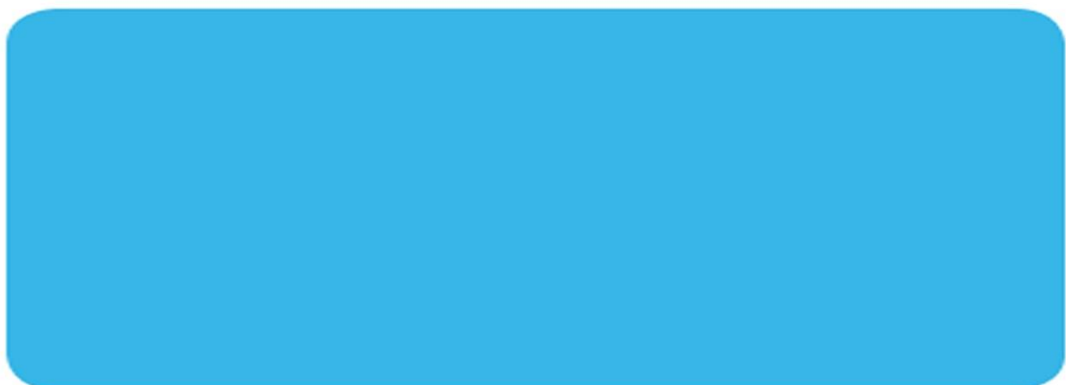


**Bullying targeting secondary school students who are
or are perceived to be transgender or same-sex attracted:
Types, prevalence, impact, motivation and preventive measures
in 5 provinces of Thailand**



Bullying targeting secondary school students who are or are perceived to be transgender or same-sex attracted: Types, prevalence, impact, motivation and preventive measures in 5 provinces of Thailand

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Acronyms

CES-D	Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression Scale
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBT	Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (refers to males in this report)
GPA	Grade Point Average
ID	Identification
IDI	In-depth Interview
IRB	Institutional Review Board at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University
LBT	Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (refers to females in this report)
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (a statistical software package)
SRGBV	School Related Gender-Based Violence
THB	Thai Baht
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US\$	US Dollar

Thai Translations

Ai (ไอ้)	A derogatory prefix indicating masculinity
Biang ben thang phet (เบี่ยงเบนทางเพศ)	Sexually deviant (a stigmatising term some teachers use to refer to LGBT individuals)
Chai (ชาย)	Man
Chai rak chai (ชายรักชาย)	Same-sex attracted male (literally, man who loves men)
Dee (ดี้)	Feminine lesbian with preference for toms
Hao (ห้าว)	Butch, tough (usually used to describe female students)
I (อี)	A derogatory prefix indicating femininity
Kan klaeng (การแกล้ง)	Teasing (or sometimes “bullying”)
Kan rangkae (การรังแก)	Bullying (violent behaviours that intentionally cause pain to the victims; academic Thai term rarely used by students during this study)
Kan yok lo (การหยอกล้อ)	Teasing (actions not intending to cause harm, but rather to communicate friendly intimacy)
Kathoei (กะเทย)	Transgender woman
Les (เลส)	Feminine lesbian
M (เอ็ม)	Refers to gender-normative “men who have sex with men” (MSM)
Maen (แมน)	Masculine, manly
Ok sao (ออกสาว)	Feminine (used to refer to feminine males only)
Phet thang lueak (เพศทางเลือก)	Alternative gender (a Thai umbrella term for LGBT identities)
Phet thi sam (เพศที่สาม)	Third sex/gender (a Thai umbrella term for LGBT identities)
Phit phet (ผิดเพศ)	Wrong-sexed (a derogatory term for LGBT identities)

Phit pokati thang chit (ผิดปกติทางจิต)	Mentally disordered
Phu chai kham phet (ผู้ชายข้ามเพศ)	Transgender man
Phu ying kham phet (ผู้หญิงข้ามเพศ)	Transgender woman
Phut saeo (พูดแซว)	Tease verbally
Raet (แรด)	Slutty (a derogatory term used with female and feminine individuals)
Rak nuan sanguan tua (รักนวลสงวนตัว)	Sexually reserved (a normative characteristic for Thai women)
Sao praphet song (สาวประเภทสอง)	Transgender woman
Taew (แต้ว)	Sissy, fag (a usually derogatory term referring to feminine, same-sex attracted males)
Tom (ทอม)	Butch (masculine) same-sex attracted female
Tung ting (ตุงตุง)	Effeminate (used to refer to males only)
Tut (ตุ๊ด)	Sissy, fag (a usually derogatory term referring to feminine, same-sex attracted males)
Ying (หญิง)	Woman
Ying rak ying (หญิงรักหญิง)	Same-sex attracted woman (woman who loves women)
Yok lo, klaeng, rangkae (หยอกล้อ แก่ลึง รังแก)	Teasing and bullying

Definitions

Bisexual: A bisexual person is one who is attracted to and/or has sex with both men and women.

Bullying: In a theoretical sense, bullying refers to repeated physical, verbal, social or sexual actions (or those acted through various media) that one party repeatedly does to hurt another party, the one having more power than the other (Olweus, 2003). Teachers' and students' understandings of the term often differ from this theoretical definition.

Cultural violence: Culture that normalizes violence.

Gay: The term 'gay' can refer to same-sex sexual attraction, same-sex sexual behaviour, and same-sex cultural identity in general. However, it often refers to a male who experiences sexual attraction to, and the capacity for an intimate relationship primarily with, other men. In the Thai context, it is used to refer to exclusively same-sex attracted, non-transgender males. In Thai, the term is usually used as a noun, unlike in English, where it is usually used as an adjective.

Gender and sex: The term 'sex' refers to biologically determined differences, whereas 'gender' refers to differences in social roles and relations. Gender roles are learned through socialisation and vary widely within and between cultures. Gender roles are also affected by age, class, race, ethnicity, and religion, as well as by geographical, economic, and political environments.

Gender expression/gender presentation: How someone expresses his/herself in terms of appearance, speech, behaviours, or other factors that society characterises as 'masculine' or 'feminine'. Some people's gender expression or presentation may not match their biological sex.

Gender identity: An individual's self-conception as being man, woman, or some other gender, as distinguished from their biological sex during and after birth.

Heterosexual: People who have sex with and/or are attracted to people of the opposite sex.

Heteronormativity: Heterosexuality as a social norm.

Heterosexism: Bias against people who are not heterosexual; "beliefs about gender, morality, and danger by which homosexuality and sexual minorities are defined as deviant, sinful, and threatening" (Herek, 2004, p. 15)

Homophobia: Fear, rejection, or aversion, often in the form of stigmatising attitudes or discriminatory behaviour, towards same-sex attracted individuals and/or other manifestations of same-sex attraction.

Homophobic bullying: is bullying targeting those who are or are perceived to be same-sex attracted. When referring to the Thai context, this report uses the term "bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be LGBT".

Homosexual: People who have sex with and/or sexual attraction to or desires for people of the same sex. This term is avoided in this report because of its pathologising connotations.

Lesbian: A female who experiences sexual attraction to and the capacity for an intimate relationship with other women.

Men who have sex with men (MSM): MSM is an abbreviation used for 'men who have sex with men'. The term 'men who have sex with men' describes males who have sex with males, regardless of whether or not they have sex with women or have a personal or social gay or bisexual identity.

Same-sex attraction: Attraction to or desires for people of the same sex. Used in this report as a preferred term instead of "homosexuality" to avoid the pathologising connotations of the latter term.

Sex education: Sex education refers to programmes that aim to equip children and young people with the knowledge, skills and values to make healthy choices about their sexual and social relationships. In this report, ‘sex education’ refers to the programme currently provided in many locations in Thailand. This is differentiated from the term ‘comprehensive sexuality education’ also used in this report to refer to more holistic programmes with defined essential characteristics (UNESCO, 2009).

Sexual/gender diversity: The presence of diverse genders, sexualities, gender/sexual identities and forms of gender/sexual expression in society.

Sexual identity: How individuals identify their own sexuality (usually based on sexual orientation).

Sexual orientation: refers to whether an individual is attracted to the same sex, another sex, or both the same and other sexes. The term “gender identity” is used to describe whether an individual defines themselves as being a man, woman, or some other gender.

Sexuality: The sexual knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviours of individuals. Its dimensions include the anatomy, physiology and biochemistry of the sexual response system; sexual identity, orientation, roles and personality; and thoughts, feelings and relationships. Its expression is influenced by ethical, spiritual, cultural and moral concerns.

Stigma and discrimination: Stigma is an opinion or judgement held by individuals or society that negatively reflects a person or group. When stigma is acted upon, the result is discrimination that may take the form of actions or omissions. Discrimination refers to any form of arbitrary distinction, exclusion, or restriction affecting a person, usually but not only by virtue of an inherent personal characteristic or perceived belonging to a particular group.

Structural violence: Harm caused to individuals or groups by unfair social structures.

Teasing: In Thai students’ understanding, teasing refers to behaviors characterized by having fun, engaging in child-like play, as well as expressing and building friendly intimacy among friends. Teasing is generally not thought to have negative intentions. However, students recognize that sometimes the boundaries of teasing and bullying are not clear, and interactions that begin as teasing may develop into bullying, or be interpreted by one party as such.

Transgender: A transgender person has a gender identity that is different from his or her sex at birth. Transgender people may be male to female (female appearance, also called transgender women) or female to male (male appearance, also called transgender men). Transgender is not a sexual orientation; transgender people may have any sexual orientation.

Transphobia: Fear, rejection, or aversion, often in the form of stigmatising attitudes or discriminatory behaviour towards transgender individuals or other manifestations of transgenderism.

Transphobic bullying: is bullying targeting those who are or are perceived to be transgender. When referring to the Thai context, this report uses the term “bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be LGBT”.

Executive Summary

Rationale

Access to education in a safe environment is a universal human right. However, the exercise of this right is often compromised by the presence of violence and bullying in schools, making them unsafe. Given its often gendered nature, bullying is considered a subtype of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV; Leach & Dunne, 2013).

In particular, students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) tend to be disproportionately bullied at schools (UNESCO, 2012). In many Western and Asian contexts, over half of LGBT students report having been bullied because of their same-sex attraction or because of their transgender expressions (Takács, 2006; Khan et al., 2005). Thailand is often perceived as very accepting of sexual/gender diversity, but in fact LGBT people are usually only tolerated, not accepted (Jackson, 1999). There was previous evidence of school bullying in Thailand (Sombat Tapanya, 2006), but only anecdotal evidence pointed at the presence of school bullying specifically targeting students who are or are perceived to be LGBT, or on mechanisms to counter it in Thai schools.

Thus, research was needed to evaluate the issue in the Thai context. UNESCO, which has recently been addressing homophobic school bullying on a global scale, together with Plan International, which has been operating a school safety campaign “Learn Without Fear” in Thai schools, partnered with the Center for Health Policy Studies, Department of Society and Health, and the Center for Health Law at Mahidol University to investigate the issue.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To gather evidence on the nature, scale and impact of bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be same-sex attracted or transgender, attending general secondary schools in 5 provinces of Thailand;
- To study various aspects of the lifestyles of secondary school students that might be linked to bullying behaviours;
- To document the availability of existing prevention and support interventions on bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be same-sex attracted or transgender, including accountability measures for those perpetrating bullying; and
- To assess the support and educational needs of same-sex attracted and transgender secondary school students; as well as the training needs of teachers in the area of effective bullying prevention.

Methodology

Research Design: Mixed qualitative/quantitative methods were used.

Study sites and sampling: One province in each of Thailand's four major regions (Central, Northeastern, Northern and Southern), as well as the capital city Bangkok were selected as study sites. In each province, qualitative data were collected in three general, non-vocational secondary schools and quantitative data in an additional three secondary schools. Two of these schools in each province were private schools in central areas of the province, two were state schools in central areas, and a further two were state schools in peripheral areas of the province. The provinces and schools for qualitative data collection were purposively selected. The schools for the quantitative data collection were randomly chosen through a multistage cluster sampling process.

Data collection methods and participants: The study was reviewed and approved by the institutional review board (IRB) at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University. All data were collected within the participating schools when convenient for them, with consideration for the privacy of the participants. Participants were briefed of the objectives and process of the study, and informed consent was obtained. Qualitative data were collected through 67 focus group discussions (FGDs) and 56 in-depth interviews (IDIs) with LGBT and non-LGBT students, teachers and administrators. Quantitative data were collected using a custom-built, self-administered computerised survey that was administered in the presence of the research team to 2,070 randomly selected students. Of the survey participants, 246 (11.9%) self-identified with various LGBT identities. All students who participated in this research were studying on levels 1-6 of secondary education (grades 7-12) and their ages ranged from 13 to 20 years.

Data analysis: The qualitative data were content analysed using the data management program NVivo. The quantitative data were described in terms of absolute numbers and percentages; differences between groups were assessed using Chi Square.

Findings

Both students and teachers described a continuum of behaviours ranging from *kan yok-lo* (teasing), considered harmless, through *kan klaeng*, used for less serious kinds of bullying or rough teasing, to *kan rangkae*, which is the academic Thai term for "bullying," and was used for the most severe cases of bullying. The students might perceive the same behaviours as any of these, depending on perceived intent (hostile vs. friendly) and the relationship between those involved (friend, enemy, or neither).

A range of behaviours were described, including verbal abuse (e.g. face-to-face and online name calling), physical abuse (e.g. slapping, kicking), social abuse (e.g.

face-to-face and online social exclusion), and sexual abuse (e.g. unwanted touching of buttocks, breasts, penises). Among male students, placing victims into sexually humiliating positions and mimicking sexual intercourse and/or rape also emerged as a form of teasing/bullying. *Toms* (masculine girls) seemed to be the least liked group in schools; some schools mentioned specifically anti-*tom* hate groups.

Overall, 55.7 per cent of self-identified LGBT students reported having been bullied within the past month because they were LGBT. Nearly one-third of self-identified LGBT students (30.9%) experienced physical abuse, 29.3 per cent reported verbal abuse, 36.2 per cent stated social abuse, and 24.4 per cent reported being victims of sexual harassment specifically because they were LGBT. Even among students who did *not* indicate they were LGBT, 24.5 per cent reported having been bullied in some way because they were *perceived* to be transgender or attracted to the same sex. Overall, only one-third of those who were bullied because they were or were perceived to be LGBT did something in response to such incidents – for example, consulted their friends, fought back, or told a teacher.

When compared to those who had not been bullied at all, a significantly higher proportion of those who had been bullied on the basis of perceived transgenderism or same-sex attraction had missed classes in the past month, drank alcoholic beverages, were depressed, had unprotected sex in the past 3 months, and had attempted suicide in the past year. They were also significantly more likely to be depressed or have attempted suicide when compared to those who had been bullied for other reasons.

Schools generally did not have specific anti-bullying policies, let alone LGBT-specific anti-bullying policies. The schools' responses mostly consisted in punishing perpetrators when bullying was brought to their attention. Even in these cases, some male students with feminine gender presentation protested that the punishment other boys got for bullying them was milder than if they had bullied girls. Many feminine male students reported being afraid of going to school toilets or school camps, with some indicating that they were ridiculed and not welcomed in either male or female toilets. In one school, group-specific sleeping arrangements had been provided for this group on a school camp upon their request after they had experienced unwanted sexual advances from other boys. Many schools had guidance counsellors that could provide individual support to victims of bullying, yet they were seldom being used. Some students complained that they informed their teachers that they were being bullied, and the teachers responded that it was their own fault.

The study found that teachers need significantly more support to understand sexual/gender diversity issues, and integrate this understanding into comprehensive sexuality education interventions. Many schools had negative attitudes about sexuality. The sex education that was given emphasised stigmatising sexual behaviour and encouraging delayed sexual debut beyond graduation. Teachers' language about LGBT students was stigmatising. A common term used during FGDs with teachers was *biang ben thang phet*

(sexually deviant). Teachers seemed to use such terms even when they described LGBT students in a positive tone of voice, suggesting that they did not intentionally condemn such students. In many schools, teachers initially said they did not see any link between sexuality education and bullying prevention, but when the issue of anti-LGBT bias was discussed further, they expressed a wish to receive educational materials, presentations and training related to sexual/gender diversity.

Recommendations

For schools

1. Develop and enforce clear anti-bullying policies covering students of all genders, emphasising management of bullying perpetrators in a manner involving no discrimination on the basis of the sex, sexual orientation or gender expression of either perpetrators or victims.
2. Integrate content and participatory activities increasing understanding of the extent and consequences of bullying and teasing into various existing school subjects, for example into sex education, guidance, or homeroom classes.
3. Build safe spaces for LGBT students, for example specific toilets, activity rooms or separate sleeping arrangements (e.g. during school camps) as one way to prevent bullying targeting this group of students.
4. Build acceptance of sexual/gender diversity through activities that enable LGBT students to fully express their identities and abilities.
5. Encourage participatory teaching of comprehensive sexuality education that emphasises acceptance of diversity and mutual respect regardless of sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.
6. Permit students of all genders to participate in all activities and to become student leaders (e.g. student council president) both informally and formally.
7. Challenge myths about LGBT students (e.g. myths that view them as deviant, mentally abnormal, over-emotional, or as prone to violate school regulations) among students, teachers, and parents by inviting external agencies working on comprehensive sexuality education or sexual diversity topics to provide information at the school.

For policy-makers

1. Bodies responsible for educational and public health management must have policies on the prevention of school-related gender-based violence in general, and on the prevention of bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be LGBT in particular.
2. Revise current educational curricula in each subject and remove biased terminology and explanations related to sexual/gender diversity.
3. Provide channels of assistance to bullied students, e.g. hotlines, web boards, or mobile applications.

4. Build understanding of sexual/gender diversity by teaching related topics in teacher training programs at universities so that future teachers will understand these issues and have readiness to teach about them.
5. Develop and enforce policies on bullying against students who are or are perceived to be LGBT, together with clear indicators to measure progress, and rewarding mechanisms for schools that show progress in reducing such bullying.
6. Create collaboration agreements on the provision of knowledge on sexual/gender diversity and school safety promotion between relevant agencies, for example between Educational Service Area Offices and UNESCO or Plan International.
7. Create or identify existing manuals on the prevention of bullying targeting students who are or are seen to be LGBT that teachers can use in their day-to-day work.
8. Develop and enforce policies providing more flexibility in the implementation of school regulations on school uniforms and obligatory hairstyles to better match the gender identities of LGBT students.
9. Arrange inter-ministry meetings between the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Public Health to build shared understandings of sexual/gender diversity, to bring an end to the use of the term “sexually deviant” and to understand that LGBT individuals are not mentally disordered.

For society at large

1. Promote acceptance of sexual/gender diversity within society at large through public campaigns, popular media, or activities of civil society organisations.
2. Create collaboration networks between schools and civil society organisations working on sexual/gender diversity and gender-based violence.

For further research

1. Continued research on these topics is needed for up-to-date information about the situation.
2. These issues should also be studied specifically in the context of boarding schools, religious schools, juvenile observation and protection centres, vocational colleges and centres for non-formal education.

Rationale

According to universal human rights principles, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 26), every human being has the right to education (United Nations, 1948). Education should be of high quality and be provided within an environment safe to learners. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people are no exception. They have this right to education just like other people.¹

However, a number of children around the world find their right to education being violated though bullying by other students, because bullying interrupts their normal attendance and school life (Pinheiro, 2006).

Forms of bullying may include teasing, name-calling, labelling, psychological abuse, physical assaults and social exclusion (UNESCO, 2011). According to the theory of Dan Olweus, a pioneer in the field, bullying is different from fighting in that in bullying, the bully has more power and is thus able to repeatedly bully the less powerful victims (Olweus, 2003).

The United Nations' Global Report on Violence against Children indicates that almost all types of bullying are sex- or gender-based; they enforce the norm that males are tough and females are gentle, and bullying is a punishment for those who fail to conform to such a norm (Pinheiro, 2006). Hence, the high prevalence of bullying targeting LGBT students in many countries is no surprise (UNESCO, 2012).

Many countries have adopted the international framework on the protection of children from all types of violence, emphasising the issue of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) and the importance of providing education to prevent or mitigate the problem. Bullying against children is considered a form of SRGBV (Leach & Dunne, 2013).

Among the concepts used to explain negative thoughts, feelings and practices toward LGBT persons, the word "homophobia" is probably the most frequently one used. The term was developed by George Weinberg in the 1960s, based on his observation that many psychiatrists had violently negative reactions toward same-sex attracted people. Weinberg felt that the reactions were violent enough to be classified as a phobia – that is, an unreasonable fear (Herek, 2004). According to Herek, the term homophobia is now quite dated, because it implies that opposition against same-sex attracted people is based on an unreasonable fear. Research on negative attitudes toward same-sex attracted people has revealed that hatred and anger may be more relevant aspects. Herek (2004) has further critiqued the term homophobia for portraying individual emotions

¹ The 16th principle (the right to education) of the Yogyakarta Principles, a document applying existing international human rights principles on sexual orientation and gender identity issues, states that "everyone has the right to education, without discrimination on the basis of, and taking into account, their sexual orientation and gender identity" (Paisarn Likhitpreechakul, 2009, p. 57). Clause E under Principle 16 (p. 59) specifies that States shall "ensure that laws and policies provide adequate protection for students, staff and teachers of different sexual orientations and gender identities against all forms of social exclusion and violence within the school environment, including bullying and harassment".

rather than social bias as the problem, whereas the most suitable explanation for the issue is probably on the societal level.

