THROUGH THE RAINBOW LOOKING GLASS
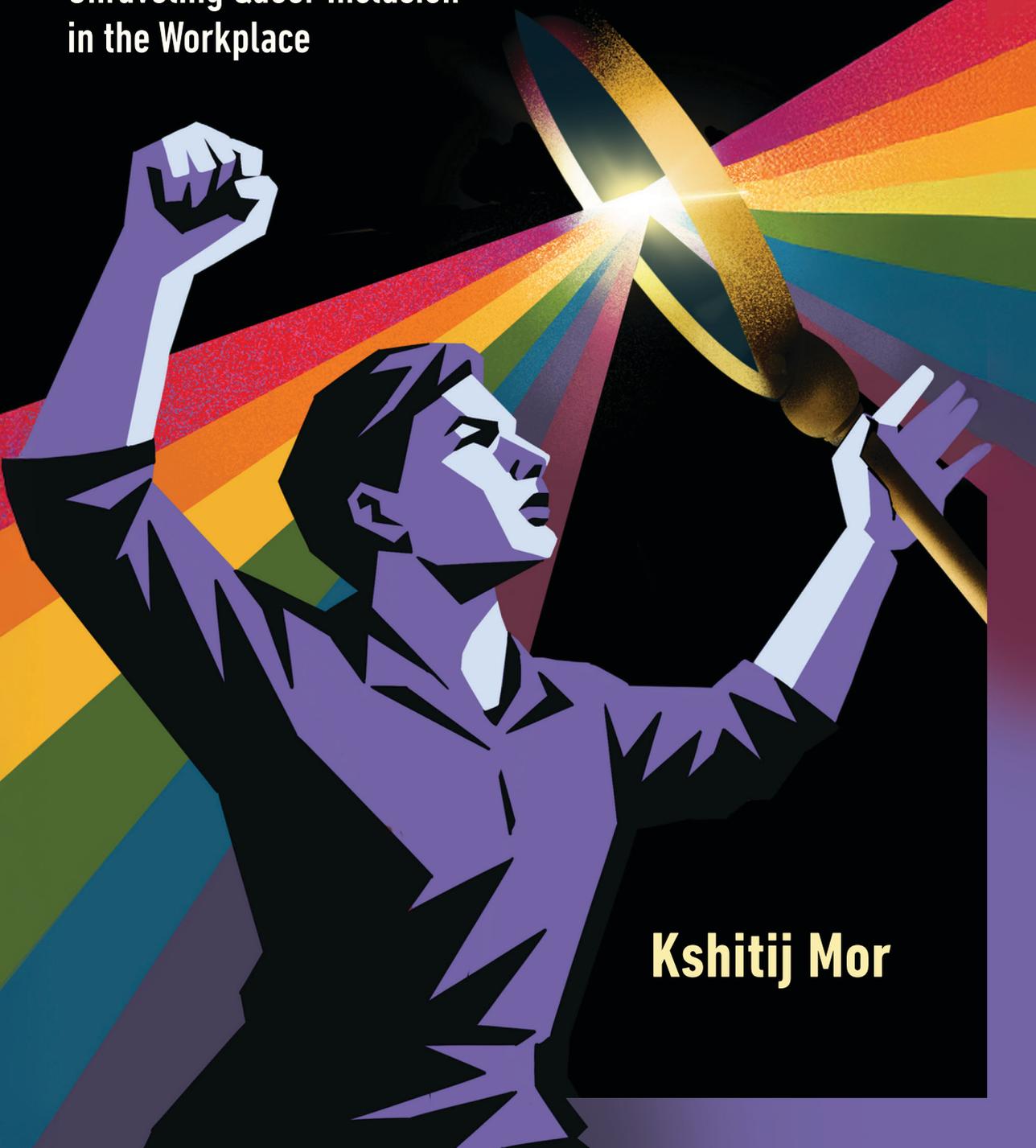
Unraveling Queer Inclusion in the Workplace

Kshitij Mor

Through the Rainbow Looking Glass

Kshitij Mor

Through the Rainbow Looking Glass
Unraveling Queer Inclusion in the Workplace

Door een regenbooglens: Queer inclusie op de werkvloer ontrafeld

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de
Universiteit Utrecht
op gezag van de
rector magnificus, prof. dr. ir. W. Hazeleger,
ingevolge het besluit van het College voor Promoties
in het openbaar te verdedigen op

vrijdag 13 maart 2026 des middags te 12.15 uur

door

Kshitij Mor

geboren op 28 augustus 1998
te Delhi, India

Promotoren:
Prof. dr. J.M. van der Toorn
Prof. dr. N. Ellemers

Copromotor:
Dr. S. Gündemir

Beoordelingscommissie:
Dr. B.G. Adams
Prof. dr. B. Derks
Prof. dr. ir. A.G. van der Lippe
Prof. S. Otten
Prof. dr. J.B.F. de Wit

"Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast" - *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*

Here is to making another one of them reality!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Overview and Discussion of Dissertation

> *"*
>
> *What you do in the bedroom has nothing to do with your work.*
>
> *"*

This phrase or some variation of it, has been heard by far too many lesbian, gay, bi+ (bisexual, pansexual, etc.), transgender, and otherwise queer (LGBTQ+)[1] individuals in the workplace. Beyond crudely reducing queerness to physical intimacy, it reflects a deeper, more insidious sentiment: that queerness belongs in the private sphere, behind closed doors, and should be left at the office threshold. But this expectation is not equally applied. Heterosexuality, by contrast, is openly expressed and affirmed at work: photos of spouses and children on desks, casual conversations about weekend plans with a partner, or family-related small talk are rarely seen as "too personal." These everyday moments are seamlessly woven into professional life affirming one's identity without question or consequence. Queerness, however, is often stripped of this social legitimacy and flattened into a matter of private behavior. As if sexual orientation and gender identity are coats to be shrugged off and left in the closet – again.

Yet social identities, such as queerness, are not merely private characteristics; they are multilayered, multidimensional constructs that shape how individuals are seen, treated, and able to participate in everyday life - including at work (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012; Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019). While there have been significant strides in terms of visibility and representation for queer individuals, this has not translated into universal acceptance or safety. Estimates suggest that between 10–30% of adults now identify under the LGBTQ+ umbrella (Pappy, 2024; Rahman et al., 2020). Some for their sexual orientation (or lack thereof), others for their gender identity (or lack thereof), or both. This growing visibility has been met with increasing hostility. Across Europe and globally, reports have documented a sharp rise in anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment, policies, and public rhetoric (2024 State Equality Index, 2025; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2024; Luneau, 2024). Trans and gender-diverse individuals, in particular, are facing intensified scrutiny, marginalization, and legislative rollback (Cech & Rothwell, 2020; Mehmet, 2024; Napier, 2024; Pereira, 2024; The Epidemic of Violence Against the Transgender & Gender-Expansive Community in the U.S., 2024; Timmins, 2025).

---

1   In this dissertation, the term *queer* is at times used as an umbrella term to refer to the broader LGBTQ+ community and is used interchangeably with LGBTQ+.

Within this climate, some organizations that once visibly championed queer inclusion are beginning to retreat. Faced with political backlash and public pressure, many organizations in the US have scaled down their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts – with LGBTQ+ inclusion among the first casualties (Bussewitz, 2024; Leung, 2025; Vanderford, 2024). This shift suggests the potentially conditional nature of institutional support for LGBTQ+ employees: often symbolic, easily reversed, and rarely embedded deeply enough to withstand public controversy. Despite decades of efforts, queer inclusion remains precarious, contested, and dependent on shifting social winds.

Research into the workplace experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals is therefore both timely and essential. As LGBTQ+ inclusion becomes increasingly politicized and vulnerable to rollback, understanding how queer employees experience and navigate the workplace offers critical insight into the gaps between institutional rhetoric and lived reality. Work is a central part of life; it is not only a source of income that allows people to provide for themselves, but it also offers individuals a sense of purpose, fulfilment and allows them to form social connections. Individuals spend a large portion of their waking hours at work, and thus the dynamics can be very impactful in their daily lives (Bartoll & Ramos, 2020; Kasl & Jones, 2007; Rosenthal et al., 2012; Settersten et al., 2015; World Economic Forum, 2019). Yet for many LGBTQ+ people, the workplace remains a site of inequality. Studies consistently show that LGBTQ+ individuals are paid less, receive fewer professional development opportunities, encounter less mentorship and support, and face discrimination at nearly every stage of the employment process (Bryant-Lees & Kite, 2020; Cech & Rothwell, 2020; Galupo & Resnick, 2016; Tilcsik, 2011; Van der Toorn & Gaitho, 2021). These persistent disparities underscore the importance of examining how organizations engage with LGBTQ+ individuals, and how this group[2] responds to organizational efforts.

The increasing prejudice against LGBTQ+ individuals, combined with the fragile institutionalization of their inclusion in organizations as well as the waning support for queer inclusion in some parts of the world prompt a pressing question: What does sustainable inclusion for LGBTQ+ employees really look like? How do

---

2   While I refer to "LGBTQ+ individuals" as a collective in this dissertation, I acknowledge that this acronym encompasses a diverse set of identities with distinct histories, needs, and experiences. Treating LGBTQ+ people as a single group can be a practical necessity for analysis, but it risks overlooking important within-group differences. Where possible, this dissertation disaggregates findings to reflect these differences, but the limitations of available data and sample sizes mean some nuances remain underexplored.

organizations best foster inclusion for LGBTQ+ individuals and create an where LGBTQ+ employees not only exist but thrive? This dissertation seeks to answer that question by examining the workplace experiences of queer individuals, the organizational practices that shape those experiences, and the mechanisms through which genuine inclusion and sustainable cooperation can be built.

This dissertation forms part of the SCOOP 'Sustainable Cooperation: Roadmaps to a Resilient Society' research program (SCOOP, 2019), which explores how cooperation can be sustained or disrupted in the face of three key threats: external shocks (where events originating outside a domain threaten cooperation and value creation), spillovers (where one form of cooperation or satisfaction is achieved at the expense of others), and vicious cycles (which refers to self-defeating or self-reinforcing feedback loops that erode cooperation over time). These dynamics are relevant to the inclusion of LGBTQ+ employees – including being a critical indicator of sustained cooperation between individuals and their work organizations. Across this dissertation, I examine how these forces may undermine or reinforce the continued engagement of LGBTQ+ workers, and how organizations can mitigate such threats to foster more resilient, inclusive forms of cooperation. These themes will be further elaborated throughout this overview and discussion.

"QUEERING" THE WORKPLACE: LGBTQ+ ORIENTED DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

As societies grow more diverse, workplaces inevitably mirror this change. Diversity is increasingly recognized not just as a moral or social priority, but as a driver of organizational success. Studies link diverse workforces to greater innovation, stronger decision-making, and improved performance (Ely & Thomas, 2001, 2020; Li et al., 2019; Phillips & O'Reilly, 1998). However, these benefits do not emerge by default. They require deliberate organizational efforts to ensure safety, fairness and empowerment to employees (Green et al., 1969; Gröschl, 2011; Shore et al., 2018). These efforts are typically known as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives; programs, policies, and practices designed to foster an inclusive and equitable organization. Importantly, DEI initiatives are not only vital for organizational performance but also play a key role in supporting the well-being and flourishing of all employees– both marginalized and non-marginalized. An inclusive climate, that fosters a sense of belonging and allows individuals to be their authentic selves benefits everyone across the organization (De Cock et al., 2025; Ellemers et al.,

2018; Gündemir et al., 2017; Jansen et al., 2015; Şahin et al., 2019; Stevens et al., 2008).

Historically, both academic research on DEI and organizational DEI initiatives have concentrated primarily on more visible identity categories, most notably gender and race[3] (Apfelbaum et al., 2016; Gündemir et al., 2019; Leslie & Flynn, 2022; Martin, 2023; Rattan & Ambady, 2013). However, there is a growing recognition of the distinct and complex challenges faced by other groups, including those with more concealable identities – such as LGBTQ+ individuals (Clair et al., 2005; Ghumman et al., 2013; Gündemir et al., 2019; Jackson & Mohr, 2016). While LGBTQ+ employees face some forms of bias and exclusion similar to those experienced by racial minorities and women, such as harassment, microaggressions and bullying (Baert, 2018; Cumberbatch, 2021; Galupo & Resnick, 2016; Granberg et al., 2020; Zanoni & Janssens, 2007), they also encounter unique challenges specific to their identities, such as the need to navigate disclosure, the threat of social or professional repercussions following disclosure, and the frequent absence of openly LGBTQ+ role models or representation in leadership positions (Apfelbaum et al., 2016; Capell et al., 2018; Clair et al., 2005; Johnson et al., 2019; Kirby, Barreto, et al., 2023; Kruk & Matsick, 2021). As awareness of these issues increases, it becomes imperative to examine how the scholarly insights on DEI initiatives can be applied and adapted to meaningfully support those with more concealable identities.

LGBTQ+ employees represent a key group of interest in this context, as they are uniquely sensitive to the diversity dynamics within organizations (Cech & Rothwell, 2020; Cech & Waidzunas, 2021; Colgan, 2016; Fric, 2017; Kirby, Barreto, et al., 2023; Morgenroth et al., 2024). Yet, they continue to be under-researched and underrepresented in both scholarship and practice. Although academic interest in LGBTQ+ workplace experiences dates back to the 1980s (Badgett, 1995; Day & Schoenrade, 2000; Herek, 1984; Shallenberger, 1994) organizational strategies for LGBTQ+ inclusion remain comparatively underdeveloped, less standardized, and often not fully integrated into broader DEI frameworks (Anteby & Anderson, 2014; Byington et al., 2021; Van den Dungen et al., 2023; Van der Toorn & Gaitho, 2021). Focusing on this group offers an important lens into how individuals navigate diversity when the terrain is ambiguous or poorly defined. While DEI efforts around race and gender have made strong progress, with established practices like

---

3   I recognize that race and gender are not always unambiguous or uniformly visible or that identity disclosure challenges are strictly tied to specific types of identity. Rather, that on average, some groups may face disclosure-related challenges more frequently than others

representational goal setting, metrics and leadership targets, the field of LGBTQ+ DEI is still an emerging one. Best practices are limited and the path forward is less well-defined. A focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion also helps to highlight how dimensions of identity that are less visible can challenge prevailing assumptions about what diversity is and how it should be addressed. Hence, this research not only deepens our understanding of LGBTQ+ inclusion but also pushes the boundaries of diversity management more broadly.

This dissertation aims to shed light on how organizational DEI efforts and organizational environment shape LGBTQ+ employees' lived experiences and responses. Central to this inquiry are the perspectives, reactions, and first-person accounts of LGBTQ+ individuals themselves. Importantly, these insights inform broader organizational goals related to diversity and inclusion such as attracting and retaining diverse talent, fostering innovation and improved performance through inclusive practices, as well as identifying the barriers that prevent these goals from being fully realized. This dissertation integrates the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ employees with an analysis of organizational structures, policies, and practices that shape those experiences. It employs a multimethod approach combining a quantitative approach involving experiments and surveys with in-depth qualitative interviews to capture both the subjective realities of LGBTQ+ individuals and the structural, strategic considerations of the organizations in which they work. Through this integration, this research provides a more holistic understanding of how meaningful, sustainable inclusion can be achieved.

Below, I begin by reviewing the literature on LGBTQ+ experiences in the workplace, highlighting the specific challenges faced by this group and underscoring the urgency and relevance of this research within the current socio-political climate. I then turn to organizational DEI approaches, some of the most prevalent and salient DEI initiatives present in organizations, outlining the two dominant approaches: identity-blindness[4] and identity-consciousness, that often shape how diversity is managed and experienced in organizations. Particular attention is given to how these approaches may influence LGBTQ+ employees' perceptions and workplace experiences. Recognizing that DEI is not a static construct, I explore diversity policy and practices through the lens of Human Resource Management (HRM) theory, using the distinction between intended, implemented, and perceived practices. This

---

4   The use of the term "identity-blindness" warrants acknowledgement, as it may be interpreted as ableist language. However, it is the terminology most commonly used in current research, and at present, we have not identified a more fitting alternative.

framework helps to understand whether and how organizational intentions translate into lived employee experiences. In the final section, I shift the focus to health and well-being outcomes of LGBTQ+ employees in the workplace. Building on minority stress theory, here I explore how broader workplace perceptions, shaped, at least in part by DEI efforts and climate, relate to the health and well-being experiences of this group, who are already at heightened risk for negative outcomes in these areas.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

LGBTQ+ Individuals in the Workplace

The term LGBTQ+ encompasses a diverse spectrum of sexual orientations and gender identities, including but not limited to lesbian, gay, bi+, transgender, and queer individuals. While this umbrella term brings together groups that share a history of marginalization, it is important to recognize the variation within: the lived experiences of someone with a minoritized sexual orientation may differ significantly from those with a minoritized gender identity and differ still for those who hold both. Even among individuals with different sexual orientations, the type, intensity, and visibility of challenges encountered both inside and outside the workplace can vary (Einarsdóttir et al., 2016; Klysing et al., 2024; Köllen, 2013; Napier, 2024; Van der Toorn & Gaitho, 2021). Despite these internal differences, there remains a strong rationale for examining these groups collectively. Many of the struggles LGBTQ+ individuals face share common roots in heteronormativity - a prevailing societal ideology that assumes and privileges heterosexuality and cisgender identities as default, normal, or ideal (Marchia & Sommer, 2019; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009; Van der Toorn et al., 2020; Velez et al., 2021). Even in contexts where legal protections exist, LGBTQ+ individuals continue to face significant barriers, including social stigma, harassment, and exclusion (Badgett et al., 2007; Cancela et al., 2024; Cech & Waidzunas, 2021; Coffman et al., 2017; Sears & Mallory, 2014). In the workplace, heteronormativity manifests not only in interpersonal bias but also in professional norms and expectations that may implicitly discourage or penalize non-normative identity expression (Corlett et al., 2022; Mizzi, 2013; Morgenroth et al., 2024). It is within this ideological context that we must situate the workplace experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals and understand how these dynamics give rise to concepts of heteroprofessionalism, which further illuminate the tensions between professional identity and queer visibility.

Heteroprofessionalism

The concept of heteroprofessionalism describes how workplace norms around professionalism are implicitly shaped by heteronormative ideals, thereby disadvantaging LGBTQ+ employees (Mizzi, 2013, 2016; Morgenroth et al., 2024). Professionalism refers to a set of occupational or normative values that guide behavior in the workplace, traditionally seen as worth preserving and promoting (Evett, 2014). While professionalism is often treated as a neutral and universal standard, it is in fact a socially constructed and ambiguously defined set of behaviors deemed appropriate, respectable, and necessary for workplace success. Conformity to these standards typically grants individuals increased trust, legitimacy, and autonomy, along with greater access to organizational power (Ashcraft, 2013; Evans, 2008; Malin, 2000; Roberts, 2005). However, the underlying norms of professionalism have historically been defined by dominant cultural values often reflecting traits associated with masculinity, whiteness, cisgender identity, and heterosexuality. As a result, expectations of professionalism tend to uphold binary gender roles, reward the performance of normative gender and sexual expressions, and marginalize those who deviate from these scripts (Cumberbatch, 2021; Morgenroth et al., 2024). LGBTQ+ individuals, whose identities or self-presentations may challenge or fall outside of these norms, are thus at an inherent disadvantage. Expressions of queerness whether in appearance, language, relationships, or behavior may be subtly or explicitly read as "unprofessional," creating pressure to conceal, conform, or downplay one's identity in order to be accepted or advance (Bizzeth & Beagan, 2023; Corlett et al., 2022; Embrick et al., 2007; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009). LGBTQ+ individuals are acutely aware of workplace norms surrounding professionalism, and the pressure many feel to conceal or downplay their identity reveals a unique challenge tied to the relative concealability of queer identities (Capell et al., 2018; Collins & Callahan, 2012; Goh et al., 2019).

This tension also exemplifies a spillover dynamic, as described in the SCOOP framework. The expectation that LGBTQ+ individuals manage their identity to align with heteronormative standards of professionalism represents a negative spillover effect, creating emotional dissonance and undermining authenticity. For LGBTQ+ employees, such spillovers can erode work motivation, belonging, and ultimately sustained cooperation with their organizations (Boyles, 2008; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Hennekam & Ladge, 2023; Martinez et al., 2017). As such, heteroprofessionalism is not simply a matter of workplace culture, but a structural barrier that disrupts resilient and inclusive forms of collaboration posing a direct threat to the long-term retention and engagement of LGBTQ+ workers.

Coming Out? Concealment and Disclosure of Queer Identity

An LGBTQ+ identity is relatively invisible, which introduces distinct dilemmas and stressors in organizational contexts. From an individual perspective, LGBTQ+ employees are frequently faced with the decision of whether to disclose or conceal their identity; a choice laden with personal and professional implications (Clair et al., 2005). Disclosure is rarely a one-time event; rather, it is a continuous, context-dependent process, re-evaluated in each new interaction or environment (Button, 2004; Capell et al., 2018; Follmer et al., 2020; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Kirby, Barreto, et al., 2023; Schönauer & Greven, 2024). While being open about one's identity is associated with a range of positive outcomes including higher job satisfaction, improved psychological well-being, increased organizational commitment, and reduced stress openness also brings potential risks, LGBTQ+ employees who disclose may become targets of subtle or overt forms of bias, such as microaggressions, exclusion, or even discrimination (Beagan et al., 2022; Bryant-Lees & Kite, 2020; Einarsdóttir et al., 2016; Suppes et al., 2021; Thuillier et al., 2021; Tilcsik, 2011).

The concealability of queer identity complicates inclusion efforts from an organizational perspective as well. Common signals of organizational support such as visible representation, role models, or affinity groups may be less available or harder to interpret for LGBTQ+ individuals (Apfelbaum et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2019; Kruk & Matsick, 2021; Wilton et al., 2020). Collection and reporting of LGBTQ+ identity data within the context of workplace inclusion presents additional challenges, such as concerns about data security, privacy and concerns regarding misuse and misrepresentation of information (Klarenaar et al., 2022; Van der Toorn et al., 2024). Altogether this makes it more difficult for LGBTQ+ individuals to assess whether an environment is truly inclusive, heightening the uncertainty around identity disclosure (Buizer et al., 2025).

Unsurprisingly, much of the scholarly attention in LGBTQ+ workplace research has centered on the dynamics of concealment and coming out, generating valuable insights into the psychological and relational complexities of this process (Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Thuillier et al., 2021). However, this emphasis has left relatively less attention to other important dimensions of the LGBTQ+ work experience such as how queer employees perceive and respond to organizational diversity strategies, what signals they interpret as indicators of inclusion and safety, and how organizations conceptualize and implement LGBTQ+ inclusion in practice. This dissertation seeks to address that gap by shifting attention beyond the disclosure

dilemma to the broader organizational conditions that shape inclusion and identity safety for LGBTQ+ employees.

Understanding these dynamics is especially timely given the resurgence of anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment in various sociopolitical contexts (Coffman et al., 2017; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2024). Despite growing visibility and legal advancements in many regions, queer and trans individuals continue to face heightened scrutiny, backlash, and policy rollbacks. These developments not only threaten individual rights and safety but also cast a chilling effect within workplaces, where support for LGBTQ+ inclusion is increasingly being contested or deprioritized (Bussewitz, 2024; Leung, 2025; Luneau, 2024). In this climate, understanding how to create environments where LGBTQ+ employees feel safe, valued, and able to thrive is not just a moral imperative, it is a pressing organizational and societal need.

These shifting sociopolitical landscapes represent a form of external shock, as defined in the SCOOP framework. When political climates grow increasingly hostile toward LGBTQ+ rights, the legitimacy and durability of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts within organizations can be called into question. Public backlash, legislative restrictions, and culture wars often permeate the workplace, placing pressure on companies to either retreat from or defensively justify their inclusion strategies (Bussewitz, 2024; Leung, 2025; Vanderford, 2024). This external volatility renders DEI policies more precarious, exposing LGBTQ+ workers to heightened uncertainty about whether their identities will continue to be protected or respected in professional settings.

Diversity Management Approaches

Organizations utilize Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policies and practices to address the needs of minoritized employees and to foster an inclusive work environment that supports the well-being and performance of all staff (De Cock et al., 2025; Gröschl, 2011; Mor Barak et al., 2016; Stevens et al., 2008). Examples include policies aimed at reducing bias during recruitment and selection, diversity training programs, resource practices such as diversity mentoring, and accountability structures like diversity plans (Leslie, 2019). These policies and practices are often based on the organizations' diversity approaches (also known as diversity ideologies or diversity philosophies), "a blueprint for how individuals and organizations should respond to social group differences" (Wu & Apfelbaum, 2024, p. 1). Broadly, two approaches to diversity management are identified: identity-blindness and identity-consciousness. While both approaches ultimately intend to promote harmony and

cohesion across groups, they differ in their foundational assumptions and in how they inform organizational strategies for managing diversity.

An identity-blind approach is based on the belief that demographic differences should be deemphasized or rendered irrelevant in workplace practices. It focuses on shared qualities among individuals or their unique personal traits, rather than group-based identities. Organizations that adopt this approach may emphasize equal treatment, universal norms, or meritocratic principles that prioritize skills and competencies above all else. In some cases, this can translate into expectations for minoritized employees to assimilate into dominant workplace cultures. In contrast, an identity-conscious approach stresses the importance of acknowledging and valuing social group differences. It recognizes that individuals' identities and backgrounds shape their workplace experiences. This perspective emphasizes the need to celebrate diversity and address systemic barriers. It also positions diversity as a source of strength, contributing positively to innovation, decision-making, and organizational performance (Gündemir et al., 2017, 2019; Leslie et al., 2020; Leslie & Flynn, 2022; Plaut et al., 2018). Organizational diversity approaches are often communicated to (prospective) employees through diversity mission statements and, at times, more indirectly through HR practices and leadership behaviors (e.g., Dang et al., 2022; Gündemir et al., 2019).

While both approaches have been extensively studied, much of the existing literature on the impact and utility of diversity approaches focuses on these in the context of relatively visible dimensions of diversity – racial minorities and women in the workplace. This leaves important questions unanswered about whether and how these diversity approaches apply to less visible stigmatized identities, such as those related to sexual orientation and gender diversity. This represents a missed opportunity for theory development, as LGBTQ+ individuals navigate the norms of heteroprofessionalism and challenges of identity management in the workplace, likely making them especially sensitive and attuned to explicit messaging and cues of inclusion. That is, relative concealability of a queer identity, and a lack of readily visible cues to assess the safety and supportiveness of their workplace enhances LGBTQ+ employees' reliance on the organization's diversity approach and messaging to determine whether their identities are acknowledged, respected, and supported. I propose that, in such contexts, identity-conscious approaches can play a crucial role in providing reassurance and clarity for LGBTQ+ individuals (which I explore in Chapter 2 and 3), whereas identity-blind approaches may obscure important signals and unintentionally signal exclusionary norms. Understanding how LGBTQ+ individuals interpret and respond to these ideological

1

cues is therefore critical for designing inclusive environments that offer identity safety, and sustainable inclusion.

From an organizational perspective, both identity-conscious and identity-blind approaches offer strategic advantages, depending on which groups they aim to engage. In practice, organizations often combine elements of both to maximize buy-in, for example, by blending meritocratic ideals with multicultural messaging to appeal simultaneously to dominant and minoritized groups. Research has explored such hybrid models, including multicultural meritocracy and all-inclusive multiculturalism, and their potential to increase support for DEI among majority group members (Gündemir et al., 2017; Jansen et al., 2015; Leslie et al., 2020; Stevens et al., 2008). At the same time, research has cautioned that overly broadening diversity narratives in the interest of palatability can dilute their core message, thereby reducing their relevance and impact for minoritized individuals (Akinola et al., 2024; Kirby et al., 2023). This tension reflects broader societal trends, where organizations strive to uphold their diversity commitments while adjusting the language and visibility of those efforts to avoid backlash (Carter, 2024; Vanderford, 2024).

This strategic ambiguity can, however, give rise to vicious cycles as described in the SCOOP framework. These are self-undermining dynamics in which well-intentioned DEI efforts, particularly those rooted in identity-blindness, inadvertently reinforce the very inequalities they aim to address. When diversity policies prioritize neutrality or universality over explicit recognition of marginalized identities, they may obscure systemic barriers faced by LGBTQ+ employees and reduce opportunities for meaningful structural change. This may prompt LGBTQ+ individuals to be less open or conceal their identity, further reinforcing heteroprofessionalism in the work environment (Pasek et al., 2017), ultimately eroding trust, dampening engagement, and weakening organizational commitment to inclusion over time (Chapters 2 and 3). Such cycles risk ineffectiveness and threaten long-term cooperation and the sustainability of inclusion initiatives.

Organizations are thus engaged in a dynamic balancing act, navigating trade-offs between ideological clarity and strategic adaptability. Diversity management, far from being a static set of policies, is a complex, evolving process involving multiple stakeholders - top leadership, HR professionals, DEI practitioners, and employees across hierarchical levels and identity groups. LGBTQ+ inclusion within this space represents a relatively nascent and unsettled domain. There is no universally accepted blueprint, and practices often vary widely between organizations (Byington et al., 2021; Cunningham & Nite, 2020; Huffman et al.,

2008; Priola et al., 2018). This highlights a need for deeper investigation into how DEI is conceptualized, communicated, and implemented specifically with regard to LGBTQ+ individuals. To do this, HRM literature offers a useful lens through which to understand how diversity policy unfolds across levels within an organization from formal design to everyday practice.

Intended-Implemented-Experienced Framework

HRM scholarship aims to understand when and why employee goals align with organizational ones since such alignment is a requirement for effectiveness (Jackson & Schuler, 1995). This literature often conceptualizes HR practices through a tripartite lens, distinguishing between intended practices, how they are implemented, and the experiences or perceptions of these practices by employees. *Intended* practices refer to the goals and strategies articulated by top management, HR departments, and DEI professionals, which are designed to shape behaviors and drive specific organizational outcomes. *Implemented* practices reflect how these policies are enacted in practice, often mediated by factors such as organizational resources, leadership buy-in, and middle-management interpretation. Finally, *perceived* practices capture how employees experience and interpret these initiatives. It refers to how they make sense of them, engage with them, and respond to them, which in turn shapes their attitudes, behaviors, and well-being (Makhecha et al., 2018; Nishii & Wright, 2008; Wang et al., 2020; Wright & Nishii, 2004).

Crucially, there is often a disconnect between the intended HR policies and how they are implemented and perceived by both managers and employees (Nishii & Paluch, 2018). This gap in translation and perception across organizational levels threatens the effectiveness of any organizational policy and practice since even the most well-intentioned policies can fall short if inconsistently implemented or perceived as insincere, inauthentic, or irrelevant. Hence, in this dissertation, I draw on this line of inquiry to unravel critical yet formerly overlooked translation gaps around LGBTQ+ oriented DEI policies and practices in organizations. Understanding such potential gaps is an especially critical area for further examination in the context of DEI initiatives, which involve multiple stakeholders and a wide range of perspectives. Given the relative invisibility of queer identities and a historical legacy of exclusion and stigmatization, LGBTQ+ employees are particularly attuned to whether DEI efforts are performative or genuinely inclusive. Consequently, understanding LGBTQ+ inclusion demands attention not only to the policies as written but also to how they are enacted within organizational systems and experienced by employees. This dissertation (particularly in Chapter 4) builds on this HRM framework to explore the tensions between DEI policy and lived reality.

Beyond Policy (Responses): LGBTQ+ Employee Wellbeing

Building on the critical role of employee perceptions and subjective experiences, the final part of this dissertation shifts to center on the lived, day-to-day workplace experiences of LGBTQ+ employees, with particular attention to a crucial correlate of these experiences: their well-being. A focus on health and well-being is essential, not only because LGBTQ+ individuals face disproportionate risks to their physical and mental health, but also because, from an organizational perspective, supporting employee well-being is essential to creating inclusive and sustainable workplaces where everyone can thrive.

The minority stress framework provides a foundational lens for understanding the heightened (mental) health challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals. It posits that, in addition to general life stressors, LGBTQ+ people experience unique, chronic, and socially based stressors such as identity-based stigma, discrimination, and internalized negativity linked to their minoritized status (Frost & Meyer, 2023; Meyer, 2003). These stressors accumulate over time and contribute to adverse health outcomes, including elevated rates of anxiety, depression, and burnout.

This framework also identifies resilience-promoting factors that can buffer against these effects. One such factor is community resilience; the protective strength drawn from social connection, solidarity, and mutual support within marginalized communities (Crawford & Kashubeck-West, 2023; Cunningham & Nite, 2020; McConnell et al., 2018; Parmenter & Galliher, 2023). While community resilience is traditionally conceptualized within the context of one's identity-based community (e.g., LGBTQ+ networks), this dissertation seeks to extend the concept into the organizational realm. Specifically, it asks whether meaningful social connections and inclusive interpersonal relationships at work across identity lines can offer similar psychological protection. By integrating the minority stress and community resilience frameworks with workplace inclusion research, this dissertation (Chapter 5) examines whether favorable interpersonal workplace perceptions, which are often associated with effective DEI initiatives and an inclusive climate, can help buffer LGBTQ+ employees against the psychological toll of minority stress. In doing so, it advances both theoretical and practical understanding of how inclusive workplaces contribute to not only performance and engagement, but also the mental health and flourishing of queer employees.

EMPIRICAL CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This dissertation offers a comprehensive exploration of LGBTQ+ employees' workplace perceptions and experiences, with a particular focus on how these are affected by different DEI policies and initiatives. By centering their perspectives and experiences, it provides valuable insights and recommendations for improving DEI strategies in ways that meaningfully address the needs of this group.

Chapter 2 extends diversity management research by examining how organizational diversity approaches shape the workplace experiences of LGBTQ+ employees, with specific attention to exploring differences between LGB and trans individuals. Integrating the diversity approach paradigm with signaling theory and the concept of identity safety, I explore how these approaches influence perceptions of organizational attractiveness and turnover intentions. I argue and find that LGBTQ+ employees are more likely to prefer identity-conscious over identity-blind approaches, as the former explicitly acknowledge and support their identities, thereby offering stronger identity safety cues.

Chapter 3 builds on Chapter 2, examining the impact of diversity approaches on LGBTQ+ employees' perceptions of being tolerated (rather than being truly accepted). Drawing on both academic and lay understandings of tolerance, I argue and show how seemingly "neutral" diversity messaging particularly rooted in identity-blindness can communicate a workplace climate that signals to LGBTQ+ employees that they are being put up with instead of genuinely accepted. I conclude that, for individuals with concealable stigmas like queer identities, such environments may subtly encourage identity management, not sharing one's diverse perspective and concealment, undermining the very benefits that diversity policies seek to achieve.

Chapter 4 builds on the insights of the previous chapters by asking: how do DEI strategies unfold in practice? Policies are rarely implemented exactly as intended, and their impact often hinges on how they are interpreted and enacted by various stakeholders. Using a qualitative comparative case study of two Dutch financial organizations, this chapter explores how diversity management is translated from vision to implementation to lived experience. Drawing on the HRM literature's intended–implemented–perceived framework, it centers two key stakeholder groups: LGBTQ+ employees and HR/Diversity professionals. The study examines (a) where alignment and misalignment occur between the designers and recipients of DEI policy, (b) how these perspectives interact across the different stages of the policy process, and (c) the factors that facilitate or hinder effective implementation.

This chapter reinforces the dissertation's dual-level perspective by analyzing how organizational structures and individual experiences interact with one another. It positions employees not as passive recipients of policy but as active agents. Ultimately, the chapter offers a well-grounded, stakeholder-informed view of DEI as a dynamic, relational process rather than a static, top-down initiative.

Chapter 5 shifts the focus from organizational policy to subjective workplace experiences of LGBTQ+ employees and the individual-level health and well-being implications. Specifically, it explores how the social and interpersonal dimensions of workplace perceptions contribute to employee well-being. Drawing on the minority stress framework, this chapter examines whether social satisfaction in the workplace can serve as a protective factor, functioning similarly to community resilience, in buffering against the negative mental health impacts of minority stress. In addition, it investigates whether these social dynamics play a more critical role in the well-being of LGBTQ+ individuals compared to their cisgender, heterosexual counterparts. Given that inclusive workplace practices can play a critical role in fostering positive social and interpersonal experiences for underrepresented groups, the questions explored in this chapter are important for helping organizations understand the breadth of the positive impact of inclusive policies and practices, beyond mere performance outcomes.

The following section presents a detailed overview of each chapter, summarizing the methodologies and key findings, as well as outlining their theoretical contributions and practical implications.

Table 1. Overview of chapters

Chapter	Research Aim	Methods	Findings
Chapter 2: Celebrating the "Invisible": The Role of Organizational Diversity Approaches on Attracting and Retaining LGBTQ+ Talent	How do organizational diversity approaches shape LGBTQ+ individuals' experience of identity safety, and how does this affect attraction and retention?	Three pre-registered studies: • Study 1 – Vignette experiment (N = 407) • Study 2 – Vignette experiment (N = 462) • Study 3 – Survey (N = 445)	An identity conscious diversity approach (compared to an identity blind approach) is associated with increased attraction towards organizations among prospective and lower turnover intentions among incumbent LGBTQ+ workers. Identity safety (measured through employees' sense of authenticity, belonging and justice) mediates these relationships. Transgender participants consistently reported more negative experiences overall.
Chapter 3: "Are They Just Putting Up With Me"? How Diversity Approaches Impact LGBTQ+ Employees' Sense of Being Tolerated at Work	How do organizational and leadership diversity approaches (identity-conscious vs. identity-blind) shape LGBTQ+ employees' perceptions of being tolerated?	Two pre-registered studies using data from Chapter 2: • Study 1 – Vignette experiment (N = 462) • Study 2 – Survey (N = 445)	Identity-blind approaches (at both organizational and leadership levels) increased perceptions of tolerance. When both leaders and organizations endorsed identity-conscious approaches, their effects were synergistic in reducing tolerance perceptions. Intersectional differences showed higher perceptions of tolerance among transgender and LGB employees of color.

1

Table 1 *Continued*

Chapter	Research Aim	Methods	Findings
Chapter 4: From Vision to Reality: Examining (Mis)alignments in LGBTQ+ Policies and Practices	How do intended, implemented, and perceived LGBTQ+ DEI policies align or misalign in practice, and what factors shape their success or failure?	Qualitative comparative case study of 2 Dutch financial organizations. • Interviews with HR/ DEI professionals (n = 4) and LGBTQ+ employees (n = 12; total N = 16) • Analysis of policy documents	DEI is a dynamic and relational process shaped by interpretation and engagement across levels. Despite inclusive visions, policies faltered at implementation due to reliance on individual advocates, limited structural embedding, and inconsistent leadership. Success requires structural integration, clear communication, and shared accountability.
Chapter 5: Examining Workplace Perceptions and Well-Being Among LGBTQ+ Employees	How do interpersonal and task-related workplace satisfaction relate to well-being, and do these relationships differ between LGBTQ+ and cis-hetero employees?	Pre-registered study using longitudinal survey data (LISS panel), N = 4,794	LGBTQ+ employees reported lower workplace satisfaction, higher absenteeism, greater work hindrance, and poorer mental health than cis-hetero peers. Contrary to expectations, interpersonal satisfaction was not a stronger predictor of well-being than task satisfaction. Moreover, interpersonal satisfaction did not predict well-being more strongly for LGBTQ+ employees compared to cis-hetero employees.

Chapter 2: Celebrating The "Invisible": The Role of Organizational Diversity Approaches on Attracting and Retaining LGBTQ+ Talent

In Chapter 2, I examine how LGBTQ+ individuals respond to different organizational diversity approaches, specifically comparing identity-conscious and identity-blind strategies. Using two vignette experiments and a survey study, I examine how these approaches influence perceptions of identity safety and organizational outcomes such as attraction and retention. In Study 1 (*n*= 398), LGBTQ+ participants rated organizations with identity-conscious messaging as more attractive than those using identity-blind messaging. Study 2 (*n*= 462) extended these findings by demonstrating that this preference was mediated by identity safety perceptions. Study 3 (*n*= 445) moved beyond hypothetical scenarios to assess LGBTQ+ employees' real-world perceptions of their organizations' diversity approach and their impact on their intention to stay. Results showed that working in an identity-conscious organization was associated with stronger identity safety and, in turn, reduced turnover intentions. Notably, across all three studies, transgender participants reported lower organizational attractiveness, weaker identity safety, and higher turnover intentions regardless of the diversity approach, underscoring the specific and persistent barriers they face in workplace inclusion.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This chapter contributes to the diversity management literature by extending the diversity approaches paradigm to identities that are often invisible or concealable, such as sexual orientation and gender diversity, a consistent call in diversity approach research (Gündemir et al., 2019; Leslie et al., 2020). While existing research has largely focused on more visible identity markers such as race or binary gender, this work highlights how LGBTQ+ individuals are especially reliant on explicit inclusion signals, with this paper being among the first to examine diversity approaches for LGBTQ + workers. The findings also refine our understanding of identity safety, a widely cited but under-theorized construct. Despite its frequent use, identity safety lacks conceptual clarity, with definitions and measurements varying considerably across studies ranging from organizational attractiveness to trust and inclusion (Howansky et al., 2021; Kruk & Matsick, 2021; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; Sanchez, 2021). This study critically examines how identity safety is typically understood and seeks to clarify its measurement by identifying its most commonly referenced elements and translating them into clear, measurable dimensions. I propose that identity safety comprises three core components: authenticity (feeling free to be oneself), belonging (feeling accepted and connected), and fairness (feeling that one's identity does not impede equitable treatment or

opportunities). By operationalizing identity safety in this way, I offer a clearer, more actionable framework for future research and organizational practice.

This chapter further links individual level perceptions of identity safety (authenticity, belonging and fairness) to organizational outcomes like talent attraction and retention. It incorporates signaling theory with the diversity approach paradigm to demonstrate how organizational messaging can communicate value and safety cues to incumbent as well as potential future employees (Bird & Smith, 2005; Connelly et al., 2011).

This research underscores the importance of intentional and identity-conscious diversity messaging in organizational communication. For LGBTQ+ individuals, who often lack visible cues to assess workplace safety (e.g., salient role models), these explicit messages serve as vital signals that their identities will be seen, respected, and protected. Organizations seeking to attract and retain LGBTQ+ talent should therefore move beyond generic commitments to diversity and instead communicate clear, identity-conscious values both externally in recruitment materials and internally through ongoing engagement. The responses of LGBTQ+ employees to diversity approaches echo findings from research on racial minorities, potentially suggesting shared underlying mechanisms. We argue that this similarity stems from the fact that both groups face workplace disadvantages rooted in broader social inequities and disparities in opportunity (Martin, 2023). As such, identity-conscious strategies are particularly effective, as they acknowledge these systemic inequities and signal a genuine commitment to inclusion and equity.

Finally, the consistent disparities observed among transgender participants underscore a critical theoretical insight: the LGBTQ+ umbrella encompasses diverse experiences and cannot be treated as a monolith (Brewster et al., 2014; Einarsdóttir et al., 2016; Köllen, 2013; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2016). These findings challenge the common tendency in diversity management research and practice to approach LGBTQ+ employees as a homogenous group. Theoretically, this calls for a shift toward identity-responsive frameworks that recognize the intra-group variation, including intersectional differences, within minoritized populations.

Chapter 3: "Are They Just Putting Up With Me"? How Diversity Approaches Impact LGBTQ+ Employees' Sense of Being Tolerated at Work

Building on Chapter 2, Chapter 3 investigates the relationship between organizational diversity approaches and LGBTQ+ employees' feelings of being

merely tolerated (versus genuinely included); Drawing on data from the last two studies of the previous chapter (ns = 462 and 445), this study examines how identity-blindness shapes workplace dynamics by signaling tolerance—defined as conditional acceptance—which, though often regarded as virtuous, ultimately reinforces existing power hierarchies. Tolerance may suppress authenticity and discourage the expression of diverse perspectives, thereby undermining one of diversity's core promises: the value of difference.

The findings reveal that identity-blind diversity approaches are more likely to communicate a tolerant (rather than inclusive) climate to LGBTQ+ individuals, both in hypothetical organizational scenarios and in real-world workplace perceptions. Importantly, the chapter also highlights the critical role of leadership in shaping such a climate. Leader-level diversity messaging independently influenced perceived tolerance and interacted with organizational diversity approaches. When both leaders and organizations were seen as identity-conscious, perceptions of tolerance were lowest, which suggests that stronger alignment fosters greater inclusion. This chapter also underscores how intersecting marginalized identities shape perceptions of workplace climate. Transgender participants and participants of color anticipated greater levels of tolerance regardless of diversity messaging, pointing to persistent structural skepticism among those most marginalized. By examining tolerance as a middle ground between exclusion and inclusion, this chapter adds nuance to our understanding of how diversity approaches are perceived and the subtle ways they may undermine the very goals they intend to support.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This chapter extends the diversity approaches paradigm by integrating it with tolerance research (Gebert et al., 2017; Kelly et al., 2021; Von Bergen & Collier, 2013), showing how identity-blind strategies by de-emphasizing demographic differences can unintentionally signal a climate of tolerance rather than inclusion to LGBTQ+ employees.

In popular discourse, tolerance is widely regarded as a virtue essential for intergroup harmony. In everyday language, it is often used interchangeably with inclusion; yet, scholarly work highlights its more ambivalent nature (Scanlon, 2003; Van Doorn, 2014; Verkuyten & Killen, 2021). Research further shows that while tolerance is generally perceived as positive (Oberdiek, 2001; Verkuyten & Kollar, 2021), those who are the objects of tolerance frequently experience it as a form of conditional acceptance rather than genuine inclusion. Our findings contribute to this body of literature showing that in contexts where identity is neither explicitly acknowledged

nor outright dismissed, employees may feel merely tolerated. It further raises the question whether tolerance in a work environment may in fact be preferable over outright rejection (Adelman et al., 2023, 2024). Since tolerance, unlike clear exclusion or discrimination, has an ambiguous nature, it may act as a "wolf in sheep's clothing," masking marginalization behind a façade of civility. Furthermore, given that it does not have inherently exclusionary connotations, it may not prompt a desire to change a potentially suboptimal or even unfair work environment and can instead serve to maintain the status quo

The study also advances intersectional understanding within LGBTQ+ research, revealing that transgender and LGB participants of color reported higher tolerance than their cisgender and white counterparts, regardless of diversity approach. Extending the insights from Chapter 2, this finding similarly highlights the need to account for intragroup variation and the unique challenges faced individuals with intersecting marginalized identities.

This chapter further contributes to identifying the critical role of leadership in facilitating the organizational diversity approach. Leaders, in this case direct supervisors, serve as both role models embodying the organizational culture and operational translators of organizational values (Dang et al., 2022; Grojean et al., 2004; Nishii & Paluch, 2018), with their diversity approach predicting employees' tolerance perceptions, even independent of what is communicated by the broader organization. Notably, alignment between identity-conscious organizational and leadership strategies produced a synergistic effect, significantly reducing perceived tolerance and fostering a more inclusive climate. This finding underscores the importance of coherence across organizational levels for effective diversity implementation. This finding further paves the way for investigating how diversity policies and practices are implemented in organization, highlighting alignment between organizational vision and leadership implementation as determinant of success. This is further explored in Chapter 4 through use of a qualitative interview study.

Practically, this research highlights a unique way in which identity blindness can backfire: by making members of marginalized groups feel merely tolerated, this approach may undermine an organization's ability to fully leverage the benefits of diversity. To leverage the full value of DEI, organizations must visibly and consistently adopt identity-conscious approaches both at the organizational level and through everyday leadership practice.

Chapter 4: From Vision to Reality: Examining (Mis)alignments in LGBTQ+ Policies

Building on the findings of Chapters 2 and 3, which highlighted both the promise and potential pitfalls of diversity strategies, Chapter 4 investigates how DEI policies unfold in practice. While policy intentions are important, their impact ultimately depends on how they are enacted and interpreted by different organizational stakeholders. This chapter deepens the earlier insight that leadership plays a key role in translating diversity approaches and further expands the understanding of how DEI policies and practices are realized in an organization. Incorporating the HRM framework of intended, implemented, and experienced policies, this chapter asks: How do HR/diversity officers and LGBTQ+ employees perceive LGBTQ+-focused diversity policies, where do their perspectives converge or misalign, and how do these (mis)alignments affect policy effectiveness?

Using a qualitative comparative case study approach, this chapter analyses in-depth interviews with six LGBTQ+ employees and two HR/diversity officers from each of two Dutch financial organizations (total *n* = 16). Thematic analysis centered around five key organizational practices that served as recurring touchpoints in participants' reflections on DEI: (1) the organization's diversity vision and messaging; (2) inclusive infrastructure: especially the design and implementation of gender-neutral bathrooms; (3) employee networks as a core mechanism for fostering inclusion; (4) management support and leadership buy-in; and (5) the broader organizational climate, including both informal norms and formal structures such as diversity training and onboarding processes.

By mapping out how policies are understood and enacted at different levels, this chapter sheds light on how gaps in alignment between intention, implementation, and lived experience can undermine inclusion. It emphasizes that diversity management is not a linear, top-down process, but a dynamic, relational one that depends on stakeholder engagement and organizational coherence.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This chapter extends the "intended–implemented–experienced" model from the HRM literature to the context of LGBTQ+ diversity policy, offering a holistic, stakeholder-informed view of how DEI strategies unfold in practice. By incorporating the perspectives of both HR/DEI professionals and LGBTQ+ employees, this research bridges a gap in the literature that has traditionally examined the experiences of policy implementers and recipients in isolation. This integration represents an important theoretical advancement, as it illuminates how HR/DEI

professionals conceptualize, enact, and rely on various actors and conditions to implement diversity strategies while also revealing tensions between their intentions and behaviors, often referred to as the attitude–behavior gap (Jansen et al., 2024). At the same time, this approach recasts LGBTQ+ employees not as passive recipients of policy but as active participants whose engagement, interpretation, and response are critical to the success or failure of DEI efforts. This dual-lens approach, considering both the perspective of HR and LGBTQ+ employees, combined with the Intended-Implemented-Experienced (I-I-E) framework, underscores that misalignments in DEI are not merely operational breakdowns but stem from differing cultural interpretations and expectations about what inclusion means, echoing broader critiques in DEI scholarship about inconsistent strategy execution.

Furthermore, while prior research has highlighted the potential of combining identity-conscious and meritocratic frames to engage both majority and minoritized employees (Gündemir et al., 2017; Jansen et al., 2015; Stevens et al., 2008), our findings show that simply toggling between these without a coherent rationale creates ambiguity. Such ambiguity can dilute organizational messaging, confuse implementation efforts, and ultimately undermine employee trust and perceptions of inclusion. In contrast, integrated and transparently communicated diversity approaches help build coherence across organizational levels.

We also contribute to understanding how responsibility for DEI should be distributed within organizations. Prior work cautions against siloing diversity work within HR or symbolic endorsements by leadership (Vincent et al., 2024). Our findings support and extend this by showing that meaningful progress requires a networked structure of shared responsibility where executive sponsors, ERG leaders, diversity boards, and middle management. By comparing an organization where DEI responsibilities were largely concentrated in a single individual with another where responsibilities were more broadly distributed, we show that a more diffuse model not only enhances the perceived legitimacy and reach of DEI efforts but also increases their effectiveness. Despite this, both cases revealed a common gap: the need for deeper engagement from middle management, reinforcing the idea that responsibility must be further shared across organizational layers (Christie & Tippmann, 2024; Garib, 2013; Kelan, 2022).

Our findings also caution against overreliance on "advocates" - individuals who, often driven by personal commitment, take the lead on DEI work. These may include formal DEI officers, ERG leaders, or passionate employees who voluntarily dedicate

time to advancing inclusion. While such individuals can be powerful catalysts, our research suggests that placing the burden of inclusion disproportionately on them signals fragile institutionalization. Their efforts are vulnerable to burnout, shifting organizational priorities, or attrition - any of which can result in the abrupt stagnation or collapse of DEI initiatives (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Vincent et al., 2024; Wolbring & Lillywhite, 2023). Interviewees repeatedly emphasized that the work of one or two individuals, no matter how committed, is insufficient to embed lasting change. Thus, a truly inclusive organization requires not just champions but structures that ensure their work is supported, sustained, and widely shared.

This study also advances theorizing on heteroprofessionalism by demonstrating how normative expectations around gender and sexuality persist even within organizations widely regarded as inclusive (Corlett et al., 2022; Mizzi, 2016; Morgenroth et al., 2024), both by external markers (such as ERGs, dedicated DEI officers, and explicit diversity commitments) and by LGBTQ+ employees themselves. Even in these "safe" environments, LGBTQ+ participants reported subtle pressures to conform to traditional gender norms and professional standards, particularly in relation to dress codes and gender expression. These concerns reveal how deeply entrenched heteroprofessional expectations can shape what is considered acceptable behavior in the workplace even when those workplaces are seen as supportive. These findings challenge the assumption that formal inclusion mechanisms are sufficient for fostering genuine inclusion and point to the need for organizations to interrogate and address the implicit, often invisible, cultural norms that define "professionalism." Promoting authenticity requires not only structural policies but also a cultural shift. However, how to meaningfully enact such change remains an open question for future research and practice.

Practically, our study underscores the need for clear and consistent communication about DEI. Many employees are unaware of their organization's diversity goals, available tools, or the rationale behind key decisions (Bokern et al., in preparation a, in preparation b; Bokern et al., 2022). Communication should therefore be intentional, value-linked, and transparent. Poorly explained shifts can appear reactive or disingenuous, eroding trust and weakening perceived commitment to inclusion.

This chapter effectively combines both the individual and organizational perspectives, exploring how they interact and the dynamics between these perspectives. It demonstrates that effective DEI requires more than good intentions or policy frameworks, it demands consistent alignment, cultural coherence, and

structural integration. Diversity management, I argue, must be approached as a dynamic, relational process rather than a top-down directive.

Chapter 5: Examining Workplace Perceptions and Well-Being Among LGBTQ+ Employees

Chapter 5 shifts the focus from organizational policies to the individual-level health consequences of workplace (non)inclusion, examining how the perceived social environment at work is linked to LGBTQ+ employees' well-being. Building on earlier chapters and existing literature, this chapter argues that since much of the disadvantage experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals lies in the social domain, workplace social satisfaction should be particularly important for their well-being. Using longitudinal data from the LISS panel, we analyze the relationship between satisfaction with the social environment among colleagues, along with task satisfaction and various well-being outcomes (sick days, work hindrance, general well-being, and mental health) among LGBTQ+ and cis-hetero employees.

The results confirmed earlier findings that LGBTQ+ individuals experience lower task and social satisfaction, higher absenteeism, more work hindrance, and poorer mental health than their cis-hetero counterparts. While we hypothesized that social satisfaction would be a stronger predictor of well-being for LGBTQ+ individuals specifically, we did not find evidence supporting this. Nor did we find significant differences in the relative importance of task versus social satisfaction between LGBTQ+ and cis-hetero participants.

Theoretical and Practical Implementation

Theoretically, this study reinforces the enduring relevance of minority stress theory in understanding the workplace experiences and mental health outcomes of LGBTQ+ individuals. Our findings demonstrate that LGBTQ+ employees continue to face disproportionate challenges in the workplace as well as experience diminished well-being compared to their cisgender heterosexual counterparts. Notably, these disparities persist even in comparatively progressive and inclusive national contexts such as the Netherlands (Coffman et al., 2017; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2024; Van den Dungen et al., 2023), suggesting that advances in cultural and policy acceptance may not necessarily translate into lived equality. This underscores the importance of continued theoretical and empirical attention to the mechanisms through which workplace environments can either buffer or exacerbate minority stress for LGBTQ+ employees.

This research also aimed to extend the concept of community resilience into the workplace, exploring whether supportive workplace relationships were linked to positive well-being outcomes. While null results may be partially due to statistical power limitations, they also point to potential issues with measurement. Broad indicators like "satisfaction with atmosphere among colleagues" may lack the nuance necessary to capture inclusionary dynamics or support accurately. This finding validates the focus of Chapter 2 on identity safety and inclusion, suggesting that general social satisfaction may be too blunt an instrument to assess the protective effects of workplace relationships for LGBTQ+ employees.

Practically, the chapter underscores the importance of not only attracting and retaining LGBTQ+ employees but also cultivating social environments that actively support their well-being. Efforts to promote inclusion must go beyond surface-level collegiality and address the deeper dynamics of belonging, authenticity, and fairness that shape minority stress experiences.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

In this dissertation, I advance theoretical contributions to several interconnected literatures, including on diversity management, heteroprofessionalism, inclusion, and sustainable cooperation. By bridging insights from human resource management, organizational behavior and the minority stress framework, I add to existing paradigms with an empirically grounded and interdisciplinary perspective. These contributions are supported through the use of a multi-method approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to offer a robust and nuanced understanding of LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion. This approach includes in-depth interviews, vignette experiments, cross-sectional surveys, and large-scale longitudinal panel data. By employing diverse methods across different organizational and national contexts, the research captures both the richness of lived experience and the generalizability of broader patterns.

Across chapters, I consistently adhere to the FAIR principles of science, ensuring that data and research practices are Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable. The majority of the studies in this dissertation were pre-registered, reflecting a strong commitment to research transparency and hypothesis-driven inquiry. For increased replicability, I provide power calculations and/or sensitivity analyses for each of the quantitative studies, and ensure that the data collected, as well as the code underlying the analyses, are publicly available.

By integrating individual and organizational perspectives, the research takes a dual-lens approach to examine how inclusion efforts are experienced by LGBTQ+ employees on the ground and how these efforts are shaped by broader institutional and structural realities. This design enables an in-depth investigation into the dynamics of sustainable cooperation in the workplace, capturing not only the lived experiences, perceptions, and outcomes of LGBTQ+ employees, but also the intentions, strategies, and constraints faced by organizations in implementing DEI efforts.

