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CONTEXTUALIZING LGBTQ FACULTY EXPERIENCES:  
AN ACCOUNT OF SEXUAL MINORITY PERCEPTIONS

By

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BS Biology, Howard University 2002  
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A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Affiliated Faculty

Of the College of Graduate and Professional Studies at the University of New England

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the degree of Doctor of Education

Portland & Biddeford, Maine

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2017

CONTEXTUALIZING LGBTQ FACULTY EXPERIENCES:  
AN ACCOUNT OF SEXUAL MINORITY PERCEPTIONS

Abstract

The well-being of faculty is susceptible to influence from intrinsic and extrinsic occupational characteristics. Heterosexism or hostile environments can be associated with decreased satisfaction amongst sexual minorities. As such, this transcendental phenomenology examined perceptions from tenured lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) faculty of their workplace conditions. Eight participants reflected on experiences from within higher education, academic settings. This study purposefully probed how sexual orientation and sexual minority status impacted their overall job satisfaction. Through providing context for social interactions in a traditionally heteronormative environment, cultural and attributional behaviors associated with affecting LGBTQ faculty in higher education was analyzed.

This phenomenology was guided by two research questions: (1) How do lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) tenured university faculty perceive workplace climate including direct and indirect experiences? (2) How does sexual orientation and identity in higher education settings affect LGBTQ tenured university faculty members' job satisfaction i.e. self-expression, acceptance, achievement, advancement, retention, and job security? Data collected was analyzed both manually and with NVivo for Mac qualitative software. Each question added to the existing knowledge base by investigating whether sexual minority status in association with occupational surroundings and cultural practices developed perceptions of affective work

related outcomes. Following exhaustive data analysis, four themes emerged: (1) sexuality is complicated; (2) inclusion does not equal acceptance; (3) environmental dynamics are integral; and (4) satisfaction reflects participation. Pivotal excerpts were reviewed and presented in the results section of this study documenting the unique experiences of LGBTQ tenured faculty.

LGBTQ faculty participants perceived their experiences in academia similar to other marginalized groups. As in minority stress theory, the internalization of pervasive attitudes and beliefs throughout the course of common social exchanges was particularly impactful.

Therefore, developing an identity as academic faculty was multifaceted and transcended simply stating one's sexual orientation. To exist within campus climate required the dexterity to possess levels of awareness and activism that adapt with or resist even the subtlest forms of homophobia and intolerance. If unsuccessful or combined with apathy from administrators or colleagues, parity for LGBTQ faculty was imperiled.

University of New England

Doctor of Education  
Educational Leadership

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Nelson Mandela, the revolutionary South African political leader and philanthropist, held unwavering devotion for facilitating democracy, equality, and learning. To quote Mandela, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”. With that same passion and dedication, I would like to earnestly express my gratitude to everyone who assisted me along this journey towards receiving a Doctor of Education degree.

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backbone. Without you I wouldn't be here. I love you eternally. Auntie, you always supported me immeasurably. The example you set climbing to heights in your career blazed a trail for me to follow. Thank you for taking me to college on the weekends with you when I was a kid. You planted the seed in me that higher education was both necessary and fun.

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In closing, I encourage myself and others to relentlessly chase after dreams. Have the courage to persevere in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. Put God first in everything you do. Remember that failure is only an option if you make it a choice. Therefore, set a path, trust the process, choose to succeed, and never give up.



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Fear. Hatred. Isolation. Disenfranchisement. Prejudice. Marginalization. These are compelling examples of themes that plausibly constitute portions of the national picture of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) workers' experiences on jobsites across the United States of America. The Human Rights Campaign Foundation (2009) reported that, "Despite a changing social and legal landscape for LGBT people, still over half (53 percent) of LGBT workers nationwide hide who they are at work" (p. 2). As such, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation (HRCF) aptly dedicated its resources for studies specific to the LGBT community. "In spite of diversity initiatives, intolerance of lesbian and gay people still exists in today's society and carries over into the workplace" (Day & Schoenrade, 1997, p. 148). The aforementioned statistic further established a context for future study of how sexual orientation, identity, and environmental workplace conditions intersect within an organizational culture that may be unintentionally yet inherently permissive of many prejudices. It also signified the importance of identifying factors influencing the perceptions of sexual minorities.

The expression of one's sexual identity and sexual orientation are potential moderators of heterosexist discrimination or oppressive heteronormative behavior in categorically tiered and structured places like academic settings. Silverschanz, Cortina, Konik and Magley (2008) stated, "Personalized hostility is not typically elicited by the heterosexuality of an individual in the way that it can be by someone's non-heterosexuality, especially those who are "out" about their sexual orientation" (p. 180). Despite the creation of well-intentioned anti-discrimination policies and the adoption of more inclusive state and national legislation, determining and fully

understanding how to secure longstanding equal employment rights in a workplace that is diversified and protective of all is a necessary topic up for exploration and discussion.

The impact of minority stress is partly due to primary influences in workplace culture being ubiquitous and subsequently deserving of evidence-based approaches that decipher and help to interpret nuanced professional environments. Silverschanz et al. (2008) stated, “The construct encompasses a variety of behaviors including verbal insult, property damage, theft, and physical and sexual assault against persons perceived as sexual minorities” (p. 180). Specifically, offensive workplace environmental influences potentially contribute to the denigration, stigmatization, or outright marginalization of non-heterosexual orientations, identities, behaviors, relationships, and communities. In recognizing that trend, it becomes clearer that any instance of heterosexism promotes the proliferation and continuation of organizational ideologies that encourage the suffocation of the professional queer voice and image.

If minority LGBTQ employees are persistently allowed to perceive feelings of invisibility in comparison with their colleagues belonging to the sexual majority, it may increasingly threaten the diversification of unionized and non-unionized work settings. It can also be hypothesized that LGBTQ faculty would be more likely to perceive themselves as satisfied within the domain of their jobs if enabled or equipped to make progress and achieve personal goals. Simply put, LGBTQ employee job satisfaction requires perceiving the possession of certain capabilities and assistance in development of performance enhancing skills that lend to highly valued, profitable outcomes. Lent, Singley, Sheu, Gainor, Brenner, Treistmann, and Ades (2005) stated, “People are likely to be satisfied when they see their environments as supportive of their involvement and as providing tangible resources that can facilitate their goal directed

behavior” (p. 430). Therefore, work environments should be evaluated on the basis of providing not only job security but sustained examples of provision and respect.

At times, noticeably absent from literature and general conversation is a more holistic or inclusive explanation of the intricate experiences of each faction within the LGBTQ minority grouping. Amongst LGBTQ minorities, there are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning individuals with valuable narratives that deserve investigation or feature. It is noteworthy how bisexual and transgender accounts are often overlooked or not included. “In the stories of participants from qualitative studies, formal discrimination most often included employer decisions to fire or not hire someone due to their sexual orientation” (Croteau, 1996, p. 199). Therefore, vivid information should be collected from an inclusive sample that represents the breadth of employees who can provide accurate examples of formal and informal discriminatory practices. If colleges and universities promote strategic plans or mission statements based on principles like equal opportunity and diversity, research focusing on academic personnel should be reflective of a higher standard for inclusion as well. Faculty members are not only highly educated professionals; they are integral to the infrastructure of institutions.

### **Statement of Problem**

Day and Schoenrade (1997) warned, “Despite diversity initiatives, intolerance of lesbian and gay people still exists in today’s society and carries over into the workplace” (p. 148). Across most fields or disciplines, establishing mentoring and networking relationships is an integral element in the formation of professional alliances. Therefore, feigning or emulating heteronormative behavior, dress, and relationships can frequently be recognized as lifelines or assets by members of the LGBTQ community in order to secure a foothold amidst workplace



politics (Sears & Mallory, 2011). Those who transgress sexual and gender norms may perceive they have to engage in duplicitous activities to avoid invasive, uncomfortable or offensive questioning. Heterosexism includes ambient experiences such as actions within the environment but are not directed at a specific target, as in telling anti-LGBTQ jokes within earshot of anyone (Silverchanz et al., 2008). This reinforces conventional gender and sexual roles that conform to heteronormative and idealized views on masculinity and femininity. The consequence of exposing personal proclivities and living outwardly in appreciation of their true authentic lifestyles is often debilitating and career ending. “Employees who lack appropriate networks and mentors often do not experience adequate career and professional advancement. They may face ridicule, ostracism or even job loss” (Day & Schoenrade, 1997, p. 148). Subsequently, LGBTQ workers are challenged with considering remaining in the proverbial closet or implementing various strategies to mask their identities in the workplace. Research fails in terms of providing an adequate explanation of how self-deprecating choices and circumstances affect those employees’ levels of perceived job satisfaction. Little description of the effects of an oppressive job culture on the LGBTQ higher education community exists in investigative research or academic journals that can be incorporated with the formation of better adapted or inclusive human resource manuals and guidelines. Researchers should investigate the direct and indirect factors that are contributing to hiding, modifying or concealing behavioral characteristics that may betray one’s sexual identity or orientation in the workplace. Until such research is conducted and the results used to inform workplace changes, idealized forms of hegemonic sexuality will be perpetuated. Therefore, the research problem this study seeks to address is the identification and formulation of a clear explanation of how LGBTQ tenured university faculty

members perceive workplace climate experiences and associate contributory factors with job satisfaction.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Occupational culture and experiences within the workplace environment are interrelated with employee output and perception. “Employees having to hide who they are comes at the cost of individual employee engagement and retention and reveals broader challenges of full inclusion in the workplace” (Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2014, p. 2). If workplace culture affects efficacy, there may be subsequent internalized emotions tantamount with a dissatisfied mental state of being. “Employees who are not open at work experience more negative outcomes from their workplace environment that affect productivity, retention and professional relationships” (HRCF, 2009, p. 5). Through insightful interpretation of the sexual minority experiential phenomena within academia, it was anticipated that from identifying thematic associations found amongst tenured LGBTQ faculty perceptions of job satisfaction an insightful discussion would be developed. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to provide accounts of how lived experiences in the work environment affect the job satisfaction perceptions of LGBTQ tenured academic faculty. Particular focus was placed on associative variances found in the narratives on job satisfaction for a sample population of eight lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, or queer tenured professors. It was anticipated that deeper meaning and understanding would be gained through data collected providing significant detail and context for some of the issues and challenges contributing to LGBTQ tenured faculty overall job satisfaction.

Many factors are used to determine academic professionals’ job satisfaction and that contribute to their contentment. Schulz (2009) posited, “By examining the job satisfaction of

faculty more closely, a deeper understanding of what motivates them and how they feel about the intrinsic and extrinsic factors associated with their jobs can be developed” (p. 2). This investigative process is limited to a population of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning professors to provide them as underrepresented sexual minorities, a platform to voice their feelings. Creswell (2015) advised, “Present multiple perspectives of individuals to provide useful information, give voice to silenced people, and represent the complexity of our world” (p. 205). As a result, this study examined how the participants chose to respond to, deal with, or react to a confluence of workplace elements. This is a highly important research goal. Bell, Ozbilgin, Beauregard, and Surgevil (2011) stated, “The voices of minorities in general and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender employees in particular have been neglected in much of the academic research on employee voice” (p. 131). Intentional scrutiny through qualitative interview yielded data from which an analysis of themes ascertained some causal factors of variant levels in job satisfaction for a more inclusive demographic of tenured university faculty members than is typically found in research.

Discrimination, be it formal or informal, constitutes harassment. Without credibility, respect, trust or acceptance, institutional and interpersonal social prejudice and stigma prompts certain adjustments or efforts from maligned employees. “Research indicates that everyone (regardless of sexual orientation) working in a heterosexist climate, in which behaviors such as anti-gay jokes are accepted as common practice, can experience reduced psychological well-being” (Silverschanz, Cortina, Konik, & Magley, 2008, p. 185). Ergo, it is reiterated that the purpose of the present exploration was to focus on contextualizing the workplace experiences of LGBTQ faculty so that perceptions like job satisfaction are better explained and understood.

