

**LGBT IDENTITY AND
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT:
A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW**

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INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines a systematic review (Pittaway et al., 2004; Tranfield et al., 2003) of the literature surrounding lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers, their careers and their workplace experiences. The review draws on literature from areas including psychology, sociology and gender/sexuality studies, but is rooted in research within, and written specifically from, the perspective of human resource management and development research. This study outlines the methods used in the systematic review process, recurring themes within and characteristics of the literature, and recommendations for human resource development practitioners and for future research in this area.

Completed as part of a wider study on the influence of a LGBT identity on a person's career, this review examines the major themes within the literature surrounding the topic, outlines major findings and consensuses, and suggests areas that require further study. One major research question is addressed in the paper:

- What are the experiences and factors, both within and outside the workplace, that influence a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender person's career?

The career of the lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender person may differ in many respects from that of the heterosexual person, in that factors such as discrimination (Chung, 2001), the disclosure of one's (often stigmatised) identity (Ragins, 2008), interpersonal difficulties, identity development issues and psychological problems, associated with the above, (McDermott, 2006) will often play a larger role within the LGBT population. This can affect many aspects of their lives, not least their career, and can become associated with heightened occupational stress and lower job satisfaction (Driscoll et al. 1996), lower organizational commitment (Button, 2001), and increased turnover intentions (Ragins and Cornwell 2001).

A key tenet of the evolving critical HRD field is the transformation of workplaces and HRD practices towards justice, equity and fairness (Fenwick, 2004), and it is in this respect that critical HRD is of use in the careers of the LGBT population. However, Short, Bing, and Kerhahn (2003) discuss how, even though HRD practitioners are increasingly citing their commitments to ethical and socially responsible workplace, shareholder value is now more than ever their number one priority. Yet, the promotion of LGBT-affirmative HRD policies and practices need not necessarily injure the bottom line. On the contrary, the business case for diversity is now well established (Herring, 2009; Robinson and Dechant, 1997; Slater et al., 2008), and, although many will argue that an organization has a social and moral imperative in pursuing an equitable workplace (King and Cortina, 2010), the HRD practitioner might also cite the increases in LGBT employee productivity (King and Cortina, 2010), increased brand equity (Day and Greene, 2008), and better recruitment (Day and Greene, 2008) enjoyed by those organizations that pursue pro-LGBT initiatives if they wish to achieve buy-in from colleagues and senior figures.

The current research on LGBT issues in HRD may also present a difficulty for practitioners. Bierema and Cseh (2003) criticize the work of HRD research in promoting equity in the workplace:

“HRD focuses little on issues of social justice in the workplace or larger social context...gender/race/ethnicity is not used as a category of analysis – even when data are collected by gender. Organizational “undiscussables” such as sexism, racism, patriarchy, and violence receive little attention in the literature yet have considerable impact on organizational dynamics.”

With Ragins (2004:35) describing the LGBT employee population as constituting “one the largest, but least studied, minority groups in the workforce”, and Davis (2009) discussing

how organizations do not know how to deal with transgender employees undergoing a transition in the workplace, I would extend Bierema and Cseh's argument, and in doing so agreeing with Schmidt et al. (2012), by adding sexual and gender identity as a category of analysis largely ignored in existing HRD research. HRD practitioners, whilst having good intentions as to the study and advancement of LGBT issues in their organization, may therefore lack a large pool of knowledge from which to draw in order to do so.

This systematic review examines the literature from a number of fields, including human resource development, human resource management, gender and sexuality, sociology, and psychology, while many systematic literature reviews focus on only one or two disciplines of literature. Although a similar review (Schmidt et al., 2012) has recently been completed on the intersection of LGBT population and human resource development, only the literature in Adult Education and Human Resource Development was used. This, I feel, limits the conversation; research within other fields, such as sociology (e.g. Tilcsik 2011, Giuffre et al. 2008), psychology (Rostosky and Riggle, 2002; Budge et al., 2010) and gender and sexuality studies (Bernstein and Swartwout, 2012; Bowleg et al., 2008) are of substantial relevance to this topic and thus limiting a literature review to only the HRD and Adult Education fields may prove problematic in recommending future research priorities and implications for HRD practitioners. This review takes a multi-disciplinary approach to appraising the literature, with a broad spectrum of the social sciences represented, and examines how these important pieces of research in non-HRD areas can be of benefit to academics and practitioners alike. For example, Prince (1995) states, 'the literature pertaining to the psychology of gay men – specifically the literature related to the management of stigma and self-concept – can help point to specific implications for the career development of gay men'. To improve the work-lives and careers of the LGBT population, and in doing so helping an organization to become more socially-conscious and equitable, the cognitive, psychological and social processes

within an LGBT person's life, such as identity development, identity management, discrimination and prejudice can play a large part in shaping and influencing practices and policies within the remit of the HR practitioner.

In addition to answering the central research question, this systematic review also seeks to examine the characteristics of the literature surrounding the careers and workplace experiences of the LGBT population, including:

- the main fields the research is being carried out in,
- the major themes occurring within the literature,
- the methodologies most commonly used.

In doing so, this review will be a useful tool in surveying the literature on LGBT careers, providing an overview of existing gaps in the literature, the most successful ways of recruiting LGBT participants (a notoriously difficult task) and collecting data about potentially sensitive issues surrounding sexual and gender identity.

