The Situation of LGBTI+ Employees in the Private Sector in Türkiye

2025 Research

KAOS GL

eşcinselliğin kurtuluşu heteroseksizmi de özgürleştirecektir

The Situation of LGBTI+ Employees in the Private Sector in Türkiye

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CHAPTER 1

KEY FINDINGS

The consecutive research conducted by Kaos GL Association, on the situation of LGBTI+ Employees in Türkiye, completed its 11th edition in 2025. The 2025 survey was conducted online through *SurveyMonkey* Pro, and a total of 283 LGBTI+ respondents who declared that they work for a private company operating in Türkiye completed the survey.

The Sample

Similar to previous years, the sample this year consisted predominantly of young persons with post-secondary education and who have been in the workforce for a short period of time. 78.1% of the respondents a re between the ages of 18-35; 85.8% has a bachelor's, associate's or graduate degree. 85.1% of the respondents are employed at their current job s for 5 years or less. 67.5% of respondents work in small and medium-sized companie s. Since the 2020 survey, respondents have been asked to indicate their city of residence, but the answer "I do not want to share" has been added to the options, anticipating that there may be respondents who would prefer not to disclose this information due to safety concerns. This year, 10.6% of the respondents preferred not to indicate their city of residence. In line with last year's data, the majority of the respondents this year indicated that they live in Istanbul (45.9%). IFollowing Istanbul are Ankara (21.3%) and Izmir (11.5%)[1]. Although the majority of those who disclosed their city of residence live in these three metropolitan cities, the overall responses indicate that our survey reached participants from at least 27 provinces across Türkiye.

38.9% of the participants of the 2025 survey declared their gender identity as men, transgender men, or cisgender men and their sexual orientation as gay. Therefore, similar to previous years, gay men respondents constitute the highest percentage in the sample of this year's survey. Since the 2023 survey, the respondents were offered the option "non-binary" alongside "other" in response to the question about their gender identity; and 15.5% of all participants have chosen the "other" and "non-binary" options in the 2025 survey. The percentage of respondents who selected an option other than lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual (such as asexual, pansexual and "other" options) to the question on sexual orientation was 13.1%. Therefore, respondents who identify their gender identity and/or sexual orientation outside the binary are represented in the sample this year, as in the previous years.

Looking at the sectors represented in 2025 survey, it is seen that the education sector is at the top of the list this year (9.2%), as in the previous years. The education sector was followed by the IT (8.1%), food (7.4%), civil society (6.4%), and health

1 The percentages were calculated based on the 253 respondents who have indicated their city of residence.

(6.4%) sectors respectively. The total number of participants working in these sectors are 37.5% of the sample. On the other hand, the statements of the participants show that LGBTI+ employees from almost every sector are represented in the sample. When we analyze the 4-point scores given by the participants to their workplaces in terms of awareness of LGBTI+ rights, the civil society stands out with the highest average score (2.8); followed by media (2.8), entertainment (2.2), arts and culture (2.2).

Forced closet strategy and discrimination

In line with the findings of our previous research, this year's private sector findings show that LGBTI+ employees mostly rely on recruitment channels such as the recommendation of acquaintances and company profiles placed on online career sites when looking for and applying for a job. This fact reinforces our belief that LGBTI+ employees need to assess the compatibility of the position, future work environment, and their personal qualifications before applying for a position. Despite these measures taken during the job search, the high percentage of respondents (78,1%) who are not open or partially open about their sexual orientation or gender identiy reveals that there are major obstacles to LGBTI+ visibility in the private sector in Turkey, and the number of workplaces that implement effective inclusive policies is low. The statements by the respondents, in most cases, demonstrate that anti-discrimination and inclusive policies are not mentioned in job postings or the recruitment processes. The emphasis on expectations related to heteronormative and cisnormative roles in job postings and recruitment processes creates negative effects on LGBTI+ employees even before employment and forces them to adopt a strategy of staying in closet. Where inclusive policies are implemented in the workplace, they appear to show a positive impact, encouraging LGBT+ individuals to apply for jobs.

In the 2025 private sector survey, 8.1% stated that they had experienced discriminatory attitudes, statements, behaviors, or practices during the recruitment processes. While 43.1% of the participants stated that they did not encounter discriminatory attitudes, statements, behaviors, or practices during the recruitment process, 48.8% attributed this to the fact that they concealed their gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics, or these were not immediately apparent. The rate of participants who stated that they encountered discriminatory attitudes, statements, behaviors, or practices at the workplace after recruitment is 19.8%. 38.2% of the participants stated that they did not encounter such treatment because they concealed their gender identity, sexual orientation, or sex characteristics, or because these were not immediately apparent. The percentage of respondents who stated that they did not encounter discriminatory attitudes or practices without giving any reason was 42%.

The percentage of respondents who stated that they had experienced discriminatory attitudes or practices during the recruitment process and at their workplace appears to be low. However, as in previous years, these rates should be evaluated together with a series of other data. First of all, the following finding should be highlighted: Three out of every five LGBTI+ employees have either been discriminated against during the recruitment processes (56.9%) and/or at their workplace (58%), or thinks that they have not been discriminated against because they have been assigned as cisgender and heterosexual by the people around them due to their gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics being hidden or not immediately apparent. In addition, the rate of respondents who stated that they did not encounter any discriminatory attitude or practice without any reason should be assessed together with the rates of being open in the recruitment process and in the workplace. Only 13.4% of the participants stated that they were completely open during the recruitment process, and only 21.9% stated that they were completely open at their workplace. The rate of participants who witnessed discriminatory attitudes or practices against another LGBTI+ employee in their workplace (12.7%) should also be analyzed within this framework.

As stated above, the overall rate of respondents who declared that they are fully open at work is 21.9%. The relevant rate in this year's public sector survey, which we conducted simultaneously with the private sector survey, is 4%. This rate was even lower during the recruitment processes. As noted, only 13.4% of the private sector survey respondents reported being fully open during the recruitment process, and there is no participant who was open during the recruitment process in the 2025 public sector survey. As in previous years, the 2025 surveys reveal that discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics is a serious barrier to access to employment. LGBTI+ workers follow a strategy of forced closet to mitigate the risk of not being hired. Since the risk of discrimination persists after employment, the same strategy characterizes the entire working life of LGBTI+ workers. The fact that the total rate of LGBTI+ employees in the private sector who are fully and partially open in the workplace (49.1%) is higher than the relevant rate during the recruitment process (21.5%), and that the rate of being completely in closet decreases after recruitment (from 52.3% to 21.9%) shows that LGBTI+ employees can be more open about their identities if an environment of trust is created depending on the conditions in the workplace and the attitudes of superiors and other employees. The responses of participants to open questions are consistent with this finding.

In 2011, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights issued a detailed report regarding discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation, in which it pointed out that LGBTI+ employees are forc ed to an in-closet strategy in order to prevent discrimination and harassment, makes it more difficult to analyze the actual effects of homophobia, transphobia and discrimination in the

workplace.[2] Considering our study's findings, The Commissioner's statement appears to be valid also for Türkiye. The data also suggests that when this strategy is not practiced, the feared discrimination occurs. For this reason, LGBTI+ employee s in Türkiye follow a strategy of forced closet starting from the early stages of a job search to reduce the risk of discrimination and harassment as much as possible.

To better understand the conditions that push LGBTI+ employees to continue this strategy throughout their working life, a question on hate speech was added to the survey for the first time in 2019. As a response to this question, 34% of the participants in 2019, 36.9% in 2020, 30.5% in 2021, 27.3% in 2022, 32% in 2023, and 30.4% in 2024 stated that they encountered hate speech against LGBTI+ persons at their workplace. This rate is 34.6% in 2025. Considering this data, it is possible to conclude that one out of every three LGBTI+ employees in the private sector in Türkiye encounters hate speech against LGBTI+ persons. These findings also confirm the conditions that force LGBTI+ employees to maintain a strategy of staying in the closet in the private sector. The relevant rate for hate speech increases to 58.6% for public sector employees. This is one of the reasons that can explain the much lower rate of being out among LGBTI+ public sector employees than in the private sector. On the other hand, as in previous years, it is understood that a part of the participants in our study this year also consider sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics as qualities related to private and personal life, and do not view them as categories related to social and economic rights that are protected and supported on the basis of human rights against discrimination in the workplace. It is important to bear in mind that this situation may determine how participants define discriminatory attitudes, discourse, behavior, and practices in the workplace.

Another factor that makes it difficult to analyze the real extent of discrimination against LGBTI+ persons in employment in Türkiye is the low number of cases where mechanisms are used against discrimination. Again, in parallel with the findings of the research we have conducted in previous years, the private sector survey of 2025 shows that LGBTI+ employees generally do not apply to any official mechanism after experiencing discrimination. Among the 56 participants who stated that they faced discriminatory attitudes or practices in their workplace due to their gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics, none of them officially reported the incident to the authorities and 27 people did not resort to any means. Most of the rest only reacted to the person concerned (17 people), verbally reported the situation to the managers(13 people), and shared the issue with their close circle (20 people). Among these 56 people, only 3 participants took the matter to the judiciary, and only 1 participant reported the situation to a civil society organization.

2 Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe, p. 166, 176. https://rm.coe.int/discrimination-on-grounds-of-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-in/16809079e2.

Neither did the participants apply to Türkiye Human Rights and Equality (THREI, i.e. national human rights body) nor notify their union/professional organization. The accounts of the participants reveal that LGBTI+ employees are not convinced that they will get results through official channels in the face of discrimination.

Anti-Discrimination and Inclusivity Mechanisms

This picture reveals that there is a need for mechanisms that empower LGBTI+ employee s in accessing employment and working life in Türkiye. However, our research shows that such mechanisms are not widespread enough in the private sector, and where they do exist, they can be ineffective. In a few positive examples where empowering mechanisms exist and operate, it proves that these tools can effectively protect LGBTI+ employees against discrimination and hate speech and increase job satisfaction and productivity. For example, similar to previous years, satisfaction with the business environment for workplaces headquartered abroad is higher than for workplaces headquartered in Türkiye. 68.2% of foreign based workplaces are headquartered in the US and European countries, and their average score is 2.3 out of 4. This average drops to 1.8 for Türkiye -based workplaces. Consistent with this finding, 40.9% of the respondents who indicated that their workplaces are headquartered abroad stated that there are mechanisms in place to prevent discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics. This rate decreases to 11.3% for respondents in workplaces based in Türkiye. Again, the rate of being completely open in terms of gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics among the respondents in workplaces headquartered abroad (29.6%) exceeds the general rate in the sample (21.9%)

In 2025, the rate of participants who stated that there are effective rules or boards to prevent discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics in their workplace is only 15.9%. On the other hand, in workplaces where such mechanisms exist and are effectively implemented, the rate of being completely open among LGBTI+ employees (55.6%) is 2.5 times higher than the overall rate in the sample (21.9%), while the rate of being completely in closet (8.9%) is two-fifths of the rate in the sample (21.9%).. In addition, the statements by respondents show that even if such rules or committees do not officially exist, the existence of an unwritten consensus and a corporate culture sensitive to LGBTI+ rights can have positive results. Similarly, only 18.4% of the respondents stated that there are practices for the inclusion of LGBTI+ employees within the scope of social activities in their organization. 63.5% of the respondents working in such workplaces stated that they are fully open at work. Respondents working in workplaces where there are practices sensitive to the needs of LGBTI+ employees regarding welfare and medical-psychological support constitute only 9.5% of the sample. 70.4% of these stated that they are fully open in their workplaces. Evidently, workplaces where mechanisms empowering LGBTI+ employees are in place and

effectively operated are rarely encountered in the private sector in Türkiye. However, the findings of our research clearly demonstrate that these mechanisms are essential in combating discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics in employment, and in the equal access of LGBTI+ employee s to economic and social rights.

Unions and Professional Organizations

Unions and professional organizations are undoubtedly one of the first areas that come to mind when it comes to mechanisms that empower LGBTI+ workers in accessing and taking part in employment. Our research shows that the rate of being a member of a union or professional organization among LGBTI+ employees in the private sector is low. Those who are members do not see unions and professional organizations as one of the leading platforms against discrimination of LGBTI+ persons in work life. Only 8.1% of the sample are members of professional organizations. The rate of respondents who are members of a trade union remains at 10.3%. This rate is well below the unionization rate among employee s in Türkiye. According to the latest circular from the Ministry of Labor and Social Security on the subject, the percentage of unionized workers in Türkiye is 14.022%.[3]

According to the data of our research, 13 out of 56 participants who stated that they were discriminated against at their workplace are members of a union and/or professional organization. However, as mentioned above, none of them reported the situation to the union or professional organization of which they are a member. In addition, in response to the question "which three main measures should be taken against LGBTI+ discrimination?", only 8.4% of participants selected the option, "organized struggle and solidarity networks". These findings reveal that unions and professional organizations have important duties in empowering LGBTI+ employees in employment and preventing discrimination against LGBTI+ persons. Therefore, unions and professional organizations should make it one of their priorities to produce policies concerning this cause. In 2016, the International Labor Organization (ILO) published the findings of its Pride Project where they noted that economic and social rights of LGBTI+ people are not a priority for unions. The result of our survey shows that this statement is also valid for unions in Türkiye. The same report also indicates that LGBTI+ community is the group that is most likely to experience discrimination and harassment in employment, and that the job-seeking LGBTI+ community is not open about their gender identity, sexual orientation, or sex characteristics as a strategy, which continues during employment. The ILO study also shows that LGBTI+ employees who can safely disclose their

3 Ministry of Labor and Social Security, Pursuant to Law No. 6356 on Trade Unions and Collective Labor Agreements, Circular on Statistics for July 2025 Regarding the Number of Workers in Industrial Sectors and the Number of Members of Trade Unions, Official Gazette, Number: 32965, 24.07.2025. https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2025/07/20250724-17.pdf.

identities suffer less from anxiety, depression, and burnout syndrome, and in order to provide these working conditions, workplaces should implement supportive and inclusive policies.[4]

The Effects of Discrimination and The Risk to be Discriminated Against

These statements are in line with both the findings of last year's and this year's surveys. Participants in this research stated that being subject to discrimination and hate speech or the risk of experiencing them because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics, paired with the continuing strategy of concealment of their identities, 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 in their companies, and feeling hopeless, sad, anxious, and angry. They also stated that their performance was lacking along with their motivation, which all led to depression, stress, and burnout syndrome due to psychologically and physically overwhelming conditions. Their productivit y and job satisfaction dropped considerably. Since we spend most of our time at our workplaces, the negative impact of this situation on LGBTI+ employees is obvious.

