

Queer-Friendly Schools?

The relationship between perceived school climate, psychological and student well-being of LGBTQ+ students in Switzerland

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BACKGROUND

LGBTQ+ students...

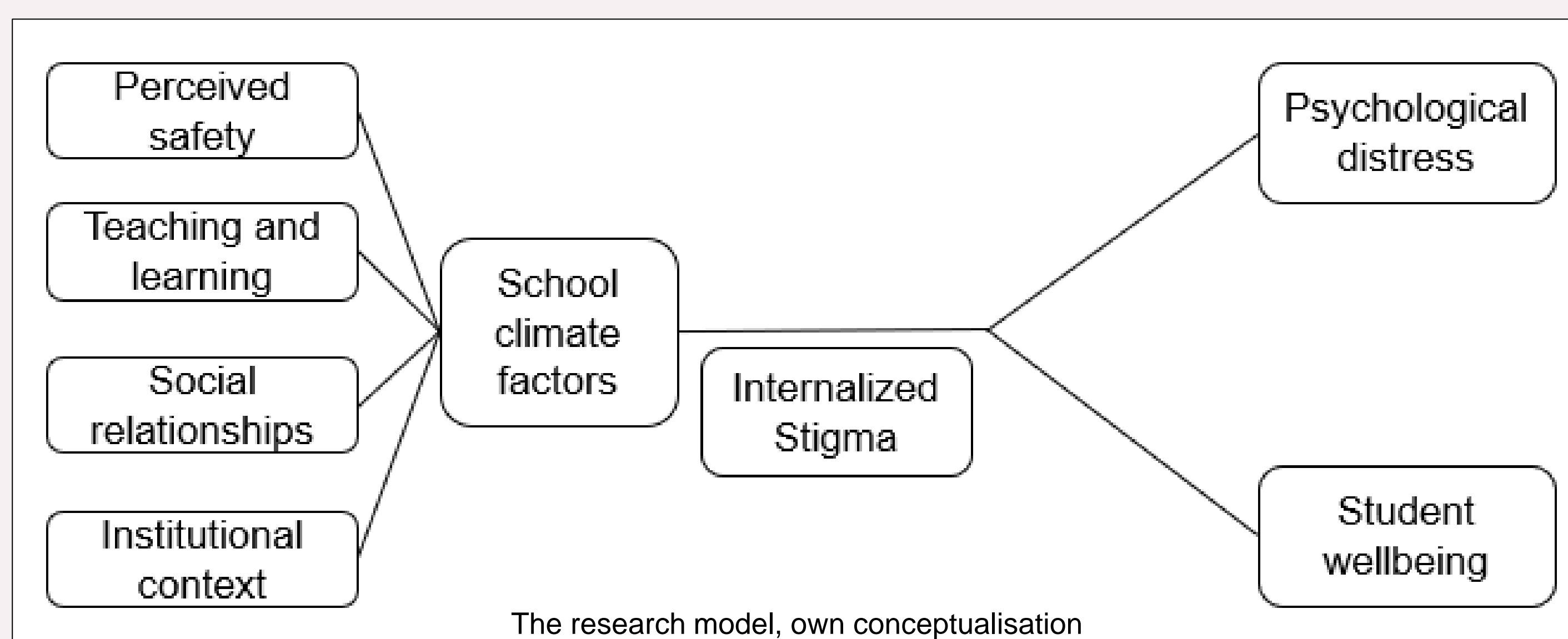
- Are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer
- Deviate from the norm of the heterosexual binary gender system
- often report LGBTQ+ negative school climate factors in school (studies from Germany/USA) [1], e.g.
 - Harassment
 - Feeling unsafe



- Limited data on LGBTQ+ and school climate in Switzerland so far
 - Applies especially to trans and non-binary students
- International research gap on how school climate factors relate to psychological distress and student well-being

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Minority Stress Model: Connects LGBTQ+ specific stress factors with health outcomes [2]
- Adapted to the school context