This dissertation contributes to the SCOOP framework by examining sustainable cooperation through the lens of LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion. It engages with the three core sustainability threats outlined in SCOOP: external shocks, such as shifting political climates that destabilize DEI commitments; spillover, where societal norms around gender and sexuality intrude into the workplace and undermine queer inclusion; and vicious cycles, in which well-intentioned but identity-blind DEI strategies inadvertently reproduce exclusion. By investigating these dynamics across organizational and employee perspectives, the dissertation offers both conceptual insight and practical guidance for advancing resilient, inclusive cooperation within work organizations.

This dissertation responds to growing scholarly calls to disaggregate the LGBTQ+ umbrella by paying specific attention to the experiences of gender-diverse individuals, such as transgender and nonbinary employees (Hässler et al., 2024; Klysing et al., 2024). These voices are often homogenized or excluded in diversity research, and this work's intentional inclusion ensures that their distinct challenges are neither overlooked nor diluted. Where possible, this dissertation paid attention to the heterogeneity within the LGBTQ+ community; however, the central focus remained on the group as a whole.

At the same time, this focus also highlights a key limitation of this dissertation, the difficulty of fully capturing the layered complexity of queer experiences, particularly where multiple marginalized identities intersect. Despite efforts to isolate and analyze subgroups, we were unable to adequately recruit and represent LGBTQ+ individuals of color, limiting the depth and inclusivity of our findings. While intersectionality was acknowledged as an important analytic lens, it was not the primary focus of the study design, and as such, attempts to meaningfully capture the experiences of those with multiple marginalized identities remained limited in scope. This mirrors a broader pattern in diversity research in which the most structurally marginalized groups particularly those at the intersection of multiple disadvantaged

identities are also the most likely to be underrepresented (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Settles & Buchanan, 2014; Wong et al., 2022). This limitation underscores an urgent need for future research to adopt a more intersectional lens that moves beyond additive identity models and centers the lived experiences of multiply marginalized LGBTQ+ individuals.

Another limitation lies in the predominantly cross-sectional nature of the quantitative studies included in the dissertation. Although the use of both experimental and survey methods offers robust insights into how LGBTQ+ individuals perceive and respond to various DEI strategies, these designs cannot capture how such perceptions or their consequences evolve over time. This limits the ability to draw causal inferences or understand the longitudinal effects of diversity policies, particularly in relation to well-being, burnout, retention, and organizational identification. Longitudinal research is vital for examining how the benefits or harms of DEI initiatives accumulate or shift over the course of employees' careers and in response to changes in organizational climate or leadership.

Furthermore, while this dissertation adopts a dual-lens approach by integrating both employee and organizational perspectives, more elaborately incorporating the critical viewpoint of organizational leadership will be valuable in the future. Although leadership is discussed through examining the effects of leader diversity approaches in Chapter 3 and the perceptions of HR professionals and LGBTQ+ employees in Chapter 4, the direct voices of senior leaders themselves are not fully integrated. Given the pivotal role leaders play in setting strategic direction, modelling inclusive behavior, and shaping organizational culture (Dang et al., 2022; Grojean et al., 2004; İşçi et al., 2015; Nishii & Paluch, 2018), more closely capturing their perspectives would offer valuable insights into how DEI visions are formed, justified, and prioritized at the highest levels of decision-making.

Additionally, although a strength of this thesis is derived from shifting the focus from majority groups to LGBTQ+ individuals, future research should incorporate, compare, and contrast the perspectives of cis-hetero individuals with LGBTQ+ individuals. As key stakeholders in the broader workplace climate and as essential participants in the success or resistance of DEI efforts, understanding how cis-hetero individuals respond to, and engage with LGBTQ+-focused policies and how that differs from LGBTQ+ individuals could be critical for developing strategies that foster buy-in and reduce backlash.

1

CONCLUSION

Across five chapters this work offers a multi-layered understanding of LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion, bridging policy intent with lived experience and organizational practice with individual impact. As workplaces continue to evolve, this research underscores the importance of designing and implementing DEI initiatives that are not only well-intentioned but also well-aligned with the realities and needs of those they aim to serve.

REFERENCES

2024 State equality index. (2025). Human Rights Campaign Foundation. https://reports.hrc.org/2024-state-equality-index

Adelman, L., Verkuyten, M., & Yogeeswaran, K. (2024). Being tolerated as a minority group member: An experimental study with virtual teams. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2024.2351036

Adelman, L., Yogeeswaran, K., & Verkuyten, M. (2023). The unintended consequences of tolerance: The experience and repercussions of being tolerated for minority group members. *PLOS ONE*, *18*(3). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0282073

Akinola, M., Opie, T., Ho, G., Castel, S., Unzueta, M., Kristal, A., Stevens, F., Brief, A., & Zambrotta, N. D. (2024). Does broadening the term "diversity" correlate with a lowered representation of racial minorities and women in organizations? *Academy of Management Discoveries*. *10*(4), 568-588 https://doi.org/10.5465/amd.2020.0058

Anteby, M., & Anderson, C. (2014). The shifting landscape of LGBT organizational research. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *34*, 3–25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2014.08.001

Apfelbaum, E. P., Stephens, N. M., & Reagans, R. E. (2016). Beyond one-size-fits-all: Tailoring diversity approaches to the representation of social groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *111*(4), 547–566. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000071

Ashcraft, K. L. (2013). The glass slipper: "Incorporating" occupational identity in management studies. *Academy of Management Review*, *38*(1), 6–31. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2010.0219

Badgett, M. V. L. (1995). The wage effects of sexual orientation discrimination. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, *48*(4), 726–739. https://doi.org/10.2307/2524353

Baert, S. (2018). Hiring a gay man, taking a risk?: A lab experiment on employment discrimination and risk aversion. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *65*(8), 1015–1031. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2017.1364950

Bartoll, X., & Ramos, R. (2020). Worked hours, job satisfaction and self-perceived health. *Journal of Economic Studies*, *48*(1), 223–241. https://doi.org/10.1108/JES-10-2019-0457

Beagan, B. L., Bizzeth, S. R., Pride, T. M., & Sibbald, K. R. (2022). LGBTQ+ identity concealment and disclosure within the (heteronormative) health professions: "Do I? Do I not? And what are the potential consequences?" *SSM - Qualitative Research in Health*, *2*, 100114. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmqr.2022.100114

Bird, R. B., & Smith, E. A. (2005). Signaling theory, strategic interaction, and symbolic capital. *Current Anthropology*, *46*(2), 221–248. https://doi.org/10.1086/427115

Bizzeth, S. R., & Beagan, B. L. (2023). "Ah, it's best not to mention that here:" Experiences of LGBTQ+ health professionals in (heteronormative) workplaces in Canada. *Frontiers in Sociology*, *8*, 1138628. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2023.1138628

Bokern, Y. N. A., Jansen, W. S., Van der Toorn, J., Euser, L., Djoemai, V., & Ellemers, N. (2022). *All aboard: Handout for creating support for diversity and inclusion policy* [Handout]. NIM. https://www.nederlandseinclusiviteitsmonitor.nl/handreiking-iedereen-aan-boord

Bokern, Y., Van der Toorn, J., & Ellemers, N. (2025a). *From resistance to results: Handout for creating support and engagement for D&I policy among managers and employees*. NIM. [Manuscript in preparation]. Organizational Behavior Group, Utrecht University

1

Bokern, Y., Van der Toorn, J., & Ellemers, N. (2025b). *Voices behind walking the talk: Qualitative insights on motivations for D&I policy support.* [Manuscript in preparation]. Organizational Behavior Group, Utrecht University

Boyles, P. (2008). "Thank you for letting me be myself": Exploring the effects of identity management strategies on engagement levels of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees [Virginia Tech]. http://hdl.handle.net/10919/28830

Brewster, M. E., Velez, B. L., Mennicke, A., & Tebbe, E. (2014). Voices from beyond: A thematic content analysis of transgender employees' workplace experiences. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, *1(2)*, 159–169. https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000030

Bryant-Lees, K. B., & Kite, M. E. (2020). Evaluations of LGBT job applicants: Consequences of applying "out." *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, *40*(7), 874–891. https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-01-2019-0048

Buizer, I., Van der Toorn, J., Bilgili, Ö., Schietecat, A. C., & Veldhuizen, M. D. (2025). Disclosing identities at work: Employee attitudes toward sharing personal information on sexual orientation and gender identity. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, 44(9)*, 227–242. https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-05-2024-0220

Bussewitz, C. (2024, September 17). Major companies abandon an LGBTQ+ rights report card after facing anti-diversity backlash. *AP News*. https://apnews.com/article/corporate-equality-index-dei-backlash-lgbtq-8a7ba4bd25bedc7cf8583426d107eef3

Button, S. B. (2004). Identity management strategies utilized by lesbian and gay employees: A quantitative investigation. *Group & Organization Management*, *29*(4), 470–494. https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601103257417

Byington, E. K., Tamm, G. F. B., & Trau, R. N. C. (2021). Mapping sexual orientation research in management: A review and research agenda. *Human Resource Management*, *60*(1), 31–53. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.22026

Capell, B., Tzafrir, S. S., Enosh, G., & Dolan, S. L. (2018). Explaining sexual minorities' disclosure: The role of trust embedded in organizational practices. *Organization Studies*, *39*(7), 947–973. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840617708000

Carter, A. (2024, June 6). By the numbers: How Fortune 100 companies are adjusting their DE&I language. *PR Daily*. https://www.prdaily.com/how-fortune-100-companies-are-adjusting-their-dei-language/

Cech, E. A., & Rothwell, W. R. (2020). LGBT workplace inequality in the federal workforce: Intersectional processes, organizational contexts, and turnover considerations. *ILR Review*, *73*(1), 25–60. https://doi.org/10.1177/0019793919843508

Cech, E. A., & Waidzunas, T. J. (2021). Systemic inequalities for LGBTQ professionals in STEM. *Science Advances*, *7*(3), eabe0933. https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abe0933

Christie, A., & Tippmann, E. (2024). Intended or unintended strategy? The activities of middle managers in strategy implementation. *Long Range Planning*, *57*(1), 102410. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2023.102410

Clair, J. A., Beatty, J. E., & MacLean, T. L. (2005). Out of sight but not out of mind: Managing invisible social identities in the workplace. *Academy of Management Review*, *30*(1), 78–95. https://doi.org/10.2307/20159096

Coffman, K. B., Coffman, L. C., & Ericson, K. M. M. (2017). The size of the LGBT population and the magnitude of antigay sentiment are substantially underestimated. *Management Science*, *63*(10), 3168–3186. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2016.2503

Colgan, F. (2016). LGBT company network groups in the UK: Tackling opportunities and complexities in the workplace. *Sexual Orientation and Transgender Issues in Organizations*, 525–538. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29623-4_31

Collins, J. C., & Callahan, J. L. (2012). Risky business: Gay identity disclosure in a masculinized industry. *Human Resource Development International, 15(4),* 455–470. https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2012.706427

Connelly, B. L., Certo, S. T., Ireland, R. D., & Reutzel, C. R. (2011). Signaling theory: A review and assessment. *Journal of Management*, *37*(1), 39–67. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310388419

Corlett, S., Di Marco, D., Munduate, L., & Arenas, A. (2022). Manifestations and reinforcement of heteronormativity in the workplace: A systematic scoping review. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *0*(0), 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2022.2074334

Crawford, D., & Kashubeck-West, S. (2023). Testing a mediational framework for sexual minority resilience. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, *11*(4), 585–593. https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000635

Cumberbatch, S. (2021). When your identity is inherently "Unprofessional": Navigating rules of professional appearance rooted in cisheteronormative whiteness as black women and gender non-conforming professionals. *Journal of Civil Rights and Economic Development*, *34*(2). https://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/jcred/vol34/iss2/2

Cunningham, G. B., & Nite, C. (2020). LGBT diversity and inclusion, community characteristics, and success. *Journal of Sport Management*, *34*(6), 533–541. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2019-0338

Dang, C. T., Volpone, S. D., & Umphress, E. E. (2022). The ethics of diversity ideology: Consequences of leader diversity ideology on ethical leadership perception and organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *108*(2), 307–329. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001010

Day, N. E., & Schoenrade, P. (2000). The relationship among reported disclosure of sexual orientation, anti-discrimination policies, top management support and work attitudes of gay and lesbian employees. *Personnel Review*, *29*(3), 346–363. https://doi.org/10.1108/00483480010324706

De Cock, V., Celik, P., & Toma, C. (2025). The proof is in the pudding: workers care about evidence-based diversity cues. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *55*(1), 52–70. https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.13076

Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. (2016). Why diversity programs fail. *Harvard Business Review*, *94*(7), 1–10.

Einarsdóttir, A., Hoel, H., & Lewis, D. (2016). Fitting the bill? (Dis)embodied disclosure of sexual identities in the workplace. *Work, Employment and Society*, *30*(3), 489–505. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017014568136

Ellemers, N., & Haslam, S. A. (2012). Social identity theory. In *Handbook of theories of social psychology, Vol. 2* (pp. 379–398). Sage Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446249222.n45

Ellemers, N., Şahin, O., Jansen, W. S., & Van der Toorn, J. (2018). Naar effectief diversiteitsbeleid: Het bouwen van bruggen tussen wetenschap en praktijk. [Toward effective diversity policy: Building bridges between science and practice.]. *Gedrag En Organisatie*, *31*, 409–428.

1

Ely, R. J., & Thomas, D. A. (2001). Cultural diversity at work: The effects of diversity perspectives on work group processes and outcomes. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *46*(2), 229–273. https://doi.org/10.2307/2667087

Ely, R. J., & Thomas, D. A. (2020). Getting serious about diversity: Enough already with the business Case. *Harvard Business Review*, *98*(6), 114–122.

Embrick, D. G., Walther, C. S., & Wickens, C. M. (2007). Working class masculinity: Keeping gay men and lesbians out of the workplace. *Sex Roles*, *56*(11), 757–766. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-007-9234-0

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (Ed.). (2024). *LGBTQI equality at a crossroads: Progress and challenges: EU LGBTQI survey III*. Publications Office. https://doi.org/10.2811/569753

Evans, L. (2008). Professionalism, professionality and the development of education professionals. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *56*(1), 20–38. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8527.2007.00392.x

Evetts, J. (2014). The concept of professionalism: Professional work, professional practice and learning. *International handbook of research in professional and practice-based learning*, 29-56. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8902-8_2

Follmer, K. B., Sabat, I. E., & Siuta, R. L. (2020). Disclosure of stigmatized identities at work: An interdisciplinary review and agenda for future research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *41*(2), 169–184. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2402

Fric, K. (2017). Access to the labour market for gays and lesbians: Research review. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, *29*(4), 319–361. https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2017.1365671

Frost, D. M., & Meyer, I. H. (2023). Minority stress theory: Application, critique, and continued relevance. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *51*, 101579. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2023.101579

Galupo, M. P., & Resnick, C. A. (2016). Experiences of LGBT microaggressions in the workplace: Implications for policy. *Sexual Orientation and Transgender Issues in Organizations*, 271–287. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29623-4_16

Garib, G. (2013). Leisure managers' perceptions of employee diversity and impact of employee diversity. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *32*, 254–260. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2012.07.002

Gebert, D., Buengeler, C., & Heinitz, K. (2017). Tolerance: A neglected dimension in diversity training? *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *16*(3), 415–438. https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2015.0252

Ghumman, S., Ryan, A., Barclay, L., & Markel, K. (2013). Religious discrimination in the workplace: A review and examination of current and future trends. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *28*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-013-9290-0

Goh, J. X., Kort, D. N., Thurston, A. M., Benson, L. R., & Kaiser, C. R. (2019). Does concealing a sexual minority identity prevent exposure to prejudice? *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 10(8)*, 1056–1064. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550619829065

Granberg, M., Andersson, P. A., & Ahmed, A. (2020). Hiring discrimination against transgender people: evidence from a field experiment. *Labour Economics*, *65*, 101860. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2020.101860

Green, K. A., López, M., Wysocki, A., & Kepner, K. (1969). Diversity in the workplace: Benefits, challenges, and the required managerial tools. *EDIS*, *2002*(2). https://www.academia. edu/16843953/Diversity_in_the_workplace_Benefits_challenges_and_the_required_ managerial_tools

Griffith, K. H., & Hebl, M. R. (2002). The disclosure dilemma for gay men and lesbians: "Coming out" at work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *87*(6), 1191–1199. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.6.1191

Grojean, M. W., Resick, C. J., Dickson, M. W., & Smith, D. B. (2004). Leaders, values, and organizational climate: Examining leadership strategies for establishing an organizational climate regarding ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *55*(3), 223–241. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-004-1275-5

Gröschl, S. (2011). *Diversity in the Workplace: Multi-disciplinary and International Perspectives*. Gower Publishing, Ltd.

Gündemir, S., Homan, A. C., Usova, A., & Galinsky, A. D. (2017). Multicultural meritocracy: The synergistic benefits of valuing diversity and merit. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *73*, 34–41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2017.06.002

Gündemir, S., Martin, A. E., & Homan, A. C. (2019). Understanding diversity ideologies from the target's perspective: A review and future directions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00282

Hässler, T., Fogwell, N. T., Gonzalez, A., Anderson, J. R., & Atwood, S. (2024). Reimagining LGBTIQ+ research – Acknowledging differences across subpopulations, methods, and countries. *Journal of Social Issues*, *80*(3), 821–842. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12643

Hennekam, S., & Ladge, J. J. (2023). Free to be me? Evolving gender expression and the dynamic interplay between authenticity and the desire to be accepted at work. *Academy of Management Journal, 66(5),* 1529–1553. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2020.1308

Herek, G. M. (1984). Beyond "homophobia": A social psychological perspective on attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *10*(1–2), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v10n01_01

Howansky, K., Maimon, M., & Sanchez, D. (2021). Identity safety cues predict instructor impressions, belonging, and absences in the psychology classroom. *Teaching of Psychology*, *49*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628321990362

Huffman, A. H., Watrous-Rodriguez, K. M., & King, E. B. (2008). Supporting a diverse workforce: What type of support is most meaningful for lesbian and gay employees? *Human Resource Management, 47*(2), 237–253. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.20210

İşçi, S., Çakmak, E., & Karadağ, E. (2015). The effect of leadership on organizational climate. In E. Karadağ (Ed.), *Leadership and Organizational Outcomes: Meta-Analysis of Empirical Studies* (pp. 123–141). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-14908-0_8

Jackson, S. D., & Mohr, J. J. (2016). Conceptualizing the closet: Differentiating stigma concealment and nondisclosure processes. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, *3*(1), 80–92. https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000147

Jackson, S. E., & Schuler, R. S. (1995). Understanding human resource management in the context of organizations and their environments. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *46*, 237–264. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.ps.46.020195.001321

1

Jansen, W. S., Otten, S., & Van der Zee, K. I. (2015). Being part of diversity: The effects of an all-inclusive multicultural diversity approach on majority members' perceived inclusion and support for organizational diversity efforts. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *18*(6), 817–832. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430214566892

Jansen, W. S., Van der Toorn, J., Bokern, Y. N. A., & Ellemers, N. (2024). Shades of support: An empirical assessment of D&I policy support in organizations. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *54*(4), 221–229. https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.13025

Johnson, I. R., Pietri, E. S., Fullilove, F., & Mowrer, S. (2019). Exploring identity-safety cues and allyship among Black women students in STEM environments. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *43*, 131–150. https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684319830926

Kasl, S. V., & Jones, B. A. (2007). Unemployment and health. In A. Baum, C. McManus, J. Weinman, K. Wallston, R. West, S. Newman, & S. Ayers (Eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of Psychology, Health and Medicine* (2nd ed., pp. 232–236). Cambridge University Press; Cambridge Core. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511543579.051

Kelan, E. K. (2022). Men as middle managers doing and undoing gender in organizations. *European Management Review*, *19*(2), 236–247. https://doi.org/10.1111/emre.12496

Kelly, M., Carathers, J., & Kade, T. (2021). Beyond tolerance: policies, practices, and ideologies of queer-friendly workplaces. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, *18*(4), 1078–1093. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-020-00512-3

Kirby, T. A., Barreto, M., Korine, R., Hendy, J., Osman, L., Stadie, S., & Tan, D. (2023). To conceal or reveal: Identity-conscious diversity ideologies facilitate sexual minority identity disclosure. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *54*(1), 199–218. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2996

Kirby, T. A., Russell Pascual, N., & Hildebrand, L. K. (2023). The dilution of diversity: ironic effects of broadening diversity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *51*(2), 268–283. https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672231184925

Klarenaar, M., Van Ooijen, A.-L., Van der Toorn, J., Boes, M., Lakens, D., Stelling, L., Simons, M., Funk, M., Van Goch, M., Veldhuizen, M., & Tetteroo, D. (2022). *Towards a representation of unheard and unseen individuals in the hospital, workplace, and neighborhood*. Centre for Unusual Collaborations.

Klysing, A., Prandelli, M., Roselló-Peñaloza, M., Alonso, D., Gray, M., Glazier, J. J., Swanson, S., & Wang, Y.-C. (2024). Conducting research within the acronym: Problematizing LGBTIQ+ research in psychology. *Journal of Social Issues*, *80*(3), 871–895. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12634

Köllen, T. (2013). Bisexuality and diversity management—Addressing the B in LGBT as a relevant "sexual orientation" in the workplace. *Journal of Bisexuality*, *13*(1), 122–137. https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2013.755728

Kruk, M., & Matsick, J. L. (2021). A taxonomy of identity safety cues based on gender and race: From a promising past to an intersectional and translational future. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*, *7*(4), 487–510. https://doi.org/10.1037/tps0000304

Leslie, L. M. (2019). Diversity initiative effectiveness: A typological theory of unintended consequences. *Academy of Management Review*, *44*(3), 538–563. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2017.0087

Leslie, L. M., Bono, J. E., Kim, Y. (Sophia), & Beaver, G. R. (2020). On melting pots and salad bowls: A meta-analysis of the effects of identity-blind and identity-conscious diversity ideologies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *105*(5), 453–471. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000446

Leslie, L. M., & Flynn, E. (2022). Diversity ideologies, beliefs, and climates: A review, integration, and set of recommendations. *Journal of Management*, *50*(3), 849–876. https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063221086238

Leung, R. (2025, April 27). Corporate sponsors are backing away from LGBTQ+ Pride organizations. *CNBC*. https://www.cnbc.com/2025/04/27/companies-lgbtq-pride-festivals.html

Li, Y., Perera, S., Kulik, C. T., & Metz, I. (2019). Inclusion climate: A multilevel investigation of its antecedents and consequences. *Human Resource Management*, *58*(4), 353–369. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21956

Luneau, D. (2024, September 23). New FBI data: Anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes continue to spike. *HRC*. https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/new-fbi-data-anti-lgbtq-hate-crimes-continue-to-spike-even-as-overall-crime-rate-declines

Makhecha, U. P., Srinivasan, V., Prabhu, G. N., & Mukherji, S. (2018). Multi-level gaps: A study of intended, actual and experienced human resource practices in a hypermarket chain in India. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *29*(2), 360–398. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1126336

Malin, N. (2000). *Professionalism, boundaries and the workplace*. Routledge London.

Marchia, J., & Sommer, J. M. (2019). (Re)defining heteronormativity. *Sexualities*, *22*(3), 267–295. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460717741801

Martin, A. E. (2023). The divergent effects of diversity ideologies for race and gender relations. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *175*, 104226. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2023.104226

Martinez, L. R., Sawyer, K. B., Thoroughgood, C. N., Ruggs, E. N., & Smith, N. A. (2017). The importance of being "me": The relation between authentic identity expression and transgender employees' work-related attitudes and experiences. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 102(2)*, 215–226. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000168.

McConnell, E. A., Janulis, P., Phillips II, G., Truong, R., & Birkett, M. (2018). Multiple minority stress and LGBT community resilience among sexual minority men. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, *5*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000265

McFadden, C., & Crowley-Henry, M. (2016). A systematic literature review on Trans* careers and workplace experiences. In T. Köllen (Ed.), *Sexual Orientation and Transgender Issues in Organizations* (pp. 63–81). Springer.

Mehmet. (2024, February 29). *Alarming surge in transphobic speech across Europe sparks concern for EU elections | ILGA-Europe*. https://www.ilga-europe.org/press-release/alarming-surge-in-transphobic-speech-across-europe-sparks-concern-for-eu-elections/

Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, *129*(5), 674–697. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674

Mizzi, R. C. (2013). "There aren't any gays here": Encountering heteroprofessionalism in an international development workplace. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *60*(11), 1602–1624. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.824341

Mizzi, R. C. (2016). Heteroprofessionalism. In N. M. Rodriguez, W. J. Martino, J. C. Ingrey, & E. Brockenbrough (Eds.), *Critical Concepts in Queer Studies and Education: An International Guide for the Twenty-First Century* (pp. 137–147). Palgrave Macmillan US. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55425-3_15

Mor Barak, M. E., Lizano, E. L., Kim, A., Duan, L., Rhee, M.-K., Hsiao, H.-Y., & Brimhall, K. C. (2016). The promise of diversity management for climate of inclusion: A state-of-the-art review and meta-analysis. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, *40*(4), 305–333. https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2016.1138915

Morgenroth, T., Kirby, T. A., & Van der Toorn, J. (2024). Heteroprofessionalism: The power of the gender/sex binary in the workplace. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *60*, 101908. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2024.101908

Napier, J. L. (2024). A cross-cultural investigation of prejudice against transgender people. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*. https://doi.org/10.1177/19485506241289638

Nishii, L. H., & Paluch, R. M. (2018). Leaders as HR sensegivers: Four HR implementation behaviors that create strong HR systems. *Human Resource Management Review*, *28*(3), 319–323. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2018.02.007

Nishii, L., & Wright, P. (2008). Variability within organizations: Implications for strategic human resource management. *CAHRS Working Paper Series*.

Oberdiek, H. (2001). *Tolerance: Between Forbearance and Acceptance*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Pappy, A. (2024, January 24). ICYMI: New data shows that nearly 30% of Gen Z adults identify as…. *HRC*. https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/icymi-new-data-shows-that-nearly-30-of-gen-z-adults-identify-as-lgbtq

Parmenter, J. G., & Galliher, R. V. (2023). Experiences of community resilience and inequity among LGBTQ+ people: A person-centered analysis. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *51*(1), 84–112. https://doi.org/10.1177/00110000221124274

Pasek, M. H., Filip Crawford, G., & Cook, J. E. (2017). Identity concealment and social change: Balancing advocacy goals against individual needs. *Journal of Social Issues, 73*(2), 397–412. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12223

Pereira, C. (2024). *Annual Review 2024 | ILGA-Europe*. https://www.ilga-europe.org/report/annual-review-2024/

Phillips, K., & O'Reilly, C. (1998). Demography and diversity in organizations: A Review of 40 years of research. In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Behavior* (Vol. 20, pp. 77–140). Elsevier Academic Press.

Plaut, V. C., Thomas, K. M., Hurd, K., & Romano, C. A. (2018). Do color blindness and multiculturalism remedy or foster discrimination and racism? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *27*(3), 200–206. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721418766068

Priola, V., Lasio, D., Serri, F., & De Simone, S. (2018). The organisation of sexuality and the sexuality of organisation: A genealogical analysis of sexual 'inclusive exclusion' at work. *Organization, 25*(6), 732–754. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508418790140

Purdie-Vaughns, V., & Eibach, R. P. (2008). Intersectional invisibility: The distinctive advantages and disadvantages of multiple subordinate-group identities. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 59(5–6), 377–391. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9424-4

Purdie-Vaughns, V., Steele, C. M., Davies, P. G., Ditlmann, R., & Crosby, J. R. (2008). Social identity contingencies: How diversity cues signal threat or safety for African Americans in mainstream institutions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *94*(4), 615–630. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.94.4.615

Rahman, Q., Xu, Y., Lippa, R. A., & Vasey, P. L. (2020). Prevalence of sexual orientation across 28 nations and its association with gender equality, economic development, and individualism. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *49*(2), 595–606. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-019-01590-0

Rattan, A., & Ambady, N. (2013). Diversity ideologies and intergroup relations: An examination of colorblindness and multiculturalism. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *43*(1), 12–21. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.1892

Roberts, L. M. (2005). Changing faces: professional image construction in diverse organizational settings. *Academy of Management Review*, *30*(4), 685–711. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2005.18378873

Rosenthal, L., Carroll-Scott, A., Earnshaw, V. A., Santilli, A., & Ickovics, J. R. (2012). The importance of full-time work for urban adults' mental and physical health. *Social Science & Medicine (1982)*, *75*(9), 1692–1696. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2012.07.003

Şahin, O., Van der Toorn, J., Jansen, W. S., Boezeman, E. J., & Ellemers, N. (2019). Looking beyond our similarities: How perceived (in)visible dissimilarity relates to feelings of inclusion at work. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00575

Scanlon, T. (2003). *The Difficulty of Tolerance: Essays in Political Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press.

Scheepers, D., & Ellemers, N. (2019). Social identity theory. In *Social Psychology in Action* (pp. 129–143). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-13788-5_9

Schilt, K., & Westbrook, L. (2009). Doing gender, doing heteronormativity: "Gender Normals," transgender people, and the social maintenance of heterosexuality. *Gender & Society*, *23*(4), 440–464. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243209340034

Schönauer, J., & Greven, A. (2024). "Beyond the Closet" – How identity shapes disclosure and authenticity among LGBTQ+ employees. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, *2024*(1), 12301. https://doi.org/10.5465/AMPROC.2024.51bp

SCOOP. (2019). *Sustainable Cooperation: Roadmaps to a Resilient Society*. https://www.scoop-program.org/about-scoop/program/roadmaps-to-a-resilient-society

Sears, B., & Mallory, C. (2014). Employment discrimination against LGBT people: Existence and impact. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9qs0n354

Settersten, R. A., Ottusch, T. M., & Schneider, B. (2015). Becoming adult: Meanings of markers to adulthood. In *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 1–16). American Cancer Society. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118900772.etrds0021

Settles, I. H., & Buchanan, N. T. (2014). Multiple groups, multiple identities, and intersectionality. *The Oxford Handbook of Multicultural Identity*, 1, 160–180.

Shallenberger, D. (1994). Professional and openly gay: A narrative study of the experience. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, *3*(2), 119–142. https://doi.org/10.1177/105649269432002

Shore, L. M., Cleveland, J. N., & Sanchez, D. (2018). Inclusive workplaces: A review and model. *Human Resource Management Review*, *28*(2), 176–189. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2017.07.003

1

Stevens, F. G., Plaut, V. C., & Sanchez-Burks, J. (2008). Unlocking the benefits of diversity: All-inclusive multiculturalism and positive organizational change. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, *44*(1), 116–133. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886308314460

Suppes, A., Van der Toorn, J., & Begeny, C. T. (2021). Unhealthy closets, discriminatory dwellings: The mental health benefits and costs of being open about one's sexual minority status. *Social Science & Medicine*, *285*, 114286. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114286

The Epidemic of Violence Against the Transgender & Gender-Expansive Community in the U.S. (2024). Human Rights Campaign Foundation. https://reports.hrc.org/an-epidemic-of-violence-2024

Thuillier, J., Almudever, B., & Croity-Belz, S. (2021). Perceived workplace discrimination and disclosure at work among lesbian and gay employees: The role of prior coming out experiences in different life domains. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *0*(0), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2021.1933784

Tilcsik, A. (2011). Pride and Prejudice: employment discrimination against openly gay men in the United States. *American Journal of Sociology*, *117*(2), 586–626. https://doi.org/10.1086/661653

Timmins, C. (2025, April 16). UK Supreme Court rolls back trans rights. *Equality Network*. https://www.equality-network.org/uk-supreme-court-rolls-back-trans-rights/

Van den Dungen, R., Galesloot, N., & Schols, H. (2023). *Het Charter Diversiteit Monitor 2022* (21153). Sociaal-Economische Raad (SER). https://www.ser.nl/nl/Publicaties/monitor-charter-diversiteit-2022

Van der Toorn, J., Bracco, S. E., Gaitho, W., Ryan, W. S., Horne, S. G., Anderson, J. R., & Leskinen, E. A. (2024). Inclusion and protection in tension: Reflections on gathering sexual orientation and gender identity data in the workplace. *Journal of Social Issues*, *80*(3), 947–972. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12632

Van der Toorn, J., & Gaitho, W. (2021). LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion: A global issue requiring a transdisciplinary and intersectional approach. *Tijdschrift Voor Genderstudies*, *24*(3/4), 376–387. https://doi.org/10.5117/TVGN.2021.3/4.010.TOOR

Van der Toorn, J., Pliskin, R., & Morgenroth, T. (2020). Not quite over the rainbow: The unrelenting and insidious nature of heteronormative ideology. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, *34*, 160–165. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2020.03.001

Van Doorn, M. (2014). The nature of tolerance and the social circumstances in which it emerges. *Current Sociology*, *62*(6), 905–927. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392114537281

Vanderford, R. (2024, February 5). Corporate America tweaks diversity initiatives amid pushback. *Wall Street Journal*. https://www.wsj.com/articles/corporate-america-tweaks-diversity-initiatives-amid-pushback-062cfe89

Velez, B. L., Adames, C. N., Lei, N., & Kerman, M. E. (2021). A content analysis of psychological research on vocational issues among sexual minority people. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, *8*(3), 344–364. https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000496

Verkuyten, M., & Killen, M. (2021). Tolerance, dissenting beliefs, and cultural diversity. *Child Development Perspectives*, *15*(1), 51–56. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12399

Verkuyten, M., & Kollar, R. (2021). Tolerance and intolerance: Cultural meanings and discursive usage. *Culture & Psychology*, *27*(1), 172–186. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X20984356

Vincent, S., Lopes, A., Meliou, E., & Özbilgin, M. (2024). Relational responsibilisation and diversity management in the 21st century: The case for reframing equality regulation. *Work, Employment and Society*, *38*(6), 1549–1568. https://doi.org/10.1177/09500170231217660

Von Bergen, C. W., & Collier, G. (2013). Tolerance as civility in contemporary workplace diversity initiatives. *Administrative Issues Journal: Education, Practice, and Research*, *3*(1), 86–97.

Wang, Y., Kim, S., Rafferty, A., & Sanders, K. (2020). Employee perceptions of HR practices: A critical review and future directions. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09585192.2019.1674360

Wilton, L. S., Bell, A. N., Vahradyan, M., & Kaiser, C. R. (2020). Show don't tell: Diversity dishonesty harms racial/ethnic minorities at work. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *46*(8), 1171–1185. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167219897149

Wolbring, G., & Lillywhite, A. (2023). Burnout through the lenses of equity/equality, diversity and inclusion and disabled People: A scoping review. *Societies*, *13*(5), Article 5. https://doi.org/10.3390/soc13050131

Wong, C. Y. E., Kirby, T. A., Rink, F., & Ryan, M. K. (2022). Intersectional invisibility in women's diversity interventions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.791572

World Economic Forum. (2019, March 12). *Average Work Week Hours in Different Countries*. World Economic Forum. https://www.weforum.org/stories/2019/03/average-work-week-hours-country-wise/

Wright, P., & Nishii, L. (2004). Strategic HRM and Organizational Behavior: Integrating Multiple Levels of Analysis. *CAHRS Working Paper Series*, *468*.

Zanoni, P., & Janssens, M. (2007). Minority employees engaging with (diversity) management: An analysis of control, agency, and micro-emancipation*. *Journal of Management Studies*, *44*(8), 1371–1397. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2007.00700.x

1

CHAPTER 2

Celebrating the "Invisible": The Role of Organizational Diversity Approaches on Attracting and Retaining LGBTQ+ Talent

Celebrating the "Invisible": The Role of Organizational Diversity Approaches on Attracting and Retaining LGBTQ+ Talent

Author Contributions

Kshitij Mor: Writing and preparing original draft, designing study, organizing materials, data collection, data analysis,
Seval Gündemir: Reviewing and editing drafts, supervision, conceptualization, assistance with analyses
Jojanneke van der Toorn: Reviewing and editing drafts, supervision, conceptualization, assistance with analyses

This chapter is based on:

ABSTRACT

Organizations vary in diversity approaches. Some recognize and celebrate group differences (identity consciousness), while others deem these differences as unimportant and deemphasize them (identity blindness). Research on diversity approaches' impact on workplace perceptions and experiences of marginalized groups has grown but focuses mainly on "visible" groups (e.g., racial minorities, women) while largely overlooking the potential impact on "invisible" groups (e.g., LGBTQ+ individuals). Integrating the diversity approaches paradigm with signaling and identity safety theory, this research addresses this oversight. Three pre-registered studies (N_{total}=1,318) investigate whether LGBTQ+ individuals prefer identity conscious organizations for employment because they perceive this approach as a signal of safety and acceptance for their identity. Findings reveal that identity consciousness (vs. identity blindness) is associated with increased attraction towards organizations among prospective (Study 1 & 2) and lower turnover intentions among incumbent (Study 3) LGBTQ+ workers. Identity safety (measured through employees' sense of authenticity, belonging and justice) mediates these relationships. Exploratory analyses indicate that, compared to their cisgender counterparts, transgender participants generally report more negative workplace experiences and expectations (Studies 1-3). Furthermore, there is suggestive evidence that transgender individuals who publicly disclose their identity may exhibit an even more positive response towards diversity-conscious organizations. We discuss the implications of these findings and conclude that identity consciousness signals and creates an identity safe working environment for LGBTQ+ individuals, improves their workplace experiences and enhances organizations' ability to attract and retain LGBTQ+ talent.

Keywords: LGBTQ+, Diversity Ideology, Identity Safety, Organizational Attractiveness, Turnover

CELEBRATING THE "INVISIBLE": THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL DIVERSITY APPROACHES ON ATTRACTING AND RETAINING LGBTQ+ TALENT

Despite an increasingly diversifying labor market, many organizations grapple with becoming and remaining a representation of the societies in which they operate. To hire and retain diverse talent, organizations not only have to search and recruit in different pools but also create a safe and attractive work environment for people with different backgrounds and identities. This requires effective diversity management, which pro-actively addresses the needs of (prospective) employees from minoritized groups, who frequently experience struggles, distress, prejudice and exclusion at work (Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Clair et al., 2005; Cumberbatch, 2021; Ghumman et al., 2013; Van der Toorn et al., 2020; Van Dijk et al., 2020).

One stream of psychology literature that is particularly relevant for creating such work environments is the diversity approaches paradigm (Apfelbaum et al., 2016; Gündemir et al., 2019; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). This paradigm has outlined two types of approaches organizations can adopt. An *identity blind* organizational approach underlines a belief that demographic differences are inconsequential and should receive minimal recognition. In this view, a focus on similarities across groups or individual level uniqueness has a central place. An *identity conscious* approach emphasizes instead that demographic differences should be acknowledged and celebrated (Plaut et al., 2009, 2018; Rattan & Ambady, 2013).[1] The intergroup and interpersonal effects of these approaches have been well documented in the literature (for a recent meta-analysis see Leslie et al., 2020). Yet, how and why these approaches contribute to organizations' ability to attract and retain minoritized groups with relatively invisible characteristics has been missing (for an exception see Kirby et al., 2024). Addressing this oversight in the literature, the current work examines the effects of organizations' diversity approaches and studies whether and why these approaches may impact organizations' ability to attract and retain a large, but relatively understudied group: lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, or otherwise queer (LGBTQ+) employees (Rahman et al., 2020).

---

1   The specific approaches to diversity in a local setting can take various forms and include different components that reflect these two overarching approaches. For example, an identity blind organization can embrace an assimilationist, meritocratic, and/or individual uniqueness focused form. These specifications are beyond the scope of this work and have been discussed in detail in prior work (Gündemir et al., 2019). Here, we adopt prevailing operationalizations of the two overarching approaches commonly employed in organizations.

Integrating the diversity approaches paradigm with signaling theory (Connelly et al., 2011; White et al., 2019) and perspectives on identity safety (Kruk & Matsick, 2021; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008), this work advances theory in four ways. First, we offer a new critical extension of the diversity approaches paradigm to involve target groups with (partly) concealable identities. This extension is crucial for at least two reasons. Emerging research suggests that when it comes to diversity approaches, one size does not fit all. For example, research shows differential effects of diversity approaches for racial minorities and women, as well as opposing patterns of what type of approach may be most beneficial for these groups (Apfelbaum et al., 2016; Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Iyer, 2022; Martin & Phillips, 2017; Plaut et al., 2018; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2014; for a review see Gündemir et al., 2019). This highlights the significance of accumulating empirical knowledge on the effects of diversity approaches on various demographic groups. Such knowledge helps understanding and reconciling diverse responses across these groups. Further, in comparison with readily visible group memberships, (partly) concealable identities present employees with additional identity management complexities (Clair et al., 2005). Compared to racial minorities and women, whose group membership is often visible to others, LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to be confronted with considerations whether to maintain an authentic and coherent sense of self at work by revealing their identity or to avoid prejudice and discrimination by concealing it (Bilimoria & Stewart, 2009; Doyle & Barreto, 2022; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Ragins et al., 2007). A lingering theoretical question in the diversity approaches paradigm is thus how the celebration versus deemphasizing of group membership affects members of groups beyond racial minorities and women, for whom the burden of expression often lies within the individual. Further, what constitutes cues of safety and acceptance remains unclear for LGBTQ+ individuals, given that previously identified safety cues such as numerical representation and role models in higher hierarchical positions (Apfelbaum et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2019; Kruk & Matsick, 2021) may not be as straightforward due to the identities' relative invisibility.

Second, this research contributes to theory by carefully unpacking the psychological mechanisms of *why* diversity approaches may impact organizations' ability to attract and retain LGBTQ+ talent. Drawing on signaling theory (Bird & Smith, 2005; Connelly et al., 2011; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; White et al., 2019), we suggest that LGBTQ+ employees' responses to diversity approaches can be understood by examining the extent to which these approaches signal identity safety. Identity safety is a popular, yet surprisingly poorly understood variable. Its measurement often includes concepts like attraction and trust (Chaney et al., 2016; Hildebrand et al., 2020;

Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008) which sometimes confounds the consequences of safety with its antecedents and processes. We resolve issues with construct contamination by clearly defining and testing the relationship between the predictors (i.e., diversity approach), processes (i.e., perceptions of key safety indicators) and outcomes (i.e., attraction, turnover intentions). Our work thus illuminates why diversity approaches affect LGBTQ+ talent and enhances construct clarity within identity safety scholarship.

Third, one limitation of existing research on attracting and retaining talent is that it primarily focused on the presence versus absence of diversity relevant cues (Griffeth et al., 2000; Groeneveld, 2011; Lee & Zhang, 2021; McKay et al., 2007; White et al., 2019). Past studies on signaling theory have often operationalized diversity approach as a dichotomous variable that is either present or absent in an organization, without specifying the exact diversity approach. However, in the contemporary landscape, many large organizations have some form of diversity message or approach in place (Gündemir & Galinsky, 2018; Kirby et al., 2023). Thus, studying *which,* rather than *whether,* diversity approaches are present, and how they affect prospective and current employees, is a highly relevant test of central tenets of signaling theory in contemporary organizations.

Fourth, the LGBTQ+ group is a broad and diverse community, consisting of several subgroups with varying degrees of stigma and unique experiences. In this study, we recognize the importance of accounting for potential within-group variability in responses. Therefore, we undertake a series of exploratory analyses to examine the response patterns as influenced by (a) individuals' concealment versus openness about their LGBTQ+ membership and (b) the role of membership in different subgroups within the LGBTQ+ community.

Taken together, this research synthesizes scattered insights and advances the diversity approaches paradigm, illuminating organizations' ability to attract and retain minoritized groups with relatively invisible characteristics. We present our theoretical model in Figure 1.
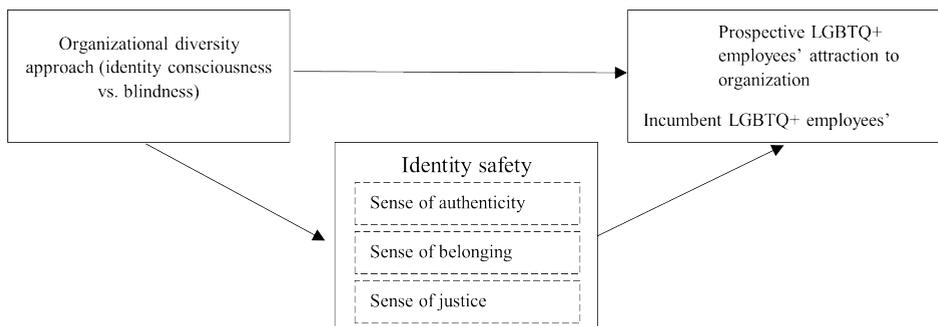
Figure 1. Theoretical Model

Diversity Approaches as Signals for Minoritized Employee Groups

Because of their inherently disadvantaged position, minoritized groups tend to be particularly sensitive to environmental cues communicating acceptance of one's identity and gravitate towards organizations embodying those cues (Avery & McKay, 2006; Lee & Zhang, 2021; Lindsey et al., 2017; Thomas & Wise, 1999; Van Dijk et al., 2020). The process of attending to cues to infer underlying organizational characteristics can be understood through signaling theory. According to signaling theory, there is an information asymmetry between organizations and potential employees. This asymmetry is reduced through signals that communicate competence, the type of work environment, fit and more (Spence, 2002). A critical assumption of signaling theory is that perceivers differ in how they seek and interpret signals and show variability in their vigilance to signals (Connelly et al., 2011). That is, cues of acceptance and fairness may become especially important for groups that are concerned about these the most; minoritized groups.

Most research has examined the impact of diversity approaches on racial minorities and women (Gündemir et al., 2019; Leslie & Flynn, 2022; Rattan & Ambady, 2013). For racial minorities, the benefits of an identity conscious approach have been frequently highlighted (Leslie et al., 2020; Plaut et al., 2018). Research has, for instance, documented benefits of identity consciousness over blindness in domains ranging from improved self-esteem (Verkuyten, 2009), work engagement (Plaut et al., 2009), and sense of inclusion (Jansen et al., 2016). Notably, racial minorities' positive responses to diversity conscious approaches may still depend on their numeric representation at specific companies (Apfelbaum et al., 2016) or on the centrality of their racial identity (Kirby & Kaiser, 2020).

While women and racial minorities share common challenges in terms of visibility, competency concerns, pay inequality, negative stereotyping, and lack of fit concerns, research on gender and diversity approaches indicates that recommendations effective for improving the workplace experiences of racial minorities may not always yield similar benefits for women. Some research on women suggests that diversity blindness generates more favorable effects on women in the workplace including an increased sense of agency, confidence and pro-active behaviors (Martin & Phillips, 2017). Recent research has explained this by arguing and empirically demonstrating that because women's workplace disadvantage is often attributed to biological or internal stereotypes, an identity conscious approach can exacerbate these stereotypes, ultimately further disadvantaging them (Martin, 2023). However, some work nuanced these findings by showing that the benefits of identity blindness may be restricted to women with a strong career orientation, whose needs may be different from those with a family orientation (Martin et al., 2018). Other studies have hinted at a similar nuance, albeit more indirectly, by showing that approaches related to gender consciousness (such as highlighting gender-based differences) can benefit women in the workplace (Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018b).

As this research stream matured over the past decades, scholars increasingly call for a more tailored approach that takes critical contingencies in targeted groups' contexts into account and make attempts to understand the mechanisms of diversity approaches shifting effects across groups. In this regard, recent research attempted to reconcile some of the prior findings on the benefits of different diversity ideologies for racial minorities and women. In a series of unique studies, Martin (2023) demonstrated that an awareness approach may be beneficial for groups whose disadvantaged position is primarily attributed to opportunity-based differences (e.g., racial minorities) whereas a blindness approach may "work best" for groups with internalized (or essentialized) attributes or stereotypes (e.g., women).

Extending the Diversity Approaches Paradigm to LGBTQ+ Employees: Diversity Conscious = Identity Safe?

Because existing work on diversity approaches has focused on the study of employee groups with relatively visible identities (i.e., racial minorities and women), its utility for employee groups with concealable identities has yet to be determined. Here we examine this paradigm in the context of a crucial target group: LGBTQ+ individuals.

Sexual and gender minorities face unique challenges in organizations, which differ from other identity groups widely studied within the diversity approaches paradigm. First, an LGBTQ+ identity is often relatively invisible to others which presents an information management challenge that lies within individuals. Compared to racial minorities and women who can more easily gauge a supportive environment through numerical representation within the organizational hierarchy or by identifying role models to enhance perceived fit and signal safety (Apfelbaum et al., Banchefsky & Park, 2018; 2016; Clair et al., 2005; Johnson et al., 2019; Kruk & Matsick, 2021), LGBTQ+ individuals often lack readily visible cues to assess the safety and supportiveness of their workplace. This may leave them more dependent on the diversity approach of the organization to signal information about the working environment (see Kirby et al., 2024). In addition, to find support from similar others, LGBTQ+ employees have to consider whether to opt for (partial) concealment or disclosure of their identity. Both choices carry critical personal consequences that are difficult to predict in advance (Clair et al., 2005). This disclosure dilemma presents a unique source of stress for LGBTQ+ individuals, which individuals with less concealable identities may not experience. Second, the expression of LGBTQ+ identity has historically been subject to persecution, and it remains illegal in many parts of the world (Flores et al., 2023). Even in places where being LGBTQ+ is protected by the law, LGBTQ+ individuals can face stigma, harassment and bullying because of their identity (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2013; Kuyper, 2016; Meyer, 2003). Job applicants who appear queer are perceived more negatively (Gorsuch, 2019; Granberg et al., 2020; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009; Tilcsik, 2011), LGBTQ+ employees experience hiring and promotion discrimination and are often on the receiving end of everyday prejudice and microaggressions (Badgett et al., 2007; Embrick et al., 2007; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2016; Sears & Mallory, 2014; Van Dijk et al., 2020). Considering the relatively limited attention LGBTQ+ employees receive in academia and applied settings, some scholars suggest that there is a significant underestimation of antigay sentiment in the workplace (Coffman et al., 2017).

The experienced or anticipated bias among LGBTQ+ workers can be understood within the framework of heteronormative ideology. This ideology prescribes a heterosexual and cis-gender identity as the standard, with defined gender roles for males and females, branding any deviations from this norm as abnormal (Cumberbatch, 2021; Van der Toorn et al., 2020; Velez et al., 2021). Heteronormativity in the workplace manifests in professional standards that may conflict with LGBTQ+ identity expression. The term "heteroprofessionalism" has been coined and explains how heteronormative ideals in the workplace may disadvantage LGBTQ+

employees (Leslie et al., 2020; Mizzi, 2013, 2016; Salvati et al., 2021; Williams & Giuffre, 2011). It refers to the perception of "professionalism" in the workplace, which is primarily shaped by norms set by the majority, often aligning with attributes linked to masculinity, cisgender identity, and heterosexuality. This tendency can put LGBTQ+ individuals, who deviate from these norms, at a disadvantage.

Heteroprofessionalism can manifest in diverse forms. Discussions involving sexuality are often marginalized in professional environments, categorized as either "irrelevant" or, in many instances, labeled as "unprofessional". This categorization delineates sexuality as a facet of the personal sphere, distinctly separated from the professional domain. Importantly, heterosexuality escapes these negative connotations as it is often the norm and thus considered an implicit part of professional life, whereas non-heterosexual sexuality is pushed to the margins. These dynamics create an environment where conversations about sexuality are seen as relevant only for LGBTQ+ individuals, reinforcing their outsider status while maintaining heterosexuality as the unspoken standard (Bizzeth & Beagan, 2023; Compton & Dougherty, 2017; Corlett et al., 2022; Cumberbatch, 2021; Mizzi, 2013, 2016; Priola et al., 2018; Van der Toorn et al., 2020). Heteroprofessionalism is further reinforced by dress codes within numerous professions and organizations often conform to traditional gender norms, emphasizing distinctions between men and women. Expressing oneself in a way that challenges these gender binaries, such as men wearing skirts or heels, is often met with disapproval and might contradict the established dress code in many workplaces (Compton & Dougherty, 2017; Lehtonen, 2016; Resnick & Galupo, 2019; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009).

Taken together, the separation of LGBTQ+ identities from the work sphere may lead to hesitancy in assessing LGBTQ+ workplace needs, and reporting LGBTQ+ inclusion in diversity reports, eliminating safety cues and sources of information about the degree of genuine diversity commitment of the organization (Klarenaar et al., 2022; Wilton et al., 2020). Further, the myriad of potential negative consequences associated with being openly queer at work, norms associated with sexual and gender identity disclosure, and the relatively invisible nature of an LGBTQ+ identity may motivate employees to conceal their identity (Griffith & Hebl, 2002; King et al., 2017; Thuillier et al., 2021).

Against this backdrop, compared to other demographic groups, employees with LGBTQ+ identities have less access to visible cues within organizations to infer how their group membership is viewed. For example, racial minorities and women can often infer diversity signals not only from institutional support signals but also

2

representational cues (e.g., role models or numeric representation; Apfelbaum et al., 2016; Clair et al., 2005; Johnson et al., 2019; Kruk & Matsick, 2021; Wilton et al., 2020). For LGBTQ+ individuals, signals of institutional support thus become especially important to shape their views of an organization and its openness to their identity groups (Johnson et al., 2019; Kirby et al., 2024; Kruk & Matsick, 2021; Thuillier et al., 2021).

Here, we examine a potential effect of these cues as signals for "identity safety". While identity safety has been recognized as a key mechanism for why minoritized groups respond to diversity approaches (Kirby et al., 2020; 2024; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008), there is great variability in how the term "identity safety" is conceptualized and measured in the literature (Johnson et al., 2019; Kruk & Matsick, 2021; Pietri et al., 2018). Measures assessing identity safety often include elements such as trust, organizational attractiveness, and work commitment (Chaney et al., 2016; Hildebrand et al., 2020; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008), leading, at times, to a blurred distinction between identity safety, its outcomes, and the underlying processes. In response, we reviewed the identity safety literature and observed that despite the absence of a standardized measure or definition, there were recurring aspects in the way the construct of identity safety is conceptualized. The common denominator across studies is that identity safety involves an experience or expectation that one's identity is (a) welcomed and valued and (b) will form no hindrance in a specific context (Chaney et al., 2016; Walton et al., 2015).

The experience of being welcomed and valued involves a workplace that fosters the expression of individual identity and encourages meaningful connections with colleagues. This underscores the significance of both a sense of authenticity and belonging for identity safety. Identity safety cannot be accomplished without a sense of belonging, as it would mean the criterion of being welcomed is not satisfied. However, a sole emphasis on belonging, without considering authenticity, might compel individuals to conform to group dynamics, risking the compromise of crucial aspects of their identity in the workplace (Jansen et al., 2014; Shore et al., 2011; 2018).

In addition to the freedom to express oneself and build positive connections with others, identity safety also involves an absence of devaluation or bias because of one's identity. This facet differs from the other two as the focus of evaluation shifts from oneself (e.g., Do I feel a sense of belonging?) to the organization (e.g., Does the organization employ equitable processes?). In this context, identity safety pertains to the extent individuals perceive the organizational environment as a potential source of inequitable treatment or fair procedures based on their group

membership (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2013). This facet is best captured by assessing the extent to which target groups see the organization as a fair entity.

In sum, to experience identity safety is to exist in an environment where one has a sense that their identity is embraced and respected and where the organization adheres to principles of justice. Thus, identity safety is characterized by a sense of authenticity, belonging, and fair treatment.

We argue that LGBTQ+ individuals will be more attracted to organizations with an identity conscious compared to an identity blind approach because this will signal a more identity safe environment to them (Chaney et al., 2016; Howansky et al., 2021; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). Considering the stigma attached to an LGBTQ+ identity, active acknowledgement, celebration, and incorporation of an LGBTQ+ identity in the diversity approach of an organization (as is the case for identity conscious approaches) will better facilitate feelings of authenticity and belonging (Hatzenbuehler, 2009; Hebl et al., 2014; Köllen, 2013). Furthermore, given the pervasiveness of heteronormativity at work, a focus on similarity as emphasized in the identity blind approach, may cue concerns about heteroprofessionalism and threat of prejudice for LGBTQ+ individuals (Cumberbatch, 2021; Mizzi, 2013, 2016; Van der Toorn et al., 2020). Hence, despite the intention of a blind approach to promote equality and fairness, LGTBQ+ individuals may in fact perceive it as less fair. Past and emergent research supports this view by showing that signals communicating an explicit recognition and celebration of gender and sexual identity can indeed prompt identity safety among LGBTQ+ individuals. For example, research in the U.S. shows that observing others' use of personal pronouns signals procedural fairness to and fosters positive organizational attitudes among gender and sexual minorities (Johnson et al., 2021). Other work demonstrates that organizational cues for diversity consciousness such as existence of LGBTQ+ supportive policies or diversity statements can reduce anxiety and encourage a sense of belonging and identity disclosure among LGBTQ+ individuals (Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Kirby et al., 2024). The link with disclosure is critical because in environments where LGBTQ+ employees feel comfortable disclosing their identity, they perform better, report feelings of inclusion and identification with the organization, and experience less work-related stress and negative affect (Clair et al., 2005; Hebl et al., 2014; Martinez et al., 2017; Webster et al., 2018). Thus, LGBTQ+ employees are likely to use cues of identity consciousness to infer a work environment that offers identify safety (Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Joo et al., 2016; Kahn et al., 2015; King et al., 2017; Kirby et al., 2024; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008).

