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Case Study of Inclusive Environments for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Employees

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Abstract

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Employees

by

Darin D. Stephens

MS, Baker University, 1995

BGS, University of Kansas, 1993

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Despite the positive changes occurring regarding American attitudes toward members of

the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community, empirical evidence

indicates that LGBT individuals do not believe inclusive environments exist, as 48% of

the population remains closeted at work. A gap exists in the literature relating to the

formulation of practical solutions that establish and sustain inclusive environments. The

purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify the possible influence of cultural lag

on the workplace engagement of LGBT employees. Ogburn's cultural lag theory served

as the conceptual framework. The following research questions guided the study: (a) The

impact that antidiscrimination, social, legal, and organizational changes have had on

LGBT employees, (b) the effect of cultural lag on the career paths of LGBT employees,

and (c) best practices for implementing strategies that create and maintain inclusive

environments for the advancement of LGBT employees. Purposeful snowball sampling

led to the selection of individuals who were open about their sexual orientation in the

workplace. Twenty-seven participants came from various industries within the

Northeastern, Midwestern, Northwestern, and Western regions of the United States. Data

were obtained from open-ended interviews and were coded to find themes and

subthemes. The results indicated that generalizations can occur across geographical

locations or work environments and identified emergent themes for recommended best

practices and strategies for organizations. Implications for positive social change include

a greater understanding of, and support for establishing and maintaining inclusive

environments for LGBT employees.

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Dedication

I am dedicating this dissertation to my husband, Brian. I am so grateful your

patience and the sacrifices you made during this dissertation journey. You spent many

nights and weekends alone as I was locked in the office studying and writing. You never

once complained! You gave me the encouragement to make it through the peaks and

valleys. I could not have done this without you by my side.

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Third, soon to be Dr. Professor Tawnya Lubbes and Dr. Christopher Wells, you began as Walden peers and are among my closest friends in life. You are amazing friends, thank you for all you have done.

Fourth, the participants who willingly and unselfishly shared their journeys. I am very appreciative of your willingness to help make this possible.

Finally, to my family members, friends, and work associates, thanks for continually standing by me and encouraging me to make this dream a reality.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

An attitudinal change is occurring toward members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. There is a documented cultural shift, and Americans are now favoring equality in society (Pew Research Center, 2013). The increasing number of individuals coming out as LGBT to their families and friends is allowing more Americans to move beyond stereotypical attitudes. Individuals who are LGBT view their status as an advantage instead of a disadvantage in society (Hewlett, Sears, Sumberg, & Fargnoli, 2013). However, there is a lack of progress toward inclusive environments in the workplace, which has resulted in a decline in LGBT employee retention (Fullerton, 2013; Pizer, Sears, Mallory, & Hunter, 2012).

As a result of increased LGBT turnover, it is crucial that organizations reduce and prevent "invidious bias and discrimination, eliminate negative conflicts, avoid waste, and increased fairness" (Ferdman & Deane, 2014, p. xxi). Organizational leaders need to take advantage of the human capital of all employees to deliver better results for more people, organizations, and society (Hewlett et al., 2013). Nishii (2013) found an inclusive environment plays a significant role in reducing conflict in diverse working groups. Leonardelli and Toh (2011) discovered when coworkers perceive leaders treat colleagues of different groups in a procedurally fair manner, they are more likely to collaborate with these associates.

This study included an investigation into the career paths of LGBT employees. Social changes, discrimination, and organizational culture and policies affect individuals'

career paths. The establishment and maintenance of inclusive environments, grounded in best practices, have positive potential organizational and social implications. The following sections include descriptions of the background, problem statement, purpose, research questions, nature, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study.

Background of the Study

Despite social and legal progress, empirical evidence reinforces the fact that LGBT employees experience discrimination in the workplace (Platt & Lenzen, 2013; Rabelo & Cortina, 2014). They also witness prejudice, harassment, isolation, marginalization, and lower earnings ("Homophobia in the Workplace," 2012; Out Now Global, 2013; Rubin, 2011). They further face hostile environments that include antigay jokes and slurs by fellow employees or supervisors or they may have supervisors who look the other way when they witness such acts (Movement Advancement Project, 2013).

The political landscape on LGBT issues has shifted. In the November 2012 election, Maine, Maryland, and Washington voted to legalize same-sex marriage, and Minnesota blocked a gay marriage ban (Hewlett et al., 2013). In July 2014, President Barack Obama signed into law an order banning anti-LGBT bias among federal contractors and barring discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity (Donelson, 2014).

Researchers from the Williams Institute gathered results from multiple surveys that documented the extent to which LGBT employees face discrimination and

harassment at work (Burns & Krehely, 2011). A significant finding revealed up to 43% had faced job discrimination, perceived negative performance evaluations or experienced being passed over for promotions, were verbally abused, physically assaulted, or witnessed vandalism (Movement Advancement Project, 2013).

Closeted employees are 73% more likely to depart organizations than their colleagues who are out (Fullerton, 2013). In an effort to address this problem, organizations need specific strategies and practical solutions to establish and maintain inclusive environments. Although an extensive body of knowledge relates to general workforce retention, limited literature addresses strategies that foster LGBT inclusive environments. To respond to the gap in the literature, an in-depth examination of lived experiences was necessary and provided the opportunity to formulate recommendations and practical solutions for organizational leaders.

Problem Statement

Despite the social and political changes related to LGBT equality, there is a cultural lag (Ogburn, 1966) in the workplace that has not kept pace with American society (Gates & Kelly, 2013; Hewlett et al., 2013). A cultural lag cultural lag can occur when society witnesses a change that does not advance in an integrated and synchronized manner. Among the approximately 144 million Americans in the workforce, there are 9 million that distinguish themselves as LGBT (Gates, 2011; U.S. Department of Labor, 2014). The business management problem is discrimination, hostility, and adversity in

the workplace affect these people's career paths, despite social views of equality (Gates & Kelly, 2013; Hewlett, 2013; Platt & Lenzen, 2013).

Given their vulnerability to discrimination, LGBT employees often do not choose to disclose their sexual orientation, notwithstanding that 85% of Fortune 500 companies have incorporated protective policies related to sexual orientation (Hewlett & Sumberg, 2011). Statistics indicate 33% to 48% of closeted employees feel a cultural exclusion despite legal, social, and political changes (Hewlett & Sumberg, 2011; Hewlett et al., 2013). The cultural lag occurring in organizations continues to exist as employees face overt discrimination, despite the corporate policies protecting against such actions (Hewlett et al., 2013). Twenty-one percent of respondents reported receiving unfair treatment from employers in hiring, pay, or promotions, while 54% of LGBT reported experiences of slighting and snubbing at work and 77% of transgender respondents reported experiencing harassment and discrimination (Hewlett et al., 2013; Mallory & Sears, 2014). This statistical evidence indicates this is a significant and relevant issue in the workplace that needs addressing. A gap exists in the literature connected to the formulation of practical solutions that establish and sustain inclusive environments (Fassinger, Shullman, & Stevenson, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify the possible influence of cultural lag on the engagement of LGBT employees. The primary phenomenon is the relationship between inclusive environments and the impact on LGBT employee

engagement. Researchers have positively linked employee engagement to job attitudes, job performance, and company commitment, as well as health and wellness outcomes (Cole, Walter, Bedeian, & O'Boyle, 2012) and it is negatively related to turnover intentions (Batt & Colvin, 2011).

The focus of the study was the positive and negative experiences of LGBT employees and the potential influence these experiences have on employee engagement, commitment, retention, and organizational outcomes through in-depth interviews. The data gathered informed the development of recommendations that may foster the creation and maintenance of inclusive environments. Inclusive environments enable people to feel engaged, but this can only happen if people feel respected, involved, heard, well-led, and valued by others in the workplace. Current resources exist in providing practices to create equitable workplaces and inclusive environments. Among these resources are LGBT advocacy groups that promote the social welfare of the LGBT community and the adoption of LGBT inclusive policies and procedures. Representative samples of these organizations include Human Rights Campaign, Out and Equal, and Pride at Work.

Existing organizational policies and practices need enhancing and enforcing because they are not eliminating the discrimination facing LGBT employees (Rabelo & Cortina, 2014). This dissertation built upon existing practices. The next section outlines the research questions.

Research Questions

In this study, I answer three research questions to develop practical solutions that establish and maintain inclusive environments for all employees:

RQ1: What have antidiscrimination, social, legal, and organizational changes meant to LGBT employees in the workplace?

RQ2: What effect does cultural lag have on the career paths of LGBT employees?

RQ3: What are the perceived best practices for implementing strategies that create inclusive environments for the advancement of LGBT employees?

Conceptual Framework

Ogburn (1966) contended that cultural lags are likely to occur when society witnesses a change that does not advance in an integrated and synchronized manner. The conceptual framework in this study was the disparity between LGBT employee engagement and inclusive environments, which results in cultural lag in the workplace. Ogburn developed four types of cultural lag: Economic, technological, material, and nonmaterial conditions. According to Ogburn, there is an interconnection and an interrelationship between parts of culture and types of lags that can develop into breakdowns in social solidarity and increases in social conflict.

A fourth type of cultural lag exists when nonmaterial culture moves faster than other nonmaterial forms such as (a) established social behaviors promoting institutional inertia through the methods of vested interests, (b) compliance due to fear of exclusion, and (c) the past-binding power of custom (Brinkman & Brinkman, 1997). This cultural

lag leads to institutional lag, with conflict and maladjustment resulting in corporate culture lagging behind the social culture of inclusive environments (Brinkman & Brinkman, 2005). The cultural lag phenomenon exists regarding the increasing acceptance of the LGBT community in the workplace. Personnel continue to experience maladjustment through the discriminatory practices and behaviors of colleagues and leaders.

Cultural lag theory served as a suitable framework to explore why corporate culture, and the treatment and engagement of employees has not kept pace with modern social views related to the LGBT community. Researchers have used the theory of cultural lag in other studies to explain maladjustments between material conditions and cultural behaviors in society. Yoshida (2010) studied the effects of cultural lag on the decline of marriage across Japan. He tested Ogburn's hypothesis by comparing the participants' opinions of gender roles during an economic surge in the 1980s and a recession in the 1990s, both in Japan, among cohorts of Japanese males and females. Yoshida concluded that cultural lag theory predominantly influenced the decline in marriages for the boom cohort of women.

Byrne and Carr (2005) explored the stigma of singlehood versus marriage through the filter of cultural lag. Byrne and Carr posited that singles exist in a cultural lag amid the macrosocial shifts that embolden a desirable singlehood lifestyle versus the "slow-to-change ideals of marriage as the ideal state" (p. 85), and they concluded the ideology of family and marriage compromised the quality of life felt by individuals seeking the single

lifestyle. The cultural lag framework helped inform the development of the research questions to explore the effect of cultural lag on the career paths of LGBT employees. A more detailed discussion of cultural lag occurs in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

This study was a qualitative case study design. I explored a case in a contemporary context or setting. Yin (2014) posited that researchers of case studies investigate a contemporary phenomenon in a bounded system. The key concept in this study was developing an account of the experiences of LGBT employees with regard to their careers. The research design provided rich data that targeted best practices to create accepting environments for LGBT employees.

A purposeful snowball sampling strategy was suitable for identifying those who have experienced life as LGBT employees. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) contended a purposeful snowball sampling provides the ability to locate a few key participants, and while conducting interviews, seek referrals for others to participate. The criteria for participants were that they (a) self-identify as LGBT, (b) consent to participating in an audio-recorded interview, and (c) agree to review the interview transcript for confirmation of accuracy.

The sample population size "depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources" (Patton, 2015, p. 311). Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended sampling until the data reached the point of saturation or

redundancy. Patton (2015) supported sampling cases to "yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge" (p. 276). The sample size consisted of 27 participants. Participant recruitment did not take place at my place of employment, which eliminated potential personal biases. A snowball sampling strategy elicits an unbiased sample with characteristics representative of the target population (Ngwakongnwi, King-Shier, Hemmelgarn, Musto, & Quan, 2014).

Data collection consists of guided open-ended conversations with respondents (Yin, 2014). Interviews provide the ability to collect data in a fluid manner related to developing a composite description of the experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2011; Seidman, 2013). Patton (2015) said that interviewing allows researchers to learn with others experience and gather their stories. Data collection methods included interviews, audiovisual material, and documents. Data analysis included the following company documents: Employee surveys, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission records, and annual turnover reports. Such an approach involves deriving meanings from cases, which Erickson referred to as assertions (Nolen & Talbert, 2011, p. 269), and building "patterns, or explanations" (Yin, 2014, p. 132).

Data collection should occur in an environment that is comfortable and acceptable to both the participant and the researcher (Javalgi, Granot, & Alejandro, 2011), which can include participants' workplace, a local library conference room, or a community business center. This approach allows researchers to experience firsthand what and how the participants respond to the interview questions. This process provides clarification of

questions or messages from the participants. The tape-recorded interviews in this study were 30-60 minutes. I compared the tape-recorded interviews to notes taken during the analytical process. Also, I requested the participants to carefully review the transcripts for accuracy after the interview.

A representative from TranscribeMe, a professional transcription company, transcribed the interviews. I obtained a signed confidentiality agreement from TranscribeMe. Data analysis incorporated the interview transcripts and my notes. Coding and analyzing the data involved a seven-step process. Member checking occurred to ensure captured themes reflected participants' experiences. Data analysis also included a bracketing process to remove my potential personal biases. Chapter 3 provides full details of data collection and analysis procedures.

Definitions

Career paths: Growth of the employee in an organization (Ferdman & Deane, 2014, p. 298).

Cultural lag: When a culture does not advance as an integrated, synchronized whole but some parts accelerate faster than other parts (Ogburn, 1966).

Employee engagement: The sense of personal attachment to work, colleagues, and managers that motivates employees to demonstrate their highest level of performance in the workplace (Barrick, Thurgood, Smith, & Courtright, 2015).

Inclusive environments: An environment in which members value and use individuals and intergroup differences within the workforce (Ferdman & Deane, 2014).

In the closet: When others do not know the sexual orientation of a person (Benozzo et al., 2015).

Lived experiences: The experiences of participants naturally encountering the environment (Vagle, 2014).

Out: Outward disclosure of one's sexual orientation or gender identity (Mansh, Garcia, & Lunn, 2015).

Sexual orientation: The direction of sexual feelings or behaviors toward others (Russell & Toomey, 2012).

Assumptions

General assumptions in qualitative case study research, as well as the assumptions of this study, included:

1. The responses to interview questions were truthful based on their experiences.

2. There was a need to set aside personal biases (sexual orientation and workplace experiences) and objectively evaluate the data as they corresponded to the participants' responses.

3. It was necessary to validate any analysis and results with participants to eliminate potential biases and preserve the data.

4. In qualitative research, the interview is an important instrument for addressing potential biases.

5. It was necessary for the interview questions to be suitable for addressing the three research questions and provided clarity in the experiences sought.

Scope and Delimitations

The boundaries of the investigation included individuals living in the Northeastern, Midwestern, Northwestern, and Western regions of the United States. The study included individuals who self-selected to participate and those who were out to coworkers. The questions focused on participants' experiences. I delimited this study to 27 participants based on the viability of data they provided. Although the focus was on LGBT individuals, findings are potentially transferable to organizations whose leaders seek practical solutions for establishing and maintaining inclusive environments for a variety of diverse populations.

Limitations

A central element of a qualitative study is themes grounded in responses, stories, and experiences. Patton (2015) posited that individuals' emotional demeanor at the time of the interview could greatly impact their responses to the questions as a result of "personal bias, anger, anxiety, politics, and simple lack of awareness at the time of the interview" (p. 390). Patton contended data might be "subject to recall error, reactivity of the interviewee to the interviewer, and self-serving responses" (p. 390). Distorted responses were a potential limitation that I addressed through observations.

A limitation was the logistical challenge of conducting face-to-face interviews. As challenges arose, I incorporated telephone, Skype, and FaceTime interviews into the design. I ensured the timing and environmental setting of interviews were most suitable and least intimidating for participants.

Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco are liberal and accepting places for LGBT residents. Conducting the study in these locations could have been a limitation, as the results might not be generalizable to a broader base beyond these metropolitan areas. The study included participants from the Midwestern and Northwestern regions of the U.S. to enhance the potential generalizability of the findings.

An additional limitation was the concern participants had with regard to the fact that they did not know the researcher, who was asking them to provide in-depth information in response to each interview question. It was important to establish a comfortable rapport to minimize this potential issue. A solution involved identifying those who were unfamiliar with me and focus on rapport-building techniques during a pre-interview meeting. The data collection process required clear communication regarding interview protocol and procedures.

