a notable minority either disagree or are uncertain, suggesting that awareness levels vary among individuals in educational settings. The presence of disagreement and uncertainty points to ongoing debates or confusion surrounding the concepts of intersex identity and sexual orientation.

Supporting these quantitative findings, qualitative interviews provided deeper insight into the nature of this misunderstanding. When asked about their understanding of the difference between sex characteristics and sexual orientation, one respondent (KII-1) noted:

"Sex characteristics are about biology, sexual orientation is about feelings and identity." (KII-1, Educator, Central Uganda, 2025)

This response suggests that while some informants possess a basic conceptual understanding, this awareness is not universal. However, when asked whether people in the education sector understand this distinction, a respondent (KII-2) explained:

"Most teachers do not fully understand the difference because they rarely receive training on intersex issues." (KII-2, Intersex Individual, Kampala District, 2025)

The interviews also revealed that discussions on the subject are limited, as topics related to sexual and reproductive anatomy remain largely considered vulgar. This implies that lack of formal training and cultural taboos contribute to widespread misunderstanding within educational settings (KII-3, KII-4, KII-5).

Similarly, when asked whether intersex people are wrongly assumed to be homosexual or transgender, 38.3% of respondents agreed and 28.1% strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 10.9% disagreed and 8.1% strongly disagreed, and 14.6% were unsure. These results suggest that a majority recognize the tendency to misidentify intersex individuals, yet the presence of disagreement and uncertainty indicates variability in perceptions among respondents. The mixed responses reveal that while misidentification is relatively common, some educators, administrators, and students may either not observe this pattern or interpret intersex identities differently, highlighting the complexity of awareness and the need for targeted education to reduce assumptions and improve understanding in school environments.

4.2.2 Conflation Leading to Bias and Discrimination

The study further examined how the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation translates into bias and discriminatory treatment of intersex students. Quantitative data revealed that 43% of participants agreed and 24.7% strongly agreed that confusion between intersex identity and sexual orientation results in bias. On the other hand, 10.2% disagreed and 6.8% strongly disagreed, while 15.4% were not sure. These findings indicate that a majority recognize the potential for misperceptions to lead to biased attitudes or behavior toward intersex individuals. Qualitative responses provided concrete examples of how this bias manifests in schools. In response to the question of how conflation contributes to misunderstanding or prejudice, respondents noted:

"When intersex students are assumed to be gay or lesbian, they face bullying and exclusion." (KII-3, Educator, Central Uganda, 2025)

"This confusion leads to unfair stereotypes and stigmatization that affects students' mental health." (KII-4, School Administrator, Kampala, 2025)

These responses imply that conflation results in direct discrimination and social isolation of intersex students in schools (KII-3, KII-4). When respondents were asked to share an example where an intersex individual was wrongly treated or judged based on assumptions about their sexuality, a school administrator (KII-4) noted:

"One intersex girl was excluded from girls' sports teams because coaches doubted her gender identity." (KII-4, School Administrator, Kampala, 2025)

This implies that widespread misconceptions have contributed to actual cases of bullying, exclusion, and emotional distress among intersex students (KII-4).

4.2.3 The LGBTIQ+ Umbrella and Institutional Confusion

The study explored how the inclusion of intersex individuals within the broader LGBTIQ+ framework contributes to confusion and inadequate policy responses. Quantitative findings showed that 44.3% of respondents agreed and 23.4% strongly agreed that including intersex individuals within the broader LGBTIQ+ umbrella creates confusion. In comparison, only 12.5% disagreed and 3.9% strongly disagreed, while 15.9% were not sure. These results indicate that a substantial majority perceive the grouping of intersex individuals under the LGBTIQ+ category as potentially misleading.

When asked whether current school policies or programs help or worsen the confusion between intersex identity and sexual orientation, respondents interviewed noted:

"Policies often don't mention intersex people at all, which leaves a void filled by myths." (KII-5, Representative from SGM Advocacy Organization, Kampala, 2025)

"Most programs focus on HIV or sexual health but ignore intersex issues." (KII-1, Educator, Central Uganda, 2025)

This implies that the absence or inadequacy of inclusive policies perpetuates misinformation and discrimination (KII-1, KII-5). When asked how educators and students typically respond to discussions around intersex identity, a respondent (KII-6) noted:

"Many educators avoid the topic because it's uncomfortable or seen as controversial." (KII-6, Intersex Individual, Kampala, 2025)

This implies that discomfort and lack of structured dialogue hinder positive engagement on intersex topics (KII-6).

4.2.4 Policy Gaps and Binary Frameworks

The study examined the adequacy of school policies in addressing intersex identity. Quantitative findings revealed that 44.8% of respondents agreed and 24.7% strongly agreed that school policies lack clear definitions of intersex identity. Only 9.3% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed, with 17.2% unsure. These findings indicate that a majority of respondents perceive educational institutions as lacking explicit frameworks to support intersex students.

Moreover, a significant proportion of respondents (44%) agreed and 21.9% strongly agreed that teachers are unsure how to categorize intersex students. Meanwhile, 11.8% disagreed and 5.4% strongly disagreed, and 16.9% were not sure. These results indicate that a majority of educators may lack the knowledge or guidance needed to appropriately recognize and support intersex learners.

Likewise, a majority of respondents (45.1% agreed and 25.5% strongly agreed) indicated that school systems tend to force intersex students into binary gender categories. In contrast, 9.9% disagreed and 4.4% strongly disagreed, while 15.1% were unsure. These findings indicate that a majority perceive educational frameworks as enforcing rigid gender binaries, which may restrict inclusivity and fail to acknowledge the identities of intersex students.

Finally, 46.1% of respondents agreed and 25.5% strongly agreed that general LGBTIQ+ policies in schools fail to address intersex-specific challenges. Only 8.9% disagreed and 3.4% strongly disagreed, while 16.1% were not sure. These findings indicate that a majority recognize the limitations of existing policies in meeting the unique needs of intersex students.

In exploring strategies to address these issues, respondents in interviews suggested practical interventions. When asked how schools could clarify and address this conflation to reduce discrimination, one respondent stated:

"Integrating clear information about intersex traits versus sexual orientation into the curriculum is essential." (KII-7, Representative from Sexual and Gender Minorities Advocacy Group, Kampala, 2025)

This implies that education, training, and open dialogue are essential strategies for reducing confusion, stigma, and discrimination within school environments (KII-7).

4.3 The nature of discrimination faced by intersex individuals within Kampala educational institutions due to their inclusion in the LGBTIQ+

Findings on the nature of discrimination faced by intersex individuals within Kampala educational institutions due to their inclusion in the LGBTIQ+ were captured through both structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, with results presented below.

