TO WHAT EXTENT DO LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY MEMBERS EXPERINCE DISCRIMINATION IN THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY.

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Abstract

The following paper shall discuss and explore to what extent do LGBTQ+ community members experience discrimination in the food and beverage industry. Beginning with an introduction, to define and explain what discrimination and sexual orientation is. Highlighting how current this topic is, sexual orientation only became a protected ground in 2003 in the Employment Equality Act. The aims of the paper is to evaluate how many people are 'out' in their workplace; this refers to, if one openly admits and expresses their sexual orientation. How discrimination, if experienced, presents itself and what kind of policies are companies offering to help their employees. It will review previous research and academic studies that exist in the field regarding all elements of sexual discrimination in any workplace, not specifying it to any industry. Next to highlighting the reasoning for the methodology; in depth interviews. In depth, interviewing allows the research to gather vast detailed information on a specific topic. It will gather, analysis and conclude all the relevant information in an attempt to answer the hypothesis. Revealing surprising conclusions such as 40% of participants are not out in their workplace and 0% of organisations offered formal policies. Lastly, the paper recommends areas for further research, such as how relative the industry is to the results and what factor does age play.

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Contents

Introduction

This Thesis will discuss to what extent do LGBTQ+ community members experience discrimination in the food and beverage industry within Ireland. It will review general findings in the areas of sexual orientation discrimination. It will then attempt to answer the research question by analysing and discussing findings from primary research generated through in depth interviews. It will leave off with recommendations for further study within the topic of research.

"Discrimination refers to unjustifiable negative behaviour towa rds a group or its members, where behaviour is adjudged to incl ude both actions towards, and judgements/decisions of , group members." (Correll et al, 2010, p. 46). At its most basic, sexual orientation refers to whom you are attracted sexually and romantically to. The labels that follow sexual orientation are given dependant on your own gender and the gender of the people you are attracted to. For the purpose of this study the following sexual orientations are prevalent; Gay, Lesbian, bisexual and pansexual. A person who identifies as gay is typical a male who is attracted to same sex people. A lesbian is typically a woman who is attracted to same sex people. A bisexual is typically a person of any gender who is attracted to both male and female people. A pansexual is typical a person of any gender attracted to people of any gender. It is important to note sexuality is complex and fluid and that these definitions are generic and may not apply in all circumstances. Sexual Orientation does not fall into neat boxes and tends to not be a fixed or static thing. Sexual orientation is a very complex matter as it is inherently effected both by nature and nurture of individuals. Sexual orientation can be divided up into seven categories; Attraction, Behaviour, Fantasies, Emotional Preference, Social Preference, Lifestyle, and Self-Identification. All of which comes into effect when one is understanding one's own sexual orientation. (Aaron, M, 2016).

The main aims of this thesis are as follows; to see to what extent individuals are openly out within their workplace, to discover if discrimination is prevalent, what way does it manifest itself within the workplace, Lastly, to see what kind of policies and procedures workplaces offer on discrimination such as bullying and harassment etc.

The initial interest for this topic stemmed from two things. Firstly, a love for employment law and how important it is to everyone's rights and experiences in the workplace. People spend most of their waking hours in their working environment, employment law is there to help ensure they have a fair and equal

experience. Secondly, it comes from personal experiences of discrimination within workplaces which peeked an interest to discover how common such occurrences are in similar industry within Ireland. Although, Ireland is a first world country with a progressive view on accepting differences, discrimination is still prevalent which can be easily seen through the many cases of discrimination the courts and the workplace relations commission deal with each year. 11% of all WRC cases are based just on discrimination issues. (Buckley, 2016). In particular, the interest for LGBTQ+ community came from personal experience of discrimination. Sexual orientation discrimination is one of the least researched of the nine grounds that you cannot discriminate under. This thesis and the research it generates is important for the following reasons, firstly as previously mentioned there is little research within the topic of sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace in Ireland. This may be due to how recent the issue is, Up until 1998, it was still considered an illegal offense to be participate in homosexual relations. Sexual orientation was only added into the nine grounds you can't discriminate under in 2003 in the Employment Equality Act. (Irishstatutebook, 2018) (Bohan, 2013). Secondly, this topic is about equality. Equality is the basic foundation of any fair society. It helps to stop any section from dominating others and allows us to recognise those that need more support. It is the only way to build a peaceful community. Thirdly, from a business point of view discrimination within the workplace has huge financial repercussions on the organisations due to increase in turnover, absenteeism and a lack of employee engagement. The cost of replacing an hourly working employee can vary anywhere between 5,000 to 10,000 Euro. This kind of turnover on a large scale has significant financial implications for a business. (Burns, 2012). Lastly, it effects a vast amount of the work force within Ireland, with Approximately 10% of the Irish population identifying within the LGBTQ+ community. This number is said to be rapidly growing every year, therefore it is crucial that this topic is researched, and light is shed on the current situation facing Ireland. (O'Brien, 2015)

The reasoning for specifying the research to the food and beverage industry was firstly, this industry tends to be made up of non-skilled work which leads to an organisational culture of employee disposability. Secondly, it was chosen out of convivence. All the people being contacted were students who commonly would work in the food and beverage industry.

Previous research

Section One: Recruitment and selection

Discrimination based on sexual orientation occurs even before an individual becomes an employee in the workplace. LGBTQ+ members are facing bias views which lower their opportunities of being offered employment, solely based on perceptual errors and stereotyping. Pichler et al (2017), looks at aversive discrimination during the recruitment and selection process. Aversive discrimination is "subtle, often unintentional, form of bias." This type of discrimination is coming from individual heterosexist attitudes. They created a study where they showed interviewers several video interviews of men both homosexual and non-homosexual and asked them to rate these interviews. As their hypothesis suspected the men perceived as gay were on average given a lower rating than their heterosexual comparators. This was despite the interviewers self-reported acceptance of LGBTQ+ members. Similar to this, Luiggi-Hernandez et al (2015), found during their sample of 157 LGBTQ+ members being interviewed that 62.2% reported being discriminated against in the interview through the forms of, derogatory terminology, jokes and out right homophobic remarks. They pointed out that an individual's perceptions of LGBTQ+ members can be deeply rooted within the country the organisation is located. They promote a need for social awareness within an organisation and suggest the need for public or mandatory best practices on sexual orientation and diversity. Parallel to this Lambert (2015), suggests the need for an organisation to create a culture of tolerance from within. It highlights the importance of having statements within the recruitment and selection policy that supports diversity in sexual orientation. It also suggests the possibility of using the selection process to wean out intolerant individuals. This overall helping to create a more accepting and diverse organisation. (Molloy, 2017)