Attraction and Retention of LGBTQ+ Employees

Based on the above presented integration of signaling theory and the diversity approaches paradigm, we have proposed that LGBTQ+ individuals make identity safety inferences based on organizational diversity approaches. We argue that the benefits of identity consciousness will extend to organizations' ability to promote diversity and inclusion.

One area where this becomes evident is how attractive an organization appears to LGBTQ+ talent. As prospective employees (e.g., job seekers) often face constraints in accessing accurate information about an organization and its attributes, they rely on signals to reduce their uncertainty (Connelly et al., 2011). That is, prospective employees infer unknown information from available cues (Lindsey et al., 2017). Research demonstrates that organizational cues that convey a safe working environment and signal fairness and trust appear more attractive to job applicants (Capell et al., 2018; Joo et al., 2016; Kahn et al., 2015; Leung et al., 2021). Studies specifically focusing on underrepresented groups consistently show that dimensions associated with identity safety, which we argue will be triggered by a conscious approach, can critically drive these groups' attraction to organizations. For example, when signals during the recruitment process indicate anticipated belonging to women, their intentions to apply increase (Hentschel et al., 2021). Conversely, cues for reduced anticipated belonging (Georgeac & Rattan, 2023) or devaluation (Puncheva-Michelotti et al., 2014) diminish women's reports of organizational attraction. Moreover, diversity signals communicating inclusive and bias-free environments can boost racial minority workers' attraction towards organizations (for reviews see Avery & McKay, 2006; McKay, 2024). One recent study unraveled that sexual and gender minorities may exhibit similar responses to such cues and inferences. Specifically, inferences of a positive diversity climate based on organizational cues have been shown to heighten both organizational attraction and person-organization fit among members of this group (Bradley et al., 2023).

Taken together, the literature suggests that an identity-conscious organization will signal an environment that meets the identity safety needs of LGBTQ+ employees, thereby enhancing their attraction to these organizations. In other words, we anticipate that LGBTQ+ individuals will perceive companies that prioritize identity consciousness as more appealing work environments (than those emphasizing blindness), due to the perceived higher level of identity safety they signal:

H1: LGBTQ+ individuals will find identity conscious organizations to be more attractive than identity blind organizations.

H2: The relationship between organizational diversity ideology and organizational attractiveness will be mediated by the anticipated identity safety (i.e., anticipated authenticity, belonging, and justice).

Another critical domain for the relationships of interest pertains to organizations' ability to retain LGBTQ+ talent. While signaling theory has been primarily utilized to understand outsiders' responses to organizations (Connelly et al., 2011), its relevance may extend beyond these responses and explain events within organizations (Lindsay et al., 2017). To test the utility of signaling in explaining incumbents' responses, we examine whether a conscious approach signals identity safety to incumbent LGBTQ+ employees, enhancing organizations' ability to retain this group of employees. This extension is critical for two reasons. First, research shows that LGBTQ+ employees experience more distress, harassment and exclusion compared to their cis-hetero counterparts (Bilimoria & Stewart, 2009; Embrick et al., 2007; Galupo & Resnick, 2016; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2016). These unfavorable experiences create a push factor and put them at risk for higher rates of turnover (Deery et al., 2011; Griffeth et al., 2000). Second, limiting turnover (especially among minoritized employee groups) is crucial for companies given the financial and reputational costs associated with it.

Prior research underscores the critical role of employees' perceptions of the work environment in their retention. Organizations' ability to communicate key components of identity safety, such as a sense of belonging and justice, is linked to employees' intentions to remain with the company (Choi, 2011; Das & Baruah, 2013). Diversity management research offers evidence that such cues may also substantially benefit the retention of minoritized employees. For example, favorable diversity climates, evaluated in broad terms (i.e., whether antidiscrimination policies exist, if organizations offer equal access to training or publicize their diversity principles; Groeneveld, 2011; McKay et al., 2007; Wagner, 2017), can be helpful for retaining minoritized groups. Notably, some studies have shown that key subcomponents of identity safety may drive these beneficial effects. For example, when organizational diversity-related cues signal fairness to employees of color, they report lower turnover intentions and higher work engagement (Buttner et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2021). Similarly, sense of belonging, a central component of identity safety, is a critical correlate of intentions to stay in work domains where minorities are underrepresented (Rainey et al., 2018). A sense of inclusion, encompassing

2

both belonging and authenticity subcomponents, is strongly related to workplace satisfaction among minoritized groups; a variable linked to their likelihood of staying employed at a company (Jansen et al., 2016).

In sum, based on the literature we expect an identity conscious organization to evoke a sense of identity safety among incumbent workers (Howansky et al., 2021; Sabharwal et al., 2019), making them less likely to want to leave the organization. Specifically, we hypothesize:

H3: Perceptions of organizational identity consciousness will be negatively associated with turnover intentions among LGBTQ+ employees.

H4: The relationship between organizational identity consciousness and turnover intentions will be mediated by perceived identity safety (i.e., perceived authenticity, belonging, and justice).

Exploring the Role of Identity Concealment and Intragroup Variation

Given the emphasis placed on the importance of concealment versus disclosure for LGBTQ+ well-being at work (Hatzenbuehler, 2009; Hebl et al., 2014; Köllen, 2013), our study aims to investigate the potential impact of LGBTQ+ employees' level of identity disclosure or openness on their perception of diversity cues. Specifically, we explore whether the effect of the diversity approach differs for individuals who are more versus less open about their identity. LGBTQ+ individuals who tend to be more open about their queerness, often consider this aspect of their identity as more central to their self-concept, shaping their worldview (Suppes et al., 2021). Research also indicates that when an identity is central, individuals become more attuned to potential threats and stigma associated with that identity (Hinton et al., 2022). Consequently, LGBTQ+ individuals who are more open about their identity, compared to those who are less open, may be more sensitive to signals of safety or potential discrimination due to their heightened awareness of prejudice and discrimination. As a result, they may be inclined to seek environments that explicitly signal safety and acceptance of their identity, such as identity-conscious organizations.

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that the LGBTQ+ community is not a homogenous one, and different subgroups within the community may have diverse experiences and differently responses to diversity cues. The experiences of individuals with only a minoritized sexual orientation can differ from those with a minoritized gender identity and from those with both. Previous research has

highlighted that among LGBTQ+ individuals, transgender individuals, especially those who also belong to a sexual minority group face some of the most challenging outcomes (Cech & Rothwell, 2020; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2016; Pepper & Lorah, 2008). Notably, even within diversity and inclusion policies for LGBTQ+ inclusivity, the specific concerns and experiences of transgender individuals are understudied (Lehtonen, 2016; Ozturk & Tatli, 2016). Moreover, individuals with a minoritized gender identity, such as transgender individuals, often encounter greater difficulty concealing their identity compared to those with only a minoritized sexual orientation. Physical transformations resulting from hormone treatments, conforming attire to match one's gender identity, or changing one's name can inadvertently "out" transgender individuals, placing them at heightened risk of facing adverse reactions as they may be perceived as challenging the traditional norms of a workplace (Brewster et al., 2014; Diamond et al., 2011; Granberg et al., 2020; Hennekam & Ladge, 2023; Mizzi, 2016). Considering the additional challenges faced by transgender individuals and their heightened visibility within the LGBTQ+ community, we anticipate that they may experience comparatively worse outcomes across various domains than cis-gendered individuals. Consequently, we explore whether transgender individuals' gravitation towards identity conscious organizations, that explicitly communicate safety and acceptance, is more pronounced than that of cis-gender individuals. This addition is important in light of scholarly calls to better highlight the unique experiences of transgender individuals (Cancela et al., 2024; Law et al., 2011; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2016; Pepper & Lorah, 2008; Sangganjanavanich & Headley, 2013). In an effort to bridge this gap, we aim to conduct comparative exploratory analyses, distinguishing between transgender and cisgender participants, to address and highlight the distinct experience of this understudied group.

Overview of Studies

We examined our hypotheses across three pre-registered studies. Studies 1 and 2 were vignette experiments and Study 3 used a survey design. The studies were built in Qualtrics and distributed using the crowdsourcing platform Prolific. Participants were prescreened, and only individuals who lived in the UK and who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or otherwise queer (LGBTQ+) were invited through the platform. To ensure representation, the samples consisted of at least 25% transgender participants. Information about participants' age, work status, gender identity and sexual orientation was collected in each study. Text field entries for the gender identity and sexuality questions ("I prefer to self-describe") were manually scanned and recategorized when necessary. Participants who identified as heterosexual and cis-gender, and participants with missing data were removed

prior to analyses. We supplemented our collected data with the ethnicity data collected by Prolific to explore potential intersectional implications of our results. Unless stated otherwise, all scales were measured using a seven-point Likert scale (1=*Strongly disagree*, 7=*Strongly agree*). At the end of each study participants were de-briefed and had an opportunity to provide comments about the study.

The sampling plan, data exclusions (if any), all experimental manipulations and measures are described in the main text, the Supplementary Online Materials (SOM), or can be found on the Open Science Framework. All tables and figures are included in the manuscript or can be found in the SOM. All analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS 28 and Rstudio, and ethics approval was obtained for all studies (21-467, 22-0334, 22-0456). The preregistration details, data, materials, and codes are available on the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/ysx2w/?view_only=a4805c46090e40af966a376ee3fde562).

STUDY 1

This study tested whether LGBTQ+ individuals will on average find an identity conscious organization to be more attractive than an identity blind organization (H1).

Participants and Procedure

An a-priori power analysis indicated that we needed a sample size of 398 participants (d=0.25, 1-β=0.80, α=.05; Faul et al., 2007). We oversampled to account for possible missing data and requested 420 responses. We received 407 complete responses (M_{age}=31.63, SD_{age}=10.73; for demographics see Table 1, for means and correlations see Table 2)[2].

---

2   Due to an error with Prolific, we were unable to recruit the intended number of transgender participants for the first study, the analyses with transgender participants are still presented but should be interpreted with caution given the small sample size.

Table 1. Demographic Composition of Participant Samples of Studies 1-3

Demographic Characteristics	Study 1		Study 2		Study 3	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Work Status						
Employed full-time	188	46.2	217	47	333	74.8
Employed part-time	71	17.4	90	19.5	112	25.2
Unemployed looking for work	27	6.6	22	4.8	-	-
Unemployed not looking for work	43	10.6	46	10	-	-
Retired	7	1.7	6	1.3	-	-
Student	71	17.4	81	17.5	-	-
Gender Group						
Male	104	25.6	151	32.7	141	31.7
Female	265	65.1	234	50.6	237	53.3
Non-binary	29	7.1	60	13	51	11.5
Genderfluid	5	1.2	8	1.7	6	1.3
Agender	0	0	4	0.8	4	0.9
Self-described	4	1.0	5	1.1	6	1.3
Transgender Identity						
Yes	57	14	112	24.2	102	22.9
No	350	86	349	75.5	343	77.1
Other	0	0	1	0.2	0	0
Sexual Orientation						
Gay	58	14.3	66	14.3	70	15.7
Lesbian	60	14.7	46	10	80	18
Bisexual	204	50.1	212	45.9	195	43.8
Queer	24	5.9	36	7.8	26	5.8
Asexual	34	8.4	40	8.7	25	5.6
Pansexual	26	6.4	58	12.6	42	9.4
Heterosexual	1	0.2	4	0.9	5	1.1
Self-described	0	0	0	0	2	0.4
Ethnicity						
White	363	89.2	416	90	398	89.4
Black	4	1	9	1.9	7	1.6
Asian	13	3.2	15	3.2	15	3.4
Mixed	19	4.7	18	3.9	19	4.3
Other	1	.2	2	.4	3	0.7
Missing/Unknown	7	1.7	2	.4	3	0.7

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Studies 1-3

Variable	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5
Study 1						
1. Age	31.63 (10.73)	-				
2. Organizational Attractiveness	4.56 (1.67)	.08	-			
3. Workplace Openness about Gender Identity	6.03 (1.85)	.14**	.04	-		
4 Generalized Openness about Gender Identity	6.19 (1.50)	.13**	.03	.97**	-	
5. Workplace Openness about Sexual Orientation	4.03 (2.28)	.17**	-.02	.24**	.21**	-
6. Generalized Openness about Sexual Orientation	4.59 (1.86)	.12**	.00	.21**	.20**	.94**
Study 2						
1. Age	30.48 (10.02)	-				
2. Organizational Attractiveness	4.76 (1.53)	.12*	-			
3. Anticipated Authenticity	4.78 (1.89)	.04	.83**	-		
4. Anticipated Belonging	4.94 (1.55)	.05	.84**	.81**	-	
5. Anticipated Justice	4.97 (1.33)	.09+	.78**	.82**	.81**	
Study 3						
1. Age	32.73 (9.41)	-				
2. Organizational Diversity Approach	4.87 (1.37)	.02	-			
3. Turnover Intentions	3.71 (2.04)	-.16**	-.39**	-		
4. Perceived Authenticity	5.12 (1.60)	.12*	.55**	-.54**	-	
5. Perceived Belonging	4.79 (1.61)	.15**	.54**	-.58**	.79**	-
6. Perceived Justice	5.09 (1.46)	.13**	.44**	-.58**	.71**	.76**

Note. $N_{Study\ 1}$= 407(403 for gender identity parameters due to missing data points); $N_{Study\ 2}$= 462; $N_{Study\ 3}$= 445.
+ p<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01s

Participants were asked to form an impression of an organization based on limited information. After providing informed consent, participants were randomly assigned to either an identity blind or an identity conscious condition and rated that organization's attractiveness. Finally, participants completed demographics questions.

Materials and Measures

Depending on the condition, participants were presented with a version of the webpage of a fictitious organization named Wynn Inc, including its diversity mission statement (texts are modeled after Purdie-Vaughns and colleagues, 2008). The mission statement in the identity blind condition emphasized ignoring differences and fostering equality through a focus on similarities. A sample phrase is: *"While other firms mistakenly focus on their staff's diversity, we at Wynn Inc. train our workforce to embrace their similarities."* In the identity conscious condition, the mission statement emphasized the value of diversity and embracing differences, and included phrases such as: *"While other firms mistakenly try to shape their staff into a single mold, we at Wynn Inc. believe that embracing our differences enriches our culture."*

The perceived attractiveness of the organization was assessed using the five-item attractiveness subscale of the organizational attraction scale (Highhouse et al., 2003). A sample item is: "For me, this company would be a good place to work." ($\alpha=.95$). To test whether the manipulation was successful, participants rated the extent to which they thought Wynn Inc. valued differences (Kirby & Kaiser, 2020; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008).

To measure participants' openness, they rated how open they were about their gender identity and sexual orientation on a 7-point scale, in the following domains: "To colleagues", "To supervisor/management", "To family", "To friends" and "In general". This was adapted from the outness scale of Mohr and Fassinger (2000), with the wording of the questions changed to not only measure outness but also openness about sexual orientation and gender identity. Participants reported their age, employment status, and indicated their gender identity and sexual orientation (see Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018a). Data about participants' ethnicity were retrieved from Prolific and merged with the data collected through our survey.

Results

Manipulation Check

Participants in the identity conscious condition more strongly perceived the organization to value group differences in the work setting (M=6.14, SD=1.12) than participants in the identity blind condition (M=2.67, SD=1.83, t(349.48=-23.33, Cohen's d=1.52, p<.001, 95%CI [-3.77,-3.18]). The manipulation was thus successful.

Hypothesis Testing

Consistent with H1, participants found an identity conscious organization to be more attractive (M=5.38, SD=1.31) than an identity blind organization (M=3.80, SD=1.62, t(396.01)=-10.89, p<.001, 95%CI [-1.87,-1.30], Cohen's d=1.48).

Exploratory Analyses: The Role of Openness and Intragroup Variation

We first investigated if participants' attraction to organizations embodying different diversity approaches varied based on how open they were about their gender identity and/or sexual orientation both at work and in general. Organizational diversity approach was dummy coded, with identity blind ideology (coded as 0) as the reference condition. To determine how open participants were at work, we derived *workplace openness* by calculating a mean score of openness "To colleagues" and openness "To supervisor/management". We derived *generalized openness* by calculating a mean score of all openness items.[3]

We performed a series of regression analyses on organizational attractiveness with organizational diversity approach, openness, and their interaction as our IVs. We conducted separate analyses including openness about gender identity and including openness about sexual orientation. Openness was centered at the mean. Among sexual minority participants (n=406; i.e., almost the full sample), we obtained no significant interactions between diversity approach and either type of openness about sexual orientation (ps >.224; see Table 3). Among transgender participants (n=57), we observed no significant interaction between diversity approach and workplace openness about gender identity (p =.090; see Table 3), but we did obtain a significant interaction between diversity approach and generalized openness about gender identity, revealing that transgender participants who were generally

---

3   We included a measure of generalized openness because participants evaluate a fictitious organization in this study. While their responses to the workplace openness measure are likely influenced by factors specific to their current workplace, the generalized openness measure may reflect a dispositional tendency. Consequently, we deemed it relevant to take their generalized openness into account in their assessment of the organization depicted in the vignette.

more open about their gender identity found the identity conscious organization to be more attractive ($b_{interaction}$=0.46, SE=0.20, p=.023, 95%CI [0.07,0.86]; see Figure 2 for a visualization).

Next, we examined potential differences between transgender and cisgender individuals among our participants. We performed a regression analysis to explore (a) possible differences between cisgender (coded as 0) and transgender (coded as 1) participants in organizational attraction (i.e., a main effect of gender identity), and (b) a possible interaction effect between organizational diversity approach and gender identity. We found no significant main or interaction effects (ps>.369, see Table 4).

2

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analyses to Assess Effects of Diversity Approach and Openness About Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation on Organizational Attractiveness in Study 1

	Model 1 – Intercept only			Model 2 – Openness variation			Model 3 – Interaction effects		
	B(SE)	*95% CI*	*p*	*B(SE)*	*95% CI*	*p*	*B(SE)*	*95% CI*	*p*
Workplace Openness about Gender Identity									
Diversity Approach	1.92(0.35)	1.21, 2.63	<.001	1.88(0.36)	1.16, 2.59	<.001	1.86(0.35)	1.16, 2.56	<.001
Openness				0.09(0.08)	-0.07, 0.25	.282	-0.03(0.10)	-0.24, 0.18	.770
Diversity Approach * Openness							0.27(0.16)	-0.04, 0.59	.090
Workplace Openness about Sexual Orientation									
Diversity Approach	1.58(0.15)	1.29, 1.87	<.001	1.58(0.15)	1.29, 1.87	<.001	1.58(0.15)	1.29,1.87	<.001
Openness				-0.001(0.03)	-.06, .06	.984	-0.04(0.05)	-0.13, 0.05	.393
Diversity Approach * Openness							0.08(0.07)	-.05, 0.21	.224
Generalized Openness about Gender Identity									
Diversity Approach	1.92(0.35)	1.21, 2.63	<.001	1.89(0.36)	1.18, 2.60	<.001	1.87(0.34)	1.18, 2.56	<.001
Openness				0.10(0.10)	-0.11, 0.30	.342	-0.10(0.13)	-0.35, 0.16	.449

	Model 1 – Intercept only			Model 2 – Openness variation			Model 3 – Interaction effects		
	B(SE)	95% CI	p	B(SE)	95% CI	p	B(SE)	95% CI	p
Diversity Approach * Openness							0.46(0.20)	0.07, 0.86	.023
Generalized Openness about Sexual Orientation									
Diversity Approach	1.58(0.15)	1.29, 1.87	<.001	1.58(0.15)	1.29, 1.87	<.001	1.58(0.15)	1.29, 1.87	<.001
Openness				0.01(0.04)	-0.07, 0.09	.777	-0.02(0.05)	-0.12, 0.09	.770
Diversity Approach * Openness							0.06(0.08)	-0.10, 0.22	.441

Note. Diversity Approach is coded 1 = identity consciousness and 0 = identity blindness. Analyses including Openness about Gender Identity were only conducted for Transgender participants (*n*=57). Analyses including Openness about Sexual Orientation were conducted with the full sample (*n*=407).

2

Table 4. Multiple Regression Analyses to Assess Effects of Diversity Approach and Gender Identity on Organizational Attractiveness in Study 1

Variables	Model 1 – Intercept only			Model 2 – Intragroup variation			Model 3 – Interaction effects		
	B(SE)	95% CI	P	B(SE)	95% CI	p	B(SE)	95% CI	p
Diversity Approach	1.59(0.15)	1.30, 1.87	<.001	1.59(0.15)	1.30, 1.88	<.001	1.53(0.16)	1.22, 1.85	<.001
Gender Identity				0.09(0.21)	-0.32, 0.51	.660	-0.08(0.28)	-0.64, 0.48	.784
Diversity Approach * Gender Identity							0.38(0.43)	-0.45, 1.22	.369

Note. Diversity Approach is coded 1 = identity consciousness and 0 = identity blindness; Gender Identity is coded 1 = transgender and 0 = cisgender.t
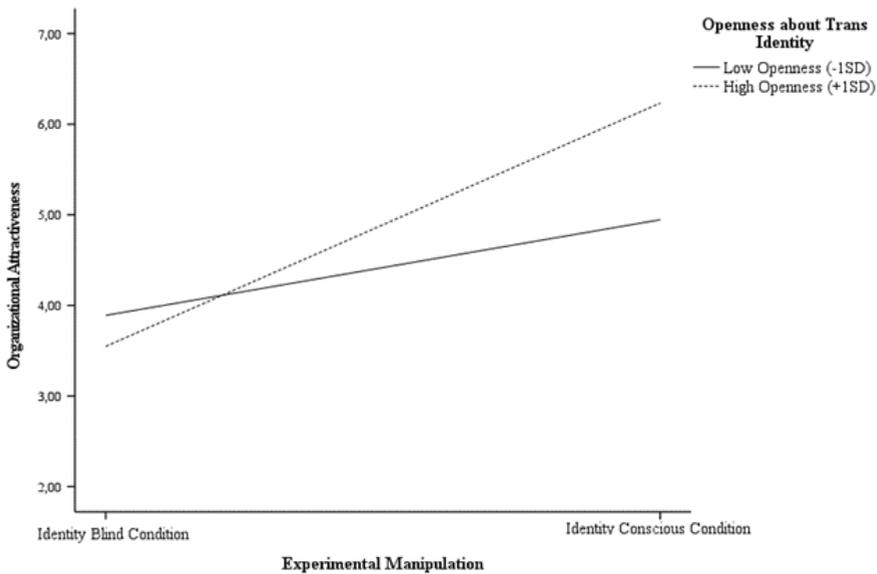
Figure 2. Moderation Effect of Generalized Openness About Gender Identity on Organizational Attractiveness

Exploratory Analyses: The Role of Race/Ethnicity

We conducted an additional linear regression analysis to explore (a) potential differences between white (coded a 0) and non-white (coded as 1) participants in organizational attraction, and (b) a possible interaction effect between race/ethnicity and organizational approach. We found no significant main or interactive effects ($ps>.239$).

Discussion

In support of H1, this study provided evidence that organizations that recognize, value, and celebrate group-based diversity may be more effective at attracting LGBTQ+ talent than organizations ignoring those differences.

Exploratory analyses suggest that while this preference for identity conscious organizations is not contingent on how open LGBTQ+ individuals are about their sexual orientation, some subgroup differences may occur. Specifically, transgender participants who were generally more open about their gender identity found identity conscious organizations to be more attractive. Given that gender identity for transgender individuals may not always conform to the gender binary, concealing their gender identity and expression can be challenging (Cumberbatch, 2021;

Law et al., 2011; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2016; Morgenroth & Ryan, 2021). Consequently, it is plausible that those who are more open about their gender identity may be drawn to organizations that explicitly include and embrace diverse social identities in their diversity approach. The pattern of results suggests an intriguing possibility that the degree of openness about gender identity among transgender participants may influence their perception of diversity cues. However, it is important to interpret these findings with caution due to the exploratory nature of the analyses and the limitations posed by the relatively small sample size of the subgroup.

Considering the majority of null findings regarding the variable of openness in Study 1, we decided to not pursue further exploration of this variable in our subsequent studies. Since an error with the sampling tool resulted in limited representation of transgender participants in Study 1, we took extra precautions in the next studies to ensure we have adequate transgender representation in our sample.

STUDY 2

Study 2 sought to replicate and expand upon the results from Study 1. In addition to re-testing the direct relationship between ideology and organizational attractiveness (H1), the goal was to uncover whether identity safety perceptions could be the psychological mechanism underlying LGBTQ+ individuals' preference for an identity conscious organization over an identity blind one (H2).

Participants and Procedure

Based on sample norms from other studies that used similar mediation models and a supplementary Monte Carlo analysis which suggested a sample of 400-500 to achieve power values around 0.8 (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Joo et al., 2016; Leung et al., 2021), we requested 500 responses on Prolific. We received 499 responses. Thirty-seven participants did not meet our pre-registered criteria and were excluded before analysis. Our final sample included 462 participants (M_{age}=30.48, SD_{age}=10.02, for demographics see Table 1, for means and correlations see Table 2).

The procedure was largely identical to Study 1. One difference was that participants additionally indicated their anticipated experiences of authenticity, belonging and justice at the company.

Materials and Measures

The diversity approach vignettes, the organizational attractiveness measure (α=.95), the manipulation check, and demographics measures were identical to the ones used in Study 1.

Anticipated authenticity was measured using four items from an adapted version of the authenticity subscale from the Perceived Group Inclusion Scale (PGIS; Jansen et al., 2014). A sample item is: "This organization will allow me to present myself the way I am." (α=.99).

Anticipated belonging was measured using four items from an adapted version of the belongingness subscale from the PGIS (Jansen et al., 2014). A sample item is: "This organization will give me the feeling that I belong." (α=.96).

Anticipated justice was measured using four items from an adapted version of the Perceived Overall Justice scale (POJ; Ambrose & Schminke, 2009). A sample item is: "Overall, I will be treated fairly by this organization." (α=.95).[4]

Results

Measurement and Manipulation Checks

We conducted a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) on the authenticity, belonging and justice items to check whether the slight rewording had affected the factor structure of the instruments (not pre-registered). For authenticity and belonging all items loaded highly (>.80) on the latent variable for each instrument respectively. For the justice scale all items apart from one item ("Most of the people who work here will say they are often treated unfairly.") loaded acceptably on the latent variable (>.75). Since removing this item did not change the results, we kept it in analyses as originally planned.

Participants in the identity conscious condition more strongly perceived the organization to value group differences in the work setting (*M*=6.14, *SD*=1.16) than participants in the identity blind condition (*M*=2.80, *SD*=1.78), *t*(401.73)=-23.99, *p*<.001, 95%CI [-3.62, -3.07], Cohen's *d*=1.50), indicating our manipulation was successful.

---

4   We additionally measured and explored the role of personal diversity ideology in Study 2. Further details can be found in the SOM.

Hypothesis Testing

Consistent with H1, participants in the identity conscious condition found the organization more attractive (*M*=5.40, *SD*=1.16) than participants in the identity blind condition (*M*=4.14, *SD*=1.59, *t*(426.37)=-9.77, *p*<.001, 95%CI [-1.52,-1.01], Cohen's *d*=1.40).

We tested our full model (Figure 1) using the PROCESS procedure in SPSS (Model 4; Hayes, 2017). We estimated the indirect effects of diversity approach on organizational attractiveness through anticipated authenticity, belonging and justice[5]. Organizational diversity approach was dummy coded, with identity blind ideology (coded as 0) as the reference condition. To test the indirect effects in the model, we calculated a bias-corrected confidence interval for each indirect effect based on 10,000 bootstrap samples. All path coefficients can be found in Figure 3.
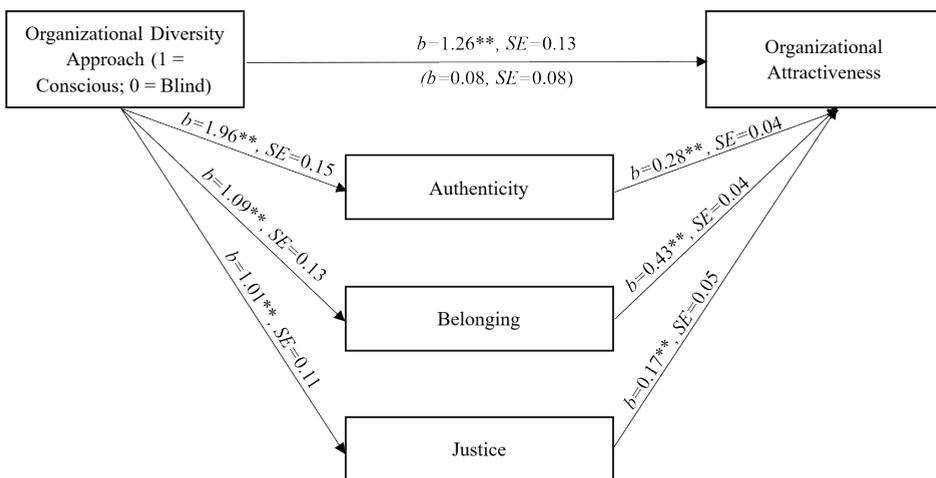

Figure 3. Path Coefficients for the Indirect Effects in Study 2
Note. n= 462
*p<.05, **p<.001

---

5   Given that these three aspects are subcomponents of an overarching safety variable, one might wonder whether they should be analysed as a single construct rather than as separate parts. We chose to analyse the three paths separately because it provides more detailed information about potential variations in strength. Furthermore, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) has demonstrated that a three-factor model fits the data significantly better than a one-factor model. Details of the CFA can be found in the SOM.

Organizational identity consciousness (vs. blindness) predicted higher levels of anticipated authenticity, belonging, and justice. All three identity safety indicators were positively associated with attractiveness. There was a significant indirect effect of organizational diversity ideology on organizational attractiveness through authenticity ($b_{indirect}$=0.55, SE=0.12, 95%CI [0.34,0.80]), belonging ($b_{indirect}$=0.47, SE=0.10, 95%CI [0.28, 0.68]), and justice ($b_{indirect}$=0.17, SE=0.07, 95%CI [0.05, 0.31]).

Exploratory Analyses: Intragroup Variation

We performed a series of regression analyses to explore (a) possible differences between cisgender (coded as 0) and transgender (coded as 1) participants in their reported organizational attraction and anticipated authenticity, belonging, and justice, and (b) a possible interaction effect between organizational approach and gender identity.

Across conditions, transgender participants reported significantly lower organizational attractiveness (b=-0.50, SE=0.15, p=.001 95%CI [-0.79, -0.20]), anticipated belonging (b=-0.52, SE=0.16, p<.001, 95%CI [-0.83, -0.22]) and anticipated justice (b=-0.33, SE=0.13, p=.013, 95%CI [-0.59, -0.07]) than cisgender participants. The difference in anticipated authenticity between transgender and cisgender participants was not significant (p=.128). We found no support for an interaction between organizational approach and gender identity on the dependent measures (ps >.200; see Table 5).

Table 5. Multiple Regression Analyses of Intragroup Variation and Interaction Effect of Transgender Identity on Dependent Variables in Study 2

	Model 1 – Intercept only			Model 2 – Intragroup variation			Model 3 – Interaction effects		
	B(SE)	*95% CI*	*P*	*B(SE)*	*95% CI*	*p*	*B(SE)*	*95% CI*	*p*
Organizational Attractiveness									
Diversity Approach	1.26(0.13)	1.00, 1.52	<.001	1.26(0.13)	1.01, 1.52	<.001	1.17(0.15)	0.88, 1.46	<.001
Gender Identity				-0.50(0.15)	-0.79, -0.20	.001	-0.69(0.21)	-1.10, -0.27	.001
Approach * Gender Identity							0.39(0.30)	-0.20, 0.98	.200
Anticipated Authenticity									
Diversity Approach	1.96(0.15)	1.66, 2.25	<.001	1.96(0.15)	1.66, 2.26	<.001	1.94(0.17)	1.60, 2.28	<.001
Gender Identity				-0.27(0.18)	-0.62, 0.08	.128	-0.30(0.25)	-0.79, 0.19	.225
Approach * Gender Identity							0.07(0.35)	-0.63, 0.76	.848
Anticipated Belonging									
Diversity Approach	1.09(0.14)	0.82, 1.35	<.001	1.09(0.13)	0.83, 1.35	<.001	1.04(0.15)	0.74, 1.34	<.001

	Model 1 – Intercept only			Model 2 – Intragroup variation			Model 3 – Interaction effects		
	B(SE)	95% CI	P	B(SE)	95% CI	p	B(SE)	95% CI	p
Gender Identity				-0.52(0.16)	-0.83, -0.22	<.001	-0.63(0.22)	-1.06, -0.19	.005
Diversity Approach * Gender Identity							0.21(0.31)	-0.40, 0.82	.502
Anticipated Justice									
Diversity Approach	1.01(0.11)	0.78, 1.23	<.001	1.01(0.11)	0.79, 1.23	<.001	1.03(0.13)	0.78, 1.29	<.001
Gender Identity				-0.33(0.13)	-0.59,-0.07	.013	-0.28(0.19)	-0.65, 0.09	.131
Diversity Approach * Gender Identity							-0.10(0.27)	-0.62, 0.43	.718

Note. Diversity Approach is coded 1 = identity consciousness and 0 = identity blindness; Gender Identity is coded 1 = transgender and 0 = cisgender.

2

Exploratory Analyses: The Role of Race/Ethnicity

We conducted a series of linear regression analyses to examine the difference between white (coded a 0) vs non-white (coded as 1) participants on organizational attraction, anticipated authenticity, belonging, and justice. We also tested for an interaction effect between organizational approach and race/ethnicity. We found no significant main or interactive effects on any of the dependent measures (*ps*>.188).

Robustness Check

We noticed that some participants from Study 1 also took part in Study 2. To adjust for potential inflated effects due to the sample overlap, we re-ran the results of Study 2 after removing all participants that also participated in Study 1 (adjusted *n*=396). The results and conclusions were identical.

Discussion

Replicating Study 1, Study 2 showed that LGBTQ+ individuals perceive an identity conscious organization as more appealing for employment than an identity blind organization. This preference is explained by identity safety. LGBTQ+ individuals believe that in an identity conscious company, they can be more authentic, belong more, and be treated fairly.

Exploratory analyses demonstrated that transgender individuals report lower attraction, belonging, and justice than cisgender individuals regardless of the organization's diversity approach. This finding aligns with research on transgender individuals in the labor market, which consistently highlights the heightened challenges faced by this group. (Law et al., 2011; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2016; Pepper & Lorah, 2008).

STUDY 3

The first two studies showed that employing a diversity conscious approach can help organizations attract LGBTQ+ talent. In Study 3, we test whether the benefits of a diversity conscious approach extend to incumbents, reducing LGBTQ+ employees' turnover intentions (Cohen et al., 2016; Griffeth et al., 2000). We further gauge the role of the three indicators of identity safety in explaining the relationship between perceived diversity approach and turnover intentions.

Understanding whether a conscious diversity approach predicts employees' workplace withdrawal behaviors has two key implications. First, it broadens our

understanding of the reach of diversity approaches beyond experimental settings. This complements the first two studies in important ways and adds to the ecological validity of our theoretical model. Second, attracting talent is only one part of the diversity puzzle; many organizations have difficulty retaining talent from traditionally underrepresented groups who have entered their company. Indeed, research shows that minority employees show higher turnover than majority employees (Deery et al., 2011; Hofhuis et al., 2014; Jones & Harter, 2005). Given that turnover is highly costly for organizations, understanding conditions under which this may be limited is of great importance for organizations.

Participants and Procedure

Based on similar a-priori considerations as in Study 2, we requested 500 responses on Prolific. Fifty-five participants did not meet our criteria and were excluded. Our final sample included 445 participants (M_{age}=32.73, SD_{age}=9.41; for demographics see Table 1, for means and correlations see Table 2).

In the survey description, participants read that we were interested in their experiences at work. After providing informed consent, participants completed a short questionnaire about their demographics. They then reported the diversity approach of their current organization, turnover intentions, sense of authenticity, belonging and justice at work.

Materials and Measures

Organizational diversity approach was measured with nine items: four items assessing perceived identity consciousness of own organization and five items assessing perceived identity blindness, adapted from Dang and colleagues (2022). Example items include: "My organization behaves in ways that ignore employees' demographic background." and "My organization believes that employees' demographic differences should be acknowledged and valued.". We conducted a principal components analysis, using a direct oblimin rotation (Conway & Huffcutt, 2003). The results showed two factors with eigenvalues 4.61 (four diversity consciousness items and two reverse-coded blindness items accounting for 51.25% of the variance) and 1.48 (three remaining items accounting for 16.46% of the variance). Consistent with our pre-registered approach, and other studies providing theoretical support and empirical precedent for approaching ideology as a unitary construct (see Koenig & Richeson, 2010; Martin & Phillips, 2017), we created a single measure of diversity approach using the items for the first factor with higher scores representing a more conscious approach and lower scores representing a more blind approach (α=.90). We ran a series of robustness checks on our model

and findings (e.g., controlling for a scale comprising the three other items), which yielded no meaningful changes in our result patterns or interpretations. These can be found in the SOM.

The measures for demographic variables, authenticity (α=.98)*, belonging* (α=.96) and justice (α=.96) were the same as in Study 2. Turnover intentions were measured using two items from Lawler and colleagues (1975). The items were "I often think about quitting." and "I will probably look for a new job in the next year." (r=.73).[6]

Results

Initial Check: Adjusting for Common Method Bias (CMB)

To mitigate potential risks associated with common method bias (CMB) - artificially inflated relationships between variables (Spector & Brannick, 2010) - we followed the scholarly recommendations (Simmering et al., 2015) and included a marker variable that was theoretically unrelated to any of our other variables (i.e., preference for the color green). Controlling for the effects of this variable had no notable effects on our findings.

Hypothesis Testing

A linear regression supported H3: higher levels of perceived organizational identity consciousness were related to lower turnover intentions amongst LGBTQ+ employees (b=-0.58, SE=0.07, p<.001, 95%CI [-0.71, -0.46]). We then tested the theoretical model (see Figure 1) using the PROCESS procedure in SPSS (Model 4; Hayes, 2017), employing a similar strategy as in Study 2. One difference was the predictor: perceived organizational diversity approach was a continuous variable, with higher scores indicating a more conscious organization (see Figure 4 for all path coefficients). The results showed that greater perceived identity consciousness predicted a higher sense of authenticity, belonging and justice. Belonging and justice, but not authenticity, were in turn associated with lower turnover intentions. There were significant indirect effects of organizational diversity approach on turnover intentions through belonging ($b_{indirect}$= -0.19, SE=0.06, 95%CI [-0.31,-0.07]) and justice ($b_{indirect}$=-0.20, SE=0.05, 95%CI [-0.30, -0.11]). The indirect effect through authenticity ($b_{indirect}$=-0.07, SE=0.05, 95%CI [-0.18, 0.04]) was not significant.

---

6   We additionally measured and explored the role of supervisor diversity approach in Study 3. Further details can be found in the SOM.
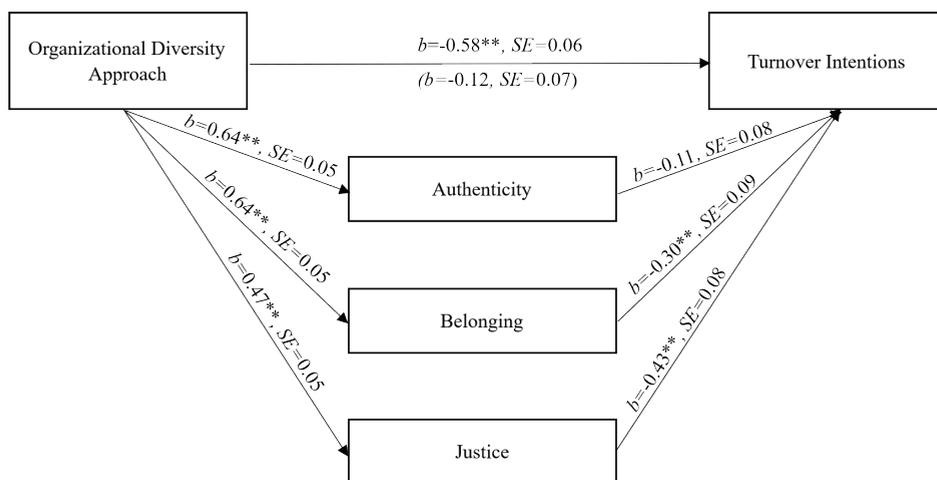
Figure 4. Path Coefficients for the Indirect Effects in Study 3
Note. n= 445
*p<.05, **p<.001

Exploratory Analyses: Intragroup Variation

Using a series of linear regression analyses, we estimated how transgender participants (coded as 1), compared to cisgender participants (coded as 0), experienced turnover intentions, belonging, authenticity, and justice. We also tested for an interaction effect between organizational diversity ideology and transgender identity.

Across conditions, transgender (vs. cisgender) participants reported significantly higher turnover intentions (b=0.66, SE=0.21, p=.002, 95%CI [0.25, 1.08]) and lower authenticity (b=-0.53, SE=0.15, p<.001, 95%CI [-0.82, -0.23]), belonging (b=-0.60, SE=0.15, p<.001, 95%CI [-0.90, -0.30]), and justice (b=-0.37, SE=0.15, p=.014, 95%CI [-0.66, -0.07]).

Of all our measures, we found a single significant interaction for sense of belonging (p=.049). However, we refrain from drawing definitive conclusions regarding this interaction due to the large number of tests conducted, the relatively large p-value, and the absence of similar findings in any of our other studies. The details of the regression slopes can be found in Table 6.

Table 6. Multiple Regression Analyses of Intragroup Variation and Interaction Effect of Transgender Identity on Dependent Variables in Study 3

	Model 1 – Intercept only			Model 2 – Intragroup variation			Model 3 – Interaction effects		
	B(SE)	95% CI	P	B(SE)	95% CI	p	B(SE)	95% CI	p
Turnover Intentions									
Diversity Approach	-0.58(0.07)	-0.71, -0.46	<.001	-0.55(0.07)	-0.68, -0.43	<.001	-0.52(0.08)	-0.67, -0.37	<.001
Gender Identity				0.66(0.21)	0.25, 1.08	.002	1.27(0.71)	-0.13, 2.67	.074
Diversity Approach * Gender Identity							-0.13(0.15)	-0.42, 0.16	.369
Authenticity									
Diversity Approach	0.64(0.05)	0.55, 0.73	<.001	0.62(0.05)	0.52, 0.71	<.001	0.60(0.05)	0.49, 0.70	<.001
Gender Identity				-0.53(0.15)	-0.82, -0.23	<.001	-0.86(0.50)	-1.85, 0.13	.088
Diversity Approach * Gender Identity							0.07(0.10)	-0.13, 0.28	.488
Belonging									
Diversity Approach	0.64(0.05)	0.54, 0.73	<.001	0.61(0.05)	0.52, 0.70	<.001	0.55(0.06)	0.45, 0.66	<.001
Gender Identity				-0.60(0.15)	-0.90, -0.30	<.001	-1.56(0.51)	-2.56, -0.57	.002

	Model 1 – Intercept only			Model 2 – Intragroup variation			Model 3 – Interaction effects		
	B(SE)	95% CI	P	B(SE)	95% CI	p	B(SE)	95% CI	p
Diversity Approach * Gender Identity							0.21(0.11)	0.00, 0.41	.049
Justice									
Diversity Approach	0.47(0.05)	0.38, 0.56	<.001	0.45(0.05)	0.36, 0.54	<.001	0.41(0.05)	0.31, 0.52	<.001
Gender Identity				-0.37(0.15)	-0.66, -0.07	.014	-1.01(0.50)	-1.99, -0.03	.043
Diversity Approach * Gender Identity							0.14(0.10)	-0.06, 0.34	.176

Note. Diversity Ap proach is a continuous variable with higher scores indicating a more conscious organizations. Gender Identity is coded 1 = transgender and 0 = cisgender.

2

Exploratory Analyses: The Role of Race/Ethnicity

We conducted a series of linear regression analyses to examine the difference between white (coded a 0) vs non-white (coded as 1) participants on turnover intentions, authenticity, belonging and justice. We also tested for an interaction effect between organizational diversity approach and race/ethnicity. We found no main or interactive effects of race/ethnicity on turnover intentions, authenticity, belonging or justice (*ps>*.106).

Exploratory Analyses: Employee Tenure

Employees' work experience could potentially have an impact on their sensitivity to diversity signals or influence the weight they might place on diversity signals. For example, employees who have worked at the company longer may have a deeper understanding of the importance of an identity conscious versus identity blind approach to the organizational climate compared to those who have worked for the company for a shorter period. To investigate this possibility, we used a series of linear regression analyses examining the interaction between participants' tenure (the number of years worked at their current organization) and the organization's diversity approach. We examined how this interaction influenced their turnover intentions, as well as their sense of authenticity, belonging, and justice within the organization.

We found a negative relationship between tenure and turnover intentions (*b*=-0.04, *SE*=0.02, *p*=.041, 95%CI [-0.07, -0.00]); the longer participants had worked at their organization, the lower their turnover intentions were. Tenure was not associated with a sense of authenticity, belonging or justice. Intriguingly, we observed tenure by organizational diversity approach interactions, on turnover intentions (*b*=0.03, *SE*=0.01, *p*=.040, 95%CI [0.00, 0.05]), sense of authenticity (*b*=-0.03, *SE*=0.01, *p*=.009, 95%CI [-0.04, -0.01]), and belonging (*b*=-0.02, *SE*=0.01, *p*=.033, 95%CI [-0.04, -0.00]). Unpacking these interactions showed that while diversity consciousness benefits all employees, their benefits are more pronounced among LGBT+ employees with a shorter tenure (see Figures 1S-3S in the SOM).

Discussion

Study 3 offered additional evidence to the utility of a diversity conscious approach for organizations aiming to enhance and retain LGBTQ+ representation. Adding to the insights from the first two studies that demonstrated that identity consciousness can pull new LGBTQ+ employees to companies, this study showed that this approach can also help companies hold on to LGBTQ+ talent they already have.

Additional analyses revealed intriguing insights. First, consistent with Study 2 and past research, transgender employees' workplace experiences appeared to be less positive than those of cisgender employees (Law et al., 2011; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2016; Pepper & Lorah, 2008). Further, while all LGBTQ+ employees responded positively to diversity consciousness, we did not find strong support for additional benefits of diversity consciousness for transgender employees. Second, the benefits of diversity consciousness for LGBTQ+ employees are more pronounced among those with relatively shorter tenures. This aligns with the idea that new employees may rely more on the signals conveyed by an organization's diversity approach compared to those with longer tenures, who may have additional or alternative sources of information to form their impressions.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Three pre-registered studies extended the diversity approaches paradigm to understand how organizations can attract and retain LGBTQ+ talent. We predicted and found that LGBTQ+ individuals find identity conscious organizations to be more attractive employers than identity blind organizations and that this preference is explained by anticipated authenticity, belonging and justice (identity safety). Critically, we also demonstrated that the benefits of identity consciousness extend to incumbents: LGBTQ+ employees report lower turnover intentions to the extent that they perceive their organization to be identity conscious, primarily because these contexts improve their sense of belonging and perceived justice.

Theoretical Implications

This work advances the diversity approaches paradigm by extending it to the workplace experiences of minoritized employees with group memberships that are often not readily visible to others. A clear show of support through identity conscious messaging appears to have a positive effect on LGBTQ+ individuals, who may find it more difficult to ascertain a safe working environment due to the lack of availability of visible cues of safety as are available to minorities with more visible stigma (Apfelbaum et al., 2016; Banchefsky & Park, 2018; 2016; Clair et al., 2005; Johnson et al., 2019; Kruk & Matsick, 2021). The current contribution is among the first to examine diversity approaches for LGBTQ+ workers, along with the recent work by Kirby and colleagues' (2024), which found a positive impact of identity consciousness on LGBTQ+ workers' identity disclosure, perceived fairness and belonging. Our study constructively extends these findings to the broader domain

of organizational attractiveness and employee turnover and further expands upon identity safety as a mechanism underlying these relationships.

Our contribution to the broader discussions within the diversity approach paradigm lies in elucidating whether LGBTQ+ individuals prefer and benefit from identity-conscious approaches, akin to racial minorities, or from identity-blind approaches, as observed with women in previous research. Our consistent finding that LGBTQ+ employees respond more positively to a conscious approach fits prior empirical findings regarding racial minorities. One possible explanation of this overlap is that both racial minorities and LGBTQ+ individuals face disadvantage in the workplace that is attributed to social inequities and opportunity-based differences, thus a conscious approach can effectively place emphasis on these inequities and highlight a need and support for inclusive policies. In contrast, the disadvantage faced by women in the workplace is often attributed to perceived biological and internal differences. Accordingly, research has demonstrated that a focus on consciousness accentuates biological stereotypes, in ways that limit women's potential for success (Martin, 2023).

It is intriguing to observe that, despite research suggesting that a blind approach may better cater to the needs of women in the workplace (Gündemir et al., 2019; Leslie et al., 2020; Martin & Phillips, 2017), LGBTQ+ women in our samples predominantly express a preference for a conscious approach. For instance, across studies we find no interactive effects of participant gender suggesting that women's responses do not systematically differ from men's or other genders' (see SOM for details). We posit that, akin to the phenomenon of ethnic prominence, queer women in this study may be prioritizing the more stigmatized aspect of their identity—their queer identity—over their identity as women. Consequently, they appear to gravitate towards a conscious organizational approach, which proves more beneficial for their queerness, as opposed to a blind organizational approach that might be more advantageous for them as women (Levin et al., 2002; Taylor et al., 2012).

Given the relatively concealable nature of an LGBTQ+ identity, we sought to understand whether the effects of an identity conscious organization would differ across individuals with differing degrees of openness about their identity. Potential shifts in the benefits of identity consciousness across persons who are more or less "out" would have different theoretical implications. For example, if effects are restricted to individuals who are out, this would suggest their reach is limited to public interactions. However, if their impact extends to individuals who are "closeted", this could imply a broader impact on internal, psychological

responses. Our lack of findings with regards to one's openness around their sexual orientation, in conjunction with the consistently documented advantages of identity consciousness for LGBTQ+ individuals in various studies, suggests that even for closeted LGBTQ+ individuals—whose needs may be challenging to assess—employing an overarching conscious diversity approach can be beneficial. In addition to the sexual identity, we also considered the role of one's openness about their gender identity. Outside of one instance where we observed that transgender individuals who were overall more open about their gender identity showed a stronger preference for conscious organizations, we found no strong evidence for a moderating role of gender identity openness. Overall, these findings suggest that identity consciousness has far reaching benefits for LGBTQ+ employees, even when they can and/or choose to conceal their identity.

Our work offers valuable peripheral insights on the workplace experiences of transgender individuals, a subgroup often overlooked in research. The additional finding that transgender individuals overall anticipate and experience lower authenticity, belonging, and justice and show higher turnover intentions (even in more identity-conscious organizations) underscores the heightened struggles this subgroup encounters compared to their cisgender counterparts (Cancela et al., 2024; Martinez et al., 2017; McFadden, 2015; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2016). Given that nearly all transgender participants in our study also did not identify as heterosexual, this additional finding contributes to the intersectionality literature, suggesting an additive effect of multiple stigmatized gender and sexual identities on reduced positive experiences and expectations in the workplace (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). For future research we would recommend active recruitment of heterosexual transgender participants to enable a nuanced examination of the distinctive effects arising from being both a sexual and gender minority, contrasting with the experiences of those who solely identify as a gender minority. Although our exploratory findings do not indicate an additional advantage of identity consciousness for transgender employees compared to cisgender employees, the positive responses among transgender employees to conscious approaches (as opposed to blind approaches) suggest that organizations implementing a conscious approach may be better equipped to provide a sense of safety and create an appealing workplace for this subgroup of LGBTQ+ individuals.

This research examines the psychological mechanisms triggered by diversity approaches and highlights that LGBTQ+ (prospective) employees' positive responses to a conscious approach are explained by experiences of identity safety. Former work has been ambiguous in conceptualizing identity safety, often

confounding its predictors, experiences, and consequences. By disentangling critical dimensions of identity safety experiences -authenticity, belonging and justice- this work offers additional construct clarity to the identity safety literature. That is, identity safety is distinct from its antecedents (e.g., organizational cues such as diversity messages) or its consequences (e.g., employee withdrawal behaviors) and should be carefully defined and operationalized in empirical work.

The discrepancy between findings regarding anticipated (Study 1 and 2) and experienced (Study 3) authenticity suggests that the expectation of authenticity and belonging may be more distinguishable than their actual experience. Our results demonstrate that while identity consciousness activates all three safety dimensions, their impact on LGBTQ+ employee responses unfolds in different ways and depends on whether one is a prospective versus an incumbent employee. Moreover, our findings suggest that, while much research construes and studies authenticity and belonging in conjunction, under the umbrella of inclusion (e.g., Jansen et al., 2014), perceivers may differentiate between them depending on the context. That is, scholars should consider the theoretical disentanglement of these constructs as separately meaningful to employees.

Practical Implications

A key practical implication of this research is that organizations that want to create a work environment that attracts LGBTQ+ talent and reduces turnover, should consider incorporating identity consciousness in their diversity approach. They should explicitly communicate this approach in job ads and internal company communication with employees. In addition, we find that use of an identity conscious approach targets multiple aspects of the diversity puzzle, in that it is not only useful in attracting LGBTQ+ talent but also plays a role in retaining said talent.

Additionally, we find that the impact of the diversity approach on turnover intentions, authenticity, and a sense of belonging is more pronounced among newer LGBTQ+ employees compared to their longer tenured counterparts. We posit that this discrepancy arises because LGBTQ+ employees may gradually rely less on cues derived from an organization's diversity approach over time. For recent LGBTQ+ hires, the diversity approach may serve as one of the primary signals of a safe working environment. Longer tenured employees can identify similar individuals within the organization and discern additional cues of safety beyond the diversity approach. This underscores the importance of the HR communication of organizational diversity approaches as part of onboarding activities. As new employees, particularly those from traditionally underrepresented groups like

LGBTQ+ individuals, join the company, they may be particularly attentive to signals of identity consciousness. Organizations that embrace a conscious approach and proactively communicate their stance stand to benefit by fostering a more inclusive environment and facilitating talent retention.

Limitations and Future Directions

Our study was not without limitations. The primary focus on LGBTQ+ identity led us to forego recruiting a more ethnically diverse sample, limiting our ability to explore potential intersectional dynamics related to the impact of diversity approaches and safety signaling on racially minoritized individuals. While we were able to conduct exploratory analyses using meta-data from the data collection platform, which resulted in null effects, we are unable to draw strong conclusions from these given that only ~10% of our sample in each study represented non-white individuals. The lack of focus on intersectional dynamics is a common problem in the diversity management literature. Individuals are often categorized into a single minoritized identity and the effects of other aspects of their identity and how they interact with diversity approaches are left unattended (Kruk & Matsick, 2021; Martin & Phillips, 2017; Purdie-Vaughns & Walton, 2011). While the current work is unique in unveiling the LGBTQ+ responses to diversity approaches, future work should delve deeper into the complexities of these responses by explicitly exploring the interaction with race/ethnicity.

Further, the first two studies examined the effects of diversity approaches in a fictitious setting. While ecological validity concerns are offset by Study 3, future research should study LGBTQ+ candidates' job application behavior as a factor of organizational diversity approach in more realistic settings.

Another avenue for future research could involve broadening the scope of impact assessments related to diversity approaches by incorporating additional dependent measures. Although our current study primarily focused on metrics aligned with organizational objectives, such as talent attraction and retention, diversity approaches might yield broader benefits for the well-being and satisfaction of the target group (see Kirby et al., 2024, for empirical support for such benefits in the context of identity disclosure). Expanding our understanding of such impacts would extend beyond a strictly organization-centric perspective in management science. Furthermore, our research scrutinized the influence of diversity approaches through vision statements—abstract ideals rather than concrete policies. Considering previous findings indicating that the abstraction level of a pro-diversity focus yields different effects (see Bradley et al., 2023; Yogeeswaran

& Dasgupta, 2014), investigating the impact of specific diversity-focused policies could offer valuable complementary insights. In this regard, and also in light of the complexities highlighted in this study, scholarly work should explicitly unpack the unique ways organizations can signal identity consciousness to (prospective) LGBTQ+ employees.

Conclusion

While research on the diversity approaches paradigm has expanded, its utility for employee groups with invisible social identities remained largely unknown. The current work demonstrates that organizations that embrace and communicate an identity conscious approach will attract and retain more LGBTQ+ talent.

Chapter 2 established the foundational importance of organizational DEI efforts (specifically diversity approaches) in shaping LGBTQ+ employees' perceptions and experiences. The next chapter (Chapter 3) builds on this foundation by exploring a less overt but potentially significant consequence of these diversity initiatives: the extent to which they contribute to feelings of mere tolerance (rather than genuine acceptance) among LGBTQ+ individuals.

REFERENCES

Ambrose, M. L., & Schminke, M. (2009). The role of overall justice judgments in organizational justice research: A test of mediation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *94*(2), 491–500. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013203

Apfelbaum, E. P., Stephens, N. M., & Reagans, R. E. (2016). Beyond one-size-fits-all: Tailoring diversity approaches to the representation of social groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *111*(4), 547–566. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000071

Avery, D. R., & McKay, P. F. (2006). Target practice: An organizational impression management approach to attracting minority and female job applicants. *Personnel Psychology*, *59(1)*, 157–187. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2006.00807.x

Badgett, L., Lau, H., Sears, B., & Ho, D. (2007). Bias in the workplace: Consistent evidence of sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination. *Chicago-Kent Law Review*, *84*.

