LGBTQ+ In Your Area

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Affidavit

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

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Abstract

Due globalisation the world is becoming smaller and more diverse. People redefine themselves and express their identities more openly. The LGBTQ+ community is growing more present and outspoken, encouraging the world to be aware and accepting. However, there are still issues that individuals of the community have to face – discrimination, bullying, mental and physical abuse. This thesis aims to educate on the LGBTQ+ community, what it encompasses, and what it means in the diversity context. Moreover, the study examines, using quantitative methods, such as extensive literature review and a questionnaire, how the diversity, specifically in the case of LGBTQ+ people are perceived in the work environment.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

1   Introduction

1.1   The Current Status and the History Behind It

On the 3rd of April 2019, Brunei amplified Islam's Sharia law, which is a legal code, derived from the Quran (Koran), that regulates not only public but also private behaviour and beliefs. Under the new changes of this law, theft is punished by amputation, lesbian sex is punishable by 40 strokes with a cane and a maximum of ten years in incarceration; and more serious offences, such as criticising the Quran or the Prophet Muhammad, rape, adultery and sodomy (anal sex) are punished by stoning to death (BBC News, n.d.; Tan, 2019).

Brunei is not the only country where being part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community is illegal. According to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) same-sex relationships are considered illegal in almost 70 countries of the world: most of them are African and Middle Eastern states (Mendos, 2019). Punishments include lengthy incarcerations, fines and corporate punishment (Reality Check team, n.d.), as shown in the example of Brunei.

Un- and miseducation due to religious beliefs and ignorance, as well as a lack of historical awareness, are hurdles that need to be overcome to understand that the LGBTQ community is not something that appeared in the past decades. Although it has been conceptualised and named 'homosexuality' only recently, it is as old as humankind. The ancient Greek philosopher Plato, in his dialogue 'Symposium', tells the story of the three original types of people (Köllen, 2016). Each had two bodies attached back-to-back. Some had two male bodies, some two female bodies, and some a male and female body - they were called androgynous. After being split by the Gods, the story tells how the separated beings developed sexual desire that made them search for their other half. With this Plato insinuated that homosexuality is normal and first mentioned the existence of a third sex (Köllen, 2016).

In ancient Greece, a relationship between men - depending on the area - was rather ordinary. The gender of the involved did not play a role, the status however did. Only a relationship between an older 'freeman' and a male slave or a young boy, who was

not yet of age was considered 'not problematic' (Pickett, 2015). That means, it did not affect the status of the freeman. If it were the case of two freemen who were involved with each other, it would be a problem for their status within the society. Even though the genders of the sexual partners did not make a difference, the role that they took upon themselves did. One had to take the part of the 'insertive', whereas the other the role of the 'penetrated'. The latter was only acceptable to be carried out by women, slaves or young boys who were not yet considered adults and member of the society. As mentioned before, there were differences in the perception of relationships between men and their statuses. In general, however, being attracted to another male was considered masculine (Pickett, 2015).

1.2   The Issue

With diversity being a universal phenomenon and the growing openness of the LGBTQ community, more and more literature focuses on diversity management practices that concentrate on the rights and equality of LGBTQ people in the workplace. The majority of existing literature uses qualitative research, with tools such as interviews, to gather data from either LGBTQ employees or people in management positions (Colgan, Creegan, McKearney, & Wright, 2007; Brooks & Edwards, 2009; Colgan, Wright, Creegan, & McKearney, 2009; Ozturk & Rumens, 2014). In only a few cases does the literature consider allies (Brooks & Edwards, 2009; Clark, 2010), people who see themselves as 'friends' of the LGBTQ community. However, there are no studies that focus on the general perception of people regarding diversity, especially LGBTQ diversity. Furthermore, there are no studies that educate people about the community and what it means to be LGBTQ. Thus, definitions vary from study to study, making use of the terms LGB (Colgan et al., 2007; Colgan et al., 2009), LGBT (Brooks & Edwards, 2009; Fullerton, 2015; Paisley & Tayar, 2015; Pichler, Ruggs, & Trau, 2017), LGBTQ (Clark, 2010; Stewart & O'Reilly, 2017; Ruud, 2018), LGBTQI (Köllen, 2016) or on rarer occasions GLBT (Bell, Özbilgin, Beauregard, & Sürgevil, 2011). Explanations about what the expansive initialism stands for are mostly found on the internet, and even there, opinions differ. Consequently, there is a research gap in the existing literature, that does not touch upon gender identities (Paisley & Tayar, 2015) and sexual orientations beyond the LGBTQ term. On these grounds, for the purpose of this study and the attempt to unify the terms, this thesis will use the abbreviation LGBTQ+

(OK2BME, n.d.), combining research-based knowledge with common knowledge of the LGBTQ+ community. Furthermore, to be in line with awareness and equality the thesis aims to promote, personal pronouns such as 'he/him' and 'she/her' will be replaced by the androgynous and inclusive 'they/them'. This will not apply to authors whose gender is known. The points mentioned above are what make the study relevant and current. Even though the diversity of humanity is undeniable (Tuan, Rowley, & Thao, 2018), many people do not know how to cope with new and unfamiliar things, trusting in their instinct to push them away, diminish and de-normalise them.

1.3 The Purpose

The thesis aims to inform and educate the reader on the general topic, the challenges of the LGBTQ+ community as well as of Human Resources, and the practices that are in place to protect and support a diversified workforce. It is vital that people of the 21st-century possess knowledge of differences that lie beyond the binary standards that have lived on for so long and are capable of accepting them. Especially in the working environment, that due to globalisation consists of an immensely diversified workforce. Accordingly, the group of people this thesis wants to reach includes individuals older than 14 years, of all genders, sexual orientations, nationalities and ethnicities, religious beliefs, and educational backgrounds. The age of 14 was chosen, as it is the youngest age of consent within the European Union, where the research is based and will primarily collect most of its data. The thesis shall research the following questions: how educated are people about the LGBTQ+ community? What do people think about how others, especially the members of the LGBTQ+ community, should be treated in a work environment? How do potential employees perceive applied equality policies?

To answer the proposed research questions the thesis will draw on and review various literature that provides an understanding of diversity, diversity management, the LGBTQ+ community and practices to include, protect and equalise it within organisations as well as the benefits that stem from a positive working environment. Additionally, the thesis aims to educate on the matters mentioned above, to contribute to the knowledge gathered so far and deepen it further, as well as make people more open-minded. The remainder of this thesis will establish the

methodology, outlining the data collection and analysis with the help of a questionnaire, designed based on the reviewed literature. This will be followed by an interpretation of the results and a conclusion.

2 Literature Review

The following chapter will touch upon what constitutes diversity and diversity management. Subsequently, define relevant terms to familiarise the reader with the LGBTQ+ community. After that, it will go deeper into identity management practices and elaborate on equality policies set in place in today's working environments.

2.1 Diversity and Diversity Management

2.1.1 Diversity

Diversity is an ambiguous term to define (Manoharan & Singal, 2017). The Oxford English Dictionary describes the state of being diverse as showing a great deal of variety. Thus, diversity refers to a combination of people who show various demographic and personal factors, such as age, gender, origin, sexual orientation (Manoharan & Singal, 2017), and race (Starostka-Patyk, Tomski, & Zawada, 2015; Manoharan & Singal, 2017).

According to Manoharan and Singal (2017), there are two levels of human diversity: the surface-level (primary) and the deep-level (secondary). The former refers to dimensions that form the core identity (age, gender, ethnicity, race, mental and physical abilities, sexual orientation), whereas the latter describes the aspects of human character that do not substantially change their essence - beliefs, earnings, educational background and work expertise (Manoharan & Singal, 2017).

2.1.2 Diversity Management

As with 'diversity', different researchers and academics defined its management in various ways. Manoharan and Singal (2017) describe it as the policies and practices set in place to embrace diversity and use it to attain the goals of an organisation. Other studies refer to the need to establish an environment that attracts a variety of talented people from different backgrounds, where they feel included, motivated and

encouraged to develop, thus allowing their company to retain them in their employment and better achieve organisational goals (Ali & Konrad, 2017; Tuan et al., 2018).

A variety of theories has been taken into account to justify and explain the benefits of diversity management. Drawing upon the social exchange theory (SET), described as a series of interdependent interactions between two or more parties, that, under the right circumstances are mutually rewarding and create healthy relationships (Emerson, 1976; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005); Tuan et al. (2018) argue, that when diversity practices benefit the employees, they feel supported and in return pay the employer back with a positive work attitude and behaviour (Pichler et al., 2017; Tuan et al., 2018), such as higher job performance and lower absenteeism (Pichler et al., 2017). Similarly, signalling theory posits that organisations implement specific measures to demonstrate their values and priorities to their stakeholders, who in exchange if they identify with the company's intentions, are likely to support them by providing additional resources (Ali & Konrad, 2017; Báez, Báez-García, Flores-Munoz, & Gutiérres-Barroso, 2018). The resource dependence theory, on the other hand, argues that having a 'diverse and inclusive workforce' (Ali & Konrad, 2017, p. 441) improves the performance of an organisation, since the accumulated knowledge of the diverse workforce brings new perspectives and attracts a more varied customer base, broadening markets and opportunity pools (Ali & Konrad, 2017).

2.2   Defining Terms

2.2.1   Sex vs. Gender

To enter the dialogue of LGBTQ+, one must, first and foremost, understand the fundamental differences between sex and gender. The biological sex refers to the reproductive organs a human being is born with: male and female (American Psychological Association, 2012; American Psychological Association 2015; Paisley & Tayar, 2015; Köllen, 2016). In some cases, there might be a certain ambiguity of the sex (Morland, 2014; Köllen, 2016), that challenges the concept of it being binary (Köllen, 2016). People who show traits of both sexes are called intersex, the prefix 'inter' suggesting an intermediate position between male and female (Köllen, 2016). The characteristics that make an individual intersex can be detected either through

external genitalia, internal reproductive organs, hormones or chromosomes (American Psychological Association, 2012; American Psychological Association 2015; Köllen, 2016).

