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LGBTQ2 Experiences with Stigma and Discrimination in the Workplace

Executive Summary

Prepared for the Privy Council Office

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Executive Summary

Background and Objectives

The Privy Council Office (PCO) commissioned Delvinia Inc. to conduct online in-depth interviews on the experiences of LGBTQ2 individuals with stigma and discrimination in the Workplace.

Although LGBTQ2 people enjoy the benefit of workplace protections in all Canadian jurisdictions, there are still potential negative workplace culture and norms that may lead to challenging experiences for LGBTQ2 people.

The purpose of this research project is to learn how anti-LGBTQ2 stigma and discrimination affects employees, not only when it happens, but throughout the course of their career.

The objective of this research was to collect narrative accounts of the lived experiences of stigma and discrimination that LGBTQ2-identified people have had in the workplace. These narrative accounts aim to provide information to direct conversations with partners both internal and external to government regarding the need for any further research and the development of policy priorities.

Methodology

A survey was administered to a national online panel, AskingCanadians, according to the *Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research—Qualitative Research* and *Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research—Online Surveys*. The respondents had the right to respond to the survey in their preferred official language.

For the purpose of identifying and recruiting LGBTQ2 individuals who are currently employed for follow-up in-depth interviews, the study was conducted in two (2) parts from March 13 to March 20, 2020:

1. As part of the quantitative qualification, LGBTQ2 individuals who are currently employed were identified through the screener by means of self-identification questions on birth gender, gender identity, sexual orientation¹, and employment status.
2. Once the quantitative screener was completed, a cross-representation of LGBTQ2-identified individuals were invited to take part in a *qualitative* online interview using artificial intelligence (AI) in-depth interviews called CRIS (Conversational Research Insight System)². Participation in the interviews was completely voluntary.

The data and charts displayed here are weighted according to the national representation of sex, age and region, as per the most recent Statistics Canada census data.

¹ Questions required to identify LGBTQ2 individuals are based on Statistics Canada standards.

² Detailed information about AskingCanadians, recruitment process and CRIS tool is in the Detailed Description of the Research and Findings section.

Sample Profile

Overall, the screener questions of the quantitative portion of the research were completed by 3,002 survey respondents. To minimize the non-response bias and to ensure that the total sample is representative of the Canadian labour force, hard quotas were implemented for the age and region of the respondents. Any minor variations in the final data were corrected by weighting the data to the national standards defined by the most recent Statistics Canada census data^{3,4}.

The total sample includes only labour force participants. This was identified as Canadians who either are working full-time (that is, 35 or more hours per week), working part-time (that is, less than 35 hours per week), or self-employed, and all work with organizations that employ 2+ employees.

The qualitative portion of the study was completed by 62 respondents who had identified themselves as LGBTQ2 and were willing to answer further questions about their experiences in the workplace. The fall-out was natural with a minimal sample control over the participants chosen for the interview. Soft quotas of minimum one (1) complete per each demographic group of LGBTQ2-identified individuals to ensure diversity of the sample.

In total, 42 people in English and 20 in French went through the interview with the virtual moderator. The average CRIS interview length was 6 minutes overall (n = 62) with an average of 10 minutes among those who had experiences with workplace stigma and discrimination in the workplace (n = 16).

Note on interpretation: As with all qualitative research, results are directional and not statistically projectable to the target population.

Summary of Key Findings

In total, 8.8% of the Canadian working population identified themselves as LGBTQ2. Of them:

- 4.9% of respondents self-identified lesbian or gay, that is, sexually attracted to people of the same sex;
- 3.3% of respondents self-identified as bisexual, that is, sexually attracted to people of both sexes;
- 0.6% of respondents self-identified as transgender, which is individuals whose gender identity or expression does not match the sex they were assigned at birth.