Table 4.7: The nature of discrimination faced by intersex individuals within Kampala educational institutions due to their inclusion in the LGBTIQ+

	Response	Frequency	Valid Percent
Reports of Discrimination against Intersex Persons in Educational Institutions	Yes	245	63.80%
	No	139	36.20%
If Yes, what form did it take?	Verbal abuse	180	73.50%
	Physical bullying	92	37.60%
	Social exclusion	140	57.10%
	Denial of services	108	44.10%
	Unfair discipline	80	32.70%
Who were the main perpetrators of such discrimination?	Fellow students	205	83.70
	Teachers	105	42.90
	Administrators	62	25.30
	Non-teaching staff	40	16.30
Are there any support systems in your school for students facing discrimination?	Yes	110	28.60%
	No	170	44.30%
	Not Sure	104	27.10%
Is there a specific mention of intersex rights or protection in your school policies?	Yes	84	21.90
	No	196	51.00
	Not Sure	104	27.10
How common is discrimination against intersex people in educational institutions in Kampala	Very Common	130	33.90%
	Somewhat Common	158	41.10%
	Rare	46	12.00%
	I Don't Know	50	13.00%
Whether discrimination affects the educational performance of intersex individuals	Yes	280	72.90%
	No	52	13.50%
	Not Sure	52	13.50%

4.3.1 Prevalence of Discrimination

The study sought to establish the prevalence of discrimination against intersex individuals in educational institutions. Quantitative findings revealed that 63.8% of respondents had witnessed or heard of discrimination against intersex persons, while 36.2% said they had not. Furthermore, when asked about the perceived commonality of discrimination, 41.1% said discrimination is somewhat common, 33.9% believe it is very common, 12.0% said it is rare, and 13.0% were unsure. These findings suggest that the prevailing perception is that discrimination against intersex individuals is widespread in educational settings.

Qualitative interviews supported these findings and provided deeper insight into the nature of this prevalence. When asked about the commonality of discrimination against intersex individuals in schools or universities in Kampala, a representative of an advocacy group (KII-8) noted:

"Discrimination is quite common but often hidden because intersex students don't openly discuss their status due to fear." (KII-8, Advocacy Group Representative, Kampala, 2025)

This suggests that discrimination against intersex individuals is present yet often underreported, revealing a silent but persistent challenge within educational settings (KII-8). The substantial minority who reported no exposure to such incidents (36.2%) indicates variability in awareness or observation, highlighting that experiences of discrimination may be context-specific or underreported. Nevertheless, both quantitative and qualitative data converge to indicate that discrimination is perceived as widespread, emphasizing the need for urgent interventions and reforms to promote inclusivity and protect the rights of intersex students.

4.3.2 Forms of Discrimination

The study examined the specific forms of discrimination experienced by intersex students in educational settings. Quantitative findings among those who witnessed discrimination revealed that 73.5% reported verbal abuse, 57.1% noted social exclusion, 44.1% mentioned denial of services, 37.6% observed physical bullying, and 32.7% indicated unfair disciplinary action. These findings indicate that verbal abuse and social exclusion are the most common forms of discrimination experienced by intersex individuals in schools, highlighting emotional and social harm as primary challenges. The presence of other forms, such as denial of services and physical

bullying, further emphasize the multifaceted nature of discrimination that can affect academic participation, wellbeing, and inclusion.

Qualitative responses provided rich descriptions of these forms of discrimination. When asked about the typical forms of discrimination that intersex individuals face in educational institutions, one educator (KII-9) noted:

"Verbal abuse and name-calling are the most common, often targeting their perceived difference." (KII-9, Educator, Kampala, 2025)

Others described exclusion from social and classroom activities as well as being denied access to appropriate restroom facilities or being compelled to conform to uniform requirements that do not align with their identity (KII-2, KII-6, KII-10). These accounts corroborate the quantitative findings and suggest that intersex students experience multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination, ranging from social exclusion to denial of basic facilities (KII-2, KII-6, KII-9, KII-10). The convergence of quantitative and qualitative data underscores that discrimination is not limited to peer interactions but is embedded in institutional practices and infrastructure.

4.3.3 Perpetrators of Discrimination

The study investigated who the main perpetrators of discrimination against intersex students are. Quantitative data revealed that 83.7% of discrimination cases were attributed to fellow students, 42.9% to teachers, 25.3% to administrators, and 16.3% to non-teaching staff. These findings indicate that peer-to-peer discrimination is the most prevalent, but the involvement of teachers, administrators, and other staff highlights institutional gaps in fostering inclusive and supportive environments for intersex students.

Qualitative responses corroborated these findings. When asked who the perpetrators of such discrimination are often, one respondent (KII-6) noted:

"Mostly fellow students, as bullying usually comes from peers." (KII-6, Intersex Individual, Kampala District, 2025). However, another respondent (KII-11) highlighted the role of authorities: "There are instances where school administrators ignore complaints, indirectly allowing discrimination to continue." (KII-11, Advocacy Group Representative, Kampala, 2025)

These insights suggest that discrimination comes primarily from peers but is sometimes perpetuated or unaddressed by authorities (KII-6, KII-11). Both quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that interventions are needed not only to address student behavior but also to improve staff awareness, accountability, and policy implementation within schools.

4.3.4 Institutional Support and Policy Gaps

The study assessed the availability of support systems for students facing discrimination. Quantitative findings showed that 44.3% of respondents reported no support systems in their institutions, 28.6% said yes, while 27.1% were unsure. These findings suggest that a higher number of the studied schools either lack or have unclear mechanisms to support students facing discrimination, highlighting a significant gap in institutional protection and the need for clear, accessible structures to safeguard intersex learners.

Similarly, when asked about specific mention of intersex rights or protection in school policies, only 21.9% of participants reported the presence of intersex-specific rights in school policies, 51.0% said there were none, and 27.1% were unsure. These findings suggest that the majority of studied school policies do not explicitly protect intersex students, leaving them vulnerable to systemic neglect and highlighting the need for clearly defined, inclusive policy provisions.

Qualitative responses provided further insight into institutional gaps. When asked about school policies, facilities, or classroom settings that may unintentionally discriminate against intersex students, respondents noted:

"Restroom facilities are typically segregated by male/female without any neutral option, which creates discomfort and exclusion." (KII-2, Intersex Individual, Kampala District, 2025)

"Classroom seating or activities are sometimes organized by gender, leaving intersex students isolated or forced into one category." (KII-12, Advocacy Group Representative, Kampala, 2025)

This implies that gender-binary policies and facilities unintentionally exclude or marginalize intersex students, contributing to their discomfort and discrimination (KII-2, KII-12). On the issue of how schools usually respond when an intersex student reports mistreatment or bullying, respondents noted:

"Often, schools respond by advising the student to 'ignore it,' which is not helpful." (KII-13, Advocacy Group Representative, Kampala District, 2025)

"In many cases, reports are downplayed or dismissed due to lack of knowledge or unwillingness to handle sensitive issues." (KII-14, Policy Officer, Kampala District, 2025)

This implies that inadequate and dismissive school responses to reports of discrimination exacerbate the vulnerability of intersex students (KII-13, KII-14). The convergence of quantitative and qualitative data reveals a systemic failure in institutional support, where policies are absent, facilities are exclusionary, and responses to discrimination are inadequate.

4.3.5 Impact of Discrimination on Educational Outcomes

The study examined the perceived impact of discrimination on the educational performance of intersex individuals. Quantitative findings revealed that a large majority (72.9%) believe discrimination negatively impacts academic performance, while only 13.5% disagreed or were unsure. These findings indicate that discrimination is widely perceived as a significant factor limiting the educational success and opportunities of intersex students, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to create supportive and inclusive learning environments.