## **Research Questions**

This study originated from an exploration on variant levels of job satisfaction amongst tenured university faculty. It was further clarified to a narrower topic to focus specifically on if/how workplace experiences associated with sexual orientation influences faculty contentment. As Day and Schoenrade (1997) asserted, “Many U.S. firms are incorporating diversity management into their human resources practices and some employers are including sexual orientation in their lists of major sources of diversity” (p. 147). To gather a valid account of LGBTQ faculty workplace experiences that facilitate understanding the essence of their perceptions; specific research questions were developed as guidelines for the research. In total, two detailed research questions encompassed the investigative process. Through identifying what experiences directly or indirectly affects LGBTQ faculty contentment, it could uncover contextual pathways previously not considered associated. First, by recounting occupational lived experience:

How do lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) tenured university faculty perceive workplace climate including direct and indirect experiences?

The main premise was to capture the essence of overt and covert workplace climate experiences in higher education that affect LGBTQ faculty job satisfaction perceptions. Second:

How does sexual orientation or identity in higher education settings affect LGBTQ tenured university faculty members’ job satisfaction i.e. self-expression, acceptance, achievement, promotion, retention, and job security?

## **Conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework of this study was derived from two theories existing within job satisfaction research and sociological investigation. Each focuses on previously

underexplored linkages between the experiences of individuals, social environments, and perceptions of contentment. The first theory, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (1974), acted as a precursor for Meyer's minority stress theory (1995), which establishes the conceptual framework. Herzberg's theory introduced factors that influence work-related contentment and minority stress theory defines the relationship between social and environmental structures that result in positive or negative outcomes (Herzberg, 1974; Meyer, 1995). Therefore, the framework built upon minority stress theory explored the factors that act as an integral part of LGBTQ faculty job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Bilimoria and Stewart (2009) found, "Pervasive discomfort with minority sexualities may arise because heterosexual faculty are relatively indifferent to colleagues' identities, personal lives, and experiences" (p. 97). Though valid, significant descriptions of LGBTQ faculty job satisfaction perceptions are currently underreported, this study sought to contribute to dialogue on the oppressive nature of intrinsically heteronormative workplaces.

Observing if lived workplace experiences connected with gender identity and sexual orientation impacts tenured faculty job satisfaction has the potential to become an important part of academic administrations across America. Herzberg's (1959) work was revolutionary because it concentrated on the development and impact of the extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors of employees. Motivation-hygiene theory explains both physical and psychological factors that are causations of either satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1974). Contemporary studies surrounding job satisfaction and work related employee attitudes still credit Herzberg. For example, a hygiene may be a need that employees desire in order to receive instant gratification (Meyer, 2013). Deeper motivation, however, encompasses the procurement of qualities that are less temporal like respect, development, support and advancement. With this basic comparison

of a hygiene and a motivator, an examination was made to see if academics are currently lacking the level of humanity required for improved organizational performance. For this study, stimuli like ambient experiences that are not extreme, non-confrontational or nonphysical were included and defined. Herzberg's theory assisted with contextualizing which psychological or physiological needs infiltrate the perceptions of academic satisfaction and dissatisfaction most. Thereafter, thematic associations in job satisfaction perceptions correlating with faculty member gender identity or sexual orientation were analyzed explicitly, specifically to explain if university administrations are managing their intentions for the good of some of their workforce rather than their workforce.

To further expand the conceptual framework, minority stress theory was selected based on its potential relevance to the intended target group of this study. There is a main foundational premise within minority stress theory. Minority stress theory suggests that LGBT or other marginalized people are faced with unique stressors like stigma and prejudice (Meyer, 2013). If left unaddressed, such stressors can lead to adverse reactions and outcomes like deterioration of health, physical illness, and mental disorders. Frost, Lehavot, and Meyer (2015) proved, "Although some forms of minority stress can be experienced by any socially stigmatized group, concealment of sexual minority status (i.e. outness) and internalized homophobia are unique to the experience of sexual minority individuals" (p. 2). In this study, LGBTQ faculty members comprise the sexual and gender minority at their respective jobsites. Therefore, they may be a greater risk of exposure to stressors socially that directly or indirectly affect their perceptions of job satisfaction.

## **Assumptions and Limitations**

A primary assumption of this study was that the majority of LGBTQ participants will report periodic feelings of rejection or discomfort in their work environment. By being members of the sexual or gender minority, this may entail periodic experiences of systematic and systemic heterosexist harassment (HH). As a part of the majority, non-LGBTQ employees tend to overlook how they freely express their own sexual orientation and gender identity. This could be revealed as an associative factor of workplace satisfaction. A second assumption is that exclusionary signals and cues found commonly in workplace culture every day, are dismissed, downplayed or even encouraged by colleagues of LGBTQ employees. It is predicted that such stereotypes and mischaracterizations will also factor into participants' perceived feelings of satisfaction. The Human Rights Campaign Foundation (2014) noted:

Though 81% of non-LGBTQ people report that they feel LGBTQ people should not have to hide who they are at work, over 70% agree that it is unprofessional to talk about your sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace. (p. 14)

Hence, perceptions of ambient harassment or bystander stress from workplace heterosexism were suitable for inclusion in participant narratives.

A challenge of conducting this study was the act of finding willing participants to satisfactorily analyze and interpret the range of experiences that sexual minority persons in academia endure. Describing job satisfaction perceptions is part of a philosophical abstract that requires the interpretation of information that is subjective. "In qualitative research, our approach relies on general interviews or observations so that we do not restrict the views of participants" (Creswell, 2015, p. 204). Confidentiality and participant's rights are especially valued and protected since honest dialogue from participants is susceptible to any inherent fear

of workplace repercussion. Fifty-four percent of LGBTQ employees report lying about their personal lives and only twenty-one percent are totally open about their sexual identity (HRCF, 2009).

Another limitation as a researcher was the bracketing of personal experiences that could influence the interpretation of data. Interviews provided information that was filtered through the views of the interviewer. As such, one must be vigilant to avoid presenting invalid data which presents only the perspectives that participants want researchers to hear (Creswell, 2015). A transcendental phenomenology should focus on the essence or search the breadth of experiences in relation with phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). Experiences, relationships, and behaviors are equally as inseparable as they are integrated with qualitative investigation. A researcher must set aside prejudgments via epoche and systematically analyze their findings as if new or being viewed in its entirety for the very first time (Moustakas, 1994). When executed correctly, at the end of a methodically conducted and well written transcendental phenomenology, is a textural description that conveys significant statements and themes categorizing what the participants felt, perceived or experienced.

A third limitation of this phenomenological study was that it focused on capturing the personal experiences of participants using a lens of discrimination based on sexual orientation. This is a very relevant research problem and does add to a minimal knowledge base. However, the essence of participant narratives may not fully capture or translate the duration, intensity, and frequency of heterosexist workplace events. It also may not fully differentiate between indirect or direct iterations of marginalization.



### **Definition of Key Terms**

The terms defined in this section are incorporated throughout the dissertation. They are provided here as an added measure of clarification. This is done in order to counteract accidental misinformation and ensure that the intended interpretation is received.

*Avoidance* - Creating diversions or boundaries between professional and personal life to offset intrusions requiring the revelation of sexual orientation or identity (Szymanski & Sung, 2010).

*Counterfeiting* - The act of strategically imitating or adopting the persona of another sexual orientation to purposefully present a false heteronormative identity (Szymanski & Sung, 2010).

*Heterosexism* - A cultural or psychological system that institutionalizes ideology that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes non-heterosexual behavior, identity, relationships, or communities (Szymanski & Sung, 2010).

*Heterosexist discrimination* - Activity within an environment that amounts to or includes prejudices, biases, hate crimes, targeting, or exclusion toward non-heterosexual sexual minorities (Szymanski & Sung, 2010).

*Heterosexist harassment (HH)* - Verbiage that symbolically is used to convey insensitive speech or extend discriminatory intent toward non-heterosexuality (Szymanski & Sung, 2010).

*Inclusion* - An emotional state, condition, or sense of belonging, support, respect, and value within a larger society or community grouping (Szymanski & Sung, 2010).

*Internalized homophobia (IH)* - If sexual minorities accept widespread negative social ideologies about their orientation to be true and begin to devalue their self-worth (Szymanski & Sung, 2010)

*Job satisfaction*- An overall affective orientation individuals have towards the work roles they occupy. It includes multiple dimensions of self-directed values and perceived rewards that are

either intrinsic or extrinsic facets of the job or task itself (Kalleberg, 1977).

*LGBTQ* - An inclusive abbreviation for the “gay community” which represents diverse groups of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals or identities. It is important to note that LGB refers to sexual orientation and T indicates a gender identity. Queer persons may not consider themselves to be gay or bisexual and conform to a pansexual identity (Szymanski & Sung, 2010).

*Outness* - The level of open identification or expression as a sexual orientation or identity with others (Szymanski & Sung, 2010).

*Queer*- An umbrella term used by LGBTQ people to refer to the entire community. Initially used negatively, it is now used by those who identifies outside of binary terms and views orientation, sexuality, and gender as overlapping (Szymanski & Sung, 2010).

*Social integration* – Incorporation into a general societal aggregate as a minority or an outlier with the intent of being accepted or respected (Szymanski & Sung, 2010).

### **Significance**

“Heterosexism may be rooted in the enforcement of traditional gender roles, in that negative attitudes towards sexual minorities are often linked to perceptions that gay men and lesbian women violate stereotypes of acceptable gender behavior” (Silverschanz et al., 2008, p. 180). With regard to the formation of more inclusive university policies and practices, the significance of this investigative study is to direct a finely tuned interpretive lens that concisely analyzes how incomplete knowledge or flawed understanding of LGBTQ faculty experiences exacerbates pressing social issues and workplace phenomena worthy of deciphering. Specifically, it should show accurately how to recognize the role of influencers, like sexual orientation, as integral contributing factors of faculty job satisfaction. It may also prove vital to

institutional reform and targeted human resource outcomes by suggesting modes and ways that outdated practices could be revised for more general inclusivity. Creating models that assist with reporting and analyzing these types of data may aid in the support and retention of key faculty members from heterogeneous demographics. Internalized homophobia (IH) within a heterosexist environment may have a number of associated variables (Meyer, 2013). Therefore, studies like this must not be abandoned and should be considered, reviewed, and elucidated.

### **Conclusion**

As introduced in Chapter 1, the rationale behind this study derived from the need to explore how LGBTQ faculty members internalize common job related experiences and perceive their feelings of contentment. As explained, the significance of this investigation was that defining job satisfaction more explicitly may help to reduce workplace discrimination, stigma and prejudice. Contextualizing the impact of heterosexism and internalized homophobia in academia on faculty job satisfaction is a subject that could further ameliorate both hiring and retention practices. Sexual minorities that are exposed to stigma-related experiences may bear the cognitive burden associated with level of outness and derived from expectations of rejection regardless of actual discriminatory occurrences (Frost, Lehavot & Meyer, 2015). For many, coming out is a process that never ends and diversity is a skill that requires excoriating the workplace of unconscious biases. The Human Rights Campaign Foundation (2009) stated:

LGBT employees do not insist on bringing their sexual orientation into the workplace; rather, the workplace itself demands it. While these conversations are important to building working relationships, they can often make LGBT employees feel uncomfortable. Fewer than half of LGBT employees feel very comfortable talking about any of these topics, particularly those that are not open at work. Some LGBT workers

say they spend a lot of energy trying to dodge these conversations and the questions they evoke. (p. 17)

In a host of circumstances, sexual minorities are either susceptible or subjected to some form of harassment regularly. Similar to other marginalized groups regularly denied societal acceptance, LGBTQ people experience discrimination and cultural oppression that ranges from individual to institutional (Balsam, Beadnell, & Molina, 2013). Therefore, they may elect to adopt identity management strategies like remaining closeted, utilizing a quiescent voice, or counterfeiting.

The following chapter expounds upon the climate of academic workplace environments through a review of relevant literature and provides examples of how protective coping mechanisms elicit certain perceptions and behaviors from affected sexual minority employees. Both quantitative and qualitative works are included to provide descriptive and empirical data of significant contribution. Additionally, the theoretical framework is presented and introduces theories commonly found in career theory research. As provided in the theoretical framework, they describe, support, and inform the research problem.

