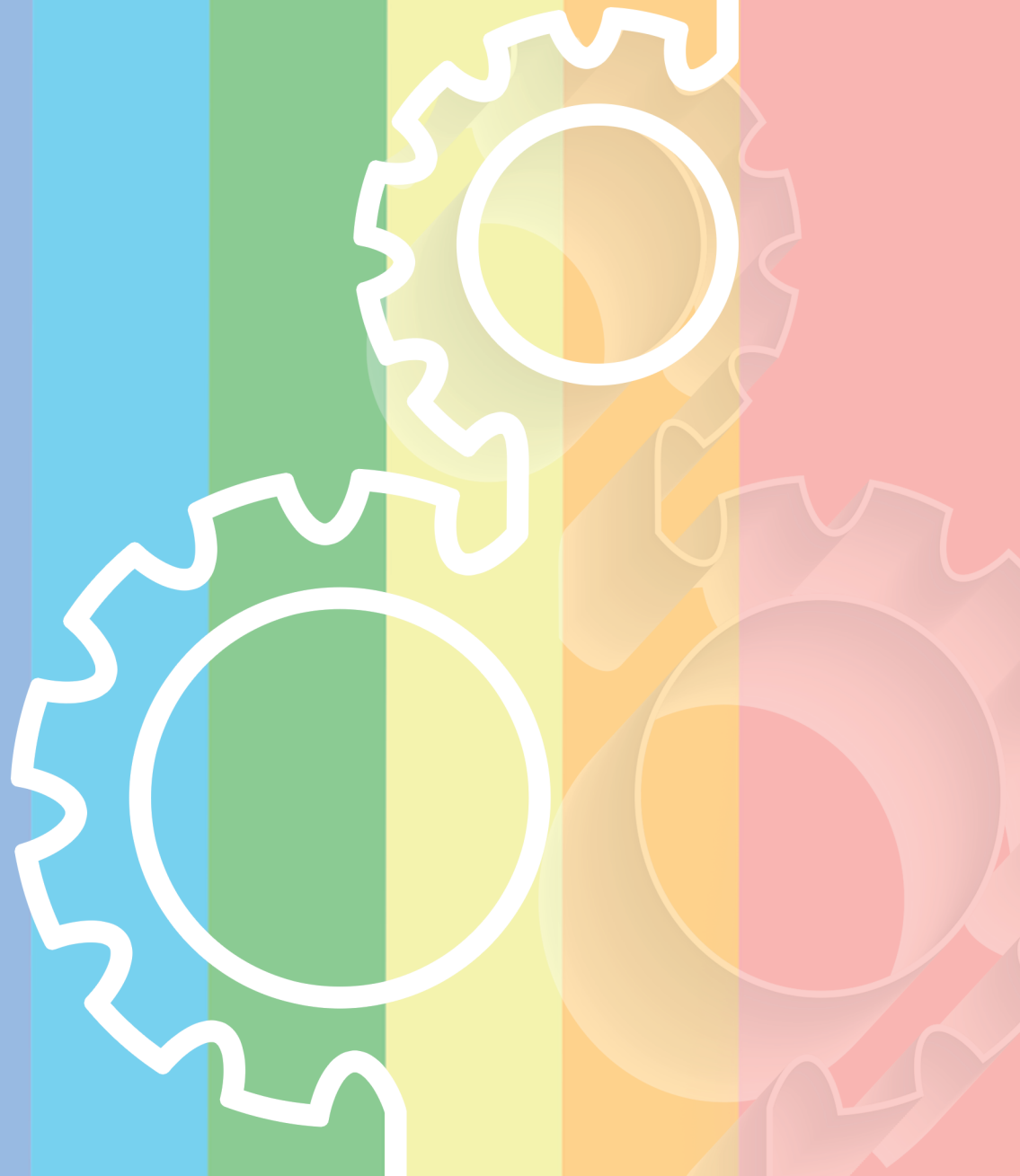


**THE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT AND EXPERIENCES  
OF LGBTI+S IN THE LABOUR MARKET  
IN THE NORTHERN PART OF CYPRUS**



# QUEER CYPRUS ASSOCIATION

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## **ABOUT QUEER CYPRUS**

Queer Cyprus is a non-governmental organisation founded in 2007 in the northern part of Cyprus under the name "Initiative Against Homophobia" in order to change discriminatory local legislations and develop public opinion regarding the rights and freedom of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Plus individuals. The Association, which has continued its activities as Queer Cyprus since 2012, works towards a world where no one has to endure any sort of discrimination due to their language, religious belief, colour, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, and ethnicity. Therefore, Queer Cyprus campaigns against all sorts of oppressive mechanisms with a feminist, anti-militarist, ecologist and veganist mentality by embracing diversity.

The Queer Cyprus Association is a non-governmental organisation campaigning against discrimination based on sex, gender expression, sexual orientation and gender identity. Queer Cyprus is active on national and international levels in the fields of law, education, psychology and health in order to assist LGBTI+s' access to human rights.

## **THE "STRONGER TOGETHER" PROJECT**

Launched in July 2020 in order to identify and devise solutions to the socio-economic problems and obstacles encountered by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Plus (LGBTI+) individuals, the one-year Stronger Together Project is funded by ILGA-EU and implemented by the Queer Cyprus Association. The project was initiated to identify the fundamental difficulties and problems encountered by socio-economically vulnerable LGBTI+s in the northern part of Cyprus as well as devise solutions to these problems. Additionally, it aims to raise awareness of the socio-economic problems faced by LGBTI+s as well as coordinating joint action to develop technical capacities and social services counselling to potential LGBTI+ victims and those at risk along with developing the access to rights. In this context, a research was conducted on the access of LGBTI+s to employment and their experiences in the labour market experiences. Collaborations were formed with institutions and organisations running occupational and technical capacity development studies to facilitate LGBTI+s in developing their occupational and technical skills. Through the support of free-of-charge social services throughout the project, the access to rights for at-risk LGBTI+s was improved. In addition to this, various advocacy studies and trainings were provided to social service workers to raise their awareness on LGBTI+s.



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## TRIGGER WARNING

The experiences included in this report contain discrimination, violence, harassment, and LGBTI+phobic behaviours, which may be distressing to some readers.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Discrimination, harassment, and bullying against lesbians, gays, bisexuals, trans, intersexes and pluses (LGBTI+) are severe human rights problems that appear in different dimensions and types in each country. Discrimination, harassment, and mobbing can be observed in all aspects of LGBTI+s' lives, yet their experiences in the field of employment are of particular importance since they<sup>1</sup> affect their living standards and relations with society /the government. LGBTI+s face discrimination, harassment, and mobbing in the labour market throughout their employment cycles due to their declared or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identities. Since their access to employment is hampered and/or they are exposed to social exclusion, mobbing, harassment, and discrimination throughout these processes, they are also excluded from the solidarity and social security that are supposed to be constructed among the individual and the government since they are forced into poverty as a result of psychological pressure and loss of income. What's more, in patriarchal countries like Cyprus, where negative attitudes towards LGBTI+s are frequent; LGBTI+ individuals are not strongly represented in governmental organisations and institutions or occupational/work spaces, their rights and interests are rarely the subject of political and social dialogue, and are debarred from the rights of claim and/or legal remedies. Consequently, LGBTI+s rarely apply to legal remedies when they are exposed to discrimination, harassment, or mobbing. Moreover, the lack of LGBTI+ embracive policies and mechanisms that protect against discrimination prompts LGBTI+s not to be free in their workplaces, that is, being in the closet, or keeping silent towards their experiences of unfair treatment, discrimination, harassment, and mobbing.

Research and publications on LGBTI+s in the northern part of Cyprus are very limited. On the other hand, in addition to the recent informative publications of the Queer Cyprus Association, including the Mental Health Booklet, Militarism in the Northern Part of Cyprus and the Struggle of LGBTI+s Booklet, Frequently Asked Questions Booklet, Media Monitoring Reports, there are empirical studies on LGBTI+'s experiences of social exclusion in the media (Şahin, 2018), psychological problems and perceptions (Cumhur, 2020; Yolaç, 2019) or the attitudes towards LGBTI+ in society (Uluboy, 2017a, 2017b; Uluboy & Husnu, 2020). There has also been extensive studies on legal developments in Cyprus (Cyprus Dialogue Forum, 2020; Kamenou, Ethemer, Gavrielides & Bullici, 2019). However, there is no detailed study on LGBTI+ experiences in employment or the workplace. Coordinated by the Queer Cyprus Association within the scope of the Stronger Together Project, "A Study on The Access to Employment and Experiences of LGBTI+s in the Labour Market in

1. 'They' has been used within this report to mean a group of people, in the plural sense, as well as to refer to a single person whose "gender identity is nonbinary" or whose "gender is intentionally not revealed". <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/they>



the Northern Part of Cyprus" is the first comprehensive research study on the employment experiences of LGBTI+s in the northern part of Cyprus and aims to fill this knowledge gap. This report, which compiles the findings of this research study, presents the experiences of LGBTI+s in the northern part of Cyprus due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, expression and gender characteristics, starting from their life in education and throughout their employment cycles.

The findings of this study will contribute towards determining whether LGBTI+s have equal opportunities and conditions in terms of their right to participate in the working life and search for their rights. This study also aims to raise awareness on gender as well as preventing discrimination against LGBTI+s in the labour market in the northern part of Cyprus and contribute to the evidence-based policies to be developed to empower LGBTI+s.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW <sup>2</sup>

There are different classifications of discrimination in the literature dealing with discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. In order to contribute to the creation of evidence-based policies, this research has analytically classified discrimination experiences as 'formal' and 'informal' (Levine & Leonard, 1984). In this context, formal discrimination is not hiring, not promoting, reducing or increasing duties, forcing resignation and dismissal, which appear in corporate policies and decisions. Informal discrimination, contrary to the aforementioned formal discriminatory practices, includes ostracism, mocking, acrimonious or quizzical glaring, disrespectful behaviour, ignoring, mobbing, sexual harassment, humiliating, labelling, uttering expressions that include "tolerance" for homosexuality and directing questions regarding marriage/relationship status (Doğan, 2015; Öner, 2015). In this context, informal discrimination includes all kinds of direct or indirect, verbal or non-verbal harassment and bullying experiences that imposes gender roles. The need of LGBTI+s to hide their sexual identity or orientation in order to avoid negative reactions due to their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression is also considered a form of informal discrimination (Demirdizen et al., 2012). Considering the experiences of discrimination towards LGBTI+s, it is necessary to consider discrimination as potential/perceived and encountered discrimination. Even if closeted LGBTs do not face discrimination, they experience the pressure of potential discrimination due to the discrimination experiences of others (Doğan, 2015). Regardless of whether LGBTI+s are out or closeted, discrimination

2. In this section, besides the abbreviation LGBTI+, abbreviations from the studies conducted have also been used to better reflect which LGBTI+ groups are covered.

towards LGBTI+s is related to how close or far they are from the accepted gender roles rather than being LGBTI+ (Öner, 2015). In this context, it is inevitable for LGBTI+s to remain closeted in their workplaces and to experience pressure to comply with gender-role expectations so as to avoid discrimination.

Many studies in the literature show that the discrimination experienced by LGBTI+s in the workplace exists in various forms and at different stages throughout a person's employment cycle. Studies that reveal the discrimination and difficulties LGBTI+s face in the field of employment are mostly conducted in the USA and European countries. In developing countries, where discrimination against gender identity, sexual orientation and gender expression is less legally protected and therefore experienced at a higher level, studies on the employment experience of LGBTI+s have increased over the past decade, but are still very limited.

This section reveals the findings of studies on the problems and discrimination experiences faced by LGBTI+s throughout their employment cycle, starting from their life in education.

## **2.1 Before the Labour Market: Education and Choice of Profession**

### **2.1.1 Education**

In addition to being one of the basic human rights, access to education is of great importance in choosing a profession, creating the conditions of working life and accessing quality jobs for LGBTI+s. LGBTI+s do not have equal opportunities in education. Their access to education is bound by certain rules. In the event that they decide not to abide by these rules, they cannot access education. Also, they have less of a chance of continuing their education than heterosexuals (Cyprus Dialogue Forum, 2020). Due to gender-based discrimination or bullying in their education life, they may be deprived of opportunities to use, reveal or develop their talents. What's more, their inability to access or drop out of education affects labour market outcomes (occupation, work and job position) and causes them to be included in the labour market in a more fragile way when compared to cis-heterosexuals.

Although there are studies showing that LGBTs are exposed to less discrimination, violence and phobic behavior in their university life (Çavdar & Çok, 2016), heteronormative or heterosexist education reproduced in secondary and high schools causes LGBTI+s to be exposed to bullying in their school environment (Apostolidou, 2020; Greytak, Kosciw, & Diaz, 2009; Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012; Kosciw, Greytak,

Zongrone, Clark, & Truong, 2018). These attacks cause schools to no longer be safe places for LGBTI+ students, who may partially or completely withdraw themselves from academic life. It has been determined that there is a relation between low academic success and dropping out to bullying at schools based on gender identity, sexual orientation and expression (Kosciw et al., 2018). It has also been identified that these problems are much more serious in trans students, where almost half have had to be absent, with less of a desire to go to university (Greytak et al., 2009). In a study conducted with LGBTs in Turkey, it was reported that 5% of 2,875 LGBTs dropped out of school because of discrimination due to their gender identity or sexual orientation, and 4.2% changed schools during their pre-university school years (Göçmen & Yılmaz, 2017). A study conducted with trans women in Turkey revealed that 7.8% of the study participants changed schools because of their sexual identity, and one third of them dropped out of their education (Lambdalstanbul, 2010). The loss of an education due to dropping out of school, stereotypes about trans women (such as being sex workers) and postponing occupational activities as they wait for the completion of the gender confirming process cause trans people to be included in the labour market in a more fragile way than non-trans people (Budge, Tebbe & Howard, 2010).

### **2.1.2 Choice of Occupation**

Few studies report that LGBTI+s state that their gender identity, sexual orientation or gender expression does not affect their career choices (for example, Adams et al., 2005). In addition, many studies reveal that discrimination, fear of being discriminated against and identity management strategies in the workplace affected by these influence the professional expectations, career choice, development and decisions of LGBTI+s (for example, Dispenza et al., 2012; McFadden, 2015; Chung, 1995; House, 2004).

According to Chung (1995), some occupations may be perceived as inappropriate for gays and lesbians by both LGBs themselves and discriminatory heterosexuals. In this context, while heterosexuals may believe that gays and lesbians are not suitable for professions such as teaching, health care, or child care (Uluboy, 2017a)<sup>3</sup> gays and lesbians who want to stay away from intolerance, discrimination or other negative attitudes may choose to avoid certain professions (Chung, 1995; House, 2004).

Studies on career choices with university students show that LGBs have lower salary expectations than heterosexuals and are more likely to adopt altruistic/voluntary work values and choose a career in the non-profit sector than heterosexual students (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2012) and have higher entrepreneurial intentions (Germon et al.,

3. In this context, the study found that negative attitudes towards LGs in the teaching profession are high in the northern part of Cyprus. While six out of ten women and five out of ten men stated that they would be uncomfortable if their child's teacher was a lesbian, five out of ten women and seven out of ten men stated that they would be uncomfortable if their child's teacher was gay (Uluboy, 2017a).

2019). In addition, a study conducted in Turkey stated that the sexual orientation and gender identity of LGBT-Qs affect career planning and development, and that LGBT-Qs who become more aware of their gender identity and sexual orientation in adolescence change their career plans for jobs and professions where they can be free from and comply less with gender norms (Ulaş-Kılıç et al., 2019). As many LGBTs are denied access to these specific job opportunities or do not consider these specific jobs appropriate, their job opportunities are limited and have unequal access to employment (Yılmaz & Göçmen, 2016).

The fear of discrimination or worrying about the construction of gender identity and expression anticipated in the future workplace also causes additional psychological stress that distracts some transgender students from career decisions. (Scott et al., 2011). Following the gender confirming process and legal recognition of the gender, trans individuals encounter difficulties regarding the approval or recognition of their former education or work experiences. For example; despite their gender being legally recognised following their gender confirmation process, 67.8% of Turkish universities refused to reflect this on the graduation certificates of the students (Dikmen, 2021). Moreover, when trans people want to obtain reference or recommendation letters, their gender identity may be disclosed and their risk of being exposed to discrimination may increase (Pepper & Lorah, 2008; Scott et al., 2011) or they may experience difficulties when receiving reference letters from their former workplaces due to changing their gender identities on their identity cards (McNeil et al, 2013). At the same time, it has also been determined that trans people do not apply for certain jobs for fear of discrimination or harassment in the workplace (Brown et al., 2012; McNeil et al., 2013). In a study conducted with trans women in Turkey, 69% of participants declared that they gave up on applying for a job as they believed that they would not be hired, and 9 out of 10 stated that they "thought they would have to do sex work because they wouldn't be able to find a job" (Lambdalstanbul, 2010).

The choice of career and profession can be considered as a coping strategy for dealing with discrimination. In this context, self-employment, tendency towards LGBTI+ friendly workplaces, or taking risks are strategies of LGBTI+s when choosing a career and profession (Chung, 2011). Since attitudes towards gays and lesbians may show differences among occupations when compared to heterosexuals, gays/lesbians may lean towards 'gay/lesbian-friendly' occupations in which they do not expect to face discrimination (Ahmed et al, 2013; Drydakis, 2009).

The fact that there are more career choices in certain fields also causes occupational discrimination based on sexual orientation. It has been determined that gays and lesbians

concentrate more on jobs that require creativity, psychology, law and social work (Baumle et al., 2009) or they generally perform jobs which are traditionally associated with the opposite sex (Baumle et al, 2009; Tilcsik et al, 2015). These studies indicate that gays are more likely to be in jobs with a higher proportion of female workers than heterosexual men, and lesbians are more likely to have jobs with a higher proportion of male workers than heterosexual women. When compared to heterosexuals, it has also been found that gays and lesbians prefer job independence more than heterosexual individuals – that is, jobs they can do alone without being dependent on colleagues or employers. (Ng et al, 2012; Tilcsik et al, 2015.)

Gender identity has an impact on job types or industries as well. In a study conducted with 384 transgender people in Brazil, 36.15% of trans women and 26.61% of trans men reported that they did not work in their preferred field (Brandelli Costa et al., 2020). Brown et al. (2012) showed that prior to their gender reassignment processes, trans women worked in fields that were typically considered “masculine”, but as the pressures changed after gender reassignment, trans women switched to career fields that were traditionally considered as ‘women’s jobs’.

## **2.2 Discrimination in the Workplace**

### **2.2.1 Discrimination during job applications and recruitment**

The discriminatory attitudes that LGBTI+s face during their job application and recruitment processes have been revealed both in studies conducted with LGBTI+s, the analysis of national data, and experimental studies conducted with employers (correspondence tests). In these studies, besides the fact that LGBTI+s declared that their job applications were rejected because of their sexual orientation, empirical research studies also showed that LGBTI+s received less positive responses to job applications than heterosexuals. Discrimination during the recruitment process is explained by two sources widely presented in the discrimination literature: preference-based and statistical discrimination. Preference-based discrimination refers to discrimination caused by the employer’s own preferences/initiatives. In hiring decisions, this indicates situations where employers reject LGBTI+s based on their personal preferences or with the thought of not disturbing other employees and customers. Statistical discrimination, on the other hand, is when the employer, who lacks sufficient information on the applicant’s productivity or competence, evaluates the applicant based on stereotypes and clichés about LGBTI+ group characteristics and may discriminate in favour of a non-LGBTI+ applicant, despite the employer not being homophobic, biphobic or transphobic.

The level of discrimination experienced during the job application process against LGBTI+s differs significantly from country to country. For instance, in a study conducted in Kansas, USA, 16% of LGBs and 20% of transgender people in Virginia state that their job applications were rejected because of their sexual orientation or gender identity (Colvin, 2004), while in a study conducted in China, 14.3% of LGBTI+ people (Suen et al., 2020), 7.7% of LGBTI+s in Hong Kong (Lau & Stotzer, 2011) and 57.8% of trans women in Turkey declared that their job applications were rejected (Lambdalstanbul, 2010).

Experimental studies have also revealed similar findings. In a study conducted in Switzerland between 2011-2012, fictitious gay job applicants called back for job interviews were 12% less than their fictitious heterosexual counterparts (Ahmed et al., 2013). This rate is 30% in a study conducted in Italy in 2012 (Patacchini et al., 2015), 37% percent in another study conducted in the USA in 2005 (Tilcsik, 2011), 65% in a study conducted in Greece between 2006-2007 (Drydakis, 2009), and 39% in another study conducted in South Cyprus (Drydakis, 2014). The study in South Cyprus suggested that the rate of lesbians being called for work was 43% less than heterosexual women. An experimental study conducted in Austria suggested that the candidates that had a lesbian-like appearance in their application photos appearances have a lower possibility of being called back for a job interview by 12-13% (Weichselbaumer, 2003).

Even when there is no discrimination in response to job applications, it has been revealed that LGBTI+s endure different behaviors during their job application process. A study conducted in Texas, USA, which aimed to reveal formal and informal types of discrimination, has shown that there is no formal discrimination, yet, employers used more negative words, spoke less, and spent less time with the applicants with "Gay and proud" hats when compared to applicants with "Texan and dignified" hats (Hebl et al., 2002).

Studies conducted have also found that discrimination is higher in low-skilled jobs than in high-skilled jobs, and gays are more likely to be discriminated against than lesbians in low-skilled job applications (unless the job in question is seen as 'women's work'). Job applications by heterosexual men are twice as successful as gay job applications. Heterosexual women also have 31% more positive job applications than lesbian women (Flage, 2019).

In the private sector research conducted in Turkey in 2020, the rate of those who declared that they encountered discriminatory attitudes, discourse, behavior or practices in the recruitment processes is 6.7%. However, 50% of these participants stated that the reasons for not encountering this type of behavior were due to a lack of understanding of

sexual orientation or gender identity (O'Neil et al., 2020). The prominence of expectations regarding norms and roles created by the heteronormative/cisnormative-binary gender system in Turkey in the recruitment processes forces LGBTI+s to follow a strategy of staying in the closet<sup>4</sup> before employment (O'Neil et al., 2020). The strategy of 'staying in the closet' is more prominent in the public sector; in a research conducted in 2020, while only 8.9% of respondents in the private sector were able to declare that they were completely out during the recruitment process, this rate was 3.4% among public research participants.

### **2.2.2 Discrimination Experiences At Workplaces**

Studies on formal discrimination faced in the workplace reveal that formal discrimination towards LGBTI+s exists in many parts of the world. In addition to the above experiences of formal discrimination when applying for a job, Lau and Stotzer (2011) report that almost one-third of sexual minorities in Hong Kong report being denied or fired from a job, denied a promotion, or mistreated at work due to their sexual orientation. Discrimination in employment, the loss of a job or promotion, health insurance problems, and sexual or verbal abuse are also common problems faced by many transgender employees. For example, a study conducted in Ireland stated that 43% of trans employees encountered problems at work due to their gender identity, while 9% were fired, and another 9% were dismissed due to harassment or discrimination (McNeil et al., 2013). According to the final report of the research titled "Documenting Human Rights Violations of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Individuals" conducted by the Queer Cyprus Association in the northern part of Cyprus in 2009, 13% of participants reported being dismissed or threatened with dismissal because of their sexual orientation (Queer Cyprus Association, 2011).

Another crucial form of formal discrimination encountered by LGBTI+s in many countries is wage discrimination. There are many studies that reveal the differences between the wages of LGBTI+ and non-LGBTI+ employees resulting from the analysis of existing national databases and different estimation methods. These findings suggest that while gay men often face wage discrimination, lesbians are less likely to experience such discrimination, and are even more likely to receive higher wages than heterosexual women. While gays receive a lower wage than heterosexual men, lesbians earn higher wages than heterosexual women (Blandford, 2003; Carpenter, 2005; Clain & Leppel, 2001; González & Sönmez, 2021; Laurent & Mihoubi, 2012).<sup>4</sup> Wage discrimination also varies based on occupation type, status and sector. For example, an Australian study found no difference in pay between gay and heterosexual men in the public and private sectors between 2015-2017, while high-skilled lesbian employees in the private sector (13%), low-

4. The strategy of 'staying in the closet' means that LGBTI+ employees hide their gender identity, sexual orientation or gender expression in order to avoid the risk of not being employed and to protect themselves from discrimination, bullying or phobic behaviors they may encounter in the workplace. Although it is expressed as a strategy, in the face of cis-heterosexual oppression, LGBTI+ phobic behaviors and discrimination, the strategy of 'staying in the closet' is generally used as a compulsory one.

skilled bisexual women (11%) and bisexual men (8%) were paid less. In public sector, low-skilled lesbian and bisexual women had higher wages when compared to heterosexual women (Preston et al., 2019). While there is no wage discrimination in low-skilled jobs in France, gay men in high-skilled jobs, when compared to heterosexual men in high-skilled jobs, were paid 9.4% less (Laurent & Mihoubi, 2012). A study conducted in Athens also found that gay and bisexual men are paid less than heterosexual men, but this rate difference is smaller for educated gay and bisexual men (Drydakis, 2012).

Another type of formal discrimination manifests itself as dismissal. In interviews conducted with 20 people in Turkey, while lesbians are seen as more dominant characters in the workplace and their jobs are not in danger, gays are fired when their identities are disclosed (Ozturk, 2011). In another study with trans women, it was found that participants were discriminated against based on their gender identity, 30% were fired, and 24.4% were forced to resign (Lambdalstanbul, 2010).

Gaining authority/positions in the workplace, reducing the wage gap, gaining personal dignity an appreciation, eliminating existing inequalities/discrimination are important in terms of preventing workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. The "glass ceiling" experienced by women presents itself as the "lavender ceiling" for LGBTI+s. Many studies have shown that LGBTI+s face discrimination during promotions. For example, in the United Kingdom, gays were found to be significantly less likely to occupy top management positions (which come with higher status and salaries) compared with heterosexual men of similar qualification. In fact, when this probability coincides with other minority statuses (being in a racial minority group), it is much lower for gays in the racial minority group. While lesbians may hold higher managerial positions than heterosexual women, at the highest level, the proportion is still very low for lesbians. Again, bisexual men and women are less likely to have any type of workplace authority than heterosexuals of similar qualifications (Aksoy et al., 2019). Lesbians and gays are seen as less competent for leadership positions than heterosexuals, and it has even been found that people perceived as lesbian or gay by employers based on their tone of voice receive lower scores and rank lower for leadership positions than those with heterosexual tones (Fasoli & Hegarty, 2019; Fasoli, Hegarty, & Frost, 2021; Fasoli, Maass, Paladino, & Sulpizio, 2017).

5. Although the findings of these studies reflect these differences, the dimensions of these differences depend on the prejudices and stereotypes towards the traditional gender roles. For example, while González ve Sönmez(2021) comment that the wage differences in Spain as the results of , violation of traditional gender roles, less expectations of groups that foresee discrimination and statistical discrimination by the employer, also discuss that lesbians that are deemed as more masculine than heterosexual females or gays are deemed as more feminine are generally resulted in that lesbians earn more wages than gays and heterosexual females in workplaces where heterosexism and masculine hegemony is dominated. Therefore, the differences in wages also are affected by the factors such as current prejudices depending on gender roles, workers' genders, marital statuses or having children. Even though these studies are not detailed in this study they might be analysed for further information.



Along with formal discrimination, informal discrimination has an equally negative impact on an individual's mental health, physical health, and work-related duties. In this context, heterosexist or heteronormative/cisnormative workplaces are environments where informal discrimination is experienced in different dimensions. In Turkey, 36.9% of the participants working in the private sector and 56.6% of the participants working in the public sector in 2020 stated that they encountered hate speech towards LGBTI+ people in the workplace (O'Neil et al., 2020). LGBTI+ colleagues who witness but are not exposed to LGBTI+ phobic incidents may experience discomfort and withdraw from their workplace duties as a result of an increased focus on identity management strategies (Willis, 2012).

Recent studies conducted in Turkey have shown that homophobic discourse is encountered at a high rate in the workplace (Erdur & Ozgunlu, 2020; Ozturk, 2011), LGBTI+s are faced with formal discrimination, such as hiring, promotion and dismissal due to their sexual orientation in their working life (Aydin & Ozeren, 2020; Erdur & Ozgunlu, 2020), and they face informal discrimination, such as belittlement, insult and social exclusion, and therefore they tend to hide their gender identity and sexual orientation in working life (Erdur & Ozgunlu, 2020).

Many types of formal and informal discrimination that trans people experience have also been revealed in studies. These include verbal abuse, malicious gossip, deliberate ostracism by coworkers and more covert micro-aggressions (like the deliberate use of incorrect pronouns when addressing trans coworkers) (Dispenza et al., 2012; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2016). Gender confirming processes may also cause trans people to face loss of respect, stigmatisation, emotional abuse and physical threats of trans people at workplaces (Budge et al., 2010). The differences in gender expressions following the gender adaptation processes causes how trans people are being treated in their professional lives. This, again, can be seen as a reflection of stereotypes regarding the masculine hegemony and gender roles in workplaces. For example, harassment encountered due to the gender confirming process causes trans people to leave their jobs (Dietert & Dentice, 2009) as well as devaluing the skills and abilities of trans women after their gender confirming process (Schilt & Connell, 2007), yet trans men have stated an increase in perceived authority and respect (Schilt & Wiswall, 2008), which positively affected the salaries of trans men, while reducing salaries for trans women by a third (Schilt & Wiswall, 2008).

The absence of gender-neutral toilets in the workplace is also among the challenges/discrimination faced by trans and non-binary<sup>6</sup> people. Studies have shown that trans people are prevented from using toilets or are attacked in toilets (Herman, 2013; Nadal et al., 2012). Likewise, having gender-specific dress codes and being forced to dress

6. Non-binary is "an umbrella term for people, who do not define their gender identity within the man and woman categories offered by the binary gender regime." <https://kaosgilderneji.org/images/library/cevirisozlugu2020.pdf>

inconsistently with their identities is another discrimination that trans and non-binary people endure in the workplace (Levi, 2007).

It has been determined that LGBTI+s generally do not resort to any official channels in the face of discrimination. There are findings that this phenomenon stems from having little faith that they will get results through official channels in the face of discrimination, being further victimised during the reporting process, losing their job, facing hate speech and prejudice, and fear of disclosing their gender identity and sexual orientation (O'Neil et al., 2020).

While individuals who encounter formal or informal discrimination cope by using strategies such as quitting, staying silent, finding social support and confrontation (Chung, 2001), they also determine their gender identity management strategies in the workplace. When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are a number of gender identity management strategies used by LGBTI+s in the workplace. Chief among these strategies is integrating a false heterosexual impersonation and gender identity/sexual orientation in the workplace by 'acting as if one has come out' or combinations of these (such as revealing one's identity to a limited number of people and maintaining a false heterosexual identity with others) (Button, 2004). In addition to identity management in the workplace, superior performance (increasing job performance, taking on the toughest jobs, gaining a reputation for being tough, etc.), disconnection/withdrawal (asking for a transfer, isolating oneself from colleagues, etc.), and emotional control strategies (developing resilience, keeping quiet, making jokes, etc.) have also been revealed as coping strategies used by LGBTI+s against phobic violence and discrimination, which are widely seen in the literature (Mara et al., 2020).

Unexperienced but worrying discriminatory practices (potential discrimination anxiety) are also among the experiences LGBTI+s have in the workplace. Anxiety about loss of authority (Öner, 2015), anxiety of co-workers learning and revealing their sexual orientation or gender identity to others, anxiety of being mocked by colleagues, being harassed, being fired (Demirdizen et al., 2012) also manifests itself as potential discrimination experience. In general, LGBTI+s hide their gender identity, sexual orientation or gender expression in the workplace due to potential discrimination concerns (Göçmen & Yılmaz, 2017; Ozturk, 2011).