Significance of the Study

The percentage of LGBT employees who were in the closet in the workplace but out in their personal lives remained unchanged between 2011 and2013 (Hewlett et al., 2013). Thus, progress toward inclusive environments for LGBT employees was flat. Organizational leaders have attempted to make progress in developing welcoming environments for all employees. Despite these advances, employees still believe their sexual orientation is a detriment to their roles and responsibilities (Hewlett et al., 2013; Hewlett & Sumberg, 2011). These perceptions indicate there is a deficiency in the existing strategies of organizations. This study involved exploring best practices that can

help provide conceptual and pragmatic understanding, which organizational leaders can apply to develop strategies that lead to inclusive environments for all employees.

Significance to Practice

As LGBT employees continue to emerge in the workplace, understanding how members of this population make meaning of their own experiences and influence in ways that profoundly change organizations is important (Fassinger et al., 2010). A secondary goal was to recommend organizational strategies that produce inclusive environments. When inclusive environments exist, there is turnover reduction, economic savings, higher job performance, and greater employee satisfaction scores (Fullerton, 2013; Nishii, 2013). Nishii (2013) found climate inclusion plays a significant role in reducing conflict in diverse working groups.

Significance to Theory

This project adds to the body of literature through an examination into the effect of cultural lag theory on LGBT workplace experiences. Studying cultural lag theory provided a framework to evaluate why corporate culture and the poor treatment and engagement of LGBT employees has not kept pace with modern social views related to the LGBT community. The findings of this research provide insights into the strengths that LGBT individuals use to influence colleagues, followers, and organizations positively.

Significance to Social Change

Understanding the strategies that LGBT individuals use to influence positive social outcomes, as well as advance the knowledge and cultural understanding of their contributions, is necessary in scholarly research (Gates & Kelly, 2013). Implications for social change include greater understanding and support for organizations to establish and maintain inclusive environments for employees. Organizational leaders are essential for leading by example and supporting inclusive environments. In doing so, they create a trickle-down effect with subordinates across an organization. Subordinates should help support positive working relationships with LGBT employees, which leads to maintaining inclusive environments for all staff.

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Summary

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Chapter 1 included a discussion of the need to study LGBT workers and their lived experiences in the workplace. Despite the social, legal, and political changes occurring in society, LGBT employees face adversities in the workplace. Many organizations lack cultural environments in which employees feel comfortable being open in the workplace (Rabelo & Cortina, 2014). The level of comfort sought by personnel, regardless of sexual orientation, includes a safe environment to share personal information about partners, family interactions, and activities outside of the workplace. LGBT employees should be able to share without fear of judgment or a negative influence on performance evaluations and this should be the standard code of conduct at work.

The intent of this study was to discover the factors needed to ensure employees have inclusive environments at work. Work performance increases when individuals feel connected to organizational culture, colleagues, and supervisors. Organizational leaders have a corporate and social responsibility to ensure the existence of inclusive environments for all individuals. This study involved a process designed to identify best practices that organizational leaders can adopt to provide inclusive environments.

Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature, including a historical overview of LGBT employees in the workplace. The chapter sections will include (a) background and history of LGBT individuals in society and workplace discrimination, (b) social and legal movements for LGBT inclusion, (c) corporate inclusive environments, (d) LGBT self-efficacy, (e) cultural lag, and (f) LGBT inclusion related to cultural lag.

Chapter 3 includes the research methodology, methods, and rationale for the research design. The chapter includes the data collection procedures for the study. Chapter 4 contains the findings from the data collection. The results of the study may be beneficial to company executives, supervisors, and human resources (HR) managers seeking to establish inclusive environments for all employees. Chapter 5 discusses the conclusions of this study and the impact on social change. Finally, Chapter 5 includes recommendations for future research on inclusive environments for organizations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Cultural and political shifts are occurring regarding the acceptance of the LGBT community in American society. Changes have occurred that have led Americans to accept the lifestyle of LGBT individuals and view them as equals (Pew Research Center, 2013). These attitudinal shifts have resulted in more individuals feeling comfortable coming out to family members and friends. The growing number of individuals who are out has helped create a positive attitudinal shift, as a growing number of family and friends know and care about someone in the LGBT community.

Despite the cultural shifts, evidence exists in the workplace that LGBT individuals face discrimination and do not feel they work in an inclusive environment (Fullerton, 2013; Pizer, Sears, Mallory, & Hunter, 2012). A cultural lag exists in the workplace, which has not kept pace with society (Gates & Kelly, 2013; Hewlett et al., 2013). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify the possible influence of cultural lag on the workplace engagement of LGBT employees.

The first section of this chapter will include an outline of the key search terms and procedures employed in conducting the literature review. The second section will include the conceptual framework for the study. The third section contains an exhaustive literature review related to the historical influences and the workplace experiences of the LGBT community. The fourth section will contain a discussion of the various research methodologies and reasons why I selected one over the others.

Literature Search Strategy

A scholarly review of the literature took place through multiple information sources. The sources included the Los Angeles Public Library, Los Angeles LGBT Community Center, Google, Google Scholar, and bookstores (e.g., Amazon and Barnes and Noble) on subjects related to cultural lag theory, the LGBT community, and inclusive workplace environments. I accessed the online databases of Walden University Library. They included Business Source Complete, Academic Search Complete, and ABI/INFORM Complete. The search terms included *cultural lag theory*, *gay*, *lesbian*, *bisexual*, *transgender*, *LGBT*, *LGBT inclusion*, *LGBT discrimination*, *cultural change*, *historical influences*, *social change*, *social movements*, *cultural inclusion*, *LGBT leadership*, *inclusion*, *inclusive workplace*, *employee engagement*, *attitudes toward LGBT and homophobia*, *retention and retention strategies*, *LGBT retention*, *social movements in LGBT community*, *tolerance*, *case study*, *phenomenological study,* and *LGBT qualitative case studies*.

The search process began by conducting broad reviews of all relevant articles. The purpose of conducting broad searches was to avoid overlooking studies by confining the search terms. This process revealed additional content that allowed a deeper exploration of research than I could find otherwise. Narrowing the search strategy involved combining the search terms *LGBT* with *inclusion*, which led to articles related to workplace environments and the discrimination and exclusion experienced by LGBT employees. The next step involved downloading, reviewing, and coding articles

identified as relevant to the research topic to search for common themes. Another step involved examining reference lists from articles to exhaust the literature even further.

The review involved seeking theoretical information by exploring cultural and social inclusion, which led to Ogburn's cultural lag theory and provided the conceptual foundation for this work. Searches included the terms *case study* and *phenomenological study* in conjunction with category topics to identify studies in the literature. The searches produced studies related to LGBT individuals in the workplace but did not reveal studies correlated with LGBT and cultural lag theory. The following section is a review of literature associated with cultural lag theory as the conceptual framework for this research.

Conceptual Framework

The two leading scientists connected with the origin and theory of cultural lag are William F. Ogburn and Thorstein B. Veblen. Both scientists overlapped in their focus on the dynamics of general cultural evolution as the primary foundation for cultural lag theory and explanation (Brinkman & Brinkman, 2005). Although a general overlap existed between them, Veblen wanted a theory on economic evolution in the context of cultural evolution, whereas Ogburn used cultural evolution as a whole to explain the processes of social evolution (Ogburn, 1957, 1966).

Ogburn was the first American sociologist who prominently employed the anthropological concept of culture. Ogburn concentrated on culture, the dynamics of invention, and technological advances. For the purposes of this research and its

conceptual framework, Ogburn's work was most relevant given its focus on culture and social evolution versus Veblen's primary focus on the economic cultural lags in the marketplace. For this reason, Ogburn's theory served as the focus for this research.

Ogburn (1966) posited that culture does not consistently evolve at an integrated or synchronized pace. Some aspects of culture move more rapidly than others and others have a tendency to lag behind, which led to the ancillary focus on cultural lag (Ogburn, 1957). Ogburn acknowledged the interconnectedness and interrelation of the parts of culture (Brinkman & Brinkman, 2005). Given this interconnected ideology, Ogburn employed a functionalist methodology of an organic whole and employed the parallel concept of culture functioning as a machine. Ogburn (1966) viewed cultural lag as "a correlation and interdependence of parts" (p. 200-201) in conjunction with the machine and functionalist analogy, whereby "culture is like a machine with parts that fit" (Ogburn, 1957, p. 171).

Cultural lags emerge from the dynamic nature of culture and occur within segments of the population at any given time (Choukas, 1936). The rate of differential change that characterizes various components of a culture directly relates to cultural lag (Choukas, 1936). Ogburn (1957) posited that changes occurring in particular dimensions of culture in response to other dependent dimensions result in a period of maladjustment. Choukas (1936) noted these changes continually occur when new traits challenge old traits and compete for performance of the function (e.g., biblical knowledge and evolving scientific interpretations). When this challenge occurs, individuals experience

maladjustment with the cultural environment and ultimately fail to integrate their

personalities with the requests of social life. Minority groups also experience

maladjustments when they fail to make satisfactory adjustments. When members of

minority groups fail to function as a social unit, it is a direct result of a cultural failure to

integrate.

Ogburn (1957) posited, "A cultural lag occurs when one of two parts of culture

which are correlated changes before or in greater degree than the other part does, thereby

causing less adjustment between the two parts that existed previously" (p. 167).

Researchers have used cultural lag theory in previous research to consider the cultural

changes occurring in society. The following three studies, in addition to those cited

above, illustrate the use of cultural lag as a framework to explore a specific phenomenon

occurring in modern society.

Yoshida (2010) explored the influence of cultural lag on the decline of marriage

in Japan. Yoshida examined the applicability of cultural lag theory by comparing the

views of gender roles in Japan in the 1980s economic boom and the subsequent economic

recession in the 1990s among cohorts of Japanese women and men. Results demonstrated

a cultural lag existed and influenced the decline in marriages for the boom cohort of

females.

Byrne and Carr (2005) employed cultural lag theory to examine the stigma of

singlehood versus marriage. Byrne and Carr posited singles are wedged in a cultural lag

between the macrosocial changes that inspire a desirable single lifestyle versus the "slow-

to-change ideals of marriage as the ideal state" (p. 85). The findings indicated the constructs of marriage and family compromised the quality of life experienced by individuals seeking the singlehood lifestyle (Byrne & Carr, 2005).

McCormack and Anderson (2010) conducted an ethnographic study and explored the understanding of the reproduction of homosexually themed discourse occurring in organized sports. The study involved examining the political, deliberate, and unintentional effects of men's discourses and the "notion of *gay discourse* as a form of heteronormativity that is distinct from the well-established traditional use of homophobic discourse" (p. 8). McCormack and Anderson used cultural lag as the theoretical framework to understand the interwoven social variables that potentially become disconnected given their meanings shift at different rates (McCormack & Anderson, 2010). Currently, youth use homosexually themed dialog without a clear understanding of what it previously implied. As a result, their discourse lags behind their attitudinal views on LGBT.

As illustrated, researchers have used cultural lag to explore maladjustments between material conditions and cultural behaviors in society. The researchers used the theory constructs to understand if they could draw correlations or interdependences from the participants and their lived experiences. Cultural lag theory provides a framework to explore why corporate culture, and the maladjustment treatment and engagement of employees, has not kept pace with modern social views related to the LGBT community.

Literature Review

The following is a review of the literature associated with the experiences of LGBT individuals in the workplace. The review serves as the basis of inquiry for the research questions. The subsections include an exhaustive literature review related to (a) historical influences of LGBT employees in society and the workplace, (b) legislation related to LGBT equality and inclusion, (c) self-disclosure, (d) LGBT workplace experiences, (e) social issues and experiences, and (f) research methodologies related to qualitative methods.

In the U.S. approximately 9 million adults distinguish themselves as LGBT, 19 million adults have engaged in same-sex sexual behavior, and 25.6 million adults experience same-sex attraction (Gates, 2011). Ozeren (2014) postulated non-heterosexual personnel constitute one the largest minority groups at work, it is therefore critical to understand their experiences in the workplace. The following discussion outlines a historical perspective on the influences that have shaped the perceptions and lives of LGBT individuals in the community and workplace.

Historical Overview

Cook-Daniels (2008) explained, "Every person is shaped in part by the major public events that happen during their lifetime, whether these events are tragedies like 9/11 or struggles and triumphs like the Civil Rights Movement or the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act" (p. 485). Occurrences, like these, meaningfully shape an individual's interpretation on the world. The LGBT community has witnessed various

events and factors that have influenced their rights and responsibilities in the workplace, which include (a) the gay rights movement; (b) developments in societal and political ideals (e.g., media, literature, AIDS); (c) changes in psychology and sociology fields; (d) the same-sex marriage debate; (e) Supreme Court's 2013 ruling striking down an essential element of Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and its decision to turn down a case that involved the ban of same-sex marriage in California (Proposition 8); (f) federal legislation repeals; and (g) political contradictions. These key factors are not exhaustive but serve as a short list of the most influential elements shaping the perceptions of LGBT individuals in the workplace.

The LGBT movement began in the 1920s with the first organized advocacy group started by Henry Gerber, who established the Society of Human Rights. This group fought for legal reformations and community education linked to LGBT entitlements (Mora, 2015). Sexuality researchers during this time viewed homosexuality as a form of abnormality, a morally contagious disease, and a violation of gender norms (Hammack & Windell, 2011). American society was on an amplified warning process and lawmakers expanded sodomy laws. Society considered the LGBT community as predators, criminals, and child molesters driven to commit sexual assault on male children (Bronski, 2012).

During World War II, LGBT individuals were not able to serve in the United States military (Bateman, 2011). The LGBT community considered the years following the war among the most repressive in U.S. history. From 1940 to 1960, Americans

showed severe persecution against the LGBT community (Ford, 2013). McCarthyism

fueled homophobia, as an association existed between homosexuality and communism,

and the saying "commie, pinko, queer" was created (Townsend, 2015). In 1953, President

Dwight Eisenhower banned the employment of homosexuals, labeling them sexual

deviants (D'Emilio, 2015). The 1948 and 1953 Kinsey reports on male and female

sexuality heightened public mindfulness on the prevalence of homosexuality and

amplified the hysteria (Garrido, 2015). The elevated search for homosexuals during the

preceding decades was in full force as society continued to purge the military, the

government, and the workplace of individuals believed to be homosexuals (Garrido,

2015).

The Stonewall Riots were a pivotal moment in the LGBT history. On June 29,

1969, New York police officers entered a gay and lesbian bar and began beating a patron.

The other patrons came to the individual's rescue by throwing objects at the officers. This

confrontation led to hundreds of individuals fighting with police officers over 6 days

(Franke-Ruta, 2013). The Stonewall Riots sparked a sense of empowerment among the

LGBT community, and marches began occurring across the U.S.

The 1970s and 1980s involved a strong rally of gay activism and the formation of

advocacy groups fighting for the rights of the LGBT community. The AIDS epidemic

took place in the 1980s. Health care professionals initially regarded as a disease that

affected homosexuals, and it raised the level of fear toward the LGBT community. This

fear led to profound discrimination in the workplace for LGBT employees, with nearly

one third of all gay men surveyed reporting experiences of discrimination against them on the job (Levine, 1979).

The 1990s were a period of significant growth for the LGBT community. The LGBT community was a sizeable constituency with a powerful voting voice (Klarman, 2013). In the workplace, leaders at Fortune 500 organizations did not specifically address the language of gay, lesbian, and homosexual in company documentation (Catalyst, 2015). Thus, many LGBT members felt that they could lose their job if organizational leaders identified them as LGBT employees.

Since the 1990s, leaders of Fortune 500 companies have adopted new language that is inclusive of LGBT employees and the companies' nondiscrimination stance and policies (Hewlett & Sumberg, 2011). Despite the added language and policies, LGBT employees do not believe all workplaces are inclusive environments (Hewlett & Sumberg, 2011; Hewlett et al., 2013). Although federal and state laws, as well as some organizations, have policies that prohibit discriminatory employment practices grounded in "sexual orientation and gender identity, these protections are incomplete at the federal level, inconsistent or nonexistent at the state and local levels, and often unenforced or unenforceable when they exist at the local level or simply as a matter of corporate policy" (Pizer et al., 2012, p. 742). Governments need to complete more work to fully and legally protect LGBT employees in the workplace from discrimination, as outlined in the following discussion.

Legislation

State lawmakers hold the right to set and administer discriminatory regulations. In 1982, Wisconsin established protection for sexual minorities from employment and housing discrimination (Kretz, 2013). In 2015, fewer than 20 states had protective employments rights for LGBT (Human Rights Campaign Foundation [HRC], 2015). Those states were California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington, as well as the District of Columbia (HRC, 2015). New York, New Hampshire, and Wisconsin did not allow discriminatory practices based on sexual orientation (HRC, 2015). Furthermore, it was legal to fire an individual based on their sexual orientation in 29 states in 2015 (HRC, 2015).

Lipton (2015) the Supreme Court handed down a ruling, on June 26, 2015, that constitutionally guarantees the marriage rights of same-sex couples. Public opinion polls signified the majority of Americans are in favor of same-sex unions (Liptak, 2015). The enforcement of this ruling in local county offices that issue marriages licenses resulted in a new set of challenges in states that opposed same-sex marriages prior to the ruling based on the religious objections of the individuals issuing the licenses.