The systematic review, most commonly implemented in the study of medicine and healthcare practice (Tranfield et al., 2003), offers a scientific and reliable alternative to the traditional literature review, through a series of transparent, imitable steps that seek to reduce bias and provide full accountability for the researcher's considerations and decisions throughout the process (Pittaway et al., 2004; Tranfield et al., 2003).

METHODOLOGY

The selection of the papers that make up this literature review was performed within a number of steps that follow Tranfield et al. (2003) and Pittaway et al., (2004):

1. Initial Study
2. Pilot Study
3. Categorization of Literature
4. Review of Literature
5. Synthesis of Review

Initial Study

The initial step of the systematic review ensures the identification of the key scholars within the field and the creation of a search string that may be used to effectively and efficiently query the electronic databases (Pittaway et al., 2004; Tranfield et al., 2003). For the purpose of this review, the following databases were used: EBSCO Academic Source Complete (over 13,600 journals over a number of fields), EBSCO Business Source Complete (more than 2,400 peer-reviewed journals in the business and management areas), and Thompson Reuters Web of Knowledge (over 23,000 journals in various fields). The first step of the initial study was a simple search of the databases using a broad search string, using keywords based on the author's prior experience (Pittaway et al., 2004), relating to both the *Sample* of interest in this research (the LGBT population) and the *Context* (the workplace, the career, employment, etc.). These articles were then filtered down by searching only within the title; only within the subject terms, excluding those not in peer-review journals, excluding those in an irrelevant field (for example, biology) and those that were not in the English language.

The remaining articles were then filtered down further by selecting for relevance to the research question; this included selecting only those that exhibited the key words, phrases and areas of relevance to the research question, and by deselecting those that were irrelevant. The citation histories of the remaining articles were then analysed. The key authors within the field were identified based on the number of citations each had received, the databases were queried with the names and initials of these key authors and additional, relevant papers by them were added to the review. The articles that cited these key authors' articles were then reviewed, and included or excluded based on their relevance to the research question.

By reviewing the titles and examining the myriad of keywords, synonyms and themes of each of the articles that had been chosen so far, a definitive search string was created with which to query the databases. This larger search string was constructed in a similar fashion to the initial search string (i.e. *Sample and Context*), but now included the various synonyms of the initial search terms that authors had used in their articles.

Pilot Study

The second step of the systematic review, the pilot study, tests the effectiveness of the search string created in the initial study (Pittaway et al., 2004), and gathers potential articles that will make up the basis of the review. Any changes to the search string that were felt necessary were performed in an iterative process early in the pilot study. The three databases were then queried with the established search string, and articles were included or excluded as per the criteria outlined above.

Categorization of Literature

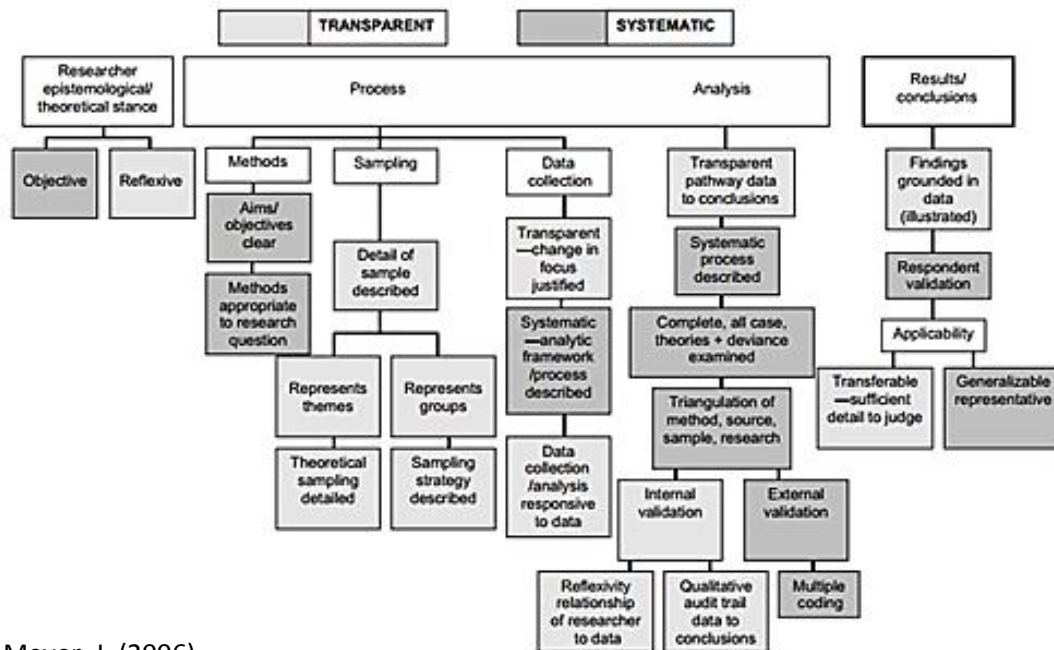
The third stage of the systematic review involved the resulting articles (133) being included or excluded from the review according to their quality (see below), their affiliation with the key authors in their field, and their citation history (Pittaway et al., 2004). Those that were deemed to be of high quality made up the basis of the review. Before exclusion, the overall demographics of the literature, such as their publication year, the fields in which they were published, and the methodologies used, were recorded in order to map the research surrounding this topic more clearly.