One concept that positions the problem as societal is heterosexism (meaning bias against people who are not heterosexual). Herek (2004, p. 15) has considered heterosexism a suitable concept to describe systems based on:

“... beliefs about gender, morality, and danger by which homosexuality and sexual minorities are defined as deviant, sinful, and threatening. Hostility, discrimination, and violence are thereby justified as appropriate and even necessary.”

The term “heteronormativity” is similarly used to explain heterosexuality as a social norm. However, this term has various definitions used in various ways (Herek, 2004).

It is important to note that all these three terms refer to sexual orientation, but do not cover gender identity and gender expression. Thus, the word “transphobia” is used in a similar manner as “homophobia”, and the term “transprejudice” has been proposed as a counterpart of heterosexism when reference is made to transgender rather than same-sex attracted people (King & Winter, 2009).

Nonetheless, the word “homophobia” has been widely used in the context of describing bullying against same-sex attracted people. A global review by UNESCO (2012, p. 16) chiefly uses the expression “homophobic bullying” and defines it as “bullying on the basis of either sexual orientation or gender identity²”. Though the definition does not explicitly refer to such bullying as being due to homophobia, the word “homophobia” in the expression implies this. Moreover, when the term “homophobic bullying” is used to refer to bullying against both same-sex attracted and transgender people, it focuses the attention on same-sex attracted people and obscures the issues of transgender people. If a direct Thai-language translation of the term “homophobic bullying” is used, it may be even more likely to create the impression that the only issue at hand is bullying based on a fear of same-sex attracted people, which would not reflect social realities in Thai society. Existing terminology in both Thai and English is problematic. When referring to the Thai context, this report uses the term “bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be LGBT” which corresponds to the definition provided by UNESCO (2012) for “homophobic bullying”. The term is intended as a neutral expression that describes the problem but does not take a stance on its cause(s).

Studies in various countries have found that this kind of bullying is a global issue. For example, a 37-country study in Europe (Takács, 2006) found that more than half of LGBT students had been bullied in their school. A study in Australia reported verbal insults as the most frequent (61%) form of bullying, 80 per cent of which took place in schools (Hillier et al., 2010). A study in South Asia (Bangladesh and India) found that half of LGBT students had been harassed by

² “Sexual orientation” refers to whether an individual is attracted to the same sex, another sex, or both the same and other sexes. The term “gender identity” is used to describe whether an individual defines themselves as being a man, woman, or some other gender.

friends and teachers (Khan et al., 2005), indicating this problem is not confined to the Western world.

Bullying against LGBT students affects the quality of their education; it can make them unwilling to go to school, or make them stop going to school altogether. LGBT students often report feeling less safe at school than their non-LGBT counterparts (Kosciw et al., 2010). Studies on this kind of bullying have linked it to depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem (Russell et al. 2010), as well as increased risk of illegal drug use, unprotected sex, HIV infection, self-harm and suicide (Lancet Editorial Board, 2011). LGBT students often try to protect themselves from violence and intimidation by people around them by hiding their gender identity or sexuality from their friends and families (Takács, 2006).

In the past few years, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has paid a lot of attention to homophobic bullying. A global consultation was organised in 2011 to collect evidence on homophobic bullying in various contexts around the world (UNESCO, 2012). In Thailand, a preliminary desk review of existing evidence was conducted (De Lind van Wijngaarden, 2012). However, there have been no prior systematic studies on this issue in Thailand. Thus, this report presents the first study conducted in Thailand that directly focuses on bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be LGBT.³

Thailand has been perceived by both foreigners and some of its own population as very accepting of sexual/gender diversity. This perception is still widespread today. A Thai government agency makes use of it in a campaign aimed at increasing the number of foreign LGBT tourists that come to Thailand.⁴ Yet, Jackson (1999) has described Thai society as “tolerant but unaccepting” toward same-sex attracted individuals and concluded that the perception of Thailand as a “gay heaven” is a mere myth. A review of recent research on the problems faced by LGBT individuals in Thailand (Ojanen, 2009) suggested that many of the problems noted by Jackson (1999) were still common. Heterosexism and transprejudice dominate Thai society, which therefore does not genuinely accept transgender and same-sex attracted people (Ojanen, 2009).

Previous evidence of bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be LGBT in Thailand exists in the form of news articles and anecdotes. For example, an openly gay male student attempted suicide by overdosing on sleeping pills because of the harsh pressure he faced at his school. He was blamed and slapped on the face by a teacher in front of other students. The teacher told him to stop “acting sissy” and threatened to undress him in front of the flagpole should he fail to do so.⁵ The evidence gathered by UNESCO also included narratives about teachers, who tried to change their students’ gender characteristics, for example by forcing feminine male students to attend a boxing camp or to play football, hoping they would absorb masculinity and eschew their transgender identity

³ Prior research in Thailand has investigated school bullying in the general student population (e.g. Sombat Tapanya, 2006; The Wisdom Society for Public Opinion Research of Thailand, 2009) which did not indicate whether LGBT students were being bullied more than other groups of students, and whether the motivations behind bullying against these students were the same as motivations behind bullying targeting other students.

⁴ The Tourism Authority of Thailand has developed a website (<http://gothaibefree.com/>) to convince foreign LGBT people that Thailand accepts sexual/gender diversity, and that they should patronize the tourism industry in Thailand.

⁵ Available at: <http://highlight.kapook.com/view/73415/>

(De Lind van Wijngaarden, 2012). These anecdotes reflect the fact that Thai schools create an atmosphere which indicates to students that transgender students are not appreciated by the school. Such an atmosphere can hardly help to increase these students' safety at school. On the other hand, UNESCO has produced video materials showcasing good practices in certain schools in Thailand, where the health and well-being of LGBT students are promoted, for example through the provision of "third gender toilets" for male-to-female transgender students (who were born male but choose to live in the feminine role or as *phet thang lueak*, "alternative gender").⁶

Overall, the previously existing evidence suggested that students in Thai schools were being bullied because of their actual or perceived LGBT status, as were students in many other countries. As a result, UNESCO Bangkok Office wished to further explore the details of the problem and its impact on LGBT students, in order to inform solutions to the problem in the future. Plan International Thailand, on the other hand, implements programmes protecting students from school-based violence perpetrated by either teachers or other students, and wished to identify approaches to help students who face this kind of bullying. Therefore, this study was conducted in collaboration between various agencies to identify the problems faced by students who are or are perceived to be LGBT, and to find ways to solve these problems in Thai society.

Objectives

1. To gather evidence on the nature, scale and impact of bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be same-sex attracted or transgender, attending secondary schools in 5 provinces of Thailand.
2. To study various aspects of the lifestyles of secondary school students that might be linked to bullying behaviours.
3. To document the availability of existing prevention and support interventions on bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be same-sex attracted or transgender, including accountability measures for those perpetrating bullying; and
4. To assess the support and educational needs of same-sex attracted and transgender secondary school students; as well as the training needs of teachers in the area of effective bullying prevention.

Methodology

This study investigated teasing and bullying⁷ among general secondary school students in 5 provinces in 4 regions of Thailand (2 provinces in Central Thailand, and 1 province in the North, the Northeast and the South), focusing on situations where one party teases or bullies another because they perceive that other party to be same-sex attracted or transgender (hereinafter referred to as "LGBT" or

⁶ Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/resources/multimedia/video/addressing-homophobia-in-and-through-schools-promising-examples-from-thailand/>

⁷ The qualitative findings, presented in the next section of this report, revealed that neither teachers nor students used the term *rangkae* ("to bully" in Thai) often. When they did, their definition was narrow and different from the definition held by the research team. Thus, the research team used all the three terms used by the teachers and the students to refer to incidents which may be deemed as bullying by the research team. These include *yok lo*, *klaeng* (both rendered as "to tease" here) and *rangkae* (rendered as "to bully" here).

“transgender or same-sex attracted”), regardless of whether the victim actually is LGBT or not.

Mixed qualitative/quantitative methods were used to answer the research questions on the prevalence, types and impact of bullying on the students who formed the study sample, on how their lifestyles were related to bullying, as well as on bullying prevention measures and mechanisms and the information and other support needs related to finding solutions to the problem. Qualitative data were collected from students, teachers and school administrators through IDIs and FGDs. Quantitative data were collected from students using a computerized, self-administered survey. All students who participated in this research were studying on levels 1–6 of secondary education (grades 7–12); their ages ranged from 13 to 20 years.

Technical advisory board

A technical advisory board was established, with terms of reference. The board met twice. The first meeting was to review the details of the research process and the second meeting to provide inputs on the research report, as well as to brainstorm on advocacy relevant to the studied issue. The board comprised representatives from the aforementioned partner organisations, LGBT secondary school students from various regions of Thailand, representatives from national and regional LGBT organisations in Thailand, and a representative from Partners for Prevention, a specialist organisation on gender-based violence (see Appendix 1 for details of the board).

Study sites

This study was conducted in 5 provinces in 4 regions of Thailand (Central, Northern, Northeastern and Southern Thailand). One province was selected to represent each region, except for the central region, where 2 provinces (Bangkok and another province) were selected. In some of these provinces, Plan International Thailand was implementing a project to promote school safety for students, while others were deemed by the research team to represent their respective regions well. These provinces are not disclosed in this report to safeguard the participants' privacy and confidentiality (except for Bangkok, which was chosen as an additional study site in the central region so as to ensure that the study reflected the context of the capital city, provincial cities and rural areas).

Three secondary schools were selected in each province for the qualitative component of the study, and a further three were chosen for the quantitative component:

- a. One state-operated and one private school in each provincial capital (or inner Bangkok); and
- b. One state-operated school in a district outside the provincial capital (or in suburban Bangkok).

Multistage cluster sampling was used to randomly assign one district outside the provincial capital/inner Bangkok as the rural/suburban study site in each

province. This method was also used to randomly select all the schools in which quantitative data were collected (including the state-operated and private schools, in both central and peripheral districts). The random sampling process consisted of the following:

1. A list of all the districts in a given province, as well as of all schools of each type, was compiled.
2. A number was assigned to each school or district.
3. A random number was generated using the random number function in MS Excel.
4. The districts and schools with numbers matching the randomly generated numbers were chosen as data collection sites.

Thus, the way the quantitative data were collected aimed to represent the overall general secondary school student population in Thailand in the sense permitted by multistage cluster sampling. Data representing each region (except for Central Thailand) were only collected in two districts of one province, and the provinces representing each region were purposively selected, which somewhat limits the representativeness of the quantitative sample.

The schools for qualitative data collection were purposively selected on the basis of recommendations from the advisory board that identified them as having a high number of LGBT students.

One girls-only school was included in the qualitative dataset and another one in the quantitative dataset. The former was purposely chosen to investigate the context of a single-sex school. The latter emerged as a quantitative data collection site through the random school selection process, in which both coeducational and single-sex schools were listed as possible data collection sites. All other schools included in this study were coeducational, though one further school in the qualitative dataset had considerably more female than male students because it had previously been a single-sex school. Overall, the findings of this study mostly reflect the context of coeducational schools.

One boarding school was likewise included in the qualitative dataset to investigate this type of specific context. Overall, the findings of this study mostly reflect the context of non-boarding schools.

Timeframe

The study was conducted between 1 December 2012 and 30 November 2013. The research team collected qualitative data during two periods; in February 2013 in the Central region (Bangkok and another province) and the Northeast, and in June–July 2013 in the South, the North and the remaining parts in Bangkok. The quantitative data were collected during August–September 2013.

Ethical issues

Review and approval of research involving human subjects

Prior to data collection, the study was reviewed and approved by the institutional review board (IRB) at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University.

Informed consent

According to Mahidol University's regulations, researchers must provide potential research participants with a document explaining the project details and ask these potential participants (or their parents, in case the potential participants are under 18 years of age) to express their consent to participate in the study in writing. The research team followed these regulations.

Confidentiality

Keeping data provided by participants confidential is an important aspect of research. The research team safeguarded the confidentiality of the data collected in each school by not disclosing it to others in that school in a way that would have made it possible to identify who provided the data. Only the research team members, transcribers, the IRB at Mahidol, as well as those working on this project at UNESCO and Plan International had access to the IDI and FGD data. During FGDs and IDIs, the participants were allowed to choose between using their real nicknames or pseudonyms to ensure that they felt comfortable to participate. Many chose to use pseudonyms during FGDs.

Being aware of the possibility of leakage of personal information through other FGD participants, FGD participants were also reminded to keep each other's information confidential.

While writing the research report, all names mentioned in the spoken accounts were changed to pseudonyms. Names of schools, districts or provinces (except Bangkok) where data were collected are not stated in this report, to minimise the risk of research participants being identified.

Privacy

To ensure the privacy of the participants during FGDs or IDIs, the research team allowed the participants to choose the venue every time there was more than one option. These options differed from one school to another. Some schools assigned specific rooms for data collection. However, the downside of arranging FGDs in rooms assigned by the school was that the resulting discussions tended to be rather formal and so were the data obtained. When the place where data collection took place was chosen by the participants, the participants tended to choose benches in outdoors areas of the school, where there were some passers-by from time to time. However, since most of these conversations took place when other students were in class, the participants felt these areas were private enough to feel comfortable to contribute information.

Trust building

Before starting each FGD, and while walking to the place chosen for the FGD, the researchers acquainted themselves with the participants and started the conversation from very general topics to build trust with them, for example, “How did you come to school this morning?”, “Do you watch soap operas?”, or “Which characters do you like?” As a result, the participants felt more familiar with each other. Before every session, the researchers introduced themselves. Sometimes, FGDs were difficult to get going, because some participants did not quite trust the researchers yet, seeing them as strangers and not feeling sure whether they should provide their information. When the atmosphere was not comfortable, the researchers suspended the session and gave the participants an opportunity to ask questions. When the participants felt assured that the researchers had a positive view of the participants’ group, the atmosphere was improved. Some research team members and assistant researchers were gay or lesbian, and some were under 30 years old. Having researchers whose age or sexuality were similar to the participants facilitated trust building.

Qualitative research process

Method and objectives of qualitative data collection

The research team collected qualitative data in order to achieve a deep and accurate understanding of the situation in the Thai context, in particular, the nature and forms of teasing and bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be LGBT; the impact of such bullying or teasing; measures, policies and activities used to address the problem; teachers’ needs related to preventing the problem; and the educational support needs of students who are or are perceived to be LGBT.

The research team collected qualitative data through:

- a. FGDs, with 5-6 participants per group
- b. IDIs
- c. Observation
- d. Participatory FGDs, where participants played a more active role than just discussing. Drawing was used to get conversations going. Counting candies was used to indicate the frequency of teasing and bullying victimisation. The “train station” game (with 4 stations, each with a flipchart for writing) was used to collect written data about students’ support needs. This approach was used in a single school to compare it with the traditional FGD approach used in other schools.

Selection of qualitative data participants and coordination

The research project coordinator contacted the selected schools to obtain formal permission to collect data on bullying among students. A formal written request for permission was sent to each school, together with details of the data collection plan. Then, the coordinator contacted an assigned coordinating teacher at each school by phone for selecting participants among teachers and students, and making appointments for data collection with them.

There were six groups of participants; namely, 1) teachers 2) administrators, 3) male students, 4) female students, 5) GBT students (gay, bisexual or transgender males) and 6) LBT students (lesbian, bisexual or transgender females).

Altogether 67 FGDs were convened, as follows:

- Teachers 15 groups
- Male students 12 groups
- Female students 14 groups
- GBT male students 13 groups
- LBT female students 13 groups

Fifty-six IDIs were conducted with the following:

- School administrators/disciplinarians 15 persons
- Male students 3 persons
- Female students 3 persons
- GBT male students 15 persons
- LBT female students 20 persons

In selecting non-LGBT students and teachers/administrators/disciplinarians, the project coordinator requested the coordinating teacher's assistance in making appointments with groups of male and female students who "liked to tease other students or were teased", each group consisting of five students. In each school, appointments were made with one group of lower secondary students, one group of upper secondary students, one group of teachers (each consisting of five persons), and a school director or disciplinarian.

The research team was aware that selection or making appointments with LGBT students could be a sensitive matter, because some LGBT students would not be open about their LGBT status to most other students and teachers. Being publicly identified as LGBT could have negative consequences to such students. In some cases, the project coordinator contacted the student council president for assistance in identifying LGBT students. This approach was used, because in the early stages of data collection, some schools told the coordinator that "we don't have such students." Furthermore, student council presidents generally are familiar with a large number of students. Thus, they tend to be able to identify some LGBT students in their school and make appointments with them, while not making them feel as intimidated as if a teacher made a similar request. However, in many cases, teachers also assisted with the selection of these students, and collaborated with the research team without any problems. Whether coordination took place through teachers or the student council president, appointments were requested with one group of GBT male students and one group of LBT female students in each school, each with circa five participants.

The initial term used to request appointments with such students was "feminine-looking males or tomboyish, rough-acting female students" instead of directly identifying them as LGBT (which also might not have been a readily understood term among some teachers). Some student council presidents readily understood this as an indirect reference to LGBT in general and also recruited

same-sex attracted students who were relatively gender normative. In some cases, where the research team coordinator felt that good rapport had been reached with the student council president, a direct request was also made for students who were attracted to the same sex.

Students who participated in IDIs were mostly selected among students who had already participated in an FGD. The research team members observed the students during these discussions and tried to identify students that would have interesting information to share in an additional IDI, especially when they were perpetrators or victims. However, sometimes a suitable student's or teacher's name was mentioned during an FGD, but that person was not present at the FGD, and was thus requested to give an IDI afterwards.

Qualitative data collection process

The research team started all FGDs and IDIs by introducing themselves and providing snacks and refreshments to the participants. The team ensured the willingness to participate among those who were present by going through the participant information document and obtaining signatures on a consent form. Upon their consent, the research team asked for permission to audio record the conversation and started the FGD or IDI, using the guidelines (annex 2) to specify the topics to be covered. However, these guidelines used in a flexible way; they were a memory aid rather than a schedule to be followed in the order stated in the guideline. After each session, each participant received an incentive payment to compensate for their contribution (THB 100/US\$3.3 for an FGD, THB 150/US\$5 for an IDI and THB 500/US\$16.5 for an IDI with a teacher/administrator/disciplinarian).

While on the school premises but not engaged in an FGD or an IDI, the research team members observed interactions among students, between students and teachers, and physical characteristics of the school, for example blind spots where each type of bullying can take place. The team members took notes or photos of these areas. In certain cases, issues observed in the school were used as material to ask further questions during FGDs or IDIs.

FGD/IDI venues

In the initial stages of data collection, the research team used the rooms provided by each school for FGDs, for example the school meeting room or a classroom. After collecting data in a number of schools, the research team members felt the FGD environment created by these rooms was rather formal and led to the collection of data that were too formal in character. This prompted the research team to change the approach by asking the participants to choose where the FGD should take place. A table under a tree with not a lot of teachers walking by was usually chosen. Each FGD was conducted at distance from the other FGDs so as to minimise any interference. Certain schools, however, had limited space (especially those in Bangkok), and in these schools, the research team had to stick to the room provided by the school, for example the school library or meeting room.

Qualitative data collection team

The qualitative data collection team comprised eight members, four of whom were male and the remaining four were female. Sometimes assistant researchers who were not part of the core research team assisted with data collection in the field. Some assistant researchers were lesbian women, while some of the core research team members were gay men. Having gay or lesbian research team members facilitated the process of the FGDs, especially trust building and mutual understanding.

In conducting the FGDs, the eight core research team members usually paired up into four pairs. One facilitator led the discussion while the other took notes. The former initiated the discussion and the other, in addition to taking notes, asked additional questions missed by the main facilitator.

The team members who conducted interviews with school directors or disciplinarians were university faculty members to ensure that the interviewee and interviewer were roughly matched in terms of terms of seniority and could thus communicate with each other more easily.

Qualitative research tools

The research team used guidelines to guide the FGDs and IDIs. These guidelines had been drafted and revised on the basis of recommendations from the technical advisory board. Altogether six types of guidelines were used (see Appendix 2):

- Guideline 1: For FGDs with students in general
- Guideline 2: For FGDs with LGBT students
- Guideline 3: For FGDs with teachers
- Guideline 4: For IDIs with school principals/directors
- Guideline 5: For IDIs with bullied students
- Guideline 6: For IDIs students with students perpetrating bullying

The guideline questions for FGDs emphasised issues the participants had witnessed or perceived in their school, rather than personal experience. The IDI guideline questions, on the other hand, emphasised direct bullying experiences, whether as perpetrators or victims of teasing or bullying behaviours, or as directors or disciplinarians responsible for the safety of the students in their school.

All guidelines contained questions on the nature, forms, places, frequency, and motivations of bullying; on the characteristics, feelings and reactions of victims as well as the impact teasing or bullying had on them; the role of bystanders in the incidents; and bullying prevention or management measures used by the schools. All guidelines (except the set used with LGBT students) began with questions on bullying in general, not focusing specifically on bullying against students who are or are perceived to be LGBT, to gain a general overview of the problem as well as to find out whether the participants themselves would take up the issue of bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be LGBT. In case the participants would not themselves take up these issues, the

guidelines had additional questions on the social status of such students in the participant's school and on bullying targeting them.