Title VII. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act does not defend LGBT individuals from discriminatory practices at work (Buzuvis, 2014). The Civil Rights Act does not protect employees based on sexual orientation or gender identity. It does protect

discriminatory practices related to ethnicity, race, national origin, religion, and sex

(Buzuvis, 2014).

A federal mandate in the late 1960s began ratifying workplace discrimination.

Although efforts to remove discriminatory practices have been infused in the workplace

since the 1960s, two key areas e.g., gender identity and sexual orientation are still

unprotected. Congress has not passed protective legislation that defends against

discrimination related to gender identity or sexual orientation. Under federal law, LGBT

employees who have experienced status-based discrimination must claim sex

discrimination to seek protection (Buzuvis, 2014). The "courts' insistence that sex

discrimination should not subsume all discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or

gender identity" (Buzuvis, 2014, p. 957) inherently limits this protective avenue.

Don't ask, don't tell. President Bill Clinton sought to allow LGBT service

members to openly serve by passing the federal Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) statute.

Prior to DADT, it was the military's practice to deem homosexuality unsuited for service

members, and those who announced they were LGBT or who engaged in homosexual

activities would be discharged (Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, 2011). From

1975 to 1985, more than 11,000 service members were discharged based on sexual

orientation (Lambda Legal, 2013). The revised version of DADT provided the ability for

LGBT members to serve provided they remained closeted about their sexual orientation.

In September 2011, after years of controversial debate, legislators repealed

DADT. Leaders at the U.S. Department of Defense modified the regulations to allow gay

members to serve their country openly. Since the repeal, there has been little discussion related to the rights of the transgender segment of the LGBT community (Parco, Levy, & Spears, 2015). The Department of Defense will need to address the transgender community in an effort to continue refining policies and procedures (e.g., medical guidelines and gender-neutral polices that outline one's fitness to serve) to recognize fully the needs of this segment of the LGBT military community.

Self-Disclosure

Mansh et al. (2015) assessed the experiences of sexual and gender minorities (SGMs) among United States and Canadian medical students. Medical students enrolled in doctor of medicine and doctor of osteopathic granting medical programs shared about their perceptions of curricula, sexual/gender identity, and identity disclosure. Of the 5,812 responses (5.7% response rate), 912 identified themselves as SGM and 269 (30%) covered their identity.

The most shared responses for covering their sexual identity were "nobody's business, fear of discrimination, social or cultural norms" (Mansh et al., 2015, p. 1). The SGM participants feared discrimination by peers based on sexual identity. A fear of discrimination by faculty related to offensive remarks or attitudes experienced by students coupled with the perceived power of the faculty over evaluations prevented individuals from disclosing their identity.

There were several noteworthy limitations. The sample size represented a small segment (5.7%) of the population. The nonrandom sampling of participants formed a rate

of 16%, greater-than-expected, as estimates indicate LGBT individuals comprise 6.9% of

the United States population ages 18–29 years old (Gates & Newport, 2012). The link

used for their survey likely increased the SGM participation, and potentially reduced the

non-SGM participants, which potentially reduced the internal validity of the results.

Self-disclosure in the medical workplace remains challenging (Mansh et al.,

2015). Negative consequences influence SGM to remain closeted (Mansh et al., 2015).

Concealment of sexual identify has negatively impacted the physical and mental states of

health care providers (Hass et al., 2011; Juster, Smith, Ouellet, Sindi, & Lupien, 2013).

Eliason, Dibble, and Robertson (2011) stated 10% of LGBT doctors had been denied

referrals by their heterosexual counterparts, and 15% had been harassed by, their

heterosexual counterparts. Twenty-two percent of SGM physicians reported being

socially shunned, while 65% overheard offensive statements related to LGBT colleagues.

Physicians fear patients will discriminate against them, as more than 30% of patients

cited they would change doctors if they learned they were LGBT (Eliason et al., 2011).

Research on work environments for LGBT employees has shown workplaces that

do not foster inclusive and trusting partnerships will negatively impact work-related

outcomes and disclosure (Velez & Moradi, 2012). Fesko (2001) discovered unsupportive

environments to be a principal reason that individuals are not comfortable divulging their

HIV status in the workplace. A study of 123 lesbians from numerous fields discovered

that unsupportive LGBT work environments led to less disclosure (Driscoll, Kelley, &

Fassinger, 1996). An individual with high-quality relationships with colleagues will be

more likely to divulge with a colleague than individuals with low-quality relationships, irrespective of the support or trust level with that specific workmate.

Fesko (2001) found, with HIV-positive individuals, that a single unsupportive or untrusting colleague would result in an individual not disclosing to others in the workplace. Additionally, when individuals identified with an emotionally supportive supervisor, they would fully disclose to others. Ragins (2008) developed a model of invisible stigma disclosure. In the model, Ragins identified the link between the importance of supportive workmates (potential allies) and their influence on individuals to disclose their invisible stigmatizing identities. Ragins contended these partnerships "may give the stigmatized individual a sense of safety that generalizes to other relationships" (p. 204). Following this analogy, the perception or presence of a potential ally may encourage disclosure to a specific individual and others. The potential of sharing identity information secondhand (Ragins, 2008) makes all relationships possibly influential on individuals' decision to disclose their identity to others.

A major argument of Ragins's model is the function of risk assessment in one's decision to disclose. Ragins contended employees will disclose based on apparent rewards or risks associated with disclosure. Ragins failed to consider disclosure related to specific relationships. However, it is possible to deduce that individuals will view disclosure within specific relationships on a sliding risk scale. For example, individuals may dread sharing with anyone about their religious beliefs if a workmate is not

supportive and has the ability to control their career path in the workplace. Equally, having an influential ally can make disclosure seem a less risky proposition.

Individual and organizational characteristics can have a critical role in self-disclosure. In prior disclosure models, researchers have identified several elements that could impact disclosure, e.g., identity centrality, self-monitorization, risk propensity, and company culture and policies. When an employee is able to disclose without fear, the work environment is more inclusive and authentic (Heintz, 2012). The following discussion outlines the key constructs of each factor influencing disclosure.

Ragin's (2008) postulated identity centrality denotes the degree a precise identity is critical to one's self-concept. A stigmatizing identity, for some individuals, may be fundamental to the view of themselves and thus they may be obliged to disclose irrespective of colleagues' perceptions (Ragins, 2008). Griffith and Hebl (2002) found, among LGBT individuals, the high importance of sexual orientation identity linked to higher rates of disclosure in the workplace. However, Ragins did not examine specific disclosure decisions, which left an opportunity for further exploration.

Self-monitoring refers to a propensity to be self-aware and attempt to control one's own behavior and impression when in the presence of others (Parks-Leduc, Pattie, Pargas, & Eliason, 2014). Chang, Rosen, Siemieniec, and Johnson (2012) posited low self-monitors are not as concerned with overall impressions in social situations and are therefore more likely to disclose versus high self-monitors. Self-monitoring can result in

high anxiety levels for LGBT individuals in their attempt to control behaviors depending upon where they are on the spectrum.

Risk propensity denotes one's general propensity to take risks (Chen, Wang, Herath, & Rao, 2011). Chang et al. (2012) theorized when individuals have a high propensity toward risk-taking, they will be more likely to self-disclose to work colleagues. Finally, the developers of most models of identity disclosure (e.g., Chang et al., 2012; Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010; Ragins, 2008) have noted that organizational leaders can support employees' disclosure decisions by ensuring they feel comfortable and protected in their work environment through eliminating the fear of negative outcomes following their disclosure.

Organizational policies are constructs that indicate company support to individuals within a certain group. In an LGBT context, the existence of supportive policies (e.g., diversity and inclusive training platforms) relates to self-disclosure (Prati & Pietrantoni, 2014). Prati and Pietrantoni (2014) did not measure specific disclosure decisions in their study, which left a need for further exploration.

LGBT Workplace Experiences

Katz-Wise and Hyde (2012) conducted a comprehensive study of discrimination among LGBT employees in several areas of life. The meta-analysis included 30 different samples that provided figures on workplace discrimination. Results demonstrated that 25% of the LGBT employees reported workplace discrimination and that the manifestation did not decline over time. Among the 30 samples, 11 paid attention to

possible differences between LGBT and heterosexual participants. The studies Katz-Wise and Hyde analyzed showed that LGBT employees faced a more significant degree of workplace discrimination than heterosexual employees faced.

Katz-Wise and Hyde (2012) wanted to outline the rate and forms of victimization experienced among LGBT employees. The study involved exploring whether rates of victimization had altered since 1992 and whether there were differences based on ethnicity and gender. Results concluded LGBT employees experienced victimization substantially more frequently than in comparison to Berrill's (1992) review; increases had occurred among some types (sexual harassment and workplace discrimination) while others experienced decreases. They discovered the amount of forms of victimization rose during 1992 to 2009, while the rates of other types of victimization remained constant. LGBT males reported victimization slightly greater than LGBT females. Based on the findings, the argument can be made that the LGBT community still experiences a significant rate of victimization. Katz-Wise and Hyde concluded there is a gap in victimization between heterosexuals and LGBT individuals that has grown larger in recent years and demonstrates a social problem that needs addressing. The next section includes an expansion on the workplace experiences of LGBT individuals with the following subtopics: (a) discrimination and bias, (b) self-regulation, (c) gender versus sexual orientation, and (d) transgender military work experiences.

Discrimination and bias. King and Cortina (2010) posited that a significant body of evidence exists that demonstrates LGBT face discrimination in employment practices.

LGBT are one of the largest populations without employment protection (Burns, 2012), which has strong implications for the individuals and the organizational objectives. King and Cortina contended organizational executives have the obligation to protect employees, despite the lack of federal legislation to protect the LGBT community. Many LGBT individuals live in fear of losing their jobs, benefits, and promotions based on their sexual orientation (Burns, 2012). The basis of the negative attitudes felt by the LGBT community is heterosexism, which refers to organizational policies, practices, laws, employee behaviors, and regulations that favor the heterosexual majority (Institute of Medicine, 2011).

National attitude surveys provide a basis for the perceptions of LGBT employees. Research conducted by Gallup analysts indicated that 89% of Americans do not oppose employment rights for LGBT individuals, but negative views toward homosexuality persist (Gallup, 2006). Bowman (2006) found that 43% of study participants did not think that LGBT individuals should be elementary teachers. Herek (2002) discovered bisexual men and women face stronger negative perceptions than all other combined attitudes of ethnic, racial, and political groups, with the exception of drug users. Elmslie and Tebaldi (2007) discovered the wages of gay males were 23% less than the wages of heterosexual men in the same occupational fields. Badgett, Lau, Sears, and Ho (2007) examined nine studies and discovered gay males earn 10% to 23% less than heterosexual males.

Hebl, Foster, Mannix, and Dovidio (2002) explored bias toward LGBT in order to understand the stigmatization associated to traditional and modern forms of bias in other

areas of racism. Hebl et al. wanted to understand the "relationship between the expression of bias and the response of potential targets of discrimination" (p. 817). They analyzed research related to subtle prejudice in other areas (e.g., racism) to examine how discrimination includes various expressions of bias, rejection, and more understated, interpersonal practices. They drew on previous research and revealed gay and lesbian candidates endured more hostility versus heterosexual candidates (Hebl et al., 2002). Results showed interviewers were verbally aggressive, spent less time, and conversed less with LGBT applicants than with non-LGBT applicants. Employers were able to limit some of the formal discriminatory practices, but the negativity was demonstrated on interpersonal behaviors (Hebl et al., 2002). Employers appeared to be more distant, anxious, and antagonistic and less concerned with LGBT applicants than with non-LGBT applicants (Hebl et al., 2002).

There are practical difficulties showing formal discrimination against LGBT individuals based on the methodological approach and applied standards of evidence. Psychologists may apply one specific method of inferring statistical significance ($p <$ .05), whereas representatives of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission may argue discrimination exists if the hiring rates of LGBT individuals is less than 80% (Riggio, 2013). This difference demonstrates the importance of inferring results from both an academic and a practical perspective to create inclusive environments. The practical perspective provides academics and organizational leaders with resources that

can influence recruiting; policies; procedures; and organizational cultural and diversity practices in the workplace.

Tilcsik (2011) explored discriminatory hiring practices toward openly gay men. The results showed that gay men encountered substantial challenges in the hiring process given the fact that employers readily disqualified gay candidates versus equally skilled heterosexual candidates at the initial contact stage (Tilcsik, 2011). Gay job applicants were 40% less likely to receive an offer for an interview than were heterosexual applicants (Tilcsik, 2011). These results are consistent with other discriminatory practices that LGBT individuals experience (Badgett et al., 2007). This reinforces the discriminatory practices occurring in the workplace. Employers who pursued candidates with stereotypically male heterosexual traits discriminated against gay applicants at a higher rate than employers who showed less concern with these characteristics.

A study limitation was the narrow focus a single segment of the LGBT community: gay men. The potential discriminatory hiring practices of lesbian, bisexual, and transgender job applicants was not within the scope and should undergo examination in the future. Exploring multiple LGBT groups, and including gender and race, could provide insights into the interactive effects of sexual orientation, gender, and race on hiring practices and labor-market inequalities (Tilcsik, 2011).

Self-regulation. Madera (2010) posited the fear of disclosure and concealment of individual's sexuality may alter the cognition of LGBT individuals. Madera contended that building on the previous research demonstrates the positive influences of cognitive

ability on job related performance and noted it is essential to explore if concealment and fear of disclosure in the workplace influence cognitive resources. Madera's research expanded on Muraven and Baumeister's theory on the effects of self-regulation or control over the self and the impact of self-regulation on cognition related to logic, attention, reasoning, and subsequent regulation (Schmeichel, Vohs, & Baumeister, 2003).

Madera (2010) noted LGBT individuals are fearful of disclosure and regulate their verbal and nonverbal practices in an effort not to reveal their sexual identity when interacting with colleagues. These practices have negative consequences to the individual and organization. Muraven and Baumeister identified self-regulation as "the exertion of control over the self and occurs when a person attempts to change the way he or she would otherwise think, feel, or behave and involves overriding or inhibiting competing urges, behaviors, or desires" (p. 248). Within a self-regulation paradigm, attempting to control high-level cognitive thoughts and behaviors (e.g., solving problems, reasoning, and drawing conclusions) simultaneously with others can deplete this resource (Schmeichel et al., 2003). Schmeichel et al. (2003) discovered individuals who practiced self-regulation behaviors in more than one function performed below others who did not self-regulate in such activities. Madera (2010) posited that LGBT individuals who self-regulate their behaviors to avoid being outed can diminish regulatory resources to complete their work. For example, LGBT employees leading a group meeting might be undermined if they previously engaged in behaviors that required them to regulate their behaviors to hide their sexual orientation.

Madera (2010) explored thought suppression behaviors. Research on thought suppression indicates individuals may control or suppress their behaviors, mood, or thoughts when they fully possess the cognitive abilities to concentrate on the needed control (Wegner, 1994). The successful control requires the mental capacity to balance thoughts and cognitive resources on competing objectives. Madera contended LGBT employees may not possess the necessary resources to control their behaviors successfully given the balancing act of managing e-mails, meetings, projects, and deadlines. Madera did not explore how LGBT employees can successfully manage their sexual orientation without experiencing the negative implications related to self-regulatory control.

Gender vs. sexual orientation. Lehavot and Lambert (2007) implemented an analytical approach to antigay bias with an objective to separate sexual orientation from gender role violations. The study involved deploying a crossed design whereby they "orthogonally varied the sex of the target (male vs. female), his or her gendered qualities (clearly masculine vs. clearly feminine), and his or her sexual orientation (heterosexual vs. gay/lesbian)" (p. 280). The participants observed randomly a male or a female homosexual or heterosexual individual acting in feminine or masculine behaviors. The ratings of the individuals were worse when associated with stereotypes of their gender (e.g., gay men behaving with feminine mannerisms and females behaving with masculine mannerisms). This resulted in high prejudice by the participants and demonstrated that discrimination toward LGBT employees may be highest when LGBT employees

proclaims stereotypical roles. Discrimination transcends across both the civilian and military workplaces.

Transgender military work experience. Evidence from the National Transgender Discrimination Survey showed transgender members experience discrimination, stereotyping, and bias in civilian and military workplaces (Bender-Baird, 2011; Moser 2013). Gates and Herman (2014) estimated there are 15,500 transgender members currently serving in armed forces and an estimated 134,300 transgender veterans or retirees.

Dietert and Dentice (2015) studied issues related to transgender officers, enlisted members, and warrant offices and sought the following: (a) "to understand their reasoning for joining the military, (b) how they negotiate their gender identity within the gender expectations of the military, (c) whether and/or how they affected by the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell (DADT), and (d) what kinds of discriminatory practices affect their service" (p. 2).