Measuring Quality & Bracketing Biases

The process of excluding certain studies is by nature a subjective one; the reviewer's biases towards certain methodologies, ontologies, epistemologies and styles may cloud their judgement somewhat. In this case the researcher is currently pursuing qualitative research, set within a social constructivist and queer epistemological framework, and is also a member of the LGBT community, the population being studied. In an attempt to bracket any biases, the exclusion/inclusion process within this review was performed with reference to a number of criteria cited by others (Meyrick, 2006; Popay, Rogers and Williams, 1998) as characteristic of high quality research. For example, Meyrick highlights transparency and a systematic procedure throughout the research process (Fig. 1), while Popay et al. (1998) discuss features of high quality research such as sampling strategies being shaped by theory and the phenomena being studied, quantifiable data being collected from a number of sources and the manner in which researcher create interpretations from the collected data, amongst others. By ensuring that these recommendations were kept at the forefront when judging papers on their

quality, any personal or research biases were held at bay, and a true and proper systematic approach was taken.

Figure 1. Meyrick’s (2006) overview of the characteristics of high quality qualitative research.



Source: Meyer, J. (2006)

Synthesis of Review

The review was synthesised by taking note of a number of the characteristics of each paper after reading. These included the area in which the study was based, the year it was published, the recruitment methods used in gaining a research sample, the methods used in data collection, and the gaps in the extant literature identified by the author(s) of the paper. A number of themes that overarched many of the articles were identified, and each publication was assigned to one or two of these themes. In assigning a theme to each article we gain an overview of the major directions in which the literature has, and continues to, progress, and an impression of the topics which require further development.

RESULTS

Initial Study

The initial query of the databases resulted in a total of 11,394 articles. After filtering and excluding irrelevant articles only 51 articles remained across the three databases. After the citation histories of these papers were analysed, twelve authors were chosen as the key authors in the field. In querying the databases for additional papers by these authors, an additional twenty relevant papers were identified. The citation histories of the papers of the most cited authors yielded six additional papers. In total, the initial study resulted in 77 papers.

Pilot Study

The pilot study allowed for the development (and subsequent redevelopment) of a definitive search string with which to query the databases. This larger search string resulted in an addition of 56 papers to the review, when duplicates from the initial study were accounted for. The total number of papers before the exclusion process was undertaken was therefore 133.

Categorization of Literature

The process of excluding papers from the 133 results of the initial and pilot studies was done in consultation with the parameters, described above, set out by Popay (1998) and Meyrick (2006). Any major overlap between articles from the same author was eliminated by choosing the most representative, high quality paper. The number of papers excluded at this point was 75, leaving a remainder of 59 papers that make up the review.

Figure 2. Showing an overview of the 133 articles that resulted from the initial and pilot study steps of the systematic review, according to the fields they are published in.

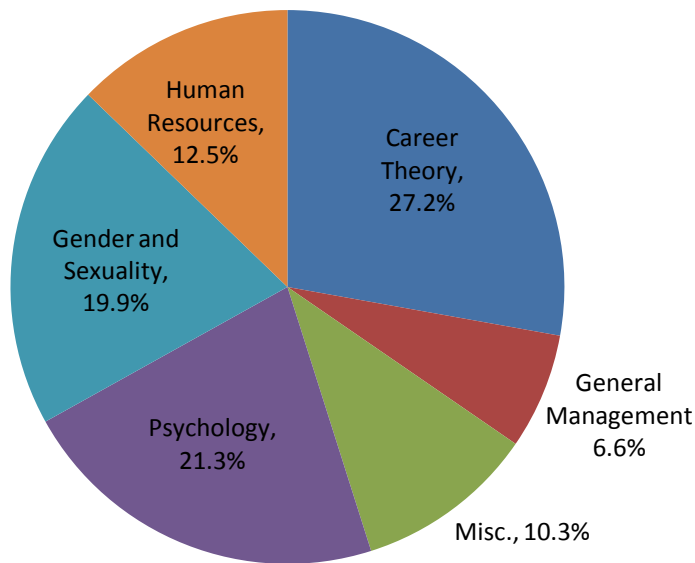


Figure 2 represents the academic fields the 136 papers that resulted from the initial and pilot studies were published in. While almost 50% of the relevant papers were published in journals related to the human resources, career theory and management areas, the fields of psychology and gender/sexuality studies were also well represented. These papers, whilst not written directly from a HR practitioner perspective, are nonetheless relevant to the area of LGBT careers and workplace experiences, as they provide in-depth analyses of many of the cognitive, developmental and identity management process that an LGBT person may go through in their lifetime.

