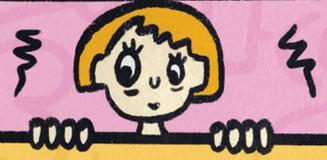


Situation

of LGBTI+
Employees



in the private sector



in
TURKEY

2021 Research



Situation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Plus Employees in the Private Sector in Turkey 2021 Research

Prepared by: Prof. Dr. Mary Lou O'Neil, Dr. Reyda Ergün,
Dr. Selma Değirmenci, Dr. Kivılcım Turanlı, Dođancan Erkengel

Editorship: Murat Köylü, Defne Güzel



Published by: Kaos Gay Lesbian Cultural Research and Solidarity Association (Kaos GL)
and Kadir Has University Gender and Women's Studies Research Center

First edition: Ankara, 2021

This book is charge free. It can be used freely within the scope of non-commercial
activities that promote human rights.

Kaos GL Derneđi
PK 12 Tunus PTT Kavaklıdere - Ankara
Telefon: +90 312 230 0358
Faks: +90 312 230 6277
E-posta: bilgi@kaosgldernegi.org
www.kaosgl.org



**FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
FOUNDATION** For Freedom.

Türkiye



**İsveç
Sverige**

*This book is published by Kaos GL Association and Kadir Has University Gender and Women's
Studies Research Center with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation and Swedish
International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). This does not mean that the content of
the book reflects official views of Friedrich Naumann Foundation and SIDA.*

Index

Chapter 1: Key Findings	5
Chapter 2: Situation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Trans and Intersex Employees in the Private Sector in Turkey – 2021	17
1. Research sample	19
Sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics	19
Age, residence and education level of the participants	22
Disclosure of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics in the workplace	23
Characteristics of workplaces and positions of the participants	24
Headquarters of companies	25
Duration of work in the current workplace	26
Position in the current company	27
2. Assessments regarding recruitment processes	30
Channels for job search and application	30
Inclusion and discrimination in job advertisements	31
Disclosure during the hiring process	33
Experiences of discrimination during the hiring process	34
3. Corporate protection against discrimination	37
LGBTI+ inclusive social activities	39
LGBTI+ inclusive social help and medical support	39
4. Personal experiences of discrimination	41
Reporting the discrimination	43
5. Experience of discrimination towards other LGBTI+ employees	45
6. Hate speech against LGBTI+ employees in the workplace	47
7. The relationship between discrimination, job satisfaction and productivity	50
8. General evaluation regarding the sensibility of workplaces about LGBTI+ rights	54
9. Suggestions for the fight against discrimination against LGBTI+ employees	55
10. The situation of LGBTI+ employees during the Covid-19 pandemic	56
11. Quotes from our participants	58



Chapter 1

Key Findings

This is the 7th year for research on The Situation of LGBTI+ Employees in the Private Sector in Turkey conducted by Kaos GL Association. We, as the Kadir Has University Gender and Women Studies Center are happy to have been a part of this research for the last four years.

The 2021 research was conducted using SurveyMonkey Pro and consisted of an online survey. Participants comprised 633 people who declared themselves to be LGBTI+ and who work in a private company. The sample consisted mainly of young, highly educated (above high school) individuals who have been in the workforce for a relatively short time with 79.4% between the ages of 18 and 35, 83% have associate, undergraduate or graduate education and 83.6% have worked in their current workplace for less than 6 years. Starting last year, we asked participants to identify the city in which they live but we also included “I do not want to share” as an option in case people wanted to keep this information private for security issues. Similar to last year, 16% did not answer this question. Among those who stated their city, most of the participants were in Istanbul (53.6%), followed by Ankara (10.7%) and İzmir (10.5%). Even though three quarters of the participants were from major cities, our research included participants from 37 different cities.

In 2021, 44.9% of the participants declared their gender identity as male, trans man or cis male and their sexual orientation as gay. Despite a small decrease in comparison to last year, this remained the largest group in the sample. The ratio of those who chose “other” for gender identity was 9%. The “other” answer for sexual orientation also increased to 10.6%. In comparison to results from 2019, this year more people defined themselves outside the binary gender system in terms of gender identity and sexual orientation.

Another interesting aspect of this year’s results was the decrease in the total percentage of participants who chose “woman” or “trans woman” for their gender identity. This ratio was 38% in 2016 (85 respondents), 45% in 2017 (166 respondents), 36.3% in 2018 (198 respondents), and finally dropped to 29.3% in 2019 (772 respondents). This year the ratio is 29.7%. As sample size has increased, the percentage of those who identify as woman or transwoman has decreased.

In previous years when we were putting together our key findings, we tried to analyze ratios regarding gender identity from a gender equality point of view, it is clear that we do not have enough data to explain why the ratio drops as our sample size increases. Nevertheless, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) the labor force participation rate for men in 2019 was 72% and rate of employment was 63.1%. The same ratios were 34.4% and 28.7% for women. With the pandemic in 2020, the rate of employment participation was 68.2% for men and 30.9% for

women and the rate of employment is 59.8% and 26.3% respectively.¹ These statistics show that generally speaking women's labor force participation rate is low and they are often engaged in unregistered employment. According to DISK/Genel-İş Union report on March 2020 entitled "Women's Labor in Turkey", compared to other OECD countries Turkey has one of the lowest rates of participation for women. Only 3 out of 10 women above 15 years of age are part of the work force. The unemployment rate for women is double that of the EU average and 3 times the OECD average. For those who are employed, the biggest problem is job insecurity. According to 2019 data, unregistered employment for women comprises 41.3% of the total.² Research shows that access to employment and working conditions worsened for women because of the pandemic.³ In addition, different international statements, opinions and decisions point to the fact that in countries where there are no policies regarding gender transition periods and legal recognition of gender identity, unemployment rates are higher among trans individuals. This is a fact that forces trans women into unregistered, insecure jobs, involuntary sex work and this needs further examination as a form of discrimination.⁴

As in previous years, this year the largest group in terms of sectors was education followed by health, IT, food and tourism sectors. Among respondents, 34.5% were working in these four sectors. It is possible to say that the respondents represent LGBTI+ employees from nearly every sector of the economy. When it comes to the score the employees gave to their workplaces (1 to 4) in terms of LGBTI+ sensitivity, non-governmental organizations (NGO's) received the highest average (2.5) similar to last year. NGO's are followed by advertisement sector (2.4). The banking/finance (1), energy (0.9) and automotive (0.5) sectors received the lowest points. Two-thirds (69.1%) of the participants come from small and medium size companies. This research suggests that company scores and the ratio of openly LGBTI+ employees drop as the number of employees increase.

Multinational or foreign companies received a higher satisfaction rate than companies based in Turkey. Nearly three quarters (73%) of the international companies represented in the sample have their headquarters in the United States or the Euro-

1 TÜİK, *Haber Bülteni: İşgücü İstatistikleri 2020*, 22 Mart 2021, www.tuik.gov.tr (Last access: 20.10.2020).

2 DISK/Genel-İş Araştırma Dairesi, *Türkiye'de Kadın Emeği Raporu*, Mart 2020, www.genel-is.org.tr Last access: 20.10.2020)

3 As an example: DISK/Genel-İş Araştırma Dairesi, *Covid-19 Salgınının Disk /Genel-İş Kadın İşçileri Üzerindeki Etkileri Araştırması*, Mart 2020, www.genel-is.org.tr (Last access: 18.09.2021); TÜSİAD, TÜRKONFED, UNWOMEN, *Covid 19 Salgınının Kadın Çalışanlar Açısından Etkileri Araştırması*, 12 Kasım 2020, www.tusiad.org (Last access: 18.09.2021)

4 As an example: European Council Commissioner for Human Rights, *Human Rights and Gender Identity* (CommDH/IssuePaper(2009)2), 29 July 2009, s. 12,13, www.coe.int (Last access: 23.10.2020); *European Council Commissioner for Human Rights, Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe*, October 2011, s. 171, www.coe.int (Last access: 23.10.2020).

pean countries. Their average score was 2.4/4. The same score was 1.6/4 among Turkey based companies. In line with this finding, 32.3% of the participants who worked in a foreign company declared that there are mechanisms in their workplaces to prevent discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics. In companies based in Turkey, the same ratio was 9.3%. Similarly, the ratio of employees open in terms of their gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics (24.7%) was higher than the general average in foreign companies.

For 2021, the percentage of those who claimed they were completely open regarding their identity in the workplace was 17.2%. In the same research for the public sector, the ratio was 5%. Last year, disclosure rates in private and public sector were 14.8% and 3.4% respectively. In 2019, the numbers were higher at 17.4% and 4.4%. In 2018, they were 22% and 7%.

The rate of those who disclosed their identity in terms of hiring procedures in the private sector employees was low. Only 10.3% of participants declared there were open during these processes. This demonstrates that, similarly to previous years, LGBTI+ employees experience difficulties accessing employment at least, in part, due to discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics. LGBTI+ employees often do not disclose their identities in order to avoid unemployment. Since the risk of discrimination continues after the hiring process, they often continue the strategy throughout their employment. The total rate of the participants who were completely disclosed and partially disclosed during employment was higher (41,8%) than the respective rate during the hiring process (18,2%), and the ratio of complete closure drops from 57.3% to 31.6% after being hired, which suggests that the working conditions, the attitude of colleagues and administrators may create a level of confidence that could help LGBTI+ employees to disclose their identities. Quotes from our participants support this as well.

In 2021, 6.8% of participants reported that they had experienced discrimination (discriminatory attitudes, discourse, behavior and/or practices) during the hiring processes. Less than half (40,1%) of the participants stated that they had not experienced discrimination in hiring but 53,1% believe they did not experience discrimination because either they were not open regarding their gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics and/or these were not detectable in the appearance. A further 12% experienced discrimination after the employment and 38.5% declared they had not experienced discriminatory attitudes or practices without pointing to a particular reason.

The ratio of those participants who reported experiencing discrimination during the hiring processes or at the workplace was low; however, we should consider this data in comparison to other statistics.

We should underline that 6 out of 10 LGBTI+ employees (59.9% during the hiring process and 61.3% at the workplace) either experienced discrimination or think that they did not experience it because they were assumed to be cisgender and heterosexual since they did not disclose their gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics or since their gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics were not detectable. We should also consider the rate of the participants who declared that they did not experience discrimination without stating a reason with the rates of disclosure during the hiring process and at the workplace. We should remember that only 10.3% were open regarding their identity during hiring processes and only 17.2% reported being open in the workplace, once hired. We should also consider the number of those who witnessed discriminatory attitude or practices towards other LGBTI+ employees (14.5%) in the same context.

In 2011, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights issued a detailed report regarding discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation that highlighted the non-disclosure strategy LGBTI+ employees are often obliged to adopt in order to prevent the risk of discrimination and harassment. The often-obligatory use of non-disclosure as a strategy makes it more difficult to analyze the real dimensions of homophobia, transphobia and discrimination in the workplace.⁵ Looking at our own survey data, the Commissioner's statement, based on research in different countries, is also valid for Turkey. Data also suggests that when this strategy is not employed the discrimination occurred. LGBTI+ employees in Turkey do not disclose their identities to avoid discrimination and harassment.

Parallel to our findings in 2018, 2019 and 2020, LGBTI+ private sector respondents, in 2021, continued to prefer channels like peer reference and internet career sites to seek and apply for jobs. In that context LGBTI+ employees may feel the need to foresee the conditions in companies where they seek work, to determine if there is a possible match between their profile and the position.

Despite precautions while job seeking, the number of individuals who remain totally or only partially disclosed regarding their identities demonstrates that there remain substantial obstacles to LGBTI+ visibility in the private sector in Turkey and that the number of companies with inclusive policies is very limited. According to our participants, inclusive policies and non-discriminatory attitudes were not advertised in job postings or hiring processes. Roles and norms produced by the heteronormative and cisnormative gender binary system create certain expectations that have a negative impact on LGBTI+ employees starting with the hiring processes and leading to the deployment of the strategy of non-disclosure.

⁵ Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, *Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe*, s. 166, 176.

In order to examine the conditions that force LGBTI+ employees to use this strategy throughout their work lives in 2019 we added a question regarding hate speech. In 2019 34% and in 2020 36.9% of our participants declared they witnessed hate speech in their workplaces towards LGBTI+. The ratio was 30.5% in 2021. This finding confirms the conditions in which LGBTI+ employees often feel compelled to hide their identities at work. The same ratio is 59.7% in the public sector research, which explains why we have a lower disclosure rate among LGBTI+ employees in the public sector.

Another important point is the aspect of gender equality. When we consider the answers of those who chose “woman”, “trans woman” or “cis woman” for their gender identity in comparison to our answers in general we concluded that the strategy of non-disclosure was even more common among women participants. We had similar results in 2019 and 2020 as well. The ratio of women who are totally undisclosed during the hiring process and at the workplace is relatively higher than the respective ratio among all participants.. We are planning to analyze the gender equality aspect comparing our results over the last 6 years and share separately as a detailed study.

Similar to previous years, this year some of our participants expressed the idea that sexual orientation, gender identity and someone’s sex characteristics are private and related to an individual’s personal life. Therefore, they did not see these “personal issues” as related to social and economic rights, supported and protected in terms of human rights against discrimination in the workplace. We should also consider that these participants might have a different understanding related to discriminatory attitudes, discourse, behavior and practices in the workplace.

A further reason for the difficulty of analyzing all dimensions of discrimination against LGBTI+ employees in Turkey is the low number of official complaints using non-discrimination mechanisms. Similar to previous years, this year’s research results suggest that LGBTI+ employees do not use official channels to report the discrimination they experience. Only two out of 76 individuals who experienced discrimination in the workplace based on their gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics made an official complaint and 33 individuals never reported the discrimination. The remaining individuals engaged in personal reactions, spoke to officials or just shared the experience within their close circle. Only one participant reported the case to an NGO and again only two took their discrimination case to court. None of the participants reported their experience of discrimination to their union or professional organization or took the case to the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey (TIHEK). Participants also stated that they do not believe they would get any results through official channels in case of discrimination against LGBTI+ employees. Furthermore, they feared losing their jobs, hate speech, prejudice and involuntary disclosure due to their claims of discrimination.

These results show a need in Turkey for mechanisms empowering LGBTI+ employees in accessing employment and in work life.. Unfortunately, our research suggests that such mechanisms are not common or are ineffective in the private sector. In a few positive instances where they were effective, these mechanisms protected LGBTI+ employees against discrimination and hate speech, increasing their job satisfaction and efficiency.