Even though the in-closet strategy seems to provide some level of protection against discrimination and hate speech, the obligation to remain in closet is a form of discrimination itself. LGBTI+ employees feel certain that they will face discrimination and thus take measures even before employment. During their employment, LGBTI+ individuals conceal their identity or share it with close colleagues or other LGBTI+ employees, so they separate their work life and their private life. Some even have to pretend in terms of body language or the way they express themselves in public in order to conceal their gender expression. This strategy of concealment and caution against potential discrimination turns into a continuous form of discrimination and hurts LGBTI+ employees both mentally and physically, that exceeds the boundaries of work life.

Economic Instability and Uncertainty

In 2022, we added a question to the survey to inquire whether the current economic instability and uncertainty in Türkiye had a different impact on the working conditions of LGBTI+ employees or not; 18.6% of all participants stated that it had a different impact on them. The responses from participants indicated that the economic hardships forcing people to shrink their social lives outside of work had negative effects on LGBTI+ s, who particularly need safe spaces and solidarity. It also pointed to

4 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, p. 1, 2, 3. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40gender/documents/briefingnote/wcms_368962.pdf.

the growing prevalence of unemployment among LGBTI+ s, deepening fears of being fired and being unable to find new jobs, and that being open at work had become an even greater risk for LGBTI+ employees s in this context. In 2023, the percentage of respondents who selected "yes" rose to 27.9%. In 2024, this percentage was 26.4%. This year, this percentage is 28.6%. This year's participants' contributions also show that economic instability has pushed LGBTI+ workers into a more vulnerable position due to the continuous decline in the purchasing power of salaried workers and increasing concerns about unemployment and job security. The fear of losing one's job and not being able to find new employment has led to a widespread sense of insecurity and anxiety about the future among LGBTI+ employee s; it has forced them to continue working in jobs where they are paid less than they deserve, cannot be open about their identity, and face pressure and discrimination. Participants in this year's survey also stated that socializing has become financially difficult and mentioned its negative effects on LGBTI+ employees. Two participants mentioned the negative impact on their ability to live their identities due to not having their own homes and private spaces because they could not afford the necessary financial conditions. One participant also shared thoughts of leaving the country.

The findings indicate that, as was the case last year, the impact of economic conditions on trans employee s requires further examination this year as well. This year, out of a total of 28 participants who answered the question regarding gender identity by selecting the options "trans woman" (6 people), "trans man" (19 people), and "trans" (3 people), 17 (60.7%) stated that they were negatively affected by economic instability. This rate is more than double the general rate mentioned above. The experiences shared by these participants show that the negative economic conditions in Türkiye further limit trans people's access to gender affirming processes. Problems encountered in job applications and having to conceal their gender identity, working without insurance, and for low wages are among the experiences shared by trans respondent s, as long as their gender identity is not legally recognized and their legal name is not changed in their legal documents. Some trans respondents stated that they face difficulties when looking for work due to their gender identity, and one respondent stated that when the workplace she worked for downsized, she was the first to be laid off because of her gender identity. One trans woman respondent shared that she has to continue sex work due to economic conditions.

When examining international human rights mechanisms, it is evident that numerous international documents, opinions, and decisions point out that unemployment rates among transgender person s are higher in countries where there are no supportive policies, particularly regarding gender affirming processes and the legal gender recognition, regardless of the economic situation of those countries. It has been determined that this phenomenon leads to consequences that require further investigation, particularly in terms of discrimination against trans women,

such as unregistered and socially unprotected work.[5] The work of international civil society organizations also shows that disadvantages in accessing social and economic rights are much more evident for trans people[6]. One of our respondents summarized the issue as follows: "Trans employment saves lives."

What Are the Demands of LGBTI+ Employees?

Looking at the statements by respondents in response to open-ended questions, it is clear that the fundamental demands of LGBTI+ employees in Türkiye are freedom, visibility, and equality. In this context, LGBTI+ employees primarily express their demand for legal protection against discrimination, both in general and specifically in employment. Respondents also consider it important for responsibility to be taken at the government level and in the management levels of companie s. On the other hand, this year, some respondents mentioned the anxiety and concerns caus ed by the government's anti-LGBTI+ rhetoric and policies. Finally, it can be said that there is a widespread perception among respondents that social change cannot be achieved through the law alone. Alongside the demand for legal guarantees, demands are also being voiced for increased social awareness, abandoning heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions based on the binary gender system, and achieving social change through education. In this context, it is understood that LGBTI+ employees also have demands from universities, professional organizations, unions, and civil society organizations working in the field of LGBTI+ rights.

Consequently, in line with the findings of previous years' research, our 2025 research also highlights the need to prevent discrimination in employment based on gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics, to transform the disadvantaged position of LGBTI+ employees in accessing a safe and productive working environment, ensuring equality in the exercise of social and economic rights. We hope that these studies will contribute to the development of policies aimed at preventing discrimination against LGBTI+ individuals in employment and empowering LGBTI+ employees.

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

5 For example, see: Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Human Rights and Gender Identity (CommDH/IssuePaper(2009)2), 29 July 2009, pp. 12, 13, www.coe.int (Last accessed: 24.09.2025); Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe, October 2011, p. 171, www.coe.int (Last accessed: 24.09.2025). https://rm.coe.int/discrimination-on-grounds-of-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-in/16809079e2.

6 See, for example: C. B. Russel, F. Sanders, F. Watkins, Intersections. Diving into FRA LGBTI II survey data. Trans and non-binary briefing, TGEU and ILGA Europe, 2023, pp. 6, 7. https://www.ilga-europe.org/report/intersections-trans-non-binary-diving-into-the-fra-lgbti-ii-survey-data/.

CHAPTER 2

The Situation of LGBTI+ Employees in the Private Sector in Türkiye

1. Research Sample

Kaos GL Association has been reporting on equality of sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics in the private sector since 2015. Between 2018 and 2022, the surveys were conducted in collaboration with the Kadir Has University Gender and Women's Studies Research Center. The studies carried out since 2023 were conducted solely by Kaos GL. A total of 283 people who declared that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex (LGBTI+) and work for a private company operating in Türkiye participated in our 2025 survey conducted through an online survey platform, SurveyMonkey Pro. Among the participants, 211 (74.6%) stated that they had not participated in our survey before, 48 (17%) stated that they could not remember whether they had participated in the survey before, and 24 (8.5%) stated that they had participated in our survey before.

1.1. Gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics

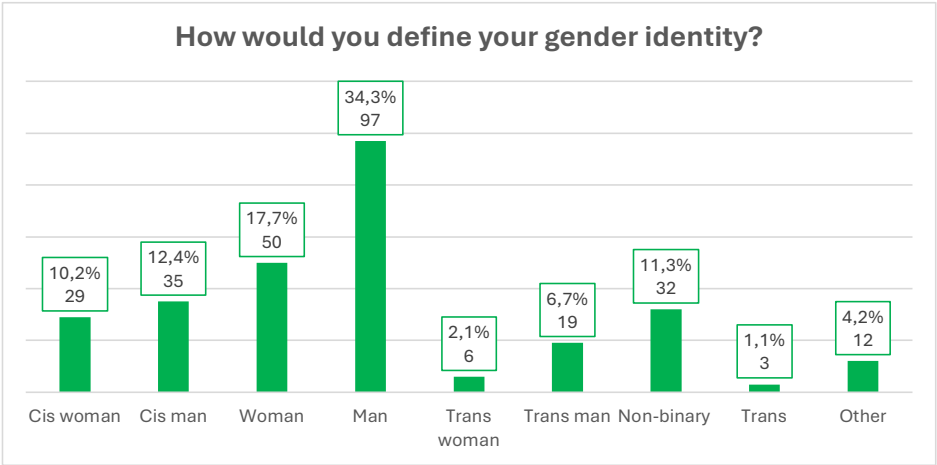
Participants defined their gender identity and sexual orientation in their own words by checking the given options or by using the "other" option.

29 respondents (10.2%) were cis women, 35 (12.4%) were cis men, 50 (17,7%) were women, 97 (34.3%) were men, 6 (2.1%) were trans women, 19 (6.7%) were trans men, 3 (1.1%) were transgender, 32 (11.3%) were non-binary, and 12 (4.2%) have responded by selecting the "other" option.

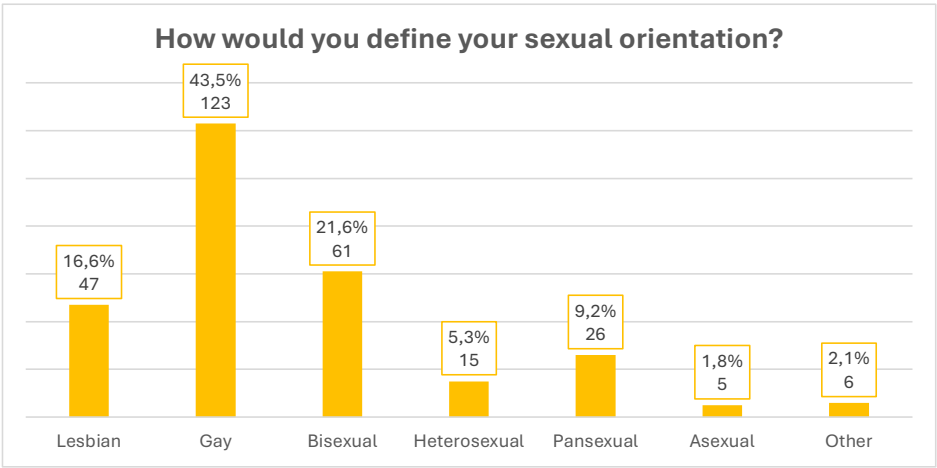
Among the participants, 47 (16.6%) participants identified themselves as lesbian, 123 (43.5%) as gay, 61 (21.6%) as bisexual, 15 (5.3%) as heterosexual, 26 (9.2%) as pansexual, 5 (1.8%) as asexual, and 6 (2.1%) as "other".

As shown in the graph below, a considerable rate of the participants, 43.5%, declared their sexual orientation as "gay". An interpretation of the graphs shows that the largest sum of the respondents were gay men and bisexual women and men, followed by lesbians.

The small number of transgender participants working in the private sector can be attributed to the difficulties transgender people face in accessing employment, especially due to the obstacles they face during their education and discriminatory practices stemming from gender norms.

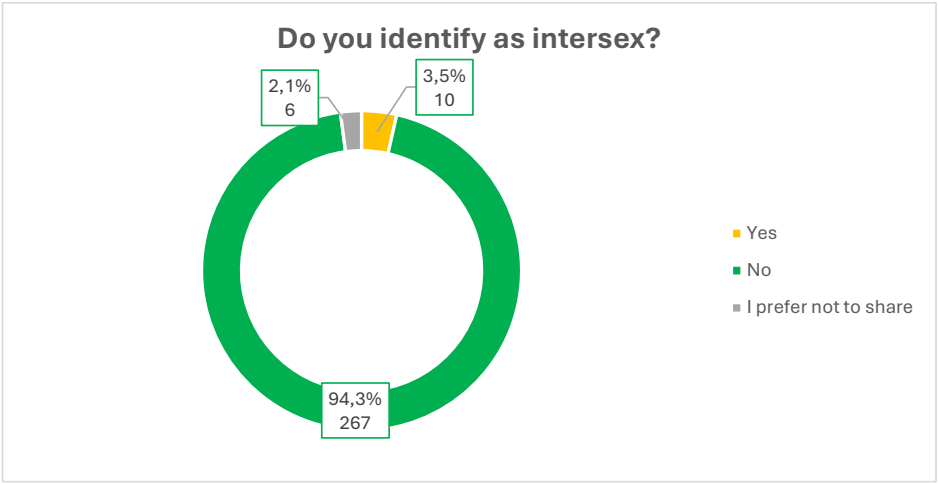


Other: Genderfluid (2), both male and female, cis male but questioning, fluid, happy with my body but attracted to men, don't want to define (2), masculine, Transfeminine Non-Binary, Masculine, *.

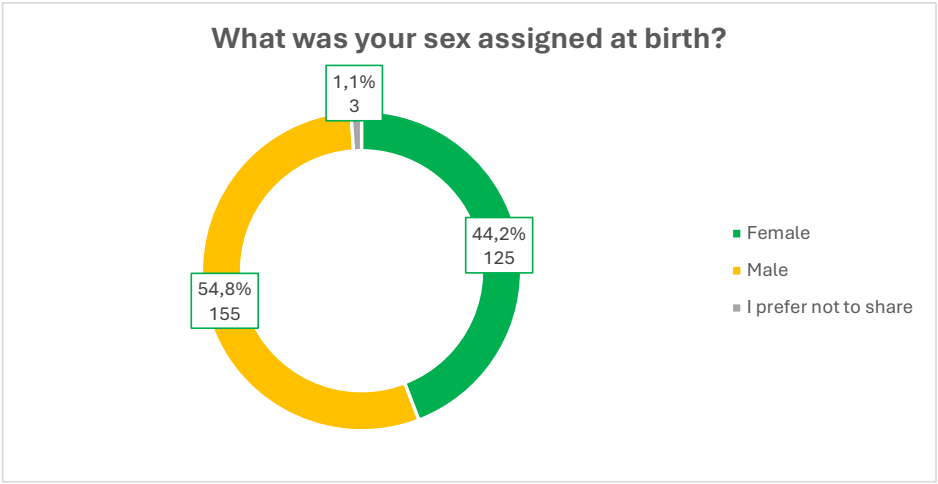


Other: I am demisexual panromantic, I am only attracted to women, but since I don't identify with the binary gender system, the above doesn't apply to me. I don't experience love based on gender, but I have mostly had romantic relationships with women and continue to do so; I haven't had any with men. I am polyamorous and receive psychological support for my lesbianism and FTM transition. Some men are very attractive.