Figure 3: Number of relevant publications from 1985 to 2012

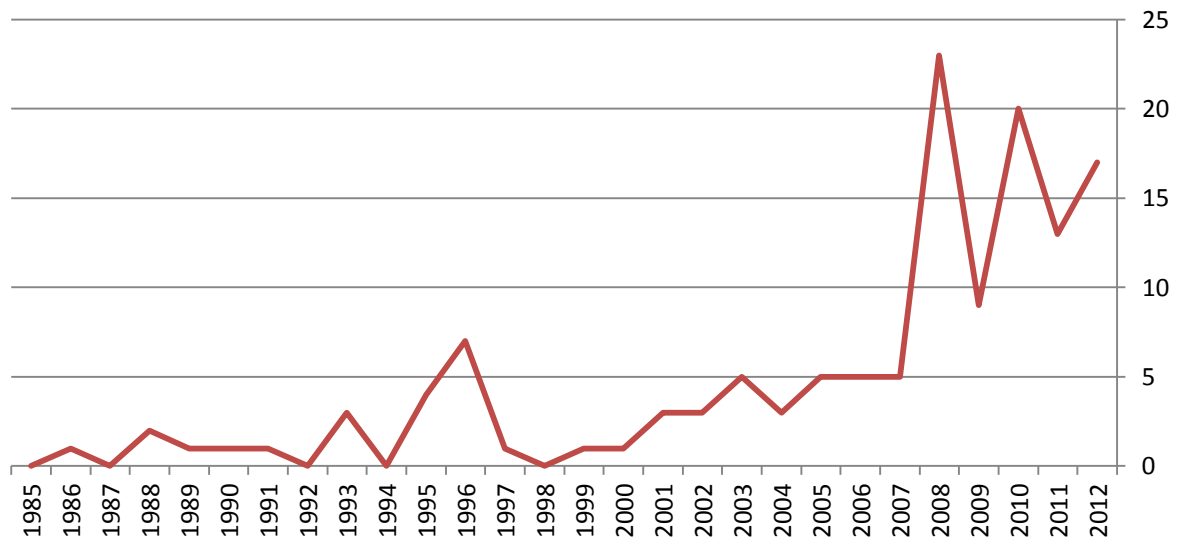


Figure 3 shows the number of publications relevant to this review from the year 1985 until 2012. A positive trend can be seen, showing the growing interest of the academic community in this hitherto under-researched workplace population. Although a small number of papers from the year 2013 were included in the literature review, that year has not been included in this figure. Only complete years were represented. In the years preceding 1985, articles were characterised by a very clear bias against the LGBT population, to the extent to that it was felt necessary to exclude any published pre-1985. Furthermore, the political, legislative and social landscape has changed so much between 1985 and now any findings or recommendations from these articles would not be of any relevance in today's society.

Recruitment and Data Collection Methods

The most widely method of recruitment for quantitative studies was through the internet, with email lists provided by LGBT organizations, online message boards and web-based communities and groups proving popular. Combined with snowball sampling and, in some

cases, a small incentive, these techniques can provide a large amount of participants for surveys and questionnaires. For qualitative studies, personal networks, combined with snowball sampling, was the most common recruitment method used.

Almost one third (29%) of the articles were conceptual, drawing together existing empirical research or introducing a previously unused conceptual framework (e.g. Degges-White and Shoffner, 2002; Velez and Moradi, 2012). Of those that contained empirical research, there was an almost even divide between qualitative and quantitative research methodologies (48% and 52%, respectively). Table 1 provides an overview of the data collection methodologies used in reviewed articles.

Table 1: Methods of Data collection used in empirical research articles.

Method	No. Of Publications
Survey	46
Semi-Structured Interview	34
Case Study	8
Psychological Field Test	2
Other	5

Recurring Themes

The literature was characterised by a number of major themes within the area of LGBT careers and workplace experiences. Each article represented one or two themes and were identified as such. The themes recognized, the key authors and the number of publications within each are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Major themes within the literature

Theme	Key Authors	No. of Publications
<i>Identity Management</i>	Ward & Winstanley, Griffith	25
<i>Identity Development</i>	Boatwright et al., Lyons	2
<i>Career Development</i>	Fassinger	41
<i>LGBT Youth Issues</i>	Willis	5
<i>Organizational and Human Resources Perspectives</i>	King & Cortina, Hebl	23
<i>Discrimination</i>	Ragins, Cornwell, Smith & Ingram	27
<i>Social Issues and Experiences</i>	Rumens	24

DISCUSSION

Discrimination

Discrimination was found to be a hugely salient issue with the careers and workplace experiences of the LGBT population, and it is therefore not surprising that this was one of the larger themes. Even in articles not categorised within this theme, the fear and experience of prejudice was at the forefront of many participants' minds. Articles here directly relate to discrimination; exploring antecedents to and consequences of workplace discrimination and heterosexism, the strategies used by the LGBT population to mitigate or cope with this, and the different types of discrimination that can occur, and the effects on an organizational level.

LGBT workplace discrimination was shown to be present in a number of forms. Formal discrimination relates to prejudice against LGBT people within formalized contexts, such as job applications, interviews, promotions, performance appraisal and employment termination. Tilcsik (2011) found that signalling one was LGBT on a job application meant that in many American states one was significantly less likely to receive a positive response, while Dispenza et al. (2012) reported discrimination against transgender job applicants. While in

these contexts it was easy to observe that formal discrimination was taking place, in many cases an LGBT person may not be so sure that their sexual/gender identity was the underlying cause of a negative formal workplace process.

Informal discrimination refers to discriminatory incidents on an interpersonal level, and may relate to malicious jokes, snubs, exclusion or harassment. While more subtle than formal discrimination, it can have just as large an effect on the individual. Silvershanz et al. (2008), building on research from Meyer (2003), Harrell et al. (2003), and Williams et al. (2003), show that heterosexist and homophobic harassment can have a negative effect on the psychological well-being of LGBT employees within academia. Waldo (1999) found that experiencing heterosexism was related to adverse psychological, health, and work-associated outcomes. Additionally LGBT co-workers on the periphery of homophobic incidents, where homophobia is being directed at or about another, can experience discomfort and an increased focus on identity management strategies, which, as discussed below, may cause a distraction from workplace tasks.

