

SITUATION OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX EMPLOYEES IN PUBLIC SECTOR IN TURKEY

2019 RESEARCH



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Chapter 1

FOREWORD



This research has been conducted by the Kaos GL Association for private sector since 2015 and for public sector since 2017. The focus of the research is the hiring processes, general working conditions and personal experiences of discrimination of the LGBTI+ employees of different sectors. Since 2018 Kadir Has University Gender and Women's Studies Research Center has also been part of the team.

In 2019, there were 228 public sector and 772 private sector participants. In line with the findings of previous years, very few employees completely disclose their gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex situation in their workplaces. In previous research, we found that public sector LGBTI+ employees were less open compared to the private sector, but the results this year suggest that the ratios are quite similar. The fact that these employees are forced to hide their gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex situation in their workplaces is not only a violation of basic human rights but causes these individuals to hide their identity outside the office as well. The experiences both private and public sector shared relate the fact that these individuals cannot be open and this affects their productivity, creates a constant source of stress and negatively impacts their relationship with other employees.

Another experience of discrimination common for both public and private sector LGBTI+ employees is their inability to resist innuendos and "jokes" that force them to reveal their identities. They are also unable to seek justice through legal or executive channels. Even though very few establishments in the private sector have protective regulations, we lack national legislation that would prevent discrimination and regulate the work environment for LGBTI+ employees.

Our participants who are open regarding their LGBTI+ existence shared different situations of prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behavior. Unfortunately the research reveals that the majority of both public and private institutions in Turkey do not have adequate procedures and practices that meet the health and other needs of LGBTI+ individuals or protect them from the negative results of discrimination.

The fact that we do not have sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics within the prohibited categories of discrimination in the Constitution and

Labor Law creates the primary obstacle and the primary legal gap for LGBTI+ on the way to an equal citizenship. Most of our participants stated the need for legal and constitutional changes to prevent discrimination, which means it is only then they can feel comfortable and protected.

Results also show that working conditions also negatively affect the performance of the LGBTI+ employees, their peace in the workplace and their productivity. Even though discrimination based on gender identity or intersex status for those who disclose their identity is more obvious, even in closed cases comments, prejudices and innuendos prevent these employees from completely participate in labor and victimizes them.

Both public and private sector employees stated they often experience hate speech. Even though legally there is a distinction between hate speech and hate crimes, considering the results of hate speech in the workplace one can argue that it is also a hate crime. The answers given to open-ended questions by the LGBTI+ employees and their shared experiences of discrimination reveal that in most cases discrimination is based on behavior. The relationship between hate speech and hate crime is the fact that hate speech can easily be observed in one's behavior. Homosexuality as a stigmatized category, discrimination against sexual orientations other than heterosexuality and heteronormativity are social problems that were ignored by both government and in academic circles. Many studies, both in US and in Europe, consider the relationship between discrimination and violence within the definition of the concept of hate crime. This special form of discrimination is underlined. In Turkey, considering the high level of discriminatory violence towards LGBTI+ individuals, we need to deal with homophobia as a special form of violence. Hate crimes experienced in the workplace by LGBTI+ employees have direct negative impact, according to our results.

Hate crimes based on discrimination against sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics should be separated from hate crimes towards other group identities. According to the studies in this area, victims of such crimes face or would face this kind of attacks all their lives just because they are LGBTI+. These attacks do not necessarily happen predictively, as a consequence of other incidents, as is the case for hate crimes towards other groups. They are also not limited to the actual time of the attack, they also cover the period before and after the incident. Victims are generally harassed and threatened in advance, in most cases there are witnesses and most do not react or intervene. The personal experiences of our participants regarding discriminatory behavior at work supports these findings, showing us that hate crimes and discrimination experienced in everyday life continues at the workplace.

The results show us clearly the destructive nature of the problem that is mentioned above with its more important aspects. As employees from various sectors have pointed out, the most immediate solutions are “to prevent discrimination and hate crimes toward LGBTI+ by legal and constitutional changes” and “to organize awareness campaigns that aim a social transformation”. To be able to ban discrimination in work life we should fight discrimination at a societal level so that the whole society reaches a mental and ideological understanding to condemn discrimination and to build a democratic and legal system that would support it. This understanding would only be possible by making discrimination and hate crimes visible, by having a mental and behavioral determination to recognize and demonstrate them as a violation of human rights and as crimes and by having an appropriate legal system. As public and private sector LGBTI+ employees put it, this target can be received only through organization and awakening of all the employees and the society as a whole.

Prof. Dr. Melek Göregenli

İzmir, 2019

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a green pen, poised to write on a spiral-bound notebook. The background is softly blurred, showing the spiral binding and the texture of the paper. An orange rectangular overlay is positioned in the upper right quadrant, containing the chapter title.

Chapter 2

KEY FINDINGS

This is the 5th year that Kaos GL Association conducted research on the situation of private sector LGBTI+ employees in Turkey. As Kadir Has University Gender and Women's Studies Research Center, we are proud to be a part of this project for the past two years. We hope that this annual research will contribute this academic area by creating a large data pool, increasing both the quantity of research and its diversity. It will also help us generate new policies in terms of advocacy and the struggle for rights. We give importance to the empowering effect created by the cooperation between academy and activism. We especially consider academia's role, as one of the pillars of democratic society, and responsibility regarding the fight against discrimination.

This year's research had 228 participants who declared they are LGBTI+ and who work in a public institution. The survey was online and conducted using *SurveyMonkey Pro*. This year our sample consisted mainly of young people, who possessed a high school education or higher and who are in the labor force for a relatively short time. Eighty-one percent were between the ages of 18-35 and 90% were university graduate or higher. Among the participants, 65,8% have worked in their current workplace for less than 6 years. Similar to last year's research results, participants come from mostly education, academy and health sectors but our data also suggests that we have participants from other professions as well.

Among the participants, 62% declared their gender identity as male and 57% identified themselves as gay. These figures reveal that more than half of our sample are non-trans homosexual males. Compared to results from last year, there has been an increase in the number of those selecting the categories of "trans man", "trans". Those who chose "other" for gender identity has also increased from 2,3% to 5,7%. Those who chose "other" for their sexual orientation increased from 2,3% to 7,5%. Therefore, despite the majority of non-trans homosexual male participants, there is a higher representation of individuals who define themselves with terms other than those of the binary system of gender and sexuality.

An interesting finding in the last two years of our research is that the total percentage of women and trans women in terms of gender identity is lower than the total percentage of women employed in the State Personnel Administration. In 2018 31,5%, in 2019 35% of participants in the survey were women. According to State

Personnel Administration in 2018 38,5% of public employees were women. We can talk about the possible significance of these number when we conduct our analyses in the coming years.

Those who declared that they are completely open, regarding their identity, in the workplace were 4,4% of the sample this year. The same ratio was 17,4% in the private sector research that we conducted simultaneously. According to last year's findings the disclosure ratio was 22% in the private sector and 7% in the public sector. This decline can be explained by the increase in the number of participants and the number of sectors. In this way our sample is closer to our research universe, but we should see the results in the years ahead to confirm this.

In addition, the fact that the ratio of disclosure in terms of gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex situation is lower in the public sector relative to the private sector makes us think that LGBTI+ employees are at a greater risk for discrimination and hate speech.

According to the 2019 research, 95,6% of the LGBTI+ employees in the public sector are not completely open about their identity. Even so, out of the 96 who were completely closeted, 3 experienced discriminatory attitudes or practices during the hiring process and 4 in the workplace. Among participants, 67% witnessed hate speech towards LGBTI+. As far as we can see the public sector is far worse than the private sector when it comes to the reproduction of discrimination and hate speech.

Our study suggests that the rate of disclosure is even lower when it comes to hiring processes. Only 2,1% were completely open during these phase. Similar to last year, discrimination is a main obstacle for LGBTI+ employees in accessing employment in the public sector. They are forced to stay closeted to prevent the risk of unemployment. Since discrimination continues after employment the same strategy determines the rest of their work life. Closure is even more evident in the public sector compared to private companies. The fact that the ratio of those who are completely or partially open at the workplace is higher than those who are open during the hiring processes and that the ratio of total closure drops after the employment demonstrates that LGBTI+ employees can be more open about their identities if they have a safe environment depending on the conditions in the workplace, on the attitude of their colleagues and superiors. But, this is rarely the case in the public sector.

In 2019 only 3,6% of the participants declared that they experienced discriminatory attitudes, discourse, behavior or practices during the hiring processes. Nevertheless, 64,4% of the participants believe that they did not experience discrimination simply because their gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex situation is ei-

ther hidden or not obvious. At the same time, 11,8% of the participants experienced discrimination in their workplaces and 61,4% say they did not face discrimination because of their hidden or not visible gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex situation.

Taking these data into consideration, the ratio of experiencing discriminatory attitudes or practices during or after the hiring process is higher than the rate of disclosure during hiring or employment. Therefore, the forced strategy of closure does not always prevent discrimination in the public sector. Secondly, even though the rates of experiencing discrimination are low, we should keep in mind that out of every 2 out of 3 LGBTI+ employees applying for a job either experienced discrimination before and 3 out of 4 after the employment process. If they did not experience any discrimination in many cases it is because their gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex situation was hidden and they were taken for a heterosexual non-trans individual. We should also examine the ratio of those who did not face discrimination together with the ratio of those who were disclosed during the hiring processes or at the workplace. We should remember that only 2,1% were open during hiring and 4,4% while at work.

In 2011, the European Union Human Rights Commission issued a report on discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. According to that report, the strategy of remaining undisclosed that was developed by the LGBTI+ individuals against discrimination and harassment makes it more difficult to analyze the real level of homophobia and transphobia in the area of labor.¹ This statement is based on different research in different countries and according to our findings, it is also applicable to Turkey. It is also true that the minute this strategy is changed or no longer works, the risks become a real. Therefore, LGBTI+ individuals in Turkey are closed from the beginning of the hiring process to decrease the risk of discrimination and harassment.

Our research indicates that LGBTI+ employees working in the public sector cannot be disclosed in terms of gender identity, sexual orientation or gender qualities unless there is no risk of discrimination. In 2019, 5% of the participants declared they were partially or completely open during the hiring process and 4% experienced discriminatory acts and attitudes. These ratios go up to 23% and 12% respectively once the employee starts working. Looking only at these numbers, one might think that the fact that they are closed is a reason for the LGBTI+ employees to experience discrimination. But when we examine the answers of those who are open or partially open, their ratio of experiencing discrimination is far lower than the gen-

¹ European Council Commissioner for Human Rights, *Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe*, s. 166, 176.

eral ratios of the sample. Taking into consideration the answers to the open-ended questions, we can conclude that public sector LGBTI+ employees continue with the strategy of being closeted unless there is no risk of discrimination. When binary systems of heteronormative and cisnormative gender perceptions are strong, this strategy might not work because any kind of behavior, attitude or wording outside these gender roles might cause that person to be discriminated against.