Key Qualitative Findings

Sixty-two (62) respondents went through the interview with the virtual moderator; 42 in English and 20 in French. Respondents showed good representation in terms of sexual orientation (lesbian or gay n = 34, Bisexual n = 25, Other n = 3) and the majority of respondents (n = 60) identified as cisgender with two respondents (n = 2) identifying as transgender or other. From their descriptions of their current workplaces, we can see they

³ Statistics Canada 2020. Table 14-10-0017-01 Labour force characteristics by sex and detailed age group, monthly, unadjusted for seasonality (x 1,000). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/1410001701-eng>.

⁴ Statistics Canada 2020. Table 14-10-0287-03. Labour force characteristics by province, monthly, seasonally adjusted. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/1410028701-eng>.

cover a wide range of professions (education, real estate, labour, management, professional, military, public and private sector) and a variety of job situations (office, factory, on the road, on worksites) and tenures.

Fewer than half (n = 29) said their gender identity and/or sexual orientation is known by most or all in their workplace, while the remaining respondents (n = 33) said their gender identity and/or sexual orientation is known by some or not known in their workplace. Reasons for the lack of awareness vary, but a key theme, whether their gender identity and/or orientation is known only by some or not known at all, is that the respondent feels it is unnecessary or that they are more comfortable keeping it private.

About a quarter of respondents (n = 16) say they have experienced stigma or discrimination in the current workplace. Often the stigma or discrimination that respondents have experienced is related to general insensitivity around stereotypes, language and jokes that makes them feel like an outsider and to a lesser extent overt name calling. Some of the stigma or discrimination that respondents have experienced has been implied, in that it takes the guise of another issue which they feel has impacted their career advancement.

Of those who have experienced stigma or discrimination in their current workplace (n = 16), very few have formally addressed it with their employer (n = 4). When it was formally addressed, most respondents felt their employers had clear mechanisms in place to report the issue and were satisfied with the outcome. The mechanisms for reporting the issue included having clear workplace policies, written documentation and providing the ability to have frank conversations.

The majority who have experienced stigma or discrimination in their current workplace have not formally addressed it with their employer (n = 12). The reasons they have not addressed it tended to be related to fear that doing so would not change anything and might potentially make matters worse. There was some hope that things are changing for the better, but respondents still felt that more could be done to stop stigma and discrimination in the workplace, including having clear policies and leading by example.

Among those who say they haven't experienced stigma or discrimination in their current workplace, most said the main reason driving this is that their workplace is inclusive (n = 28) or that their gender identity and/or sexual orientation is not known in the workplace (n = 14). Those who feel their workplace is inclusive attributed this to the nature of the industry they are in and to the open-mindedness of people they work with. Some also talked about policies that are in place, and an environment where there is zero tolerance for any kind of stigma or discrimination (not just related to gender identity or sexual orientation).

When asked for their final thoughts on how workplaces in general could be more inclusive, many talked about ensuring that clear policies are in place. And several talked about how important leadership is in setting the right example in terms of appropriate language and behaviour.

Additionally, the sentiment of each of the participant's responses was analysed using the Google Cloud Language API. (An Application Programming Interface, or API, is a software intermediary that allows two applications to talk to each other. In this case, CRIS calls the Google Cloud Language API to return the sentiment score for each response). Across all participants and responses, the average overall sentiment was neutral. However, negative sentiment was observed in approximately half of the responses when participants shared their specific workplace situations and experiences of stigma and discrimination.

Notes to Readers

- All quantitative results in the report are expressed as a number, unless otherwise noted.
- Where applicable, the unweighted sample size for various demographic groups is shown in brackets under the chart.
- All qualitative results are expressed by numerical counts, as to avoid any implication that results are projectable.
- The number of respondents changes throughout the report because questions were asked of sub-samples of survey respondents. Readers should be aware of this and exercise caution when interpreting results based on smaller numbers of respondents.
- The survey questionnaire (including the questions asking in the qualitative CRIS experience) is appended to the report.
- The tabulated data are available under separate cover.

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Statement of Political Neutrality:

I hereby certify as a Senior Officer of Delvinia Inc. that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not contain any reference to electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leader.

Original signed by



Raj Manocha

Chief Revenue Officer

Delvinia Inc.