Banchefsky, S., & Park, B. (2018). Negative gender ideologies and gender-science stereotypes are more pervasive in male-dominated academic disciplines. *Social Sciences, 7(2),* 27. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci7020027

Berdahl, J. L., & Moore, C. (2006). Workplace harassment: Double jeopardy for minority women. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(2), 426–436. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.2.426

Bilimoria, D., & Stewart, A. J. (2009). "Don't ask, don't tell": The academic climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender faculty in science and engineering. *NWSA Journal*, *21*(2), 85–103. https://doi.org/10.1353/ff.2009.a316151

Bird, R. B., & Smith, E. A. (2005). Signaling theory, strategic interaction, and symbolic capital. *Current Anthropology*, 46(2), 221–248. https://doi.org/10.1086/427115

Bizzeth, S. R., & Beagan, B. L. (2023). "Ah, it's best not to mention that here:" Experiences of LGBTQ+ health professionals in (heteronormative) workplaces in Canada. *Frontiers in Sociology, 8,* 1138628. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2023.1138628

Bradley, C., Moergen, K. J. N., Roumpi, D., & Simon, L. S. (2023). Don't just tell me, show me: Impacting perceptions of organizational attraction and fit using activating LGBT diversity signals. *Personnel Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12595

Brewster, M. E., Velez, B. L., Mennicke, A., & Tebbe, E. (2014). Voices from beyond: A thematic content analysis of transgender employees' workplace experiences. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 1(2),* 159–169. https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000030

Buttner, E. H., Lowe, K. B., & Billings-Harris, L. (2010). Diversity climate impact on employee of color outcomes: Does justice matter? *Career Development International*, *15(3)*, 239–258. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620431011053721

Cancela, D., Stutterheim, S. E., & Uitdewilligen, S. (2024). The workplace experiences of transgender and gender diverse employees: A systematic literature review using the minority stress model. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 1–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2024.2304053

Cech, E. A., & Rothwell, W. R. (2020). LGBT workplace inequality in the federal workforce: Intersectional processes, organizational contexts, and turnover considerations. *ILR Review*, *73*(1), 25–60. https://doi.org/10.1177/0019793919843508

2

Chaney, K. E., Sanchez, D. T., & Remedios, J. D. (2016). Organizational identity safety cue transfers. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *42*(11), 1564–1576. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167216665096

Cheryan, S., & Markus, H. R. (2020). Masculine defaults: Identifying and mitigating hidden cultural biases. *Psychological Review*, *127*(6), 1022–1052. https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000209

Choi, S. (2011). Organizational justice and employee work attitudes: The federal case. *The American Review of Public Administration*, *41*(2), 185–204. https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074010373275

Clair, J. A., Beatty, J. E., & MacLean, T. L. (2005). Out of sight but not out of mind: Managing invisible social identities in the workplace. *Academy of Management Review*, *30*(1), 78–95. https://doi.org/10.2307/20159096

Coffman, K. B., Coffman, L. C., & Ericson, K. M. M. (2017). The size of the LGBT population and the magnitude of antigay sentiment are substantially underestimated. *Management Science*, *63*(10), 3168–3186. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2016.2503

Cohen, G., Blake, R. S., & Goodman, D. (2016). Does turnover intention matter? Evaluating the usefulness of turnover intention rate as a predictor of actual turnover rate. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, *36*(3), 240–263. https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X15581850

Colquitt, J. A. (2001). On the dimensionality of organizational justice: A construct validation of a measure. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *86*(3), 386–400. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.386

Colquitt, J. A., Scott, B. A., Rodell, J. B., Long, D. M., Zapata, C. P., Conlon, D. E., & Wesson, M. J. (2013). Justice at the millennium, a decade later: A meta-analytic test of social exchange and affect-based perspectives. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *98(2)*, 199–236. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031757

Compton, C. A., & Dougherty, D. S. (2017). Organizing sexuality: Silencing and the push–pull process of co-sexuality in the workplace. *Journal of Communication*, *67*(6), 874–896. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12336

Connelly, B. L., Certo, S. T., Ireland, R. D., & Reutzel, C. R. (2011). Signaling theory: A review and assessment. *Journal of Management*, *37*(1), 39–67. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310388419

Conway, J. M., & Huffcutt, A. I. (2003). A review and evaluation of exploratory factor analysis practices in organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods*, *6*(2), 147–168. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428103251541

Corlett, S., Di Marco, D., Munduate, L., & Arenas, A. (2022). Manifestations and reinforcement of heteronormativity in the workplace: A systematic scoping review. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *70(12),* 2714–2740. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2022.2074334

Cumberbatch, S. (2021). When your identity is inherently "unprofessional": Navigating rules of professional appearance rooted in cisheteronormative whiteness as black women and gender non-conforming professionals. *Journal of Civil Rights and Economic Development*, *34*(2), Article 2. https://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/jcred/vol34/iss2/2

Dang, C. T., Volpone, S. D., & Umphress, E. E. (2022). The ethics of diversity ideology: Consequences of leader diversity ideology on ethical leadership perception and organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 108(2),* 307–329. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001010

Das, B. L., & Baruah, M. (2013). Employee retention: A review of literature. *Journal of business and management*, 14(2), 8-16. https://doi.org/10.9790/487X-1420816

Deery, S., Walsh, J., & Guest, D. (2011). Workplace aggression: The effects of harassment on job burnout and turnover intentions. *Work, Employment and Society*, *25*(4), 742–759. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017011419707

Diamond, L. M., Pardo, S. T., & Butterworth, M. R. (2011). Transgender experience and identity. In S. J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx, & V. L. Vignoles (Eds.), *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* (pp. 629–647). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-7988-9_26

Doyle, D. M., & Barreto, M. (2022). Toward a more relational model of sexual minority identity concealment. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*. 52(5), 1911–1916. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-022-02491-5

Embrick, D. G., Walther, C. S., & Wickens, C. M. (2007). Working class masculinity: Keeping gay men and lesbians out of the workplace. *Sex Roles*, *56*(11), 757–766. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-007-9234-0

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2013). *European Union lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender survey: Results at a glance.* Publications Office. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2811/37741

Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A.-G., & Buchner, A. (2007). G*Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods*, *39*(2), 175–191. https://doi.org/10.3758/bf03193146

Flores, A. R., Carreño, M. F., & Shaw, A. (2023). Democratic backsliding and LGBTI acceptance. Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep53257.8

Fombrun, C., & Shanley, M. (1990). What's in a name? Reputation building and corporate strategy. *Academy of Management Journal*, *33*(2), 233–258. https://doi.org/10.2307/256324

Galupo, M. P., & Resnick, C. A. (2016). Experiences of LGBT microaggressions in the workplace: Implications for policy. In T. Köllen (Eds.), *Sexual Orientation and Transgender Issues in Organizations* (pp. 271–287). Berlin: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29623-4_16

Gamarel, K. E., Walker, J. J., Rivera, L., & Golub, S. A. (2014). Identity safety and relational health in youth spaces: A needs assessment with LGBTQ youth of color. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *11*, 289–315. https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2013.879464

Georgeac, O. A. M., & Rattan, A. (2023). The business case for diversity backfires: Detrimental effects of organizations' instrumental diversity rhetoric for underrepresented group members' sense of belonging. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 124(1), 69-108. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000394

Ghumman, S., Ryan, A., Barclay, L., & Markel, K. (2013). Religious discrimination in the workplace: a review and examination of current and future trends. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 28(4), 439–454. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-013-9290-0

Gorsuch, M. M. (2019). Gender, sexual orientation, and behavioral norms in the labor market. *ILR Review*, *72*(4), 927–954. https://doi.org/10.1177/0019793919832273

Granberg, M., Andersson, P. A., & Ahmed, A. (2020). Hiring discrimination against transgender people: evidence from a field experiment. *Labour Economics*, *65*, 101860. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2020.101860

2

Griffeth, R. W., Hom, P. W., & Gaertner, S. (2000). A meta-analysis of antecedents and correlates of employee turnover: Update, moderator tests, and research implications for the next millennium. *Journal of Management*, *26*(3), 463–488. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-2063(00)00043-X

Griffith, K. H., & Hebl, M. R. (2002). The disclosure dilemma for gay men and lesbians: "Coming out" at work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *87*(6), 1191–1199. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.6.1191

Groeneveld, S. (2011). Diversity and employee turnover in the Dutch public sector: Does diversity management make a difference? *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, *24*(6), 594–612. https://doi.org/10.1108/09513551111163675

Gündemir, S., & Galinsky, A. D. (2018). Multicolored blindfolds: How organizational multiculturalism can conceal racial discrimination and delegitimize racial discrimination claims. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *9*(7), 825–834. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550617726830

Gündemir, S., Martin, A. E., & Homan, A. C. (2019). Understanding diversity ideologies from the target's perspective: A review and future directions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*, Article 282. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00282

Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2009). How does sexual minority stigma "get under the skin"? A psychological mediation framework. *Psychological Bulletin*, *135*(5), 707–730. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016441

Hayes, A. F. (2017). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis, Second edition: A regression-based approach*. Guilford Publications. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uunl/detail.action?docID=5109647

Hebl, M. R., Martinez, L. R., Skorinko, J. L., Barron, L. G., & King, E. B. (2014). To be or not to be; and to see or not to see: The benefits of LGBT identity consciousness for organizations and employees. In K. M. Thomas, V. C. Plaut, & N. M. Tran (Eds.), *Diversity ideologies in organizations* (pp. 151–176). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Hennekam, S., & Ladge, J. J. (2023). Free to be me? Evolving gender expression and the dynamic interplay between authenticity and the desire to be accepted at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, *66*(5), 1529–1553. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2020.1308

Hentschel, T., Braun, S., Peus, C., & Frey, D. (2021). Sounds like a fit! Wording in recruitment advertisements and recruiter gender affect women's pursuit of career development programs via anticipated belongingness. *Human Resource Management*, *60*(4), 581–602. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.22043

Heres, L., & Benschop, Y. (2010). Taming diversity: An exploratory study on the travel of a management fashion. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, *29*(5), 436–457. https://doi.org/10.1108/02610151011052762

Highhouse, S., Lievens, F., & Sinar, E. F. (2003). Measuring attraction to organizations. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *63*(6), 986–1001. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164403258403

Hildebrand, L. K., Jusuf, C. C., & Monteith, M. J. (2020). Ally confrontations as identity-safety cues for marginalized individuals. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *50*(6), 1318–1333. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2692

Hinton, J. D. X., de la Piedad Garcia, X., Kaufmann, L. M., Koc, Y., & Anderson, J. R. (2022). A systematic and meta-analytic review of identity centrality among LGBTQ groups: An assessment of psychosocial correlates. *Journal of Sex Research*, 59(5), 568–586. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2021.1967849

Hofhuis, J., Van der Zee, K. I., & Otten, S. (2014). Comparing antecedents of voluntary job turnover among majority and minority employees. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, *33*(8), 735–749. https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-09-2013-0071

Howansky, K., Maimon, M., & Sanchez, D. (2021). Identity safety cues predict instructor impressions, belonging, and absences in the psychology classroom. *Teaching of Psychology*, 49(3), 212-217. https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628321990362

Iyer, A. (2022). Understanding advantaged groups' opposition to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies: The role of perceived threat. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *16*(5), Article e12666. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12666

Jansen, W. S., Otten, S., & Van der Zee, K. I. (2015). Being part of diversity: The effects of an all-inclusive multicultural diversity approach on majority members' perceived inclusion and support for organizational diversity efforts. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *18*(6), 817–832. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430214566892

Jansen, W. S., Otten, S., Van der Zee, K. I., & Jans, L. (2014). Inclusion: Conceptualization and measurement. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *44*(4), 370–385. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2011

Johnson, I., Pietri, E., Buck, D., & Daas, R. (2021). What's in a pronoun: Exploring gender pronouns as an organizational identity-safety cue among sexual and gender minorities. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 97, Article 104194. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2021.104194

Johnson, I. R., Pietri, E. S., Fullilove, F., & Mowrer, S. (2019). Exploring identity-safety cues and allyship among Black women students in STEM environments. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *43(2)*, 131–150. https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684319830926

Jones, J. R., & Harter, J. K. (2005). Race effects on the employee engagement-turnover intention relationship. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, *11*(2), 78–88. https://doi.org/10.1177/107179190501100208

Joo, Y., Moon, H., & Choi, B. (2016). A moderated mediation model of CSR and organizational attractiveness among job applicants: Roles of perceived overall justice and attributed motives. *Management Decision*, *54*, 1269–1293. https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-10-2015-0475

Kahn, K. B., Unzueta, M. M., Davies, P. G., Alston, A. T., & Lee, J. K. (2015). Will you value me and do I value you? The effect of phenotypic racial stereotypicality on organizational evaluations. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *59*, 130–138. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2015.03.008

King, E. B., Mohr, J. J., Peddie, C. I., Jones, K. P., & Kendra, M. (2017). Predictors of identity management: An exploratory experience-sampling study of lesbian, gay, and bisexual workers. *Journal of Management*, *43*(2), 476–502. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206314539350

Kirby, T. A., & Kaiser, C. R. (2020). Person-message fit: Racial identification moderates the benefits of multicultural and colorblind diversity approaches. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *47*(6), 873-890. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167220948707

2

Kirby, T. A., Barreto, M., Korine, R., Hendy, J., Osman, L., Stadie, S., & Tan, D. (2024). To conceal or reveal: Identity-conscious diversity ideologies facilitate sexual minority identity disclosure. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 54(1), 199-218. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2996

Kirby, T. A., Russell Pascual, N., & Hildebrand, L. K. (2023). The dilution of diversity: ironic effects of broadening diversity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*,. https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672231184925

Klarenaar, M., Van Ooien, A-L., Van der Toorn, J., Boes, M., Lakens, D., Stelling, L., Simons, M., Funk, M., van Goch, M., Veldhuizen, M., & Tetteroo, D. (2022). Towards a representation of unheard and unseen individuals in the hospital, workplace, and neighborhood. Centre for Unusual Collaborations.

Koenig, A. M., & Richeson, J. A. (2010). The contextual endorsement of sexblind versus sexaware ideologies. *Social Psychology*, *41*(3), 186–191. https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-9335/a000026

Köllen, T. (2013). Bisexuality and diversity management—Addressing the B in LGBT as a relevant "sexual orientation" in the workplace. *Journal of Bisexuality*, *13*(1), 122–137. https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2013.755728

Kruk, M., & Matsick, J. L. (2021). A taxonomy of identity safety cues based on gender and race: From a promising past to an intersectional and translational future. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*, *7*(4), 487–510. https://doi.org/10.1037/tps0000304

Kuyper, L. (2016). *LHBT Monitor 2016. Opvattingen over en ervaringen van lesbische, homoseksuele, biseksuele en transgender personen.* Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.

Law, C. L., Martinez, L. R., Ruggs, E. N., Hebl, M. R., & Akers, E. (2011). Trans-parency in the workplace: How the experiences of transsexual employees can be improved. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *79*, 710–723. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2011.03.018

Lawler, E., Cammann, C., Nadler, D., & Jenkins, D. (1975). *Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire*. https://doi.org/10.1037/t01581-000

Lee, D., & Zhang, Y. (2021). The value of public organizations' diversity reputation in women's and minorities' job choice decisions. *Public Management Review*, *23*(10), 1436–1455. https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2020.1751253

Lee, Y., Li, J.-Y., & Sunny Tsai, W.-H. (2021). Diversity-oriented leadership, internal communication, and employee outcomes: A perspective of racial minority employees. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *33*(5), 314–334. https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2021.2007388

Lehtonen, J. (2016). Experiences of non-heterosexual and trans youth on career choice and in the workplace. In T. Köllen (Ed.), *Sexual orientation and transgender issues in organizations: Global perspectives on LGBT workforce diversity* (pp. 289–306). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29623-4_17

Leslie, L. M., & Flynn, E. (2022). Diversity ideologies, beliefs, and climates: A review, integration, and set of recommendations. *Journal of Management, 50(3), 849-876.*. https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063221086238

Leslie, L. M., Bono, J. E., Kim, Y. (Sophia), & Beaver, G. R. (2020). On melting pots and salad bowls: A meta-analysis of the effects of identity-blind and identity-conscious diversity ideologies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *105*(5), 453–471. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000446

Leung, X. Y., Sun, J., Zhang, H., & Ding, Y. (2021). How the hotel industry attracts Generation Z employees: An application of social capital theory. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *49*, 262–269. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2021.09.021

Levin, S., Sinclair, S., Veniegas, R. C., & Taylor, P. L. (2002). Perceived discrimination in the context of multiple group memberships. *Psychological Science*, *13*(6), 557–560. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9280.00498

Lindsey, A. P., Avery, D. R., Dawson, J. F., & King, E. B. (2017). Investigating why and for whom management ethnic representativeness influences interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *102*(11), 1545–1563. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000238

Martin, A. E. (2023). The divergent effects of diversity ideologies for race and gender relations. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *175*, Article 104226. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2023.104226

Martin, A. E., Gündemir, S., Phillips, K. W., & Homan, A. C. (2018). Women's responses to gender-aware and gender-blind organizational approaches: The moderating role of career and family orientation (Working paper). Columbia Business School.

Martin, A. E., & Phillips, K. W. (2017). What "blindness" to gender differences helps women see and do: Implications for confidence, agency, and action in male-dominated environments. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *142*, 28–44. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2017.07.004

Martinez, L. R., Sawyer, K. B., Thoroughgood, C. N., Ruggs, E. N., & Smith, N. A. (2017). The importance of being "me": The relation between authentic identity expression and transgender employees' work-related attitudes and experiences. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *102*(2), 215–226. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000168

McFadden, C. (2015). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender careers and human resource development: A systematic literature review. *Human Resource Development Review*, *14*(2), 125–162. https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484314549456

McFadden, C., & Crowley-Henry, M. (2016). A systematic literature review on trans* careers and workplace experiences. In T. Köllen (Ed.), *Sexual Orientation and Transgender Issues in Organizations* (pp. 63-81). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29623-4_4

McKay, P. F., Avery, D. R., Tonidandel, S., Morris, M. A., Hernandez, M., & Hebl, M. R. (2007). Racial differences in employee retention: Are diversity climate perceptions the key? *Personnel Psychology*, *60*(1), 35–62. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2007.00064.x

McKay, P. F. (2024). Targeted recruitment of racial-ethnic minorities: A research review. In J. E. Slaughter & D. G. Allen (Eds.) *Essentials of Employee Recruitment* (pp. 214-235). Routledge.

Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, *129*(5), 674–697. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674

Mizzi, R. C. (2013). "There aren't any gays here": Encountering heteroprofessionalism in an international development workplace. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *60*(11), 1602–1624. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.824341

2

Mizzi, R. C. (2016). Heteroprofessionalism. In N. M. Rodriguez, W. J. Martino, J. C. Ingrey, & E. Brockenbrough (Eds.), *Critical Concepts in Queer Studies and Education: An International Guide for the Twenty-First Century* (pp. 137–147). Palgrave Macmillan US. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55425-3_15

Mohr, J., & Fassinger, R. (2000). Measuring dimensions of lesbian and gay male experience. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, *33*(2), 66–90. https://doi.org/10.1080/07481756.2000.12068999

Morgenroth, T., & Ryan, M. K. (2018a). Gender trouble in social psychology: How can Butler's work inform experimental social psychologists' conceptualization of gender? *Frontiers in Psychology, 9,* Article 1320. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01320

Morgenroth, T., & Ryan, M. K. (2018b). Quotas and affirmative action: Understanding group-based outcomes and attitudes. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *12*(3), e12374. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12374

Ozturk, M. B., & Tatli, A. (2016). Gender identity inclusion in the workplace: Broadening diversity management research and practice through the case of transgender employees in the UK. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *27*(8), 781–802. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1042902

Pepper, S. M., & Lorah, P. (2008). Career issues and workplace considerations for the transsexual community: Bridging a gap of knowledge for career counselors and mental health care providers. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *56*(4), 330–343. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2008.tb00098.x

Pietri, E. S., Johnson, I. R., & Ozgumus, E. (2018). One size may not fit all: Exploring how the intersection of race and gender and stigma consciousness predict effective identity-safe cues for Black women. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *74(4)*, 291–306. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2017.06.021

Plaut, V. C., Thomas, K. M., & Goren, M. J. (2009). Is multiculturalism or color blindness better for minorities? *Psychological Science*, *20*(4), 444–446. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02318.x

Plaut, V. C., Thomas, K. M., Hurd, K., & Romano, C. A. (2018). Do color blindness and multiculturalism remedy or foster discrimination and racism? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *27*(3), 200–206. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721418766068

Priola, V., Lasio, D., Serri, F., & De Simone, S. (2018). The organisation of sexuality and the sexuality of organisation: A genealogical analysis of sexual 'inclusive exclusion' at work. *Organization*, *25*(6), 732–754. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508418790140

Puncheva-Michelotti, P., Hudson, S., & Hennekam, S. (2024). Anticipated chilly climate for women: The development and validation of a measure. *Employee Relations: The International Journal, 46(4),* 795-816. https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-01-2023-0017

Purdie-Vaughns, V., Steele, C. M., Davies, P. G., Ditlmann, R., & Crosby, J. R. (2008). Social identity contingencies: How diversity cues signal threat or safety for African Americans in mainstream institutions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *94*(4), 615–630. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.94.4.615

Purdie-Vaughns, V., & Walton, G. M. (2011). Is multiculturalism bad for African Americans? Redefining inclusion through the lens of identity safety. In L. R. Tropp & R. K. Mallett (Eds.), *Moving beyond prejudice reduction: Pathways to positive intergroup relations* (pp. 159–177). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/12319-008

Ragins, B. R., Singh, R., & Cornwell, J. M. (2007). Making the invisible visible: Fear and disclosure of sexual orientation at work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *92*(4), 1103–1118. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.92.4.1103

Rahman, Q., Xu, Y., Lippa, R. A., & Vasey, P. L. (2020). Prevalence of sexual orientation across 28 nations and its association with gender equality, economic development, and individualism. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *49*(2), 595–606. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-019-01590-0

Rainey, K., Dancy, M., Mickelson, R., Stearns, E., & Moller, S. (2018). Race and gender differences in how sense of belonging influences decisions to major in STEM. *International Journal of STEM Education, 5(1),* Article 10. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-018-0115-6

Rattan, A., & Ambady, N. (2013). Diversity ideologies and intergroup relations: An examination of colorblindness and multiculturalism. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *43(1),* 12-21. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.1892

Resnick, C. A., & Galupo, M. P. (2019). Assessing experiences with LGBT microaggressions in the workplace: development and validation of the microaggression experiences at work scale. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *66*(10), 1380–1403. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2018.1542207

Sabharwal, M., Levine, H., D'Agostino, M., & Nguyen, T. (2019). Inclusive work practices: Turnover intentions among LGBT employees of the U.S. Federal Government. *American Review of Public Administration*, *49*(4), 482–494. https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074018817376

Salvati, M., Pellegrini, V., Giacomantonio, M., & De Cristofaro, V. (2021). Embrace the leadership challenge: The role of gay men's internalized sexual stigma on the evaluation of others' leadership and one's own. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *60*(2), 700–719. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12424

Sangganjanavanich, V. F., & Headley, J. A. (2013). Facilitating career development concerns of gender transitioning individuals: Professional standards and competencies. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *61*(4), 354–366. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2013.00061.x

Schilt, K., & Westbrook, L. (2009). Doing gender, doing heteronormativity: "Gender Normals," transgender people, and the social maintenance of heterosexuality. *Gender & Society*, *23*(4), 440–464. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243209340034

Sears, B., & Mallory, C. (2014). *Employment discrimination against LGBT people: Existence and impact*. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9qs0n354

Shore, L. M., Cleveland, J. N., & Sanchez, D. (2018). Inclusive workplaces: A review and model. *Human Resource Management Review*, *28*(2), 176–189. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2017.07.003

Simmering, M. J., Fuller, C. M., Richardson, H. A., Ocal, Y., & Atinc, G. M. (2015). Marker variable choice, reporting, and interpretation in the detection of common method variance: A review and demonstration. *Organizational Research Methods*, *18*(3), 473–511. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428114560023

Sparkman, D. J., Eidelman, S., Dueweke, A. R., Marin, M. S., & Dominguez, B. (2019). Open to diversity: Openness to experience predicts beliefs in multiculturalism and colorblindness through perspective taking. *Journal of Individual Differences*, *40*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1027/1614-0001/a000270

Spector, P. E., & Brannick, M. T. (2010). Common method issues: An introduction to the feature topic in Organizational Research Methods. *Organizational Research Methods*, *13(3)*, 403–406. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428110366303

2

Spence, M. (1973). Job market signaling. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *87*(3), 355–374. https://doi.org/10.2307/1882010

Spence, M. (2002). Signaling in retrospect and the informational structure of markets. *American Economic Review*, *92*(3), 434–459. https://doi.org/10.1257/00028280260136200

Suppes, A., Van der Toorn, J., & Begeny, C. T. (2021). Unhealthy closets, discriminatory dwellings: The mental health benefits and costs of being open about one's sexual minority status. *Social Science & Medicine*, *285*(9), 114286. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114286

Taylor, S. D., Charlton, J. P., & Ranyard, R. (2012). Ethnic and gender differences in the labour market perceptions of post-higher education job seekers: 'Double jeopardy' or 'ethnic prominence'? *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 85(2), 353–369. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.2011.02041.x

Thomas, K. M., & Wise, P. G. (1999). Organizational attractiveness and individual differences: Are diverse applicants attracted by different factors? *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *13(3)*, 375–390. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022978400698

Thuillier, J., Almudever, B., & Croity-Belz, S. (2021). Perceived workplace discrimination and disclosure at work among lesbian and gay employees: The role of prior coming out experiences in different life domains. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *69(11),* 1819–1841. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2021.1933784

Tilcsik, A. (2011). Pride and prejudice: Employment discrimination against openly gay men in the United States. *American Journal of Sociology*, *117*(2), 586–626. https://doi.org/10.1086/661653

Van der Toorn, J., Pliskin, R., & Morgenroth, T. (2020). Not quite over the rainbow: The unrelenting and insidious nature of heteronormative ideology. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, *34*, 160–165. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2020.03.001

Van Dijk, H., Kooij, D., Karanika-Murray, M., De Vos, A., & Meyer, B. (2020). Meritocracy a myth? A multilevel perspective of how social inequality accumulates through work. *Organizational Psychology Review*, *10*(3–4), 240–269. https://doi.org/10.1177/2041386620930063

Velez, B. L., Adames, C. N., Lei, N., & Kerman, M. E. (2021). A content analysis of psychological research on vocational issues among sexual minority people. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, *8*(3), 344–364. https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000496

Verkuyten, M. (2009). Self-esteem and multiculturalism: An examination among ethnic minority and majority groups in the Netherlands. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *43*(3), 419–427. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2009.01.013

Wagner, S. H. (2017). Perceptions of support for diversity and turnover intentions of managers with solo-minority status. *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, *17*(5), 5. https://www.articlegateway.com/index.php/JOP/article/view/1651

Walton, G. M., Murphy, M. C., & Ryan, A. M. (2015). Stereotype threat in organizations: Implications for equity and performance. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *2*, 523–550. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032414-111322

Webster, J. R., Adams, G. A., Maranto, C. L., Sawyer, K., & Thoroughgood, C. (2018). Workplace contextual supports for LGBT employees: A review, meta-analysis, and agenda for future research. *Human Resource Management*, *57*(1), 193–210. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21873

White, K., McCoy, M., Love, K., Kwak, E. J., Bruce, E., & Grable, J. (2019). The role of signaling when promoting diversity and inclusion at the firm level: A financial advisory professional case study. *Advances in Business Research*, *9*(1), Article 1.

Williams, C., & Giuffre, P. (2011). From organizational sexuality to queer organizations: Research on homosexuality and the workplace. *Sociology Compass*, *5*(7), 551–563. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2011.00392.x

Wilton, L. S., Bell, A. N., Vahradyan, M., & Kaiser, C. R. (2020). Show don't tell: Diversity dishonesty harms racial/ethnic minorities at work. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *46*(8), 1171–1185. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167219897149

Yogeeswaran, K., & Dasgupta, N. (2014). The devil is in the details: Abstract versus concrete construals of multiculturalism differentially impact intergroup relations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *106*(5), 772–789. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035830

2

APPENDIX A: STUDY 1 AND 2 VIGNETTES

A1: Identity Blind Vignette

Our Mission

While other firms mistakenly focus on their staff's diversity, we at Wynn Inc. train our workforce to embrace their similarities. We feel that focusing on similarities fosters a more unified, exciting, and collaborative work environment.

The best work environment can be achieved if we recognize that at our core, we are all the same, that everyone is created equal, and that we are first and foremost an organization of individuals. Such an environment helps not only us but also our clients.

At Wynn Inc., as soon as you walk through our doors, you'll appreciate the strength that we derive from our similarities irrespective of your race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and religion.

| HOME | ABOUT US | CONTACT |

A2: Identity Conscious Vignette

Our Mission

While other firms mistakenly try to shape their staff into a single mold, we at Wynn Inc. believe that embracing our differences enriches our culture. We feel that focusing on diversity fosters a more unified, exciting, and collaborative work environment.

The best work environment can be achieved if we better appreciate our differences and recognize and celebrate unique contributions that employees bring in based on their group memberships. Such an environment helps not only us but also our clients.

At Wynn Inc., as soon as you walk through our doors, you'll appreciate the strength that we derive from the diversity in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and religion of our employees.

HOME   ABOUT US   CONTACT

CHAPTER 3

"Are They Just Putting Up With Me"?
How Diversity Approaches Impact LGBTQ+
Employees' Sense of Being Tolerated at Work

"Are They Just Putting Up With Me"? How Diversity Approaches Impact LGBTQ+ Employees' Sense of Being Tolerated at Work

Author Contributions

Kshitij Mor: Writing and preparing original draft, designing study, organizing materials, data collection, data analysis,
Seval Gündemir: Reviewing and editing drafts, supervision, conceptualization
Jojanneke van der Toorn: Reviewing and editing drafts, supervision, conceptualization

ABSTRACT

This research investigates whether and how workplace diversity approaches—identity-conscious versus identity-blind—are associated with LGBTQ+ employees' perceptions of tolerance. Whilst tolerance is widely regarded as an important virtue for the harmonious functioning of diverse societies, it can inadvertently harm minoritized individuals. In workplace settings, perceptions of tolerance may hinder the benefits of diversity by discouraging minoritized employees from sharing their perspectives and prompting individuals with relatively concealable stigmas, such as LGBTQ+ employees, to conceal their identities. Across two studies (n = 907), we examine the conditions under which tolerance perceptions may arise. Study 1 explores LGBTQ+ prospective employees' anticipated tolerance in organizations with identity-blind versus identity-conscious mission statements. Study 2 examines LGBTQ+ employees' workplace experiences, focusing on how organizational and leadership diversity approaches are related to perceptions of tolerance. Findings reveal that relatively identity-blind approaches are associated with increased feelings of being tolerated. Moreover, identity-conscious leadership strategies, when coupled with identity-conscious organizational approaches, further diminish perceptions of being merely tolerated. Our findings underscore an un-intended correlate of identity-blind diversity approaches, which may perpetuate tolerance-focused climates and indirectly undermine inclusion for LGBTQ+ employees.

Keywords: Tolerance, LGBTQ+, Diversity Approach, Leadership

"ARE THEY JUST PUTTING UP WITH ME"? HOW DIVERSITY APPROACHES IMPACT LGBTQ+ EMPLOYEES' SENSE OF BEING TOLERATED AT WORK

The increasing diversity in the workplace has brought critical conversations to the forefront about how to navigate differences in identity, beliefs and values. In organizational contexts, these conversations are often shaped within broader perspectives on how diversity should be managed. Diversity approaches are prescriptive frameworks that guide individuals' and organizations' engagement with social group differences, such as race, gender and sexual orientation (Wu & Apfelbaum, 2024) and are widely reflected in organizational communication (Kirby et al., 2023b).

These approaches can be broadly divided into two categories. On one hand, the *conscious* approach, which values and celebrates the differences between social groups. On the other hand, the *blind* approach, which downplays social group differences in favor of individualistic views or an overarching emphasis on group membership. While employees from minoritized groups tend to respond more positively to conscious rather than blind approaches (Gündemir et al., 2019; Mor et al., 2025 [Chapter 2]), the broader literature presents a nuanced view of the impact of these approaches, with effects on belonging, organizational attractiveness, and other outcomes depending on conceptual and contextual contingencies (e.g., Kirby et al., 2021; Leslie et al., 2020; Martin, 2023). Given the wide prevalence and substantial impact of these approaches, scholarly interest in understanding which outcomes they influence, for whom and under what conditions, remains high (Kirby et al., 2023b). Intriguingly, studies on the impact of diversity approaches often focus on whether these initiatives are beneficial or harmful for certain groups, with outcomes of interest frequently framed in strongly valenced terms (e.g., Plaut et al, 2009; 2018).

Here, we advance this past work by examining the role of diversity approaches in shaping a potentially critical yet understudied outcome, namely, employees' sense of being tolerated, whose valence is often ambiguous rather than clearly positive or negative. The Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) defines tolerance as *'willingness to accept behavior and beliefs that are different from your own, even if you disagree with or disapprove of them.'* In popular discourse, tolerance is typically regarded as a virtue that promotes openness and respect (Cohen, 2004; Oberdiek, 2001; Verkuyten et al., 2023). However, scholarly discussions have highlighted the more ambivalent nature of tolerance, pointing to how it can reinforce power imbalances

and contribute to feelings of marginalization amongst those who are merely 'put up with' by dominant groups (Adelman et al., 2023; Cvetkovska et al., 2020, 2021; Verkuyten et al., 2020). Rather than signaling acceptance or equality, being tolerated can be experienced as conditional and sometimes even condescending. From this perspective, tolerance occupies a conceptual space between exclusion and genuine inclusion. This ambivalence renders it a particularly complex and meaningful perception, whose examination provides novel insights into the effects of diversity approaches that go beyond straightforwardly positive or negative outcomes. Whilst research has begun to define tolerance and examine how it is experienced by minoritized individuals and its consequences (Adelman et al., 2023, 2024; Cvetkovska et al., 2021; Verkuyten et al., 2019), relatively little is known about the contextual or organizational factors that elicit feelings of being tolerated. In the present study, we aim to address these gaps by exploring the relationship between diversity approaches and perceptions of tolerance, focusing on an understudied population: LGBTQ+ employees.

Below, we begin by summarizing diversity approaches, how they are understood in the literature and why it is important to focus on LGBTQ+ employee experiences in this context. We then review the academic literature on tolerance, including the scholarly definition guiding this study. We further examine the relevance of perceived tolerance in the workplace, before outlining key organizational and interpersonal factors hypothesized to shape these perceptions. In this final section of our theory, we identify and discuss several additional factors that may moderate or attenuate how LGBTQ+ employees respond to diversity approaches. In addition to considering multiple group memberships (e.g., transgender identity and race), we also explore the role of diversity messages communicated by key organizational actors i.e. leaders - alongside broader organizational statements. This allows us to unpack unique dynamics across different dimensions that may influence LGBTQ+ employees' workplace experiences.

Navigating Diversity in the Workplace Through Diversity Approaches

The diversity approach adopted by an organization often serves as a key indicator of its diversity climate (Leslie & Flynn, 2022; Li et al., 2019; Mor Barak et al., 2016). In social and organizational psychology, diversity approaches are typically understood through two variants: identity-blindness and identity-consciousness. An identity-blind approach minimizes demographic differences, emphasizing either a shared identity or individual uniqueness. This approach is grounded in the belief that focusing on demographic differences may inadvertently increase stereotyping and prejudice. In contrast, an identity-conscious approach values and celebrates

demographic differences, recognizing that individuals bring unique experiences and perspectives shaped by their identities, which influence how they contribute to and experience the workplace (Plaut et al., 2009, 2018; Rattan & Ambady, 2013).[1] Despite variations in methods and specifics, the overarching goal of these diversity approaches is to foster a work environment where diverse groups can collaborate effectively and harmoniously.

While research on diversity approaches has traditionally centered on more visible identities, such as race and gender, recent scholarship has begun to focus on minoritized groups with concealable identities, including LGBTQ+ employees. Examining the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in this context is both theoretically and socially significant, as the concealable nature of their identities introduces unique challenges. These challenges differ in important ways from those faced by more visible groups such as racial minorities and women who have historically been the primary focus of diversity scholarship (Gündemir et al., 2019). Emerging findings suggest that identity-conscious messaging is associated with greater psychological safety, authenticity, and a sense of belonging among LGBTQ+ employees (Kirby et al., 2023a; Mor et al., 2025[Chapter 2]). These environments make it easier for individuals to express their identities without fear of stigma or marginalization. While studies have linked identity-blindness to negative outcomes such as increased prejudice (Plaut et al., 2018), it is important to recognize that these approaches are often well-intentioned strategies for managing diversity. Given that they typically do not involve overtly exclusionary rhetoric, their effects may be more nuanced. Rather than resulting in clear rejection, identity-blind environments may lead to more ambiguous experiences, neither fully inclusive nor explicitly hostile.

To better understand this in-between space, we propose that the concept of tolerance may help explain the dynamics at play. In contexts where identity is neither explicitly acknowledged nor outright dismissed, employees may feel merely tolerated. To explore this further, the following section reviews the literature on tolerance and outlines the working definition adopted in this study.

3

---

1   Research into diversity approaches has further identified sub-facets and combinations within organizational diversity strategies that reflect these two overarching ideologies, such as multicultural meritocracy, interculturalism, and individual uniqueness. These more specific approaches fall outside the scope of this study but have been discussed in detail by others (Gündemir et al., 2017; 2019; Yogeeswaran et al., 2021).

Defining Tolerance and Understanding Its Impact on Minoritized Individuals

Tolerance is often viewed as a virtue almost akin to acceptance and respect. Some scholars define it as openness to other cultures and a generalized positive attitude towards differences (Allport, 1954; Hjerm et al., 2020). Some scholars propose a respect-based conception of tolerance, which views groups as moral equals, who despite differences operate from a shared framework of equal status for all (Forst, 2018). Others, however, argue that disapproval and negative attitudes are inherent to the concept of tolerance, encapsulated in the idea that 'one cannot tolerate ideas of which one approves' (Gibson, 2006, p. 22). In this view, tolerance is conceptualized as an attitude of accommodation despite disapproval, a form of forbearance or endurance of something one does not necessarily like (Cohen, 2004; Gibson, 2006; Verkuyten et al., 2023). Whilst little is known as to what causes one to feel tolerated, the experience of tolerance is shaped by perceptions of implicit devaluation and disapproval from the dominant group, where the non-dominant group occupies a position of relative moral inferiority (Insel, 2019), coupled with an attitude and expectation of non-interference from the dominant group. This non-interference can be further seen as legitimizing the power differences between the dominant and non-dominant group and reinforcing the dominance of those who tolerate (Verkuyten et al., 2020). Tolerance represents an intermediate stance, neither full acceptance and inclusion nor complete exclusion or rejection (Cvetkovska et al., 2020, 2021; Scanlon, 2003; Verkuyten et al., 2019).

Whilst definitions of tolerance vary across disciplines, research in social and intercultural psychology commonly adopts conceptualizations that emphasize tolerance as enduring or 'putting up with' differences (Cvetkovska et al., 2020; Verkuyten et al., 2023). For instance, a recent free-response survey study found that nearly three-quarters of participants described tolerance as enduring beliefs or behaviors they disapproved of rather than as genuine openness (Verkuyten & Kollar, 2021). Based on this, we define tolerance as forbearance of beliefs, behaviors, identities or opinions that one does not necessarily agree with or approve of, a definition closer to a permission-based rather than respect-based conception of this construct (see Forst, 2018).

Although tolerance may be seen as a positive attribute from the perspective of the tolerator, research focusing on the experiences of those being tolerated paints a more complex picture. Minoritized individuals who feel tolerated sometimes experience threats to their social identity needs. For instance, ethnic minorities who feel tolerated report lower well-being and reduced national identification

compared to those who feel accepted (Verkuyten et al., 2019, 2020). Furthermore, perceptions of being tolerated can undermine an individual's sense of self-esteem, meaning, belonging and efficacy, leading to negative outcomes such as reduced self-worth, increased anxiety and depressive symptoms and lower life satisfaction (Bagci et al., 2020). Nevertheless, feeling tolerated is associated with better well-being and more optimistic expectations of future treatment than outright rejection or discrimination (Adelman et al., 2023, 2024; Cvetkovska et al., 2020, 2021).

In summary, despite the promotion of tolerance as a key to managing differences, research shows that for those on the receiving end, it can feel ambivalent or, at times, even alienating. It occupies a space between exclusion and inclusion; less harmful than outright rejection but falling short of genuine acceptance and belonging. In the workplace, this nuance becomes especially critical. Organizations increasingly frame diversity not merely as a fact to be managed, but as a strategic asset that is central to innovation, collaboration, and performance. In such settings, where employees with diverse identities work in close, interdependent relationships, mere tolerance may prove insufficient. Although preferable to discrimination, a culture of tolerance may still limit the full expression and contribution of minoritized employees. The next section explores how perceptions of tolerance may manifest in workplace contexts and why they matter for the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ employees.

Tolerance in the Workplace

Though tolerance may be regarded as essential for peaceful coexistence in society (UN, 1945), in the workplace, coexistence is not the end goal. Instead, organizations emphasize collaboration, mutual reliance, and the productive exchange of ideas. Despite this, little is known about which factors in interdependent professional settings engender tolerance.

Diverse workforces are often promoted as offering a competitive advantage by bringing together a range of perspectives that can drive innovation, improve decision-making and enhance organizational outcomes (Green et al., 1969; Gröschl, 2011; Phillips & O'Reilly, 1998; Shore et al., 2018; Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1998). However, these benefits rely on an important assumption, that is, diverse viewpoints are not only present but also genuinely valued. If diversity is merely tolerated rather than actively embraced, the full potential of these varied perspectives may not be realized.

Research has shown that perceptions of inclusion and acceptance are critical for minoritized employees to feel psychologically safe and empowered to share their insights (Li et al., 2019; Mor Barak, 2015; Mor Barak et al., 2016). In contrast, environments where individuals feel merely tolerated may suppress openness and reduce engagement. Recent findings suggest that tolerance can discourage individuals from expressing dissenting views or challenging dominant norms (Adelman et al., 2023), which undermines the very diversity of thought that organizations seek to harness. Furthermore, because tolerance, unlike clear exclusion or discrimination, has an ambiguous nature, it may not prompt a desire to change a potentially suboptimal or even unfair work environment and can instead serve to maintain the status quo. This raises important questions about how tolerance, as a workplace dynamic, may influence the experiences of minoritized groups, particularly those whose identities are less visible.

LGBTQ+ Individuals and Tolerance

Although research has begun to uncover the negative implications of being tolerated (Adelman et al., 2023; Bagci et al., 2020; Cvetkovska et al., 2020, 2021), these effects may be particularly acute for individuals with concealable minoritized identities, such as LGBTQ+ employees. For these groups, the message of partial inclusion combined with implicit or explicit discouragement of deviation can create an especially fraught environment. In such contexts, individuals may feel compelled to hide or downplay aspects of their identity to avoid disapproval, judgment or marginalization (Capell et al., 2018; Cipollina & Sanchez, 2022; Follmer et al., 2020; Griffith & Hebl, 2002).

However, identity concealment is associated with a range of negative outcomes, including reduced psychological well-being (Barreto et al., 2006; Ellemers & Barreto, 2006; Goh et al., 2019; Le Forestier et al., 2022), lower levels of belonging (Newheiser et al., 2017; Newheiser & Barreto, 2014) and diminished job performance (Powers & Ellis, 2014). These risks are further compounded by the persistence of negative social attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals, both inside and outside of the workplace (Coffman et al., 2017; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2024).

Moreover, LGBTQ+ identities are often entangled with moral and religious discourses (Embrick et al., 2007; Hebl et al., 2014), which can heighten their vulnerability in workplace cultures that emphasize tolerance. When identities are viewed through a moral lens—particularly as 'wrong' or 'sinful', they are more likely to evoke swift judgement and disapproval (Verkuyten et al., 2019, 2023).

In workplaces where tolerance is the dominant norm, such moralized views may be implicitly permitted, leading LGBTQ+ employees to feel both hyper visible and unsupported. These dynamics underscore the precarious position of LGBTQ+ employees in environments that prioritize tolerance over inclusion.

Diversity Approaches as Signals of Being Tolerated

Recent literature increasingly emphasizes leveraging diversity approaches to cultivate safe and inclusive work environments (Bell et al., 2011; Li et al., 2019; Mor Barak et al., 2016), particularly for minoritized groups such as racial minorities (for a review, see Gündemir et al., 2019). This research shows that identity-conscious approaches can decrease prejudiced beliefs (Plaut et al., 2018; though see Wolsko et al., 2000 for contrasting effects on stereotyping), increase perspective-taking (Sparkman et al., 2019) and enhance self-esteem, work engagement and job satisfaction amongst minoritized employees (for a meta-analysis see Leslie et al., 2020).

Whilst research has highlighted how identity-conscious versus identity-blind approaches signal in/exclusion, it has yet to address their potential connection to perceptions of being tolerated. Emerging evidence suggests that identity-blind strategies may inadvertently produce negative outcomes for minoritized groups, including reduced perceptions of support, diminished identity safety and increased concealment of identity (Kirby et al., 2023a; Mor et al., 2025 [Chapter 2]; Pichler et al., 2017; Schönauer et al., 2025). We argue that such strategies may un-intentionally foster a sense of being merely tolerated. When diversity strategies de-emphasize or avoid recognizing minoritized identities, individuals may perceive this as a lack of appreciation for their identity This may then lead to feelings of being merely tolerated rather than genuinely valued. Relatedly, scholars argue that incorporating tolerance into diversity equity and inclusion (DEI) practices, such as diversity training, risks fostering environments where individuals are conditionally accepted rather than fully valued (Gebert et al., 2017; Lozano & Escrich, 2017).

We thus propose that the de-emphasis of social group differences in identity-blind approaches is interpreted by LGBTQ+ employees as a signal of a tolerant environment. Testing this link is crucial, given prior research showing that LGBTQ+ employees are particularly sensitive to diversity approaches when assessing how safe it is to be their authentic selves, feel a sense of belonging, and decide whether to disclose their identity (Cipollina & Sanchez, 2022; Howansky et al., 2021; Kirby et al., 2023a; Mor et al., 2025[Chapter 2]). Importantly, research has shown that

these assessments influence LGBTQ+ employees' attraction to employers *and* their intentions to remain with an organization (Mor et al., 2025[Chapter 2]).

If identity blindness is found to contribute to perceptions of being tolerated among (prospective) LGBTQ+ employees, it would suggest that the impact of diversity approaches extends beyond shaping career decisions to impacting day-to-day employee collaboration and interaction. Such perceptions could stifle the effective exchange of diverse perspectives (Adelman et., 2023)—an essential driver of organizational outcomes like innovation. Hence, our first research question is whether LGBTQ+ individuals associate different diversity approaches, particularly identity blindness, with perceptions of being tolerated.

Additional Factors of Interest

In addition to exploring the relationship between diversity approaches and perceptions of being tolerated, we seek to examine two additional factors that may influence the direction or strength of this relationship: multiple minoritized group membership and the perceived diversity approach of one's leader.

Multiple Minoritized Group Membership

Tolerance, when defined as forbearance of beliefs, practices or identities one disagrees or disapproves of, reflects an unequal power dynamic between those who tolerate and those who are tolerated. Such power imbalances are particularly impactful for individuals who are further removed from the dominant culture (Cvetkovska et al., 2020; Verkuyten et al., 2023). Indeed, research on intersectionality has widely documented the compounded and unique challenges that individuals with multiple marginalized identities face in gaining acceptance and recognition (McCluney & Rabelo, 2019; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). This suggests that LGBTQ+ individuals who also belong to other minoritized or marginalized groups may be especially vigilant to tolerance cues inferred from diversity approaches (Chaney et al., 2021; Emerson & Murphy, 2014; Hollis, 2022; Kruk & Matsick, 2021; Settles & Buchanan, 2014).

Although many different intersections can be explored, this study specifically focuses on race/ethnicity and transgender identity. First, racial or ethnic group membership continues to be a significant source of bias and discrimination in the workplace (Salari et al., 2024; Whitaker, 2019). LGBTQ+ people of color may experience compounded bias, facing discrimination based on both their sexual/gender orientation *and* racial/ethnic identity. Second, transgender people within the LGBTQ+ umbrella, particularly those who also belong to a sexual minority

face some of the most severe challenges (Cech & Rothwell, 2020; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2016; Pepper & Lorah, 2008). Additionally, in many countries anti-trans sentiment is on the rise, even surpassing anti-gay sentiments (Cancela et al., 2024; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2024; Napier, 2024), further exacerbating their exposure to bias and prejudice. Both LGTBQ+ people of color and transgender individuals thus are likely to have heightened sensitivity to cues signaling acceptance or the lack thereof due to their frequent encounters with both anti-LGBTQ+ and racial/ethnic bias (Cech & Rothwell, 2020; Emerson & Murphy, 2014; Hollis, 2022). Thus, we examine whether and how these intersecting identities influence the inferences LGBTQ+ individuals draw about tolerance derived from organizational diversity approaches.

Perceived Diversity Approach of Leaders

The role of diversity approaches in shaping an organization's climate is well established. These approaches are often conveyed at an organizational level through formal policies and vision statements, signaling the blueprint organizations follow towards inclusion (Leslie & Flynn, 2022; Li et al., 2019; Wu & Apfelbaum, 2024). However, organizational climate is also critically influenced by leadership. Leaders - such as supervisors and managers not only directly shape their teams' behaviors and experiences but also serve as representatives of organizational values. Through their actions, leaders establish norms and expectations and set the tone for appropriate conduct (Grojean et al., 2004; İşçi et al., 2015; Koene et al., 2002).

The diversity approach modeled by leaders significantly impacts employees' perceptions of the organizational climate (Dang et al., 2022; Dwertmann & Van Dijk, 2020; Homan et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2021), making it a critical factor in shaping perceptions of tolerance among LGBTQ+ employees. Leaders influence these perceptions both through direct interactions with employees and by modeling inclusive or exclusive behaviors. Additionally, as representatives of the organization, leaders serve as a link between the organization's broader values and individual employee experiences. This dual influence suggests that the diversity approach communicated by leaders may play two key roles. First, the perceived diversity approach of leaders may be directly associated with LGBTQ+ employees' perceptions of tolerance. Second, leaders' approaches may moderate the impact of the organization's overall diversity approach on these perceptions, either amplifying or mitigating its effects.

Overview of Studies

We explored the role of diversity approaches in shaping perceptions of tolerance in the workplace amongst LGBTQ+ individuals across two studies. The data were collected as part of Mor and colleagues (2025;Chapter 2) research on diversity approaches and LGBTQ+ workers. For the current analyses, we focus specifically on findings related to perceptions of tolerance included in the studies for exploratory purposes. The relevant preregistrations detailing this exploratory measure are publicly available (https://osf.io/my2zr/?view_only=6c5ed5842df744b8a4dd957dea8e382f). The studies were programmed in Qualtrics and shared via the Prolific crowdsourcing platform. Participants were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: 1) Participants had to be adults (18 years or older), 2) Participants were required to reside in the United Kingdom, and 3) Participants needed to self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or otherwise queer (LGBTQ+). Participants who identified as both cisgender and heterosexual, as well as those with incomplete data, were excluded from the analysis. Additionally, ethnicity data provided by Prolific were incorporated to assess potential intersectional factors in the findings. Unless otherwise specified, responses were collected using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*). Upon completing the study, participants were fully debriefed and given an opportunity to provide feedback.

STUDY 1

Participants and Procedure

The study uses an available dataset collected for Mor and colleagues (2025; Chapter 2), including 499 responses. Thirty-seven participants did not meet our pre-registered criteria and were excluded before analysis. The final sample included 462 participants (M_{age}=30.48, SD_{age}=10.02). A post-hoc sensitivity analysis of the collected sample indicated sufficient power (1-β = 0.80, α = 0.05) to detect an effect size of d = 0.26 (Faul et al., 2007). Full breakdown of the sample characteristics can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Composition of Participant Samples of Studies 1-2

Demographic Characteristics	Study 1		Study 2	
	n	%	*n*	%
Work Status				
Employed full-time	217	47	333	74.8
Employed part-time	90	19.5	112	25.2
Unemployed looking for work	22	4.8	-	-
Unemployed not looking for work	46	10	-	-
Retired	6	1.3	-	-
Student	81	17.5	-	-
Gender Group				
Male	151	32.7	141	31.7
Female	234	50.6	237	53.3
Non-binary	60	13	51	11.5
Genderfluid	8	1.7	6	1.3
Agender	4	0.8	4	0.9
Self-described	5	1.1	6	1.3
Transgender Identity				
Yes	112	24.2	102	22.9
No	349	75.5	343	77.1
Other	1	0.2	0	0
Sexual Orientation				
Gay	66	14.3	70	15.7
Lesbian	46	10	80	18
Bisexual	212	45.9	195	43.8
Queer	36	7.8	26	5.8
Asexual	40	8.7	25	5.6
Pansexual	58	12.6	42	9.4
Heterosexual	4	0.9	5	1.1
Self-described	0	0	2	0.4
Ethnicity				
White	416	90	398	89.4
Black	9	1.9	7	1.6
Asian	15	3.2	15	3.4
Mixed	18	3.9	19	4.3
Other	2	.4	3	0.7
Missing/Unknown	2	.4	3	0.7

After providing informed consent, participants were randomly assigned to either an identity-blind or an identity-conscious condition. They were then presented with the diversity mission statement of a fictitious organization and asked to form an impression based on the limited information. Participants rated their perceptions of the statement, including perceived tolerance, and assessed the organization's attractiveness. Finally, participants completed demographics questions. Full materials can be found in the supplementary files.

Materials and Measures

Depending on the assigned condition, participants viewed a version of a webpage from a fictional organization, Wynn Inc., which featured a diversity mission statement (texts are modeled after Purdie-Vaughns and colleagues, 2008; see Mor et al., 2025 [Chapter 2]). The mission statement in the identity-blind condition emphasized ignoring differences and fostering equality through a focus on similarities. A sample phrase is: *"While other firms mistakenly focus on their staff's diversity, we at Wynn Inc. train our workforce to embrace their similarities."* In contrast, the identity-conscious condition highlighted the importance of diversity and encouraged recognizing and valuing differences, including phrases such as: *"While other firms mistakenly try to shape their staff into a single mold, we at Wynn Inc. believe that embracing our differences enriches our culture."*

Anticipated tolerance was measured with one item adapted from Cvetkovska and colleagues (2021). Participants rated the statement: "I anticipate being tolerated at this company, meaning that people will not really approve of my identity, but rather will endure and put up with me at work if I worked at Wynn Inc."

We further also collected demographic data, including the participants' age, employment status, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Open-response entries for gender identity and sexual orientation ("I prefer to self-describe") were reviewed and recategorized as needed for analysis.

Results

Descriptives and Correlations

Across our sample, anticipated tolerance had a mean around the midpoint of the scale (*M*=3.77*, SD*=1.90). Table 2 presents descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for both the primary variables of the current study. The full correlation matrix with all the key variables from Mor and colleagues (2025;Chapter 2), from which the current dataset was derived can be found in the supplementary materials.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations of Studies 1 & 2

Variable	M (SD)/N(%)	1	2	3	4	5
Study 1						
1. Age	30.48 (10.02)	-				
2. Identity-Conscious Condition	228 (49.4%)	.12*	-			
3. Transgender Identity	111 (24%)	-.09+	.01	-		
4. Racial/Ethnic Minority Identity	44 (9.5%)	-.11*	-.04	.01	-	
5. Anticipated Tolerance	3.77 (1.90)	-.18**	-.26**	.17**	.10*	
Study 2						
1. Age	32.73 (9.41)	-				
2. Organizational Diversity Approach	4.87 (1.37)	.02	-			
3. Leader Diversity Approach	4.73 (1.35)	-.03	.67**			
4. Transgender Identity	102 (22.9%)	-.25**	-.15**	-.11*		
5. Racial/Ethnic Minority Identity	44 (9.9%)	-.06	-.07	.00	-.05	
6. Perceived Tolerance	2.65 (1.62)	-.16**	-.41**	-.39**	.26**	.07

Note. $N_{Study\,1}$= 462; $N_{Study\,2}$ = 445.
+ p<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01

Effect of Diversity Approach on Anticipated Tolerance

An independent sample t-test indicated that participants in the identity-blind condition anticipated higher tolerance (*M*=4.26, *SD*=1.85) at Wynn Inc. compared to participants in the identity-conscious condition (*M*=3.27, *SD*=1.80; *t*[460]=5.76, *p*<.001, 95%*CI*[0.65,1.32], Cohen's *d*=1.84).

Further we find that in the identity-conscious condition tolerance is significantly lower than the mid-point of the scale (*t*[227]=-6.06, *p*<.001, 95%*CI*[-0.96,-0.49], Cohen's *d*=1.81), and in the identity-blind condition tolerance is significantly higher than the midpoint of the scale (*t*[233]=2.11, *p*=.036, 95%*CI*[0.02,0.50], Cohen's *d*=1.86).

Multiple Group Membership: Transgender Identity

We performed step-wise regression analyses to explore (a) possible differences between cisgender (coded as 0) and transgender (coded as 1) participants in their anticipated tolerance and (b) a possible interaction effect between organizational approach and gender identity.

Across conditions, transgender participants reported significantly higher anticipated tolerance (b=0.71, SE=0.20, p=.001, 95%CI[0.32, 1.10]) than cisgender participants. We found no support for an interaction between organizational approach and gender identity on the dependent measures (b=-0.30, SE=0.40, p=.447, 95%CI [-1.08, 0.47]).