Section two: "Coming out"

The LGBTQ+ community is "one of the largest but least studied minority groups in the workforce."(Ozeren, 2014) Sexual orientation along with family status, religion etc. are invisible diversities in the workplace. This meaning it can be even more difficult for an organisation to control discrimination against these minorities. One big factor that effects this is whether LGBTQ+ members are open about their sexual orientation within the workplace. There is a lot of fear around "coming out" in work for LGBTQ+ members. They face the possibility of non-acceptance which comes in the form of joking, verbal and physical abuse and the loss of employment. Ozeren (2014),

states that gay men in particular are the most likely to lose their job for "coming out". Ozeren's research looks at this discrimination from a financial point of view, finding that discrimination against sexual orientation cost organisations 1.4 billion in 1994 alone. They suggest having a supportive climate for LGBTQ+ is critical. This may be done through equal opportunity policy, the presence of LGBTQ+ organisation group or trade union and members of the LGBTQ+ being in roles of seniority. Wright et al (2006), reinforces this by saying only 57.8% are openly out within their workplaces, leaving nearly half of LGBT+ members concealing their sexual orientation. They reiterate the key importance of a company having an equal opportunity policy. Having the policy my not be enough, the organisation needs to provide all employees and management with training about the diversity of workers and promote a culture of tolerance in the workplace environment. Although legislation exists in many countries to protect individuals against discrimination, there are loop holes within this legislation that leave in particular LGBTQ+ members vulnerable. There is a religious clause within the Irish employment equality act 1988. Section 37(1), which allows an organisation that is religious based or funded, in the educational or medical sectors to be exempt from this law. For example, a teacher that works within a school that is funded or run by the church, their job may be terminated if found that they are a member of the LGBTQ+ community. Many individuals who work in such sectors must conceal their sexual orientation in hope of remaining a sense of "invisibility". (Vasquez del Aguila et al, 2011). Eliason et al (2011) re-emphasises this in their study of LGBTQ+ experiences working within the medical field. Over 65% saying they experience derogatory comments and refusal of other physicians to work along side of them solely because of their sexual orientation. The low level of individuals that are out within the workplace means also a lot of discrimination is going unreported. This meaning that the statistics may be given a falsified view of discrimination in the workplace. Russell et al (2017), reports that only 0.5% of complaints made in Ireland are about sexual orientation, however 30.6% are categorized as other. They note that within this other section appearance, mannerism and wrong behaviours that may be associated negatively with LGBTQ+ members are a large percentage of this category. The more individuals that feel safe and supported to come out within the workplace will help the organisation to control such discrimination between employees and management. There is a gap here in the research as statistically we are unsure how much discrimination is taking place as for

many LGBTQ+ members may be afraid to make a formal complaint. (Molloy, 2017)

Section Three: Policy and procedures

The policies and procedures that an organisation has in place are key in creating tolerance and diversity within. Factors external and internal to the organisation effect the level of policies a business has. Some companies may be at the fore front while others only have the bare minimum needed to conform with legislation. Everly and Schwarz (2015), draws an interesting comparison that organisations with women serving as directors have higher links to policies and procedures on LGBTQ+ issues. Pichler et al (2017), looked at the outcomes of having supportive LGBTQ+ policies within an organisation. Having such policies can lead to having a competitive advantage by improved quality of workforce through recruitment, lower turnover and less stressful environment. Ragins and Cornwell (2001) contributes to this by adding that discrimination based on sexual orientation is highly more likely to be reported by organisations that have a policy and procedure supporting them. It also concluded that the presence of policies and practices in an organisation is the strongest link directly related to lowering discrimination. All these findings were concluded from a study of 534 employees who identify as lesbian or gay. On the other hand, Theriault (2017), reminds organisations how they can cause unintentional negative consequences by promising practices that don't follow through and having a lack of knowledge on the issues that affect LGBTQ+ members. There is gap in the research and theory here on what type of policies should be used. There also isn't much information on how to implement and regulate these policies. My research question would aim to discover the type of policies needed, by getting the real issues from individuals who are members of LGBTQ+ community. (Molloy, 2017)

Methodology

Methodology is looking at how we gather data and the models we use to process it. Methodology is "a set of ideas or guidelines about how to proceed in gathering and validating knowledge of a subject matter." (Little, 2014). In its simplest form, methodology is a recipe for generating justified statements. Firstly, it is important to review what type of answers your research will generate, whether that is quantitative or qualitative. This research question is of a personal topic that is in a specific field. Patterns are not set and only will emerge as the research is conducted. Qualitative research needs interpretation by the researcher. As the thesis question does not pose a yes or no

answer the data gathered must be interpreted in order to come to any conclusions. Secondly, a decision on how data will be gathered needs to be made that is in align with the research question and the resources available. Several options that were plausible included, surveys, secondary research, case studies, interviews etc. When one is choosing how they will gather data they must consider the following; sample size, timing, resources and existing information. (DeFranzo, 2014).

The methodology chosen needs to be in align with the key research aims, which are to see to what extent individuals are openly out in the workplace, to see how discrimination manifests itself and lastly to explore any policies or procedures that are in place to prevent such discrimination.