Only 12.6% of participants declared there were effective rules and regulations in their companies to prevent discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics. In companies where, effective anti-discrimination measures are in place disclosure rates for LGBTI+ employees were almost 2.5 times higher and the number of individuals who remain feel they cannot in anyway disclose their identities drops to half compared to the sample. In these companies, 41.3% of the LGBTI+ employees were completely open about their identities and only 17.7% remain completely undisclosed. As a reminder, in the overall sample 17.2% reported being open about their identity and 31.6% remained undisclosed. Participants also stated that in companies with no such mechanisms, a non-written agreement or the existence of a corporate culture sensitive to LGBTI+ rights also created positive results. However, only 13.7% of the participants declared such inclusive practices existed regarding LGBTI+ employees in terms of social events. In companies with inclusive practices, 54% of the participants declared they are completely open about their identities. Social aid and psychological support for LGBTI+ employees were only applicable for 10% of the participants and 46% of those individuals disclose their identities in their workplaces. The existence of open or implicit criteria to encourage LGBTI+ individuals during job applications is a factor that increases access to employment. Forty percent of the participants who faced this kind of criteria during the hiring process were either disclosed or partially disclosed in the process. These results show that workplaces with effective mechanisms that empower LGBTI+ employees remain quite rare in the private sector in Turkey.. The findings here make clear that these mechanisms are crucial to fighting discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics and to empowering LGBTI+ employees.

When we talk about mechanisms to access employment and to empower employees, the first groups that come to mind are unions and professional organizations. This research suggests that the rate of membership in such organizations is low among LGBTI+ employees and those who are members do not consider these organizations as the primary places to fight discrimination. Only 10.7% of participants were members of professional organizations and 5.7% were members of a union. This is below the general unionization rate in Turkey. According to DİSK-AR Report on Unionization in Turkey 2020, 12.1% of all workers in Turkey are members of a union.⁶

6 DİSK-AR, *Türkiye’de Sendikalaşmanın Durumu Araştırması Raporu*, Nisan 2020, www.disk.org.tr (Last access: 20.10.2020).

According to our data, among the 76 participants who experienced discrimination, only 13 were members of a union and/or professional organization at the time of the survey. Importantly, none of these individuals reported their case to their member organizations. In addition, when we asked our participants to state three major measures that would prevent discrimination against LGBTI+ employees only 6.5% mentioned, “organized struggle and solidarity networks” as a solution. These findings demonstrate that we need unions and professional organizations to be active in the fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics and in empowering LGBTI+ employees and that these organizations should prioritize the implementation of anti-discriminatory policies.

In 2016 the International Labor Organization (ILO) published the findings of its Pride Project where they note that economic and social rights of the LGBTI+ are not a priority for unions. The result of our survey shows that this statement is also valid for unions in Turkey. The same note also indicates that LGBTI+ are the major group to experience discrimination and harassment in employment and that job seeking LGBTI+ often do not disclose their gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics as a strategy which continues during the employment. The ILO study also shows that LGBTI+ employees that are able to safely disclose their identities in the workplace suffer less from anxiety, depression and burnout syndrome. In order to provide these working conditions workplaces should implement supportive and inclusive policies.⁷

These statements are in line with the findings of our survey. Participants made clear that being subjected to discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics and hate speech or even the risk of experiencing these along with the continuing strategy of non-disclosure of their identities to avoid such possibilities created a series of difficulties. LGBTI+ employees reported being unable to have real and intimate relationships with their colleagues, feeling little or no sense of belonging to their companies, they often felt hopeless, sad, anxious and angry, they work performance lacked and motivation proved difficult, which often led to depression, stress, tension and burnout syndrome due to overwhelming conditions. Their efficiency and job satisfaction dropped decidedly. Since we spend most of our time at our workplaces, the negative aspects of the situation are obvious.

Even though the non-disclosure strategy seems to provide some level of protection against discrimination and hate speech, the seeming obligation to subscribe to this strategy is a form of discrimination itself. Generally, LGBTI+ employees reported fe-

⁷ 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.

eling certain that they would be discriminated against and therefore began to take measures against this even before their employment. During their employment, LGBTI+ individuals continued to hide their identities or shared this with close colleagues or other LGBTI+ individuals, to separate their work life and their private life. Some individuals even felt they had to pretend in terms of body language or the way they express themselves in public. This strategy of non-disclosure and caution against potential discrimination turns into a continuous form of discrimination and has negative impact on LGBTI+ employees both mentally and physically that is not limited to just their work life.

The answers of the participants to the question added in 2021 regarding Covid-19 pandemic support our findings regarding work life and working conditions of LG-BTI+ employees. We asked our participants if the new conditions created by the pandemic affected their lives differently because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics. 90% of the participants answered negatively or had no opinion on the subject. The sixty-four participants who answered positively to the question provided some interesting insights with 40.6% of these individuals stating that the pandemic affected their work life positively, where 59.4% believe that the effects were negative. Statements of those who mentioned positive effects show the level of stress, anxiety and distrust caused by the necessary closure strategy. Almost all these employees stated that home-office conditions helped them physically distance themselves from heteronormative, cisnormative and male-dominant work environment, decreased the risk of possible hate speech and discrimination, helped them feel safer since the only interaction with their superiors and colleagues was online and decreased the pressure about looking and



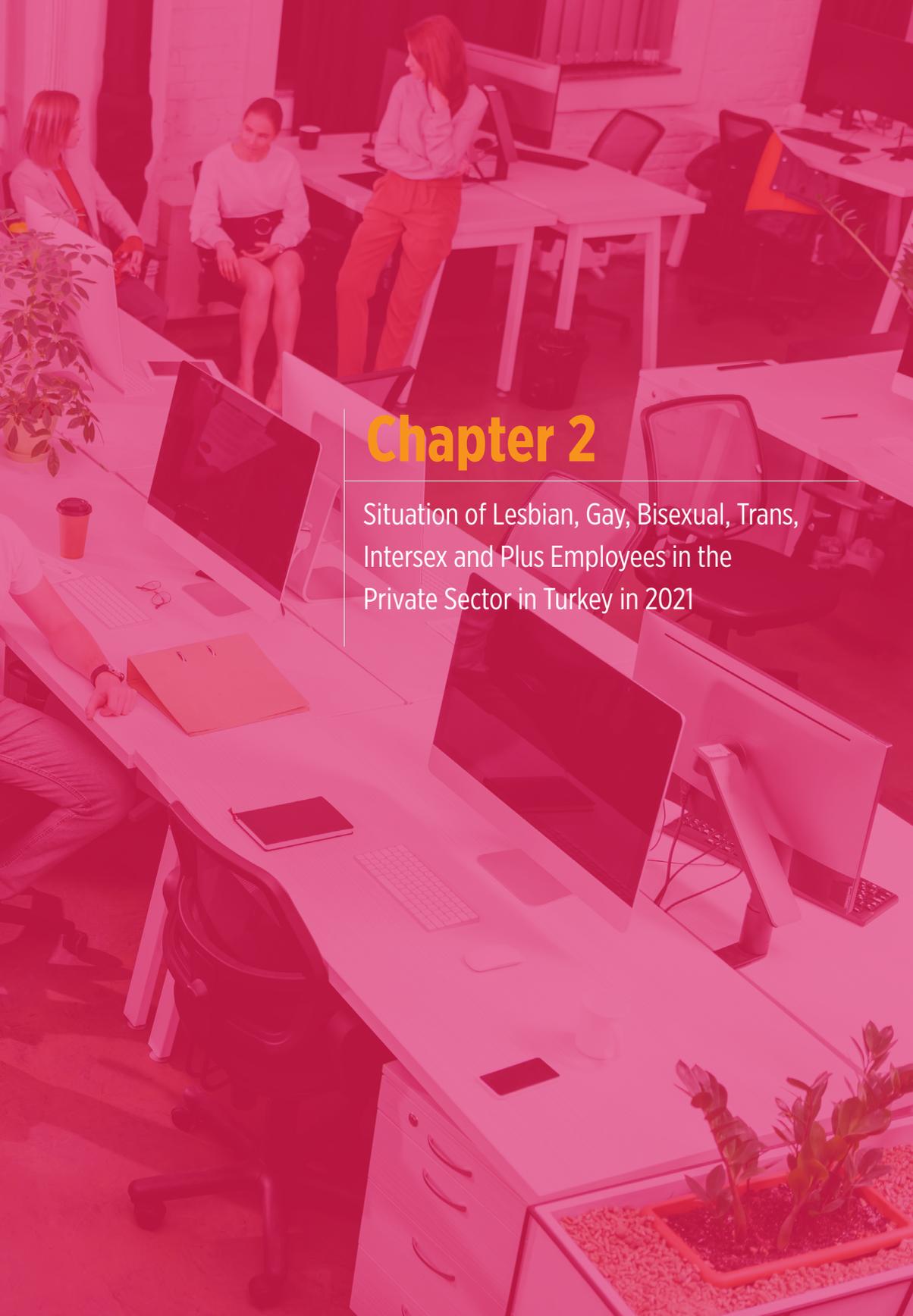
behaving according to gender norms. Most of the participants who underlined the negative effects of the pandemic mentioned the loss of limited social relationships where they can disclose their identity, have the sense of support and solidarity, and its isolating effect and its result on work efficiency. They also mentioned their concern for the future might deepen because of the pandemic, the risk of unemployment and difficulty of finding a job would hit the LGBTI+ harder.

Answers to open ended questions revealed that the primary concerns for LGBTI+ employees were freedom and visibility. In order to achieve these, LGBTI+ individuals need, in their words, increased social awareness, the abandonment of heteronormativity and cisnormativity rooted in the gender binary system and transformation through education. Even though LGBTI+ participants requested social and legal security both in gender and in terms of employment, respondents expressed a general belief that law was not enough to transform society. In that context, LGBTI+ employees called for universities, professional organizations, unions and NGO's to address LGBTI+ rights.

Finally, similar to previous years, the research for 2021 shows that we still have a long way to go in preventing discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics, in ensuring LGBTI+ individuals a peaceful and efficient work environment, and in eliminating disadvantages to access employment, to generate legal and corporate policies and civic strategies to guarantee equality in terms of social and economic rights. We hope that our research will contribute to policy-making processes to empower LGBTI+ employees and eliminate discrimination.

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



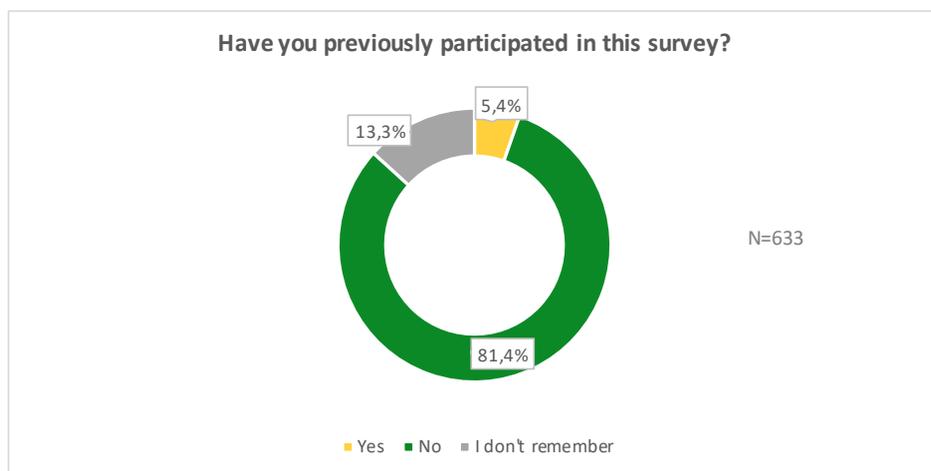


Chapter 2

Situation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Plus Employees in the Private Sector in Turkey in 2021

1. Research sample

Kaos GL has published reports on sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics equality in the workplace since 2015 and since 2018 with the partnership of Kadir Has University Gender and Women’s Studies Research Center. The 2021 research was again conducted using SurveyMonkey Pro online survey system. The participants were lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex individuals employed in the private sector in Turkey. This year, 2021, the survey consisted of 633 participants with 81.4% of the participants (515 people) stating they had not participated this research before, 13.3% (84) did not remember participating and 5.4% (34) participated in previous years.

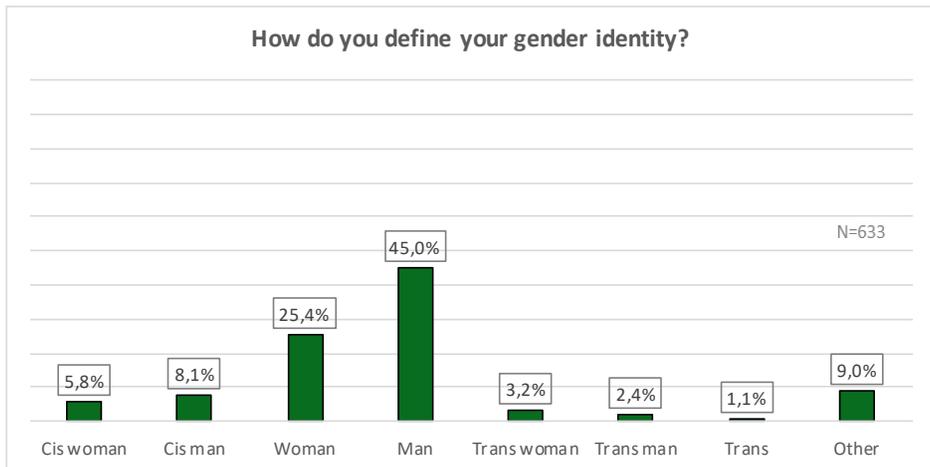


Sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics

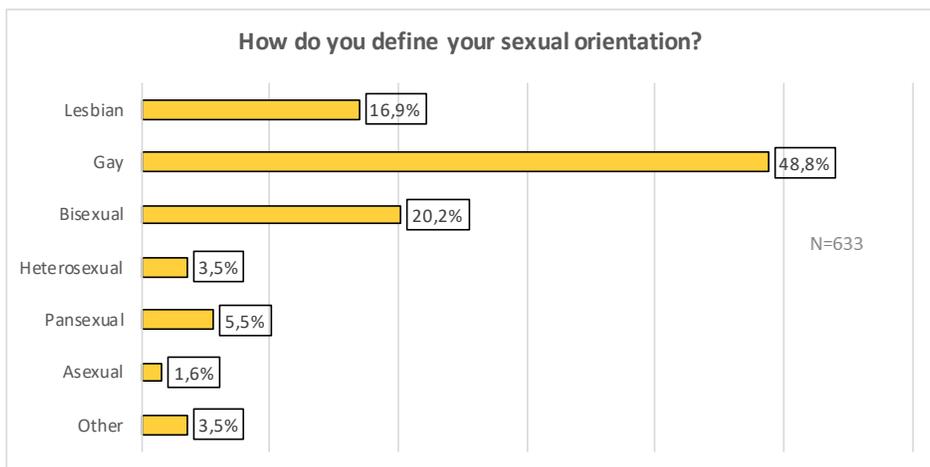
Participants defined their gender identity and sexual orientation by marking the given options or choosing the “other” option to identify themselves with their own words. In the sample, 285 participants (45%) identified themselves as man, 161 (25.4%) as woman, 15 (2.4%) as trans man, 20 (3.2%) as trans woman, 7 (1.1%) as trans, 37 (5.8%) as cis woman, 51 (8.1%) as cis man and 57 (9%) as other. Regarding sexual orientation, 107 of the participants (16.9%) identified as lesbian, 309 (48.8%) as gay, 128 (20.2%) as bisexual, 22 (3.5%) as heterosexual, 35 (5.5%) as pansexual, 10 (1.6%) as asexual and 22 (3.5%) as other.