Qualitative responses provided concrete evidence of these impacts. When asked whether there are cases where intersex individuals have had to drop out or leave school due to discrimination, respondents noted:

"Some intersex youths drop out quietly due to stigma and lack of support, though these cases rarely get documented." (KII-12, Advocacy Group Representative, Kampala, 2025)

"In one instance, a student was forced to transfer schools after discriminatory treatment by both peers and staff." (KII-15, School Administrator, Kampala District, 2025)

This implies that discrimination leads to premature school leaving for some intersex students, negatively impacting their educational attainment (KII-12, KII-15). When asked what institutional or policy gaps contribute to this discrimination, a respondent (KII-9) noted:

"Most schools lack gender-neutral facilities and flexible uniform policies that could accommodate diversity." (KII-9, Educator, Kampala District, 2025)

This implies that the absence of inclusive policies, infrastructure, and training creates an environment where discrimination against intersex students persists (KII-9). Both quantitative and qualitative findings converge to demonstrate that discrimination has tangible, harmful consequences on the educational outcomes of intersex individuals, including dropout, transfer, and diminished academic performance.

4.4 The extent to which educators, administrators and students in Uganda's education sector aware of intersex issues

Findings on the level of awareness and understanding of intersex issues among educators, administrators and students in the education sector were captured through both structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, with results presented below.

Table 4.8: The level of awareness and understanding of intersex issues among educators, administrators and students in education sector

Statement	Response	Frequency	Valid Percent
I know what the term "intersex" means.	Strongly Disagree	38	9.9
	Disagree	58	15.1
	Not sure	96	25
	Agree	115	29.9
	Strongly Agree	77	20.1
I have received some training or information about intersex issues.	Strongly Disagree	115	30
	Disagree	96	25
	Not sure	77	20.1
	Agree	58	15.1
	Strongly Agree	38	9.9
Intersex issues are discussed in school awareness programs.	Strongly Disagree	154	40.1
	Disagree	115	30
	Not sure	58	15.1

	Agree	38	9.9
	Strongly Agree	19	5
Teachers and school leaders are aware of the needs of intersex students.	Strongly Disagree	77	20.1
	Disagree	96	25
	Not sure	115	30
	Agree	58	15.1
	Strongly Agree	38	9.9
There is a school counselor or department that addresses gender and identity issues.	Strongly Disagree	38	9.9
	Disagree	38	9.9
	Not sure	77	20.1
	Agree	115	30
	Strongly Agree	116	30.2
I am comfortable talking about intersex issues openly.	Strongly Disagree	58	15.1
	Disagree	77	20.1
	Not sure	96	25
	Agree	96	25
	Strongly Agree	57	14.8
Students are taught to respect people of all identities, including intersex individuals.	Strongly Disagree	19	5
	Disagree	38	9.9
	Not sure	58	15.1
	Agree	154	40.1
	Strongly Agree	115	30
More awareness is needed about the distinction between sex characteristics and sexual orientation.	Strongly Disagree	38	9.9
	Disagree	58	15.1
	Not sure	77	20.1
	Agree	96	25
	Strongly Agree	115	30

(Sample Size = 384)

4.4.1 Awareness of Intersex

The study sought to establish the level of awareness of intersex among respondents. Quantitative findings revealed that 29.9% of participants agreed and 20.1% strongly agreed that they know what the term "intersex" means, while 25.0% were not sure and 25.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This suggests that although a reasonable proportion of respondents have a fair understanding of the term "intersex," a significant knowledge gap exists that could be addressed through targeted awareness campaigns.

Qualitative interviews provided deeper insight into the nature of this awareness. When asked how they would describe the level of awareness and understanding of intersex issues among teachers and school administrators in Kampala, one respondent (KII-16) noted:

"Awareness is generally low. Many teachers have little knowledge about intersex issues beyond stereotypes." (KII-16, Intersex Individual, Kampala District, 2025)

Another respondent (KII-15) added:

"Most administrators do not consider intersex students specifically when planning policies or programs." (KII-15, School Administrator, Kampala District, 2025)

While a few progressive educators demonstrated awareness, this remained limited (KII-1, KII-9). Both quantitative and qualitative findings converge to indicate that although some awareness exists, it is often superficial and not translated into institutional practice, hindering the provision of effective support for intersex students.

4.4.2 Training and Professional Development

The study examined whether respondents had received any training or information about intersex issues. Quantitative findings showed that 30.0% strongly disagreed and 25.0% disagreed that they had received training, while only 15.1% agreed and 9.9% strongly agreed. The highest percentage of respondents (30.0%) strongly disagreed, indicating that most of them have not received any training or formal information about intersex issues.

Qualitative responses corroborated these findings. When asked whether they had seen or been part of any training, workshop, or awareness campaign on intersex rights or gender diversity in their institution, a respondent (KII-1) noted:

"I have never attended any formal training on intersex issues." (KII-1, Educator, Kampala District, 2025)

Others mentioned that while some gender diversity workshops address sexual orientation, they rarely include intersex specific content (KII-3, KII-9). A few respondents noted that occasional awareness initiatives by NGOs exist but do not reach all schools (KII-7, KII-11). Both quantitative and qualitative data highlight a significant gap in educational interventions and emphasize the need for structured training programs for educators, administrators, and students to improve awareness, understanding, and support for intersex individuals.

4.4.3 Integration of Intersex Issues in School Programs

The study assessed the extent to which intersex issues are discussed in school awareness programs. Quantitative data revealed that 40.1% strongly disagreed and 30.0% disagreed that intersex issues are discussed in school awareness programs, while only 9.9% agreed and 5.0% strongly agreed. The dominant response was strong disagreement at 40.1%, suggesting that intersex issues are largely absent from school awareness programs.

Qualitative responses provided further insight into this absence. When asked about support structures in schools that address the needs of intersex learners, a respondent (KII-3) noted:

"Anti-bullying clubs exist, but they often overlook issues related to gender diversity or intersex status." (KII-3, Educator, Kampala District, 2025)

Both quantitative and qualitative findings emphasize the urgent need to integrate intersex-related topics into school curricula and sensitization initiatives to promote understanding, reduce stigma, and foster inclusive educational environments. The absence of dedicated support structures leaves intersex students vulnerable to discrimination, social isolation, and limited access to equal learning opportunities.

4.4.4 Awareness of Intersex Students' Needs

The study examined whether teachers and school leaders are perceived to be aware of the needs of intersex students. Quantitative findings revealed that 30.0% were not sure, 25.0% disagreed, and 20.1% strongly disagreed, while only 15.1% agreed and 9.9% strongly agreed. The highest

response was 30.0% for "not sure," indicating uncertainty among respondents about whether educators are aware of intersex students' needs.

Qualitative responses on how well students understand or respond to topics around intersex identity indicated that students generally have limited understanding of intersex identities, often reacting with confusion or curiosity influenced by misinformation (KII-2, KII-6, KII-16). While some students demonstrate respectful attitudes, many responses are shaped by cultural beliefs that perpetuate stigma (KII-3, KII-9). Both quantitative and qualitative findings suggest a potential communication gap or lack of visible support structures within schools and highlight the need for enhanced teacher training and proactive leadership engagement to ensure the needs of intersex learners are recognized and addressed.