The guidelines differed from each other in terms of the point of view adopted. For example, the guidelines used with students were created in a way to match their vantage point, while those used with teachers were created so as to match a teacher's point of view. The guidelines used with teachers focused on ways to prevent or manage the problem, while those used with school directors or disciplinarians emphasised the policy level response.

Qualitative data analysis

During the qualitative data collection period, the research team met regularly to share and make sense of the data, to reach a shared understanding of the phenomenon and to guide further data collection. Such dialogues constituted initial data analysis.

During systematic data analysis, the team members used the same codebook, designed in advance, to code snippets of text. These codes were based on the research objectives as well as phenomena encountered on the field.

After codebook development, the research team used a qualitative data software package, NVivo10, to analyse the data. All the transcribed FGDs and IDIs, as well as the codebook, were input into the program. Coding was performed to categorise the data. Each research team member who performed coding did this on sections of data with which they had helped to collect and were thus familiar with. For instance, the research team leader, who interviewed school directors or disciplinarians, was responsible for analysing data gained from them and writing the section in this report based on these data.

Quantitative research process

Method and objectives of quantitative data collection

The research team used quantitative methods to find out about the forms, prevalence and impact of bullying targeting secondary school students who are or are perceived to be LGBT, in a way that could reflect the extent of the problem in the entire Thai general secondary school student population. A computerised, self-administered survey was used for quantitative data collection. The survey was designed by the research team and converted into a computerised format by an outsourced programming and graphic design team.

Quantitative data collection tools

The main data collection tool was the survey program. This program was specifically developed for this study and adjusted on the basis of recommendations from the advisory board. Draft versions of the program were pilot tested during the qualitative phase of the study, and comments received from the pilot testers also informed the final design of the computerized survey. The survey consists of five sections, as follows:

Section 1: Basic information

Section 2: Incidents that have happened to you

Section 3: The quality of your everyday life

Section 4: Relationships and love

Section 5: Substance use

Section 1 of the survey contains general questions about the participant, for example year of birth, grade, ethnicity, religion, height, weight, grade point average (GPA), and parents' highest level of education; detailed questions about the participant's gender and sexuality (personal title, identity, perceived level of femininity or masculinity, and the sex of a partner the participant would like to have); as well as questions on the use of mobile phones and the Internet.

Section 2 is the main component of the survey. This section contains all questions related to teasing and bullying. However, as the research team realised early on that students' perceptions of the word "bullying" differ from those held by researchers, the word "bullying" is not used. More neutral terms, such as "behaviour" or "incident" are used instead. The first set of questions in this section covers physical behaviours (4 questions), verbal behaviours (3 questions), social behaviours (3 questions), sexual behaviours (5 questions) and behaviours acted through a mobile phone or the Internet (7 questions)⁸ that the participant was subjected to in the past one month. In choosing the questions to be covered, the research team relied on both the advisory board and the qualitative data collected earlier. These questions are first asked without linking them to any motivations.

After the participant has passed these initial questions, the software will prompt the participant to identify the motivations the participant thinks the various perpetrators had when they did the things identified by the initial questions to the participant. The participant is asked to specify how the perpetrators viewed the participant when they did these things to the participant, regardless of whether these perceptions were true or not. These motivation questions are asked separately for each behaviour the participant stated they were subjected to. The motivation questions for each behaviour are presented in two sets; the first covers characteristics of the participant that are not related to being LGBT:

- Being fat, skinny, tall or short
- Looking like a country bumpkin or hillbilly
- Looking nerdy (or being so good in one's studies it annoys others)
- Looking "a bit slow"
- Not reacting to what they do to one
- Acting in an annoying way
- Having teased them before
- Having a dark complexion
- Having a more attractive girlfriend or boyfriend
- Looking weak or "proper"
- Other reasons (not asked to specify)

⁸ This report does not include quantitative data on mobile phone or Internet based behaviours due to technical difficulties that occurred with the computerised survey.

Having answered this first set of questions for the given behaviour, the participant will see the second set of questions. These are perceptions of the participant in the eyes of the perpetrator, related to “being LGBT”:

- Being a feminine [*ok sao*] male
- Being a butch [*ok hao*] female
- Being *gay* or *chai rak chai* [a man who loves men]
- Being *tut*, *kathoei*, or *sao praphet song* [feminine transgender terms]
- Being a *tom* [masculine lesbian]
- Being a *dee*, *les*, or *ying rak ying* [gender-normative lesbian identities]

In answering these two sets of questions, the participant can choose as many reasons as they like to. In the second set, at least one choice or “not related to these motivations” must be chosen. By using this approach, the research team was able to identify perpetrators’ underlying motivations, often several at a time, and whether these motivations had something to do with perceiving the participant as LGBT. In this report, all incidents for which at least one reason from the second question set was chosen as a motivation, are reported as teasing or bullying based on perceived LGBT status, while all the incidents identified as “not related to these motivations” in the second question set are reported as teasing or bullying based on non-LGBT related reasons.

The second part of Section 2 contains additional questions, which are asked only when the participant indicates that they had been subjected to some behaviours because they were perceived to be LGBT. These questions concern the frequency, place, help from bystanders, reactions of the participant to being victimised/reasons for inaction, as well as the consequences of reacting to such behaviours. Section 2 also contains questions about bullying perpetrated by teachers. However, this report presents data based on only some of these additional questions.

Section 3 contains questions on the participant’s well-being, including a Thai version of a depression screening instrument for youth, namely the Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D) (Thorarin Kongsuk et al., 2006). The CES-D has been validated to screen depression disorders among Thai teenagers (Umaporn Trangkasombat, 1997, cited in Thorarin Kongsuk et al., 2006). It consists of 20 questions. In addition, this section has questions on school safety, suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts, other forms of self-harm and questions regarding unauthorized absence from school.

Section 4 contains questions about couple life and sex. These questions were included by the research team to be able to investigate the link between these issues and teasing or bullying victimisation. The issues covered include having a steady or a casual partner, the gender(s) and number of such partners, disclosure of LGBT identity to friends, teachers and family, and reactions to such disclosure.

The section also contains questions on having sex in various ways, as there was an interest in assessing health risks associated with different types of sex (vaginal, anal, oral or manual); these detailed sex-related questions were only administered to those over 18 years of age, per IRB recommendations. Survey

participants who were under 18 years of age were only asked a general question on whether they had “ever had sex”. In this section are some additional questions on age at first sex, gender of the participant’s first sexual partner, whether the participant’s first sexual experience was consensual, whether the participant uses condoms, whether the participant is having transactional sex, and whether the participant uses the Internet to hook up for sex dates. The software program was designed to let participants choose whether to see the sex-related questions. The program only reveals these questions to participants who express their willingness to see them by ticking a box in the program. With participants who choose not to see these questions, the program skips these items and codes responses to them as missing data.

Section 5 contains questions on smoking, alcohol consumption and illegal substance use, as well on body modification practices, such as breast binding, injecting various substances, and taking sex hormones. The purpose of these questions was the same as for the sex-related questions, that is, to identify any associations between teasing/bullying and substance use or body modification behaviours that may be detrimental to health.

The survey program randomises the order in which the participant encounters these sections (except the first section) to ensure that survey-taking fatigue does not affect the responses to the latter sections more than it affects the earlier ones. To reduce participants’ boredom in taking the survey, the research team also collaborated with the outsourced programming and graphics design team to select, create and incorporate animated images attractive to teenagers in each section.

Two versions of the survey program were developed: 1) an online survey hosted on a website, collating responses on a remote server provided by the outsourced programming and graphics design company, and providing password-protected access to the data and 2) an offline survey, stored on the 21 portable computers (13 laptops and 8 netbooks) the research team used. It was initially planned that both online and offline versions would be used in order to minimise the time required to complete the questionnaire by the students in each school (if the school’s computers could be used, the number of students taking the survey at the same time could be increased and the time consumption reduced).

However, the research team encountered technical problems regarding Internet connection instability during data collection at the first two schools (in Bangkok). Sometimes the connection was lost in the middle of the session and incomplete data were recorded. The research team thus decided to use only the offline survey, which involved fewer technical problems in data recording.

The quantitative sample

During the planning stage, the research team aimed to collect enough data in each region to gain a sample representative of the student population in each region. The targeted sample size for each region (province) was thus 400. As 5 provinces were selected, the total targeted quantitative sample size was 2,000. Each region was represented by the selected province (except for the Central region, where two provinces were selected).

The research team aimed to reflect rural and urban contexts by assigning 200 participants for each context in each province. The proportion of students in private and state-operated schools was also reflected, by setting the targeted sample size for private schools at 80 in Bangkok and 50 in the provinces.⁹ Private school data were always collected in a provincial capital (or in the case of Bangkok, an inner-city district). The overall targeted proportions of participants were thus as follows:

- Private school in a provincial capital (or inner Bangkok) = 50 participants (80 participants in Bangkok)
- State school in a provincial capital (or inner Bangkok) = 150 participants (120 participants in Bangkok)
- State school in a peripheral district (or outer Bangkok) = 200 participants

Data were collected in the same proportion on each grade (all participating schools offered classes from grades 7 to 12), as follows:

- State school in a provincial capital: $150/6 = 25$ participants/grade
- Private school in a provincial capital: $50/6 = 8-9$ participants/grade
- State school in a peripheral district: $200/6 = 33-34$ participants/grade
- State school in inner Bangkok: $120/6 = 20$ participants/grade
- Private school in inner Bangkok: $80/6 = 13-14$ participants/grade
- State school in outer Bangkok: $200/6 = 33-34$ participants/grade

Observing the above proportions, the research team collected data from two classes per grade to reflect the diversity of participants sampled in each grade. The number of participants per class was thus as follows:

- State school in a provincial capital $25/2 = 12-13$ participants/class
- Private school in a provincial capital $9/2 = 5$ participants/class
- State school in a peripheral district $34/2 = 17$ participants/class
- State school in inner Bangkok $20/2 = 10$ participants/class
- Private school in inner Bangkok: $14/2 = 7$ participants/grade
- State school in outer Bangkok $34/2 = 17$ participants/class

The research team randomly selected two classes in each grade, and also randomly assigned the students whose participation would be requested in each class; this randomisation used their student ID number as its basis. The research team also had a randomly generated list of replacement participants to be asked to take the survey in case some of those on the primary participant list were unable or unwilling to participate.

After data collection using the survey program had begun, the research team found out that incomplete data had been recorded in some cases, prompting the research team to increase the sample size to make up for the missing data. To do so, the sample size was increased by 12 in the remaining state schools (resulting in 1 more participant per class) and by 6 in the remaining private schools

⁹ This sampling proportion is based on the proportion of students in state-operated and private schools observed in the student population (<http://eis.moe.go.th/stat53/T0004.htm>); private schools represent 20% of the overall student population in Bangkok and 12% in other provinces.

(resulting in 1 more participant per grade). However, the research team was unable to collect additional data from schools in Bangkok, and so the sample size in Bangkok is smaller than that targeted.

Due to the technical difficulties with the questionnaire and the subsequent adjustment of sample sizes, the final quantitative sample size in each region was as follows:

- Bangkok : 347 participants
 - Central : 442 participants
 - North : 431 participants
 - Northeast : 420 participants
 - South : 430 participants
- Total: 2,070 participants

In collecting these data, the research team did not assign any quotas for each gender or sexual orientation, as the sample size proportions were designed to reflect the general student population. Therefore, the proportions of male and female students, as well as the proportion of students with various LGBT identities, are likely to match those in the actual student population.

To acquire data on sex at birth and gender identity, the research team had to identify terms that would be comprehensible by the students. Sex at birth was asked with reference to the participant's personal title (corresponding to Mr/Miss) which at present always corresponds to sex at birth, because there is no legal provision allowing a title change to reflect one's gender identity in Thailand. Of all the survey participants, 1,213 (58.6 %) indicated a female personal title and 857 (41.4 %) indicated a male one. These proportions correspond to the student population in Thai general secondary schools, which on average have more female students than male ones. To identify each participant's self-assigned gender identity label, the question used was "which of these words do you think describes you best?" and the participants were to choose one from a list of various identities. Table 1 shows the number and percentage of participants indicating each gender/sexual identity.

In analysing the quantitative data on gender identity, the research team split the sample into two groups, one comprising participants who identified themselves as a "man" (*chai*) or a "woman" (*ying*); and the second comprising all other identities. The first group was labelled as "non-LGBT" and the second as "LGBT". The quantitative sample had 246 LGBT participants (11.9 %) and 1,824 non-LGBT participants (88.1 %).

Method and study sites for quantitative data collection

The project coordinator requested permission from each school for data collection and made appointments with randomly selected students in each randomly selected grade and class. The letter requesting permission for data collection was sent at least one month in advance, followed by telephone coordination. When permission had been obtained and appointments made with

each school and participants in it, the research team visited each school to collect data.

Table 1: Number and percentage of each gender/sexual identity in the quantitative sample

Gender/sexual identity	N	%
<i>Kathoei</i> [transgender woman]	17	0.8
<i>Sao praphet song</i> [transgender woman]	10	0.5
<i>Phu ying kham phet</i> [transgender woman]	10	0.5
<i>Gay</i> [gay male]	26	1.3
<i>Chai rak chai</i> [man who loves men]	15	0.7
<i>Tom</i> [masculine lesbian]	50	2.4
<i>Phu chai kham phet/transman</i> [transgender man]	9	0.4
<i>Dee</i> [feminine lesbian with preference for toms]	40	1.9
<i>Les</i> [feminine lesbian]	9	0.4
<i>Ying rak ying</i> [woman who loves women]	19	0.9
<i>Bi</i> [bisexual of either sex]	30	1.4
<i>Ying</i> [woman]	1043	50.4
<i>Chai</i> [man]	781	37.7
Other	11	0.5

Not: N = 2070.

With each potential participant, the research team started the data collection process by explaining about the project and ensured the potential participant's consent to participate. Then, each participant took the computerised survey. Each survey participant received an incentive payment of THB 50.

Certain challenges arose during the process. Based on the research team's observation, grade 7 students were slower than students on higher grades, owing to their comparatively more limited computer and reading skills. Some students could not read well. In some data collection sites, some students could not read Thai at all, and were excluded from taking the survey. The survey program featured a page change button titled with the English word "next", which some students did not understand. Some students did not understand certain questions, for example the item "which of these words do you think describes you best?", which featured 14 different identity terms as response options, some of which they did not know, the term "bi" for example. In contrast, some students smiled when they encountered this item, as there was a response option available that best described their identity.

In the early stage of data collection, the research team intended to use both the online and offline forms of the survey. The project coordinator had requested permission to use the school computer room in advance and gave each school THB 2,000 for the service. In these cases, participants mainly took the survey in the school computer room, where the research team tried to ensure the participants would not sit too near each other to maintain their privacy.

After the online survey was no longer used, the project coordinator requested a suitable room that could accommodate 21 laptops. The schools provided different kinds of rooms for this purpose, as follows:

1. Meeting room, counselling room, multi-purpose room or classroom

These rooms had movable tables and chairs. The research team discussed the best arrangement of the computers and a spot for picking up the incentive payment. The considerations in making these arrangements involved the survey takers' privacy and convenience in entering and exiting the room. If the tables and chairs had previously been arranged in a U-shape, the research team moved the tables away from each another and placed two laptop computers on each table whereby the participants would sit face-to-face but not see each other's responses. The spot for receiving the incentive payment was placed near the exit door so as to enable easy pick-up and leaving the room without disturbing the remaining participants. In rooms with long tables, the tables were moved away from each another and a laptop was placed at each end of each table, with a space in between tables; the spot for the incentive pick-up was again near the door. In rooms with large rectangular tables, a laptop was placed on each a corner of each table, or only in some corners, depending on the number of the tables available. When four laptops had to be placed on a single table due to lack of space, students tended to chat with each other and ask each other about the survey questions.

2. Library

Generally, libraries are quiet rooms; this helped to create a quiet atmosphere during a survey-taking session. A librarian was always on duty and there were enough tables and chairs for placing the laptops with sufficient spacing in between. This helped ensure participants' privacy and prevent disruptive talking among the participants. The tables and chairs were typically already provided by the school; it remained for the research team to discuss how the computers would be placed. Again, with small tables, a single computer was placed on each table, whereas large rectangular tables would have one laptop on each corner. The incentive pick-up table was placed near the exit door.

3. The school computer room

Certain schools provided a computer room for the survey-taking owing to the unavailability of other rooms. Computer rooms were convenient in that it was easy to charge the laptops' batteries, but their downside was that tables could not be moved. The research team placed a laptop on every other table. The row of tables closest to the door or in the back of the room was left vacant as most computer rooms had large windows on their inside walls, through which other students tried to see what their friends were doing in the room .

The place where participants waited before taking the survey was different from one school to another. Some schools could provide an additional room to be used as waiting space, but most did not have an adjacent room free, so they could only provide one room and participants had to wait outside the room before taking the survey.

The research team's roles in quantitative data collection

Each quantitative data collection round required 4–6 researchers to supervise the administration of the survey. Of these, three visited all schools where data were collected, whereas the others joined in based on their availability. The roles of the research team members were as follows:

1. One male and one female research team member stayed in the survey-taking room to type in participant ID codes (assigned by the team) before each participant took the survey, answer any questions the participants had, and to observe the process. In answering the participants' questions, the female researcher would respond to questions asked by female participants and the male researcher would respond to questions asked by male participants. This arrangement was chosen because the survey contained sensitive questions, especially about sexual matters. The researchers noted that some participants were hesitant to ask questions; hence the need for them to observe the participants and determine whether they needed assistance. In such case, the researcher might ask "Are you wondering about anything?" and would approach the participant in question if the participant answered in the affirmative. During the session, the researchers did not walk around the room so as to avoid disturbing the participants, other than to enter participant ID codes. The researchers overseeing the process usually sat or stood in a corner where they could not see how the participants were responding.
2. A financial officer was responsible for ensuring that the students who came to take the survey had a student ID code matching those randomly selected by the research team, as well as for handing out the incentive payments. The financial officer sat in the room where the participants took the survey and assisted the researchers when needed.
3. Researchers who stayed outside the room were responsible for answering any questions about research ethics, about the project objectives, explaining the process and coordinating with the researchers inside the room when sending in participants for taking the survey. In addition, these researchers engaged the participants with conversations, activities and games while they were waiting to start their session. Sometimes the researchers could not be heard clearly because there were so many participants waiting for their turn to take the survey. In such cases, they would divide the participants into groups when explaining the survey-taking details. An activity used by the team to determine which group got to take the survey first was rock-paper-scissors. The team tried to engage the participants in informal conversations or asked one of them to sing for the rest in order to create a relaxing atmosphere while waiting.

Quantitative data processing and analysis

Prior to quantitative data analysis, the research team transferred the data, which had been recorded in MS Excel format, from each laptop into a single database. Then, the team used IBM SPSS 19.0 to analyse the data.

The analysis began with recoding data into groups as previously explained (i.e. those who had and those who had not been victimised due to being perceived as LGBT).

The analysis proper consisted of describing the data in terms of descriptive statistics (absolute numbers and percentages) and identifying group-based differences using Chi Square.

To describe the prevalence of teasing and bullying, the research team had to apply weighting because the proportion of participants in each region did not correspond to the student population size in that region as a proportion of the total student population. To do this, the team had to obtain the number of general secondary school students in each province from the Ministry of Education's website¹⁰ and calculate the number of students in each region from these provincial figures. The obtained weights were then applied to the data.

Findings

Students' definitions of teasing and bullying

The research team noticed early on that both students and teachers used the word *kan rangkae* ("bullying") infrequently. The terms *kan yok lo* and *kan klaeng* (both roughly equivalent to "teasing"). Definitions given to these terms differed from person to person. Both teachers and students understood the word *kan rangkae* differently from the research team. For example, they might think the term referred only to physical violence or fights. Thus, had the research team only used the word "bullying", they would not have gained data on phenomena the participants did not consider bullying. This necessitated the researchers to understand the terms used among the participants, and their definitions.

Students tended to define *kan rangkae* as very violent behaviours that intentionally cause pain to the victims, and *kan yok lo* as actions not intending to cause harm, but rather as expressions of friendly intimacy. *Kan klaeng* was given both kinds of definitions.

Overall, the definitions of these three words carried two dimensions, negative and positive. The negative dimension was consistent with the research team's understanding, while most students considered these phenomena from the positive point of view. The following further explains these dimensions.

¹⁰ The latest complete data for all provinces were from 2010; these data were used (data available at: <http://eis.moe.go.th/eis/stat53/GP53.xls>).

Teasing and bullying: The negative dimension

The perpetrator feels they have more power than the victim: Some students explained that these incidents usually involved a perpetrator who had more power while the victim was inferior in terms of power and could not defend themselves:

“It’s the fun of the one who teases [klaeng] someone else who is inferior to them. Sometimes it happens because of dissatisfaction.”

(FGD, upper-secondary male students, Central)

“I think it’s got to be like bullying [rangkae] someone who can’t fight back. If we don’t see them as enemies or there’s no conflict between them, one should not bully the other... Like me, for example, if I were to bully [rangkae] others, I would do it to someone who’s smaller and thinner because I would think I could win.”