As you can see in the table a large part of the participants (%48.8) identified themselves as gay. Additionally, male and female homosexuals are the largest groups in the sample followed by bisexual males and females.

The number of trans men and women in the private sector was limited, similar to other areas of work life. A series of obstacles during their education and limitations based on gender norms are the main causes of the situation.

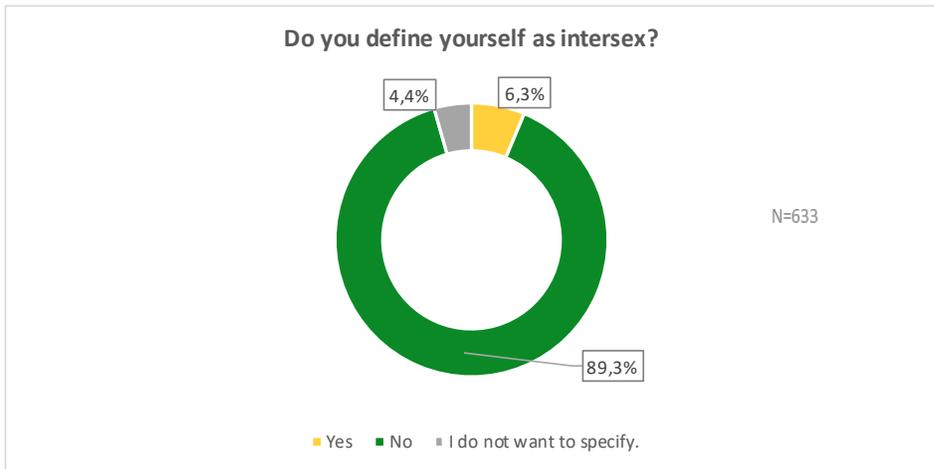


Other: Non-binary (15), Fluid (2), meaning what?, Queer (3), Genderless, Feminine male, actually I am a trans woman but did not start the process yet, Gender Fluid (4), Gay (2), Ladyboy, can't define don't exist, Bigender, CD, like men in a men's body, agender, man, genderqueer (3), W, Homosexual (2), I think I am intersex, genderless (4), woman +, they/them, woman but feeling like a man, crossdresser, neutral, don't want to fit in a pattern (2), transmasculine non-binary, I look at it without an identity

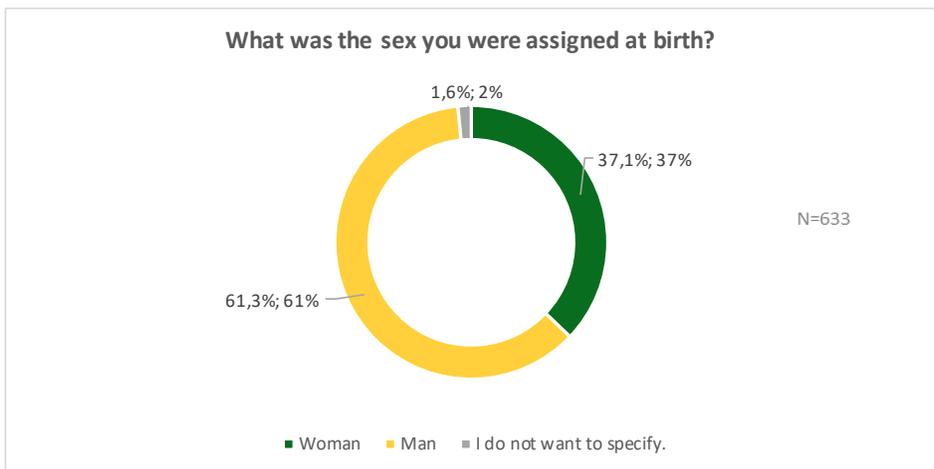


Other: B, political lesbian, transsexual, queer, androsexual, bicurious, trans man, W, trans woman, active and passive gay, abrosexual, homoflexible, trans, non-, individual, biromantic, asexual, like women, panromantic asexual, I am a woman.

In response to the question “Do you identify yourself as intersex?” forty participants said yes (6.3%) while 565 said no (89.3%) and 28 (4.4%) did not want to specify. Among those who answered yes, the distribution of gender identities was as follows: cis man 2, cis woman 1, man 9, woman 13, trans 2, trans man 3, trans woman 3, and 7 others.

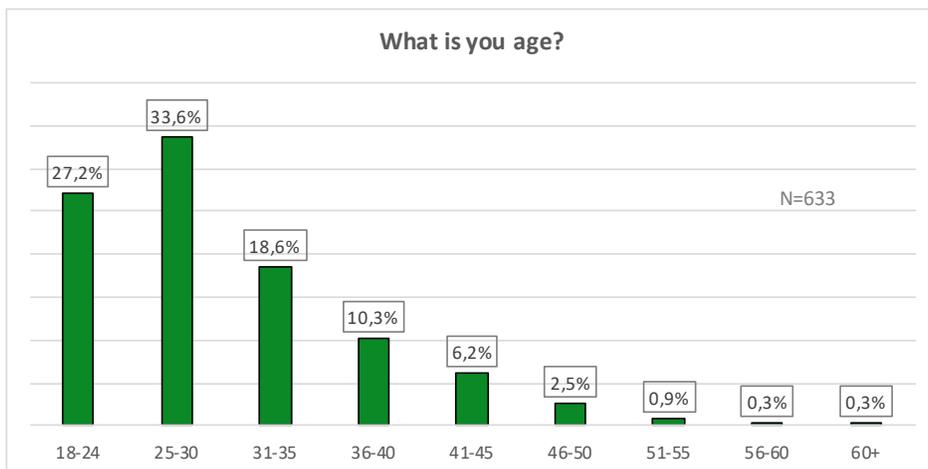


In 2021, we added the question “What was the sex you were assigned at birth?” To this question, 235 people (37.1%) replied female, 388 (61.3%) stated male and 10 participants (1.6%) chose not to specify.

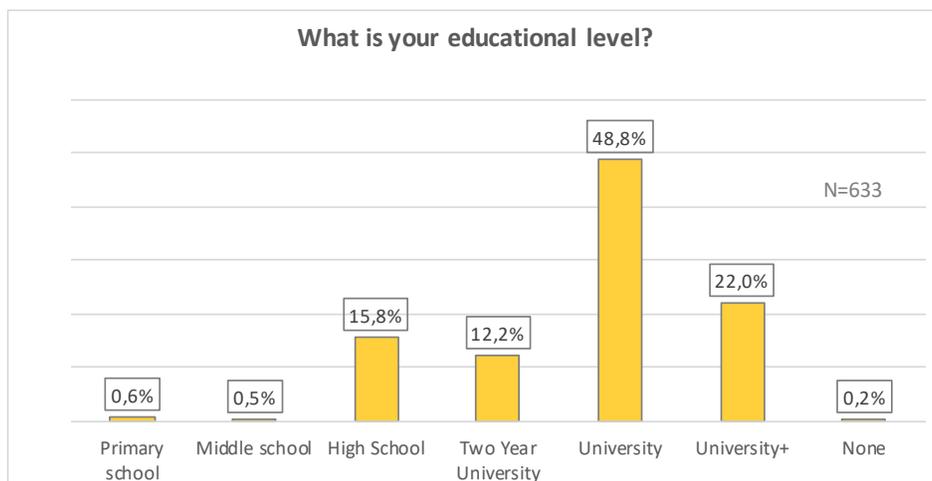


Age, residence and education level of the participants

The age distribution of participants can be examined below. The largest group was between 25-30 years (33.6%). The total of those between 18-35 years was 503 individuals (79.5%).



Close to half of the participants (309) have a university degree (48.8%) while the other half of the sample consisted of 139 people (22%) with an M.A. or PhD, 100 (15.8%) with a high school diploma, 3 (0.5%) individuals had completed middle school, 4 participants (0.6%) had a primary education and 1 participant choose “other”.

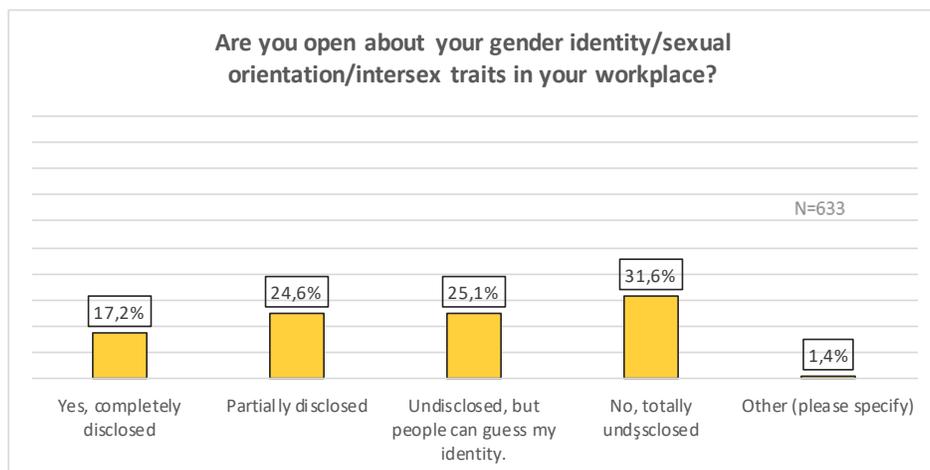


This year, as in 2020, we asked participants to name the city they live in at the time of the research. While 101 respondents (16%) preferred not to share that information, the remaining 532 (84%) came from 37 different cities. The most named were Istanbul (53.6%), İzmir (10.5%) and Ankara (10.7%). These cities are followed by Kocaeli, Bursa, Eskişehir, Antalya and Adana.

Disclosure of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics in the workplace

Regarding disclosure of identity in the workplace, 109 participants (17.2%) stated they were completely open about their identity. In contrast, 200 people (31.6%) related that they were completely closed and a further 156 people (24.6%) were partially open about their identity in their workplaces. A further 159 participants (25.1%) believed others in the workplace could determine their identity despite the fact that they remain undisclosed.

It would appear that those who are partially disclosed were open towards close colleagues or other LGBTI+ employees but not to management or their employers. At the same time, in open ended questions some participants made clear that there are supportive managers and employers. Detailed numbers can be found in the table below.



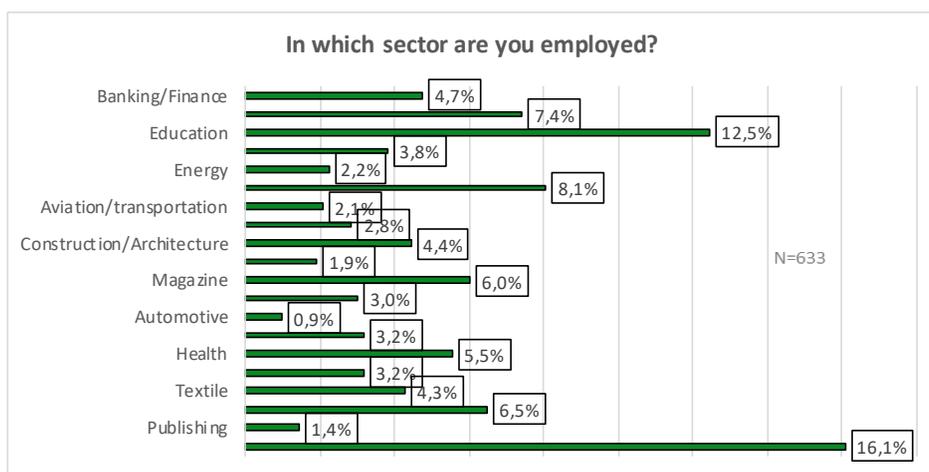
Other: 1- I did not specify but I do not hide it, **2-** I am open to 2 colleagues, **3-** They would beat me, **4-** They did not ask I did not tell, I did not specifically try to hide it, **5-** I cannot openly say I am gay, **6-** A couple of people knows it, **7-** I am closed to everybody except for a colleague, **8-** Executives guess but my colleagues know, **9.** A couple of people know it.

Out of the 109 participants who were completely open at work, 86 worked in companies with headquarters in Turkey. In this subgroup, 64 declared that they were men, 21 as woman, 10 as cis man, 8 as cis woman, 3 as trans man, 5 as trans woman and 2 as trans. Among this group of participants, 55 were open regarding their identity during the hiring processes as well.

Detailed data and comments regarding negative conditions created by forced closure of identity and its alienating effects in daily life, work performance and advocacy of rights will be discussed. For now, it is sufficient to say that these are recurrent findings.

Characteristics of workplaces and positions of the participants

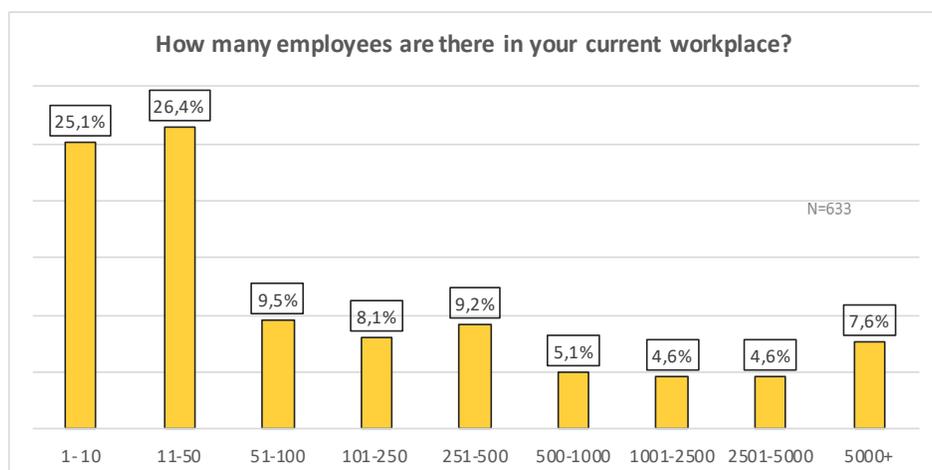
You can see the distribution of sectors in the table below. Participants worked in a wide range of different fields in the private sector. The majority of respondents worked in education, food, information technology and retail stores. Furthermore, the details of the answer “other” shows that LGBTI+ individuals are employed in many different areas, contrary to gender roles inherent to the society. Unfortunately, the fact that they have to hide their identity does not help fight the idea that “LGBTI+ employees only work in some sectors”.