Another fact that shows us the real dimensions of homophobia, transphobia and discrimination in Turkey is the low number of cases of discrimination that are reported through various legal mechanisms. Again, in line with the previous year, the 2019 public sector report reveals that LGBTI+ employees rarely make any official complaint in cases of discrimination. Out of 27 participants who experienced direct discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics, 13 never reported it, 8 reacted directly to the person in question or shared it with people around them while only 3 people reported to the institution verbally. One employee made a complaint to an NGO and 1 to a union or professional organization. Not even one individual took a case of discrimination to court. From the shared experiences we understand that LGBTI+ employees do not believe that they would have results through official channels. On the contrary, they are afraid of being even more victimized during the process, losing their jobs, experiencing hate speech abs prejudices and being disclose beyond their will.

The situation proves that LGBTI+ employees in Turkey need empowerment mechanisms both to access labor and during work. But our study tells us that in the public sector these mechanisms are either nonexistent or ineffective.

The percentage of those institutions that have rules and commissions to prevent discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics in their workplaces is 3,5% and 12,3% declared that these rules and commissions exist but they are not effectively run. When it comes to discriminatory rules and practices LGBTI+ employees gave us different examples. They are not able to benefit from the social rights that accompany marriage and family as it is the case within the heteronormative interpretations. Some aspects of Law no: 657 regarding public officials can be interpreted in a discriminatory manner. Public sector employees also mentioned transfers and blocking promotions that can be interpreted as a kind of exiling.

Our research indicates that the closedness strategy that LGBTI+ employees are forced to employ prevents them from building communication and solidarity networks within the community. Only 7% mentioned these kinds of networks and 4,8% are aware of these networks but they are not part of it. Only 9% of these individuals are completely open in the workplace. Public employee LGBTI+ are rarely members

of a union or professional organization and even when they are members, they do not see these organizations as the locus for the fight against discrimination. Only 33,8% of our participants are members of a union, which is lower than the rate of membership for all public employees. In addition, only 10% are members of a professional organization. Even though the ratio of being closed in the organization is higher than the one in the workplace, it is still below 12%. As mentioned above only 1 of those who experienced discrimination reported the case to a union or a professional organization. In addition, to the question regarding measures to prevent discrimination against LGBTI+, only 22% mentioned organized resistance and solidarity networks. These findings prove that unions and professional organizations have a central role in preventing discrimination towards LGBTI+ and empowering employees. These organizations should prioritize the development of policies regarding LGBTI+ members. Unfortunately, in 2016 the International Labor Organization (ILO) published findings of its Honor Project where they note that the economic and social rights of the LGBTI+ are no priority for unions, Turkey is no exception.

The same report also indicates that LGBTI+ are the major group to experience discrimination and harassment, that job seeking LGBTI+ are closed about their gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex situation as a strategy which continues during the employment. According to ILO study disclosed LGBTI+ employees suffer less from anxiety, depression and burnout syndrome, and in order to provide these working conditions workplaces should implement supportive and inclusive policies.²

All these conclusions are in line with the findings of our research. According to our participants LGBTI+ employees use closedness as a strategy to avoid risks of discrimination and hate speech, which in turn prevents them from building close relationships with their colleagues, generates feelings of hopelessness, sadness, anxiety and anger. These employees often have trouble with a sense of belonging, they underperform due to a lack of motivation, but they also experience burnt out and depression because of psychological and physical stress they experience every day. Their productivity and job satisfaction drop drastically. Since in modern society, we spend most of our days in our workplaces, the impact of such conditions are even more evident.

Even though being closed provides some protection, many LGBTI+ feel that being forced to stay closed is a violation of their rights. Generally, all LGBTI+ employees are certain that they will be discriminated against, therefore they take measures

² International Labour Organization, *Gender identity and sexual orientation: promoting rights, diversity and equality in the world of work, Results of the ILO's PRIDE Project, Briefing note*, s. 1, 2, 3.

from the beginning and hide their identity or only share it with close colleagues or other LGBTI+. This way they create clear boundaries between their private and work lives and in some cases, they enter a different role in terms of the way they talk, their body language or expressions of gender. This constant state of cautiousness becomes a permanent kind of discrimination in and of itself and has heavy psychological and sometimes physical effects on the individual.

Open-ended questions reveal that the biggest issue for the LGBTI+ employees is freedom and visibility. According to our participants the condition for that are social awareness and running mechanisms of a protective legal system.

In conclusion, there are measures to be taken to prevent discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation, to transform the disadvantages of LGBTI+ employees to access employment and to establish equality in terms of social and economic rights. There are discussions to be made in order to create legal policies, institutional policies and strategies for the NGOs.

Prof. Dr. Mary Lou O'Neil and Dr. Reyda Ergün

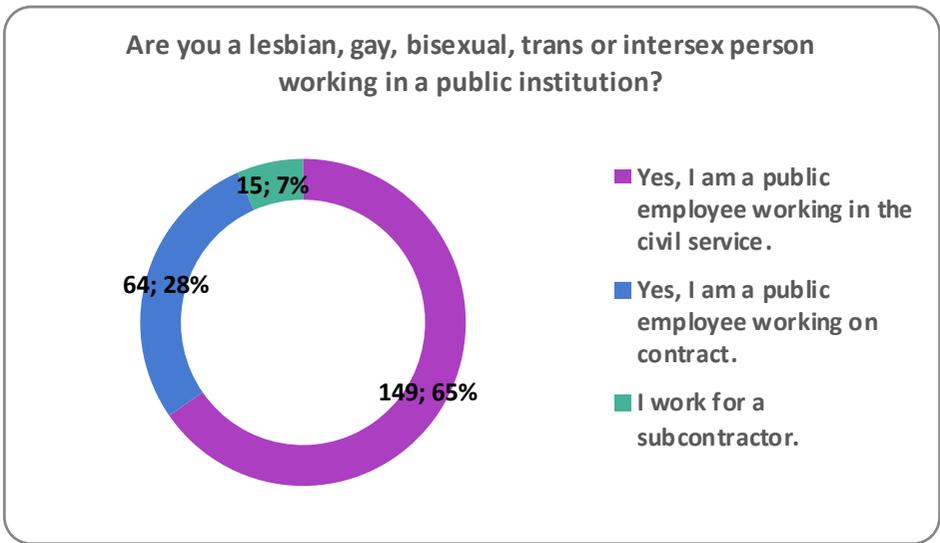
Chapter 3

SITUATION OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS AND INTERSEX EMPLOYEES IN PUBLIC SECTOR IN TURKEY – 2019



1. Research Sample

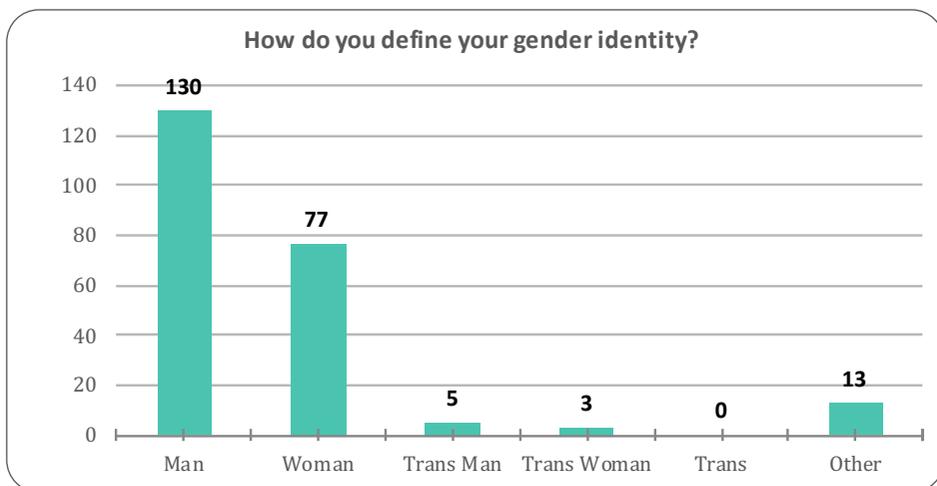
Our survey is conducted using SurveyMonkey Pro. The sample consisted of 228 individuals who declared themselves to be lesbian, gay, bisexual trans or intersex. In the sample, 149 individuals (65,35%) work as public employees, 64 (28,07%) work on contract and 15 (6,58%) work under a subcontractor.



In this year’s survey, 198 of the participants (86,84%) stated that they had not participated in the research previously, 18 people (7,89%) said they do not remember participating and 12 (5,26%) participated previous years’ surveys.

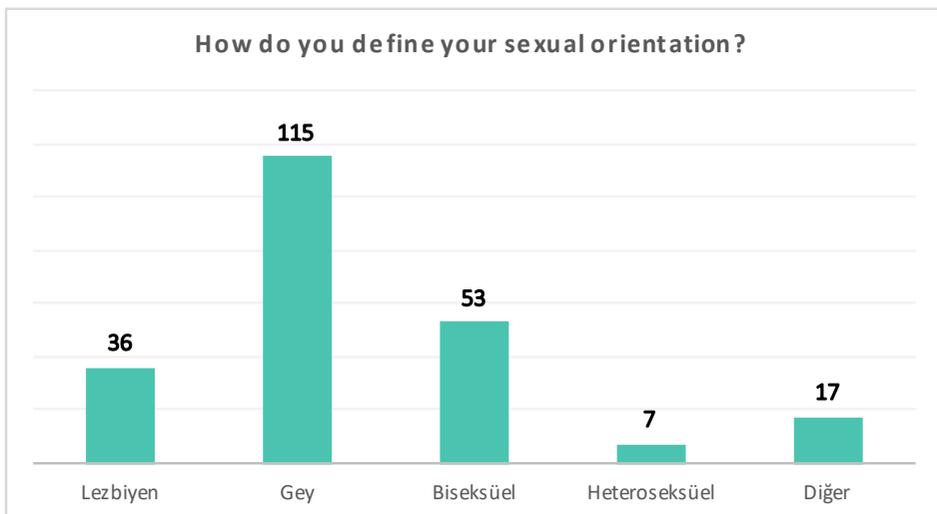
1.1. Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status

Our survey included two question regarding sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex situations. Most of the participants responded as “Man” or “Woman” while chose “Trans Man” or “Trans Woman” or the category of “other”.