(FGD, lower-secondary female students, Central)

These kinds of definitions matched the theoretical definition of bullying (Olweus, 2003) and the perceptions of the research team.

Actions causing damage to the victims: Being teased or bullied usually harms the victims. Thus, any harmful actions could be regarded by the students as teasing and bullying (*kan yok lo, kan klaeng, kan rangkae*).

“Speaking sarcastically, or speaking so that the listener is harmed or feels sad.”

(FGD, GBT male students, North)

The perpetrator’s fun, the victim’s pain: In many cases, the perpetrator does not have the intention to harm the victim, but is only trying to have some fun; however, the perpetrator’s actions in fact harm the victim or make the victim feel hurt:

“It might be just teasing [kan yok lo], playing for fun, but the other one may feel a bit hurt.”

(FGD, lower-secondary male students, North)

Teasing and bullying can be either physical or psychological: Teasing and bullying can be either physical or psychological. In many cases, these actions cause psychological pain and hurt the victims’ feelings:

“I think it’s like hurting someone’s feelings, like blaming them, making them feel uncomfortable. That’s bullying [kan rangkae]. Doing or saying something that makes the other feel bad. Like, bullying [rangkae], saying something sarcastic, throwing insults.”

(FGD, lower-secondary female students, Central)

“Being bullied... For example, it can be physical or psychological. The physical kind is like, touching or hurting parts of the body. Psychological violence involves the use of words.”

(FGD, GBT male students, North)

Teasing and bullying: The positive dimension

Teasing (*kan yok lo*, *kan klaeng*) means having fun with friends: Generally, when speaking of teasing (*kan yok lo*, or in some cases *kan klaeng*), students generally thought of having fun, child-like play, a kind of social interaction, and an expression of love and affection among friends (teasing because one cares):

“I think it’s about expressing our loving feelings, because the more you love them the more you tease them.”

(FGD, upper-secondary male students, Central)

*“It depends on each person’s thinking, what bullying [*kan rangkae*] is like. Like, sometimes kids are just playing and adults think it’s bullying [*kan rangkae*, *kan klaeng*]. But really, we’re just having fun, playing.”*

(FGD, lower-secondary female students, Bangkok)

Teasing is also a form of friendship-building or relationship-building among peers. Teasing is often an attempt to build intimacy among friends:

“It’s friendship-building. Teasing each other and so getting to know each other well.”

(FGD, LBT female students, Bangkok)

The intensity of teasing and bullying: Students perceived teasing and bullying to have various levels of intensity. Teasing (*kan yok lo*, or sometimes, *kan klaeng*) implies a positive meaning and is done for fun, while bullying (*kan rangkae*, or sometimes, *kan klaeng*) is violent, a more serious matter that can cause physical pain or hurt feelings:

*“I think bullying [*kan rangkae*] is different from teasing [*kan klaeng*], because the emotion you have when teasing is just wanting to have a laugh, to have fun, and so we tease them. But bullying is like we’re angry, we hate, we don’t like them, and so we bully them. It’s a different emotion.”*

(FGD, upper-secondary male students, Northeast)

*“Teasing [*klaeng*] might just be a form of playing [*yok len*], intending to just play [*klaeng yok*]. But bullying can hurt us – something like that.”*

(FGD, lower-secondary female students, South)

The following quote from LBT students implied both the positive and negative dimensions of “bullying”.

*“I think the word bullying [*kan rangkae*] is like, violence, it’s more violent than the word teasing [*kan klaeng*]. Teasing is like we’re playing [*yok lo len*]; even if it’s for real, we’re not pushing, pulling or rubbing them, we’re not doing violence to them. But bullying [*kan rangkae*] is hurting them*

outright, making them hurt both physically and psychologically. Teasing [klan klaeng] is not so violent as bullying, but if you ask me if they're similar, yes they are. Whether you're teasing [klan klaeng] or bullying [rangkae], neither of those are good things."

(FGD, LBT female students, Central)

Teasing and bullying are interrelated: In many cases, bullying (*kan rangkae*) starts with playing with no intention to hurt each other. But when the playing begins to make someone unhappy, it may become bullying. There might thus be an endless cycle of teasing and bullying:

"If you're playing, if it starts from playing, like we pat each other's heads. The first one does it softly, and so does the other. But when you keep doing it, it gets more violent, like "why are you doing it so hard?" and then someone gets angry. Then, it turns into a violent fist fight. It all starts from playing, playing like teasing [len yok lo], then teasing harder [klaeng] and finally bullying [rangkae]. Like, playing, teasing [len, yok lo] maybe they all mean the same."

(FGD, upper-secondary male students, South)

These perspectives of the students illustrate that the behaviours referred to by the terms *kan yok lo*, *kan klaeng*, and *kan rangkae* can be the same behaviours. Thus, it is impossible to categorise behaviours into three distinct categories titled *kan yok lo*, *kan klaeng*, and *kan rangkae*. In the students' point of view, the meaning of a behaviour lies in the intention, the relationship between the parties involved, and how violently the behaviour is acted, not in the behaviour itself. For example, patting someone on the head can be considered teasing (*kan yok lo*, which students think is a good thing) if the person who does it is a close friend and the action is meant to show intimacy and is not done too hard. In contrast, such patting can be bullying (*kan rangkae*, which students consider a bad thing) if the person who does it is not a close friend, has negative intentions, and does it violently enough to physically hurt the victim. Thus, it is not sufficient to look at who is done what, but the analysis must also include other relevant factors.

Types of teasing and bullying targeting students who are/are perceived to be LGBT

Types of teasing and bullying behaviours targeting male students who are or are perceived to be GBT

The types of teasing and bullying targeting male students who are or are perceived to be GBT come in different forms, including physical, verbal, social, and sexual behaviours, as well as those that are acted out using mobile phones or the Internet. These diverse behaviours can be categorised as follows:

Physical behaviours: The qualitative data indicate that the physical behaviours GBT male students are subjected to include patting or slapping them on the head or shoulder, punching, kicking, hitting, or tripping them, throwing water on

them, strangling them, lugging their ear, locking them into a room, tying their hands and legs, and tickling them:

“Interviewer: Back in times, when you didn’t do anything, what was it like? Can you share it with me?”

Interviewee: When I’d walk by, they’d touch my bottom, pat my head, pat my bottom, or jump and push me. I couldn’t take it. It hurt both physically and mentally, really hurt. When I really couldn’t take it anymore, I consulted a friend about what to do. They told me to try and fight back, just like them, and that’s what I did.”

(IDI, GBT male student, South)

“Facilitator: You’ve also teased [klaeng] them, right? How did you tease them?”

Participant: I went around teasing [yok] them. Or, I’d tie them up and have a friend punch them for laughs. Something like this.

Facilitator: Tying them up like this, and then, like grab them, and then let your friends... do like this?

Participant: Yes. Sometimes I’d tie them up and let a friend tickle them.

Facilitator: To what extent? Tickling?

Participant: Sometimes they’d be tickled until they cried out.”

(FGD, lower-secondary male students, South)

“Facilitator: I just heard a lot. You just said you’d go in—and then what?”

Participant: There’d be senior students next door, smoking and making noises. Sometimes they’d knock on the door and that would scare me.

Participant: Sometimes they’d spray water on me.

Participant: Or, they might climb over to look at my friend, if he’d be smoking. I feared they’d see something more horrible than smoking.”

(FGD, GBT male students, Central)

Verbal behaviours: Verbal behaviours are another form of teasing or bullying experienced by GBT male students. These behaviours are so common that they are experienced as normal. The specific forms include insulting, being sarcastic, making threats, and verbal teasing (*phut saeo*) resulting in embarrassment:

“Facilitator: What are the insults like? In what way are they violent? Any examples?”

Participant: Like, ‘drop dead, you fag [tut]’. Something like this. They say like, ‘what a wasted man’s life [sia chat koet chai]’. Something like that. Like, people think in different ways. I myself don’t think it’s wrong. Whatever people like, it’s their choice.”

(FGD, GBT male students, Central)

Social behaviours: The kinds of teasing and bullying GBT male students face often have a social aspect. These behaviours are often acted out by a group. Examples include gossiping, banning (not talking to someone), exclusion from a group, and looking at someone in a scornful, disrespectful way:

“It’s like he didn’t like me, so he acted like an undercurrent: He told everyone to oppose me. Normally, he would talk to me, but out of sight, he would gossip about me with his gang.”

(FGD, GBT male students, Central)

Sexual behaviours: The kinds of teasing and bullying faced by GBT male students also often have a sexual aspect. Examples include sexual touching, such as squeezing or fondling someone else’s penis, breasts or bottom, forcibly taking off their shirt or trousers, rubbing one’s penis against their bottom, or acting out a mock-rape. Of these, touching the bottom is the most common type:

“Facilitator: Normally, how do they bully [rangkae] you?”

Participant: Touch my bottom, grab me here and there, parts of my body they’re not supposed to touch.

Facilitator: For example...?

Participant: My breasts, to begin with.

Participant: Grabbing my breasts, bottom or the front side.

Facilitator: You mean they grab your penis?

Participant: Yes. I wouldn’t even want to say this. It fouls my mouth.”

(FGD, GBT male students, Bangkok)

“Facilitator: What about you, then? Have you ever been done anything? What sorts of things?”

Participant: They’d come and stand behind me and then that thing would come.

Facilitator: Like...?

Participant: They’d come to stand behind me, and being roughly as tall as them, that thing in their front would touch me, standing so close by.”

(FGD, GBT male students, North)

Behaviours involving mobile phones or the Internet: Besides being teased or bullied in the physical world, these youths were also facing the same in the online world. Online teasing and bullying are increasingly common. Examples include posting insults on a website or a social network, impersonating others, and building hate groups on various websites:

“Facilitator: And then there’s, like, some people don’t log out, and someone impersonates them...”

Participant: Yes, that happens. And then they make a new status posting.

Participant: Posting like, suppose, like, ‘You, I’m lonely and I want to have a lover’.

Participant: Usually, if it’s a male student, it’ll be like, ‘I am gay, I like this guy...’ and then tag it to their account.

Participant: Like when you’re playing with someone else’s phone, you send messages to others to tease [klaeng] them, like ‘I like you’, something like this, and they’ll think they’re a real somebody.”

(FGD, GBT male students, North)

“Facilitator: And have you experienced these things here in your school? It might have happened with you or someone else, you might’ve seen it, that here, this is bullying...?”

Participant: A junior student once posted under my picture ‘you fag’ [i tut].

Facilitator: Really? Under a photo in your Facebook account?

Participant: Someone posted my picture on a page, and when my photo was there, then someone posted ‘you fucking fag’.”

(FGD, GBT male students, Central)

Teasing and bullying behaviours by teachers or school personnel:

According to GBT male students, also teachers and school personnel were teasing or bullying them. Their behaviours included saying sarcastic things, giving disapproving looks, staring and deducting points without a valid reason.

“Facilitator: What sorts of things?”

Participant: Usually, it’s the Thai language teachers. They love to say bad things to you. Back then, we didn’t know about the military draft, like, those who serve as cadets don’t have to be drafted. We wore our purple-and-white outfits that day. Well, we’re of the third sex [phet thi sam]. Then, the teacher said, ‘You worms.’ Called us ‘worms,’ like that.

Facilitator: Worms?

Participant: ‘You worms!’ And it really hurt my friend.

Participant: Only a minority of them do not accept us. Usually, those who don’t accept us show it on their face. It might be like, reactions when they do... speak to us in a violent way, as if they were talking to their male friends. With the girls, they speak nicely, but with us they speak in a hurtful way.”

(FGD, GBT male students, Northeast)

Types of teasing and bullying behaviours targeting female students who are or are perceived to be LBT

The teasing and bullying behaviours that affect LBT female students can be divided into six different types. The extent to which these behaviours are violent depends on the motivations behind the action and the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. These forms include:

Physical behaviours: Some of the bullying behaviours faced by LBT female (*tom*) students include being punched, kicked or stamped on by male students, who feel aggravated or jealous when the masculine female students flirt with their girlfriend or have a prettier girlfriend than they themselves do. This can lead to fights.

“Facilitator: When this happens to a tom, what exactly happens?”

Participant: It’s harsh! If a tom steals a girlfriend from a boy, it’s going to be really rough.

Facilitator: How?

Participant: All the way up to punching and kicking.”
(FGD, GBT male students, Central)

On the “teasing” level, behaviours between LBT female and male students are mostly considered mere playing with each other. These behaviours include taking turns kicking, punching, or hitting each other, or hiding each other’s belongings (e.g. bag, shoes).

“We don’t talk sweet. We talk rough. Like, ‘ku, mueng’ [I, you¹¹]. So, they think we’re like, er, easy-going and so they tease us. The teasing-to me, it’s not rough. Like, pushing or kicking.”
(FGD, LBT female students, North)

Verbal behaviours: These behaviours are the most common type among LBT female students. Their intensity ranges from playfully teasing (*saeo len*) someone when walking by them, for example calling them “super-handsome”, a “slutty tom (*tom raet*)”, a “swaggering tom” (*tom sa*, lit. “bubbly tom”) or simply “you tom” (*ai tom*¹²). Sometimes LBT female students are teased by asking them questions like “Would you like to try it with a boy?” or sarcastic questions like “You think a fake is better than the real thing? Is it hot? Hotter than a man’s tool?” Toms are also looked down on and called “good-for-nothing” (*mai ao nai*). This is not limited to self-identifying *tom* students; also masculine female students who self-identify as women (not *toms*) are sometimes told they have mannerisms not fit for a woman. This happens because according to social norms, women are expected to be sweet, gentle, and soft-spoken; have polite and not too sexy manners; and have male, not female partners:

*“Facilitator: Looked down on? How? What sorts of expressions?
Participant: Like, ‘why are you a tom, not a woman, why not?’ or ‘You were born to be a woman, so why are you not a woman?’”*
(FGD, LBT female students, Northeast)

“Suppose... Like, guys will have a corner where they sit in front of the toilets, gents’ toilets. If a tom walks by, they will stare at her and speak sarcastically, like, ‘What’s this? A transwoman [ying kham phet]? Wrong-sexed [phit phet]? They say things like this sometimes; it happens, but it’s not common. Hardly ever happens.”
(IDI, LBT female student, Central)

Social behaviours: These include casting mean, hateful, or quarrelsome looks, as well as the establishment of “hate toms” clubs at school, as a way of displaying the members’ dislike of toms:

“Like, last year, a gang of boys who didn’t like toms at all went as far as forming a ‘hate toms’ club.”

¹¹ These pronouns are insulting, unless used within a very intimate friendship.

¹² The word *ai* (as used here before the word *tom*) is usually used in front of a name or a noun; it signifies that the person being referred to is 1) male (or otherwise masculine) and 2) a close friend of the speaker, which permits the use of this term; otherwise, the person being referred to (using the word *ai*) is being insulted.

(FGD, female students, Central)

Tough-acting female students who like to play with boys are usually considered toms:

“Interviewer: Do some people think you are a tom, or something like that?”

Interviewee: No. But I like to play like boys do, like boxing or something like that. I’m just like them. But some think I am a tom.

Interviewer: And are you?”

Interviewee: No, no.”

(IDI, LBT female student, North)

Sexual behaviours: These behaviours are infrequent, and mostly acted by female students on other female students. Male students do not engage in these behaviours with female students as they would be seen as not being respectful toward their female friends. *Tom* students are also considered girls, so boys do not tease them in a sexual way, either. The types that were encountered included female students touching other female students’ breasts or bottom, forcibly taking off their shirt or pulling up their skirt:

“Interviewer: Has anyone ever teased you by taking off your shirt?”

Interviewee: More like, my friend grabbed my breasts.

Interviewer: Why did they do that?”

Interviewee: I wore stays, so she wanted to touch them.

Interviewer: And they teased you with their words [saeo] after that?”

Interviewee: Not much. This other girl didn’t wear stays so they said like, ‘Wow, big breasts’.”

(IDI, LBT female student, Bangkok)

Behaviours involving mobile phones or the Internet: These behaviours are not common among LBT female students. Sometimes they come across status postings stating “hate *toms* and *dees*”, or they might be added as a friend by someone only aiming to cause them trouble:

“Facilitator: What kind of trouble did you have?”

Participant: They added me just to look for trouble [ha rueang] with me.

Facilitator: The guy added you to harass you?”

Participant: But I didn’t do anything about it. It was nothing serious.

Facilitator: This happened only on your BlackBerry?”

Participant: Outside of that as well, but I have already forgotten about it.”

(FGD, LBT female students, North)

Teasing and bullying behaviours by teachers or school personnel: These behaviours include sarcastic remarks in class, staring, cutting grades and blaming LBT students for things they did not do. LBT students usually wear their hair shorter than other girls, which school regulations do not permit. This draws special attention and glances from teachers. These students tend to be watched

more closely than other students, and when something happens, for instance, students talk loudly in line during a flagpole ceremony, the teachers choose to blame them first:

“Interviewer: ... and what you said about the health studies teachers being sarcastic with you?”

Interviewee: Yes, they sometimes do that, saying that I’ll be like this for a while and then be cured on my own. They’ll be talking about sex education, telling us that their woman friend was drunk, got raped by a man and when she woke up the next day, she was a real woman. They try to convince me that I’ll revert into being something I’m not.”

(IDI, LBT female student, Bangkok)

“Interviewer: OK, let me ask you a general question. You said the teachers didn’t quite like you. How was that expressed?”

Interviewee: How? It’s like....I don’t know if they....I think they just did it to tease [klan klaeng] us. Like, what, our points were deducted without us having done anything wrong. And when I’m sitting in the classroom, a friend behind me might fall asleep or something, but it’s not me. My group was paying attention to our studies, but the group behind us were sleeping, and the teacher said we talked in class. What? It wasn’t us but I don’t know why it happened. There are 13 of us in the group, right? Most of us wear our hair short, dye our hair or have long hair. The teachers view us as bad girls for sure, as girls that have to be given warnings very often. Something like that.”

(IDI, LBT female student, Bangkok)

Prevalence of teasing and bullying targeting students who are/are perceived to be LGBT

The data on the prevalence of teasing and bullying behaviours targeting students who were or were perceived to be LGBT were collected using the computerised survey. Table 2 shows the prevalence of each behaviour and type of behaviour perpetrated by one student against another in the past one month because the victim was or was perceived to be LGBT. This prevalence is shown for both specific behaviours and (physical, verbal, social and sexual) types of behaviours. The figures for each type of behaviour refer to students who were subjected to at least one behaviour of the given type at least once in the past month because they were thought to be LGBT. Absolute numbers, sample percentages as well as weighted percentages are shown; the latter are national general secondary school student population prevalence estimates. Of the total sample ($N = 2070$), 28.2 per cent were victimised for these reasons in the past one month. The absolute numbers or percentages are not markedly different for different kinds of behaviours. Sexual behaviours, however, appeared less common than other types of behaviours. The sample percentages and the weighted percentages do not differ much, suggesting that the regions do not differ much in terms of the prevalence of these types of behaviour (Table 2).

Comparing participants who self-identified as LGBT (i.e. those who indicated that the word *gay*, *kathoei*, *tom* or *dee* or some similar term was the best word to describe them) with participants who did not self-identify as LGBT (i.e. those who described themselves as a man or a woman), the proportion of those who were teased or bullied for these reasons was twice as high among those who self-identified as LGBT. More than half (55.7 %) of LGBT-identified participants indicated that they had been teased or bullied because they were LGBT in the past one month, whereas only a fourth of non-LGBT identified had been bullied because others thought they were LGBT. However, LGBT-identified participants constituted only 11.9 per cent of the total sample, so the majority of the students who were teased or bullied because of their perceived LGBT status were not LGBT-identified. The same pattern was observed for specific types of behaviours: The proportion of participants who were victimised for perceived LGBT status in each way was 3-4 times higher among LGBT-identified participants than among non-LGBT identified ones. Yet, more than half of those victimised in these specific ways due to perceived LGBT status were non-LGBT identified (Table 3).

Male and female students were also compared with each other. Female students had a higher prevalence of victimisation due to perceived LGBT status than male students, both overall and for each type of behaviour—physical, verbal, social or sexual (Table 4).

Apart from physical sex and gender identity, the research team asked the participants how feminine or masculine they thought they were, when compared to other girls or boys (male participants were asked to compare themselves with boys and female participants with girls). A higher proportion of both male and female students who perceived that they had a lower level of masculinity or femininity, respectively, than other members of their sex, were victimised due to perceived LGBT status than those who perceived themselves to be as masculine or feminine as other members of their sex (Table 5).

When lower-secondary and upper-secondary students were compared, no statistically significant difference was found in the overall level of victimisation due to actual or perceived LGBT status. However, when compared by type of behaviour, the victimisation prevalence was higher among lower-secondary students for physical and verbal types of behaviour (Table 6).

In a regional comparison, the proportion of participants who were victimised due to perceived or actual LGBT status was higher in Bangkok, the South and the Northeast than in Central or Northern regions. When analysed using Chi-Square, differences among the regions were statistically significant overall, but not for individual types of behaviour (Table 7).