4.4.5 Availability of Counseling and Support Services

The study assessed the availability of counseling services addressing gender and identity issues. Quantitative findings showed that 30.2% strongly agreed and 30.0% agreed that there is a school counselor or department that addresses gender and identity issues, while 20.1% were not sure and 19.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This indicates that many educational institutions may already have counseling services that deal with gender and identity issues, which is a positive sign. However, qualitative responses revealed that these services may not adequately address intersex-specific needs. When asked about support structures in schools that address the needs of intersex learners, a respondent (KII-3) noted:

"Anti-bullying clubs exist, but they often overlook issues related to gender diversity or intersex status." (KII-3, Educator, Kampala District, 2025)

The 20.1% who were unsure and the 19.8% who disagreed or strongly disagreed suggest that these services may not be consistently accessible or widely known, highlighting the need for better visibility and communication about available support structures.

4.4.6 Comfort Levels and Open Discussions

The study examined respondents' comfort levels with discussing intersex issues openly. Quantitative findings revealed that 25.0% were not sure, 20.1% disagreed, 15.1% strongly disagreed, 25.0% agreed, and 14.8% strongly agreed. The equal percentages for "not sure" and "agree" (25.0% each) indicate a divided perception among respondents.

Qualitative responses provided further insight into this discomfort. When asked how educators and students typically respond to discussions around intersex identity, a respondent (KII-6) noted: "Many educators avoid the topic because it's uncomfortable or seen as controversial." (KII-6, Intersex Individual, Kampala, 2025)

While a fair number feel comfortable, many still hesitate or remain uncertain, suggesting that stigma, lack of awareness, or limited confidence may be hindering open discussions about intersex topics within educational settings (KII-6, KII-16).

4.4.7 Promotion of Respect for All Identities

The study assessed whether students are taught to respect people of all identities, including intersex individuals. Quantitative findings showed that 40.1% agreed and 30.0% strongly agreed that students are taught to respect people of all identities, while only 9.9% disagreed, 5.0% strongly disagreed, and 15.1% were not sure. The majority of respondents indicate that respect for all identities, including intersex individuals, is actively promoted in many schools.

However, qualitative responses revealed a gap between general respect messaging and specific intersex inclusion. When asked about how well students understand or respond to topics around intersex identity, respondents indicated that students generally have limited understanding of intersex identities, often reacting with confusion or curiosity influenced by misinformation (KII-2, KII-6, KII-16). These findings suggest that while there is a positive trend toward fostering inclusion and diversity, general respect promotion may overlook intersex-specific needs if policies and curricula do not explicitly address them.

4.4.8 Need for Greater Awareness and Conceptual Clarity

The study examined whether more awareness is needed about the distinction between sex characteristics and sexual orientation. Quantitative findings revealed that 30.0% strongly agreed and 25.0% agreed that more awareness is needed, while 20.1% were not sure, 15.1% disagreed, and 9.9% strongly disagreed. The majority strongly agreed with the need for more awareness.

Qualitative responses supported this finding. When asked about the main challenges faced when trying to increase awareness about intersex issues in schools, respondents noted:

"Cultural taboos and misconceptions make it difficult to openly discuss intersex issues." (KII-15, School Administrator, Kampala District, 2025)

"Lack of resources and trained personnel limits awareness-raising efforts." (KII-14, Education Policy Officer, Kampala District, 2025)

Both quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation is common and problematic, highlighting a significant knowledge gap that should be addressed through targeted education and awareness campaigns. Socio-cultural barriers and resource constraints hinder effective awareness campaigns in schools (KII-14, KII-15).

4.4.9 Curriculum Content and Intersex Representation

The study examined whether school curricula or textbooks mention intersex identities or issues. Qualitative responses provided important insights on this matter. When asked about this issue, respondents noted:

"Textbooks generally do not mention intersex identities, which contributes to invisibility." (KII-1, Educator, Kampala District, 2025)

"Including intersex topics in curricula would promote understanding and reduce stigma." (KII-3, Educator, Kampala District, 2025)

This implies that curriculum exclusion perpetuates ignorance about intersex identities, whereas deliberate inclusion could foster greater understanding, acceptance, and respect within the education system (KII-1, KII-3). The absence of intersex content in curricula, as confirmed by both quantitative and qualitative data, reinforces the invisibility of intersex individuals and perpetuates misconceptions.

4.4.10 Recommended Strategies for Improvement

The study explored respondents' recommendations for improving education sector awareness and support for intersex students. When asked what strategies or interventions they would recommend, respondents noted:

"Implementing mandatory teacher training on gender diversity including intersex issues is critical." (KII-1, Educator, Kampala District, 2025)

"Developing inclusive policies and curricula that specifically mention intersex identities will help." (KII-15, School Administrator, Kampala District, 2025)

"Creating peer support groups and safe spaces in schools can encourage acceptance and dialogue." (KII-7, Advocacy Group Representative, Kampala, 2025)

These qualitative recommendations align with the quantitative findings that revealed significant gaps in training, awareness, and policy provisions. Both data sources converge to indicate that comprehensive training, policy reform, and student-centered support are key to improving awareness and support for intersex students in the education sector (KII-1, KII-7, KII-15).

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of research findings in relation to the study's objectives, the existing literature and the theoretical framework guiding the study. It interprets results and elucidates their implications for understating how the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation affects the right to education for intersex individuals in Kampala. The chapter is organised according to the study's objectives.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

5.1.1 How the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation contributes to discrimination against intersex individuals in Kampala educational institutions

The finding that many individuals in educational settings lacked accurate knowledge about intersex issues aligns with Queer Theory, which posits that schooling systems reproduce and reinforce normative expectations of sex and gender. According to Vasiliūnaitė and Giniotaitė (2023), biology textbooks continue to present sex as strictly male or female, without acknowledging differences in sex development (DSDs). This silence sustains the binary framework that Queer Theory critiques, thereby marginalizing bodies and identities that do not conform to traditional categories. Similarly, Brown (2022) and Jones (2016) observed that limited knowledge within schools perpetuates stigma by framing any deviation from the binary as abnormal or inherently queer. These studies support the Queer Theory perspective that educational institutions act as regulatory spaces where heteronormativity and cisnormativity are upheld, restricting the visibility and inclusion of intersex learners. However, the analysis also revealed that the voices of intersex people themselves were not adequately represented, which limits the depth of understanding and fails to challenge the very silencing that Queer Theory seeks to expose. Meaningful engagement with intersex voices is therefore crucial for disrupting normative narratives and promoting truly inclusive educational reforms.

The finding that misidentification of intersex individuals is relatively common aligns with Queer Theory, which critiques the rigid categorization of bodies and identities within normative social and institutional frameworks. Consistent with Brown (2022) and Sterling (2023), educational

institutions often conflate intersex traits with non-heterosexual orientations, reflecting a persistent failure to distinguish between variations in sex characteristics and sexual orientation. This misclassification renders the specific needs of intersex students invisible, as they are frequently subsumed under broader LGBTQ+ categories without recognition of their distinct bodily diversity (Monro, Wall, & Wood, 2023). From a Queer Theory standpoint, such practices reproduce heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions about gender and sexuality, thereby reinforcing marginalization and constraining the potential for truly inclusive educational support. Moreover, the absence of intersex voices in the analysis underscores how institutional silence perpetuates epistemic injustice, where those most affected are excluded from shaping the narratives and interventions meant to support them.