Gender, as opposed to sex, is a social construct and is assigned to a newborn based on their sex (American Psychological Association, 2012; Ozturk & Rumens, 2014; American Psychological Association 2015; Köllen, 2016). There are three gender identities: man, woman or non-gendered (Paisley & Tayar, 2015), also described as agender (Ruud, 2018). If an individual is born and identifies with the gender that society associates with the respective sex, they are cisgender (from the Latin 'cis-', translating to 'on the same side as' (Aultman, 2014), the opposite would be transgender ('trans-' = 'on the other side'), describing a dissonance between sex and assigned gender (Aultman, 2014).

2.2.2 LGBTQ+

As mentioned before, LGBTQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (Clark, 2010; Stewart & O'Reilly, 2017; Ruud, 2018). The '+' is a way to include anyone who does not identify with any particular label or is not represented in any of the five letters, as the initialism is not enough to encompass the variety of individual human experiences. The plus also includes straight allies, who are willing to raise their voices on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community (Ruud, 2018). Table 1 summarises and defines relevant terms for the LGBTQ+ discourse. It is important to note, however, that due to the dynamics of language and its evolvement, definitions may vary.

Table 1. *LGBTQ+ Relevant Terms and Definitions.*

Term	Definition
Agender	Describes a person who identifies as having no gender.
Ally	A person who supports and stands up for the rights of LGBTQ+ people.
Androgynous	A person who has characteristics or nature of both male and female; is neither specifically masculine nor feminine.
Asexual	Describes a person who experiences little or no sexual attraction to others. Asexuality is not the same as celibacy.
Bigender	A gender identity where the person moves between feminine and masculine gender identities and behaviours, possibly depending on context.
Bisexual	A person who is emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to both men and women.

Cisgender	A person whose gender identity and gender expression align with the sex assigned at birth.
Cisnormativity	A systematic bias based on the ideology that gender expression and gender identities are determined by sex assigned at birth rather than self-identified gender identity.
Gay	A person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of their own gender. It can be used regardless of gender identity, but it is more commonly used to describe men.
Gender	Gender refers to the attitudes, feelings, and behaviours that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex.
Gender binary structure	The belief that there are only two genders—boy/man/male and girl/woman/female—and that a person must strictly fit into one category or the other.
Gender fluid	A person whose gender identity is not fixed; they may feel like a mix of the two traditional genders or they may feel more as one gender some of the time and another gender at other times.
Gender expression	One's exhibited external gender, often deciphered as either masculine or feminine. The ways in which a person outwardly aligns the self as male, female, or another gender.
Gender identity	One's innate, intrinsic self-identification as a male, female, or another gender.
Gender non-conforming /Gender variant	Describes a gender expression that differs from a given society's norms for males and females.
Heteronormativity/Heterosexism	The assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities.
Heterosexual	A person whose emotional, romantic, and sexual attraction are primarily for individuals of a different sex; colloquially 'straight'
Homosexual	A person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to the same sex.
Intersex	A person born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not fit the traditional definitions of male or female.
Lesbian	A woman who is emotionally and sexually attracted to other women.
Misgendering	The use of incorrect pronouns or gender references when speaking to or about an individual.
Non-binary / Genderqueer	Refers to individuals who identifies their gender as falling outside the binary constructs of male and female.
Pangender	Describes a person whose gender identity comprises many genders.
Pansexual / Omnisexual	A sexual attraction, romantic love, or emotional attraction toward people of any sex or gender identity.
PGPs (preferred gender pronouns)	she/her/hers; he/him/his; they/them/theirs (less traditional gender-neutral pronouns are 'zie' or 'hir')
Queer	An umbrella term to describe gender identity and sexual orientation outside of the binary systems; represents non-normative desires and sexual practices and challenges all stable boundaries of identity; can be regarded as offensive due to its derogatory meaning in history.
Questioning	The questioning of one's gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation, or all three is a process of exploration by people who may be unsure, still exploring, and concerned about applying a social label to themselves for various reasons.
Transgender	A person whose gender identity and assigned sex at birth do not correspond. May choose to transition to the sex of their choice.

Transvestite / Cross-dresser	A person who wears clothing, accessories, and make-up that are associated with the opposite gender; does not have to identify as transgender.
Sex	The biological status one is born with, based on genitalia, reproductive organs, hormones, and/or chromosomes.
Sexual orientation	A component of identity that includes a person's sexual and emotional attraction to another person.
X-jendā	Originated in the Japanese queer online community; broadly accepted to describe a third gender.

Note. Definitions of LGBTQ+ relevant terms were gathered from American Psychological Association (2012), American Psychological Association (2015a), American Psychological Association (2015b), American Psychological Association (2015c), Aultman (2014), Dale (2014), Love (2014), Collins (2015), Köllen (2016), Stewart & O'Reilly (2017), Ruud (2018), OK2BME (n.d.).

2.2.3   Coming-out

Coming-out refers to the process of revealing one's true sexual orientation or gender identity (Paisley & Tayar, 2015). It is a process that has to be repeated time and time again (Köllen, 2014; Köllen, 2015; Paisley & Tayar, 2015), as a person enters a new environment or meets new people, making it also continuous with no end (Paisley & Tayar, 2015). Depending on the social context, whether it is friendly, open and supportive or closed and non-supportive, the process can be modified (Köllen, 2014; Köllen, 2015) and has multiple levels to it (Paisley & Tayar, 2015). An individual's coming-out might differ depending on their private and professional lives, meaning they might be open about their gender identity and sexual orientation with their family and friends but closeted in their work life; the vice-versa case is also possible but less common.

There is a number of factors that encourage a person to come out: the existence of equal opportunity policies, other colleagues or seniors who are part of the LGBTQ+ community, and the overall attitude and signals an organisation as a whole sends out regarding diversity (Colgan et al., 2007). On the other hand, circumstances, such as negative attitudes of male co-workers, fundamentalist religious colleagues or unfortunate past experiences can be discouraging (Colgan et al., 2007) and force a person to stay 'closeted' (Fullerton, 2015). Additionally, the fear to lose their job or the opportunity to be promoted and the wish for privacy (Colgan et al., 2007) also play a role whether or not to come out in the workplace.

Multiple studies have shown that being open about one's identity bears excellent benefits for the individual, as well as for the organisation (Bell et al., 2011; Fullerton, 2015; Köllen, 2015; Paisley & Tayar, 2015; Pichler, Ruggs, & Trau, 2017). Köllen (2015) describes three general benefits of coming out: positive career development, loyalty and job satisfaction, and positively influenced organisational citizen behaviour. If an individual misreads the corporate culture and signals, coming out can have negative consequences: discrimination, loss of job and mental health issues, to name a few (Köllen, 2015).

n the case of LGBTQ+ individuals, discrimination is more difficult to uncover. For one, some members of the community may decide, yet their colleagues may know or assume their orientation due to stereotypes in behaviour; and out of fear of consequences and lack of protection they might stay 'silent' and not report having been the victim of discrimination (Bell et al., 2011). Additionally, as sexual orientation is 'invisible', and moral, religious and cultural values influence the discrimination based on this characteristic, makes it challenging to negotiate what discrimination in this context implies (Priola et al., 2014). Due to this, discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation is considered "the last acceptable prejudice" (Bell et al., 2011, p.133).

2.3   Issues Experienced by LGBTQ+ Employees

The main issue that LGBTQ+ individuals have to face in the work environment is discrimination. Discrimination is when an individual or a group is mistreated or with prejudice based on personal characteristics such as gender, age, race and ethnicity, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation (Discrimination, n.d.). According to the research of Bell et al., (2011), as well as Priola, Lasio, De Simone, and Serri (2014) there are two kinds of discrimination: formal and informal, also known as interpersonal. Formal discrimination is when a person is not hired, is overlooked for a promotion, does not receive the same resources as their colleagues, or is fired because of one of the personal traits mentioned above. Interpersonal or informal discrimination refers to other employees mistreating their colleague by verbally and physically harassing them, disrespecting them, lessening their credibility and decreasing their psychological well-being (Bell et al., 2011; Priola et al., 2014).

To exhibit a more concrete image of discrimination, the thesis shall refer to a study from 2018, commissioned by Stonewall, a British charity for LGBTQ+ rights, and carried out by YouGov, a market research company. The research aimed to investigate the experiences of LGBTQ+ employees in their work environment and the 3.213 respondents were asked about discrimination in the workplace. The findings showed that 18 per cent of the respondents had been the target of negative comments or conduct from their co-workers because of their gender identity and sexual orientation; more accurately: derogatory remarks not only from colleagues but from customers as well, bullying, exclusion from their peers, and lack of opportunities to develop professionally (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018). According to Colgan et al. (2007), the protection LGBTQ+ employees receive at work against their 'discriminatory' colleagues, does not include clients of privately-owned firms, adding to the danger of being mistreated at work. Nonetheless, one in eight (12%) lesbian, gay or bi people would not come forward about the misconduct (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018).

Transgender individuals have to endure even more: co-workers and clients have physically attacked 12 per cent of transgender employees. However, 21 per cent of transgender people would not report discrimination against them. This may be due to fear of repercussions (Colgan et al., 2007), lack of trust in the employer's support or even negative experience with the employer. For example, one of the participants has told the researchers that their employer blamed the LGBTQ+ individual for being mistreated and told them to tolerate the abuse (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018).

2.4   Identity Management Practices

An individual who works in an environment, where they do not feel safe or comfortable to be their authentic self, may try to hide or suppress their identity to 'fit in' and not attract unwanted attention (Ozturk & Rumens, 2014). Due to sexual orientation being 'invisible' and society being heteronormative, individuals identifying as LGBTQ+ can choose whether or not to be open about their identity (Köllen, 2014). Paisley and Tayar (2015) recognised an identity management strategy referred to as concealment or passing. An employee may actively feign being heterosexual by inventing stories and changing the pronouns of the people in their lives; or try to avoid the topic of sexuality in its entirety (Gedro, 2009; Ozturk & Rumens, 2014; Paisley & Tayar, 2015). In some cases, they do not have to do anything, as they may pass

unintentionally because of heteronormativity - the general assumption that everyone is heterosexual (Köllen, 2014; Stewart & O'Reilly, 2017; Ruud, 2018). By managing their identity, an employee might become self-conscious, which in turn will negatively affect their performance; they may become disengaged from the organisation and its employees by self-alienating. As sexual orientation manifests in details, such as placing a photo of one's partner or wearing a wedding band, investing a lot of energy into hiding these things might cause cognitive dissonance, making a person less productive and causing an identity conflict from portraying a false image of themselves. Furthermore, it might affect relationships with co-workers, as a closeted person is not their true selves (Gedro, 2009; Köllen, 2014; Paisley & Tayar, 2015). In the following sections the thesis will touch upon how an identity develops, and Paisley and Tayar's (2015) application of intersectionality to explain what happens to a person's self-identity when they cannot express their genuine self.