Due to the subjective nature of the study, the research would need to adopt an interpretive approach. Thus, meaning interpretation and perception of the interviewer would play a large role in the outcome of the results. The data gathered would have to be compared with previous research to see if they concur with one another. The ability to gather primary research for this topic was dependent on gaining access to appropriate resources. The study is on a very specific field of individuals, which means that there is limited resources. The intrusive nature of the research meant there would be limitations and objections from the pool of possible participants. (Jackson, 2011). Two methods that were considered for conducting research, were surveying and in-depth interviews. The first consideration was surveys conducted through an online engine. Surveying consists of questioning participants on a specific topic or topics and gathering the responses. Surveying can be done through a few methods such as in person, mail, phone and internet. Usually, a set questionnaire would be devised with several questions that should not be leading. The downsides of surveying are that you cannot see the responses of the individual. Usually, there isn't enough time or space in a questionnaire to express one's opinions accurately. There is the issue that participants may provide inaccurate information. Also, the data may be interpreted incorrectly as the researcher can't question the responses of the participants. Due to these disadvantages and refined level of participants this method was not chosen. (Denscombe, 2010). The methodology used for the purposes of this thesis was in depth interviews. In depth interviews fall under Qualitative research, it is a technique which is used to conduct one to one intensive interviews. When using this technique there is usually less respondents as each interview gathers vast amount of data. They are used when the research is focused on one

specific situation or objective. Questions are posed at the participant in an objective manner, listening attentively and giving the freedom to explore other topics. The interviewer may also use prompts which may be verbal or physical i.e. body language, such as a hand movement, gesturing the individual to continue speaking. To try keep the research objective, consistent and fair, questions that will be asked during the interviews should be constructed before the interview and asked to each participant taking place. Despite this, participants should be encouraged and prompted to discuss in detail their experiences and feel free to share any information they feel might be relevant to the topic. (Conway et al, 1995).

Taking all these factors into consideration the best option for this thesis was in depth interviews for the following reasons. In this case, individual's responses from interviewees on the issue being explored were way more valuable than a large set data about responses to same research question. We could gain far more insight into the topic by allowing time to explore the experience. Due to the sensitive nature of the information and the personal nature of the topic, the participant needs to be in a one to one environment where they feel they can freely share their experience. By allocating more time to the interviewee it gives space for them to become more comfortable and share their true opinions and experiences. The topic is vast and invites a great deal of information. The Interviews needed to be in depth to give a long enough time for the subject to express themselves fully, a time constraint could mean the risk of losing valuable data. The resources available had to be taken into consideration such as the lack of financial resources, time constraints and participants. (Boyce and Neale, 2006) (Steber, 2017). The lack of willing participants meant that in depth interviews would be more suited as you would need less respondents. 86 Subjects were contacted regarding the research, however only 12 responded that they were willing to participate. Out of the 12 willing participants, 10 were interviewed due to time constraints. Exact reasoning behind this low response can't be confirmed, however, a few reasons that were given were fear of being exposed, some were not open about their sexual orientation and were not ready to speak regarding it and a less ominous reason was they had not yet worked in the food and beverage industry.

In order to find participants for the research, local LGBTQ+ societies in Colleges in the Dublin and Wicklow area were contacted asking for any willing individuals, who identified within the LGBTQ+ community and had previously worked in

the food and beverage industry, would partake in research. Through this method Participants essentially choose themselves.

However, with this choice come some pitfalls. Firstly, in depth interviewing is a subjective process, despite measures being put in place to regulate the process by nature it is subjective which could affect the accuracy of the research. Interviews must be interpreted by the researcher meaning less objectivity. Another issue was keeping on topic within the interview, the topic is so vast that there could be an overload of data and the true aims of the research may be forgotten during the interview process. It may become difficult to differentiate what information is key for the research question and which isn't relevant for this topic. Thirdly, in depth interviewing is usually used to discuss topics that by their nature are personal which means individuals can be very reluctant to share true feelings or experiences. Fourthly, We, must be aware when interviewing people there is always a possibility of exaggeration or even untruthfulness, this must be taken into consideration when drawing final conclusions. Lastly, lack of experience or training of the researcher in conducting such interviews affects data accuracy. (Steber, 2017).

The study itself consisted of 10 participants whose ages, gender, sexual orientation varied, but with one constant that was their job title and industry they worked in.

The chosen participants were all asked the same questions. Before the questions were asked, the following statement was made clear to all participants. 'Before I begin with asking you any questions it's important that I state that this interview will be anonymous and confidential. Your name or place of work will not be used but instead an alias such as subject A or 1. It's also important to know that once this research is completed, analysed and transcribed, this audio recording will be destroyed. Thank you.' This was very important to the process as the participants discussed private and personal information about themselves and others.

The following thirteen questions were asked in the same order for each participant.

1. Please state your age and the gender you identify under.

2. Do you identify within the LGBTQ+ community, if so Please state the label which you most closely identify under.

3. Please state the industry you worked or are working in and the job title you held or hold.

4. During your time within this job position were you openly 'out' to employer, colleagues etc.

5. If so, what was your experience of employers, colleague's responses to this.

6. During any recruitment process has your LGBTQ+ identity ever been asked, noticed or mentioned.

7.what was your experience as a LGBTQ+ member with customers you may have dealt with in the industry.

8. Do you feel your identifying with the LGBTQ+ community has affected your experience in working in this industry.

9. Do you feel you ever faced any discrimination verbal or non-verbal based solely on your LGBTQ+ status.

10. If so, how did this discrimination manifest itself examples include, jokes, taunts, verbal abuse, none verbal and lose of hours or termination of employment.

11. Where You aware of any policies or procedures your company had on such conduct.

12. Has any experience caused you to be more cautious with being openly 'out' in the workplace.

13. Do you feel you were treated equally and offered same opportunities as those who don't identify within the community.

The questions were carefully formulated to be clear and concise. They were made to not be leading but to encourage the participant to develop their own answer and feelings. The questions also addressed the main objectives the research aims to answer. All, of the interviews took place in a similar setting which was a coffee shop.

See Appendix 1 and 2, for Sample transcribed interviews.

Analysis

The primary research gathered was 10 in depth interviews with individuals of different age, sex, sexual orientation, but with the same variable being there job position/title, which was bartender/waiter.

All participants were students currently in third level education. The participant age varied between 19-26 years of age, gender categories included female, male and non-binary participants, the sexual orientation included lesbian, bisexual, gay and pansexual.

See figure 1.1 for exact breakdown.