Identity Management

Papers within the identity management theme discussed how LGBT employees withhold or discuss information about their sexual/gender identity in the workplace; the different strategies that are used in doing this, singularly or in combination, throughout one's careers (Button, 2004); the reasons why a person may or may not disclose their sexual/gender identity (Ragins, 2008); reactions from heterosexual co-workers (Blackwell, 2008, Bernstein and Swartwout 2012); the psychological, cognitive and social effects of hiding or revealing one's sexual identity (Madera, 2010; King et al., 2008).

A review of the literature shows that there are a number of identity management strategies that may be used a gay or lesbian employee in the workplace. Supporting and extending earlier research (Shallenberger, 1994; Woods, 1993), Button (2004) identified these strategies as counterfeiting, where a false heterosexual identity is created and maintained; avoidance, where the subject of one's sexual identity is completely avoided, but a heterosexual identity is not actively created; and integrating, where one reveals their sexual identity and attempts to deal with any consequences that may arise. Interestingly, the study showed that a number of these strategies may be used in combination, at the same time or throughout one's career, for example by disclosing one's sexual identity to a limited number of people but maintaining a false heterosexual identity with all others. Clair et al. (2005) delved deeper, identifying different ways of *passing* or *revealing*: in the former, one may fabricate a false heterosexual identity, actively conceal information about themselves, or dodge questions about their sexual identity. With the latter, one may signal that one is LGBT (e.g. by bringing up specific conversational topics), revealing their LGBT identity and attempting to normalise it by making it seem ordinary, or by differentiating, a strategy where one openly presents their identity and highlights their difference. Ragins (2008) constructs a model of antecedents to stigmatised identity disclosure in both work and non-work domains. Disclosure decisions are affected by many factors, including the desire to be seen by others as one sees oneself; the anticipated consequences of disclosure, both positive and negative; the environmental support one's feels they have for their stigmatised identity; characteristics of the stigma itself; and the presence of other people with this identity, as well as allies and supportive relationships. King et al. (2008) explore positive aspects and negative aspects of coming out in the workplace, and also implicate the timing and method of disclosure, and the organizational climate, as factors in the success of disclosure decisions.

It is clear from these models that identity management in the workplace is much more complicated than choosing whether to disclose or not disclose one's hidden sexual/gender identity. Identity management processes may therefore take up a larger amount of psychological resources than first expected. However, the literature surrounding identity management also highlights the negative consequences of hiding one's sexual or gender identity, and the positive outcomes of coming out. Madera (2010) discusses the large cognitive toll concealing an LGBT identity can have, possibly interfering with day-to-day work, while Day and Schoenrade (1997) showed that workers who were open about their sexual identity had higher affective commitment, higher job satisfaction, higher perceived top management support, lower role ambiguity, lower role conflict, and lower conflict between work and home.

Identity Development

Identity development is an important but under-researched topic within the management field. The development of a lesbian and gay identity has been researched since the 1970s, and has been represented in a number of models (e.g. Cass, 1973; Coleman, 1982, Troiden, 1989) that seek to plot the social, psychological and cognitive processes that one may go through in developing a positive gay or lesbian self-identity. Crucially, these models mention the differing attitudes to one's self and one's sexual orientation, the increased psychological resources that are used, and the evolving views and perceptions of heterosexuality during this time. These changes in perception and focus may have an impact on the LGBT person's career development, interpersonal relations, and the success of diversity initiatives within organizations. For example, Boatwright et al. (1996) find that lesbian women went through a

‘second adolescence’ during the process of coming out, and this period was marked with delays, disruptions and in some cases derailment of the career development process.

Unfortunately, the intersection between career development and LGBT identity development has not been studied in any great detail within the literature, with only three of the 133 articles (Boatwright et al. 1996, Lyons et al. 2010, Tomlinson and Fassinger 2003) dealing specifically with the topic. Prince (1995) criticises the lack of research into this topic, while Chojnacki and Gelberg (1994) suggest that career counsellors use the sexual identity development framework as a background to help understand the interaction of sexual identity and career. To help HRD practitioners improve the career development opportunities available to their LGBT colleagues, more research into its interplay with identity development, and how perspectives and priorities may change over time, is needed.

The theme of identity development is somewhat present in a much lesser context within parts of the literature, particularly with the related, but different, themes of identity management, strategies of which may change as one’s LGBT identity develops; and youth issues, which deal with adolescents and college students who often are only just beginning to fully explore their sexual/gender identity. The implications of coming out within the workplace and the consequences of a burgeoning LGBT identity within teenage years are well documented, but the management literature has yet to track the development of one’s LGBT identity within the context of the workplace, or explore the work-lives of those who identify as heterosexual until later than usual in their lives.

Career Development

This theme was characterised by articles that focused on the interplay of an established LGBT identity with one's vocational aspirations and occurrences. Career development was the most well represented theme in this review, with over 30% of the articles reviewed associated with it. Many of these included discrimination, the fear of discrimination, and identity management strategies influenced largely by discrimination, as key issues affecting the career development of LGBT workers (e.g. Dispenza et al., 2012; Velez and Moradi, 2012; Adams et al., 2005), but a number of other factors were also found to be important in the careers of LGBT people.