2.4.1 Identity Development

Research shows that the identity of an LGBTQ+ person develops differently compared to the identity of a heterosexual individual. As the world's population is predominantly heterosexist, the first discovery of one's sexual orientation differentiating from the 'norm' may cause embarrassment and alienation. Moreover, there is societal pressure to comply with expectations and no blatant freedom to experiment with one's sexuality (Gedro, 2009). It is of relevance to understand the identity development of any human being to allow them to grow into a healthy and happy individual. However, in the case of LGBTQ+ individuals, it is essential to understand their development not only on a personal level but also from a Human Resource Management perspective, as it aids the understanding of what it means for a person to not live in alignment with their true identity.

To help comprehend said development, the Australian psychotherapist Vivienne Cass (1979) devised a six-stage model of the identity formation of homosexuals in the late '70s. In this model, the person holds an active role, meaning they can choose not to develop their gay identity further at any stage. Furthermore, a differentiation between private and public identity is possible. A homosexual individual goes through six stages of identity development: (1) identity confusion, in which a person starts questioning their sexuality by realising that their feelings, thoughts and actions align

17

with homosexuality. After coming to the acceptance that one may be gay comes the (2) identity comparison; in this stage the individual compares their feelings, thoughts and actions to those around them, trying to assess the general perception of their gay or lesbian self. In this phase, depending on the environment, alienation and the feeling of 'different' is highly possible. At this point, the person experiences (3) identity tolerance, meaning they tolerate their self, being (probably) gay. At this time in the formation, the individual needs to seek-out other gay people to understand that they are not alone and have a sense of belonging again (Cass, 1979). The (4) identity acceptance stage is straightforward - the individual, rather than tolerating themselves, accepts their homosexual identity and forms a positive mindset towards it. When the person enters (5) identity pride, they are less susceptible to negative attitudes and are able to give more value to their newfound community. However, during this stage, the intense feeling of pride provokes a general distaste towards heterosexuals, 'devaluating' them. This changes again when (6) identity synthesis takes place - the homosexual individual is able to re-evaluate and acknowledge that there are heterosexuals that are supportive of their sexual orientation. With this, the formation of the homosexual self is completed, which means that being gay is not the only and main identity but part of the whole self (Cass, 1979; Gedro, 2009). Nevertheless, should an individual eventually work in an environment where they cannot be their authentic self, and they are forced to separate their private and public identities, they may experience psychological difficulties. This will further be discussed in the next chapter.

2.4.2   Social Constructivists Perspective of Intersectionality

The term 'intersectionality' was coined in 1989 by Kimberle Crenshaw in her paper 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics'. Using an analogy of a traffic intersection, she explained how black women could be harmed both through racism and sexism (Crenshaw, 1989). Being both black and a woman, their identity included both race and sex, putting them right in an intersection where they were 'subordinated' from both anti-racist and feminist perspectives (Crenshaw, 1989).

Since, the perspective of intersectionality has been adapted, re-interpreted and expanded. Considering that an individual might find themselves in an intersection of more than two identities, scholars argued that the concept has to be broadened and 'include a range of experiences' (Paisley & Tayar, 2015, p. 5). The social constructivist perspective of intersectionality describes the selection and combination of an individual's strands of identity that form the whole projected identity that changes depending on the cultural context. When a person holds more than one culturally and socially constructed identities, a change in one strand will affect other strands and the identity as a whole. All humans are influenced, conscious or not, by 'multiple ingredients of [...] race, class, age and sexual identities' (Paisley & Tayar, 2015, p. 6).

Therefore, the way a person feels on the inside is their self-identity. The way an individual presents themselves is called identity-expression, and the identity distance describes the distance between self-identity and the identity expression, as well as the individual strands. If there is a rather large distance, it is referred to as divergent intersectionality, whereas a slight gap is called convergent intersectionality. Figure 1 depicts how a tight, hostile environment affects the identity distance, compared to a loose and inclusive culture (Paisley & Tayar, 2015). It shows that when an employee is forced to compartmentalise (Colgan et al., 2007) their life into private and professional spheres, with no room to intersect, their mentality and efficiency will suffer. Working in an environment where one does not have to try to be someone else will reduce distractions (Fullerton, 2015) and make them capable of working and living up to their full potential.

Figure 1. The divergent and convergent intersectionality of an LGBT individual. Paisley & Tayar, 2015, p. 7.
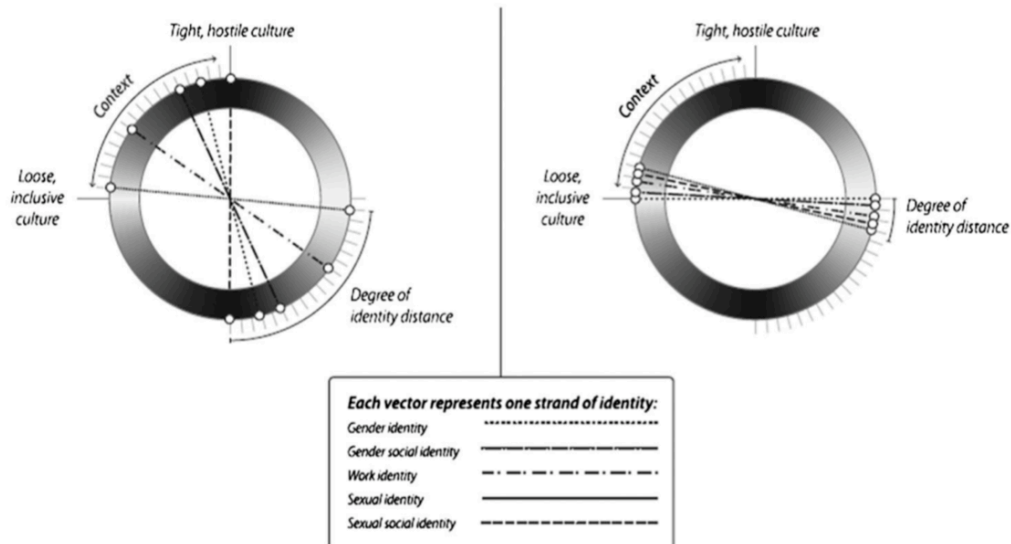
2.5 Equality Policies

According to the perceived organisational support (POS) theory, most employees will have higher perceptions of corporate support, if their employer has LGBTQ+ supportive policies (Pichler et al., 2017). This positive perception has to do with the personification of the organisation and the feeling that employers genuinely care about their staff (Pichler et al., 2017). Similar to the social exchange theory (Tuan et al., 2018), workers will work to reciprocate the feeling of support (Pichler et al., 2017). Thus, taking the role as an inclusive employer earnestly, brings substantial rewards and benefits (Fullerton, 2015). As mentioned before, being open about one's identity has positive effects on the individual, as well as the organisation. A number of studies have proven, that if a company has LGBTQ+ supportive policies, closeted employees may feel safe enough to come out, which would improve their productivity, mental and physical health, relationships with colleagues, as well as job satisfaction. These positive developments on an individual level, would reduce costs and increase profits on an organisational level (Badgett, Durso, Kastanis, & Mallory, 2013).

In some cases, the effort a company puts into equalising LGBTQ+ employees sends a signal to other 'average' workers, that they are being excluded. De-categorising, which refers to avoiding "manifestations of sexual orientations" altogether (Köllen, 2015, p.

20

10) is another practice to make it clear to employees that equality policies include and protect everyone, even heterosexual individuals (Köllen, 2014; Köllen, 2015). Through this, the status of exception falls away and being part of the LGBTQ+ community becomes normal. "In not making a difference between homosexual and heterosexual employees, the category of sexual orientation loses its polarising potential" (Köllen, 2015, p. 10). De-categorisation could thus, decrease the rate of discrimination and marginalisation within a company, allowing it to reap the benefits of an inclusive and diverse workforce.

2.5.1 The Application of Equality Policies

In general, the 'business case for diversity' has been recognised by companies, researchers, stakeholders and the media (Badgett et al., 2013). The business case for diversity asserts that implementing equality policies, especially LGBTQ+ inclusive ones, attract better talent and decrease employee turnover, as well as win over the loyalty of 'discerning' consumers, making them beneficial for the bottom line (Badgett et al., 2013; Hewlett & Yoshino, 2016; Marks, 2019). Although it is a commonly accepted and researched fact, it has yet to be implemented more broadly, and there is still room for improvement.

Title VII of the US Civil Rights Act that is in place since 1964 protects identity groups except for gender identity minorities, which means that there is no legal protection in place against them being discriminated in the workplace (Brooks & Edwards, 2009). The European Union has made more progress in this sphere as it required all its member states to introduce legislations that make discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief, disability, age, and sexual orientation unlawful in its Employment Equality Directive, adopted in 2000 (Colgan et al., 2009). The EU was the first international organisation to recognise and include gender identity and sexual orientation in anti-discrimination laws (Five key facts on EU and LGBT equality, n.d.). However, there is still a discernible gap between equality policies and practices.

Extensive research in the United Kingdom has shown the differences in how large the gap between policy and practice is in the private, public, and voluntary sector. According to the study conducted by the Working Lives Research Institute of the London Metropolitan University, 77,6 per cent of the LGBTQ+ respondents working in

the public sector agreed that their employer has 'gay-friendly' policies and 63,1 per cent agreed that the employer also has gay-friendly practices. In the private sector, the percentage of employers with equality policies is slightly higher, with 83,1 per cent. However, the gap is vaster, as only 60 per cent of participants agreed that there were inclusive practices in place (Colgan et al., 2007; Fullerton, 2013). It often occurs that companies in the private sector introduce equality policies as a reaction to customer backlash or negative attention from the media, to save or portrait a better image to the public. Despite this, not much is being done, as private employers adapt diversity policies that are only required by law and do not protect LGBTQ+ employees entirely (Pichler et al., 2017). The most surprising results of the study, however, are the results of the voluntary sector. As Fullerton (2013) expresses in her review, the voluntary sector evokes the sense to be the best one to employ LGBTQ+ individuals, which is supported by 75 per cent of respondents expressed that there are gay-friendly practices in place. In contrast, 91,6 per cent said that there were policies in their favour. The gap between these two numbers is more significant than the difference in the public and private sectors. Explanations for this implementation gap draw on the sensitivity of the topic and the potential backlash from essential stakeholder, as well as the 'entrenched' ways of employers and their organisations (Colgan et al., 2007).