In Chapter 3, methodology that supports this phenomenological study and grounded by literature is presented. The data gathered and analyzed from this phenomenology should encourage open dialogue and discussion of factors that put certain members of society and professional organizations at risk of poorer physical and mental health. The results may add context to the existing knowledge base and provide university administrators and policymakers with suggestions of how to improve current working conditions. Defining the essence of LGBTQ faculty experiences could demystify their variant levels of job satisfaction and suggest advancements or ways to improve overall institutional efficacy.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Sexual orientation, in literature, is often portrayed as a foreign concept or illicit part of occupational diversity. The Human Rights Campaign Foundation (2014) noted:

LGBT jobseekers and workers face a patchwork of state and local laws, private sector policies and shifting attitudes leading to a prevailing sense of uncertainty as to whether or not it is safe and comfortable to be openly LGBT in the workplace. The picture of the American workplace as a place to be able to be one's self, treated fairly and thrive is not yet the reality for most LGBT Americans. (p. 7)

As such, policies pertaining to how employees should react or respond when encountering heterosexism should become preeminent tenets of occupational behavior. The Pew Charitable Trusts (2015) also found:

Policymakers are facing difficult decisions regarding funding higher education as annual budgets continue to outpace revenue growth. In the twenty-five years leading up to 2012, state government spending on colleges and universities increased by more than sixty-five percent. While concurrently rebounding from a recession and facing a constrained fiscal environment, states across the nation are challenging themselves to better achieve shared goals along with more effective funding strategies. (para. 7)

Academic institutions should be required to uphold mission statements or strategic plans based on principles like scholarship, diversity and equal opportunity in order to remain viewed as the valuable investments they purport to be.

The federal government aides in providing financial assistance for individual student and research projects along with funding the general operations of public institutions. In 2013, 75.6 billion federal dollars and 72.7 billion in state funds were spent on higher education (The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2015). There should also be a degree of responsibility on administrations that appear to lack a system by which to validate or ascertain their own diverse faculty's satisfaction. Regarding the study of faculty contentment, one should not start with a blank slate. Instead, satisfaction should be evaluated on the characteristics of the individual faculty members, the context of their workloads, and the institutional interactions (Bozeman & Gaughan, 2011). Hence, the purpose of this literature review is to examine the causal factors of variant levels in job satisfaction for an inclusive demographic of tenured university faculty members.

There are contributing factors that typify determinants of satisfaction or intervene with an academic's contentment. Bilimoria et al., (2016) indicated:

Two key academic processes occurring within a faculty member's primary unit (department or school/college) mediate the perceived relationships between institutional characteristics and job satisfaction for both female and male academics: internal academic resource (including research-supportive workloads) and internal relational supports. (p. 96)

A perspective requiring deeper investigation is how specific populations respond to, deal with, or react to a confluence of imposing elements. The potential to uncover similar or divergent faculty behavioral responses which affect overall satisfaction comprised the framework of this exploration. "Findings are limited by the use of instruments that require respondents to self-report. However, because of the importance placed on appraisal and perceptions in the stress process, self-report measures are appropriate" (Brewer & Landers, 2003, p. 44). Specifically, it

is intended to provide a knowledge base explaining how lived experiences that are attributable to sexual identity or sexual orientation may affect the interpretation, internalization, and conveyance of job satisfaction.

This literature review contains a comprehensive compilation of sources used to provide insight surrounding job satisfaction perceptions from tenured university faculty. Detailed focus is placed on variances in lived experiences and other associative factors affecting satisfaction that are attributable to an individual's sexuality. As Bilimoria et al. (2006) have shown, "Our main purpose in the current investigation was to expose the pathways leading from perceived institutional characteristics to the job satisfaction of faculty members and to investigate likely differences in the strengths of these paths" (p. 355). Starting with an evaluation of faculty satisfaction, the review moves on to look at the significance of job satisfaction literature. Then, an argument for the emerging study is made leading to a discussion of existing university conditions. This is followed by a review of current faculty job satisfaction analyses, and a classification of contributing factors is presented. A review of exclusionary institutional practices follows with findings and observations that contributed to the determination of the conceptual framework. Finally, the intrinsic and extrinsic contributing factors of job satisfaction are analyzed for deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of sexual identity and tenured faculty perceptions.

### **The Evaluation of Faculty Satisfaction**

Rosser (2004) discovered that, "Public demands for the accountability of faculty members' workload and productivity have become pronounced policy debates, adding to the existing pressures on faculty time and performance" (p. 285). As a result of the added intrusion, greater understanding of the impact or depth that professional workplaces have on academic's

wellbeing is required. If institutions of higher learning arduously seek to legitimize their commitments towards providing access to inclusive, responsive environments for all demographics, they should determine if significant predictors of faculty job satisfaction are truly ubiquitous for every classification and orientation.

“Because of its broad, normative nature, prior research has offered little insight into the complex interaction of events and experiences in the lives of individual faculty members that shape their perceptions and ultimately their decisions to stay or leave” (Ambrose, Huston, & Norman, 2005, p. 805). Investigations on faculty contentment have included areas like productivity, motivation, behavior, gender, technology, instruction, and salary (Aquirre, 2010; Blackburn & Lawrence, 1996; Boyer, 1996; Rice & Miller, 2001). Within the existing field of social science inquiry, income is often used for comparative measures of satisfaction. Heart disease, suicide, and depression are also some of the physical and psychological health outcomes that populate the kinds of stressors university employees are exposed to. Mark and Smith (2012) cautioned, “While it is clear that the study of stressful job characteristics may be helpful in the prediction of outcomes in university employees, it is also important to take account of how workplace stressors affect different individuals” (p. 65). It is unreliable to describe the plethora of contributory factors of job satisfaction based on the provision of autonomy or any prospective factor solely.

Furthermore, universities are not always successful at retaining high quality faculty regardless of the amount of effort or money invested (Ambrose, Huston, & Norman, 2005). The evaluation of academic faculty demands thorough evaluation of the satisfaction of the population. Johnsrud and Rosser (2002) argued, “Institutions would benefit from a clearer understanding of what contributes to faculty decisions to leave” (p. 518). Colleges and



universities may become better equipped to confront faculty dissatisfaction and address poor retention if they are enabled to engage their employees in ways that determine how they function or what makes them stay. It could effectively serve to synthesize a conceptual construct that can essentially describe rather than explain faculty perceptions that are accurate contributors to job satisfaction in an academic setting.

Special emphasis should also be placed on finding a diverse sample, both gay and straight, wherein academics' satisfaction thereafter can be ascribed with sexual identity associatively. From a conceptual standpoint, lengthy debate surrounds reformation attempts focused on the mission of modern universities. In general, a lack of unifying purpose is found. Chung (2003) explained, "The empirical research that does exist on lesbians, gays, and bisexuals (LGB) career issues mainly has examined work discrimination and sexual identity management" (p. 82). An integrative model for the evaluation of work-associated contentment amongst academics that include sexual identity or orientation should be established.

Evaluating variables that influence contributive factors of university faculty satisfaction is an area where significant literature can be added. As Brewer and Landers (2003) stated, "The salience of job stress as a research topic has been due in part to the magnitude of its effects" (p. 37). The identification of a concise, complete tabulation of job satisfaction determinants for academic faculty members is of great importance. Experimentation that accurately analyzes a wider spectrum of faculty sentiments is imperative due to the presumed effect their level of motivation has on investment of time, energy and overall job satisfaction. Alexander-Albritton and Hill (2015) explained, "Understanding career satisfaction is critical because it can have a profound impact on overall wellbeing" (p. 109). By evaluating diversified satisfaction variables,

factors are holistically analyzed for their potential to affect work engagement and total motivation.

### **Significance of Job Satisfaction Literature**

Colleges and universities are occupational models for and pipelines to a vast variety of global industries. They are pivotal organizations that are acutely geared toward the extensive proliferation of education, research and rapidly advancing technology. “Despite the importance of faculty retention, there is little understanding of how demographic variables, professional and institutional worklife issues, and satisfaction interact to explain faculty intentions to leave at a national level” (Rosser, 2004, p. 285). The addition of significant research that is inclusive and contemporary may contribute to transforming the attitudes and perspectives of the entire academic community.

“Previous research has revealed that employees who are satisfied with their job are more likely to be creative, innovative and initiate the breakthroughs that can increase their job performance” (Pan, Shen, Liu, Yang & Wang, 2015, p. 12761). While university faculty members’ satisfaction remains insufficiently examined using the lens of sexual orientation to explicitly describe the experiences that affect quality of life, optimal career development cannot occur when individuals are forced to suppress the parts of their identities that are devalued by society (Myers, Haggins, & Speight, 1994). Morrow, Gore, and Campbell (1996) found, “Many lesbian women and gay men report having made abrupt career shifts during the “coming out” phase of their sexual identity development, coinciding with major alterations in self-identity” (p. 142). Initiatives that support faculty by increasing their contentment aligns with forming truly successful and revolutionary organizations. “The results indicated that the perceptions faculty members have of their worklife had a direct and powerful impact on their moral, and

subsequently on their intentions to leave at both the individual and group or institutional level” (Rosser, 2004, p. 287). Introducing positive, affirmative imagery depicting sexual minorities in higher education could be posited as a mode of reclassifying homophobic and heterosexist dogma thereby fostering satisfaction.

Basak and Govender (2015) proposed, “In higher education, a positive and healthy climate is needed for university faculty job satisfaction. A positive climate can increase a university academics’ satisfaction with their occupation through the inclusion of a variety of factors” (p. 317). Providing adequate and equitable support services to faculty members within a department or college, can have an impact on their perceptions of worklife and satisfaction (Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002; Kerlin & Dunlap, 1993; Matier, 1990). Bellamy, Morley, and Watty (2011) pinpointed the following:

The significant changes experienced in higher education sectors over past decades have led a number of researchers to investigate their impact on the working lives of academics. Later studies have concluded that there are increasing levels of dissatisfaction, alienation and stress being experienced by the majority of academics. (p. 15)

Ergo, evaluating the host of presumptive contributive factors associated with analyzing and describing faculty satisfaction requires literary work that determines the most significant variables of those perceptions and the extent of their effect.

### **Existing University Conditions**

Carlson and Mellor (2004) postulated, “Jobs that provide opportunity for autonomy and individual responsibility were likely to be perceived as satisfying” (p. 238). It is as pivotal to understand the job satisfaction perceptions of faculty, as it is to outline the core influential characteristics found embedded in the culture of campuses. Effective evaluation of existing

conditions across higher education campuses should lead to broader more efficacious modes of management. Rockenbach and Crandall (2016) asserted:

In an era of rapid societal change, institutions of higher education are grappling with how to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals are safe and supported on campus. Many challenges remain as LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff are subject to continued acts of discrimination and subtle microaggressions on a regular basis according to national assessments of campus climate. (p. 62)

Inclusive diversity practices starting with university or college administrations need to be integrated into postmodern academic occupational behavior. Despite the fact that government officials are making efforts to improve working conditions, the environment at higher education institutions do not necessarily facilitate the entire teaching community (Dragan, Ivana, & Arba, 2014). In present circumstances, a major challenge for organizations or management is the implementation of effective human development strategies such as working conditions, opportunity, participation, commitment, and satisfaction for employees with his or her job (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012). Wright and Davis (2003) reported:

The work environment is made up of two components: job characteristics and work context. Job characteristics describe how aspects of an employee's job or task responsibilities contribute to important psychological states, such as the meaningfulness or work, that affect the employee's spirit, growth, and development. Work context variables, on the other hand, pertain to characteristics of the organizational setting-such as the organization's reward systems, goals, or degree of formalization-in which the employee is expected to perform his or her duties. (p. 72)

When evaluated in tandem, it is evident that work environment, culture, and social exchange conditions exert influential factors upon employees. It is the internalization of those variables which lead to the formation of how they shape and express job satisfaction perceptions.

Employees that are comfortable in or satisfied within the work climate are less likely to leave their place of employment.

### **Current Faculty Job Satisfaction Analysis**

Hiring practices, promotion, and workload distribution are some factors that may typically concern academic faculty members and impact satisfaction. So much so that annually the Council on Social Work Educators publishes demographic statistics. However, the data reports numerical breakdowns only by gender and race. Davis (2015) asserted, “By contrast, gender, unlike race, has generally not been found to be a good predictor of job satisfaction” (p. 81). Noticeably absent from discussions are the influences of sexuality that may provide more accurate or generalizable observations. Chung (2001) showed that “Theoretical conceptualizations of sexual minority people’s vocational experiences implicate heterosexist discrimination, expectations of stigma, and internalized heterosexism as important factors in job outcomes” (p. 41). Rigorous, scholarly work on the distinct experiences of LGBTQ faculty would add to the limited amount of information in the current knowledge base.