## **2.3 Labour Market Results**

### **2.3.1 Employment**

Although there are many studies on the discrimination faced by LGBTI+s in the workplace, especially within the last decade, studies on their position in the labour market are much less. However, they still provide a framework for labour supply and demand. The findings

of these studies are that the probability of being employed is lower for LGBTI+s and differs according to gender identity and sexual orientation. Compared to heterosexual men, gays are less likely to be employed. Gay men are more likely to work part-time, and less likely to work full-time. In contrast, compared to heterosexual women, lesbians are more likely to be employed and less likely to work part-time (Ahmed et al., 2013; Antecol & Steinberger, 2013; Brennan, Hackett, Halpenny, Pakula, & Waite, 2021; Laurent & Mihoubi, 2017; Leppel, 2009; Tebaldi & Elmslie, 2006). In addition, it has been shown in different studies that bisexual men are at a disadvantage compared to heterosexual men by 5%, bisexual women by 11%, and trans women by 24%, while trans men are at an advantage by 4% in terms of employment rates (Valfort, 2017). However, in countries where there are no empowering policies regarding access to the gender confirming process and legal recognition of gender identity, unemployment rates are higher among trans people, which leads to consequences such as unregistered work and work without social security, non-optional sex work and labour exploitation of trans women (European Council Commissioner for Human Rights, 2009; European Council Commissioner for Human Rights, 2011).

### **2.3.2 Unemployment**

Studies show that gays are more likely to be unemployed and seek jobs for a lot longer than heterosexuals (Abben, 2015). This may be due to the aforementioned discriminatory practices of the employer or the restriction of LGBTI+s in the job search process (not applying for certain jobs/trying to find a suitable job) based on experienced or witnessed negative experiences. A study with 384 trans participants in Brazil revealed that trans people experience high rates of unemployment, underemployment<sup>7</sup> and job dissatisfaction, and it was shown that 77.1% of trans women and 64.2% of trans men were rejected at least once in their lifetime because of their gender identity (Brandelli Costa et al., 2020).

## **2.4 Crucial Legal Regulations and Mechanisms for Equality/Anti-Discrimination**

### **2.4.1 International laws and regulations**

Preventing discrimination in employment (such as hiring, promotion and equal pay) and violence and harassment in gender-based workplaces or containing clauses to that effect International conventions on fundamental rights and freedoms within the United Nations, International Labour Organisation conventions, European Union directives and the Yogyakarta Principles, which, although not binding on their own, reflect the current situation in international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity are presented in Annex 1. In addition, the Legal Gap Analysis Report of the Queer Cyprus Association, in which international laws and regulations regarding employment

7. Underemployment describes the situation "in which people in a labor force are employed at less than full-time or regular jobs or at jobs inadequate with respect to their training or economic needs." (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/underemployment>)

as well as local legislation are examined in detail, can also be examined. In the northern part of Cyprus, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ILO 100 and 111 are part of domestic law.

## 2.4.2 Local Legislation

The Constitution in the northern part of Cyprus defines the principle of equality with Article 8 as follows: "Everyone is equal before the Constitution and the law, without any discrimination. No individual, family, group or class can be privileged." Although the right to work and the right to social security are not clearly stated, LGBTI+s have fundamental rights and freedoms like all citizens. The constitutional guarantee for working life is determined within the framework of Articles 48 (freedom to work), 49 (right and duty to work), 50 (working conditions) and 52 (fair pay), and 55 (right to social security). While Article 48 states "Every citizen has the freedom to work in any field he wishes", Article 50 says "No one can be employed in a job that is not suitable for his/her age, strength and gender" and recommends that "children, young people, women, and physically and mentally disabled people have special working conditions" for their protection. This article proposes discrimination based on gender, albeit in a protective language. While it could be argued that the main intention behind this article stems from a desire to help women, it actually reinforces gender stereotypes of women as weak and vulnerable to the "dangers" of working life. The relevant article is an example of the protectionist, paternalist and discriminatory approach that is at the root of the patriarchal culture. Therefore, women, like children, physically and mentally handicapped people, are seen as in need of special protection and therefore cannot perform certain activities open to men, and gender-based discrimination is justified on this basis.

In the northern part of Cyprus, there are very few legal regulations that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in employment.<sup>8</sup> The "Equal Treatment of Men and Women, Equal Opportunity" bill and the "Combating Discrimination and Equality" bill were drafted in 2015, submitted to the parliament taking into consideration the opinions of civil society, but the bills were never enacted.

Although the Labour Law (22/1992) does not contain clear statements on preventing or prohibiting discrimination based on sexual identity or sexual orientation, "Termination for Unjust Reasons" means termination for any reason unrelated to the employer or the

8. In the Interpretation section of the Press Labour Law, "Termination for Unjust Reasons" means "terminating for any reason that is not related to the employer, the business and the press employee; meanwhile, it describes the abuse of the right to terminate the contract that is based on reasons as race, ethnicity, religion, language, belief, gender identity or sexual orientation and political opinion." Article 18 states that gender identity or sexual orientation cannot be a reason for dismissal. In para. 4/Article 24, gender based discrimination is considered as a reason for termination in the Autonomy of Editorial / Publishing Works. Although the added articles that contain the prohibition of discrimination in other regulations and prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender it can be said that this is problematic that they do not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation gender identity or expression. However, for example, in the Interpretation of the Labour Law "Termination for Unjust Reasons" means "to terminate employment for any reason not related to the job or the employee; meanwhile, the termination of the contract based on reasons such as gender, race, religion, language, belief and political opinion is an abuse of the right to terminate the contract." If this is understood as interpreted in international regulations that are part of domestic law, it can be claimed that these necessitate inclusivity.

employee; meanwhile, it describes the abuse of the right to terminate the contract based on reasons such as gender, race, religion, language, belief and political opinion. Article 16(6) states that 'the language, religion, race, gender and political opinion of the worker' cannot be a reason for termination of employment, and Article 21(3) defines equal pay only for women and men.<sup>9</sup> The Law on Public Servants also does not contain any clauses on preventing or prohibiting discrimination; However, Article 16 states that 'Public officials cannot discriminate against language, race, gender, political thought, philosophical belief, religion or sect while performing their duties and cannot take sides'.<sup>10</sup> Completing military service and being asked for a medical report creates discrimination in employment in the public sector (62 (f and g)).

Military profession has been accepted as a tool for LGBTI+s under the name of sexual identity and behavioral disorder according to the Security Forces Command Health Skills Regulation (Accidents-Article 17-D4)<sup>11</sup> and the presence of "sexual identity and/or behavior patterns" may result in not selecting the military as a profession.

Article 6 of the Good Administration Law No. 27/2013 (2) "Administration, religion, language, race, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, political and philosophical opinion, sect, ethnic origin, place of birth or any other cannot discriminate for any reason."<sup>12</sup>

Following the amendments to the Penal Code (20/2014), the penal code is subject to a heavier maximum penalty on sexual harassment and assault offenses motivated by hatred or prejudice due to the sexual orientation, gender identity or gender of the victim pursuant to Articles 151(f) and 152(g), with Article 172 stating, "Whoever inflicts psychological or economic violence on a person because of prejudice or hatred towards his/her gender and/or sexual orientation and/or gender identity", and Article 174 stating, "Discrimination against a person benefiting from public service by a civil servant or public service employee on the grounds of/or sexual orientation and/or gender identity commits a minor offence." Article 171(1) prohibits hate speech based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender, and with the amendment made in 2020, Article 171(2) criminalises hate speech made through the press, broadcast, internet media or social media. Unfortunately, being trans is still considered a psychological disorder, psychiatric disorder as gender dissatisfaction in the northern part of Cyprus (Kamenou et al., 2019).

In 2014, The Department of Gender Equality (Establishment, Duty and Work Principles) Law was put into force. Among reasons for the founding of this Department;

(1) To work towards eliminating inequalities faced by people due to their gender, gender

9. [http://mevzuat.kamunet.net/mmd/yasalar/Kamu\\_Gorevlileri\\_Yasasi.pdf](http://mevzuat.kamunet.net/mmd/yasalar/Kamu_Gorevlileri_Yasasi.pdf)

10. [http://mevzuat.kamunet.net/mmd/yasalar/Kamu\\_Gorevlileri\\_Yasasi.pdf](http://mevzuat.kamunet.net/mmd/yasalar/Kamu_Gorevlileri_Yasasi.pdf)

11. [http://mevzuat.kamunet.net/mmd/tuzukler\\_htm/k/KKTC\\_Devleti\\_G%C3%BCvenlik\\_Kuvvetleri\\_Komutanl%C4%B1C4%9FC4%B1\\_Sa%C4%9FI%C4%B1k\\_Yetene%C4%9Fi\\_T%C3%BCz%C3%BCC%C4%9FC3%BC.pdf](http://mevzuat.kamunet.net/mmd/tuzukler_htm/k/KKTC_Devleti_G%C3%BCvenlik_Kuvvetleri_Komutanl%C4%B1C4%9FC4%B1_Sa%C4%9FI%C4%B1k_Yetene%C4%9Fi_T%C3%BCz%C3%BCC%C4%9FC3%BC.pdf)

12. [https://www.google.com.cy/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjK17C\\_9OXvAhWj\\_7sIHSREAs4QFjACegQIAhAD&url=htp%3A%2F%2Fwww.mahkemeler.net%2Fbirlestirilmis%2F27-2013.doc&usg=AOvVaw0EKKEDykAt8XWrSJ7eHHfJ](https://www.google.com.cy/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjK17C_9OXvAhWj_7sIHSREAs4QFjACegQIAhAD&url=htp%3A%2F%2Fwww.mahkemeler.net%2Fbirlestirilmis%2F27-2013.doc&usg=AOvVaw0EKKEDykAt8XWrSJ7eHHfJ)

identity or sexual orientation, to prevent gender-based discrimination in the access and use of opportunities and resources, and to ensure equality on gender issues;

(2) Strengthening the roles of those who face inequality because of their gender, gender identity or sexual orientation in social, economic, cultural and political life;

can also be found.<sup>13</sup> However, the Department is not yet fully functional (Cyprus Dialogue Forum, 2020).

There are no policies or mechanisms to prevent discriminatory attitudes that LGBTI+s face or may encounter in the workplace (Cyprus Dialogue Forum, 2020, p. 138). Problems such as the absence of separate courts dealing with employee issues, the lengthy process for district courts to hear cases related to workplace discrimination, or the lack of expertise of judges on these issues also make the legal rights-seeking processes of LGBTI+ employees more difficult, and "makes it more difficult for employees to report unlawful dismissals through legal processes. Additionally, the absence of prosecution mechanisms and the lack of the right to take legal action makes such resolution mechanisms more cumbersome and dysfunctional" (Cyprus Dialogue Forum, 2020, p. 156).

In the northern part of Cyprus, consensual sexual intercourse between men has been decriminalised for the last 7 years, and more severe penalties have been put in place for sexual harassment and sexual assault crimes motivated by hatred or prejudice due to sexual orientation, gender identity, and prejudice against sexual orientation and gender identity, and psychological or economic violence due to hatred and hate speech based on sexual orientation and gender identity are all punishable under the penal code. However, the traditional, patriarchal and binary sexist structure of society prevents many LGBTI+s from freely expressing their sexual orientation and gender identity in society, including the workplace. One reason is that few attempts have been made to produce laws or policies that combat discrimination and inequality. Until now, only four political parties (TDP, CTP, HP and DP) have included LGBTI+ rights in their agendas. Although included in election manifestos, there is a general reluctance and lack of prioritization for the government to address the concerns and problems of LGBTI+ groups. Another reason is that there is very little sex education in schools and with no coverage of LGBTI+ specific content.

There are non-governmental organisations such as the Queer Cyprus Association that campaign against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender expression, gender characteristics and gender identity. (Kamenou et al., 2019) – it can be said that the society, like politicians, has an intolerant attitude towards LGBTI+s due to the lack of social reaction to the vandalism towards awareness-raising works (such as the billboards, "Uncle Kamil, I am lesbian" and "Auntie Mediha, I am gay").

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.mahkemeler.net/birlestirilmis/61-2014.docx>

## **2.5 The Importance of Workplace Rules and Culture**

The existence of a corporate culture sensitive to LGBTI+ rights significantly increases being out in the workplace. People in workplaces with effective rules or committees to prevent discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation and gender are more likely to be out. The job satisfaction and productivity of LGBTI+s are higher in workplaces where there are protective mechanisms against discrimination and where these mechanisms are operated when compared to workplaces without these mechanisms. Job satisfaction is positively associated with the support of supervisors and the existence of anti-discrimination policies (Huffman et al., 2008) and the support of top management (Day & Schoenrade, 2000). In other words, LGBTI+ inclusive workplace policies are an important factor that increases the job satisfaction of LGBTI+s.

## **2.6 Importance of Organisation: Unions and occupational organisations**

The establishment of LGBTI+ networks at the union level, as well as the increase in the representation/visibility of LGBTI+s after the 1990s, also enabled the problems of LGBTI+s to be discussed at the union level. The existence of LGBTI+ employee networks in workplaces is important in terms of social isolation that may be experienced and for employees to raise their voices directly or indirectly and to create social solidarity mechanisms (Colgan, 2016; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2018; McKearney, 2012). Studies conducted in Turkey have shown that trade unions or professional organisations are not sufficiently open to LGBTI+ workers and labourers and do not use these mechanisms when exposed to discrimination (O'Neil et al., 2020).

Although some unions in the northern part of Cyprus have begun taking steps to prevent possible discrimination and marginalisation towards LGBTI+s, they are not yet sufficient. An example of these steps is the collective bargaining agreement signed by United Media, which includes Yenidüzen Newspaper, Kanal Sim and Sim FM, with the Revolutionary General Labour Union (Devrimci Genel İş Sendikası) in 2017. The Convention stipulates that discrimination and oppression against LGBTIs will not be applied; press workers will not be discriminated against during their recruitment, employment, or in the event of their dismissal; necessary positive discriminatory measures will be taken to prevent LGBTI press workers from being discriminated against; all physical, psychological, verbal, sexual and sexual acts, harassment, violence, and mobbing will be considered as disciplinary offenses against LGBTIs will be considered disciplinary offenses and, in the event of such complaints, three articles state that the statement of the LGBTI employee will be taken as basis in such complaints and that the opposing party is obliged to disprove this statement.

### 3. Method

The situation of being closeted, which is compulsorily developed by LGBTI+s in the face of the risk of discrimination and harassment, makes it difficult to reveal the true dimensions of phobic violence and discrimination in employment (European Council Commissioner for Human Rights, 2011). To better understand the discrimination experiences of LGBTI+s living in the northern part of Cyprus during their employment cycle, this study adopted a mixed-method approach using both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. Descriptive Statistical and Thematic Analysis methods were used to analyse the quantitative and qualitative data, respectively. The research covers LGBT+ people of working age living in the northern part of Cyprus.<sup>14</sup> Data were collected using an online questionnaire, semi-structured face-to-face interviews, and focus group work.<sup>15</sup>

The Queer Cyprus Association's Stronger Together Project's "LGBTI+'s Access to Employment and Labor Market Experiences" survey in the northern part of Cyprus was conducted between February 9th, 2021 and April 10th, 2021 using an online survey platform, SurveyMonkey Pro, in two languages (Turkish and English). A total of 179 participants living in the northern part of Cyprus who declared themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or intersex (LGBTI+) took part in the survey. 134 of the participants stated that they had work experience, 22 stated that they had no work experience, but had experience in searching for jobs. In this report, the data were analyzed for these two groups using the Descriptive Statistical Analysis method in the SPSS program.

Semi-structured face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted in the participants' preferred environments (via Zoom, in the Queer Cyprus Association offices, or at their homes). During the in-depth interviews held in February-April 2021, a total of 18 interviews were conducted. 4 lesbians, 6 gays, 2 bisexual women, 1 bisexual man, 4 trans women and 1 trans man, aged between 22 and 53 with work experience participated in interviews, the participant details of which are detailed in Appendix 2. Most of the participants were reached through an online survey or Queer Cyprus Association. Both participants were reached through other participants we interviewed face-to-face. Participants have worked or are currently working in different occupational groups and sectors. Except for two of the participants, 16 participants have worked or are working in the private sector. The majority of the interviews were conducted by a heterosexual cis-woman and a cis-male Queer Cyprus Association activist. This relatively balanced the potential bias of the interviews as well as gaining the trust of the participants. The interviews, the majority of which lasted an average of 1 hour and 15 minutes, investigated the participants' education,

14. While the aim of the study was to reach out to LGBTI+s, none of the participants stated that they were intersex.

15. For this study, permission was obtained from the Girne American University Faculty of Business and Economics Research and Publication Ethics Committee, to which one of the researchers is affiliated (Ref No.: 2020-21-Fall-0063).



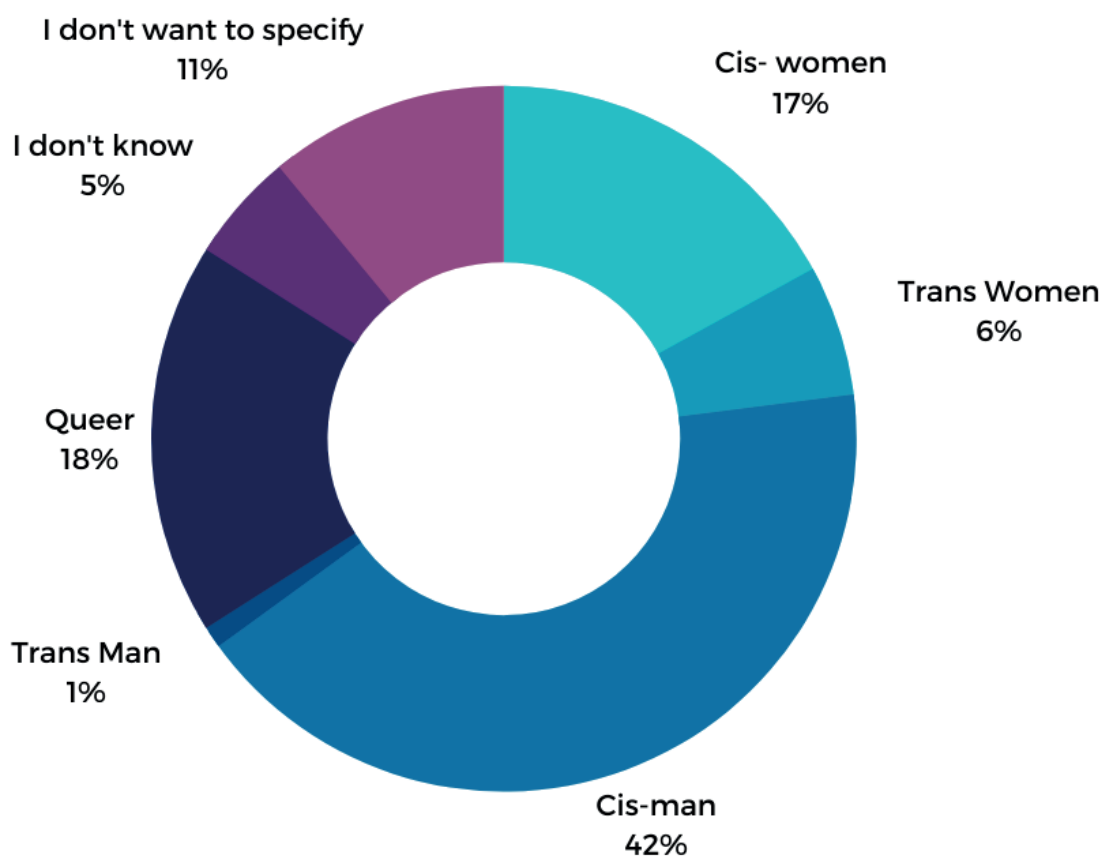
job search and work experiences and how they identified/interpreted these experiences. Moreover, it was examined how participants coped with these experiences. The LGBTI+ participants were then asked to share suggestions on how to overcome these problems in the employment cycle. All interviews were resolved and recorded with the permission of the participants. In the resolutions, the identities of participants were protected by pseudonyms based on their colour of choice, as per the confidentiality agreement. Data were thematically analysed using the program ATLAS.ti 8.

The focus group study, in which the preliminary findings and analyses obtained from the survey and face-to-face interviews were shared, was held on May 6, 2021 with nine LGBT+ participants. In addition to sharing the findings, the effects of education, job search and the experiences they have been exposed to or observed in the workplace on the choice of field and profession, and coping strategies were discussed. Participants who had previously participated in the interviews and two new participants who had a role in the realisation of the project were included in the focus group work carried out over Zoom. This research has some limitations. The research includes LGBT+ people living in the northern part of Cyprus who voluntarily participated in the online survey, interviews and focus group study between February 2021 and April 2021. We could not reach any participants who declared to be intersex. Since the survey was conducted online, LGBTI+s who did not have access to technology, who had special needs preventing them from completing the survey, and who were illiterate, could not be reached. The questionnaire was designed as bilingual only. Therefore, individuals who do not speak Turkish or English could not be reached.

## 4. Sample of the Research

### 4.1 Online Survey Participant Profile

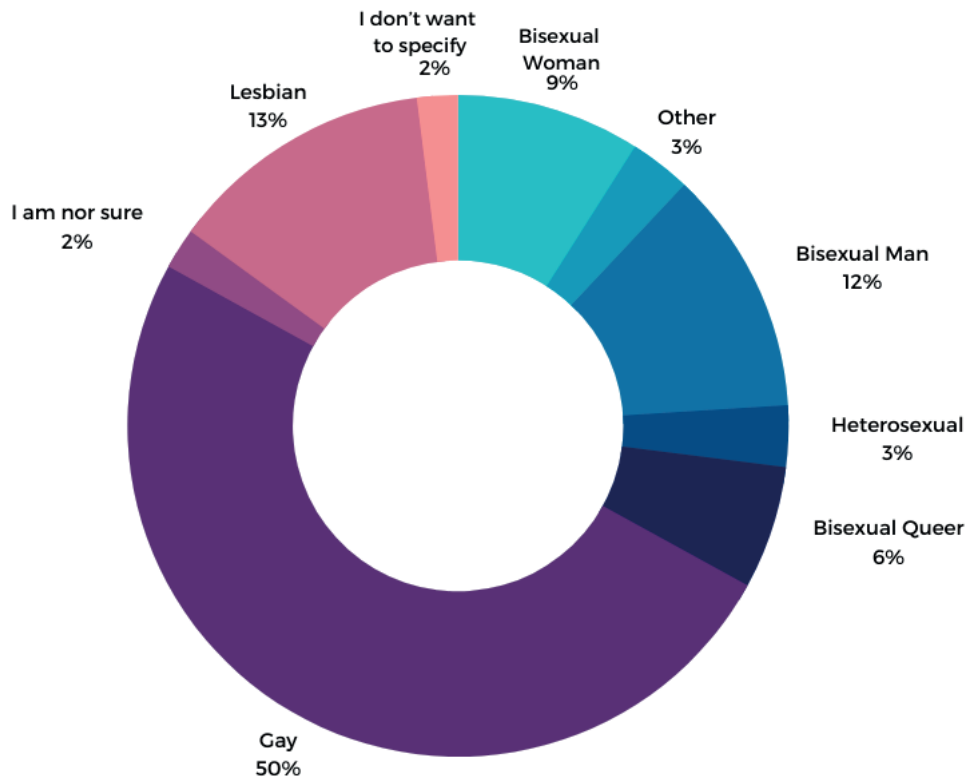
A bilingual online survey using SurveyMonkey Pro included 179 people who declared that they lived in the northern part of Cyprus and were LGBTI+. The sample mainly consisted of participants under the age of 35 (70%) with a bachelor's degree or higher (73%). Half of the participants declared their sexual orientation as gay. 75% of the respondents had both work and job-search experience. Participants defined their gender identity and sexual orientation by ticking predefined options or by ticking 'Other'.<sup>16</sup> The gender identities declared by survey participants are given in Graph 1 and their sexual orientations are given in Graph 2. 42% of the participants were cis-men (71 people), 17% were cis-women (29 people), 18% were Queer/Genderless/Fluid (31 people), 6% were trans women (9 people). While 1% defined their gender identity as trans men (2 people), 9 people (5%) answered this question as "I don't know" and 19 people (11%) answered "I don't want to specify."<sup>17</sup>



**Graph 1:** Distribution of participants according to their declared gender identities(%)

16. Open-ended responses to 'Other' were combined if they matched one of the available options.

17. Four participants did not answer this question.

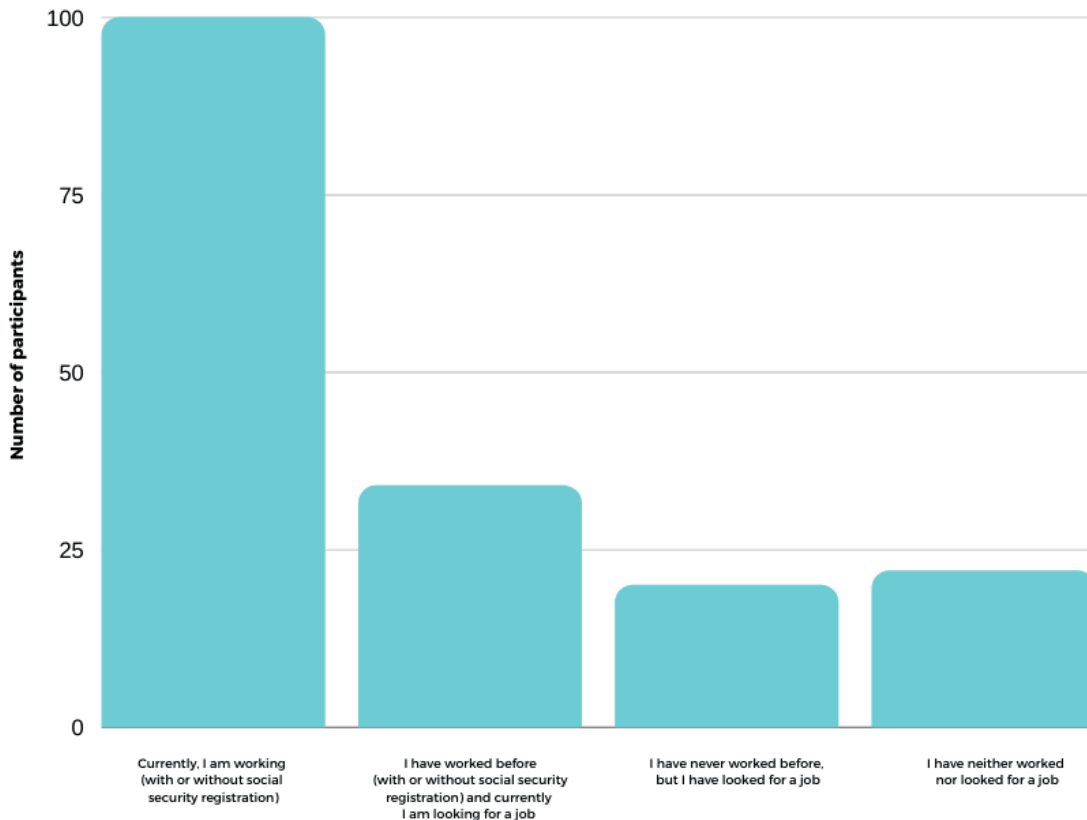


**Graph 2:** Distribution of participants according to their declared sexual orientation (%)

Participants were guided by asking whether they had experiences in job searching or working. All participants were asked questions on the demographic information section of the questionnaire. Questions on potential discriminatory attitudes in the northern part of Cyprus and environments where LGBTI+s avoid being openly out were also accessible to all participants. On questions aiming to understand the job seeking and work experiences of participants, guidance was provided based on the participant's job search and work experience.

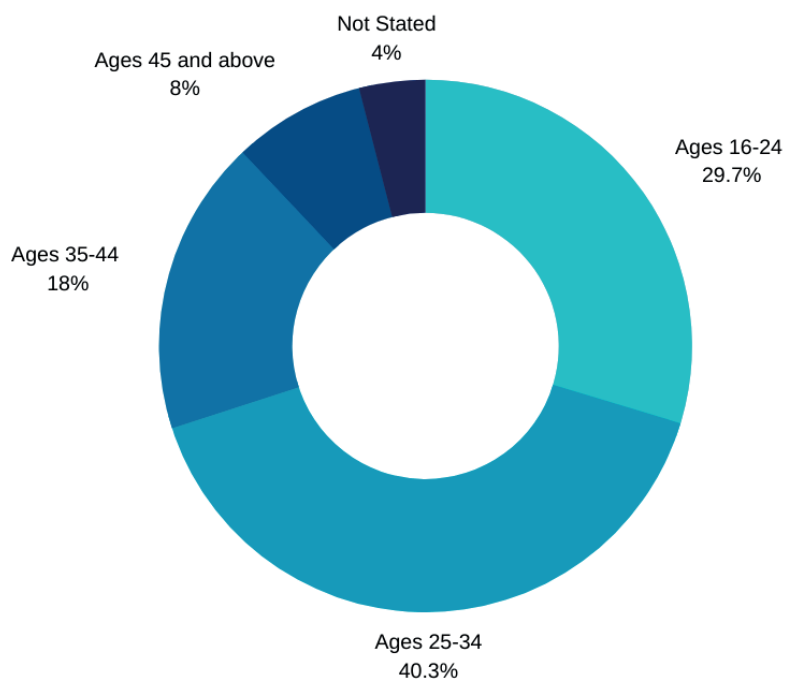
Participants who declared that they had any work experience (insured/uninsured, full/part-time, temporary/volunteer/intern) at the time of the survey or before were directed to the parts where they had problems regarding both their job search and their workplace experience. Participants with job search experience were only asked about their job search experience. Participants who had never worked or looked for a job also answered questions about job search and job prospects. 100 people who participated in the survey stated that they had a job during the survey and 34 people stated that they had worked at a job before and had job search experience. 20 people had no previous working experience but had job search experience. 22 people never worked and did not look for a job.<sup>18</sup> (Graph 3)

18. Three individuals did not answer this question.



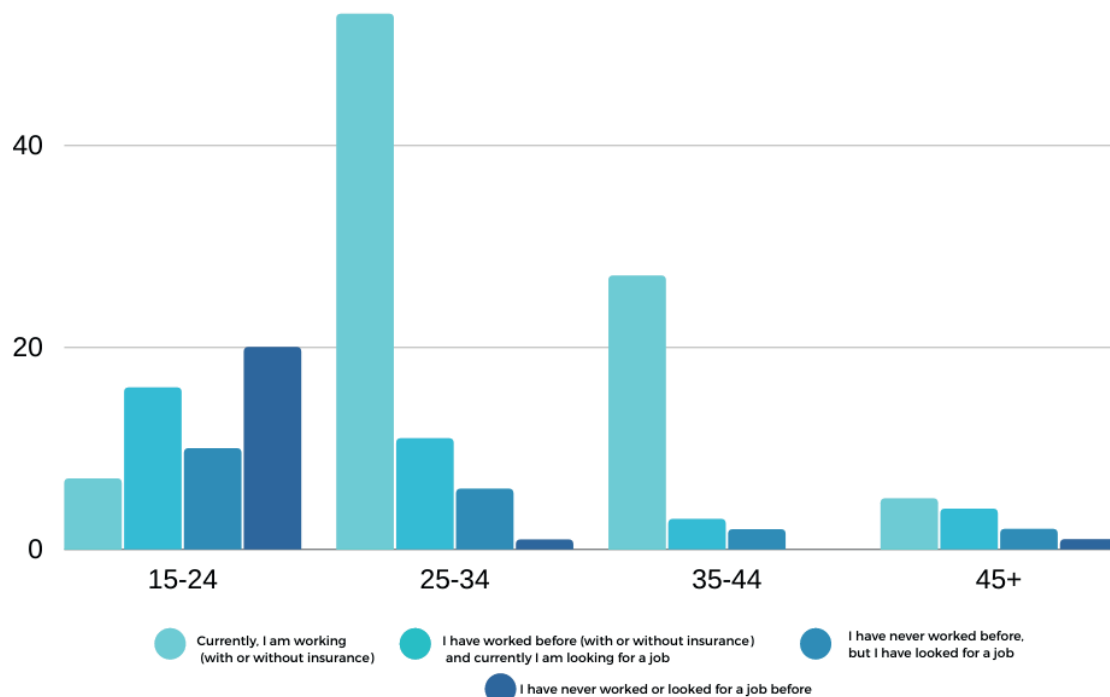
**Graph 3:** Distribution of participants according to their work/job search experiences

30% of participants were young people with less than 25 years of age. 58% of participants were between the ages of 25-44 and 8% of applicants were older than 45 years of age.<sup>19</sup> (Graph 4)



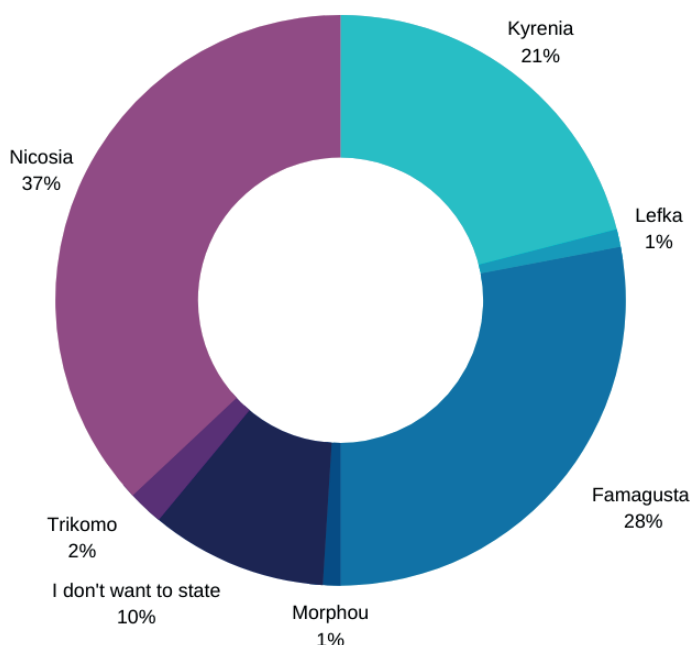
**Graph 4:** Age distribution of participants (%)

19. Three individuals did not state their age.



**Graph 5.** Distribution of applicants according to their work experience and age

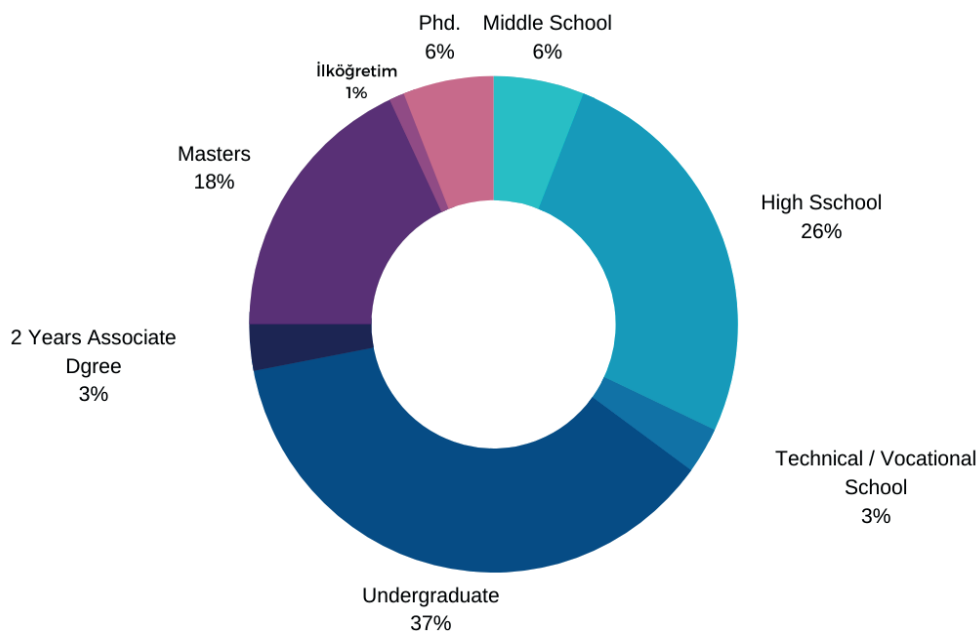
The majority of participants reside in the districts of Nicosia (37%), Famagusta (28%) and Kyrenia (21%). Only 4% reside in the districts of Morphou, Lefka and Trikomo. 75.9% of participants stated that they live in city centres while 24.1% stated that they lived in villages and townships (Graph 6).