In response to the question "Do you define yourself as intersex?", 10 people (3.5%) answered "yes", 267 people (94.3%) answered "no" and 6 people (2.1%) answered "do not want to specify." The gender identity statements of the 9 people who chose the "yes" option are as follows: 2 identified as non-binary, 1 identified as cis-gender woman, 2 people identified as woman, 3 people identified as man, 1 person identified as trans man; and one person selected the "other" option.

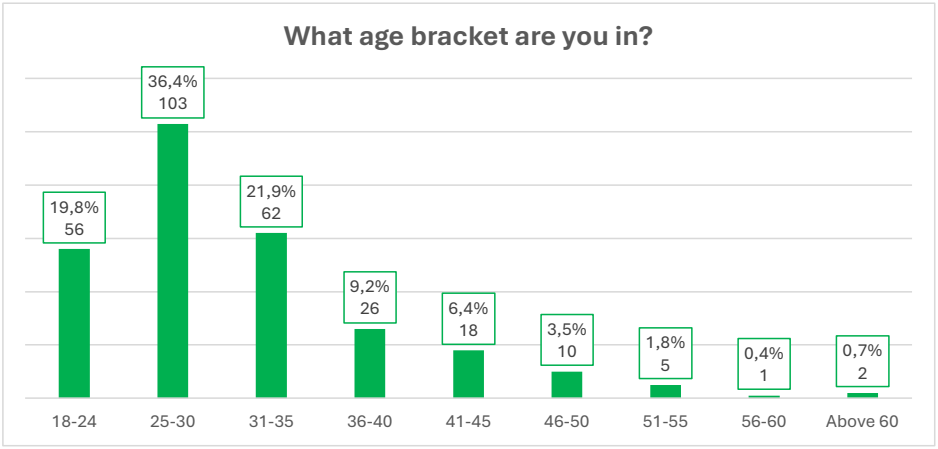


We added the question "What was your sex assigned at birth?" to our 2021 survey. In our 2025 survey, 125 respondents (44.2%) selected " female", 155 respondents (54.8%) selected "male" and 3 respondents (1.1%) selected "I do not want to specify."

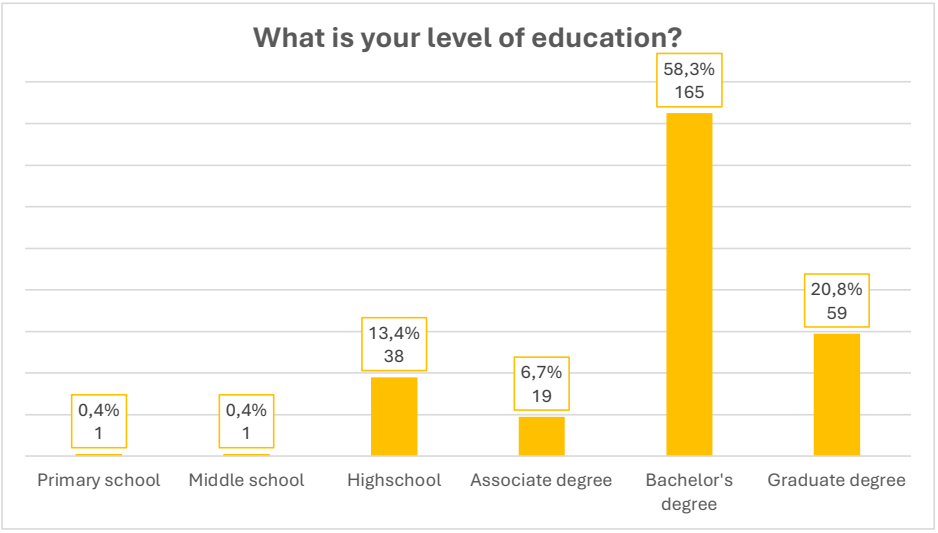


1.2. Age, educational background, and city of residence information of the participants

The age distribution of the respondents is given in the graph below. The highest rate of participants (36.4%) is between the ages of 25-30. The total number of participants between the ages of 18-35 is 221 (78.1%).



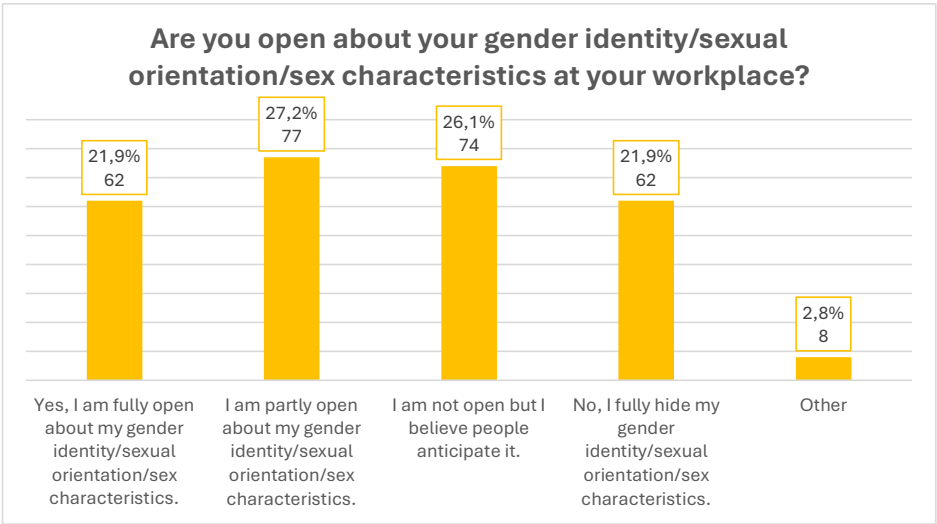
Among the 283 participants, 165 (58.3%) stated that they hold a bachelor's degree. The number of respondents who indicated their educational status as postgraduate is 59 (20.8%), 38 (13.4%) as high school, 19 (6.7%) as associate degree, 1 (0.4%) as primary school and 1 (0.4%) as secondary school.



When the answers to the question "Which city do you live in?" are analyzed, it is seen that 30 participants (10.6%) did not want to specify their city of residence. The responses of the remaining 253 respondents (84.1%) reveal that LGBTI+ employees from at least 27 different cities participated in our survey. The cities with the highest number of respondents are Istanbul (41%), Ankara (19.1%) and Izmir (10.2%). These three cities are followed by Antalya, Mersin, Muğla, Eskişehir, and Kocaeli.

1.3. Out Status Regarding gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics in the workplace

Regarding gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics, 62 respondents (21.9%) stated that they were completely out at their workplace. While 62 respondents (21.9%) stated that they were completely in closet at the workplace, 77 respondents (27.2%) stated that they were partially out. We observe that this



Other: 1-I don't understand how out I need to be. If we're not talking about standard heterosexual male sexual relationships, and this is a workplace, I'm not hiding anything, but I'm not talking about it either. I don't understand the need for being out, so: 2-One friend knows, others are guessing, 3-I think I'd feel more comfortable if they knew I'm only attracted to women, 4-I could be out t, but I don't specifically mention it, 5-I keep my professional life separate from my personal life. Just as I separate myself from labels like "someone's boyfriend" or "someone's child" in the organizations I work for, I also separate myself in terms of my sexual identity and orientation. Other people may like to reflect their private lives and personalities, but I am a bit despotic in this regard. 6-I feel happy because I work in a more liberal and free workplace environment. 7-I am a teacher, and it is the administration and my colleagues who bother me, rather than the children. Teachers who are phobic and disrespectful of differences have a definite impact on children. An educator should not be like this. This bothers me. 8-It's impossible to be out; you'll be immediately excluded and ridiculed.

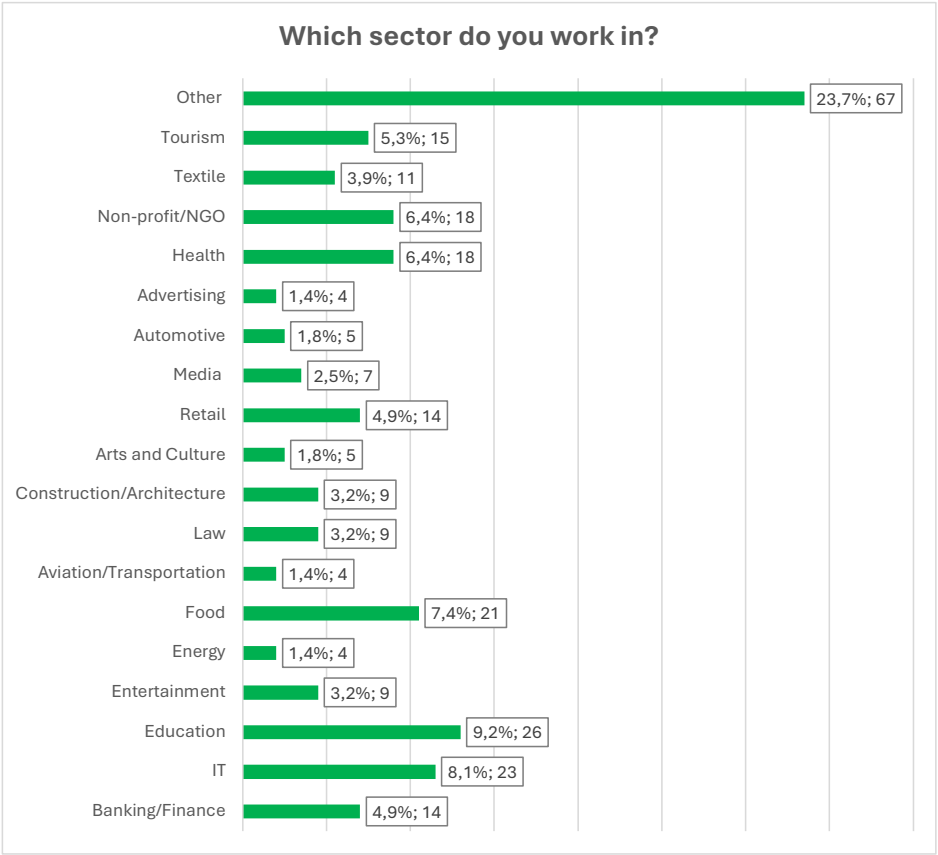
partial outness is generally not towards the management or the employer but towards close colleagues or other LGBTI+ employees. Nevertheless, the responses to open-ended questions reveal that there are also participants who talk about sensitive and supportive managers and employers. 74 participants (26.1%) stated that people assumed their sexuality even though they were not out. Detailed results are presented in the following graph.

Among 62 participants who declared that they are fully out about their gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics in their workplace, 48 work in companies based in Turkey. 6 of these 80 participants stated their gender identity as "cis man", 22 as man, 4 as cis woman, 8 as woman, 3 as trans, 6 as trans man, 4 as trans woman and 7 as non-binary. Again, only 36 of these 62 participants stated that they were out during the recruitment process.

We will present the detailed data and analysis concerning the negative conditions created by forced closet in terms of daily life, workplace performance, and the advocacy of rights in the following chapters. For the time being, however, it will suffice to note that this is a consistent finding that is repeated every year in our surveys.

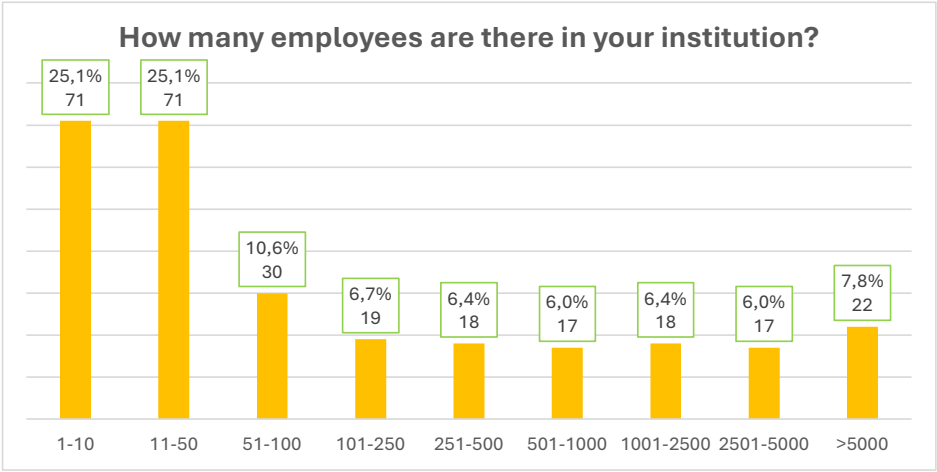
1.4. Workplace Properties and Working Positions of the Respondents

The sectors of work for the respondents are presented in the graph below. According to the table, participants work in a variety of sectors. When the distribution of the sectors is analyzed, we see that education, IT, food, health, civil society, and tourism are the sectors most frequently selected. The answers under the "other" option reveal that there are LGBTI+ employees in almost every sector or line of work in Türkiye. This finding shows that, contrary to widespread stereotypes about gender, LGBTI+ employees exist in all sectors. However, the fact that employees' sexual orientations, gender identities, and sex characteristics are often concealed prevents this social reality from being visible; therefore, the widespread stereotype that LGBTI+ employees gravitate towards certain sectors cannot be broken.