Others: Hermaphrodite, I don't want to specify, Queer, I define myself as a Woman, Gayx2, Gender Fluid, I don't definex2, I don't know, Anima, Gay Man, There should be an option as "I don't want to define", Bisexual but mostly Gay, Trans

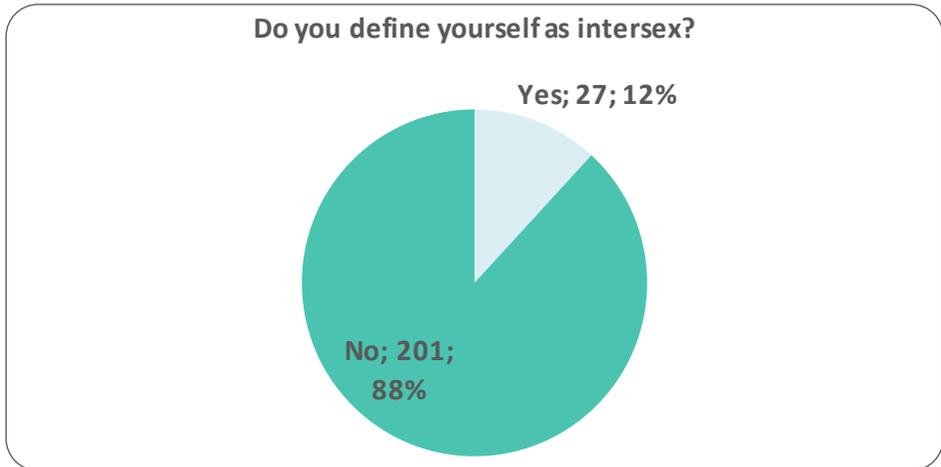
Examining the answers regarding sexual orientation, the largest group are those who identified as gays, followed by bisexuals and lesbians.



Others: Pansexualx7, I don't want to specify, Asexual x2, Active, Undefined, Panlesbian, I don't define, Normal, Gay, I don't know, I might be a gay who is in Ace spectrum. +.

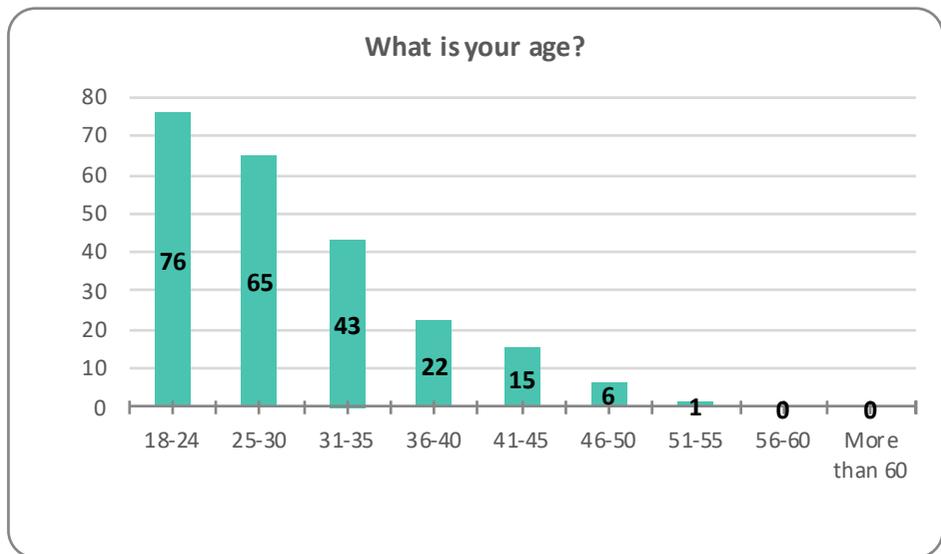
From the sample of 228 people, 57,02% (130 people) stated their gender as male while 115 people (50,44%) declared their sexual orientation as gay. Therefore, the majority of the sample consists of non-trans gay individuals.

To the question “Do you define yourself as intersex?” 27 people (11,84%) said “Yes” and 201 people (88,16%) said “No”. Of the 27 positive answers, 13 defined themselves as male, 11 as female, and 3 as other. Regarding sexual orientation, there were 8 bisexuals, 9 gays and 6 who stated their sexual orientation as other.

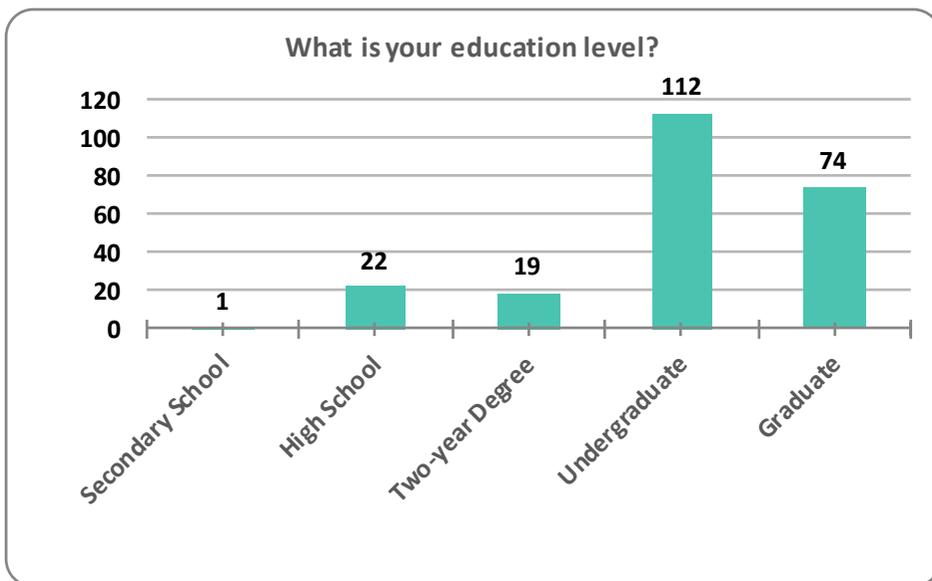


1.2. Age and Education Level of the Participants

The age distribution of the sample is reflected in the chart below. Reflecting a relatively young sample, 33,33% of the participants are between 18-24 years of age and 80,70 % are between 18-35 years of age.



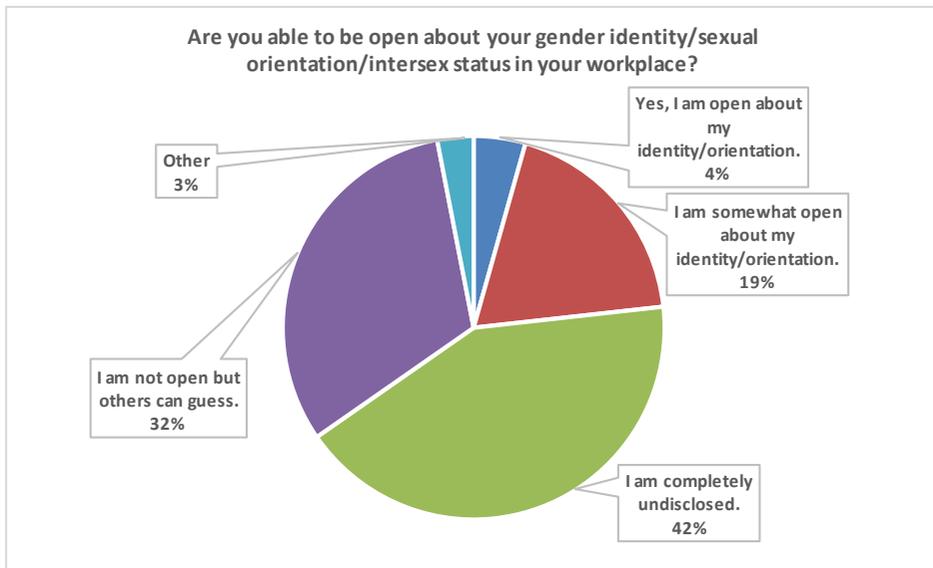
The table below shows the level of education of the survey participants. Half of the sample (49,12%) are university graduates and 32,5% have received graduate education.



1.3. Disclosure in the Workplace in Terms of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Intersex Status

To the question “do you think you can disclose your gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex status at your workplace?” To this, 96 participants (42,11%) answered as “I am completely undisclosed” while 43 people (18,86%) are partially open and only 10 people (4,39%) are completely open in terms of gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex. There are 72 people (31,50%) that believe they are assumed to be LGBTI+ even though they have not disclosed their identity. As you can see, the lowest percentage is the group that is completely disclosed. Another interesting fact is the high ratio of those who believed their identity is already known by others despite the fact they were not the ones to disclose their identity.

According to the findings of the research conducted by Kaos GL and Kadir Has University Gender and Women’s Studies Research Center about private sector employees in 2019, participants stating they are “completely open” were only 17% of the total. Comparing the two results, one can conclude that in the private sector it is somewhat easier to be open about one’s gender identity/orientation. The State, as an employer, should be in line with international agreements and national regulations that prevent discrimination, therefore current situation is of concern.

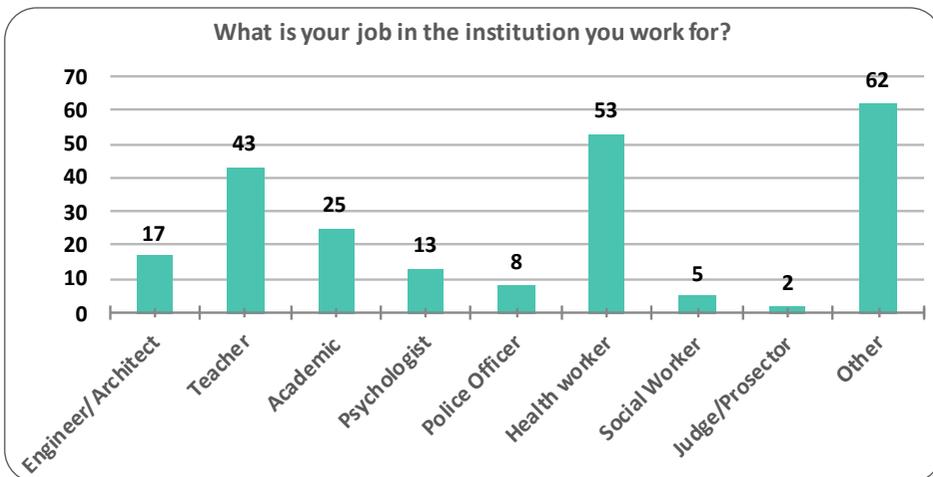


Other: To avoid the abasement I don't come out, I am open to my close friends at work place, I behave unbalanced, No, Just some of my co-workers know – I am also friends with them out of the office, I have no tendency like this, I am open to LGBTQ individuals.