There are nevertheless champions in LGBTQ+ equality - large and successful multinational companies such as IBM, Google, The Coca Cola Company, Uber, Microsoft, The Bank America Merrill Lynch, and DP-DHL. The most common practices in diversity management are commitment from senior leadership and management training, employee networks, implementing diversity in the company's strategy, diversity training, and policies within the company that enable the organisation to recruit talented people based on their skills and performance, as well as fair compensation (Brooks & Edwards, 2009; Köllen, 2015; Starostka-Patyk, 2015). In this vein, the thesis will present the aforementioned companies and their efforts to create a diverse and inclusive workforce.

IBM, the information technology company is a pioneer of inclusion and diversity as they believe diversity to be the same as innovation - it creates better outcomes and new opportunities. Already in 1899, when women were not allowed to vote, and racial

segregation was a reality, IBM hired three women and their first African-American employee. In 1914 the company hired an employee with a disability for the first time. These acts were followed by a series of other inclusive actions long before the U.S. would create laws and regulations such as the Equal Pay Act. All of this led to today's IBM with over 250 Business Resource Groups (BRGs) - Asian, African-American, Hispanic, Native American, LGBTQ+ people, Women, Men, and people with disabilities - where employees can come together with others who share their interests or backgrounds. IBM also supports transgender employees who choose gender transition and offer LGBTQ+ inclusive benefits in over 50 countries (IBM Diversity & Inclusion, n.d.).

The people at Google believe that it is vital that their workforce mirrors the world, thus, trying to build an inclusive environment without bias through talent management and community outreach, as well as through 'unbiasing'. Unbiasing is Google's effort to educate people about their unconscious bias that restrains them from making objective decisions. Additionally, Google has 15 Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) with more than 250 local groups. Similarly to IBM, Google has ERGs for ethnicity groups including South Asians (Indus Google Network), Iranians and Filipino individuals; as well as for older employees (Greyglers), LGBTQ+ (Gayglers) and Trans people, women and veterans (Google Diversity, n.d.; Unbiasing, n.d.).
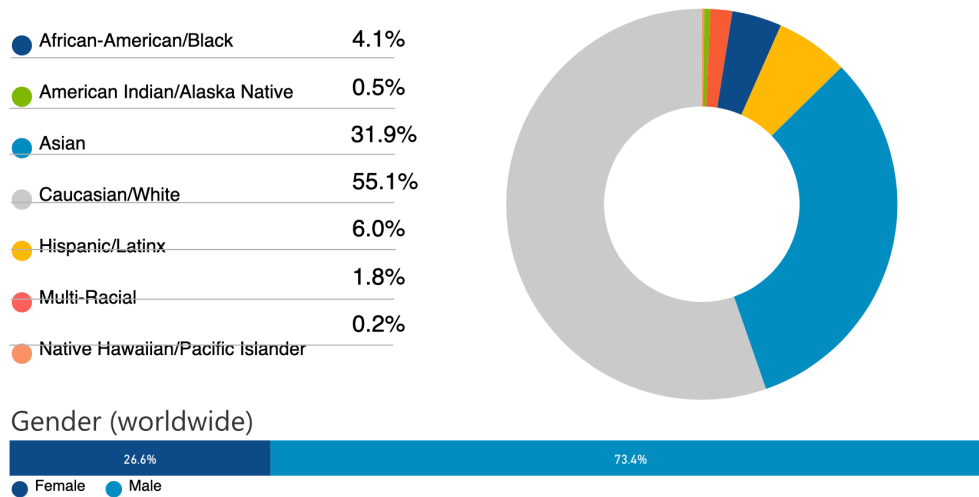
The Coca-Cola Company has Diversity Advisory Councils that work to embrace "the similarities and differences of people, cultures and ideas". Councils such as the Millennial Voices, who attempt to understand, attract and retain millennials in order to satisfy future generation's needs and wants; the Women's Leadership Council, consisting of female executives who advise counsel senior leaders how to develop female talent further. These councils are meant to represent the vast variety of employees in the company. Furthermore, the organisation has BRGs; however, according to their website, they are only present in the US. Just as the companies described earlier in the chapter, The Coca-Cola Company has BRGs for African American, Asian, and Hispanic employees; the LGBTA ('A' for Ally) community, Women and Military Veterans; as well as a BRG to connect the various generations of staff (The Coca-Cola Company - Diversity Councils, n.d.).

For three consecutive years, Uber has been named one of the Best Places to Work by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, specifically for LGBTQ+ individuals. Uber sponsors Pride events all over the world, makes donations to organisations for the LGBTQ+ community, and supports their LGBTQ+ employees through their UberPride ERG. As for other groups, Uber supports immigrants and aims to close the pay gap between women and men. Although Uber seems to invest a lot of effort into diversity, especially the LGBTQ+ community, their diversity and inclusion page does not mention any other ERGs supporting other demographic groups (Uber - Advocating for LGBTQ+ equality, n.d.; Uber - Fostering diversity and inclusion, n.d.).

Microsoft believes in the 'power of diversity' and wants its employees that come from different backgrounds to prosper both personally and professionally. They support their staff through ERGs and Employee Networks, where people can develop their careers and network, as well as raise awareness for the various cultures and communities. Microsoft has ERGs such as Black@Microsoft (BAM), Global LGBTQ+ Employees and Allies at Microsoft (GLEAM), disAbility ERG, Military@Microsoft, Hispanic/Latinx Organization of Leaders in Action (HOLA), and Women@Microsoft. They also support the Asian community, which represents 17 ethnicities, and parents through various events, resources, information and adoption. Microsoft also provides an annual overview of their demographic diversity numbers: Figure 2 shows the ethnic as well as the gender distribution in the US from June 2018 (Inside Microsoft, n.d.).

Furthermore, Microsoft discloses information about equal pay. For the same job title and level in the United States, women earn $1,000 for every dollar men make. For every dollar a Caucasian employee receives, African American employees earn $1,003, Hispanic/Latinx people make $1,002, and Asian receive $1,007. Paying racial and ethnic minorities more than the Caucasian majority might lead to categorisation, similarly to the predicament Köllen (2015) addressed in his research. Caucasian employees may feel uncared for simply because they are Caucasian and have to be 'punished' for it (Inside Microsoft, n.d.).

Figure 2. Diversity Within Microsoft (US) and the Gender Distribution Worldwide for June 2018. Inside Microsoft, n.d.

● African-American/Black	4.1%
● American Indian/Alaska Native	0.5%
● Asian	31.9%
● Caucasian/White	55.1%
● Hispanic/Latinx	6.0%
● Multi-Racial	1.8%
● Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.2%

Gender (worldwide)

26.6%	73.4%

● Female   ● Male

The Bank of America Merrill Lynch believes that diversity makes them stronger as an organisation and is essential to attend to their clients. They aim to create a diverse work environment "in thought, style, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, disability, culture and experience" (Bank of America – Diversity and Inclusion, n.d.). The Bank of America also has employee networks for Asians, African-Americans, Hispanic, Native American, people with disabilities, women, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Additionally, the firm promotes inter-generational relations, supports parents and caregivers, as well as veterans, military spouses and family members. Moreover, the company partnered with advertisement council Love Has No Labels to promote and encourage a more inclusive world (Bank of America – Diversity and Inclusion, n.d.; Fullerton, 2013).

Lastly, an example from Europe – the Deutsche Post DHL Group, the globally operating package delivery and supply chain management company. On their Diversity & Inclusion page, the company states that diversity "goes beyond" personal characteristics such as gender, age, race, age, disability, religion, national origin or sexual orientation (Deutsche Post DHL Group – Diversity & inclusion, n.d.). However, they also specify that it goes beyond diversity if it is protected by law. Moreover, gender identity is not included in their statement. Nonetheless, they promote respect and integrity on a day-to-day basis to achieve the highest possible productivity and efficiency. The Deutsche Post support equality among men and

women and offer diversity training to both employees and management (Deutsche Post DHL Group – Diversity & inclusion, n.d.).

3 Methodology

This section will introduce the method of survey used to acquire data relevant to the research and later go into depth of how the questionnaire was designed, drawing upon the above-conducted literature review to develop appropriate questions. After that, the data collection and its limitations will be discussed before moving onto the next chapter, where the results will be presented and interpreted.

3.1 Introduction to Surveys

The terms 'survey' and 'questionnaire' are often confused. Most commonly survey refers to a research strategy where information is gathered from a small group of people - a sample - that is reflective of a population of interest - a large group of people (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003). A survey uses different tools and instruments to collect the desired data, one of which questionnaires are (Sheatsley, 1983), which are a set of questions designed to research a problem. Before going further into the design of a questionnaire, it is essential to understand the principles of survey research.

First, after having a clearly defined research problem, the researcher has to assess how suitable it is to conduct survey research. Other sources might provide the required information; or depending on the research topic methods such as direct observation, field experiments or content analysis may be of more use than a 'retrospective questioning' (Sheatsley, 1983). Secondly, the researcher has to decide on a sample. It is crucial to have a large enough sample for it to be representative of the population, after invalid or lost answers, as well as the people who did not respond, are taken into account (Jones, Baxter, & Khanduja, 2013). Additionally, an appropriate sample has to be chosen. Often, people receive questionnaires regarding a topic they are not familiar with. As mentioned before, a poorly chosen sample might affect the number of valid answers and lessen the power of the study (Sheatsley, 1983). Thirdly, a method of data collection has to be decided. Each method has its

advantages and disadvantages that have to be considered and weighted, depending on the resources of the research as well as its aims.

3.1.1 Administration Modes

A researcher could conduct personal interviews, that on the one hand, allow the researcher and the participant to discuss complex questions that subsequently generate a higher response rate; on the other hand, are very costly, since trained professionals have to be hired to conduct a high number of interviews without creating bias, and take a lot of time and planning (Jones et al., 2013). Surveys can also be conducted over the phone. Similarly to interviews with a large sample, this method requires a standardised set of questions, with specific wording and order "so that each respondent receives the same stimulus" (Sheatsley, 1983, p. 197). This method allows the respondent to clarify specific questions but is disadvantageous because it is challenging to build a rapport with potential respondents.