Dietert and Dentice found a significant amount of misinformation and confusion existed among military populations regarding transgender individuals. Based on the findings, they posited that leaders at the U.S. Department of Defense needed to develop policies that ensured a safe and inclusive environment for transgender personnel. These policies would enhance leadership skills, strengthen professionalism, and would reduce discrimination in the workplace.

Kerrigan (2012) studied discriminatory behaviors directed at transgender military personnel. Transgender veterans and active duty members reported the burdening impact of with medical and psychology constraints. Article 134 provides leaders the authority to discharge personnel for behaviors perceived as prejudicial to good order (Kerrigan, 2012). For example, cross-dressing behavior is a punishable offense in a military court. Traditionally, the armed forces have been a male-dominated organization, and males have handled engaging in war. Women have been associated with support positions. Kerrigan contended that, since the repeal of DADT, women have witnessed more advancement opportunities, but noted the military still has a difficult time distinguishing between sexuality and gender.

Harrison-Quintana and Herman (2013) examined associations among active duty personnel, veterans, and non-serving participants. The respondents consisted of approximately 20% ($N = 1,261$) who served or currently serving. The majority of participants had experienced harassment or sexual assaults while serving. Transgender veterans experienced greater frequencies of family rejection, imprisonment, and homelessness than non-serving participants, as well as greater challenges with obtaining health care benefits from Veterans Administration sources. Harrison-Quintana and Herman concluded the repeal of DADT did not result in a resolution for the challenges faced by transgender service personnel and veterans, and they recommended changing military policies to permit transgender members to serve openly and receive fair treatment in military environments.

Yerke and Mitchell (2013) explored the significance of permitting transgender members to serve with dignity by focusing on current military policies related to the exclusion and rejection of transgender personnel. Yerke and Mitchell contended the use of medical and psychological justifications that inhibit transgender personnel from serving promoted discrimination in the armed forces. Yerke and Mitchell further contended military leaders must address discrimination given the quantity of active duty members. The study included a recommendation that U.S. military policymakers become educated about the transgender community and that the U.S. armed forces leaders need to reverse the policies that refuse entry and discharge currently serving transgender members and institute inclusive policies in the same manner as the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 allowing females to serve (Executive Order No. 9981, 1948).

Social Issues and Experiences

This section contains a review of research on group dynamics and interpersonal relationships focused beyond discrimination (e.g., Rumens's 2010 study on friendships of gay males at work) and the social facets of work environments. The focus of previous research was on how various social constructs may generate a positive LGBT identity (Rumens, 2010), friendships among males as empowering nontraditional sexualities in work environments, and exploring leadership roles (Fassinger et al., 2010). The social facets include mentoring, age, romantic and interpersonal relationships, and career development.

Mentoring. Hebl, Tonidandel, and Ruggs (2012) explored the job-related outcomes of LGBT who had an LGBT mentor, a heterosexual mentor, or no mentor. Hebl et al. posited that, for LGBT employees, mentors serve as resources for "job and career guidance, advice, positive and negative feedback, and personal support and encouragement" (p. 52). Members of the LGBT community can reap the various benefits from mentors that heterosexual employees experience, although it is not clear to what extent LGBT employees would benefit from having an LGBT mentor versus a heterosexual mentor (Hebl et al., 2012). Hebl et al. explored affiliations between the sexual orientation of mentors and protégés' job attitudes (e.g., satisfaction and involvement) and job outcomes (e.g., salary, promotion rates).

Hebl et al. (2012) concluded employees who have a mentor, regardless of the sexual orientation of the mentor, had job attitudes that were more positive than employees who did not have mentor. The results indicated that all employees, regardless of sexual orientation, benefit from having a mentor. Additionally, the research demonstrated LGBT protégés may particularly benefit from an LGBT mentor as a result of greater job satisfaction and involvement responses, as well as greater psychosocial mentor functions (e.g., positive role modeling, and gay-specific counsel) when mentors and protégés were both LGBT (Hebl et al., 2012).

Hebl et al. (2012) had a small subsample ($N = 253$, 166 gay men, 77 lesbians, and 10 who did not identify gender), with an ethnic makeup of participants that was 70.8% Caucasian, 11.1% Hispanic, 3.6% African American, 3.2% Asian American, 2.5% Native

American/Indian, and 4.0% other. Given the small subsample, the study was limited by the ability to examine how sexual orientation, gender, or race interacted and which variables influenced work outcomes. Previous research documents the interactive effects of gender, sexual orientation, gender role orientation, and race (Barratt, Bergman, & Thompson, 2014; Blake-Beard, Bayne, Crosby, & Muller, 2011; Hu, Wang, Yang, & Wu, 2014; Ragins, Cornwell, & Miller, 2003; Scandura & Ragins, 1993) with regard to mentor and protégé affiliations, and researchers should explore how these interactions progress (Hebl et al., 2012).

Age. Willis (2010) examined workplace connections among young LGBT individuals with older LGBT coworkers and discovered, parallel to Hebl et al.'s (2012) findings, that LGBT mentees of mentors who were also LGBT enjoyed stronger work results. Willis discovered when younger LGBT individuals had coworkers who shared parallel sexual orientations, they were a source of support, which Rumens (2010) also confirmed. However, when openly LGBT coworkers faced the exposure of another closeted LGBT colleague, conflict or sexual harassment arose (Willis, 2010).

Romantic and interpersonal relationships. Horan and Chory (2013) examined LGBT individuals involved in romantic relationships with their supervisors. Employees view their heterosexual and LGBT counterparts to be less caring when involved in these relationships, and employees perceive LGBT to be less competent versus heterosexual colleagues. Horan and Chory noted that coworkers might believe that LGBT would not be able to maintain their roles on their own merits. The results showed both sexes

experienced diminished perceived competency. Employees viewed gay males with increased competence versus their lesbian counterparts (Horan & Chory, 2013).

Developing and maintaining interpersonal and networking relationships is increasingly challenging for LGBT individuals (O'Ryan & McFarland). Parnell et al. (2012) posited this dynamic may be the result of a good ol' boy network upheld entirely by heterosexual males in the workplace and the possible fear of discrimination that results in a loss of confidence. O'Ryan and McFarland (2010) proposed that identity management and disclosure concerns are important as LGBT employees are reluctant to build relationships because of "the decisions about what to say and what not to say, and when to disclose, when to push it and when not to push it" (p. 74). A lack of confidence with regard to networking and establishing solid workplace relationships may result in colleagues viewing LGBT individuals as unfriendly or hostile, which could also have implications for interpersonal relationships, performance ratings and evaluations, and overall career growth and development (O'Ryan & McFarland, 2010).

Career development. The juncture amid career development and LGBT identity development lacks significant research in the management literature, with only a few relative articles (e.g., Boatwright, Gilbert, Forrest, & Ketzenberger, 1996; Lyons, Brenner, & Lipman, 2010; Tomlinson & Fassinger, 2003). McFadden (2015) posited researchers in the management literature had not tracked the development of LGBT employees' identity or the work lives of those who self-identified as heterosexual later in life. Attempting to develop and manage one's identity is not an easy task, especially

given the environmental obstacles in which LGBT individuals live and work (McFadden, 2015). As discussed above, coming out or pursuing a journey of self-discovery can be stressful (McFadden, 2015). Lansing and Cruser (2009) noted that, given the influence of a work environment on one's life and as the beneficiary of their employees' efforts, organizational leaders have a moral obligation to ensure LGBT individuals have a safe and stress-free work environment. The next section will discuss the qualitative research design.

Review of Qualitative Research Methodology

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) posited the primary interest of qualitative researchers is understanding how participants translate their experiences and construct their worlds, as well as the meanings they relate to their experiences. A qualitative design is focused on developing explanations to current social phenomena. A qualitative design helps to comprehend why things are such as they are (Joubish, Khurram, Ahmed, Fatima, & Haider, 2011). Further, qualitative research helps researchers comprehend how and why people feel the way they do (Dworkin, 2012; Joubish et al., 2011). A detailed discussion of research designs will occur in Chapter 3.

Summary and Conclusions

Existing literature reflected the cultural and political shifts occurring in society related to the acceptance of the LGBT community. The attitudinal shifts have provided the opportunity for individuals to feel comfortable coming out to family and friends.

Despite the cultural shifts, the literature demonstrated LGBT employees still face discrimination and do not feel they have an inclusive workplace environment.

There is a gap in published literature linked to the cultural and organizational challenges that LGBT employees experience in the workplace that relate to the business management problem of commitment, engagement, and achievement of company objectives Leaders of both private and public organizations have not consistently demonstrated the ability to provide inclusive environments for all employees, including LGBT employees. LGBT employees have a fundamental right, as do all employees, to work in inclusive environments in which they can meet and exceed personal and company objectives and successfully contribute to the organization.

The review of the literature demonstrated there is a need to frame appropriate strategies and practical solutions to establish inclusive environments and ultimately solve the inherent problem facing LGBT workforce. In this case study, I specifically address the gap in the literature related to the LGBT community and the cultural lag that exists in the workplace. The study identifies strategies, best practices, and practical solutions that organizations can adopt to ensure inclusive environments for all employees. Chapter 3 will include a description of the research methodology, methods, and rationale for the research design. The chapter will also include the data collection procedures of the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this case study was to identify the possible influence of cultural lag on the engagement of LGBT employees. The primary phenomenon was the relationship between work environments and the impact on employee engagement. Researchers have positively linked employee engagement to job attitudes, performance, health and wellness outcomes, satisfaction, and commitment, as well as negatively linked employee engagement to turnover intentions (Batt & Colvin, 2011; Cole et al., 2012).

Research Design and Rationale

In this study, I answered the following questions to develop practical solutions that establish and maintain inclusive environments for all employees:

RQ1: What have antidiscrimination, social, legal, and organizational changes meant to LGBT employees in the workplace?

RQ2: What effect does cultural lag have on the career paths of LGBT employees?

RQ3: What are the perceived best practices for implementing strategies that create inclusive environments for the advancement of LGBT employees?
Qualitative methods are most appropriate for studies when researchers seek to understand the meaning individuals have assembled to make sense of their work and experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Leedy and Ormrod (2014) posited qualitative methods are best suited for investigations of a subject or experience for which there is a lack of understanding.

Corbin and Strauss (2014) noted qualitative inquiry encompasses the need to listen and develop meaning. Participants in qualitative studies have the opportunity to articulate their experiences as experts (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). This approach may lead to a holistic description of an issue, event, experience, or phenomenon.

Case Study Design

A case study design was appropriate given prior researchers had not measured the influence of cultural lag on engagement for LGBT employees. Yin (2014) noted cases are particularly effective to explore a modern phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not evident. As discussed in Chapter 1, Ogburn's cultural lag theory served as the conceptual framework.

Participants took part in interviews to share their perceptions about the influence of cultural lag on employee engagement and factors contributing to inclusive environments. Data collection took place through individual semistructured open-ended interviews. Interviews provide a further understanding within the context of a phenomenon's environment (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). Yin (2014) noted in-person sessions permit researchers to discern nonverbal cues (e.g., facial expressions and body language). Marshall and Rossman (2015) indicated open-ended questions provide the opportunity to obtain rich details.

Yin (2014) said interviews provide participants with the opportunity to think about situations and not just simply respond to the questions. The value of data collection increases when respondents are key members of organizations, communities, or small

groups and not simply average members of such groups. Case studies are a method of investigating complicated social issues comprised of several variables of possible significance to understand a phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Anchored in real life circumstances, results provide a holistic perspective of a phenomenon. Case studies permit researchers to investigate processes, problems, and programs to obtain greater knowledge of the issues that can lead to improving practices (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Suri, 2011). Erickson (1986) said what researchers ascertain from a specific case may illuminate comparable circumstances elsewhere. Polit and Beck (2014) reinforced Erickson's (1986) perspective that participants from various organizations are likely to help formulate discoveries that can be generalizable.

The qualitative case study design was superior to other alternatives (e.g., grounded theory, ethnography, and narrative analysis) in addressing the research problem. Grounded theory is applicable to develop a new theory (Chong & Yeo, 2015). This design was not suitable because there are existing theories available for the conceptual framework, and I could not have developed a theory from the data. Ethnography involves studying shared patterns of behavior through observations of and interviews with an intact cultural group (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). As the case participants were not from a single cultural or organizational group, and observations were not within the scope of the design, this approach was not suitable. Narrative analysis involves the use of stories as data, with a focus on real-life accounts of individuals' lived experiences communicated in story form (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). As the scope of the

study was subjects' experiences narrowed to the workplace, and not their life story or autobiography, this approach was also not suitable.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role represents one of the most distinctive contributing factors of effective qualitative design (Hays & Wood, 2011). Despite the potential biases a researcher may possess, theoretical frameworks provide a solid underpinning that shapes qualitative inquiry. Data analysis is particularly disposed to a researcher's definitive worldview. Coding is an essential instrument of exploration. It provides the ability to categorize the data in broad themes for analysis.

I conducted the study as the human instrument and sole facilitator of data collection, coding, analysis, and recommendations. I queried participants regarding their perceptions of LGBT individuals in the workplace and the experiences that may have affected them being open or closeted at work. The method used to select participants was purposeful snowballing sampling. I identified people in my personal and professional network outside of my current workplace. This selection process thus eliminated potential biases toward participants in a supervisorial capacity.

The study involved incorporating data and the literature reviewed to answer the three research questions and outline recommendations for organizational and social change. As the work evolved, it was essential to remove potential personal biases toward participants or the topic. Accordingly, it was critical to follow the prepared interview structure and questions to ensure the individuals formulated their own responses void of

my influence. The study included both data-checking and member-checking processes. I reaffirmed responses and shared interview transcripts, summaries, and analysis with the participants through member checking so they could fill in any missing data, correct inaccuracies, and feel informed about the study.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

A purposeful sampling strategy coupled with snowball sampling was employed to select participants. The sampling strategy was suitable for identifying those who had life experience as an LGBT employee. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) contended snowball sampling provides the ability to locate a few key participants and, while conducting interviews, seek referrals to others. Purposeful sampling allows researchers to sample individuals who have the greatest knowledge regarding the topic being investigated (Walker, 2012). The selection criteria were that participants were (a) LGBT employees, (b) signed consent forms to participate in an audio-recorded interview, and (c) agreed to participate in a member-checking process to review transcripts for accuracy.

The sample consisted of 27 participants and included those who are out in the workplace. Patton (2015) posited the size of the sample "depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources" (p. 311). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested sampling until the data reached the point of saturation or redundancy.

Seidman (2013) noted there is not a specified number of interviews a researcher should complete in the process and added "enough" is an interactive consideration of each step in the process. Researchers should include additional participants as new information evolves from interviews (Seidman, 2013). When saturation or repetition occurs, researchers should conclude the number of participants reached.

I used a snowball sampling strategy in which I contacted prospective participants via e-mail. The communication included an explanation of the study, interview protocol, time requirements and sought written consent to participate. An approved written consent form, retrieved from Walden's research center, served to confirm participation.

Instrumentation

I used semi structured interviews as the primary data collection instrument. Each interview consisted of open-ended questions to obtain responses that underwent analysis to answer the three research questions. The instrument purpose was to gauge the experiences and perceptions of LGBT employees in the workplace. The study also involved gathering and analyzing demographic information (e.g., age, gender, and position).

To mitigate the effects of personal preconceptions or biases, the study included both member checking and bracketing. Member checking comprises confirming data or research conclusions with members of the sample prior to study completion to ensure the researcher has interpreted participants' responses accurately (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). This process involved sharing the transcribed interviews with participants and

giving them the ability to review the transcripts and make any adjustments to reflect their intended responses.

Eddles-Hirsch (2015) posited bracketing is a process in which the researcher "purposefully sets aside any preconceived knowledge or everyday beliefs he or she regards might be used to explain the phenomena being investigated" (p. 252). Bracketing provided the opportunity to enrich data collection, research findings, and interpretations based on the ability to maintain self-awareness throughout the process. Bowie and Wognar (2015) stated bracketing can involve maintaining a journal inclusive of a self-reflective diary and field notes. I consistently reviewed my journal to maintain the continual notion regarding the role of personal bias throughout the data analysis process. The journal maintained during the data collection and analysis processes served as a method to examine and reflect upon engagement with the data. Eddles-Hirsch (2015) noted insights in a journal assist in grounding a researcher's preconceptions and help a researcher listen in an open and naïve manner.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Recruitment. The initial contacts from different regions in the United States received an e-mail that communicated the study purpose and asked for participation. The e-mail included instructions asking the contacts to respond via e-mail. If questions arose regarding the study, the potential participants received my telephone number to share about their questions or concerns. They had 5 days to respond. A follow-up e-mail was sent on Day 6 if they had not yet provided a response. If recruitment had not resulted in

sufficient volunteers, I would have continued to solicit more individuals through the snowballing process.