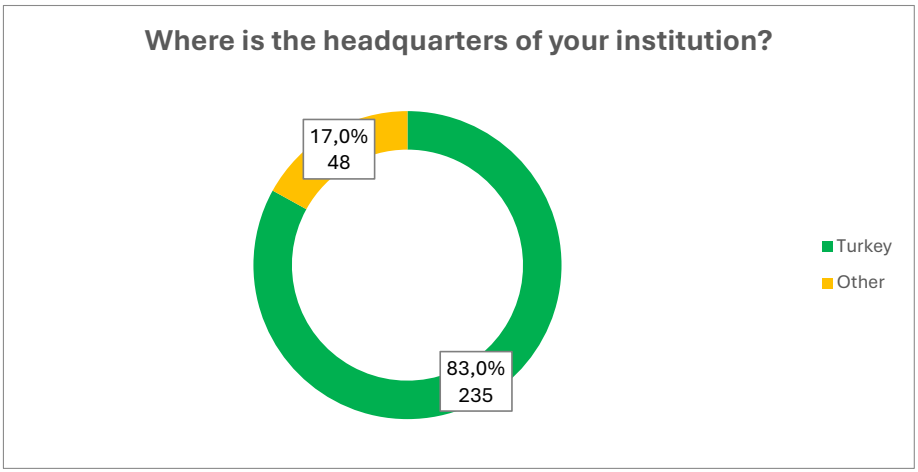
Other: Security company, Furniture, Machine Manufacturing, Holding (has various companies in construction, energy, real estate, consumer goods, pharmaceuticals, etc.), Teacher, Translator and interpretation company, so it operates in many sectors, for example the France-based Été company Netflix, Human Resources & Consulting, Security, Sports, Cosmetics (3), Telecommunications/Retail, Supply Chain, MARITIME SECTOR SHIP PERSONNEL, Accounting, Stationery Products Factory, Fitness Trainer, Call Center (2), Part-time, Duty-free, Packaging, Auditing, Sports Sector, Customer Communication and Support, Home Appliances, Chemistry, Air Conditioning/Combi, Gasoline, Environmental Laboratory, Retail, Financial Consulting & Auditing & Consulting, Recycling, Psychological Counseling, Manufacturing Industry, Jewelry, Aesthetics and Beauty, E-commerce, Library Staff, Mental Health, Lighting, Fire Extinguishing Systems Installation and Sales, Call Center, Insurance, E-commerce, Management Consulting, Consulting, Telecommunications, Real Estate, White Goods and Home Appliances, Research, Communication, Currently Courier Logistics, Mobile Gaming, Services, Law, Food, Advertising, Entertainment, Technology, Consulting, Human Resources Consulting, Retail, Travel, Pharmaceuticals, Foreign Trade, Consulting, Shipping, Durable Goods, Furniture Manufacturing.

An analysis of the scales of workplaces reveals a picture that is in line with the findings of our previous surveys. Among this year's respondents, 71 (25%) reported working in small-scale workplaces with 1-10 employees. Another 57 respondents (20%) work in workplaces with more than 1,000 employees; these workplaces might be expected to be more institutionalized in their capacity to manage workforce diversity. Among these 57 respondents, 17 (29.8%) stated that they are fully out about their gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics. Among the 57 people working in these large-scale companies, 21 (36.8%) gave the companies they work for a score of 4 and 3 out of 4 for their approach to LGBTI+ rights. These findings show that the quantitative characteristics and organizational structure of the workplace do not make a significant difference for LGBTI+ employees. Detailed numbers can be seen in the graph below.



1.5. Company Headquarters

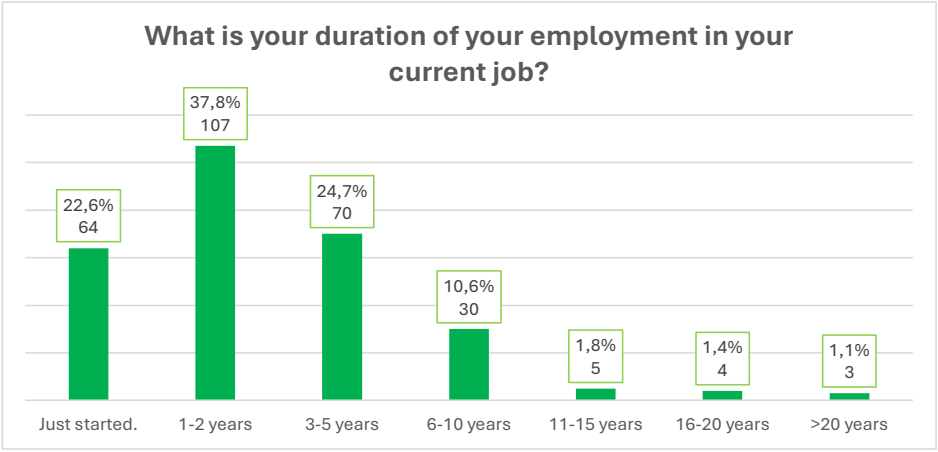
We asked the participants about the location of the headquarters of the company they work for. The aim was to measure the conditions provided to employees in Türkiye by foreign companies that have protective and supportive human rights policies regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics. Among the 235 respondents who stated they work for companies based in Türkiye, only 27 stated that there are rules or committees in their workplace to prevent discrimination against LGBTI+ persons.



Other: USA (15), UK (11), Germany (9), Spain (4), France (3), Sweden (3), International corporation (2), Australia (1), Italy (1), Switzerland (1), Japan (1), Denmark(1)

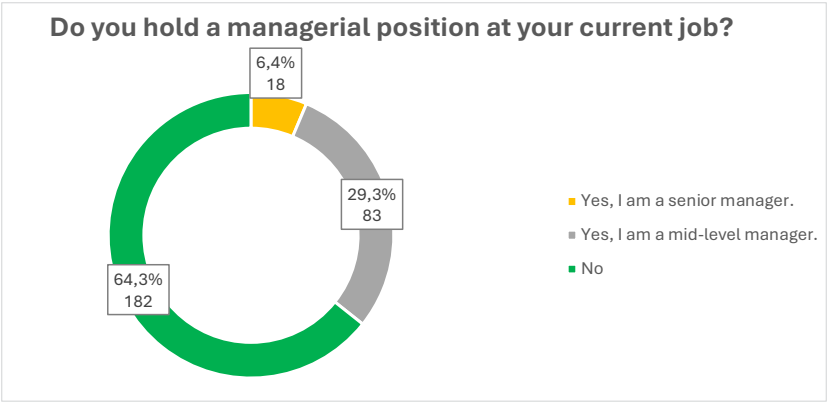
1.6. Duration of Employment at the Current Company

The majority of the sample (85.2%) consists of participants who have been working in their current workplace for 5 years or less. Very few participants (7 people) stated that they have been working at their current workplace for more than 15 years. Among the respondents who have been working in their current workplace for more than 10 years (12 respondents), only 1 respondent stated that they are open in their workplace. This data shows that the inability to disclose sexual orientation/sex characteristics/gender identity is not a condition peculiar to the recruitment process and the initial stages of work life but also persists in work life over the long-term.



1.7. Working Positions of the Respondents in their Current Employment

In terms of the working position in the current workplace, it is seen that more than half of the participants do not hold managerial positions (64.3%). However, according to the detailed table below regarding the question "what is your position in the organization you work for?", there are many LGBTI+ employees in different positions. The statements of many participants about "not being promoted" or "fearing competition for promotion" suggest that similar to other disadvantaged groups - for example, heterosexual cisgender women - LGBTI+ employees also face difficulties in receiving promotion, and they have limited opportunities to benefit from the principle of equality. In addition to all these, it is important to keep in mind that a high percentage of LGBTI+ employees in our sample stated that they are closeted or partially out at work. Detailed data is presented in the following graph.



Among the 18 participants who reported working as senior managers, only 5 people stated that they are out about their sexual orientation/gender identity/sex characteristics in the workplace.

In 2025, when answering the open-ended question "What is your position in the organization you work for?", various fields reported different job descriptions.

Coach (2)
Research assistant (2)
Researcher (3)
Interface designer
Art director
Chef
Assistant
Assistant Interpreter Manager
European Union Project Specialist
Lawyer (4)
backend developer
Banker

Bar waiter
Barista (3)
Bartender
Vice President
I do not want to specify (2)
white collar
IT specialist
Regional manager
Brand training manager
Office worker
Worker
Editor in Chief

Lifeguard
Chief
Cosplay, clowning, influence
Solution expert
Creative Lead
Always new and initiated
Consultant (6)
Data Analyst
Database Administrator
Auditor
Auditor Assistant
Digital marketing (3)

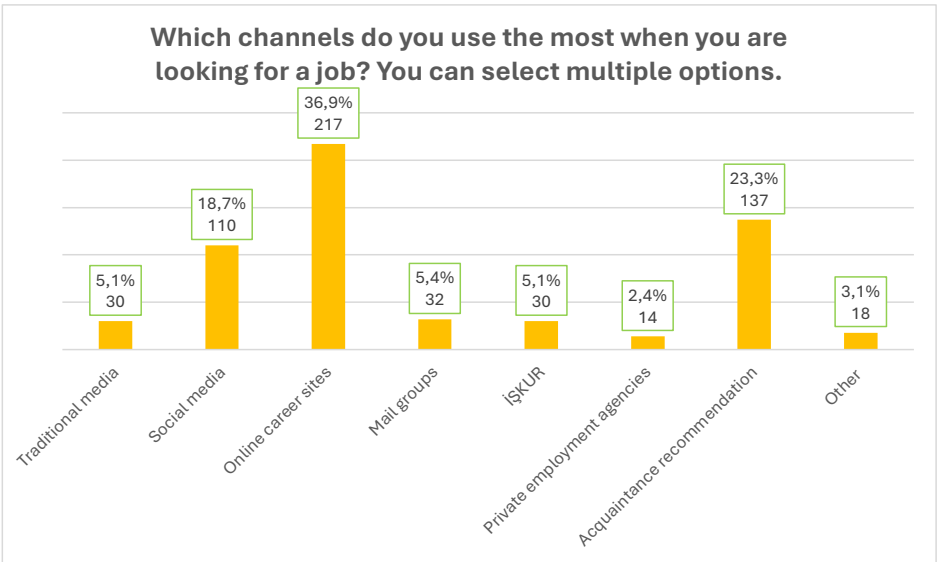
Director (3)
Dentist (2)
Dr.
Assistant Professor
E-commerce Specialist
Trainer
Instructor (2)
Instructor
Team leader
Electrical, electronics and software engineer
Electrical installation personnel
Finance (2)
Photo and video editor
Game Developer
Waiter (4)
General Coordinator
Using recycling machines and transporting vehicle loads
Takeaway, desk job, bartending
Food production
Visual editing expert
Visual Communication (2)
Graphic designer (2)
Group Project Manager
Nurse
Executive
HRBP
Administrative Assistant
HR (2)
Communication Design
Human Rights Expert
IP technical support engineer
Business development manager and business analyst
Worker (5)
Senior Recruitment and Employer Branding Specialist
Import-Export operations manager
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (2)
Quality (3)
Building a caravan
Cashier (3)
Fundraising and international relations coordinator
Senior Specialist
Senior assistant
Senior Software Engineer
Section manager
Clinical Research Coordinator
Clinical Psychologist (2)
Coordinator (4)
Editing Operator
Founder
Institutional psychologist
Laser epilation specialist
Store manager (2)
Makeup artist
Brand Communications Coordinator
Marketer
Architect (3)Fashion coordinator
Moderator
Motorcycle courier
Mt
Manager
Accounting (3)
Engineer (2)
Customer Service (7)
Kitchen bellboy
Office worker
Student Development and Psychological Counseling
Lecturer
Teacher (13)
Assistant Front Office Manager
Preliminary Accounting
Operation (3)
Organization Manager
Middle manager (3)
Playmate
Actor
Laboratory unit manager
Laboratory technician
Private security
Packaging
I work as a paralegal
Part-time
pastry chef
Marketing (2)
Pizza chef
Planning Manager
Planning Engineer
Product manager
Project assistant
Project architect
Project manager
Project Specialist (2)
Project manager
Reporting
Receptionist
Health Tourism
Blonde consultant (6)
Sales activity manager
Assistant Sales Manager
Sales Manager
Sales and marketing specialist
Sales Personnel
Sales Reporting
Sales representative (2)
Sales and Marketing Manager
Chef
Deputy Chief
Secretary
Service personnel (3)
Service Specialist
Sound engineer, sound designer
Travel consultancy
SHU
Civil society consultant
Chauffeur
Software Developer
Soloist
Engineer in Charge
Social worker
Social media (5)
Stylist - Style Consultancy
Officer
Branch manager (2)
Supervisor
Sustainability
Technical staff
Technical service
Therapist
Clerk
Commercial Manager
Commercial Product Manager
flight attendant
Production Staff
Product consultancy
Product Development
Senior executive
Expert
Expert (2)
Expert sales consultant (2)
Tax assistant
Data scientist
Data-Driven Process Designer
Veterinarian
Veterinary Nurse
X
Library Staff
Software (2)
Passenger Services Officer
Administrator (4)
Executive Assistant
Managing attorney
Director
Overseas Project Engineer
Officers

2. Findings regarding the recruitment process

2.1. Channels for Job Search and Job Application

According to the graph below, LGBTI+ employees who participated in our research mostly found their jobs through online career sites, recommendations by acquaintances, and social media channels. The fact that the participants generally checked more than one option shows that they use various channels together in the job search and job application process.