Questionnaires can also be sent per post or handed out in a physical form. The response rate for mail sent surveys is low, as people may forget or find it too inconvenient to sent them back. Additionally, 'less-educated' people may misunderstand the instructions or questions, and there is no opportunity to follow up and clarify responses. Another disadvantage of self-administrated questionnaires is the bias that happens when a person reads through the survey before answering it, possibly researching the 'right' answers. An advantage of surveys sent via mail, however, is that they produce more accurate responses to specific topics, as there is no one present to oversee them while answering (Sheatsley, 1983). When handed out to a group of respondents, the researcher present at the location can ensure a high response rate and clarify any questions that may arise ((Sheatsley, 1983; Jones et al., 2013). Having said this, the presence of others, be it peers or researchers, affects the truthfulness with which the respondent answers sensitive questions. More specifically, the participant may feel that their answers will not remain confidential, which creates response bias, as they fear social consequences and reply the way it is expected or 'correct' (Van De Looij-Jansen & De Wilde, 2008).

In recent years the more common alternative to paper-and-pencil surveys are the electronically self-administered questionnaires. This method allows quick responses

and data collection, as well as reaching a larger target. Furthermore, compared to the methods describes above, when it comes to more sensitive topics, such as drug use, sexual orientation or income, it might give the respondent a stronger feeling of anonymity and safety to disclose truthful and accurate information (Sheatsley, 1983; Matias et al., 2019). The disadvantages of online surveys are similar to questionnaires sent by mail: a low response rate or no responses at all (Jones et al., 2013), and according to Sheatsley (1983), different interpretation of the questions by different people, the lack of room to explain or justify their responses or a discomfort in answering specific questions, as they seem 'unnatural'.

3.1.2 How to Design a Questionnaire

Considering all of the above, to design a logically structured and easy-to-understand questionnaire, the researcher has to consider a range of factors and variables. A literature review has to be conducted with the intent to find already existing questions that would fit the research problem (Sheatsley, 1983; Kelley et al., 2003). Additionally, a transparent scoring system, that is consistent and accurate should be applied to easily interpret the collected data (Kelley et al., 2003). When writing the individual items of a questionnaire, the researcher should include measures of knowledge, interest and attitude. This way the researcher can determine whether or not, and to what extent the respondents are familiar with the topic, how invested they are, what their general opinion on the issue is and how insistent they are on their point of view (Sheatsley, 1983).

Furthermore, questionnaires should capture a 'snapshot' of a current situation, as it is most useful to try to bring out what is in the person's mind at the moment, opposed to asking them about the past or the future (Sheatsley, 1983; Kelley et al., 2003). To make it more appealing for respondents to participate in the research, it is of importance to design the questionnaire in an aesthetically pleasing way. The order of the questions, as mentioned before, should be logical. It is best to place essential items at the beginning and demographic questions at the very end, and group questions of the same topic or section (Jones et al., 2003; Kelley et al., 2013). The wording of the individual questions also plays an important role: an item should be short and clear, "targeted towards those at the lowest educational level in [the] cohort" (Jones et al., 2003, p. 5), neutral, without bias. 'Double-barrelled' questions

(two or more items in one) and questions with double negatives, as well as questions that imply a right answer should be avoided. Moreover, responses can be open-ended, giving the respondent freedom to express their opinion better; or closed-ended, providing several responses to choose from (Jones et al., 2003; Kelley et al., 2013).

In order to send out the survey to the respondents, the researcher has to add a cover letter that explains who is conducting the research, the purpose of the study, whether there is an incentive for the participation or not, and how the data will be handled - here it is of utmost importance to assure the participant of their anonymity (Kelley et al., 2013). After the whole questionnaire is designed, it is beneficial to conduct a pilot study with a small sample to detect errors in spelling or questions that are difficult to understand (Jones et al., 2003; Kelley et al., 2013). The testing of the survey allows the researcher to revise their work and send it out to the actual sample and continue with the research. When it comes to the analysis, the respondent's data is entered into a database, where the responses are translated into a pre-determined coding system, to test, analyse and interpret the results and come to a conclusion of the research (Kelley et al., 2013).

3.2   Survey Development

The questionnaire was designed using Google Docs, as it is free of charge, user-friendly, and creates statistics based on the answers. As for the goal of the survey, it aimed to answer the research questions of this thesis and can be found in Appendix 1. Thus, for the order of the items to be logical, they were grouped by the research question. The first research question was: how educated are people about the LGBTQ+ community? That means, how familiar are people with the different identities and orientations, do they actually know what it means when someone identifies as transgender or queer? A number of terms from Table 1 that specifically describe an individual's identity and orientation were put in the questionnaire to measure this. Terms such as cisnormativity, gender binary structure, gender expression and identity, gender nonconforming, heterosexism, misgendering, non-binary, and x-jendā describe concepts rather than an individual, which is why they were not included in the questionnaire. Since a person might encounter someone from the LGBTQ+ community, it is of higher importance to understand them and their identity or

orientation, rather than what state society finds itself in. 'Heterosexual' was not included as, due to heteronormativity, everyone is familiar with the term. 'Homosexual' is a generalised term for 'gay' and 'lesbian' and would be repetitive. To keep the questionnaire as concise as possible, the researcher chose to omit the term. 'Transvestite' was not included in the list as it is neither gender identity nor an orientation. Although it might be considered an expression, a cross-dresser does not have to identify as transgender, and it is not linked to their sexual orientation. Additionally, the level of familiarity and awareness is being measured by asking the first three questions in a row: which of the terms has the participant heard at least once in their life, what terms is the participant somewhat familiar with, and what are the terms the participant is confident they know the meaning of.

The first three questions can be linked to the following one about whether or not the person answering knows anyone from the LGBTQ+ community. As some people might not be even aware of such individuals in their circle, it is possible to respond with 'I do not know'. Knowing someone LGBTQ+ might make people relate to the topic differently way than if they do not. The question that follows is an open-ended one and asks for the general opinion on the LGBTQ+ community. As it is open, the item gives the participant the freedom and range to answer in any way they want without restricting them with possible answers to choose from that might also make them uncomfortable. Lastly, the sixth question asks about the willingness to embrace the gender identity and sexual orientation, meaning whether people will respect other's preferred personal pronouns and instead of saying 'he' or 'she' they will say 'they', for example; or welcome their LGBTQ+ colleague's partners at corporate gatherings. The possible answers are 'yes', 'no', and 'other', where people can leave a more specific comment. With that, the first section of the questionnaire that answers the first research question is completed.

The second section is concerned with LGBTQ+ specifically in the working environment and aims to answer the research question: "What do people think about how others, especially the members of the LGBTQ+ community, should be treated in a work environment?" For the first question of this part, the research considers an example illustrated in Köllen's (2015) paper "Lessening the Difference Is More - the Relationship Between Diversity Management and the Perceived Organizational

Climate for Gay Men and Lesbians". In 2011 the insurance company Allianz invited German professionals for human resources to a discussion about how to more effectively incorporate sexual orientation into human resources management. The German newspaper Handelsblatt reacted by questioning the priorities of the Allianz. Köllen (2015) points out that this reaction mirrors the belief in the Western world that a "productive workplace [is] asexual" (p. 1967). This means that one should divide one's personal and professional life and that one's gender identity and sexual orientation are irrelevant in the workplace. This is how the researcher formulated the seventh question of the survey, and the possible answers range on a five-point Likert scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

To research further how people perceive others should be treated, this research relies on Brant and Tyson's (2016) study on "LGBTQ Self-Efficacy in Social Studies". Their research focuses solely on the ability of teachers to work with children that identify as LGBTQ+ and educate other children on this matter. However, it is possible to apply some of their questions to the working environment. While the two researchers question whether it is essential to discuss the issue of gender and sexual orientation in the classroom (Brant & Tyson, 2016) this thesis shall ask whether it is of importance to address these topics in the workplace; this question also applies the five-point Lickert scale with answers ranging from strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. The next two items (9-10) are taken in a slightly modified form directly from Brent and Tyson's (2016) questionnaire. The questions use an 'I can' statement with three possible answers: 'I do not believe I could do this', 'I could probably do this', and 'I am confident I could do this'. First, it is asked whether people can generally work with people from the LGBTQ+ community and then, whether they can stop discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals by others.

The third part of the survey questions "how do potential employees perceive applied equality policies?" For this an excerpt from an Equal Opportunity policy statement issued by The Coca-Cola Company on the 1st of May 2019 was used as an example:

> The Company is committed to maintaining a work environment free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment. It is the Company's policy to prohibit discrimination and harassment against any applicant or employee on the basis of race, color, religion (including religious dress and grooming), sex or

gender, national origin, ancestry, age, mental or physical disability, medical condition, pregnancy, military or veteran status, genetic information, citizenship status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression, or any other reason prohibited by law.

This extract is followed then by three questions. First, whether the participant would like to work in an environment that applies this type of equality policy? The possible answers are 'yes', 'no', and 'does not make a difference', as there might be people who are not affected by changes in equality policies or do not care. The next question asks for specific feelings the participant would experience working in the above-described environment. For this item, the thesis took some of the possible emotions from the research by Colgan et al. (2007). As their study was primarily interested in the standpoint of an LGBTQ+ individual, for the sake of this thesis that considers anyone a participant, the researcher had to recognise the 'polarising potential' of such policies and add neutral and negative emotions that someone outside the LGBTQ+ community might experience. The list of emotions the participant can choose from (as many as they want) is as follows:

- Free to express myself (Colgan et al., 2007)
- Motivated to be productive (Colgan et al., 2007)
- Supported (Colgan et al., 2007)
- Does not make a difference
- Excluded (Colgan et al., 2007)
- Insecure
- Angry

The last question regarding the topic is an open-ended question and asks the participant in what environment they would prefer to work in and why: traditional or open and diverse.

In the last section of the questionnaire, the participant is asked to provide their demographic data such as gender, age, nationality and ethnicity, religion and belief, as well as the highest completed level of education. The researcher, in conjunction with the topic of diversity and LGBTQ+, aimed to be as inclusive as possible by providing as many options as possible or allowing the participant to answer for

themselves. Therefore, the possibilities for gender are: 'female', 'male', 'prefer not to say', or 'other', where they would need to specify their gender identity. For religion and belief, the options are Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, and Hindu. Moreover, the participant can choose 'none' or not share their views or specify one that has not been listed. Lastly, the different levels of education are no schooling, compulsory schooling, high school graduate, trade/technical/vocational training, bachelor's or master's degree, as well as a doctorate.