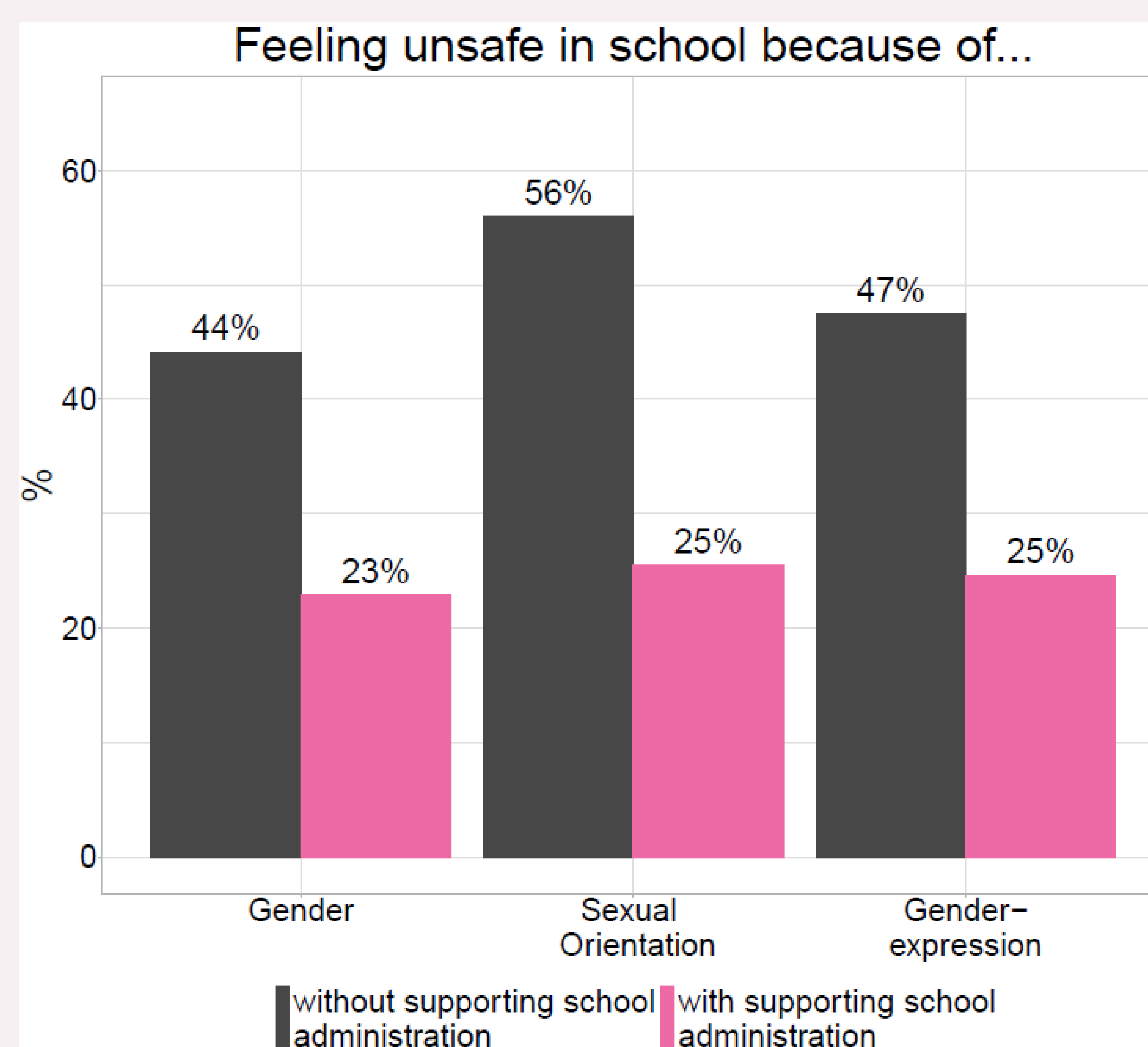
METHODOLOGY

- Mixed-methods study: online survey in autumn 2022, interviews in 2024
- Target group:: LGBTQ+ students aged between 14 and 19 from the German-speaking part of Switzerland
- Adaptation of a school climate study from the USA [3] + validated measures of distress and well-being
- Participatory research approach, 2 workshops with LGBTQ+ youth for research questions and questionnaire development
- Sample: 569 LGBTQ+ youth from various Swiss-German cantons, average age: 16.5 years; different school levels/types

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PRELIMINARY FINDINGS



- Those who perceive the school administration as supportive feel safer as LGBTQ+ individuals in school ($p < 0.01$)
- The more frequently participants report hearing derogatory remarks about LGBTQ+, the higher their psychological distress and the lower their student well-being ($p < 0.01$)

REFERENCES

- [1] Gaupp N, Krell C. Lebenssituationen von lesbischen, schwulen, bisexuellen, trans* und queeren Jugendlichen. Unsere Jugend 2020; 72: 290–298
- [2] Meyer IH. Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: conceptual issues and research evidence. Psychol Bull 2003; 129: 674–697
- [3] Kosciw JG, Clark CM, Truong NL, Zongrone AD. The 2019 National School Climate Survey 2020