Other: Heavy industry, alcohol, research (5), IT and media, café-restaurant (4), call center (2), steel pipes industry, CNC center, child care, consulting (9), data, maritime, leather, import-export, e-commerce (2), pet raise, photography, real estate, (3), graphic design, security (3), beauty center (3), airport, I can be in different sectors in different times, FMCG (2), service (2), import/production/metals, pharmaceuticals, production, heating-cooling, furniture (2), accounting, transportation, network, P, market research (2), marketing, retail, petrol, production, advertisement, sex-shop, insurance, sports (3), agriculture, design, technology, textile chemicals, telecommunication (2), telemarketing, trade, medicine, consumer electronics, tourism but I am in the kitchen, university (3), production (2), software (2), higher education

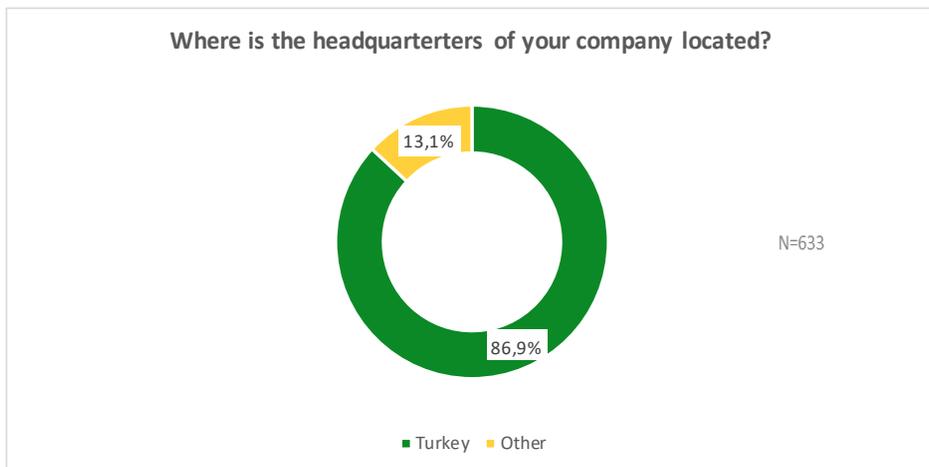
When we consider the numbers of employees in the workplaces of participants, a consistent finding emerged. Similar to previous years, most respondents worked in small businesses. In 2021, 25.1% of the participants (159 people) worked for companies with ten or fewer employees.

In contrast, 106 individuals (16.8%) were working in companies with more than 1000 employees. Companies with such a labor workforce might be expected to have more corporate capacity to manage human resources. However, only 17 participants (15.8%) working in these companies stated they were able to disclose their identity and only 31 of them (28.9%) rated their companies highly (3 or 4 out of 4) in terms of LGBTI+ sensitivity. These findings show that corporate size has little influence on LGBTI+ employees. You can see the details on the table.



Headquarters of companies

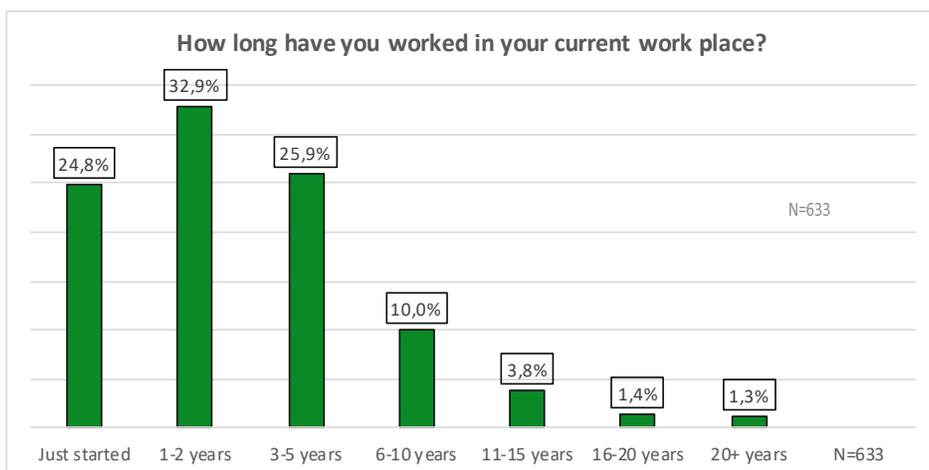
We asked participants about the headquarters of their companies. The purpose is to assess whether foreign companies retain supportive and/or protective policies towards LGBTI+ employees in Turkey. Of the 550 participants who worked in companies based in Turkey, 52 declared that their companies have rules and regulations to prevent discrimination against LGBTI+ individuals.



Other: USA (18), Germany (12), Ankara (2), Antalya (1), Europe (4), Austria (1), United Kingdom (10), China (1), France (6), Holland (4), Spain (5), Sweden (2), Switzerland (4), Japan (2), Canada (4), Cyprus (1), Slovakia (1), Saudi Arabia (1), Thailand (1), International Chain (1), Outside Turkey (2)

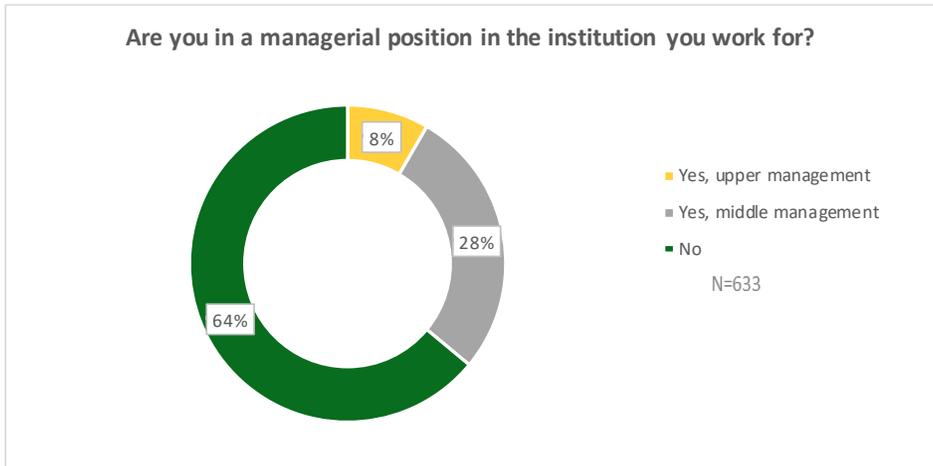
Duration of work in the current workplace

Most of our participants (83.6%) declared they had worked in their current workplace for less than 5 years. Just a small group (17 people) had worked in the same place for more than 15 years while 6 people (14.6% of 41) who worked in the same company for more than 10 years (41 people) were open regarding their identity in their workplace. This demonstrates that the strategy of non-disclosure is not specific just to the hiring process of but often continues over the long term.



Position in the current company

An examination of the answers regarding job positions of participants, revealed that 64% of the sample were not executives.



As the table below shows, LGBTI+ employees who participate in this research occupied a variety of positions similar to the population as a whole. This shows that LGBTI+ employees have the capacity to work at all different levels and including upper levels of their respective organizations.

However, many participants related experiencing difficulties in promotion similar to other disadvantaged groups such as heterosexual cisgender women. LGBTI+ employees often face limited opportunities for promotion. Furthermore, it is important to note that a majority of participants were either closed or partially closed in their workplaces. Twenty-six percent of the participants (14 people) who were high-level executives were completely closed regarding their sexual orientation/ gender identity/ sex characteristics.

In 2021 we asked, “What is your position in the company?” as an open-ended question. The answers reflected that LGBTI+ individuals are working in a variety of areas and in different positions.

What is your position in your institution/company?					
Academic personnel	7	Stewardess	1	project manager	5
Area researcher	1	administrative affairs	5	Process	1
Low-level marketing	1	communication expert	1	Psychologist	4
Analyst	2	English teacher	4	Guide	1
Anaesthesia technician	1	Human rights expert	1	Receptionist	2
Animation	1	HR	5	Art teacher	1
Trainer	2	Interior designer	1	restaurant manager	2
Research Assistant	9	Business analyst	1	Retail Store Manager	1
Researcher	7	Business developer	1	Department supervisor	1
Art Director	1	worker	4	Runner chef	1
Cook	10	employee security and health	1	Fieldworker	1
Assistant/Executive Assistant	10	operations manager	1	Construction site executive	1
Lawyer	16	employer	1	Sales expert	30
Barista	5	Flight attendant	2	Sales executive	1
Bartender	1	Quality engineer/systems manager	2	Chef	3
Head software engineer	1	Channel marketing spoke person	1	Secretary	1
Labourer	1	Cashier	5	scenarist	1
IT	2	Source development department	3	Services	3
Information officer	1	Senior digital communication expert	1	Sound operator	1
IT manager	1	Stationary and book sales person	1	Travel expert	1
Computer Scientist	1	Department supervisor	1	Cinema sector	1
Software	1	Coordinator	7	Social services Expert	1
Personal banking	1	Protection team leader	1	Social media expert	1
Window dresser	1	Protection expert	1	Social projects supervisor	1
Reagional coordinator	1	Hairdresser	1	Athlete	1
Call-center personnel	2	Editing operator	1	Sportive education expert	1
Employee	5	Corporate communication	2	Intern	7
criticizing and helping employees	1	Courrier	1	Styling and costume	1
CEO	1	Labtech	2	Supervisor	2
Translator	4	Logistic operation supervisor	1	Sustainable development executive	1
Environmental Engineer	1	Store clerk	4	Icut wood	1
CNC operator	1	Store executive	6	team leader	2
Child care	1	Machine operator	1	sales demonstrator	1
Consultant	8	Master machine operator	1	design	10
Dancer	1	Manager	1	Technical Leader	1
Data expert	1	Vicemanager	1	technical manager	1
Auditor	2	Officer	1	technical office executive	1
Department manager	1	Copywriter	2	technics	1
Logistics personnel	1	Architect	6	technician	6

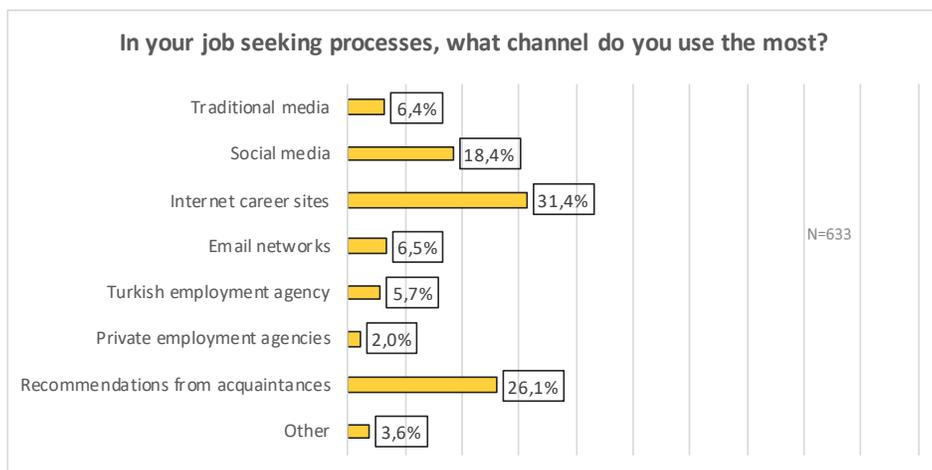
Developer	3	Guest relations	2	cleaning	1
Digital art director	1	Visiting scholar	1	translator	3
Digital department executive	1	Fashion designer	1	displayer	1
Digital director	1	Motorcycle courier	2	trade department	1
Digital media	1	Vice director	14	turner	1
Digital marketing expert	1	accounting	10	tour operator	2
Dentist	1	engineer	7	master in production	1
exports - imports manager	1	customer services/representative	10	production personnel	1
exports-imports expert	1	network expert	1	product category executive	1
Distributor	1	audiologist	1	product manager	1
Doctor	3	scholar	5	product advertiser	1
Organization	1	teacher	29	product expert	1
E-commerce executive	1	front desk	1	high level executive	2
Editor	8	operation supervisor	5	master	3
Education activation executive	1	operator	2	expert	12
education programs executive	1	organization supervisor	1	tax return expert	1
Instructor	6	mid-level executive	4	data analyst	1
Team member	1	runner	1	veterinarian	3
Industrial Designer	1	partner	2	veterinary assistant	1
Entertainment Mentor	1	actor	1	2ndassistant	1
Aesthetician	2	security	1	sous chef	1
Events organizer	1	packaging	2	assistant director	1
Document registration	1	pastry cook	1	publishing editor	1
Finance	3	boss	1	editorial director	1
Physicaltherapist	2	marketing/marketing manager	11	software developer	1
Frontend Developer	1	retail manager	1	software developing engineer	1
Waiter	21	personnel	7	soft ware engineer	1
General coordinator	1	lanscape gardener	1	software expert	5
General art director	1	Pilot	1	ground hostess	1
Visual design expert	1	piano and voice instructor	1	senior sales representative	1
Graphic design	11	gas pump attendant	1	executive	35
Security officer	2	program assistant	1	managerial	1
PR	2	programmer	1	chairman	1
Nurse	5	project assistant	3	foreign purchases	1
Service personnel	1	project coordinator	1	undefined	10
				don't want to mention	6

2. Assessments regarding recruitment processes

Channels for job search and application

As you can see in the following table, most participants found their current jobs through career websites, recommendations from a contact or social media channels. Many of them chose more than one answer which shows that they often used different channels when applying for jobs.