Networking and interpersonal relations were found to be more difficult for LGBT workers (O'Ryan and McFarland, 2010; Parnell et al., 2012). Parnell et al. (2012) theorize that this may be because of the existence of a "good ole' boy network" maintained exclusively by heterosexual men within organizations, and the experience, or fear, of interpersonal discrimination, leading to a loss in confidence. O'Ryan and McFarland (2010:74) cite identity management and disclosure issues as important in this respect, with lesbians and gay couples hesitant to build networks 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". A lack of confidence in relation to networking and building good workplace relationships may lead to LGBT workers being perceived by co-workers and managers as unfriendly or hostile; which could have implications for performance evaluations, interpersonal relations and overall career development.

The importance of one's sexual/gender identity within the workplace was demonstrated in many articles, with participants experiencing decreased job satisfaction in heterosexist organizations (Parnell et al., 2012; Lyons et al., 2005), an awareness for executives of their

position as advocate and role model for other LGBT employees (Heintz, 2012), and their conscious attempts to bring together this identity with other workplace identities (Rumens and Kerfoot, 2009; O'Ryan and McFarland, 2010). Articles within this theme show that sexual/gender identity is central to many LGBT employees' lives, and in many cases the career may be of secondary importance compared to being authentic to oneself (Heintz, 2012).

The interplay of sexual or gender identity with career choices was also a salient factor within this theme. Chung (1995) discusses the idea that certain occupations may be perceived as inappropriate, by both themselves and by heterosexuals, for lesbians and gay men.

Discriminatory heterosexuals may believe that gay men and lesbians are inappropriate for positions in the teaching, healthcare or childcare professions, while gay men and lesbians, fearing religious intolerance, discrimination or other negative attitudes may choose to stay away from certain career paths (Chung, 1995). Ng et al. (2012) found that LGBT people, as part of a marginalised social identity, espoused more altruistic values as a way to protect themselves and the collective interest of the social group, and were thus more likely to choose to work in the non-profit sector, while their heterosexual control sample was more likely to choose to work in the private sector.

Scott et al. (2011) found that transgender students may experience difficulties in their career development during the transition process, as any former experience would be under a different name and gender presentation. To avail of references and recommendations, they would be forced to disclose their transgender status and risk discrimination. Similarly, Tilcsik (2011) found that mentioning previous experience in an LGBT campus organization would actually hinder the career development process in many parts of the USA, rather than help it. In scenarios such as this, sexual and gender identities can become entwined with the career

development process, and the LGBT person must forgo mentioning a possibly beneficial aspect of their former career, or run the risk of discrimination, both formal and informal, when their LGBT identity is made known.

LGBT Youth Issues

The study of the vocational processes of LGBT youths may be considered as part of the general career development theme. However, some factors may be unique or more important during adolescence, while common factors affecting LGBT people within the workplace, like identity disclosure or discrimination, might have not yet been experienced, but may still be a consideration in the career development process. A number of career development barriers specific to LGBT youth have been found in the literature. Nauta et al., (2001) found that the sexual orientation of a role model is an import factor for LGB youths; however, Fassinger (1996) theorized that lesbian and gay youths have fewer role models with whom to identify, because of the lack of visible lesbians and gay men. As well as lacking a relatable role model for career development purposes, lesbian and gay youth may not be able to see examples of the interplay between one's sexual identity and career, and thus valuable psychological resources may be taken up (within adolescence and at the beginning of one's career) in developing identity management strategies for the workplace (Schmidt and Nilsson, 2006). Additionally, Nauta et al. (2001) found that LGB college students felt less career guidance than heterosexual students. The existence of stereotypically LGBT occupations may mean that some youths feel restricted in their vocational choices (Fassinger 1996), or feel that these workplaces offer a "safe-space" in which they will not face discrimination (Morrow, 1997), in contrast to other non-stereotyped professions or workplaces.

Hetherington (1991) postulated that the process of sexual identity self-realization, usually occurring during adolescence, is so psychologically overwhelming that the LGBT youth may focus more on their personal issues, while concentration on career development is significantly reduced. The result is a “bottle-neck” or slump in the career development process. Schmidt and Nilsson (2006) support the bottleneck theory in their study of 102 lesbian, gay and bisexual youths. They found that LGBT adolescents who reported higher levels of inner conflict with their sexual identity had lower levels of career maturity and higher levels of vocational indecision. A slump in the career development process may have larger ramifications in adolescence than at any other point in the LGBT person’s life, as further education or a career path may be chosen that will then be abandoned for another.

Organizational and Human Resources Perspectives

Papers that related primarily to the position of the organization or the HR practitioner in dealing with LGBT issues in the workplace were categorized under this theme. Papers within this theme examined factors such as employee job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational citizenship behaviours and the disclosure of sexual identity in the workplace, and looking at how organizational support and workplace diversity can affect them.

Huffman (2008) examines the role of multi-level support in different aspects of an LGBT person’s career, and finds that support from supervisors was related to job satisfaction, a finding related to Day and Schoenrade’s (2000) finding that top management support of LGBT employees leads to increased job satisfaction. Huffman also finds that the presence of anti-discrimination policies is related with higher job satisfaction, while Rostosky and Riggle (2002) find that they are positively associated with the extent to which one is out at work.

Similarly, Brenner et al. (2010) find that workplace heterosexism is associated with the level of workplace outness of LGBT employees, and that this is related to the amount of organizational citizenship that these employees perform.

The literature within this theme presents a clear economic case for diversity within organizations and support of LGBT employees. As well as having positive outcomes for employees (and thus indirectly for the company), levels of outness in the workplace will increase which, as stated above, has major economic benefits for the organization. Below, recommendations for HR practitioners on how to increase LGBT diversity are outlined.