3.3 Data Collection

In an effort to expand the pool of participants, the online survey instrument Google Docs was utilised to collect data from participants of various nationalities, ages, religions and educational backgrounds. The link to the questionnaire was shared on social media (Instagram, Facebook, and direct messaging applications) for the first time starting May 6th. As the participation curve stagnated after a few days, the link was posted again on Instagram and Facebook after a week, on May 13th. As the sample was not large enough after three weeks, the link was shared once again. After a whole month of data collection, the online questionnaire was closed on May 31st.

4 Results

In the following section, the thesis will discuss the data collected through the questionnaire. First and foremost, the researcher shall describe the sample. After that, the analysis will move to the actual questions and go through each section of the questionnaire, summarising the findings and answering the posed research questions.

4.1 Participants

A whole of 128 people has responded to the online questionnaire. As there were little restrictions on the sample (the only criteria were that participants must be older than 14 years old), the respondents showed diversity in age and origin, as well as various points of views. Out of 128 participants, 55,9 per cent were female, 39,4 per cent were male, 3,1 per cent preferred not to say what gender they are, 0,8 per cent chose the option 'other' and stated they were 'gay', and one participant did not select any of the offered answers.

As shown in Figure 3, the sample varied strongly in age, with the youngest participant being 18 and the oldest 78 years old. 13,4 per cent of the respondents were 22, thus being the most represented age group, closely followed by 21 (11,8%), 23 (11,0%) and 25 (7,9%) year olds.

Figure 3. The Age Distribution of the Sample.
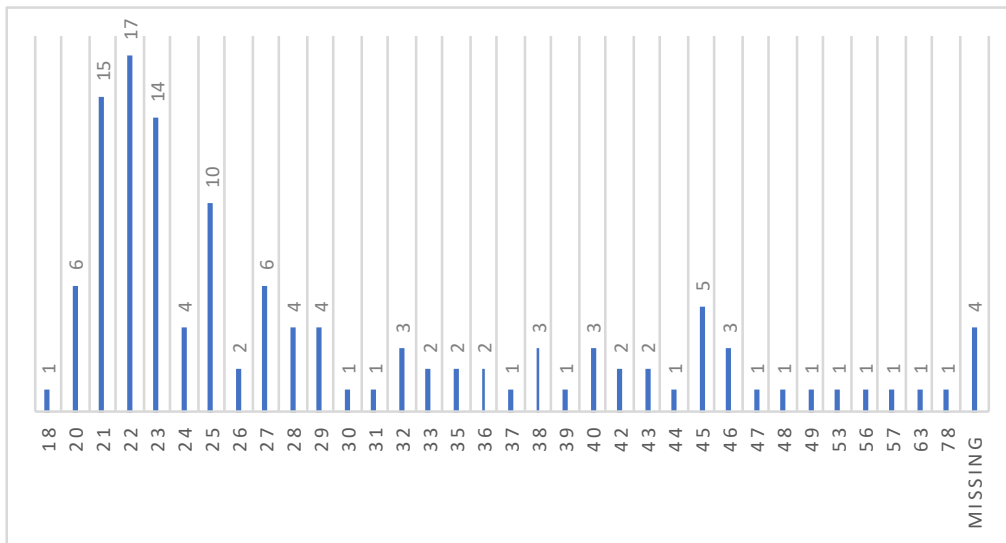
The people who responded to the online questionnaire also showed high diversity in nationalities. As the researcher is based in Austria, the sample, too, mirrored that, since 28,3 per cent of participants were Austrian nationals. Similarly, the researcher has many ties to Russia, and 14,2 per cent of the respondents were Russian. 7,1 per cent of the sample were Italian, 4,7 per cent German, and 3,1 per cent came from South Korea. Great Britain, Spain, Ukraine, Vietnam, Armenia, Hong Kong, Turkey, Canada, Japan, France, Bulgaria, China, Hungary, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Thailand, U.S.A., Croatia, Latvia, Greece, Serbia, the Netherlands, Israel, Mexico, Brazil, and the Philippines were also represented in the participant pool by one to three people.

Moving further to religion and beliefs, the majority of the sample were either Christian (42,9%) or did not have a belief (38,9% chose 'none'). Only five people were Muslim, and another five were Buddhist, two were Jewish, and four participants decided not to disclose their beliefs. Five people entered their answers under 'other', disclosing they were either agnostic, Deists or lived by the Native American Principles. Furthermore, participants were also asked to provide their highest completed level of education. 48 people said they have a Bachelor's degree (37,5%), whereas 36 people

have gained a Master's degree (28,1%), and 33 were High School graduates (25,8%). There were also seven participants with a Doctorate and one soldier of the Israel Defense Forces.
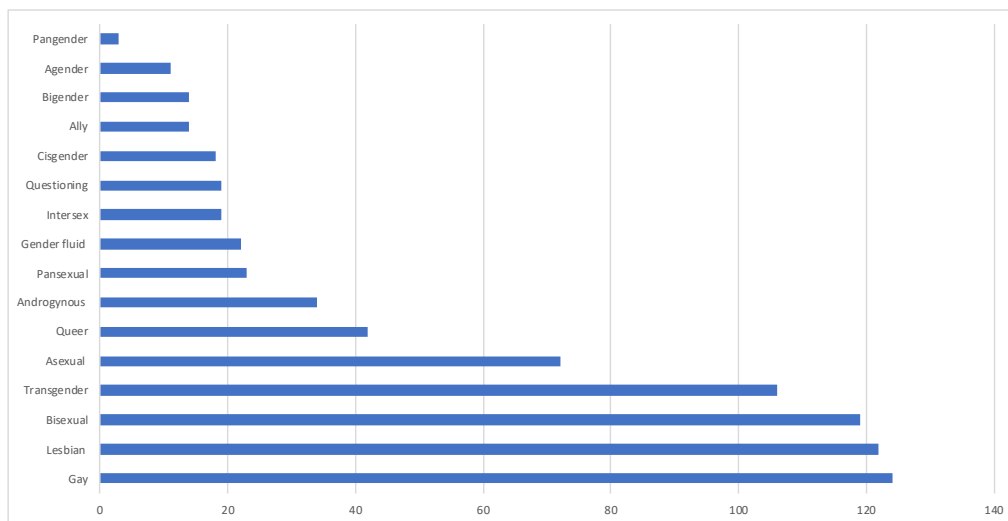
4.2 LGBTQ+ in General Terms

Upon the first examination, the percentages became lower moving from the first question that indicated that the participant had heard the term at least once, to the third question that asked how confident the respondent was in knowing what they mean. Although there is no term related to the LGBTQ+ community that has never been heard by any of the participants, there is a discernible gap between the most commonly known and the little-known terms.

Sexual orientations bisexual, gay, and lesbian and the gender identity transgender were popularly understood, as shown in Figure 4 by more than 90 per cent of respondents, who felt confident in what they mean. Another 72 per cent also seemed to be well educated on asexuality. 'Androgynous' (27%) and 'queer' (33,3%) were comprehended less, however further on the spectrum of understanding than the remaining terms that an average of 17,5 per cent of people was confident in. The least known word was pangender - only three people (2,4%) ticked it in the third question. The same term seemed to be the least familiar one, with only eight people (6,5%) who selected it and has been heard by merely 15 (11,9%) participants.

What can also be seen is that people were more familiar with sexual orientations - except for transgender - than with gender identities. This reflects the general awareness as well as the awareness in diversity management. Sexual orientation has long been included, at least formally, in legal works, whereas gender identity is comparably a more recent change that not many are yet accustomed to.

Figure 4. Terms participants are confident they know the meaning of (Question 3).

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Participants have also been asked whether or not they know someone who identifies as LGBTQ+. Considering that two people have not answered this item of the questionnaire, 82,5 per cent said that they do know an LGBTQ+ individual, whereas 9,5 per cent do not. The remaining 7,9 per cent did not know whether they do.

When it comes to general opinions on the matter of the LGBTQ+ community, specific themes could be identified. Many participants stated that LGBTQ+ individuals are people like anyone else and deserve respect, regardless of how they identify, what they believe in, and whom they choose to love. It is their basic human right and does not concern anyone else, as long as it does not harm anyone. Some of the respondents found the community inspirational as they fight for freedom and support them because they believe that the LGBTQ+ community "will help to make the world a more open-minded place". Additionally, people wish that the matter was discussed more in educational institutions and that there was "more active clarification of all the different identifications that exist". Which is supported by a number of participants saying that they are not familiar with the community, do not know what it means and find terms often confusing and over-complicated.

Another group of participants are indifferent to the matter, have no opinion or interest, and do not think about it. Some reason that, on a personal level, personality matters most, and on a professional level, talent. Moreover, it has been mentioned that LGBTQ+ people should not particularly be seen as a separate community, as it differentiates them. Instead, as one respondent put "normality should be treated normally". This is a testament to Köllen's (2015) argument about de-categorising. Within the group of participants with a neutral point of view, some find it an exaggerated issue, that is being discussed and advertised in the media too actively. They perceive the LGBTQ+ community to be seeking attention and showing off their gender identity and sexual orientation as if they feel superior just by being LGBTQ+. One participant, although tolerant of the individuals and their happiness, described it as a disease that cannot be cured. This was, however, the only 'extreme' comment that the research encountered.

A few of the respondents identified themselves as part of the LGBTQ+ community. One was very supportive of the community's search for recognition and acceptance, as they perceive the world to be increasingly intolerant and bigoted. The other

pointed out that the LGBTQ+ community itself is not as embracing as they say. Some LGBTQ+ groups are not being treated equally to others. The participant noted that there is still a lot of work to be done until all LGBTQ+ people feel included in the community.