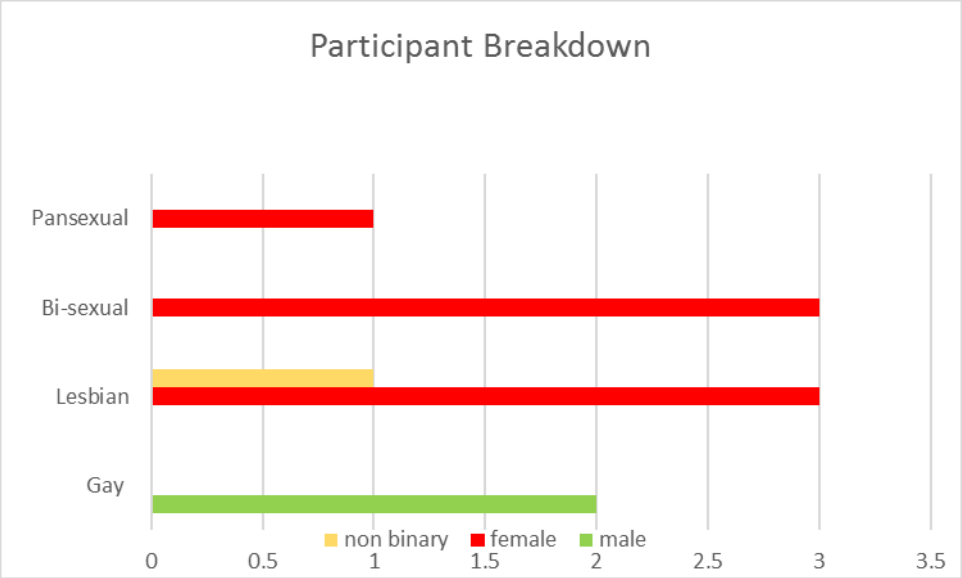

Figure 1.1

Section One: Coming out

The term coming out refers to expressing and openly sharing your sexual orientation. It is a metaphor used for the LGBTQ+ community to self-disclose one's sexual identity or orientation. Coming out or being out can also be used when referring to non LGBTQ+ topics such as religion, but in the context of this research it will only refer to the first definition. The research initially focused on whether the participants were openly out about their sexual orientation to colleagues and management in the workplace. Out of the 10 participants only one was fully openly out to both colleagues and management. 5/10 participants were partially out to selected colleagues and some superiors. 4/10 were not out in their work place at all. See figure 1.2.

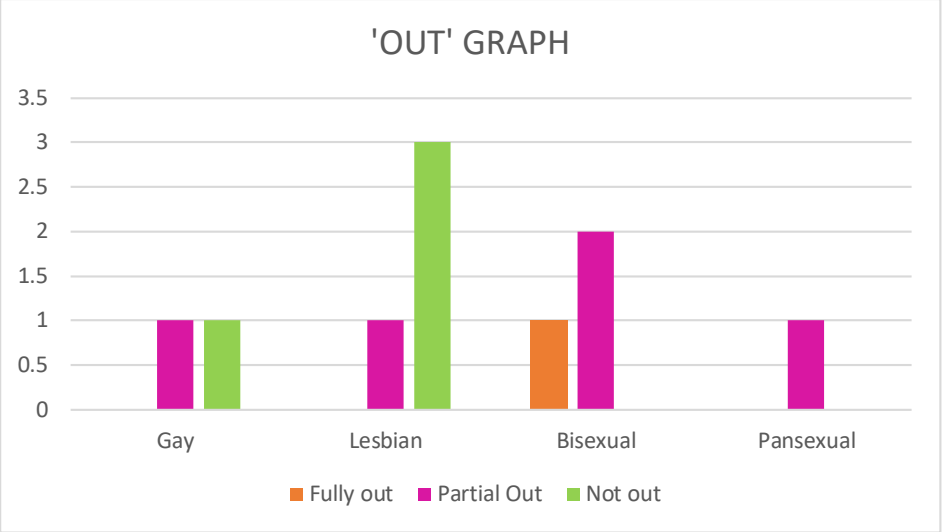

Figure 1.2

The research then posed why or why not the participant was out in their workplace. The following were the reasons. Those who were fully out gave the reasoning they were aware previous to being employed that the manager had a daughter who was a member of the LGBTQ+ community, so they made the assumption that there wouldn't be a homophobic response. Thus, in their opinion making it safe to come out as for they believed it would not to affect their work environment, treatment or opportunities. This means their choice to be open was based solely on their perception of others and not on what they wanted to do. This highlights the fear of coming out.

The 5/10 that were out to varied degrees gave the following reasons. All 5 said it was because they had built a close relationship with some colleagues and felt comfortable telling them. This however was time relative, meaning those individuals were closeted for some amount of time previous. 4/5 added that dependent on the gender and age of colleagues would affect their choice. The younger colleagues were, the more likely the participants were to come out to them. Also, participants were more likely to come out to female or non-binary colleagues than males. Does this pose the possibility that the LGBTQ+ perception is that male gendered individuals tend to be more homophobic than female. 2/5 added that they would tell colleagues but not management, as management were in charge of their work progression and feared inequality. Interestingly this may be linked to the policies and procedures that the company value and put forward. See figure 1.3

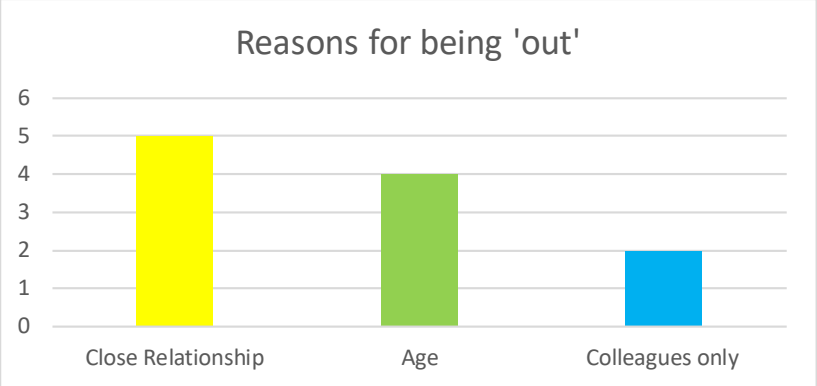

Figure 1.3

The 4/10 who weren't out at all in the workplace gave the following reasons; All four 4 participants agreed on two main reasons for not being out in the workplace. Firstly, a general fear of homophobia and homophobic responses. Secondly, they did not want to have to be exposed to inappropriate jokes or comments made solely on their sexual orientation. 2/4 also added they didn't want to answer questions regarding their sexuality or having to justify or explain their orientation to people. What they felt would not be relevant if they were straight. 1/5 added a fear of losing their job due to the known age and religious choices of their management. See figure 1.4.