Participation. Qualitative researchers gather information through transcribed interviews (Maxwell, 2013). I obtained written consent from each participant prior to interviews and confirmed participants' privacy using an authorized consent form. The participants had 5 days to review the consent form, clarify questions, and return the signed form indicating whether or not they chose to participate. I scheduled the interviews prior to arriving onsite. The interview questions are in Appendix A.

Data collection. Data collection consisted of guided open-ended conversations with the respondents. Collection methods included interviews and documents. The company documents included in the data analysis were as follows: employee surveys, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission records, and annual turnover reports. Upon approval of the individual, I sought company documents through the HR department for a period of 10–15 days. This time frame was suitable for reviewing and capturing key insights into the respective companies' policies, procedures, and culture. I also sought documents from national LGBT advocacy organizations (e.g., HRC, Out and Equal, and Pride at Work) for documents related to LGBT issues in the workplace. Such an approach led to meanings derived from the cases, which Erickson referred to as assertions (Nolen & Talbert, 2011, p. 269) and Yin (2014) called building "patterns, or explanations" (p. 132).

Data collection took place in a suitable location acceptable to the participants and me (e.g., participants' workplace, local library conference room, or community business center). I arranged interviews at agreed-upon dates and times, which provided the opportunity to experience what and how the participants responded to the questions. The process allowed me to clarify any questions or messages from the participants. Anyan (2013) noted if face-to-face interviews were not conducive to the interviewee, is it highly recommended to conduct them in a suitable manner to the interviewee.

The interviews were 30–60 minutes and recorded with a digital device. I supplemented the recording device with handwritten notes to capture nonverbal expressions and comments from each interview. I adopted the following techniques during the interview, as recommended by Turner (2010): (a) reviewed the recording device periodically to ensure it was working properly, (b) asked a single question at a time, (c) maintained neutral expressions with participants, (d) avoided emotional responses that may influence responses, and (e) kept the interview progressing forward from question to question to avoid running over time. It was important to be transparent throughout the interviews to avoid counterbalances in perceived power between the participants and me and to avoid compromising the validity of the study (Anyan, 2013).

A transcriptionist at Transcribeme.com, a professional transcribing company, transcribed the recordings. The agreement with the company included a signed confidentiality agreement to ensure confidentiality. The participants had the ability to review the transcribed interview for accuracy through a member-checking process

outlined by Loiselle, Profetto-McGrath, Polit, and Beck (2011). Participants had 3 days to review and return with any changes to the transcripts. Changes noted by a participant were incorporated into the transcript prior to inputting the transcript into NVivo software. The audio transcription and transcribed interviews were entered into NVivo to code and analyze voice inflections, tone changes, and themes.

Data analysis plan. Corbin and Strauss (2014) posited data analysis consists of breaking data into manageable components to find the meaning. Data have meaning if researchers demonstrate comprehension of what the participants were attempting to convey. Berg and Lune (2011) followed a systematic process for case study research: (a) collect data, (b) inductively identify codes from data, (c) place codes into themes, (d) sort data into themes or categories by identifying phrases or patterns, (e) examine sorted data to isolate patterns, and (f) compare the patterns to a set of generalizations. The next section includes an outline of the data analysis plan.

A representative at Transcribeme.com, a professional transcription company, transcribed the interviews. The agreement with the company included a signed confidentiality agreement to ensure confidentiality. Data analysis included the interview transcripts and my notes as an observer. The seven-step process to code and analyze the data was as follows.

1. Shared typed transcripts with participants and asked them to review the transcript accuracy.

2. Read the interview transcripts to refresh my memory.

3. Read the transcripts a second time to identify major themes.

4. Compared my researcher notes with participants' responses to calibrate similarities and differences. This step provided critical details that occurred while conducting the interview that may have been missed. The procedure employed was constant comparison of the interviews. The process involved selecting and coding passages of text and comparing them with previously coded passages.

5. Used NVivo data management software for data analysis. NVivo provided me the ability to code the interview transcripts and my field notes as an observer to identify key themes and statements common among participants.

6. Member checked emerging findings through a process of participant review in which participants confirmed the interpretations represented their experience. This step involved fine-tuning to capture their perspectives and incorporating any new information into emerging themes.

7. Incorporated the bracketing process to protect the data from my biases and from the potential trap of grouping responses into predetermined slots or filtering the participants' experiences through my experiences.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) posited that trustworthiness of qualitative research is essential to evaluating the worth of a study. Trustworthiness contains four elements: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability. This section

contains a discussion on each element and the methods employed to address

trustworthiness of the study.

Credibility

Establishing credibility or internal validity in qualitative research is contingent

upon the trustworthiness and experience of the researcher (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Credibility relates to the accuracy or truth of the results. Yin (2014) indicated a process

that confirms validity is one that involves member checking. Seidman (2013) noted

member checking is a critical component to confirming the credibility of a study.

This study included the following procedures to achieve internal validity.

Throughout the data collection and analysis procedures, member checking occurred, and

participants reviewed their transcripts to ensure the responses captured were accurate.

Participants also reviewed the reporting and recommendations captured prior to final

reporting. This process ensured the accuracy of the reporting based on participants'

viewpoints.

Transferability

In qualitative studies, transferability or external validity denotes the credibility of

the results across other environments (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Tracy (2010)

noted credibility exists in a study when the data provide a rich, thick description or an in-

depth detail articulation of the data in an effort to comprehend the phenomenon.

Researchers establish reliability when they are able to replicate a prior study and achieve

similar findings in a similar setting (Ali & Yusof, 2011; Grossoehme, 2014). The findings

serve as potential best practices for organizational leaders to set policy and procedures that establish and maintain inclusive environments for the LGBT population.

Dependability

Dependability is equivalent to reliability in quantitative studies. Triangulation and researcher journaling were two methods employed to enhance the study's dependability. The process of documenting research procedures through journaling a researcher's specific activities demonstrates reliability (Grossoehme, 2014). To safeguard dependability, documented processes and procedures described by Ali and Yusof (2011) occurred during the data collection stages, analysis, and interpretation.

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) noted data triangulation bolsters trustworthiness, reliability, and validity, as it cross references multiple data sources within a study. The various data sources can link themes related to the research questions and confirm the data and literature support the themes. Triangulation occurred to confirm similarities among the data collection sources, including transcripts, field notes based on observations of interviewees, and research data in the literature (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Walshe, 2011).

Confirmability

Confirmability conveys the degree to which other researchers can verify or substantiate the findings from a study. Outlining the procedural processes, participant selection strategies, researcher's role, and the relationship with participants serves as an essential tool for others to follow. I documented in detail the research process, which may

allow others to replicate the study and strengthen the validity. The journaling process provides reliability, as others have the road map to duplicate the charted procedures (Ali & Yusof, 2011; Polit & Beck, 2014). This process helped to ensure the ethical procedures were followed as outlined in the next section.

Ethical Procedures

The names and contact information of subjects do not appear in the findings and analysis sections to ensure privacy. Names and contact information will remain locked in my office cabinet. A confidentiality agreement is available for anyone who needs access to the data in the future. I addressed ethical concerns related to data security through data storage procedures and coding. Data remained in electronic storage and were only accessible for retrieval and analysis by me. Electronic data will remain in electronic data storage systems for 5 years and physical data will remain locked in a cabinet for 5 years.

Summary

Chapter 3 included a description of the methodology used in this qualitative case study to explore the experiences and perceptions of LGBT employees in the workplace. This chapter contained discussions on the research methodology, my role as the researcher, participants, sampling strategy, sample size, data collection, data analysis, protocol for testing the reliability, validity, and trustworthiness of the data collected. Data collection occurred through in-depth interviews of 27 participants from across the United States, in conjunction with a review of documents related to LGBT policies and procedures. The methods discussed were appropriate for answering the three research

questions. The case study design provided the ability to become immersed with the

participants in a comfortable environment that allowed them to provide accounts of their

workplace experiences and perceptions. The next chapter contains a description of the

findings from the data collection process. The results of this study may contribute to

company leaders and human resource managers seeking to establish inclusive

environments for all employees.

Chapter 4: Results

Organizational leaders need to understand how to create inclusive environments for all employees, including members of the LGBT community. Inclusive environments are critical to the overall engagement of organizations and LGBT employees. I will present the research results on employee experiences in the workplace. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify the possible influence of cultural lag on the engagement of LGBT employees.

I conducted a qualitative case study on the experiences of LGBT individuals in the workplace. I received Institutional Review Board approval on February 12, 2016 (Approval No. 02-12-16-0176635). Twenty-seven LGBT participants participated. The three research questions were as follows:

RQ1: What have antidiscrimination, social, legal, and organizational changes meant to LGBT employees in the workplace?

RQ2: What effect does cultural lag have on the career paths of LGBT employees?

RQ3: What are the perceived best practices for implementing strategies that create inclusive environments for the advancement of LGBT employees?

Data collection involved emails, telephone conversations, and semistructured telephone, in-person, and Skype or FaceTime interviews. Nine interviews occurred in person. These interviews occurred in a private office conveniently located for the participants. This setting also provided a private environment that was comfortable for the participants but not associated with their workplace. Thirteen interviews took place

through Skype or FaceTime. These participants were in regions that were not conducive to meeting in person. The final five interviews took place over the telephone. These participants did not live in the same region as the researcher and did not have access to Skype or FaceTime. I digitally recorded each interview with the participants' permission. This chapter includes (a) the research setting, (b) demographics, (c) data collection, (d) data analysis, (e) evidence of trustworthiness, (f) study results, and (g) summary.

Research Setting

The research settings were the Northeastern, Midwestern, Northwestern, and Western regions of the United States. Data collection occurred during June and July 2016. Twenty-seven participants submitted informed consent forms in person or through email. Nine interviews took place in person in a private office building. Five interviews took place from my office and the participant's home. The remaining 13 interviews occurred via Skype or FaceTime from my office and the participant's home.

Demographic Information

The recruiting process began with an initial list of 20 potential participants. I received 20 signed informed consent forms back. Upon interviewing the 20 participants, I received seven additional potential candidate names. I followed the same protocol sending an email explaining the research with an attached consent form, and I received seven signed consent forms back and conducted interviews with each person.

The participants were LGBT employees between the ages of 24 and 60. I collected demographic information during the initial email or telephone conversation and

during the semistructured interviews. The participants represented a cross-sectional range

of work fields and environments. The demographic information for the 27 cases appears

in Table 1. I used codes for participants to protect their identities and distinguish them for

analysis purposes.

Table 1

Demographic Information

Code	Age	Work field	Time in position	Sexual orientation	Out or closeted in workplace	Out or closeted to friends and family	Geographic location
A	29	Automotive dealership	3 years	Gay	Out	Out	Midwest
B	48	Elementary education	5 years	Gay	Out	Out	Midwest
C	50	Drug manufacturer	19 years	Gay	Out	Out	Midwest
D	59	Social work	6 months	Transgender male to female	Out	Out	Midwest
E	31	Nonprofit youth organization	3 years	Gay	Out	Out	Midwest
F	41	College sports administration	2.5 years	Gay	Out	Out	Northeast
G	58	State government	9 years	Lesbian	Out	Out	Northwest
H	59	Military/government hospital	5 years	Lesbian	Out	Out	Northwest
I	38	Higher education	4 years	Gay	Out	Out	Northwest
J	53	Law enforcement	19 years	Gay	Out	Out	Midwest
K	37	Attorney	1 year	Gay	Out	Out	Midwest
L	24	Automotive manufacturer	1.5 years	Gay	Out	Out	Northeast
M	30	Insurance	3 years	Gay	Out	Out	Midwest
N	28	Elementary education	2 years	Transgender female to male	Out (selective)	Out (selective)	Midwest
O	57	Government hospital	37 years	Gay	Out	Out	Midwest
P	54	Higher education	8 years	Lesbian	Out	Out	Northwest
Q	55	Religious organization	5 years	Lesbian	Out	Out	West
R	26	State mental health	1 year	Bisexual	Out	Out	West
S	52	Hospital	3 years	Lesbian	Out	Out	Northwest
T	25	State mental health	6 months	Lesbian	Out	Out	West
U	44	Fire department	21 years	Lesbian	Out	Out	Midwest
V	41	Secondary education	5 years	Lesbian	Out	Out	Midwest
W	59	Health care	6 years	Gay	Out	Out	Northeast
X	60	Financial services	10 years	Gay	Out	Out	Northeast
Y	37	Higher education	5 years	Gay	Out (selective)	Out	West
Z	60	Information technology	1 month	Gay	Out	Out	West
AA	40	Higher education administration	3 years	Gay	Out	Out	Northeast

The sample consisted of 16 gay men, one transgender female-to-male, one transgender male-to-female, eight lesbians, and one bisexual female. Participants worked for their current employer from 6 months and 19 years. Twenty-five participants were fully out at work and with family and friends, and two were selective with who they informed in the workplace (e.g., HR and key allies) and fully out only with family and friends). Participants worked in a wide range of work environments and five were from the Northeast region, 12 were from the Midwest region, five were from the Northwest region, and five were from the Western region of the U.S. The geographical locations of the individuals provided cross-sectional representation from various U.S. regions.

Data Collection

Twenty-seven individuals participated. Each returned a signed consent form and joined in initial face-to-face, telephone, or e-mail conversations. Twenty-seven completed the semistructured interviews via face-to-face, telephone, or Skype or FaceTime interviews. All participants also completed the transcript review and member checking through email exchanges.

To protect confidentiality, data remained securely stored. Paper documents are in a locked filing cabinet drawer. All computer documents are in password-protected files on my computer. A backup copy is stored on a Zip drive and locked in a filing cabinet in my office.

Data sources were (a) interviews, (b) review of documents, and (c) company or governmental websites. Multiple data sources supported credibility through the data

triangulation process. Triangulation fosters the overall data quality and instills the ability to substantiate a matching phenomenon (Yin, 2012). Triangulation involved reviewing (a) interview transcripts, (b) researcher field notes, and (c) company and government websites. I cross-referenced and analyzed the data to triangulate findings and enhance the quality of the findings. I used a protocol to enhance dependability by outlining the procedures conducted during the research: (a) intended project overview, (b) protocol purpose and intended use, (c) data collection procedures, (d) list of interview questions, (e) data analysis tools and techniques, and (f) credibility, dependability, and transferability methodology (see Appendix B).

Yin (2014) reported that qualitative researchers increase dependability through using databases. I developed a database to capture the perceptions of LGBT employees in the workplace. It contained (a) field notes captured during the interviews, (b) copies of interview transcripts, (c) thematic coded tables from that data analysis, and (d) drafted narratives from the data collection and summary of research findings.

Data collection resulted in extensive amounts of data, documents, and interview transcripts. The data will be available upon request for 5 years after the publication date of the dissertation. Policy documents came from the United States Office of Personnel Management, Shawnee County in the State of Kansas, a private university, and a banking institution (see Appendix C).

A review of the documents determined correlated themes and best practices with the interviews. Documents 1 and 2 outlined policies for the federal government

workforce about the workplace and programmatic policies, benefits, and expectations regarding LGBT employees. Document 3 provides supervisors with a foundation to include and sustain LGBT members in their respective workforces. Document 4 defined the sexual orientation policy for a county in the State of Kansas. Documents 5 and 6 were policy handbooks from a banking institution and a private university. The results of the document review depicted policies, training, and best practices for creating inclusive environments for LGBT in the workplace. These insights contributed ideas used to answer Research Question 3. I reviewed company, governmental, and educational institutions websites to identify correlated themes and best practices. This information provided insights into how organizational leaders publicly communicated their general policies, cultural positions, and benefits for employees.

The interviews involved a detailed interview guide (see Appendix A). The interviews included 15 open-ended questions intended to seek insights into the participants' perceptions about workplace culture, colleagues, supervisors, and themselves. I digitally recorded them and hired a transcriptionist at Transcribeme.com to transcribe them.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved of a seven-step process. Table 2 includes an outline of the process of data analysis. The time allotted time for each step required adjustments to meet the complexity of each step of the process.

Upon transcription, I compiled the interviews to obtain a sense of the participants'

experiences and the perceptions of their workplace environments. The next step involved

uploading the interviews into NVivo qualitative analysis software and individually code

them without preconceived notions. Five categories and 13 subthemes emerged. The

coded categories and subthemes with the number of times each reference was noted

appear in Appendix D.

Table 2

Data Analysis Steps

Step	Actions	Days allotted
1	Typed transcripts shared with participants	10
2	Review transcripts to refresh observer's memory	5
3	Read transcripts a second time to identify major themes	3
4	Compare interview notes with participants' responses to calibrate similarities and differences	5
5	Input transcripts and observer field notes into NVivo software to code responses for key themes and common statements among participants.	2
6	Member checking with each participant to ensure the interpretations represented their experiences.	10
7	Incorporated Bracketing process to protect against researcher's personal biases.	2
8	Determine reliability and validity of study	3
9	Compile final written report	18

The primary categories were education, interview process, benefits, physical

environment, and vendor relationships. Subthemes emerged when three or more

participants discussed the same topic during the interviews. The subthemes were cultural

sensitivity, consistency, LGBT training sessions, supervisor training, inclusive

environment, internal communication, health care coverage, sick-time benefits, fear of

removal, safe zones, internal marketing materials, zero tolerance, and establishment of ground rules. This section contains a discussion of the findings with regard to the five categories and the respective subthemes (see Table 3).