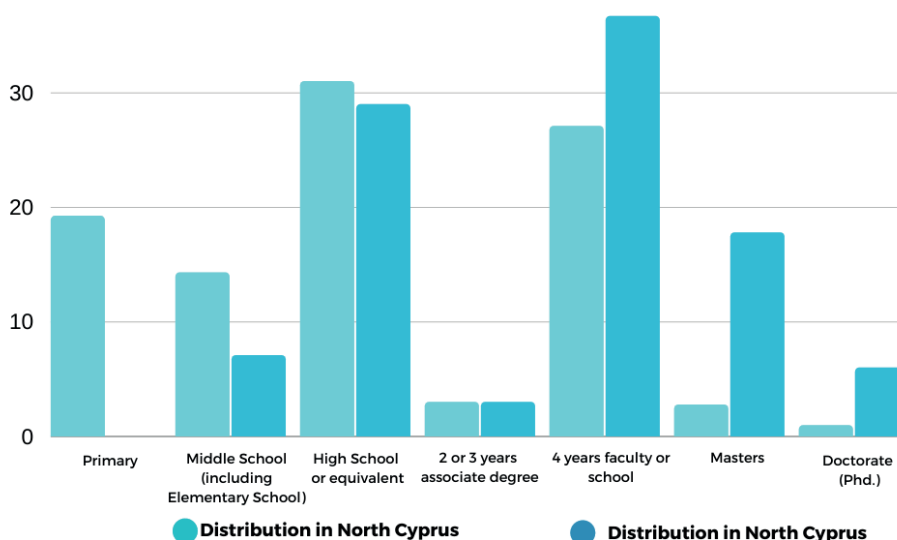
**Graph 6:** Distribution of participants according to their districts (%)

Two-thirds (63%) of the total 171 respondents have high school or higher education, as well as those employed in the northern part of Cyprus (64.3%) (iHA, 2020). LGBTI+s who did not graduate from primary school or complete any school could not be reached. Among those with post-secondary education, although the education level of the participants is in line with those employed in the northern part of Cyprus, the proportion

of graduates and doctoral graduates is noteworthy. The number of participants stating their educational status as postgraduate is 30 (18%), the number of participants stating as doctorate is 11 (7%), and the number of participants having an associate degree is 5 (3%). Again, 5 people (3%) declared their education level as technical/vocational high school, 2 people (1%) declared their education level as primary school and 9 people (5%) as secondary school (Graphs 7 and 8).



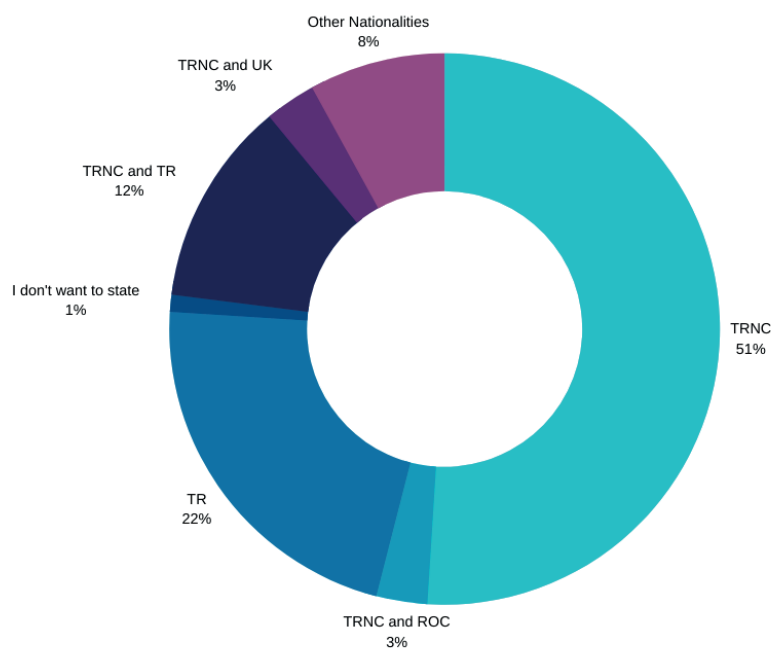
**Graph 7:** Distribution of participants according to the last education institution from which they graduated (%)



**Graph 8:** Distribution of participants and individuals recruited in the northern part of Cyprus according to the last education institution from which they graduated (2020)

The Majority of the participants have TRNC nationality (73.6%). Approximately one fifth (17.6%) declared having dual citizenship (Graph 9). Again, one fifth (22%) stated that they were Turkish nationals and 8% stated that they had citizenship other than Turkish and TRNC. Labour market surveys show that both job search and workplace experiences of citizens and non-citizens differ. Studies carried out in the TRNC point to immigrant-

domestic stratification and discrimination in the labour market (Besim et al., 2018; Güven-Lisaniler, 2019; Güven-Lisaniler et al., 2005; Güven-Lisaniler, 2008). Having participants from different nationalities is important in terms of enabling LGBTI+s to transfer their job search and workplace experiences at different levels/framework to the project.



**Graph 9:** Distribution of participants according to their nationalities(%)

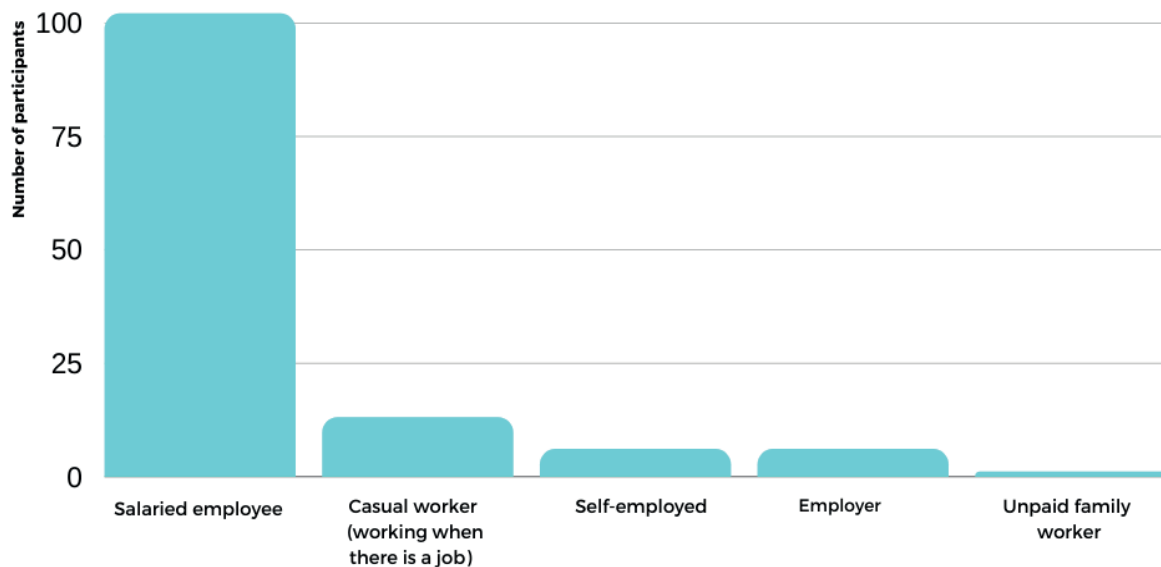
**Note:** Nationalities specified in Other countries: 1 Albania, 1 Africa, 1 Foreigner, 2 Iran, 1 Iraq, 1 Jordan, 1 Moldova, 2 Nigeria, 3 UK, 1 I do not want to specify.

## 4.2 The Employment Statuses of Participants

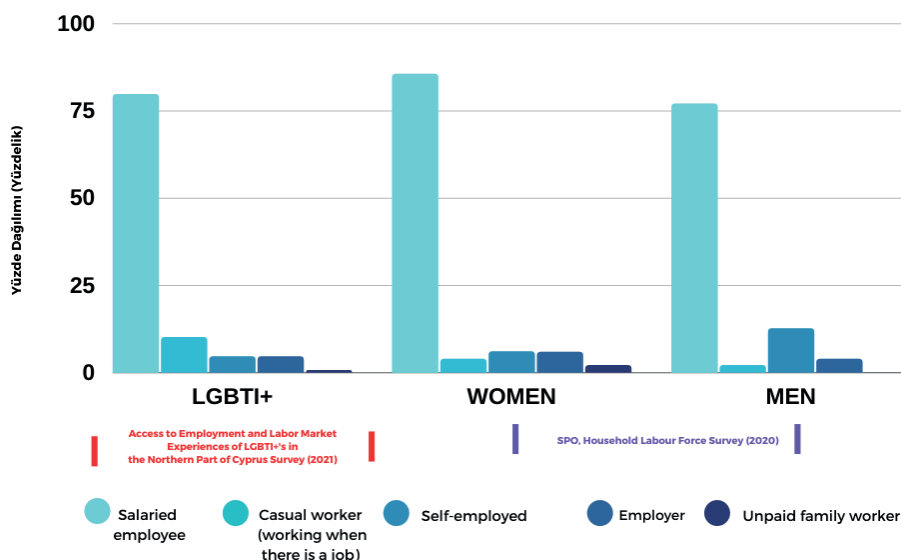
In this section, the positions of participants in the labour market are analysed. Findings of the analysis should not be read as the position of LGBTI+s in the labour market. The findings shared as a result of the analysis only concern the positions of LGBTI+s survey participants in the labour market. However, the findings are crucial in terms of providing clues as to the areas in which LGBTI+s are disadvantaged in the labor market. The suggestions presented serve the project’s aims of evidence-based policymaking and advocacy.

In the survey, 134 respondents currently employed or with previous work experience were asked to describe their employment status. The distribution of participants by employment status (Graph 10) is in line with the results of the Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) organised by the State Planning Organisation (Graph 11). Nearly four-fifths (79.7%) of the respondents are currently employed as paid employees or have worked in the past. According to HLFS data, 80% of men and 85.5% of women employed in the northern part of Cyprus are paid workers. According to the HLFS results, the second largest group for both men and women is ‘self-employed’. Those working as temporary/seasonal workers

are in third place, followed by those working as employers, with unpaid family workers in last place (Graph 11). However, although the situation of working LGBTI+s is in line with the general average of men and women in terms of the ratio of wage earners, the fact that the second largest group is not self-employed but temporary/seasonal workers indicates a relatively fragile employment structure. Survey data also indicated that 20% (21 people) of participants (102 people) employed as wage workers work part-time (part-time). Since this information is not included in the HLFS results shared, no comparison can be made. However, that the rate of people working in temporary jobs is higher than the average and that about one-fifth of the wage earners work part-time is interpreted as LGBTI+s having a more fragile employment structure. Considering the educational profile of respondents (Graphs 7 and 8), this fragile employment structure can only be interpreted as LGBTI+s being exposed to formal or informal discrimination in the labour market in their job search and employment processes.



**Graph 10:** Distribution of participants according to their employment statuses

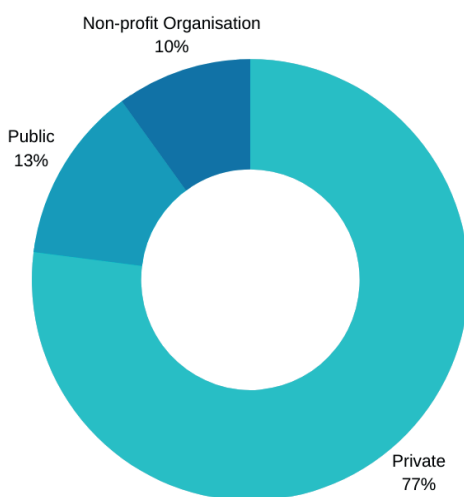


**Graph 11:** Distribution of the statuses of participants in workplaces compared to HIA results, %

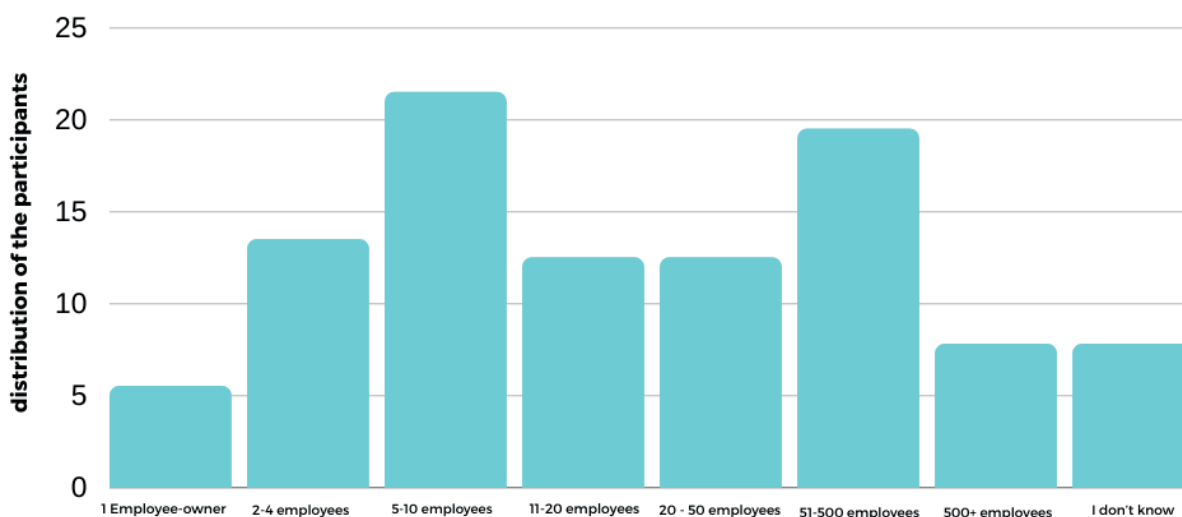


77% of participants work in the private sector, 13% in the public sector, and 10% in non-profit organisations (Graph 12). It has been determined that 35% of participants work in enterprises that can be considered large enterprises (with over 50 employees) in the northern part of Cyprus, while the other 35% work in small enterprises with less than 10 employees. The ratio of employees in medium-sized enterprises is also 25% (Graph 13).

LGBTI+s show a distribution parallel to the country averages, both in terms of the sector they work in and the size of their businesses. According to the country averages, 11.9% of total female employment and 7.9% of total male employment are employed in public administration (TRNC Prime Ministry Personnel Department, 2020). 13% of LGBTI+s participants were employed in the public sector. Likewise, compared to the country average, most private sector employees (46%) are employed by enterprises with less than 10 employees, and a large part (37%) by enterprises with over 50 employees (SPO, 2017). In this context, no segregation (deviation from the average) could be detected on behalf of LGBTI+s in terms of the sector and business size studied within the framework of the sample.

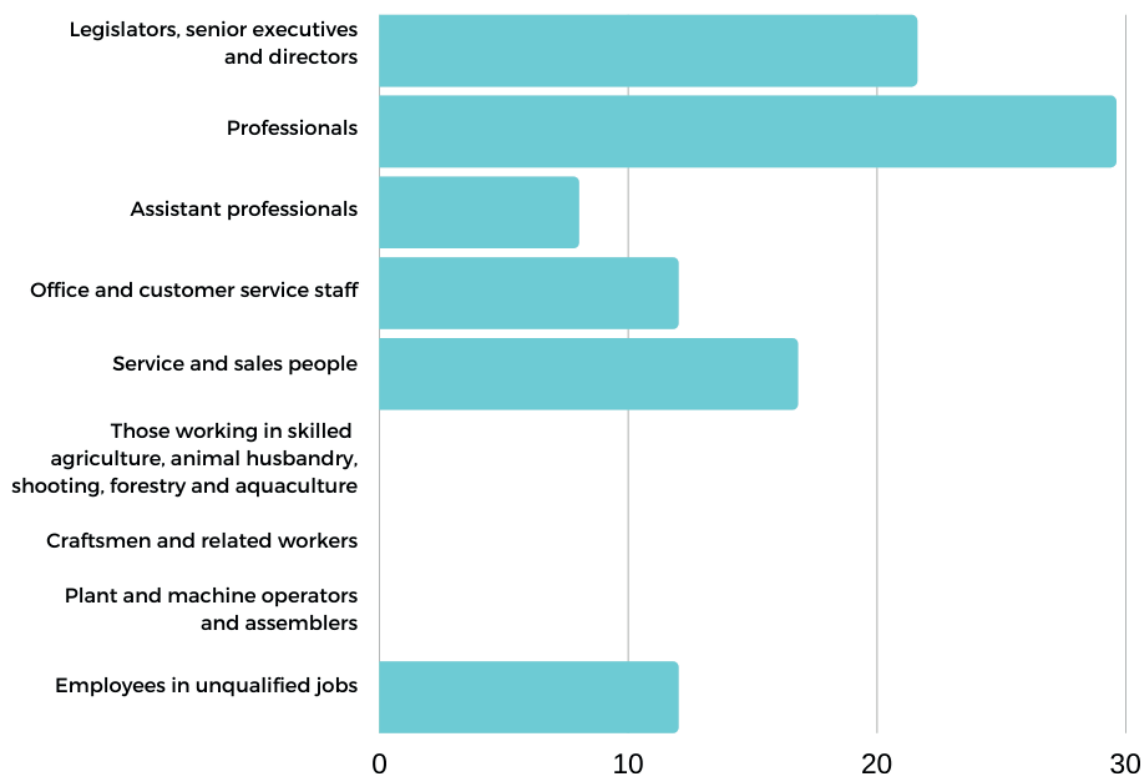


**Graph 12:** Distribution of participants according to the sector(%)



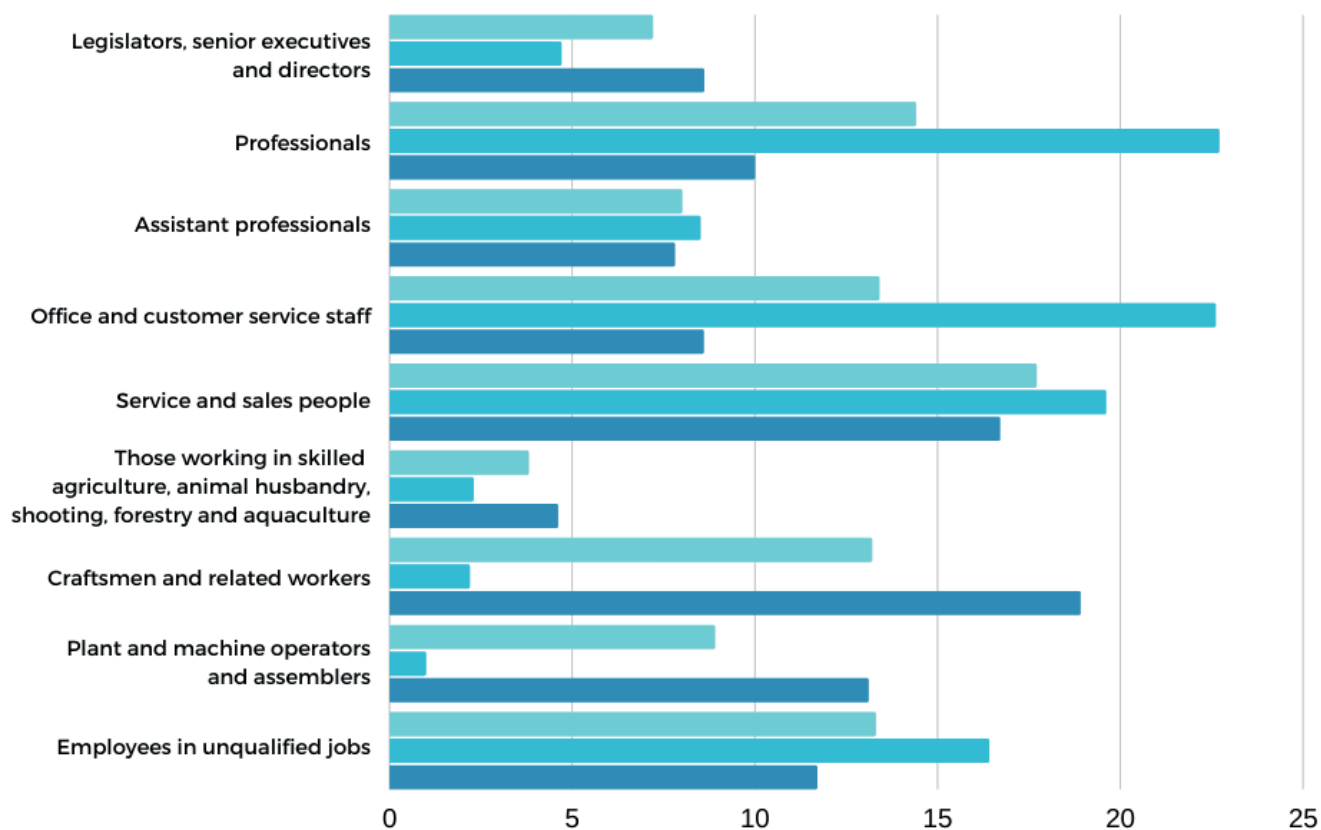
**Graph 13:** Distribution of participants according to scale-sizes of workplace (%)

At first glance, the distribution of participants according to the main occupational groups (Graph 14) is similar to the occupational distribution of employed women in the northern part of Cyprus. Employed women are stuck in a limited number of occupations. In certain occupational groups, they have representation above their total representation. Their labour force participation is low and unemployment rates are high. Reading these facts together indicates that there are constraints in front of women's labour demand. It is seen that the low level of women's employment depends on the nature of the demand for women's labour, beyond the supply and qualifications of women's labour. Positive and negative stereotypes about women shape the demand for women's labour with the generalization that women cannot do certain jobs and certain positions in certain jobs, and that certain jobs and certain positions will be best accomplished by women employees (Anker, 1998). This, in turn, reduces the demand for women's labour and causes horizontal (professional and sectoral) and vertical (position at work) separation of women's and men's labour. In the northern part of Cyprus, approximately 66% of women have a tight distribution in 3 main occupations (professional occupations, sales/service personnel, and administrative services). There is no such accumulation or compression for men (Beton-Kalmaz & Güven-Lisaniler, 2019) (Graphic 15).<sup>20</sup>



**Graph 14:** Distribution of participants according to occupational groups (%)

20. The SPO Labor Force and Household Survey does not collect any data on gender identity or sexual orientation. Therefore, "woman" includes women in the binary gender system, although it may also include lesbian, bisexual or transgender women. Again, although the word "man" includes gay, bisexual and transgender men, it includes men in the binary gender system.

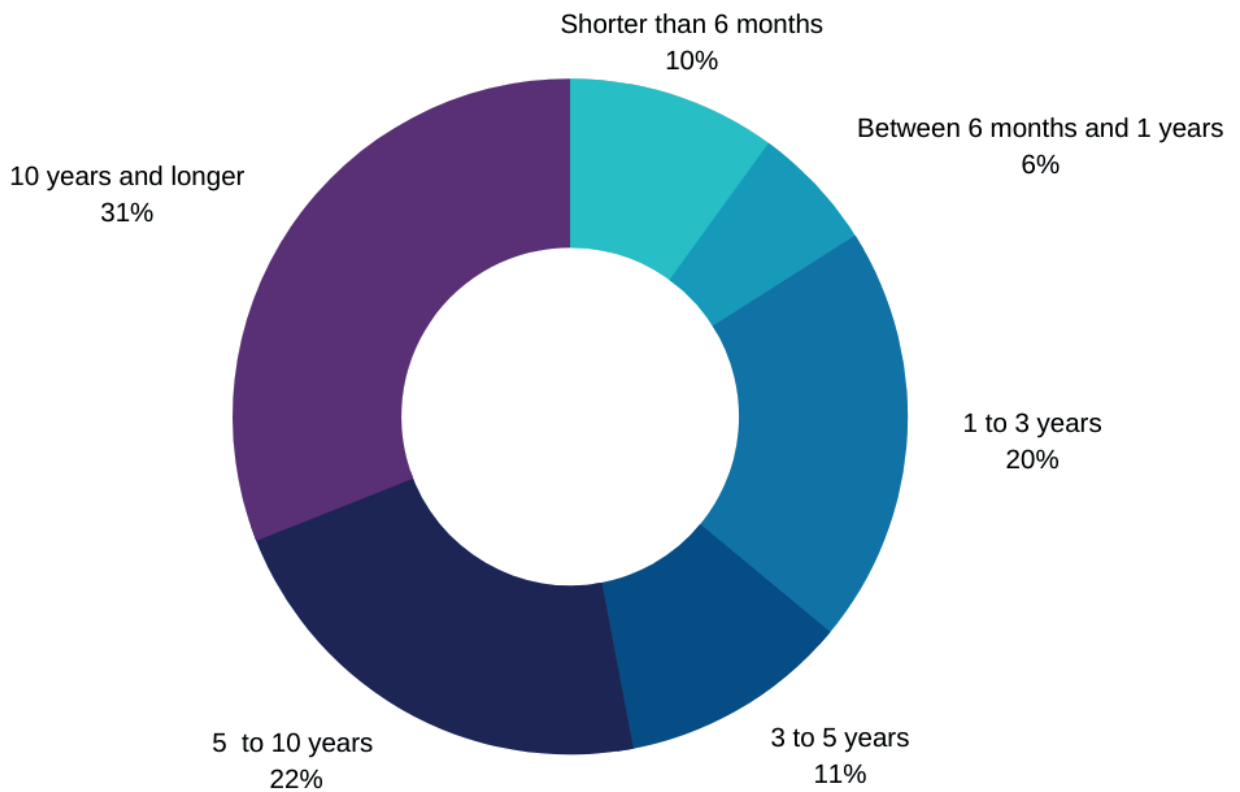


**Graph 15:** General occupational distribution for the northern part of Cyprus (%)

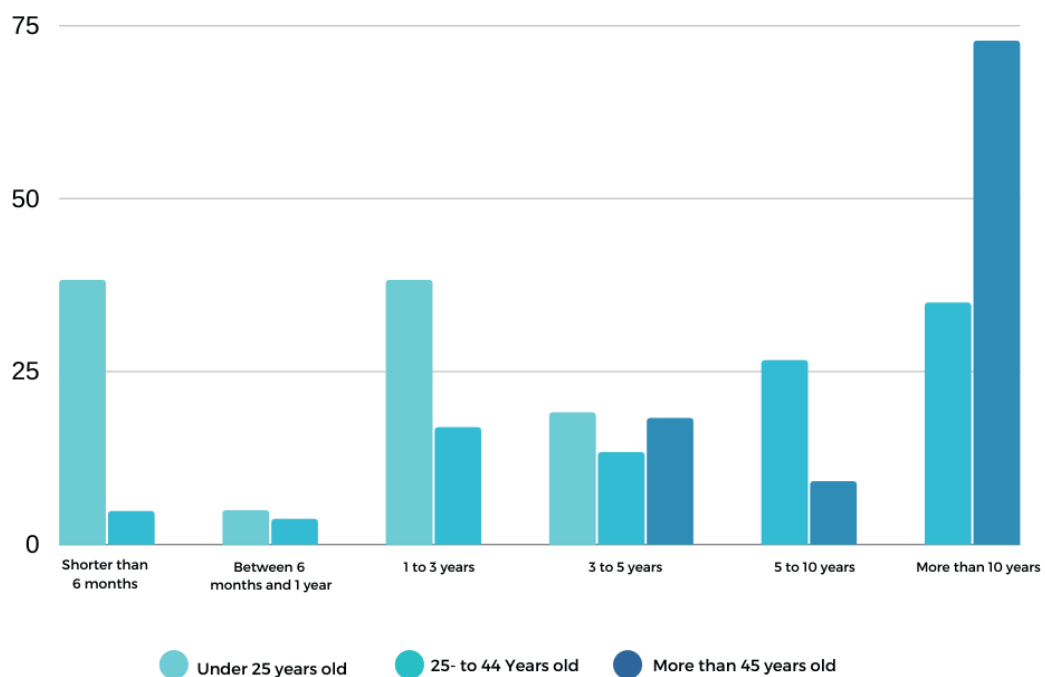
The occupational distribution presented by the survey data implied whether a similar finding could be valid for LGBTI+s as well. There is no congestion for cis-women. As it may be recalled, 64% of the participants have higher education. The rate of those with Master's and doctorate degrees is 43%. Keeping this in mind, when we observe the distribution according to the main occupational groups, it is necessary to explain how 30% of the participants are in professional occupations and 22% in managerial jobs, as a backlog rather than a congestion, as the participant bias of the sample is with a high level of education. However, considering the education level of participants, the least educated participants are secondary school graduates, and there is no reason to assume that these participants would have jobs that do not require any qualifications. However, 12.5% of participants work in jobs that do not require qualifications. Therefore, there is underemployment.