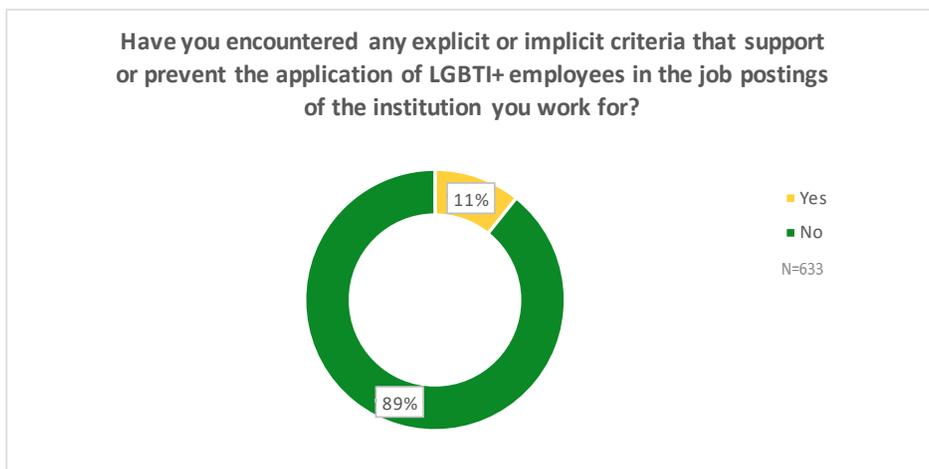
Similar to previous years, the numbers of those who used the Turkish National Employment Agency (İŞKUR) or private employment offices was low. This might be linked to the fact that LGBTI+ employees lack trust in these channels and their fear being stigmatized by these institutions. These numbers have remained low in each year of the research (2015-2021). The high level of job applications **through a personal contact** signal that LGBTI+ employees value the references of other LGBTI+ individuals in choosing companies that offer relatively better conditions regarding LGBTI+ rights. LGBTI+ employees need more information about the company in question regarding potential working conditions which also means that compared to other employees they need more developed social support mechanisms in the workplace.



Other: In the same company for 23 years, not looking for a job (2), no comment, I was preferred because of my reputation, academic assignment systems (3), for god's sake no-one in Turkey can find a job without knowing someone, not looking (3), application, personal favor, empty, personally giving out CV, I work freelance, jobs are generally offered to me, google search (2), all of them, none of them, door to door search, kariyer.com, We talked and agreed, founded my own place, find them myself, personal links (2), LinkedIn (13), I took my CV to hotels, sectoral websites (2), did not happen so far, since these are universities we e-mail them, social networks, sports, peer advice, having trouble is my biggest fear, I apply them one by one when I see them, university (2), I had no difficulty since I can speak foreign languages.

Inclusion and discrimination in job advertisements

To the question “Have you encountered any explicit or implicit criteria that support or prevent the application of LGBTI+ employees in the job postings of the institution you work for?” 565 people replied no while 68 people said yes.



Examples of positive answers can be seen below:

There are texts related to diversity and discrimination for overseas applications (gay man, consultant)

There was a note about prioritizing socially disadvantaged groups (gay man, media researcher)

They were looking for awareness regarding gender equality and disadvantaged groups (pansexual, NGO coordinator)

I did not see any supportive statement directly about LGBTI+ in the websites or job postings. But I witnessed supportive policies during the interviews and hiring procedures. There is a plan for the future regarding positions for LGBTI+ (gay man, cashier in retail)

The company I work for has positive discrimination towards LGBTI+ individuals (lesbian woman, software engineer in IT)

There is a statement about not discriminating employees in terms of religion, language, race, gender and sexual orientation (pansexual cis woman, customer relations executive in tourism)

The institution I work for prioritizes LGBTI+ (bisexual trans woman, human rights expert at an NGO)

There was a section in the job ad regarding being open to all differences like religious, cultural, sexual and physical etc. and that these differences make the institution stronger (gay cis man, graphics designer in media)

They use LGBT looking people in their advertisements (Gay man, executive in retail)

My institution stated they care about disability and sexual orientation at the end of the job ad (bisexual cis man, developer in IT)

They specifically mentioned they hire without looking at religion, language, race, sexual orientation etc. (asexual non-binary, intern in marketing)

They included sexual orientation in the ad and mentioned they are open to all individuals (lesbian queer, editor in media)

My current workplace has a condition about being respectful to LGBTI+ (pansexual woman, lawyer at an NGO)

Answers to questions concerning biased statements in advertisements revealed that discriminatory social norms often surface in private sector employment policies. However, it is a responsibility of employers, both public and private, to openly state their support for LGBTI+ employees. It is not enough to just apply the principle of equality during the job application processes, but they also have the responsibility of preventing indirect discrimination by engaging in affirmative action. Participants stated job adverts directly affected their preparation during the application process (CV and self-promotion) and had an impact on their motivation at work. The situation can be easily seen in the quotes below.

I believe military service is used as an implicit criterion and every company, including mine, uses it (heterosexual woman, HR expert in food sector)

In the company I previously worked, HR used the expression “a little poof” for someone who was about to start. Then they tried to explain it horribly, saying it was a positive discrimination, that this person “could bring some joy” to the company. The interesting thing was that we learned later that that person was not non-binary or gay, he was just outside the general masculinity norms of the society (gay man, designer in IT).

The company supports LGBTI+ globally but that is not the case in Turkey (gay man, working in the automotive sector)

CV's ask for gender or marital status (abrosexual woman, executive in food sector)

Long time ago during a job application they asked me if I had any gender identity disorders (gay man, graphic designer)

On the application forms there are gender questions but only man-woman options (bisexual genderqueer, sales representative in service sector)

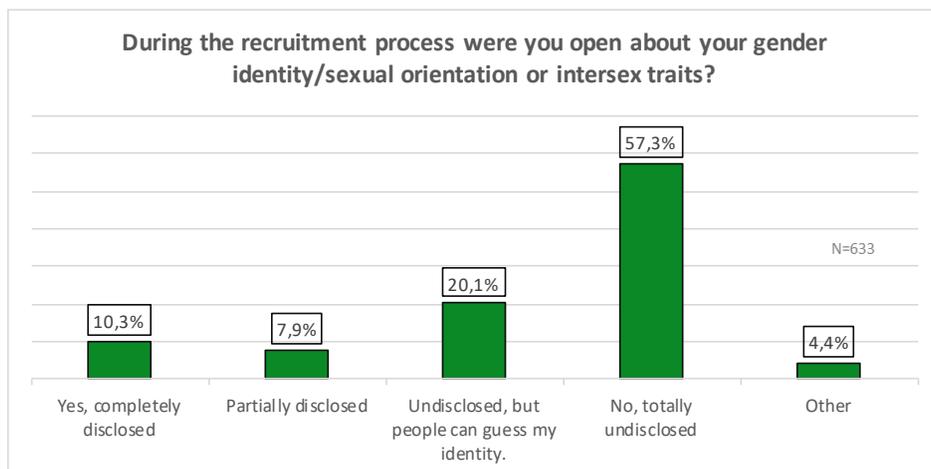
They check the way you talk or get dressed. Might tell you to use your hair longer (lesbian neutral, salesperson in food)

Some participants reported that sexist expectations arising from dominant gender norms and roles reflected in job postings negatively affected LGBTI+ employees. Therefore, using gender neutral language or language that transcends the understanding of existing gender roles would encourage LGBTI+ individuals. For example, an advert could just define the job description and not use any gender specific terms. In addition, the advertisement could also make clear that discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics is not tolerated. Positive discrimination practices are not included in this argument.

Disclosure during the hiring process

To the question “Were you open about your gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics during the hiring process?” most of the participants answered “No”, similarly to the previous question.

As you can see in the graph below only 65 people (10.3%) were completely disclosed during the hiring process while 127 applicants (20.1%) said they were not disclosed but they assumed their identity was already known. Only 50 people (7.9%) were completely open regarding their identity.



In addition, some participants accept sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics as intimate and private aspects and do not view them as related to employment and economic and social rights.

I didn't have to, no one asked, I had nothing to declare (lesbian woman, research data analyst)

No, I never felt the need (bisexual woman, communications expert in tourism)

My sexual identity has nothing to do with work (lesbian woman, chef in food sector)

I did not have a reason to mention it (bisexual cis man, script writer in media)

I did not mention, it's not their business anyway (gay man, operations executive in tourism)

Experiences of discrimination during the hiring process

To the question “During the hiring process, did you experience any discriminatory attitudes, statements, behaviors or practices regarding your gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics?” 254 applicants (40.1%) answered negatively.

However, in the following graphic you can see that 177 people (28%) thought that this situation was linked to the fact that they hid their gender identity/ sexual orientation/ sex characteristics. Another 25.1% thought they did not face discrimination because their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics were not apparent.



These answers should be evaluated keeping in mind that a great majority of participants either hide or simply do not disclose their gender sexual orientation or sex characteristics. It is evident that many LGBTI+ people fear discrimination or rejection and prefer to keep their identity hidden to prevent such occurrences.

Another reason for the high rate of the participants who stated that they did not encounter discrimination during the recruitment process may be due to the general societal assumption that everyone is heterosexual and cisgender. In order to protect people from different forms of discrimination and support them regarding their rights, companies could create an application environment where applicants would be able, if they chose to, freely state their gender identity/ sexual orientation/ sex characteristics.

Forty-three participants stated that they faced discrimination during the hiring processes:

I am not accepted due to my physical appearance (gay cis man, HR in Media)

I have found out after I was hired that the executive who interviewed me said “he is a little feminine” to his superior. It did not affect my hiring process but was unnecessary (gay cis man, expert in banking and finance)

At an interview, first they asked me if I had a girlfriend. When I said “No” they asked, “Because you like men?”. These out-of-context questions did not seem like a discriminatory attitude at first but made me ask myself “Am I going to be discriminated here?” (gay man, attorney at law)

The discriminatory attitude was completely positive. I was positively discriminated (lesbian woman, software engineer in IT)

I used to work in the most queer-friendly hotel in Turkey. In my current job, the HR director repeated several times during the interview “This not such a place!” (pansexual cis woman, customer relations executive in tourism).

I was marginalized just because of the way I speak (bisexual man, guide in the tourism industry).

During the training an instructor asked me if I could open the door of the plane, that I was a little weak for a man. Then I became top of my class (gay man, steward in aviation)

Before I change my gender marker and name on my ID I applied to XXX¹ café. They insulted me once they saw my name and gender marker. I was verbally bullied even though I said I was intersex. Actually, I was a trans man and taking hormones. I would be hired if they did not check the ID and be phobic about it (heterosexual trans man, waiter in entertainment)

I am a trans man, my sexual identity is way open. Even though I have lots of experience I witnessed companies choosing unexperienced people over me (heterosexual trans man, salesperson in food sector).

1 The name of the firm is hidden for anonymity.

I was asked why I was not having long hair like a girl, in a friendly looking conversation, disguised as a joke. I had similar situations in my previous interviews (intersex lesbian, organizer in entertainment)

I was subject to hate speech disguised as humor. I was not discriminated directly but I was pushed out of current projects due to heterosexual solidarity (gay man, scenarist in culture and arts)

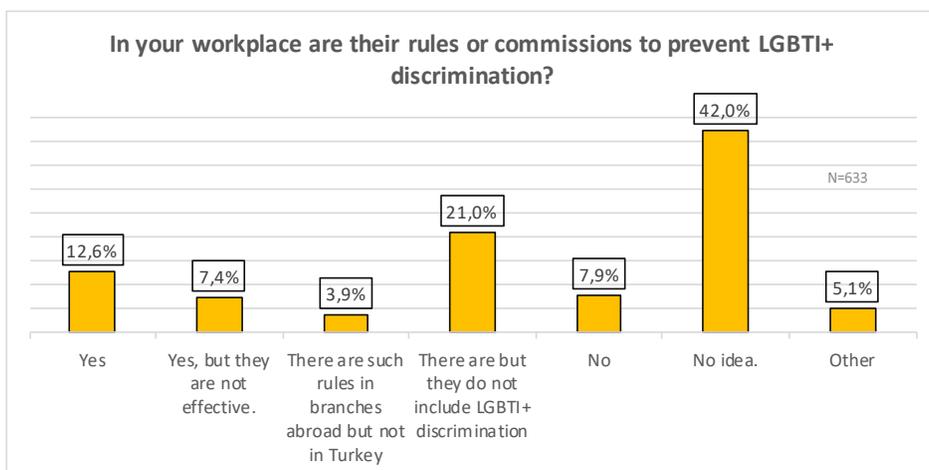
They asked more personal questions (gay cis man, co-director in media)



3. Corporate protection against discrimination

When asked “Are there any rules or boards to prevent discrimination against LGBTI+ people in your company (Boards of equal treatment or disciplinary boards, units for prevention of harassment and mobbing, regulations etc.) only 80 participants (12.6%) answered positively. 33 of these 80 participants declared they were open at work. 47 people stated that there were such mechanisms in the companies they worked but they were not well-known and effective. 25 participants (3.6%) declared that the institution they work for has rules and boards against discrimination in their foreign branches, but these rules were not applied in Turkey.

Half of the respondents answered the question “No” (42 %) or “No idea” (7.9%). It is significant that the percentage of the “No idea” answers is so high and may demonstrate a lack of expectation.



32 participants (5.1%) marked the option “Other”. You can see some participant’s personal comments below:

It exists but not in written form (gay man, consultant)

Written rules (policy documents) and boards do not exist, but they should, they are necessary (gay man, coordinator at an NGO)

I did not see any written rule, but our executives are extremely sensitive and constructive about it (gay man, designer in IT).

The contract states that the company is against all kinds of discrimination (gay trans, graphics designer in IT)

I proposed a Commission against Psychological and Sexual Harassment, and I was subject to violence for it (queer, coordinator in education)

There are disciplinary regulations, but they do not specify types of discrimination. They are too broad and open to interpretation (gay gender fluid, researcher in education)

We have a diversity representative and she meets regularly with women. I was not invited to these meeting as an openly gay man :) As I said, I think it's quite old school (gay man, researcher).

In 2021, we asked our participants “Are there any rules, customary attitudes or practices that cause discrimination against LGBTI+ employees in the company you work for?” to which 54.2% responded positively. Only 4.9% (31 people) responded negatively where 40.9% (259 people) says they do not have an idea.