Another interesting result are the answers from those who are completely hidden in their workplaces regarding personal experiences of discrimination, discrimination towards others and hate speech. According to answers from the 96 individuals hiding their identity/orientation, 3 revealed they had faced discriminatory behavior, 4 faced direct discrimination and 64 (67%) witnessed hate speech.

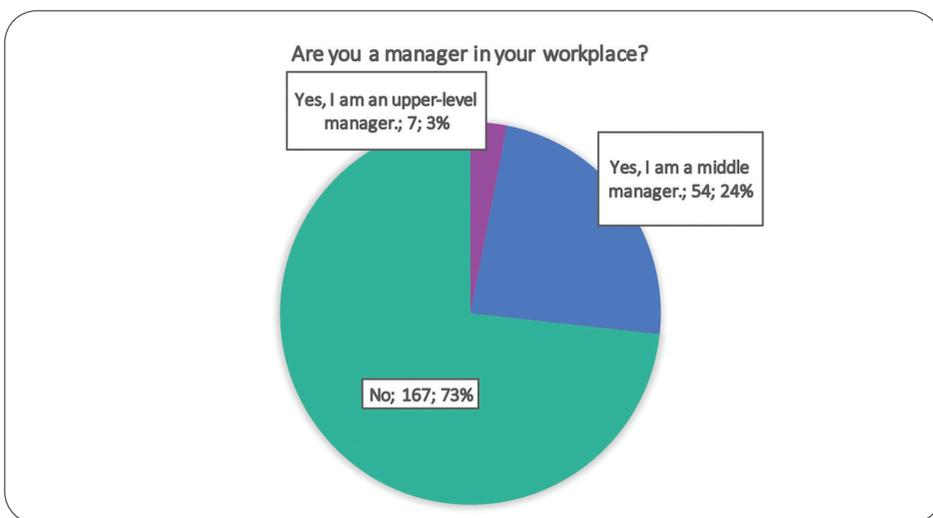
1.4. Specialties of the Employees

The sample consisted of LGBTI+ employees from different institutions and occupying many positions. Below is a table relating the distribution of participants according to their position. As you can see, most work in the education or health sectors (43 teachers, 25 scholars, 13 psychologist/psychiatrists and 58 health officers). This year one-fourth of the participants (53 people, 23,25%) defined their position as health personnel and the group “other” is the most populous with 63 people, 27,19%). This year there is more diversity in the sample in terms of positions held. Considering the increase in the number of participants, it would appear that both visibility and spectrum of the research has increased over the last five years.



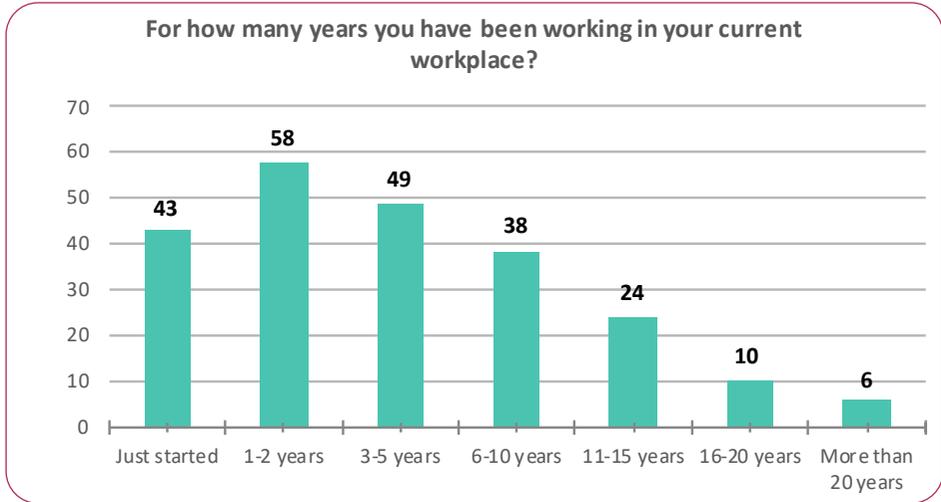
Others: I don't want to specify, Grapher, Diplomat, Cook, Data Recorder, Student x5, Barista, Guardian, Reserve Officer, Aviator, Pollster, Civil Servant x10, Laboratory, Hairdresser, Actor / (I also am at the top brass because it is half- collective), family business, Banker, Translatorx2, Nurse, Public Relations, Embryologist, Specialist Museum Registrar, Tourism, Warehouse Employee, Textile Supplier, Sociologist, Office Staffx2, Commissioned Officer-Unit Head, Head of Administrative Unit, Municipal Police, Contractual Expert, Data Origination-Control Operator, Veterinarian, Educator, Coordinator at City Council, Executive at Cultural Centre, Social Media Specialist, Expertx2, Career Official, Technical Staff, Employee, Unknownx4

To the question “Are you an executive in the institution where you work?” 167 people (73,25%) answered as “no” and only 7 people (3,07%) declared they were high level executives. Only 2 of those high-level executives are open regarding their gender identity/orientation in their workplaces while 2 others believe their identity is assumed by others. Out of 54 mid-level executives only 3 are open about their identity/orientation.



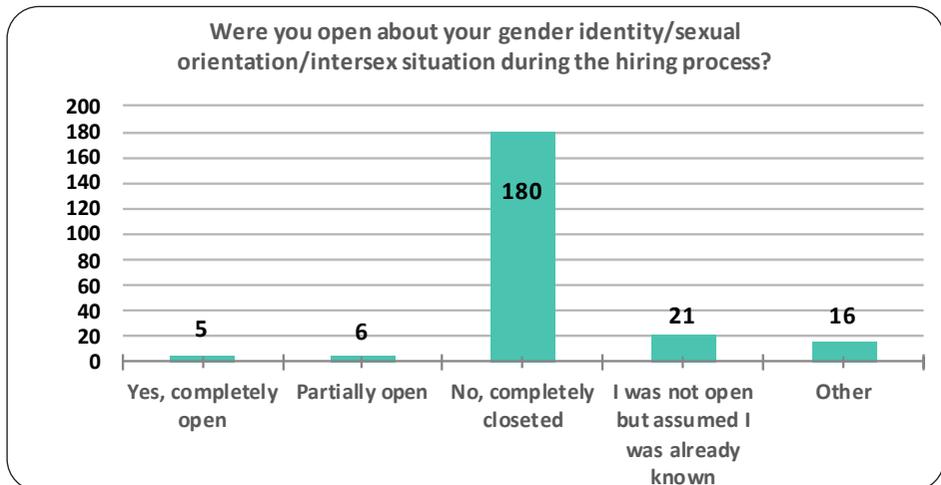
1.5. Duration of Employment In the Current Workplace

Similar to the research results in previous years, most of the participants have worked in their current workplace between 1-5 years. A majority (150 people) have worked in the same place for 5 years or more (65,79%) while 60% of those working 2 years or less are between 18-24 years of age.



2. Assessments Regarding the Hiring Process

Another question we asked our participants was “Did you disclose your gender identity/ sexual orientation/ intersex situation during the hiring process?” Only 5 participants (2,12%) declared they were open during the hiring process and 6 people were partially open (2,63%). The majority (79%) did not disclose their identity/orientation.



The “other” option also includes those hired through KPSS or who were appointed to their position. Some also explained why they remained undisclosed during the hiring process.

“Definitely no, I would be treated as a pervert the minute I said I was a lesbian” (lesbian female working as a graphic designer).

“I was afraid I wouldn’t be hired...” (lesbian female health personnel).

“In my previous workplaces I was alienated because of that” (queer teacher).

“They asked if I was going to get married. They took me for a cis-hetero probably. I said I did not think about it” (woman teacher who doesn’t know her sexual orientation).

2.1. Experiences of Discrimination during the Hiring Process

Another question to our LGBTI+ employees was “During the hiring process have you experienced any discriminatory attitude, discourse, behavior or application due to your gender identity/ sexual orientation/intersex situation?” The fact that 40,79% or 93 people answered as “no because I hide my identity” shows clearly that LGBTI++ individuals fear discrimination regarding their access to employment in the public sector.



As one can see, most of the respondents felt the need to hide their gender identity during the hiring process or at the beginning of their new job to avoid being a victim of discrimination.

At the same time, 23,25% or 53 participants in the sample believe they did not experience discrimination not because there is no such risk but because “their gender identity is not obvious”. Therefore, these LGBTI+ employees acknowledge the potential for discrimination and start their new position with this in mind.

“Even the law itself is discriminatory under the terminology ‘general morals’. And when I started teaching, I was constantly reminded that I was a teacher and I had to behave like a lady. They kept saying that I had to have longer hair” (bisexual female teacher).

“I had a genital exam. I think they checked if I had any intercourse” (gay policeman).

“It is not possible to do that in Turkey. They will stigmatize you and find a way to fire you. I have not experienced such things because I was closed. I have because not being able to disclose is also discriminatory” (gay male health personnel).

“I signed documents saying ‘being a homosexual is a reason to be dismissed’” (gay male military officer).

Law No: 657 regarding state officials is full of discriminatory discourse and attitude. They even told me not to keep my hair that short because I am a teacher” (bisexual female teacher).

During the hiring process participants experienced different levels and forms of discrimination. This finding was similar to last year where discrimination in the job application and interview processes was evident. There is also a social reality that has to be considered in this matter. LGBTI+ employees are aware of possible discrimination during interviews and job applications so they take a series of precautions in advance related to their sexual orientation and gender identity. Some of these precautions continue after the application and during work. To hide one’s identity completely, to be self-conscious about one’s look, body language and other characteristics are perhaps a heavier burden in comparison to a discriminatory experience that has a start and an end.