Be it in the surveys, face-to-face interviews and focus group studies, the majority of the participants shared that they could not be free (out) at work. They said that, as a strategy for coping with not being free, they tend to work independently (self-employment) if opportunities arise. In addition to shaping stereotypes about LGBTI+s, this coping strategy may have also influenced distribution here. As a result, although occupational distribution seems to be limited to certain occupations when compared to women's employment, it shines a light on underemployment in women. To understand how much employment has

been interrupted, it is seen that 31% of participants have been working for over 10 years and 22% have been working for 5 to 10 years (Graphs 16 and 17). When the years worked according to their age ranges are analysed (Graph 17), the years worked increase as they get older 17).



**Graph 16:** How long have you worked or been actively working?



**Graph 17:** Distribution of participants according to age ranges they actively worked, %

### 4.3 Income Statuses of the Participants

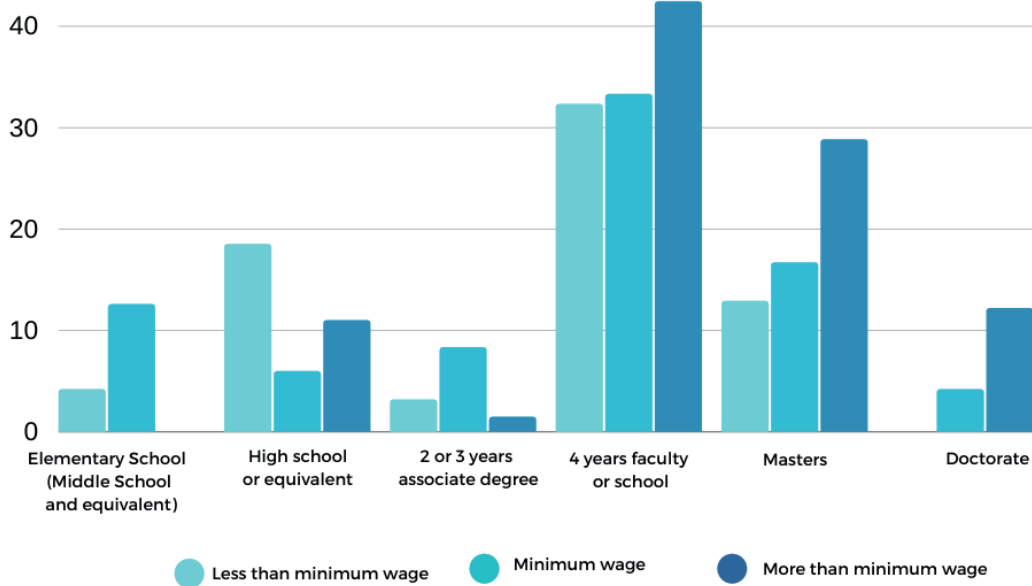
In terms of income, 54.8% of participants stated that they had a higher-than-minimum wage, 19% stated that they earned minimum wage, and 26.2% stated that they had a less-than minimum wage (Table 2). One-fifth of those with a job earnings above minimum wage can barely meet their basic needs with their job earnings.

	Less than minimum wage	Minimum wage	More than minimum wage
What is your monthly average income?	%26.2	%19.0	%54.8
Is your monthly income sufficient to meet your needs?			
Insufficient to meet my basic needs	%56.3	%25.0	%7.2
Barely sufficient to meet my basic needs	%28.1	%45.8	%14.5
It meets my needs	%15.6	%29.2	%49.3
It is meeting my needs and is on the increase	%0.0	%0.0	%29.0

**Table 2:** Monthly average wage and adequacy

Unfortunately, it is not shared what percentage of those employed in the northern part of Cyprus earn wages equal to or above minimum wage, so it is not possible to determine an overall average for participants in terms of wages. However, comparisons can be made according to the 2015 Household Budget Survey (HBA) organised by the SPO (DPÖ). HBA results share the annual average core business income by education level. According to the survey results, the annual average main job income is below minimum wage for only a small illiterate group (0.7%) who have not completed any form of education. The average annual income of the literate group (0.7%) is 16% above the minimum wage. Average annual job income at all other education levels is above the annual minimum wage. When we look at the distribution of participants' average annual income statements by education (Graph 18), the average monthly income is below the minimum wage. Having a job income below or above the minimum wage determines the work done beyond the level of education and the status and employment structure for the job. Two-thirds of participants who declared having a job income below minimum wage are part-time, casual workers. Almost all employees with casual wage status (11 people) have a high school (4 people) or higher (6 people) education. A similar pattern can be observed in women's employment. Employed women have a higher proportion of high school or higher education. While 30% of employed women are university graduates, in men this rate is 16% (DPÖ, 2019). Despite this difference in education, the majority of those employed with a casual status (73%, 2019) are women (DPÖ, 2019).

The fact that the expected linear relationship between education and labour income is not observed in women and LGBTI+ employment indicates that these groups are subject to discrimination, especially informal discrimination, in the labour market.



**Graph 18:** Distribution of participants according to monthly income and education (%)

Gender-based difficulties, harassment and discrimination in access to and within the education process determine access to and position in the labour market. The relevant literature defines this phenomenon as pre-labour market discrimination. Experiences of discrimination before the labor market and the interaction of these experiences with education level, field and career choice were analysed through face-to-face in-depth interviews.

## 5. First Steps in the Labour Market Cycle: Educational Experiences, Choice of Occupations and Their Reflections on Labour Market

### 5.1 Educational Experiences

Three out of every four respondents who answered the online survey at least had a Bachelor's degree. Although educational experiences and reflections of these experiences on the labour market were not included in the survey, there were interview participants who had the support of their school friends and teachers as well as cis-gay and transgender participants exposed to discrimination and harassment in their educational life who shared how the consequences of these experiences were reflected in their business life later on.

Participants' experiences demonstrate the phobic school environment or pressures of the family upon discovering their sexual orientation can interrupt or even terminate education. The disruption or termination of education has emerged as a phenomenon that determines the employment cycle of participants (occupation, jobs, earnings, etc.) and, consequently, their current economic position. Sky Blue, who left her education in high school as a result of the LGBTI+ phobic violence she experienced from her friends

and teachers, and Emerald Green, who could not complete her high school education as a result of her father taking her out of school, said that they could not be where they wanted in their professional life.

They would talk behind my back. I would hear it. There were people who said such harsh things to my face. "Be a man, I don't know what you are" I mean, it was pretty common, even that was the reason why I quit school. My friends' attitudes were also very bad. The attitudes of my teachers were also very bad... I was a successful student, I could have continued. It's too bad I quit... If I had continued my studies, I would have wanted to study Psychology (Sky Blue, Gay, not working)

Because I'm gay, my father took me out of school so I couldn't continue my education... I never wanted to be a cashier. The subject already goes back to the beginning and ties in to when I was taken out of school. If I had gone to school, maybe I would have been in a better place. If I could go to university, maybe I would have a better job, a better, you know, like having my own home. I mean, I'm actually not where I want to be... (Emerald, Gay, looking for work)

Alongside participants having to leave education due to phobic school experiences and family pressure, heteronormative impositions of educational institutions on students' clothing and behavior patterns may also interrupt education. Cherry Red, Vermilion and Black, who are trans women from the interviewees, have experienced this pressure. Cherry Red and Black had to drop out of school, and Vermilion was able to complete high school education as a result of the school administration bending the rules.

Unlike Vermilion, who despite being discriminated against by a teacher was able to finish high school with ease thanks to the softening of the school administration's uniform rules for whom they are grateful, Cherry Red regretted dropping out of vocational high school because he had to look like a man. Black, like Cherry Red, dropped out of vocational high school, since it did not fit her gender identity and was forced to go by her father.

I never wore men's uniforms, I never even wore a jacket, every day there was a fight at school, I used to tell my teachers that we could not get them, and they used to give me one, but again... I did not wear it, I used to untuck my shirt, I was so unhappy... I didn't want to wear a tie, I didn't want to cut my hair short anymore, that was the last straw and then I exploded. I quitted... I wish I had finished high school, went to university and gotten a career... If you are a cook, you can cook in foreign countries, and you won't experience any difficulties. I mean, I wish I could do that. I mean, had I not entered this environment [sex

work], and not have gotten used to it. (Cherry Red, Trans woman, high school dropout, sex worker)

There was this school I wanted, they didn't let me go to the school I wanted. Because of my father's dictatorship, I had to go to the school he wanted... I wanted to go [school name, standard high school] a lot. He sent me to the vocational high school [building technical department], it was a school I didn't want, but I went for a semester. (Black, trans woman, high school dropout, not working)

Discrimination, verbal or physical/sexual harassment experiences in secondary and high school lives were mostly expressed by cis-gay and trans woman participants. While the problems experienced by gays generally include behaviors such as nicknames by friends, physical or sexual assault, being warned by teachers or family that their children are 'different', for trans people, besides these, school rules (such as uniform, hair, etc.) is also challenging. The interviews conducted also demonstrate that trans people experience more family pressure and are at higher risk of dropping out of school when they run away from their families in high school. Only one of five transgender participants said that she graduated from high school because of a promise she made to her mother and the tolerant approach of the high school administration, soon after which she left her family. Four transgender participants, who had problems with their families or at school, left home during the secondary/high school period and ended their school life. The fact that violence and harassment is not taken seriously and prevented by teachers and/or school management, or even being a part of harassment, as in the narratives of Sky Blue or Daisy Yellow, leaves the student exposed to violence and harassment due to sexual orientation or gender identity no choice but to drop out. Another participant stated that his family chose to change schools after the primary school teacher warned the participant's family about the inappropriate behavior of the child participant without any privacy. What Daisy Yellow communicates is a striking example of how school administration can be a part of harassment and violence.

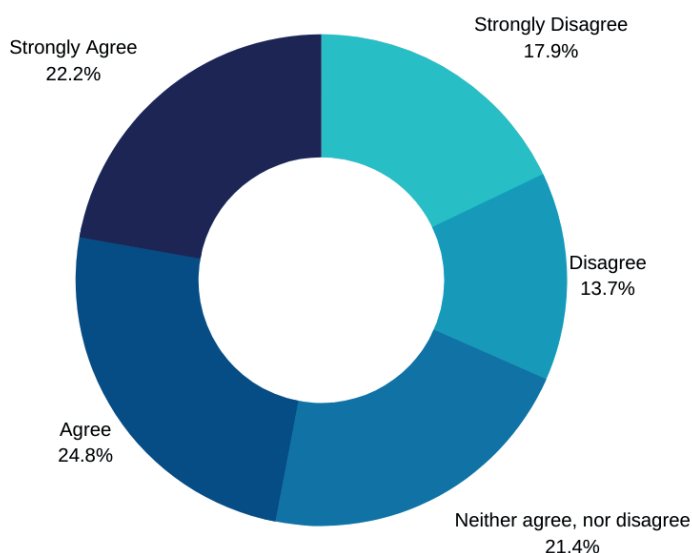
For example, here you are like a girl, it was 'something Ali', 'girl Ali', that was the nickname the [students] boys gave me ... they started taking advantage of me as if I was a girl. They started to touch me here and there, they tried to kiss me... After that, I complained to the principal and the words the principal said to me, I have never forgotten that word for my whole life, "they called a whore 'whore' and the whore screamed this from the rooftops, that they called her a whore". (Daisy Yellow, Trans woman, high school dropout, not working)



Participants stated that they had fewer problems at university. Even though the participants studied in a department they did not want, they described the university as being away from their environment/family or as an escape, and stated that universities are environments with more support and more opportunities to organise.

## 5.2 Choice of Occupation

Nearly half of survey participants (47%) agree with the statement that they direct or will direct their choice of profession to areas they think will not be subject to discrimination in terms of sexual orientation/gender identity (Graph 19). When examined in terms of sexual orientation/gender identity, the rate of those who agree that they direct or will direct their choice of profession to areas where they think they will not face discrimination based on sexual orientation/gender identity is lowest among bisexual men (36.4%) and highest among trans people (60%) (Annex 3).



**Graph 19:** Distribution of the statement "I have directed or will direct my career choice to areas where I think I will be subject to less or no discrimination, (%)"

While talking about career choices in interviews, most participants stated that their sexual orientation or gender identity did not affect their choice of profession.<sup>21</sup> In addition, when choosing their current or previous job and, when possible, their employment status, they considered paid self-employment to be effective. Some interviewees stated that they did not consciously choose a profession because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, but said that the jobs they are doing – jobs that require special skills, are of an artistic nature, do not require much interaction with customers or that can be done independently – protect them, hide them and are privileged.

The fields in which my profession enters and the segments it enters actually

21. The answers and opinions on the choice of profession were based on the statements of the participants. Our trans woman participants had an opinion that they could only do certain professions after the gender confirming process. Our participants, who are aware of their sexual orientation at a young age, may be directed to some professions unconsciously/internally.

protect me. In other words, this is something that has happened unintentionally... I wonder if it is a separate advantage or disadvantage when we enter these professional things, because people see it as you artists are different. So under that guise, I actually protected myself for a very long time (White, Lesbian, interior designer/graphic designer).

I didn't have problems anyway, since I'm behind the bar, you're not visible in a high place anyway, you just do your job and leave, but when you become a waitress, of course, you become more visible... It's like invisibility saved me more. I didn't get much reaction, that's what I think... (Navy Blue, Lesbian, barista/waitress)

This is definitely a serious privilege, and not just because I have "a respectable profession" but specifically, because it is a profession that I can carry out independently from others. (Olive Green, Queer Lesbian, Physician)

Interviewees described the public and corporate sector as workplaces where they felt little sense of belonging, more closeted (less free) and that change was more difficult.

I feel very nervous there (in government offices)... Even if you start working at a government office, it's not a place where I can say "you must be joking!" and walk out the door. Secondly, with the segmented views of the people there, I don't think I can be out... Because I think in the private sector there is always new blood entering the private sector, someone leaves, another recent graduate comes, a new generation comes and goes, and they have certain lived experiences. The government is not like that, you go there, you stay there. (White, Lesbian, interior designer/graphic designer)

In this regard, trans women differ from other LGBTI+s. They believed that, because they are trans, that they would not be given a job and, thus, do not have the option of choosing a career. There are very specific jobs they can do, such as being a hostess or sex worker. However, one trans-woman interviewee worked as a hairdresser when she first left school and became a singer upon improving on her talent by studying abroad.

Both survey participants and interviewees choose jobs and employment situations that they think will be relatively free (where they can be openly out) when choosing their profession or job, or that they will not be teased, harassed, or bullied because they are LGBTI+. This can sometimes lead to the underemployment of LGBTI+s, their concentration in certain areas, thus, lowering wages in these jobs and being unemployed for longer periods. The choice of profession of trans women is that this phenomenon; 'choosing a profession'

where they expect to be ostracised, discriminated against, harassed, and bullied, is also important in terms of explaining how devastating the impact of discrimination based on sexual orientation/gender identity/gender expression on the 'choice' of profession or job can be. The feeling of exclusion of trans women emerges from their inability to have choices or be accepted for anything other than one job.

## 6. Seeking Employment and Work Experiences

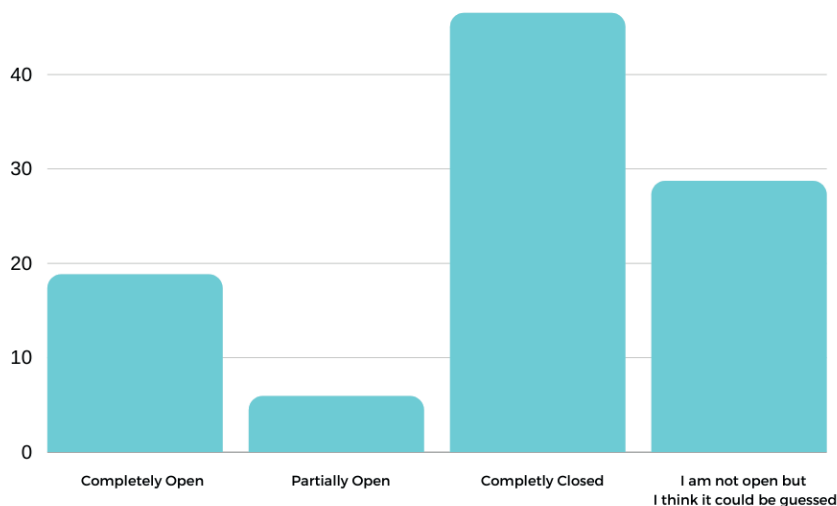
Participants were asked about their job search experience, how long they had been looking for a job in their last job search experience, their openness about being out in the job search process, their thoughts on how being LGBTI+ affects these processes and their interview.

### 6.1 Experiences when Seeking Employment

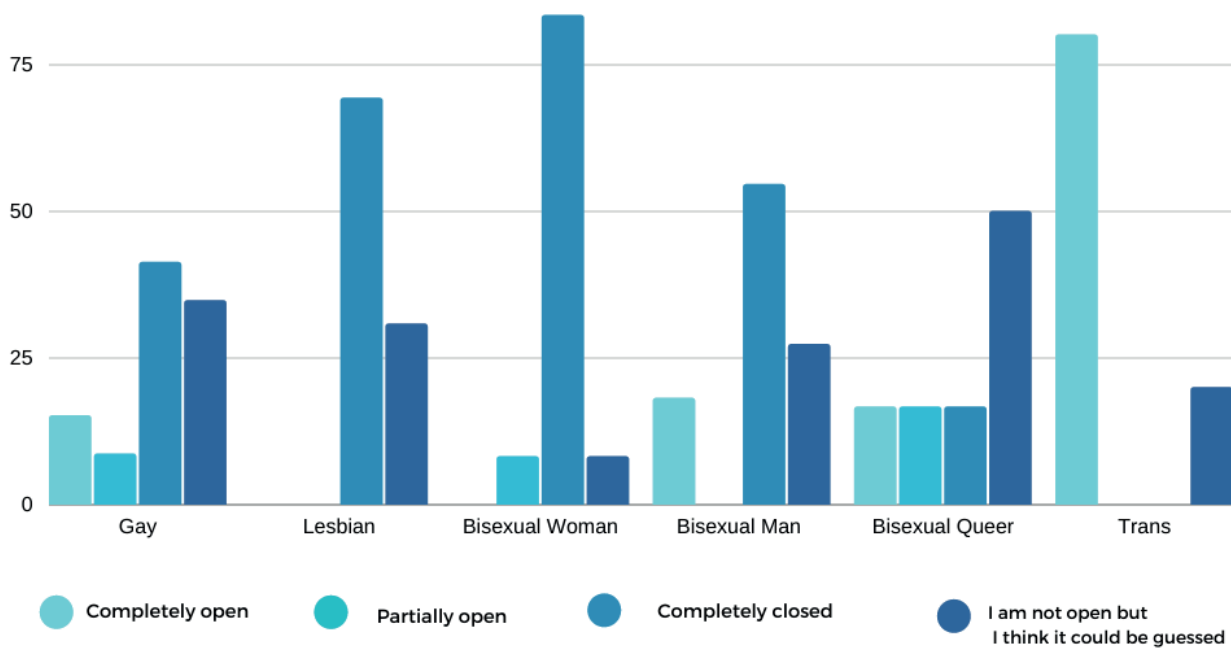
While 55.7% of participants stated that they found a job within the first three months of starting to search for a job, 16.5% had searched for a job for over a year. It has been observed that job search durations differ according to sexual orientation and gender identity. For example, all trans people declared having been looking for a job for over a year. All bisexual queers stated searching for a job for less than one year, while 8.9% of bisexual cis-women and gay men, and 27.3% of bisexual cis-men stated that they had looked for work for over a year.

#### 6.1.1 Coming Out During Job Interviews

While 46.5% of the participants with job search experience stated being completely closeted during their last job interview, the rate of those completely coming out is 18.8% (Graph 20).



**Graph 20:** Participants 'coming out' based on gender identity or sexual orientation during job interviews, (%)



**Graph 21:** Distribution of coming out regarding gender identity or sexual orientation during the last job interview by sexual orientation and gender identity, %

When analysed by sexual orientation, bisexual women have the highest rate with 83.3% among those who remain completely closeted during job interviews, followed by lesbians at 69.2%. Since it is more difficult for trans people to hide their gender identity, 80% of trans participants declared that they are completely out and 20% declared not coming out, but that people were able to guess.

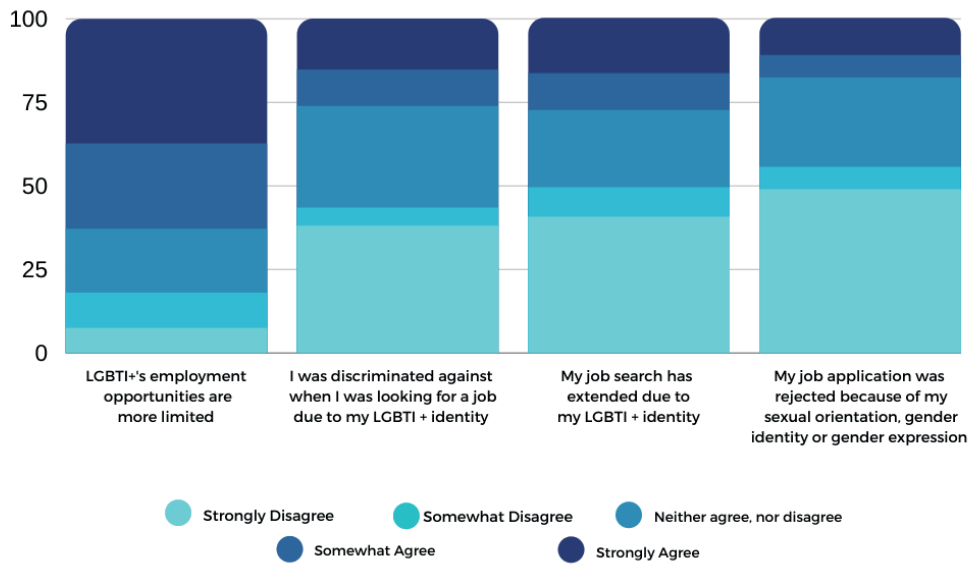
Being completely closeted during a job interview is also directly related to age. While 60% of participants in the 16-24 age group declare being completely closeted, this rate drops to 46.9% in the 25-34 age group, 42.9% in the 34-44 age group, and 11.1% in for 45 and over age group.

### 6.1.2 Regarding Job Search Processes

Anket Survey participants were given sentences expressing their views on whether they had equal employment opportunities and whether they were discriminated against in the job search process, and were asked whether they agreed with these views (Graph 22). The sentences given to the participants were sentences conveying the view that LGBTI+s do not have equal employment opportunities and that they are discriminated against because of their LGBTI+ identity.

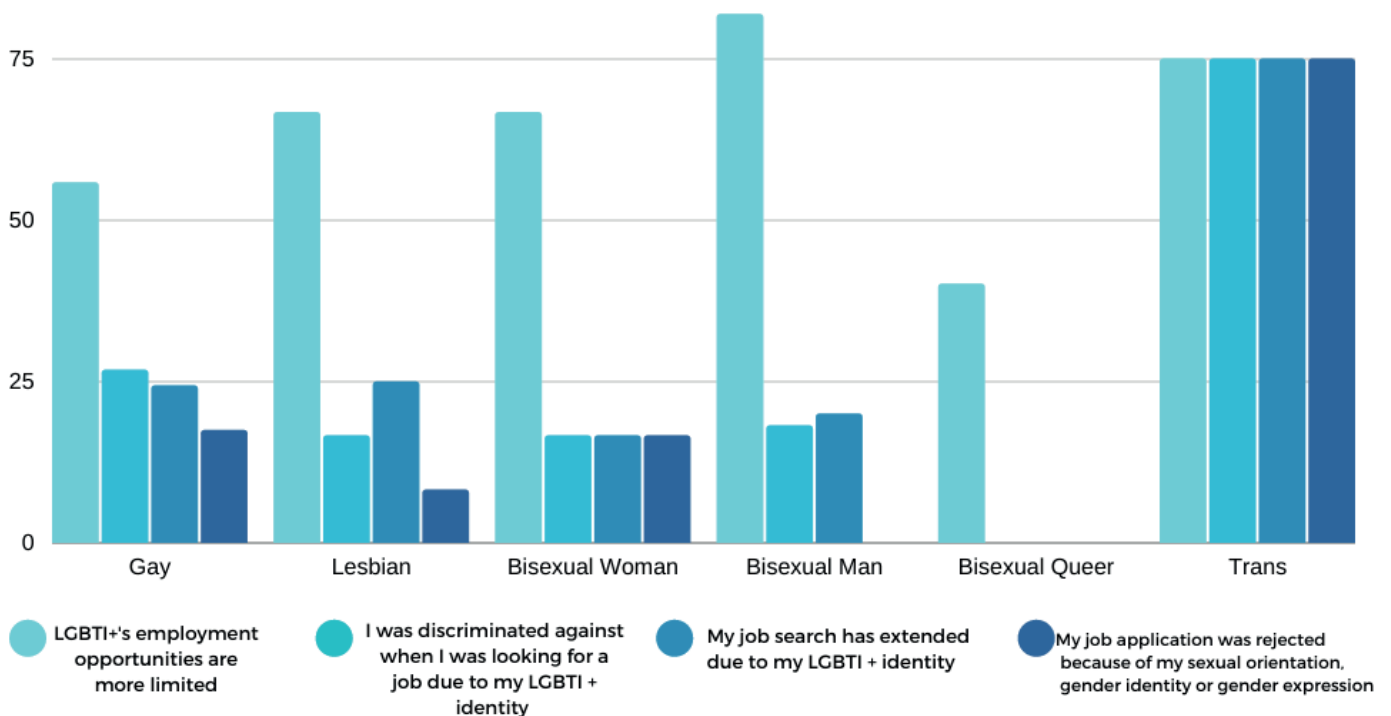
Approximately two-thirds (62.7%) of the survey participants agree that LGBTI+s do not have equal employment opportunities. However, when asked about their personal experiences, the rate of those who are discriminated against because of their LGBTI+ identity is 26.3%, the rate of those who think that their job search is prolonged (time to be unemployed) is 27%, and the rate of those who think that their job application was

turned down for this reason is 18% (Graph 22). To sum up, three-fifths of them think that they do not have equal employment opportunities, and approximately one out of every 5 LGBTI+ people are either discriminated against during the job search process, their job application is rejected or they are forced to look for a job for a longer period of time.



**Graph 22:** Opinions of participants on the job search processes of LGBTI+s, (%)

Graph 23 indicates the distribution of the answers according to the sexual orientation and gender identity. Detailed tables are given in Annexes 4 to 7.

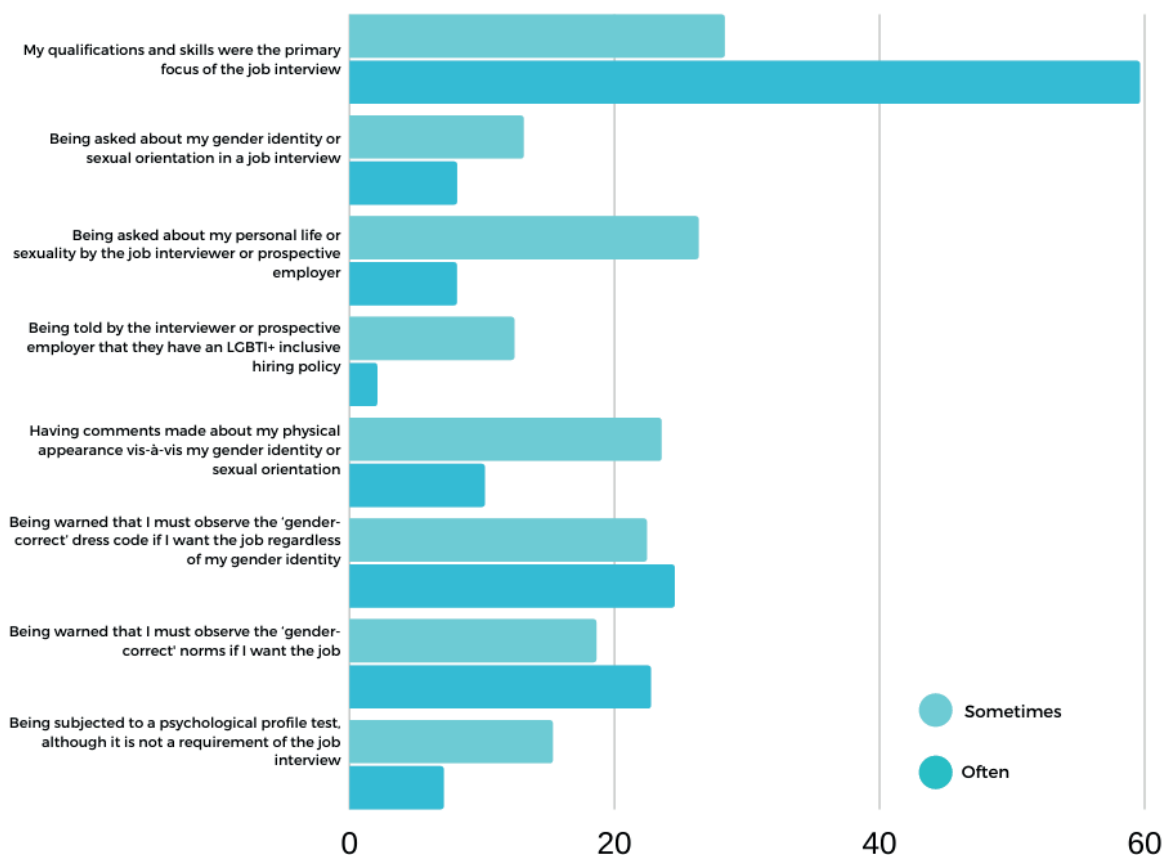


**Graph 23:** Distribution of participant opinions on job search for LGBTI+s according to sexual orientation and gender identity, (%)

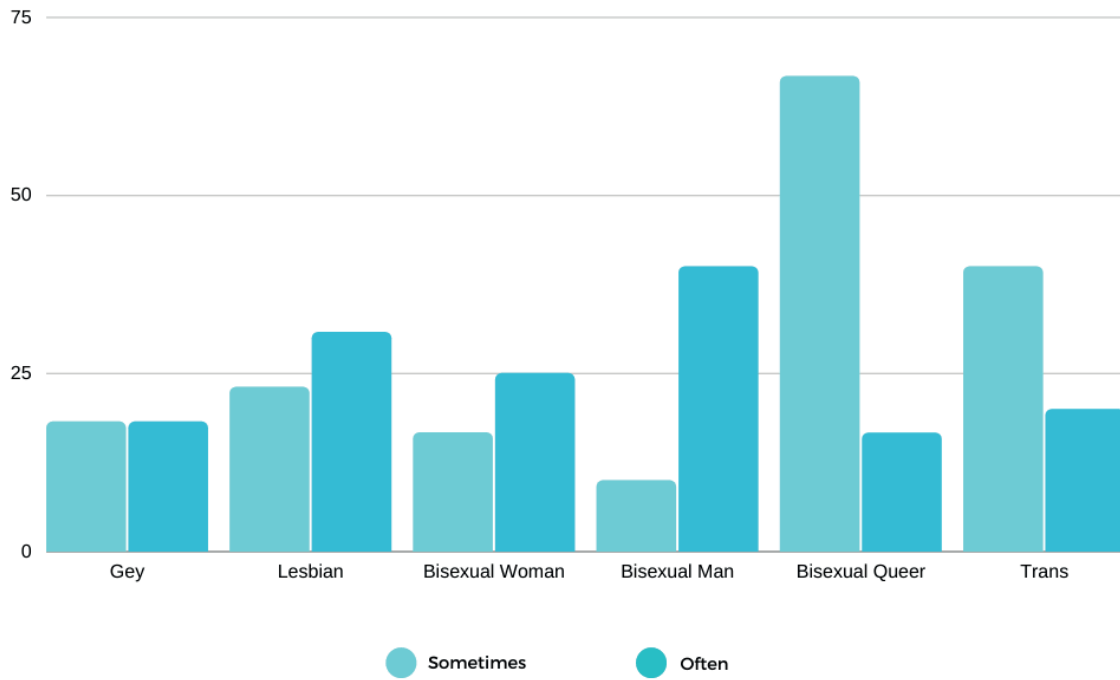
The distribution of the aforementioned opinions according to gender identity and sexual orientation shows that the participants experience the job search processes differently, except that LGBTI+s do not have equal employment opportunities. According to 75% of trans people, there is no equal opportunity in employment. At the same time, they are exposed to discrimination in their job search processes (75%), they are in a job search for longer periods (75%) and job applications are rejected due to their gender identity (75%). The same pattern applies to bisexual women, lesbians and gays, albeit to varying degrees. Bisexual men are the group with the highest rate (81%) stating that they do not have equal employment opportunities, but they stated that they are relatively less exposed to other discriminations. Bisexual queers declared that they do not face discrimination during their job search, except for the limited employment opportunities.