Table 3

Five Categories and Subthemes

Education	Interview process	Benefits	Physical environment	Vendor relationships
Cultural sensitivity	Inclusive environment	Health care coverage	Safe zones	Zero tolerance
Consistency	External communication	Sick-time benefits	Internal marketing materials	Establishment of ground rules
LGBT training sessions		Fear of removal		
Supervisor training				

Category 1: Education

A training process for employees and supervisors is critical for establishing inclusive environments. The lack of education relative to LGBT issues can negatively affect morale in the workplace. Within education category, participants discussed four subthemes: cultural sensitivity, consistency, LGBT training sessions, and supervisor training.

Cultural sensitivity. Participants made 35 references to cultural sensitivity. Participants discussed concerns with work environments where coworkers, supervisors, or leaders did not respect cultural similarities or differences between LGBT individuals and other employees. When individuals have supportive colleagues, they can open up; as Participant V stated, "I think a lot of eyes have been opened by me being open with

them—and they realize I'm not any different." Participant X said, "What really changed me was when I saw the vice president get involved, when I saw them actually talking about diversity; that made a big difference."

Consistency. Twenty-five participants said there was a need to see consistency in messages from the organization for the LGBT employees. Participants felt there was opportunity for them to be more diligent about consistently fulfilling this need. Participant C stated, "I'll be honest, we're not where I think we should be."

LGBT training sessions. Individuals specified a desire to have training sessions related to the LGBT community. Participant O replied, "Now we have mandatory in-services about inclusiveness for LGBT people. They are a part of our quarterly training sessions and have had a positive influence on individuals' attitudes towards LGBT employees." Participant P expressed, "We do a lot of multiculturalism with ethnic groups, but we need it on gays."

Supervisor training. Participants made 29 references to the need for supervisory training. Participant P stated,

> One of the things that could help create a more inclusive environment is training for supervisors, and how to recognize that there may be potential issues, how to address those potential issues, how to ensure that the culture is maintained at the level that everybody should feel comfortable.

Supervisors have a responsibility to ensure employees feel safe coming out and that their jobs are safe if they do so. Participant Q stated, "I think it would take reassuring the staff member that their job was safe if they came out, and that the storm would be weathered."

Category 2: Interview Process

Inclusive environment. Participants made 10 references to ensuring work environments were inclusive for all employees. Participant N stated, "I prefer to know what the culture is like and whether culturally the environment or my boss is comfortable with gay people." Participant S replied, "I solicited a lot of questions in the interview process to ensure it was an inclusive environment for LGBT employees. I would not have accepted the job that did not confirm the inclusive treatment of LGBT employees."

External communication. Twelve participants spoke about the need for organizations to communicate their cultural inclusiveness externally to include the LGBT community. Participant R mentioned she would only interview with companies after reviewing company information on the Internet to ensure the companies had "policies that say that they would not discriminate." Participant T stated, "it was important to know that the messages were consistent with what I read on the internet and my discussions with each person I interviewed with how they treated the LGBT community."

Category 3: Benefits

Health care coverage. Twenty-one participants noted health benefits were essential given the state of health care in the U.S... Participant C stated, "As LGBT citizens, it is critical to share the same rights as others when it comes to health care

coverage. We should not be penalized for who we are as it relates to coverage or cost of services."

Sick-time benefits. Fourteen participants mentioned the need to have sick-time benefits afforded to LGBT employees as important to their employee experience. Participant R stated, "I think that's one of the policies. Sick time is critical to benefit package, whereby employees who have boyfriends, girlfriends, partners should be able to take off to care for them, just as married persons are afforded this benefit." Participant U, who works for a county government agency, stated, "I was told, 'Given the state government did not accept domestic partnership benefits, the county government followed state policy and therefore we are denying your family-covered health benefits.'"

Fear of removal. Ten participants stated they feared losing health benefits for their partners or spouses given the current political or work environments. Participant U stated, "I was concerned when the county government threated to remove benefits since the health care policy did not cover for LGBT employees and partners/spouses on the same policy." Participant B discussed, how their fear of coming out could put their job and health care coverage in jeopardy, so they did not mention the fact they were gay to anyone in the company.

Category 4: Physical Environment

Safe zones. Participant M called for "safe spaces where people wouldn't mind hearing about personal details, just as heterosexuals discuss what they did with their kids, husband, wife, or significant-other last weekend." Participant K stated, "I've noticed little

ribbons that people put on their cubicles that signify LGBT friendly employee. They are

meant for it to [be] safe to be open about your personal life, LGBT or otherwise."

Participant M stated, "There was a group, the ANGLE Group, that kind of represents

LGBT workers within the corporation, and they started that program throughout the

company."

       Internal marketing materials. Participant K stated,

       LGBT-friendly ribbons were available from the HR department. An employee, if

       interested, could obtain a ribbon and place it on their cubicle/office door. It was

       great to see how many individuals actually placed them in their personal spaces,

       LGBT and straight.

Participant R said, "The things that are important to me were to have those stickers and

posters up to reinforce the inclusive messaging." Participant T said,

       Every month the office assistant prints out a calendar and sends out what's

       happening that month. They wrote on it that it was gay pride month. So that's

       something that I thought was like wow. That really made me feel safe, and that

       was something that created more of an inclusive environment.

Category 5: Vendor Relationships

       Seven participants noted there were concerns with outside vendors, regardless of

the internal policies related to LGBT employees. Participants C, D, and E communicated

that they had experienced discriminatory situations when interacting with their

company's outside vendors, despite the inclusive cultures of each employee's company policy.

Zero tolerance. Nine participants said that their companies needed to implement inclusive policies with outside vendors. Participant F told an experience about eating dinner with outside vendors with derogatory comments being made about "those people, e.g., the gays" and the "need for them to stay in the closet." The supervisor of the participant responded, "We have a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination of any kind at this university." Participant F said afterwards to the supervisor, "I am grateful for you standing up for my rights."

Establishment of ground rules. Participants made 16 references regarding the need to establish ground rules with outside vendors, including the following two accounts. Participant H said,

> You've got your work environment and then you had this whole other group that you have to be cognizant about bringing something, you know, fear or concern around how you relate to them. Companies need ground rules to help ensure you're protected with these other individuals or organizations.

Participant K explained,

> There is a need to ensure the company I work for has a policy that addresses guidelines for how I am treated with outside companies. I have been harassed by vendors, and I am now reluctant to be myself around external members of my company, which ultimately inhibits me being my best self.

The next section discusses Trustworthiness.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of evidence was a principal concern throughout the data collection and analysis processes. This section contains a discussion on the strategies taken to address issues of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability outlined in Chapter 3.

Credibility

Qualitative researchers concentrate on implementing strategies to ensure credibility of their research (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). I addressed this issue by accounting for researcher bias and by conducting member-checking procedures (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). Yin (2012) noted researchers' personal values and preconceptions can influence qualitative research. There is a potential to taint the data collection and analysis processes if researchers do not manage their personal biases (Seidman, 2013).

I identified three areas of personal bias. The first was that all employees should desire to share their sexual orientation. The second was all employees possess the desire to discuss who their significant others are and what their family unit does after work hours with colleagues. The third was geographical regions can influence the inclusiveness of work cultures. I conducted a self-assessment based on these three potential biases by documenting my experiences in the workplace. These experiences, which were primarily positive, influenced my personal perspective. I made assumptions based on these experiences that others should act in a similar manner. I outlined areas that were relevant

to LGBT issues and my personal work experiences in conjunction with my personal biases growing up as a gay male. During the interview process, I reviewed these biases prior to each interview to assist in keeping them from entering into the upcoming interview. This process helped me to keep my own perceptions in check and allowed me to control bias interference effectively.

A secondary strategy to establish credibility was the use of member checking (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). This process involved sharing the transcribed interviews with participants. The participants had the ability to review their transcripts and make any adjustments to reflect their intended responses.

Transferability

In qualitative research, the focus is on transferability (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). Researchers ensure transferability through rich descriptions and justifications for study populations. Demographic information and geographic boundaries enhance transferability (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), transferability is the point at which the findings can be prevalent across populations of settings, people, outcomes, and times.

In the demographic information section, I provided information on the sample and geographic regions. The results are applicable to other workplace environments due to the broad range of experiences and industries represented. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) found that variation in the sample (e.g., site and participants) helps enhance transferability to other situations. The information provided allows the audience to

evaluate the transferability of findings and conclusions to establish inclusive work environments.

Dependability and Confirmability

The demonstration of trustworthiness for qualitative research occurs through dependability and reliability (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). Dependability is an essential element in the design phase. To safeguard dependability, documented processes and procedures take place during the stages of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Ali & Yusof, 2011).

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) noted data triangulation bolster trustworthiness, reliability, and validity as it involves cross referencing multiple data sources. The various sources can connect themes related to the research questions and ensure the data and literature support the themes. A triangulation process serves to confirm similarities among the data sources, which can include transcripts, field notes on observations of interviewees, and research data in the literature (Houghton et al., 2013; Walshe, 2011).

I took detailed field notes during all interviews. The interview notes helped to document factual data, behaviors, actions, and conversations accurately. The notes also allowed me to capture my thoughts, ideas, questions, and concerns during and after the interview and reflect on the meaning-making process of the study. Finally, the notes helped capture emergent themes that allowed me to shift focus, as needed, to foster a deeper investigation. The next section includes a discussion on the results.

Study Results

The interviews captured extensive data linked to the three research questions. The

responses to Interview Questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 addressed Research Question 1,

for had as its focus the impact of antidiscrimination, social, legal, and organizational

changes on LGBT employees. The responses to Interview Questions 4 and 13 addressed

Research Question 2, which included the effect of cultural lag on the career paths of

LGBT as its focus. Finally, the replies to Interview Questions 8 and 10 addressed

Research Question 3 on the identification of best practices for implementing strategies

that create and maintain inclusive environments for the advancement of LGBT.

The purpose of Research Question 1 was to address the impact of social, legal,

and organizational changes on the experiences of LGBT employees. The responses linked

to the research question revealed seven themes. The themes, the number of sources for

the theme, and the number of times participants referred to the theme are in Table 4.

Table 4

Themed Responses to Research Question 1

Codes	Sources	References
Q2 Reveal sexual orientation	18	20
Q3 Co-workers reaction	12	15
Q5 Inclusive environment	12	15
Q5 Policies and procedures	22	23
Q7 Political and legal developments	5	7
Q8 Supervisor relationship	27	29
Q14 Local/state/federal laws	6	9

The purpose of Interview Question 1 was to establish rapport with the participant

and encourage thoughtful responses. Responses to the first interview question revealed

whether participants were comfortable identifying their sexual orientation in the workplace and their experiences related to their sexual orientation. Participants shared their positive and negative experiences with coworkers and supervisors. These experiences affected their self-worth perceptions, drive, and motivation to continue working, as well as their work output. When participants had a supervisor, who accepted them for who they were as LGBT employees and focused on the work at hand, employees felt valued and their work production and quality of work improved. Conversely, when employees had supervisors or coworkers who demonstrated, through verbal or behavioral actions, a negative attitude or bias towards them as an LGBT employee, this resulted in the participant shutting down at work and their quality and production level decreased.

All 27 participants referenced supervisory relationships as a fundamental component of their positive or negative experience. Participants looked to supervisors to enforce the organizational policies and procedures, if they existed, that created inclusive environments. Participants sought the advice of supervisors, if they had a positive working relationship and were out to their supervisors, when dealing with a difficult situation (e.g., coworker who may be derogatory, negative, or critical of their LGBT orientation).

Twenty-two participants expressed the importance of working for organizations that had relevant policies and procedures. Nine participants specifically discussed how they sought out organizations' policies and procedures during the interviews by asking

exploratory questions of the recruiters or hiring managers. This process helped in their decision to accept or decline a position based on the perceived inclusiveness toward LGBT employees. Participant R said:

> I looked at several company websites to understand the level of inclusiveness a company had. It was important to do my research before making a commitment to join an organization and dedicating myself to the role and the company culture.

Ten participants had moved across the United States for new positions. Each one discussed the need, prior to joining organization, to understand the local laws relative to their LGBT status. They wanted to ensure they were moving to an area that had protective rights. Eight of the 10 participants conducted research on the state and local governances before they finalized their relocation decision. The remaining two individuals relied on the HR departments of the companies to provide this information. Participant M mentioned, "I needed to protect myself not only at work but on my off time, so I had to be sure the local government at minimum protected my rights."

Table 5 outlines the data related to Research Question 2: What effect does cultural lag have on the career paths of LGBT employees? This is best captured through Interview Questions 4, 6, and 13. These questions served to explore how the cultural and legal changes occurring in society have affected career paths.

Table 5

Themed Responses to Research Question 2

Codes	Sources	References
Q4 Comfort level in workplace	25	27
Q6 Cultural attitude	17	20
Q13 Reveal sexual orientation to friends and family	19	23

The 2013 U.S. Supreme Court decision related to marriage equality was a monumental step forward for the LGBT community and opened the doors to the possibility of furthering the employment rights for LGBT employees. Participants discussed their excitement regarding the Court decision. There was a sense of pride and accomplishment from all the effort that went into helping to ensure the LGBT community could share the same marital rights as heterosexuals. This also extended into the workplace, as employees could now legally cover their same-sex spouses on their health care policies. Participant L discussed his experience walking into work on Monday after the decision on Friday, June 28, 2013, and feeling like the LGBT community had received a fresh start. This participant said, "I knew this would help pave the way for our future."

Eight participants discussed their negative experiences in the workplace after the Court decision. Participant H described three situations where coworkers were hostile towards her and other LGBT coworkers, claiming, "They would do everything in their power to see this decision was overturned." Participant H approached the supervisor to discuss the concern, and the supervisor said, "It was a personal choice for these employees to express their views and there is not anything I care to do at this point in

time." The story conveyed by Participant H was similar to the stories shared by the other

seven participants who shared their negative experiences.

The examples cited above had a negative impact on their employee experiences.

Five individuals described a sense of uncertainty with their long-term career paths. They

did not want to work in environments that would not support their legal rights, cultural

diversity, and inclusiveness. The common thread among stories was, despite the changes

occurring legally, politically, and socially, there is still a cultural lag between external

changes versus workplace changes.

The focus of the remaining interview questions was Research Question 3: What

are perceived best practices for the implementing strategies that create inclusive

environments for the advancement of LGBT employees? The data related to Research

Question 3 are in Table 6.

Table 6

Themed Responses to Research Question 3

Codes	Sources	References
Q8b Supervisor feedback	20	24
Q9 Peer relationships	19	25
Q10 Supervisor support	23	27
Q11 Vendor relationships	16	18
Q12 Career path	25	27

The best practice of supervisory support was a critical component, as discussed by

23 of the participants, relative to creating a positive and inclusive work environment.

Open and honest communication from the supervisor was a topic brought up by 17 of the

participants as a key attribute needed for employees to trust the leader. Participant C

mentioned, "The supervisor sets the tone and example for the rest of the team to follow. They need to help enforce the company rules and protect our LGBT rights."

According to 19 participants, the best practice of peer relationships can rapidly make or break a cultural environment. They described spending more waking hours with their peers at work than they do at home with family members. Given this factor, the participants discussed wanting to have the support of their coworkers. When coworkers positively reciprocate support, the participants feel valued and feel like an important part of the team. When the opposite occurs, their morale and productivity can diminish.

Individuals described working relationships with external vendors as both positive and negative. Twelve participants articulated that when organizations have clear policies and procedures on how they expect vendors to interact with their employees and follow norms, a positive working environment ensues.

When there is a breakdown in the process and employees find vendors treating them with disrespect through homophobic rhetoric, employees feel threatened, and it can create a hostile work environment. Participant S described a situation where a vendor continually inserted personal opinion that was in direct opposition to the LGBT lifestyle during each interaction with the participant. The participant finally reported it to her supervisor. The supervisor immediately communicated the situation with the vendor's HR representative. The vendor's HR department rectified the issue and the comments ceased during subsequent interactions. The employee felt supported by the organization.

Participant J described a similar situation with a different outcome. When the participant brought an issue to his supervisor's attention, the supervisor stated, "There is nothing I can do. That individual is not part of our company. We don't control their actions. You will just have to ignore their comments." The individual felt defeated, the situation did not improve, and the person subsequently left the organization.