2.2. Reporting Discrimination during the Hiring Process

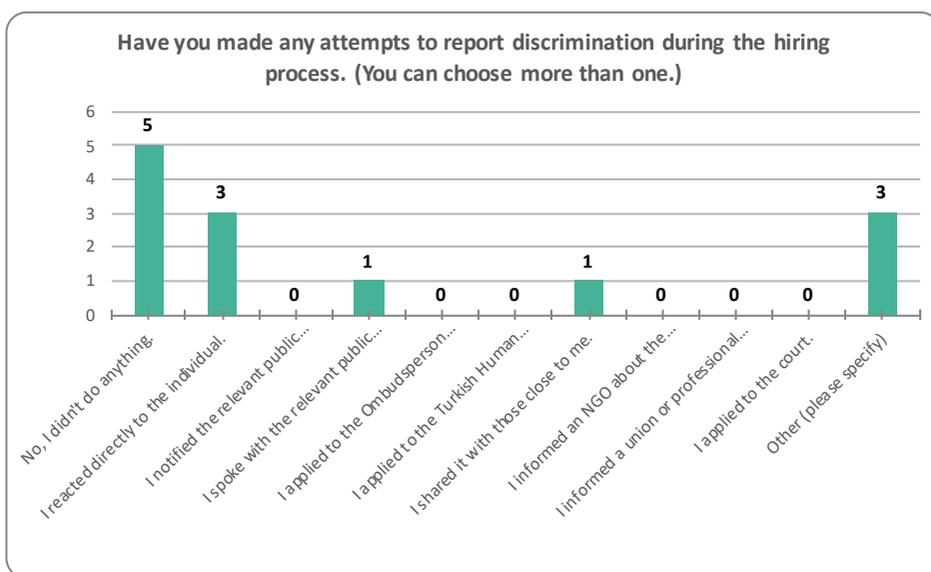
Out of 228 LGBTI+ employees participating our research in 2019, only 9 stated that they experienced discrimination during the admission process. For those who experienced discrimination we also asked if they reported that discrimination. Participants were able to choose more than one answer. As you can see on the table the most common answer is negative in that they did not report the discriminatory event (5 people). You can see below the answers of 3 people who choose the answer “other”.

“I did, partially” (trans asexual male psychologist).

“I sent him to god” (queer active teacher).

“I cut my hair shorter. Almost number 3. One they I was dressed 2like a man’, the other ‘like a woman’. I protested. I would report if I knew that was mobbing back then” (bisexual female teacher).

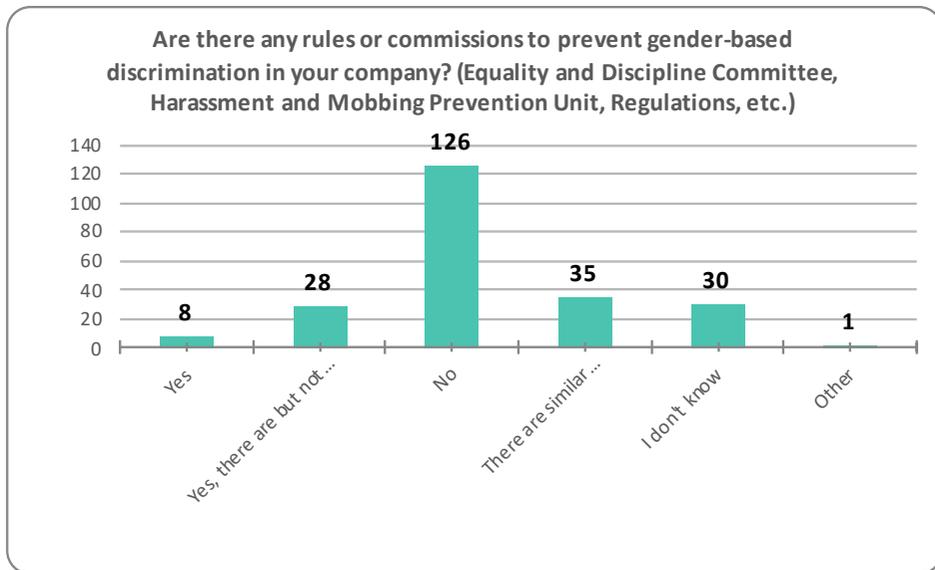
Of these participants, three said they reacted directly to the person in question and 5 of them never did anything. Only 1 person shared their experience with a government official. The finding can be interpreted as LGBTI+ individuals lack trust at Ombudsperson Institution, Turkish Human Rights and Equality Institution and other public institutions and NGOs. They do not believe these institutions will have any effect.



3. Institutional Protection against Discrimination

“To the question “Are there any rules or commissions to prevent discrimination based on gender identity/sexual orientation/intersex situation in your institution?” 8 participants (3,51%) responded positively and 28 participants said “yes but not known”. Similar to previous years’ findings, a large percentage (126 people/ 55,26%) of participants declared there are no rules or commissions to prevent discrimination.

At the same time, 35 participants (15,35%) stated there were rules or commission to prevent discrimination but they did not include gender identity/sexual orientation/intersex situation. A significant number of employees (30 people / 13,16%) said they were unaware of such rules or commissions.

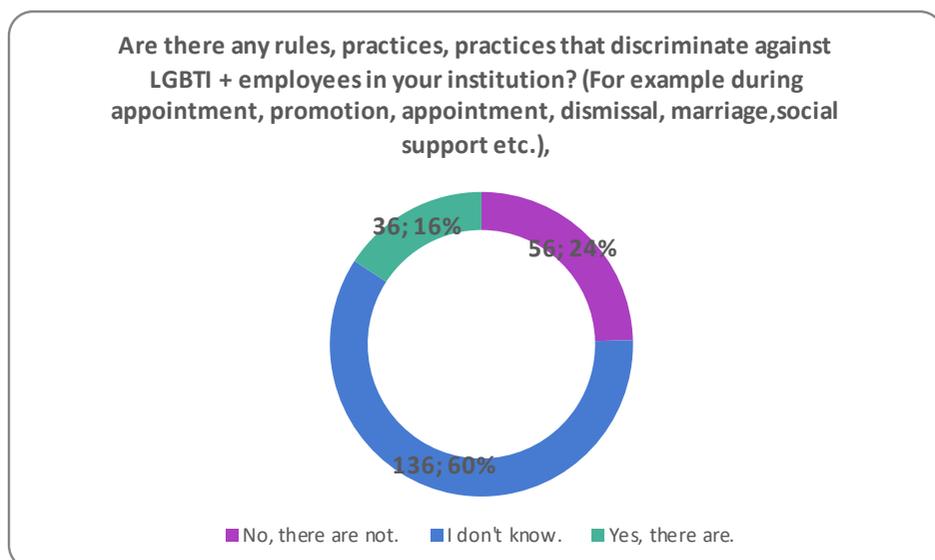


The data shows that in the public sector in Turkey, there are no mechanisms to prevent employees from being discriminated against based on their gender identity/sexual orientation/intersex situation. In some rare cases when mechanisms do exist, their effect is debatable. In fact, it is not enough to simply have these mechanisms but there also needs to be a belief and understanding that they would protect LGBTI+ individuals and that they work effectively.

3.1. Rules and Commissions that Cause Discrimination

Another question we asked our participants was “Are there any rules, practices or applications that would cause discrimination towards LGBTI+ individuals?”

Examining the answers, one of the most important findings is that 136 people (59,65%) are unaware of such a fact. This finding is similar to previous years. 59 people (24,56%) declared there are no such rules or applications in their institutions and 36 people (15,79%) stated that there were in fact such practices that cause discrimination.



As quotes below relate, most of the participants pointed out similar facts: terms like “general morals” are used against LGBTI+ persons, there is hate speech in the workplace, LGBTI+ individuals do not have access to the privileges of married couples, their identity might be disclosed against their will, it is difficult to get promoted and there is always a risk of being fired or transferred.

“When appointing to foreign countries instead of high-standard place like Europe, we are sent to low-standard places like Africa” (lesbian female diplomat).

“In any kind of close same sex relationship they report me to the director and I get a warning” (lesbian female academic personnel).

“Appointments, social right, privileges of being married. We get married as well but we will never benefit those. In this male dominant institution there are reserves against female but I don't think there is any awareness regarding LGBTI+” (lesbian female architect/engineer).

“Since we cannot get legally married we do not have appointments due to partner or protection of family unity regulations. We do not get the day of when your spouse or your spouse’s close relative dies, for example” (lesbian female health personnel).

“Law no: 657 general morals can get you fired” (bisexual female teacher).

“They fire claiming we are bad example for children” (lesbian female teacher).

“Cannot get promoted” (gay male intern).

“I am an LGBTI+ individual fired because of homophobia” (gay male in law enforcement).

“There are applications like change of workplace” (bisexual male in health).

“When you are a public official, marital situation between men and women are based on declaration. So if you are an LGBTI+ and you are away from the person in your life, that’s not a problem for the state. Many hetero couples use these rules to have an obligatory service in a nice place. But no one cares for a lonely LGBTI+ that struggles alone” (bisexual male medical doctor).

“None of the support given to hetero relationship is given to homosexual relationships” gay male psychologist/counselor).

“I am a teacher and if I would disclose myself there would be parents who would ask to take their kids away from my class. In that case the school administration would think they were right and let them transfer their kids. This attitude supports the discriminatory understanding” (gay male teacher).

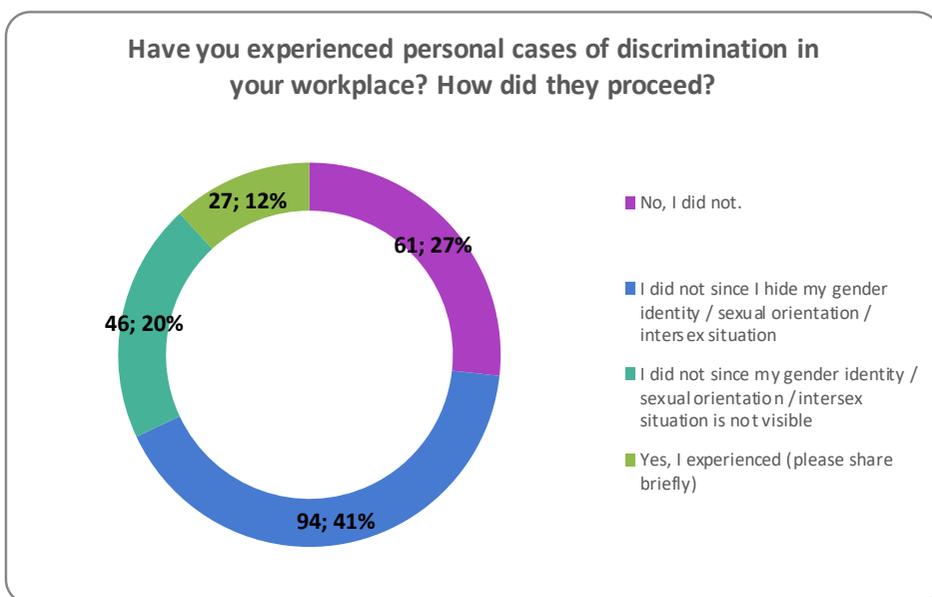
“In this country, if you declare that you are homosexual, you will be dismissed let alone being promoted. They would use excuses like ‘life style not suitable for a public office’. We have seen these things” (gay male specialist).