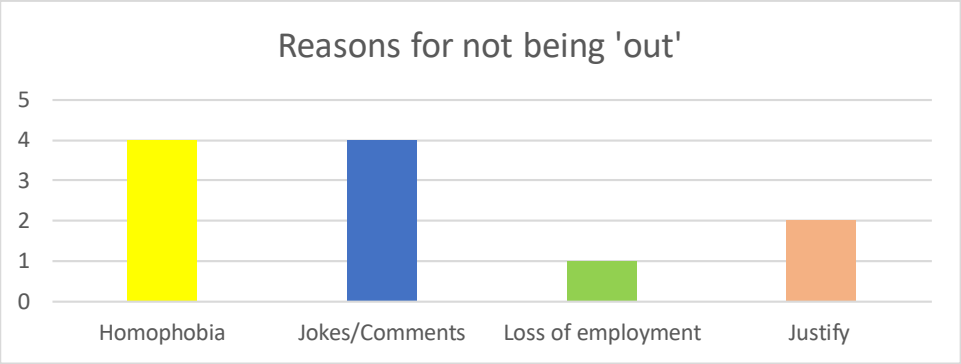

Figure 1.4

Interestingly, the labels on which the participants fell under correlated to their decision to be out or not in the work place. The 4 participants who were not out were gay or lesbian. Those who were bisexual were more likely to be out in the work place. One of the participants believed this was because "they were still half 'straight' so this made it easier for people to accept them as normal.' This is the concept of hetro-normalisation of the workplace.

Interestingly, a common factor amongst all participates was they all expressed when starting the job they spent some time trying to figure out how liberal their colleagues, management and organisation was. Their perception of whether LGBTQ+ community would be accepted within the company helped make their decision to be out or not.

Another factor that is worth noting, is that Participants with previous experiences and experiences of those they know effected their decision to come 'out' or not. If the individual had a bad or homophobic response to coming out in their personal life they are less likely to be out in their professional life. An individual's decision to be out in work is not solely up to the organisation or the culture of that business. There are personal factors that come into play. External factors play a huge role, however the more organisations that create a culture of tolerance will have a domino effect. The society in which they are based, helps it to progress and become normalised within the culture.

Section Two: Manifestation of discrimination

Discrimination can be described as "an action or practice that excludes, disadvantages or merely differentiates between individuals or groups of people on the basis of some ascribed or perceived trait" (oxfordbibliography, 2018). The 6 participants that said they were out in the work place to some extent were then questioned did they feel they experienced any discrimination or unfair treatment based solely on their LGBTQ+ status. 1/6 participants experienced zero discrimination. Meaning a large 5/6 experienced some form of discrimination within the workplace which is 83.3% of the participants. The participants were then asked how that discrimination manifested itself. The way the discrimination manifested itself was all verbal and financial abuse. It manifested itself in 4 main ways; homophobia, loss of employment, sexualisation and taunting/joking. All 5 participants who experienced discrimination experienced offensive and inappropriate jokes/ taunts that were based solely on their sexual orientation. 2/5 experienced homophobic comments, remarks or reactions. 2/5 experienced sexualisation. This meaning they were subject to inappropriate questions and suggestions regarding their personal sex life. 1/5 did experience what they believed was termination of employment due to coming out in the work place. See figure 1.5

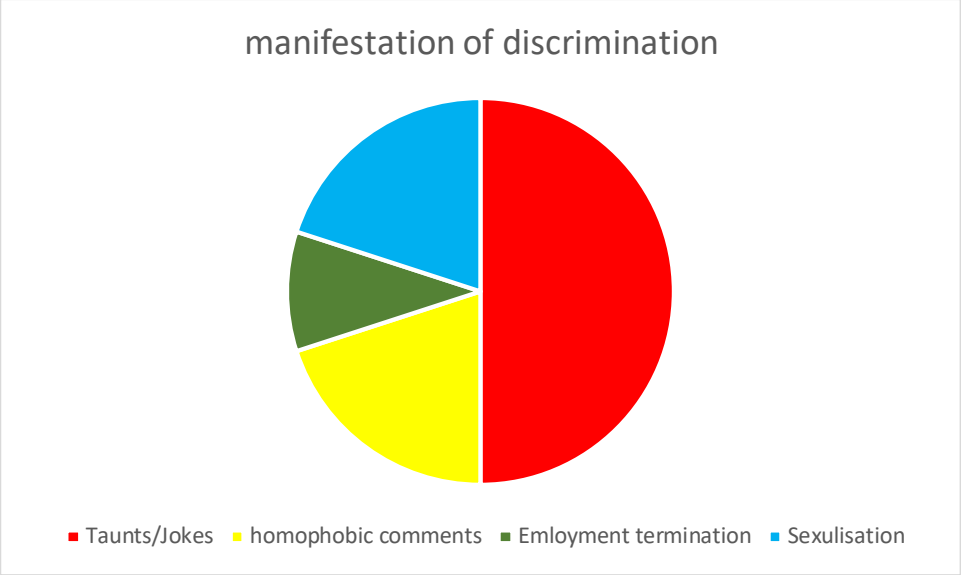

Figure 1.5

These results are extremely significant. All these manifestations of discrimination are not only homophobic but are bullying and harassment issues. 5/6 LGBTQ+ community members are experiencing being harassed basely solely on their sexual orientation. This is not anyway in line with the statistics about bullying within an organisation. A study done in the UK reported in the year 2000 was done on 5,288 participants across 70 different organisations. The results from this showed that 24.7% experienced bullying/harassment within the last five years. 46.5% witnessed bullying in the last five years. These results are significantly lower than what this research revealed. 5/10 participants experienced harassment of some from, this is a large 50% of the community. This shows how LGBTQ+ community members as a minority group tend to be far more venerable to bullying/harassment within the organisation.