Social Issues and Experiences

This theme includes research on interpersonal and group issues that was not focused on discrimination (for example, Rumens' [2010a, b] research on the workplace friendships of gay men). Many articles here looked at how various social elements of the workplace may help create a positive LGBT identity, with Rumens (2010a) identifying friendships between men as empowering non-traditional sexualities in the workplace, and Fassinger (2010) examining leadership. Whilst broad, this theme highlights areas of future research potential and fills in many of the gaps that the other themes do not look at.

Recommendations for Future Research

Sampling, Recruitment and Data Collection Methods

Gaining access to the LGBT community can, like with any “hidden population” prove hard for the researcher (Herek, 1989; Berk, Boyd & Hamner, 1992; GLEN, 1995). A prominent problem reported within the research methodologies reviewed was the difficulty in accessing a non-purposeful representative population of LGBT participants. A large number of the authors used purposeful or snowball sampling, utilising their personal networks and local transgender groups or organizations. These sampling methods have both advantages and disadvantages. Snowball sampling, where initial participants help to recruit more participants, may be useful for researchers in accessing a statistically small sample, such as the transgender population, whilst purposeful sampling may be useful to demonstrate a large range of experiences and factors to fully enhance the understanding of the “lived experiences” (Moustakas, 1994:55). Berg (2004) praises the use of snowball sampling in cases where alternative sampling methods would not be effective in gaining a sufficient number of participants, and where the depth of data, rather than the frequency of phenomena, is of importance. On the other hand, any findings obtained through the use of snowball or purposeful sampling cannot be generalised as easily without further research on a wider scale. By using transgender groups as a recruitment base, researchers may be limiting the potential participant pool to those who are actively involved in such groups.

Under-represented Populations

A highly prominent characteristic of the academic research surrounding the LGBT community and their careers is the lack of study focusing on, or even including, the

transgender population, as noted by Law et al. (2011). Only 24 of the 136 papers that resulted from the systematic search used a sample of transgender workers along with the LGB sample in their research; with 14 of these focused specifically on transgender workplace experiences and careers. One possible reason that transgender people are not included in studies with lesbian, gay and bisexual workers may be the perceived large differences in experiences and career paths, and a subsequent lack of generalizability across subgroups (Parnell, Lease and Green, 2010); however, I feel that the common factors of discrimination, heterosexism and identity management, the shared queer identity, and the historical associations between those in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender populations have led to an interlinked and unified LGBT community, and, while some experiences, such as transitioning, may be vastly different, there are enough commonalities to warrant the suggestion of a possible disconnect between the literature and the reality.

Another reason for the lack of inclusion of transgender workers may be the difficulty in actually accessing a sufficiently large sample (e.g. Schneider and Dimito, 2010) The transgender community is relatively small compared to the lesbian, gay and bisexual populations, and may therefore lack visibility and a political voice even within LGBT organizations (Barclay and Scott, 2006). Access to this population may be much more difficult for researchers, especially if they approach only general LGBT groups and organizations. The discrimination and stigma surrounding being transgender (Davis, 2009) may also mean that these people are much less comfortable in being “out” in public, and so convenience sampling using personal networks may be harder. “Going Stealth” (i.e. deliberately hiding one’s transgender status post-transition) is a particular aspiration of many, but not all, transgender people (Davis, 2009), and thus for them, association with research surrounding LGBT careers may not be desirable.

Remedying the difficulties in accessing a transgender sample may prove difficult but is an important challenge for future research. Snowball sampling, whilst having only moderate success in the past with this population, may prove to be the only way in which to access a transgender sample. Researchers should perhaps acknowledge the difficulty in accessing this sample, relative to the LGB populations, and purposively expend more time and effort from the outset in seeking ways of alleviating the problem. A popular recruitment method used within the 13 papers focusing on transgender issues was approaching transgender-specific organizations, groups, websites and message boards. This method may be used to boost numbers of transgender participants in broader LGBT studies, who commonly used only general LGBT organizations.

Another subgroup largely ignored, to an even greater extent than transgender workers, is bisexual workers (Lonborg and Phillips, 1996). Whilst a large majority of the papers reviewed here include bisexual people along with the gay and lesbian sample, it is important to consider if bisexual workers, by virtue of their ability to discuss their “heterosexual side” openly and honestly, whilst hiding their emotional and sexual attraction to those of the same sex, therefore “passing” (Parnell et al., 2012), may face different scenarios and have different experiences, particularly with identity management strategies, than gay and lesbian workers. With only one of the papers within this review focusing specifically on bisexual workers, there is clearly a need for more research in this area.

Recent Developments and New Considerations

Recent developments in the LGBT civil rights movements have meant that HR practitioners are facing new scenarios in the management of this workplace population. Same-sex

marriage has been legalised in thirteen countries (fifteen by August 2013) and twelve states of the USA, whilst joint-adoption rights for same-sex parents are present in fourteen countries and twenty three American states. With these changes in legislation comes a host of potentially sensitive situations for both LGBT employees and HR practitioners. For example, whilst same-sex partner benefits, comparable to those enjoyed by the partner of a heterosexual employee, may now be a legal imperative in these countries, much of the literature reviewed (for example, Giuffre et al., 2008; King et al., 2008; Kwon and Hugelshofer, 2010) shows that interpersonal discrimination against LGBT co-workers is still a pressing issue in organizations today. The potential risks of disclosing one's sexual orientation or gender identity may deter an LGBT employee from availing of one of their rights. Similarly, a lesbian employee, having recently become a mother, through an adoption process, surrogacy or the pregnancy of her partner, must disclose her sexual identity to avail of maternity leave. In scenarios such as this the HR department may have to put in place or extend policies of strict confidentiality.