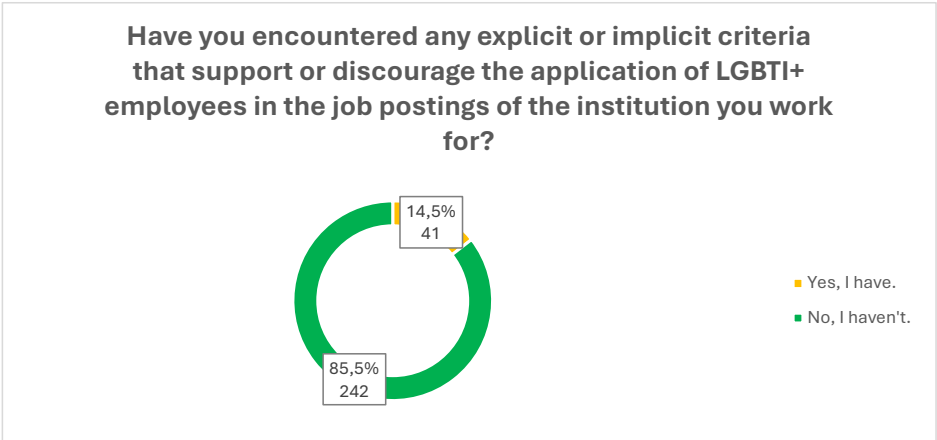
In line with the previous years' results, among the variety of preferred platforms available for job applications, İŞKUR and private employment agencies were utilized the least, indicating that LGBTI+ employees do not trust these channels and are suspicious of being "profiled." As this is in line with our findings in previous years, our belief that this is a general trend among LGBTI+ employees is reinforced. The high rate of job searches and job applications through the recommendation of acquaintances, which is the second most frequently selected option again this year, indicates that LGBTI+ employees are looking for workplaces that offer relatively more favorable conditions regarding LGBTI+ rights. LGBTI+ employees need to be informed about the conditions of the workplace in this context before applying for a job. This finding may also indicate that LGBTI+ employees need an environment that offers welfare t more than other employees.



Other: Generally, we receive job offers, LinkedIn (6), Bar Association human resources, I visited all the laboratories individually and left my CV, https://www.ilan.gov.tr/, I don't know, Bar Association job board, Friend recommendation or reference, WhatsApp groups, December 3, hiring for Disability Day at the fair :)), our own business, I don't use it.

2.2. Supporting or Constraining Criteria in Job Advertisements

To the question "Have you encountered any explicit or implicit criteria that support or discourage the application of LGBTI+ employees in the job postings of the organization you work for?" 242 participants answered "No" and 41 participants answered "Yes".



Some of the statements of the participants who shared that they encountered explicit or implicit supportive criteria in job advertisements are given below.

"The job opening stated that they were open to everyone without regard to gender, language, religion, race, or orientation. When I started working there, they provided training by distributing gender-neutral language booklets." (Bisexual cis woman, engineer in the production sector).

"Although not specifically stated as sexual orientation, the job application referred to an inclusive culture." (Gay man working in customer communication and support sector).

"As a supporting statement, it is written that 'expressions and attitudes that discriminate based on sexual orientation are contrary to the company's ethical values.' This is included in agreements or employment contracts with the parent company." (Pansexual cis woman working as a manager in the banking and finance sector).

"As it is a large, corporate company, it has anti-discrimination principles. That's why I chose it, and they seem to stick to their word when it comes to hiring. Despite this, unfortunately, ignorance is sometimes noticeable within the company as well" (Pansexual cis woman working as an engineer in the household appliances and home electronics sector).

The responses that there are prohibitive criteria in job advertisements indicate that discriminatory social norms determine employment policies in the private sector. However, it is the responsibility of the private sector as well as the public sector to create job postings that explicitly encourage LGBTI+ persons, who are among the disadvantaged social groups in work life. The ads should empower them to have equal access to employment and to shape recruitment processes from this perspective. This responsibility manifests itself not only in terms of conducting recruitment processes in accordance with the principle of equal treatment, but also in terms of taking positive measures to prevent indirect discrimination. Participants' accounts reveal that the preliminary preparations made in the process of applying for a job - the CV and self-presentation process - are directly influenced by job advertisements and can determine motivation to work.

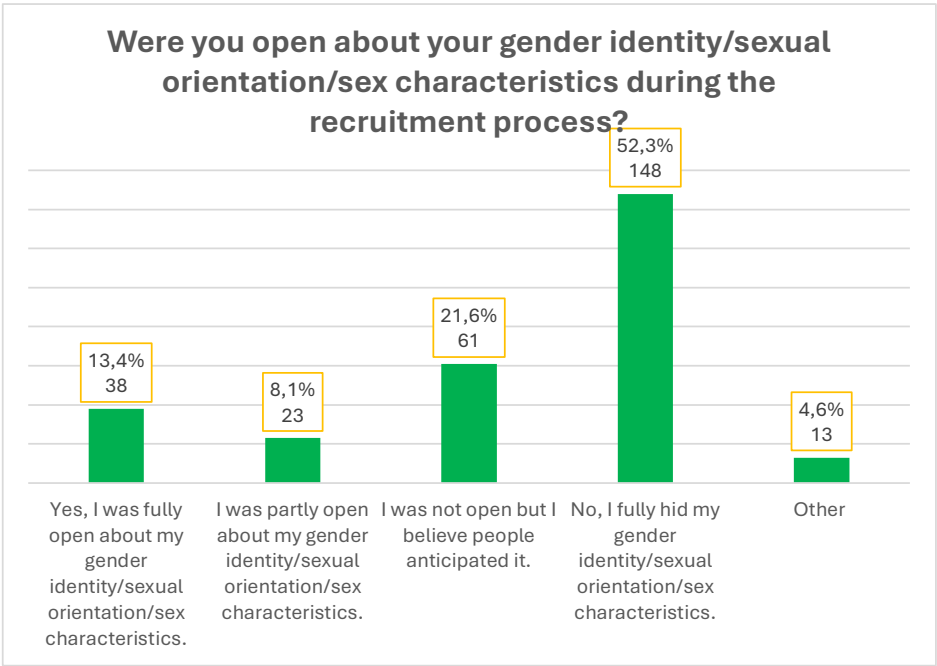
> *"In a job posting I applied for in the past, there was a vague but exclusionary phrase like 'having a suitable family life.' Even though I completed my application, I wasn't even called for an interview. I felt that this phrase carried an exclusionary implication, even if it wasn't specifically targeting LGBT+ individuals. Since then, I've been reading these types of veiled phrases in job postings more carefully. Unfortunately, these kinds of criteria prevent LGBT+ individuals from feeling safe in the application process" (Gay cis man working as an operations manager in the IT sector).*
>
> *"When I shared that I didn't want to be marginalized on the phone, they canceled the job interview" (A fluid lesbian working as a backend developer in the IT sector).*
>
> *"Yes, when asked about my military service, I said I was a trans man, and unfortunately, I received implicit rejections from several large companies" (Heterosexual trans man working in the textile industry).*
>
> *"What I encountered as potentially prohibitive is the requirement to be married" (a cisgender pansexual woman working as a coordinator in the field of culture/arts).*

Some of the respondents stated that the reflection of sexist expectations stemming from dominant gender norms and roles in job postings negatively affects LGBTI+ employees. These narratives suggest that employers' use of language that does not reproduce these norms and roles or does not directly refer to gender in job advertisements may encourage LGBTI+ employees to apply for a job. For example, it may be useful to specify in job advertisements only the nature of the job, without any reference to gender, but specifically stating that there will be no discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics (intersex status). Of course, practices based on positive discrimination are excluded from this interpretation.

2.3. Out Status during the Recruitment Process

To the question "Were you out about your gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics during the recruitment process?", the majority of the participants answered "no".

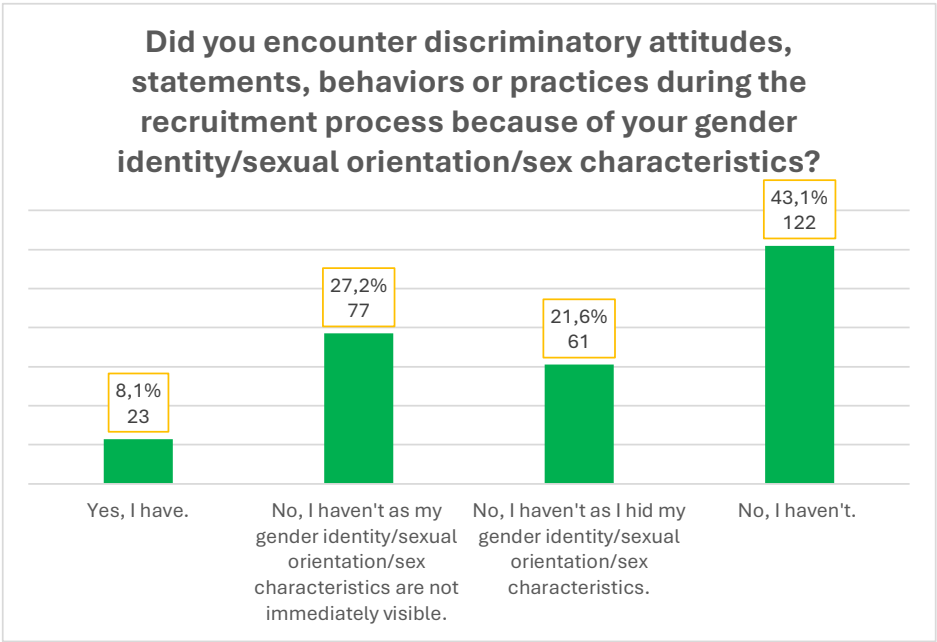
According to the graph below, only 38 respondents (13.4%) stated that they were completely open during the recruitment process, 61 respondents (21.6%) chose the option "I was not out, but I think it was assumed" and 23 respondents (8.1%) answered "I was partially out ".



Other: 1-I find it ridiculous to discuss sexual identity in interview processes. Mine doesn't concern them, and theirs doesn't concern me. Furthermore, it's not a process or environment in which such an issue should be discussed. 2-I haven't been exposed to such questions. 3-I don't know what to do. Is it my private life, and do I have to say that I like everyone? There's no need for such a thing for anyone in general. I'm just a normal person. 4-No, I wasn't out, but there was no process that specifically required me to be closeted either. 5-It wasn't an issue. 6-My CV clearly stated my work in the SPoD (an LGBTI+ rights association) and LGBT fields. It might have been assumed. 7-During the hiring process, I was just myself, as I am in daily life. 8-I made no extra effort to show or hide anything. I think the people I communicated with during this process, such as human resources, may have had their assumptions. 9-I wasn't out, but I wasn't closeted either. 10-Since my gender identity is not different from my assigned sex at birth and I was not asked about my orientation, I can't say I was out or closeted. 11-This topic was not discussed. 12-I was part of the founding team. 13-I was not out, but at that time I was volunteering at an LGBT+ association and I specifically mentioned this on my CV, briefly introducing the association, and I also mentioned it in my interview. In terms of appearance, I am considered marginal.

2.4. Experiences of Discrimination during the Recruitment Process

To the question "Did you encounter any discriminatory attitudes, statements, behaviors or practices during the recruitment process because of your gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics?", 122 participants (43.1%) answered "no". However, according to the graph below, 61 participants (21.6%) attributed this to the fact that they did not disclose their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics. 27.2% of the participants stated that they were not discriminated against "because their gender identity/sexual orientation/gender characteristics were not immediately apparent."



In other words, the answers given to this question should be evaluated together with the data that many participants conceal their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics or do not disclose them at the recruitment stages. It is also understood from the statements of the respondents that people are not out about their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics for fear of being discriminated against and having their application rejected.

Another reason for the relatively high rate of respondents who stated that they had not encountered any discriminatory attitude, statement, behavior, or practice during the recruitment process may be the general acceptance of heterosexuality and cisgenders in society, that is, the assumption that everyone is heterosexual and cisgender. However, in order to prevent forms of discrimination and to support

applicants in their practice of legal rights, an application environment where applicants can freely express their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics - if they wish to do so - and procedures can be established.

23 (8.1%) of the respondents stated that they faced discrimination during the recruitment process.

"I've encountered discrimination many times. I was told to reapply when my ID card was changed. So, I either apply without disclosing my identity or don't apply at all. At the places I've been hired, I've had to accept working for low wages and with limited opportunities." (A heterosexual trans man working as an assistant sales manager in the IT sector).

"Because my pronunciation is good, they don't directly say, 'You seem gay, can you do this?' but they say, 'You're a polite kid, can you work in this environment?' After I started the job, there were constant insinuations and jibes. They constantly made references to other gay people they knew." (Bisexual man working as an electrical installation technician in the construction/architecture sector).

"Even though I don't show it much, my masculine style makes me the focus of criticism and gossip" (a lesbian woman working as a banker in the banking and finance sector).

"I think I was indirectly asked if I was transgender during this new job interview I went to. I hadn't provided my official ID during the interview and had only filled out the job application form. On the form, I marked male for gender and exempt for military status. I was asked a strange question: 'How exempt are you?' and I had to explain my identity by saying, 'Technically, I wasn't called up for military service because my ID says female' (A pansexual trans man working as a receptionist in the tourism sector)."