A largely reported 100% of participants that experienced discrimination experienced what they felt were offensive jokes or taunts that solely based on their sexual orientation. This brings up the issue of what language and behaviour is considered appropriate in work. It is impossible to control what people say in a work place but by setting guidelines and standards of what is and isn't tolerable can help to curve this behaviour.

2/5 of participants experienced what they described as sexualisation. They were victim to inappropriate comments and suggestions of sexual nature by fellow colleagues. This highlights a whole other issue within organisations, which is sexual harassment. The two participants who experienced this were both female and the inappropriate behaviour was coming

from male individuals. This opens up a larger issue of how much gender is affecting LGBTQ+ experience of discrimination.

Section Three: Policies and procedures

All participants were asked on beginning and during their employment was their any known policies or procedures made aware to them and colleagues regarding discrimination, harassment, bullying, equality etc. None of the 10 participants were told or informed of any policies the company had in place. None of the 10 were given an employee handbook with policies. This may be directly related to the industry the participants worked in. All participants worked in the hospitality sector. In particular the food and beverage industry. By its nature this industry tends to be filled with non-skilled low paying jobs. Due to this, many organisations don't want to spend time and financial resources in developing policies and best practises. However, with this sector having one of the largest employee turnovers, (acts). In the long-term companies could save financially by creating these policies. They will increase their chance of retention and employee engagement, which will lead to an all over more productive viable company.

Conclusion

This chapter will review and summarize the thesis research, identify the key methods used and discuss their implications on the study.

The thesis set out to find too what extent do LGBTQ+ community members experience discrimination in the food and beverage industry. The thesis aimed to answer key questions; are people 'out' in the workplace, what types of discrimination are present and is there any policies or procedures being offered by organisations. The methodology used was in depth interviewing for the purpose of gaining large amounts of data on specific individuals experiences. It involved creating stable interview questions and presenting them to participants in the same manner, encouraging discussion and allowing time for detailed answers. Although in depth interviewing comes with many difficulties, it was the best choice due to the sensitive nature of the topic.

The analysis involved breaking the participants into different categories and from there breaking up the main aims and analysing in detail. Overall the results were in line with previous research that had been conducted however there were a few obscurities that are key to highlight. Firstly, the surprising figure

that 40% participants were not out in their work place. This percentage is a lot higher than anticipated which may be due to the small sample size. Baska, (2018), reports that only 20% of LGBTQ+ people are not 'out' in the workplace. The results discovered here are double that. This could have huge repercussions on an organisation because if an employee isn't bringing their full self to work their engagement levels tend to be lower. Secondly, 2/5 participants who experienced discrimination experienced behaviour of sexualisation. This not only being a discrimination issue but a serious one of sexual harassment. Although the behaviour does stem from their sexual orientation, it exposes a larger issue of level of sexual harassment in the workplace. Has it become an accepted culture norm within some organisations?. Lastly, the most shocking conclusion is the complete lack of any formal policies or procedures within the food and beverage industry. Organisations are completely ignoring the recommended best practices and due to this there, employees are suffering the negative consequences. This largely effects the productivity and financial situation of the business due to lack of employee engagement, absenteeism and high turnover.

Recommendations

The research gathered from this thesis has left so much unanswered and posed many more questions to be answered. It has left clear gaps where change needs to happen in organisations such as their culture, tolerance and policies.

Building a culture of tolerance breeds diversity within organisations. The benefits of diversity mean a more mixed skill set, new ways of thinking and overall better innovation and creativity. With the business world rapidly changing and competitive advantage becoming more important diversity is what can give an organisation their edge or niche. By developing diversity training for employees within the organisations can help to breed this type of culture.

A key recommendation for organisations within the food and beverage industry is to put time and resources into the Development of bullying/harassment policies with set, clear defined rules and repercussions. Such policies must be adhered to by all employees. It must filter down from top management to all employees, management need to lead by example.

The results that have come from this research create many more topics to be investigated. Some recommendations for the academic field are as follows. Firstly, why is there such lack of research despite the huge repercussions, could this be to do with

the level of tolerance within Ireland. Most research regarding LGBTQ+ discrimination is from other countries. Sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace is a current and prevailing issue within Ireland and the more research gathered, the better we can understand and develop solutions for the issue. Secondly, it would be interesting to research companies within the food and beverage industry and ask why there isn't policies in place. To understand the true reasoning behind the lack of formal procedures. Another area for discussion is to do similar research in various different industries and draw comparisons and differences to discover how industry related it is. Another area would be to research a different age group and see how relative age is as a factor in the workplace.

The thesis has provided a huge insight into very current experiences, but it has opened up a world of unanswered questions that need to be addressed.

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Appendix

Section One: Sample Transcribe Interview three

Interviewee: Participant Three

Interviewer: Sinead Molloy

Date and Time: 20th February 2018 and 14:51

Location: Coffee Shop

Audio file information: Audio one and 14:01

Additional Notes: The Participant was very open and easy to talk to, was eager to share information.

Interviewer: Okay firstly, to begin with I have to state for the record that anything that is recorded will deleted afterwards and that this is confidential and that the name or the place you said you have worked won't be used, you'll be known as participant 1 or 2 etc. Also, that once this information is analysed this audio recording will be deleted.

Participant: Yeah that's fine, no bother.

Interviewer: First if you wouldn't mind would you state your age and the gender you identify with most?

Participant: yeah so, I am 20 and I identify as female, she, her.

Interviewer: that's fine, do you identify within the LGBTQ+ community and if so which label would you most identify with?

Participant: I'm bisexual

Interviewer: Okay so what industry have you worked in retail or hospitality?

Participant: hospitality in a restaurant

Interviewer: As like waitress or?

Participant: Yeah, I've done waitressing, food running, I've done reception, I've done bar work.

Interviewer: Oh, it's one of those places where you kind of learn to do everything.

Participant: Yeah, completely, got moved round the whole place.