Multiple Group Membership: Race/Ethnicity

We performed step-wise regression analyses to explore (a) possible differences between white (coded as 0) and non-white (coded as 1) participants in their reported anticipated tolerance and (b) a possible interaction effect between organizational approach and race/ethnicity.

Across conditions, non-white participants reported significantly higher anticipated tolerance (b=0.61, SE=0.30, p=.037, 95%CI[0.04, 1.17]) than white participants. We found no support for an interaction between organizational approach and race/ethnicity on the dependent measures (b=0.37, SE=0.58, p=.526, 95%CI[-0.78, 1.52]).

Discussion

Our findings suggest that LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to anticipate a tolerant environment in organizations that employ an identity-blind rather than an identity-conscious approach in their messaging. Consistent with our expectations, the negative effects of marginalization are compounded for individuals with intersecting marginalized identities (Chaney et al., 2021; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Settles & Buchanan, 2014). Within our LGBTQ+ sample, transgender participants and non-white participants anticipated higher levels of tolerance compared to their cis-gender and white counterparts, highlighting the heightened sensitivity to marginalization cues among those with multiple marginalized identities. However, we find no evidence that responses to diversity approaches in terms of tolerance differ based on multiple marginalized identities.

STUDY 2

Participants and Procedure

The study uses an available dataset we collected for Mor and colleagues (2025; Chapter 2), including 500 responses. Fifty-five participants did not meet our pre-registered inclusion criteria and were excluded before analysis. The final sample included 445 participants (M_{age}=32.73, SD_{age}=9.41). A post-hoc sensitivity analysis of the collected sample indicated sufficient power (1-β = 0.80, α = 0.05) to detect an effect size of f^2 = 0.02 (Faul et al., 2007). Full breakdown of the sample characteristics can be found in Table 1.

The study was advertised as an investigation into employees' workplace experiences. After providing informed consent, participants completed a series of demographic questions, including age, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Following this, participants were asked a range of questions about their workplace, focusing on their perceptions and experiences as employees. These questions covered topics such as the diversity approach of their current organization, the diversity approach of their direct supervisor, their intentions to leave the organization (turnover intentions), and sense of being tolerated at work. The same demographic information as collected in Study 1 was also collected here.

Measures

Organizational diversity approach was measured with nine items: four items assessing perceived identity-consciousness of own organization and five items assessing perceived identity-blindness, adapted from Dang and colleagues (2022). Example items include: "My organization behaves in ways that ignore employees' demographic background." and "My organization believes that employees' demographic differences should be acknowledged and valued." A principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted on the items using a direct oblimin rotation (Conway & Huffcutt, 2003), the details of the PCA are available in Mor and colleagues (2025;Chapter 2). Following the pre-registered approach and consistent with theoretical and empirical support for treating ideology as a unitary construct (Koenig & Richeson, 2010; Martin & Phillips, 2017), a single measure of perceived diversity approach was created. Higher scores on this measure indicate a more conscious approach, while lower scores reflect a more blind approach (α = .90).

Leader diversity approach was measured using a similar scale to the organizational diversity approach scale. Participants were asked to think about their direct supervisor or the one they interact with most if they had multiple (Dang et al., 2022).

A principal components factor analysis, using a direct oblimin rotation (Conway & Huffcutt, 2003), yielded two factors with eigen values 5.16 (four identity consciousness items and three reverse coded blindness items accounting for 57.40% of the variance) and 1.42 (two blindness items accounting for 15.76% of the variance). Leader diversity approach had one additional item that loaded on the first factor as compared to organizational diversity approach. For consistency we created a unitary construct using the same items as the ones we used for organizational diversity approach (α = .91).

Tolerance was measured using a single item adapted from Cvetkovska and colleagues (2021). Participants rated the statement: "I experience being tolerated at my organization, meaning that people don't really approve of my identity, but rather endure and put up with me at work."

Participants reported the number of years they had been working at their current place of work. Due to the nature of responses (e.g., including 'years' or 'half'), this variable had to be manually corrected and transformed into a numerical variable in the statistical software program IBM SPSS (Version 27).

Results

CMB Correction

Following scholarly recommendations to mitigate the risks associated with common method bias (CMB) – artificially inflated relationships between variables (Spector & Brannick, 2010)– we included a marker variable in the survey that was theoretically unrelated to any of our other variables of interest (Simmering et al., 2015; see also Mor et al 2025[Chapter 2]). This variable, namely the preference for color green was then controlled for in our analyses. Inclusion of this variable had no notable effect on our findings.

Descriptives and Correlations

Across our sample tolerance had a mean smaller than the midpoint of the scale (*M*=2.65*, SD*=1.62)*.* Table 2 presents descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for both the primary variables of the current study. The full correlation matrix with all the key variables from Mor and colleagues (2025;Chapter 2), from which the current dataset was derived can be found in the supplementary materials.

Effect of Organizational Diversity Approach on Tolerance

We performed a linear regression to explore the effect of the organizational diversity approach on perceived tolerance. We found that higher perceived organizational identity-consciousness was related to lower tolerance (b=-0.49, SE=0.05, p<.001, 95%CI [-0.59, -0.39]).

Multiple Group Membership: Transgender Identity

We performed step-wise regression analyses to explore (a) possible differences between cisgender (coded as 0) and transgender (coded as 1) participants in their reported tolerance, and (b) a possible interaction effect between organizational approach and gender identity.

Across conditions, transgender participants reported significantly higher perceived tolerance (b=0.79, SE=0.19, p<.001, 95%CI [0.46, 1.11]) than cisgender participants. We obtained no support for an interaction between organizational approach and gender identity on perceived tolerance (b=-0.01, SE=0.15, p=.939, 95%CI [-0.29, 0.31]).

Multiple Group Membership: Race/Ethnicity

We performed a series of regression analyses to explore (a) possible differences between white (coded as 0) and non-white (coded as 1) participants in their reported tolerance, and (b) a possible interaction effect between organizational approach and race/ethnicity. We obtained no main or interactive effects of race/ethnicity on perceived tolerance.

Effect of Leader Diversity Approach on Tolerance

We performed a linear regression to explore the effect of the leader diversity approach on perceived tolerance. We found that higher perceived leader identity-consciousness was related to lower perceived tolerance (b=-0.46, SE=0.05, p<.001, 95%CI [-0.57, -0.36]).

Interaction Between Organization and Leader Diversity Approach on Tolerance

Finally, we aimed to explore whether organizational and leader diversity approaches were independently associated with perceived tolerance, as well as how leader diversity approach might moderate the effect of organizational diversity approach on tolerance. To address these questions, we performed step-wise linear regressions, with the main effects added in step one and the interaction effect added thereafter.

In these models, we included both organizational and leader diversity approaches as independent variables, and then added an interaction term between the two.

We found that higher perceived organizational identity-consciousness (b=-0.33, SE=0.07, p<.001, 95%CI [-0.47, -0.20]) and higher perceived leader identity consciousness (b=-0.24, SE=0.07, p<.001, 95%CI [-0.37, -0.10]) were both significantly associated with lower perceived tolerance. Additionally, the interaction between organizational and leader diversity approach also had a significant effect on perceived tolerance ($b_{interaction}$=-0.11, SE=0.03, p=.002, 95%CI [-0.17,-0.04]). An examination of the simple slopes indicated that when participants perceived their organization as relatively lower on identity-consciousness (-1 SD), perceived leader identity-consciousness was not significantly associated with perceived tolerance (b= -0.07, SE=0.09, p= .457, 95%CI [-0.24,0.11]), however, when participants perceived their organization as relatively higher on identity-consciousness (+1 SD), perceived leader identity-consciousness was associated with significantly reduced perceived tolerance (b = -0.38, SE=0.08, p<.001, 95%CI [-0.55,-0.22]). For a visualization of this interaction see Figure 1.
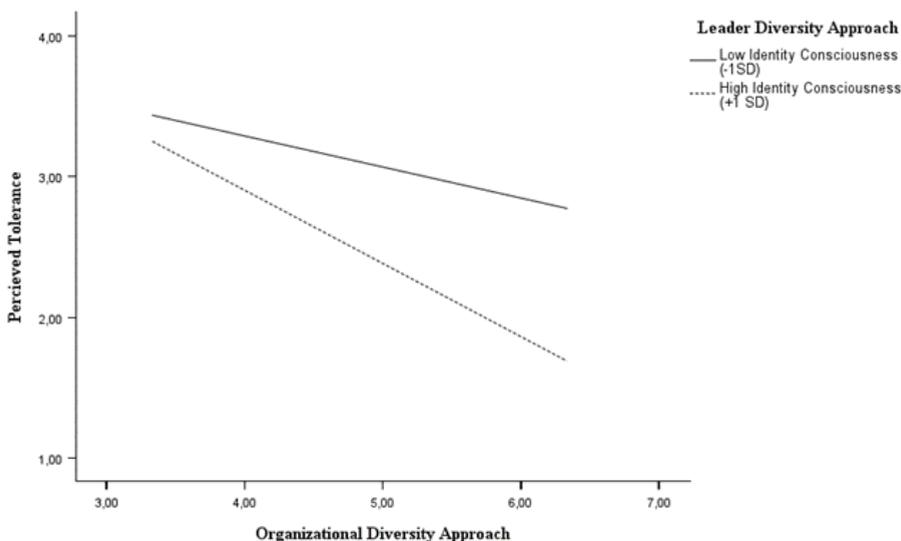
Figure 1. Moderation Effect of Perceived Organizational Diversity Approach on Perceived Tolerance By Perceived Leader Diversity Approach in Study 2

Discussion

Study 2 builds upon and reinforces the findings of Study 1. Specifically, it demonstrates that an identity-blind diversity approach not only signals tolerance to LGBTQ+ individuals evaluating organizations from the outside but is also associated with LGBTQ+ employees within such workplaces perceiving higher levels of tolerance. In alignment with Study 1, transgender employees reported higher levels of tolerance compared to their cis-gender counterparts. However, unlike Study 1, no significant effects of race/ethnicity on perceived tolerance were observed in this study. Additionally, we found that the link between diversity approaches and perceptions of tolerance is evident not only in the organization's formal communications but also in the diversity approaches adopted by leaders. The diversity approach endorsed and modeled by leaders has an influence on LGBTQ+ employees' perceptions of tolerance, highlighting the critical role of leadership in shaping workplace climate. The diversity approach adopted by leaders was independently related to perceptions of tolerance, distinct from the impact of the organizational diversity approach. Importantly, leader diversity approaches also moderated the relationship between organizational diversity approaches and perceived tolerance. Specifically, in organizations perceived as endorsing an identity-conscious approach, leaders who also endorsed an identity-conscious approach further reduced perceptions of tolerance among LGBTQ+ employees, arguably fostering a more inclusive environment. These findings underscore the critical interplay between organizational and leadership-level diversity, highlighting the importance of alignment between the two in affecting workplace experiences for LGBTQ+ employees.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Diversity approaches are widely adopted in organizations and often guide their actions and initiatives related to diversity issues. In recent decades, the impact of these approaches has received growing scholarly attention, with studies showing that they can influence employee responses across a variety of workplace-relevant domains, across many social identity groups (e.g., Gündemir et al., 2019; Kirby et al., 2023b; Leslie et al., 2020; Martin, 2023; Mor et al., 2025 [Chapter 2]). Whereas previous studies have primarily examined how diversity approaches relate to positive (e.g., belonging) or negative (e.g., prejudice) workplace perceptions, our focus here has been on a more conceptually ambiguous yet highly relevant outcome, that is, tolerance, a complex construct somewhere between inclusion and exclusion. We examined whether, and how, organizational diversity approaches might

inadvertently cue perceptions of tolerance rather than genuine inclusion to LGBTQ+ individuals in workplace settings. Our findings reveal that organizations adopting an identity-blind diversity approach, as opposed to an identity-conscious one, signal a climate of tolerance to prospective employees and engender perceptions of tolerance amongst current LGBTQ+ employees. Additional findings highlighted that diversity approaches modelled by leaders, including supervisors and managers, can also significantly shape perceptions of tolerance. Specifically, when leaders were perceived to embrace a more identity-conscious approach, perceptions of tolerance amongst LGBTQ+ employees were reduced. Furthermore, the negative relationship between an identity-conscious organizational approach and perceived tolerance was amplified when leaders also endorsed identity-conscious strategies.

Theoretical Implications

This study extends and integrates the diversity approach paradigm with tolerance research, revealing how an identity-blind approach by de-emphasizing demographic differences signals tolerance to LGBTQ+ employees. Our work contributes to emerging research on the impact of diversity approaches on employee groups with concealable identities (Kirby et al., 2023a; Mor et al., 2025[Chapter 2]). We identify a novel effect of these diversity strategies on such groups, who may be especially sensitive to cues of tolerance.

Our examination of intersectional dynamics is valuable for untangling the intragroup variation within LGBTQ+ employee populations. First, our study uncovered critical main effects of multiple group memberships. Transgender LGB individuals consistently reported higher anticipated and perceived tolerance than cisgender counterparts, regardless of the diversity approach. For LGBTQ+ people of color, Study 1 showed heightened anticipated tolerance, but Study 2 found no significant difference in perceived tolerance compared to white LGBTQ+ participants. One explanation for the differences in results is that LGBTQ+ employees of color may have greater access to community resources, which can buffer against feelings of tolerance and foster inclusion, unlike transgender individuals who may have more limited access. However, when evaluating potential future employers (Study 1), such resources may be less salient, leading to heightened perceptions of anticipated tolerance for both groups. As a result, anticipated tolerance may be more prominent than experienced tolerance for LGBTQ+ employees of color in their current workplace (Study 2). Second, the absence of interactive effects between transgender or racial identity and organizational diversity approaches on tolerance is intriguing. Whilst the current data do not allow us to draw definitive conclusions about the reasons behind these null effects, one possible explanation is

the use of broad and inclusive language (i.e., 'demographic groups') in the diversity approach manipulations and measures, which did not explicitly reference specific sub-identities. This general framing may have shaped participants' perceptions, all of whom identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community. Specifically, the presence or absence of recognition of demographic group membership within the diversity statements or measures may have activated a more encompassing minority group identity amongst participants and, consequently, may not have activated specific facets of their intersectional identities. Whilst this remains a tentative interpretation, it highlights the importance of future iterations of this line of research. For instance, researchers could vary the degree of specificity with which intersectional identities are incorporated into predictor variables, in order to test whether such specificity elicits different response patterns.

We further contribute to the literature by unpacking and highlighting the pivotal role of leaders in signaling tolerance. Leaders act as an embodiment of organizational culture, shaping interpersonal dynamics within their teams and serving as representatives of the organization's values. This dual role positions leaders as critical actors in translating organizational diversity strategies into day-to-day experiences for employees (Grojean et al., 2004; Homan et al., 2020; çi et al., 2015; Koene et al., 2002). Our results suggest that the diversity approaches modeled by leaders can be as important as those conveyed at the organizational level. Moreover, our findings highlighted the amplifying or mitigating role leaders play in relation to organizational diversity strategies. Within organizations that were perceived as more identity-conscious, leaders who similarly adopted identity-conscious practices further diminished perceptions of tolerance, creating a synergistic effect that reinforced the perceived climate for inclusion. The alignment between organizational and leadership-level diversity strategies emphasizes the critical importance of consistency across hierarchical levels in the workplace (Nishii et al., 2018; Wright & Nishii, 2004). Such alignment not only promotes a more inclusive environment but also reduces perceptions of mere tolerance. By extending the paradigm of diversity approaches, this research demonstrates how these strategies function across multiple levels—organizational and leadership—and interact in complex ways to shape employee perceptions.

Practical Implications

Diversity is not only a characteristic of most modern workplaces but also frequently regarded as a strategic asset, capable of driving innovation, enhancing decision-making and fostering overall organizational success (Green et al., 1969; Gröschl, 2011; Shore et al., 2018; Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1998). However, the effectiveness

of this diversity advantage depends on an inclusive environment where diverse individuals feel valued and empowered to share their unique perspectives. The results of our studies suggest that identity-blind diversity approaches, which de-emphasize demographic differences, contribute to perceptions of being merely tolerated rather than fully accepted for LGBTQ+ individuals. A tolerance-focused climate may undermine the collaborative and innovative potential of diverse teams, as employees who feel tolerated may be less likely to voice unique ideas, perspectives or dissenting opinions (Adelman et al., 2023). This stifling of open dialogue compromises an organization's ability to capitalize on the diversity of its workforce. Therefore, organizations should be aware of the risks attached to incorporating tolerance into their diversity strategies and instead consider creating an environment that fosters inclusion and acceptance, which can be realized by employing an identity-conscious diversity approach (Kirby et al., 2023a; Mor et al., 2025[Chapter 2]).

In addition, our results underscore the importance of alignment between organizational messaging and leadership behavior. Organizations should ensure that their formal diversity policies and vision statements are mirrored in the actions and attitudes of their leadership. Alignment between organizational and leader diversity approaches can amplify the effects of an identity-conscious approach in reducing perceptions of tolerance for LGBTQ+ employees. By adopting identity-conscious diversity approaches at both organizational and leadership levels, organizations can not only mitigate the negative consequences of tolerance but potentially enhance the innovative and collaborative potential of their diverse workforce.

Limitations

This research is not without its limitations, which should be considered when interpreting the findings and designing future studies. Our focus on researching LGBTQ+ employees led to not recruiting a very ethnically diverse sample, with only ~10% of the sample being non-white, which limits our ability to draw strong conclusions on possible intersectional struggle faced by individuals with multiple marginalized identities. Furthermore, our focus on LGBTQ+ individuals as a group that responds in particular ways to organizational cues may have un-intentionally suggested that we view this group as a monolith, overlooking individual differences. It is important to clarify that our aim is to advance theory by addressing group-based struggles and challenges that persist in both society and the workplace. At the same time, we recognize the importance of considering a variety of individual differences

that may interact with group identity to shape responses to diversity approaches (e.g., Kirby & Kaiser, 2021).

Additionally, our study measured tolerance using a single item adapted from prior work (Cvetkovska et al., 2020). Whilst this measure captures a core component and widely studied aspect of tolerance, the single-item measure limits our ability to assess its potential multi-dimensionality. For example, tolerance may involve varying experiences such as conditional acceptance, covert prejudice or subtle exclusion, each of which may be differentially influenced by diversity approaches. Furthermore, one may question whether our operationalization of tolerance as perceived forbearance with one's identity may conceptually overlap with our measure of identity blindness, which assesses the extent to which employees perceive their organization as downplaying demographic differences. This overlap could contribute to inflated correlations between constructs and should be carefully considered by scholars studying diversity approaches in conjunction with tolerance. It is, however, important to recognize distinctions between these measures in the context of the current contribution. Diversity approaches represent espoused or enacted, prescriptive frameworks on how to engage with diversity (Wu & Apfelbaum, 2024), whereas tolerance reflects employees' evaluative psychological experience of these approaches. In other words, in our studies, diversity approaches describe policy orientation that is external to the participant and tolerance refers to a personal interpretation of its impact. This distinction is particularly evident in our experimental study, where the causal relationship between the approach and anticipated tolerance is examined, and participants are randomly assigned to different informational primes (and with no other information) and report varying levels of anticipated tolerance in response. Moreover, whilst high co-variance between blindness and tolerance could pose a greater threat to our correlational study, we observe only a moderate negative correlation between the two constructs ($r = -.41$). For comparison, we find a much stronger correlation between perceived organizational and supervisory diversity approaches ($r = .67$), suggesting that participants are capable of discerning overlap between constructs when such overlap is present. Furthermore, the moderately high conceptual overlap between identity-blindness and tolerance could be of theoretical significance and may inspire future research. Specifically, like identity-consciousness, identity-blindness represents an approach aimed at promoting cohesion and collaboration in the workplace. However, if this approach un-intentionally signals 'endurance without acceptance' towards individuals with marginalized identities (Leslie, 2019), it could reveal another psychological process explaining why minoritized groups tend to respond less positively to identity-blindness than to identity-conscious approaches.

Finally, it is worth considering the measures and manipulations of diversity approaches at a more fundamental level, specifically, along a valence dimension. For example, one may argue that identity blindness is often operationalized in negatively valanced terms, whereas identity consciousness is framed more positively. Although both approaches theoretically aim to improve intergroup relations, these differences in valence may confound research findings. From this perspective, one might expect measures of these approaches to be strongly negatively correlated. However, empirical evidence often contradicts this expectation; several studies report a positive association between measures of identity conscious approaches (e.g., multi-culturalism) and identity blind ones (e.g., color-blindness ideology; e.g., Wollast et al., 2023). Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge valence-related threats to validity to enhance clarity in this research area. Future studies should carefully consider the role of valence, as doing so will enable a more precise delineation of the scope and robustness of diversity approach effects.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our research highlights that identity-blind diversity approaches in the workplace can signal a sense of being tolerated rather than truly accepted for LGBTQ+ employees. These findings highlight the importance of recognizing that diversity efforts that overlook or undervalue group-based differences—such as identity-blind vision statements—can (un-intentionally) convey mere tolerance than true acceptance. This approach may have negative consequences for underrepresented groups, including LGBTQ+ employees, and hinder open and safe collaborative environments necessary for the potential benefits of diversity to emerge. Moreover, aligning organizational diversity strategies with inclusive leadership behaviors can enhance support for diverse employees, foster their well-being and create conditions that allow their unique perspectives to meaningfully contribute to organizational success.

Chapter 3 builds on the foundation laid in Chapter 2 and extends it in important ways by demonstrating that organizational diversity approaches can vary in the extent to which they communicate a sense of being merely tolerated, rather than genuinely included, to LGBTQ+ employees. Together, the first two empirical chapters of this dissertation provide a clear and valuable perspective on the critical role diversity approaches play in shaping workplace perceptions and responses among LGBTQ+ individuals. This work offers a much-needed expansion of the literature by focusing on a key demographic group whose identities are often concealable.

However, these chapters stop short of exploring how diversity visions, implemented policies, and LGBTQ+ workplace experiences are interconnected in more nuanced ways. The next chapter addresses this gap by simultaneously examining both the perspectives of policymakers and those of LGBTQ+ employees. It explores the underlying intentions of DEI policies, how these policies are actually implemented within organizations, and how they are perceived and experienced by LGBTQ+ workers; the primary group of interest in this research.

3

REFERENCES

Adelman, L., Yogeeswaran, K., & Verkuyten, M. (2023). The unintended consequences of tolerance: The experience and repercussions of being tolerated for minority group members. *PLOS ONE*, *18*(3). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0282073

Adelman, L., Verkuyten, M., & and Yogeeswaran, K. (2024). Being tolerated as a minority group member: An experimental study with virtual teams. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2024.2351036

Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice* (pp. xviii, 537). Addison-Wesley.

Bagci, S. C., Verkuyten, M., Koc, Y., Turnuklu, A., Piyale, Z. E., & Bekmezci, E. (2020). Being tolerated and being discriminated against: Links to psychological well-being through threatened social identity needs. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *50*(7), 1463–1477. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2699

Barreto, M., Ellemers, N., & Banal, S. (2006). Working under cover: Performance-related self-confidence among members of contextually devalued groups who try to pass. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *36*(3), 337–352. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.314

Bell, M. P., Özbilgin, M. F., Beauregard, T. A., & Sürgevil, O. (2011). Voice, silence, and diversity in 21st century organizations: Strategies for inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender employees. *Human Resource Management*, *50*(1), 131–146. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.20401

Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.). Tolerance. In *Cambridge dictionary*. Retrieved May 20, 2025, from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/tolerance

Cancela, D., Stutterheim, S. E., & Uitdewilligen, S. (2024). The workplace experiences of transgender and gender diverse employees: A systematic literature review using the minority stress model. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *0*(0), 1–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2024.2304053

Capell, B., Tzafrir, S. S., Enosh, G., & Dolan, S. L. (2018). Explaining sexual minorities' disclosure: The role of trust embedded in organizational practices. *Organization Studies*, *39*(7), 947–973. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840617708000

Cech, E. A., & Rothwell, W. R. (2020). LGBT workplace inequality in the federal workforce: Intersectional processes, organizational contexts, and turnover considerations. *ILR Review*, *73*(1), 25–60. https://doi.org/10.1177/0019793919843508

Chaney, K. E., Sanchez, D. T., & Remedios, J. D. (2021). Dual cues: Women of color anticipate both gender and racial bias in the face of a single identity cue. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *24*(7), 1095–1113. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430220942844

Cipollina, R., & Sanchez, D. T. (2022). Identity cues influence sexual minorities' anticipated treatment and disclosure intentions in healthcare settings: Exploring a multiple pathway model. *Journal of Health Psychology*, *27*(7), 1569–1582. https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105321995984

Coffman, K. B., Coffman, L. C., & Ericson, K. M. M. (2017). The size of the LGBT population and the magnitude of antigay sentiment are substantially underestimated. *Management Science*, *63*(10), 3168–3186. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2016.2503

Cohen, A. J. (2004). What toleration is. *Ethics*, *115*(1), 68–95. https://doi.org/10.1086/421982

Conway, J. M., & Huffcutt, A. I. (2003). A review and evaluation of exploratory factor analysis practices in organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods, 6(2), 147–168*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428103251541

Cvetkovska, S., Verkuyten, M., & Adelman, L. (2020). Being tolerated and minority well-being: The role of group identifications. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *74*, 161–173. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2019.10.010

Cvetkovska, S., Verkuyten, M., Adelman, L., & Yogeeswaran, K. (2021). Being tolerated: Implications for well-being among ethnic minorities. *British Journal of Psychology*, *112*(3), 781–803. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12492

Dang, C. T., Volpone, S. D., & Umphress, E. E. (2022). The ethics of diversity ideology: Consequences of leader diversity ideology on ethical leadership perception and organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology 108(2), 307–329.* https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001010

Dwertmann, D. J. G., & Van Dijk, H. (2021). A leader's guide to fostering inclusion by creating a positive diversity climate. In B. M. Ferdman, J. Prime, & R. E. Riggio (Eds.), *Inclusive leadership: Transforming diverse lives, workplaces, and societies* (pp. 149–161). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Ellemers, N., & Barreto, M. (2006). Sociale identiteits en zelf-voorstelling op het werk: Hoe probeert huid die een gestigmatiseerde identiteit emotionele welzijn, sociale insluiting en prestatie treft. [Social identity and self-presentation at work: How attempts to hide a stigmatised identity affect emotional well-being, social inclusion and performance] *Netherlands Journal of Psychology*, *62*(1), 51–57. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03061051

Embrick, D. G., Walther, C. S., & Wickens, C. M. (2007). Working class masculinity: Keeping gay men and lesbians out of the workplace. *Sex Roles*, *56*(11), 757–766. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-007-9234-0

Emerson, K. T. U., & Murphy, M. C. (2014). Identity threat at work: How social identity threat and situational cues contribute to racial and ethnic disparities in the workplace. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *20*(4), 508–520. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035403

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (Ed.). (2024). *LGBTQI equality at a crossroads: Progress and challenges: EU LGBTQI survey III*. Publications Office. https://doi.org/10.2811/569753

Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A.-G., & Buchner, A. (2007). G*Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods*, *39*(2), 175–191. https://doi.org/10.3758/bf03193146

Follmer, K. B., Sabat, I. E., & Siuta, R. L. (2020). Disclosure of stigmatized identities at work: An interdisciplinary review and agenda for future research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *41*(2), 169–184. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2402

Forst, R. (2018). Toleration, justice and reason. In *The culture of toleration in diverse societies* (pp. 71-85). Manchester University Press.

Gebert, D., Buengeler, C., & Heinitz, K. (2017). Tolerance: A neglected dimension in diversity training? *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *16*(3), 415–438. https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2015.0252

Gibson, J. L. (2006). Enigmas of intolerance: Fifty years after stouffer's communism, conformity, and civil liberties. *Perspectives on Politics*, *4*(1), 21–34.

3

Goh, J. X., Kort, D. N., Thurston, A. M., Benson, L. R., & Kaiser, C. R. (2019). Does concealing a sexual minority identity prevent exposure to prejudice? *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *10*(8), 1056–1064. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550619829065

Green, K. A., López, M., Wysocki, A., & Kepner, K. (1969). Diversity in the workplace: Benefits, challenges, and the required managerial tools. *EDIS*, *2002*(2). doi.org/10.32473/edis-hr022-2002

Griffith, K. H., & Hebl, M. R. (2002). The disclosure dilemma for gay men and lesbians: "Coming out" at work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *87*(6), 1191–1199. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.6.1191

Grojean, M. W., Resick, C. J., Dickson, M. W., & Smith, D. B. (2004). Leaders, values, and organizational climate: Examining leadership strategies for establishing an organizational climate regarding ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *55*(3), 223–241. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-004-1275-5

Gröschl, S. (2011). *Diversity in the Workplace: Multi-disciplinary and International Perspectives*. Gower Publishing, Ltd.

Gündemir, S., Homan, A. C., Usova, A., & Galinsky, A. D. (2017). Multicultural meritocracy: The synergistic benefits of valuing diversity and merit. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *73*, 34–41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2017.06.002

Gündemir, S., Martin, A. E., & Homan, A. C. (2019). Understanding diversity ideologies from the target's perspective: A review and future directions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00282

Hebl, M. R., Martinez, L. R., Skorinko, J. L., Barron, L. G., & King, E. B. (2014). To be or not to be; and to see or not to see: The benefits of LGBT identity consciousness for organizations and employees. In K. M. Thomas, V. C. Plaut, & N. M. Tran (Eds.) *Diversity ideologies in organizations* (pp. 151–176). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Hjerm, M., Eger, M. A., Bohman, A., & Fors Connolly, F. (2020). A new approach to the study of tolerance: Conceptualizing and measuring acceptance, respect, and appreciation of difference. *Social Indicators Research*, *147*(3), 897–919. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-019-02176-y

Hollis, L. P. (2022). *Black Women, Intersectionality, and Workplace Bullying: Intersecting Distress*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003187813

Homan, A. C., Gündemir, S., Buengeler, C., & van Kleef, G. A. (2020). Leading diversity: Towards a theory of functional leadership in diverse teams. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *105*(10), 1101–1128. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000482

Howansky, K., Maimon, M., & Sanchez, D. (2021). Identity safety cues predict instructor impressions, belonging, and absences in the psychology classroom. *Teaching of Psychology*, *49*(3), 212–217. https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628321990362

Insel, A. (2019). Tolerated but not equal. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 45(4), 511–515. https://doi.org/10.1177/0191453719831332

İşçi, S., Çakmak, E., & Karadağ, E. (2015). The effect of leadership on organizational climate. In E. Karadağ (Ed.), *Leadership and Organizational Outcomes: Meta-Analysis of Empirical Studies* (pp. 123–141). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-14908-0_8

Kirby, T. A., Barreto, M., Korine, R., Hendy, J., Osman, L., Stadie, S., & Tan, D. (2023a). To conceal or reveal: Identity-conscious diversity ideologies facilitate sexual minority identity disclosure. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *54*(1), 199–218. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2996

Kirby, T. A., & Kaiser, C. R. (2020). Person-message fit: Racial identification moderates the benefits of multicultural and colorblind diversity approaches. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 47(6)*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167220948707

Kirby, T. A., Russell Pascual, N., & Hildebrand, L. K. (2023b). The dilution of diversity: Ironic effects of broadening diversity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 51(2), 268-283*. https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672231184925

Kirby, T. A., Silva Rego, M., & Kaiser, C. R. (2021). Colorblind and multicultural diversity strategies create identity management pressure. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 50(6),* 1143–1156. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2689

Koene, B. A. S., Vogelaar, A. L. W., & Soeters, J. L. (2002). Leadership effects on organizational climate and financial performance: Local leadership effect in chain organizations. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *13*(3), 193–215. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(02)00103-0

Koenig, A. M., & Richeson, J. A. (2010). The contextual endorsement of sexblind versus sexaware ideologies. *Social Psychology, 41(3)*, 186–191. https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-9335/a000026

Kruk, M., & Matsick, J. L. (2021). A taxonomy of identity safety cues based on gender and race: From a promising past to an intersectional and translational future. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*, *7*(4), 487–510. https://doi.org/10.1037/tps0000304

Le Forestier, J. M., Page-Gould, E., & Chasteen, A. L. (2022). Concealment stigma: The social costs of concealing. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *101*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2022.104340

Lee, Y., Li, J.-Y., & Sunny Tsai, W.-H. (2021). Diversity-oriented leadership, internal communication, and employee outcomes: A perspective of racial minority employees. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *33*(5), 314–334. https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2021.2007388

Leslie, L. M. (2019). Diversity initiative effectiveness: A typological theory of unintended consequences. *Academy of Management Review*, 44(3), 538-563. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2017.0087

Leslie, L. M., Bono, J. E., Kim, Y. (Sophia), & Beaver, G. R. (2020). On melting pots and salad bowls: A meta-analysis of the effects of identity-blind and identity-conscious diversity ideologies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *105*(5), 453–471. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000446

Leslie, L. M., & Flynn, E. (2022). Diversity ideologies, beliefs, and climates: A review, integration, and set of recommendations. *Journal of Management*, *50*(3), 849-876. https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063221086238

Li, Y., Perera, S., Kulik, C. T., & Metz, I. (2019). Inclusion climate: A multilevel investigation of its antecedents and consequences. *Human Resource Management*, *58*(4), 353–369. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21956

Lozano, J. F., & Escrich, T. (2017). Cultural diversity in business: A critical reflection on the ideology of tolerance. *Journal of Business Ethics, 142*(4), 679–696. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3113-y

3

Martin, A. E. (2023). The divergent effects of diversity ideologies for race and gender relations. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 175, 104226. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2023.104226

Martin, A. E., & Phillips, K. W. (2017). What "blindness" to gender differences helps women see and do: Implications for confidence, agency, and action in male-dominated environments. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 142*, 28–44. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2017.07.004

McCluney, C. L., & Rabelo, V. C. (2019). Conditions of visibility: An intersectional examination of Black women's belongingness and distinctiveness at work. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *113*, 143–152. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.09.008

McFadden, C., Crowley-Henry, M. (2016). A Systematic Literature Review on Trans* Careers and Workplace Experiences. In: Köllen, T. (eds.) *Sexual Orientation and Transgender Issues in Organizations* (pp. 63–81). Springer.

Mor Barak, M. E. M. (2015). Inclusion is the key to diversity management, but what is inclusion? *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, *39*(2), 83–88. https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2015.1035599

Mor Barak, M. E. M., Lizano, E. L., Kim, A., Duan, L., Rhee, M.-K., Hsiao, H.-Y., & Brimhall, K. C. (2016). The promise of diversity management for climate of inclusion: A state-of-the-art review and meta-analysis. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, *40*(4), 305–333. https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2016.1138915

Mor, K., Gündemir, S., & Van der Toorn, J. (2025). Celebrating the "invisible": The role of organizational diversity approaches on attracting and retaining LGBTQ+talent, *40(3)*, 593–617. *Journal of Business and Psychology.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-024-09975-2

Napier, J. L. (2024). A cross-cultural investigation of prejudice against transgender people. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *0*(0), 19485506241289638. https://doi.org/10.1177/19485506241289638

Newheiser, A., Barreto, M., & Tiemersma, J. (2017). People like me don't belong here: Identity concealment is associated with negative workplace experiences. *Journal of Social Issues*, *73*(2), 341–358. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12220

Newheiser, A.-K., & Barreto, M. (2014). Hidden costs of hiding stigma: Ironic interpersonal consequences of concealing a stigmatized identity in social interactions. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *52*, 58–70. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2014.01.002

Nishii, L. H., Khattab, J., Shemla, M., & Paluch, R. M. (2018). A multi-level process model for understanding diversity practice effectiveness. *Academy of Management Annals*, 12(1), 37–82. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2016.0044

Oberdiek, H. (2001). *Tolerance: Between Forbearance and Acceptance*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Pepper, S. M., & Lorah, P. (2008). Career issues and workplace considerations for the transsexual community: Bridging a gap of knowledge for career counselors and mental health care providers. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *56*(4), 330–343. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2008.tb00098.x

Phillips, K., & O'Reilly, C. (1998). Demography and diversity in organizations: A review of 40 years of research. In B. M. Staw, & L. L. Cummings (Eds.) *Research in Organizational Behavior* (Vol. 20, pp. 77–140). Elsevier.

Pichler, S., Ruggs, E., & Trau, R. (2017). Worker outcomes of LGBT-supportive policies: A cross-level model. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, 36(1),* 17–32. https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-07-2016-0058

Plaut, V. C., Thomas, K. M., & Goren, M. J. (2009). Is multiculturalism or color blindness better for minorities? *Psychological Science*, *20*(4), 444–446. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02318.x

Plaut, V. C., Thomas, K. M., Hurd, K., & Romano, C. A. (2018). Do color blindness and multiculturalism remedy or foster discrimination and racism? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *27*(3), 200–206. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721418766068

Powers, B., & Ellis, A. (2014). *A manager's guide to sexual orientation in the workplace*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315022000

Purdie-Vaughns, V., & Eibach, R. P. (2008). Intersectional invisibility: The distinctive advantages and disadvantages of multiple subordinate-group identities. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, *59*(5–6), 377–391. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9424-4

Rattan, A., & Ambady, N. (2013). Diversity ideologies and intergroup relations: An examination of colorblindness and multiculturalism. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *43*(1), 12-21. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.1892

Salari, N., Fattah, A., Hosseinian-Far, A., Larti, M., Sharifi, S., & Mohammadi, M. (2024). Prevalence of workplace microaggressions and racial discrimination: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Safety and Health at Work*, *15*(3), 245–254. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shaw.2024.05.002

Scanlon, T. (2003). *The difficulty of tolerance: Essays in political philosophy*. Cambridge University Press.

Schönauer, J., Greven, A., & Brettel, M. (2025). 'Help me be myself'—How identity-specific support promotes LGBTQ+ employees' authenticity via basic need satisfaction. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 36(2),* 304–350. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2024.2444333

Settles, I. H., & Buchanan, N. T. (2014). Multiple groups, multiple identities, and intersectionality. *The Oxford Handbook of Multicultural Identity*, *1*, 160–180.

Shore, L. M., Cleveland, J. N., & Sanchez, D. (2018). Inclusive workplaces: A review and model. *Human Resource Management Review*, *28*(2), 176–189. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2017.07.003

Simmering, M. J., Fuller, C. M., Richardson, H. A., Ocal, Y., & Atinc, G. M. (2015). Marker variable choice, reporting, and interpretation in the detection of common method variance: A review and demonstration. *Organizational Research Methods*, *18*(3), 473–511. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428114560023

Sparkman, D. J., Eidelman, S., Dueweke, A. R., Marin, M. S., & Dominguez, B. (2019). Open to diversity: Openness to experience predicts beliefs in multiculturalism and colorblindness through perspective taking. *Journal of Individual Differences*, *40*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1027/1614-0001/a000270

Spector, P. E., & Brannick, M. T. (2010). Common method issues: An introduction to the feature topic in organizational research methods. *Organizational Research Methods*, *13*, 403–406. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428110366303

United Nations. (1945). Charter of the United Nations. http://www.un.org/en/charter-unitednations.

3

Vanderford, R. (2024, February 5). Corporate America Tweaks Diversity Initiatives Amid Pushback. *Wall Street Journal*. https://www.wsj.com/articles/corporate-america-tweaks-diversity-initiatives-amid-pushback-062cfe89

Verkuyten, M., Yogeeswaran, K., & Adelman, L. (2019). Intergroup toleration and its implications for culturally diverse societies. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, *13*(1), 5–35. https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12051

Verkuyten, M., Yogeeswaran, K., & Adelman, L. (2020). The Negative Implications of Being Tolerated: Tolerance From the Target's Perspective. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 15(3), 544–561. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691619897974

Verkuyten, M., Yogeeswaran, K., & Adelman, L. (2023). The social psychology of intergroup tolerance and intolerance. *European Review of Social Psychology*, *34*(1), 1–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2022.2091326

Wentling, R. M., & Palma-Rivas, N. (1998). Current status and future trends of diversity initiatives in the workplace: Diversity experts' perspective. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *9*(3), 235–253. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.3920090304

Whitaker, T. R. (2019). Banging on a locked door: The persistent role of racial discrimination in the workplace. *Social Work in Public Health*, *34*(1), 22–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/19371918.2019.1572564

Wollast, R., Lüders, A., Nugier, A., Khamzina, K., de la Sablonnière, R., & Guimond, S. (2023). Social dominance and anti-immigrant prejudice: A cross-national and prospective test of the mediating role of assimilation, multiculturalism, colour blindness, and interculturalism. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 53(1), 167–182. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2895

Wolsko, C., Park, B., Judd, C. M., & Wittenbrink, B. (2000). Framing interethnic ideology: Effects of multicultural and color-blind perspectives on judgments of groups and individuals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *78*(4), 635–654. https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.78.4.635

Wright, P., & Nishii, L. (2004). Strategic HRM and organizational behavior: Integrating multiple levels of analysis, *CAHRS Working Paper Series, 468*.

Wu, Y., & Apfelbaum, E. P. (2024). Diversity ideologies in organizations. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 60, 101921. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2024.101921

Yogeeswaran, K., Gale, J., & Verkuyten, M. (2021). Interculturalism as a strategy to manage diversity: Moving psychological research beyond colorblindness and multiculturalism. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *15*(10), e12640. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12640

CHAPTER 4

From Vision to Reality: Examining (Mis)alignments in LGBTQ+ Policies and Practices
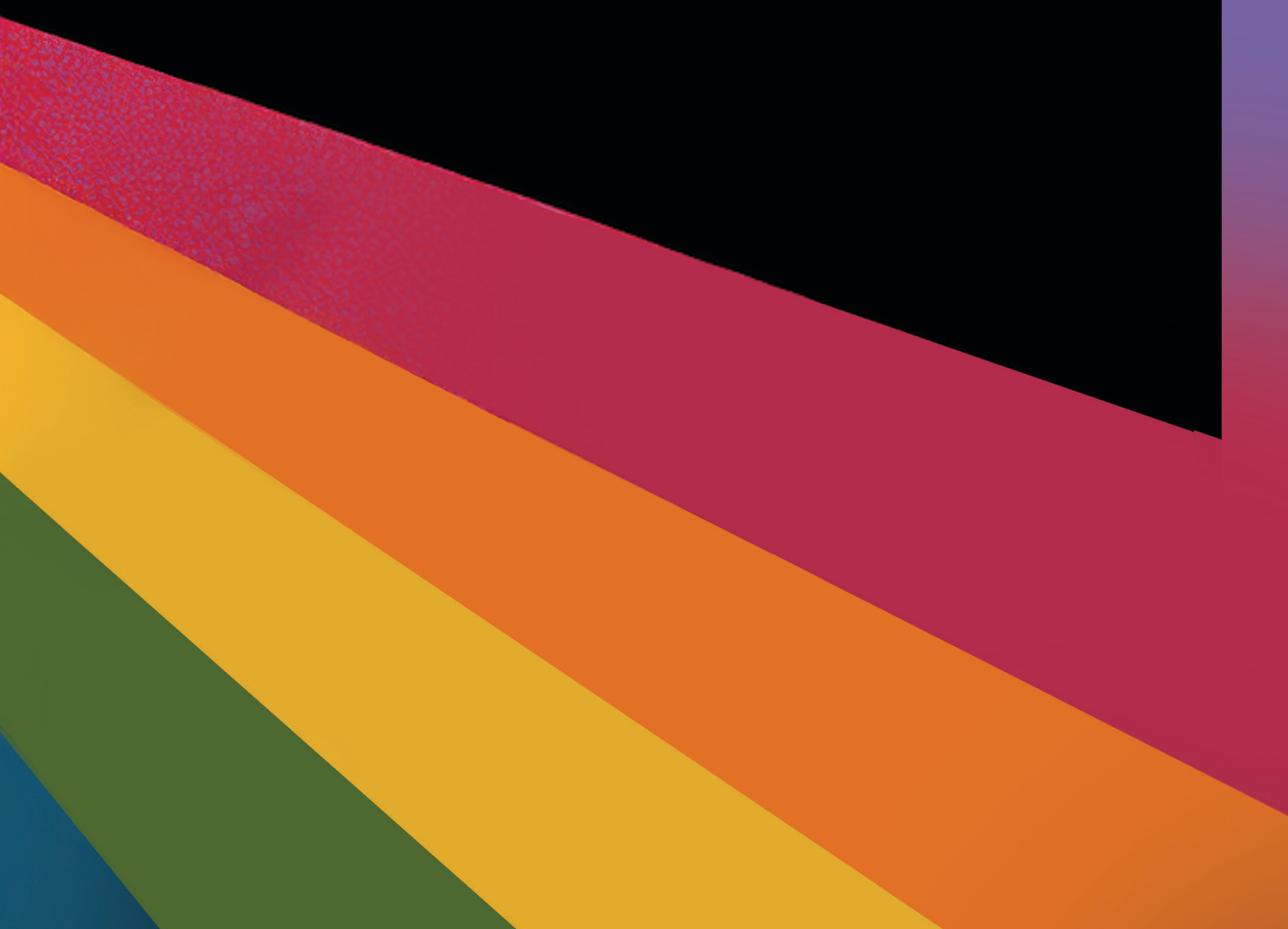
From Vision to Reality: Examining (Mis)alignments in LGBTQ+ Policies and Practices

Author Contributions

Kshitij Mor: Writing and preparing original draft, designing study, interviewing participants, coding data, organizing materials,
Marieke van den Brink: Reviewing and editing drafts, supervision, conceptualization, assistance with coding, assisting with theory and research methods
Seval Gündemir: Reviewing and editing drafts, supervision, conceptualization
Jojanneke van der Toorn: Reviewing and editing drafts, supervision, conceptualization

ABSTRACT

This study examines how diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies and practices targeted at LGBTQ+ employees unfold within two Dutch financial organizations. It focuses on three interconnected stages of policy development and reception: how such policies are intended by decision-makers, how they are actually implemented, and how they are ultimately experienced by LGBTQ+ employees. Drawing on qualitative interviews with HR/DEI professionals and LGBTQ+ employees (n=16) supplemented by policy documents, the study explores how similar diversity visions can yield different outcomes depending on how policies are implemented and experienced. The thematic analysis focused on five key areas that were central to participants' reflections on DEI: (1) organizational messaging and diversity vision; (2) inclusive infrastructure; (3) employee networks; (4) leadership support; and (5) the broader organizational climate. Our findings reveal that DEI is not a linear or top-down policy process, but a dynamic and relational one shaped by interpretation, translation, and engagement at multiple levels Our analysis showed that despite both organizations articulating inclusive visions, policies were less effective at the implementation stage due to overreliance on individual "advocates", limited structural embedding, and a lack of leadership support

Keywords: Diversity Policy, LGBTQ+, (Mis)alignments, Intended-implemented-experienced framework

FROM VISION TO REALITY: EXAMINING (MIS)ALIGNMENTS IN LGBTQ+ POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Despite growing investments and attention, diversity equity and inclusion (DEI) policies and practices in organizations often fall short of their goals. While DEI is frequently presented as a shared organizational priority, policies frequently fail to deliver meaningful outcomes, particularly for employees from minoritized groups such as LGBTQ+ individuals (Byington et al., 2021; Cech & Rothwell, 2020; Coffman et al., 2017). Poorly designed or implemented policies can reinforce stereotypes, provoke resistance, or create a false sense of fairness that obscures persistent inequalities (Dover et al., 2020; Kaiser et al., 2013; Leslie et al., 2020; Pietri et al., 2019). Even well-intentioned policies may falter when they are not widely embraced or fail to resonate with the lived realities of the people they are designed to support (Ellemers et al., 2018; Fath & Proudfoot, 2024; Kirby, Russell Pascual, et al., 2023)

A key reason why DEI policies often fall short is the assumption that organizational stakeholders, such as executives, HR professionals, and employees share a common understanding of what diversity and inclusion work entails (Ozturk & and Tatli, 2016). However, research suggests that these groups often hold diverging perspectives, shaped by their roles, identities, and positions within organizational hierarchies (Bacouel-Jentjens & Yang, 2019; Klarenaar et al., 2022; To et al., 2024; Van Douwen, 2025). These differences can lead to significant misalignments between how policies are intended, implemented and experienced, undermining their overall effectiveness. While existing scholarship has contributed important insights into each of these components (Khilji & and Wang, 2006; Kruk & Matsick, 2021), it tends to treat them in isolation. Studies often focus either on the intentions of policymakers or the experiences of employees (Cramwinckel et al., 2018; Ellemers et al., 2018; Gündemir et al., 2019; Leslie et al., 2020), but rarely analyze the dynamic interplay between policy intention, implementation, and lived experience. This compartmentalized approach overlooks how mismatches between policy vision and everyday practice emerge and why they matter (Mosse et al., 2023).

Our research aims to advance current debates on DEI policy effectiveness by examining the perspectives of both HR/DEI officers (i.e. policymakers and implementors) and LGBTQ+ employees (i.e. a key focus group of DEI policies). Specifically, we explore how HR professionals intend and implement DEI policies, and how LGBTQ+ employees experience those policies. By analyzing these multiple perspectives, we identify points of alignment and misalignment between intended, implemented, and experienced DEI policies. Understanding these (mis)alignments

sheds light on how effectively DEI policies translate from vision to reality and reveals the tensions that can hinder their effectiveness.

To do so, we draw on the "Intended–Implemented–Experienced" (I-I-E) framework from Human Resource Management research (Wright & Nishii, 2004; Makhecha et al., 2018; Trullen et al., 2020). In the context of DEI, where policies and practices are deeply relational, context-dependent, and politically charged (Apfelbaum et al., 2016; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Espino-Pérez et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2012; Plaut et al., 2011), this framework provides a valuable lens to understand how policies are constructed and negotiated across organizational levels. This framework conceptualizes the policy process as a chain of interpretation: from strategic intent, through operational implementation, to the subjective experience of employees.

Our empirical focus is on LGBTQ+ employees, a group that remains understudied in DEI scholarship despite their distinct challenges (Maji et al., 2023; Mor et al., 2025a [Chapter 2]; Van der Toorn & Gaitho, 2021). Compared to other minoritized groups, LGBTQ+ individuals are often confronted with unique barriers related to identity visibility, safety, and organizational silence (Morgenroth et al., 2024; Van der Toorn, in press). Moreover, LGBTQ+ policies tend to be less standardized and more contested, offering a critical setting to examine how these policies are practiced, negotiated, and at times, resisted (Anteby & Anderson, 2014; Byington et al., 2021; Van den Dungen et al., 2023).

Our central research question is: How do the intended, implemented, and experienced dimensions of LGBTQ+ policies align or misalign within two Dutch financial organizations, and what does this reveal about the dynamics between policy makers and LGBTQ+ employees? This paper offers three key contributions. First, it extends the "intended–implemented–experienced" framework to LGBTQ+ diversity, revealing how alignment can be both structural and interpretive. Second, it shows how unexamined ambiguity in diversity approaches weakens implementation and undermines employee engagement. Third, it highlights the importance of distributing DEI responsibility across organizational levels and beyond symbolic actors like DEI officers/ERG leaders, demonstrating that structural embedding and shared ownership are critical to effective and sustainable inclusion.

Theoretical Framework

Organizational diversity management involves more than policy design; it is a multi-layered process that unfolds across different organizational levels and actors (Blommaert & Van den Brink, 2020). Strategic leaders, HR professionals, and DEI officers shape diversity visions and translate them into policies, while employees interpret and respond to these policies in their everyday work environment. However, this translation from vision to reality is far from straightforward. Although much scholarly attention has been paid to the components of DEI, such as vision statements, policy goals, or employee outcomes, existing research often treats these elements as disconnected rather than interdependent (Dover et al., 2020; Gündemir et al., 2017; Kaiser et al., 2013; Leslie et al., 2020). What remains underexplored is the dynamic interplay between these stages: how diversity visions are translated into implemented practices, and how these are ultimately experienced by employees. Much of the literature implicitly assumes alignment across these stages, yet growing evidence suggests that misalignments are frequent and consequential, particularly in relation to inclusion outcomes (Federo, 2024; Ferdman, 2017; Tienda, 2013).

Intended–Implemented–Experienced Framework

To capture the complexity of DEI policy in organizations, we draw on the Intended–Implemented–Experienced (I-E-E) framework from Human Resource Management (Wright & Nishii, 2004; Makhecha et al., 2018; Trullen et al., 2020). This framework views HR policies not as static directives but as dynamic processes shaped by interpretation across three stages: strategic intent (intended), operational execution (implemented), and employee perception (experienced). Each stage involves distinct actors, assumptions, and constraints.

The "intended" stage refers to the formal goals and vision articulated by organizational leadership, HR, and DEI professionals, often expressed through strategy documents or public commitments to inclusion. Importantly, these visions are not neutral; they are embedded in normative assumptions about the purpose of diversity, the nature of difference, and the appropriate means of redress. What organizations choose to include in their diversity aims and what they leave out, already reflects a specific ideological positioning (Apfelbaum et al., 2016; Gündemir et al., 2019).

The "implemented" stage captures how these intentions are translated into concrete organizational policies and practices such as training programs, resource groups, and communication campaigns. However, implementation is often fraught with ambiguity and distortion. Managers, especially those in middle management, play a crucial role in translating strategic goals into everyday practice (Kelan, 2022).

4

Yet their level of commitment, understanding, and perceived priority of DEI efforts can significantly affect whether and how policies are executed (Christie & Tippmann, 2024; Trullen et al., 2020). Moreover, organizational constraints such as limited time, insufficient resources, or conflicting demands may result in partial, symbolic, or performative implementation, in which policies are formally adopted but not meaningfully enacted. Even well-resourced policies may drift from their original intent due to bureaucratic inertia, conflicting incentives, or miscommunication.

The "experienced" stage focuses on how employees perceive, engage with, and are impacted by DEI efforts. It captures the full spectrum of employee responses from how policies are understood and utilized to how they shape the lived organizational reality. Research shows that these experiences play a critical role in shaping trust, engagement, and performance (Nishii & Wright, 2008; Wang et al., 2020). In DEI, perceptions are particularly salient because diversity and inclusion are not merely administrative categories: they are experienced subjectively, emotionally, and relationally. Employees evaluate not only whether a policy exists, but whether it feels sincere, inclusive, and responsive to their realities. As such, even well-designed and competently implemented policies may fail if they are not experienced as legitimate, empowering, or safe (Gündemir et al., 2019; Jansen et al., 2024; Pietri et al., 2018). Worse, DEI practices may backfire when they are seen as tokenistic, disingenuous, or imposed without regard to context (Apfelbaum et al., 2016; Dover et al., 2021; Georgeac & Rattan, 2023).

These distinctions are not merely analytical; they highlight how different stakeholders may experience the same DEI practices in fundamentally different ways (Klarenaar et al., 2022; Van der Toorn et al., 2024; Buizer et al., 2025). For example, while HR professionals may interpret the rollout of a pronoun campaign as a bold step toward inclusion, LGBTQ+ employees may view it as superficial or even risky if organizational culture remains hostile or ambivalent. Similarly, a diversity training session may be hailed as progressive by leadership, but regarded as irrelevant or alienating by those it intends to serve. The gap between intent, implementation, and experience is not just procedural; it is interpretive, political, and emotional.

Diversity Approaches
What makes DEI particularly prone to misalignment is that it is rarely confined to a single organizational unit. DEI policies and practices cut across departments and hierarchies, often requiring collaboration between senior leadership, HR, middle management, employee networks, and the employees themselves. Each actor may operate from a different ideological standpoint regarding the value, purpose,

and scope of diversity. Thus, the success of DEI policies depends on shared interpretations and trust, not just on structural presence.

These ideological orientations, referred to in the literature as diversity approaches, offer a critical layer of analysis to understand how intended, implemented, and experienced practices align or misalign. In organizational psychology, diversity policies and practices are often embedded within prescriptive frameworks on how to engage with group-based differences (Wu & Apfelbaum, 2024), typically conceptualized through two broad approaches: identity-blindness and identity-consciousness (Gündemir et al., 2019; Leslie et al., 2020; Plaut et al., 2009; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). An identity-blind approach treats demographic differences as irrelevant to workplace practices, emphasizing equal treatment, individual merit, and shared qualities. Conversely, identity-conscious approaches explicitly recognize and attach value to group-based differences. They conceptualize diversity as a resource and seek to cultivate inclusive climates through visibility, representation, and structural redress.

Both approaches aim to foster intergroup harmony and can be used in tandem and combined to tailor diversity approaches to employee needs, or increase buy-in from different organizational actors (Gündemir et al., 2017; Jansen et al., 2015). However, misalignment may arise when these ideological frames compete. HR departments may design identity-conscious interventions, while line managers interpret and communicate them through an identity-blind lens. Employees, in turn, may experience policies as contradictory, confusing, or alienating, particularly when symbolic gestures are not backed by substantive change. Furthermore, as definitions of diversity expand to include increasingly broad dimensions (e.g., personality, communication style), identity-conscious intentions may be perceived as diluted, ultimately upholding the status quo (Akinola et al., 2024; Kirby et al., 2023).

In our study, the I-I-E framework offers a powerful lens through which to examine the complexity of DEI policy processes. It draws attention to the interpretive and political nature of organizational life, foregrounding the ways in which power, ideology, and institutional context shape inclusion. In the case of LGBTQ+ inclusion, where identities are often concealable and socially sensitive, the risk of misalignment is particularly acute. Understanding how these policies are intended, implemented and experienced by different stakeholders offers critical insight into the organizational dynamics of DEI policies and the conditions under which it succeeds or fails.