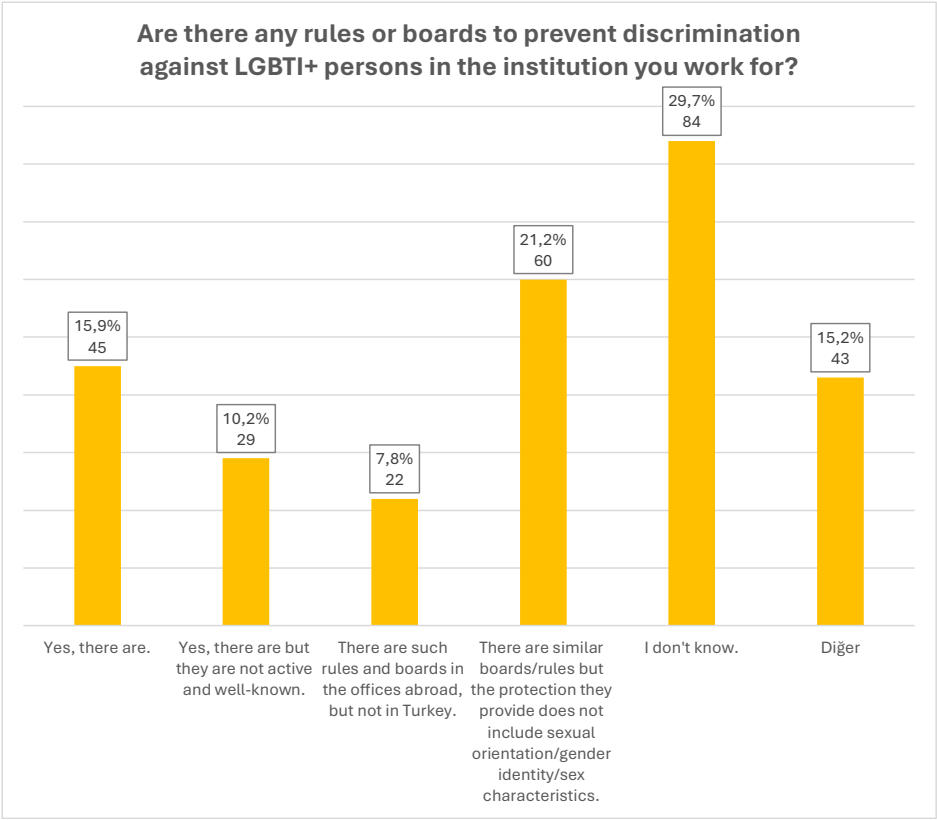
"At the company where I was interning, they told me I wasn't feminine enough and fired me" (A lesbian woman working as an import/export operations manager in the foreign trade sector).

"In 2016, I participated in the hiring process at a retail store. During the interview, my resume was well-received, and I was told I was well-suited for the position. However, as the interview progressed, indirect questions about my appearance and behavior made me uncomfortable. Phrases like, "Can you adopt a more masculine demeanor when communicating with customers?" were used. I did not receive any feedback after the interview. This incident made me feel that I had faced covert discrimination due to my gender identity and caused me to feel inadequate for a long time" (A cisgender gay man working as an operations manager in the IT sector).

3. Institutional Protection against Discrimination

LGBTI+ employees who participated in our research were asked the question “Are there rules or boards in your organization to prevent discrimination against LGBTI+ persons?”. Only 45 participants (15.9%) responded positively to the question. Of these 45 participants, 25 stated that they are out in their workplaces. 29 (10.2%) of the participants selected the option “there is, but it is not effective and well known”. 22 participants (7.8%) stated that there are rules or committees to prevent discrimination in the abroad units of their organizations, but these policies are not implemented in Türkiye.

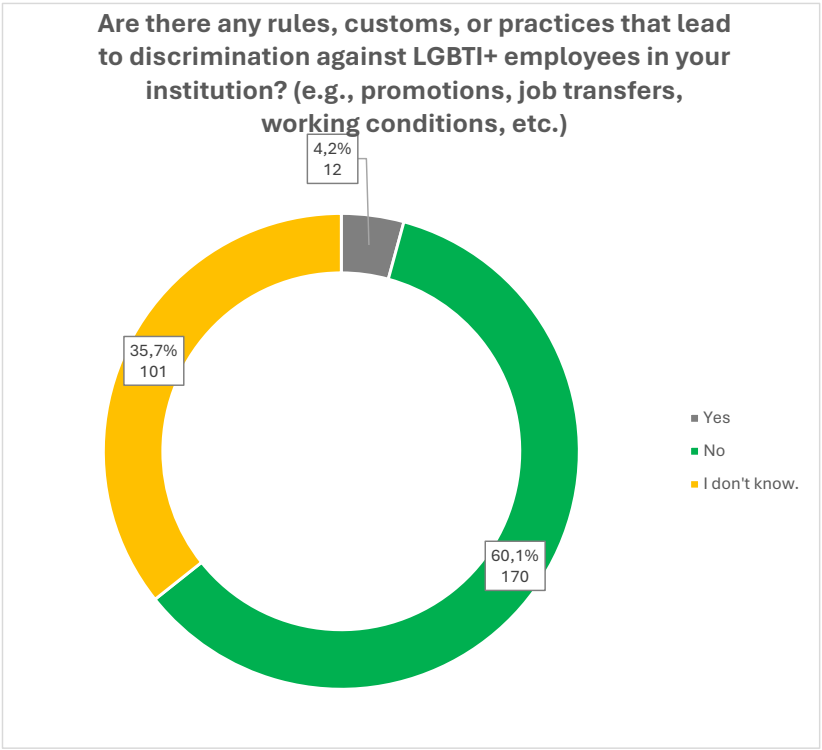
127 of the participants responded to the question by choosing “no idea” (29.7%) and “other” (15.2%). It is noteworthy that the rate of respondents who answered, “no idea” is considerable and is thought to indicate a kind of “lack of expectation”. Of the 43 participants who chose the “other” option, 40 (93%) stated that there is no board or rule to prevent discrimination against LGBTI+ persons in their organization.



Some of the participants' statements are given below.

> *"There are rules regarding discrimination, but nothing specifically mentioned for LGBT+ individuals, though it is included" (Gay man working as an auditor in the auditing sector).*
>
> *"There is no specific unit for this matter. It's more of a one-on-one working arrangement. However, my employers are careful and attentive when it comes to issues such as discrimination, harassment, and bullying." (Bisexual woman working as a managing attorney in the legal field).*
>
> *"Yes. The contract includes a clause stating that the company will provide equal rights without discrimination based on gender, sexual identity, or sexual orientation, among other circumstances. It is guaranteed that there will be zero tolerance for employees who violate this principle and that they will be subject to sanctions for "inappropriate behavior." (Bisexual man working as a production worker in the healthcare sector).*

In 2025, we asked the question "Are there any rules, customs, practices that lead to discrimination against LGBTI+ employees in the organization you work for?" 60.1% of our respondents (170 people) chose the option "no." Only 4.2% (12 people) answered "yes," while 35.7% (101 people) answered "no idea."



"They are preaching that LGBT individuals should be excluded" (Bisexual man working as an architect in the construction/architecture sector).

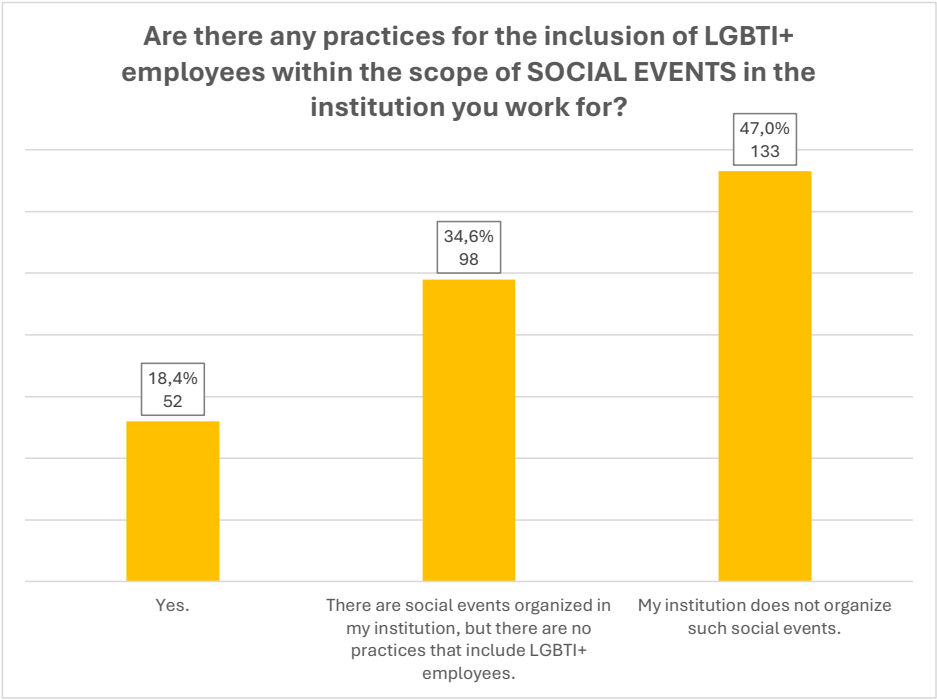
"My chances to get promoted would decrease" (Gay cis man working as a coordinator in the construction/architecture sector).

"There are no rules that lead to discrimination, but the reason for that is because your identity is ignored. If your identity becomes known, you'll be out the door in no time. So, in fact, there is major discrimination!" (Gay man working as a manager in the textile industry).

3.1. LGBTI+ Inclusive Social Activities

In response to the question "Are there practices for the inclusion of LGBTI+ employees within the scope of social activities in the organization you work for?", 133 respondents (47%) stated that such social activities are not available for any employee, while 98 participants (34.6%) stated that such social activities exist but are not sensitive to the needs of LGBTI+ employees.

The number of participants who stated that LGBTI+ employees are included in the scope of social activities in their organization is only 52 (18.4%).

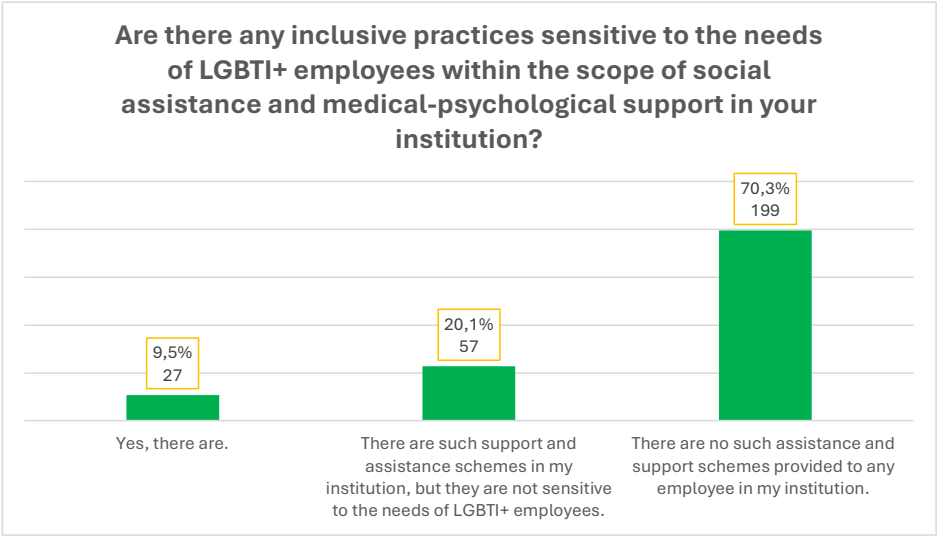


3.2. LGBTI+ Inclusive Welfare and Medical-Psychological Support

The question we asked in order to learn about the general approaches to welfare and health was: "Are there any inclusive practices sensitive to the needs of LGBTI+ employees within the scope of welfare and medical-psychological support in your organization?".

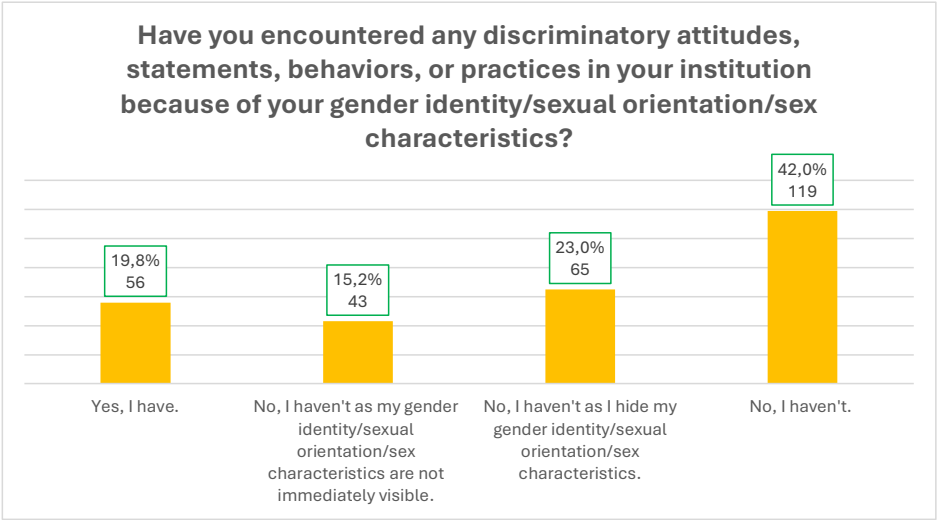
The existence of special measures sensitive to sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics (such as medical-psychological support provided to employees at the workplace, the presence of health or social-psychological support staff trained on these issues, and practices sensitive to the specific needs of transgender employees due to gender affirming processes) are important corporate equality policies.

The majority of the participants (199 people) responded by stating that such assistance and support are not provided to any of the employees in the organization where they work. 57 participants (20.1%) stated that there are such assistance and support schemes, but they are not sensitive to the needs of LGBTI+ employees. Only 27 respondents (9.5%) stated that welfare and medical-psychological support in their organization which is sensitive to the needs of LGBTI+ employees.



4. Personal Experiences of Discrimination at the Workplace

In another question, we asked participants to evaluate discriminatory behaviors and approaches that were personally directed at them. The chart of the responses to the question, "Have you encountered any discriminatory attitudes, statements, behaviors or practices in the institution where you work because of your gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics?" and examples of respondent statements are presented below.