Participants discussed the best practice of supervisory support to confront issues immediately and seek an acceptable resolution. Employees want to believe their company representatives will seek a resolution to issues that arise in the workplace. When supervisors solve these issues, employees said their trust and loyalty level increases for with the supervisor and organization.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to expand the understanding of LGBT experiences in the workplace. The responses to interview questions provided data that I filtered into categories, themes, and subthemes. Organizing the categories and themes led to the ability to separate them into various concepts and ideas. The analysis provided answers to the three research questions.

The first research question was: What have antidiscrimination, social, legal, and organizational changes meant to LGBT employees in the workplace? The social, legal, and organizational changes that have occurred in the recent years seem to have had a positive influence on the perception and treatment of employees in the workplace. As

described above, organizations have identified the need to create positive work

environments for all employees, including LGBT employees.

The second research question was: What effect does cultural lag have on the career paths

of LGBT employees? Despite social, legal, and organizational progress, evidence

demonstrates employees are experiencing negative work environments and a cultural lag

does exist in some workplace environments. The third research question was: What are

the perceived best practices for implementing strategies that create inclusive

environments for the advancement of LGBT employees? Results identified emergent

themes for recommended best practices and strategies for organizations.

Chapter 5 will contain a discussion on the conclusions of this study. The chapter

will include analysis on the impact of the findings on social change. Finally, the chapter

will identify recommendations for future research on inclusive environments for

organizations.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions

The purpose of this case study was to identify the influence of cultural lag on the engagement of LGBT employees. The study consisted of 27 interviews with LGBT workers from different organizations across four U.S. regions. The study involved exploring the workplace experiences and relationship between inclusive environments and the impact on LGBT staff engagement. The research questions were as follows:

RQ1: What have antidiscrimination, social, legal, and organizational changes meant to LGBT employees in the workplace?

RQ2: What effect does cultural lag have on the career paths of LGBT employees?

RQ3: What are the perceived best practices for implementing strategies that create inclusive environments for the advancement of LGBT employees?

The findings indicate a cultural lag exists, as organizational leaders are not establishing and maintaining inclusive environments. There is a need for managers to examine policies and procedures in the effort to establish environments where all personnel feel welcome, see personal growth, and observe long-term development with the company. This chapter contains: (a) an interpretation of the findings using cultural lag theory, (b) study limitations, (c) recommendations for best practices and strategies, (d) implications for positive social change, further research, theory, and organizations, and (e) conclusions.

Interpretation of Findings

This section includes a discussion on the ways the findings confirm, contradict, or extend the literature related to LGBT experiences at work. The findings demonstrate that a significant need exists to establish and maintain inclusive environments, as described in Chapter 2. I used the conceptual framework of cultural lag theory to analyze the data within the scope of the study. This section includes a description of specific topics from the analysis that include the role of senior executives and supervisors in developing and executing policies, procedures, and best practices leading to stronger employee engagement.

According to cultural lag theory, cultural lags (i.e., time a culture takes to catch up with social problems and conflicts) are likely to occur when society witnesses a change that does not advance in an integrated and synchronized manner (Ogburn, 1966). A cultural lag exists in the workplace that has not kept pace with society (Gates & Kelly, 2013; Hewlett et al., 2013). This study is unique because it involved exploring why corporate culture and engagement of employees has not kept pace with modern social views on the LGBT community. The findings show there is a still a cultural lag in the workplace. The findings also indicate a set of best practices is necessary for implementing strategies that create environments for the advancement of LGBT employees, as discussed later in the chapter.

Interviewees revealed that legal, political, and social changes occurring since 2010 have led to attitudinal changes toward members of the LGBT community. They

stated that coming out to friends and family members has positively shifted stereotypical attitudes. Participant B stated, "I feel a positive difference in the acceptance of LGBT as more and more individuals are coming out." The 25 interviewees who were out had witnessed negative experiences in the workplace in the past decade. Fifteen of the 25 believed the experiences were so difficult to deal with they left the organization. They disclosed that despite the attitudinal shifts in society, workplaces have not kept pace with establishing inclusive environments.

Respondents said bias and discriminatory practices remain part of some organizational cultures. For example, Participant S said:

I was hopeful, with the positive changes occurring legally and socially, I would see similar shifts at work, and I haven't. I'm nervous for my job as I don't have protection with our policies. I work in a homophobic workplace.

McFadden (2015) found discrimination to be an extremely prominent issue among the LGBT population with their careers and workplace experiences. Nine of the 27 participants described needing to live a double life at work and hiding their sexual identity. They portrayed how difficult it was to come to work and perform at their optimum level when they could not be authentic to themselves, coworkers, and supervisors. Parnell et al. (2012) theorized the prevalence of the good ol' boy network upheld by heterosexual men in the workplace creates a potential barrier for LGBT individuals to receive equal treatment.

Interviewees revealed a strong desire to seek equal, not preferential, treatment in the workplace. They wanted to have the same rights as heterosexual colleagues with regard to basic policies, procedures, and career growth opportunities. They expressed how challenging it was to see the positive societal changes occurring while their work environments lagged in terms of equality policies and practices. Theriault (2017) found through framing inclusion as a process by which all members benefit, regardless of sexual identity, organizational leaders enhance stakeholder support over approaches that focus solely on sexual identity. For example, inclusion can be viewed as advantageous for a business with regard to financial benefits related to recruiting top talent and moral benefits related to improving social responsibility (King & Cortina, 2010).

Eight interviewees discussed how difficult it can be when they do not feel they are playing on a level playing field. They mentioned their supervisors' lack of following company protocol during investigations involving LGBT discriminatory practices. Each individual expressed that expectations should be the same for all employees. When a lack of confidence exists in how LGBT workers feel they are treated, they may be perceived to be unfriendly and hostile by coworkers, which has implications for performance evaluations, workplace relationships, and overall career advancement (McFadden, 2015). Choosing to remove oneself from the workforce negatively impacts organizations (Herr & Wolfram, 2012).

Ferdman (2014) posited, "Groups create inclusion by engaging in suitable practices and establishing appropriate norms, such as treating everyone with respect,

giving everyone a voice, emphasizing collaboration, and working through conflicts productively and authentically" (p. 18). Participants in this study highly valued environments where they felt part of the team and could be themselves. They reported their productively levels were the highest when they did not fear their jobs as a result of their sexual identity. Theriault (2017) posited, "Inclusion programs are more successful when the responsibility for making all stakeholders feel welcomed, respected and heard, is shared among all employees" (p. 130). Sharing the responsibility equally among staff minimizes burnout, and results in a consistent message of inclusion throughout the organization (Allison & Hibbler, 2004).

Inclusive organizations refer to the policies and practices that outline the behavior expectations of individuals, groups, and leaders (Ferdman, 2014). For example, organizations must contextualize inclusion initiatives in the framework of the work undertaken by leaders, including overseeing employees, when coping with demanding individuals, navigating bureaucracies, and focusing on their personal needs (Larson, Walker, Rusk, & Diaz, 2015). If company executives do not incentivize or align inclusion with existing organizational objectives, the dismissal of diversity programs may occur, which will result in the continuation of a cultural lag at work.

Limitations of the Study

The study included four limitations. First, previous experiences (e.g., such as a hostile coworker or employer with no LGBT protective policies) could have impacted responses based on personal bias, anger, anxiety, or politics at the time of the interview.

To address this concern, I asked follow-up questions (e.g., such as, "Can you give me an example of how you were negatively treated by the coworker?" or "Can you tell me how that experience with your supervisor impacted your working relationship?") in an effort to explore the experiences further. In doing so, individuals went into greater detail in a relaxed way and with a more open demeanor. There was a sense they were releasing pent up emotions and experiences, and the interview gave them an opportunity to release their emotions.

A second limitation was the logistical challenges of face-to-face interviews. Not all individuals could participate in face-to-face interviews given their geographical dispersion; therefore, 18 of the 27 interviews took place using Skype, FaceTime, and the telephone. For the telephone interviews, it was not possible to observe the person's body language or facial expressions, which limited the amount of consistent data for all individuals. The countermeasure was to ask clarifying questions when I sensed there may be additional insights to capture during the interview.

The third limitation was geographical bias related to regional social norms. Prior audit studies, of employment discrimination, have not typically examined the extent to which discrimination varies geographically (Tilcsik, 2011). To address this limitation, I collected data across four U.S. regions: Northeast, Midwest, West, and Northwest. The results indicated there were similarities for organizations with inclusive environments in these regions. The study did not include any participants from the South or Southwestern states, and additional research is necessary to determine if findings may be generalizable

outside of the context and specific populations studied. The fourth limitation was the depth of information given may be limited based on comfort level between interviewer and the participant. If interviewee did not feel comfortable with me, they may have altered their responses. This appeared to be the case in two interviews.

Recommendations

Inclusive environments enable people to feel engaged, as people can only feel engaged if they feel respected, involved, heard, well led, and valued by others in the workplace. Organizations should focus on creating LGBT-inclusive leadership skills and inclusive workplaces, so employees would not feel forced to hide their authentic self (Collins, 2012). Mavin and Grandy (2012) found when "developing inclusive work environments, it is helpful to identify practices, procedures, management styles and/or other factors that contribute to the inclusion or exclusion of particular identities" (p. 228). For example, policies need to have clear expectations regarding the treatment of others with specific consequences for not following them. Based on the findings, organizational leaders can adopt eight areas of best practice in their pursuit of creating an inclusive environment.

Best Practices

This section includes the best practices to create environments for the advancement of all personnel, including LGBT employees: (a) cultural awareness, (b) protective policies, (c) employee LGBT sensitivity training, (d) supervisor LGBT sensitivity training, (d) external marketing, (e) transgender awareness training, (f) safe

places, and (g) employee resource groups. As previously discussed, the sources of the

recommended best practices were interviewees and company documents.

Cultural awareness. Cultural awareness starts with the head of the company,

(e.g., chief executive officer or president) and flows through all levels to frontline

supervisors. The top executive's actions and behaviors set the tone and example for the

rest to follow. This support includes (a) oversight or involvement in developing cultural

awareness policies, (b) implementing communication policies, (c) participating in LGBT

sensitivity training sessions, and (d) demonstrating exemplary behaviors. Mills, Fleck,

and Kozikowski (2013) contended without executive leadership support, cultural change

and the creation of inclusive environments is not possible. Participant W stated it was

motivating to hear the chief executive officer during a companywide meeting say that the

leadership team was in full support of the LGBT community and he was working hard to

ensure the company culture embraced members of the LGBT community.

Protective policies. Nondiscriminatory guidelines need to include LGBT

employees. The policies need to be specific and address consequences for employees

who do not follow them to minimize the ability to discriminate against others. The results

showed that organizations who implemented protective guidelines had stronger employee

engagement. The policies need to state specifically that an employer cannot discharge an

employee as result of the employee's LGBT status.

An effective nondiscriminatory policy contains (a) clear language that

discriminatory practices will not be tolerated, (b) specifics about prohibited behavior, (c)

a description of the consequences for violating the policy, (d) a clear grievance procedure for employees who have experienced discrimination, (e) a prompt investigation of complaints of discrimination, and (f) protection against retaliation ("Creating an LGBT-Friendly Workplace," 2018). The policies need to undergo an annual review to ensure they meet federal, state, and local laws. Employee engagement should be measured annually through surveys and lunch-and-learn discussions and during annual performance reviews to ensure the policies are effective at creating an inclusive environment. Participant M, for example, stated that leaders should conduct checkpoints to see whether their intended policies are effective at creating an engaging environment.

Supervisory LGBT awareness training. Supervisors need to treat all employees with respect, regardless of personal views or beliefs. They should lead by example and ensure they are creating an inclusive environment. They cannot display behaviors or make suggestive or derogatory remarks about LGBT workers to those within or outside of their direct supervision.

The training should derive from the mission, vision, and values of a company. It should take place with all existing and new supervisors as they begin a new role. It should also occur annually with mid-year follow-up training sessions. The following describes the components for the training (Fuller, 2018):

- Define inclusion: A practice that enables the full participation and contribution of the workforce in support of the mission of the organization by eliminating implicit and explicit discriminatory barriers.

- Define sexual orientation: A person's permanent emotional, romantic, or sexual feelings toward certain other people. Sexual orientation also refers to a person's sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviors, and membership in a community of others who share those attractions.

- Talking about sexual orientation or identity in the workplace:

  o Sharing aspects of one's personal life with colleagues is a normal part of everyone's workday.

  o Discussions about spouses, friends, and family help form bonds of mutual respect and trust that support a productive workplace.

- Identify workforce challenges unique for LGBT (e.g., role models, needing to read between lines to ascertain safety zones, level of trust, and support systems).

- Examine workplace considerations such as heterosexism, religious beliefs, fear (homophobia), harassment, and hostile work environment.

- Define lavender ceiling: the unofficial barriers LGBT individuals may face in moving up the career ladder because of sexual identity inequalities.

- Conduct non-LGBT self-assessment: Spend some time considering employee reactions, such as homophobic views and behaviors, regarding LGBT.

- Review perspectives (e.g., ally staff and role models): Non-LGBT members who have the desire to help reduce prejudice and discrimination.

- Communicate the business case: Create a valued and inclusive workplace

  (e.g., enrich productivity; increase job satisfaction; boost employee morale;

  increase employee recruitment, retention, and productivity; and decrease legal

  vulnerability).

In short, supervisory training is critical to establishing a positive work atmosphere, as it

allows leaders to leverage the talent and attributes of the entire workforce.

Employee LGBT sensitivity training. The goal of this training is to inform

personnel about workplace policies and expectations regarding the treatment of LGBT

individuals. The training should emphasize the similarities and differences between

heterosexuals and LGBT.

It must be clear that there will be no tolerance for employee behaviors that do not

support an inclusive environment. No one may act upon their objections to a specific

sexual orientation or gender identity in a way that would violate nondiscrimination law or

policy. Disciplinary actions will take place when violations occur. The training should

include new identity terminology (American Psychological Association, 2018):

Ally: An individual who or time when someone is unsure about or exploring his or

her own sexual orientation or gender identity.

Asexual: Experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others or a lack of interest

in sexual relationships/behavior.

Cisgender: A person whose gender identity and biological sex assigned at birth

align—man and assigned male at birth.

Gender neutral: A person with no (or very little) connection to the traditional system of gender.

Gender nonconforming: A gender expression descriptor that indicates a nontraditional gender presentation—masculine woman or feminine man.

Genderqueer: A gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man–woman.

Heteroflexibility: Form of a sexual orientation or situational sexual behavior characterized by minimal homosexual activity in an otherwise primarily heterosexual orientation that is considered to distinguish it from bisexuality.

Intersex: Term for a combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female.

Monosexuality: Romantic or sexual attraction to members of one sex or gender only—may be homosexual or heterosexual.

Pansexual: A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities and expressions.

Polysexuality: Sexual attraction to more than one gender or sex but not wishing to identify bisexual as it infers that there are only two genders.

Questioning: An individual who, or time when, someone is unsure about or exploring his or her own sexual orientation or gender identity.

This training will help to educate the workforce on the various identities of other employees.

Employees want to believe they can be themselves in the workplace, which should be a place to belong and to have a sense of purpose. Individuals need to be able to comfortably share with others and represent their true identity. Participant R said, "It is important for me to know that I do not have to hide behind my sexual identity where I work, and I can openly share about my partner as my heterosexual colleagues do on a daily basis." They need to know they can be open and not feel afraid to do so.

Developing workshops that educate employees about the LGBT community will establish cultural awareness of this group among other team members and will help identify the similarities and differences between the groups in an effort to demonstrate common ground and experiences among them. An organization should continually assess the environment to modify policies and best practices in the effort toward inclusiveness for all staff, which can include (a) annual companywide surveys evaluating the LGBT policies and practices since the last survey and (b) supervisor–employee check-in meetings that involve discussions on how employees feel about the company culture.

Disciplinary measures designed to prevent discrimination against LGBT individuals will demonstrate an employer's intentions to create inclusive environments (McFadden, 2015). Annual inclusion workshops may demonstrate to LGBT members that organizational leaders intend to establish a safe work environment (McFadden, 2015). Participant C said,

I finally realized how serious the leaders were about nondiscrimination policies

towards LGBT when I saw the consequences published on the company intranet

for these behaviors. It gave me a sense of relief I could actually be authentic self

when coming to work and my company supported who I was as a gay employee.

External marketing. Organizational leaders need to market to potential

applicants regarding their policies and culture that include LGBT employees:

- Job announcements or postings should include the full mission statement,
  organizational culture, and values.

- Communication regarding inclusive policies and environment with potential
  employees should be consistent throughout the process.

- Communication consistency signals to the candidate how serious the
  company takes creating inclusiveness.

The communication model markets an organization as LGBT friendly by communicating

the mission, vision, and values statements on the company website. Throughout the

recruitment process, company representatives communicate the diversity and

inclusiveness of the culture and the importance of maintaining and growing it.