METHODS

Study Design

This study employs a case study design to examine how DEI policies targeting LGBTQ+ employees are constructed, implemented, and experienced within organizational contexts. We focus on two large financial institutions in the Netherlands, referred to here as *Fanhigh* and *Mismag,* both of which have established DEI infrastructures and active LGBTQ+ employee networks. A case study design is particularly well-suited for capturing the complex, multi-actor and context-dependent nature of diversity policy and practices, allowing for in-depth exploration of the interactions between policy intent, implementation, and experience (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Zanoni & Janssens, 2007). Rather than attempting to generalize across multiple settings, this design allows for a focused, interpretive exploration of how DEI policies are constructed, implemented, and experienced from the perspectives of different organizational actors.

The selected organizations were purposefully sampled based on two key criteria: (1) a mature and formalized DEI infrastructure (e.g., presence of a DEI team, formal strategy documents, internal policies), and (2) the existence of an active internal LGBTQ+ employee network. These conditions were deemed necessary to ensure the presence of both policy design and lived experience, allowing us to examine (mis)alignments across the I-I-E framework.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and were supplemented by document analysis which informed some of the intended and implemented policies and practices. Ethical approval for the study was obtained and informed consent procedures were rigorously followed. Participants were fully informed of the study's aims and their rights, and confidentiality was ensured through the use of pseudonyms and formal Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) signed by the researchers.

In each organization, the first author conducted interviews with two HR professionals directly involved in formulating or implementing DEI policies, including those in formal DEI roles. These interviews, along with any shared policy documents, aimed to shed light on how DEI policies were intended and implemented within the organization. To access employee perspectives, we collaborated with the LGBTQ+ employee networks to recruit six to eight employees per organization who self-identified as LGBTQ+ and were willing to share their experiences with DEI

practices. The combination of HR and LGBTQ+ employee interviews allowed us to capture multiple vantage points on the policy process. Interviews were guided by semi-structured topic lists tailored to each participant group (HR professionals vs. LGBTQ+ employees). The topic lists included questions on policy goals, implementation experiences, perceptions of inclusion, organizational culture, and stakeholder involvement. The interview style was conversational and flexible, allowing for elaboration and follow-up on emergent themes. All interviews were conducted by the first author, recorded with permission, and transcribed verbatim. Interview duration ranged from 40 to 65 minutes. Table 1 provides an overview of the participant demographics and roles.

4

Table 1. Interviewee Overview

Name	Organization	Position	Age	Sexual Orientation	Gender Identity	Ethnicity
1. Fabian	Fanhigh	HR (Diversity and Inclusion Lead)	35	Gay	Cis-man	Dutch (White)
2. Kristen	Fanhigh	HR (Ex-Diversity and Inclusion Lead)	27	Straight	Cis-woman	Dutch (White)
3. Ragh	Fanhigh	Employee	42	Gay	Cis-man	Dutch (White)
4. Jace	Fanhigh	Employee	31	Straight	Trans-man	Dutch (White)
5. Bill	Fanhigh	Employee	57	Gay	Cis-man	Dutch (White)
6. Doreen	Fanhigh	Employee	61	Lesbian	Cis-woman	Dutch (White)
7. Porter	Fanhigh	Employee	44	Gay	Cis-man	Dutch (White)
8. Cassandra	Fanhigh	Employee	34	Pansexual	Cis-woman	Dutch (White)
9. Tad	Mismag	HR (Member of Diversity and Inclusion Team)	39	Straight	Cis-man	Dutch (White)
10.Lemlie	Mismag	HR (Ex-Diversity and Inclusion Lead)	46	Straight	Cis-woman	Dutch (White)
11. Evan	Mismag	Employee	32	Gay	Cis-man	Dutch (White)
12. Axelby	Mismag	Employee	58	Gay	Cis-man	Dutch (White)
13. Jammer	Mismag	Employee	28	Gay	Cis-man	Belgian (White)
14. Digsby	Mismag	Employee	46	Gay	Cis-man	Dutch (White)
15. Fergus	Mismag	Employee	50	Gay	Cis-man	Australian (White)
16. Theodore	Mismag	Employee	44	Gay	Cis-man	Dutch (White)

To complement the interview data, we collected organizational documents including internal diversity plans, vision statements, and relevant public-facing materials from the companies' websites. As there was asymmetry in the level of detail and access across the two organizations, greater emphasis was placed on publicly available materials such as diversity statements and website content. These sources helped contextualize and illuminate the organizations' intended and implemented DEI policies, supplementing insights from interviews with DEI professionals. Where relevant, these documents were referenced during interviews to seek clarification or deepen understanding.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the rigor and quality of this qualitative study, multiple strategies were employed to establish trustworthiness (Nowell et al., 2017; Shenton, 2004). Trustworthiness in qualitative research is commonly evaluated through four criteria. Credibility concerns the extent to which the findings accurately represent participants' perspectives. Transferability refers to whether the research context is described in sufficient detail for others to judge the relevance of the findings to their own settings. Dependability addresses the transparency and traceability of the research process, ensuring that procedures are clearly documented. Confirmability relates to whether conclusions are grounded in the data rather than researcher bias, often achieved by demonstrating credibility, transferability, and dependability (Nowell et al., 2017; Shenton, 2004; Tracey, 2010).

In this study, credibility was strengthened through prolonged engagement with participants and triangulation of data sources, combining insights from D&I officers, LGBTQ+ employees, and relevant policy documents discussed during interviews. The coding process was reviewed collaboratively within the research team to minimize researcher bias and incorporate diverse analytical perspectives. Transferability was supported through rich descriptions of the research context, participants and analytic procedures, allowing readers to assess the applicability of findings to other organizational settings. Dependability was enhanced by maintaining a detailed audit trail documenting methodological decisions, coding steps, and theme development to ensure transparency and consistency. Finally, confirmability was addressed through careful reflection and team discussion to ensure that interpretations remained grounded in participants' accounts rather than researcher assumptions. Together, these measures sought to demonstrate a systematic and transparent approach to qualitative rigor, supporting the overall trustworthiness of the study

4

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a primarily deductive qualitative approach, guided by the I-I-E framework and the study's research questions (Bingham, 2023). All interviews were transcribed using AmberScript software and verified for accuracy. The transcripts were imported into NVivo 14 for systematic coding and thematic analysis. We categorized participants into two groups: (1) HR/DEI officers and (2) LGBTQ+ employees. Based on the topic guides and theoretical framework, we created an initial set of a priori codes to capture key themes such as "organizational vision," "policy implementation," and "employee experience of inclusion." This theory-driven coding allowed us to trace how different actors navigated DEI practices across organizational layers. Emerging themes not captured by the initial coding scheme were added inductively. These included "pushback," "symbolic actions," and "visibility trade-offs," reflecting patterns that surfaced across interviews. This iterative approach ensured analytical flexibility while retaining alignment with the I-I-E framework.

After coding, data were reviewed to identify patterns, contradictions, and tensions within each stakeholder group, and across policy stages. While the I-I-E framework served as the primary analytic lens, we also drew on the diversity approaches framework (e.g., Gündemir et al., 2019; Apfelbaum et al., 2016) to interpret how participants framed DEI either in identity-blind or identity-conscious terms. This helped clarify misalignments in expectations and meaning-making across stakeholders.

An important analytical decision was to structure the findings thematically around specific DEI policies and practices. While initial coding aligned with conceptual dimensions (intent, implementation, experience), analysis revealed that participants frequently referred to concrete organizational practices such as diversity statements, inclusive design, ERGs, and e-learning as touchpoints for discussing DEI. We therefore reorganized our findings around these touchpoints to foreground how meaning is constructed through specific organizational practices. This structure enabled us to compare how similar policies and practices were intended, implemented, and experienced, and to surface the (mis)alignments across these layers. This analytical strategy also allowed us to move beyond general perceptions of DEI effectiveness and capture the situated dynamics through which policies are enacted and contested across organizational contexts.

FINDINGS

This section presents the main findings from the two case study organizations, focusing on (mis)alignments between the intended, implemented, and experienced dimensions of LGBTQ+ diversity policy. We begin with a brief overview of each organization's formal DEI infrastructure, before turning to key DEI policies through which these (mis)alignments became visible.

DEI at Fanhigh

Context: Organizational DEI Structure

At Fanhigh, responsibility for DEI is distributed across multiple levels of the organization, including the Executive Board, the Diversity Board and the DEI officer. The Executive Board sets the overarching DEI vision and strategic goals in consultation with the DEI officer and the Diversity Board, which acts as an advisory body. Chaired by the CEO, the Diversity Board includes the DEI officer and representatives from each business unit. Business units propose candidates for representation, and the DEI officer makes the final selection with an eye toward ensuring board diversity. The board meets quarterly to monitor progress, discuss new policies and practices, and provide recommendations to the Executive Board, with meeting agendas set by the DEI officer.

The DEI officer is positioned within HR, specifically in the leadership and diversity team, though they are the sole person dedicated to DEI. While others in the team focus on leadership and succession planning, there is overlap in efforts such as promoting inclusive leadership in hiring for high positions in the organization. The DEI officer collaborates with other HR teams as needed. Though not formally part of the DEI structure, Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) also contribute significantly to the organization's inclusion efforts. These groups organize events and initiatives and maintain regular contact with the DEI officer, who communicates their input to the Diversity and Executive Boards. ERG boards also support specific projects, for instance, the LGBTQ+ ERG collaborated with the DEI officer on an international LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion benchmarking report.

DEI Vision

Fanhigh's public DEI messaging reflects both identity-conscious and identity-blind elements. The diversity statement foregrounds authenticity and references sexual orientation, gender identity, and ethnicity, aligning with an identity-conscious approach that recognizes the need for group-specific inclusion. Simultaneously,

however, this message is interlaced with meritocratic rhetoric and a broad definition of diversity that includes "perspectives, skills, and thoughts."

This internal inconsistency was also seen in the statements from the interviewees. Fabian articulated a prototypical expansive view:

"Diversity for me really is about visible and invisible characteristics… But it's also a way of thinking so different points of views, different backgrounds."

While inclusive in tone, such framing risks promoting a flattened diversity approach; echoing concerns from scholarship that overly broad diversity definitions can undermine targeted equity efforts (Akinola et al., 2024; Kirby et al., 2023). This flattened approach was echoed in Kristen's reflection on group-specific policies:

"I think it's necessary at this point... because we're just not in a situation right now that people are treated equally… However... by really having different policies... you make different groups, you know. You put people in groups basically… Eventually... I just want to have one policy for everyone."

Kristen's quote encapsulates the tension between a principled commitment to equity and a discomfort with categorization. Her framing, recognizing structural inequality yet aspiring to uniformity, reflects ambivalence in diversity approaches. The vision implicitly blends identity-conscious aims (e.g., identity safety and tailored inclusion) with identity-blind ideals of universally equal treatment, resulting in a rhetorical compromise that may offer strategic palatability but weakens conceptual clarity.

Ultimately, while this blend may garner broader support within the organization (Gündemir et al., 2017; Leslie et al., 2020), the ambiguity risks stalling decisive action and renders it difficult to measure success or hold actors accountable. As our analysis will show, this ambivalence reverberates throughout policy design, implementation, and employee perception.

Inclusive Design

The introduction of all-gender bathrooms at Fanhigh illustrates both the symbolic potential and structural vulnerabilities of inclusive design policies. From the perspective of intended policy, the installation was a visible manifestation of the organization's identity conscious DEI vision: to foster a sense of safety and inclusion for all employees, especially those whose gender identity does not conform to binary norms. This policy emerged from a collaboration between the LGBTQ+ employee

network (Pride ERG) and the DEI officer, and was embraced by leadership as a flagship policy in organizational communication.

The symbolic power of this infrastructure change was noted by several LGBTQ+ employees, who experienced the bathrooms as both materially affirming and psychologically validating. As Porter, who was involved in the implementation, explained:

> *"It (all-gender toilets) was a very good thing. I was in the steering group… it was an initiative of the Pride group… I think it was a very good thing, is still a good thing."*

This comment exemplifies alignment between the intended vision, the enacted implementation, and the experienced value of the policy among LGBTQ+ employees. It also highlights the integrative potential of ERG-led policymaking: a grassroots demand was translated into concrete action through institutional support, reinforcing the promise of identity-conscious inclusion.

Yet, while the implementation reflected the Pride ERG's goals, the broader reception of the policy within the organization revealed a second, conflicting layer. Several employees described strong resistance from non-LGBTQ+ colleagues. Cassandra articulated this misalignment in perception:

> *"This was also a very sensitive topic when it was first introduced… the opinion of most of our colleagues is they don't really like it… they don't really get why it is necessary."*

This dissonance points to a critical breakdown in implementation strategy: although the technical execution was completed, the broader cultural embedding was not sufficiently managed. The absence of inclusive deliberation in the implementation stage undermined its legitimacy. Kristen, the DEI officer, reflected on this issue:

> *"No one from different groups were in the discussion of these toilets… there was so much resistance… Now we have one regular toilet on every floor. So not all the toilets are gender neutral anymore."*

Kristen's account confirms a dual misalignment. First, the implemented policy, though aligned with the intended vision of LGBTQ+ inclusion, was developed without proactive engagement of wider employee groups, resulting in low affective

4

buy-in and passive non-compliance. Second, the revised implementation, reverting to binary toilets on each floor, signaled a reactive posture that undermined the vision's consistency and resilience.

The misalignments here illustrate how implementation, in the absence of collective ownership, can falter even when symbolically potent. The partial rollback of the gender-neutral bathroom policy can be experienced by LGBTQ+ employees as a withdrawal of institutional support, thereby weakening the credibility of the diversity vision. While initially aligned with an identity-conscious approach, addressing a specific structural barrier, the reversal reflected a retreat toward identity-blind comfort zones, prioritizing the feelings of the majority over the needs of minoritized groups.

From a theoretical perspective, this case underscores how policy success depends not merely on its implementation, but on whether the wider organization is prepared to receive and support the policy in ways that reinforce its symbolic and practical meaning. The bathroom policy thus acts as a barometer of organizational maturity in translating equity-driven intentions into sustainable institutional practice. Its partial reversal, meanwhile, reveals the fragility of inclusion efforts when their legitimacy is not co-constructed across the organizational ecosystem.

ERGs

At Fanhigh, Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), particularly the LGBTQ+ or Pride ERG, are prominently positioned within the DEI architecture. The Pride ERG is formally structured with a board and member list, maintains a dedicated presence on the company intranet, and operates as a communicative interface between employees and the DEI officer. This formalized design signals a clear intended practice that embraces an identity-conscious approach to diversity management (Gündemir et al., 2019; Apfelbaum et al., 2016), recognizing the importance of amplifying marginalized voices and tailoring inclusion strategies to group-specific needs.

DEI professionals strongly endorsed the value of ERGs, identifying them as foundational to the organization's inclusion strategy. Fabian emphasized:

> *"We have employee resource groups… one of the biggest and most important parts of our DEI approach."*

This affirmation was echoed by LGBTQ+ employees such as Ragh, who highlighted both the network's empowering function and the social risks associated with visibility:

> "There's some scariness in joining a network… So one of the main goals is to make people comfortable… The more people in the network, the more voices you have and the more impact everywhere."

These quotes point to an alignment between intended goals and experienced value: both the DEI officer and LGBTQ+ employees view the ERG as a meaningful site of connection, belonging, and influence. In line with research on identity-conscious approaches, ERGs can serve to increase psychological safety, promote group-based solidarity, and offer a platform to inform policy from the ground up (Dennissen et al., 2019; Shore et al., 2011).

However, despite this conceptual alignment, closer scrutiny reveals two key misalignments at the implementation level. First, although ERGs are portrayed as central pillars in the DEI strategy, they are not structurally embedded in formal decision-making channels. The Pride ERG is excluded from the Diversity Board and has no direct voice in shaping policy agendas. Instead, the DEI officer functions as an intermediary relaying concerns upwards in ways that may filter or dilute employee voices. This illustrates an implementation drift, where strategic rhetoric fails to translate into meaningful structural authority (Christie & Tippmann, 2024).

Second, the limited size, scope, and accessibility of the ERG restrict its representative potential. Employees noted that the group is concentrated at only one of their office locations, and struggles to engage LGBTQ+ staff across the organization. This uneven participation reduces the ERG's ability to capture diverse lived experiences or advocate inclusively. Such practical barriers resonate with research showing that uneven implementation, even of well-intended practices, may lead to unequal access to inclusion (Wilton et al., 2020).

Together, these constraints reflect a deeper misalignment: while the intended policy frames ERGs as central instruments of participatory diversity governance, the implemented reality reveals a structurally peripheral role and uneven engagement. This limits employees' ability to experience ERGs as genuine vehicles for organizational change exposing a gap between symbolic commitment and institutional power (see also Dennissen et al., 2020).

4

Moreover, the lack of formal integration may signal to employees that diversity work remains discretionary or marginal; contingent on individual passion rather than embedded organizational commitment. This echoes wider critiques in DEI scholarship about the symbolic versus substantive roles of ERGs (Colgan, 2016; Dobbin & Kalev, 2022; Einarsdottir et al., 2020). In such cases, ERGs risk becoming "fig leaves", visible markers of inclusion that obscure rather than transform the power dynamics of decision-making.

While ERGs at Fanhigh are experienced as meaningful by both LGBTQ+ employees and DEI professionals, their impact is constrained by structural exclusions and resource limitations. This demonstrates how even well-intentioned identity-conscious practices can falter in implementation, reinforcing the importance of aligning policy design with durable institutional support and representative reach.

Management Support

Support from leadership emerged as a salient theme in the interviews and was frequently cited as essential to advancing DEI within Fanhigh. The organization's intended policy emphasizes shared responsibility between top leadership, HR, and employees to create an inclusive workplace. This vision is reflected in executive-level engagement, which was consistently praised by both HR professionals and LGBTQ+ employees. As Fabian described:

> *"What I also notice is that especially members from the executive board or people with a higher leadership position — when they speak up, that also has a good effect on the organization. You can see that people start talking about it much faster than when I, for example, speak up."*

Fabian's observation illustrates a strong alignment between the intended policy and the implemented actions of the executive board. Executive leaders not only endorse DEI principles but also model inclusive behavior by attending events and publicly voicing support, which employees experienced as both symbolic and catalytic. This aligns with research emphasizing the power of top management signalling in legitimizing DEI efforts and encouraging organizational buy-in (Dobbin & Kalev, 2022; Shore et al., 2018).

However, this alignment erodes at the middle-management level, where engagement appears markedly lower. Multiple interviewees, including Ragh, noted a lack of visible involvement from line managers and mid-tier leaders:

"You feel the board is really supportive. But on an event, there's no other management around… leadership should interfere more with the subject. It can't only be words."

Ragh's account highlights a discontinuity in implementation: while DEI is embraced rhetorically at the top, it is not operationalized through the broader management hierarchy. This disconnect creates ambiguity about who is responsible for DEI in day-to-day operations, undermining the vision of shared ownership. Fabian reinforced this concern:

"Now, it still often feels like it's our [i.e., DEI advocates'] responsibility, or just my responsibility. Well, you want the whole organization to say — no, we really believe in diversity and inclusion."

This sentiment illustrates an implementation gap: DEI is experienced as reliant on the personal commitment of a few actors rather than embedded in organizational routines or leadership expectations. Such fragmentation reflects what Wright and Nishii (2004) describe as "misalignment across levels", a situation where senior leadership may articulate strong intentions, but middle management lacks the training, incentives, or accountability structures to actualize them.

Moreover, the perceived inaction of middle managers poses risks for the experience dimension of DEI practices. As Christie and Tippmann (2024) and Jansen et al. (2024) note, the absence of sustained engagement from direct supervisors, who are crucial in shaping employees' daily work environments, can lead to feelings of tokenism or abandonment, particularly among marginalized groups. When managerial inaction is normalized, DEI risks being seen as a side project rather than a core organizational responsibility.

The case of Fanhigh reveals a critical misalignment between the intended policy of shared leadership responsibility and its uneven implementation across hierarchical levels. While executive commitment is visible and appreciated, the absence of middle management engagement undermines the systemic embedding of DEI into organizational culture and practices. This weakens the employee experience of inclusion as a collectively upheld norm and shifts the burden of change onto individual advocates, thereby limiting the reach and durability of DEI efforts (Vincent et al., 2024).

Diversity Climate

The fragility of implementation observed in previous sections is mirrored in how employees describe the organization's broader diversity climate, where symbolic inclusion is often not matched by systemic integration. Interviewees at Fanhigh generally described the organization's diversity climate as welcoming and open. Most LGBTQ+ employees reported feeling accepted and supported, and indicated that they could express their identities without fear of backlash. This aligns well with the intended diversity vision of fostering an environment in which all employees feel safe, valued, and free to express their authentic selves. As Bill reflected:

> "Yeah, I've never experienced any problem. Of course, you never know what they say behind your back, but that doesn't bother me… I've always found myself welcome, and I always find myself accepted because of who I am."

Bill's comment exemplifies the positive perception many employees have of the organization's climate. His acknowledgment of potential hidden bias ("you never know what they say behind your back") also hints at a subtle form of psychological tension. Even in generally inclusive environments, perceptions of conditional acceptance or tolerance may persist (Nishii, 2012; Verkuyten et al., 2023). Other interviewees noted that while they personally felt included, microaggressions or exclusionary humor were still present in specific teams or departments. This indicates that pockets of resistance may coexist with an overall inclusive ethos, or a degree of surface-level inclusion that fails to permeate organizational subcultures.

Beyond individual experiences, employees expressed concern about the structural fragility of DEI efforts. While inclusion was broadly valued in discourse, the organizational integration of DEI into business processes appeared limited. Fabian observed:

> "There's things happening… But we're also going through a lot of changes now as an organization… So that makes it already a bit more complex to put the topic [DEI] on the agenda at the business side."

This quote illustrates how competing priorities such as restructuring and performance demands, frequently overshadow DEI implementation. Although inclusive hiring or promotion goals existed in principle, employees viewed these practices as peripheral rather than fully embedded. Porter reinforced this perception of marginalization:

> *"When the going gets tough, [DEI] is the first thing I think that does not get any money anymore."*

This comment, echoed by others, reveals a critical misalignment between the intended message that DEI is "a core pillar" of the organization, and the implemented reality, where it is treated as expendable when business pressures intensify. Kristen similarly explained that performance and profitability often take precedence, suggesting that strategic integration of DEI remains weak.

The perception that DEI depends largely on the voluntary labor of passionate individuals, particularly the DEI officer, further reflects the fragile institutionalization of inclusive practices. As noted in prior research, DEI policies are less effective when they rely on informal efforts rather than systemic embedding in organizational processes (Christie & Tippmann, 2024; Jansen et al., 2024). This also affects the experienced component of the I-I-E framework (Wright & Nishii, 2004); while the vision signals long-term commitment, the employees experience inclusion as being precariously maintained, vulnerable to deprioritisation or underfunding.

DEI at Mismag

Context: Organizational DEI Structure

At Mismag, DEI governance is shared across multiple organizational layers, including the Executive Board, the Diversity Board, the DEI officer, and various Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). The Executive Board defines the overall DEI vision and strategic priorities, while the DEI officer, supported by a specialized team within HR, is responsible for implementation and daily coordination across departments.

The Diversity Board functions as a key advisory body, composed of senior managers representing designated focus areas (gender, disability, and non-western backgrounds), alongside the DEI officer and one Executive Board member. However, not all minoritized groups, such as LGBTQ+ employees, are currently represented, indicating an incomplete inclusivity in governance structures.

ERGs form an additional pillar of the strategy. Each is supported by an Executive Board sponsor and meets regularly with both the sponsor and DEI officer. While these groups independently define goals and propose policies, their influence remains mediated by the DEI officer, who acts as the communication conduit to the Executive Board.

DEI Vision

Mismag's public diversity narrative presents a clear and explicitly identity-conscious vision. Its diversity webpage highlights a commitment to increasing representation, fostering psychological safety, and enabling authenticity at work. This vision extends beyond surface-level inclusion, emphasizing support for specific groups such as LGBTQ+ individuals, cultural minorities, and women, and avoids identity-blind rhetoric like meritocracy or equal treatment. Instead, the language aligns with a recognition of structural inequality and the need for targeted interventions. This framing is echoed in the interview with Tad, member of the DEI team, who situates DEI as a process of cultural transformation which ultimately benefits organizational outcomes. He emphasizes the importance of trust and safety, arguing that genuine inclusion depends on shifting power dynamics within the organization:

> *"I think diversity and inclusion in the organization context is not a goal in itself. It's a measure towards more successful operation and results... [It] means feeling safe, trusted, supported for the whole person you are... We should start within the dominant group that is dominating the structure of power and decision making… And if you don't change that structure [of power], you can have so many diverse people. It's not going to change [the outcomes]."*

Tad's view reflects a strong alignment between the formal DEI vision and internal HR discourse, both rooted in an identity-conscious understanding of inclusion. However, among LGBTQ+ employees, interview data revealed a more ambivalent set of beliefs about DEI, particularly regarding its necessity and value. For instance, Axelby acknowledges that LGBTQ+ inclusion is addressed in policy documents but questions its prioritization:

> *"Current diversity policy has three spear points now… And that's female gender, non-Western cultural backgrounds and physical limitations… LGBT is not in there… I'm not convinced it should be... The inequality in male-female gender approach within the company in a quantitative sense is bigger… I don't find it (LGBTQ+ inclusion) personally the most important topic of society."*

While Axelby questions the urgency of LGBTQ+ inclusion, he later expresses support for ERGs, recognizing their role in surfacing subtle exclusions:

"They're useful to have these groups as a way of informing the organization of the particular requirements or needs or issues that these particular groups face… perhaps ways in which the organization operates that aren't necessarily inclusive."

Fergus presents a similar duality. He initially advocates for identity-blind inclusion, stating that avoiding reference to minority characteristics helps prevent stigmatization. Yet, he also acknowledges that ERGs play a valuable role in identifying institutional oversights. However, his broader framing of inclusion is utilitarian, centered on whether LGBTQ+ representation improves organizational performance:

"How does a gay person on the board help with decision making? How does a trans person…? Are they missing out on talent for not being inclusive?"

This utilitarian reasoning aligns more closely with identity-blind logic, questioning the value of a focus on LGBTQ+ identity. It privileges neutrality and assumes inclusion only matters if it enhances productivity or profitability (Ely & Thomas, 2020; Georgeac & Rattan, 2023). These sentiments suggest that some employees view DEI not as a moral or justice-based imperative, but rather as a corporate strategy whose legitimacy hinges on measurable returns.

Taken together, these perspectives indicate a misalignment between Mismag's intended vision, which frames DEI as structural, identity-conscious and morally imperative and the perceived meaning among some employees, who either question its relevance or reinterpret it through a business case lens. This disconnect may stem from limited engagement with the underlying values behind the DEI policy, or from broader organizational norms that reward "neutrality". As such, although Mismag communicates a progressive and inclusive vision, it has not yet translated into a shared ideological foundation across employee groups, particularly in relation to LGBTQ+ inclusion. This suggests that without continuous dialogue and visible structural embedding, identity-conscious DEI efforts risk being misunderstood, trivialized, or deprioritized, undermining their transformative potential (Leslie et al., 2020; Plaut et al., 2018).

Inclusive Design

The implementation of inclusive design at Mismag surfaced complex organizational dynamics, particularly around the proposal to introduce gender-neutral bathrooms. Initiated by the LGBTQ+ ERG during the renovation of a new office facility, the

4

proposal met with resistance from the Women's ERG, which voiced concerns about privacy and safety. These competing perspectives prompted deliberation among the Executive Board and facilities team, delaying a final decision. Although the organization's intention was to include all voices and prevent marginalization of either group, the process highlighted the tensions that arise when inclusion for one group is perceived to come at the expense of another.

From an organizational standpoint, the approach taken initially reflects an attempt to align with Mismag's DEI vision, which emphasizes psychological safety and equitable inclusion. Rather than imposing a top-down decision, the leadership sought input from multiple stakeholders, modelling inclusive decision-making. As Theodore explained:

> "I understand that it (installation of gender neutral toilets) is important for part of the LGBT+ community. And it will be also important for part of the female community in a different way, in the sense that they won't like it and they won't feel safe. And that's something we also need to be aware of."

Theodore's reflection highlights the delicate balancing act involved in inclusive policy design; one that acknowledges the plurality of needs within a diverse workforce. Research shows that inclusive infrastructure, such as gender-neutral toilets, can act as both a practical accommodation and a symbolic signal of safety and recognition for marginalized groups (Chaney & Sanchez, 2018). However, it can also raise some concerns among other groups, reinforcing the need for thoughtful implementation that addresses distinct perspectives.

Despite the organization's efforts to foster deliberation, employees largely interpreted the handling of the issue as emblematic of hesitancy and reactive leadership. Evan voiced frustration with the lack of resolution:

> "You see that Mismag was first kind of okay with it, but then a lot of women started to protest… They try to outsource the decision to the Pride and Women's networks… Sometimes, if you really value diversity and inclusion or really want to be ambitious… you just have to take a decision and have some courage."

This quote underscores a key misalignment: while the implementation was intended to reflect shared responsibility and inclusive governance, it was experienced as an evasion of leadership. Delegating the decision to employee networks was viewed

not as empowerment, but as an abdication of accountability. Fergus sharpened this critique:

"People hate taking decisions… That I find really frustrating—the lack of leadership. If there was a real push to improve inclusion, I don't know who would do that because no one wants to rock the boat."

Similarly, Jammer pointe*d to inconsistencies in how decisions were made, framing them as ad hoc and driven by appeasement rather than policy:*

"Now one person complained with a study from the 80s, and suddenly it shifted again… They just flip-flop... to seem like they're doing the right thing rather than having a thought-out policy."

Together, these reflections point to a second misalignment: while the implementation process appeared inclusive on the surface, employees experienced it as strategically ambiguous and driven by a fear of backlash. The lack of clear messaging and definitive policy direction undermined trust and raised doubts about the organization's capacity to uphold its stated DEI commitments when challenged.

The inclusive design process at Mismag reveals a multilayered pattern of (mis) alignment. The organization's vision to create a safe and inclusive space for all was translated into a deliberative and participatory implementation process. However, employees experienced this approach not as thoughtful inclusion but as indecisive, inconsistent, and politically cautious. Thus, although the intention behind the implementation was aligned with the vision, the perceived lack of resolve and strategic clarity produced a disconnect that weakened confidence in the organization's DEI trajectory.

ERGs

The LGBTQ+ employee resource group (ERG) at Mismag stands out as a central driver of policy development and inclusion efforts for LGBTQ+ employees. Functioning with a structured board and a clear agenda, the Pride ERG regularly engages with both the DEI officer and its executive board sponsor, proposing policies, flagging implementation gaps, and tracking organizational progress on LGBTQ+ inclusion. Importantly, the ERG has not only raised awareness but directly influenced formal policy outputs. As Evan notes:

> *"I think if you specifically look at LGBT policies, then basically almost
> everything that Mismag has was our (the LGBTQ+ ERG) initiative… in every
> policy of Mismag where you see this LGBT inclusive kind of things, either
> statements or whatever, they are usually all our initiatives. So you see that
> HR is not really proactive… they themselves don't come with ideas on LGBT
> policy."*

Evan's account illustrates both the strength and the limitation of the ERG's role.
On the one hand, it shows a high degree of alignment between employee-driven
implementation and employee perception: the ERG is empowered to shape policy,
has access to leadership, and operates with a clear mandate. On the other hand,
this quote also reveals a misalignment between the organization's DEI vision;
one that formally endorses shared responsibility across leadership, and its actual
implementation, where the onus of LGBTQ+ inclusion appears to fall largely on
LGBTQ+ employees themselves.

This concern is further echoed by Theodore, who points out that LGBTQ+ issues
are not formally embedded in the policy structure of Mismag's DEI governance:

> *"We have a diversity board. We are not on the diversity board, and we haven't
> been on the diversity board since its conception basically… The diversity
> policy said we embrace all kinds of diversity and then said: we focus on
> women, people from a non-Western cultural background and people with
> a distance to the labour market… So do they think that for us everything is
> done?"*

Here, Theodore highlights the symbolic contradiction between institutional
declarations of inclusivity and the exclusion of LGBTQ+ concerns from formal
strategic frameworks. This points to a second misalignment between the intended
diversity vision (which emphasizes inclusivity for all) and the implemented DEI
governance structure (which omits LGBTQ+ issues from its formal priorities).
Although the ERG enjoys strong executive sponsorship and financial support,
elements that suggest structural backing, its exclusion from the Diversity Board
undercuts the vision of institutionalized inclusion.

Moreover, this structural omission has distributive consequences. The perception
among LGBTQ+ employees is that inclusion is dependent on their own initiative
and labour, rather than being institutionally led. This reflects what the literature
identifies as the "minority tax"; a dynamic where members of marginalized groups

are expected to lead equity efforts on top of their existing roles, often without formal authority or recognition (Faucett et al., 2022; Ng, 2023; Tuttle & Kim, 2025; Williamson et al., 2021). While such involvement may increase authenticity and relevance of inclusion efforts it can also reinforce structural inequalities by burdening the very groups these policies intend to support.

Although the LGBTQ+ ERG plays a powerful and productive role in shaping Mismag's inclusion agenda, its positioning reveals both strengths and vulnerabilities in the DEI framework. On the one hand, the ERG's effectiveness and high visibility reflect a strong alignment between implementation and perception. On the other hand, the lack of formal integration into the DEI hierarchy and the limited initiative from HR or senior leadership constitute a clear misalignment between the organization's stated vision of shared responsibility and the reality of minority-led implementation. As a result, inclusion efforts risk being experienced as opt-in rather than embedded, and reliant on marginalized employees rather than systemically owned.

4

Management Support

Across all interviews, the executive board of Mismag was consistently recognized as a key driver of DEI progress within the organization. Employees described board members as publicly committed, proactive, and sincere in their efforts to position Mismag as a DEI leader. This reflects a clear alignment between the intended DEI vision, which emphasizes strong top-down leadership and structural commitment, and employee perception where executive-level engagement is not only visible but also experienced as meaningful and sustained. However, this alignment weakens at the level of middle management. While interviewees noted declarative support for DEI among line managers, they also pointed to a lack of representational diversity and depth of engagement. As Theodore, himself a manager, observes:

> *"I think everybody working in Mismag management they will probably say 'of course we care about this.' But when it comes to really understanding what is at stake with diversity, I think there is still room for improvement… most of the management is from the 'normal' group—white, straight, super highly educated, mostly Christian or atheist background. So this creates some kind of implicit coherence about what is normal."*

Theodore's reflection illustrates the subtle but significant way in which social homogeneity in middle management can undermine diversity integration. Even when managers express emotional or declarative support for DEI, a lack of experiential understanding can limit their ability to recognize structural barriers and may reduce

their motivation to engage meaningfully with identity-conscious practices. This limited engagement can undermine the effectiveness of DEI efforts, as research shows that while executive sponsorship signals institutional commitment, it is middle managers who play a pivotal role in translating diversity goals into everyday practice (Kelan, 2022). When they lack competence, confidence, or motivation, policies tend to stagnate or be inconsistently implemented (Christie & Tippmann, 2024; Jansen et al., 2024; Soldan & Nankervis, 2014).

Importantly, this concern is not lost on the organization itself. Mismag's diversity statement explicitly acknowledges the homogeneity of its management layer and outlines clear goals to increase leadership diversity, particularly with respect to gender and ethnicity. This suggests an alignment between the intended vision and employee perception; both recognize a gap in representation and the need for cultural as well as demographic transformation in middle management.

However, the absence of concrete references to mechanisms that hold middle managers accountable for DEI responsibilities raises the risk of a partial misalignment in implementation. While the vision is clear and employee perception concurs with its goals, the question remains whether DEI forms a part of middle management performance metrics, training programs, or leadership pipelines. If DEI remains an opt-in or symbolic concern at the middle tier, it risks being decoupled from the everyday realities of employees, particularly those from marginalized groups (Toma et al., 2024).

While executive-level engagement aligns strongly across vision, implementation, and perception, the role of middle management reveals both promising awareness and persistent structural inertia. Without deeper integration of DEI into the expectations and practices of this crucial layer, Mismag risks uneven implementation of its vision.

Diversity Climate

Employee perceptions of the diversity climate at Mismag offer a layered understanding of inclusion. On a surface level, most employees reported feeling welcome and stated they had not experienced direct discrimination, which suggests alignment with the organization's stated commitment to fostering an inclusive and safe work environment. However, a deeper analysis reveals that this inclusion is contingent and moderated by unwritten cultural expectations around conformity and professionalism. Several interviewees described a culture in which visible expressions of identity, particularly those that challenge gender norms, are implicitly discouraged. Fergus points to this cultural tension:

"It's extremely Dutch. You know, the key phrases 'doe normaal'. So be Dutch. And that's not very inclusive. And that isn't fostering diversity."

The invocation of *doe normaal* (i.e., act normal) reflects an organizational climate shaped by dominant norms of behavior and presentation. While not openly discriminatory, such norms subtly discourage visible deviation from the expected norms (Cumberbatch, 2021), which creates a misalignment between the diversity vision which celebrates authenticity and difference and employee perceptions, which reflect the presence of a normative standard that limits full self-expression. This tension is further exemplified in reflections on appearance and gender non-conforming behavior. Digsby and Evan, for instance, highlight unease with non-traditional self-presentation, despite their support for DEI in principle:

"I also have an opinion—you can go as a man with your nails painted, but they need to be the same color… We need to be taken seriously by stakeholders." – Digsby

"On the one hand, people should be able to express themselves... But on the other hand, you're also a public institution that represents something bigger than yourself." – Evan

These examples underscore how perceptions of professionalism and respectability function as regulating forces, especially for queer expression. This reflects the dynamics of heteroprofessionalism, where expectations of professional conduct are shaped by heteronormative ideals that reinforce the gender/sex binary, leading to conditional inclusion for those who diverge from these norms (Butler et al., 2024; Morgenroth et al., 2024). Such dynamics illustrate the gap between inclusive organizational rhetoric and the lived constraints on authenticity. They echo existing literature on symbolic inclusion and conditional belonging (Jansen et al., 2014; Randel et al., 2018; Shore et al., 2011), where individuals feel welcome only insofar as they conform to dominant behavioral expectations.

Despite these cultural misalignments, the organization has made considerable strides in structural implementation of DEI practices, which more strongly reflect alignment with its inclusive vision. New employees are introduced to ERGs during onboarding, mandatory e-learning modules on DEI are required at entry and at regular intervals, and DEI values are integrated into leadership development and recruitment processes. For example, job advertisements undergo bias reviews, recruitment panels are composed to maximize diverse input, and hiring managers

4

receive anti-bias training. These practices reflect identity-conscious implementation strategies that align with the organization's stated goals of embedding DEI structurally into the fabric of organizational life (Leslie et al., 2020).

Employee responses also reflect this alignment. Jammer, for instance, expresses appreciation for the DEI e-learning module:

> *"I think the e-learning is very good actually… But having to repeat it every year… I fear that it might evolve into being towards the concept of diversity and inclusion [itself]… There should be something more—like invite people to follow-up events."*

This comment reflects an important nuance: while implementation is visible and appreciated, the repetitiveness of standardized training risks creating disengagement. This signals a subtle but relevant misalignment between implementation and perception, whereby the method of delivery may undermine the intended goal of deepening understanding and engagement.

The structural embedding of DEI at Mismag aligns well with its strategic vision, particularly in onboarding, hiring, and training. However, the experienced diversity climate presents a more complex picture. Employees feel safe but not always empowered to express themselves fully, especially in ways that deviate from normative expectations. This suggests that while formal structures support inclusion, the informal cultural climate still presents barriers to authenticity, reflecting a persistent misalignment between intended and experienced practice.

DISCUSSION

This study set out to examine how DEI policies targeted at LGBTQ+ employees are constructed, implemented, and experienced within two large financial organizations in the Netherlands. Using qualitative data from HR/DEI officers and LGBTQ+ employees across both organizations, we explored (mis)alignments between the intended vision, the implemented policy, and the perceived experience of DEI. A comparison of the two case studies reveals that while both Fanhigh and Mismag articulate strong commitments to DEI, the nature and consequences of misalignments between vision, implementation, and employee experience vary significantly between them (for an overview see Table 2).

Table 2. Overview of findings

Topic	Fanhigh	Mismag
DEI Vision	Mixed rhetoric: Vision shifts between identity-conscious language and merit-based equality messaging, creating ambiguity in intended approach to DEI. DEI officers also shift between identity conscious and blind rhetoric. They do not emphasize the celebration of differences in their identity conscious stance only focusing on the disadvantage faced by minoritized employees.	Clear identity-conscious stance with explicit support for specific groups (e.g. LGBTQ+, women, non-Western backgrounds). DEI officers also reflect a conscious stance. Despite inclusive vision, employees express skepticism and uncertainty about the value of LGBTQ+ focus, leading to ambivalent engagement.
Inclusive Design (Bathrooms)	Implemented gender-neutral toilets, based on proposal from LGBTQ+ ERG but decisions were reversed following resistance. Signaling uncertain commitment and inconsistency. Poor communication and lack of engagement with other affected groups undermined rollout.	Initiative to introduce gender-neutral bathrooms stalled after pushback. Decision was delegated to LGBTQ+ and Women ERGs, perceived as avoidance of leadership responsibility and lack of clear commitment to DEI.

4

Table 2 *Continued*

Topic	Fanhigh	Mismag
ERG (Employee Resource Groups)	Pride ERG considered vital in rhetoric, yet receives no formal seat at the diversity board and relies on the DEI officer to relay concerns.	ERGs are structurally supported: executive sponsors, dedicated time, and direct access to influence DEI policies.
	Limited size and reach of ERG.	Overloading of LGBTQ+ related policy onto the ERG efforts, risks burdening minoritized group with ensuring their own well-being. Concerns about minority tax.
Management Support	Executive board visibly supportive, but middle management and HR remain disengaged. Responsibility resides heavily with DEI officer and advocates.	Executive support is translated into practice through sponsorship and inclusive governance.
	Lack of middle management support identified as issue by both the DEI officer and employees.	Lack of middle management diversity identified as issue in organizational vision and by employees.
		There is declarative support from middle management but no official mechanisms to keep them accountable.
Diversity Climate	Diversity is seen as optional and unrelated to the organization's main mission despite organizational vision highlighting it as a core pillar.	Culture shaped by "doe normaal" or "act normal" norms; while employees feel generally accepted, limits on self-expression remain due to dominant norms.

At Fanhigh, the core challenge lies in conceptual ambiguity. The organization wavers between identity-conscious and meritocratic ideals, creating a fragmented vision that weakens policy coherence. Implementation is structurally fragile: the DEI officer works largely in isolation, and DEI is not well integrated into mainstream HR practices. ERGs are emphasized in the DEI vision yet lack structural authority. Employees recognize symbolic efforts but view DEI as optional and vulnerable to organizational shifts. This fosters conditional inclusion where LGBTQ+ employees feel welcomed individually, but broader cultural norms, such as inappropriate jokes or team discomfort, remain unaddressed.

Mismag presents a more coherent, identity-conscious DEI vision, supported by robust formal structures including inclusive hiring and mandated training. However, here the misalignments stem from uneven responsibility and resistance. Middle management often lacks proactive engagement, and although the LGBTQ+ ERG is highly active, it lacks institutional authority. Employees also report subtle pressures to conform to dominant norms, which limits authenticity and self-expression. Despite structural investment, these tensions signal that inclusion is still cautiously negotiated.

These cases show that misalignment arises not only from policy gaps but from ideological inconsistency, uneven responsibility, and cultural undercurrents. Fanhigh's DEI efforts struggle with institutionalization and ownership; Mismag's with cultural integration. Both underscore the need for DEI to be both structurally embedded and culturally internalized; moving beyond symbolic gestures toward shared, actionable, and lived inclusion. This comparison reveals that although both organizations articulate an ambitious and identity-conscious DEI vision, their ability to translate this into coherent, consistent, and inclusive practice is uneven. In doing so, this study contributes to DEI scholarship in three key ways.

Theoretical Contributions

From Symbol to System: Extending The "Intended–Implemented–Experienced" Framework

Our first contribution lies in extending the "intended–implemented–experienced" (Wright & Nishii, 2004) framework of HRM to the field of LGBTQ+ diversity policy. By applying this tripartite framework to concrete inclusion practices, we expose how alignment is not only a structural challenge, but also a cultural and interpretive process. Misalignments do not merely result from failures in delivery but emerge from divergent understandings of DEI's purpose across leadership, HR, and

employees; an issue recognized in the broader literature on DEI strategy as an interpretive gap (Shen et al., 2014)

At Fanhigh, ambiguity around whether DEI should be identity blind and equality focused, identity-conscious, or a mix of both led to conceptual drift, weakening implementation in hiring and training. In contrast, Mismag's identity-conscious vision was clearer, but employee understanding of that vision remained superficial, echoing recent concerns that even coherent visions fail without cultural embedding (Bierema et al., 2023). Thus, misalignment stems not only from (in)action, but from fragmented interpretation, where the implementation does not always follow the intended vision. We argue that DEI policies must not only be structurally operationalized, but symbolically internalized through everyday meaning-making, cultural narratives, and norms of belonging (Van Douwen, 2025). This can include clear, employee centered communication about DEI, embedding DEI into hiring, training and promotion structures and appropriate resource allocation for DEI mission. This reinforces the call for DEI to be seen not as a checklist but as an ongoing organizational process.

The Consequences of Conceptual Ambiguity in Diversity Approaches

A second theoretical contribution of this study lies in unpacking how ambiguity in diversity approaches disrupts the translation of DEI vision into meaningful practice. Prior research has suggested that combining identity-conscious and meritocratic frames can generate broader buy-in (Gündemir et al., 2017). At first glance, our results may suggest that combining approaches can sometimes backfire. However, our findings show that problems do not stem from combining diversity approaches, but from doing so without a coherent and explicitly articulated rationale. When this blending of approaches remains unexamined, it can lead to confusion, disengagement, and failures in implementation.

At Fanhigh, for instance, the organization oscillates between identity-conscious rhetoric (focused on disadvantage) and meritocratic ideals. This lack of a coherent vision creates ideological drift: diversity is framed primarily as a problem to manage, rather than a strength to cultivate. This not only limits the scope of interventions (e.g., hiring or training), but also reinforces perceptions of DEI as optional or reactive, especially during periods of organizational pressure.

Mismag's case illustrates a different form of misalignment. While the DEI vision is more clearly identity-conscious at the top, its underlying rationale is poorly communicated and only partially understood by employees. Interviewees questioned

the need for LGBTQ+ specific policies, describing the broader climate as "already inclusive"; a perception that muted engagement despite visible support structures. This gap between strategic clarity and cultural embedding resulted in cautious, rather than confident, expressions of identity.

These patterns echo findings which demonstrate that identity-conscious diversity approaches encourage LGBTQ+ employees to be authentic, increase perceptions of fairness and belonging (Mor et al., 2025a [Chapter 2]), whereas identity-blind or ideologically ambiguous climates foster concealment and a sense of tolerance (Kirby, et al., 2023; Mor et al., 2025b [Chapter 3]). Importantly, they show that clarity of diversity approach not only facilitates identity expression but enhances perceived organizational authenticity. Our study adds that this ideological clarity must be carried through all levels of the organization otherwise, symbolic inclusion at the top may mask cultural hesitation below.

Furthermore. blending approaches without integration can create a form of "ideological incongruence": a mismatch between the formal vision and the informal cultural logic. We observe this dynamic in both cases: Fanhigh's managerial emphasis on neutrality undermines the inclusion agenda, while Mismag's assimilation pressures contradict its identity-affirming goals. Together, these findings emphasize that clarity, consistency, and shared interpretation are essential if diversity approach is to enable, not hinder, LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Distributed Responsibility as a Lever for Alignment

Our third contribution lies in illuminating the importance of responsibility structures in shaping alignment across vision, implementation, and perception. Both organizations relied heavily on LGBTQ+ employee networks to initiate policy changes, from parental leave to gender-neutral facilities. While these ERGs were empowered and resourced, the burden of innovation fell disproportionately on marginalized employees, reproducing what has been termed the "minority tax" (Faucett et al., 2022; Ng, 2023).

Mismag was more successful in distributing responsibility. ERG time was formally recognized as work, and executive sponsors were actively engaged. In contrast, Fanhigh's DEI officer operated largely in isolation, with middle management remaining passive or absent. Where responsibility is concentrated in symbolic or isolated actors, DEI lacks institutional traction. Where it is structurally shared through HR, ERGs, management training, and embedded leadership, alignment becomes more feasible (Vincent et al., 2024). This builds on and extends prior

work showing that middle management buy-in is critical for diversity efforts to succeed (Christie & Tippmann, 2024; Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). We argue that what matters is not just engagement by any one group, but the intentional diffusion of responsibility across multiple, complementary actors, with top leadership taking ultimate accountability and decision making responsibility. Effective inclusion requires horizontal and vertical integration: from executive board to team leaders, and from HR structures to grassroots networks.

Practical Recommendations

While not generalizable, this study offers practical insights for organizations seeking to strengthen LGBTQ+ DEI efforts. Firstly, it provides a proof of principle that strategic intentions and formal implementation do not necessarily align with employee experiences—and that different organizations may exhibit distinct patterns of alignment or misalignment. This highlights the need for organizations to critically examine not only what policies are in place, but how they are interpreted, enacted, and felt by employees. It also underscores the value of listening to marginalized voices to identify gaps between institutional ambition and lived reality. Our analysis shows that when responsibility is concentrated in a few hands, DEI becomes vulnerable to deprioritization or inconsistency. Instead, these efforts must be structurally embedded and underlying vision widely shared. This underlines the importance of clarifying roles across leadership, HR, middle managers, and ERGs, ensuring accountability, resourcing, and formal representation in governance structures (De Cock et al., 2025; Dobbin & Kalev, 2022; Gröschl, 2011).

Effective communication also emerged as vital. Employees respond more strongly to storytelling and values-based messaging that connect DEI to personal and organizational meaning. Without this, many remain unaware of or indifferent to existing policies. Clear, emotionally resonant communication helps move employees from passive support, and indifference to active engagement (Jansen et al., 2024).

Decision-making processes must also strike a balance between consultation and value-based, decisive leadership. While affected groups should be meaningfully involved, such as in discussions on gender-neutral bathrooms, final decisions should be guided by a consistent DEI vision. Over-compromising or deferring decisions entirely may erode trust and signal weak commitment.

Ultimately, successful LGBTQ+ inclusion depends not just on policy design, but on building systems that enable sustained action (Ellemers & Van der Toorn, in press). This includes: integration of DEI into organizational processes such as

hiring, onboarding, evaluations and promotion. Distribution of responsibility across stakeholders, with the resources and authority needed to shape DEI policy and practice. Consistent leadership engagement at both senior and middle levels, supported by greater diversity in leadership and clear mandates for DEI participation; and employee-centered communication that links inclusion to the organization's broader mission in an accessible, resonant way. Without these structural supports, even well-crafted policies are unlikely to translate into meaningful, lived inclusion. In this way, the intended–implemented–experienced framework offers both a diagnostic tool and a conceptual lens for designing more coherent, grounded, and impactful LGBTQ+ inclusion strategies.

Limitations and Future Directions

A limitation of this study is the lack of diversity within our participant sample. The sample comprising primarily white gay men, limits our ability to capture the broader spectrum of LGBTQ+ experiences. As such, we cannot make strong claims about how LGBTQ+ employees as a whole, particularly those with intersecting marginalized identities experience DEI policies. This is especially relevant given how organizations often focus on specific demographic groups (e.g., women or individuals with a migration background at Mismag), potentially overlooking how those at the intersection of multiple identities experience inclusion efforts (Gündemir et al., 2019; Pietri et al., 2018). Future research should prioritize more diverse sampling to better understand the varied and intersecting realities within the LGBTQ+ community and how these shape responses to DEI policy implementation.

Conclusion

This study used the I-I-E framework to examine how LGBTQ+ diversity policies unfold in practice. Rather than treating DEI policies as fixed or linear, the framework highlights how policies are envisioned, implemented and experienced by various stakeholders. Our comparative case study revealed that DEI outcomes depend on multiple factors, including clarity of vision, structural integration, shared responsibility, and communication. Even well-intentioned policies faltered when implementation was fragmented or when employee perceptions diverged from organizational goals. This highlights the need to consider both policy implementers (e.g., HR and DEI officers) and recipients (LGBTQ+ employees), and to understand where their perspectives (mis)align. Misalignments between the intended, implemented, and experienced dimensions of policy limit effectiveness and undermine inclusion. By exploring how DEI policies are reinterpreted across different actors, this study offers a look into how DEI actually works in an organization. It contributes both theoretical and practical insight into how misalignments arise, their impact on DEI

4

success, and what organizations can do to bridge gaps between intention and experience for more meaningful LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Chapter 4 adds crucial depth to the findings from previous chapters by situating diversity approaches within the lived realities of organizational life. It shows that DEI policies do not operate in a vacuum but are shaped by competing interpretations, structural constraints, and interpersonal dynamics. Using the intended–implemented–experienced framework from the HRM literature, this chapter illuminates how the meaning and impact of diversity policies can shift as they move from strategic vision to everyday practice.

By bringing together the perspectives of both organizations and employees, Chapter 4 examines the interplay between institutional structures and lived experiences. It portrays LGBTQ+ employees not as passive targets of policy, but as engaged participants who actively make sense of, respond to, and influence the implementation of inclusion efforts. In doing so, the chapter presents a more layered, stakeholder-driven understanding of diversity and inclusion

Having established how diversity policies are enacted and experienced in practice, Chapter 5 shifts focus to the emotional and health-related consequences of inclusion for LGBTQ+ individuals. It explores how social satisfaction in the workplace may serve as a protective factor, buffering against the negative effects of minority stress. In doing so, Chapter 5 builds on the earlier chapters by linking structural inclusion efforts to individual well-being outcomes thereby underscoring what is truly at stake in building inclusive workplaces.

REFERENCES

Akinola, M., Opie, T., Ho, G., Castel, S., Unzueta, M., Kristal, A., Stevens, F., Brief, A., & Zambrotta, N. D. (2024). Does broadening the term "Diversity" correlate with a lowered representation of racial minorities and women in organizations? *Academy of Management Discoveries*. https://doi.org/10.5465/amd.2020.0058

Anteby, M., & Anderson, C. (2014). The shifting landscape of LGBT organizational research. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *34*, 3–25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2014.08.001

Apfelbaum, E. P., Stephens, N. M., & Reagans, R. E. (2016). Beyond one-size-fits-all: Tailoring diversity approaches to the representation of social groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *111*(4), 547–566. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000071

Bacouel-Jentjens, S., & Yang, I. (2019). Do we see the same? Discrepant perception of diversity and diversity management within a company. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, *41*(3), 389–404. https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-12-2017-0286

Bierema, L., Callahan, J., Elliott, C., Greer, T., & Collins, J. (2023). Equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization. In *Human Resource Development: Critical Perspectives and Practices*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group

Bingham, A. J. (2023). From data management to actionable findings: A five-phase process of qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *22*, 16094069231183620. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231183620

Blommaert, L., & Van den Brink, M. (2020). Gender equality in appointments of board members: The role of multiple actors and their dynamics. *European Management Review*, *17*(3), 633–647. https://doi.org/10.1111/emre.12381

Buizer, I., Van der Toorn, J., Bilgili, Ö., Schietecat, A. C., & Veldhuizen, M. D. (2025). Disclosing identities at work: Employee attitudes toward sharing personal information on sexual orientation and gender identity at work. *Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion: An International Journal.*

Butler, K., Vanstone, M., Yak, A., & Veltman, A. (2024). "Will I be able to be myself? Or will I be forced to lie all the time?": How trans and non-binary students balance professionalism, authenticity, and safety in Canadian medical programs. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, *13*(1), 119–129. https://doi.org/10.5334/pme.1199

Byington, E. K., Tamm, G. F. B., & Trau, R. N. C. (2021). Mapping sexual orientation research in management: A review and research agenda. *Human Resource Management*, *60*(1), 31–53. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.22026

Cech, E. A., & Rothwell, W. R. (2020). LGBT workplace inequality in the federal workforce: Intersectional processes, organizational contexts, and turnover considerations. *ILR Review*, *73*(1), 25–60. https://doi.org/10.1177/0019793919843508

Chaney, K. E., & Sanchez, D. T. (2018). Gender-inclusive bathrooms signal fairness across identity dimensions. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *9*(2), 245–253. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550617737601

Christie, A., & Tippmann, E. (2024). Intended or unintended strategy? The activities of middle managers in strategy implementation. *Long Range Planning*, *57*(1), 102410. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2023.102410

4

Coffman, K. B., Coffman, L. C., & Ericson, K. M. M. (2017). The size of the LGBT population and the magnitude of antigay sentiment are substantially underestimated. *Management Science*, *63*(10), 3168–3186. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2016.2503

Colgan, F. (2016). LGBT company network groups in the UK: Tackling opportunities and complexities in the workplace. *Sexual Orientation and Transgender Issues in Organizations*, 525–538. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29623-4_31

Cramwinckel, F. M., Scheepers, D. T., & Van der Toorn, J. (2018). Interventions to reduce blatant and subtle sexual orientation—and gender identity prejudice (SOGIP): Current knowledge and future directions. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, *12*(1), 183–217. https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12044

Cumberbatch, S. (2021). When your identity is inherently "Unprofessional": Navigating rules of professional appearance rooted in cisheteronormative whiteness as black women and gender non-conforming professionals. *Journal of Civil Rights and Economic Development*, *34*(2). https://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/jcred/vol34/iss2/2

De Cock, V., Celik, P., & Toma, C. (2025). The proof is in the pudding: Workers care about evidence-based diversity cues. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *55*(1), 52–70. https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.13076

Dennissen, M., Benschop, Y., & Van den Brink, M. (2019). Diversity networks: Networking for equality? *British Journal of Management*, *30*(4), 966–980. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12321

Dennissen, M., Benschop, Y., & Van den Brink, M. (2020). Rethinking diversity management: An intersectional analysis of diversity networks. *Organization Studies*, *41*(2), 219–240. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840618800103

Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. (2022). *Getting to Diversity: What Works and What Doesn't*. Harvard University Press.