Overall, job satisfaction enhances productivity and reduces absenteeism. Instructional staff must believe they are respected for their levels of education and that they will be acknowledged or rewarded. There must also be an atmosphere of open dialogue and collaborative knowledge exchange sufficient to cultivate the best possible performance from workers. The mere existence of a sophisticated academic community does not foster loyalty or engender a fulfilling work experience. Dolan (2011) found that “In higher education, motivated

faculty are more likely to strive in their teaching and research if they have a strong sense of belonging to the institution and feel connected to the student body” (p. 62). A way to increase such sentiments is through developing a benchmark of satisfaction that effectively promotes institutional health and individual success. Providing ubiquitous observation measures that assist faculty members to understand and counteract waning levels of satisfaction will benefit any university because it allows the institution to actively engage highly proficient workers for retention purposes. Increased employee turnover rates maximize the demand for inexperienced or unqualified instructors, which can lead to inefficacy or added costs, related to recruitment and additional training.

### **Classification of Job Satisfaction Factors**

Historically, a number of analytical studies were conducted on occupations deemed as stressful, including nursing, law enforcement, and teaching (Mark & Smith, 2012). The satisfaction of academics, specifically taking into consideration the disclosure of sexual identity and its impact, is not currently widespread in the existing knowledge base (Abouserie, 1996). Kifle and Desta (2012) expressed, “There are relatively few studies exploring the job satisfaction gap” (p. 321). This seems anomalous given the inherent investigative nature of teaching and the expectation that progression along a career path in higher education should result in the development of elevated cognitive practices. Given that much of one’s time is invested at work, the work climate contextually becomes mutually influential for a great deal of identity development and management (Driscoll, Kelley, & Fassinger, 1996). The existing literature on faculty satisfaction provides examples of discrimination, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. Consistently, themes are presented like limitations in job mobility, constrained relationships, insufficient support or mentorship, hostility and potential termination (Dankmeijer,

1993; Fassinger, 1993; Gonsiorek, 1993; Morgan & Brown, 1991). As concluded in studies conducted in 2007 and 2009, employment discrimination with no relationship to performance has still been reported by LGBTQ employees in the workplace (Sears & Mallory, 2011). There should be investigation amongst higher education professionals from diverse backgrounds to elucidate basic unanswered psychological aspects of their contentment like behaviors, desires, and emotional connections. Jaffar, Ming, Anwer, Ali, and Ali (2015) explained that satisfaction is “a summary and affective response of variable intensity that is centered on the specific aspects of the acquisition and/or the consumption and that takes place at the exact moment when an individual evaluates the object” (p. 280). Electing to overlook such relevant perceptions in totality misrepresents the diversity of personnel within academia and limits the knowledge base on workplace climate effect upon faculty contentment.

### **Exclusionary Occupational Research Practices**

The omission of sexual identity and orientation in research has belittled the distinct experiences of sexual minorities. “Researchers are now beginning to recognize the need for including previously underrepresented populations in career theory, and the field is calling for integrative models that move beyond trait-factor or developmental theories to those that synthesize conceptually related constructs” (Hackett & Lent, 1992, p. 444). Particularly, workplace climate that is suppressive or oppressive should be investigated or analyzed for environmental features that affect the cognition and behavior of those that comprise the workforce. Across many industries or trades, employees are expected to perform tasks efficiently while achieving measurable goals. Those individuals also develop perspectives or expectations of their occupational outcomes from repeated direct and indirect learning experiences (Morrow, Gore, & Campbell, 1996). For any vocation, including academia, work

context sets the degree to which an institutional reward system can be observed and job satisfaction data accurately obtained. Essentially, to provide for the career interests of faculty to develop, there must be enduring climates which are positive, desirable, and conducive for efficacy (Morrow, Gore, & Campbell, 1996). What is also needed is not just more programs, but a larger purpose or sense of mission, a clarity of direction accompanied with a cooperative plane of action that would bring academics and practitioners together (Boyer, 1996). Therefore, the integrative study of job satisfaction is relevant to determining how universities modify exclusionary institutional practices of hiring, promotion, tenure, and retention. Covert and overt actions against sexually fluid members of faculty may continue to perpetuate the “glass ceiling” or unwelcoming climate often described in job contentment surveys. Sears & Mallory (2011) stated:

Widespread and continuing employment discrimination against LGBT people has been documented in court cases, state and local administrative complaints, complaints to community-based organizations, academic journals, newspapers, books, and other media. Federal, states, and local administrative agencies and legislative bodies have acknowledged that LGBT people have faced widespread discrimination in employment.

(p. 2)

A consequence of stigma in academia is the continuous demoralization of sexual minorities which undermines their perceptions of value and leads to diminished motivation.

The relevance of investigating more diversified faculty job satisfaction in multiple types of career research continues to increase in importance on an individual and organizational level. “As the college student population has become increasingly more diverse, colleges and universities have—at varying paces and levels of commitment—sought to diversify their faculty”



(Seifert & Umbach, 2008, p. 357). A general consensus has yet to be established that bridges the personal opinions of academics with their perceptions of satisfaction and faculty retention.

“Because retention of a diverse professoriate plays a critical role in fostering an intellectual environment reflective of the students and broader society, it is imperative to understand the contributive factors of faculty contentment” (Seifert & Umbach, 2008). It is uncertain if those features alone translate into a relevant rate of job satisfaction. It also remains yet to be fully explained what encapsulates the crux of disparities in job satisfaction for lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender or queer individuals in academia. As Mamiseishvili (2011) suggested:

Some accounts have shown that tenured faculty described conflict more as a precursor to declining satisfaction. Lack of reward and recognition are also some of the other negatively impactful aspects of employment. Job security, benefits, salary, and advancement opportunities are more. Atypical, but still significant, is job autonomy and the authority to make instruction related or external consulting decisions. Despite high commitment and dedication, previous research has identified a number of extrinsic factors that contribute to faculty dissatisfaction. (p. 30).

Therefore, feelings connected to the work environment or professional exchanges should be noted and include sexual identity when determining job satisfaction.

A more general, integrative model of job satisfaction may require research that is specific to or fit within a larger conceptual umbrella (Lent & Brown, 2006). Mark and Smith (2012) offered, “Two of the most popular and influential theories of workplace stress identify key factors in the onset of stress-related illness” (p. 65). Use of such models can aid in reporting and analyzing data that indicated dissimilarities in job satisfaction. One in particular, the Effort-Reward imbalance model, predicts the impact of extrinsic and intrinsic efforts in congruence

with low remuneration. “Extrinsic efforts evolve from external pressures and intrinsic efforts are categorized by internal work motivations like ‘over commitment’ (Mark & Smith, 2012, p. 66).

Figure 1 illustrates how the Effort-Reward imbalance model can be highly suitable for a study of academics for job satisfaction, psychological distress, and physical illness that are common workplace stressors found in environments of higher education.

### Effort-Reward Imbalance Model

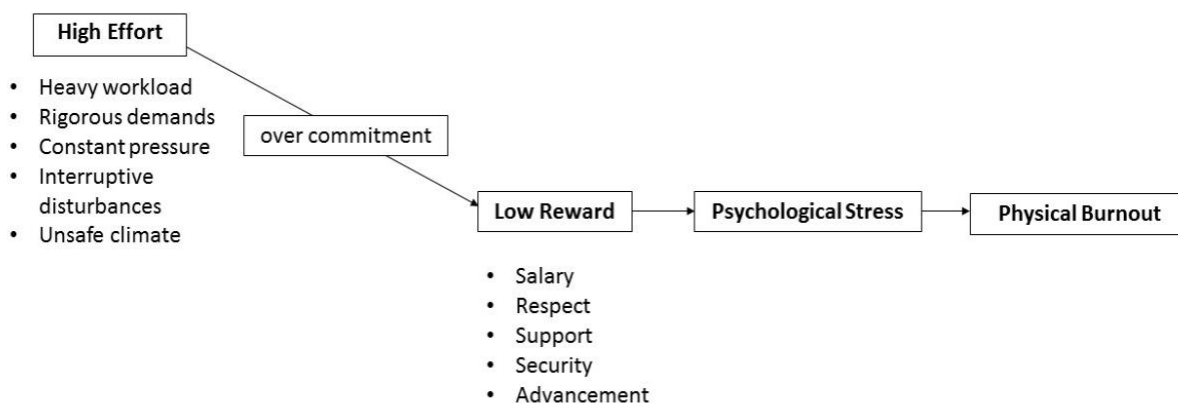


Figure 1. (Siegrist, Wege, Puhlhofer, & Wahrendorf, 2009)

The relevance of using the aforementioned model is noting how experiences potentially affect and differ individuals per sexual preference. The Effort-Reward Imbalance model is a schematic that conceptualizes how work culture and lived experiences from professional sites may create physical or psychological abnormalities due to prolonged employee over commitment. Particularly, over-commitment for LGBTQ faculty may develop into increased risk of reduced health due to the lack of available emotional outlets. Deleterious coping mechanisms can become accepted patterns by individuals striving to function in oppressive workplace climates (Siegrist, Wege, Puhlhofer, & Wahrendorf, 2009). Reinforced behavior

associated with strategic maneuvering can be endemic of the high effort to low reward non-reciprocity ratio for LGBTQ faculty and becomes ingrained in unsupportive employment scenarios.

### **Theoretical Framework**

To develop a sound theoretical framework that is descriptive and offers clarification of the experiences and perceptions of sexual minority faculty, three theories were identified based on their potential relevance. These theories are Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (1974), Lent's social cognitive career theory (1994), and Homan's social exchange theory (1961). "One of the most critical challenges faced by workers with invisible stigmas is whether to disclose their stigmatized identity to others in the workplace" (Ragins, Singh, & Cornwell, 2007, p. 1103). Career theories identify how sexual minority individuals like the LGBTQ, identify and face difficult challenges as professional employees.

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (1974) suggests that there are inherent affective factors that contribute to the presence or absence of employee job satisfaction. "What makes people satisfied at work are factors that relate to the content of their jobs—specifically, achievement, interesting work, increased responsibility, growth, and advancement" (Herzberg, 1971, p. 18). The theory maintains that job satisfaction can be directly related with workplace climate characteristics. Hygiene factors, also known as dissatisfiers, are contextually part of the workplace environment and exhibit ways in which treatment may vary according to sexual identity. Employees become unhappy or dissatisfied not because of what they do, rather reduced contentment stems from how well or how poorly they are treated (Herzberg, 1971). Through interviews, generated employee attitudes were evaluated along a spectrum that goes from optimal to undesirable (Grigalunas & Herzberg, 1971). Motivators, commonly called satisfiers,

have a corollary effect on positive job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1974). Conversely, a hygiene includes factors like policy, practices, job security, supervision, or interpersonal relationships that employees associate symbolically with treatment devolving into dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1974). Overall, Herzberg's theory continues to be used extensively to determine if work environments are conducive for employee job satisfaction.

Developed in 1994, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) presents three interrelated facets of career development. It describes how career interests develop, are transformed into goals, and then translated into specific impactful career actions (Morrow, Gore, & Campbell, 1996). University faculty participants are expected to contribute to a model of career development including the aspects of sexual orientation and identity. SCCT acknowledges if occupational factors are environmentally supportive or oppressive (Morrow, Gore & Campbell, 1996). By evaluating behavioral and cognitive employee expressions, sexual orientation can be found consistent with perceptions of desirable or satisfying work related outcomes. Interpreting faculty member perceptions of job satisfaction may unveil psychological distress or physical illness that emanates from job related strain. The determination of what contributes to optimal human functioning was integral to this framework since it required viewpoints that focused on mental and emotional health. A hedonic view relates well-being with happiness in order to define a balance between positive or negative effects while a eudemonic view contrast how individuals define happiness and use it to actualize goals (Lent & Brown, 2008). If SCCT concisely describes levels of contentment in connection with workplace climate for faculty members in the sample population, it could also reveal how LGBTQ professors modulate their perceptions in accordance with supportive or challenging lived experiences. A noteworthy factor of this framework is if sexual preference exerted an effect upon social cognitive variables like

self-efficacy and goal progress, which are often categorized as direct or indirect predictors of satisfaction outcomes (Lent et al., 2005).