After the questions to understand the equality of opportunity in employment, questions were asked to understand the types of discrimination they experienced during the job interview. The findings are presented in Graph 24.

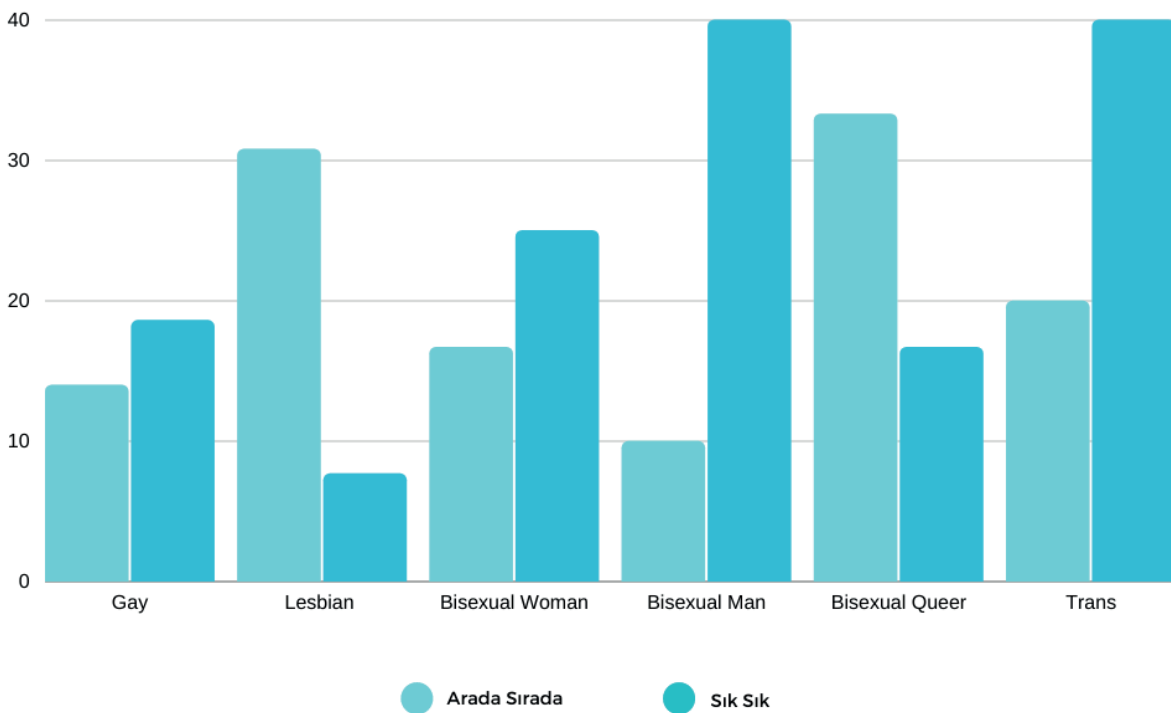
During the job interview, although job-related education and skills were the focus of the interview, the participants were exposed to discrimination by questioning their private life or sexuality, and by commenting on their sexual orientation and gender identity. Another experience of discrimination is being warned to dress and behave in accordance with dual gender roles.



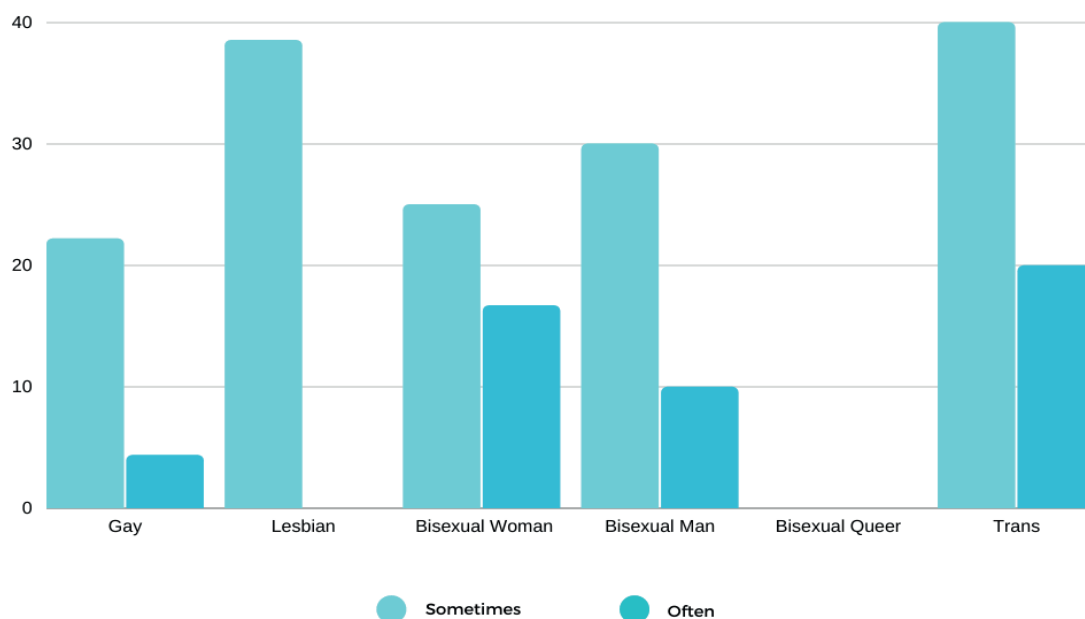
**Graph 24: Discrimination types experienced during the job interviews (%)**



**Graph 25:** Distribution of discrimination experience of being warned about dressing in accordance with gender norms during job interviews by gender identity and sexual orientation, (%)



**Graph 26:** Distribution of discrimination experience of being warned to behave in accordance with gender norms during the job interview by gender identity and sexual orientation, %



**Graph 27:** Questioning private life or sexuality by interviewer or potential employer, distribution of discrimination experience by gender identity and sexual orientation, (%)

During interviews, most participants said that even if their job application was rejected, they were not sure of the reasons because they did not receive feedback.

There were some jobs from which I was turned down, but I could never understand whether this was related to my orientation, unfortunately, that feedback does not come, they do not even inform you (white, lesbian, graphic artist).

While cis-men are not directly questioned about their military service status, it has also been observed that it is used indirectly in the rejection of job applications

For example, I had a very good job opportunity... I see that my life is still affected by the military service, for example, because of being gay, I am thinking about the difficulties I will experience there, if someone figured me out, the military environment is different... and just because of this, I postponed my military service for years, at the end of the day. Now, it's right there in front of me... you can apply for a job on our island, there will be no positive or negative feedback. For the first time, there was a response to someone, even though it was negative. They made a comeback saying we can't hire you because you didn't do your military service. (Pistachio Green, Gay, accountant).

Although some LGBTI+s say they do not have problems finding work due to their gender identity, sexual orientation or gender expression, which is usually encountered in interviews, they are completely closeted when applying to jobs, have gender expressions



and behaviors that do not challenge gender norms, or force themselves to adapt to these role. Again, participants said that they were more fortunate in applying to non-profit organisations seeking rights and smaller-scale/non-institutional workplaces or, in one participant's words, with 'no showcase'. These findings support the opinion of the survey participants that LGBTI+s do not have equal employment opportunities.

The participant, stating that they did not have any problems during the job search process and were "lucky", associated the reason for not having any problems with "being in conformity with the norms of society".

If necessary, I could easily work in a water factory with a quote-unquote hetero community... I worked in a clothing store with predominantly women workers. I did not experience any problem. I mean, I'm lucky, I know I have friends who do experience problems I was a little bit luckier, but I also don't want to say anything wrong, but because I'm in accordance with social norms, unfortunately, I don't have a hard time entering a workplace because I don't look any different from what is considered socially acceptable. (Grey, Bisexual Male, Academic)

I consider myself very lucky with employment ever since I got a positive response to my first job interview. I've been in a family business for [15 years]. (Powder Blue, gay, corporate sales)

I think it was an ad I saw in the newspaper. But I was quite feminine there when I went to the workplace [construction industry].... During one of the conversations I had with my boss afterward, I realised he didn't want such a ladylike person because the interior designer managing the foreman there needs to raise their voice a little. And at that point, I once again realised even if White wears a dress suit and talks to these guys, your voice defines who you are at some point. He said, "I mean, you have a tomboyish quality, you can take them on and turn them around" he told me. I said that I couldn't do it [being feminine]. (White, lesbian, graphic designer)

In addition to this, another important finding was that participants did not apply for jobs where it is compulsory to behave and dress according to dual gender roles based on their own or shared experiences, and they tended to work where they could be free in their gender expressions, behaviour, and clothing would be more accepted. Navy, who faced expectations that she should be more feminine in her previous job search processes and whose job applications were turned down, stated she no longer applies to offices or stores as she thinks that she will not be hired anyway, and that her friends also suggest

applying to places like bars.

I don't usually apply to places like offices. I don't really apply to places like stores, they usually say "we will call you" but they never call... They tend to ask me "we are looking for more well-groomed candidates, can you wear high heels? Can you do it?" and so on and so forth. I can't work jobs in offices, or secretarial jobs or stuff like that, of course. They hire me for shabbier places, like bars or pubs, or I apply to places like coffee shops or something... Now I just tell myself, when looking for jobs, "this place won't hire me". I've started to judge myself. They won't hire me here, they won't hire me in places like these. My friends tell me this as well, that they will only hire me in places like bars, or similar places. (Navy blue, lesbian, barista/waitress)

Apart from applying to certain places, some participants even stopped looking for work so as not to relive LGBTI+phobic experiences or pressures of having to conform to gender roles in the workplace. .

Verbal harassment by the people who work in [Hotel name] were the same... They used to catcall me as I used to pass by. My mental health was so distressed that I don't even want to look for a job any more. Because there's the fear or reliving that. I don't want to be excluded. I have fears, I mean, there's always going to be a homophobic person at the next job you get. (Sky Blue, gay, not working)

And I think that I wouldn't be able to apply for jobs. I'm okay now, because I'm at school, but I'll tell you what will happen at the job interview. Because, most probably, that is what Cyprus expects, you're going to tie your hair up, dress normally, they may even want you to cut your hair. Because "men don't have long hair". I don't know, to be honest, I believe that I will experience such problems. Will it prevent me from applying, yes it will... I mean, the problems I faced at work the last time will most probably repeat itself. (Lemon Yellow, gay, student)

During interviews, it was observed that almost all trans people are of the opinion that "no one will give us a job, anyway" when it comes to finding a job. Reasons for this were stated as the fact that they carry an official identity document that does not match their gender identity, their low level of education, and the fact that they have to turn to jobs that will bring them more financial gain to meet the financial requirements

required in the gender confirming processes or to live in safer places. Two of the trans women are actively engaged in sex work and another one who was not working but worked as hostess/bar girl did not see their work as a job. Another difficulty mentioned by all transgender interviewees was the prolonged gender confirming processes due to financial difficulties, and the inability to apply for a job due to the fact that their assigned gender in their identity was different from their gender identity. Trans people who are citizens can receive state aid. Trans people are defined by the state as people with a 'personal disorder' and are given monthly financial assistance below the minimum wage. Participants stated that this assistance could only pay the rent of a one-room house. No assistance is available for trans people who are not citizens.

Now, our identity card has not changed yet, the man looks at an ID card and says, "Allah, Allah, how could this child be?", or "how is this man, is this a woman or a man?" Well, am I supposed to stop and explain myself to him... so what do we do? We go and get our treatment, they give us our medication every two months, and that's how we get our salary. But, no work (Teal, Trans man, not working).

I didn't look for a job, they wouldn't have given us a job anyway. My friends always worked at the bar. We didn't have that opportunity... Nobody would have cared whether I had just had my surgery, I had this I had that, nobody would have given me a job. What work could we possibly do anyway? I mean, nobody gave us jobs (Black, Trans woman, not working).

After I became trans, I did not apply for a job much... I did my transition and then had to start sex work (Vermilion, Trans woman, sex worker).

I mean, you can start working at a normal job, you can work, but you won't be able to do it, you need money, everything is so expensive, you need to live in decent places... And then you've got your surgeries, laser, hormones, treatments. That's why we can't get a normal job, we can't live, and we can't make a living either. (Cherry Red, trans woman, sex worker)

Even if they are working, trans people have also stated that they have to work in jobs without social security and assurance, so as not to disclose their official identities because their gender identities do not match.

I always had to work without social security, "why?", because I didn't want to show my ID. It didn't say "woman", I am a woman, but my ID didn't say "woman" on it. Years later, when I got my new ID, I never faced this problem. But I've had losses. (Daisy Yellow, trans woman, not working)

## 6.2 Workplace Experiences

This section reflects the workplace experiences of 134 respondents who declared that they were employed or seeking employment at the time of the survey. In the survey, participants were asked to describe their workplaces in three words, with the most common words being "discriminatory", "equality" and "tiring".

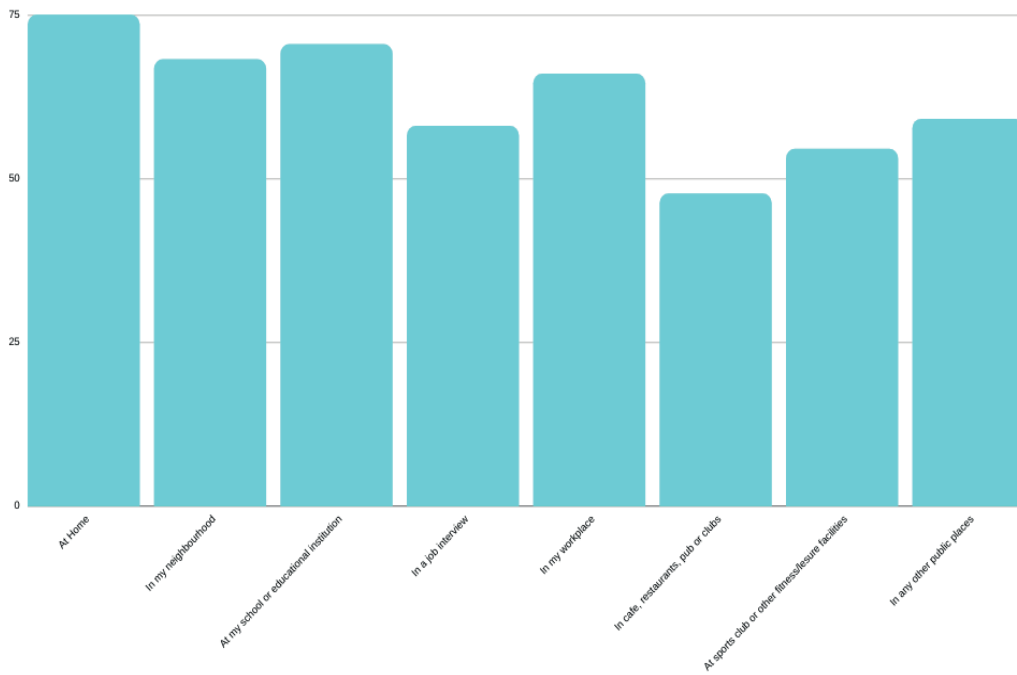
ruthless open justice unjust fair aggressive active friendship humiliating  
**discriminatory** peaceful oppression success selfishness ignorance unity ignorantly  
courage **solidarity** insignificance supportive **cautious** friendly plain lack of education labour  
empathy lack of empathy **equality** equal aware unaware tense narrow-minded sociable  
mysterious **secrecy** observation powerful trust insecure nice right **unfair** faultless **greed**  
**homophobic** **serenity** serene discomfort disgusting rude accepting **chaos** closed inclusive  
bearable backing pleasant **fear** bad contempt incompetence mask **distant** **happy** struggle normal  
positive spineless anger **freedom** confidence professional **comfortable** absurd sincere respect  
**respectful** sexist rough love lowly aggressive shallow **boring** ordinary problematic seamless  
**social** strategic stressful misuse lucky abuse bias **experience** **uneasiness** repetition  
unashamed productive **loneliness** helpful **busy** **tiring** burden rising enjoyable **hard**

Above are the words used by the participants to describe their workplaces. The size and boldness of the words indicate the frequency at which they were used. As seen, participants used both positive and negative words when describing their workplaces. It has been determined that participants working in advocacy organisations, non-profit businesses or small family businesses use positive words more often when describing their workplaces, while employees in larger and corporate businesses use negative words more often.

Workplace experiences are grouped under three headings in the survey. Firstly, experiences of not being free (out) in the workplace, which is the most basic discrimination, secondly, various workplace discrimination experiences that include various types of discrimination and can reach a level that can lead to leaving the job, and thirdly, experiences of seeking/not seeking rights will be shared.

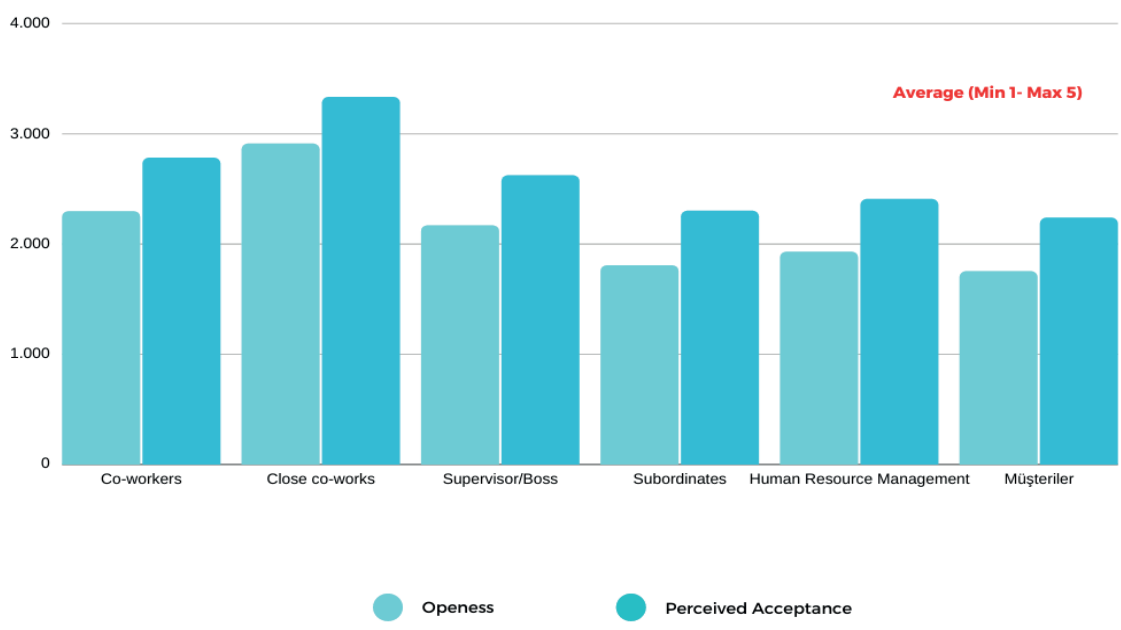
### 6.2.1 Being closeted in the workplace

Three out of every 4 participants (74%) with work experience stated that they avoided being open about their sexual orientation to avoid negative reactions. While the places where participants are most afraid of being openly out are, respectively, home, school and the workplace, places for socialising, such as restaurants, bars, and cafes are where they are the least afraid..



**Graph 28:** Places where participants avoid coming out for fear of negative reactions (%)

Being out in the workplace is related to perceived acceptance, and employees mostly open up to their close colleagues and least to other employees and customers in their network. On a scale of 1 to 5, even the highest rate of being out remains at 2.9 (closest coworkers). The mean of perceived acceptance is 3.3, although it is highest among close colleagues. Graph 29 presents findings of openness and perceived degree of acceptance.



**Graph 29:** Rates of coming out and perceived acceptance rates

Note: Scale: 1 "closeted" and 5 "totally out"; 1 "not accepted" - 5 "totally accepted".

At least half of those surveyed, excluding close colleagues, declared that they remain closeted in their workplace to colleagues, supervisors, human resources, subordinates, and customers..

	My colleagues	My close colleagues	Supervisor / Boss	My subordinates	Human resources department	Customers
Being in the closet	47.5	28.6	57.0	68.5	66.7	66.3
Vaguely out	14.8	18.5	13.2	12.0	11.5	13.5
Fairly out	13.1	10.9	3.5	2.2	0.0	6.7
Mostly out	9.8	17.6	8.8	5.4	6.3	5.8
Completely out	14.8	24.4	17.5	12.0	15.6	7.7

**Table 3:** Being in the closet, (%)

When the survey findings are examined, it has been determined that being in the closet is related to the sector, age group, position at work and size of the workplace, as well as the sexual orientation and gender identity of the participants.

More than 50% of public and private sector employees have to be in the closet and hide their gender identity and sexual orientation. Being closeted in non-profit organisations is quite low when compared to others. In public institutions, the rate of not coming out to the Human Resources department and its subordinates is up to 90%. Bisexuals are more likely to not come out than gays and lesbians.

Being completely closeted from colleagues is also related to their position at work. For example, 76.9% of academics, 63.6% of operators, managers or supervisors, and 61.1% of service personnel declared that they had not come out to their colleagues. During our interviews, a bisexual male academic participant said that although he has some colleagues who know his sexual orientation, he generally remains in the closet since he does not want his students to know out of fear of his authority being shaken. A participant who is a gay business owner stated that he hides his sexual orientation from those outside of his close circle, and as he fears losing customers in the event that people find out.

It has been observed that the situation of being completely in the closet to colleagues also depends on the number of employees in the workplace. As the workplace grows, being closeted to colleagues is seen at higher rates. While 15.4% declared that they are in the closet to their colleagues in workplaces with less than 5-10 employees, this rate increases to 56.3% in workplaces with 11-20 employees and 75% in workplaces with 51-500 employees.

It has been observed that being completely closeted is inversely proportional to age. For example, being closeted from colleagues was 60% in the 25-34 age group, 50% in the 35-44 age group, and 18.2% in the 45 and over age group. While staying in the closet from inspectors was around 65% in the 16-24 and 25-34 age groups, it was 48% in the 35-44 age group and 20% in the 45 and over age group. According to their age groups, being closeted to subordinates is 100%, 73.1%, 53.6% and 40%, respectively. During interviews, it was observed that as age progressed, the economic concerns of participants decreased, coming out to family and social circles, and as a result, coming out in the workplace increased.

With an open-ended question in the survey, the participants were asked to share the 'reasons for being out or closeted in the workplace'. Some of the participants stated that their sexual orientation or gender identity is related to their private life and does not concern the workplace. On the one hand, this indicates that they have to behave with different gender identities and sexual orientations in their homes and workplaces, and, on the other hand, the pressure of dominant heteronormative gender role expectations on LGBTI+s is relatively internalised. Parallel to this, being closeted is defined by some of the participants as a strategy to cope with discrimination, not as a discrimination.

Private life is private life, nobody writes their sexual identity on a sign around their neck. Gender identity is not brought into the eyes of people at work. No one deserves positive discrimination based on their sexual identity. Whether woman, man, or LGBT+. *Gay business-owner, entrepreneur*

My boss doesn't need to know about my private life. I'd rather they talk about my job and success. *Gay, manager, supervisor*

I don't find it necessary, there is no need for them to know. *Gay, operator/manager/supervisor*

My gender identity has nothing to do with my occupation. *Gay, academician*

I don't think everyone needs to know my preference. *Gay, unskilled labour/service worker*

I don't want to hand them a trump card. What's it to them, anyway! *Bisexual woman, professional*

I don't think they will understand. There's probably no exclusion, just silent judgment, because normally I'm harsh when they discriminate about anything. But the main reason is that it is not an issue that interests them. *Bisexual woman, academic*

Participants who were out of the closet also explained how their openness increases awareness, self-respect, trust and transparency in their organisations, apart from the fact that their workplaces are LGBTI+ friendly.

Being myself. *Queer bisexual, executive, chairperson, CEO, CFO*

I am not an individual who embraces the obligation to come out or be in the closet. Therefore, I cannot explain the reason for that. Nobody should be obliged to feel like they have to come out or be closeted in their workplace. *Gay, administrative staff, office support worker*

I came out at my current workplace. I feel comfortable and carefree. I don't pick my words. In fact, I don't care if they don't like it. *Lesbian, self-employer*

I don't believe that my gender identity and orientation are entities to be hidden or concealed. Therefore, I am out. *Queer gay, service staff*

Coming out enhances unification and awareness. *Queer gay, professional*

I think it is very important to come out in order to build healthy communication and honest relations. This definitely increases self-esteem and self-love. *Gay, professional*

I'm honoured to receive the support of those supporting me. *Lesbian, service staff*

I have been transparent throughout my whole life. I chose to look at the road ahead of me instead of watching from behind closed doors. This life belongs to me and I will not limit myself for nobody. *Trans man, business owner, entrepreneur*

The organisation in which I currently work is a place with individuals who have come out. Therefore, I didn't even hesitate. My orientation was known during my job application. However, in my former workplaces, I had to keep it a secret and stay in the closet. Heterosexism is everywhere. *Pansexual, Administrator, chairperson, CEO, CFO*

My company is an LGBT-friendly organisation, therefore I am comfortable and out. *Gay, professional*

My workplace is anti-homophobic and all my colleagues are also my friends. *Gay, labourer*

Most participants explain the situation of being in the closet as a way of protecting themselves from losing their jobs, from oppression, exclusion and discrimination in workplaces where they observe LGBTI+phobic, heteronormative/heterosexist behaviors without protective mechanisms.



I want to come out because I am exhausted to be someone that I am not. At the same time, I want to be in the closet with some people because I am tired of trying to explain this to them. As no one has to explain their sexual orientation - in heteronormative patterns- I should not be obliged to explain myself either. *Gay, academician*

I came out to my friends who are the same age as me and it was no problem. I was a little concerned about coming out to people older than me and I am a little bit concerned about their reactions. *Lesbian, business person, administrator, supervisor*

If you don't have a life society expects of you, where you are happily married with kids, your work will disregard you in this country. Don't bother dreaming. *Gay, labourer*

Because I don't want to play a role in various fantasies in people's minds, I did not want to be excluded, or be exposed to inappropriate questions. I didn't want to be seen as insatiable, unsatisfied, licentious, open to any imaginable position just because of my bisexual identity. *Bisexual women, service officer*

Their comments and fear of exclusion. *Gay, service labourer*

Fear of not being accepted and being excluded. After coming out, the possibility of misinterpreting my behavior and loss of trust. *Lesbian, academician*

You totally get what your co-workers think about other gay people, so there's no point in saying you're gay, you'll be self-excluded. *Gay, service officer*

Being closeted is for protecting myself because I was afraid to be humiliated by others. *Gay, labourer*

People are mean, they gossip, they would crush me at my workplace. *Gay, labourer*

Because I didn't feel that closeness, and seeing and witnessing what was said behind other people's backs kept me in the closet. *Bisexual woman, labourer*

I stay closeted to protect myself from spiteful judgements and glares. *Gay, labourer*

My reason for being in the closet: Homophobic attitudes of my colleagues and supervisor. *Queer gay, professional*

There were lots of homophobic people. *Queer gay, technical assistant professional*

Homophobia. *Gay, academician*

You feel obliged to stay in the closet in a homophobic environment. You feel happy to express yourself in a free environment. *Bisexual Queer, technical assistant professional*

You have to not let your private life affect your career. *Queer lesbian, service officer*

Fear of losing my job and being exposed to discrimination. *Queer lesbian, academician*

Fear of losing jobs and friends. *Gay, professional*

Lack of rights. *Gay, Academician*

Risks and vulnerability, complaints of not being taken seriously, ignorance of the issues or unwillingness to take action seriously, not being seen as a significant problem (discrimination), lack of complaint and enforcement mechanism. *Gay, professional*

I am in the same environment with a lot of ignorant people and everyone thinks that what they believe is true. Talking about being gay might put an end to my job. Or they can exploit it because I'm successful. The business environment is competitive, so you have to appear perfect. The notion of a perfect can be relative. Especially if you are in the same environment with many homophobic people... Also, my family wants it to be kept confidential. *Gay, administrative staff/office support personnel*

During interviews, most participants said that being out means freedom and being yourself. On the other hand, they defined being in the closet as "feeling confined", "not being free", and "not being yourself".

Being free. We already have many features of ourselves, and our sexual orientation, identity is just one of them. I think our freedom and power of expression are limited if we suppress anything that is private to us against our will. (Turquoise, Bisexual woman, counselor at the rights organisation)

Although staying-in-the-closet strategies at work are shaped by being out to families and the phobic behaviors observed at work or the perception of being accepted, most participants made decisions to come out in their workplaces strategically and gradually, starting with their closest colleagues, as in Emerald green. Respondents who were out in their workplaces spoke more positively when talking about their workplace, even though they had problems due to their gender identity, sexual orientation or gender expression.

At first, they didn't know my orientation, but in time, you know how I was telling you that I had hesitations. Would they figure me out from the way I talk? Slowly, I started thinking, let me relax a little, just to see their reactions. I tested my workplace and there was nothing, nothing happened. I didn't get any negative

reactions, or weird questions and in time, I was able to talk about my gender identity with my colleague. They were surprised, and told me that it was a little obvious, but that they also didn't want to ask. We got along very well and became friends... I was very happy. Then the boss found out, followed by other colleagues, and then everyone at work. There were no problems at all, it was fine. There was no judgment. I was so happy. (Emerald Green, gay, cashier)

The situation of being closeted should be viewed in terms of intersectionality, as in other discrimination experiences in the workplace, which will be discussed later. Apart from family support, the economic situation of the person, especially, affects the strategy of being closeted /out in the workplace. Participants over the age of thirty mentioned that they have reached better positions in business and economic terms with age and experience, and that they can have the option of leaving their job in the event of being fired or the moment they experience problems. Olive Green said that even if he is fired or cannot find a job, he can work independently and have a good economic standard, adding that he has obvious advantages.

I had advantages allowing me to come out. Because I don't have economical problems, I had the support of my family, and even if they didn't, my belief that I would survive allowed me to take risks when compared to others. (Olive Green, Queer, doctor)

During interviews, participants indicated their reasons for being in the closet even though it was not directly asked. Generally, these can be summarised as fear of losing their job, family finding out, possible reactions of colleagues, devaluation of competition/status/reputation, damaging their authority, concerns of gossip and victimisation.