Heterosexual employees can have their spouses benefit from their health insurance 100%. But if you are a gay or lesbian, your partner cannot do that. But the institution could actually do that (gay man, translator in banking and finance)

For married couples they consider the spouses' days off for a holiday program, that's not the case for LGBTI+ individuals (lesbian woman, advertiser in media)

Our institution uses a form overseas where they have “male/female/other” as gender markers which was revised as “male/female” in Turkey (lesbian woman, consultant in education)

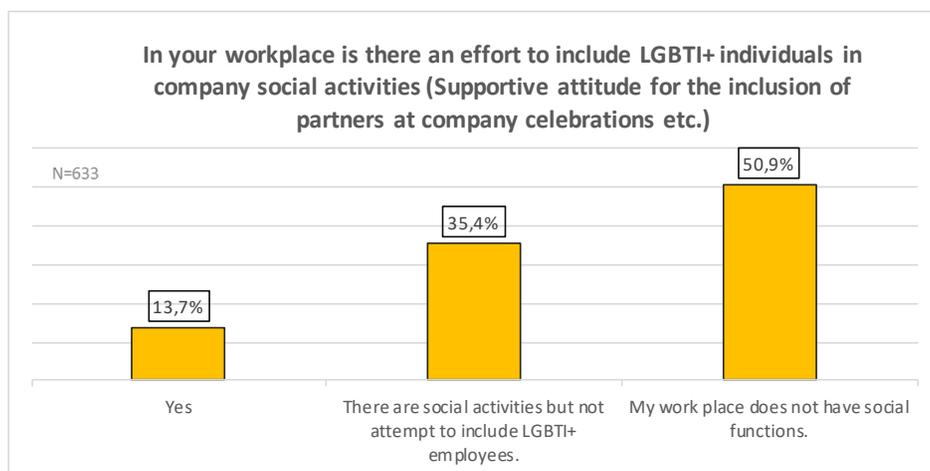
Acceptable ones, the ones that are married get promoted in a shorter period of time (gay man, assistant in energy)

They make it clear that I would never be considered for an executive position or taken seriously because I am "too polite" (gay man, call center representative in telemarketing)

Singles work at the weekends, married people with children don't (lesbian woman, HR executive in food)

LGBTI+ inclusive social activities

When asked "In your workplace is there an effort to include LGBTI+ individuals in company social activities?" 322 participants (50.9%) said that such activities did not exist in their workplace at all while 224 people (35.4%) said there were such activities but are not sensitive to the needs of LGBTI+ employees. Only 87 participants (13.7%) stated that company social activities included LGBTI+ employees.

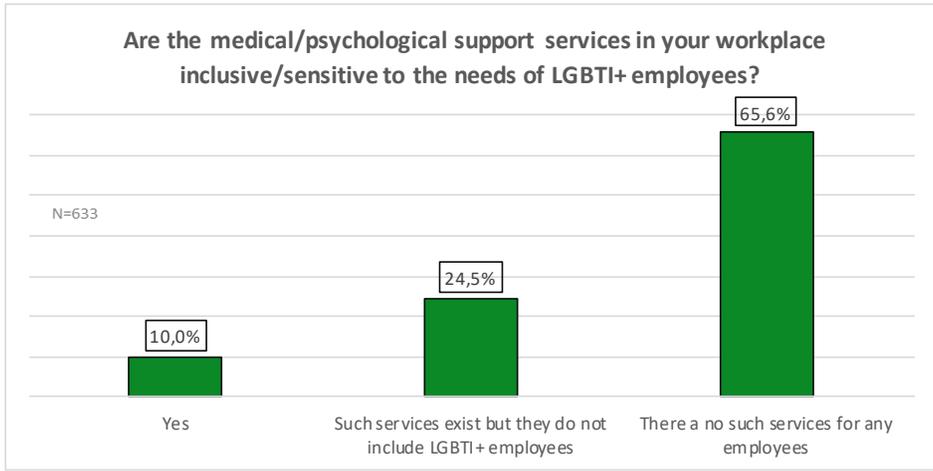


LGBTI+ inclusive social help and medical support

The question we asked about the details of the subject of social help and health was "Are there any social help practices and medical-psychological support services in your company that are inclusive and sensitive to the needs of LGBTI+ employees?"

The existence of specific measures sensitive to sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics in terms of medical-psychological support services provided in the workplace and trained health or socio-psychological support professionals and practices sensitive to the specific needs of transgender employees regarding the transition period is an important corporate equality policy.

To assess the current situation, we asked our participants whether they have any kind of medical or social support and the majority, 415 people declared there was no such support for any employee in the company they worked for while 155 participants (24.5%) said that these mechanisms existed but did not include the needs of LGBTI+ individuals. Only 63 (10%) participants provided a positive answer regarding social help and medical-psychological support services in the workplace.



4. Personal experiences of discrimination

One of the questions aimed to evaluate any discriminatory acts experienced by participants. Answers to the question “In your workplace, have you personally experienced any discriminatory attitudes, behaviors or practices based on your sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics?” can be found below.



As the table above shows, only 76 (12%) reported that they experienced discrimination in the workplace because of their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics. However, 191 people (30.1%) declared that they hide their identities in order to prevent discrimination. A further 122 people (19.2%) related that the reason they did not face discrimination was because their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics are not obvious to observers.

Some of the quotes from the personal experience of discrimination can be seen below and most of them indicate common, structural problems.

I never faced any discriminatory attitude, statement, behavior or practice from my colleagues or executives. But my students started many rumors about my sexual orientation and one of them verbally harassed me (gay non-binary, research assistant at the university)

Not through a corporate policy or employer but I was discriminated by my colleagues (gay man, cashier in retail)

Since there are no rules to protect you people, I can beat you up as I please, was the sentence I heard from a colleague disguised as a joke. When it comes to jokes, there is always a truth underneath (gay man, cashier in retail)

I did not see any open behavior or discourse. But there was a secret discrimination. For example, because of my area, I need to see patients outside the institution. I was not allowed to go to these assignments and my superiors

told me that the LGBTI+ rights organization that I was supposed to go would be “understanding” of the situation that I could volunteer on the weekends. They assumed that I had a personal attachment to that NGO and told me to deal with it. An assignment that I was supposed to fulfill was not taken seriously because it was an LGBTI+ rights organization that I was volunteering for. (androsexual non-binary, research assistant in education)

My compatibility was questioned and still is (heterosexual trans woman, lawyer at an NGO)

I was working temporarily for support at the XXX² Airport Duty-Free Zone, and I was subject to prejudicial, unreal, discriminatory statements constituting verbal violence and hate speech through implicit sarcasm and implication, and behavioral disorder of a male executive regarding my sexual orientation and gender expression, who was working as the manager of airport offices. In a final dialogue, he tried to humiliate me using my current Ph.D. education as well. I reported the whole thing to our woman and LGBTIQA+ friendly executive. She initiated the necessary actions and, he was officially warned and denounced (asexual man, tax expert in tourism)

I heard everything. They were not directed at me, but they were phobic words and coming from a non-sympathetic point of view. It was one of the executives (bisexual cis woman, organizer in food sector)

I am not taken seriously. No matter what I complain about, my words do not mean anything (gay man, call center representative in tele marketing)

Sometimes there are people who do not want to work with me, but I am not openly harassed because of my identity (lesbian trans woman, in publishing)

I was subject to psychological violence by the general manager who wanted me to quit (gay man architect in construction/architecture)

I was told I was too sensitive. My corrections were ignored. I was continuously assigned as a woman. I was isolated (lesbian trans, assistant in education)

I was advised not to comment about this. Because I have homophobic bosses (pansexual woman, editing operator in advertisement)

Even though I had no statement about being a woman, I was continuously addressed as “miss”. I was assigned a gender because of my partner and my bi+ identity was ignored. I was bothered. Sometimes I am slut-shamed because of my outfit but I keep wearing them. I am disturbed by the fact that they think they can ask me anything because I am sex positive (bisexual genderqueer, salesperson at service sector)

I have been insulted many times because of my hair style and outfit. I was isolated at work. I did not have any other intention at my contact with other people but still people thought I was homosexual and gossiping about me. I had to change my workplace (bisexual woman, packaging worker in textile industry)

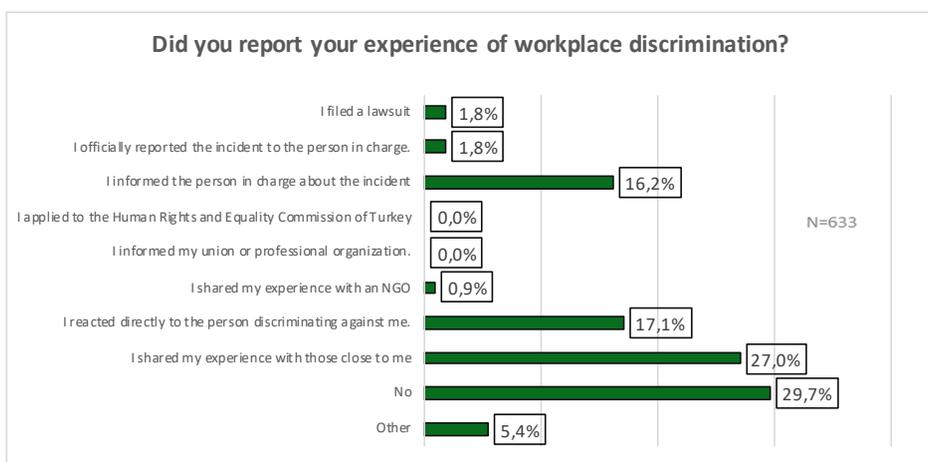
I am criticized considerably more about my performance and my outfit since I disclosed myself (asexual transmasculine non-binary, translator)

2 The name of the airport is hidden for anonymity.

Reporting the discrimination

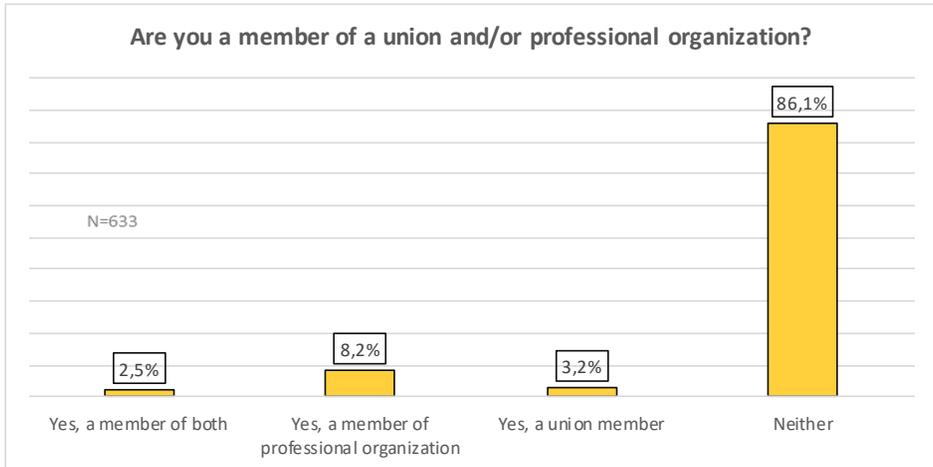
Of the 76 applicants that reported experiencing discrimination were asked whether or not they reported the incident and given the option to choose more than one reporting option. Thirty-three applicants stated they had not reported the discrimination they experienced. The most common answer was “shared with close circle “. Other common answers were “I directly reacted to the person in question” and “verbally reported to the executives”.

Only two people took the case to the court and two reported to the institution officially. One person reported their experience to an NGO. Interestingly, none of those who experienced discrimination reported their case to the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey or to a union or professional organization.



Other: 1-We are from Bursa everywhere, 2- Going to a court? Do LGBTI+ people get any legal help in this country because of violence? I would like to know where. I don't even know. Mobbing people are encouraged especially when it is a queer individual, 3- Not happened, 4- I talked to HR but since it was the general manager who was mobbing me I could not get any results, 5- I was threatened, they did not pay my leave and my salary, I was threatened when I was going to follow it up, they told me they were going to tell my family that I was gay, 6- I directly react to the person in question but lately I prepared a project about gender equality and sent it to upper management.

In general, the statements concerning how participants reacted to discrimination were in line with the findings of our surveys from previous years. LGBTI+ employees often fail to pursue their rights because they fear losing their jobs, dealing with more negative consequences, involuntary disclosure of their identity, and difficulties that would affect their life outside the workplace, and because of other reasons. Another important finding was their disbelief in authorities advocating their rights against discrimination. This might be the result of the insufficiency of corporate policies or legal framework. LGBTI+ employees worried that reporting discrimination might result in further discrimination, or even that this could spread outside the workplace. Hence, they often remain silent.

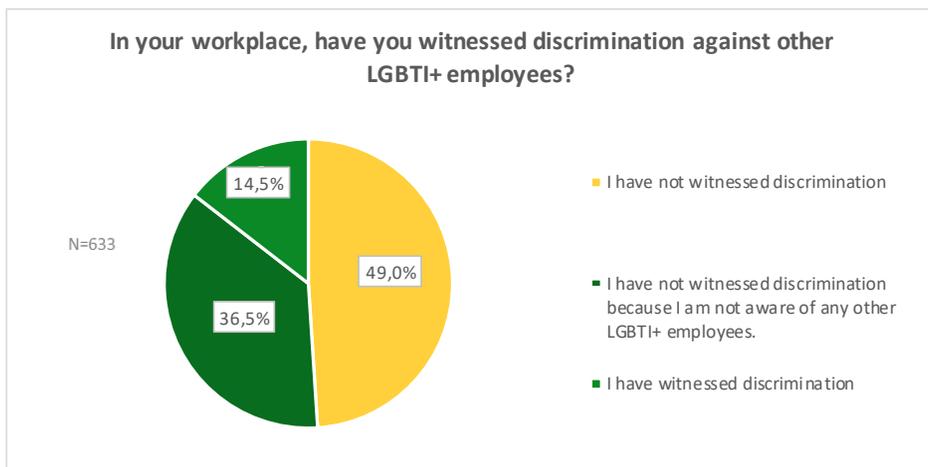


The inadequacy of corporate and legal approaches to discrimination is also worth mentioning especially with regard to unions and professional organizations. Respondents' answers made clear that 13 participants were members of at least one union or professional organization who had experienced discrimination in the workplace. Four of these participants did nothing concerning the discrimination and none of them notified their union or professional organization.



5. Experience of discrimination towards other LGBTI+ employees

On the topic of witnessing discrimination, we asked the question “In your workplace, have you witnessed any discriminatory attitude, statement or practice towards other LGBTI+ employees?”. Almost half of the participants answered negatively. One third (231 people, 36.5%) stated they did not witness any discrimination since there were no other LGBTI+ employee in the company. At the same time, 92 people (14.5%) reported witnessing discrimination.