Homan's social exchange theory (1961) evolved from the belief that exchanges are negotiated as part of reward-punishment or cost-benefit linkages (Cook & Rice, 2003). It suggests that there are factors that affect the formation, maintenance, and corruption of relationships; and offers a breakdown of the dynamics within interpersonal exchanges. Within this framework, individuals exchange resources voluntarily via social relationships. In the workplace, employee relationships and interactions are integral parts of occupational structure and influence the dynamics within the professional climate. Actions related with job security, advancement, and retention are contingent on receipt of rewarding actions from others in the culture like authority figures. "A major hallmark of recent research on social exchange in the field of sociology is its attention to the links between social exchange theory and theories of social status, influence, social networks, fairness, coalition formation, solidarity, trust, affect and emotion" (Cook & Rice, 2003, p. 53). This theoretical framework aimed at using social exchange theory to explore the existence and strength of any correlations between faculty job satisfaction perceptions and lived experiences endured due to sexual identity. The hope was to arrive upon conclusive data that lends to the creation of a template for job satisfaction that can be used predict trends in employee commitment resulting in improved retention. "Homan explained social behavior and the forms of social organization produced by social interaction by showing how A's behavior reinforced B's behavior (in a two party relation between actors A and B, and how B's behavior reinforced A's behavior in return" (p. 54). Figure 2 demonstrates, in order to classify the work contentment of gay, straight and bisexual faculty in the sample population, it was imperative to categorize typical exchanges found in that social atmosphere.

## Social Exchange Theory

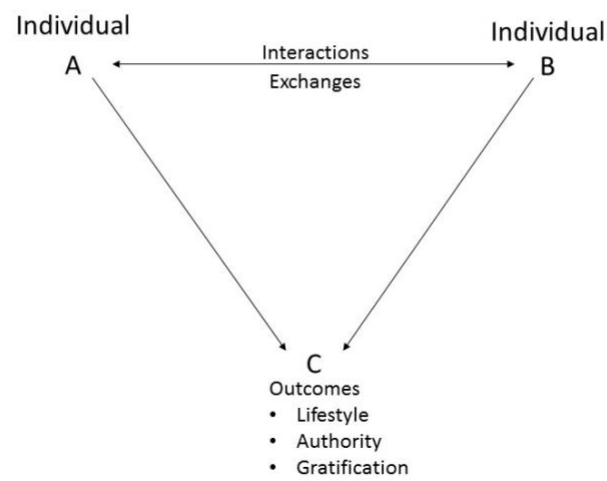


Figure 2. (Cook & Rice, 2003)

Dynamics like status, influence, networks, justice, conformity, coalitions, leadership, and trust are all tangible or intangible activities integral to the schematic (Cook & Rice, 2003).

Atypical findings were also considered significant to the framework for the discovery of variances in self-reporting and self-perception. Social exchange theory (1961) presents fundamental processes pertaining to developing communal characteristics within an organizational climate.

### Related Analyses

Lent and Brown (2006) expressed,

Job satisfaction has long been a focus of both vocational-counseling and industrial-organizational psychology researchers, although their interests in this topic typically differs. Vocational psychology, with an emphasis on person-focused outcomes, tends to be concerned with job satisfaction as either an end in itself or as an aspect of individuals' work adjustment. (p. 237)

Exploring whether the sexual identity of university faculty affects job satisfaction as a part of occupational research can foster a more inclusive and content workforce. Accurately recognizing the role of influencers on faculty job satisfaction adds to the existing data on institutional management. Organizational psychology focuses more on the potential outcomes associated with job satisfaction. Those outcomes are organizational consequences like productivity, engagement, withdrawal, and turnover (Fritzsche & Parrish, 2005).

In addition, the stimuli that foster academic satisfaction and dissatisfaction are largely contextualized factors. While there is an increasing demand from institutions on their faculty members to perform at a highly proficient and effective rate, they are also operating under declining and adverse conditions. Ssesanga and Garrett (2005) claimed, “Although intrinsic elements contribute to likely sources of satisfaction and extrinsic facts are more likely to predict dissatisfaction, any given factor could either evoke satisfaction or induce dissatisfaction which reflects situational variables in the work environment” (p. 52). As such, the perceptions associated with job satisfaction and derived in conjunction with sexual identity should be comprise further investigations.

The direction of contemporary investigative study, both qualitative and quantitative, has begun to shift focus towards explaining possible linkages between the psychological mechanisms associated with lived workplace experiences and adverse health outcomes. Some include exploration in natural settings, innovative analyses and experimental trials. Such examination provides real world or macro examples of critical aspects of organizational networks, relationships, and sociological exchanges.

The NSF Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR) dataset measures different dimensions of job satisfaction across ten variables. Those components include: 1) benefits, 2) intellectual

challenge, 3) location, 4) opportunity for advancement, 5) contribution to society, 6) degree of independence, 7) job security, 8) level of responsibility, and 9) salary. The tenth variable is an overall evaluation of the respondent's job satisfaction utilizing a Likert-type scale ranging from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied". While indicative of data previously found within the sciences, social sciences, and health disciplines, it does not include sexual preference as a contributing factor. Evaluation of job satisfaction should be ascertained through a compilation of more inclusive intrinsic and extrinsic factors that paint a holistic picture of professional and personal career variables.

The term *organizational socialization* characterizes the process by which new members of an organization embrace the preexisting social knowledge, behaviors, and expected values endemic of that particular workplace culture from more senior personnel (Albrecht & Bach, 1997). Academic faculty that serve as coaches or sponsors provide key alliances, protection, and counsel throughout various stages of employment. Although mentoring literature often focuses primarily on business organizations, the data also suggest that such relationships occurring in academic setting also benefit new faculty protégés (Alexander, 1992). In theory, mentorship could facilitate an atmosphere conducive for smooth organizational socialization leading to a transition that facilitates job satisfaction. Internalized homophobia and demoralizing social exchanges have also been shown to result in lowered self-regard and increased mental health problems amongst employees perceiving stigma (Newcomb & Mustanski, 2010). Lack of positive mentorship experiences may devolve into detrimental effects on socialization and exacerbate anxieties. Socialization comes with its challenges in that forging collegial relationships are often high stress experiences for new faculty (Schrodt, Cawyer & Sanders, 2003). There is a void in research conducted on the socialization differences of faculty members



according to sexuality for the determination job satisfaction. Schrodt, Cawyer, and Sanders (2003) offered, “One possible resource for combating low satisfaction and high stress associated with socialization is explaining the role between mentoring and identifying that certain behaviors within the mentor-protégé relationship impact socialization and satisfaction” (p. 18).

### **Gaps In the Literature**

Over the past fifteen years, more research has added to databases such as the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). Most are case studies for they provide investigators with a convenient method of exploring the multifaceted aspects of faculty members’ personal and professional lives. They control demographic characteristics of respondents and institutional type (i.e. public versus private). Unfortunately, critical gaps in the existing and newly published work persist. Rosser (2005) affirmed, “While the sophistication of the means and methods has evolved, there is little attention given to the multiple measures or faculty members’ perceptions and the potential change in these perceptions over time” (p. 82). Capturing a snapshot from a single point in time at an institution is insufficient to be fully recognized as significant in a field where the lack of information is so great. The literature investigates reward and salary or the relationship between benefits and job security. While they are conclusive measures, how can we ignore the associations that exist on a deeper level? Establishing a benchmark of satisfaction and monitoring it over time, should allow one to decipher which issues ultimately have greater impacts on academics’ attitudes (i.e. morale, satisfaction).

To identify sexuality as an influential part of faculty job satisfaction, analysis of the motivator-hygiene relationship was considered. Profiles captured from motivation-hygiene interviews reveal institutional characteristics supporting employee attitudes that make job

satisfaction levels fluctuate. In most cases, motivators are satisfying associations that correlate with positive job satisfaction when found in appropriate amounts. For instance, advancement potential, responsibility, mobility, and competence can be motivators that faculty are able to accomplish and embrace regarding the quality of their work (Mangi, Kanasro, & Bundi, 2015). Hygiene includes the aspects of institutional work typically considered when evaluation how well the treatment within the environment is for employees. The appropriateness of measuring hygiene is that it provides a context of the organizational occurrences that operate upon individuals' insights and self-awareness (Mangi et al., 2015). Research of this nature possesses implications that could have the potential to provide direct bearing on the beliefs and attitudes of faculty members and in turn their overall level of dissatisfaction or satisfaction with their university or current employment. There is a substantial amount of data on faculty members' professional worklives and job satisfaction lacking in current research that would add to or comprise the important aspects or numerous definitions of employee contentment (Rosser, 2005). If participant descriptions of lived experiences within academic workplace environments include formal and informal examples of discrimination, sexual orientation could be classified as a factor of variable job satisfaction perceptions. It provides a sense of the range of adverse effects or practices in an occupational climate tolerant of passive or aggressive harassment.

### **Future Advances in Research**

Observing if the sexuality of a tenured university faculty member affects job satisfaction has the potential to become the focus of investigative research in America. Furthermore, little is known about academic job satisfaction stimuli that foster academics' satisfaction and dissatisfaction since they are largely contextualized factors. While there is an increasing demand from institutions on their faculty members to perform at a highly efficient and effective rate, they

are also operating under declining and adverse conditions. Looking ahead, a consideration would be to prove if an assertion of Ssesanga and Garrett (2005) is valid, “Although intrinsic elements contribute to likely sources of satisfaction and extrinsic facts are more likely to predict dissatisfaction, any given factor could either evoke satisfaction or induce dissatisfaction which reflects situational variables in the work environment” (p. 52). The countries of the world are not a homogenous group. Therefore, expression of identity and self-pride would be experienced differently depending on place of origin. Tu, Plaisent, Bernard and Maguiraga (2005) explained, “Academic achievement requires teachers’ involvement in the success of transforming the educational reforms and the teachers’ involvement also requires better job satisfaction” (p. 262). Hence, it is the responsibility of investigators and research to keep abreast of the changes in faculty involvement for any aberration to the culture is a variation in structure, habit, and invariably satisfaction.

### **Conclusion**

For LGBTQ faculty, the range of workplace related social exchanges between persons are either rewarding or costly depending on the extent to which opportunities are involved or restricted. There exist significant unexplored linkages between the perceptions of work-related contentment of university academics and their sexual orientation. As denoted in *Degrees of Equality*, “When asked, LGBT workers describe a positive climate as one in which they feel free to be themselves, voice their opinions and engage openly in non-work related conversations” (HRCF, 2009, p. 13). LGBTQ faculty should have the freedom to develop perceptions from lived experiences that are devoid of alienation, oppression or discrimination leading to positive job satisfaction. The current myopic view of investigation warrants a shift that includes sexual identity and expression within the workplace climate as integral parts of faculty job satisfaction

evaluation. What is directly acknowledged is the critical role of the work environment upon shaping self-referent perceptions or beliefs (Lent, 1994). Faculty development of work related physical, emotional and mental health issues are predominant causes of aberrant behavior that should be evaluated and reported closely. As Morrow, Gore, Jr., & Campbell (1996) stated, “People develop career interests for activities in which they feel efficacious and for activities that they perceive will provide positive and desirable outcomes” (p. 137). In fact, job satisfaction is a requisite factor for effective performance in most individuals and a basic human desire.