Table 2: Number, percentage and weighted percentage of students who were teased or bullied within the past one month because they were/were perceived to be LGBT, by behaviour and type of behaviour

	<i>n</i>	%	Weighted percentage
Physical behaviours	283	13.7	13.8
Slapped, patted on the head, hit, punched, kicked, pushed, given a fillip on the ear, pulled by the hair, thrown things at, tripped, had someone walk into one's shoulders to look for trouble	231	11.2	11.7
Threatened with a weapon (e.g. knife, cutter, scissors, or gun)	37	1.8	1.8
Had belongings stolen, hidden, or destroyed (e.g. books, mobile phones, money, shoes, etc.)	81	3.9	3.8
Locked into a classroom, toilet, or some other room	23	1.4	1.3
Verbal behaviours	307	14.8	15.5
Insulted, heard insults against one's parents, imitated, subjected to sarcasm, made to feel angry or sad	226	10.9	11.3
Verbally threatened	142	6.9	7.0
Had money extorted	43	2.1	2.3
Social behaviours	327	15.8	15.9
Gossiped about, had a secret exposed, had rumours spread about oneself	231	11.2	11.4
Banned, excluded from group or activity	72	3.5	3.6
Given insulting or mean looks	192	9.3	9.1
Sexual behaviours	200	9.7	9.6
Had one's skirt pulled up, one's pants taken down or one's shirt taken off	78	3.8	4.1
Had one's body parts (breasts, vagina, penis, bottom) grabbed, squeezed, or fondled	77	3.7	3.7
Placed into sexually humiliating positions, subjected to mock rape	32	1.5	1.5
Forced to have sex (by hand, mouth, vagina, or anus)	20	1.0	0.8
Flirted with and then dumped	110	5.3	5.0
At least one above type of behaviour	583	28.2	28.4

Note: *N* = 2070.

Table 3: Number and percentage of non-LGBT identified and LGBT-identified (e.g. *gay, kathoei, tom, dee*) students who were teased or bullied in the past one month because they were/were perceived to be LGBT

	Non-LGBT identified (<i>N</i> = 1,824)		LGBT-identified (<i>N</i> = 246)		χ^2	<i>P</i>
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
Physical behaviours	207	11.3	76	30.9	70.2	<0.001
Verbal behaviours	235	12.9	72	29.3	46.1	<0.001
Social behaviours	238	13.0	89	36.2	87.7	<0.001
Sexual behaviours	140	7.7	60	24.4	69.4	<0.001
At least one of the above	446	24.5	137	55.7	104.6	<0.001

Note: *N* = 2070.

Table 4: Number and percentage of male and female participants who were teased or bullied in the past one month because they were/were perceived to be LGBT

	Male (<i>N</i> = 857)		Female (<i>N</i> = 1,213)		χ^2	<i>P</i>
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
Physical behaviour	97	11.3	186	15.3	6.7	0.009
Slapped, patted on the head, hit, punched, kicked, pushed, given a fillip on the ear, pulled by the hair, thrown things at, tripped, had someone walk into one's shoulders to look for trouble	81	9.5	150	12.4	4.3	0.04
Threatened with a weapon (e.g. knife, cutter, scissors, or gun)	16	1.9	21	1.7	0.5	0.81
Had belongings stolen, hidden, or destroyed (e.g. books, mobile phones, money, shoes, etc.)	27	3.2	54	4.5	2.3	0.13
Locked into a classroom, toilet, or some other room	10	1.2	19	1.6	0.5	0.45
Verbal behaviours	103	12.0	204	16.8	9.2	0.002
Insulted, heard insults against one's parents, imitated, subjected to sarcasm, made to feel	73	8.5	153	12.6	8.7	0.003

angry or sad						
Verbally threatened	47	5.5	95	7.8	4.3	0.04
Had money extorted	16	1.9	27	2.2	0.3	0.57
Social behaviours	88	10.3	239	19.7	33.6	<0.001
Gossiped about, had a secret exposed, had rumours spread about oneself	59	6.9	172	14.2	27.0	<0.001
Banned, excluded from group or activity	20	2.3	52	4.3	5.7	0.02
Given insulting or mean looks	49	5.7	143	11.8	22.0	<0.001
Sexual behaviours	65	7.6	135	11.1	7.2	0.007
Had one's skirt pulled up, one's pants taken down or one's shirt taken off	25	2.9	53	4.4	2.9	0.09
Had one's body parts (breasts, vagina, penis, bottom) grabbed, squeezed, or fondled	29	3.4	48	4.0	0.5	0.50
Placed into sexually humiliating positions, subjected to mock rape	20	2.3	12	1.0	6.0	0.02
Forced to have sex (by hand, mouth, vagina, or anus)	12	1.4	8	0.7	2.9	0.09
Flirted with and then dumped	37	4.3	7.3	6.0	2.0	0.09
At least one above type of behaviour	186	21.7	397	32.7	30.2	<0.001

Note: N = 2070

Table 5: Number and percentage of students who were teased or bullied in the past one month because they were/were perceived to be LGBT, by sex at birth and self-perceived level of masculinity or femininity

Sex at birth	Self-perceived femininity or masculinity	Bullied or teased in at least one way		χ^2	<i>p</i>
		<i>N</i>	%		
Female (<i>N</i> = 1,213)	Less feminine than girls in general (<i>n</i> = 131)	64	48.9	24.7	<0.001
	Just as feminine as girls in general (<i>n</i> = 1,040)	312	30.0		
	More feminine than girls in general (<i>n</i> = 42)	21	50.0		
Male (<i>N</i> = 857)	Less masculine than boys in general (<i>n</i> = 58)	40	69.0	85.6	<0.001
	Just as masculine as boys in general (<i>n</i> = 670)	114	17.0		
	More masculine than boys in general (<i>n</i> = 129)	32	24.7		

Note: *N* = 2070

Table 6: Number and percentage of lower-secondary and upper-secondary students who were teased or bullied in the past one month because they were/were perceived to be LGBT

	Lower secondary (<i>N</i> = 1028)		Upper secondary (<i>N</i> = 1041)		χ^2	<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
Physical behaviour	181	17.6	102	9.8	26.7	<0.001
Slapped, patted on the head, hit, punched, kicked, pushed, given a fillip on the ear, pulled by the hair, thrown things at, tripped, had someone walk into one's shoulders to look for trouble	140	13.6	91	8.7	12.4	<0.001
Threatened with a weapon (e.g. knife, cutter, scissors, or gun)	29	2.8	8	0.8	12.4	<0.001
Had belongings stolen, hidden, or destroyed (e.g. books, mobile phones, money, shoes, etc.)	56	5.4	25	2.4	12.8	<0.001
Locked into a classroom, toilet, or some other room	26	2.5	3	0.3	18.8	<0.001
Verbal behaviours	176	17.1	131	12.6	8.4	0.004
Insulted, heard insults against one's parents, imitated, subjected to sarcasm, made to feel angry or sad	122	11.9	104	10.0	1.8	0.17
Verbally threatened	82	8.0	60	5.8	4.0	0.05

Had money extorted	29	2.8	14	1.3	5.5	0.02
Social behaviours	177	17.2	150	14.4	3.1	0.08
Gossiped about, had a secret exposed, had rumours spread about oneself	120	11.7	111	10.7	0.5	0.46
Banned, excluded from group or activity	47	4.6	25	2.4	7.3	0.007
Given insulting or mean looks	106	10.3	86	8.3	2.6	0.11
Sexual behaviours	96	9.3	104	10.0	0.3	0.62
Had one's skirt pulled up, one's pants taken down or one's shirt taken off	47	4.6	31	3.0	3.6	0.06
Had one's body parts (breasts, vagina, penis, bottom) grabbed, squeezed, or fondled	31	3.0	46	4.4	2.8	0.09
Placed into sexually humiliating positions, subjected to mock rape	18	1.8	14	1.3	0.6	0.45
Forced to have sex (by hand, mouth, vagina, or anus)	15	1.5	5	0.5	5.2	0.02
Flirted with and then dumped	51	5.0	59	5.7	0.5	0.47
At least one above type of behaviour	308	30.0	275	26.4	3.2	0.07

Note: $N = 2070$

Table 7: Number and percentage of students who were teased or bullied in the past one month because they were/were perceived to be LGBT, by region

	Bangkok ($N = 347$)		Central ($N = 442$)		North ($N = 431$)		South ($N = 430$)		Northeast ($N = 420$)		χ^2	p
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Physical	59	17.0	53	12.0	60	13.9	64	14.9	47	11.2	7.1	0.13
Verbal	49	14.1	54	12.2	63	14.6	81	18.8	60	14.3	8.1	0.09
Social	51	14.7	61	13.8	60	13.9	77	17.9	78	18.6	6.6	0.16
Sexual	46	13.3	42	9.5	31	7.2	43	10.0	38	9.0	8.4	0.08
One or more of the above	106	30.5	105	23.8	105	24.4	139	32.3	128	30.5	13.1	0.01

Note: $N = 2070$

Places where students who are/are perceived to be LGBT are teased or bullied

Places where male students who are or are perceived to be GBT are teased or bullied

GBT male students, especially the more feminine ones, were most often teased or bullied by other boys near the male toilets. As a result, some GBT male students did not dare to enter the male toilets at all or only used them when nobody else was present. Some did not use any toilets in their school because they were so

afraid of being bullied there. Some only used toilets when they were accompanied by their female friends. Many GBT male students wanted to use female toilets, but some female students were unwilling to share their toilets with them because the GBT students were still physically male:

“Mostly they tease us by calling us ‘fag’ [tut]. The toilets are an issue. In the toilets, it happened to me every day. I had to use them when no one else was there. Who could know how I felt?”

(IDI, GBT student, Bangkok)

The physical characteristics of the male toilets were one of the reasons contributing to such victimisation. For example, the doors could be locked from both the inside and the outside, making it easy to lock someone in;

“Mostly it’s the male toilet. Because our classrooms are mostly near each other, and there’s a lot of space, but the classroom buildings are safe spots. But mostly the male toilets—when we go there, the male students tend to come and speak to us, like suppose we’ve been in there for a while, inside the toilet, someone of us might get locked inside. Locked into the toilet; they’ll lock the door from the outside. We can’t get out and have to shout for help, like this. And so they get a big laugh at our expense, our male friends.”

(FGD, GBT students, Northeast)

The facilities used during school activities that require an overnight stay, like boy scout camps or military cadet camps, tend to be places where feminine male students are teased or bullied, because on overnight camps, male students have to shower together or sleep in the same tent. This makes it easy for GBT students to be teased or bullied by other male students. The type of behaviour that is common in these situations is usually sexual in character. For example, it might consist of a mock-rape of a GBT student:

“Facilitator: What camp? You mean boy scouts?”

Participant: Like, when they have us go to a boy scout camp, and if someone’s a ‘dual-SIM card’ type of person, like a male who wants to be a woman, they still have to sleep in the male tent. You aren’t allowed to sleep in the women’s tent. And this is when the teasing happens. The men do the teasing in the tent.”

Facilitator: What do they do?

Participant: Like, as if they were raping a woman or something like that.”

(FGD, GBT students, South)

Classrooms are also a site of teasing and bullying against GBT students in the period between classes:

“Interviewer: The place, the time they tease you? Where do they do it?”

Interviewee: You see, here it’s like you walk from class to class, like if you’ve got classes in this building, and then you’ve got Maths, then you’ve got to walk to that building over there.

Interviewer: And where do they usually do the teasing?”

Interviewee: In the classroom, the room where you've got classes. Suppose the fourth parallel class has classes, and we're right next to them, and so they'll play.

Interviewer: Usually, it's the classroom. Any other rooms where bullying takes place? Any other places?

Interviewee: On the balcony outside the classroom, while waiting for the teacher to come, because when the teacher's not there yet, the door will not be open, so you're waiting for the teacher on the balcony, and so they play there."

(IDI, GBT student, North)

This is also true for rooms used for dance rehearsals, where GBT students tend to practice various performances such as classical dance. Here, students who like to participate in student activities and do performances are affected:

"By the marble bench, or in the classical dance room. Sometimes we practice our classical dance there, and they come and find us there. They might, like, fall on us."

(FGD, GBT students, North)

Places where female students who are or are perceived to be LBT are teased or bullied

LBT students can be teased or bullied anywhere on the school premises. Most often, it takes place near the classroom before class, during lunch break or when the teacher is not around:

"Facilitator: Where does it happen?

Participant: In the classroom.

Facilitator: Classroom for which subject?

Participant: Usually during the break, really.

Facilitator: Lunch break?

Participant: And when the teacher is not around."

(FGD, LBT students, Northeast)

The school canteen and various lawns are also places where LBT students are teased or bullied. These places are usually crowded, and so when someone is teased or bullied there, it is particularly humiliating for the victim, and particularly fun for the perpetrator:

"Interviewer: When they teased [saeo] you, where did it happen?

Interviewee: On the lawn. Mostly we meet on the lawn."

(IDI, LBT student, Bangkok)

In other areas where LBT students gather, such as in front of the school public relations room, male students tend to tease or speak sarcastically with the LBT students as they walk by:

“Facilitator: When they first started to speak to you like this inside the school, where on the school premises would you come across someone who spoke to you like that?”

Participant: Where? The public relations room. We like to sit there as it’s on the way to the canteen. Because we like to sit there together, they come and ask us like, why are you like this?”

Facilitator: Only in that area, because you happened to be sitting there?”

Participant: Yes. Also because we are charged with public relations stuff.”

(FGD, LBT students, Northeast)

Places beyond teachers’ and school personnel’s oversight are likewise areas where LBT students are victimised. In one school this included an “orchid tree garden” (*lan chongko*), which was meant for the students’ relaxation.

“Interviewer: It happens to you around 10 times a week. On some days it happens, on other days it doesn’t, and on yet others it happens twice. Where does it happen?”

Interviewee: Usually in the orchid tree garden.”

(FGD, LBT students, South)

Aside from these specific sites, LBT students can be teased or bullied anywhere in the school. However, LBT students tend to view these incidents as just a matter of friends in the group having fun with each other:

“Interviewer: Where does it usually happen that they pull down your pants or throw water at you?”

Interviewee: Anywhere. Whenever the occasion’s right.

Interviewer: It’s got to be a place with lots of people?”

Interviewee: Yes, that’s even better.”

(FGD, LBT students, Central)

Motivations behind teasing or bullying targeting students who are/are perceived to be LGBT

Common motivations behind teasing and bullying targeting male students who are or are perceived to be LGBT, circle around the perpetrators’ perception of these students as explicitly **effeminate, girlish, not manly**. Male students enjoy teasing them in a sexual way, because it is not tolerated if they do the same with female students, for example grabbing their breasts or genitals:

“Interviewer: It’s more like they’re effeminate [tung ting]. The more manly ones [phuak nan thi ok maen maen] that are not that effeminate, they’re not targeted so much, right?”

Interviewee: Yes. The M's [i.e. MSM] rarely face it. Few people do it to them. They keep it to themselves. But to me, it happens a lot because I am an obvious case [ok yoe], you can see it straight away, that I'm one of them. They like to tease me for fun. They tease me and I guess they're having fun."
(FGD, GBT students, Central)

Sometimes when feminine male students are teased, they **scream or cry out with a loud voice**; the male students who tease them are amused by this. They thus tend to choose the most feminine GBT male students they can find as their targets to maximise their own amusement and the entertainment they intend to provide to their friends:

"If you're very much like a woman, something like this, a lot, I bet you'll be teased. If you are like us here, it shouldn't happen to you that much, I think. But if you're openly like a woman, it's gonna be you. 'There's no way they'll be able to fight me back, they'll just scream and make a fuss [wit wat]."
(FGD, GBT students, Central)

GBT students tend to be perceived as **weak and as unlikely to fight back**; this provokes teasing and bullying against them:

"Kathoeis or people like that face a lot of it. We're seen as weak. But in fact we do react to them. Kathoeis or gays are more often targeted."
(FGD, GBT students, North)

Yet, **when GBT students try to fight back, they are teased even more**, as the male students think the resistance makes it more fun; they take it as a signal that the person in question is fair game, so to say:

*"Facilitator: In some schools, those who are quiet are targeted more than those who fight back. But here, it's not like that?
Participant: You'll be targeted more if you fight back. It's like the guys think that if you react, then they can play with you. But if they come to play with you and you start to cry, then they'll try to make amends with you."*
(FGD, GBT students, North)

Male students who have **a lighter complexion, a smaller body or other characteristics considered feminine** tend to be perceived as *kathoeis*, which incites male students to tease them:

*"Participant: But he's got such a sweet face. Such a sweet face and such white skin, brighter than the sky. He looks so young, too.
Facilitator: Is that why they tease him?
Participant: Usually, those who have white skin are called tut [fag]."*
(FGD, female students, South)

Sometimes the victimised GBT students think that reason why they are being teased is that the male students think they are **beautiful or cute**, and hence fun to tease. Some think that the male students like to tease them because in fact they **want to flirt** with them:

“Facilitator: Why do you think they tease [saeo] you?”

Participant: Because I am beautiful.

Participant: They waited for this opportunity for a long time.

Facilitator: What about the rest of you, why do you think they tease you?”

Participant: Is it just that they want to play with us?”

Participant: They want to greet us, to flirt with us.”

(FGD, GBT students, Bangkok)

Impact on victims

Students who are teased or bullied because they are or are perceived to be LGBT tend to be more or less affected in terms of their feelings and thoughts, depending on their personality and the way they react to the situation at hand. Some say they are already used to such incidents. Some say they feel embarrassed, and some say they feel so sad they do not want to go to school:

Feeling indifferent and accustomed to such incidents: Most students who are or are perceived to be LGBT are teased or bullied quite often, and thus feel accustomed to such incidents. Some accept that this is who they are and do not feel particularly bad about being targeted by their peers. This is true for some students who accept that they are kathoei:

“Facilitator: Are you angry when your friends blame you or call you kathoei?”

Participant: No.

Participant: No. I am getting used to it. They call me ‘you kathoei’ [i kathoei].

Participant: At first I might’ve gotten angry, back in junior high, in my old school. But now I’m used to it. When they call me a kathoei, I’m like, ‘Yes, a kathoei, I’m a kathoei, you’re using the right word to call me.’”

(FGD, GBT students, North)

Similarly, a tomboyish female student said she did not feel anything when called a “slutty tom” (*tom raet*).

“Facilitator: You got used to it. Have you ever been teased [saeo], Nid?”

Participant: Yes, sometimes.

Facilitator: What did they say?”

Participant: Slutty tom.

Facilitator: Slutty tom?”

Participant: Swaggering [lit. ‘bubbly’] tom.

Facilitator: Why did they call you a slutty tom?”

Participant: Maybe they saw that I had put on some powder.

Facilitator: Was it a boy or a girl who said that?

Participant: A girl.

Facilitator: And how did you feel?

Participant: Indifferent. It's well known.

Facilitator: Did you feel hurt?

Participant: No."

(FGD, LBT students, Northeast)

Feeling it's funny: Some students who are teased find it funny, because they see it as playing among friends.

"Facilitator: How did you feel?

Participant: It was like teasing [yok kan].

Facilitator: Were you afraid?

Participant: It was funny.

Participant: Just playing jokes [lo len] on your friends."

(FGD, GBT students, Northeast)

Feeling embarrassed: Sometimes LGBT students feel embarrassed when they are teased or bullied. They feel they are being singled out or stared at, which makes them feel uneasy and not sure what they should do, especially when they become the centre of attention in a crowd:

"They keep saying mean things to me and all I can do is just stand there while people look at me. They turn around to see who is being berated and why. That's embarrassing."

(IDI, GBT student, Bangkok)

Another participant also used to feel embarrassed. The feeling disappeared as the harshness of the words people used with him decreased:

"Interviewee: They made fun of me by calling me 'i tut' [you fag].

Interviewer: How do you feel when someone calls you 'i tut'?

Interviewee: Nothing, really. In the past I would feel embarrassed because it was my friends who were making fun of me. I felt humiliated and couldn't face others. But now nobody calls me that. They call me by my name, Jack, or sometimes Jackie. They think that because I'm gay they want to adjust my name a bit."

(IDI, GBT student, South)

Feeling angry and disappointed: Students who are bullied or teased because they are or are perceived to be LGBT often dislike what happens to them; they feel angry and disappointed:

"Facilitator: How do you feel when someone talks to you like that?

Participant: I feel bad.

Facilitator: Do you like it when someone talks to you like that?

Participant: No.

Participant: No.
Facilitator: Do you get angry?
Participant: Yes."

(FGD, LBT students, North)

Feeling offended or sad: Many times when students who are or are perceived to be LGBT are teased or bullied, they wonder why it is them that are being targeted by their friends, or if they have done something wrong. This can make them feel so upset and sad they may not want to come to school again:

"Facilitator: How did you feel?
Participant: I felt like 'what have I done wrong?' I hadn't done anything. It felt like, uh, upsetting. Why do they have to tease me so much? It's very mean.
Facilitator: And then, you did not come to school?
Participant: Some days I just skipped school.
Facilitator: Some days—you mean, many times?
Participant: Yes. In one week, maybe I was away for one or two days."