“There is an unwritten rule that says the person to be appointed to a foreign country cannot have homosexual orientations” (lesbian female expert).

The participants pointed out that there are different levels of discriminatory behavior and regulations. Since their sexual orientation and gender identity are not recognized legally, they cannot benefit from various rights that other employees can. Social rights that come with marriage become a tool for discrimination that excludes LGBTI+ automatically. Promotion and assignment processes are also used as mechanisms of punishment and threats. The idea of “general morals” is a discriminatory ideology not only in workplace but in society in general and apart from discrimination it helps exclusion and stigmatization of LGBTI+s.

4. Experiences of In-House Discrimination

To the question “Have you ever experienced any discriminatory attitude, discourse, behavior or application because of your gender identity/sexual orientation/intersex situation?” we received answers in the table below. To this question, 27 people (11,84%) said “yes, I have” while 94 people (41,23%) said they did not experience any discrimination because of their gender identity/sexual orientation/intersex situation is not disclosed. Forty-six people (20,18%) said they did not experience discrimination because their gender identity/sexual orientation/intersex situation is not visible and only 61 people (26,75%) answered the question negatively).



When we try to assess all the answers, 73% of the participants either experienced direct discrimination (11,84% or 27 people) or had to hide identity to prevent discrimination (41,23% or 94 people). We should also consider that in cases “when gender identity was not disclosed” (20,18% or 46 people) the identity was hidden. Another finding of our research is that LGBTI+ employees not only witness discrimination through their colleagues but also through people they serve. Below you will find some the examples of discriminatory behavior or discourse:

“Even a small connection with the same sex is interpreted the wrong way and my colleagues started avoiding me, they started looking me in a weird way in the toilet” (lesbian female academic).

"I get innuendos, like why my hair is so short, just meaningless questions really" (heterosexual trans male teacher).

"We are cruuuuushed!" (active queer teacher).

"A professor yelled at me 'What kind of a laughter is that, are you a homo' in front of the students" (gay male academic personnel)

"A disciplinary action is currently going on, I might get dismissed from my profession" (pansexual female in law enforcement).

"My behavior or my reaction to certain things, despite the fact that I control myself (or have to) can be considered as gay and be ridiculed" (gay male academic personnel).

"I think maybe it's rude and lack moral ground, but a very shallow male teacher told me once 'you are a little too delicate, professor'. I know he did not intend to praise me with that phrase. His voice, his insinuation meant a lot. We had a small disagreement with him in the past. You know when sometimes your energy does not match. He was secretly competing with me. Since we were both in the same subject, it was inevitable. Since I did my job as well as I can I did not give him or the management any leverage. But after a while he started mobbing me with my gender identity. They were little bites. I manage to survive being tough all the time" (gay male teacher).

"Mentality a la Turca. In all the places I work heteros make hand jokes. Since you are single at a certain age and intellectual, they think you might be gay and start making fun of it. It doesn't bother me really, I am not the type that loses the sleep over everything" (gay male in law enforcement).

"I cannot be assigned for a while now" (gay male instructor).

"When I had a disagreement, somebody used the word 'homo' so that everybody could hear" (gay male health personnel).

"I experience discrimination, from top to bottom, everyday" (health personnel who does not want to determine a gender identity).

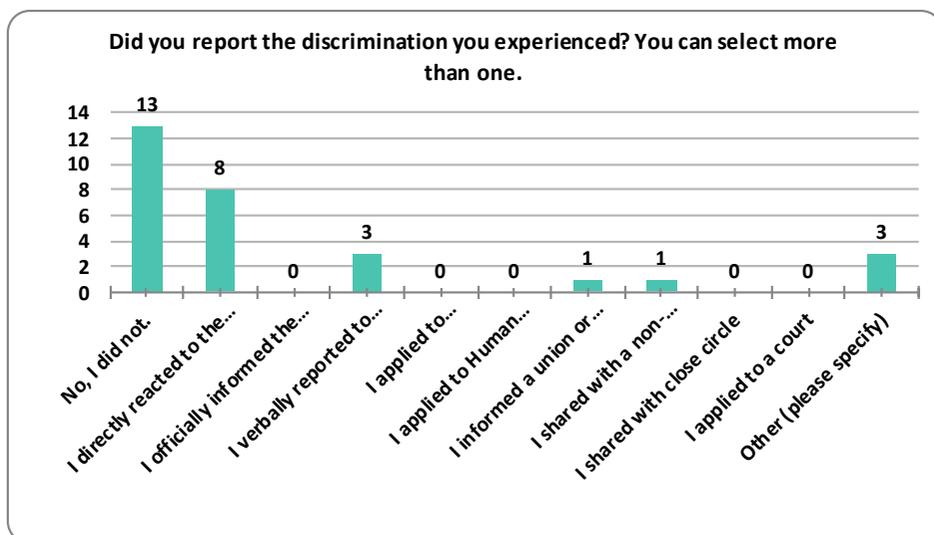
"I have experienced after I opened myself. I am still but I manage it" (gay male social servant).

"They make castrato jokes next to me. I talked to my union, had the consent and attacked him verbally" (gay male architect/engineer).

According to testimonies our participants were almost forced to disclose their identity when it was hidden, and they had to live under constant discrimination.

4.1. Reporting Discrimination in Workplace

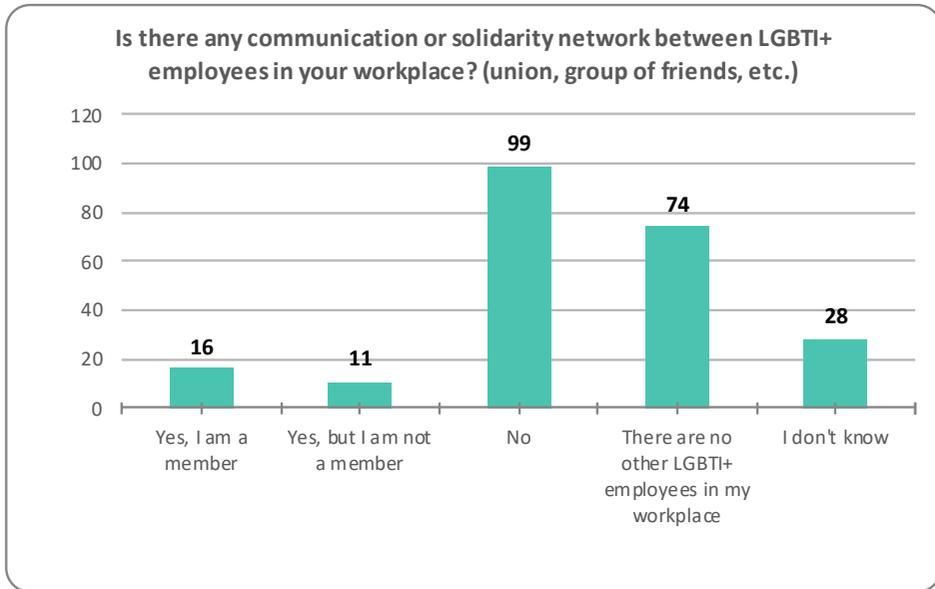
We asked the question “Did you report any kind of discrimination you experienced?” When assessing the answers to this question one should keep in mind that most of the LGBTI+ individuals in the public sector have hidden or partially hidden their gender identity/sexual orientation /intersex situation. As you can see from the following table, victims of discrimination never went to the court. None of them gave a written notice inside the institution or consulted Ombudsperson Institution and Turkish Human Rights and Equality Institution. There are no official complaints inside the institution in any of these cases. In a total of 27 cases, 13 individuals did not report at all, 8 reacted to the person in question and only 1 reported it to the union and 1 to an NGO.



5. Witnessing Discrimination towards Other LGBTI+ Employees

5.1. Communication and Solidarity Networks for the LGBTI+ Employees

“Are there any communication or solidarity networks between LGBTI+ persons in your workplace?” was the question asked, and the answers point out to how weak is the possibility. Where 99 people (43,42%) responded negatively, 28 people (12,28%) said they did not know and 74 people (32,46%) believe there are no other LGBTI+ individuals in the institution were they work.



As you can see from the table, only 16 people (7,02%) said there such networks existed and that they are also part of it where 4,28% said they were not part of the existing networks.

In fact, the public sector should support official and special “social inclusion groups” that would protect and strengthen LGBTI+ individuals against violations of rights related to labor, help LGBTI+ solidarity, advocate their existence and fight against the high level of discrimination in society. Public institutions’ current gender equality, social inclusion and human rights units should be re-designed within such a framework. Unions have similar duties as well. Unions that support public sector should regulate their commissions, create new structures and policies.

5.2.Experiences of Discrimination towards Other LGBTI+ Employees

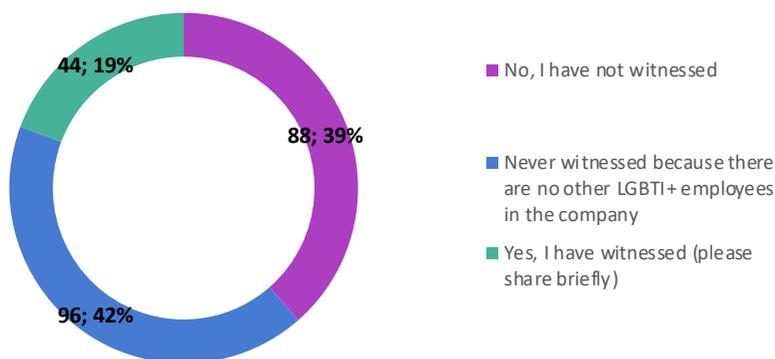
The question regarding was “Have you witnessed any kind of discriminatory discourse, behavior or attitude towards other LGBTI+ employees in your workplace?” to which 88 people (38,60%) responded negatively while 96 people (42,11%) believe the reason why they did not witness such behavior is because there are no other LGBTI+ individuals working in the same place. To the same question, 44 people (19,30%) said they were witnesses of such situations. We should interpret these answers keeping in mind that in many institutions there are LGBTI+ employees with undisclosed identities.

“They believe in incredible myths regarding LGBTI++ individuals. They think some of the trans and gay individuals are the way they are because they were abused during their childhood. They think they would have a negative effect on the kids they adopt” (pansexual female academic personnel).

“I had a girlfriend. She said she liked boys because men were bothering her. Then they started teasing her asking how she had sex” (lesbian female prosecutor).