The evidence that confusion between intersex traits and sexual orientation leads to discrimination and mistreatment aligns with Queer Theory, which critiques the enforcement of normative binaries within social institutions. According to SIPD Uganda, up to 90% of intersex youth have reportedly been forced to leave school due to stigma associated with their perceived sexuality or bodily difference. Similarly, Nichols (2024) observed that some school leaders reinforced such marginalization by failing to protect intersex learners from bullying and exclusion. From a Queer Theory perspective, these practices demonstrate how rigid institutional norms surrounding sex and gender perpetuate exclusion, sustain heteronormative control, and restrict recognition of diverse bodily and identity experiences. Moreover, the silencing of intersex voices in educational spaces underscores the need to challenge these normative systems and center intersex perspectives in both policy and practice.

The perception that schools require clearer distinctions and targeted awareness regarding intersex identities aligns with Queer Theory, which critiques institutional dependence on normative binaries and umbrella categorizations of identity. Monro et al. (2024) observed that equality and diversity frameworks often subsume intersex issues under broader LGBT agendas, thereby neglecting the specific needs and experiences related to bodily diversity. From a Queer Theory standpoint, such omission reinforces heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions, perpetuating the marginalization of those whose bodies and identities do not conform to binary norms. This underscores the need for explicit recognition of intersex identities within school policies and

curricula to affirm bodily integrity, enhance visibility, and reduce discrimination in educational environments.

The finding that many educational institutions lack explicit frameworks for supporting intersex students aligns with Queer Theory, which critiques rigid adherence to normative binaries in institutional settings. Brown (2022) and Sawyer et al. (2024) observed that the absence of formal policies forces schools to operate within binary norms, leaving intersex students vulnerable to systemic neglect. Similarly, in Kenya, 60% of reported intersex individuals left school early due to harassment and lack of accommodations (Kenya NHRC, 2018). From a Queer Theory perspective, these outcomes illustrate how institutional structures enforce conformity and marginalize those whose bodies and identities do not fit conventional categories.

The implication that educators require specific training or guidelines aligns with Queer Theory, which critiques normative schooling practices that enforce binary thinking. Sawyer et al. (2024) identified pedagogical fear the fear of using incorrect terminology or mishandling sensitive issues as a key barrier to inclusion. From this perspective, training equips teachers to challenge binary assumptions and support intersex learners effectively, reducing misclassification and promoting recognition of bodily and gender diversity.

The finding that binary gender frameworks in education limit inclusivity aligns with Queer Theory, which challenges rigid categorizations of sex and gender. Brown (2022) and Sterling (2023) found that curricula often erase intersex realities, rendering such bodies invisible and reinforcing alienation. From a Queer Theory perspective, this erasure upholds normative assumptions about “normal” bodies, framing intersex traits as deviations rather than natural variations, and perpetuates exclusion within educational settings.

5.1.2 The nature of discrimination faced by intersex individuals within Kampala educational institutions due to their inclusion in the LGBTIQ+

The finding that discrimination against intersex individuals is widely recognized in educational institutions aligns with Queer Theory, which critiques the social enforcement of normative sex and gender categories. Jones et al. (2019) and Brömdal et al. (2023) reported high rates of stigma,

misgendering, and social exclusion among intersex students in Australia and New Zealand, with over 60% feeling unsafe or unwelcome at school. The observation that verbal abuse and social exclusion are the most frequent forms of discrimination supports the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2020), which documented ridicule linked to perceived “abnormality” as a common form of abuse. Similarly, Namubiru and Mugisha (2022) noted that in Uganda, conflating intersex identity with homosexuality drives exclusion, producing emotional and social harm. Through the lens of Queer Theory, these patterns illustrate how rigid binaries and heteronormative assumptions in education institutionalize marginalization and reinforce social hierarchies that disadvantage intersex students.

The finding that peer-to-peer discrimination is most common, yet teachers and staff are also involved, aligns with Queer Theory’s critique of institutional enforcement of normative gender and sexuality frameworks. Namubiru and Mugisha (2022) and Reardon (2021) observed that while peers often initiate abuse, educators can inadvertently perpetuate or fail to address discriminatory behaviors, reflecting systemic shortcomings. Similarly, the finding that many schools lack or have unclear support structures for students facing discrimination is consistent with UNESCO (2022), which reported that fewer than 10% of global education policies explicitly recognize intersex issues. From a Queer Theory perspective, these patterns demonstrate how institutional norms and policy gaps sustain marginalization, leaving intersex students vulnerable and reinforcing heteronormative hierarchies within educational settings.

The finding that most school policies lack clear provisions for intersex protection aligns with Queer Theory’s critique of normative institutional structures, which often prioritize binary gender categories and overlook bodily diversity. United Nations Free & Equal (2021) and Mulemi et al. (2023) similarly observed that in many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, legal and institutional safeguards for intersex students are minimal or absent, exposing them to systemic neglect and vulnerability. The perception that discrimination is widespread, calling for urgent educational reform, resonates with Fraser et al. (2018), who argued that institutionalized biases and policy gaps necessitate immediate interventions to ensure the safety, inclusion, and educational access of intersex learners. From a Queer Theory perspective, these findings highlight

how entrenched heteronormative norms within school systems perpetuate marginalization and underscore the need for policies explicitly recognizing intersex students' rights and experiences.

The finding that discrimination limits the educational success of intersex students aligns with Queer Theory's critique of normative schooling practices that privilege binary gender and heteronormativity. Wilson et al. (2020) similarly found that intersex students experiencing rejection at school were four times more likely to drop out compared to their peers, highlighting how institutionalized biases directly undermine educational attainment. From a Queer Theory perspective, these outcomes illustrate how rigid gender norms and unaddressed discrimination systematically disadvantage students whose bodies and identities do not conform to socially accepted binaries, reinforcing the urgent need for inclusive policies and practices that recognize intersex realities.

The finding that discrimination is widespread yet underreported aligns with Queer Theory's critique of normative educational systems that marginalize bodies and identities outside established binaries. Brömdal et al. (2023) similarly noted that fear of exposure and stigma often prevents intersex students from reporting incidents, creating a silent but persistent pattern of exclusion. Additionally, the observation that intersex students experience multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination such as social exclusion, denial of access to facilities, and systemic neglect resonates with Carpenter (2022), who emphasizes the importance of intersectional approaches in policy and practice. From a Queer Theory perspective, these intersecting oppressions highlight how institutional norms reproduce marginalization, underscoring the need for inclusive frameworks that explicitly recognize intersex identities and address layered vulnerabilities.

The finding that discrimination is primarily from peers but is sometimes perpetuated or ignored by educators aligns with Queer Theory's critique of institutional reinforcement of normative gender and sexual binaries. Namubiru and Mugisha (2022) observed that Ugandan school authorities often fail to address or even contribute to discriminatory practices by conflating intersex identity with sexual orientation, illustrating how institutional norms reproduce marginalization. Similarly, the finding that gender-binary policies and facilities exclude or marginalize intersex students reflects Reardon's (2021) observation that schools rarely accommodate those outside binary

classifications, resulting in discomfort, reduced participation, and heightened feelings of exclusion. From a Queer Theory perspective, these findings highlight how educational structures enforce rigid binaries, systematically disadvantaging students whose identities and bodies challenge normative expectations.