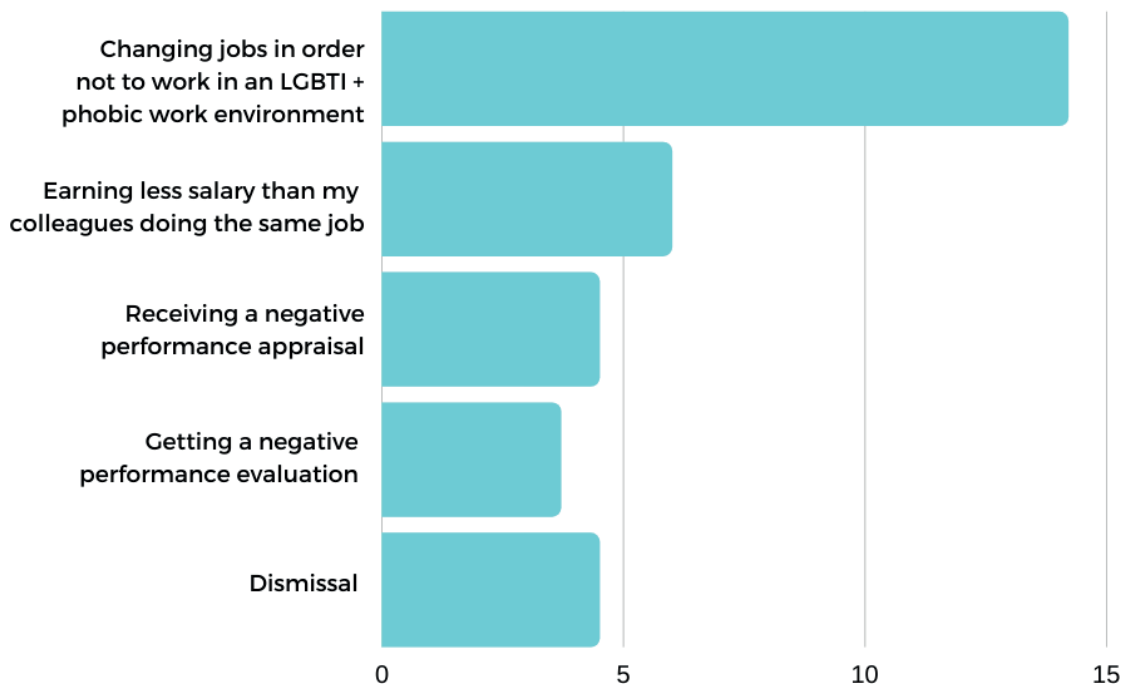
Let me put it this way, my reasons for staying in the closet are, like, in terms of work, I'm someone who gets things done and takes on a lot of responsibilities and there was constant competition between us. I thought they might use this against in this competition, otherwise, I would've told them, if it were a normal friendship (Pistachio, Gay, Accountant)

For me, coming out is half of the freedom... At least you can say that this is who I am, but if I'm going to elaborate, I want them to know, only if they're not going to victimise me because of my situation, only then I would prefer them to know. If there won't be any physical attacks, I let them know. (Emerald Green, Gay, Not working)

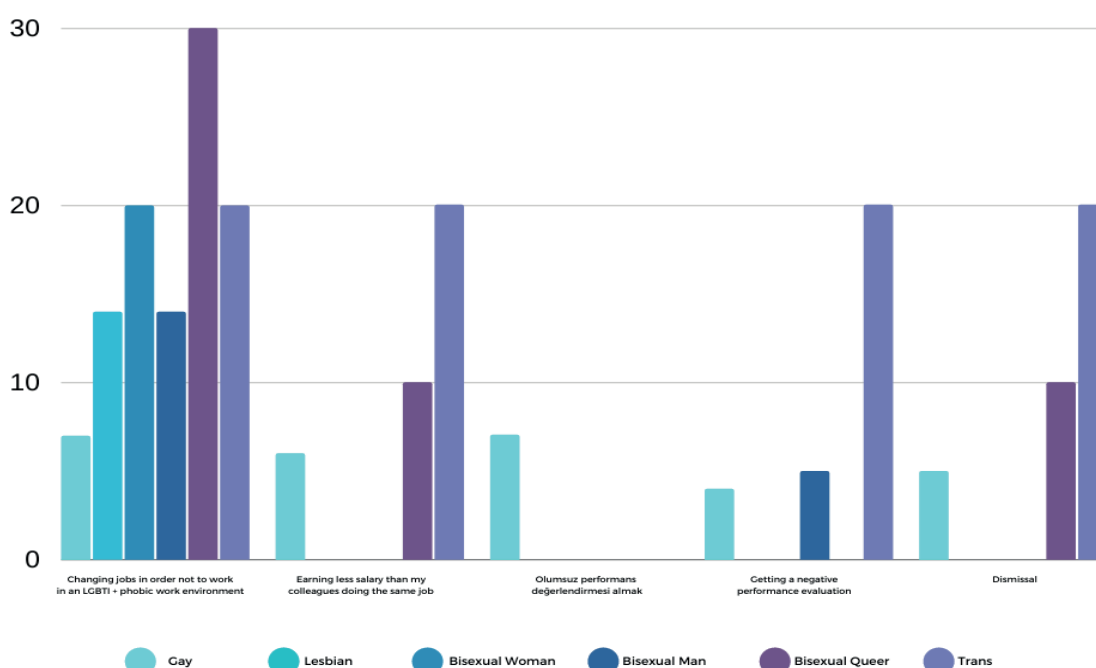
## 6.2.2 Other (formal) discrimination experiences in the workplace

### 6.2.2.1 Dismissal

While 4.5% of participants stated that they were dismissed due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, 14.2% of participants stated that they changed jobs due to the phobic behaviours they encountered.



**Graph 30:** Which of the following have you experienced in your working life due to your sexual orientation or gender identity? (%)



**Graph 31:** Which of the following have you experienced in your working life due to your sexual orientation or gender identity? (%)

During interviews, two people declared that they were dismissed because of their sexual identity, sexual orientation or gender expression. One of these participants stated that he was fired after a public servant disclosed to his employer that the participant was living with HIV, but not his sexual orientation. However, the participant was dismissed from the next five jobs he started for the same reason within a few months.

(1st work) I was told to my face, "Don't misunderstand me, Violet, because of the health issues, we cannot work with you." I sort of knew it anyway and told them that I got it. I mean, there is a health inspector wandering around, I don't know how they become one, they don't have the education... Frankly, this is a violation of human rights and privacy.

(5th work) They said "Go, Violet, here is your money, and don't even ask what happened, I don't need any workers right now, anyway." But then a guy who went there told me, "Violet, they heard of your health problem. Do you have a health problem, do you have AIDS?" (Violet, gay, unemployed)

Although direct layoffs are rare, some respondents said they quit their jobs because they could not stand the harassment, intimidation (mobbing) or pressure to conform to gender roles.

I would have continued, I mean, I was working fine, they were very pleased with my performance, but my mental health couldn't bear it no more to be working in that [homophobic] environment. (Sky Blue, gay, not working)

My co-workers said that "you're not fit for this job [because of the way I dress]", and my boss started not caring [about my complaints], they were going to dismiss me, anyway, so I quit before they could fire me. (Navy, lesbian, waitress) [My manager] harassed me in various ways, said I attracted more of his attention, that he couldn't stop thinking about me, that he wanted to be with me more because I'm a lesbian. I said, "There's no way I can be under the same roof as that man, like I can't, he will talk about me either today or tomorrow and I will have to endure glares from people. That's why I can't work with that man under the same roof. I threw away 6 years of hard work and wrote my letter of resignation and left. (Forest Green, lesbian, fundraiser for a charity)

### 6.2.2.2 Wage discrimination

6% of survey participants declared that they were subjected to wage discrimination. When analysed by comparing sexual orientation and gender identity, it is seen that those who suffer wage discrimination are gay, bisexual, queer and trans people. 20% of trans people, 10% of bisexual queers, and 4.8% of gays report that they have suffered wage discrimination.

Although there is no discrimination by the employer in terms of salary during the interviews, participants, who cannot legally marry their partners, even if they have long-term relationships, cannot benefit from tax deductions and are indirectly subject to salary discrimination due to the lack of a regulation legalising same-sex marriage.

Our salaries are equal, but everyone gets paid more than me. Why? I am single, I have no kids or whatever. But actually, I am not single, I have a 5 year relationship. It's just that it's not on paper, things like these are important to me. I know that when calculating income, when calculating salaries, it makes a difference, and I've always wanted, that maybe one day in the future, if gay couples, that is, LGBTs, can get married, the tax office is also a thing, that in partnerships there will be this much of a tax deduction, I don't know when it will pass. (Pistachio Green, gay, accountant).

### 6.2.2.3 Discrimination in promotions

4.5% of survey participants stated that they received negative performance evaluations because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, while 3.7% stated that they were not promoted (Graph 30).

In face-to-face interviews, there were participants who were certain they would not be promoted because of their sexual orientation or gender expression, as well as those who thought that their lack of promotion might be due to their sexual orientation or gender expression, as well as their other identities (ethnicity, place of birth, class). This indicates intersectionality. Individuals with multiple identities that are discriminated against increase the probability of being discriminated against salary, promotion, etc. Different promotion experiences are shared below.

Although not entirely sure about the reason why he did not get the promotion he expected for a long time, Pistachio Green said that the employer might have some opinions about his sexual orientation and that he refused the promotion on the grounds that he had not done his military service yet.

It's like this, I'm not sure if it's because of being gay or because of the roles of

men and women, but generally, until now, we've experienced something like women having the responsibility. Finally, I asked one of them, why is it that a woman has to be the responsible one? Women work more meticulously. She works like this, she works like that... A man can work neatly and meticulously. A man is messier, scruffier. He said, "you are a well-organised person, you are different, but that's another thing" he would say. "Well", I said then, "if I'm a neat and meticulous person," I said "give that responsibility to me". No, I got a response like, "let it be a woman's, not yours."

-You mean, it didn't happen even though you deserved it? (Researcher)

Exactly! It's something like that because the responsibility was going to be given to two people. Either to me, or to another colleague who was a woman. They argued that, "you may leave soon, you haven't completed your military service" and so on. The military service became an obstacle yet again, and the responsibility was given to her.

-But in fact, when you look at it, you were considered from an equal perspective, you are neat, meticulous, but you are a man. Do you think there's anything there worth looking into? (Researcher)

Maybe, that's what I questioned too. Maybe they felt something [being gay], that's why they didn't want to assign the responsibility to me. I'm not sure. They spoke about the military problem there too. (Pistachio Green, Gay, Accountant)

Turquoise, who believes that discrimination starts from the most visible features, explained that, although he burdens more responsibilities than the personnel senior to him, his promotion is always late to come, not because of his invisible sexual orientation, but because of other characteristics and not being as mainstream when working at the bank. Again, this supports findings on the intersectionality of discrimination.

For 8 years, while working at the bank, my promotions were always granted late and through difficult circumstances, but I was always given the workload of senior personnel.

So, do you think this is because you are a woman, I mean as your new assigned gender, or do you believe that your sexual orientation has something to do with it? (Researcher)

I think it's all of it. Firstly, yes, because you are a woman. Yes, many places, these workplaces, are dominated by men, they create the structure... This is caused by them, and also... Well, because of my economical background issues. Because

you are afraid to be jobless, penniless, you have a job, yes, you are working, so you're afraid of acting spoiled... So, they come on to you, you keep your silence, they hit you over the head with it, you sit still, that has an effect, too. "Oh, we can give them any work, they will do it anyway, s/he won't complain. Let's give his/her promotion to someone else so breakdowns come a little lower in human resources." I may have ended up in that category. Of course, there is also this effect: the structure of the institution I am in. Banks, insurance companies, such places, too many glass windows. They care about the showcasing a lot, you need to make compliments. I had none of these. You need to be mainstream, normal, with everything even with the lies and gossip. Even with the bad parts. Therefore, the slightest difference, which might be LGBT, character. But I attribute my promotion rejection to many things. My economic class, having a Turkish father, for example another discrimination that I was exposed to is racism in Cyprus. I mean, I have so many visible features, so the LGBT feature may not be the cause since it is not so obvious, even though it may be reflected in my perspective on life or behaviour. (Turquoise, bisexual woman, consultant in a rights association)

A public sector labourer doctor participant stated not experiencing any discrimination in promotions.

I was promoted to a higher position. They promoted me because I work, I volunteer, and I am trained to do what I do. When evaluating, they consider how we work rather than the difficulty or number of shifts we work (Olive Green, Queer, Public Health Practitioner)

Another participant, who was threatened by their manager with a negative performance evaluation due to their sporty dress-style during staffing, stated that there are more specific assignment criteria in the public sector for promotions, and thus, more difficult to prevent.

I used to get threats from my manager in my first workplace, too. You know, "I won't give you positive feedback", "you won't make it into the staff list", "you're going to get fired" were some of these threats.. S/he used to write [complaints to the related ministry] about me... criticised me right down to my clothing. Saying that I dress in sports clothes and so on and so forth...

It's like, the first promotion was through an interview, not an exam. We did the interview, we got it through the interview. Future promotions will be done with exams, I guess, whoever gets 60 points and above will be promoted. I don't know if there will be any hampering, but when you are successful what sort of a

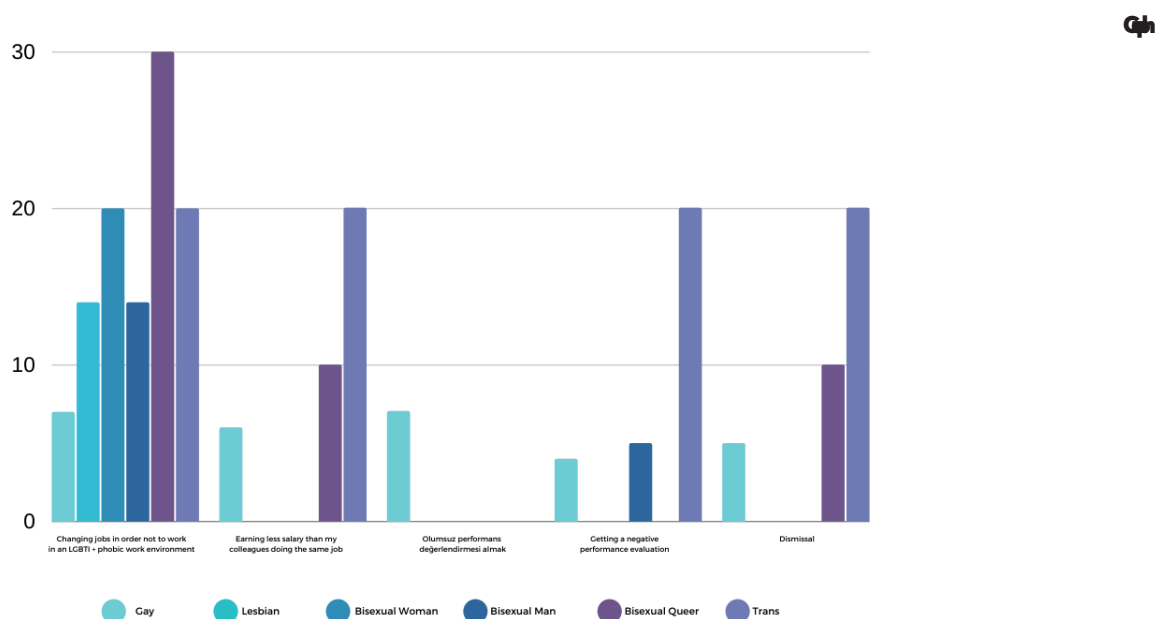


hampering can you do based on my sexual orientation? (Green, lesbian, public officer).

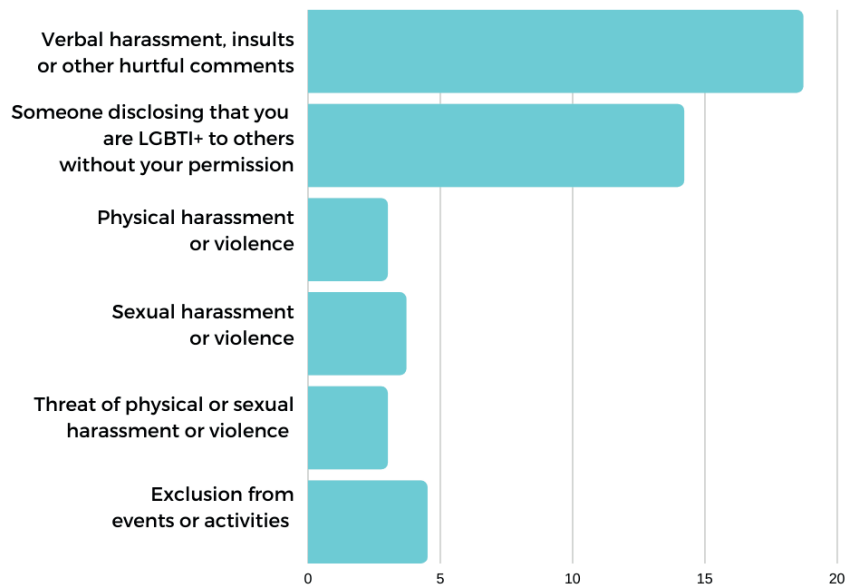
### 6.2.3 Harassment, exclusion and outing experiences at workplaces

In the previous section, it was stated that participants interviewed both in the survey and face to face were exposed to discrimination in the form of being closeted in their workplaces and pressure to dress and behave in accordance with binary gender-role stereotypes, as well as formal discrimination, such as, being fired from their jobs, being prevented from progressing/not being promoted because they are LGBTI+. In this section, experiences of intimidation, outing, harassment and assault, which are defined in the literature as informal discrimination, are shared. Findings show that one out of every five participants (18.7%) has been exposed to verbal abuse, assault, and hurtful comments. Again, a substantial proportion, 14% (approximately two out of every 10 people) have their sexual orientation/gender identity disclosed by others (colleagues, managers, etc.) in the workplace without consent. One in ten people has been subjected to physical or sexual harassment or assault, or the threat of assault. Five out of every 100 people were excluded from events and activities. Graph 32 shows by whom these discriminations are practiced. Participants were exposed to these behaviours/discrimination mostly (51.4%) by their colleagues at the same or lower level.

Although the percentage of informal discrimination in the workplace is shared in the paragraph above, the fact that it is more or less widespread does not make these behaviours acceptable or unacceptable. Nobody should be subjected to any of the behaviours described here because of their gender identity, sexual orientation or gender expression. It is important to determine whether the behaviour exists, not how common it is.



**Graph 32:** Distribution of harassment, assaults, mobbing experiences of participants in their workplaces (%)



**Graph 33:** Distribution of perpetrators of harassment, assaults, mobbing experiences encountered by participants in their workplaces (%)

He told me this many times; I want more, I want more, you attract my attention more... I heard the same sentences my manager in Istanbul told me, literally the same. You draw my attention more; I want to see if you really are like that? I don't believe it; I am going to try. What are you trying? It's my body, what are you going to try? You get treated like a whore immediately, and they don't allow you to work with dignity. So, if you are like that, if you are a lesbian, you are a whore; if you are gay, you are a faggot, you must be easy. You are a lesbian; how many women have you been with? What do you mean you've never been with a man? You get exposed to these kinds of abusive questions. These hurt your feelings, whether you like it or not. (Forest Green, lesbian, Fundraiser for a charity)

They say things like, "let me help you," or, "if I help, you would like men". They act very confidently, and they (the customers) completely disregard and disrespect you and your sexual orientation. (Dark Blue, lesbian, bartender/waiter).

### **Verbal Harassment**

Most interviewees said they were exposed to verbal abuse due to their gender identity, sexual orientation or gender expressions, albeit in different words. Just as Sky Blue heard coworkers and supervisor constantly calling him a 'puff' or 'faggot' behind his back, Forest Green stated being verbally abused in English every time she walked by a foreign co-worker.

They were cursing at me in English, dirty white woman, filthy white woman or something, like dirty lesbian, dirty whore, and then after that, they even said something to the [Male, chef], you know that woman you couldn't seduce, she

did it as a woman, those kinds of insults. After a while I stopped listening. (Forest Green, lesbian, fundraiser for a charity)

Verbal abuse was reflected not only in words but also in tone of voice and manner of speaking. Navy, a lesbian working as a waitress, described her experience as follows:

I was taking care of this crowded table and as a waiter, you ask customers if they want something... I don't know how to explain their attitude, but they yelled in such a way that the whole cafe heard them saying something to the effect of, "we don't want anything," you know, "take these away"... so their approach was a bit harsh, as if they were going to get up and beat me. (Navy, Lesbian, barista/waitress)

### **Verbal Sexual Harassment**

Among interviewees, those who were subjected to verbal sexual harassment in the workplace were usually lesbian, gay and transgender, and verbal sexual harassment was usually an offer of sexual intercourse.

I really felt like I was being excluded. The glares of customers. One of them even invited me to their room. My coworkers would make, like, offensive hand gesture jokes at me. Like, you would be nice to screw. Heavy stuff like that. Vulgar words...(Sky Blue, gay, not working)

Lesbian participants stated that male employees or clients insisted on helping them become heterosexual by having relations with them.

He told me this many times; I want more, I want more, you attract my attention more... I heard the same sentences my manager in Istanbul told me, literally the same. You draw my attention more; I want to see if you really are like that? I don't believe it; I am going to try. What are you trying? It's my body, what are you going to try? You get treated like a whore immediately, and they don't allow you to work with dignity. So, if you are like that, if you are a lesbian, you are a whore; if you are gay, you are a faggot, you must be easy. You are a lesbian; how many women have you been with? What do you mean you've never been with a man? You get exposed to these kinds of abusive questions. These hurt your feelings, whether you like it or not. (Forest Green, lesbian, Fundraiser for a charity)

They say things like, "let me help you," or, "if I help, you would like men". They act very confidently, and they (the customers) completely disregard and disrespect you and your sexual orientation. (Dark Blue, lesbian, bartender/waiter)

## Sexual Harassment

Outside of their workplaces, some gay and trans woman participants said that they were exposed to sexual harassment in other environments (such as military service, neighborhood, school environment).

One trans woman participant, who were exposed to sexual harassment in the workplace, described their sexual harassment as follows:

There was this time, in a bar, some man came up and put a knife to my throat, forced me into the private room, and raped me. My girlfriend is the bar owner, I said to her, never mind my dear. Think about it, there was a knife to my throat and a gun in his pocket, and I was forcibly raped; I didn't make a sound. I was depressed for weeks, months. She told me to let it go, think about that. If I knew then what I know now, I would've stabbed him and gotten into trouble, but...

-Couldn't you report it to the police? (Researcher)

How could I, my dear? I didn't have my gender reassignment surgery back then. Think about it; you couldn't say anything back then... There was no law, and they would act on me.

-Before 2014 (Researcher)

Yeah, I mean, they would immediately file a criminal complaint and lock me up.  
(Black, Trans Woman, not working)

Black, who has no family support and has to work, also explained that because she had not completed her gender reassignment surgeries yet, her hands were legally tied at the time, that her boss did not support her even in such a serious incident, and that she had to serve her rapist client when he came to the bar where she worked the next evening.

Daisy-yellow said that she left the place after her boss entered the locker room without her permission, and she also shared the following as another sexual harassment experience which made her quit her job:

When he (my boss) told me to grab something downstairs, I went there... He tried to go downstairs when I was coming upstairs, knowing we both wouldn't fit... His intention there was to be physically close to me and rub himself on me... I was in the middle of the stairs, and this time when I turned to the side, I was harassed. He told me that he likes me very much. And then we had a huge fight; I grabbed my bag, left, and quit. (Daisy yellow, trans woman, not working)

## **Exclusion**

Another discrimination experience encountered was exclusion. Lemon Yellow, an out non-binary, was ostracised by the principal of the high school where she worked, making her less visible at the graduation ceremony, and described her experiences as follows:

The feelings... I mean, I haven't forgotten the inequality and I carry it with me, to be honest. For example, there was this experience of inequality: it was the time when teachers handed out graduation certificates. When students went to get my name written, the headmaster told them "Lemon Yellow will not attend the ceremony." They wrote down a different name, so when they saw me at the ceremony and asked me how come I was there, because I supposedly was not going to attend. So, I asked them where they got that idea from. I handed out a few certificates to some students. Most probably there were students who wrote my name down, but they didn't want me to be on the stage for too long, even though there were others. I don't know why. I reckon maybe the owners of the school were going to be there too. That's why I'm sure, because I'm out of the ordinary stereotypes, that's why they did this. Following the ceremony, owners of the school came and congratulated me. (Lemon Yellow, non-binary, student)

Navy, a lesbian, faced exclusion from customers and at their last workplace as a waitress, the customer wanted a heterosexual waitress to serve them, as well as other customers treated them different than to a cis-heterosexual woman.

There was this girl who worked with me. A heterosexual friend. Especially some customers, who asked for her to serve them. Many times. This is a discrimination example that I had been through. They talked to her in a friendly manner with smiling faces. They used to look at me differently. Not all of the customers were the same, but we saw many. We could distinguish them (Navy, lesbian, barrista/waitress)

## **Outing**

Forest Green said that one of the two male coworkers who had to quit his job as a result of her complaining about their verbal abuse for a year, had outed her to her entire family, friends and network on social media, and continues to do so.

Filthy lesbian, whore, I don't know, you bring bad luck to the restaurant, because of you the money I make has no abundance, you are damned, you know, I will tell your children, your family... And so on... These kinds of things. He messaged my Facebook friends that I was a lesbian, to other people... I have a friend in the

South. We met in Athens. She is lesbian, too. They came to the North with her friends one night. I don't know the girls. It was the first time I met them. She told me that she knew me. I asked how. She said, "did you work with [male's name]?" I said yes, she told me that I seduced my boss [who is a woman]. You know taking our photos and sharing them, ridiculous blackmailing and everything. (Forest Green, lesbian, fundraiser for a charity)

## **Mobbing**

Mobbing in the workplace has emerged as a type of discrimination used against LGBTI+s, especially by increasing workload. As a result of the intimidation through their chiefs/managers, Sky Blue, Navy, and Vermilion left their workplaces.

Actually, I was hiding myself, to be honest because these sorts of things aren't respected that much. When I act differently, maybe more polite, then you get looks. I used to hear them talk behind my back. They used to send me out while everyone else was sitting. One of the guys asked why do you always send Sky Blue. Let the montherfucking faggot go and get it done, and that sort of thing, I had to endure verbal things. It was rough. (Sky Blue, gay, not working).

This time my co-workers put the drudgery burden on me. Like, you wipe the floor, carry these, carry those, taking 10-minute breaks and not coming back for an hour. People taking advantage of this. (Navy, lesbian, bartender/waitress)

My manager, when I used to dye my hair to auburn with those Schwartzkopf's hair dyes for men... But those dyes don't shine like this one, so they were asking me, Why did you dye your eyebrows, why do you get them groomed? What have you used on your skin? Then, after one, two, three months, I realised that she's not sending me out while everyone else was leaving, and I was stuck with everything. In the end, I ran out of patience. I said, don't you run your mouth and hand me my resignation (Vermilion, trans woman, sex worker)

## **Gossip**

Gossip was a form of discrimination frequently encountered, especially by women participants. As aforementioned, many lesbian and bisexual cis-women explained their reasons for being in the closet as to protect themselves from gossip. Rumors were often spread by coworkers about unconventional relationships (boyfriend/girlfriend who is already married) and an 'extravagant' sex life.

For example, I knew they would gossip behind my back. I wouldn't really care, so gossip doesn't get you fired unless someone comes and says it to my face... you know, there was a married man, my friend. They also gossiped that we were sincere with him. They called me, be careful at work, they're talking about you

and so-and-so, okay so let them talk, it's none of your business. People can gossip all they want, it doesn't offend me... but I heard gossip about me that I've never experienced. I mean, I've heard things that have never happened, that is, from other places. Turquoise from the bank was with so-and-so or something like that. In fact, I mean, there was a woman and I ended her marriage or something like that. I said, "Me?" Maybe it's someone else. (Turquoise, bisexual woman, counselor at a rights organisation)

At the moment, like I said, for example, many people see my posts on Facebook, but, there are strange rumors at work as if I am a heterosexual woman, not because of me being a lesbian, like I'm sleeping with all the men, strange rumours like that, so I guess, they see my posts but I guess me being lesbian doesn't make a difference to them. (Green, Lesbian, public employee)

When I first started work, my lover sent me flowers and wrote their full name and when that happened, people gossiped a lot, "He got flowers, did you see who from? His lover is a man", and other things like that. So, people talked too much. But there are people who constantly get flowers, for example, women coworkers who get flowers from their husbands, nothing was ever said about them, it was normal but whenever I got flowers there was this odd mentality (Focus group participant, gay, non binary).

mcisi, gey nonbinary)

### **Cis-Heteronormative Pressures**

As mentioned above in job interview experiences, cis-heteronormative pressures start before getting a job. LGBTI+s are under panoptic observation<sup>22</sup> throughout their working lives and feel cis-heteronormative pressures. The most common cis-heteronormative pressure is the expectation to dress, hair and behave in line with gender roles. As Vermilion experienced in the previous section, many participants declared being exposed to the pressures of clothing and behavior, that they were warned and forced to present themselves as they weren't.

I was constantly being shamed for my body, like, "dress like these women". For example, when I first started work, I was wearing sportswear, sneakers, in fact my manager was criticising me, why do you dress like that, etc... I started to dress like the women working there... I had such a hard time wearing high heels, I started to dress differently... Somehow, they got me to accept this in the workplace (Green, lesbian, public servant).

22. The original idea of the panoptic prison or panopticon was originated by the British philosopher Jeremy Bentham in the late 18th century from the idea of a prison institution where a guard could observe all the inmates, but the inmates could not see that guard or other inmates. Later, the French philosopher Michel Foucault used the idea of the panopticon as a way to illustrate the tendency of disciplinary societies to subjugate their citizens. Panoptic observation refers to observing whether any social expectations/roles are exceeded, and it ensures compliance/control with norms through internalization, even if it is not an observer. Based on this idea, we can say that heteronormative/cis-normative societies are also under panoptic observation whether they comply with the binary and gender expressions and roles of the people..

Yes, especially in my work life, I mean in cafes where I work. I mean, I like to wear what makes me happy. You know, I don't think clothes have gender, but of course, I got a lot of warnings because of this. Like, you can't dress like this, you don't wear a hat, or I don't know, you don't wear a shirt like that, they had prejudices. So I had to pay attention to some things. I had to wear clothes that were more feminine, as they say. (Navy, Lesbian, barista/waitress)

One time, I was sitting outside and I did that thing with my jacket, where you take off one sleeve when it gets hot. But, the senior manager saw me doing that... I was summoned to their room. Told me that my behaviours are wrong and I create the wrong impression... Eventually, they started interfering in what I wear. There are lots of teachers who never told off for the shoes they wear, but, you know, the Vans shoes, right? They're black and white with a tiny rose imprinted. One day that I wore those, I was summoned to the headmaster's office again, got another warning. Something like, "You shouldn't be wearing these colourful shoes." (Lemon Yellow, nonbinary, student)

I worked there [public office], so there was pressure, so how can I say, it's normal, like a normal person, I don't know, why is this like this, why is this like that, I don't know normally they would oppose, for example, my nails, they're long and normal, "Why are they long?", "Why is your hair long?" or whatever. I'd sometimes wear shorts, "Why are you wearing shorts?" or whatever... (Black, Trans woman, not working)

Another type of cis-heteronormative pressure involves co-workers' behaviour against employees they suspect to be LGBTI+ to prove their suspicions. For some participants, this has reached such a level that it violates the privacy of their private life. Since his colleagues suspected that Pistachio Green is gay, they visited his home for a check-up outside of work and even watched him from the window. In the face of these behaviours and questions about marriage, Pistachio Green had to appear to be in a heterosexual relationship.

A couple of people there were excessively nosy. They knew my house, and used to visit my home, too. What made me uncomfortable was that even if it was for a joke, they used to come and check on my home. One time, as I recall, when my friend called me while I was washing dishes in the kitchen, s/he told me that the green t-shirt you wore suits you. I mean, I'm in my own home, and let's say I did have a lover over and let's say we were doing something 'inappropriate', these were people who could bring this up at the workplace. So, I was putting in extra effort and my phone was always facing down, like this, or in the drawer because the tables were very close. Just to be on the safe side,



you know, all of a sudden if I got a message, they would jokingly grab it and start going through my phone.