To deepen the understanding of participants' perceptions, they were asked whether they are willing to embrace other people's gender identities and sexual orientation by using the correct preferred pronouns, befriend them and their life partners. The majority (81,5%) answered with yes; only 8,9 per cent said no; the remaining people chose to give a more specific answer under 'other'. Most of them were concerned with the preferred pronouns: some see the limit of embracement at changing their grammar, some are hesitant to refer to another human being as 'it', some point out that due to habits it might be problematic. For others, whether they are willing to embrace an LGBTQ+ individual depends on either the situation or the person. However, nobody specified what characteristics would lead to disregarding or accepting an LGBTQ+ individual. Perhaps their reasoning is similar to the respondent who said that they are willing to befriend them as long as their LGBTQ+ friend does not talk about 'it', which may refer to their gender identity or sexual orientation, or other private and intimate details. There are also participants who specified that they are willing to accept only certain identities and orientations: one specifically excluded transgenders; however, they did not elaborate any further.

4.3 LGBTQ+ in the Work Environment

The first two questions of this section present somewhat of a conundrum. As mentioned above, even though people seem well acquainted with the term 'asexual', the question of whether a productive workplace is an 'asexual' environment might be interpreted in different ways. The way it was meant to be understood, aligns with the example about Allianz's efforts to diversify the workforce and make it safe for LGBTQ+ individuals and the reaction of the German newspaper Handelsblatt presented earlier in the thesis. Sexuality, in this example, is perceived as something 'invisible' that has no place in the workspace. It does not matter how one identifies or is interested in. Only their work performance matters; one's personal life does not. This example has nothing to do with being accepting of other people's private lives. Instead, it has to do with completely ignoring them. How some participants might have understood the

question is in a completely different light. As in, it does not matter how one identifies or who one is interested in because it will be accepted either way. Thus, the focus does not lie on personal matters, but the professional; they are still welcome and accepted. Taking this into consideration, the validity of the results might be questionable, which is a disadvantage of self-administered questionnaires, as the researcher is not present, and clarification is not possible.

Figure 5. A productive workplace is an 'asexual' environment (Question 7).
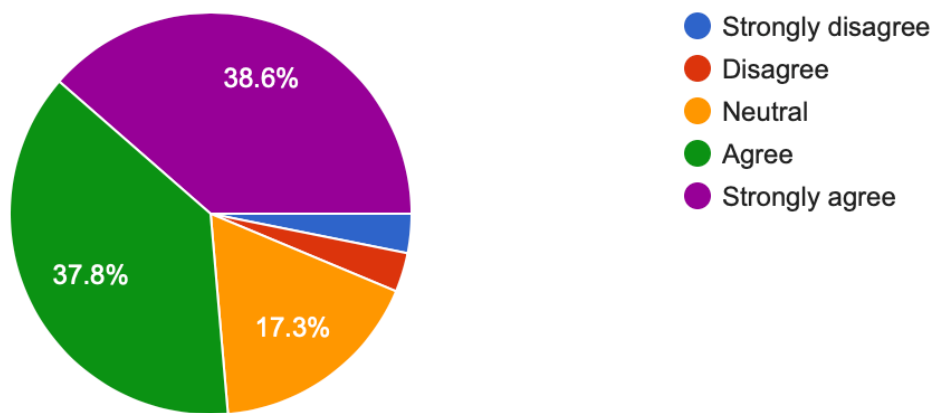
Continuing with the analysis of the results; the majority of participants, as shown in Figure 5, agree (37,8%) with the statement that the workplace is 'asexual', some agree strongly (38,6%). According to the results only, people do perceive sexuality as 'invisible' and do not believe it has any place in the work environment. There are also people who feel neutral (17,3%) towards this particular matter; 3,1 per cent disagree, and another 3,1 per cent opposes strongly. The corresponding question about whether it is of importance to address issues of gender identity and sexual orientation in the workplace received even more varied responses, as is portrayed in Figure 6. There were fewer people with 'strong' opinions: 13,5 per cent strongly disagreed, and 11,1 per cent strongly agreed with the statement. Another 22,2 per cent disagreed, and 26,2 per cent agreed. The highest percentage of respondents (27%) kept a neutral standpoint.

Figure 6. It is important to address issues of gender and sexual orientation in the workplace (Question 8).
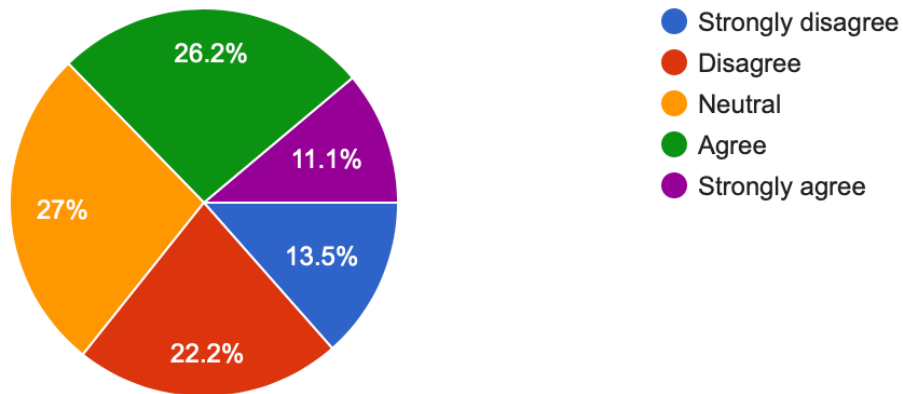
Following the questions about the nature of the work environment, participants were asked whether they see themselves as able to work alongside an individual of the LGBTQ+ community. 89 per cent were confident they could do so, 9,4 per cent said they could probably do this, and only two people (1,6%) did not believe they could work with an LGBTQ+ person. As the general opinion of people presented earlier in the analysis mirrors the results, a large number of people believe LGBTQ+ people to be like anyone else, they respect them and their choices and do not really care about how they identify, whom they love or what their personal preferences are.

Taking a step further, respondents were also asked whether they could step in when an LGBTQ+ colleague is being discriminated in front of them. The results, which can be seen in Figure 7, split into generously sized groups. The most significant percentage (54%) of participants were not sure if they could stop the discrimination, which most likely has to do with the fear of association. 27 per cent were confident they could prevent discrimination from happening, and 19 per cent did not believe they were able to do so.

Figure 7. I can stop the discrimination of LGBTQ+ people by others (Question 10).
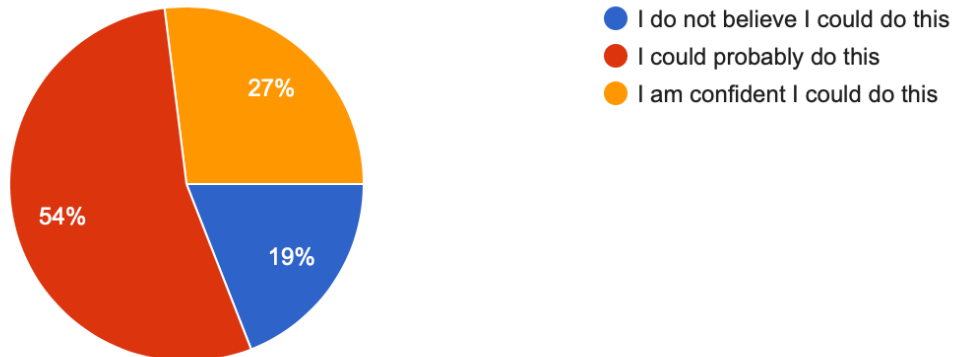
Unfortunately, this question also poses somewhat of a vague interpretation. As it was not specified what kind of discrimination was meant in the matter, people might have understood and imagined the situation differently. Some might have thought about bullying such as verbal bullying or physical attacking; others might have interpreted it as job discrimination, for example, lack of opportunity to grow within the organisation. An employee, as a third party, might not have the 'power' to do anything against it, thus answering with 'could probably do this' or 'do not believe I could do this'.

4.4   Applied Equality Policy

In this chapter, the participant was presented with an example of an equality statement from The Coca-Cola Company, that explains on what basis it is forbidden to discriminate. Following the excerpt, respondents were asked three questions related to the example directly, as well as their personal preference regarding the work environment. The first question of this section asked whether or not the person would like to work in an organisation that applies such policies. For 80,3 per cent an equality policy of this sort was attractive, and they replied with 'yes'. For 17,3 per cent, it did not make a difference whether such policies were in place or not. Perhaps they did not identify with any of the demographic groups that were mentioned in the example and felt safe and protected regardless. The remaining 2,4 per cent said 'no' they would not like to work in such an environment.

Further, the respondents were asked to express their emotions if they were to work in an environment where an equality policy, such as in The Coca-Cola Company, was applied. They had the opportunity to select from an array of positive and negative emotions, as well as a neutral point of view. On the one hand, 58,7 per cent would feel the freedom to express themselves. 36,5 per cent would have to motivation to be productive, and 54 per cent would feel like their organisation supports them. For 31,7 per cent of the participants, it did not make a difference. On the other hand, 1,6 per cent felt excluded from the statement, 0,8 per cent felt insecure, and another 0,8 per cent experienced anger imagining working in the described workplace. The results are a representation of the literature review earlier in the thesis, which identified on several occasions, that equality policies evoke an overall positive attitude from its staff.

In a second open-ended question, people were asked if they preferred to work in an open and diverse or in a traditional workplace. After having analysed the results, this question, too, seemed to present certain confusion and lack of explanation. Even though a significant number of participants understood the problem as it was intended, it was not made clear what 'open and diverse', and 'traditional' signifies; and a few respondents pointed out the inadequate posing of the question, as they believe that one does not exclude the other and a traditional work environment can and should be open and respectful.

Originally, what the researcher intended to create, was a clear differentiation between the positive connotation of an open environment and the negative connotation of a traditional one. More specifically, it was meant to portray a simplified picture, where there is only diversity in an open workplace, as there are policies in place that support and protect a firm's diverse workforce. Whereas, the traditional environment is rigid, cold and has no room for individuality, does not encourage inclusiveness and is generally narrow-minded. Upon analysing the results and rethinking the issue, it is clear that such a black-and-white perspective is insufficient in a research such as this.

Nevertheless, the resulting opinions proved to be diverse and brought different matters and viewpoints to light. Quite a few people would prefer a traditional environment over an open and diverse one, because they believe aspects of one's life

such as religion and sexual orientation to be something intimate, which should stay intimate. These aspects should not have an influence on the work environment and employees should separate between their personal and professional lives. One participant argued:

> [A] Work environment should be far from sexuality issues. It is another part of everybody's personal life, and it shouldn't be put under examination or explanation. Your colleagues should not [care] about you being heterosexual or LGTBIQ, they just should care about you being a great expert. Of course this implies respect, and a 'traditional' work environment doesn't mean to have a lack of it.