Here are some of the examples of what participants had to say on the topic:

A gay colleague is called fag and poof as a joke. Actually, that person is very much loved and has a pretty good position at work (bisexual woman, bar waiter in tourism)

I witnessed nonsense comments of phobic people. Comments regarding their disgust for lesbians because they feel disturbed since lesbians hit on them (!?). They say they are bothered to see LGBTI+ people around. All this makes me want to hide my relationship even more (bisexual woman, attorney at law)

A male friend who was open about his bisexuality was ridiculed through discriminatory language and even it was presented as a joke he was told to not to have a close contact with male customers. (lesbian gender fluid working in tourism)

They told a colleague not to talk like a “homo”. Then this person’s partner was told not to visit again at the workplace (asexual trans woman, cook in food sector)

A colleague who is openly and apparently gay is ridiculed mostly by male professors. He is criticized directly because of his outfit (earrings and accessories) (gay cis man, research assistant in education)

There were LGBTI+ customers and there were employees who were teasing them inappropriately (heterosexual genderfluid, clerk in retail)

A cisgender male student with “feminine” attitudes was being bullied. We decided to have a meeting and work on the bullies. There was another student who was not doing anything. Our coordinator told this student “we should have you get married with X, you are a match” and insulted them next to their friends. At the end, the whole class was laughing (pansexual non-binary, teacher in education)

I work in a gynecology hospital and a trans man works with me. They don't let him next to the families after the baby is born since he does not look “like a girl” (lesbian woman, anesthesia technician in healthcare sector)

After the candidate left, somebody told “Look at those eyebrows, definitely gay!” in the promotion commission and I reacted (gay man, executive in communication)

I am a trans man and my process is done, you can't tell, but a gay colleague was discriminated against and I defended him but unfortunately his psychology was ruined and he wanted to quit :((pansexual man, delivery person in aviation/transport)

I have only one colleague that is LGBTI+ but they assign him insistently as hetero. Even though he declared many times that he did not define himself as hetero. I suppose he doesn't seem gay enough to them because he does not fit the stereotypes :) (lesbian trans, assistant in education)

People talk behind LGBTI+ identifiable patients, not to their faces (gay man, translator in healthcare sector)

A colleague of mine is gay, they tease him all the time (heterosexual trans man, working in a gas station)

From what participants shared and parallel to the findings of last year, we see repeated patterns of mobbing, dismissal, ridicule and verbal insults towards LGBTI+ individuals in the workplace.

6. Hate speech against LGBTI+ employees in the workplace

In the survey we asked the question “In your workplace have you witnessed hate speech directed at LGBTI+ people?” and 440 participants (69.5%) answered the question no whereas 193 people (30.5%) said they witnessed hate speech.



Some of the personal statements of those who witnessed hate speech directed at LGBTI+ people can be found below:

The insults in an ordinary discussion, like calling people “homos” or making homophobic comments about LGBTI+ related news in media (gay man, architect in construction/architecture)

Interestingly, executives who didn’t know how to position themselves on this matter would use general hate speech regarding LGBTI+ people so that we could hear them as well, without personally attacking the employees (asexual trans woman, cook in food sector)

In my workplace I hear the word “homo” used as an insult and contempt towards the superiors (gay man, engineer in IT)

Discourses of a masculine language, “jokes” and attitudes towards trans sex workers that come to the institution (pansexual cis woman, customer relations executive in tourism)

Typical sexist discourses. The question “Are you a homo?” is common for a man who cannot come to the football match. But it’s not about the institution, it’s about the employees (lesbian woman, working at the port trade department)

When they see two men treating each other in a friendly way they say, "You scare me!". When I draw a boy with long hair, they told me to shorten them or I would get lynched since this "LGBT bullshit" is gone too far. (asexual cis woman, intern in publishing)

I witness many LGBTI+ discriminatory talk and cursing dialogues between employees, without a specific target (pansexual man working in tourism)

I hear them every day, but they are relaxed since they don't know. I hear every kind of negative statements from hanging them in the middle of Taksim square to burning at the stake etc. but as a lesbian I know I am a fantasy for many of them. I am sick of this hypocrisy (lesbian cis woman working in culture and arts)

Things like, gay people have no place in this country, those people should receive a treatment or die (gay cis man, teacher in education)

We had a meeting about a bullying incident and many teachers agreed that the student with "feminine" features was "sick". I tried to explain that this was not a disease, was none of our business, that we had to work not on that student but those who were bullying (pansexual non-binary, instructor in education)

Most of my colleagues, especially male ones keep saying things like "homo, fag" but next to our superior they are so polite (gay man, software expert in IT)

There are stereotyped discourses towards LGBTI+ individuals like he walks like a girl, she talks like a man, fag, homo, butch etc. I've heard many insulting comments like those. (heterosexual trans man, salesperson in food sector).

Every year before the Pride March, when it is mentioned in the company environment they say disturbing things like "gay, fag, boy" etc. which would offend LGBTI+ people. (gay man, sales executive in textiles)

I was tagged because I am a cheerful and positive person. I was ridiculed under the cover of humor (gay man scenarist in culture and arts)

They say things like "looks like a girl, look at that necklace" or "she acts like a boy" for students, unfortunately in the teachers' lounge (lesbian cis woman, teacher in education)

I was warned because of my rainbow-colored bag (lesbian cis woman working, teacher in education)

They asked me to throw out a customer claiming they were disturbing other customers. I did nothing and continued my job. Later I told those who had phobic discourses that it was wrong. (gay man, barista in food)

Generally, when my colleagues talk to each other (especially doctors) I hear humiliating and alienating comments about these groups (gay man, doctor in healthcare sector)

There was this dialogue between executives: "There was a soft one among the job applicants. I can't hire that one, people will be scared" and there were laughs. (gay man, warehouse personnel in retail)

One of the phobic employees said, "if my kid was gay, I would have him cured". We had a tense fight. Employees use sexist curse words all the time. I confront them every time they do it. There is a phobic discourse about trans+ people too, sometimes I stop working and explain them what transphobia is. (bisexual genderqueer, sales representative in service sector)

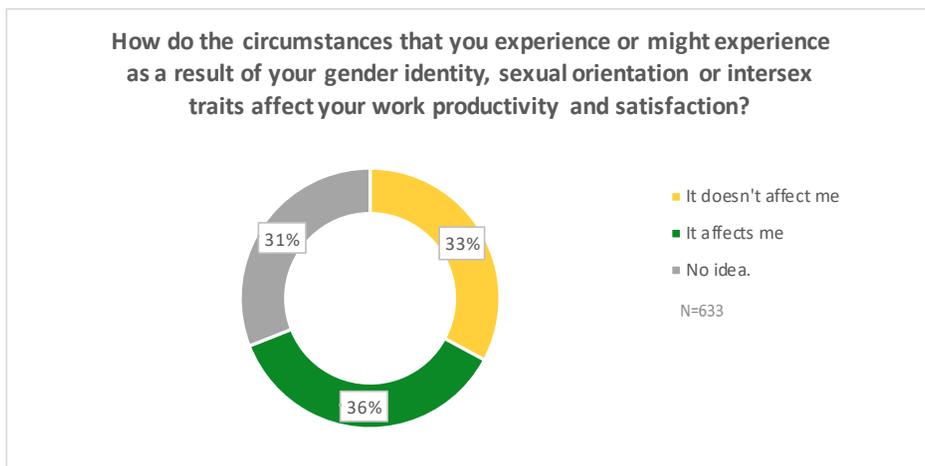
It was not directly hate speech but a colleague who was taking care of a trans woman customer came to me and she said "that is a man out there" in a surprised way. And once the classic people of Lot talk started but didn't take long (panromantic asexual genderfluid, waiter in tourism)

Just yesterday, partners and some employees were talking about why Netflix has so many gay characters, that they cannot watch it as a family and that it was disgusting. I work in aesthetics. There are doctors who treat badly their patients and asking excessive prices from them just because they are gay. In sales department no one talks bad about the customers but trans individuals say, "Do you operate on trans individuals?" instead of "How much does this operation cost?" because in many places they are denied the service (bisexual woman, working in healthcare sector)

As you can in in the quotes, hate speech and discrimination go hand-in-hand. In addition, 22.1% of those who did not witness discrimination based on gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics stated they witnessed hate speech.

7. The relationship between discrimination, job satisfaction and productivity

Responding to the question “Do the discriminatory attitudes, statements, behaviors or practices you experience or might experience because of your sexual orientation/ gender identity/ sex characteristics affect your productivity in the workplace and job satisfaction?” 208 people (32.9%) answered the question negatively. At the same time, 229 participants believed (36.2%) it did have an effect and 196 people said “I don’t know” (31%).



Some of the comments related to job satisfaction and productivity can be seen below:

I don't feel myself safe, free or equal where there is no inclusive environment. Consequently, I can't express myself in the best way and fulfill my potential (gay non-binary, research assistant in education)

Of course, we are afraid, some people are nuts. I have customers that give me a difficult time, it effects our motivation and our satisfaction negatively (gay man, executive in retail)

Just not being able to express myself lowers my motivation sometimes (gay man working in automotive sector)

I used to start everyday a little tense. I was applying for new jobs and waiting for the responses. And this was affecting my designs since I could not express myself. I had countless unproductive days (gay genderless, designer in textiles)

This possibility stops me from doing my work (gay cis man, research assistant in education)

I don't feel safe. I cannot perform fully when I am not myself. For example, I am stressed out when I'm conducting a research on LGBTI+ people (gay man, research assistant in education)

Even though I work in a company famous for its positive discrimination towards LGBTI+ I live with fear and anxiety because the company does not impose its policy to the employees and because Turkish society, not only the society but also cis hetero people who are used to heteronormative order, are ignorant and backward (lesbian woman, software engineer in IT)

Of course it does, a person's disgust with my existence turns me upside down. It hurts a lot not to be able to give the answers that I would normally give because the person who said it is someone more senior than myself. It makes me feel bad to lie when everyone is talking about their relationship in the office environment. I usually feel very bad about it for three days. Then I act like I have forgotten. But when I look back, I still feel very angry and sad because I have to work with these people. (Bisexual woman, lawyer)

It prevents me from connecting with my colleagues. I have to make an effort to disguise myself. I feel stress and anxiety (lesbian woman, consultant in education)

I don't have much dialogue with people at work. I talk about work and daily chit-chat. My relationships at work might decrease my motivation (gay man, specialist in aviation/transport)

Of course. The reasons to quit one of my previous jobs was that I was mobbed by my superior. I was not even open about my homosexual identity; I was just doing my job. But I was neat, I had manner which can be seen as a weakness in Turkey. I did not have "manly" interests like football, so it was not difficult for them to boldly guess that I was gay. It could even be not true. In time, I was making mistakes, I was sulking and gave them enough reason for them to fire me because I was working under stress. So, I can be proof of discrimination having an absolute negative effect on both productivity and satisfaction (gay cis man, research assistant in education)

My motivation drops constantly. I am personally passionate about work, but all this negativity decreases my motivation and productivity (heterosexual trans woman, lawyer at an NGO)

I have to put an extra effort to hide my sexual orientation and be careful about what I say or do. It's a lot of hard work and prevents me from building a sense of belonging with my company (gay cis man, research assistant in education)

I can't focus totally on my work. How can you do it in a place you feel isolated anyway? (gay man, accountant in food sector)

I am demotivated and demoralized; I don't want to go there. Even though I advocate respectfully my rights and my being right I internalize the situation and I am affected emotionally (asexual man, tax expert in tourism)

Of course. Even just one look ruins my whole day and makes me feel invaluable, that kind of an attitude would make me really sad (bisexual undefined, changing room steward in retail)

A wrong attitude towards my identity would not affect me but my work. I personally was subject to lots of homophobia back in the day, I won't be affected personally. But if I am pissed, I would deliberately transfer it to my work and I would make it not work (gay man, academic in education)

Totally affects. Even though I don't have a sense of belonging to the place I work, I would work harder to be a part of a company who would support LGBTI+ individuals and make them feel it (gay man, clerk in retail)

Yes. I was especially bothered by some of ignorance related comments coming from my colleagues. One example, they called a femininely dressed man in social media as "like a woman". So, in order to prevent the next comment about me, I started check my outfit and make sure it was masculine enough, making myself anxious (gay man, instructor in education)

I am bothered to know that I will never be as relaxed as my hetero colleagues and having to deal with heteronormative works (gay man, product manager in cosmetics)

I am comfortable when they are comfortable with me. I am ok as long as I don't see a phobic gesture. I am trying to keep my balance thinking about these things after work (gay man, barista in food sector)

I had that in my previous workplace. I reported my homophobic manager and general manager. I could not stand the company psychologically. It wasn't personal but there were lots of "jokes" about LGBTI+ people. I reacted sometimes but never lectured them about it like a teacher. It was the small Turkish team of a global company and I heard that the global company was a Trump supporter. There was sexual orientation inclusion close in the global ethic rules but looked like it was just a makeup, so I did not push it. But not being able to address anyone, not being able to fight demotivated me and I quit (gay cis man, research assistant in education)

No matter how much I hide myself I don't want to be in the same environment with colleagues acting like that (gay non-binary, security guard)

When we evaluate our findings as a whole, we find that experiences of discrimination related to one's gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics not only harm a person's psychology, but also decreases an employee's performance and productivity. Our participants pointed to issues like exclusion, negative feelings including anger, loss of hope from life and future. This affects the general motivation at work and decreases the efficiency.

Heterosexuals do not have to hide their identities, so they don't have to think about it. The fact that I have to blurs my focus, or that's just how I feel (gay man, translator in banking/finance)

I have difficulty working and focusing next to some people. I am always afraid they are going to say something that is going to hurt me (pansexual woman, sous chef in food)

I am unhappy, I don't want to be productive (gay man, psychologist in health)

Decreases my motivation (gay cis man, shop designer in retail)

My performance decreases (gay man, teacher in education)

Decreases my self-esteem (lesbian woman, doctor in healthcare sector)

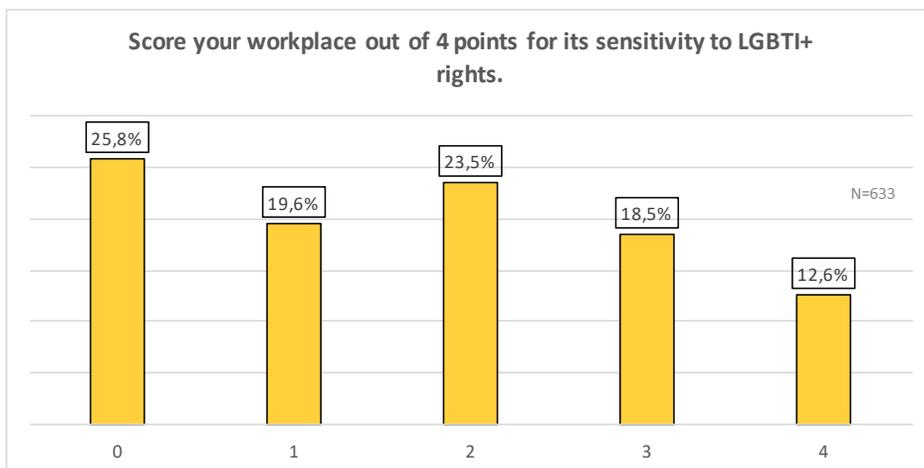
My productivity and will to work disappear (heterosexual trans man working in a gas station)

As pointed out by the participants, because of not being open about their identity in the workplace, a loss of focus and concentration should also be expected since LGBTI+ employees have to come up with various strategies to overcome obstacles in and outside work. Sometimes they do it without even noticing it or, it results in stress overload. Relationships between colleagues are affected negatively by the situation as well. Therefore, LGBTI+ employees are unable to find the minimum social support they need in the workplace. Because they cannot express themselves fully, they are unable to create genuine friendships and social relationships in the workplace that may support their private life.