(FGD, GBT students, Northeast)

In another case, participants explained that being sexually harassed makes them feel offended because they are supposed to be 'sexually reserved' (*rak nuan sanguan tua*) like women. They did not understand why the perpetrators did that to them and not to girls:

"Facilitator: How did you feel?
Participant: I felt like, I didn't want them to touch me. We're of the alternative gender and thus sexually reserved like women, right? When they touch or tease us they laugh, right? We are offended because of this. Why don't they do that to girls for a change? Yes, they can do it with us like they do with women, but why does it have to be us?"

(FGD, GBT students, Northeast)

Feeling vengeful: The teasing and bullying incidents faced by students who are or are perceived to be LGBT, whether physical, verbal, sexual, or acted through mobile phones or the Internet, can make them feel they are being taken advantage of. So, the victims feel they want to take revenge and make the perpetrators have their share of the pain such actions cause:

"Interviewer: When someone calls you 'you tom' [ai tom], why is it that you don't you like it?
Interviewee: I don't know. It's like they're blaming me. It's not good. I don't like anyone blaming me.
Interviewer: If you're a tom they blame you?
Interviewee: No, that's not it. I have got a name so why call me a tom?
Interviewer: So, you can't take it when someone calls you that?
Interviewee: It's not that I can't take it. I just don't like it.
Interviewer: You don't like people calling you that.
Interviewee: No, they call me 'you tom' and I don't like it.

Interviewer: How do you feel when they call you that?

Interviewee: I feel annoyed and want to punch them in the face."

(IDI, LBT student, North)

In some cases, the victims really want to take revenge but realise they have less power than the perpetrators. They see the perpetrators as physically stronger so a physical revenge is out of the question:

"Facilitator: So, you were angry. How did you feel?

Participant: Wanted to take revenge.

Facilitator: You wanted to grab them in return?

Participant: Normally we can't fight against their strength, because they're stronger."

(FGD, GBT students, North)

Feeling scared, sad and depressed: In cases where the teasing or bullying behaviours faced by students who are or are perceived to be LGBT are rather harsh or repeated again and again, the victims' mental health may be affected, as they feel scared, worried, and stressed, in some cases cannot concentrate on their studies:

"I can't really focus on my classes. I normally worry about trivialities to begin with, so it's like 'Huh, why do they have to blame me, do something like this to me?' I get stressed and like, I feel I don't understand anything in class. It's psychological pressure. It affects my mind."

(IDI, LBT student, Bangkok)

Another student saw that the stress caused by bullying could lead some to drop out of school:

"Participant: It's like they put pressure on you. Like, suppose I've got some trouble with a senior student, it's not fun to be in school anymore. It's like you have to avoid them all the time. Some might drop out.

Facilitator: It's stressful.

Participant: Yes, stressful."

(FGD, GBT students, North)

Not wanting to come to school: As explained above, being teased or bullied also affect the social interactions of the victims. They might try to repress the pressure they face and eventually feel they do not want to come to school to avoid being teased or bullied. The following cases exemplify this:

"It makes me hesitant to come to school. Facing something like this, well, it's my mind. What I face is like, stones being eroded, day by day. It's like, um, I know I've got to be strong because that's how people view me to begin with. Am I weak? No, I'm not. It's just that my body and my heart, they might not be those of a real man. But I'd still like them to understand me better."

(IDI, GBT student, Bangkok)

“Participant: Nobody likes to be teased [klaeng]. When it gets worse and worse, it’s annoying. With some people it might come to the point where they can’t take it anymore and want to take revenge.

Facilitator: You think there’s an impact?

Participant: Yes, definitely.

Facilitator: For example?

Participant: Impact on the body, no? If you go and harm them physically.

Participant: Mentally. When someone’s being teased and they can’t do anything about it, they’ll repress it and it accumulates.

Participant: Those who have been teased a great deal start to fear everything. They’ll be like, they don’t want to come to school.”

(FGD, GBT students, Northeast)

The quantitative data collected through the survey reflect the negative feelings of the victims and reveals in concrete terms that victimised students face more problems than those who are not victimised.

Table 8: Health and academic characteristics of students not teased or bullied, students teased or bullied for other reasons, and students teased or bullied for being/being perceived to be LGBT

	Not victimised (N = 401)	Victimised for other reasons only (N = 1,086)	Victimised for being or being seen to be LGBT (N = 583)	χ^2	<i>p</i>
GPA of previous term above 3.0	182 (45.4%)	439 (40.4%)	197 (33.8%)	14.2	0.001
Unauthorised absence in past 1 month	61 (15.2%)	338 (31.3%)	182 (31.2%)	40.7	<0.001
Drinks alcoholic beverages (N = 2050)	53 (13.4%)	241 (22.4%)	143 (24.7%)	19.8	<0.001
Unprotected sex in past 3 months (N = 1688 ^a)	8 (2.5%)	57 (6.3%)	43 (9.2%)	14.7	0.001
Depressed (CES-D score above 22)	24 (6.0%)	135 (12.4%)	132 (22.6%)	59.6	<0.001
Attempted suicide in the past 1 year	5 (1.2%)	39 (3.6%)	39 (6.7%)	19.3	<0.001

Note: N = 2070 unless otherwise specified. a. Those who declined to respond to sex-related questions are excluded from this analysis.

Table 8 compares three groups of students: 1) students who reported no teasing or bullying victimisation, 2) students who stated they had been teased or bullied for other reasons, but not because they were thought to be LGBT, and 3) students who stated they had been teased or bullied because they were thought

to be LGBT. These three groups of students differed from one another significantly in terms of their educational performance (measured as having a grade point average/GPA above 3.0), behaviours affecting their education (unauthorised absence), health-risk behaviours (alcohol consumption and unprotected sex), depression¹³ and suicide attempts.

When comparing non-victimised students with students who were victimised for being or being seen to be LGBT, the latter had a lower proportion of those with a GPA above 3.0 ($\chi^2 = 13.5, p < 0.001$), a higher proportion of those with at least one unauthorised absence ($\chi^2 = 32.7, p < 0.001$), a higher proportion of those who drank alcoholic beverages ($\chi^2 = 19.1, p < 0.001$), a higher proportion of those who had unprotected sex ($\chi^2 = 14.6, p < 0.001$), a higher proportion of those who were depressed ($\chi^2 = 49.4, p < 0.001$) and a higher proportion of those who attempted suicide ($\chi^2 = 16.5, p < 0.001$). In other words, students who were victimised for being or being seen to be LGBT, were likely to have a lower GPA and were more likely to have had unauthorised absence from school, drink alcohol, have had unprotected sex, be depressed, and have attempted suicide than students who were not victimised for any reason.

When comparing those who were victimised due to being or being seen to be LGBT with those who were victimized for other reasons, the two groups did not differ significantly from each other in terms of unauthorised absence from school, the proportion of those drinking alcoholic beverages, or the proportion of those who had unprotected sex. However, in the other aspects, those who were victimised for being or being seen to be LGBT presented a more worrisome picture as they had a lower proportion of those with GPA above 3.0 ($\chi^2 = 7.1, p = 0.008$), a higher proportion of those who were depressed ($\chi^2 = 29.4, p < 0.001$) and a higher proportion of those attempting suicide ($\chi^2 = 8.2, p = 0.004$). That is, those victimised because they were or were seen to be LGBT had lower GPAs and were more likely to be depressed and have attempted suicide than those victimised for other reasons.

These statistical associations cannot indicate whether teasing and bullying targeting those who are or are perceived to be LGBT are the cause of these negative outcomes. However, these associations do indicate that those who are victimised because they are or are seen to be LGBT are at the highest risk of having these negative outcomes among the three groups compared.

Victims' reactions

When students who were or were seen to be LGBT faced teasing or bullying, they reacted in a variety of ways, depending on their personal characteristics:

¹³ Depression was measured with the Thai CES-D (Thorarin Kongsuk et al, 2006). Those scoring higher than 22 are "in a depressed state and should receive a diagnosis for further assistance" (p. 69). The research team divided the participants into two groups: those with CES-D score below or equal to 22 (not depressed) and those whose score was higher than 22 (depressed). In this sample, those who were depressed had a significantly higher ($\chi^2 = 19.1, p < 0.001$) proportion of those who had attempted suicide in the past year (16.5%) than those who were not depressed (2.0%).

Returning insults was quite a common reaction when LGBT students were teased or bullied. In doing so, they chose relatively coarse insults to deter further teasing or bullying:

“Facilitator: What did you do after they did that to you?”

Participant: Sometimes I insulted them or hit them.

Facilitator: What did you say?”

Participant: You...

Facilitator: You what, just say it.

Participant: You bastard [hia, lit. monitor lizard], what the fuck are you doing [tham hia arai]? You animal, get lost [pai klai son tin ku]. Something like this.”

(FGD, GBT students, Central)

Slapping and chasing the perpetrator away are more intense reactions than returning insults. Similarly, victimised students would resort to these means to prevent future victimisation:

“Facilitator: So what do you do when someone, like, suppose they grab you like that, what do you do?”

Participant: Fight.

Facilitator: How?”

Participant: Slap them and chase them away. If you don't fight back they'll keep on teasing you all the time.”

(FGD, GBT students, Northeast)

Shouting or screaming loudly are reactions intended to question the perpetrator why they are teasing or bullying the victim:

“Facilitator: Do the rest of you have some ways to respond when they do things to you?”

Participant: Well, when someone grabs me here and there, I'll, like, shout to them 'why are you harassing me? I have done nothing to you'. They then tend to say they're just teasing and wondering why they can't tease us just a little bit, shouldn't be a problem, can't they touch us just a little bit. And I will say that I'm a woman.”

(FGD, GBT students, Northeast)

Bullying them in return. When victimised, some students who are or are perceived to be LGBT choose to do to the bully what the bully did to them, and often a little bit more to make the other party hurt and afraid of doing it again:

“Facilitator: What do you do if a boy grasps your breasts?”

Participant: I grasp his and squeeze them to make him hurt so that he won't do it to me again.”

(FGD, GBT students, North)

Giving dissatisfied looks is one more way for victims to express their dissatisfaction to the perpetrator:

“Facilitator: How do you respond?”

Participant: Give them annoying or mean looks.”

(FGD, GBT students, North)

A call for help is a response used in a case where the victim cannot defend themselves and needs someone else’s help. Students who are or are perceived to be LGBT would do so to make the perpetrator stop whatever they are doing:

“They will squirm to resist and then cry out, in order to get help, but usually nobody cares. If the teasing goes on and on, [the victim] might give the teaser a really serious look and he would let [the victim] go.”

(FGD, LBT students, North)

Crying is an emotional reaction a victim might exhibit when completely unable to fight back. Seeing the victim cry sometimes makes the perpetrator feel sorry for the victim and apologise:

“Participant: Then, they suddenly approached me and lifted me, like totally carried me in the air. They carried me around and then started to tease me.

Facilitator: How? Took off your clothes or what?

Participant: Something like that.

Facilitator: And then?

Participant: I shook myself off and cried. And my friends told them off for what they’d done. And then they apologised to me.”

(FGD, GBT students, Central)

Acting indifferent, walking away and not talking back are a way of fleeing teasing or bullying rather than responding to it:

“Facilitator: What did you do when they spoke to you like that?”

Participant: Nothing.

Facilitator: Nothing but inside of you...?

Participant: It hurt.

Participant: It didn’t hurt but I was desperate for an escape. I was scared.”

(FGD, GBT students, North)

Fleeing may also involve not talking to the perpetrator:

“Facilitator: When you first felt that you didn’t like it, what did you do?”

Participant: I didn’t speak to them and walked away.

Facilitator: You mean, insulted them in return?

Participant: Walked away.

Facilitator: Did they stop?

Participant: Yes. They saw that I didn’t like it so they stopped.”

(FGD, LBT students, North)

Responses to actions of friends and non-friends are different. The relationship between the parties involved affects responses to teasing and bullying. For example, if a student is being teased by a friend, they might mockingly swear at the teaser with no real intent to insult them. However, if it is being done by a senior student or someone whom the targeted student does not know well, the reaction might be a facial expression of dissatisfaction to signal to the perpetrator that what they are doing is not appreciated:

“Facilitator: Are the responses different?”

Participant: Yes, they are.

Facilitator: If it’s a friend of yours, what’s your response like?

Participant: If it’s a friend, yea, insult them a bit, just for laughs.

Facilitator: For example?

Participant: Like ‘Why the heck are you doing this? Go touch someone else.’

But if it’s not a friend, it’s like ‘Why the hell are you harassing me [klaeng ku ha hia arai]? Get lost, go to hell.’ Something like that.

Facilitator: And if it’s a senior student?

Participant: If it’s a senior, I’ll show my dissatisfaction.”

(FGD, GBT students, Central)

Responses to GBT friends’ and other male friends’ actions are different.

When feminine male students are being teased or bullied, the response is different depending on who is doing it. If it is a friend who also is *gay* or *kathoei*, they might return whatever was done to them. But if the friend in question is “a man” (not *gay* or *kathoei*), the response might be different as the victim does not dare do the same as they would do to their GBT friends.

“Facilitator: How do you respond if it’s a gay friend?”

Participant: If he touches my butt, I’ll touch his.

Facilitator: Like if this person touches your bottom.

Participant: I’ll touch his bottom. He’s got such a pretty bottom, so big.

Facilitator: And if it’s a man friend?

Participant: Sometimes I scold them.

Participant: I wouldn’t dare to touch men in return.”

(FGD, GBT students, Central)

The quantitative data indicated that two-thirds (63.8 %) of the students who were victimised because they were or were perceived to be LGBT did not do

anything in response. Table 9 shows the reasons why these students chose not to respond (in percentages and absolute numbers). The most commonly given reason (52.5 %) was simply that they “did not want to do anything” while 22.8 per cent believed nothing would happen even if they told someone, so there was no point in doing so. However, a small number of students did not respond because they were embarrassed, did not have the courage to tell others for fear of negative consequences or for fear of others finding out that they were LGBT. Each of these reasons was given by less than 20 per cent of those who chose not to respond to what was done to them.

Among the one-third of students who did respond to what was done to them, two-thirds (63 %) indicated that they “fought back” while about a half (50.5 %) indicated they consulted their friends. Few students informed their parents, teachers, school personnel or external authorities of the incident (Table 10).

Table 9: Reasons for the victims’ inaction when teased or bullied for being/being perceived to be LGBT (more than one answer could be given)

Reason	<i>n</i>	%
Nobody else was around	58	15.6
Nobody would believe it even if told	69	18.5
Embarrassment	60	16.1
Too afraid to do so	34	9.1
Nothing would happen even if someone was told	85	22.8
Afraid of being victimised more	33	8.9
Did not want to do anything	194	52.2
Afraid of finding out what I am	11	3.0

Note: N = 372

Table 10: Types of behavioural reactions to teasing and bullying due to being/being perceived to be LGBT

Type of reaction	<i>n</i>	%
Fought back	131	63.0
Consulted a friend	105	50.5
Consulted parents or family members	40	19.2
Consulted/informed teachers	17	8.2
Consulted/informed school disciplinarian	7	3.4
Consulted guidance teacher	13	6.3
Informed other school personnel	4	1.9
Informed school directors	1	0.5
Informed/consulted local sexual/gender diversity organisations ^a	2	1.0

Note: N = 211. a. The response option shown to each participant who responded to this item was the name of a sexual/gender diversity organisation active in their province

Bystanders' reactions

Bystanders who witness teasing and bullying incidents in which the victim is perceived to be LGBT react in various ways, depending on the situation, harshness of the behaviours and their relationship with the victim. These reactions include doing nothing (because they think it is just playing among friends), joining the bully or teaser, trying to get the teaser or bully to stop, and informing if the incident is particularly severe. Different reactions may be seen in a single incident. Whether the victim is considered GBT or LBT, the reactions are similar:

Dissuasion: GBT students stated they would try to help a victim if they were a close friend of the victim; otherwise, they would more likely just stand and watch:

*“Interviewer: When they fight like this, what do the people around them do?
Interviewee: Some don't care, some try to stop it if it's their close friend. If they're not close friends, they would not get involved.
Interviewee: They try to separate them from each other.”*

(IDI, GBT student, North)

When LBT students are being victimised, the witnesses usually try to stop it if it gets beyond ordinary teasing or playing and gets violent. They would intervene only after they had observed the incident for a while:

*“Facilitator: Your friends helped you when you were being strangled?
Participant: Yes. In the beginning they didn't care. They probably thought it was not their business. But mostly the women friends came to help, more than the guys.
Facilitator: So they wait and look at the situation?
Participant: Yes, for a while. If it gets unbearable, then they intervene.”*

(FGD, LBT students, South)

Inciting or siding with the teaser/bully: In some cases, witnesses join the teaser or the bully for fun, thinking it is nothing serious:

*“Facilitator: When you were bullied, how did the witnesses react?
Participant: Some helped, others made it worse.
Participant: Helped by laughing about it.
Facilitator: What else did they do to help?
Participant: Joined in the lynching.
Participant: Just stood and looked.
Facilitator: Did anyone try to stop it?
Participant: No.
Participant: There were some who did.
Participant: It depends on how much they like your looks.”*

(FGD, GBT students, Bangkok)

Taking pictures or video clips and sharing or tagging them on Facebook or forwarding them to friends: Apart from just looking on, some witnesses take pictures and share them on a social network because they see it as a joke, nothing serious, an ordinary matter:

“Participant: The victim shouted and cried for help but nobody paid attention and let it continue. Sometimes they even take pictures.

Facilitator: You mean those who see the incident?

Participant: Yes. Like, when teasing for fun [yok kan kham kham], they take pictures.

Facilitator: After they’ve taken the pictures, what happens to them?

Participant: Sometimes they post the pictures on Facebook.

Facilitator: Whose Facebook account?

Participant: The friend’s.

Facilitator: The friend who did it or the one who was being done things to?

Participant: They’ll tag the pictures, on and on, within the class.”

(FGD, LBT students, Northeast)

Some onlookers do not do anything or laugh along the situation because they think the victim is also having fun: If the witnesses think that a given incident is mere playing among friends, they may just look and laugh along. However, sometimes the victim does not enjoy the teasing and would like someone to intervene:

“Facilitator: If a boy teased you, what would the bystanders do?

Participant 1: Onlookers, what did they do? What did you see them do?

Participant 2: Nothing.

Participant 3: Nothing. The people around knew that we’re like this. The boys like to tease us and they don’t take it seriously.”

(FGD, GBT students, North)

Similarly, in incidents involving LBT students, if the witnesses think the incident involves nothing but playing, they will not intervene, or they might even participate in the teasing, or simply stand there, laughing, but not try to stop it, because they think it is funny:

“Facilitator: You saw the incident. What would you do if it was your friend being teased?

Participant: I would join in the teasing and make it really memorable.

Facilitator: Would anyone just look and not get involved, or help to stop it?

Participant: Nobody. They would laugh. If they didn’t join in the teasing, they would just stand there, watching, something like that. And laugh.

Facilitator: Nobody would try to get them to stop. Why so?

Participant: It’s, like, well-known that they’re just having fun. Soon enough the one who’s being teased will tease them in return until someone’s gonna lose.”

(FGD, LBT students, Bangkok)

Prevention and support measures used with students who are/are perceived to be LGBT

In the schools where the data were collected for this study, the school principals viewed that the most important bullying prevention measures were aimed at building mutual affection, intimacy and unity among the students so that they would take care of each other and have high moral standards, seeing the importance of the common good. Such activities and measures included group

work, the fraternity system, sports days, activities of the student council, temple visits and dhamma sermons, morality camps, and volunteering/charity activities, which might be arranged as a part of boy scout or girl guide activities. There were also teacher-based measures, such as having a teacher assigned as a tutor to each student. One school had an additional support system whereby teachers were assigned as a “father teacher” or a “mother teacher”, who were charged with overseeing individual 3-4 students’ behaviour in a parent-like capacity. A school principal explained about this:

“Interviewer: Does your school have policies on bullying?”

Interviewee: Yes. I give this a high priority. We implement a support system to ensure that they are happy studying here together. We use a philosophical approach of managing education, in a way that emphasises the learners’ happiness while studying. To be happy while studying, they have to be happy about studying together, not have fights and have good mental and physical health. That’s happy learning.”

(IDI, administrator, North)

Considering each school’s student population at large, support mechanisms for bullying victims and accountability measures for perpetrators followed a similar pattern. When a bullying incident between students is reported, the parties will be called into the school administrative (disciplinary) room for investigation. In case of a minor issue, common measures include mediation, giving formal warnings, and assigning certain activities as a punishment (e.g. a specific amount of public service work). In a severe case, for example one involving a fist fight or a theft, points will be deducted, the incident will be noted in the student’s personal record, and the student’s parent(s) will be invited to the school so they can be notified of the incident. Repeated breaches of the school regulations may result in suspension or dismissal. These measures are only aimed at the wrongdoers. Remedial measures for the victims are rarely provided, and only in cases involving a fight or a theft. Other forms of teasing that happen on a daily basis tend not to be reported to the teachers and thus do not result in support measures for the victim(s) or punishment of the wrongdoer(s). In particular, teasing or bullying of GBT students by other male students tends not to be addressed, which means that the perpetrators go without punishment. Yet, if male students tease or bully female students in a similar way, these incidents are dealt with and the perpetrators are punished or admonished. Schools generally consider that male students must treat female students respectfully, but these schools do not think that GBT students are comparable to female students, regardless of how feminine they are.