56 out of a total of 283 respondents, i.e., 19.8% of the participants, stated that they have been subjected to discrimination at the workplace due to their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics. In addition, 65 people (23%) stated that they conceal their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics to avoid discrimination. 43 people (15.2%), on the other hand, attribute the reason why they did not face discrimination to the fact that their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics are not immediately apparent.

Excerpts from the responses of participants who reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace are presented below, and most of them point to common structural problems.

> *"I had a friend who acted in a feminine way. My teammate saw him and turned to me and said, 'I don't understand these people, I can't tell if he's a man or a woman. Anyway, I have a son too, so I won't judge him. God forbid it happens to me too.' In an environment like this, I keep myself hidden too." (Gay man working as a sales consultant specializing in the retail sector)*

"I often encountered questions from employees such as 'How did you flirt/hook up?' 'How do you have sex?' And some employees used sexist language and profanity" (A lesbian woman working as a social media and marketing manager in the tourism sector).

"My gender identity, which I shared with my manager, was shared with all my teammates and the company. I experienced both positive discrimination and discrimination. That's why I don't include anyone from work in my social life or social media accounts." (A heterosexual trans man working as an assistant sales manager in the IT sector)

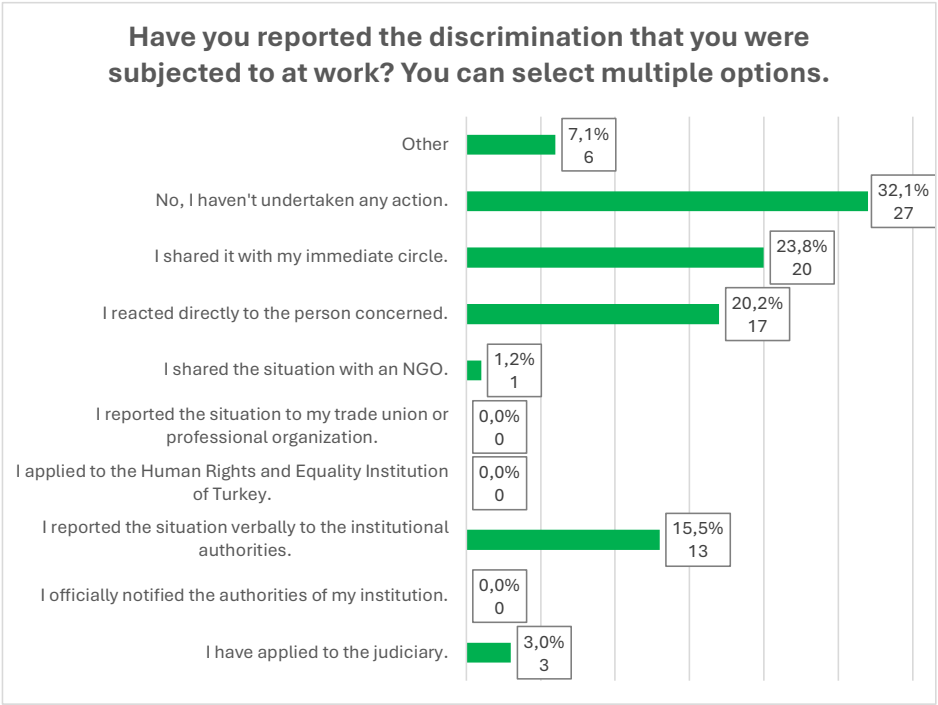
Yes, I have encountered indirect discrimination at the institution where I work, even if not directly. Some managers or employees made sarcastic remarks about my gender identity, disguised as jokes, but over time they became upsetting. Even though it wasn't explicitly stated, there were moments when I felt excluded from promotions or task assignments. This situation prevented me from feeling completely safe and like an equal at work" (Gay cis man working as an operations manager in the IT sector).

"There were employees who said they didn't want to work under a woman and quit their jobs" (a lesbian woman working as a vice president in the energy sector).

4.1. Reporting Discrimination

Participants who stated that they had been subjected to discrimination (56 people) were asked the question, "Have you reported any discrimination you have experienced?", and in the survey, the option to select more than one option was available. To this question, 27 participants responded by stating that they did not report the discrimination that they were subjected to. The most frequently selected option was "I shared it with my close circle". Other frequently selected options were "I reacted directly at the person concerned", "I verbally reported the situation to the management ", and "other".

Only 3 participants applied to the judiciary, while 1 person officially reported the situation with an NGO. It is noteworthy that no participants preferred to report the situation to the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye, and no participant notified a union/professional organization.



Other: 1-I didn't encounter it because I'm discreet. If I disclosed it, I would probably flag them all. 2-I politely explained it to the relevant person. 3-Because it didn't happen. 4-One of the biggest traumas of my life was not being able to find a job for a long time and withdrawing into myself. It was my dream job. 5-I didn't apply so as not to lose my job. 6-I have not personally experienced discrimination because I am not open about it. But if I ever stay, I will definitely file complaints with various institutions.

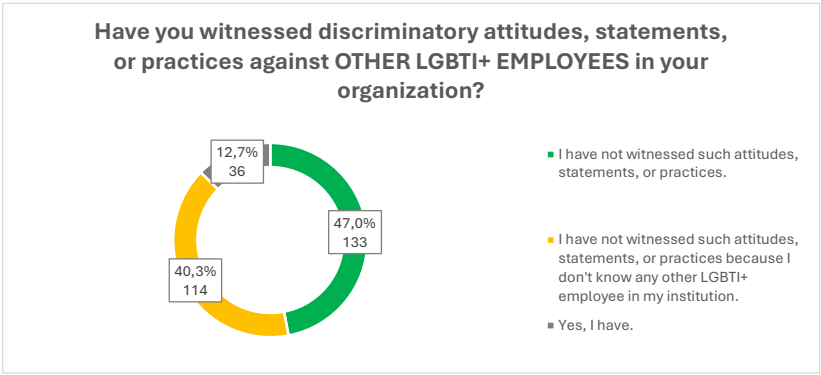
The statements of the participants regarding their attitudes towards discrimination in the workplace are generally in line with the results of our studies in previous years. Due to the fear of losing their jobs in the face of discrimination, the risk of suffering severe consequences, the fear of their sexual identity being revealed without their consent, and the difficulties they may face in their lives outside of work, LGBTI+ employees are unable to claim their rights. Another important finding is the disbelief of LGBTI+ employees that their rights will be protected against discrimination. The reason for this may be the inadequacy of both institutional policies and the legal framework. LGBTI+ employees are concerned that their resistance to discrimination may lead to more severe forms of discrimination and that this situation may even extend beyond the workplace, and this pushes them into silence.

The inadequacy of the institutional and legal framework for reporting discrimination is also an important finding in terms of unions and professional organizations. Among the 41 respondents who answered yes to the question “Are you a member of a trade union or professional organization?”, 8 stated that they have been subjected to discrimination based on gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics at the workplace; however, none of these participants preferred notifying the union and/or professional organization that they are a member of.

5. Accounts of Discrimination against other LGBTI+ Employees in the Workplace

Another question we asked the participants regarding discrimination was: "Have you witnessed discriminatory attitudes, statements, or practices targeting other LGBTI+ employees in the organization you work in?". 133 participants (47%) responded by saying no.

114 (40.3%) of the participants selected the option "I have not witnessed any discrimination against LGBTI+ employees because I do not know any other LGBTI+ employee in the organization I work for." 36 participants (12.7%) stated that they witnessed such a situation.



Statements of some of the participants who shared that they witnessed discrimination against other LGBTI+ employees in their workplace are presented below.

"During the job application process, applicants with a feminine style were rejected because they were deemed unsuitable for the company" (A gay man working as a sales consultant in the retail sector).

"I witnessed men treating a person who was clearly a lesbian as a sexual object" (Pansexual woman working as a researcher in the healthcare sector).

"Someone was fired for talking about Pride Week bans." (Gay man working in health tourism).

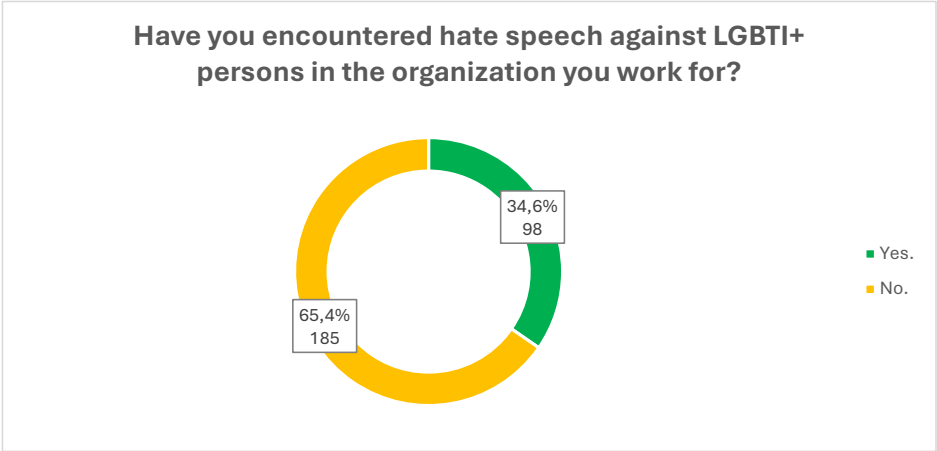
"I saw another trans woman being reported for using the women's restroom" (a heterosexual trans woman working as a social media moderator in the media industry).

"Gossip, mocking you 'secretly' while looking you straight in the face... (A pansexual woman working as a visual communication designer in the media industry)."

In parallel with the responses from last year's research, we see that mobbing, dismissal, mockery, and verbal insults are repetitive discriminatory practices against other LGBTI+ employees.

6. Hate Speech against LGBTI+s in the Workplace

Within the scope of the survey, we asked the question "Have you encountered any hate speech against LGBTI+ persons in the organization you work for?". While 185 (65.4%) of the participants stated that they did not encounter hate speech, 98 (34.6%) stated that they did.



Some of the responses of the participants who stated that they encountered hate speech against LGBTI+ employees are shared below.

"There are insults and humiliation towards LGBT guests without naming them" (Gay cis man working as a service employee in the tourism sector).

"There was no direct hate speech, but it was always turned into a joke" (a cisgender bisexual woman working as a social services specialist in the civil society sector).

"Because gays are employed so much in fashion, we end up unemployed," "Trans people shouldn't be so open about themselves, they attract too much attention." (uttered by a biologically female, heterosexual coworker to a regular customer), and "If you had made up your mind, your beard and mustache are still there, but your breasts are prominent and you're dressed like a woman. You have no right to go out like that." I warned them in a respectful manner, argued with them because they continued, and I received a verbal warning from the manager." (A gay man working as a stylist/style consultant in the textile industry).

*"To put it simply, my coworkers have the audacity to easily call men they find feminine 'f*gg*ts'" (A lesbian non-binary lawyer working in the legal field).*

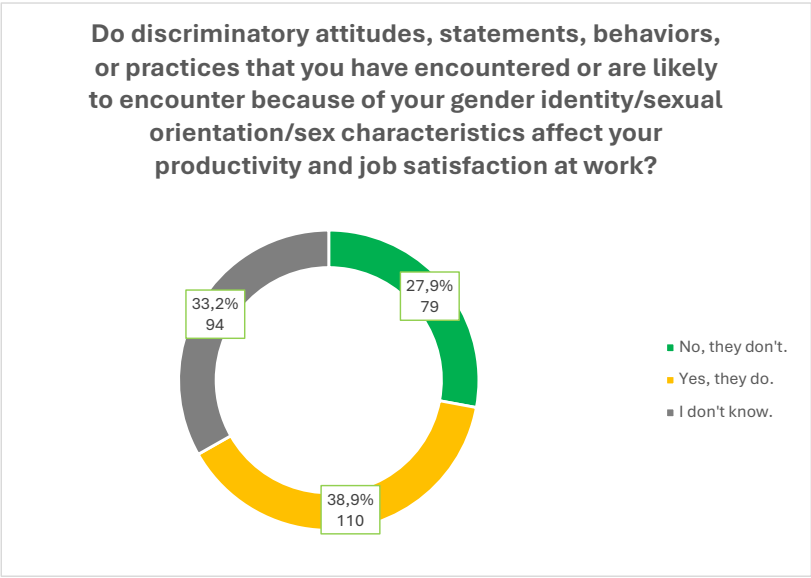
> *"It was the use of discriminatory language, statements such as 'People like that can't work in this workplace'. Or jokes about gender identity." (Gay man working as an accountant in the banking and finance sector).*

According to the statements of the participants, hate speech and discrimination cases are often mentioned together. Additionally, 27.8% of participants (227 people) who stated that they did not personally encounter discrimination based on gender identity/sexual orientation/ sex characteristics in the workplace reported encountering hate speech in the workplace.

7. The Relationship between Discrimination, Job Satisfaction and Productivity

Another question asked in the survey was "Do discriminatory attitudes, statements, behaviors or practices that you have experienced or are likely to experience because of your gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics affect your productivity and job satisfaction at work?".

79 participants (27.9%) answered the question by selecting "no, it doesn't," 110 (38.9%) by selecting "yes, it does," and 94 (33.2%) by selecting "no idea."



Some of the participants who stated that discrimination in the workplace affects their job satisfaction and productivity are quoted below.

"No one can work productively in a place where they don't feel safe" (Pansexual woman working as a researcher in the healthcare sector).

"In conversations outside of work, everyone can comfortably talk about and share their relationships with the opposite sex, but I have to hide that my partner is the same gender as me. Career development also happens somewhat through these conversations outside of work. I think this is a bit of an obstacle for me in advancing my career" (Gay man working as a game developer in the IT sector).

"It affects my chances of getting promoted" (A heterosexual trans man working as a barista in the entertainment industry).