The finding that inadequate and dismissive school responses to discrimination exacerbate vulnerability aligns with Queer Theory's critique of institutionalized norms that marginalize those outside conventional gender and sexual categories. United Nations Free & Equal (2021) highlights that the absence of enforcement mechanisms in anti-discrimination laws leaves intersex students without effective remedies or protection, illustrating how structural norms perpetuate inequity. The finding that discrimination leads to premature school leaving for some intersex students is consistent with Wilson et al. (2020) and Fraser et al. (2018), who link prolonged exposure to bullying and exclusion with absenteeism, disengagement, and dropout, demonstrating the tangible consequences of enforcing rigid binaries. Finally, the finding that the absence of inclusive policies, infrastructure, and training allows discrimination to persist reflects UNESCO's (2022) observation that the lack of intersex-specific provisions contributes to invisibility and harm. Carpenter (2022) further underscores the need for targeted policies and training to ensure intersex students are recognized and supported without pathologization, emphasizing how educational institutions must challenge normative frameworks to foster genuine inclusion.

5.1.3 The extent to which educators, administrators and students in Uganda's education sector aware of intersex issues

The finding that a reasonable proportion of respondents (29.9%) have a fair understanding of the term "intersex" aligns with Queer Theory's emphasis on challenging normative assumptions about sex and gender. Carpenter (2022) and Holzer & Brömdal (2022) note that while general awareness remains low, advocacy and visibility efforts have begun to improve public understanding in some contexts. This partial awareness reflects the early impact of programs such as those run by Intersex Human Rights Australia (Brömdal & Turtle, 2023), yet Queer Theory highlights that knowledge alone is insufficient; without integration into institutional practices and curricula, superficial understanding does little to disrupt entrenched binary norms and systemic marginalization in schools.

The finding that the highest percentage of respondents (30.0%) strongly disagreed with having received training on intersex issues aligns with Brömdal et al. (2023), who reported that over 75% of teachers in Australia had never undergone formal training on intersex topics. From a Queer Theory perspective, this lack of professional preparation reflects the persistence of normative assumptions about sex and gender, leaving educators ill-equipped to challenge binary frameworks in schools. Monro et al. (2021) similarly note that insufficient training fosters discomfort and uncertainty in supporting intersex students, perpetuating exclusion and invisibility. The finding that 40.1% strongly disagreed that intersex issues are incorporated into school awareness programs reinforces UNESCO's (2022) global report, which showed that only 8% of surveyed countries include intersex variations in sexuality education curricula. Queer Theory highlights that this omission sustains ignorance and stigma, as bodily diversity remains unacknowledged. Literature, including Mulemi et al. (2023), emphasizes that curricular reform and structured training are essential for dismantling prejudice, fostering inclusion, and enabling both educators and students to recognize and respect intersex identities.

The finding that 30.0% of respondents were “not sure” whether educators are aware of intersex students' needs reflects the uncertainty documented by Nichols (2024), where school leaders recognized the importance of inclusion but lacked clear guidance on how to implement it. From a Queer Theory perspective, this highlights how normative assumptions about gender and sexuality obscure the visibility of intersex students, reinforcing uncertainty and inadequate support. The finding that many schools may have counseling services for gender and identity issues aligns partially with the literature, which notes that general support services exist but rarely address the specific needs of intersex students (Monro et al., 2021; Holzer & Brömdal, 2022). That 20.1% of respondents were unsure, and nearly the same proportion disagreed regarding their accessibility, underscores the Queer Theory critique that institutional structures often fail to recognize bodily diversity, rendering intersex-specific support invisible and ineffective.

The finding that while some respondents feel comfortable discussing intersex issues, others remain hesitant is consistent with Fraser et al. (2022), who observed that stigma and lack of confidence often inhibit open dialogue. This aligns with Mulemi et al. (2023), who note that cultural taboos

and fear of community backlash obstruct the normalization of intersex conversations in schools. Queer Theory highlights how such societal norms and institutional pressures maintain the invisibility of intersex identities, shaping comfort levels in discourse. The finding that respect for all identities is actively promoted in many schools is encouraging and corresponds with examples from Canadian provinces where intersex-inclusive materials have been integrated into health education (Carpenter, 2022). However, Holzer & Brömdal (2022) caution that general diversity promotion may overlook intersex-specific needs if policies and curricula do not explicitly address them, reinforcing the importance of targeted inclusion efforts.

The finding that the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation is common directly supports Monro et al. (2021) and Brömdal et al. (2023), who identify this as a persistent knowledge gap arising from the lack of intersex-specific training. Such conflation can result in misinformed policies and inadequate support, as administrators may fail to differentiate between bodily diversity and sexual orientation. The finding that limited awareness among education professionals hampers effective support aligns with Holzer & Brömdal (2022), who note that insufficient understanding can lead educators to unintentionally reinforce stigma. Similarly, Brömdal & Turtle (2023) emphasize that enhanced awareness is crucial for implementing proactive, rights-based interventions that safeguard intersex students' educational and social well-being.

The finding that training and awareness programs are scarce and inconsistently available reflects the global pattern identified by UNESCO (2022), which reported that intersex topics are often absent from educational policy frameworks. The literature underscores that targeted, regular training is essential for transforming school cultures. The finding that students' limited understanding and cultural biases hinder acceptance is supported by Mulemi et al. (2023) and Namubiru & Mugisha (2022), who highlight how cultural and religious taboos perpetuate ignorance and stigma. Consequently, the literature advocates for culturally sensitive awareness initiatives to address these barriers and promote inclusive learning environments.

The finding that the absence of dedicated support structures leaves intersex students vulnerable aligns with Nichols (2024) and the United Nations Free & Equal (2021), both of which emphasize that without explicit policy language and institutional safeguards, intersex students remain largely

invisible within diversity initiatives. Similarly, the finding that curriculum exclusion perpetuates ignorance, whereas inclusive curricula can foster acceptance, reflects the conclusions of UNESCO (2022) and Jones et al. (2019), who report that students in schools with intersex-inclusive content exhibit lower levels of stigma and higher empathy toward intersex peers.

The finding that socio-cultural barriers and resource constraints hinder awareness campaigns aligns with Mulemi et al. (2023) and Namubiru & Mugisha (2022), who emphasize that in conservative or resource-limited contexts, addressing intersex issues requires careful navigation of entrenched beliefs and competing priorities. Additionally, the finding that comprehensive training, policy reform, and student-centered support are critical to improving awareness corresponds with Monro et al. (2021), Holzer & Brömdal (2022), and Brömdal & Turtle (2023), who collectively advocate for a holistic, multi-level approach combining legal mandates, educator training, curriculum reform, and collaboration with intersex-led organizations to create sustainable change in educational settings.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter draws conclusion on the study's key findings. Based on these conclusions, it offers actionable recommendations aimed at policy makers, educators and other stakeholders to promote inclusive educational practices, safeguard intersex learners' rights and address gaps in awareness, policy and institutional support.