“I have seen discriminatory behavior towards trans people” (gay male in law enforcement).

Have you witnessed any kind of discriminatory attitude, discourse or application towards other LGBTI+ in your company?



“People had doubts about this feminine friend. A homophobic person asked him about his ID if it was pink or blue” (gay male social servant).

“I had this friend who was open about gender identity to certain people. Later I heard people making jokes about that person, especially in sexual content” (gay male academic personnel).

“I have heard people cursing. Psychological harassments, you see many things, but you don't have the courage to say anything. Being abused or rapes for being a homosexual or being labelled as a pervert. And many other things...” (bisexual female in PR).

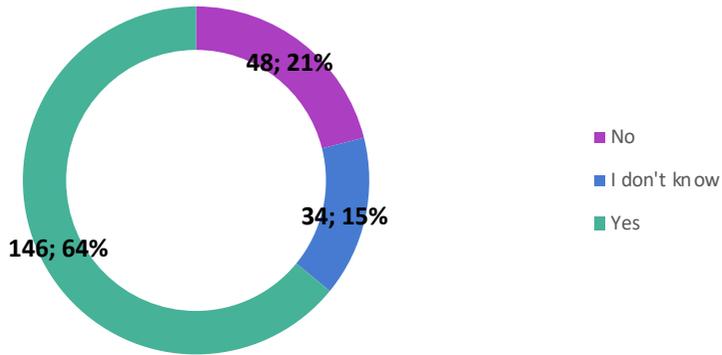
“Many people I work with label anything outside the binary heteronormative gender system as perversion or sickness” (bisexual female public official).

"I hear people call that person "fragile" or "softy". I stood by as long as I could" (gay male teacher).

"I heard people slander about two LGBTI++ individuals being in a relationship. They were also mobbed" (bisexual female health personnel).

"Discrimination that looks like a positive one" (gay male health personnel).

Have you ever witnessed any hate speech against LGBTI+?



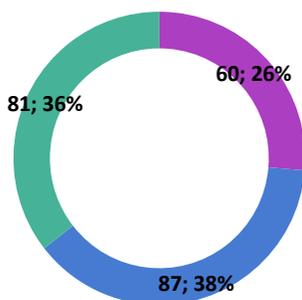
6. Hate Speech against LGBTI+ People

To the question "Have you heard hate speech against LGBTI+ individuals in the workplace?" 48 people (21,05%) answered negatively, 146 participants (64,04%) said they heard hate speech and 34 others (14,91%) say they did not know.

7. The Relationship between Discrimination, Job Satisfaction and Efficiency

In order to understand the relationship between discrimination, efficiency and satisfaction, we asked the question "Regarding you gender identity/sexual orientation /intersex situation how does attitudes, discourses, behaviors or applications you experience or might experience affect your efficiency and satisfaction in your workplace?" According to the results, different forms of discrimination that people suffer or might suffer at work have a negative effect on their efficiency and satisfaction. This effect manifests itself in different ways.

How do the circumstances that you encounter or might encounter due of your gender identity / sexual orientation / intersex situation affect your productivity and work satisfaction?



■ It does not effect ■ I don't know ■ It affects (please specify)

“Not anything I have experience but things I fear like being transferred to a more passive position, another city, blocking the promotion, dismissal. So I don't care about a career or success. The further down I stand, I have a better chance to be ignored. I fear compulsory promotions or spotlight positions that will come with time. Even if I get to be the head engineer, since the level of education in construction is low, I don't want people to talk about me like 'you know the head engineer is a lesbo'. And my institution is not the place for that kind of dialogues. So I just lay low and do my thing” (lesbian female engineer).

“Instead of focusing on my work I think about other people's discriminatory behavior” (lesbian female engineer).

“I work on a slower pace; I have low motivation” (pansexual female in health).

“I feel bad, I have low motivation, I feel like people talk about me” (asexual trans male psychologist).

“I am a scholar and I work on these subjects. Even so I feel like I am an 'outsider'. I would like to share my identity with everybody, to say my LGBTI++ students that we live in a free country and that we can do anything... unfortunately...” (gay male academic personnel).

“I censor my words every day. I think maybe I should leave those words at home like a bag. But actually I love my job, I talk, I feedback, I interact. I think many things might change if we change the language because our world is built on it. so when I go to work I put myself in a luggage and have it carried by my body” (bisexual female teacher).

"I am way behind my potential" (gay male academic personnel).

"I wonder what I am doing here and why am I serving these people" (gay male academic personnel).

"You have to be comfortable to play the part. Sometimes I am not comfortable. But I don't know if it's about me or them. I have been in more relaxed places" (gay male actor).

"I have to put up with homophobic critiques just to be able to focus on my work and not lose my job" (gay male intern).

"The fear of being disclosed or fired captures all your thoughts and you cannot work full capacity. Low performance and not being able to fulfill the potential have an effect on it" (gay male teacher).

"Affecting constantly. You are limited on your behavior. Thankfully my field is based on application and physical strength. So I am used to work with a tougher, more serious attitude because of the patriarchal environment I was previously working in. I use that during applied courses. Even so, it's not always enough. So I write myself new roles" (gay male teacher).

"Naturally it has an effect. I cannot say anything about a sexist or homophobic comment. Because of my job I see lots of trans individuals. They call them 'tro'. Not in their faces but I hear it all the time" (gay male municipal police).

"I lose my faith, because of all that heterosexism, on behalf of many LGBTI++ working for the ministry of education. Blurred situation we have to live in, me and my colleagues, because we have to hide our identities, is tiring" (bisexual female teacher).

"Being secret or covered all the time. At work you have to watch your every move and speech to stay closed. And the psychology it generates makes me hate my job" (lesbian female architect/engineer).

Working hours often take a large part of people's daily life, therefore being forced to hide one's identity forced one live under great pressure. Trying to be careful, controlling one's feelings (which most of the time negative due to discrimination), to not to react to jokes, insinuations or hate speech (even not directly) creates stress and anxiety all day, every day. This kind of a working environment would certainly negatively affect productivity. Shared experiences suggest that not being able to form attachments or a sense of belonging are also reasons for efficiency and job satisfaction to fail. In addition, a person trying to survive under these circumstances would probably have low self-esteem and general well-being which in turn would decrease creativity.

8. The Situation in Unions and Professional Organizations

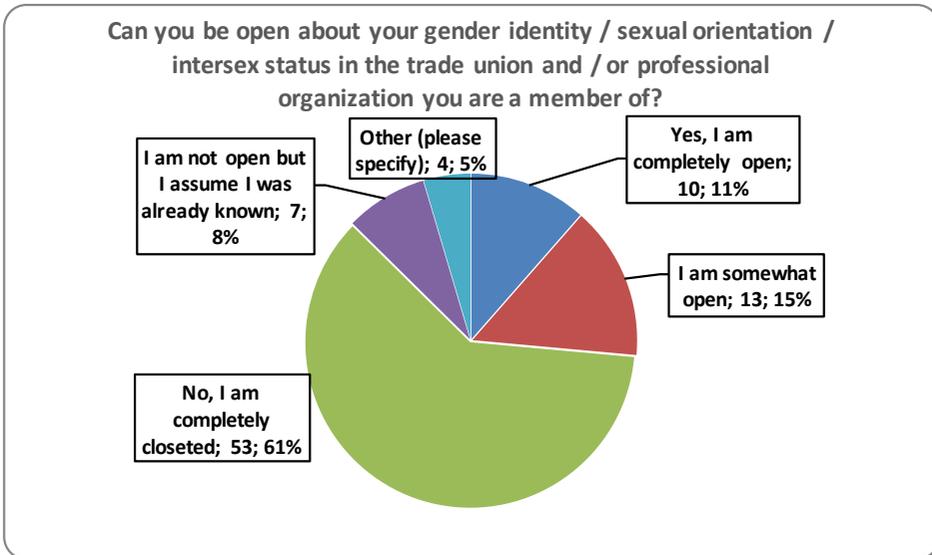
To the question “Are you a member of any union or Professional organization?” 28,07% (64 people) answered “yes, member of a union” and 5,70% (13 people) “yes, member of a professional organization” and 10 people (4,39%) are members to both of them. Unfortunately, 141 people (61,84%) are not part of any union or professional organization.



According to the 2019 data from the State directory of Personnel, the percentage of unionization in public sector is 66,79%. As you can see in the table, unionization of LGBTI+ individuals is below the national average. This might be linked to the fact that those who work on contract or under a subcontractor have lower rates of unionization. On the other hand, we can also think about this numbers as the level of relationship that unions build with LGBTI+ employees.

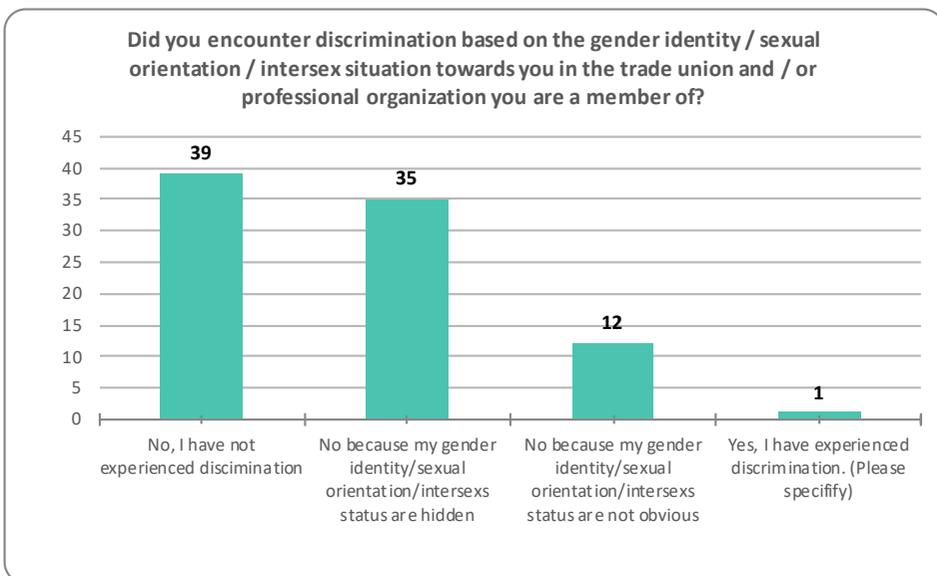
8.1. Disclosure in Unions and Professional Organizations

To those who are members of a union or professional organization, we asked the question “Can you be open about your gender identity/sexual orientation /intersex situation in your union or professional organization?” Among members, 10 people (11,49%) replied they are completely open about their gender identity/sexual orientation /intersex situation, 53 people (60,92%) are completely closed and 13 people (14,94%) are partially open.