Interviewer: okay, so, during your time there were you openly out to the people you worked with or?

Participant: No because chefs as is, are disgusting enough just as it is being female, but some of the girls I worked with knew because we were kind of friends.

Interviewer: okay, so only with some of your colleagues then. Okay so what was your experience with our colleague's response?

Participant: Em, well one of them when I told her went to the bathroom and because she said she was afraid she was going to get sick, so that was really unpleasant, yeah.

Interviewer: so, that was her initial reaction to you telling her you are a bisexual?

Participant: yeah so, we like were in the bar part and I told her, and she was like oh my god I'm going to get sick. She went to the bathroom and I explained to her that I don't fancy you in particular and then she went and got offended and said 'why don't you fancy me'. But like the other girl was really nice about it and said it's no big deal.

Interviewer: So, you definitely had a mixed experience.

Participant: And the chefs in the restaurant constantly made jokes all the time about lesbians and I thought I'm never going to tell them.

Interviewer: Yeah, understandable, Okay, so would you say then because you didn't actually come out to your employer or managers, would at any stage do you feel if you had remained in the job that you would have came out?

Participant: No definitely not, no, cause the fear.

Interviewer: Fear of what exactly?

Participant: Just that like it was already a difficult situation with the staff being predominantly male and they are very sexualised in there jokes and I didn't want to draw any more attention to myself.

Interviewer: Okay yeah of course, okay did you find during the recruitment process that your sexual orientation was asked or mentioned or anything?

Participant: No not to do with my sexual orientation necessarily but tere was a joe made about would I have time to work

weekend nights when I'd be spending it with my boyfriend or whatever. So, they just automatically assumed I was straight.

Interviewer: Yeah so in a round about way it was mentioned. So, then with customers did you ever have an experience with?

Participant: No, no, they wouldn't even have noticed.

Interviewer: Do you feel then that any of these experiences have affected you working in the hospitality industry, as in do you feel if you were not a member of the LGBTQ+ community that you would have had the same experience?

Participant: yes and no, I do think just being a female really impacts your whole experience, like and all girls I worked felt the same, that them being female was hard.

Interviewer: okay but the colleague you did tell do you feel if you were straight that relationship would have been different or the same?

Participant: Yeah completely, it changed our whole relationship after I told them, yeah it would have been different. Like I hadn't told her I think we would have remained closer.

Interviewer: so, it created maybe tension between you's?

Participant: Not even, shes just a homophobe and think she was afraid I'd make a move on her or something.

Interviewer: okay so, do you feel you faced discrimination verbally or non verbally based on just being bisexual.

Participant: like not necessarily directly towards me, the chefs would joke about gay people but not directly at me. And as for that girl I guess yes but like it was never mentioned again in work. So, I guess verbally kind of.

Interviewer: yeah so, the girls reaction of I'm going to be sick can be seen as a verbal discrimination against you for your sexuality.

Participant: yeah

Interviewer: So, you said it wasn't mentioned again so you never experienced any jokes or taunts about sexuality?

Participant: yeah like loads of the colleagues would make jokes all the time saying, 'do you have a boyfriend?' and you would say no and then they would say 'why cause you're a lesbian'.

Interviewer: yeah okay so did you find generally there was just an air of jokes about sexuality?

Participant: yeah there was, like for instance my manager there we become quite close like friends and when she would come in we might greet each other with like a hug or kiss on the cheek or something and the chefs would be like 'oh do it again, can I watch'. And stuff like that, just made me so uncomfortable.

Interviewer: yeah, okay where you made aware that the business you worked for had any policies on this issue?

Participant: Nope nothing

Interviewer: So, nothing even maybe when you signed a contract about their different policies or maybe a handbook they may have given you to read?

Participant: Literally nothing. And I even expressed before how I was uncomfortable with how the chefs would speak to me and I was told that 'I would get used to it.'. So, then that's why I ended up leaving working there.

Interviewer: okay so they followed no procedure and didn't acknowledge or take your complaint seriously.

Participant: No, they didn't care about me, so I left.

Interviewer: Has any of these experiences caused you to be more cautious in the future about being openly out in work?

Participant: yeah actually it did like I get scared to tell anyone in my workplace but then recently I was at a gay club and saw one of my work colleagues there too and he knows now but I still don't think I will tell anyone else. I don't think it's something they necessarily need to know. Like I'm there to work no to form relationships so that's kind of how I see it now.

Interviewer: okay, do you that's discriminatory to you because if you were straight you wouldn't have to conceal that part of you. For instance, you might be more cautious and say partner instead of boyfriend or girlfriend to avoid the pronoun.

Participant: yeah that is true but luckily because it's only part time job it doesn't affect my life too badly.

Interviewer: Okay so your student now so when you finish your degree and begin your career would it effect you more?

Participant: oh yeah, I don't it will be something I'll say to people because I'd be afraid of their reaction and honestly don't want it to change peoples opinion of me.

Interviewer: So, in a sense you feel closeted by it?

Participant: yeah definitely.

Interviewer: Do you feel you've been treated equally as your straight comparator?

Participant: No, I don't because if I was in a relationship with a woman I'd feel I'd have to hide it so like I couldn't fully be myself and have to be on alert. Like because I would not want to deal with their reaction.

Interviewer: So, it's a fear that the reaction is going to be negative?

Participant: yeah cause like several people expressed homophobic views on more than one occasions I kind of assume it would be the same generally.

Interviewer: So, you felt you didn't even have a chance to come out because from the offset you could sense homophobia within the workplace?

Participant: yeah totally it was just their attitude. Like I feel like it was a cultural ting I don't know if Irish men would have been the same.

Interviewer: Okay, so the people involved weren't of Irish nationality.

Participant: No, they weren't. Honestly, I feel like they were bullies and maybe it was a way for them to relieve their stress or whatever but that doesn't make it okay.

Interviewer: yeah, of course not.

Participant: yeah, I think some people get some enjoyment out of it if that makes sense.

Interviewer: yeah, I understand lie they relish in it. Okay is there anything else you feel like you'd like to add or say?

Participant: yeah I just think that in a general sense bisexuality is more difficult for people to understand than just being heterosexual or homosexual, the whole thing having to have a preference, so I think even if I had came out I'd then have to explain it and justify it to people and makes it that little bit more daunting.