To a number of people, the kind of environment they are working in does not make a difference, as they prioritise other things such as respect from the employer to the employee and a friendly collective. Others argued that what does matter is reaching an objective, or an employee's competence and their contribution to value creation. The majority of people, however, would prefer to work in an open and diverse environment. The reasons were that such an environment comforts people, as it allows them to express themselves freely. Such freedom implies the emotional stability of the employees, which in turn makes them more effective and productive. Moreover, having a diverse workforce connotes more space for creativity, a vast variety of perspectives and new ideas; and all of this drives innovation. Additionally, being an open and diverse organisation means attracting a greater talent pool, as personal attributes such as gender identity and sexual orientation do not stand in the way of appreciating skills and performance. Furthermore, in such an organisation, all employees are equal and have the same rights and opportunities to grow within the company. Another reason for choosing an open and diverse workplace was also that people might feel less insecure about communicating with others, as they would not have anything to hide; and through open communication, employees can learn from each other a lot. The researcher would like to bring attention to one particular quote that summarises the standpoint for an open and diverse work environment:

> Work is such a major part of our lives, yet a traditional workspace forces people to hide from who they are outside. We are incentivised to bring our skills from outside into the workplace yet hide who we really are and soften what we really

think just to fit into archaic social norms. I am not saying that there should be no boundaries in the workplace, yet we should not fear being our self and bring our true personalities to the role - even the simplest or most mundane of roles.

5 Conclusion

The now concluded research aimed to educate the reader about the general topic of diversity and the LGBTQ+ community, what difficulties they have to face in the working environment, how it impacts Diversity Management, as well as what equality policies and practices are being applied in organisations to include and protect LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination. The thesis conducted secondary research to illustrate common concepts and share what has been done compared to the theory behind the actions. Diversity proved to be beneficial for companies as it brings more talent and ideas together, gives more perspective on customer demands, and all in all improves the bottom line. It is crucial to manage a diverse workforce to ensure their rights, needs and wants, motivate them and generate the best possible productivity, creativity and effectiveness. If the environment is not open and inclusive, people cannot feel comfortable enough to bring their whole authentic self to work and have to compartmentalise their life into private and professional. Sometimes it requires a lot of effort and energy to fain being straight, often, colleagues assume an LGBTQ+ individual is, due to the commonly spread heteronormativity.

On top of that, should an individual fall victim to bullying or formal discrimination, worsens their overall work experience and their state of mind. They might experience a cognitive dissonance from having to differentiate between strands of identities. Extensive research has shown that this only leads to mental issues on the part of the employee, which in turn negatively affects their work performance. For this reason, governments and organisations, who strive for diversity, apply equality policies and practices, such as ERGs or BRGs for a variety of demographic groups, they offer employee and management training and make statements on diversity in their annual reports, where they also mention unlawful discrimination.

All in all, the thesis set out to answer three questions. First, how educated are people about the LGBTQ+ community? Second, what do people think about how others,

especially the members of the LGBTQ+ community, should be treated in a work environment? Thirds, how do potential employees perceive applied equality policies? In order to answer these questions, an online questionnaire was designed, targeting people older than 14 of any gender, nationality, belief and educational background. After one month of data collection, the results proved to be diverse and insightful. Generally, people are quite aware and well educated about the 'main' sexual orientations, the ones that have been present the longest and discussed the most: lesbian, gay, bisexual. The majority was also well acquainted with the transgender identity. However, there is less awareness and knowledge of everything beyond 'LGBT'.

Furthermore, people seem more educated on sexual orientation rather than gender identity. Identities such as agender, bigender and pangender were the least known terms – also the least accepted ones by some of the more negatively thinking inclined participants. That might have to do with the binary thinking that is all too present in the majority of culture. It is difficult to comprehend, how one might not identify with their assigned sex, or even feel like none of the two standard genders apply to them. Perhaps it will never become more effortless for cis-gendered people to have a notion of gender identity beyond the binary system, which is not actually necessary. What is, however, necessary, is to accept that some things are not meant to be understood. Nonetheless, the overall perception and opinion of the LGBTQ+ community were more positive than negative, although a large number of respondents expressed their general disinterest in other people's personal lives and abode by respect for others, their rights and choices. Different results were just as interesting; however, due to the vague posing of some questions, they might not be as representing the sample as wished for.

Which leads to the limitations of this research - due to inexperience on the researcher's part in conducting studies and designing questionnaires, as mentioned before, might have led to misunderstandings and invalid results. Furthermore, due to the time constraint and the sensitivity of the topic, the sample is not large enough to represent the population. Additionally, the researcher identifies as a heterosexual cis-female, who does not have any personal insight into the community, which may result

in insufficient definitions of terms, misunderstandings and heteronormative ignorance.

Nevertheless, it can be said that there is a lack of education on the matter of the LGBTQ+ community, which needs to change. Companies could use research such as this to make sense of how aware, willing to learn and understand and inclusive their employees are. A firm can additionally establish where on the spectrum it is as one unit regarding diversity and inclusiveness. As human development, in any possible way, is inevitable, people and companies have to adapt and accept that there are differences among them. Organisations will mostly have a diverse customer base; thus, they need to make an effort to retain them by satisfying their needs. That is only possible if they are able to understand them, what drives and motivates them, what their core values are. That is also a basis for future research - more general education on the matter of LGBTQ+, more awareness on diversity and the benefits of being inclusive. More specific research can also be done on the individual groups, such as gender identity minorities, their experiences as part of the LGBTQ+, as there is also tension within the community; their integration in society and work experiences.

To sum up, being aware of others, the way they are, how they express themselves is relevant and basic human respect. It should be promoted in any environment, from a young age. It is debatable whether or not young children should be exposed to the LGBTQ+ community in their education. However, they should be taught that there are differences in humans which may go beyond their comprehension. With respect being aware and inclusive should be more natural, which in the future, living and working in a globalised and diverse world, will only be of advantageous for anyone.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

Dear participant,

My name is Dominique S. Dietz and I am a student at Modul University Vienna. I am currently writing my bachelor thesis and am researching the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community in Diversity Management. If you are older than 14 years, I kindly invite you to participate in this research by completing this questionnaire.

The questionnaire will take you approximately 5 minutes to complete. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to continue at any time. The data provided will stay confidential and I guarantee your anonymity. Should you choose to take this survey, please know that there are no right or wrong answers. I only ask you to answer all the questions as honestly as possible.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding my study, please feel free to contact me via email dominique.dietz@hotmail.com.

Thank you for taking the time to support my research.

Dominique S. Dietz

LGBTQ+ in general terms

1. Please tick the terms you have heard at least once in your life.
   o Agender
   o Ally
   o Androgynous
   o Asexual
   o Bigender
   o Bisexual
   o Cisgender
   o Gay
   o Gender fluid
   o Intersex
   o Lesbian
   o Pangender
   o Pansexual/Omnisexual
   o Queer
   o Questioning
   o Transgender

2. Please tick the terms you are somewhat familiar with.
- o Agender
- o Ally
- o Androgynous
- o Asexual
- o Bigender
- o Bisexual
- o Cisgender
- o Gay
- o Gender fluid
- o Intersex
- o Lesbian
- o Pangender
- o Pansexual/Omnisexual
- o Queer
- o Questioning
- o Transgender

3. Please tick the terms you are confident you know the meaning of.
- o Agender
- o Ally
- o Androgynous
- o Asexual
- o Bigender
- o Bisexual
- o Cisgender
- o Gay
- o Gender fluid
- o Intersex
- o Lesbian
- o Pangender
- o Pansexual/Omnisexual
- o Queer
- o Questioning
- o Transgender

4. Do you know anyone who identifies as LGBTQ+?
- o Yes
- o No
- o I do not know

5. What is your general opinion on the LGBTQ+ community? (Please use the space below to answer). _____

6. I am willing to embrace other people's gender identities and sexual orientations (use the right preferred pronouns, accept their partners, befriend them, etc.)
- o Yes
- o No
- o Other

LGBTQ+ in the work environment

7. A productive workplace is an 'asexual' environment (it does not matter how people identify or what their sexual orientation is)?
- o   Strongly disagree
- o   Disagree
- o   Neutral
- o   Agree
- o   Strongly agree

8. It is important to address issues of gender and sexual orientation in the workplace.
- o   Strongly disagree
- o   Somewhat disagree
- o   Neutral
- o   Somewhat agree
- o   Strongly agree

9. I can work with people who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community.
- o   I do not believe I could do this
- o   I could probably do this
- o   I am confident I could do this

10. I can stop the discrimination of LGBTQ+ people by others.
- o   I do not believe I could do this
- o   I could probably do this
- o   I am confident I could do this

Applied Equality Policy

Kindly read the excerpt from The Coca-Cola Company's Equal Opportunity policy statement below and answer the corresponding questions.

"The Company is committed to maintaining a work environment free from all forms of unlawful
discrimination and harassment. It is the Company's policy to prohibit discrimination and harassment against any applicant or employee on the basis of race, color, religion (including religious dress and grooming), sex or gender, national origin, ancestry, age, mental or physical disability, medical condition, pregnancy, military or veteran status, genetic information, citizenship status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression, or any other reason prohibited by law."

11. Would you like to work in an environment that applies this type of equality policy?
- o   Yes
- o   No
- o   Does not make a difference

12. How would you feel working in an environment that applies this type of equality policy? Please tick as many options as you wish below.
- o   Free to express myself

- o   Motivated to be productive
- o   Supported
- o   Does not make a difference
- o   Excluded
- o   Insecure
- o   Angry

13. Would you prefer to work in a traditional work environment or in an open and diverse one? Why? Please use the space below to answer.
_____

Demographics

14. Gender
- o   Female
- o   Male
- o   Prefer not to say
- o   Other

15. Age

16. Nationality/Ethnicity

17. What is your religion/belief?
- o   None
- o   Christian
- o   Muslim
- o   Jewish
- o   Buddhist
- o   Hindu
- o   Prefer not to say
- o   Other

18. Highest completed level of education
- o   No schooling completed
- o   Compulsory education
- o   High School graduate
- o   Trade/technical/vocational training
- o   Bachelor's degree
  - •   Master's degree
  - •   Doctorate degree