This literature review presented sources that examine job satisfaction among diverse academic staff. Satisfaction is one of the principal organizational factors found in universities worldwide. Development of abhorrent physical or mental health of faculty is a predominant cause of fluctuations in function and behavior at the workplace. Effective and positive reinforcement leading to improved performance is a basic institutional necessity. Lack of power, indifference, burnout, and conflict can be compounded into neuroticism. Mehrad, Hamsan, Redzuan, and Abdullah (2015) explained, “Neuroticism assumed as negative mood that repeat for a long time leads to uncommon behaviors such as stress, anxiety and anger among staff and decrease the level of job satisfaction at university” (p. 17). Check this reference, I found it in Fayombo, 2010

Accurately recognizing the major role of internal factors on job satisfaction is vital to an institution and its outcomes. Ergo, sexual identity was selected to elucidate variance in levels of satisfaction among staff. The conceptual framework was gleaned from the readings and contributions to the knowledge base and describes the effect of social exchange factors that contribute to neuroticism and change levels of job satisfaction. From preliminary research, it is believed to be an efficient predictor of fundamental human enjoyment at the workplace.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

In this transcendental phenomenological study, a national perspective to determine instances that describe and characterize heterosexist discrimination, heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, or transphobia within the academic workplace climate was developed in order to fully express the essence of underrepresented LGBTQ faculty perceptions of job satisfaction. Most research are case studies conducted on the worklives and satisfaction of faculty members across the United States. Over the past fifteen years, some are conducted via system or statewide studies, and a few are conducted nationally (Rosser, 2005, p. 81). It is imperative to understand how workplace climate experiences affect perceptions that factor into the dimensions of satisfaction for they may be reflective of subsequent identity management strategies or coping mechanisms (Seifert & Umbach, 2008). “Personal or environmental factors moderating the transformation of interests into goals or goals into actions can serve to derail a preferably fluid process of career development and choice” (Morrow, Gore, & Campbell, 1996, p.138). The recorded depictions of LGBTQ faculty job satisfaction were evaluated to contextualize critical implications including various institutionalized examples.

Repetitive incidents of internalized homophobia or homonegativity (IH) amongst university faculty represent a type of cultural employment oppression by which perceptions of negative job satisfaction are less understood (Frost, Lehavot, & Meyer, 2015). As sexual minorities, LGBTQ faculty constitute a subset of professionals that potentially face greater exposure to excess physical and psychological stress connected with stigma related experiences due to their identification. “Specific to sexual minority people (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer), minority stress theory outlines experiences of discrimination, expectations of stigma,

internalized heterosexism, and concealment of sexual minority identity as four minority stressors that can promote psychological distress” (Meyer, 2013, p. 15). LGBTQ people also endure many of the same discriminatory occurrences as other minority groupings. “Despite recent advances in societal acceptance of sexual minorities in the United States, negative social attitudes and behaviors toward lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people are still widespread” (Balsam, Beadnell, & Molina, 2013, p. 3). Although the specific modes of ostracism for the LBGTQ may range in aspects of delivery and severity, LGBTQ discrimination can take the form of either individualized, institutionalized, or a combination of both types of prejudicial treatment and experiences. Mark and Smith (2012) explained, “High levels of dissatisfaction are commonly associated with several key factors. These include work overload, time pressure, poor levels of reward and recognition, poor management, fluctuating roles, and lack of prospects” (p. 64). Internalized minority stress not only potentially creates individuals who are susceptible to future rejection but ones that also may be targets of harmful social exchanges.

### **Guiding Questions**

Outness, or the extent to which individuals have disclosed their sexual orientation to others, vary according to the need for protective coping behaviors. Identifying as LGBTQ has the potential to place faculty at increased risk of heterosexist discrimination at work. As such, a substantial portion of research provides insight to how these individuals deescalate expectations of stigma, avoid high stress and reduced job satisfaction (Frost, Lehavot, & Meyer, 2015). Velez, Moradi and Brewster (2013) showed that “Sexual minority people make ongoing decisions about concealing or disclosing their identity; these behaviors are delineated as sexual minority identity management strategies” (p. 2). Whether adaptive or maladaptive, coping

behaviors are those cognitive and behavioral actions implemented in an attempt to reduce environmental demands (Mark & Smith, 2012). The perceptions of LGBTQ faculty collected in this study explained how they employ measures as part of that influence? their psychological health that affects their overall satisfaction.

Existing research on the effects of minority stress from heterosexism on the job satisfaction levels of LGBTQ faculty is limited. “Studies relying only on subjective measures are not able to account for the effects of minority stress in instances where sexual minority individuals do not attribute prejudice or discrimination as the cause for an adverse life experience” (Meyer, 2013). To limit reporting bias that can influence subjective measures, two premier research questions were formulated to gather both individual and situational characteristics from the intended target population. Those questions were:

1. How do lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) tenured university faculty perceive workplace climate including direct and indirect experiences?
2. How does sexual orientation and identity in higher education settings affect LGBTQ tenured university faculty members’ job satisfaction i.e. self-expression, acceptance, achievement, advancement, retention, and job security?

Sexual minorities may be at increased risk for health problems because of the unique impact of excessive exposure to prejudice when compared to similar events unrelated to prejudice (Frost, Lehavot, & Meyer, 2015). As a result, counterfeiting, avoidance, integrating and outness were evaluated amongst participants as characteristics of the proposed setting. “Counterfeiting refers to a false heterosexual identity. Avoiding refers to actively dodging references to sexual orientation. Integrating refers to openly identifying as a sexual minority person” (Button, 2004). This study evaluated experiences of homophobia, biphobia, or transphobia amongst LGBTQ

faculty by their effect on individual degree of outness and overall job satisfaction. The totality of which comprised the perceptions of job satisfaction of faculty due to life experiences within the academic workplace.

### **Study Design**

Phenomenological research emphasizes exploring lived human experiences in order to formulate a definitive idea or concept. Creswell (2013) clarified, “Whereas a narrative study reports the stories of experiences of a single individual or several individuals, a phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (p. 76). “Two major approaches—hermeneutic phenomenology and transcendental phenomenology—represent philosophical assumptions about experience and ways to organize and analyze phenomenological data” (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004, p. 2). It was integral to extrapolate the essence of human experience and convey it in the form of a description when conducting this type of investigation. Though it is common to have philosophical assumptions, in order to conduct a phenomenology, all personal judgments must be suspended until the end in order to avoid biases (Creswell, 2013). A transcendental phenomenological design affords the acquisition or collection of data develops a composite of the “what” and “how” of a shared experience and translates deeper meaning (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004).

By conducting a transcendental type of phenomenology, the intent is to eliminate researcher prejudgments, presuppositions, or biases (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher utilized the technique known as *epoche* to set aside all preconceived ideas so that a fresh focus could be placed on analyzing the experiences of the participants. The emphasis of this transcendental phenomenological study design was exploring, understanding, and presenting the essences of



LGBTQ faculty perceptions in totality. At the culmination of this type of study is a description of world or human experience as it is lived (Lavery, 2003). As Moustakas (1994) stated, “What appears in consciousness is an absolute reality while what appears to the world is a product of learning” (p. 27). Ergo, a reality this study sought to conclude was whether LGBTQ faculty internalized biases and other unpleasant social experiences in academic settings leading to related minority stress health disparities.

A transcendental phenomenology was an appropriate choice of methodology because it readily assisted the researcher who was a novice investigator. The systemic processes and procedure of analysis are ideal for understanding the essence of participants experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Transcendental analyses balance both objective and subjective knowledge with a rigorous philosophical view. Most importantly, there is an integrated and inseparable relationship between searching through data, viewing behaviors, and focusing on the wholeness of the research problem. “The inquirer describes their own experiences with the phenomenon (epoche), identifies significant statements in the database from participants, and clusters these statement into meaningful units and themes” (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004, p. 6). In this study, transcendental phenomenology allowed for a comprehensive view of the data collected from the participants with detailed analysis and presentation of the results.

### **Setting**

As a transcendental phenomenology, this study used first person accounts of lived experiences pertaining to the job satisfaction perceptions of sexual minority faculty. Drawing from Greek philosophy, this approach is best suited to capture human experience or understand the life world as lived (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). The setting included junior and senior institutions of higher education in multiple geographic locations. Faculty from rural and urban

communities, from universities and colleges, and from public and private sector, reflected a wide socioeconomic spectrum. It was also imperative to explore the breadth of job satisfaction perceptions from tenured and theoretically, protected LGBTQ faculty that are navigating contemporary workplace environments indicative of the diversity of higher education institutions. As Balsam, Beadnell, and Molina (2013) stated:

Unlike members of other stigmatized groups, LGBT people more often have the option of concealing their sexual identity. Thus, individuals who are more disclosing of their orientation may be subject to external stressors in the form of people's anti-LGBT behavior, whereas individuals who conceal their orientation may be subject to the more internal stressors associated with concealment. (p. 4)

Recounting the detailed perceptions of participants was conducted with utmost respect in order to maintain the significance of their narratives without compromising their confidentiality.

### **Sample**

Careful consideration went into selecting whom to study, the number of participants, and the specific types of sampling strategies. Regarding qualitative analysis, purposeful sampling involves selecting a grouping or individuals who are knowledgeable and experienced with the phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Purposeful sampling illuminates a topic of interest through decoding the research questions and extracting detailed information. A combination of snowball sampling and criterion sampling was used in order to obtain maximal depth of understanding. In conducting a phenomenology, implementing two sampling strategies complements the process by increasing the degree to which data may be collected that explicates the essences of actual human experiences (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). "Snowball or chain sampling identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases

are information rich” (Creswell, 2013, p. 158). Snowball samples are key examples that provide critical data or evidence. According to Patton (2001), “Criterion sampling is the most common approach in implementation research” (p. 238). Useful for quality assurance, the participants are logical choices because they add relevant qualitative components that meet the predetermined criterion of importance.

Multiple methods were used to recruit potential participants to the study in accordance with criterion and snowball sampling. To address the challenge of finding such a specific sampling, the community based participatory action networking site, LinkedIn, was utilized. Participants were recruited via social media from within large academic settings based on their self-identification as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer. LinkedIn, a social networking site for the business community provided a wide ranging professional network to choose participants from. Membership in the LGBT Professionals in Higher Education group also generated opportunities to find representatives of the population. Another social networking site that was used is Facebook. On Facebook, the Queer Ph.D group offered exposure to LGBTQ higher education employees from across the nation. Using those sites along with word of mouth recruitment tactics, a minimum of twelve respondents was established to screen for eligibility via a demographic questionnaire before comprising the final sample population that went through the interview process.

Unlike a questionnaire indicative of quantitative analysis which establishes statistical frequencies, the instrument is the researcher (Creswell, 2013). In qualitative research, there often are limitations that do not afford continuing open-ended investigation with a large population. This is especially accurate in the case of a doctoral graduate student. Therefore, clearly defined rationale and strategies are imperative to indicate feasible participant selection

and significant sample size (Creswell, 2013). For a phenomenology, Creswell suggested a range of five to twenty-five participants (Creswell, 2015). A sampling that size would be conducive for achieving data saturation. Achieving saturation entailed the collection and interpretation of a sufficient amount of information to develop meaningful themes and accurate interpretations (Creswell, 2015).

An original qualitative survey created by the researcher was completed by 17 respondents and determined the diverse nature of the population. Thereafter, no less than five individuals were purposefully selected for interviews. The subsequent interview instrument was a semi-structured interview with a mixture of closed and open-ended questions. The final sample of individuals was a diverse collection of LGBTQ faculty unrestricted by gender, ethnicity, nationality or geographical location. Negative social attitudes, like heterosexism, is an arguably important concept that requires focus on the normalizations of prejudice and social stigma (Waldo, 1999). Heterosexist environments are not specific to a faction of sexual minorities or one LGBTQ demographic in workplace culture. The range of related phobias, discrimination, marginalization or violence denies and denigrates the right of all identities. However, only tenured LGBTQ faculty members comprised the population. The selection tactic was intentionally used to effectively reduce participants' fear of retribution through a threat to job security. Those who were eligible and selected should theoretically have been more likely to participate freely in frank dialogue about their experiences and perceptions. Having a "guaranteed" protected position should have unencumbered participants from some hesitance to participate in a study of this nature and was incorporated as a question that compared views before and after receiving tenure.

It is very important to distinguish at this time that the transgender characterization represents gender identity while lesbian, gay, and bisexual denotes a sexual identification. For the purpose of this study, transgender faculty participants were included only if they are fully identifying as a sexual minority concurrently with their gender identity. Queer and questioning faculty members were also purposefully recruited to represent the total diversity of the LBGTQ community, which varies culturally, ethnically, and politically.

### **Interviews**

In order to prepare a qualitative foundation for answering the two research questions, a protocol for individual recorded interviews was developed. After providing consent, participants received a copy of 15 open ended questions via email prior to being interviewed. Taking into consideration their personal schedules and physical geographic locations, participants were allowed to submit their choices of timeslots that were convenient for a phone interview. Beginning with an informal off the record conversation to review the purpose and parameters of the study, the researcher attempted to make a connection with the participant and reduce any apprehension.