Interviewer: Yeah, I understand, okay perfect, thank you very much.

Section Two: Sample Transcribed interview Seven

Interviewee: Participant Seven

Interviewer: Sinead Molloy

Date and Time: 13th March 2018 and 19:33

Location: Coffee Shop

Audio file information: Audio two and 13:46

Additional Notes: Participant seemed relaxed but not eager to have in depth conversation, found it difficult to get the participant to engage.

Interviewer: Okay firstly, to begin with I have to state for the record that anything that is recorded will deleted afterwards and that this is confidential and that the name or the place you said you have worked won't be used, you'll be known as participant 1 or 2 etc. Also, that once this information is analysed this audio recording will be deleted.

Participant: Okay grand.

Interviewer: Okay so firstly, please state your age and the gender you identify with.

Participant: Em, twenty-five and female.

Interviewer: Okay, do you identify within the lgbtq+ community and if so can you please state the label that you most closely associate with?

Participant: Lesbian.

Interviewer: Please state the job title and industry you worked in or work in currently for your chosen employment of discussion.

Participant: Well I work in next door off license.

Interviewer: So, the industry you work in would be retail then.

Participant: Yeah and I'm the assistant manager I guess.

Interviewer: During your time within this job position were you openly out to your employer and colleagues from the beginning?

Participant: Yes, I was.

Interviewer: Okay please describe your experience of their responses.

Participant: Em, my colleagues would have been my pals anyway so, they wouldn't have really cared either way.

Interviewer: Okay, what about your employer's response?

Participant: My employer didn't care either.

Interviewer: Did you tell him directly?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: How did you tell him?

Participant: My girlfriend came in one day and I was like oh this is s****, my girlfriend.

Interviewer: Did he respond or say anything?

Participant: No, he didn't, it didn't really phase him at all, his daughter is gay, so it wouldn't really be a thing for him.

Interviewer: Okay cool, during your recruitment process like going for interviews for jobs has the fact that you are a member of the lgbtq+ community ever been asked, come up or mentioned to you?

Participant: No, I don't think so, getting this job was very informal, I just walked into the shop and got a trial run you know.

Interviewer: What was your experience as an lgbtq+ member with your customers?

Participant: What do you mean?

Interviewer: For instance, has any customers ever made a comment about it or?

Participant: I wouldn't really be bringing it up, like if there was a conversation about the gays I wouldn't join in. I just ignore it.

Interviewer: Do you feel your identity with the lgbtq+ community has affected your experience in the retail industry?

Participant: Em, not really like, I wouldn't, if I was going into a job walk in and say hi my name is s**** and I'm gay, I just wouldn't mention it, unless they said it to me then I would say yeah, I am.

Interviewer: So then do you feel you've ever faced any discrimination verbal or nonverbal solely based on your lgbtq+ status?

Participant: Em well the kind of customer base I'd have wouldn't be like, trying to think of what I'm trying to say, like a lot of customers would come in and be like 'oh there were these two queer lads up in the pub' or whatever but I'd just respond and say I have no time to listen to that and I'd walk away but in my experience nearly anyone under the age of forty are fine with it now a days.

Interviewer: Do you feel then, that has affected you in wanting to maybe hide in work, your lgbtq+ status?

Participant: No not really no.

Interviewer: So, if any, how has discrimination you may have experienced manifested itself such as jokes, taunts etc.

Participant: Em, well if anything had been said it wouldn't be directly towards me.

Interviewer: Such as?

Participant: Just like what I said early how people might mention the gays as a whole kind of thing and like say it in a negative way.

Interviewer: Okay are you aware if your company has any policies or procedures based on these issues such as equal opportunities policy?

Participant: What do you mean?

Interviewer: For instance, when you were first employed in the employee handbook or in your contract?

Participant: No, I was never given either of those things.

Interviewer: Have any of your experiences caused you to be more cautious being openly out in future employment.

Participant: I think if I was there a while and it came up in conversation like I'd say it, but I wouldn't say it straight away.

Interviewer: So, for instance, some people might say partner instead of girlfriend or boyfriend to keep the gender neutral.

Participant: Em, depends I have done it before but now it wouldn't really bother me like.

Interviewer: Okay thanks, do you feel that you've been offered the same opportunities as your straight comparator.

Participant: In the job I have now yeah definitely, I just think the way my boss is, I just wouldn't even come into account.

Interviewer: That's great.

Participant: Yeah, I'm lucky.

Interviewer: Any other job or experience you'd like to discuss or express you feel could be important to this discussion.

Participant: Em, well I worked on Vikings for those few years and I told everybody I worked with I was straight.

Interviewer: You did, why?

Participant: Just because of the way they went on.

Interviewer: How do you mean?

Participant: Oh, that was very much of a load of men, where gays were the butt of almost all their jokes.

Interviewer: So, you were in a work situation you were around colleagues who were making clear homophobic jokes and that made you then in turn conceal your sexuality.

Participant: I just thought it be easier to say nothing.

Interviewer: Okay, but did you find you thought okay if they do bring it up I'm going to just pretend to be straight.

Participant: Yeah, just because it be easier like.

Interviewer: Was that just colleagues or also management or those in supervisor roles?

Participant: Oh no that was just the colleagues who had the same job I did, they were just those type of lads.

Interviewer: So, that would make you cautious?

Participant: Yeah for sure.

Interviewer: Do you think then because of that experience then if you got a new job because of the mixed experiences you have you'd be more cautious to be openly out?

Participant: I suppose for me depends on the work environment you would be in like.

Interviewer: So, you try to gage or read the environment?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: So, a part of you does hesitate to be openly out in work?

Participant: Yeah for sure like I'd think if you give yourself a period of a week or two and try figure out if those people seem okay with being gay then maybe you know.

Interviewer: Yeah, I understand try to suss out it out if there is a possibility of homophobia before you'd share your sexuality.

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay thank you anything else you'd like to add or say?

Participant: I don’t think so no.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Participant: That’s alright, was no problem, was lovely talking to you.

Interviewer: You too really appreciate it.