8.2. Personal Experiences of Discrimination in Unions and Professional Organizations

Members of a union or professional organization were asked if they had personally experienced any kind of discrimination in the organization to which 39 people (44,83%) declared they never witnessed any discrimination and only one experienced direct discrimination. On the other hand, 54,02% believe the reason they

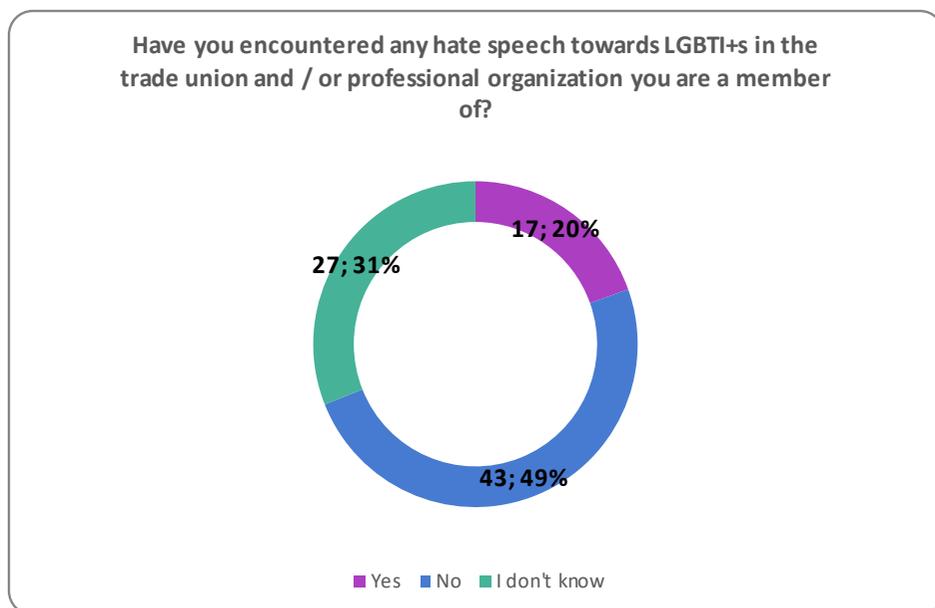


did not experience any discriminatory behavior or attitude regarding your gender identity/sexual orientation /intersex situation is because they have not disclosed their identity/orientation.

This demonstrates that unions are also unable to create trust among LGBTI+. Only 1 person who experienced direct discrimination also answered “yes” to the question “Have you reported/reacted on it?” claiming to both have reacted and reported to a professional organization or NGO.

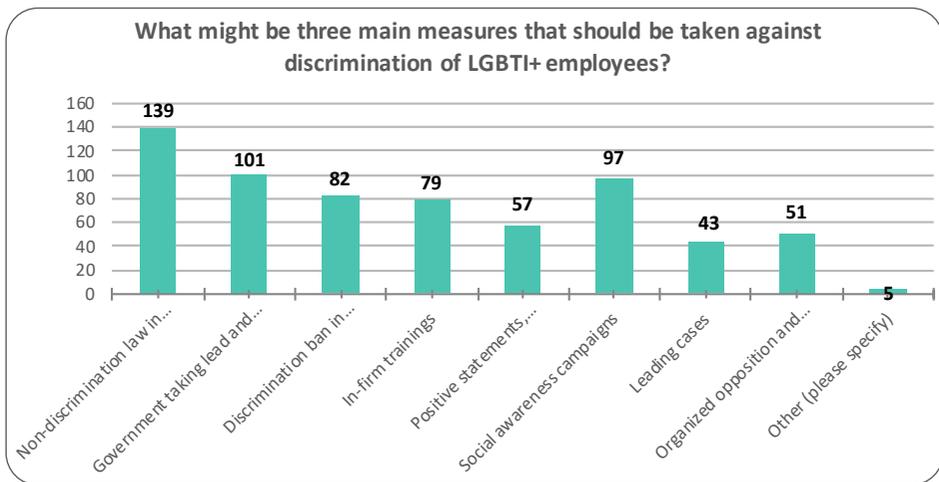
8.3.Hate Speech against LGBTI+ Employees in Unions and Professional Organizations

To those who are members of a union or professional organization, we asked the question “Have you witnessed any hate speech against LGBTI++ in your organization?” and 49,43% said “no” and 27% said “don’t know”. While the percentage of witnessing hate speech at the workplace is 64,04%, within the member of a union or organization the same percentage is 49,43%. Therefore we can say that relatively speaking LGBTI+ employees experience less hate speech in unions and professional organizations.



9. Requests and Measure Against Discrimination

The question related to the issue was “What do you think three measures against discrimination against LGBTI+ employees in the public sector?” When we group the answers, what comes to the fore is the need for “legal measures” on LGBTI+ rights. The requests start with current legislation being updated according to universal human rights criteria and follow as “solidarity networks and organized resistance” and “campaigns for social awareness”. In-house training ban against discrimination in legislation, government responsibility and leadership, court case examples and positive statements of managers are other measures that our participants mentioned.



Most of the answers are in line with Turkey’s responsibilities regarding national and international human rights agreements. Most participants stated that in order to prevent discrimination, current legislation should be updated. Legal applications would provide LGBTI+ employees in public sector job security and change their work environment where they are obliged to work under threat. The need for in-house legislation is also mentioned.

A great deal of answers was related to education, information and awareness creation processes regarding sexual orientation and gender identity. One of the main reasons of discrimination is considered to be ignorance and resolving it might help reduce ignorance-related discrimination. There should be seminars and workshops to inform people from different channels and these efforts to raise consciousness should target all of society. In addition, participants underlined the importance of the creation of organized solidarity networks starting from public institutions and how crucial it is to fight against discrimination of the disadvantaged groups in the society.

10. Quotes from our Participants

At the end of the survey, participants were asked to add or share any subject that was not included in the questions. Below you will find some of their thoughts and ideas.

These quotes underline the close link between the situation of LGBTI+ employees in public and the situation of employees in general and therefore collective action is a must. However, LGBTI+ employees need special legal changes and mechanisms that would give them more liberty. Increase in LGBTI+ visibility, in public just like in every other area, would change positively the working conditions. Some of our participants pointed out the systematic nature of discrimination and believe they there would not be any improvement in the work environment without radical transformations.

"We want freedom, equality and not hiding" (gay male public official).

"We should establish Equality Offices (not Male-Female Equality) in all public offices and municipalities" (Heterosexual trans female in a city council).

"I is sad that LGBTI++ individuals are threatened or mobbed at their jobs. We have to prevent social and institutional discrimination; we need laws before we loose any more lives" (bisexual female health personnel).

"We can arrange in-house activities to talk about rights and wrongs of LG-BTI++ employees. During these conversations people can come and ask LG-BTI++ personally, within the boundaries of respect. That can be a friendly environment, one that can be that enlarged to the city or region. Maybe the community can make itself heard by the state. Maybe it can be a step toward the legalization of gay marriages" (lesbian female intern).

"I wish they understood we are people, too; our hearts can be broken" (heterosexual tran male teacher).

"There are no examples public sector employees can use against the mobbing and alienation caused under the witch hunt called 'degenerate relationship'. When we are forced to resign or dismissed it's over and there are no other options but asylum. I want the state to issue gender equality and sexual orientation policies and to ease those life that turned into an endless torture, just like mine" (gay male academic personnel).

"Before marching on the street, we should get organized and put an article on the constitution regarding discrimination. The priority should be national legislature, constitution and court" (gay male working as an aviation officer).

"Homosexuality is seen all over the world in difference species homophobia is seen only on one of them. Worth thinking on it..." (gay male academic personnel).

"I turned myself into a story under Gay Policeman Osman. Can we make it more visible?" (gay male law enforcement).

"A direct communication and a proper conduct is needed with psychological counselling services at schools to reach LGBTI++ students" (gay male teacher).

"We need effective campaigns at schools about sexuality and gender, I am doing my best" (bisexual female teacher).

"I am not scared anymore" (bisexual male health personnel).

"I am a homosexual individual that works under a contract. I have no security. I have been working at public institutions as a teacher since 2017 and so far I don't have any problems. This is because I am very cautious, and I like my job. As you asked in the survey, I believe there are people who make assumptions about my identity at my workplace. Especially at the management. But since I am focused on my work and my students love and respect me, nobody bothered me about my identity. It is hard to live in Turkey. I am tired of holding on for years by myself. Plus, you have to hide your sexual orientation all the time, it is difficult to square my shoulders. I don't know how long I have to go on with this act" (gay male teacher).

"Currently I am working in a public institution. It's the second one I had. I used to work in a different one. They used my text messages with another homosexual colleague using surveillance, they threatened me saying they would tell my family and formed me to resign. You need social consciousness before any law to defend yourself, you need justice, you need courage..." (gay male public official).

"A country that still discusses human rights or women's rights needs years to reach a standard about these issues. I know my personal life won't be enough. Everybody deserves happiness though..." (lesbian female architect/engineer).

"The institution I currently work in did not discriminate me in any way. But I am still bothered to feel different. I wish my orientation would be accepted by everybody, my colleague teachers, school personnel, parents and students. I wish I could attend school dinners with my boyfriend. I love my school, my work, my colleagues and my students but there is always something missing. I feel alienated and alone. Because there are no other LGBTI++ at the school unfortunately (gay male teacher).

“Young LGBTI++ are more organized and more conscious. But we, employees are suffocating under peer and state pressure. I think we need inclusive social policies about us and that organizations should be in charge. Not only support but we need organizational and awareness related work as well. We need to be aware of our majority. We need projects that focus on our sensitivities. And I think something other than the hegemony of few who control the NGOs, attitudes that would encourage the individuals should be researched” (bisexual female teacher).

“I was threatened many times by people I share my gender identity with. Unfortunately they include also people who seem against homophobia, or advertise themselves like that. So, it is important to internalize the issue and make it part of our lives. And also you, those who are dealing with research, should investigate and expose those who threaten people, so that you can overcome this superficial point of view” (lesbian female architect/engineer).

“The unions should change. Even LGBTI++ associations can be discouraging at a personal level” (gay male academic personnel).

“Public officials can wear pins on certain days to point out LGBTI++ rights” (gay male public official).

“I would like the government to be asked questions regarding LGBTI++ employees at public institutions” (lesbian female expert).

“In my opinion we need some kind of training for public employees just like health and security trainings (heterosexual trans male public worker).