No schools that were investigated in this study had written policies on bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be LGBT. These schools also had no policies on how to support students who become victims of such bullying. The school directors and teachers did not perceive that such students face bullying, for four main reasons.

First, the school directors and teachers define bullying in a narrow way that does not match the definition used in bullying theory (Olweus, 2003), namely, they think that bullying equals physical fights. For example, a school principal in

the north recounted that *“in bullying that is about sexual relationships [chu sao], female students have fights over a boy, or male students have fights over a girl...there are gangs that try to pick up fights with each other...they use emotion to fuel their anger. They only need to see each other for the fist fight to begin...”*

Second, most teasing or bullying incidents targeting students who are or are perceived to be LGBT are not reported to the teachers or directors.

Third, most teachers do not see LGBT students as perpetrators or victims of bullying. On one hand, they consider kathoei students obedient, submissive, having satisfactory academic performance, and not liking fights. On the other, they do not think that *tom* students harass others or look for trouble, and consider *toms* difficult to bully because they protect each other:

“The sissy ones [phuak pen tut pen tao] are easy to manage. They do what they’re told to. Any fights? No. They’re less to be worried about than the manly ones [phuak maen]. They are not obstinate...they have moderate academic performance. They are very good at activities, they dare to express themselves and are very willing to volunteer. They tend to be highly helpful...to teachers, the school and their friends.”

(IDI, school principal, North)

“Interviewer: Is there bullying among LGBT students?”

Interviewee: Very little. Never seen kathoeis fighting. They only do good deeds.

Interviewer: Do they boys ever bully kathoei or tom students?”

Interviewee: No. It’s never happened here. They are encouraged to express themselves, be a part of a team, be in groups that express themselves. The tom kids are tough. Who would tease them? They protect others.”

(IDI, vice principal, Northeast)

Fourth, the directors and the teachers view that the number of LGBT students is small; hence, there is no need for specific bullying prevention policies for them. As one school principal in the North put it, *“there is no problem. Here, they’re a small group, not a big one, because there are just one or two of them.”*

However, interviews with principals of public and private schools revealed that in practice, in many schools these students are subjected to bullying, and some preventive measures have been put in place after incidents of bullying against LGBT students have already occurred and teachers have found out about it. These measures included the following:

1) In one school, when a boy scout camp was arranged that required an overnight stay, a separate sleeping arrangement was provided to feminine male students. This measure came about after these students had explained to the teachers that they were afraid of being teased by their male friends in the dormitory room, and asked the teachers to be allowed to sleep in a separate room.

2) In some schools, an individual class or the whole student body had been addressed in the classroom or during the flagpole ceremony, and encouraged to accept differences in gender expression and to recognise the equal dignity of all human beings. The students were told that in spite of different sexual orientations, everyone must respect each other and uphold everyone's right to bodily integrity, and that LGBT students are a part of the school. However, in some schools such speeches were given in such insensitive ways that they may in fact have fostered prejudice against LGBT students. For example, in one school, the students were told to have sympathy for transgender students and not tease them because they were mentally abnormal.

3) Activities were arranged to all students that aimed to instil mutual love and forgiveness in the students.

4) In some schools, sex education was provided as a part of health studies by subdistrict health promotion hospital officials from the Ministry of Public Health. Sexual/gender diversity topics were covered as a part of a syllabus on physical and social survival skills for LGBT students. However, these topics are still covered very briefly in sex education because they are considered less important than preventing unwanted pregnancies among female students.

5) Many schools encouraged LGBT students to express themselves through school activities, for example by serving as cheerleaders, doing flower arrangement, serving as a master of ceremonies in school events, and so on. The main purpose of this is to make other students to see how skilled LGBT students are, accept them and refrain from teasing or bullying them. However, only feminine male students participate in these activities; *tom* students do not:

“Interviewer: What kinds of policies does the school have to protect students who are gay, tut, tom or kathoei from bullying by other groups of students, and prevent them from bullying others?”

Interviewee: We promote their self-expression...as cheerleaders in the school's sports day, joining in parades and processions, serving as drum majors, as producers...Are they being bullied? No, never. This is because they have worked together with people of other sexualities. I think the policy is to promote everyone's participation in every group so as to foster understanding about what the nature of being together is like.”

(IDI, vice principal, Northeast)

Support was typically provided to LGBT students and accountability measures imposed on perpetrators when a teacher found out from the affected students that they had been bullied by other students. It usually consisted of having a discussion with the bullied student about the problem and the student's needs. In particular, the teacher would ask the bullied student if he or she could accept what happened, and how he or she would cope with it. However, this kind of guidance was only found to be provided to some male-to-female transgender students, who often approached the teachers to talk with them about many other matters as well. *Tom* students do not receive such support because they are rarely open about themselves in public or with the teachers; they tend not to inform teachers when they are teased or bullied.

Training needs for sex education on sexual/gender diversity

Most school administrators and teachers did not mention a need for training on addressing sexual/gender diversity as a part of sex education. This in part resulted from their perception that the number of LGBT students in their school was small. They also did not see any sexual or bullying problems among these students. Instead, they saw them as happy and as having activities they could join in to express themselves. Moreover, most schools did not emphasise sex education for various reasons, for example because they had few teachers, the teachers had a heavy workload, or because they emphasised teaching subjects in which exams would need be taken rather than sex education. The attitude that providing sex education would point the way for the villain (encourage students to have sex) was also expressed. Finally, many teachers had limited skills in the provision of sex education, especially the older ones.

However, some principals and teachers agreed with the provision of sex education on sexual/gender diversity topics. They noted that these issues were not much taught at present, but they also thought that the number of LGBT students was increasing, and teachers thus needed training on sexual/gender diversity issues. They called for trainings with contents and format that would enable teachers to understand these students in terms of their gender identities, thoughts, problems and needs so that the teachers could apply the skills and knowledge gained in teaching their students. Such teaching would enable other students to understand and sympathise with these students, which in turn would provide space for LGBT students in the school, community and society.

Some school directors opined that teaching about LGBT topics in sex education should be aimed at changing these students and make their gender match their sex at birth. This opinion was based on the belief that being LGBT was temporary and changeable. One interviewee put it thus:

“Interviewer: What should be the role of teachers in sex education on gay, tut, tom or kathoei issues?”

Interviewee: By primary school, it's apparent that some kids show signs of it already. Therefore, activities are needed that, like, for a boy who's likely to end up as tut while with us, we should provide quite a bit of manly activities for him. And with girls that are like toms, we'll provide them with women's activities, like etiquette training, girly things, lots of them.”

(IDI, school principal, North)

Some school principals emphasised their willingness to allow the participation of LGBT students in the development of a sex education curriculum on sexual/gender diversity so that the curriculum would reflect their attitudes and match their needs.

One school had already designed and conducted a survey on students' attitudes toward LGBT students and used the findings to design contents and teaching methods for sex education. This had been undertaken due to the problems being faced by LGBT students:

“Interviewer: How do you think the school or other authorities should support you?”

Interviewee: For those that are of an alternative gender and have a real necessity to wear female uniforms, I would like to wear such clothing and have long hair.”

(IDI, GBT student, Northeast)

Educational and other support needs of LGBT secondary students

The various support needs of LGBT students were as follows.

First, GBT students wanted their school to have regulations to punish those who bullied them. Such regulations on bullying should be implemented equally with all students regardless of their gender. GBT students felt that current regulations led to unequal treatment. For example, if *kathoei* students were being teased or bullied by male students, the perpetrators would not be punished, because both would be considered to be of the same sex, whereas male students would be punished if they teased or bullied female students in the same way.

Second, there should be separate toilets for GBT students to alleviate their fear of being bullied by male students when using male toilets and their feeling of not being welcome to female toilets. A feminine male student in a private school in Bangkok and others in a state school in another Central Thai province told the research team that they never used the male toilets and chose to hold their bladder until they reached home because of their fear of being bullied by male students:

“Facilitator: Besides what they already said, is there anything else you’d like the school to do to make you feel safe?”

Participant: The toilets.

Facilitator: What do you mean? Can you tell me?

Participant: Build toilets for the third gender [phet thi sam].

Participant: Yea. I’ve really wanted this for a long time.

Facilitator: How would you call the toilets, men’s, women’s or what?

Participant: Well, third gender.

Participant: They could have a picture of a boy wearing a skirt.

Facilitator: Why do you need a third gender toilet?

Participant: If we use female toilets, some people think it looks bad. They don’t know us. If we use male toilets, we are bullied like I told you.”

(FGD, GBT students, Central)

Such needs surfaced in many schools where data were collected. What the GBT students told the research team indicates that female students are often not happy to welcome GBT students to the female toilets (and in some schools, the teachers do not permit it), whereas male toilets are not safe to them due to the risk of being bullied by male students. Thus, there are no toilets they can use safely:

“If there’s a kathoei toilet, it’s going to be safe. There will only be kathoeis in there. No one would need to come and give us looks like ‘you should know

your limits.' If I use a female toilet, I'll be seen as a kathoei using a female toilet, something like this."

(FGD, GBT students, Central)

"Interviewer: How do you think the school or other authorities can support you?"

Interviewee: Build the toilets. Because in general, when someone of an alternative gender, who is really beautifully dressed, enters a male toilet, the men will be surprised because it's like, 'why is a woman using their toilet?' They will feel embarrassed and won't accept it, won't let us enter. If we use a female toilet, we're doing wrong. If we use a male toilet, we're also doing wrong. I'd like it to be like the other kids recommended – build the toilets. Besides having toilets for the disabled, there should be toilets for the alternative gender, too."

(IDI, GBT student, Northeast)

Third, GBT students wanted the freedom to put on powder, sunscreen, and foundation make-up, which are not allowed by current regulations of some schools. Some wanted to be permitted to wear a skirt instead of shorts:

"Interviewer: What do you think the school can do to help you feel better or safer?"

Interviewee: I'd like the school to accept people like us. Like, sometimes I wear makeup and they come and blame me like, 'how do you think you can wear makeup like this'. And yet I see the women wear super-thick foundation and contact lenses, the big-eye type, and they shape their eyebrows. I'd like to do the same."

(IDI, GBT student, Central)

On the other hand, LBT students would like their school to allow them to wear their hair short in the style they prefer, rather than be forced to wear the obligatory straight short cut, tied or braided long hair.

"Facilitator: What support do you need from school?"

Participant: The hairstyle thing. I'd like the principal to issue measures that compromise a bit, allowing us to have these hairstyles.

Facilitator: Like, with hair on the sides roughly by the earlobes, not covering the ears?"

Participant: I want a hairdo that's actually a style.

Participant: Like, it's cooler; it's not hot."

(FGD, LBT students, North)

Fourth, GBT students would like the schools to provide diverse activities they can participate in without being discriminated against, such as classical Thai dance, modern dance, musicals, and so on. That these wishes were expressed underlines that though some schools arrange such activities, not all do.

Fifth, LBT students proposed that preventive measures be put in place to stop bullying against them. They proposed that frequent relationship-building activities between senior and junior students be organised so that they could become closer to each other and take care of each other. These activities could

include freshmen's welcoming orientation and activities within a fraternity system. As with the fourth item, these activities are currently only provided in some schools:

“Facilitator: If you were the school principal, what kinds of bullying prevention measures would you design for tom students?”

Participant: There should be activities that senior and junior students can do together, to strengthen their relationship.

Participant: They should be frequent, in the style of the freshmen's welcoming ceremony.

Facilitator: Do freshmen's welcoming ceremony activities. Anything else that can strengthen the ties between junior and senior students?

Participant: Like, the senior and junior students should always take care of each other.

Participant: Having the fraternity system is relationship building between students of different grades.

Facilitator: Does it help reduce bullying?

Participant: I think it helps a lot.

Participant: Helps a lot. I think it helps a lot. Because when we know each other, right, so we'll know what this or that person's like. It might not be quite as harsh as what we're seeing, like someone coming to you to shout at you really loud, if you don't like some junior student's looks, or there's something about them you don't like.”

(FGD, LBT students, South)

Sixth, both LBT and GBT students proposed activities to adjust the attitudes of students and teachers so as to accept sexual/gender diversity. They also suggested that more work is needed on the level of society to bring about more acceptance on these matters, including legislation that guarantees equal rights on par with those enjoyed by gender-normative, heterosexual men and women. GBT students clearly explained that if they are physically assaulted or sexually harassed, they should be able to file a lawsuit just like one filed when women are victimised:

“Facilitator: Is there anything you'd like to add?”

Participant: I'd like the government to issue a law or something that grants alternative gender people like us rights and liberties that are equal with those women have, so that society can accept us better...If that's possible, social acceptance will be better.

Facilitator: That could take us really far.

Participant: If the leadership of the country will implement this law, then if our male friends violate our bodies in the same way they do to women, we can sue them. Or when they sexually abuse us, we can also file a lawsuit against them, something like this. That should be our right. If this happened, everything would be much more OK.”

(FGD, GBT students, Northeast)

LBT students emphasised the need for campaigns to enable communities and schools to understand women who love women, and to have fewer myths about them. They think that society currently tends to hold the misunderstanding that

women who love women are violent, have mental problems and are not good to associate with:

“Facilitator: If you were a school principal, what measures or activities would you like to have so as to reduce violence or bullying among your group?”

Participant: There should be campaigns like...Don't look down on toms...You've got to understand. Toms are often looked down on. It's so common in Thai society.

Participant: Because they think toms are disgusting and like to use violence.

Participant: Yes. Sometimes there's no understanding at all. Even though sometimes toms can be better students than ordinary folks, boys or girls, right? And it's not necessary for love that a woman should always be together with a man. It's more about understanding between two persons.”

(FGD, LBT students, South)

Students in certain schools suggested that these activities should include staging plays or showing films like those shown in the cinema, for example the films titled *Sayew* and *Yes or No*. Alternatively, LGBT students could talk to other students so that they can correctly understand their sexual/gender identities. As one LBT student put it, “it's a good opportunity for *tom* and *dee* students who feel different from other students to share with other students that there's no harm involved in what we are. It can help others to understand us.” In addition, these students suggested inclusion of sexual/gender diversity contents into the health studies curriculum, which currently mostly focuses on the anatomy and functions of different organs as well as on sexually transmitted infections.

Seventh, GBT students proposed support measures involving flexibility in dividing students into groups when forming queues or doing group work in class; they wished that sex at birth would not be the sole criterion in dividing students. Currently, this often makes them not to fit in either group:

“Like when you enter the big meeting room or auditorium, boys and girls have to queue in separate lines. We don't want to be in the boys' line so we join in the girls' line but are told to join the boys' one.”

(FGD, GBT students, Northeast)

“Groups for assignments are divided into men and women. When we do our assignments, the teachers tell us to split into male and female groups and we don't know which group to join so we stay together, just the two of us.”

(FGD, GBT students, Northeast)

Discussion

This study focused on teasing and bullying behaviours targeting students who are or are perceived to be LGBT in 5 provinces in 4 regions of Thailand (Bangkok, Central, North, Northeast and South), using both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The key finding was that Thai secondary schools have a rather high prevalence of such teasing and bullying, be it physical, verbal, social, sexual, or online. Being a victim of such teasing or bullying is associated with many severe negative outcomes. This study thus underlines that such teasing or bullying is not just a matter of children playing with each other, unlike many students and teachers perceive it, but a social problem in Thai society that seriously reduces wellbeing and access to education among students who are or are perceived to be LGBT. Yet, the schools studied in this project had no systematic approaches to manage the problem. This gap in the student welfare system needs to be urgently addressed.

Teasing and bullying: Direct or cultural violence

The first important finding was that the words *yok lo*, *klaeng*, and *rangkae* (roughly corresponding to teasing or bullying) reflect the degree of violence involved in each kind of behaviour. At one end are interactions that students do not think constitute a problem but relationship-building among friends. At the other end are actions that are unbearable to the victims and make them unwilling to go to school. However, the meaning of an action is often ambiguous and the parties involved interpret it differently. Whether a given behaviour is physical, verbal, social, sexual or online, the students typically consider the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator as a criterion in determining whether an incident is bullying or not, rather than just considering the behaviour itself. Thus, it is not possible to categorise these behaviours into bullying and not-bullying by just looking at the behaviours. The relationship between the students involved and the intention behind each action must also be taken into consideration.

However, even when neither party considers a behaviour to constitute bullying or a problem, it can nevertheless be regarded as cultural violence (Galtung, 1990), in other words a culture that normalises violent behaviours. When these behaviours are related to same-sex attraction or transgenderism, it reinforces the inferiority of same-sex attracted or transgender individuals at a cultural level. Though the parties involved in an incident may not view “teasing” about these things as a problem, such teasing contributes to the legitimisation of subsequent more severe behaviours, which then negatively affect students who are or are perceived to be same-sex attracted or transgender.

Transgender individuals are still considered deviant in Thai educational contexts, but are conditionally tolerated

Statistically speaking, this study found that more than half of self-identified LGBT students were teased or bullied within the past one month because they were LGBT. This prevalence observed in Thai general secondary schools corresponds to that observed in Europe (Takács, 2006) or South Asia (Khan et al., 2005).

Recognising such extensive teasing and bullying behaviours targeting persons who are or are perceived to be LGBT helps to refute the myth described by Jackson (1999) that Thai society is very accepting of sexual/gender diversity. The teachers' attitudes toward male same-sex attracted or transgender students may seem accepting. However, this acceptance is conditional. Some teachers compliment "girlish" male students because they rarely create problems at school, and always participate in school activities, in contrast to other male students. These characteristics correspond to the school system's ideals. However, as one GBT student put it, he felt that when he came to study at his present school, he was deemed an "empty-handed *kathoei*", meaning he had nothing to compensate for what others considered his defect – being a *kathoei*. After he had earned himself popularity and fame in the school by consistently participating in and organising activities, other students looked up to him to the extent they elected him as the student council president. Had he not done all that he did, he would still have been considered inferior to others because his gender did not conform to the social norms, which specify that sex at birth must determine gender. Failing this, one will be regarded as "sexually deviant" (*biang ben thang phet*), a word still widely used by many teachers. The term "mentally disordered" (*phit pokati thang chit*) is another term still used by some teachers, who do not consider using the term to involve any bias at all, but rather consider it an objective description of a defect some students have and for which they should receive "sympathy".

LBT students are disliked by many students and teachers alike due to their masculine characteristics, which are considered "aggressive" by others. Male students who possess the same characteristics, however, are regarded as conforming to the gender norms of Thai society. Thus, the schools regard LBT students as defective women rather than accepting them as another kind of masculine being and applying the same criteria to them as they apply to male students. Tomboyish students are considered the more "unnatural" (*mai pen thammachat*) the more masculine they are, because both teachers and other students judge LBT students' value against what is expected of "women", not of "men." In other words, the schools refuse the reality of such tomboyish students' gender identity.

Overall, the qualitative findings indicate that students' conformity to gender norms based on their sex at birth is more important than whether they are attracted to the same sex, another sex, or more than one sex. Thus, it can be said that transprejudice (King & Winter, 2009) is a more serious problem than heterosexism (Herek, 2004) in these schools. The clearest indication of this in the quantitative findings can be seen with male students who considered themselves as less masculine than other boys; 70 per cent of them had been teased or bullied due to their perceived LGBT characteristics. This is the highest prevalence of such teasing or bullying seen among any group in this study.

Teasing and bullying targeting students perceived to be LGBT can affect any students

Although self-identifying LGBT students were more likely to be teased or bullied for their LGBT characteristics, the majority of students who were victimised due

to perceived LGBT status did not self-identify as LGBT. Some of them may be same-sex attracted or have some transgender characteristics, but have not yet developed an LGBT identity. Nonetheless, the fact that one-fourth of all students without an LGBT identity indicated that they had been victimised because they were perceived to be LGBT may imply that “being LGBT” (which in most students’ understanding means being transgender rather than same-sex attracted) is an important theme that can be invoked in bullying in general. The perpetrator may not necessarily perceive the victim as really being LGBT. Thus, bullying drawing on this theme affects all groups of students, not only those who are LGBT.

Thus, the teachers’ understanding that the schools need not address the issue because the number of students affected is small is not true in two important respects. First, the proportion of LGBT-identified students (11.9 %) is much higher than the teachers think. Most teachers thought that of the thousands of students in their school, only a handful were feminine males or tomboyish females. Second, based on the affected students’ self-identification, most were not in fact LGBT, but they were nevertheless affected by this type of bullying.

Another common perception among teachers and students—that teasing and bullying are just a matter of children playing with each other and thus not a big issue—is also untrue in the light of the findings. In this study, being teased or bullied due to perceived LGBT status was associated with a higher risk of depression, unauthorised absence from school, unprotected sex and attempted suicide. These findings indicate this to be true in Thai society; previous research indicates it to be true in Western societies (Russell et al., 2010; Lancet Editorial Board, 2011). However, a limitation of the current study is that drawing causal inferences (i.e. that these negative outcomes are *caused* by LGBT-themed teasing or bullying) is not possible due to the cross-sectional rather than longitudinal methodology of the study.