Creating a relaxed atmosphere is integral in phenomenological study (Moustakas, 1994). The open ended format of the questions was used to allow respondents to describe their experiences in their own voice while accentuating personal and professional examples. Each personal interview lasted 30 to 45 minutes. The same initial set of questions were asked of each participant. If necessary, an unscripted follow-up question was asked by the investigator. Follow-up was instrumental for providing background information, filling gaps in important statements, and completing stories the respondents wished to tell.

Participants were made aware of the specific pseudonym assigned to them with the understanding that it would be reflected exclusively in the interview transcripts and resulting dissertation. Then, it was explained that recording the interview would commence via the TapeACall app. TapeACall is a digital recording service providing by voice recorder site Rev.com. After answering all remaining participant questions, interviews were conducted with transcription following immediately. Concluding the interview protocol, participants were thanked for their time and contributions. They were informed that they would receive an email of their transcript for member checking to occur. During member checking, a copy of the individual's transcript was provided for their feedback on its clarity and accuracy. None of the 8 participants in the sample withdrew from the study or reneged on allowing their transcripts to be used for analysis.

### **Data**

Croteau (1996) cautioned, "With some exceptions, vocational and career literature focusing on lesbian, gay, and bisexual people did not begin to appear until the 1970s" (p. 195). Contemporary qualitative study encompasses a diversity of investigative methods that provide for empirical phenomenological survey. Therefore, data analyzed was from semi structured questions asked in accordance with the flow of the general conversation. Prior to the determining the set of interview questions that was used, three pilot test interviews were conducted. Roberts (2010) suggested, "Refine your instrument(s) per the recommendations of the committee and conduct a pilot test to determine reliability and validity" (p. 28). The execution and results of the piloted interviews is discussed in the analysis section of the dissertation which explains the preliminary parameters set before the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. During the pilot interviews, each question was subject to be amended or

followed by another probing question that elicited and captured the essence being conveyed at that moment.

As previously mentioned, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted, digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim using the transcription site rev.com. Interviews consisted of closed and open ended questions conducive for a phenomenological study. The interview questions focused on capturing the essence of lived experiences from environmental work culture and climate upon sexual minority faculty, the nature and level of outness, the impact of sexual identity on satisfaction and other mental health coping mechanisms.

Two procedures were used to maintain reliability to the recorded data: member checking and triangulation. Data collected were thoroughly checked to ensure that participants' accounts are their own and not the researchers' interpretation (Merriam, 2009). Member checking was utilized to validate the accounts provided by participants. The focus of member checking was on the accounts of participants. It is a systematic way of reviewing and confirming the significance of raw data, transcriptions, or observational field notes (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Triangulation was another procedure implemented to confirm validity. Deriving from a military nautical term, it means to search for convergences among multiple sources of information in order to find related categories (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In this study, triangulation served as a mode of sorting the observations that participants made during interviews and identifying common themes by eliminating overlapping areas. The end result of such analysis was to explain with credibility, the rich detail of lived experiences and job satisfaction perceptions from LGBTQ faculty. Qualitative research analysis requires exposing undiscovered essences and hidden meaning in phenomena (Merriam, 2009). For this transcendental phenomenology, that entailed

explicit explanations from tenured LGBTQ faculty that featured inherent stressors, or challenges associated with being a sexual minority within an academic setting.

In Appendices B and C respectively, are the demographic survey and interview questions from which data were initially collected from all participants and subsequently the smaller sample group. To ensure the confidentiality of the participants, the online survey site Survey Monkey was used to determine descriptive statistics. Different from inferential statistics, descriptive statistics describes in literary detail what the data shows (Creswell, 2013). Survey Monkey afforded data to be collected without IP addresses being recorded. Participants were also not prompted thereby introducing the researcher's biases into their responses. Instead, the researcher acted as the instrument and evaluated their shared perceptions and most impactful observations of lived experiences. The demographic survey was assessed for generalizability and thematic responses to further delineate which participants will be selected for one-on-one interviews.

### **Analysis**

Transcendental phenomenological analysis contains three important principles. Those principles are epoche, phenomenological reduction, and synthesis. Epoche requires researchers to separate from their own suppositions. Things cannot be felt to be known in advance or without internal reflection or meaning (Moustakas, 1994). It is from the collected data that worth is revealed or discovered. In phenomenological reduction, there is great potential for discovery. Phenomenological reduction describes relationships exactly as they occur between a phenomenon and individual (Moustakas, 1994). Reduction provides textural quality to analysis and affords context for experiences. Synthesis is a final step of phenomenology that evaluates



the essence of conditions. It is the summarization of findings that discuss social meaning or values without which that thing would not be what it is (Moustakas, 1994).

As described by Moustakas (1994), “transcendental or psychological phenomenology is focused less on the interpretations of the researcher and more on the descriptions of the experiences of the participant” (p. 80). In this instance, data collected from tenured LGBTQ faculty was analyzed and codified into significant statements or quotes and combined into themes. Then, a contextual description was presented that is both textural the “what” and structural the “how”. Ultimately, the essence of perceiving job satisfaction through lived experiences as a LGBTQ tenured faculty member was conveyed descriptively.

Initially, from the collected data, analysis was conducted through the lens of minority stress theory and used a “broad brush stroke”, descriptive approach to observe in vivo codes. Coding links themes into categories from general passages of qualitative data or transcriptions (Creswell, 2013). From there, a shorthand notation system was used to categorize the codes of LGBTQ faculty participants. The qualitative analysis software, NVivo assisted with coding the essence derived from the perceptions of LGBTQ faculty lived workplace experiences. In vivo coding splits themes into smaller, more nuanced pieces of information that is more conducive to careful scrutiny (Creswell, 2013).

### **Participant rights**

In this phenomenological study, participation was voluntary. Provided in Appendix A is documentation that all individuals received online or via email explaining the study and requiring informed consent. The opportunity to withdraw or cease participation at any time was reiterated. Before selection for participation, interested individuals received and were required to complete a written consent form. The form explained the purpose of the study and defined the

intended target demographic. Participants were assured of their confidentiality and given the right to decline participation or exclude themselves from the study during any portion of the investigation. That agreement may have provided an added level of assurance for participants who disclosed details regarding the lived experiences, preferences, or sexual attitudes. A waiver of documentation was also arranged in order to allow the researcher to obtain verbal informed consent of participation instead of written consent.

### **Potential limitations**

A limitation of this study was being able to accurately analyze sexual orientation and identity as a construct for minority stress. The exhaustive literature review revealed the abstract nature of sexual minority perspectives. “Being a member of a sexual minority may make one vulnerable to psychological distress—not because of any deficit inherent in being lesbian, gay, or bisexual, but as a result of belonging to a stigmatized group” (Smith & Ingram, 2004, p. 57). Another potential limitation of this study was finding willing participants. Tenured LGBTQ faculty members have various levels of outness and many hesitated when considering joining such a study for a number of reasons. The sampling methods utilized also further limited the analysis. Criterion and snowballing may result in a sample population of like-minded individuals with very similar experiences and perceptions (Creswell & Miller, 2013). Therein lies the reason why the researcher decided to use a broad definition of LGBTQ self-identification that embraces the unique differences to attract a diverse representation of such a colorful community. Using a semi-structured interview process was also a limitation. While interviews provide rich detail, it is incumbent for the researcher to bracket his or herself so that the data retains credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Another challenge was presenting, analyzing, and discussing the data openly without introducing personal biases. As a transcendental

phenomenological study, it is imperative to use intuition rather than deduction (Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, the essence conveyed through narratives should accurately describe the sentiments of the sample's LGBTQ faculty as originally presented.

### **Conclusion**

Given the disparity in literature adequately documenting the mental, emotional, or physical health of LGBTQ faculty, this study was particularly important. The findings may benefit budding explorations and add to the lagging knowledge base. Specifically, study of job satisfaction perceptions produced from the life experiences of LGBTQ faculty within workplace climate may lead to further discussion on how distressful subjugation to stigma and oppression is. Regardless of whether the marginalization is overt or covert, through evaluation of job satisfaction perceptions there is a greater likelihood to attain the ability to diagnose, distinguish, and interpret which behaviors are clearly triggers for LGBTQ professionals. Development of assessment techniques that offer a high level of usability and validity may counteract the pervasiveness of socially regressive heteronormative beliefs that are negatively ingrained as discriminatory practices toward sexual minorities. This study highlighted the need for a variable approach when addressing the range of components or stressors that encompass the diversity of perceived internalized homophobia.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

The overarching objective of this phenomenological qualitative study was not to generalize the LGBTQ academic faculty population but rather to provide a platform for participant voices that may otherwise be unheard. By extrapolating valuable descriptive information through careful analysis of the data collected from self-designed open-ended interview questions, it was possible to learn from their experiences without constraint. Importantly, the purpose of this study was to open dialogue while creating options responsive to and for an underrepresented minority group. Further, this study sought to add context to overlapping themes received directly from queer individuals working in higher education. Qualitative research identifies participants or sites with purposeful sampling to best understand a phenomenon (Creswell, 2015). Thus, the purpose of conducting trustworthy transcendental phenomenological analyses, was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) tenured university faculty perceive workplace climate including direct and indirect experiences?
2. How does sexual orientation and identity in higher education settings affect LGBTQ tenured university faculty members' job satisfaction i.e. self-expression, acceptance, achievement, advancement, retention, and job security?

Additionally, this study sought to examine perceptions of workplace climate from the perspective of LGBTQ persons in an attempt to demystify both tangible and intangible activities that influence their opportunities as a minority group. Behaviors and experiences are as equally inseparable as they are ingrained within phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). As previously

mentioned in Chapter 2, rank, tenure, and seniority may vary or manipulate the amount of trust or collegiality that exists in occupational settings. Therefore, interactions and experiences insular to the environment are either rewarding or restrictive. This is according to each individual employee's assessment of their personal standing consistent with a risk to benefit ratio.

From recurrent lived experiences, LGBTQ faculty develop distinctive perceptions and expectations of their professional surroundings. If imbalance takes the form of high effort and low reward without viable alternatives then a lack of reciprocity, pattern of coping, and over commitment can devolve into lower satisfaction and increased risk (Siegrist, Wege, Puhlhofer, & Wahrendor, 2009). It is particularly important to note how supportive or oppressive environmental factors are within higher education campuses. Disturbances, demands, obligations, and pressure unique to sexual orientation were considered as potential measures of how job satisfaction was perceived, and were deemed variables capable of being revealed as predictive factors for fluctuating feelings of respect, support, and security internalized by LGBTQ faculty. This study considered if factors within higher education culture bore unique societal influences consistent with the classification of faculty's sexual orientation. For trustworthy analysis, a transcendental phenomenological approach was found the most conducive to best interpret participant responses based upon the research questions.

### **Overview of Participants**

In-depth exploration of a central phenomenon includes unmasking emotions, relationships, or entities like programs, organizations, and culture (Lin, 2013). The objective, however, is not to generalize the target population. Therefore, this chapter presents the viewpoints of participants that are ethnically and geographically diverse. Each participant was

encouraged and allowed to share their narratives unconstrained without facing interviewer bias about or interference with their responses. They were purposefully selected to provide useful information while giving voice to an otherwise silent or under-recognized demographic. According to Silverschanz, Cortina, Konik, & Magley (2007), “As sexual minorities, the LGBTQ are vulnerable to heterosexist harassment within the environment even when they are not the intended target and are therefore often less likely to express themselves” (p. 180). As stated in Chapter 3, purposeful sampling along with snowball sampling and criterion sampling were used to recruit tenured university faculty members from across the entire United States who have willingly self-identified as either lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ).

### **Recruitment of Participants**

Results collected by the researcher reflect the process of gathering and analyzing data as evidenced in transcendental phenomenology. The recruitment plan to identify and enroll participants was targeted and specific. A combined strategy inclusive of posting a recruitment flyer on queer professional networking sites and word of mouth proved successful. This study recruited 17 participants in total. From an online survey supported by Survey Monkey (see Appendix C), initial descriptive statistics were collected from the 17 to indicate which general demographic tendencies were relative. Of the 17 respondents, 15 completed the entire online survey and provide consent to be considered for the individual interview. Two of the respondents skipped all of the questions and were therefore disqualified.