In fact, they were trying to intervene in your private life, somehow. So, was this because they were suspicious of you being gay, or was it their curiosity to find out more? (Researcher)

Well, I'm not sure if it's because I was gay, but surely it had effects, because after a certain point, I started getting questions like "you don't have anyone in your life," but constantly. And so what I did was, I went abroad with a girlfriend and shared a photo telling them, "There you go, this is your sister-in-law". You know, just to get them to shut up. (Pistachio, Gay, Accountant).

In addition to the violation of privacy, Pistachio Green also experienced the expectation of a heterosexual relationship, another type of heteronormative pressure, just like many other participants, and was constantly pressured by colleagues to find a girlfriend and marry.

How many times have I gone through this, like, when we go on external audits for work, they used to try and set me up with someone, so I could eventually marry. Each time, I found an excuse to turn it down, but this is still ongoing. (Pistachio, Gay, Accountant)

Olive Green, who is out and says that their appearance reflects that they are queer, expressed discomfort at being thought to be heterosexual and feeling like they are hiding it, even though that is clearly not the case.

I started working for the state, and my appearance was like it always was. There was an assumption that I was heterosexual and I used to tell my friends that I am a good person and I would always joke that I don't deserve to be thought of as straight. But then I thought about the thing, that nobody asked me what my sexual orientation is. They said, "do you have a girlfriend?" I said "no". It wasn't a thing then, nobody asked if it was your boyfriend or girlfriend. ... I didn't find it necessary to open up and talk about the matter, and then as time went on, I started to feel uneasy about being thought of as such, because I'm not straight, I mean I'm clearly not straight. But out of the blue, it seemed absurd to me to say that I am gay and I am Queer. Because I never had to do that, normally, people would look at me and understand. I remember thinking a lot about why

this is happening now. Then... I mean, I was at that job for about 8 months, when I had a lover, and this time, I felt like I was hiding something, or as if I was hiding it before. However, it was never asked of me and it was never a topic of discussion. (Olive Green, Queer, Doctor)

Contrary to Olive Green's experience, some participants complained that they were constantly questioned in different ways or tested to see whether they were not heterosexual. This desire to learn even extended to sexualised violence perpetrated by coworkers for some participants. To understand whether White is a lesbian or not, her coworkers at work showed her pictures of naked women. Although White talked about this with a laugh, she shared it out of the sheer shock she experienced that day.

There was the issue of showing me pictures of naked women. Then I found out that while I was working there, a guy accountant who had left work, told me "They thought you were lesbian so they tested you to be sure. I told them you are not, but they insisted." Who are these people? My co-workers, the secretary girl. I mean if my boss would find out, the guy wouldn't care at all. All he cared about was that I work and make money (White, lesbian graphic designer).

Grey, a bisexual man and academic, was also asked several times by the program coordinator about whether they had a boyfriend or not, and when he suggested his friend for a position at the same workplace, he had to tell the program coordinator about his relationship as a result of threats. He had to reveal his sexual orientation to a colleague, whether he wanted to or not, to discuss this issue and get an opinion.

Well, I recently experienced such a situation with the same coordinator...I wanted them to hire my friend...I got a message one evening. "Mr. Gray [male name], I am going to recommend his name, but I cannot if there are secrets between us... I think you look great together, I hope you haven't broken up." They said something to that effect and I did something like ask "what are you saying at this hour, it's one, half past one at night," and then they threatened me by saying "if you don't feel comfortable, then I won't suggest your friend's name to my head of department." I kind of had to accept it too, because I really wanted my friend to get a job... He didn't mind saying, 'OK, now it's done, don't worry, I'll recommend him'. - Actually, in a way, they forced you to come out. (researcher)

Of course I experienced mobbing or a threat. He informed me that he wouldn't hire him if I didn't tell him, and I was nervous. If he is hired now, he can walk all

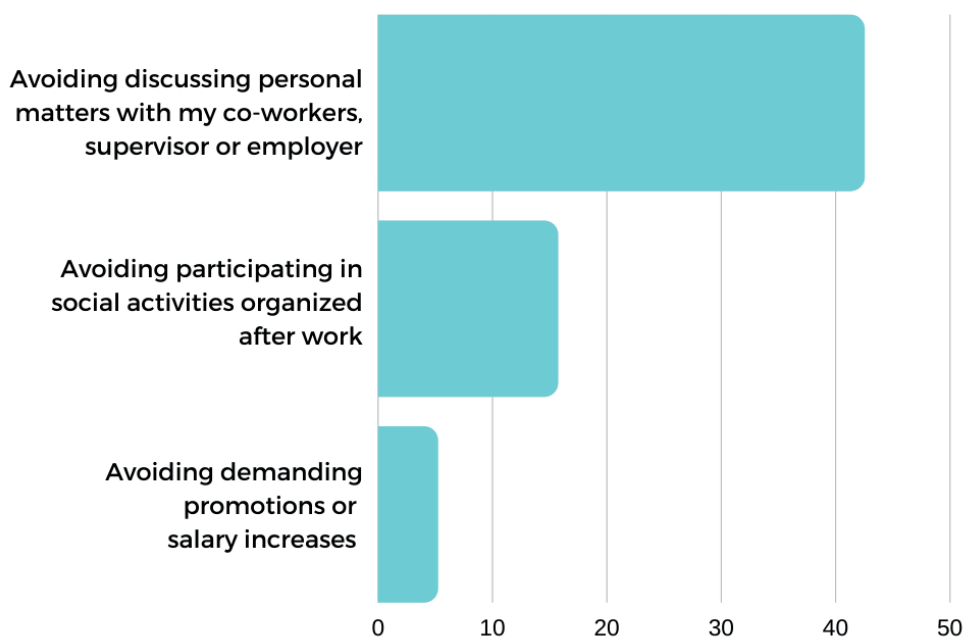
over us based on this issue for what's to come. Because in a way, I accepted and said don't separate us there. The next day I went and delivered a very harsh speech... I think we've sorted it out. After that, it never came up again, but I was very nervous during that process... For this reason, I had to tell a friend of mine, whom I did not explain [previously] about my situation, because I did not know what to do. (Grey, bisexual man, academic)

Another experience we have come across is that LGBTI+s are asked questions about their sexual life and decisions.

Approaches like, on how it's done. Generally about roles, which one of you is the man, which one is the woman, so uncomfortable, these sorts of comments made me so uncomfortable. They would constantly ask questions like these. And then there's, "so, you are a lesbian, so you like girls? Are you thinking of becoming a man? Are you considering a sex change? Everyday, we were exposed to these questions, so in that sense, it was bad. (Navy, Lesbian, bartender/Waitress)

#### 6.2.4 Harassment, assault and intimidation in the workplace and (not being able to) access rights

In Graph 34, there are survey findings on coping/avoidance strategies of participants exposed to these behaviours or who have observed those who have been exposed or who have listened to the experiences of those who have been exposed



**Graph 34:** Distribution of avoiding/coping strategies for harassment, assault and mobbing behaviours in the workplace (%)

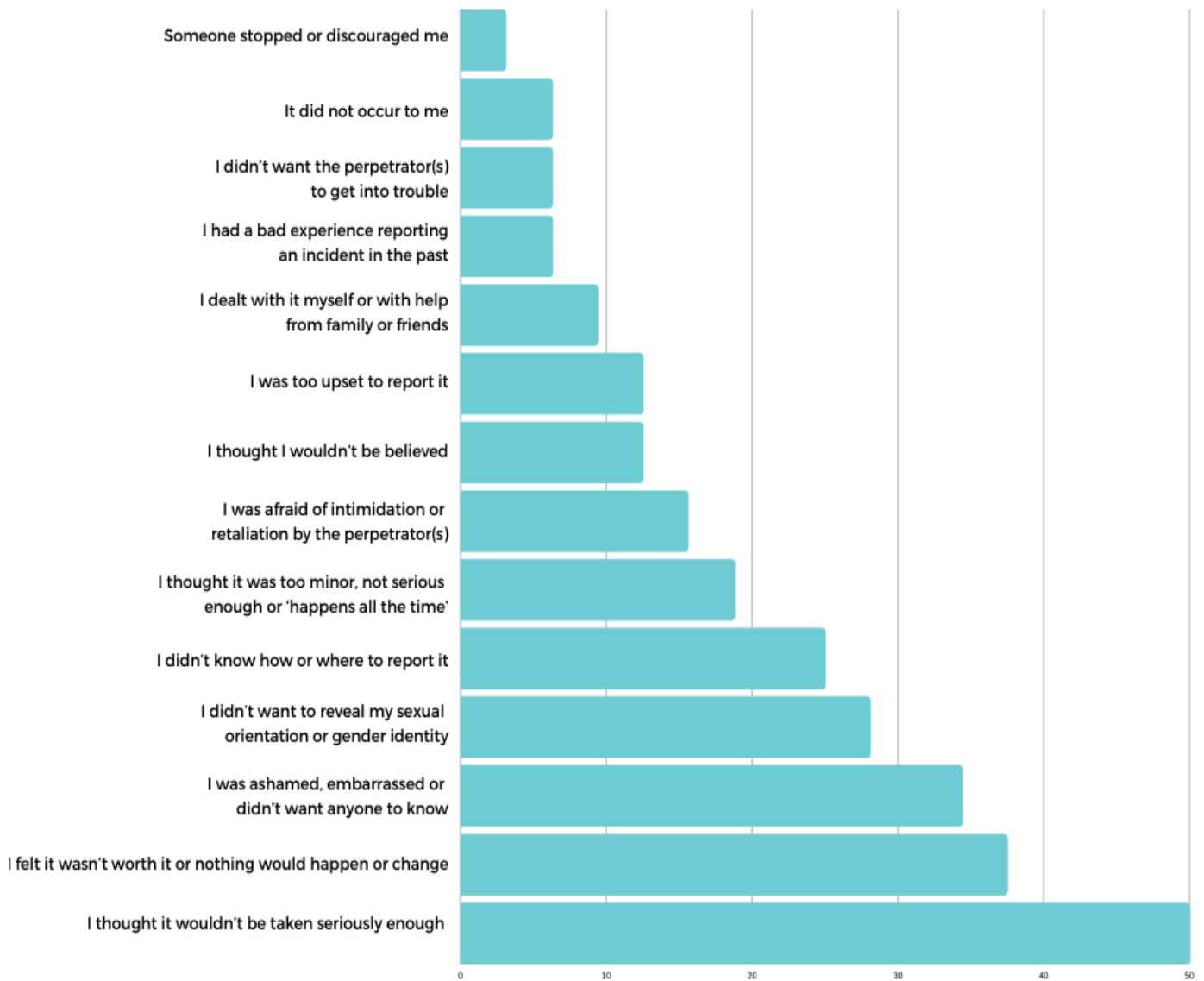
86.5% (32) of 37 survey participants exposed to harassment, assault, outing or exclusion in the workplace declared that they did not file any complaints (Table 4). The notified authorities (the director, human resources officer and police) were not involved in the incident and did not intervene.

Reporting	Number of Individuals	Percentage	Authority receiving report
Yes, I reported	4	10.8	Manager, human resources director, police, mother
Yes, someone reported	1	2.7	Employer
No, nobody reported	32	86.5	
Total	37	100.0	

**Table 4:** Reported complaints on harassment, assault, exposure, exclusion in the workplace

Although 11.6% of survey participants were members of a trade union and 22.5% were members of a professional organisation, nobody reported to these organisations in the face of harassment, assault, being outed and exclusion. This situation also reflects that members do not see these organisations as a place of struggle against LGBTI+ discrimination.

Graph 35 shows why participants who were exposed to such behaviours but did not notify anyone, did not/could not file a report. The majority of survey participants (50%) stated that their complaints would not be taken seriously, not yield any results even if they were taken into account (37%), and thus, they did not report to avoid further embarrassment (34%). These three reasons stand out. The first two reasons are valuable in that they reveal the insensitivity of society to the crimes of harassment, assault, exclusion, and interference in the private lives of LGBTI+s. The third reason is important in explaining the attitude of society towards such crimes. In violence against women, the general public blames not the perpetrator, but the victim enduring violence and the person causing it. However, there is nothing the victim of violence can do to avoid it, but the perpetrator has the option of not doing it. Unfortunately, LGBTI+s choose not to report to avoid experiencing embarrassment due to society's stance, that is, to avoid a second victimisation.



**Graph 35:** Distribution of participants' reasons for not reporting (%)

Note: In this question, it was stated that participants could mark more than one option. The aim was for each participant to identify their main reason. Therefore, the sum is not equal to 100.

As stated in previous sections, findings obtained from face-to-face interviews are shared below, presenting concrete examples of the cases identified through the questionnaire. So, are there any mechanisms to which you could report your complaints?

I didn't complain. In fact, I couldn't go and tell my manager such things. This time, I was afraid that they might think, he is homosexual, let's fire him. Since they find the situation wrong anyway, they wouldn't deal with your complaint no matter how much you wanted them to.

By this situation, do you mean homosexuality? (Researcher)

Yes. If I ended up telling the boss, they wouldn't stand by my side.

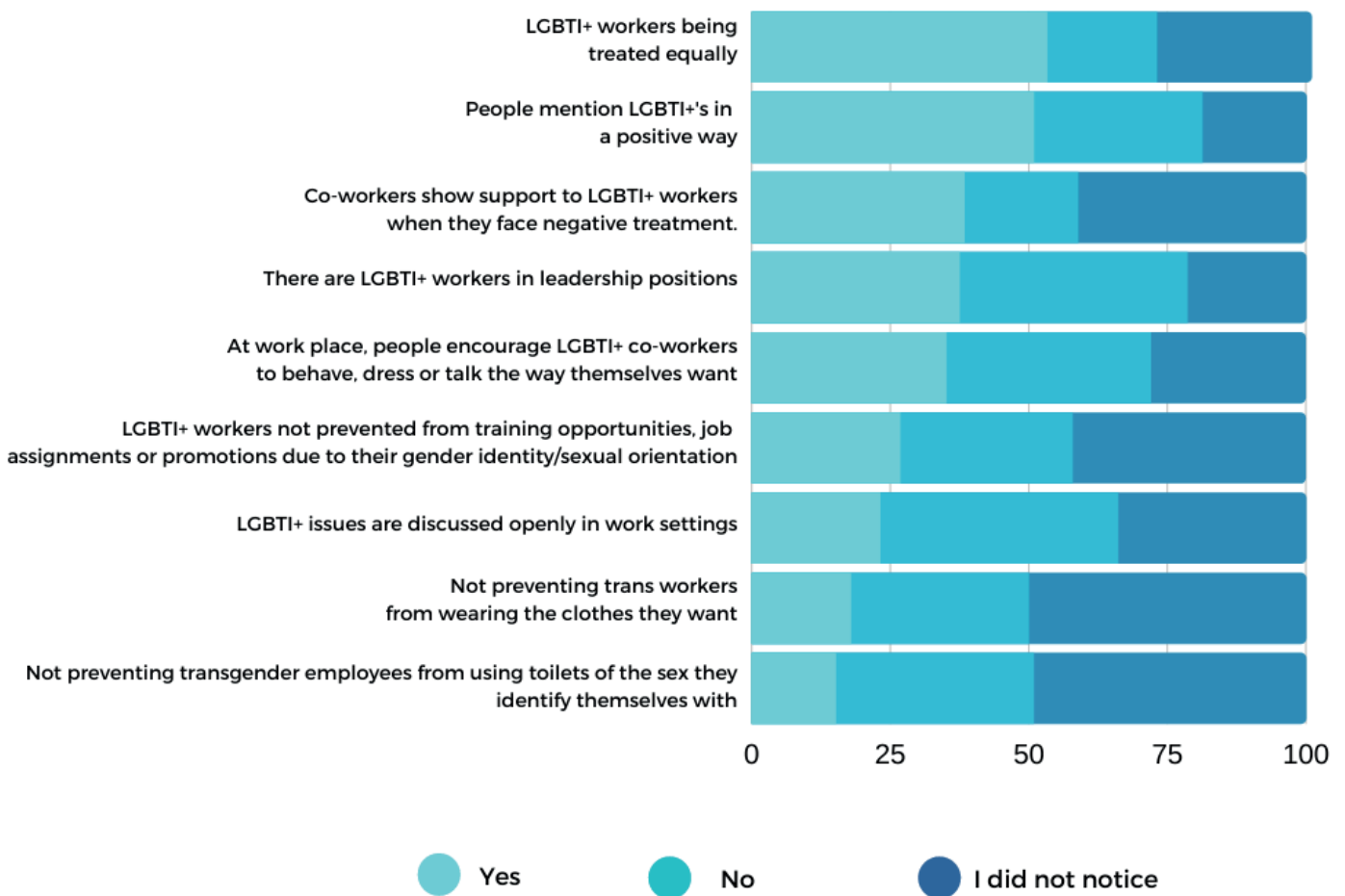
Have you ever tried? (Researcher)

Since I can sense it, I never braved it to go and do it in front of them. If I said, they behave like this and that towards me, they would say, oh you're like that, huh, and fire me. (Sky Blue, Gay)

So, I could have reported it during that period I told you before. But I wasn't sure what was going on. Was it my fault? Was it theirs? How exactly could I prove? Who would I report, and where? I'm one against 3. I felt really powerless. Would my friends talk to me? They don't have to. Would they make homophobic or sexist jokes? They do, anyway. Even the managers. (Turquoise, bisexual woman, consultant).

In addition to informal discriminatory behaviors, participants were also asked about their observations and experiences on attitudes towards LGBTI+s at work (Table 5). In terms of helping to understand the attitudes of colleagues, supervisors, managers or customers towards LGBTI+s at work, being closeted in the workplace, and the reaction (to report or not) to injustice and discrimination in the workplace, participants answered the question, 'Have you observed the situations listed below?' as 'yes,' 'no' or 'I did not notice'.

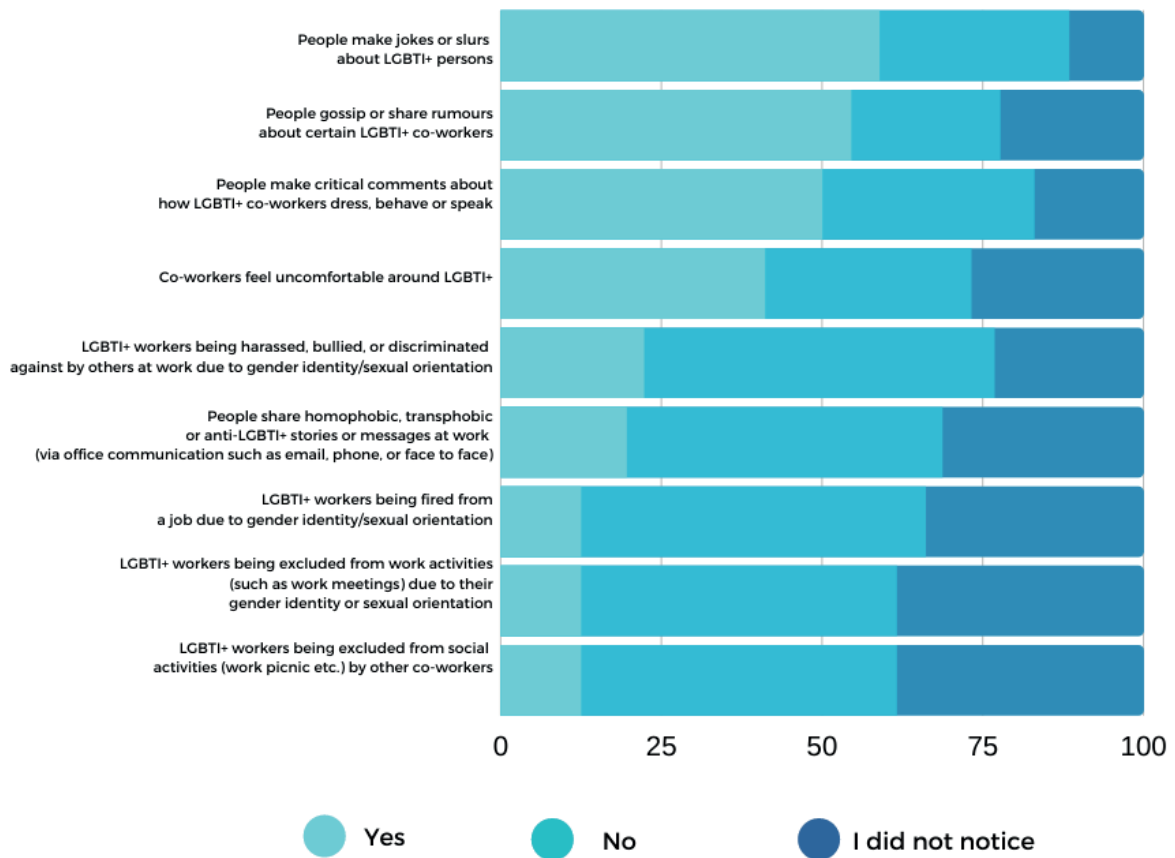
Attitudes were addressed in two groups, as positive (inclusive) (Chart 36) and negative (discriminatory) attitudes (Graph 37). In the observed positive (inclusive) attitudes, equal treatment of LGBTI+s in working life and positive comments about LGBTI+s stand out as an attitude observed by one out of every two people participating in the survey. The least observed inclusive attitude was the attitudes regarding the ability of trans people to use the toilets of the gender with which they identify and not to interfere in their clothes.



**Graph 36:** Positive (inclusive) attitudes observed towards LGBTI+ in working life (%)

Four negative (discriminatory) attitudes stand out. These attitudes are related to the informal discrimination faced by the survey and face-to-face interview participants in previous sections. These four prominent attitudes were observed by at least five of every 10 participants, except for one. Making inappropriate jokes about LGBTI+s, speaking offensively (59%), gossiping or spreading rumors about certain LGBTI+s by colleagues (55%) were observed by 6 out of 10 respondents.

Making judgmental comments about the clothing, behaviour and speech styles of LGBTI+s was observed by five out of every 10 participants (50%), while the attitude of not feeling comfortable around LGBTI+s was observed by four out of 10 participants (40%). The least observed attitudes were attitudes towards formal discrimination, physical and sexual harassment and assault.



**Graph 37:** Negative (discriminatory) attitudes observed towards LGBTI+s in working life (%)

During interviews, phobic offensive speech, sarcastic behaviour and inappropriate jokes about LGBTI+s were the most common attitudes. Interviewees embodied these attitudes as follows:

They generally say, faggot, you know. They need to be foulmouthed, but it's just not in my nature. You know, they generally say, he's a fag, faggot, etc., and these are light examples. There are things they say that are more advanced, heavier words, more vulgar, so, in the end, I found a solution, just so that I wouldn't hear what they were saying, I would put on my earphones, play some soft music, and let them talk amongst themselves while I continued working with music. (Pistachio Green, gay, accountant)

Two men came to the department where I worked. Both would tell homophobic jokes 24/7 and I would get so upset, I would tell them off. Somehow, we were a four-person team and hatred emerged against me, and I was exposed to mobbing for a very long time. It started because of my attitudes, actually. I didn't laugh with them. I didn't join in on their jokes. So, problems arose at work. I couldn't take control over that situation. They talk about you, gossip about you, and write to each other. They would hand me work. Finally, my manager

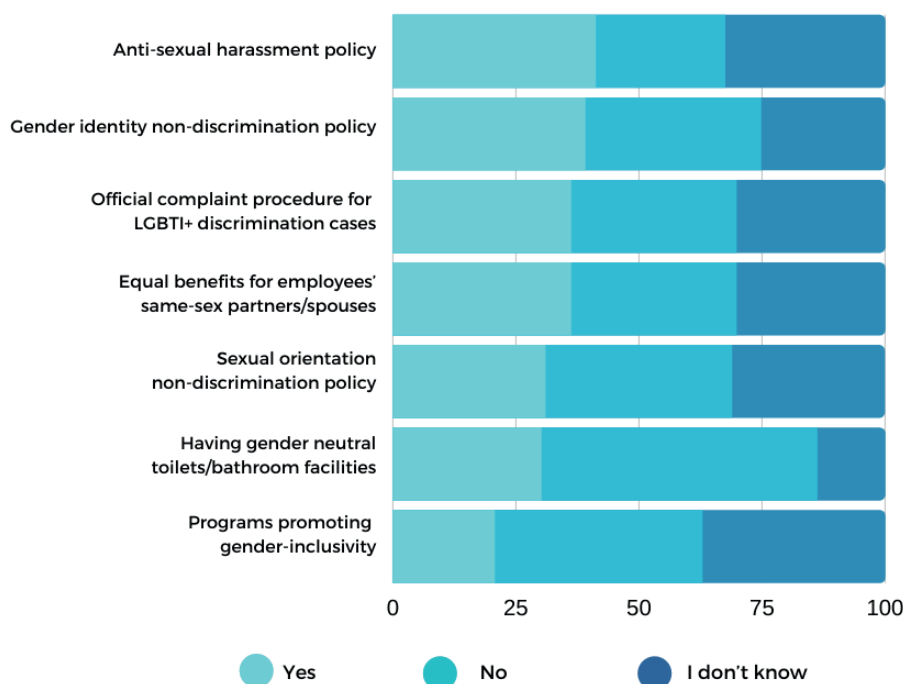


summoned me. They had complained about me. I shut down and closed off from everything around me. Actually, it's not that they made homophobic jokes, it's all of it. I didn't belong in such an environment, anyway, and yes, if 1 person is sulking while the other 3 are making, then you end up with such an environment. You would be unpleasant, and after that, things start going downhill. This seems very normal to me now. (Turquoise, Bisexual Woman, Consultant at a Rights Association).

The inclusive or discriminatory attitudes summarised above clarify why people in workplaces either report or do not report any form of discrimination in the workplace, or more generally, in their working life. Inclusive or discriminatory attitudes are effective. There is a need for workplace policies that will transform these attitudes, which prevent discriminatory attitudes, and transform them into inclusive institutional attitudes, and legal regulations that will force their transformation into social attitudes.

### 6.2.5 Business policies

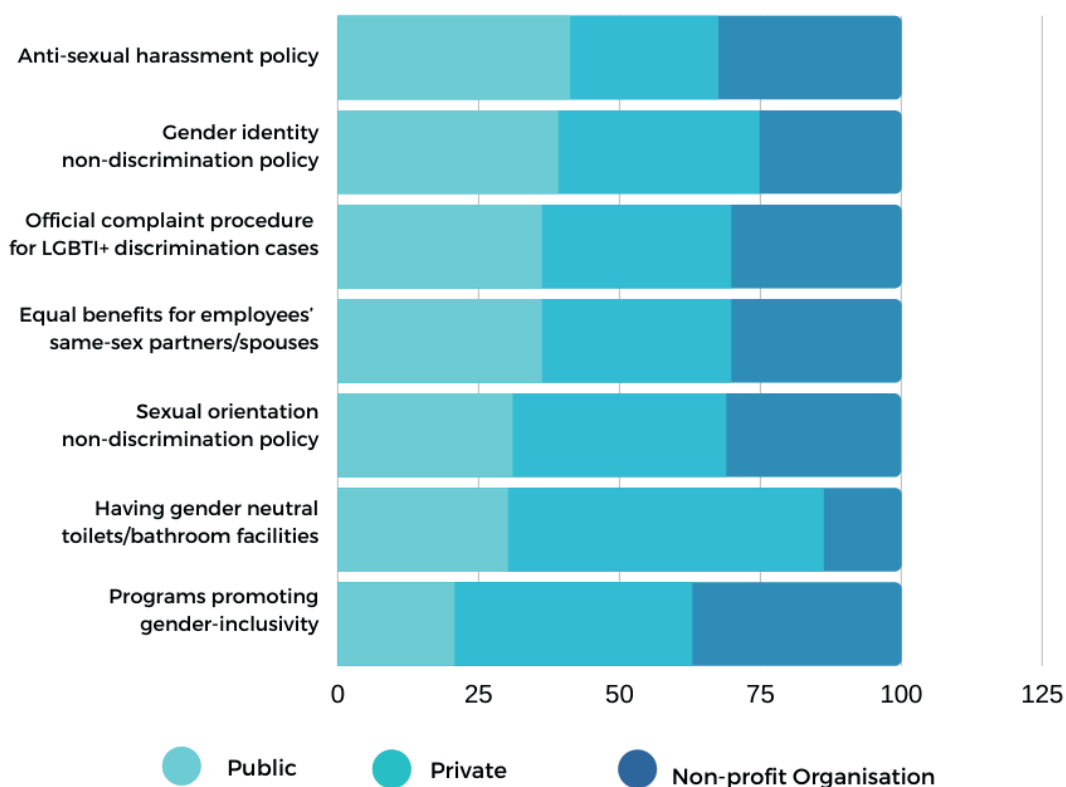
Findings obtained from both surveys and interviews about the inability of participants to report experiences of harassment, assault, disclosure and intimidation at work due to their LGBTI+ identity point to the lack of legal regulation and inclusive workplace policies against discrimination. In Graph 38, findings have been shared of inclusive workplace policies in the current or last workplace of participants.



**Graph 38:** Inclusive workplace policies for respondents' current or most recent workplaces, (%)

Workplace policies in the graph were given to participants who were asked whether these policies existed in their current workplaces. In general, there are as many participants who work in workplaces with inclusive workplace policies as there are participants who do not have these policies and who do not have any idea about their workplace policies. There are four workplace policies that go beyond this generalisation.

40% of participants work or have worked in workplaces that have a policy to prevent sexual harassment and discrimination based on gender identity. Again, 36% of them are or have been in workplaces with a defined application process for discrimination cases against LGBTI+s and an equal rights policy for same-sex partnerships and non-same-sex partnerships. From a sectoral perspective, the lowest rate of these policies in the workplace was declared by LGBTI+s working in the public sector and the highest in non-profit organisations (Graph 39). Considering the date of decriminalisation of same-sex partnerships in the northern part of Cyprus (2014), the proportion of employees working in workplaces with inclusive workplace policies seems satisfactory.



**Graph 39:** Sectoral distribution of inclusive workplace policies in the current or last workplaces of participants (%)

However, in the section aimed at understanding the interaction between the participants' pre-labour discrimination experiences and their access to the labour market, the majority of participants stated that they directed their profession (their job) to areas and workplaces where they thought they would be discriminated against the least. The above assessment should be considered in light of this information.

## 7. Instead of Conclusion: If there was no discrimination

The findings of this report show that LGBTI+s are severely discriminated against in the northern part of Cyprus. The most important indicator of the finding that they are severely discriminated against is the fact that the majority of the participants are forced to be discreet about their gender identity and sexual orientation in the labour market. Starting from their educational life, they need to hide their sexual orientation both during job interviews and at work, they try not to behave in ways that may cause them to be outed, and they cannot be free. This is significant discrimination and a violation of human rights.

LGBTI+s living in the northern part of Cyprus stated that they chose to be closeted as a strategy to avoid discrimination, but that they face formal and especially informal discrimination starting from the job interview process. During the job interview, they are exposed to the pressures of behaving and dressing according to binary cis-heteronormative gender stereotypes, to questions on their gender identity and sexual orientation, and on their private life and sexuality. LGBTI+s do not have equal employment opportunities in accessing employment. One in five respondents to the survey face discrimination during the job search process and remain unemployed for longer due to their gender identity, sexual orientation or gender expression.

LGBTI+s face many formal and informal discriminations in the workplace due to their gender identity and sexual orientation. Formal discrimination types encountered are dismissal, refusal of promotion, and increasing workload. It has been observed that there is less exposure to formal discrimination due to being closeted. Informal discrimination is more common. In particular, verbal abuse, verbal sexual abuse, heteronormative pressures, intimidation and exclusion are types of discrimination faced by many participants.

In concluding the report, we wanted to present whether and how it would differentiate their personal development (education, skills, hobbies, etc.), job search or working experience, if there was no discrimination in the words of the participants.

While 23 participants stated that there would be no difference, most participants stated that they would be happier, more comfortable and more successful in environments where they did not restrict themselves or experience discrimination or fear. We have shared the thoughts of some participants below.