Participants described the importance of the communication process with their

preemployment exploration. They sought information from company websites, Internet

searches, and individuals who had knowledge about the organization. They described the

company culture and inclusiveness as equally important to the specific job they were

seeking. Participant T stated,

I was just as concerned about the inclusiveness of the company culture as the role

I would be doing if I received the job. I would not want to work in an

environment that was not inclusive, no matter how great the job was I would be

doing, it would not be worth it to me.

Transgender awareness training. Supervisors should identify an individual who

is transgender to speak to employees about issues related to being transgender. This will

provide the ability to educate the others about transgender identity; considerations when

transitioning; and social, legal, and health issues related to being transgender.

Organizational leaders should create protective practices that identify the needs of

transgender employees. These policies include nondiscrimination statements, gender-

neutral codes of conduct, transitioning on the job, name changes, dress code, restroom

issues, and health benefits (Robinson, Van Esch, & Bilimoria, 2017). Transgender

policies demonstrate an organization's willingness to foster inclusive environments. This

helps engage a segment of the workplace that otherwise may have been disenfranchised.

Participant N stated,

My current employer is "openly supportive" of the transgender community. When

I started looking for a new job, I searched LGBT friendly companies. What

caught my eye was the company outlined their mission, vision, and values

statements on the website and included specific details about inclusiveness. They

described the health benefits, which contained details about transgender benefits.

This information provided the insights I needed. I carefully listened throughout

the interview process to ensure what they described on the website was actually occurring. I found there was consistency and subsequently accepted the job.

Safe places. A safe zone is a confidential place where all members can share their authentic selves and feel welcomed and included. This may occur in a classroom, office space, or an entire agency. Establishing safe zones can take to help people feel empowered to reach their full potential. Participant AA stated that his workplace created rainbow flags that coworkers could place on their doors or cubicles to indicate an LGBT friendly zone. This gave individuals an identifying maker so LGBT member could stop by and talk to this individual and know it was safe to do so. Safe spaces contribute to enhanced diversity climates and network opportunities (Ozeren, 2014).

Employee resource groups. Employee resource groups are voluntary, employee-led groups that foster a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with organizational mission, values, goals, business practices, and objectives. Group activities could include the development of future leaders, increased employee engagement, and expanded marketplace reach. Specifically, groups should do the following ("Creating an LGBT-Friendly Workplace," 2018):

1. Encourage employers to advance their policies and participate in the Corporate Equality Index.

2. Advocate for LGBT equality in the workplace.

3. Establish a mentoring program to improve leadership skills, specifically for younger employees.

4. Ask the company's chief executive officer to publicly endorse LGBT-inclusive legislation.

5. Identify opportunities to engage LGBT consumers (e.g., having a booth at a LGBT pride event, launching an LGBT-inclusive advertising campaign, and participating in strategic philanthropy to LGBT organizations).

6. Identify opportunities to recruit LGBT employees (e.g., job fairs, local universities, and strategic philanthropy organizations).

Employee resource groups are important, as they are an essential force in small and large companies. These groups allow individuals to feel safe discussing their workplace concerns and needs. They are instigators of organizational and social change, and they contribute significantly to establishing inclusive environments (Welbourne, Rolf, & Schlachter, 2017).

In summary, these best practices provide flexible and responsive solutions to establish and maintain positive workplaces. They offer strategies to transitioning individuals, teams, and organizations from their current state to the desired inclusive state by setting clear expectations, providing training and development, helping staff feel valued, and gaining trust and commitment to the needed changes.

Implications

This study resulted in new ramifications for LBGT in the workplace. In the following section, I will examine the implications that emerged from the data. This study

has the potential to effect positive social change at the individual, organizational, and societal levels.

Implications for Positive Social Change

The findings may lead to positive social change by providing qualitative research on creating inclusive work environments for LGBT. The findings illustrate what LGBT employees are seeking in a work environment. For instance, they desire the establishment of policies and practices that ensure cultural awareness, equal treatment, and security to share who they are in the workplace. The results can help leaders implement new policies and strategies to benefit LGBT employees. Those who apply the strategies will help establish appropriate environments and strengthen the organizational culture, increase retention rates, inspire growth (e.g., individual and organizational) levels, and enhance competitive advantage in the marketplace. When employees feel valued, a dynamic effect occurs with colleagues and subordinates across the organization. In a trickle-down effect, subordinates should help support positive working relationships with LGBT employees, which leads to maintaining inclusive environments for all staff.

This study may also influence social change through an explanation of how leaders can develop, coach, and reward employees. Through creating awareness and understanding of the LGBT community and culture, organizational leaders strengthen the opportunity build a connection with LGBT employees, which allows leaders to create environments that serve the best interests of all employees and provides the opportunity

to attract and retain the most qualified people. When employees feel valued and rewarded, their commitment level to the company, and their productivity, increases.

The results indicate further exploration is necessary as it relates to transgender issues in the workplace. Given that only two of the 27 interviewees were transgender, further research may be conducted to identify the complex issues of policies and procedures facing this segment of the employee base. The policies must address the problems in a nonthreatening manner. Topics to consider include the following:

- Restroom use.

- Gender reassignment surgery.

- Name and phone change on company documents.

- Use of appropriate pronouns.

- Dress code.

- Testosterone or hormone treatments.

- Leader and employee training.

Researchers also should consider the differences of female-to-male and male-to-female transgender, as these groups deal with different issues when transitioning in the workplace.

Transgender employees seek the guidance of HR to help navigate the changes they are facing. An individual's opportunity to maintain a consistent job and financial income during the transition, and the level of support received at work, strongly influence a successful outcome from the transition. Further research is necessary to identify the

responsibility of HR in the development and implementation of policies, practices, training, and communication initiatives for transgender employees.

Implications for Theory

The theoretical ramifications of this study as it relates to cultural lag theory showed a lag exists. Some of the participants described how their work environments had not kept pace with social and legal changes. For instance, Participant L indicated,

I have witnessed the legal changes occurring with regards to marriage and nondiscrimination legislation in certain states. I was hopeful this would translate into the establishment of nondiscriminatory policies and practices in the workplace. I have been disappointed to see this has not occurred to the degree myself and my LGBT colleagues had hoped it would.

The implication is that as societal changes occur, organizational leaders will need to safeguard that policies and procedures keep pace with employee needs. The LGBT community makes up a significant percentage of the workforce. It is therefore important that policies are in place for the growth and retention of these valuable employees.

Implications for Organizations

Organizational policies and best practices will require significant workplace change. Collins (2012) noted, "Organizations need to concentrate on developing inclusivity and enabling individuals to bring their full self to the workplace" (p. 370). Priola, Lasio, de Simone, and Serri (2014) believe LGBT employees will more likely disclose their sexual orientation if they witness other disclosing with positive treatment

from others. I recommended best practices that organizational leaders can adopt in support of the needed actions described above. Although the focus of this research was on the LGBT community, there are implications for other minority groups to use the recommendations to establish positive work environments for those employees.

Senior leaders must believe that establishing healthy environments is important. Their support is essential to make the necessary changes in organizational policies and best practices. Researchers have shown that when employees perceive senior leaders have been instrumental in supporting policies, the employees reported increased intentions to follow policies (Hu et al., 2012). The change process is ongoing and not a one-time event. Leaders and supervisors need to help all employees understand the need for change.

Future work is necessary whereby communication strategies, including (a) forming a communication team, (b) assessing communication practices, (c) ensuring vision and strategy development, (d) cascading to all personnel, and (e) monitoring results, receive consideration to ensure a successful transition for organizations. For instance, do LGBT communication strategies need to be different from other communication strategies implemented in organizations? How do organizational leaders evaluate or adjust the strategies to guarantee achievement of desired results?

Conclusions

This study included three research questions. The first related to what role antidiscrimination, social, legal, and organizational changes have had among LGBT

employees. The cases demonstrated a positive social shift has occurred in the perceptions, understanding, and overall acceptance of individuals. Participants discussed how these changes have allowed individuals to share their LGBT identity outside of the workplace without the stigma previously felt by this community. The fear of retaliation and social isolation has also decreased as a result. Despite the social changes, employees have not witnessed similar positive experiences in the workplace. Discrimination and hostility toward LGBT individuals still exist in work environments.

The focus of the second question was the effect of cultural lag on career paths. Despite a positive shift in societal attitudes, the findings showed that a cultural lag still exists in the workplace. Workplace environments have not kept pace with positive social changes. Companies must take responsibility for this lag. Employees want to be judged fairly and treated equally on their abilities, not gender identity or expression.

The focus of the third question was identifying perceived best practices for implementation strategies for the advancement of LGBT members. The findings provided eight best practices that organizational leaders can adopt to establish and maintain inclusive environments for all employees. Cultural shifts begin with senior leadership as the driving force (Mills et al., 2013).

Companies who want a committed workforce should understand the importance of the LGBT employee base. Employees who feel engaged in their work produce results, remain longer, and are more effective in their roles (Tims, Bakker, Derks, & van Rhenen, 2013). Leaders should develop clear policies and implement strategies that foster a

positive place to work. Supervisors have the responsibility to implement and maintain the policies within their work groups. The adoption of the recommended best practices will increase employee commitment and retention and will lead to successful results for all employees and the company.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. Please describe your career path from the beginning.

2. Do people at your place of employment know about your sexual orientation?
     a. Why or Why Not?

     b. If out:
        i. How long have you been out at work?
        ii. Why did you want to come out at work?
        iii. Have you ever felt you had to hide? Can you tell me about a time when you felt you had to hide your sexual orientation?
        iv. How do you feel this affects your work performance?

     c. If not out:
        i. Do any of your co-workers know? Why do some know and others not?
        ii. Can you tell me about why you hide your sexual orientation at work?
        iii. How do you think your co-workers would react if you told them? Do you think you would be treated differently?

3. How do you perceive the culture at large with regard to attitudes toward LGBT in your workplace?

4. Are you comfortable in your current work environment with respect to your sexual orientation? Why or why not?

5. Do you believe your workplace creates an inclusive environment for LGBT employees?
     a. Why or Why Not?
        i. If yes, what policies, procedures, or people have created an inclusive environment?
        ii. If not, what would need to change for you to believe it is an inclusive environment?

6. How do you think the culture in your workplace has played a role in the development of your career path?

7. What do you perceive as trends or recent activity in political or legal developments regarding LGBT rights?
     a. Have those trends, publicity, or activities affected the culture in your workplace?
        i. If so, how?

b. Have they affected your career path?
    i. If so, how?

8. How do you get along with your supervisor? Can you walk me through times when you've worked together well and times when you have had awkward or troublesome interactions?
1) Is he/she aware of your sexual orientation?
2) What kind of feedback do you receive from your supervisor?
3) Can you think of a story in which you were or may have been treated differently by your supervisor because of your sexual orientation?

9. How do you get along with your peers? Can you walk me through times when you've worked together well and times when you have had awkward or troublesome interactions?
10) Are they aware of your sexual orientation?
11) Can you think of a story in which you were or may have been treated differently by your peers because of your sexual orientation?

10. Please describe how your organization and your direct supervisor supported you during your career?

11. What challenges have you faced in your workplace related to your sexual orientation?

12. Would you describe your career path as successful in the workplace?
a. Why or why not?
b. Has your sexual orientation had a positive or negative impact on your career path?

13. Have you come out to family and friends?
a. Has your decision to come out or not to your family influenced your decision to come out or not in the workplace? If so, why?

14. To your knowledge, can you be fired in this city/workplace for being LGBT?
1) If they can't be fired, ask: How important was knowing that you could not be fired in your decision to come out at work or stay in the closet?

15. Have you shared all that is significant in reference to the experiences that you have described?

Appendix B: Case Study Protocol

1) Case Study Introduction

   a) Research Questions

      i) What have anti-discrimination, social, legal, and organizational changes meant to LGBT employees in the workplace?

      ii) What effect does cultural lag have on the career paths of LGBT employees?

      iii) What are perceived best practices for the implementing strategies that create inclusive environments for the advancement of LGBT employees?

2) Conceptual Framework

   a) Cultural Lag Theory

3) Protocol Purpose and Intended Use

   a) Protocol to be used by the researcher to guide and inform all study data collection, analysis, and conclusions

   b) Researcher will use the protocol to ensure dependability of case study methods, findings, and conclusions

4) Data Collection Procedures

   a) Researcher will recruit interviewees from (a) purposeful sampling coupled, and (b) snowball sampling process

   b) Prepare informed consent forms for each interviewee

   c) Review and finalize planned interview questions

   d) Case Study Interview Questions

      (1) Please describe your career path from the beginning.

      (2) Do people at your place of employment know about your sexual orientation?

         (i) Why or Why Not?

         (ii) If out:

1. How long have you been out at work?

2. Why did you want to come out at work?

3. Have you ever felt you had to hide? Can you tell me about a time when you felt you had to hide your sexual orientation?

4. How do you feel this affects your work performance?

   a. If not out:

5. Do any of your co-workers know? Why do some know and others not?

6. Can you tell me about why you hide your sexual orientation at work?

7. How do you think your co-workers would react if you told them? Do you think you would be treated differently?

(3) How do you perceive the culture at large with regard to attitudes toward LGBT in your workplace?

(4) Are you comfortable in your current work environment with respect to your sexual orientation? Why or why not?

(5) Do you believe your workplace creates an inclusive environment for LGBT employees?

   (a) Why or Why Not?

      (i) If yes, what policies, procedures, or people have created an inclusive environment?

      (ii) If not, what would need to change for you to believe it is an inclusive environment?

(6) How do you think the culture in your workplace has

   played a role in the development of your career path?

(7) What do you perceive as trends or recent activity in political or legal developments regarding LGBT rights?

(i) Have those trends, publicity, or activities affected the culture in your workplace?

(ii) If so, how?

(iii) Have they affected your career path?

    1. If so, how?

(8) How do you get along with your supervisor? Can you walk me through times when you've worked together well and times when you have had awkward or troublesome interactions?

    (i) Is he/she aware of your sexual orientation?

    (ii) What kind of feedback do you receive from your supervisor?

    (iii) Can you think of a story in which you were or may have been treated differently by your supervisor because of your sexual orientation?

(9) How do you get along with your peers? Can you walk me through times when you've worked together well and times when you have had awkward or troublesome interactions?

    (i) Are they aware of your sexual orientation?

    (ii) Can you think of a story in which you were or may have been treated differently by your peers because of your sexual orientation?

10) Please describe how your organization and your direct supervisor supported you during your career?

(11) What challenges have you faced in your workplace related to your sexual orientation?

(12) Would you describe your career path as successful in the workplace?

(i) Why or why not?

(ii) Has your sexual orientation had a positive or negative impact on your career path?

      (13)   Have you come out to family and friends?

            (i) Has your decision to come out or not to your family influenced your decision to come out or not in the workplace? If so, why?

      (14)   To your knowledge, can you be fired in this city/workplace for being LGBT?

                   (i) If they can't be fired, ask: How important was knowing that you could not be fired in your decision to come out at work or stay in the closet?

      (15)   Have you shared all that is significant in reference to the

      experiences that you have described?

5) Collect data from the review of documents, and the review of available services

6) Data collection tools

   a) Digital audio recordings and typed transcripts

   b) Researcher field notes

   c) Case study database

7) Outline of Case Study Report Contents

   a) Overview of study

   b) Presentation of the findings

   c) Implications for theory

   d) Implications for organizations

   e) Recommendations of best practices

   f) Recommendations for further study

   g) Conclusions

8) Data Analysis Techniques and Tools

   a) Coding (within case, and cross-case)

b) Analysis tools

    i) NVivo

    ii) Microsoft Excel

9) Study Dependability, Credibility, and Transferability Methods

a) Dependability methods

b) Case study protocol use

c) Case study database creation

10) Trustworthiness methods

a) Multiple data sources (dependability)

b) Research bias identification, and member checking (credibility)

c) Rich description of study sample population and context (transferability)

Appendix C: Case Study Documents

Document Identification	Description
Document 1	Introductory training on LGBT inclusion in the Federal Government
Document 2	Benefits for LGBT Federal Employees and Annuitants
Document 3	Introductory Training on LGBT Inclusion in Federal Government Facilitator's Guide
Document 4	A Resolution Setting Policy for State of Kansas Shawnee County Concerning Sexual Orientation
Document 5	Employee Policy Handbook for CoreFirst Bank & Trust
Document 6	Employee Policy Handbook for Washburn University

Appendix D: Coded Categories and Subthemes

Codes	Sources	References
Education	20	45
Cultural Sensitivity	15	35
Consistency	16	38
LGBT Themed	17	22
Supervisor Training	18	29
Interview Process	14	13
Inclusive Environment Awareness	12	10
External Communication	13	12
Benefits	19	27
Health Care Coverage	14	21
Sick time	10	14
Remove fear of loss	11	10
Physical Environment	15	12
Safe Zones	10	13
Internal Marketing Materials	9	10
Vendor Relationships	8	7
Zero Tolerance	10	9
Establishment of Ground Rules	14	16