Dover, T. L., Kaiser, C. R., & Major, B. (2020). Mixed signals: The unintended effects of diversity initiatives. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, *14*(1), 152–181. https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12059

Dover, T. L., Major, B., & Kaiser, C. R. (2021). Cardiovascular, behavioral, and psychological responses to organizational prodiversity messages among racial/ethnic minorities. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *24*(8), 1241–1261. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430220944222

Einarsdottir, A., Mumford, K., Birks, Y., Lockyer, B., & Sayli, M. (2020). *Understanding LGBT+ employee networks and how to support them*.

Eisenhardt, K. M., & Graebner, M. E. (2007). Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, *50*(1), 25–32. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2007.24160888

Ellemers, N., Şahin, O., Jansen, W. S., & Van der Toorn, J. (2018). Naar effectief diversiteitsbeleid: Het bouwen van bruggen tussen wetenschap en praktijk. [Toward effective diversity policy: Building bridges between science and practice.]. *Gedrag En Organisatie*, *31*, 409–428.

Ellemers, N., & Van der Toorn, J. (in press). Achieving equity and inclusion in the workplace. *The Sage Handbook of Psychological Perspectives on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*.

Ely, R. J., & Thomas, D. A. (2001). Cultural diversity at work: The effects of diversity perspectives on work group processes and outcomes. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *46*(2), 229–273. https://doi.org/10.2307/2667087

Ely, R. J., & Thomas, D. A. (2020). Getting serious about diversity: Enough Already with the Business Case. *Harvard Business Review*, *98*(6), 114–122.

Espino-Pérez, K., Major, B., & Malta, B. (2018). Was it race or merit?: The cognitive costs of observing the attributionally ambiguous hiring of a racial minority. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *24*, 272–276. https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000153

Fath, S., & Proudfoot, D. (2024). Devaluation by omission: Limited identity options elicit anger and increase identification. *Psychological Science*, *35*(3), 239–249. https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976231223416

Faucett, E. A., Brenner, M. J., Thompson, D. M., & Flanary, V. A. (2022). Tackling the minority tax: A roadmap to redistributing engagement in diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. *Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery*, *166*(6), 1174–1181. https://doi.org/10.1177/01945998221091696

Federo, R. (2024). The rainbow glass ceiling: Breaking barriers for LGBTQ+ inclusion in board diversity. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, amp.2023.0186. https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2023.0186

Ferdman, B. M. (2017). Paradoxes of inclusion: Understanding and managing the tensions of diversity and multiculturalism. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, *53*(2), 235–263. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886317702608

Georgeac, O. A. M., & Rattan, A. (2023). The business case for diversity backfires: Detrimental effects of organizations' instrumental diversity rhetoric for underrepresented group members' sense of belonging. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *124*(1). https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000394

Gröschl, S. (2011). *Diversity in the workplace: Multi-disciplinary and international perspectives*. Gower Publishing, Ltd.

Gündemir, S., Homan, A. C., Usova, A., & Galinsky, A. D. (2017). Multicultural meritocracy: The synergistic benefits of valuing diversity and merit. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *73*, 34–41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2017.06.002

Gündemir, S., Martin, A. E., & Homan, A. C. (2019). Understanding diversity ideologies from the target's perspective: A review and future directions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00282

Jansen, W. S., Otten, S., & Van der Zee, K. I. (2015). Being part of diversity: The effects of an all-inclusive multicultural diversity approach on majority members' perceived inclusion and support for organizational diversity efforts. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *18*(6), 817–832. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430214566892

Jansen, W. S., Otten, S., Van der Zee, K. I., & Jans, L. (2014). Inclusion: Conceptualization and measurement. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *44*(4), 370–385. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2011

Jansen, W. S., Van der Toorn, J., Bokern, Y. N. A., & Ellemers, N. (2024). Shades of support: An empirical assessment of D&I policy support in organizations. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *54*(4), 221–229. https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.13025

Jiang, K., Lepak, D. P., Han, K., Hong, Y., Kim, A., & Winkler, A.-L. (2012). Clarifying the construct of human resource systems: Relating human resource management to employee performance. *Human Resource Management Review*, *22*(2), 73–85. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2011.11.005

4

Kaiser, C. R., Major, B., Jurcevic, I., Dover, T. L., Brady, L. M., & Shapiro, J. R. (2013). Presumed fair: Ironic effects of organizational diversity structures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *104*(3), 504–519. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030838

Kelan, E. K. (2022). Men as middle managers doing and undoing gender in organizations. *European Management Review*, *19*(2), 236–247. https://doi.org/10.1111/emre.12496

Khilji, S. E., & and Wang, X. (2006). 'Intended' and 'implemented' HRM: The missing linchpin in strategic human resource management research. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *17*(7), 1171–1189. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190600756384

Kirby, T. A., Barreto, M., Korine, R., Hendy, J., Osman, L., Stadie, S., & Tan, D. (2023). To conceal or reveal: Identity-conscious diversity ideologies facilitate sexual minority identity disclosure. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *54*(1), 199–218. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2996

Kirby, T. A., Russell Pascual, N., & Hildebrand, L. K. (2023). The Dilution of Diversity: Ironic Effects of Broadening Diversity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *51*(2), 268–283. https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672231184925

Klarenaar, M., Van Ooijen, A.-L., Van der Toorn, J., Boes, M., Lakens, D., Stelling, L., Simons, M., Funk, M., Van Goch, M., Veldhuizen, M., & Tetteroo, D. (2022). *Towards a representation of unheard and unseen individuals in the hospital, workplace, and neighborhood*. Centre for Unusual Collaborations.

Kruk, M., & Matsick, J. L. (2021). A taxonomy of identity safety cues based on gender and race: From a promising past to an intersectional and translational future. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*, *7*(4), 487–510. https://doi.org/10.1037/tps0000304

Leslie, L. M., Bono, J. E., Kim, Y. (Sophia), & Beaver, G. R. (2020). On melting pots and salad bowls: A meta-analysis of the effects of identity-blind and identity-conscious diversity ideologies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *105*(5), 453–471. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000446

Maji, S., Yadav, N., & Gupta, P. (2023). LGBTQ+ in workplace: A systematic review and reconsideration. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, *43*(2), 313–360. https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-02-2022-0049

Makhecha, U. P., Srinivasan, V., Prabhu, G. N., & Mukherji, S. (2018). Multi-level gaps: A study of intended, actual and experienced human resource practices in a hypermarket chain in India. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *29*(2), 360–398. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1126336

Mor, K., Gündemir, S., & Van der Toorn, J. (2025a). Celebrating the "Invisible": The Role of Organizational Diversity Approaches on Attracting and Retaining LGBTQ + Talent. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *40*(3), 593–617. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-024-09975-2s

Mor, K., Gündemir, S., & Van der Toorn, J. (2025b). 'Are they just putting up with me'? How diversity approaches impact LGBTQ+ employees' sense of being tolerated at work. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 64(4),* e70006. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.70006

Morgenroth, T., Kirby, T. A., & Van der Toorn, J. (2024). Heteroprofessionalism: The power of the gender/sex binary in the workplace. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *60*, 101908. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2024.101908

Mosse, D., Pocobello, R., Saunders, R., Seikkula, J., & Von Peter, S. (2023). Introduction: Open Dialogue around the world – implementation, outcomes, experiences and perspectives. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 1093351. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1093351

Ng, E. (2023, December 13). *Minority workers pay a hidden cultural tax | Smith Business Insight*. https://smith.queensu.ca/insight/content/Minority-Workers-Pay-a-Hidden-Cultural-Tax.php

Nishii, L. (2012). The benefits of climate for inclusion for gender-diverse groups. *Academy of Management Journal*, *56*, 1754–1774. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2009.0823

Nishii, L., & Wright, P. (2008). Variability Within Organizations: Implications for Strategic Human Resource Management. *CAHRS Working Paper Series*.

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16*(1), 1-13, https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847

Ozturk, M. B., & Tatli, A. (2016). Gender identity inclusion in the workplace: Broadening diversity management research and practice through the case of transgender employees in the UK. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *27*(8), 781–802. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1042902

Pietri, E. S., Hennes, E. P., Dovidio, J. F., Brescoll, V. L., Bailey, A. H., Moss-Racusin, C. A., & Handelsman, J. (2019). Addressing unintended consequences of gender diversity interventions on women's sense of belonging in STEM. *Sex Roles*, *80*(9), 527–547. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-018-0952-2

Pietri, E. S., Johnson, I. R., & Ozgumus, E. (2018). One size may not fit all: Exploring how the intersection of race and gender and stigma consciousness predict effective identity-safe cues for Black women. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *74*, 291–306. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2017.06.021

Plaut, V. C., Garnett, F. G., Buffardi, L. E., & Sanchez-Burks, J. (2011). "What about me?" Perceptions of exclusion and whites' reactions to multiculturalism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *101*(2), 337–353. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022832

Plaut, V. C., Thomas, K. M., & Goren, M. J. (2009). Is multiculturalism or color blindness better for minorities? *Psychological Science*, *20*(4), 444–446. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02318.x

Plaut, V. C., Thomas, K. M., Hurd, K., & Romano, C. A. (2018). Do color blindness and multiculturalism remedy or foster discrimination and racism? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *27*(3), 200–206. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721418766068

Purdie-Vaughns, V., Steele, C. M., Davies, P. G., Ditlmann, R., & Crosby, J. R. (2008). Social identity contingencies: How diversity cues signal threat or safety for African Americans in mainstream institutions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *94*(4), 615–630. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.94.4.615

Randel, A. E., Galvin, B. M., Shore, L. M., Ehrhart, K. H., Chung, B. G., Dean, M. A., & Kedharnath, U. (2018). Inclusive leadership: Realizing positive outcomes through belongingness and being valued for uniqueness. *Human Resource Management Review*, *28*(2), 190–203. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2017.07.002

Shen, J., Tang, Ningyu, & and D'Netto, B. (2014). A multilevel analysis of the effects of HR diversity management on employee knowledge sharing: The case of Chinese employees. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *25*(12), 1720–1738. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.859163

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information, 22*(2), 63-75. https://doi.org/10.3233/EFI-2004-22201
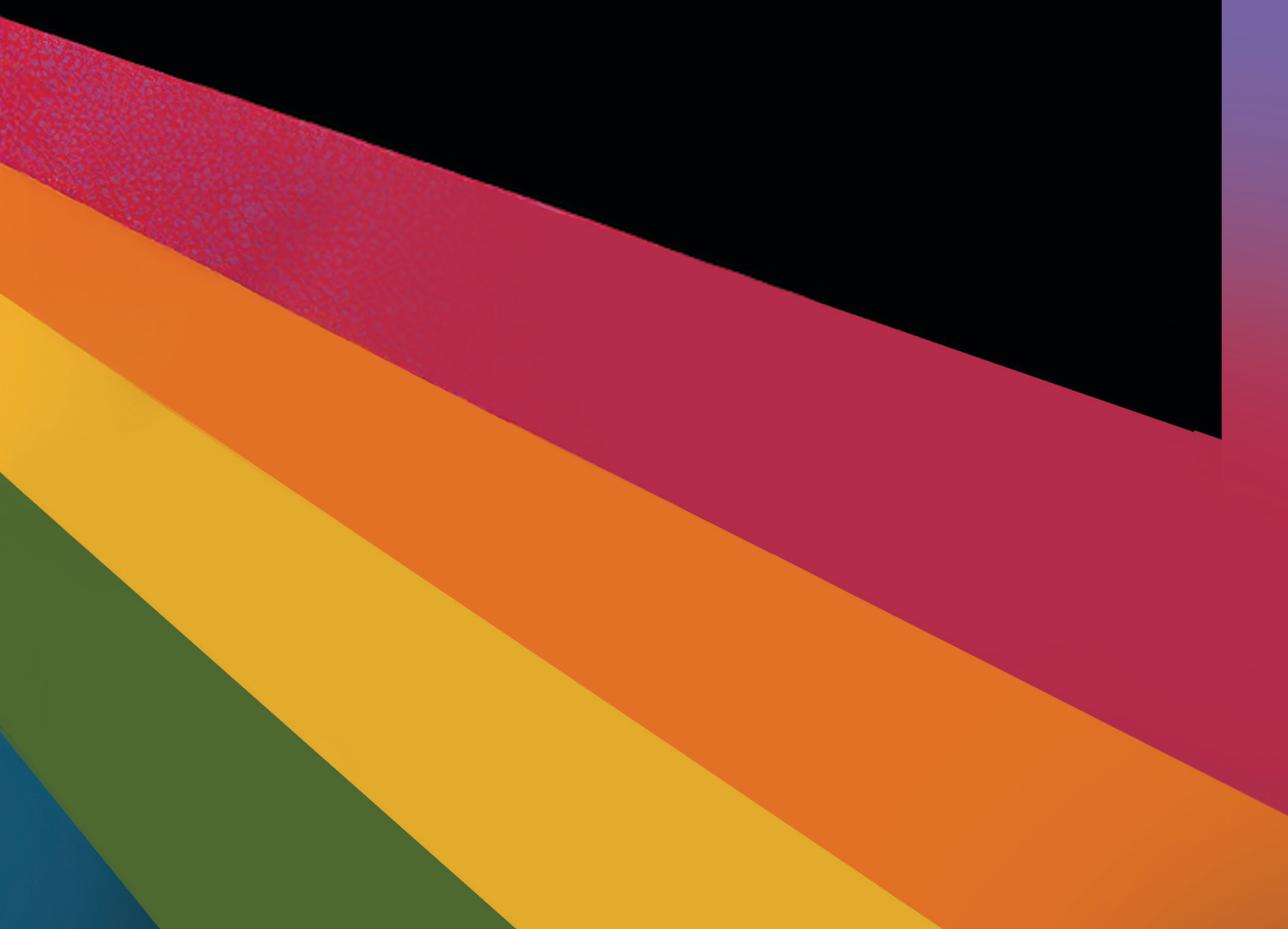
4

Shore, L. M., Cleveland, J. N., & Sanchez, D. (2018). Inclusive workplaces: A review and model. *Human Resource Management Review*, *28*(2), 176–189. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2017.07.003

Shore, L. M., Randel, A. E., Chung, B. G., Dean, M. A., Holcombe Ehrhart, K., & Singh, G. (2011). Inclusion and diversity in work groups: A review and model for future research. *Journal of Management*, *37*(4), 1262–1289. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310385943

Soldan, Z., & Nankervis, A. (2014). Employee perceptions of the effectiveness of diversity management in the Australian public service: Rhetoric and reality. *Public Personnel Management*, *43*(4), 543–564. https://doi.org/10.1177/0091026014533093

Tienda, M. (2013). Diversity ≠ Inclusion: Promoting integration in higher education. *Educational Researcher (Washington, D.C.: 1972)*, *42*(9), 467–475. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X13516164

To, C., Sherf, E. N., & Kouchaki, M. (2024). How much inequity do you see? Structural power, perceptions of gender and racial inequity, and support for diversity initiatives. *Academy of Management Journal*, *67*(1), 126–149.

Toma, C., Janssens, R., & De Cock, V. (2024). *Diversity decoupling in top European corporations myth or fact?* (SSRN Scholarly Paper 5028998). Social Science Research Network. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5028998

Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight "Big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*(10), 837-851. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121

Trullen, J., Bos-Nehles, A., & Valverde, M. (2020). From Intended to Actual and Beyond: A Cross-Disciplinary View of (Human Resource Management) Implementation. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *22*(2), 150–176. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12220

Tuttle, S., & Kim, C. (2025). Equal pay for disproportionate work: Assessing cultural taxation in the legal profession. In M.-C. Pantea, K. Roberts, & D.-C. Dabija (Eds.), *Higher Education and Work in the Knowledge Economy: Power, Prestige and Precarity* (pp. 219–245). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-80618-6_10

Van den Dungen, R., Galesloot, N., & Schols, H. (2023). *Het Charter Diversiteit Monitor 2022* (21153). Sociaal-Economische Raad (SER). https://www.ser.nl/nl/Publicaties/monitor-charter-diversiteit-2022

Van der Toorn, J. (in press). Advancing LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion: Barriers, opportunities, and strategies for progress. In F. Fasoli & A. Carnaghi (Eds.), *Exploring identity, diversity and stigma in LGBTQ+ lives: Social psychological perspectives*. Routledge.

Van der Toorn, J., Bracco, S. E., Gaitho, W., Ryan, W. S., Horne, S. G., Anderson, J. R., & Leskinen, E. A. (2024). Inclusion and protection in tension: Reflections on gathering sexual orientation and gender identity data in the workplace. *Journal of Social Issues*, *80*(3), 947–972. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12632

Van der Toorn, J., & Gaitho, W. (2021). LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion: A global issue requiring a transdisciplinary and intersectional approach. *Tijdschrift Voor Genderstudies*, *24*(3/4), 376–387. https://doi.org/10.5117/TVGN.2021.3/4.010.TOOR

Van Douwen, N. (2025). *Doing diversity work: Unravelling the interplay between change and resistance in the Dutch military* [Doctoral Dissertation, Radboud University]. https://repository.ubn.ru.nl/handle/2066/319686

Verkuyten, M., Yogeeswaran, K., & Adelman, L. (2023). The social psychology of intergroup tolerance and intolerance. *European Review of Social Psychology*, *34*(1), 1–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2022.2091326

Vincent, S., Lopes, A., Meliou, E., & Özbilgin, M. (2024). Relational responsibilisation and diversity management in the 21st century: The case for reframing equality regulation. *Work, Employment and Society*, *38*(6), 1549–1568. https://doi.org/10.1177/09500170231217660

Wang, Y., Kim, S., Rafferty, A., & Sanders, K. (2020). Employee perceptions of HR practices: A critical review and future directions. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 31(1),* 128–173. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2019.1674360

Williamson, T., Goodwin, C. R., & Ubel, P. A. (2021). Minority tax reform—Avoiding overtaxing minorities when we need them most. *New England Journal of Medicine*, *384*(20), 1877–1879. https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMp2100179

Wilton, L. S., Bell, A. N., Vahradyan, M., & Kaiser, C. R. (2020). Show don't tell: Diversity dishonesty harms racial/ethnic minorities at work. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *46*(8), 1171–1185. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167219897149

Wright, P., & Nishii, L. (2004). Strategic HRM and organizational behavior: Integrating multiple levels of analysis. *CAHRS Working Paper Series*, *468*.

Zanoni, P., & Janssens, M. (2007). Minority employees engaging with (diversity) management: An analysis of control, agency, and micro-emancipation*. *Journal of Management Studies*, *44*(8), 1371–1397. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2007.00700.x

4

CHAPTER 5

Examining Workplace Perceptions and Well-Being Among LGBTQ+ Employees

Examining Workplace Perceptions and Well-Being Among LGBTQ+ Employees

Author Contributions

Kshitij Mor: Writing and preparing original draft, designing study, conceptualization, organizing materials, data collection, data analysis.
Seval Gündemir: Reviewing and editing drafts, supervision, conceptualization.
Peter Lugtig: Advising and consulting on research methods and analyses.
Jojanneke van der Toorn: Reviewing and editing drafts, supervision, conceptualization.

ABSTRACT

LGBTQ+ individuals continue to experience less favorable outcomes both within and beyond the workplace compared to their cisgender, heterosexual counterparts. Drawing on minority stress and community resilience frameworks, this study investigates how different dimensions of workplace experiences, namely interpersonal and task-related satisfaction, relate to employee well-being, and whether these relationships differ between LGBTQ+ and cis-hetero individuals. We hypothesized that (1) LGBTQ+ individuals would report lower workplace satisfaction and well-being, (2) interpersonal satisfaction would be a stronger predictor of well-being than task satisfaction among LGBTQ+ employees, and (3) interpersonal satisfaction would predict well-being more strongly for LGBTQ+ employees than for cis-hetero employees. Using data from the LISS panel, a large population-based longitudinal study in the Netherlands, we conducted multilevel regression analyses to test these predictions (n=4794). As expected, LGBTQ+ participants reported significantly lower interpersonal and task satisfaction, as well as poorer mental health and work-related well-being. However, contrary to expectations, interpersonal satisfaction did not significantly outperform task satisfaction in predicting LGBTQ+ well-being, nor did its predictive strength differ from that of cis-hetero employees. We discuss possible explanations for these null findings, including sample-related limitations and measurement constraints, and emphasize the enduring need to address systemic inequalities affecting LGBTQ+ individuals in the workplace.

Keywords: LGBTQ+, Well-being, Workplace Satisfaction, Minority Stress

EXAMINING WORKPLACE PERCEPTIONS AND WELL-BEING AMONG LGBTQ+ EMPLOYEES

LGBTQ+ employees face many challenges in the workplace that can negatively impact their well-being, as discrimination, microaggressions, and harassment remain persistent (Cech & Rothwell, 2020; Coffman et al., 2017; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2024). These employees also bear an additional emotional burden of navigating workplace interactions with greater caution than their cis-heterosexual counterparts. At times they are expected to educate colleagues on LGBTQ+ issues while also managing the complexities of identity disclosure (Cancela et al., 2024; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Mara et al., 2021). The relative concealability of a queer identity means that LGBTQ+ employees often weigh the risks and benefits of being open about their identity. While disclosure can foster inclusion, authenticity, and workplace satisfaction, it also makes individuals vulnerable to potential bias and exclusion (Pachankis et al., 2020; Suppes et al., 2019, 2021). Conversely, concealing one's identity may provide protection but can diminish authenticity, well-being, and opportunities for meaningful workplace connections (Beagan et al., 2022; Collins & Callahan, 2012; Follmer et al., 2020; Shepherd & Brochu, 2024). This ongoing identity management challenge at work affects how LGBTQ+ employees experience their workplace relationships, sense of inclusion, and professional fulfillment (Corlett et al., 2022; Cumberbatch, 2021; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009).

The workplace environment plays a critical role in shaping the well-being of LGBTQ+ employees, with organizational conditions influencing both psychological outcomes and broader job-related attitudes. A meta-analysis by Webster and colleagues (2018) demonstrates how workplace conditions affect perceived discrimination, work attitudes, and—most relevant to the present study—psychological strain. Their findings emphasize the importance of supportive workplace relationships as a protective factor, buffering LGBTQ+ employees against psychological strain and promoting greater well-being. In the current study, we build on and extend this previous work in three key ways. First, we explicitly recognize that the well-being of LGBTQ+ employees may be shaped by multiple dimensions of workplace experience, particularly their perceptions of both interpersonal and task-related relationships. Second, workplace perceptions most theoretically meaningful to LGBTQ+ employees may be those they experience less of compared to their cis-heterosexual counterparts. Third, to test the specificity of earlier findings, the associations between workplace perceptions and well-being need to be compared across LGBTQ+ and cis-heterosexual employees. If LGBTQ+ employees are indeed

more responsive to interpersonal dynamics, as prior research suggests, we would expect stronger associations between interpersonal perceptions and well-being within this group. Drawing on a large longitudinal dataset, we examine how both interpersonal and task-related aspects of workplace satisfaction relate to employee well-being, and whether these relationships differ systematically between LGBTQ+ and cis-heterosexual employees. The current study draws on a large longitudinal dataset to examine how both interpersonal and task-related aspects of workplace satisfaction relate to well-being—and whether these associations differ between LGBTQ+ and cis-heterosexual employees.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

LGBTQ+ employees face heightened risks and challenges in the workplace due to their queer identity, placing them at a disadvantage compared to their cisgender, heterosexual counterparts. The prevailing heteronormative culture, which prioritizes cisgender and heterosexual experiences as the default and is reinforced by implicit biases and exclusionary norms, further deepens this disparity, shaping both interpersonal and task-related aspects of work (Beagan et al., 2022; Bizzeth & Beagan, 2023; Compton & Dougherty, 2017; Corlett et al., 2022; Mizzi, 2016; Van der Toorn et al., 2020). Socially, LGBTQ+ employees must navigate stigma, harassment, microaggressions, discrimination, and the complexities of identity disclosure, all of which negatively affect workplace relationships and overall belonging (Cancela et al., 2024; Corlett et al., 2022; Einarsdóttir et al., 2015; Mara et al., 2021; Schönauer & Greven, 2024; Sears & Mallory, 2014). Beyond these interpersonal challenges, LGBTQ+ employees also experience challenges related to the job itself including reduced perceptions of fit, and lower wages (Badgett et al., 2007; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2016; Webster et al., 2018).

Taken together, existing research strongly suggests that LGBTQ+ employees may experience both task-related and relationship-related aspects of the workplace less positively than their cis-heterosexual counterparts. While these experiences can be measured in various ways, we focus here on employees' self-reported satisfaction with interpersonal and task-related aspects of their job, as this provides a direct measure of how well these aspects of their jobs meet their expectations and needs (Locke, 1969). Furthermore, given the well-established link between employee perceptions of both social and task-related aspects of work and overall well-being (Bowling et al., 2010; Faragher et al., 2005), we argue that the challenges associated with navigating a queer identity in the workplace create a compounded risk for LGBTQ+ employees' well-being compared to their cis-heterosexual peers. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: LGBTQ+ individuals will report lower levels of (a) interpersonal and task-related workplace satisfaction and (b) well-being compared to cis-hetero individuals.

It is important to recognize that workplace satisfaction and well-being are interconnected. Satisfaction in both interpersonal and task-related domains is linked to overall well-being (Bowling et al., 2010; Faragher et al., 2005; Judge et al., 2002; Judge & Klinger, 2008). On the job characteristics side, satisfaction with pay shapes perceptions of fairness, work motivation, engagement, and turnover intentions (Currall et al., 2005; Jawahar & Stone, 2011; Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2013). Satisfaction with working hours has been linked to overall life satisfaction and absenteeism (Bartoll & Ramos, 2020; Lee et al., 2015), while satisfaction with the nature of one's tasks contributes to well-being by reducing stress and fostering a sense of autonomy (Jiang et al., 2020; Sasser & Sørensen, 2016).

On the interpersonal side, research emphasizes the importance of workplace inclusion for both performance and well-being, highlighting the detrimental effects of loneliness and the critical role of supportive workplace relationships (Chordiya, 2022; Jansen et al., 2014; Lam & Lau, 2012; Randel, 2023). This mirrors findings from the social identification literature, which underscore the profound impact of social networks and identities on both mental and physical health (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010, 2015; Jetten et al., 2012). Notably, some job satisfaction measures aggregate different aspects of workplace satisfaction into composite scores (Bowling et al., 2010; Faragher et al., 2005; Judge & Klinger, 2008), which possibly obscures the relative importance of interpersonal and task-related factors for different groups.

LGBTQ+ individuals face unique identity-related stressors, often referred to as minority stress, which contribute to their heightened risk for poorer well-being outcomes (Frost & Meyer, 2023; McConnell et al., 2018; Meyer, 2003; Velez et al., 2013). These stressors—rooted in societal stigma, discrimination, and exclusion—are inherently social in nature. In the workplace this may manifest in impeded interpersonal dynamics, shaping employees' experiences of inclusion, authenticity, belonging, and overall satisfaction. Conversely, the community resilience framework suggests that the negative effect of minority stress on well-being can be mitigated through supportive networks and strong interpersonal relationships within one's community (Crawford & Kashubeck-West, 2023; McConnell et al., 2018; Parmenter & Galliher, 2023). We extend this argument to propose that similar benefits can also emerge from positive workplace relationships. Positive workplace interactions may serve as a crucial buffer against minority stress, fostering a sense of belonging

5

and emotional security that, in turn, enhances well-being (Schönauer et al., 2025). However, the absence of such positive relationships may not only exacerbate existing stressors but also contribute to diminished well-being by compounding the emotional burden of navigating workplace interactions. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that interpersonal satisfaction—more so than task-related satisfaction—may play a particularly significant role in shaping LGBTQ+ employees' well-being. Hence, we hypothesize:

H2: For LGBTQ+ employees, interpersonal satisfaction will be a stronger predictor of well-being compared to task-related satisfaction.

Given the pervasive heteronormative culture in many workplaces and the prevailing norms of professionalism, which are often aligned with cisgender and heterosexual identities (Cech, 2022; Corlett et al., 2022; Cumberbatch, 2021; Mizzi, 2013, 2016; Morgenroth et al., 2024), cisgender, heterosexual employees are less likely to encounter systemic identity-related stressors compared to their LGBTQ+ counterparts. Without these systemic social stressors, the role of interpersonal workplace relationships in shaping well-being may be less pronounced for cis-heterosexual employees. As a result, we propose that the link between interpersonal satisfaction and well-being will be more pronounced for LGBTQ+ employees compared to their cis-heterosexual counterparts, as supportive workplace relationships may play a more significant role in mitigating/exacerbating the effects of minority stress.

H3: The relationship between interpersonal satisfaction and well-being will be stronger for LGBTQ+ employees compared to cis-hetero employees.

Current Study

This study builds on existing research by highlighting the pivotal role of workplace relationships for LGBTQ+ employee well-being. By integrating literature on community resilience and workplace well-being, we extend current frameworks to underscore the significance of workplace inclusion. Additionally, we offer a comparative perspective on the experiences of LGBTQ+ employees relative to their cisgender-heterosexual counterparts. Here, we examine how interpersonal and task-related aspects of job satisfaction may differentially influence well-being among LGBTQ+ and cisgender-heterosexual employees. In doing so, we move beyond documenting disparities to exploring the mechanisms that may contribute to them— namely, the distinct ways in which social and structural aspects of the workplace interact with minoritized identities. This approach deepens our understanding of

why well-being gaps persist across groups and offers a more nuanced view of how workplace experiences shape mental health outcomes.

To achieve this, we utilize data from the LISS panel, a large, population-based longitudinal dataset in the Netherlands, which enables us to examine how different aspects of work satisfaction influence well-being over time. The LISS dataset's longitudinal design allows for a robust analysis by capturing well-being variables several months after work-related variables. For a comprehensive assessment of the impact of work satisfaction on general well-being, we incorporate multiple well-being measures. This includes aspects that are proximal self-reports such as a self-report of global well-being measure and a mental health inventory, as well as measures more indirectly affected by health such as work hinderance and a measure of absenteeism. In addition, we include satisfaction with working hours, wages, and overall job satisfaction as supplementary predictors in our analyses to assess the robustness of our primary findings. These additional variables allow us to explore whether broader or more structural aspects of job satisfaction influence well-being outcomes differently across groups, and help ensure that our core results are not driven by omitted facets of the workplace experience.

5

METHODS

Sample and Data Collection

We analyzed data from the Longitudinal Internet Studies for the Social Sciences (LISS) panel, a population-based longitudinal panel in the Netherlands (*LISS Panel*, n.d.). The LISS panel is composed of participants who periodically complete online questionnaires in exchange for compensation (see Scherpenzeel & Das, 2011 for additional information about the panel). The collection of LISS panel data has been previously approved by a relevant ethics board, and we received additional ethics approval for secondary analysis of the data from our own institution. Our hypotheses and exploratory analyses were all pre-registered and can be found on https://osf.io/sa4qn/?view_only=a512f53e7b3541309edbdd2b1caad976

We extracted data on work satisfaction, well-being, and demographic variables, including age, sexual orientation, gender assigned at birth, and gender identity. These variables were drawn from the Work and Schooling, Health, and Background questionnaires, as well as the Democratic Innovations add-on study for the sexual orientation question. We used the last three waves of data collection from 2022, 2023 and 2024, which were available at the time of extraction. It is also noteworthy

that the gender identity question was introduced into the LISS background questionnaire starting in 2022, making our reliance on these waves particularly relevant. Sexual orientation data were obtained from the Democratic Innovations study, conducted in 2023.[1] All other demographic variables were extracted from the latest wave of data collection, i.e. the 2024 Background questionnaire. In cases where information was missing in the 2024 wave, data were supplemented using responses from earlier waves, where available. Participants were explicitly informed that their responses would be used solely for scientific purposes. They were told that their answers would remain confidential, their participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

In the final dataset we had a total of 14,382 observations reflecting responses from 4,794 individuals who were above the age of 18 and provided complete data on work satisfaction, well-being, sexual orientation, gender assigned at birth, and gender identity at one or more of the three time points. A post-hoc sensitivity analysis indicated that the sample size had sufficient power (1-β = 0.80; α = 0.05) to detect an effect size of f^2 = 0.02 with 80% power (Faul et al., 2007).

Measures

Work

Task-Related Satisfaction.
Task-related work satisfaction was measured with a single item. Participants rated their satisfaction on a 10-point scale (1 = *Not at all satisfied*; 10 = *Completely satisfied*) in response to the question: *"How satisfied are you with the type of work that you do?"*.

Interpersonal Satisfaction.
Interpersonal work satisfaction was measured with a single item. Participants rated their satisfaction on a 10-point scale (1 = *Not at all satisfied*; 10 = *Completely satisfied*) in response to the question: *"How satisfied are you with the general atmosphere among your colleagues?"*.

---

1   Due to lack of sexual orientation in 2022 and 2024, we assume that the sexual orientation indicated in 2023 was stable across the three years.

Well-being

General Health.

General health was measured with a single item. Participants rated their health on a 5-point scale (1 = *Poor*; 5 = *Excellent*) in response to the question: *"How would you describe your health, generally speaking?"*.

Mental Health.

Mental health was assessed using the five-item Mental Health Inventory (MHI-5; Berwick et al., 1991). Participants responded to how frequently they experienced psychological distress and happiness during the past month using a 6-point scale (1 = *Never*; 6 = *Continuously*). The items included: *(1) "I felt very anxious," (2) "I felt so down that nothing could cheer me up," (3) "I felt calm and peaceful," (4) "I felt depressed and gloomy," and (5) "I felt happy."* Items were reverse-coded such that higher numbers indicate better mental health.

Absenteeism.

Absenteeism was measured with the question: *"How many days during the last month were you unable to go to work, perform housekeeping work, or attend school due to disease?"* Participants selected one of the following response options: 0 days; 1–2 days; 3–5 days; 6–10 days; more than 10 days.

Work Hindrance.

Work hindrance due to poor health was assessed using a single item. Participants rated the extent to which their physical health or emotional problems hindered their work on a 5-point scale (1 = *Not at all*; 5 = *Very much*). The question was: *"To what extent did your physical health or emotional problems hinder your work over the past month, for example, in your job, housekeeping, taking care of children, doing volunteer work, or school?"*.

Demographics

Sexual Orientation.

Sexual orientation was assessed with the question: "How would you describe your sexual orientation?" Participants could select from the following response options: Heterosexual, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual or Omnisexual, Asexual, and Other. Participants who selected "Other" were given the opportunity to provide a written response. These open-text responses were manually reviewed and, when

appropriate, recategorized into existing categories or excluded if they did not reflect a clear sexual orientation.

Gender Identity.

Gender identity was assessed using the definition of a transgender person as someone who does not identify with the gender assigned at birth (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018). Participants whose reported gender did not match their identified gender identity were categorized as transgender in the sample.

Age.

Participants reported their age in whole years.

Exploratory Analyses Measures

Working Hours Satisfaction.

Working Hours satisfaction was measured with a single item. Participants rated their satisfaction on a 10-point scale (1 = *Not at all satisfied*; 10 = *Completely satisfied*) in response to the question: *"How satisfied are you with your working hours?"*

Wage Satisfaction.

Wage satisfaction was measured with a single item. Participants rated their satisfaction on a 10-point scale (1 = *Not at all satisfied*; 10 = *Completely satisfied*) in response to the question: *How satisfied are you with your wages, salary, or profit earnings?".*

General Satisfaction.

General work satisfaction was measured with a single item. Participants rated their satisfaction on a 10-point scale (1 = *Not at all satisfied*; 10 = *Completely satisfied*) in response to the question: *"How satisfied are you with your current work?".*

RESULTS

We conducted multilevel regression analyses to account for the nested structure of the data, with repeated observations nested within individuals. As our primary interest was in individual-level differences, all predictors were specified at the individual level. Time-level variance was not modeled explicitly. Preliminary analyses indicated sufficient variance at the individual level for all key variables, justifying the use of multilevel modeling. Detailed variance components are presented in Table 2.

Hypothesis Testing

Intergroup Differences: LBGTQ+ vs Cis-Hetero Individuals

We first tested whether LGBTQ+ individuals will report lower levels of (a) interpersonal and task-related workplace satisfaction and (b) well-being compared to cis-hetero individuals (Hypothesis 1). Table 3 presents the results from the multilevel regression analyses comparing LGBTQ+ participants (*n*= 387) with cis-heterosexual participants (*n* = 4,407). Consistent with Hypothesis 1, LGBTQ+ individuals reported significantly lower levels of both interpersonal and task-related satisfaction. They also reported poorer mental health outcomes, more frequent work hindrance due to health, and a greater number of sick days. However, no significant difference was observed between the two groups on global well-being.

Interpersonal versus Task-Related Satisfaction Effects on Well-being

We then examined whether interpersonal satisfaction will be a stronger predictor of well-being for LGBTQ+ individuals compared to task-related satisfaction (Hypothesis 2). Table 4 presents the results of multilevel regressions examining the associations between interpersonal and task-related satisfaction and well-being outcomes within the LGBTQ+ subsample. Contrary to expectations, neither interpersonal nor task satisfaction significantly predicted any of the well-being indicators. Nevertheless, the direction of all coefficients aligned with theoretical predictions, with interpersonal satisfaction generally showing a stronger (though non-significant) association with well-being compared to task satisfaction. An additional contrast between interpersonal and task satisfaction was not conducted as neither of the variables seem to have a significant relationship with well-being.

5

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for LGBTQ+ Subsample

Variable	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Interpersonal Satisfaction	7.36 (1.94)	-							
2. Task Satisfaction	7.29 (1.92)	.52***	-						
3. Pay Satisfaction	6.52 (1.99)	.31***	.40***	-					
4. Hour Satisfaction	7.24 (1.81)	.37***	.51***	.45***	-				
5. General Work Satisfaction	7.29 (1.66)	.58***	.82***	.43***	.51***	-			
6. General Well-being	3.04 (0.86)	.11*	.11*	.15**	.10*	.08	-		
7. MHI	4.42 (0.92)	.22***	.27***	.30***	.21***	.24***	.37***	-	
8. Sick days	1.75 (1,24)	-.05	-.05	-.11*	-.2	-.3	-.31***	-.34***	-
9. Work Hinderance	2.10 (1.21)	-.09	-.16***	-.17***	-.07	-.14**	-.47***	-.54***	.55***

*$p<.05$, **$p<.01$, ***$p<.001$

Table 2. Individual and Time Variance for variables of interest

Variables	*Individual Variance*	*Time Variance*
Interpersonal Satisfaction	1.24	1.16
Task Satisfaction	1.58	1.08
General Well-being	0.44	0.17
MHI	0.51	0.16
Sick days	0.32	0.74
Work Hinderance	0.62	0.55

Table 3. Multilevel Regression comparing LGBTQ+ participants with cis-hetero participants

Outcome Variables	Predictor	B	SE	95% CI	N (Obs / Persons)
Interpersonal Satisfaction	LGBTQ+ Identity	-0.28**	0.10	-0.48, -0.09	5967 (2466)
Task Satisfaction		-0.36***	0.10	-0.56, -0.16	6773 (2774)
General Well-being		-0.05	0.04	-0.13, 0.03	12588 (4705)
Mental Health Index (MHI)		-0.39***	0.04	-0.47, -0.31	12579 (4707)
Sick Days		0.32**	0.04	0.23, 0.41	12567 (4700)
Work Hindrance		0.34***	0.05	0.24, 0.44	12572 (4702)
Pay Satisfaction		-0.48***	0.12	-0.71, -0.25	6744 (2771)
Hours Satisfaction		-0.37	0.10	-0.57, -0.17	6761 (2772)
General Work Satisfaction		-0.33***	0.10	-0.52, -0.14	6543 (2693)

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

5

Table 4. Multilevel Regression – Predicting well-being based on interpersonal and task satisfaction for LGBTQ+ employees

Outcome Variable	Predictor	B	SE	95% CI	N (Obs / Persons)
General Well-being					396 (185)
	Interpersonal Satisfaction	0.04	0.02	-0.01, 0.08	
	Task Satisfaction	0.003	0.02	-0.04, 0.04	
Mental Health Index (MHI)					396 (185)
	Interpersonal Satisfaction	0.04	0.02	-0.01, 0.08	
	Task Satisfaction	0.01	0.02	-0.03, 0.05	
Sick Days					395 (184)
	Interpersonal Satisfaction	-0.02	0.04	-0.11, 0.06	
	Task Satisfaction	0.02	0.04	-0.06, 0.09	
Work Hindrance					396 (185)
	Interpersonal Satisfaction	-0.03	0.04	-0.10, 0.05	
	Task Satisfaction	-0.03	0.03	-0.10, 0.04	

*$p<.05$, **$p<.01$, ***$p<.001$

Table 5. Multilevel Regression – Examining whether interpersonal satisfaction predicts well-being more strongly for LGBTQ+ employees than cis-hetero employees

Outcome Variable	Predictor	B	SE	95% CI	N (Obs / Persons)
General Well-being					5472 (2343)
	Interpersonal Satisfaction	0.04^{***}	0.01	0.03, 0.05	
	LGBTQ+ Identity	-0.10	0.15	-0.41, 0.20	
	LGBTQ+ Identity*Interpersonal Satisfaction	0.004	0.02	-0.03, 0.04	
Mental Health Index (MHI)					5466 (2341)
	Interpersonal Satisfaction	0.05^{***}	0.01	0.04, 0.06	
	LGBTQ+ Identity	-0.25	0.16	-0.56, 0.05	
	LGBTQ+ Identity*Interpersonal Satisfaction	-0.01	0.02	-0.05, 0.03	
Sick Days					5461 (2339)
	Interpersonal Satisfaction	-0.03^{**}	0.01	-0.05, -0.01	
	LGBTQ+ Identity	0.20	0.22	-0.23, 0.64	
	LGBTQ+ Identity*Interpersonal Satisfaction	0.01	0.03	-0.04, 0.07	
Work Hindrance					5464 (2340)
	Interpersonal Satisfaction	-0.05^{***}	0.01	-0.07, -0.03	
	LGBTQ+ Identity	0.23	0.23	-0.22, 0.67	
	LGBTQ+ Identity*Interpersonal Satisfaction	0.01	0.03	-0.05, 0.06	

$^{*}p<.05, ^{**}p<.01, ^{***}p<.00$

5

Interpersonal Satisfaction and Well-being: Moderation by LGBTQ+ identity

We also tested whether the relationship between interpersonal satisfaction and well-being is stronger for LGBTQ+ individuals compared to cis-hetero individuals (Hypothesis 3). Table 5 presents the results of multilevel regressions testing whether the association between interpersonal satisfaction and well-being differs by sexual orientation and gender identity. Specifically, we examined interaction effects between LGBTQ+ status and interpersonal satisfaction across multiple well-being outcomes. Contrary to expectations, no significant interaction effects were observed. That is, the strength of the relationship between interpersonal satisfaction and well-being did not differ significantly between LGBTQ+ and cis-heterosexual individuals. While all interaction terms were in the hypothesized direction, the results do not provide statistical support for Hypothesis 3.

Intragroup Variation: Transgender Participants

We did not find any significant differences between transgender participants and LGB+ participants on well-being or workplace satisfaction perceptions in our sample.

Exploratory Analyses

In light of the non-significant findings for Hypotheses 2 and 3, we opted not to explore the role of additional factors such as age, tenure, or ethnicity in the relationship between workplace perceptions and well-being. However, we did conduct additional exploratory analyses to investigate whether other dimensions of workplace satisfaction, namely satisfaction with pay, working hours, and overall job satisfaction, differed between LGBTQ+ and cisgender-heterosexual individuals. These results are presented in Table 3. We find that, similar to the pattern observed for interpersonal and task satisfaction, the pay, hour and overall job satisfaction of LGBTQ+ individuals is significantly lower than that of cis-hetero individuals.

DISCUSSION

This study set out to examine how different aspects of workplace experiences, specifically interpersonal and task-related satisfaction, relate to the well-being of LGBTQ+ employees compared to their cisgender-heterosexual counterparts. Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as minority stress theory (Frost & Meyer, 2023; Velez et al., 2013) and community resilience (Crawford & Kashubeck-West, 2023; McConnell et al., 2018), we hypothesized that LGBTQ+ employees would report lower satisfaction and well-being, and that interpersonal workplace satisfaction would play a particularly salient role in shaping their well-being.

Summary of the Findings

Our findings partially support these expectations. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, LGBTQ+ individuals reported significantly lower levels of both interpersonal and task-related satisfaction, as well as worse mental health, greater work hinderance, and more absenteeism compared to cis-heterosexual employees. These results align with existing literature showing that LGBTQ+ employees face more challenges in workplace inclusion, often due to systemic marginalization and identity-related stressors (Maji et al., 2023; Meyer, 2003; Webster et al., 2018). However, contrary to our expectations, no significant differences emerged for global well-being, suggesting that the impact of workplace experiences may be more pronounced on domain-specific outcomes (e.g., mental health, work-related functioning) than on general life satisfaction. Further, we did not find support for Hypotheses 2 and 3. Specifically, interpersonal satisfaction did not emerge as a significantly stronger predictor of well-being for LGBTQ+ employees compared to task satisfaction, and the strength of this association did not differ significantly between LGBTQ+ and cis-heterosexual employees. While the direction of associations was consistent with our theoretical expectations, the lack of statistical significance limits the strength of our conclusions.

Implications, Limitations, and Recommendations

The observed group-level disparities in both workplace satisfaction and well-being reaffirm the critical impact of systemic, identity-related stressors faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in professional settings. Lower levels of satisfaction may reflect subtle experiences of exclusion, microaggressions, identity concealment, or a diminished sense of authenticity and belonging, factors that are well-documented in the minority stress literature (Frost & Meyer, 2023; Velez et al., 2013). Our findings align with broader research and European Union monitoring reports that document persistent disparities in LGBTQ+ wellbeing both in and outside the workplace,

5

even in progressive contexts like the Netherlands (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2024; Van den Dungen et al., 2023). These findings suggest that despite formal advances in legal protections and social acceptance, the workplace remains a site of vulnerability for LGBTQ+ employees. These findings underscore the potential risks of recent decisions by some organizations and policymakers to scale back commitments to diversity and inclusion initiatives (Bussewitz, 2024; Leung, 2025), reinforcing the continued need for research and advocacy in this area.

The absence of an interaction between interpersonal satisfaction and LGBTQ+ group membership on outcomes is surprising, particularly in light of the recent meta-analysis by Webster and colleagues (2018), who found that supportive workplace relationships were of unique importance for reducing LGBTQ+ employees' psychological strain, a variable closely linked to well-being. However, the absence of significant findings for Hypotheses 2 and 3 may also reflect methodological limitations. First, the smaller size of the LGBTQ+ subsample compared to the cisgender-heterosexual group may have limited statistical power to detect interaction effects or subtle group differences. Prior research has shown that unbalanced group sizes, especially in moderation analyses, can reduce sensitivity to detect cross-level or between-group effects (Aguinis et al., 2001; Costa et al., 2013; McClelland & Judd, 1993). Second, both interpersonal and task-related satisfaction were measured using single-item indicators due to constraints associated with using an existing dataset. While single-item measures can be practical and are sometimes validated for global assessments, they are limited in their ability to capture the complexity and multidimensionality of constructs such as job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2002; Van Saane et al., 2003; Williams & Smith, 2016). In particular, the measure of social satisfaction - "How satisfied are you with the general atmosphere among your colleagues?" - may be too broad or superficial to adequately reflect core experiences related to inclusion, psychological safety, or social connectedness (Jansen et al., 2014). As a result, while the constructs of interpersonal and task satisfaction remain theoretically relevant, they may not have been fully or accurately captured in this study, potentially limiting the precision and interpretability of the findings.

These insights point to several important avenues for future research. First, future studies should prioritize the development and use of more granular measures of workplace belonging, inclusion, and interpersonal connectedness, particularly as they relate to marginalized identities. Additionally, future research should leverage longitudinal designs to examine how workplace perceptions and well-being evolve

over time. While the present study used longitudinal data, limitations in statistical power led us to adopt a multilevel model that did not explicitly model time as a predictor. As a result, we were unable to assess how these relationships change or accumulate across different time points.

Also exploring intersectional differences remains an important area to further the understanding of how marginalized individuals navigate workplace perceptions and how it shapes their well-being. An intersectional lens is especially relevant in this context, as the impact of workplace satisfaction and minority stress may not be uniform across the broader LGBTQ+ population. For instance, LGBTQ+ people of color may face compounded forms of discrimination which can influence access to support systems, perceptions of inclusion, and vulnerability to workplace exclusion. In the context of community resilience, research has shown that LGBTQ+ individuals of color may face greater challenges in accessing the protective benefits of community support due to experiences of racism within LGBTQ+ spaces and heterosexism within racial or ethnic communities (Cyrus, 2017; Parmenter et al., 2021). This can weaken the buffering effect that social support might otherwise have on minority stress and well-being. As such, future research should move beyond broad group comparisons and instead examine how multiple, intersecting identities interact to shape workplace experiences and outcomes.

In sum, this study sheds light on the persistent disparities in workplace satisfaction and well-being between LGBTQ+ and cisgender-heterosexual employees, highlighting the need for more inclusive and responsive organizational practices. Future research should continue to refine our understanding of the conditions under which workplace satisfaction contributes to well-being, particularly for those navigating minoritized identities in professional settings.

REFERENCES

Aguinis, H., Boik, R. J., & Pierce, C. A. (2001). A generalized solution for approximating the power to detect effects of categorical moderator variables using multiple regression. *Organizational Research Methods, 4(4)*, 291–323. https://doi.org/10.1177/109442810144001

Badgett, L., Lau, H., Sears, B., & Ho, D. (2007). Bias in the workplace: Consistent evidence of sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination. *Chicago-Kent Law Review*, *84*.

Bartoll, X., & Ramos, R. (2020). Worked hours, job satisfaction and self-perceived health. *Journal of Economic Studies*, *48*(1), 223–241. https://doi.org/10.1108/JES-10-2019-0457

Beagan, B. L., Bizzeth, S. R., Pride, T. M., & Sibbald, K. R. (2022). LGBTQ+ identity concealment and disclosure within the (heteronormative) health professions: "Do I? Do I not? And what are the potential consequences?" *SSM - Qualitative Research in Health*, *2*, 100114. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmqr.2022.100114

Berwick, D. M., Murphy, J. M., Goldman, P. A., Ware, J. E., Barsky, A. J., & Weinstein, M. C. (1991). Performance of a five-item mental health screening test. *Medical Care*, *29*(2), 169–176. https://doi.org/10.1097/00005650-199102000-00008

Bizzeth, S. R., & Beagan, B. L. (2023). "Ah, it's best not to mention that here:" Experiences of LGBTQ+ health professionals in (heteronormative) workplaces in Canada. *Frontiers in Sociology*, *8*, 1138628. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2023.1138628

Bowling, N. A., Eschleman, K. J., & Wang, Q. (2010). A meta-analytic examination of the relationship between job satisfaction and subjective well-being. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *83*(4), 915–934. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317909X478557

Bussewitz, C. (2024, September 17). Major companies abandon an LGBTQ+ rights report card after facing anti-diversity backlash. *AP News*. https://apnews.com/article/corporate-equality-index-dei-backlash-lgbtq-8a7ba4bd25bedc7cf8583426d107eef3

Cancela, D., Stutterheim, S. E., & Uitdewilligen, S. (2024). The workplace experiences of transgender and gender diverse employees: A systematic literature review using the minority stress model. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *0*(0), 1–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2024.2304053

Cech, E. A. (2022). The intersectional privilege of white able-bodied heterosexual men in STEM. *Science Advances*, *8*(24), eabo1558. https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abo1558

Cech, E. A., & Rothwell, W. R. (2020). LGBT workplace inequality in the federal workforce: Intersectional processes, organizational contexts, and turnover considerations. *ILR Review*, *73*(1), 25–60. https://doi.org/10.1177/0019793919843508

Chordiya, R. (2022). Organizational inclusion and turnover intentions of federal employees with disabilities. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, *42*(1), 60–87. https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X20942305

Coffman, K. B., Coffman, L. C., & Ericson, K. M. M. (2017). The size of the LGBT population and the magnitude of antigay sentiment are substantially underestimated. *Management Science*, *63*(10), 3168–3186. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2016.2503

Collins, J. C., & Callahan, J. L. (2012). Risky business: Gay identity disclosure in a masculinized industry. *Human Resource Development International*, *15*(4), 455–470. https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2012.706427

Compton, C. A., & Dougherty, D. S. (2017). Organizing sexuality: Silencing and the push–pull process of co-sexuality in the workplace. *Journal of Communication*, *67*(6), 874–896. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12336

Corlett, S., Di Marco, D., Munduate, L., & Arenas, A. (2022). Manifestations and reinforcement of heteronormativity in the workplace: A systematic scoping review. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *0*(0), 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2022.2074334

Costa, P. L., Graça, A. M., Marques-Quinteiro, P., Santos, C. M., Caetano, A., & Passos, A. M. (2013). Multilevel research in the field of organizational behavior: An empirical look at 10 years of theory and research. *SAGE Open, 3(3)*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013498244

Crawford, D., & Kashubeck-West, S. (2023). Testing a mediational framework for sexual minority resilience. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, No Pagination Specified-No Pagination Specified. https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000635

Cumberbatch, S. (2021). When your identity is inherently "Unprofessional": Navigating rules of professional appearance rooted in cisheteronormative whiteness as black women and gender non-conforming professionals. *Journal of Civil Rights and Economic Development*, *34*(2). https://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/jcred/vol34/iss2/2

Currall, S. C., Towler, A. J., Judge, T. A., & Kohn, L. (2005). Pay satisfaction and organizational outcomes. *Personnel Psychology*, *58*(3), 613–640. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2005.00245.x

Cyrus, K. (2017). Multiple minorities as multiply marginalized: Applying the minority stress theory to LGBTQ people of color. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health, 21(3),* 194–202. https://doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2017.1320739

Einarsdóttir, A., Hoel, H., & Lewis, D. (2015). 'It's nothing personal': Anti-homosexuality in the British workplace. *Sociology*, *49*(6), 1183–1199. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038515582160

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (Ed.). (2024). *LGBTQI equality at a crossroads: Progress and challenges: EU LGBTQI survey III*. Publications Office. https://doi.org/10.2811/569753

Faragher, E. B., Cass, M., & Cooper, C. L. (2005). The relationship between job satisfaction and health: A meta-analysis. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, *62*(2), 105–112. https://doi.org/10.1136/oem.2002.006734

Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A.-G., & Buchner, A. (2007). G*Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods*, *39*(2), 175–191. https://doi.org/10.3758/bf03193146

Follmer, K. B., Sabat, I. E., & Siuta, R. L. (2020). Disclosure of stigmatized identities at work: An interdisciplinary review and agenda for future research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *41*(2), 169–184. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2402

Frost, D. M., & Meyer, I. H. (2023). Minority stress theory: Application, critique, and continued relevance. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *51*, 101579. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2023.101579

Griffith, K. H., & Hebl, M. R. (2002). The disclosure dilemma for gay men and lesbians: "Coming out" at work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *87*(6), 1191–1199. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.6.1191

5

Holt-Lunstad, J., Smith, T. B., Baker, M., Harris, T., & Stephenson, D. (2015). Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for mortality: A meta-analytic review. *Perspectives on Psychological Science: A Journal of the Association for Psychological Science*, *10*(2), 227–237. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691614568352

Holt-Lunstad, J., Smith, T. B., & Layton, J. B. (2010). Social relationships and mortality risk: A meta-analytic review. *PLoS Medicine*, *7*(7), e1000316. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316

Jansen, W. S., Otten, S., Van der Zee, K. I., & Jans, L. (2014). Inclusion: Conceptualization and measurement. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *44*(4), 370–385. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2011

Jawahar, I. M., & Stone, T. H. (2011). Fairness perceptions and satisfaction with components of pay satisfaction. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *26*(4), 297–312. https://doi.org/10.1108/02683941111124836

Jetten, J., Haslam, C., & Haslam, S. A. (Eds.). (2012). *The social cure: Identity, health and well-being* (pp. xvii, 390). Psychology Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203813195

Jiang, Z., Di Milia, L., Jiang, Y., & Jiang, X. (2020). Thriving at work: A mentoring-moderated process linking task identity and autonomy to job satisfaction. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *118*, 103373. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2019.103373

Judge, T. A., & Klinger, R. (2008). Job satisfaction: Subjective well-being at work. In *The science of subjective well-being* (pp. 393–413). The Guilford Press.

Judge, T. A., Parker, S. K., Colbert, A. E., Heller, D., & Ilies, R. (2002). Job satisfaction: A cross-cultural review. In *Handbook of industrial, work and organizational psychology, Volume 2: Organizational psychology* (pp. 25–52). Sage Publications, Inc.