Some current approaches of managing the problem constitute cultural and structural violence

The findings indicate that general secondary schools in Thailand do not have specific policies to prevent bullying due to perceived LGBT status or to provide support for victims of such bullying, because the schools do not see such teasing or bullying as a problem requiring specific measures. However, in some schools, after the problem became evident, ad hoc preventive measures were put in place (e.g. granting permission for feminine male students to sleep separately from other male students on a boy scout camp). What most schools offer are standard measures intended to manage bullying among students in general. Such measures include relationship-building activities, morality promotion, fraternity systems, assigning teachers as a “father teacher” or “mother teacher” responsible for overseeing specific students, as well as attempts to solve conflicts involving bullying through mediation. In cases considered serious by the school, the perpetrator may have points deducted or even be suspended from attending school for a while. While the teachers or directors seemed to have confidence in the effectiveness of these measures, the prevalence of teasing or bullying due to

perceived LGBT status or other motivations indicates these measures are not as effective as teachers or administrators believe them to be.

The lack of a bullying prevention policy specifically addressing bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be LGBT, is a form of cultural and structural violence. In the absence of such policy, there are no effective structures to ensure the safety of students who are or are perceived to be LGBT. The absence of such policy also fosters a culture of sweeping the problem under the carpet, allowing students who are or are perceived to be LGBT to be bullied all the time without anyone noticing it.

Teachers themselves often perpetrate cultural violence that legitimises direct violence. Examples include using stigmatising terms like “deviant” or “abnormal” when referring to LGBT students, or excluding these students from participating in some activities (especially activities taking place outside the school, out of fear of possible damage to the school’s image). Such practices humiliate LGBT students, make them unwilling to come to school, and label them as a group of students that have inferior value; hence, they can be bullied without it being particularly wrong. Strict adherence to student hairstyle and uniform regulations based on sex at birth also attaches abnormality to transgender students and makes them feel uncomfortable, because they feel they are being coerced to follow the norms of the opposite sex. These practices are also directly linked to bullying behaviours. For example, forcing *kathoei* students to wear cropped hair makes them seem ridiculous in the eyes of other students, who duly choose them as targets for some “teasing.”

Most LGBT students are aware of structural and cultural problems in their school, but most teachers are not

The educational and other support needs of LGBT students have much to do with addressing the structural problems at schools that strictly separate students into two groups based only on sex at birth, without flexibility toward gender diversity. Key examples of such flexibility would include providing toilets for feminine boys that they can use without being teased or bullied by other male students (as tends to happen when they try to use male toilets) or being forbidden to enter by female students (as tends to happen if they attempt to use the female toilets), as well as permitting tomboyish students to wear outfits or short hair that they feel correspond to their gender identity. At present, some LGBT students also face injustice when those who tease or bully them go without punishment because the school thinks that such actions between students who are of “the same sex” is a trivial issue.

Most teachers still do not quite see how teaching about sexuality or sexual/gender diversity is linked to bullying prevention. A very limited number of teachers see that correct understandings about sexual/gender diversity lead to improved treatment of each other and would thus like to increase their knowledge on the subject. Teachers of certain schools are of the opinion that such education should be provided by external agencies because the teachers do not have adequate knowledge about this subject.

Thus, in most schools, the necessary first step is building awareness of the high prevalence of teasing and bullying and its negative impact on LGBT-identified students and their non-LGBT identified counterparts alike. Awareness is also needed about the fact that teasing and bullying is often linked to some students' perception that certain other students seem to be LGBT, hence of lower value and hence a legitimate target for teasing or bullying. If teachers understand the role myths about being LGBT play in bullying, they will also become aware of the necessity to teach about sexual/gender diversity in order to counter such myths and thereby reduce bullying that stems from such myths.

Conclusion

This research aimed 1) To gather evidence on the nature, scale and impact of bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be same-sex attracted or transgender, attending secondary schools in 5 provinces of Thailand, 2) to study various aspects of the lifestyles of secondary school students that might be linked to bullying behaviours, 3) to document the availability of existing prevention and support interventions on bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be same-sex attracted or transgender, including accountability measures for those perpetrating bullying; and 4) to assess the support and educational needs of same-sex attracted and transgender secondary school students; as well as the training needs of teachers in the area of effective bullying prevention. The study integrated qualitative and quantitative methodologies and was conducted in 30 general secondary schools in 5 provinces in 4 regions of Thailand, including Bangkok. In each province, 3 general schools were selected for qualitative data collection and 3 others for quantitative data. Each set of three consisted of a) 1 state-operated school and 1 private school in a provincial capital (or inner Bangkok), and b) 1 state-operated school in a peripheral district (or outer Bangkok).

The research team purposively selected the schools for qualitative data collection based on recommendations from the technical advisory board, who viewed these schools as having a higher number of LGBT students. The schools for quantitative data collection, on the other hand, were selected using multistage cluster sampling. The peripheral districts where data were collected in each province, as well as all the schools where quantitative data were collected, were all randomly assigned.

The qualitative data collection methods included 1) 67 FGDs with GBT and LBT students as well as non-LGBT male and female students and teachers; 2) 56 IDIs with school administrators/disciplinarians, male and female non-LGBT students as well as GBT and LBT students. Quantitative data were collected from 2070 students using a computerised survey. The data management program NVivo 10 was used for categorising and analysing the qualitative data (transcribed FGDs and IDIs). For quantitative data analysis, IBM SPSS 19.0 was used to obtain descriptive statistics and Chi Square analyses.

The study revealed that the meanings given to the word *rangkae* (to bully) by students and teachers on one hand, and the research team on the other, were different. Most teachers thought that bullying only referred to physical fights.

The words *yok lo* and *klaeng* were also used. Of these, students perceived *rangkae* as very violent behaviours with clear intent to hurt the victim. *Yok lo* (teasing), on the other hand, is not intended to cause damage but to show intimacy. *Klaeng* (here also translated as “teasing”) was an ambivalent term as students used it in both of the above senses. Overall, the definitions of these three terms could be categorised into negative and positive ones. The negative dimension involves the perception that the perpetrator has more power than the victim and is having fun at the victim’s expense, who suffers. The positive dimension is that teasing (*yok lo* or *klaeng*) is a matter of mutual fun and intimacy among friends.

Teasing and bullying behaviours targeting students who are or are perceived to be LGBT include physical, verbal, social, sexual and online behaviours.

Overall, 55.7 per cent of the participants, who identified as LGBT reported that they had been subjected to such behaviours in the past one month because they were LGBT. Physical behaviours were reported by 30.9 per cent, verbal behaviours by 29.3 per cent, social behaviours by 36.2 per cent and sexual behaviours by 24.5 per cent. Even among those who did not identify as LGBT, 24.5 per cent were victimised because they were perceived to be same-sex attracted or transgender. Overall, only one-third responded in some behavioural way to these incidents, for example by consulting a friend, fighting back or informing a teacher.

Students who were victimised because they were or were perceived to be LGBT had a significantly higher proportion of those who had unauthorised absence from school in the past one month, drank alcohol, were depressed, had unprotected sex in the past three months or had attempted suicide in the past one year than students who had not been victimised for any reason. Those who were victimised because they were or were perceived to be LGBT also had a significantly higher proportion of those who were depressed or attempted suicide than students who were victimised for other reasons.

The schools did not have specific bullying prevention policies, and hence also no bullying prevention policies specifically aimed to protect students who are or are perceived to be LGBT. If notified, most schools address bullying incidents by punishing the perpetrators. Even in such cases, feminine male students mentioned that other male students would receive a milder punishment (or no punishment) if they chose to bully feminine male students rather than female students. Many GBT students said they were afraid to use the school toilets, whether male or female, because they were either bullied or refused entry. However, one school had provided separate sleeping arrangements for these students after they had been sexually harassed by other male students. Most schools have guidance teachers as a remedial measure for the victims but this mechanism is not used much. In some cases, students who reported being bullied by the teachers were told by the teachers it was their own fault.

Overall, the findings of this study revealed a clear need for teachers to receive more support to understand sexual/gender diversity and integrate such an understanding in the provision of comprehensive sexuality education. Currently, many schools still hold negative attitudes about sexuality, and the current sex

education stigmatises sexual behaviours and encourages delaying sexual debut to after graduation. Moreover, the language used by the teachers stigmatises LGBT students. For example, the word “sexually deviant” was used even when the teachers referred to LGBT students in a positive way, indicating that they did not intend to condemn such students by using the term. In the beginning of focus group discussions with the teachers at many schools, the teachers mentioned they saw no linkage between sexuality education and the prevention of bullying. When the discussions reached the topic of prejudice against LGBT, the teachers mentioned the need for teaching materials, external speakers and training on sexual/gender diversity.

Recommendations

For schools

1. Develop and enforce clear anti-bullying policies covering students of all genders, emphasising management of bullying perpetrators in a manner involving no discrimination on the basis of the sex, sexual orientation or gender expression of either perpetrators or victims.
2. Integrate contents and participatory activities increasing understanding of the extent and consequences of bullying and teasing into various existing school subjects, for example into sex education, guidance, or homeroom classes.
3. Build safe spaces for LGBT students, for example specific toilets, activity rooms or separate sleeping arrangements (e.g. during school camps) as one way to prevent bullying targeting this group of students.
4. Build acceptance of sexual/gender diversity through activities that enable LGBT students to fully express their identities and abilities.
5. Encourage participatory teaching of comprehensive sexuality education that emphasises acceptance of diversity and mutual respect regardless of sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.
6. Permit students of all genders to participate in all activities and to become student leaders (e.g. student council president) both informally and formally.
7. Challenge myths about LGBT students (e.g. myths that view them as deviant, mentally abnormal, over-emotional, or as prone to violate school regulations) among students, teachers, and parents by inviting external agencies working on comprehensive sexuality education or sexual diversity topics to provide information at the school.

For policy-makers

1. Bodies responsible for educational and public health management must have policies on the prevention of school-related gender-based violence in general, and on the prevention of bullying targeting students who are or are perceived to be LGBT in particular.

2. Revise current educational curricula in each subject and remove biased terminology and explanations related to sexual/gender diversity.
3. Provide channels of assistance to bullied students, e.g. hotlines, web boards, or mobile applications.
4. Build understanding of sexual/gender diversity by teaching related topics in teacher training programs at universities so that future teachers will understand these issues and have readiness to teach about them.
5. Develop and enforce policies on bullying against students who are or are perceived to be LGBT, together with clear indicators to measure progress, and rewarding mechanisms for schools that show progress in reducing such bullying.
6. Create collaboration agreements on the provision of knowledge on sexual/gender diversity and school safety promotion between relevant agencies, for example between Educational Service Area Offices and UNESCO or Plan International.
7. Create or identify existing manuals on the prevention of bullying targeting students who are or are seen to be LGBT that teachers can use in their day-to-day work.
8. Develop and enforce policies providing more flexibility in the implementation of school regulations on school uniforms and obligatory hairstyles to better match the gender identities of LGBT students.
9. Arrange inter-ministry meetings between the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Public Health to build shared understandings of sexual/gender diversity, to bring an end to the use of the term “sexually deviant” and to understand that LGBT individuals are not mentally disordered.

For society at large

1. Promote acceptance of sexual/gender diversity within society at large through public campaigns, popular media, or activities of civil society organisations.
2. Create collaboration networks between schools and civil society organisations working on sexual/gender diversity and gender-based violence.

For further research

1. Continued research on these topics is needed for up-to-date information about the situation.
2. These issues should also be studied specifically in the context of boarding schools, religious schools, juvenile observation and protection centres, vocational colleges and centres for non-formal education.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Details of the technical advisory board

Objectives of establishing a technical advisory board

To provide advice and recommendations for the Center for Health Policy Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University on the direction, format, implementation and monitoring of this research project in order to ensure the achievement of established objectives.

Roles & Responsibilities of the board

1. Review and provide recommendations on the research tools to ensure the appropriateness and relevance of the questions to the research sites.
2. Provide comments and communicate with the research team via email throughout the research implementation.
3. Attend planning meetings (twice).
4. Review and comment on the progress updates and the final research report.
5. Contribute to the dissemination of the findings to relevant partners.

Timeframe

The appointed advisory board members are to provide cooperation from 1 December 2012 to 31 December 2013. The effort required by the members is approximately one day per month via email and attendance at two meetings in Bangkok.

Criteria

1. The technical advisory board will have 15 members.
2. The board consists of secondary students from the selected provinces under this project, youth representatives from local and national organisations working on the issues of human rights and youth, representatives from partner organisations and authorities in charge of prevention of violence and bullying.
3. Able to attend the two planning meetings and provide comments via email, as needed.
4. Members who are under 18 years of age must obtain written consent from parents in order to participate.
5. Must be able to communicate in Thai.

The Research Team's Responsibilities

1. The advisory board members will have the expenses (travel, per diems) incurred in relation to their participation in the project reimbursed in accordance with the regulations of the Center for Health Policy Studies. The research team will arrange accommodation for one night before or after each meeting for board members travelling from other provinces, as appropriate.
2. The committee members will receive the meeting minutes from the Center for Health Policy Studies.

First meeting

7 December 2012, at UNESCO Bangkok Office.

Board members present

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Yanumas Panjakul | Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand, Bangkok |
| 2. Jutarat Photipattama | Student representative, Bangkok |
| 3. Anucha Nuchpaeng | Health and Opportunity Network, Chonburi |
| 4. Nuntapong Boonanan | Student representative, Chonburi |
| 5. Akkarapol Suttanan | M Plus Foundation, Chiang Mai |
| 6. Pitsanu Singjai | Student representative, Chiang Mai |
| 7. Anon Chaisongkram | Andaman Power, Phuket |
| 8. Tipanan Chompoo | Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand, Ubon Ratchathani |
| 9. Kritsaran Seesan | Student representative, Ubon Ratchathani |
| 10. Jetsada Taesombat | FOR-SOGI Foundation, Bangkok |
| 11. Vijit Wongwareetip | Anjaree Foundation, Bangkok |
| 12. Khamsavath Chanthavysouk | Partners for Prevention |
| 13. Supol Singhapoom | Plan International, Thailand |
| 14. Kritsiam Arayawongchai | UNESCO |

Second meeting

28 October 2013, at Plan International Thailand, Bangkok.

Board members present

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Yanumas Panjakul | Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand, Bangkok |
| 2. Jutarat Photipattama | Student representative, Bangkok |
| 3. Thanachat Macharoen | Student representative |
| 4. Nuntapong Boonanan | Student representative, Chonburi |
| 5. Tipanan Chompoo | Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand, Ubon Ratchathani |
| 6. Kritsaran Seesan | Student representative, Ubon Ratchathani |
| 7. Chonnakarn Rimteerakul | Student representative, Chiang Mai |
| 8. Atchariya Chaipho | Student representative, Chiang Mai |
| 9. Sippanon Khanom | Student representative, Nakhon Si Thammarat |
| 10. Tinnakorn Khaopho | Student representative, Nakhon Si Thammarat |
| 11. Jetsada Taesombat | FOR-SOGI Foundation |
| 12. Vijit Wonwareetip | Anjaree Foundation, Bangkok |
| 13. Supol Singhapoom | Plan International, Thailand |
| 14. Prempreeda Pramoj na Ayutthaya | UNESCO |

Appendix 2: Focus group discussion and in-depth interview guidelines

Set 1: FGD, students in general

- 1) Have you ever come across bullying between students in your school? If yes, where did it happen? What was it like? What was the bullied student like (e.g. fat, thin, dark-skinned, feminine, tough-acting, looking like a country bumpkin, nerdy, dirty-looking)? How often does it happen here?
- 2) What kinds of reasons do you think those who bully others have for bullying them?
- 3) How do you think the bullying victim feels? How do you think the victim is affected (e.g. in terms of their studies, physically, in terms of their health, mentally and socially)?
- 4) Based on what you've seen, how do bullying victims react (e.g. fighting back, trying to escape, crying, smiling, informing their teachers or parents)?
- 5) Based on what you've seen, what do the bystanders do (e.g. helping the victim, siding with the bully, doing nothing)?
- 6) If your school gets to know about bullying, what kinds of ways does your school have to manage the problem?

Set 2: FGD, LGBT students

- 1) Have your friends who are like you ever been bullied by other students in the same school? If yes, where did it happen? What was it like? How often does it happen here?
- 2) What kinds of reasons do you think those who bully others have for bullying them?
- 3) How do you think the bullying victim feels? How do you think the victim is affected (e.g. in terms of their studies, physically, in terms of their health, mentally and socially)?
- 4) Based on what you've seen, how do bullying victims react (e.g. fighting back, trying to escape, crying, smiling, informing their teachers or parents)?
- 5) Based on what you've seen, what do the bystanders do (e.g. helping the victim, siding with the bully, doing nothing)?
- 6) If your school gets to know about bullying, what kinds of ways does your school have to manage the problem?
- 7) In your school, what do other students think about someone like you?
- 8) In your school, what do teachers' think about someone like you?
- 9) What kinds of educational or other kinds of support would you like to get (e.g. special toilets, counselling, etc.)? How? (from the school or other authorities)?

Set 3: FGD, teachers

- 1) Have there ever been incidents of bullying between the kids in this school? If yes, where did it happen? What was it like? What was the bullied student like (e.g. fat, thin, dark-skinned, feminine, tough-acting, looking like a country bumpkin, nerdy, dirty-looking)? How often does it happen here?
- 2) What kinds of reasons do you think those who bully others have for bullying them?
- 3) How do you think the bullying victim feels? How do you think the victim is affected (e.g. in terms of their studies, physically, in terms of their health, mentally and socially)?
- 4) How do bullying victims react (e.g. helping the victim, siding with the bully, doing nothing)?
- 5) How do kids who are bystanders react (e.g. helping the victim, siding with the bully, doing nothing)?
- 6) If your school gets to know about bullying, what kinds of ways does your school have to manage the problem?
- 7) What do you think about students who are *gay*, *kathoei*, *tom* or *dee*?

- 8) To prevent bullying that happens due to negative attitudes toward students who are *gay, kathoei, tom* or *dee*, what measures, policies or classes does your school offer?
- 9) Do you think you have the necessary skills to manage or prevent this problem? Please explain.
- 10) Do you think you yourself need support in providing sex education to manage or prevent the problem? Please explain.

Set 4: IDI, school principal or director

- 1) Have there ever been incidents of bullying between the kids in this school? If yes, where did it happen? What was it like? What was the bullied student like (e.g. fat, thin, dark-skinned, feminine, tough-acting, looking like a country bumpkin, nerdy, dirty-looking)? How often does it happen here?
- 2) What kinds of reasons do you think those who bully others have for bullying them?
- 3) How do you think the bullying victim feels? How do you think the victim is affected (e.g. in terms of their studies, physically, in terms of their health, mentally and socially)?
- 4) How do bullying victims react (e.g. helping the victim, siding with the bully, doing nothing)?
- 5) How do kids who are bystanders react (e.g. joining the perpetration, cheering the victim up, nothing)?
- 6) If your school gets to know about bullying, what kinds of ways does your school have to manage the problem?
- 7) What do you think about students who are *gay, kathoei, tom* or *dee*?
- 8) To prevent bullying that happens due to negative attitudes toward students who are *gay, kathoei, tom* or *dee*, what measures, policies or classes does your school offer?
- 9) Do you think you have the necessary skills to manage or prevent this problem? Please explain.
- 10) Do you think you yourself need support in providing sex education to manage or prevent the problem? Please explain.
- 11) Are there any policies regarding bullying in this school? If yes, what are they?
- 12) Are there specific policies to protect LGBT students from bullying in this school? Please explain.

Set 5: IDI, victimised students

- 1) Have you ever been bullied by students in the same school? If yes, where did it happen? What was it like? How often does it happen to you?
- 2) What kinds of reasons do you think those who bully you have for bullying you?
- 3) When you were bullied, how did you feel? How were you affected (e.g. in terms of your studies, physically, in terms of your health, mentally and socially)?
- 4) When bullied, how did you react (e.g. fighting back, trying to escape, crying, smiling, informing your teachers or parents)?
- 5) How did the kids who saw it react (e.g. helping you, siding with the bully, doing nothing)?
- 6) Did the school know about this? Why or why not? If yes, how did the school manage the problem and help you?
- 7) How do you think the school should manage this problem?
- 8) Generally, what do other students in your school think about someone like you?
- 9) Generally, what do the teachers in your school think about someone like you?
- 10) What kinds of educational or other kinds of support would you like to get (e.g. special toilets, counselling, etc.)? How? (From the school or other authorities)?

Set 6: IDI, perpetrating students

- 1) Have you ever teased [*klaeng*] other students in the same school? If yes, how did you tease them? If yes, where did it happen? What was it like? How often do things like this happen to you?
- 2) When you teased them, what kinds of reasons did you have for it?
- 3) Generally, what do you think about students who are similar to the ones you have teased?
- 4) During the incident and afterward, how did you feel? Why?
- 5) How do you think the kids you teased felt? Why?
- 6) How did the ones you teased react (e.g. fighting back, trying to escape, crying, smiling, informing the teachers or parents)?
- 7) How did the kids who were bystanders react (e.g. helping the kid you teased, siding with you, nothing)?
- 8) Did the school know about the incident? Why or why not? If yes, what did the school do to you?
- 9) Do you think what the school did was fair to you? Why?
- 10) What kinds of educational or other kinds of support would you like to get (e.g. special toilets, counselling, etc.)? How? (From the school or other authorities)?