Social pressure creates many psychological problems. It causes behavioural disorders, obsessiveness and many manifestations. Instead of going through the confusion of searching for identity, I could freely buy and do what I wanted, because I wasn't insecure, but the late realisation that identity was not a social barrier left me lacking in many situations. In the simplest terms, I want to walk as I want, laugh, dress as I want and express my ideas. Even if you don't reveal your identity out loud with your words, when you wear something you want and walk and laugh like that, stereotypes have shaken my friendships, my search for a job, and my self-confidence. I was cut off from society and ignored; restricting the possibilities of going only to LGBT+ venues, limiting friendships, not being able to do my hobbies, in bars or venues that are regarded as LGBT+ sex objects to earn money. I would have been someone who did not spend my childhood with psychiatrists or on the streets, went to school regularly and believed in their dreams of a solid future, and ran after them, my biggest loss was myself. *Pansexual Woman, never worked, but has job-searching experienced*

It certainly would make a difference. That is to say, in the simplest terms, when people go to job applications, they wouldn't have to worry about being rejected because the way they look, act, or move exposes their sexual identity/orientation. Moreover, they wouldn't have anxiety about being exposed to discriminating expressions. *Bisexual Woman, Service Personnel*

Of course, it would have an impact because when we don't encounter discrimination, we would only deal with education, hobbies, etc.. However, a discriminated and excluded person is delayed from developing themselves. *Gay*

It would be different. I could improve myself more in every business field where I don't encounter discrimination. *Lesbian Manager, Chairman, CEO, CFO*

I would do some work more comfortably and confidently. *Lesbian, Service Personnel*

Yes, absolutely. I think I've been holding myself back from a lot of things because of my thoughts on how to adapt to society before I came out. Moreover, with many teachings, I think I can live by expressing it in a more free and different manner. *Gay, Professional*

To take easier and more decisive steps. Besides, it would enable individuals to increase their business potential by acting naturally rather than hiding their sexual identity. *Gay, Academician*

I would be more comfortable in my workplace. I would have support from my co-workers about my personal life. *Gay, Academic*

I most definitely have dreams to accomplish but I avoid them due to my thoughts about being discriminated against. *Gay, Service Personnel*

Yes, it would make me stronger, and I would feel more comfortable and relaxed in communal places. It would help me gain more experience and improve in a working environment. *Gay, labour/service worker*

I could travel and talk more comfortably, it's hard to think about doing everything "right" all the time. *Bisexual Man, Academic*

Because of prejudice and discrimination, I can be shy about networking in terms of business and socialising. Without these, I can show and realise my personal and professional capacity to its fullest. *Queer Pansexual Manager, Chairman, CEO, CFO*

I could have been more expressive and productive. *Queer Gay, Service Personnel*

We could have been in a much better position than we are now, as we would have equal access to education, medical, employment and many other rights. *Queer Bisexual Manager, Chairman, CEO, CFO*

Yes, I would have been much more active in life. *Bisexual Man, labourer/service worker*

Absolutely, everything is easier and achievable when there is nothing to worry about. *Lesbian, Self-employed*

I would have been more comfortable psychologically and successful more in my career. *Gay Businessman, Manager, Supervisor*

## 8. Recommendations

This report reveals the social pressures, discriminations, harassment and bullying that LGBT+s face in the northern part of Cyprus, starting from their education life and throughout the labour market cycle, in short, human rights violations experienced by LGBT+s. In addition, more than half of survey participants (56%) answered that they agree (24.6%) or strongly agree (31.4%) with the statement that they would risk going to another country (immigrating) to avoid LGBTI+ phobic environments. Considering that most participants have a university or higher education,<sup>23</sup> the possibility of brain drain is quite high if the necessary legal regulations are not put in place to prevent LGBTI+ phobic behaviours, there are no sanctions and mechanisms, or the problems in their functioning are not resolved.

22. The proportion of those who agree with this statement is the highest among those who have completed their doctorate education (86.5%).

International human rights law emphasises the necessity of protecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of LGBTI+s, preventing discrimination and providing legal and institutional guarantees for equal treatment of everyone. In this context, the legislature and the legislator have a great responsibility. Existing laws should be examined, discriminatory laws in accessing employment and employment processes, or that contain cis-heteronormative connotations, even if they do not contain discrimination, should be reviewed and legal arrangements should be made in line with these findings. Again, necessary mechanisms should be established for the implementation of laws that prevent discrimination and violence but cannot be implemented due to the lack of mechanisms, and general and sectoral incentives (tax reduction, quota, etc.) should be provided to increase the employment of LGBTI+s. In addition to legal regulations and protective mechanisms, awareness-raising programs at the community and workplace level should be developed and implemented, and awareness-raising campaigns should be organised for LGBTI+s.

As a result of the meeting held with the Queer Cyprus Association to share the findings of the report, these recommendations were detailed according to the related institutions.

### **1. Ministry responsible for Education**

- a. Providing regular trainings to increase sensitivity/awareness of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and characteristics of school administrators, school counselors, classroom teachers, branch teachers and other school personnel, in order to protect LGBTI+s from discrimination and prejudices they encounter in schools,
- b. Working to create an LGBTI+ friendly environment at schools in cooperation with branch teachers, counsellors, school administration and non-governmental organisations,
- c. Reorganising the education curriculum by taking into account the diversity of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and characteristics,
- d. Developing emergent intervention plans to prevent peer bullying based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and characteristics. Realising the sustainable mechanisms where necessary supports will be provided to LGBTI+ students who are exposed to discrimination and bullying,
- e. Arranging existing disciplinary rules and practices in educational institutions in a way that prevents discrimination, verbal, physical, psychological and sexual violence on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or gender characteristics,

- f. Including discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression and gender characteristic into disciplinary legislations and governing active interrogations by the relevant authority,
- g. Implementing gender neutral school uniforms and toilets/dressing rooms at schools and not interfering in the gender expressions of students, behaviours and freedoms,
- h. Developing programmes that would provide lifelong education opportunities and free resources to adults whose education life have been hampered due to gender identity/ expression and gender characteristics-based discrimination.

## **2. Ministry responsible for Labour and Social Security**

- a. Explicitly prohibiting gender identity, gender expression and characteristic based discrimination in the article on the equality principle in the Constitution,
- b. Amending the Labour Law, Press Labour Law and Public Officers Law so as to include gender identity, gender expression and gender characteristic and explicitly prohibiting gender identity, gender expression and characteristic based discrimination in wage determination, assignments, employment, promotion and termination processes,
- c. Providing incentive support to businesses that provide employment to LGBTI+s; compensating social security payments, at least a part of them, through the local organisations in this manner, providing cutbacks in income tax, social security, etc. similar supportive measures,
- d. Implementing necessary legal regulations and practices regarding the ability of same-sex partners to benefit from all rights and opportunities available in legal regulations regarding social security. Additionally, references to the children of employees in similar legal regulations as well as all children actually cared for,
- e. Opening shelters and solidarity houses for LGBTI+ children and young people aged 16 and older who have lost family support to ensure the continuation of their education and participation in future employment, and protection from labour exploitation,
- f. Immediate implementation of Police Violence Response Units stipulated in the Gender Equality Department (TOCED) law and relevant units not only to deal with violence against women perceived as cis-hetero, but also be responsible for relevant applications concerning violence perpetrated due to gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and gender characteristics,

g. Establishing mechanisms that identify barriers that limit LGBTI+s' access to work and social security rights, that is, conduct research, collect and analyse data, monitor, and evaluate them; in this context, the "gender equality department" and especially the "economy, planning and education branch" that is envisaged to be established within its body, is to be put into operation by employing necessary personnel.

### **3. Ministry responsible for Internal Affairs**

a. At minimum, recognition of the right to access gender confirming processes and gender recognition by law in line with the right to self-determination, adopting rapid and transparent procedures for the exchange of birth certificates, records, identity cards, passports, certificates of training, and other similar documents, enforcing comprehensive laws including the prevention of making information public, such as name and gender, prior to their legal recognition without the consent of the person in question,

b. Explicitly prohibiting the termination of the employment contract on the basis of gender adaptation processes and providing required health services to trans individuals in the absence of medical leave as well as providing the required off days to trans individuals during this process,

c. HIV testing should not be a prerequisite for employment, since living with HIV is not an obstacle to a person's working life, continuity of work and existence in employment. the end of the expulsion policy based on the HIV status of employees.

### **4. Ministry responsible for Finance**

a. Allocating the necessary financial budgets in efforts to increase LGBTI+ inclusiveness in employment and prevent discrimination, and to support civil society working in the field,

b. Rephrasing of the Income and Tax Law No. 24/1982 as well as similar cis-heterosexual relations-based laws in an LGBTI+ inclusive way, which states "If the responsible party is married and his wife lives with him permanently in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, a discount equal to eight percent (8%) of the discount amount determined in accordance with the rules of paragraph (1) of this article for his wife.",



c. Financial support for non-governmental organisations conducting research on LGBTI+s for society, raising-awareness and supporting LGBTI+s, by public institutions, and carrying out joint activities with these organisations; Consulting organisations in decision-making processes.

## **5. Unions and Occupational Organisations**

a. Unions, occupation chambers, occupational unions to rephrase their disciplinary regulations to prohibit all forms of discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation,

b. Mainstreaming the rights of LGBTI+ workers in work trade unions to protect, promote and enforce the rights of LGBTI+ workers,

c. Providing legal and psychosocial support to and following up on LGBTI+s exposed to discrimination and violence by trade unions and professional organisations,

d. Providing awareness campaigns regarding LGBTI+ students at teachers unions.

## **6. Private Workplaces**

a. Implementing policies visibly related to LGBTI+s and put in force, for all forms of sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions and characteristics based mobbing, bullying and harassment should be considered by special regulations,

b. Providing the existence of reporting mechanisms where reports of gender, gender identity, gender expression and characteristic an sexual orientation based mobbing, harassment and assaults are given and working through principle of privacy,

c. Adapting policies to fight against violence and discrimination based on gender, gender identity, gender expression and characteristic and mandating trainings of awareness for all workers regarding LGBTI+s.

## **7. Local Authorities**

a. Developing in-house policies for the prevention of discrimination and violence based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender characteristics, organising LGBTI+ awareness trainings for all employees, and monitoring and reporting the implementation of the policies to be developed,

b. Opening youth development centers in every city and making them accessible to everyone, without discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity/expression and gender characteristics, to increase professional awareness and become places for social interaction.

## **8. Statistics Department**

a. Keeping data on employment and unemployment based on sexual orientation and gender identity,

b. Sharing records in transparent and accessible ways to identify and increase LGBTI+ employment.

APPENDICES

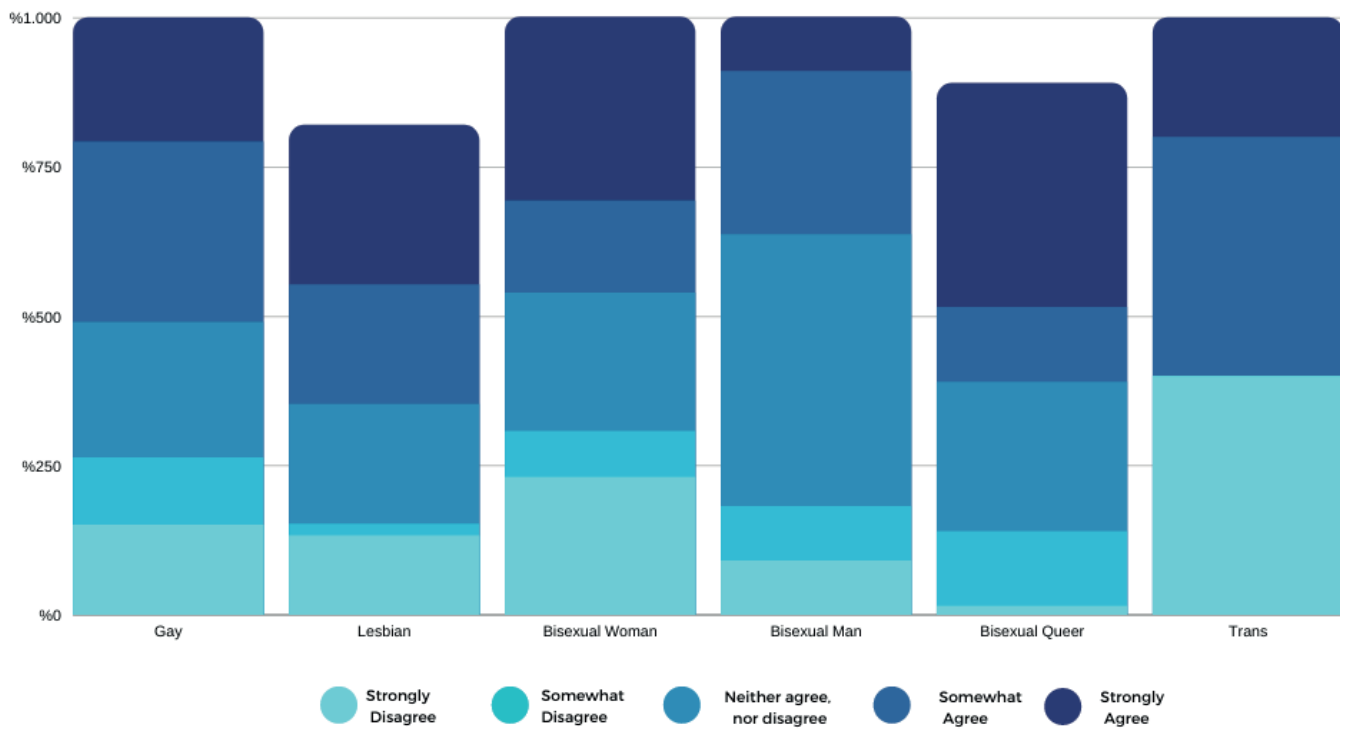
APPENDIX 1: International Legislation

International Human Rights Law	1948	United Nations General Board	Article 23	1- Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
				2-Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	1976	United Nations General Board	Article 2	2- The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
			Article 6	1- The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts and will take appropriate steps to safeguard this right.
			Article 7	a- Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with: Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work
				c- Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence;
Article 9	The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance.			
Charter of Fundamental Rights of The European Union	2009		Article 21	1. Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.
Yogyakarta Principles	2006		Principle 12	Everyone has the right to decent and productive work, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment, without discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.
			Principle 13	Everyone has the right to social security and other social protection measures, without discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

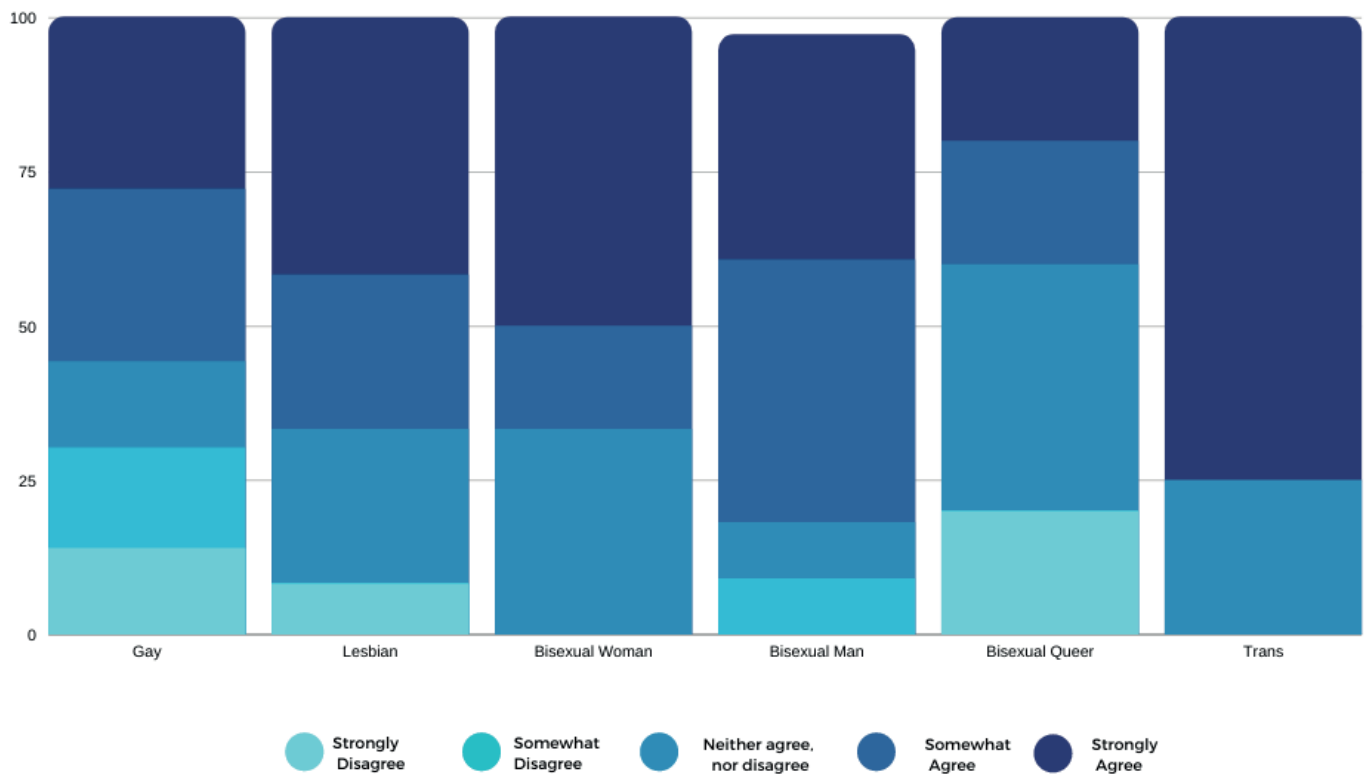
			Principle 25	Every citizen has the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, including the right to stand for elected office, to participate in the formulation of policies affecting their welfare, and to have equal access to all levels of public service and employment in public functions, including serving in the police and military, without discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.
Yogyakarta Principles plus 10	2017		Article 2	G- Take all appropriate steps to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided, where needed, in order to promote equality and eliminate discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics, including in education, employment, and access to services;
Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation	2000	European Union		It gives a perception to fight against discrimination on the basis of religion, disability, age or sexual orientation in terms of employment and occupation
Discrimination (Employment and Profession) Convention No 111	1958	International Labour Association		It calls for the prevention of discrimination on the basis of race, colour, gender, religion, political opinion, national identity and social origin in the regulation of employment, education and working conditions, and the development of equality in the field of opportunity and practice. The Convention body has expanded the categories of discrimination to include sexual orientation.
9. ILO 100 (Equal Remuneration Convention)	1951	International Labour Organisation	Article 2	Each Member shall, by means appropriate to the methods in operation for determining rates of remuneration, promote and, in so far as is consistent with such methods, ensure the application to all workers of the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value.
ILO 190 Violence and Harassment Convention	2019	International Labour Organisation	Article 1	a- The term "violence and harassment" in the world of work refers to a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment
				b- The term "gender-based violence and harassment" means violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately and includes sexual harassment.

APPENDIX 2: Semi Configured Interview Participant Details

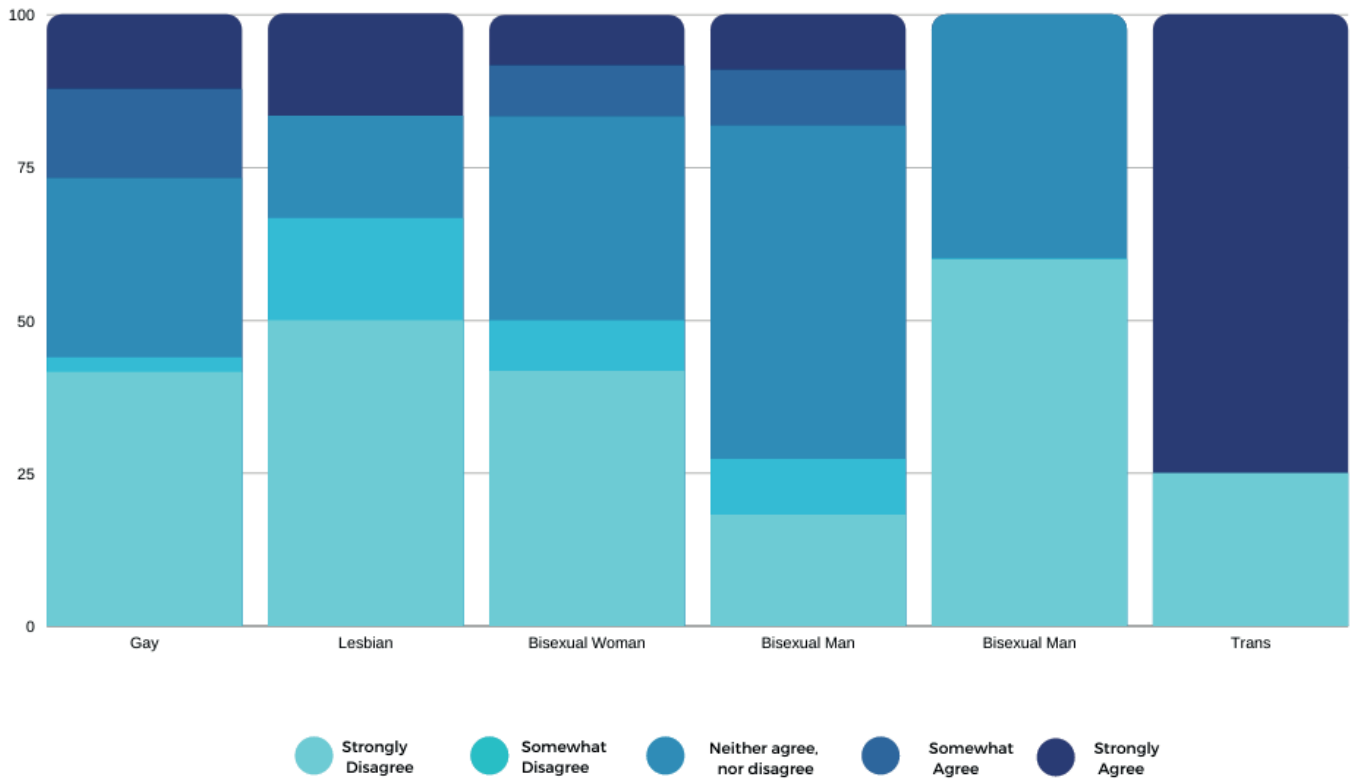
	Pseudo-names	Age	Gender Identity	Sexual Orientation	Level of Education	Works (lastly worked is given as first)
1	White	37	Not aware	Lesbian	Postgraduate	Graphic Designer / Interior Architect
2	Sea Blue	42	Trans Man	Heterosexual	Primary School	Not working, Casual worker
3	Pistachio	32	Cis-Man	Gay	Postgraduate	Accountant
4	Sky Blue	25	Cis-Man	Gay	Secondary School	Not working, Labourer
5	Grey	26	Cis-Man	Bisexual Male	Postgraduate	Academician/association executive, various fields of work
6	Lemon	25	Non-binary	Gay	Undergraduate	Student, teacher, call centre
7	Violet	44	Cis-Man	Gay	High School	Unemployed/ housekeeper
8	Forest Green	37	Cis-Woman	Lesbian	Undergraduate	Charity fundraiser/ mezze consultant, brand representative
9	Black	51	Trans Woman	Heterosexual	Secondary School	Not working, waitress, hostess, public officer
10	Dust Blue	35	Cis-Man	Gay	High School	Corporate sales
11	Turquoise	36	Queer	Bisexual	Undergraduate	Consultant in rights association, bank officer, service officer
12	Green	37	Agender	Lesbian	Undergraduate	Public officer
13	Olive Green	27	Queer	Bisexual	Undergraduate	Doctor in public sector
14	Emerald Green	22	Cis-Man	Gay	Secondary School	Seeking employment, cashier
15	Vermilion	30	Trans Woman	Heterosexual	High School	Sex worker, sales representative
16	Navy	24	Cis-woman	Lesbian	High School	Seeking employment, student, waitress, bartender
17	Cherry Red	30	Trans Woman	Heterosexual	Secondary School	Sex worker
18	Daisy Yellow	53	Trans Woman	Heterosexual	Secondary School	Singer, casual worker, hairdresser



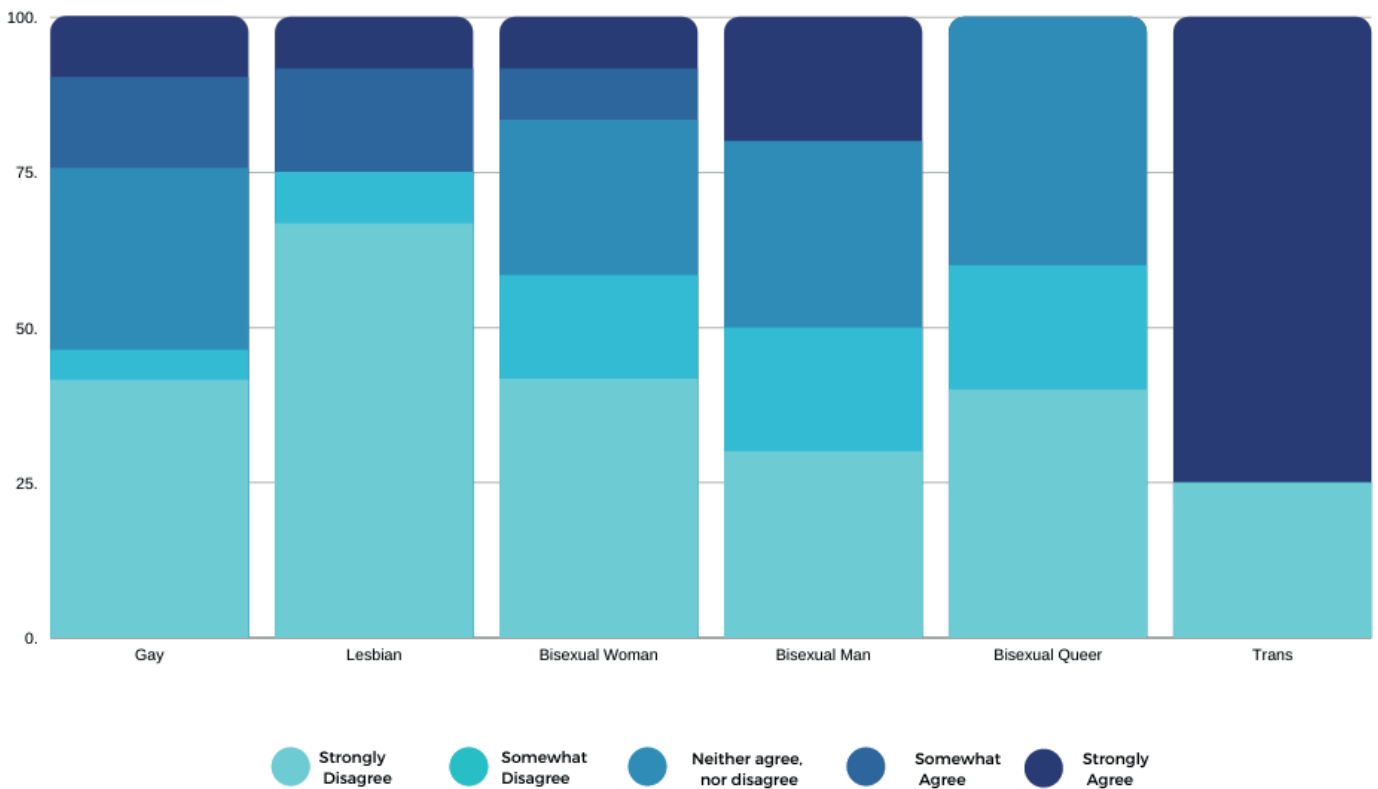
**Appendix 3:** Distribution of answers to the statement "I will lead or have led by choice of profession to fields where I thought I would be exposed to less discrimination (%)"



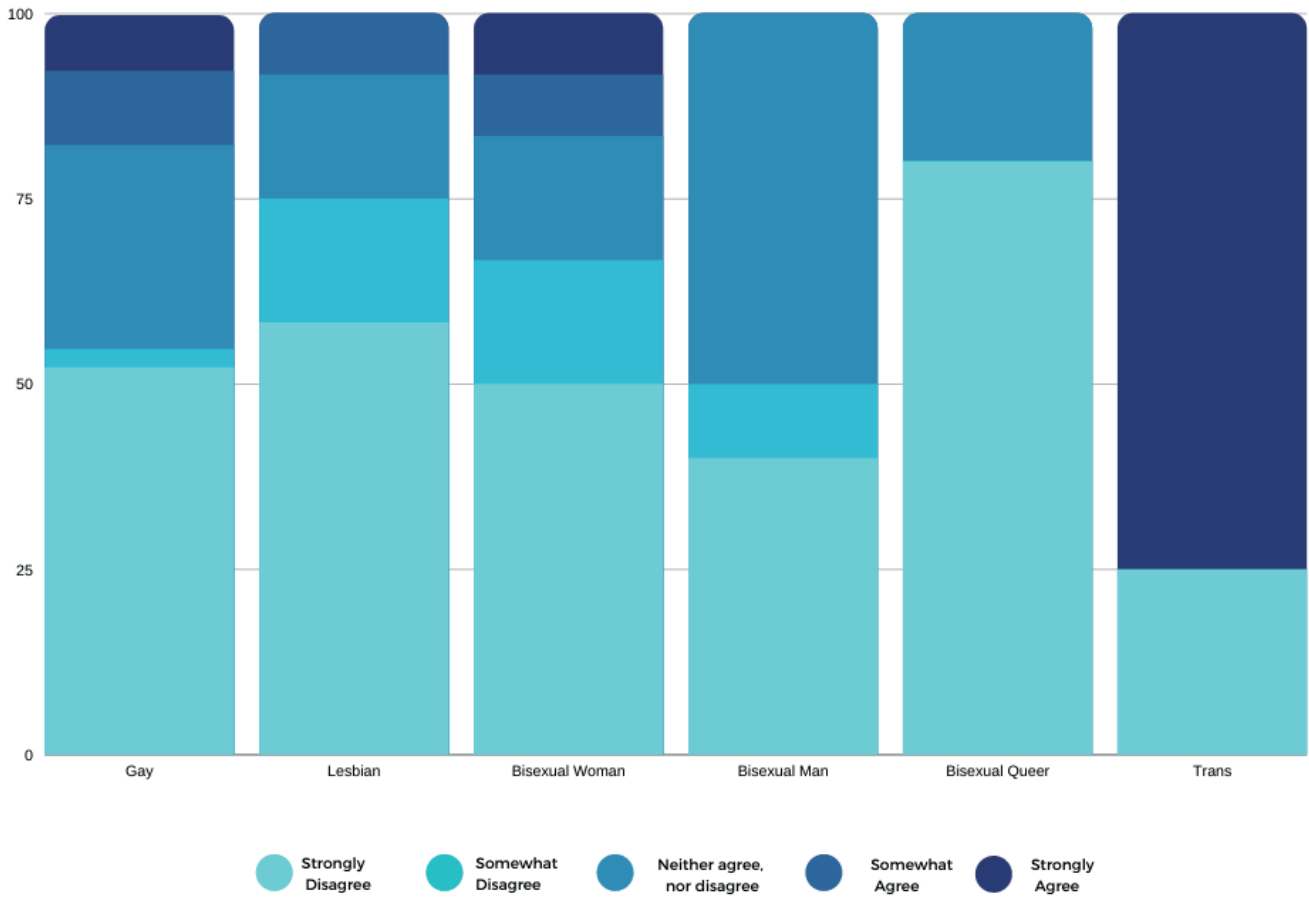
**Appendix 4:** Distribution of the statement "Employment opportunities of LGBTI+ are more limited" according to sexual orientation and gender identity (%)"



**Appendix 5:** Distribution of the statement "I was exposed to discrimination during my job-search process due to my LGBTI+ identity" according to sexual orientation and gender identity (%)



**Appendix 6:** Distribution of the statement "Job search duration lasted longer due to my LGBTI+ identity" according to sexual orientation and gender identity (%)



**Appendix 7:** Distribution of the statement “My job application was rejected due to my sexual orientation, gender identity and expression” according to sexual orientation and gender identity (%)



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