A growing topic of relevance to research on sexuality and the workplace that has so far had limited discussion in the literature is the rise of "newer" sexual and gender identities, such as *genderqueer*, *queer* and *intersex*. *Genderqueer* is a term that encompasses gender identities that exist outside of the conventional man/woman gender binary. Those who identify as genderqueer may therefore refer to themselves as both man and woman, neither man nor woman, *genderfluid* (moving between genders), or of a third gender (for example, the *hijra* tradition in India).

The queer identity is a sexual identity that rejects heterosexual/bisexual/homosexual labels. It is used as an umbrella term to refer to those who identify as one of a variety of sexual identities that do not fit into the concept of binarized sexual orientation labels of

homosexual/heterosexual. While the queer identity is being acknowledged by some researchers of LGBT issues at the beginning of interviews or surveys (Giuffre et al. 2008, Willis 2012) within the demographic sections, but has had little impact on theoretical discussion or considerations.

Intersex refers to a person with sex chromosomes, external genitalia or an internal reproductive system that is not considered conventional for either males or females (Davis, 2009). Intersex chromosomes involve combinations differing from XX-female and XY-male, such as individuals with Klinefelter syndrome (XXY/XXXY) or XYY syndrome. Those with ambiguous genitalia are usually subject to surgery at birth to reconstruct solely male or female genitalia. However, endocrinologic, social, and psychological factors are also related to one's biological sex (or intersex), and thus "gendering" a child may prove unsuccessful using surgery alone (Newman et al., 1992). These individuals may subsequently discover their intersex status and start to identify publicly as such.

Wide-spread knowledge about these identities is still limited, unsurprising perhaps, given their relative infancy compared to the more well-known lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender identities, and may therefore incite confusion or even disdain from those not previously educated on the subject. While many of the difficulties and opportunities encountered by the LGBT community in the workplace and throughout their careers may be theoretically extended to these newer identities, further study is still required to discover if this is possible, if there are significant differences, or indeed, if a coherent and definitive structure can be placed on the experiences of those with these identities.

Areas of study

Research carried out in the United States dominates much of the literature pertinent to this review, with 69% of the papers containing empirical research or country-specific concepts (100 in total) emerging from this country. As American states differ greatly in the presence and scope of LGBT anti-discrimination laws, as well as cultural, religious and social perceptions of LGBT people and civil rights legislation, this may prove problematic when attempting to generalise U.S. studies for other countries, and even other states. Many of the studies in this review were performed using participants from only one or two states, and thus may not be generalizable to another, less or more liberal state or area.

At a European level, research on the careers or workplace experiences of the LGBT population is scant, with only twenty articles containing data from European participants. Further research would benefit from a larger European context, as the disparity between European states in perceptions of LGBT people is such that data collected in one may not be generalizable to another. For example, the UK, which makes up the majority of the twenty European articles (70%), provides a high level of protective anti-discrimination legislation for LGBT citizens. In contrast, various other European states (e.g. Armenia, Macedonia, Russia, Turkey) have no such legislation, and LGBT workers may have their employment legally terminated due to their sexual or gender identity. It is clear, therefore, that this lack of protection will have a massive influence on how an LGBT employee manages and discloses their identity, and while other countries like the UK may reside within the same geo-political landscape, research from here into the careers and workplace experiences will be of no use. Research within specific countries or smaller geographical contexts would be of use to HR practitioners, managers and civil rights groups in these areas.

Recommendations for HRD Practitioners

Nationwide legislation versus company policies

While many European countries and American states, as mentioned above, have little or no anti-discrimination legislation in place for the protection of their LGBT population, the economic case for the promotion and maintenance of diversity is well-observed (King and Cortina 2010). While it may prove difficult, in this respect the HRD practitioner may be able to boost company morale, productivity and the core competencies by introducing policies promoting diversity and acceptance, particularly in cases where religious or social opposition can be avoided or minimised. As King and Cortina (2010a), and Griffith and Hebl (2002) state, by leading the charge in enhancing community support for LGBT individuals, companies will benefit from economic advantages.

Encouraging Identity Disclosure

Promoting diversity and LGBT-supportiveness within an organization may encourage LGBT workers to come out (King et al., 2008; Ragins, 2008; Rostosky and Riggle, 2002), leading to more productive LGBT workers (Madera, 2010) with higher levels of job satisfaction and affective commitment (Day and Schoenrade, 1997, 2000; Huffman, 2008). This may be achieved by taking a zero-tolerance approach to homophobia within the workplace, and by celebrating the advantages (both social and economic) of having a diverse workforce. In cases with transgender employees, additional steps could involve the education of the workforce on the transition process.

Increasing LGBT recruitment

As discussed above, LGBT workers may feel restricted in their career choices, partially from perceived heterosexism or lack of support from certain industries or professions, and this may lead to an organization having little to no LGBT employees. In marketing one's organization as LGBT-friendly, one may gain access to a talent pool that was previously off limits, and subsequently reap the economic benefits.

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