I didn't have the mental capacity to work any harder. That's why I had to quit my job, because of these approaches. Generally, when these kinds of scrutiny started, when I was inevitably exposed to defamation, I had to leave despite my managers not wanting me to." (Bisexual man working as an electrical installation technician in the construction/architecture sector).

"It definitely has an impact. Without a sense of belonging and safety within the organization, my productivity and well-being suffer significantly." (A gay cis man working as a tax assistant in the accounting, auditing, and consulting sector)

"It alienates me from my coworkers. In situations where it's not necessary, it even leads to a job change" (A heterosexual trans man working as a post-production operator in the media industry).

"When my coworkers talk about social events they attend with their partners, I have to keep this a secret, so referring to my partner as my friend lowers my mood that day and reduces my productivity. That's why I prefer not to mention my partner to anyone at work" (Bisexual woman working as an institutional psychologist in the education sector).

"I'm really scared to look for a job. I'm going into crisis mode again, thinking, 'Oh no, they'll probably fire me for being gay,' so I can't even look for a job. No matter how hard I try, no matter how good I am, there's always the possibility I'll get fired." (A man working in the legal sector who does not wish to disclose his sexual orientation).

"Of course it affects us because, even though we have much greater capabilities, we are forced to accept and work with minimal opportunities due to our identity" (A heterosexual trans man working as an assistant sales manager in the IT sector)

"I can't speak like myself, I can't express my thoughts" (Gay cis man working as a coordinator in the construction/architecture sector)

The following conclusion can be drawn from these findings: Experiences relating to gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics at work not only affect the personal psychological well-being of the LGBTI+ employee but also have a direct impact on job satisfaction and productivity. As we can see from their statements, participants emphasize the negative consequences of experiencing discrimination such as feeling excluded and frustrated, and the effects of having increased anxiety regarding the future. The conclusion we can draw is that this leads to feeling demotivated in the work environment and decreases efficiency.

"Although I haven't experienced this at this workplace, based on my previous experience, this kind of behavior causes me to distance myself from

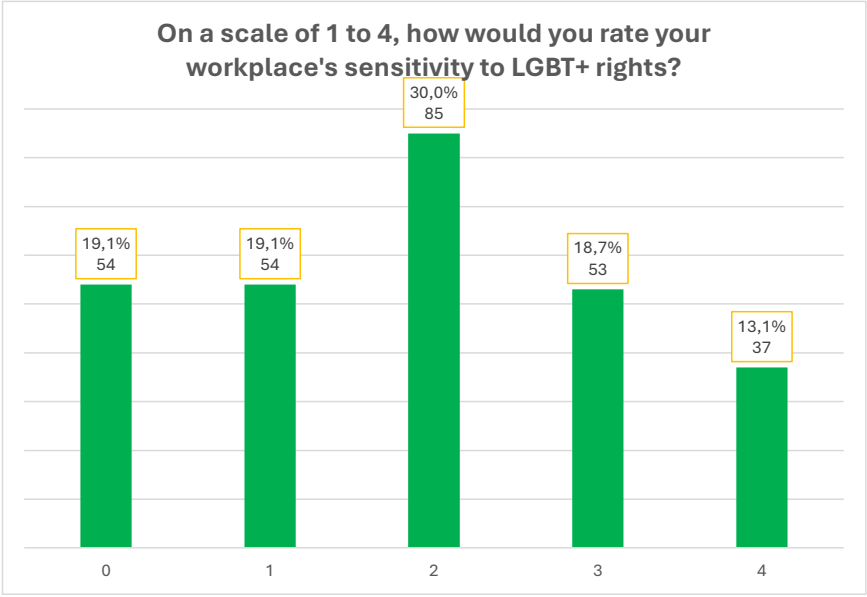
the workplace and lowers my motivation" (Bisexual cis man working as a customer representative in the education sector).

"I'm unhappy here. I do my job well, but being part of such disgusting conversations makes me sick. Every day, I feel like my feet are dragging." (A lesbian woman working as an engineer in the pharmaceutical industry).

Because LGBTI+ employee s must focus on developing various strategies to cope with the difficulties they face both in and outside the workplace, feeling forced to remain in the closet at the workplace leads to negative consequences such as lack of attention and concentration. As it can be understood from respondent statements, this strategy is followed unknowingly and leads to excessive strain on the individual. It also has negative implications for the relations with other employees, which may result in an inability of LGBTI+ employees in finding even a minimum degree of social support that they need in the workplace. The inability to express themselves and identities freely prevents LGBTI+ employees from establishing genuine friendships in the workplace and hinders them from forming social relationships that can extend into their personal lives.

8. Respondents' Overall Evaluation of the Workplace's Sensitivity to LGBTI+ Rights

Participants were asked to rate their current workplace out of 4 with regard to its sensitivity to LGBTI+ rights. The distribution of responses is shown in the graph below.

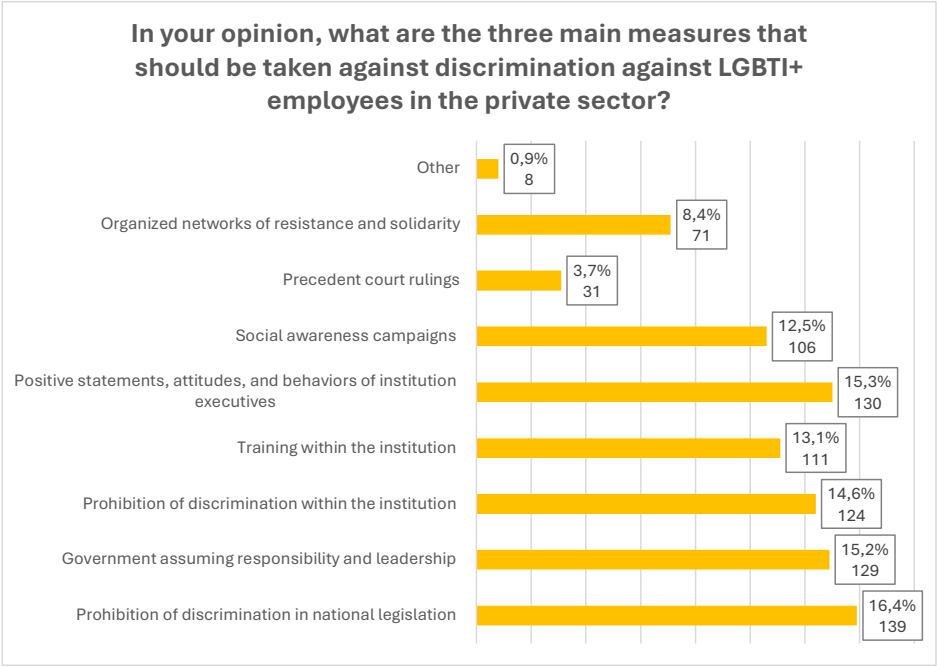


As seen in the graph, 108 out of 283 respondents, i.e., 38.2%, rated their workplace with 0 and 1 out of 4. 85 of the respondents rated their workplace with a grade of 2; in other words, they found it to be only "mediocre". As a result, 68.2% of the respondents find the sensitivity of their workplaces to LGBTI+ rights to be mediocre or below mediocre. The number of employees who rated their workplace as above average in this respect, i.e., 3, was 53, and its rate in the sample was 18.7%. Only 37 of the respondents, i.e., 13.1%, evaluated their workplace as highly positive with a score of 4.

These findings are in line with the results of previous surveys. Similar to the analyses of previous years' research, it is possible to point out the subjectivity of the evaluations of the respondents who rated their workplaces as very positive (4). As can be seen from their responses to other questions, a significant portion of these respondents do not have equal access to rights related to employment, doubt the continuity of this relatively positive situation, cannot fully assert themselves in work life, work by taking precautions, and are aware that they are in an exceptional position. This finding shows that no LGBTI+ employee can feel completely happy, satisfied, and safe without a generalized sense of equality and rights in the labor market.

9. Respondents' Recommendations for Combatting Discrimination Against LGBTI+ Employees

In the last part of our survey, participants were asked the question "What are the "top 3 measures" that should be taken against discrimination of LGBTI+ employees in the private sector?" Three options could be marked in response to this question, and the distribution of answers is presented in the table below.



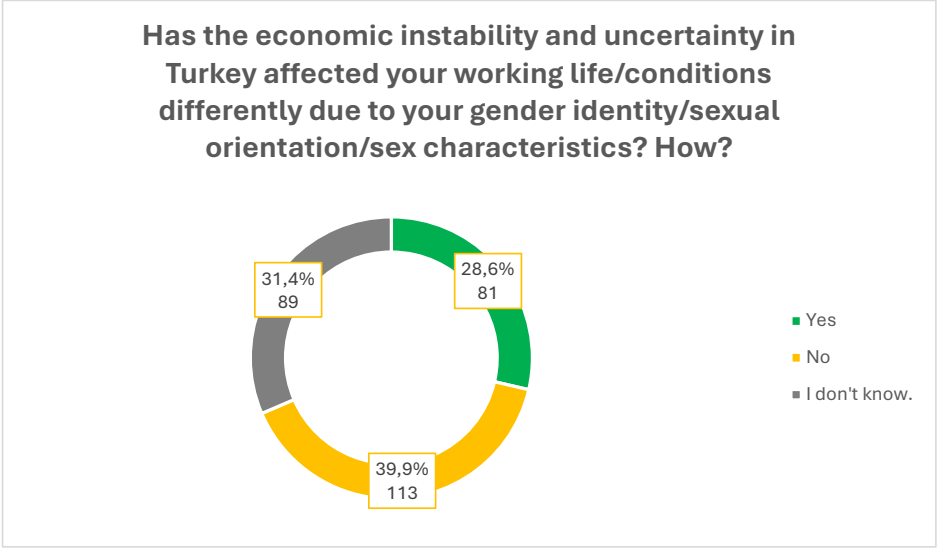
Other: Freedom and then recognition. First, you need to be acknowledged so that we can then discuss rights-based approaches; it is enough for people to respect each other. There are many different groups, and the list is endless. I believe we should start from the necessity of respecting people, not because they are vegan, on the autism spectrum, or LGBTI+, but because we are a leader- and punishment-driven society, I don't think solutions that don't include these two will be effective. The dissemination of education on gender and similar topics, government policies, I believe the discrimination we are currently experiencing is political because in our society, artists such as Zeki Müren and Bülent Ersoy, who are loved and respected by the public, are now being stirred up by politicians and driven to hatred. Even if expressions of sexual identity and orientation were included in legislation, there would be a huge change. All of the above.

As can be seen from the table, the majority of the participants chose the option of prohibition of discrimination in national legislation as the main measure to be taken against discrimination. The second most frequently selected option was positive action by higher level managers, and the third option was the government taking responsibility and leadership.

Respondents' recommenda tions for the prevention of discrimination in employment are largely similar to the findings of our previous research. The fact that "prohibition of discrimination in national legislation" ranked first among them undoubtedly reveals the demand for extensive and legal guarantees. However, the respondents believe that constitutional or legal reforms are not sufficient in addressing discrimination in employment and that there is also a need for societal transformation. After all, laws are implemented by people, and it is not possible to transform the working conditions of LGBTI+ employees in the workplace without social change. A significant number of respondents pointed to trainings that should be offered within the organization, practices and policies to increase social awareness for ensuring legal and social change.

10. The Situation of LGBTI+ in the Current Economic Conditions

Another question asked to the participants was "Has the economic instability and uncertainty being experienced in Türkiye affected your work life/conditions due to your gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics?". 39.9% of the participants (113 people) answered this question by choosing "no", 31.4% (89 people) chose "no idea" and 28.6% (81 people) chose "yes".



Among the participants who selected yes, there were no respondents who mentioned a positive impact of the current economic conditions. The statements of some of our respondents who stated that they were negatively affected by the current economic conditions are given below.

"Economic problems are lowering our quality of life. The lack of social spaces where LGBTQ+ individuals can freely meet and spend time together day or night, as they do in European countries, makes life even more difficult for us, and in this suffocating environment, we can hardly breathe." (Gay cis man working as a regional manager in the telecommunications/retail sector).

"I don't have my own home or space" (Gay man working as a worker in the construction/architecture sector).

"I don't have the financial means for surgery/hormone therapy, so I can't express myself the way I want to in the workplace" (Bisexual trans man working as a graphic designer in the IT sector).

"There were already few areas where I could work, and now there are even fewer" (Gay cis man working as a director in the field of culture/arts).

"As a queer private employee, current wages and the economic crisis cause me to experience fear and anxiety even when only existing and trying to make ends meet. My anxiety level is high" (Heterosexual trans woman working as a consultant in human resources).

"Even though I was the top performer when my old workplace downsized, I was the first to be laid off because I am trans" (A pansexual trans woman working as a resource development and international relations coordinator in the civil society sector).

11. Additional Comments from The Respondents

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked whether they wanted to share anything else to be quoted in the study. The responses of some s are presented below.

"Thank you. As long as this government remains in power, discrimination, marginalization, violence, and humiliation targeting LGBT individuals in Turkey will continue. The country's highest authority is targeting us; the Directorate of Religious Affairs condemns and targets us. Living as an LGBT person in Turkey is very difficult. I don't believe this country will change, so I will seek asylum in a country where I can live more comfortably and won't have to hide my identity" (A gay man working as a sales consultant in the retail sector).

"More effective campaigns (in collaboration with civil society organizations and political parties) should be organized against the government's overt attacks on LGBT+ individuals" (Lesbian cis woman working as a coordinator in the health sector).

"Nothing is as empowering as feeling that we are not alone. I believe we must never stop being each other's voice. Even if my managers or the institution itself does not treat us inclusively, I always support my colleagues whose orientation I know, under any circumstances. I feel that they support me too" (Gay man working as a social media specialist in the education sector).