Lam, L., & Lau, D. (2012). Feeling lonely at work: Investigating the consequences of unsatisfactory workplace relationships. *International Journal of Human Resource Management - INT J HUM RESOUR MANAG*, *23*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2012.665070

Lee, B. Y., Wang, J., & Weststar, J. (2015). Work hour congruence: The effect on job satisfaction and absenteeism. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09585192.2014.922601

Leung, R. (2025, April 27). Corporate sponsors are backing away from LGBTQ+ Pride organizations. *CNBC*. https://www.cnbc.com/2025/04/27/companies-lgbtq-pride-festivals.html

LISS panel. (n.d.). LISS Panel. Retrieved January 23, 2025, from https://www.lissdata.nl/

Locke, E. A. (1969). What is job satisfaction? *Organizational Behavior & Human Performance*, *4*(4), 309–336. https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(69)90013-0

Maji, S., Yadav, N., & Gupta, P. (2023). LGBTQ+ in workplace: A systematic review and reconsideration. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, *43*(2), 313–360. https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-02-2022-0049

Mara, L.-C., Ginieis, M., & Brunet-Icart, I. (2021). Strategies for coping with LGBT discrimination at work: A systematic literature review. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, *18*(2), 339–354. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-020-00462-w

McClelland, G. H., & Judd, C. M. (1993). Statistical difficulties of detecting interactions and moderator effects. *Psychological Bulletin, 114(2)*, 376–390. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.114.2.376

McConnell, E. A., Janulis, P., Phillips II, G., Truong, R., & Birkett, M. (2018). Multiple minority stress and LGBT community resilience among sexual minority men. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, *5*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000265

McFadden, C., & Crowley-Henry, M. (2016). A systematic literature review on Trans* careers and workplace experiences. In T. Köllen (Ed.), *Sexual Orientation and Transgender Issues in Organizations* (pp. 63–81). Springer.

Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, *129*(5), 674–697. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674

Mizzi, R. C. (2013). "There aren't any gays here": Encountering heteroprofessionalism in an international development workplace. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *60*(11), 1602–1624. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.824341

Mizzi, R. C. (2016). Heteroprofessionalism. In N. M. Rodriguez, W. J. Martino, J. C. Ingrey, & E. Brockenbrough (Eds.), *Critical Concepts in Queer Studies and Education: An International Guide for the Twenty-First Century* (pp. 137–147). Palgrave Macmillan US. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55425-3_15

Morgenroth, T., Kirby, T. A., & Van der Toorn, J. (2024). Heteroprofessionalism: The power of the gender/sex binary in the workplace. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *60*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2024.101908

Morgenroth, T., & Ryan, M. K. (2018). Gender trouble in social psychology: How can Butler's work inform experimental social psychologists' conceptualization of gender? *Frontiers in Psychology*, *9*. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01320

Parmenter, J. G., Galliher, R. V., Wong, E., & Perez, D. (2021). An intersectional approach to understanding LGBTQ+ people of color's access to LGBTQ+ community resilience. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 68(6),* 629–641. https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000578

Pachankis, J. E., Mahon, C. P., Jackson, S. D., Fetzner, B. K., & Bränström, R. (2020). Sexual orientation concealment and mental health: A conceptual and meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, *146*(10), 831–871. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000271

Randel, A. E. (2023). Inclusion in the workplace: A review and research agenda. *Group & Organization Management*, 10596011231175578. https://doi.org/10.1177/10596011231175578

Ruiz-Palomino, P., Sáez-Martínez, F. J., & Martínez-Cañas, R. (2013). Understanding pay satisfaction: effects of supervisor ethical leadership on job motivating potential influence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *118*(1), 31–43. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1549-2

Sasser, M., & Sørensen, O. H. (2016). Doing a good job—The effect of primary task quality on well-being and job satisfaction. *Human Factors and Ergonomics in Manufacturing & Service Industries*, *26*(3), 323–336. https://doi.org/10.1002/hfm.20648

Scherpenzeel, A. C., & Das, M. (2011). "True" longitudinal and probability-based Internet panels: Evidence from the Netherlands. In *Social and behavioral research and the Internet: Advances in applied methods and research strategies* (pp. 77–104). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Schilt, K., & Westbrook, L. (2009). Doing gender, doing heteronormativity: "Gender Normals," transgender people, and the social maintenance of heterosexuality. *Gender & Society*, *23*(4), 440–464. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243209340034

5

Schönauer, J., & Greven, A. (2024). "Beyond the Closet" – How identity shapes disclosure and authenticity among LGBTQ+ employees. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, *2024*(1), 12301. https://doi.org/10.5465/AMPROC.2024.51bp

Schönauer, J., Greven, A., & Brettel, M. (2025). 'Help me be myself'—How identity-specific support promotes LGBTQ+ employees' authenticity via basic need satisfaction. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *36*(2), 304–350. https://doi.org/1 0.1080/09585192.2024.2444333

Sears, B., & Mallory, C. (2014). *Employment discrimination against LGBT people: Existence and impact*. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9qs0n354

Shepherd, B. F., & Brochu, P. M. (2024). Let's get real: Identity concealment, burnout, and therapeutic relationship quality among psychology trainees with concealable stigmatized identities. *Psychotherapy (Chicago, Ill.)*, *61*(2), 125–136. https://doi.org/10.1037/pst0000522

Suppes, A., Napier, J. L., & Van der Toorn, J. (2019). The palliative effects of system justification on the health and happiness of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, *45*(3), 372–388. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167218785156

Suppes, A., Van der Toorn, J., & Begeny, C. T. (2021). Unhealthy closets, discriminatory dwellings: The mental health benefits and costs of being open about one's sexual minority status. *Social Science & Medicine*, *285*, 114286. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114286

Van den Dungen, R., Galesloot, N., & Schols, H. (2023). *Het Charter Diversiteit Monitor 2022* (21153). Sociaal-Economische Raad (SER). https://www.ser.nl/nl/Publicaties/monitor-charter-diversiteit-2022

Van der Toorn, J., Pliskin, R., & Morgenroth, T. (2020). Not quite over the rainbow: The unrelenting and insidious nature of heteronormative ideology. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, *34*, 160–165. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2020.03.001

Van Saane, N., Sluiter, J. K., Verbeek, J. H. a. M., & Frings-Dresen, M. H. W. (2003). Reliability and validity of instruments measuring job satisfaction—A systematic review. *Occupational Medicine (Oxford, England)*, *53*(3), 191–200. https://doi.org/10.1093/occmed/kqg038

Velez, B. L., Moradi, B., & Brewster, M. E. (2013). Testing the tenets of minority stress theory in workplace contexts. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *60*(4), 532–542. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033346

Webster, J. R., Adams, G. A., Maranto, C. L., Sawyer, K., & Thoroughgood, C. (2018). Workplace contextual supports for LGBT employees: A review, meta-analysis, and agenda for future research. *Human Resource Management*, *57*(1), 193–210. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21873

Williams, G., & Smith, A. P. (2016). Using single-item measures to examine the relationships between work, personality, and well-being in the workplace. *Psychology*, *7*, 753–767. https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2016.76078

NEDERLANDSE WETENSCHAPPELIJKE SAMENVATTING
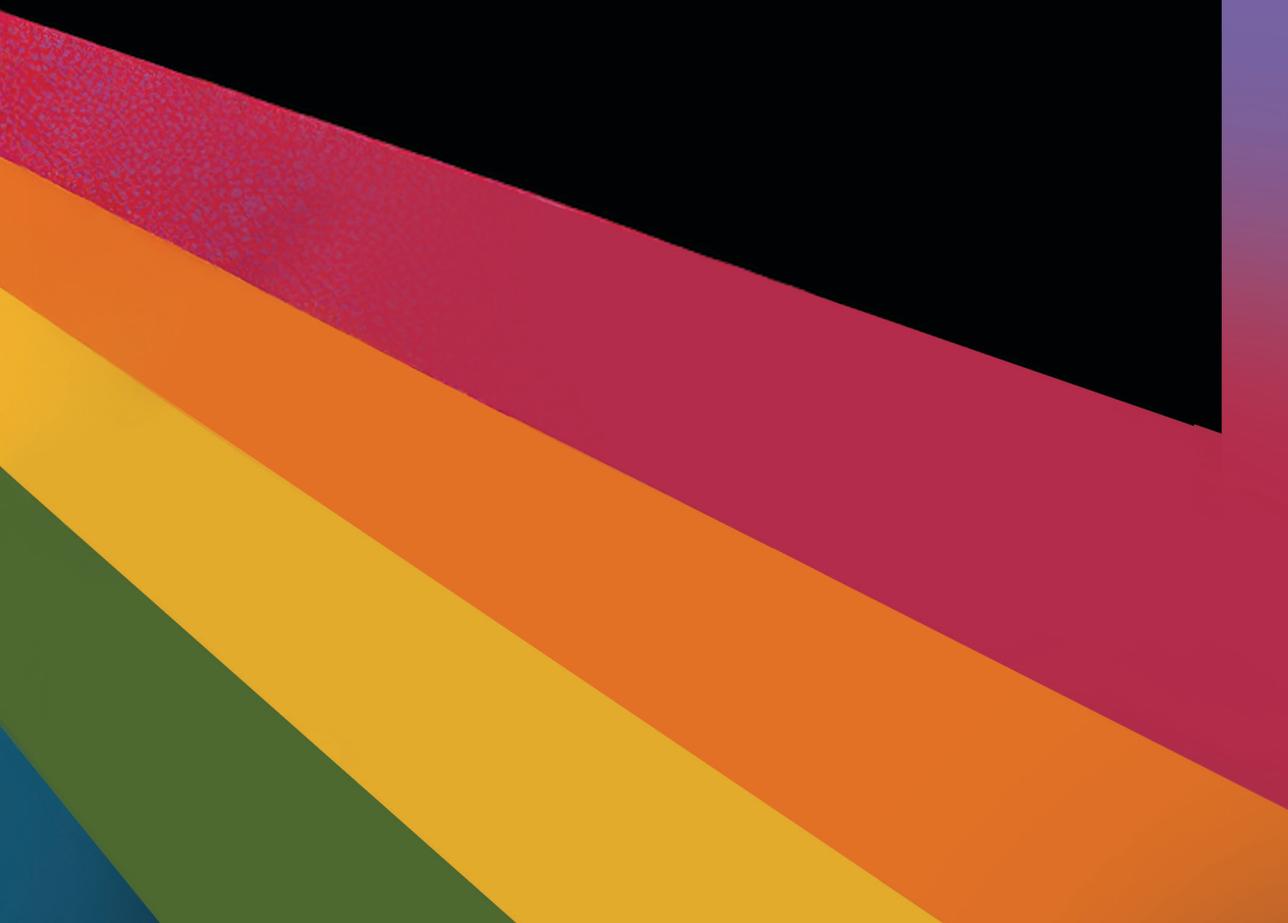
NEDERLANDSE WETENSCHAPPELIJKE SAMENVATTING

Dit proefschrift onderzoekt hoe diversiteits-, gelijkheids- en inclusiebeleid (DEI) en de werkomgevingen van organisaties de ervaringen en reacties van LHBTI+-werknemers beïnvloeden. Hoewel het onderzoek naar diversiteit op de werkvloer de afgelopen decennia aanzienlijk is uitgebreid, heeft het zich voornamelijk gericht op meer zichtbare identiteitscategorieën; met name geslacht en etniciteit (Apfelbaum et al., 2016; Gündemir et al., 2019; Leslie & Flynn, 2022; Martin, 2023; Rattan & Ambady, 2013). Binnen het onderzoek naar LHBTI+ mensen op de werkvloer lag de wetenschappelijke aandacht vooral op de dynamiek van de keuze om wel of niet uit de kast te komen, met nadruk op seksuele geaardheid en minder aandacht voor genderidentiteit. Daarbij wordt de heterogeniteit binnen de gemeenschap en de specifieke uitdagingen waarmee subgroepen – zoals transgender en non-binaire personen – worden geconfronteerd, vaak over het hoofd gezien (Anteby & Anderson, 2014; Kirby et al., 2023; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2016; Ozturk & Tatli, 2016; Pepper & Lorah, 2008; Thuillier et al., 2021; Van der Toorn & Gaitho, 2021).

Er is met name relatief weinig onderzoek gedaan naar hoe queer werknemers de diversiteitsstrategieën van organisaties waarnemen en hierop reageren, welke signalen zij interpreteren als indicatoren van inclusie en veiligheid, en hoe organisaties LHBTI+-inclusie in de praktijk conceptualiseren en implementeren. Het vertrouwen op onderzoeksontwerpen met slechts één methode beperkt ons begrip van de genuanceerde en intersectionele dynamiek van queer-inclusie. Deze blinde vlekken wijzen op belangrijke lacunes in ons begrip van hoe DEI-beleid wordt vertaald naar de dagelijkse praktijk op de werkvloer.

Dit proefschrift draagt bij aan het vullen van deze leemtes door de vertaalprocessen rond LHBTI+-gerichte DEI-initiatieven systematisch te onderzoeken. Omdat DEI- inspanningen meerdere belanghebbenden omvatten – variërend van HR-professionals en leidinggevenden tot werknemers zelf – is het essentieel te begrijpen hoe beleid wordt geïnterpreteerd, uitgevoerd en ervaren om de effectiviteit ervan te kunnen beoordelen. Om deze dynamiek in kaart te brengen, heb ik gebruik gemaakt van een multimethodisch onderzoeksontwerp waarin diepte-interviews, vignette-experimenten, cross-sectionele enquêtes en longitudinale panelgegevens worden gecombineerd. Deze aanpak integreert zowel het perspectief van de organisatie als dat van de werknemers en biedt zo een vollediger beeld van hoe inclusie formeel wordt gestructureerd en subjectief wordt ervaren.

Het proefschrift begint met een onderzoek naar hoe verschillende benaderingen van diversiteitsmanagement de percepties en ervaringen van LHBTI+-personen beïnvloeden. Organisaties verschillen in de mate waarin zij groepsverschillen benadrukken (identiteitsbewuste benaderingen) of juist bagatelliseren (identiteitsblinde benaderingen). Hoofdstuk 2 is gebaseerd op drie vooraf geregistreerde studies (N = 1.318) – twee vignette- experimenten en een enquête – waarin wordt onderzocht of LHBTI+-personen de voorkeur geven aan identiteitsbewuste organisaties als potentiële werkgevers. De bevindingen laten zien dat identiteitsbewust beleid fungeert als signaal van veiligheid en acceptatie: het verhoogt de aantrekkelijkheid van de organisatie voor potentiële werknemers en vermindert het verloop onder huidige werknemers. Dit hoofdstuk draagt bij aan de literatuur over diversiteitsmanagement door het diversiteitsbenaderingsparadigma (Gündemir et al., 2019; Leslie et al., 2020; Rattan & Ambady, 2013) te verbinden met de signaaltheorie (Bird & Smith, 2005; Connelly et al., 2011) en benadrukt hoe individuen met relatief verborgen of moeilijk zichtbare identiteiten, zoals seksuele geaardheid en genderidentiteit, reageren op diversiteitssignalen binnen organisaties. Het toont aan dat expliciete diversiteitsboodschappen een cruciale aanwijzing vormen voor inclusiviteit op de werkvloer wanneer zichtbare indicatoren (zoals zichtbare representatie) ontbreken. Daarnaast verfijnt de studie het concept van identiteitsveiligheid, een veelgebruikt maar onderbelicht construct. Ondanks de brede toepassing variëren de definities en meetinstrumenten sterk, van organisatorische aantrekkelijkheid tot vertrouwen en verbondenheid (Howansky et al., 2021; Kruk & Matsick, 2021; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Sanchez, 2021). Dit onderzoek verduidelijkt het concept door de drie meest genoemde dimensies – authenticiteit, verbondenheid en eerlijkheid – te identificeren en te koppelen aan organisatorische uitkomsten zoals het aantrekken en behouden van talent. Door de signaaltheorie te integreren met het diversiteitsparadigma wordt zichtbaar hoe organisatorische boodschappen waarde- en veiligheidssignalen overbrengen aan zowel huidige als toekomstige werknemers.

Hoofdstuk 3 bouwt voort op deze inzichten en richt zich op het concept van tolerantie. Hoewel tolerantie vaak wordt geprezen als een deugd (Allport, 1954; Forst, 2018; Hjerm et al., 2020), definiëren wij het – in lijn met zowel academische als alledaagse opvattingen (The Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.; Cohen, 2004; Gibson, 2006; Verkuyten et al., 2023) – als een vorm van verdraagzaamheid of voorwaardelijke acceptatie. We onderzoeken tolerantie als een 'tussenliggende' toestand die de ruimte inneemt tussen uitsluiting en inclusie, en betogen dat deze vorm van voorwaardelijke acceptatie op de werkvloer schadelijk kan zijn. Op basis van gegevens uit de laatste twee studies van het vorige hoofdstuk (n = 462 en n = 445) concludeert dit

hoofdstuk dat identiteitsblinde benaderingen – waarbij identiteit niet expliciet wordt erkend maar ook niet ronduit wordt afgewezen – een werkklimaat scheppen waarin LHBTI+-werknemers zich eerder getolereerd dan oprecht geaccepteerd voelen.

Leiderschap speelt eveneens een cruciale rol: de diversiteitsboodschap van managers beïnvloedt onafhankelijk de perceptie van tolerantie en werkt samen met de aanpak van de organisatie. Dit onderstreept het belang van afstemming: wanneer managers en organisatiebeleid dezelfde identiteitsbewuste signalen afgeven, versterken zij elkaar en ontstaat een coherente en geloofwaardige boodschap van inclusie. Dit onderzoek draagt bij aan de literatuur over diversiteit op de werkvloer door het diversiteitsparadigma te verbinden met tolerantieonderzoek, waardoor een genuanceerder beeld ontstaat van hoe LHBTI+- werknemers de strategieën van hun organisatie ervaren. Daarnaast benadrukt het de sleutelrol van leiders in het vormgeven van inclusie en laat het zien dat identiteitsblinde benaderingen kunnen leiden tot een gevoel van louter tolerantie in plaats van acceptatie – een perceptie die de uitwisseling van ideeën, uitgesprokenheid en betrokkenheid vermindert, en daarmee samenwerking en innovatie binnen teams ondermijnt (Adelman et al., 2023).

Hoofdstukken 2 en 3 dragen bij aan een intersectioneel begrip van LHBTI+- ervaringen op de werkvloer en vullen daarmee een lacune die in de literatuur herhaaldelijk wordt gesignaleerd (Brewster et al., 2014; Cancela et al., 2024; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2016; Pepper & Lorah, 2008; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Settles & Buchanan, 2014). In alle drie de studies van hoofdstuk 2 rapporteerden transgenderdeelnemers consequent een lagere aantrekkelijkheid van de organisatie, een zwakkere perceptie van identiteitsveiligheid en een hogere vertrekintentie, ongeacht de diversiteitsaanpak. Hoofdstuk 3 vult dit beeld aan door te laten zien dat transgenderdeelnemers en LHBTI+-werknemers van kleur een hogere mate van waargenomen tolerantie rapporteerden dan hun cisgender en witte collega's. Gezamenlijk onderstrepen deze bevindingen de hardnekkige barrières waarmee personen met overlappende gemarginaliseerde identiteiten worden geconfronteerd en benadrukken zij de noodzaak van intersectionele benaderingen van DEI. Daarnaast laten hoofdstukken 2 en 3 zien dat bewuste en identiteitsbewuste diversiteitsboodschappen cruciaal zijn in de organisatiecommunicatie. Voor LHBTI+-personen, die vaak geen zichtbare aanwijzingen hebben om hun werkplek te beoordelen op identiteitsveiligheid, fungeren expliciete boodschappen als essentiële signalen dat hun identiteit wordt erkend, gerespecteerd en beschermd.

Hoofdstuk 4 verschuift de focus van beleidsintentie naar beleidsuitvoering en onderzoekt hoe DEI-strategieën in de praktijk vorm krijgen. Beleid wordt zelden precies zoals bedoeld uitgevoerd, en de impact hangt vaak af van de interpretatie en toepassing door verschillende belanghebbenden. Vanuit het "intended-implemented-experienced" raamwerk uit de HRM-literatuur (Khilji & Wang, 2006; Makhecha et al., 2018; Wright & Nishii, 2004) analyseert dit hoofdstuk, aan de hand van een kwalitatieve casestudy van twee Nederlandse financiële organisaties, hoe diversiteitsmanagement zich ontwikkelt van visie naar implementatie en praktijkervaring. Het onderzoek richt zich op twee groepen belanghebbenden: LHBTI+-werknemers en HR-/DEI professionals. Het verkent (a) waar ontwerpers en ontvangers van beleid overeenkomen of verschillen, (b) hoe hun perspectieven elkaar beïnvloeden in de verschillende fasen van het beleidsproces, en (c) welke factoren effectieve implementatie bevorderen of juist belemmeren.

Op basis van diepte-interviews met zes LHBTI+-werknemers en twee HR-/DEI-professionals per organisatie (totaal N = 16) laten de bevindingen zien dat DEI management geen lineair of top-down proces is, maar een dynamisch en relationeel proces, gevormd door interpretatie, vertaling en betrokkenheid op meerdere niveaus. Hoewel beide organisaties inclusieve visies formuleerden, stokte de uitvoering vaak door een sterke afhankelijkheid van individuele 'voorvechters,' beperkte structurele verankering en inconsistente managementondersteuning. Dit creëerde een kloof tussen intentie en praktijk en benadrukte de kwetsbaarheid van beleidsambities wanneer deze niet systematisch werden ingebed. Het hoofdstuk breidt het *intended–implemented–experienced*-model uit naar de context van LHBTI+-diversiteitsbeleid en biedt een holistisch, door belanghebbenden geïnformeerd beeld van hoe DEI-strategieën in de praktijk worden gerealiseerd. Door de perspectieven van zowel HR-/DEI-professionals als LHBTI+-werknemers te integreren, overbrugt het een lacune in de literatuur die uitvoerders en ontvangers doorgaans afzonderlijk bestudeert. Het hoofdstuk laat zien hoe HR-/DEI-professionals strategieën conceptualiseren en uitvoeren, beïnvloed door uiteenlopende actoren en omstandigheden, en onthult tegelijkertijd spanningen tussen intenties en gedrag, vaak omschreven als de *attitude–behavior gap* (Jansen et al., 2024). Tegelijkertijd worden LHBTI+-werknemers niet langer voorgesteld als passieve ontvangers, maar als actieve deelnemers wier interpretaties, reacties en betrokkenheid doorslaggevend zijn voor het succes van DEI-inspanningen. Het hoofdstuk maakt duidelijk dat DEI alleen werkt wanneer beleid niet bij woorden blijft, maar wordt vertaald naar consistente acties, afstemming en er constante aandacht en vernieuwing is van dit beleid. Zo ontstaat een genuanceerd beeld van diversiteitsmanagement dat gedragen wordt door de betrokkenen. Ten slotte richt hoofdstuk 5 zich niet op beleid, maar op de manier

waarop LHBTI+-werknemers hun werk ervaren en de gevolgen daarvan voor hun gezondheid en welzijn. Het onderzoekt hoe sociale en interpersoonlijke aspecten van de werkvloer het welzijn van werknemers beïnvloeden. LHBTI+-personen worden geconfronteerd met unieke identiteitsgerelateerde stressfactoren – vaak aangeduid als minderheidsstress – die het risico op verminderd welzijn vergroten (Frost & Meyer, 2023; McConnell et al., 2018; Meyer, 2003; Velez et al., 2013). Deze stressfactoren zijn sociaal van aard, voortkomend uit stigma, discriminatie en uitsluiting, en kunnen ervaringen van inclusie, authenticiteit, verbondenheid en werktevredenheid ondermijnen. Hoewel onderzoek naar groepsweerbaarheid suggereert dat ondersteunende netwerken minderheidsstress kunnen verzachten (McConnell et al., 2018; Parmenter & Galliher, 2023), is er weinig bekend over de rol van werkrelaties als beschermend mechanisme. Dit hoofdstuk onderzoekt hoe goede relaties op het werk stress kunnen verminderen, verbondenheid kunnen vergroten en welzijn kunnen verbeteren. Daarbij laat het zien dat sociale tevredenheid, naast werkresultaten, een belangrijke rol speelt in de ervaringen van LHBTI+-werknemers.

Aan de hand van longitudinale bevolkingsgegevens uit Nederland (N = 4.794) wordt onderzocht of sociale tevredenheid op de werkvloer minderheidsstress kan mitigeren. De resultaten laten zien dat LHBTI+-werknemers consequent lagere werktevredenheid, hoger ziekteverzuim, meer belemmeringen op het werk en slechtere geestelijke gezondheid rapporteren dan hun cisgender heteroseksuele collega's. In tegenstelling tot onze verwachtingen is er geen bewijs dat sociale tevredenheid een sterkere voorspeller is voor het welzijn van LHBTI+-personen. Evenzo bleken er geen significante verschillen tussen LHBTI+- en cisgender heteroseksuele deelnemers in het relatieve belang van taak- versus sociale tevredenheid.

Ondanks deze nulbevindingen onderstreept het hoofdstuk de aanhoudende ongelijkheden in welzijnsresultaten voor LHBTI+-werknemers en roept het op tot meer aandacht voor structurele en culturele mechanismen die minderheidsstress in stand houden. In de praktijk benadrukt het hoofdstuk het belang van niet alleen het aantrekken en behouden van LHBTI+-werknemers, maar ook van het cultiveren van sociale omgevingen die hun welzijn actief ondersteunen. Inspanningen om inclusie te bevorderen moeten verder gaan dan oppervlakkige collegialiteit en ingaan op de diepere dynamiek van verbondenheid, authenticiteit en eerlijkheid die bepalend is voor de stresservaringen van minderheden.

Al met al draagt dit proefschrift op verschillende manieren bij aan de wetenschappelijke kennis op het gebied van diversiteitsmanagement. Het breidt het paradigma van diversiteitsbenaderingen, signaaltheorie en identiteitsveiligheid uit naar de vaak over het hoofd geziene context van relatief verborgen identiteiten en integreert deze kaders met tolerantie. Het HRM-kader *intended–implemented–experienced* wordt uitgebreid door het te combineren met LHBTI+-diversiteitsonderzoek, waardoor een door belanghebbenden geïnformeerd perspectief op DEI ontstaat. Bovendien overbrugt het de kloof tussen beleidsontwikkelaars en ontvangers en benadrukt het dat LHBTI+-werknemers actieve deelnemers zijn in het vormgeven van DEI-resultaten.

Tegelijkertijd wijst het onderzoek op belangrijke beperkingen en veelbelovende richtingen voor toekomstig werk. Om de complexiteit van inclusie echt te begrijpen, is er meer aandacht nodig voor de ervaringen van meervoudig gemarginaliseerde LHBTI+- personen, met name op het snijvlak van etniciteit, gender en seksualiteit, om de gelaagde realiteit van inclusie. Longitudinale studies zijn essentieel om te onderzoeken hoe de perceptie van DEI-inspanningen en hun effecten op welzijn, retentie en identiteit in de loop van de tijd evolueren. Verder kan het integreren van de perspectieven van senior leiders naast die van werknemers en HR-/DEI-professionals het inzicht verdiepen in hoe inclusieve visies worden geconstrueerd, ondersteund en in stand gehouden op het hoogste organisatieniveau. Door deze hiaten aan te pakken, kan toekomstig onderzoek voortbouwen op de bijdragen van dit proefschrift om de dynamiek van duurzame LHBTI+-inclusie vollediger belichten.

Tot slot biedt dit onderzoek veelzijdige inzichten in de inclusie van LHBTI+ personen op de werkvloer, doordat beleidsintenties worden gekoppeld aan praktijkervaringen en organisatorische praktijken aan individuele resultaten. Aangezien de werkvloer en de bijbehorende uitdagingen voortdurend in beweging zijn, is het cruciaal dat DEI-initiatieven niet alleen zorgvuldig ontworpen zijn, maar ook continu worden herijkt om te waarborgen dat zij blijvend aansluiten bij de behoeften, ervaringen en realiteit van de werknemers die zij beogen te ondersteunen.

REFERENCES

Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice* (pp. xviii, 537). Addison-Wesley.

Anteby, M., & Anderson, C. (2014). The shifting landscape of LGBT organizational research. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 34, 3–25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2014.08.001

Apfelbaum, E. P., Stephens, N. M., & Reagans, R. E. (2016). Beyond one-size-fits-all: Tailoring diversity approaches to the representation of social groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 111*(4), 547–566. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000071

Bird, R. B., & Smith, E. A. (2005). Signaling theory, strategic interaction, and symbolic capital. *Current Anthropology, 46*(2), 221–248. https://doi.org/10.1086/427115

Brewster, M. E., Velez, B. L., Mennicke, A., & Tebbe, E. (2014). Voices from beyond: A thematic content analysis of transgender employees' workplace experiences. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 1*(2), 159–169. https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000030

Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.). Tolerance. *In Cambridge dictionary*. Retrieved May 20, 2025, from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/tolerance

Cancela, D., Stutterheim, S. E., & Uitdewilligen, S. (2024). The workplace experiences of transgender and gender diverse employees: A systematic literature review using the minority stress model. *Journal of Homosexuality, 0*(0), 1–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/0091 8369.2024.2304053

Cohen, A. J. (2004). What toleration is. *Ethics, 115*(1), 68–95. https://doi.org/10.1086/421982

Connelly, B. L., Certo, S. T., Ireland, R. D., & Reutzel, C. R. (2011). Signaling theory: A review and assessment. *Journal of Management, 37*(1), 39–67. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310388419

Forst, R. (2018). *Toleration, justice and reason*. https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526137708.00010

Frost, D. M., & Meyer, I. H. (2023). Minority stress theory: Application, critique, and continued relevance. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 51*, 101579. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2023.101579

Gibson, J. L. (2006). Enigmas of intolerance: Fifty years after Stouffer's communism, conformity, and civil liberties. *Perspectives on Politics, 4*(1), 21–34.

Gündemir, S., Martin, A. E., & Homan, A. C. (2019). Understanding diversity ideologies from the target's perspective: A review and future directions. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00282

Hjerm, M., Eger, M. A., Bohman, A., & Fors Connolly, F. (2020). A new approach to the study of tolerance: Conceptualizing and measuring acceptance, respect, and appreciation of difference. *Social Indicators Research, 147*(3), 897–919. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-019-02176-y

Howansky, K., Maimon, M., & Sanchez, D. (2021). Identity safety cues predict instructor impressions, belonging, and absences in the psychology classroom. *Teaching of Psychology, 49*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628321990362

Jansen, W. S., van der Toorn, J., Bokern, Y. N. A., & Ellemers, N. (2024). Shades of support: An empirical assessment of D&I policy support in organizations. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 54*(4), 221–229. https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.13025

Khilji, S. E., & and Wang, X. (2006). 'Intended' and 'implemented' HRM: The missing linchpin in strategic human resource management research. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 17*(7), 1171–1189. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190600756384

Kirby, T. A., Barreto, M., Korine, R., Hendy, J., Osman, L., Stadie, S., & Tan, D. (2023). To conceal or reveal: Identity-conscious diversity ideologies facilitate sexual minority identity disclosure. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 54*(1), 199–218. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2996

Kruk, M., & Matsick, J. L. (2021). A taxonomy of identity safety cues based on gender and race: From a promising past to an intersectional and translational future. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science, 7*(4), 487–510. https://doi.org/10.1037/tps0000304

Leslie, L. M., Bono, J. E., Kim, Y. (Sophia), & Beaver, G. R. (2020). On melting pots and salad bowls: A meta-analysis of the effects of identity-blind and identity-conscious diversity ideologies. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 105*(5), 453–471. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000446

Leslie, L. M., & Flynn, E. (2022). Diversity ideologies, beliefs, and climates: A review, integration, and set of recommendations. *Journal of Management, 50*(3), 849–876. https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063221086238

Makhecha, U. P., Srinivasan, V., Prabhu, G. N., & Mukherji, S. (2018). Multi-level gaps: A study of intended, actual and experienced human resource practices in a hypermarket chain in India. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 29*(2), 360–398. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1126336

Martin, A. E. (2023). The divergent effects of diversity ideologies for race and gender relations. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 175*, 104226. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2023.104226

McConnell, E. A., Janulis, P., Phillips II, G., Truong, R., & Birkett, M. (2018). Multiple minority stress and LGBT community resilience among sexual minority men. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 5*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000265

McFadden, C., & Crowley-Henry, M. (2016). A systematic literature review on Trans* careers and workplace experiences. In T. Köllen (Ed.), *Sexual Orientation and Transgender Issues in Organizations* (pp. 63–81). Springer.

Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin, 129*(5), 674–697. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674

Ozturk, M. B., & Tatli, A. (2016). Gender identity inclusion in the workplace: Broadening diversity management research and practice through the case of transgender employees in the UK. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 27*(8), 781–802. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1042902

Parmenter, J. G., & Galliher, R. V. (2023). Experiences of community resilience and inequity among LGBTQ+ people: A person-centered analysis. *The Counseling Psychologist, 51*(1), 84–112. https://doi.org/10.1177/00110000221124274

Pepper, S. M., & Lorah, P. (2008). Career issues and workplace considerations for the transsexual community: Bridging a gap of knowledge for career counselors and mental heath care providers. *The Career Development Quarterly, 56*(4), 330–343. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2008.tb00098.x

Purdie-Vaughns, V., & Eibach, R. P. (2008). Intersectional invisibility: The distinctive advantages and disadvantages of multiple subordinate-group identities. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research, 59*(5–6), 377–391. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9424-4

Rattan, A., & Ambady, N. (2013). Diversity ideologies and intergroup relations: An examination of colorblindness and multiculturalism. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 43*(1), 12–21. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.1892

Sanchez, K. H., Melanie Maimon, Diana. (2021). Identity safety cues predict instructor impressions, belonging, and absences in the psychology classroom. *Teaching of Psychology.* http://journals-sagepub-com/doi/full/10.1177/0098628321990362

Settles, I. H., & Buchanan, N. T. (2014). Multiple groups, multiple identities, and intersectionality. *The Oxford Handbook of Multicultural Identity, 1*, 160–180.

Thuillier, J., Almudever, B., & Croity-Belz, S. (2021). Perceived workplace discrimination and disclosure at work among lesbian and gay employees: The role of prior coming out experiences in different life domains. *Journal of Homosexuality, 0*(0), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2021.1933784

van der Toorn, J., & Gaitho, W. (2021). LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion: A global issue requiring a transdisciplinary and intersectional approach. *Tijdschrift Voor Genderstudies, 24*(3/4), 376–387. https://doi.org/10.5117/TVGN.2021.3/4.010.TOOR

Velez, B. L., Moradi, B., & Brewster, M. E. (2013). Testing the tenets of minority stress theory in workplace contexts. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 60*(4), 532–542. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033346

Verkuyten, M., Yogeeswaran, K., & Adelman, L. (2023). The social psychology of intergroup tolerance and intolerance. *European Review of Social Psychology, 34*(1), 1–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2022.2091326

Wright, P., & Nishii, L. (2004). Strategic HRM and organizational behavior: Integrating multiple levels of analysis. *CAHRS Working Paper Series, 468*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
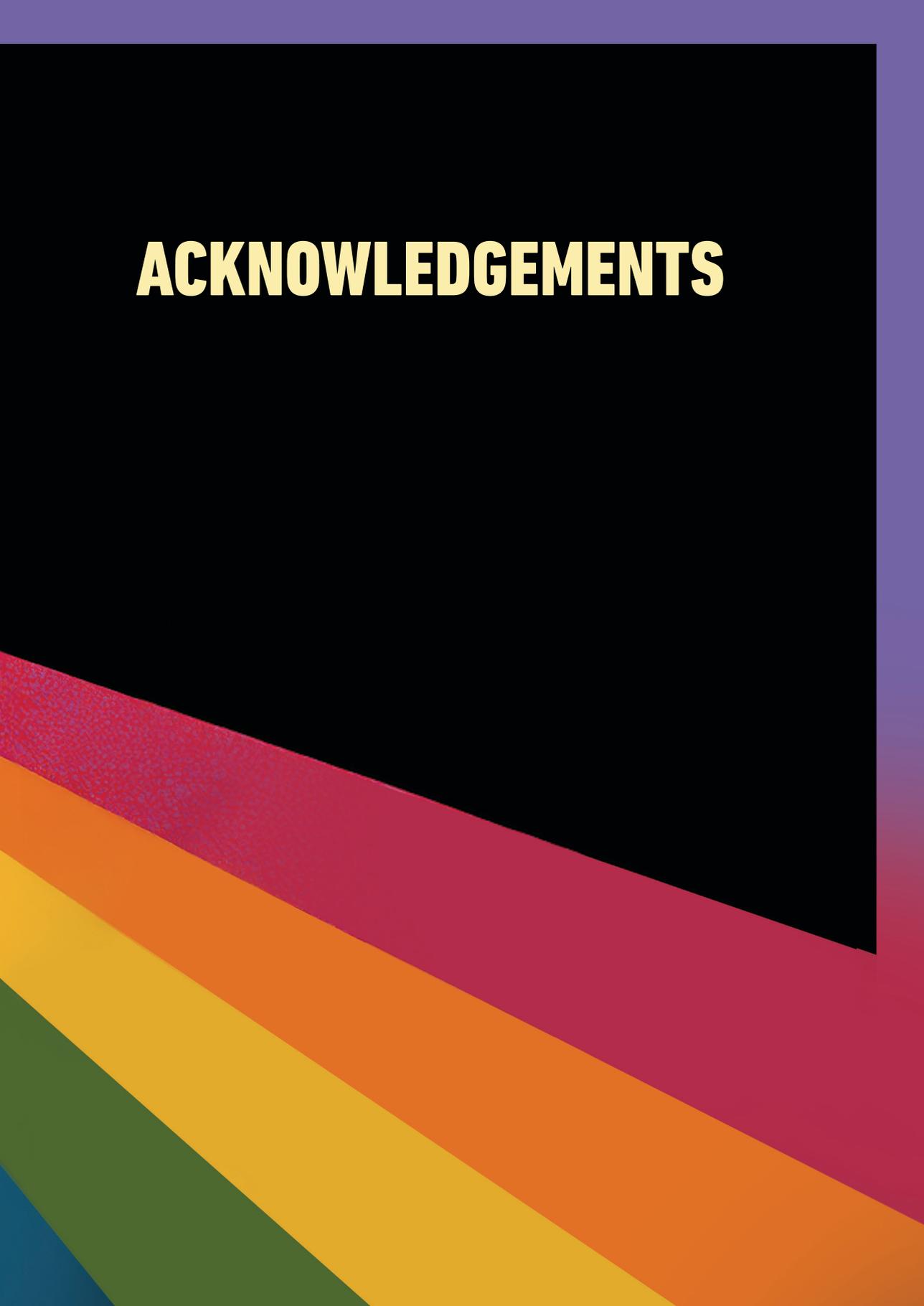
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Of all the sections in this thesis, this is the one I've struggled with and, admittedly, procrastinated on the most. Where do you start? How do you even begin to thank the countless people who helped you get here? So many have shaped this journey that the thought of forgetting someone is genuinely nerve wracking (and entirely possible, so I apologize in advance, hahaha). When I moved to the Netherlands at seventeen, I certainly didn't imagine that a decade later I would be writing the acknowledgements to my PhD. Looking back, this life I've built here is far more extraordinary than anything I could have planned and it has only been possible because of the love, guidance, and help of so many brilliant people. At every stage of this journey, new and wonderful people have come into my life, offered their support, and chosen to stay. They have celebrated my successes, lifted me through setbacks, and made the hard days lighter and the joyful days brighter. It feels only right that, at the end of this chapter of my life, I take the time to properly honour them.

First and foremost, I could not have done this without my supervisors, Jojanneke and Seval. I still remember seeing the position and applying in January, even though I couldn't start until September. Despite my lack of experience in social and organizational psychology, you both saw a potential in me that I hope has come to life in this dissertation. I could not have asked for better supervisors. Always constructive, always supportive. Even during your leaves, you found ways to offer guidance, and when I felt lost, you helped me find structure again. You thought along with me through every step, helping me turn chaos into clarity and a completed thesis submitted on time! Our back-and-forth on theory and practical relevance, our discussions about anticipating and addressing reviewers' comments, the time and care you devoted to your feedback, all of it has shaped me into the researcher I am today. Your trust and steady encouragement have meant more than I can express, and I am deeply grateful for your guidance throughout this journey.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the assessment committee: John de Wit, Belle Derks, Tanja van der Lippe, Sabina Otten, and Byron Adams, for taking the time to carefully review my thesis, and for your kind words, critical questions, and thoughtful compliments.

To my wonderful paranymphs, Judith and Johanna - my anchors throughout this academic journey.

Judith, from our very first conversation it was clear that we would need each other to survive the master's: working hard, but always making room for fun. I am so glad I had you by my side to navigate COVID together, finding joy even when the world was shut down. From our spirited student lives to becoming (mostly) sophisticated adults; from being thoroughly pampered during countless weekends at yours in Groningen, to cultivating my increasingly expensive tastes (for your friendship is a gift to the soul and a challenge to the bank account); from excelling academically to securing PhD positions and continuing our academic adventures in Utrecht - on topics that could hardly be more different - we have been there for each other through every challenge and every achievement. I am deeply grateful to have shared this journey with you, and it feels only fitting that we now bring it to a close together, standing beside each other as paranymphs.

Johanna, my gorm, my PhD lifeline, I genuinely do not know what I would have done without you. From our gossip sessions and midday coffee breaks that stretched far longer than our to-do lists would have liked, to the standing invitation to rant, vent, and release whatever frustrations the day had wrought, you made this PhD infinitely more manageable; Attending courses and conferences together, and sharing writing days and retreats, made the process not only achievable, but genuinely enjoyable. And that is without mentioning all the joy we shared outside of work: the mischief, the adventures, the chaotic nights that will stay with me forever. You made Utrecht feel like home and welcomed me into your life in a way I will always be grateful for. And while my PhD journey may be over, make no mistake, I am not going anywhere and will be cheering you on every step of the way as you finish yours.

Mibs and Ian, my support team: thank you for patiently enduring my complaints, helping me organize everything around the defence, and keeping things running smoothly on the day itself, while my paranymphs and I focused on the official task of turning me into a doctor. I am deeply grateful for your support, and even more so for having you both in my life.

Ian, our paths have been intermingled in one form or another since I moved to the Netherlands. You have been a constant pillar, through weekly dinners, late-night conversations about everything and nothing, shared COVID bubbles, parallel moves to Utrecht, and the many beginnings that followed. Knowing you were always within reach made every new adventure feel far less lonely. Thank you for taking care of me when my body seemed determined to rebel, for being a constant and loving presence, for always showing up when I needed you, and for standing beside me through every celebration and heartbreak. Your presence has been steady,

generous, and grounding, and I count myself incredibly lucky to have you as one of the people closest to me.

Mibs, I think we both sensed, right from that very first online meeting with you and Onur before I started my PhD, that our friendship was just going to be a matter of time. I survived many stressful periods thanks to our mental health walks, impromptu dinners, and cups of tea squeezed between impossibly busy schedules. From travelling to India with me to being the person I can always go to when I don't want to do something alone. Thank you for always being a comforting presence, for listening without judgment, and for being the calm to my chaos.

Alexa, I am constantly in awe of your many talents, your creativity, and the ease with which you bring ideas to life. Beyond your incredible artistry, I am grateful to have you in my life as a friend, and I can't thank you enough for the care and artistry you poured into designing this beautiful cover page and the joy, love and lightness you bring to my life.

Many thanks to my peers at KLI, SHOP, and the Organizational Behaviour Lab for creating a gezellig, inspiring, and incredibly fun working environment. To my exploding angels Johanna, Sarwesh, and Yonn - I hope we continue expanding our palates through wine tastings, getting competitive over board games, and organizing future writing retreats (if only for morale!). A big thank-you also goes to Julia, Lena, Mandy, Piet, Omer, Amarins, Manuel, Anneloes, Onur, Elena, Jeanette, Hyunji, Hao, Esmee, Marty, Gonneke, Frank, Illona, Larissa, Marieke, Jenny, Maaike, and Maarten for the stimulating academic discussions, insightful feedback, and, of course, for all the fun we shared at karaoke nights, vrijmibo, and the many social events we organized and enjoyed together. Having had the chance to work closely with the MT, I would also like to extend my gratitude to the senior members of our group, Naomi, Annemarieke, Melissa, Tessa, Emma, Karin, Felice, Daan, Reine, Madelijn, and Elianne, for always striving to make the research group approachable, inclusive, and welcoming, and for their guidance, encouragement, and support throughout my time in the lab.

Not only did I enjoy being part of the academic communities at UU and KLI, but I also had the opportunity to complete the interdisciplinary research program of SCOOP. I am grateful to the wonderful people I met through this program Silke, Thijs, Michael, and my cohort: Paula, Gita, Eline, and Helena. Your company turned every journey across the country into an adventure and made the annual SCOOP conferences something to look forward to.

Though my PhD took place in Utrecht, my academic journey toward becoming a doctor began much earlier in Groningen, and there are many who have been there from the very start, and for that I am deeply grateful.

Thomas, you often said I made doing a PhD look easy, but I'm sure I would have struggled significantly more if I didn't have you to lean on and provide much needed reprieve and joy.

Mimi, Gigi, Sara, Leilah and Paulina, though we may see each other a little less often than we did back in our Groningen days, thank you for always being my cheerleaders.

Karolina and Femke, sharing that board year with you was truly an adventure, and I'm so glad that, all these years later, you're still woven into my life. Half the wonderful people I now hold dear I met through your introductions, and your continued presence in my life means a great deal.

The move from Groningen to Utrecht marked another beginning, an exciting and welcome change that brought new companions into my life: people to lean on, who made the unfamiliar feel safe, and filled my days with comfort, care, connection, and love.

To my hike-and-hooch gang, Marianne and Tim: thank you for the countless walks through the wonderfully flat Dutch landscape that kept me healthy and sane, even as you never failed to remind me how my outfits seemed more suited for a runway than the hiking trail.

Judith, Paco and Thijs, thank you for continuing to offer me a home base in Groningen whenever I needed to escape the wonderful insanity of Utrecht. Knowing I could always return, even briefly, meant more than you know.

Elliot, Romee, Casper, Anne, and Anoushka, thank you for never letting stress swallow me whole. You pulled me out into the world, into conversations, new experiences, laughter, and life beyond deadlines. With you, joy was always just a message away.

And to my recent obsession with Dungeons and Dragons and my brave companions who adventure with me to worlds beyond – Tim, Marianne Felix Els and Melati, thank you for the many weekends spent laughing, joking, and playing pretend; for

your company (and that of your characters). Thank you for making time for me, hearing me complain, and always making me leave significantly less stressed and significantly more loved each time we saw each other.

While much of this journey unfolded here, there are also those who have known me since long before I moved to the Netherlands, and whose presence has remained a constant throughout.

To Ohana - what began in 2015 as a group chat of semi-strangers and loose acquaintances somehow grew into a home, a family, and a soft place to land. Scattered across countries and continents, you've become the safety net I can always tumble back into and the long-distance lifeline that keeps me tethered. You've known versions of me I barely remember, and you have been there unfailingly to support me, cheer me on, and celebrate every milestone. Much love to all of you: Tanya, Eshaa, Zoya, Varun, Shaiv, Harnidh, and Sukhnidh.

Finally, to my family - the reason I could even begin this journey. Mom, Dad, Anshu: thank you for pushing me, trusting me, and not letting on how much worry I cause running headfirst into trouble and living just far enough away that you can't swoop in to rescue me. To my siblings: Ishita, Chirag, Arnav, Divij, Amayra and Vara, I'm always counting the days till we can hang out again and sow a little chaos together. And to everyone back home, whom I miss dearly - Nana, Nani, Mausa, Mausi, Mama, and Mami. Since my own words fall short, I'll borrow the immortal ones of Chappell Roan: *"Don't think I've left you all behind. I still love you in India - you're always on my mind."*

To everyone who has crossed my path and shaped this journey in one way or another: thank you. I value it far more than I let on. Though these words barely do justice to how grateful I am, I hope they carry even a fraction of the love, support, and joy you have brought into my life. Every conversation, every laugh, every moment of guidance or comfort has left its mark in ways I could never fully capture.

Where this thesis ends, something new begins, and I can't wait to find out what lies ahead.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

AUTHORS BIO

Kshitij Mor was born on August 28, 1998, in Delhi, India. In 2016, he moved to the Netherlands to begin his academic journey at the University of Groningen, initially with the intention of becoming a therapist. During his bachelor's studies in psychology, he discovered a strong passion for research and joined the honours program, complementing his curriculum with a wide range of multidisciplinary courses. This marked the first of several shifts in focus that would come to characterize his academic path. After graduating cum laude, he transitioned into the Research Master in Clinical and Psychosocial Epidemiology at the University Medical Center Groningen, where he further developed his methodological expertise and interdisciplinary perspective. He completed his master's thesis under the encouraging supervision of Prof. Dr. Ute Bültmann and Dr. Karin Veldman. During this period, he also completed additional coursework and obtained his qualification as Epidemiologist A from the Vereniging van Epidemiologie (VvE).

Alongside his studies, Kshitij was actively engaged in university life and student representation. He served as a columnist for the psychology student journal, as a student representative for the psychology bachelor's program, and later as chairman of the board of the Honours College Social Association. In addition, he worked as a tutor both within and outside the university, teaching statistics to bachelor's students.

Building on his interdisciplinary background and curiosity about queer research, Kshitij made a further shift into social and organizational psychology by pursuing a PhD at Utrecht University. There, he examined LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Jojanneke van der Toorn and Dr. Seval Gündemir.

During his PhD in the Organizational Behaviour group, Kshitij was also affiliated with the Kurt Lewin Institute (KLI) and the Sustainable Cooperation (SCOOP) consortium. Across these transitions, he demonstrated a strong ability to adapt to new fields, research traditions, and methodological approaches, consistently translating prior expertise into new contexts. Alongside his research, he took on several advisory and coordination roles to further his professional development, serving as lab coordinator, PhD representative for the faculty, and editor for the Journal of Gender Studies. His work has been published in several international journals, and he actively sought to bridge research and practice through policy briefs, stakeholder events, panel discussions, and workshops for both Dutch and international organizations.

Kshitij's work combines rigorous research with an interdisciplinary outlook and a strong commitment to real-world impact, aiming to translate academic insights into meaningful change for organizations and the people within them.

KLI DISSERTATION SERIES
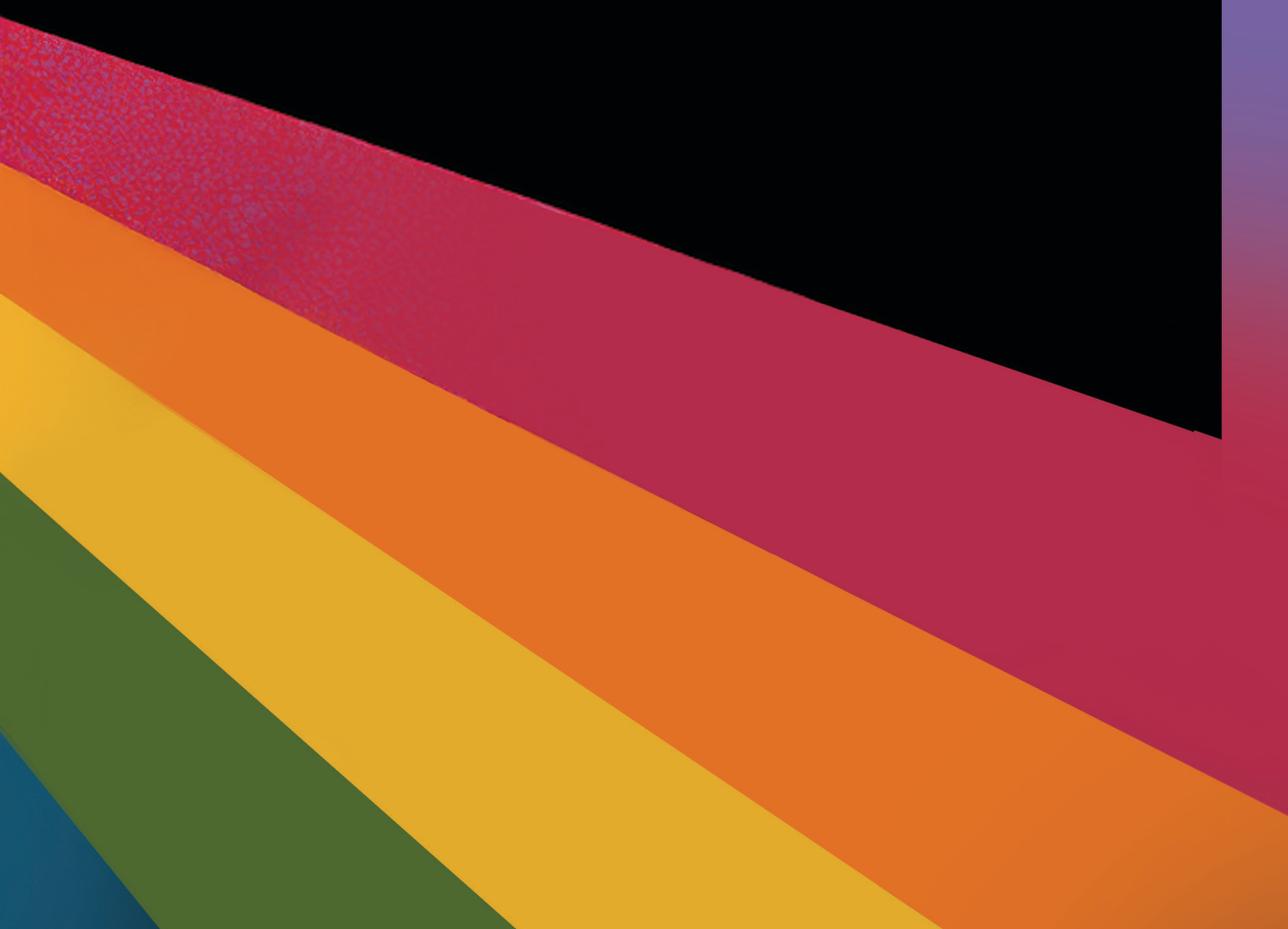
KLI DISSERTATION SERIES

The "Kurt Lewin Institute Dissertation Series" started in 1997. The following dissertations have been published during the last two years. The complete list can be found on our website: https://kurtlewininstituut.nl

2023-01: How Hwee Ong: Demystifying Magical Justice Beliefs: Believing in Justice in a World of Injustices

2023-02: Erdem Meral: Talking about belonging: Whether, why, and how people talk about social exclusion

2023-03: Maria Zwicker: The Complexity of Consumer Attitudes Towards Sustainable Alternatives

2023-04: Shuxian Jin: Social Dilemmas and Institutional Solutions to Promote Cooperation

2023-05: Frank Gootjes: Societal discontent as a catalyst for action: Explaining protest and solidarity, why we help and protest

2023-06: Nieke Lemmen: The autonomy challenge, 5 ways to control control

2023-07: Leonie Vrieling: When others are in control: Understanding public responses to externally controlled energy projects

2023-08: Piet Groot: Born abroad, studied here: A historical and psychological account of migrant doctors integrating

2023-09: Kunalan Manokara: Expressing positive emotions as they are: Spontaneous Production, Display Rules, and the Role of Culture

2023-10: Lei Fan: Navigating Threats Through Disgust: From Pathogen Avoidance to Moral Punishment

2023-11: Kaiyang Qin: Revisiting Automatic Goal Pursuit: Exploring the Value of Goals in Cue-Based Behavior

2023-13: Yingqiu Wu: Cancer in the Media: Unintended Effects on Prevention

2023-14: Valentina Lozano Nasi: Human Transilience in the Face of Adversities: Embracing Global Challenges as Stepping Stones, rather than Stumbling Blocks

2023-15: Ana Leal: An Intergroup Perspective on Attitude Moralization

2023-16: Monique Chambon: The Complexity of Behaviour in relation to Health, Safety and Sustainability: A Psychological Network Approach

2023-17: Terence Daniel Dores Cruz: The Cooperative and Competitive Functions of Gossip

2024-01: Çağla Çınar: Adapting Food Preferences: The Social, Emotional, and Genetic Roots of Preferences for Meats versus Plants

2025-03: Reinoud Moojen: Misperceived Social Norms and Food Choices: Co-Creating Better Food Environments with Local Communities; Studies of Pluralistic Ignorance and Collaborative Interventions in Neighbourhoods

2025-04: Amarins Jansma: Climate Justice Now! Why Protesters Break the Law, Block Roads, and Damage Property to Protect the Earth

2025-05: Zi Ye: Emotion Deception in Negotiations and Bargaining

2025-06: Feiteng Long: Group norms in interethnic relations: Implications for intergroup attitudes, collective action, and stress

2025-07: Esmee Veenstra: Embracing corporate social responsibility: How organizations can foster sustainable commitment to societal impact

2025-08: Elena Bacchini: Between the Mind and the Heart: The Threat and Challenge of a Changing Society

2025-09: Ranran Li: Unlocking Personality: How Situational Strength and Situational Affordances Shape Behavioral Expression

2025-10: Chantal D'Amore: How Political Disagreements Escalate into Moral Conflicts: A Potentially Toxic Interplay between Polarization and Moralization within Democratic Societies

2025-11: Yi Liu: To Cooperate or Compete: Social Value Orientation, Affordances, and Beliefs

2025-12: Luisa Solms: From Work Pressure to Work Pleasure: Understanding and Improving Well-Being in Academia

2025-13: Jiayan Mao: Intergroup Categorization Affects the Expression of Conspiracy Theories in Society

2025-14: Anabela Cantiani: From Perspectives to Coalitions: Whether, When, and How Perspective-taking Plays a Role in Coalition Formation

2025-15: Anneloes Kip: Coping with Ostracism

2025-16: Enzo Cáceres Quezada: "So you're just a normal person. Just like me?" Difference Evasion in Managing an Advantaged Identity and Legitimising Inequality

2025-17: Florian Bonensteffen: Pixels of Reconciliation; The potential of digital encounters in Victim-Offender Mediation

2025-18: Tengku Nila Fadhlia: It Takes a Village to Grow Stronger: A Socio-Ecological Model of Resilience in Refugees