6.1 Conclusions

6.1.1 How the conflation of sex characteristics and sexual orientation contributes to discrimination against intersex individuals in Kampala educational institutions

The conflation of sex characteristics with sexual orientation fundamentally undermines the educational rights of intersex students in Kampala by perpetuating ignorance, enabling discrimination, and entrenching institutional neglect. The study demonstrates that this conflation operates through a cycle of misidentification, stigmatization, and policy failure, wherein intersex students are systematically excluded, bullied, and forced out of educational institutions due to widespread misconceptions that frame their biological variations as deviance or criminality. Through the lens of Queer Theory, the findings expose how educational institutions in Kampala function as regulatory spaces that enforce rigid binary norms, thereby reproducing marginalization and denying intersex students the recognition, accommodation, and protection they require. Addressing this conflation is therefore not merely a matter of awareness-raising but requires fundamental policy and curriculum reforms that explicitly recognize sex characteristics as distinct from sexual orientation and gender identity, alongside mandatory training for educators and institutional accountability mechanisms to dismantle the structural barriers perpetuating this discrimination.

6.1.2 The nature of discrimination faced by intersex individuals within Kampala educational institutions due to their inclusion in the LGBTIQ+

The discrimination faced by intersex individuals in Kampala's educational institutions as a result of their inclusion in the LGBTIQ+ umbrella is systemic, multifaceted, and deeply entrenched in

both interpersonal interactions and institutional frameworks. The study establishes that intersex students endure layered forms of abuse ranging from verbal harassment and social exclusion by peers to institutional neglect through inadequate policies, binary-gendered facilities, and dismissive responses from authorities all of which are amplified by the conflation of their sex characteristics with homosexuality in Uganda's hostile socio-legal climate. Through the lens of Queer Theory, the findings reveal how educational institutions function as regulatory spaces that enforce heteronormative and cisnormative standards, rendering intersex bodies unintelligible and subjecting them to systemic exclusion. This discrimination has tangible, harmful consequences, including psychological distress, academic disengagement, and premature school leaving, underscoring the urgent need for explicit policy protections, institutional accountability, and targeted interventions that recognize intersex individuals as rights-holders with distinct needs that cannot be adequately addressed under broader LGBTIQ+ frameworks.

6.1.3 The extent to which educators, administrators and students in Uganda's education sector aware of intersex issues

The pervasive deficit in awareness and understanding of intersex issues among educators, administrators, and students in Kampala's educational institutions constitutes a fundamental barrier to the realization of intersex students' right to education. The study demonstrates that while basic awareness of the term "intersex" exists among some respondents, this superficial knowledge is insufficient to translate into meaningful institutional action, as evidenced by the overwhelming absence of formal training, curricular content, and dedicated support structures. Through the lens of Queer Theory, the findings expose how this ignorance is not accidental but is sustained by educational systems that enforce binary norms and silence discussions of bodily diversity, thereby perpetuating the harmful conflation of sex characteristics with sexual orientation. The resulting cycle of ignorance wherein lack of training enables conflation, which reinforces stigma, which in turn prevents the development of awareness and supportive policies systematically excludes intersex learners and undermines their educational rights. Addressing this deficit requires comprehensive and mandatory training for all educational stakeholders, explicit policy recognition of intersex identities, and meaningful curricular reform that challenges binary assumptions and affirms bodily diversity as natural and worthy of protection.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to address the impact of conflating sex characteristics with sexual orientation on the educational rights of intersex individuals in Kampala. The recommendations are organized according to the study's specific objectives.

6.2.1 How conflation of intersexuality and sexual orientation contributes to discrimination against intersex individuals in Kampala educational institutions

1: The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) should take a lead role in formulating and enforcing inclusive education policies that explicitly recognize and protect intersex students. These policies should clearly distinguish between sex characteristics, gender identity, and sexual orientation to eliminate the confusion that fuels discrimination. The policies should be developed in consultation with intersex-led organizations and human rights experts to ensure they are comprehensive and responsive to the specific needs of intersex learners.

2: School administrators and head teachers should implement school-wide awareness campaigns, workshops, and peer education programs to sensitize both staff and students about intersex issues. These initiatives should specifically address the distinction between sex characteristics and sexual orientation, challenging the misconceptions that lead to conflation and discrimination. Awareness programs should be ongoing rather than one-off events to ensure sustained impact.

3: Local NGOs and human rights organizations, particularly those working on gender and sexual diversity, should collaborate with schools to develop culturally relevant, rights-based learning materials that clearly differentiate between sex characteristics and sexual orientation. They should also provide technical support in delivering training to educators and students, ensuring that accurate information reaches all stakeholders.

4: Parent-teacher associations (PTAs) should be engaged through structured dialogues to increase parental understanding of intersex issues and reduce resistance to inclusive practices. These dialogues should emphasize the distinction between sex characteristics and sexual orientation, helping parents understand that intersex is a biological variation rather than a sexual orientation or chosen identity.

6.2.2 The nature of discrimination faced by intersex individuals within Kampala educational institutions due to their inclusion in the LGBTIQ+

5: The Ministry of Education and Sports should integrate intersex-specific content into the national curriculum, developing age-appropriate modules that address human diversity, sex characteristics, and gender identity. This should ensure that learners are introduced to these topics in a respectful, factual, and culturally sensitive manner, thereby reducing ignorance and stigma from an early age.

6: Heads of schools and board members must be proactive in creating safe, inclusive environments by implementing anti-discrimination protocols that specifically protect intersex students. They should establish clear reporting mechanisms and support systems such as counseling units or peer support clubs that cater to gender-diverse students. Schools should also review and revise binary-gendered facilities (toilets, dormitories, sports teams) to accommodate intersex students and reduce daily discomfort and exclusion.

7: The Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) should monitor and document cases of discrimination within educational institutions and provide legal and psychosocial support to affected students. They should also conduct regular advocacy campaigns to challenge societal stigma and promote intersex visibility and inclusion in the education sector, ensuring that intersex-specific concerns are addressed rather than subsumed under broader LGBTIQ+ frameworks.

8: School administrators should ensure that institutional responses to reports of discrimination are prompt, adequate, and supportive rather than dismissive. Clear guidelines should be developed and communicated to all staff on how to respond when an intersex student reports mistreatment or bullying. This should include establishing accountability mechanisms for staff who fail to intervene or who perpetuate discrimination.

6.2.3 The extent to which educators, administrators and students in Uganda's education sector aware of intersex issues

9: The Ministry of Education and Sports should mandate mandatory sensitivity and awareness training on gender diversity, intersex variations, and human rights for all school staff, including educators, administrators, and non-teaching personnel. These training sessions, facilitated by experts in human rights, gender diversity, and child psychology, should equip school personnel with the knowledge and skills to identify, support, and protect intersex students.

10: Teacher training colleges and universities should revise their syllabi to incorporate intersex awareness in their teacher education programs. Future educators need to be adequately prepared before entering the classroom. Collaboration with civil society organizations, particularly those that advocate for intersex rights, can provide resources, guest lecturers, and real-life testimonies to enrich the training process and reduce prejudices.

11: Intersex persons, especially youth, should be meaningfully involved in the design and implementation of programs and policies that affect them. Their lived experiences are crucial in shaping interventions that are empathetic, relevant, and effective. Platforms for intersex voices such as student unions, clubs, or advocacy groups should be established and empowered within schools to ensure representation and peer-led support.