A small number of positive comments coming from respondents who are open about their identities at work or who work in LGBTI+ friendly workplaces show that having no pressure regarding sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex situation increases employees' loyalty and belonging, their thrust towards themselves and their colleagues, efficiency, private life – work life feedback and job satisfaction.

8. General evaluation regarding the sensibility of workplaces about LGBTI+ rights

We asked our participants to evaluate the sensitivity of their companies in terms of LGBTI+ rights. We asked them to grade their company on a scale of 0 to 4. You can see the answers on the table below.



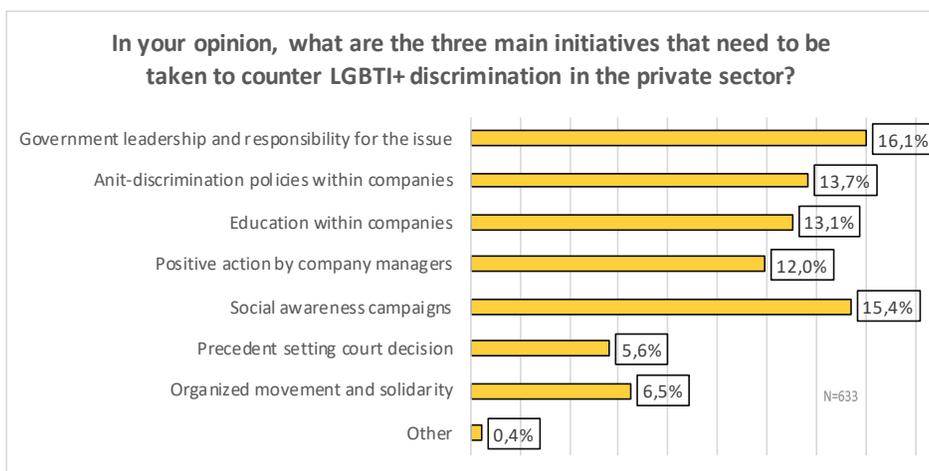
As you can see on the table, 287 applicants out of 633 (45.3%) gave their companies 0 or 1 out of four in terms of sensitivity while another 149 graded their company two out of four, namely as mediocre. As a result, 70% of the employees related that the company they work for is average and/or below average when it comes to sensitivity in terms of LGBTI+ rights. Some did report more positive results; 117 people graded their company three out of four (18.5%) but just 80 participants (12.6%) awarded their companies a four.

This finding is consistent with previous years. Even among those who provided a positive rating for their companies, their answers remain relative. Participants expressing content in terms of company sensitivity also provided negative answers to other questions. They reported a lack of equal access to rights in the workplace, they suspected this relatively positive position of their company wouldn't be permanent, they could not fully express themselves, and they took precautions and worked keeping in mind that their workplace experience was an exception. This finding demonstrates that unless there is sensitivity throughout the labor market about equality and rights, no LGBTI+ employee can ever be completely happy, satisfied and, secure.

9. Suggestions for the fight against discrimination against LGBTI+ employees

In the last part of the survey, we asked our participants “In your opinion, what are the three main initiatives that need to be taken to counter LGBTI+ discrimination in the private sector?” You can see in the table a distribution of the answers provided.

Most participants pointed to the need for a national policy against discrimination. The second most common measure suggested was for the government to assume responsibility and leadership on the issue. Social awareness campaigns were the 3rd most common answer.

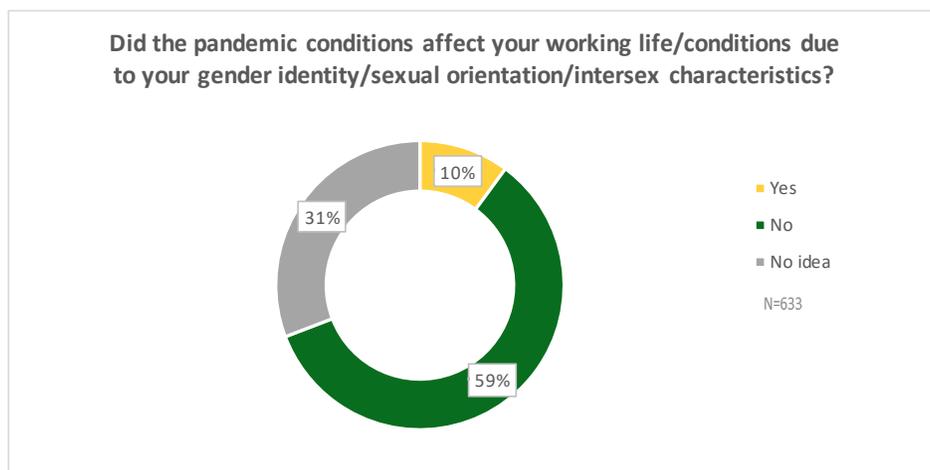


Other: 1- They should add laws and regulations that make people prefer LGBTI+ employees, 2- Every action and practice that would raise consciousness in the society. Parade was such an important action; it was a peaceful protest with the participation from every part of the society and people with every sexual orientation. It should be organized again, 3- We need adequate provisions in the constitution, 4- We need hate speech laws, 5- Even a minor case should be taken to court and the institution should be pressured by the NGOs, 6- No open LGBT members in the upper management, 5- No one should interfere with the other, 6- Visibility in media, 7- Equality during hiring processes, 8- Everyone should say how they feel and all should support each other without fear. This way we can be accepted more easily. Without ruining our love and respect for one another.

The answers regarding the fight against discrimination in employment were consistent with previous years. The most common answer, the need for the prohibition of discrimination in national laws shows the demand for a common, trustworthy legal guarantee. However, participants thought that legal and constitutional changes were not enough and a change in social mentality was imperative to fight against discrimination. Law is indeed applied by people and without social change LGBTI+ employees’ working conditions will not improve. A significant number of participants also underlined the importance of in-company trainings, practices and policies to proceed in legal and social transformations.

10. The situation of LGBTI+ employees during the Covid-19 pandemic

In order to gather data regarding the effects of Covid 19 pandemic on work life and conditions of LGBTI+ employees, in 2021 we asked the survey participants the question “Do you think the new conditions in work life caused by the pandemic had a different (negative or positive) effect on you because of your gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics?” and we asked them to share their experiences.



10.1% of our participants (64 people) says they were affected where 59.1% (374 people) believe they were not affected and 30.8% has no idea (195 people). Those who are affected (64 people) have different answers. Here are the ones who had positive effects:

Working from home has less risk of homophobia since it decreases interaction and keeps me away from cis hetero male dominant working environment. It has a positive outcome (gay man, project manager in IT)

I started learning more, live more (bisexual woman technician in energy)

I am more comfortable since I work from home (gay man, coordinator at NGO)

Out of office is freer (gay cis man, project manager at energy)

Positive: staying at home removed obligations like dresses and make up (lesbian woman, consultant in education)

Since we started working from home, I have less interaction with other employees and executives. And that makes me feel relatively safer (gay cis man, research assistant in education)

It is better to stay at home, not to be obliged to go to the office (gay man, product expert in healthcare sector)

When I am at home, I can be more myself, I don't get caught in other people's ideas. Then I can have a more pleasant day. I believe some of it has to do with my sexual orientation and my closure (gay man, industrial designer in energy)

When I started working at home, I had to see less people from work and I felt freer about my outfit and my behavior (gay man, instructor in education)

I work online. I don't have to hide my private life. I am not worried (bisexual woman, graphics designer in advertisement)

Some of them talk about the negative effects:

Normally I have a low employment possibility and now it's even harder because of the pandemic. Sometimes I feel lonely about the work I do (heterosexual trans woman, lawyer at an NGO)

During the transition to online education, I was excluded from the process, cis hetero individuals were preferred over me because I get paid per hour. That female colleague with a foreign citizenship I was talking about is ahead of me on the list because she is a cis hetero woman and had a baby with a Turkish guy. (gay man, teacher in education)

I have a family of homophobes and I have to stay with them. And they know about me since 2017, we are in a constant fight. I feel like I have no family even though I stay with them. And that affects me in every way possible (gay man, developer in IT)

My operation process was stopped, and I am facing trials, so I am unemployed for a long time now. People in my apartment see me more often and since I am a trans (no operation) I am wearing a leather jacket as a disguise (heterosexual trans man, waiter in entertainment)

I go out less and I see less of people who accept me and that feels bad (bisexual trans, teacher in education)

Being psychologically exhausted and not wanting to do anything plus hormonal imbalances I think we are more affected by it (lesbian trans man, graphic designer in culture and arts)

I felt my loneliness in this life even more (gay man executive in culture and arts)

I sit down and think about what the hell am I going to do in this country, more often than usual. This online work changed the format of all my social relations. And that makes me feel lonelier (gay cis man, resource development coordinator in education)

My coming out process was halted since I have to live with my family now (lesbian cis woman, instructor in education)

I had to go back to my family, I wish I did not (pansexual man, researcher in education)

11. Quotes from our participants

At the end of the survey, we asked the participants if they wanted to share anything they thought should be included in our reports. Below you will see some of the answers.

I am working in a small company where no one talks about gender identity or sexual orientation, so I have no chance to disclose myself. I don't think I have any chance other than hiding at work until Turkish society considers my identity as normal (bisexual non-binary, accountant in food sector)

As a law student my dream was to become a prosecutor. But when I discovered my sexual orientation, I had to give that dream up. I don't want to work in any public office. I don't want people to interfere with my private life. I don't want to be a prosecutor and hide; I can rather be a lawyer and live freely. Since I did not tell my family about my identity, they don't understand why I changed my carrier path. They push me, pressure me and they don't even know. I just wanted to say. I have no one else to talk to. (gay man, working in machine industries)

Not only about LGBTI+ individuals, but I also believe we need a serious revision regarding labor law. Working conditions regarding discrimination should be better for everyone and the state should be impartial between the employer and the employee. Currently it's taking employer's side neither unions nor NGO's have any power in the country. Any institution who is not on the government's side is targeted, criminalized. The real criminal organizations are protected by the government taking what should be property of the people. Concepts like merit, conscience and justice should be remembered (gay cis man, research assistant in education)

Most of the LGBTI+ individuals are forced to hide their sexual orientation/preference at their workplaces. Heterosexuals who show you some tolerance may also harm you in the end. Those who are open about their sexual orientation are generally subject to bullying, teasing and gossip. It's worse in factories that are more closed, production factories. Social pressure, religious pressure and tendency to domestic violence force people to hide their sexual identity or sexual orientation at work (bisexual man, production/metal expert in exports)

Most of the LGBTI+ employees hide themselves, other than those big international companies, Turkish companies rarely care about the issue. Even when people say "I respect them" I can feel them gossip like "You know that one..." In private sector people are a little more comfortable but public workers are definitely disadvantaged because even at the military homosexuality is seen as "severe psychiatric disorder". This shows how backward Turkey is. In public service they could be easily fired because of the laws (bi-curious man, assistant in IT)

LGBTI+ people hide themselves at work and tried to be someone by working hard or they do not hide themselves and still they have to work hard. Anyhow they are disadvantaged, and the most important experience is that of trans people's. Even though I have no trans experience, in a disgusting system where trans people are treated in such an inhumane and disrespectful way, it is really disadvantaged to be a queer (gay man, teacher in education)

Let's not forget we all have to work because we are human. It is ridiculous to question orientation once we have a feminine looking man or a masculine looking woman. We need to educate people about their jargon in every profession, disgusting comments like "fag, homo" should be punished (gay man, steward in aviation/transportation)

The company I work for has some global auditing mechanisms. We are currently using gender-neutral WCs but in order to pass the audit we need gendered ones. I took an initiative and rejected to do it, but I don't know how it will end. I believe the attempts to "bring civilization" to the sector from global companies just make our already existing problems more difficult (pansexual non-binary, executive in textiles)

I believe LGBTQA+ Solidarity Networks and Formations should become a stakeholder with an active role in the parliamentary commissions regarding legislation related to work life (asexual man tax expert in tourism)

I believe people or organizations who work on gender equality awareness should get in touch with HR or in-service training departments or organize presentations (lesbian woman, executive in education)

Unfortunately, in Turkey the most visible LGBTI+ individuals are trans men and women but discriminatory behavior is towards everyone. Yet we trans people experience it intensively not only at work but also at school, at the bank, at the hospital, we are discriminated. Trans people cannot get a job at public offices or in private companies. I am looking for a job over a year now but not even the tiniest no-skill companies would hire us (heterosexual trans man, sales representative in food sector)

It should be prevented that people like us are treated like freaks at workplaces, we should have the same rights and equality with everyone (gay man, cook in food sector)

There should be unions and solidarity. This way sanctions can be enforced to institutions. Not even implicit jokes will be possible then. We should educate institutions and every employee must attend these trainings (lesbian cis woman, protection expert in civil society)

We need more study on bisexual individuals, I think the term is not known enough. People define me as gay or hetero man. It's sad, every color in the rainbow should be equally known (bisexual man, physiotherapist in health-care sector)

As far as I know there are no content about this in the labor law. This causes employees to hide themselves or become invisible (bisexual woman, chemicals manager in textiles)

In any change towards gender equality in any company, what they mean is always men and women. They do it to increase women's employment. Inclusive policies still do not exist, maybe you can add this to the research. You can ask LGBTI+ people who work at institutions with (so-called) corporate gender equality policies (bisexual genderqueer, sales representative in service sector)

As far as I heard, in the workplaces, especially in the public sector as LGBTI+ individuals, on the one hand, we have to make an effort to hide our identity, and on the other hand, we have to fight hetero-normative patterns imposed. This situation forces us to live "double" lives, and as we go on, we are psychologically damaged (bisexual woman, project assistant in civil society)