12: Student-led clubs and peer support programs should be established within schools to create safe spaces for dialogue, learning, and peer education. Through clubs such as human rights clubs, debate teams, and school assemblies, students can be sensitized using creative approaches like drama, storytelling, and discussions that address stigma and promote empathy. These platforms should specifically address intersex issues to challenge misconceptions and foster acceptance among students.

13: Government agencies and non-governmental organizations must work together to establish interschool outreach programs that use multimedia campaigns, inter-school competitions, and public speaking events to raise awareness on sex and gender diversity. These programs should reach parents and community members to challenge cultural taboos and misconceptions that hinder awareness and acceptance of intersex individuals.

14: The Ministry of Education and Sports should allocate adequate resources for the development and dissemination of educational materials that address intersex issues. This includes textbooks, teacher guides, and supplementary materials that present intersex variations as natural biological diversity rather than pathology or deviance, thereby challenging the binary frameworks that perpetuate ignorance and stigma.

15. The Ministry of Health should enforce and strengthen the 2015 guidelines advising against surgical intervention for intersex infants. The guidelines should be updated to explicitly prohibit non-consensual, medically unnecessary genital-normalising surgeries and hormonal interventions on intersex children. Healthcare professionals should be trained on the human rights of intersex persons, and parents should be provided with comprehensive counselling and information about intersex variations. Legal recognition of intersex persons should be decoupled from surgical intervention, and a sex-neutral marker should be introduced on birth certificates to ease change of sex, if necessary, when the child is old enough to be an active participant in this decision

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APPENDIX 1: STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondents,

This questionnaire is for academic research purposes only. Your responses are confidential and will only be used to understand the experiences and perceptions surrounding the treatment of intersex individuals in Kampala's education sector. Please answer honestly and completely.

Section A: Demographic Information

(Please tick or fill in as appropriate)

A1. Gender

Male

1

Female

2

A2. Your role in the Education Sector

Student	Teacher	Administrator	Policy Maker
1	2	3	4

A3. Type of Institution

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	University
1	2	3	4

Section B: Conflation of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation

Tick the box that best describes your level of agreement with each statement.

Where, SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, NS= Not Sure, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

No.	Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA
B1	Most people do not know the difference between intersex identity and sexual orientation.	1	2	3	4	5
B2	Intersex individuals are often assumed to be homosexual or transgender.	1	2	3	4	5
B3	Confusing intersex identity with sexual orientation leads to biased treatment.	1	2	3	4	5
B4	Inclusion of intersex people in the LGBTIQ+ group contributes to misunderstanding in schools.	1	2	3	4	5
B5	Policies in schools do not clearly define intersex identity.	1	2	3	4	5
B6	Teachers are unsure how to categorize intersex students.	1	2	3	4	5
B7	School records and systems often force intersex students to identify as either male or female.	1	2	3	4	5
B8	Intersex individuals face unique challenges that are not addressed by general LGBTIQ+ policies.	1	2	3	4	5

Section C: Prevalence and Nature of Discrimination

C1. Have you witnessed or heard of any discrimination against an intersex person in an educational institution?

Yes	No
1	2

C2. If Yes, what form did it take? *(Tick all that apply)*

Verbal abuse	Physical bullying	Social exclusion	Denial of services or participation	Unfair disciplinary action
1	2	3	4	5

C3. Who were the main perpetrators of such discrimination?

Fellow students	Teachers	Administrators	Non-teaching staff
1	2	3	4

C4. Are there any support systems in your school for students facing discrimination?

Yes	No	Not Sure
1	2	3

C5. Is there a specific mention of intersex rights or protection in your school policies?

Yes	No	Not Sure
1	2	3

C6. In your view, how common is discrimination against intersex people in educational institutions in Kampala?

Very Common	Somewhat Common	Rare	I don't know
1	2	3	4

C7. Do you think this discrimination affects the educational performance of intersex individuals?

Yes	No	Not Sure
1	2	3

Section D: Awareness and Understanding of Intersex Issues

Tick the box that best describes your level of agreement with each statement.

Where, SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, NS= Not Sure, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

No.	Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA
D1	I know what the term "intersex" means.	1	2	3	4	5
D2	I have received some training or information about intersex issues.	1	2	3	4	5
D3	Intersex issues are discussed in school awareness programs.	1	2	3	4	5
D4	Teachers and school leaders are aware of the needs of intersex students.	1	2	3	4	5
D5	There is a school counselor or department that addresses gender and identity issues.	1	2	3	4	5
D6	I am comfortable talking about intersex issues openly.	1	2	3	4	5
D7	Students are taught to respect people of all identities, including intersex individuals.	1	2	3	4	5
D8	More awareness is needed about the distinction between sex characteristics and sexual orientation.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Dear respondents

The purpose of this discussion is to explore the impact of conflating sex characteristics and sexual orientation on the educational rights of intersex individuals within educational institutions in Kampala. Your insights as an educator, administrator, or stakeholder in the education sector are valuable in understanding how intersex individuals are perceived, treated, and supported in school environments. The information you provide will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will be used solely for academic research purposes. Please feel free to share your honest views and experiences as we go through the questions.

Section A: Conflation of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation and Its Contribution to Discrimination

1. What is your understanding of the difference between sex characteristics (such as intersex traits) and sexual orientation?
2. In your opinion, do people in the education sector understand this distinction? Why or why not?
3. How does the conflation (mixing) of sex characteristics and sexual orientation contribute to misunderstanding or prejudice in schools?
4. Can you share an example (if any) where an intersex individual was wrongly treated or judged based on assumptions about their sexuality?
5. Do you think that current school policies or programs help or worsen the confusion between intersex identity and sexual orientation?
6. How do educators and students typically respond to discussions around intersex identity?
7. In your view, how could schools or educational institutions clarify and address this conflation to reduce discrimination?

Section B: Prevalence and Nature of Discrimination Against Intersex Individuals in Schools

1. From your experience or observation, how common is discrimination against intersex individuals in schools or universities in Kampala?

2. What are the typical forms of discrimination that intersex individuals face in educational institutions (e.g., verbal abuse, exclusion, denial of services)?
3. Who are often the perpetrators of such discrimination – fellow students, teachers, administrators, or others?
4. Are there any particular school policies, facilities (e.g., restrooms, uniforms), or classroom settings that may unintentionally discriminate against intersex students?
5. How do schools usually respond when an intersex student reports mistreatment or bullying?
6. Are there cases where intersex individuals have had to drop out or leave school due to discrimination? If so, could you share a general account?
7. What institutional or policy gaps do you believe contribute to this discrimination?

Section C: Awareness and Understanding of Intersex Issues in the Education Sector

1. How would you describe the level of awareness and understanding of intersex issues among teachers and school administrators in Kampala?
2. Have you seen or been part of any training, workshop, or awareness campaign on intersex rights or gender diversity in your institution?
3. How well do students understand or respond to topics around intersex identity when they arise in school?
4. Are there support structures in schools (e.g., counseling, anti-bullying clubs) that address the needs of intersex learners?
5. Do school curricula or textbooks mention intersex identities or issues? If not, do you think they should? Why?
6. What are the main challenges faced when trying to increase awareness about intersex issues in schools?
7. What strategies or interventions would you recommend to improve education sector awareness and support for intersex students?

APPENDIX 3: KREJCIE & MORGAN TABLE

SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION TABLE

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note.—*N* is population size. *S* is sample size.

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970



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