As Creswell (2009) noted, “the focus of qualitative study isn’t guided by specific rules on sample size but rather by the fullness of the participant’s shared experiences” (p. 56). From the responses conveyed via the electronic questionnaire, a smaller subset of eight was chosen from the population to form a representative sample. They were extended invitations to participate in

individual interviews. All of the eight sample participants provided signed, written consent. With approval secured, follow-up semi-structured interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for all participants in the sample. In Table 1, key demographic information is presented. The table format was instrumental for indicating pertinent data such as the ratio of males to females, age, gender, and ethnicity in a way that is easily understood. The selection of who comprised the sample came from the information in Table 1. If a respondent in Table 1 skipped all questions and declined to participate further, they were not considered eligible for the sample.

Table 1

*Participant Demographics*

Participant	Gender	Age	Race	Title	Institution	Orientation
1	Trans/Male	45-54	Caucasian	Associate Professor	Public University	Queer/Questioning
2	Other	35-44	Caucasian	Associate Professor	Private University	Lesbian
3	Female	35-44	Caucasian	Associate Professor	Public University	Gay
4	Male	45-54	Caucasian	Associate Professor	Public University	Gay
5	Male	45-54	Caucasian	Lecturer	Public College	Bisexual
6	Female	45-54	Caucasian	Associate Professor	Private University	Queer/Questioning
7	Male	45-54	Caucasian	Professor	Private University	Gay
8	Male	18-24	Hispanic	Director	Private College	Pansexual
9	Male	35-44	Caucasian	Professor	Public University	Gay
10	Female	55-64	Caucasian	Associate Professor	Private College	Lesbian
11	Female	65-74	Caucasian	Professor	Private University	Lesbian
12	Skipped	Skipped	Skipped	Skipped	Skipped	Skipped
13	Female	25-34	Caucasian	Associate Professor	Private University	Lesbian

14	Male	25-34	Caucasian	Lecturer	Public University	Gay
15	Male	65-74	Caucasian	Professor	Public University	Gay
16	Male	35-44	Caucasian	Professor	Private University	Gay
17	Skipped	Skipped	Skipped	Skipped	Skipped	Skipped

### **Inclusion Criteria**

To be considered eligible for inclusion in the smaller sample subset of the study, participants that provided consent had to meet three initial criteria:

- Be fully tenured academic faculty
- Self-identify as LGBTQ
- Be currently employed by a college or university

Eight of the 17 participants qualified for inclusion, provided written informed consent, and selected timing that was mutually accommodating for an individual interview. A snapshot summary of demographic statistics, along with each participant's pseudonym is provided below in Table 2. Demographic statistics collected online via Survey Monkey for all 17 respondents helped to generate a spread of overlapping characteristics. Traits or characteristics that were similar were integral to the determination of the smaller subset of eight. Demography can equally be used on large populations or small, targeted subsets. "Although the idea of saturation is helpful at the conceptual level, it provides little practical guidance for estimating sample sizes for robust research prior to data collection" (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006, p. 59). Therefore, the characteristics set by the inclusion criteria were an abridged version of the information provided by the online survey. The online survey was a broad stroke approach at identifying participants who fit the standards outlined in the theoretical framework of the study. Then, the investigator chose to implement a metric provided by Creswell (2013) for sample size selection.



To avoid data overload, the researcher selected a sample range from 5 to 25 in which the phenomena appears a minimum of once (Creswell, 2013). Limiting the sample size of a phenomenological study within those parameters still allowed for data saturation. In this instance, LGBTQ tenured faculty was the focus for the purpose of assembling descriptive data to compile an initial profile of this study's recruits.

Table 2

*Participant Sample Profiles*

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Orientation	Community	Out
Pink	Female	45-54	Queer	Urban	Yes
Red	Male	45-54	Bisexual	Urban	No
Orange	Male	45-54	Gay	Urban	Yes
Yellow	Female	25-34	Lesbian	Suburban	Yes
Green	Female	55-64	Lesbian	Urban/Rural	Yes
Turquoise	Male	65-74	Gay	Urban	Yes
Indigo	Female	65-74	Lesbian	Rural	Yes
Violet	Male	35-44	Gay	Urban	Yes

Green, Indigo, Yellow, and Pink were the four female participants. Green and Yellow are both married to same sex spouses. Green is very active on her campus and describes herself as both a feminist and civil rights advocate. Yellow was drawn into higher education because she was able to prioritize teaching. Although one of the youngest participants and only recently receiving tenure, she is part of grass roots efforts at her university that challenges heteronormative ideals. As a law professor and student of theory, Indigo enjoys conducting social science research. Her passion lies in investigating social dynamics of power that threaten diversity and inclusion. Pink cherishes her independence and flexibility as an academic. She even switched jobs previously to feel valued and supported. It is important to Pink that her ideas were solicited and appreciated. At her current campus, she and her trans partner are respected and find the environment progressive and unproblematic.

The male participants were Turquoise, Orange, Violet, and Red. Violet is an out and proud father who co-parents with his husband. Though he described his campus as a progressive environment, equal paternal leave and health care for LGBTQ faculty remain very important. Turquoise, a Midwesterner, has been active in the political scene since the 1970's. As one of the most senior faculty on his campus, he brought over 35 years of higher education experience to this study. Orange has never felt like the minority at any university he worked for. On his current campus, a small university, he is out and feels like his colleagues are welcoming to both him and his long-term partner. The final male participant, Red, is unique. He is the only bisexual participant recruited in this study. Recently divorced from his wife, he co-parents while navigating a new relationship with a male partner. He is a self-described conservative and member of the "Old School".

### **Sample Nomenclature**

Presenting multiple perspectives of useful information to the point of data saturation may better represent the complexity of the world (Creswell, 2015). The National Center for Education Statistics and American Council on Education conducted seven reports between 1986 and 2013 that failed to include LGBTQ narratives in the literature (Stern, 2016). As such, the push for inclusion in the workplace is not a modern cause celebre. There is a long tradition of radical activism amongst supporters of social justice. One such luminary figure this study chose to honor is Mr. Gilbert Baker.

Gilbert Baker, the creator of the Rainbow Flag, passed away on March 31, 2017 in New York City (Haag, 2017). The Rainbow Flag is not only an iconic international phenomenon; it is a beacon of the human right movement. As young man serving in the army and stationed in San Francisco, Baker was fortuitously positioned to become part of the gay liberation movement. As

a self-taught vexillographer (flag maker), he decided to use his skill for creating provocative banners to convey messages visually during gay and anti-war protests. Commissioned by Harvey Milk before his assassination November 27, 1978, Baker created the Rainbow Flag as a positive emblem of movement in the fight towards freedom (Haag, 2017).

Each color of the Rainbow Flag has its own significance. The original flag was created with eight stripes intended to translate a universal message of acceptance that needed no explanation (Haag, 2017). They represent inclusion, peace, love, remembrance, and action against persecution. The careful assembly per swatch of vibrant color is symbolic of the enduring message of social justice and human rights. Partly as a tribute to Mr. Gilbert Baker and to protect the identities of the eight participants that agreed to individual interviews, a color from the original Rainbow Flag depicted in Figure 3 was assigned to each one. In coordination with the timeless message of the Rainbow Flag and Baker's legacy, the narratives shared in this study represent courage, inclusion, love, remembrance, and action against persecution.

Hot pink: Sexuality
Red: Life
Orange: Healing
Yellow: Sunlight
Green: Nature
Turquoise: Magic/Art
Indigo/Blue: Serenity/Harmony
Violet: Spirit

*Figure 3.* Rainbow Flag colors. Reprinted from Did You Know: LGBT Community News and Insights, n.d., Retrieved August 29, 2017, from <http://netprider.wordpress.com>. Reprinted with permission.

### **Data Collection**

Moustakas (1994) cautioned, “The phases of qualitative research are iterative; cycle back and forth between data collection and analysis” (p. 237). Specifically, as a transcendental phenomenology, this study endeavored to reveal the breadth of tenured LGBTQ faculty experiences. Those experiences that are equally integrated in the occupational behaviors within higher education workplace culture were the primary focus. Preemptively, the researcher set aside prejudgments via epoche in order to interpret how participants described their relationship with the social environment through the lens of sexual orientation with authenticity. Even in the event the researcher had previous knowledge or interaction with a participant, it was strictly a professional relationship and sexual orientation was never discussed. Hence, performing transcendental phenomenological reduction was possible and the researcher was able to view the phenomenon impartially. Epoche requires active bracketing or establishing the researcher as an objective spectator unaffected by prior lived experiences (Schmitt, 1959). Thereafter, all judgments influencing validity are untainted by what the researcher has undergone and focuses on the participants shared reflections. Perceptual information, the most critical kind of information, derives from the participants’ perceptions related to the subject of inquiry (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

The eight respondents enlisted as the sample set of this research represented the various classifications of LGBTQ personnel in higher education. They came from different geographic regions, disciplines, age ranges and professional rankings. Comparatively, each possessed a Doctor of Philosophy degree and had received full tenure at the time of interview. The recruitment of tenured queer faculty was intentionally engineered to gather vivid intelligence

from each of the enlisted individuals. In order to explore the central phenomenon of sexual minority faculty perceptions on academic workplace culture, it was imperative to find participants who were similar and receptive to having open, frank dialogue. Investigating the essence of their lived experiences required delving into the emotions and relationships that are part of programmed organizational customs (Lin, 2013). Therefore, the ideal sample subgroup was a collection of highly educated academics that bore the identity of a sexual minority in common.

Though there is not a definite set of rules regarding conducting phenomenological study, Creswell (2013) suggested “a narrow range of sampling from 5 to 25 participants” (p. 64). For the purpose of this study, it was important to base the criteria for data collection so that the sample allowed for sufficient data to achieve saturation. The most effective techniques provide information-rich content from the criterion type of purposeful sampling necessary to add depth and connect their experiences with others in ways that were not previously taken into account. Saturation represents a strategy of investigation that yields data that repeats itself until nothing new emerges.

## **Method**

Transcendental phenomenology (TPh) affords those who are not afforded the opportunity of sharing their experiences to create greater understanding by bringing their perceptions into consciousness (Moustakas, 1994). By remembering feelings or thinking of experiences and sharing those narratives, the data collected is applicable in a way that adds value and richness to qualitative study. Providing clarity on previously uncharted phenomena is grounded in actively presenting context and defining human illustrations in a multitude of ways. When he developed

TPh, Husserl's philosophical underpinnings followed a framework of authenticating constructs by making them relevant and expressing them in a succinct way (Schmitt, 1959).

All eight participants of the sample electronically received a packet approved by the IRB committee of the University of New England. In addition to a letter of invitation (see Appendix A), the scope, purpose, and potential risks associated with participation in the study was clearly articulated. Each person returned the signed consent form (see Appendix B) as confirmation that they agreed with the terms outlined, were comfortable with the measures taken to protect their identities, and understood there was no penalty for withdrawal from participation.

### **Data Analysis**

For a qualitative researcher, achieving noema entails deriving an explanation for what is seen, touched, thought, or felt (Sheehan, 2014). That process is itself complex and requires adept dexterity in order to move seamlessly between inductive and deductive reasoning. Data collected in concrete and abstract forms dictates careful interpretation followed by a thorough, descriptive portrayal. Analysis in transcendental phenomenology necessitates the phenomenon to be clarified in such a way that it has individual meaning and the object itself is brought to light (Moustakas, 1994). Bringing the essence LGBTQ faculty experiences in higher education clarity meant authenticating their feelings as they were internalized and perceived. It was the intent of this study's researcher to not only add value and richness to the underrepresented narratives of its respondents but to apply context to the voices of a minority community that in some cases would be overlooked.

Data analysis is the process of making sense of one's data while moving between interpretation and description (Merriam, 2009). As stated previously, bracketing or epoche was a central part of the phenomenological reduction process in this study. The researcher carefully

listened to participants describe instances and scenarios from their point of view. From the 15 interview questions, each direct quote or statement had to be reviewed and analyzed without introducing bias. Moustakas (1994) affirmed, “Epoche means to set aside preconceptions and prejudgments of the phenomenon” (p. 180). The collected responses filled with anecdotes were fundamental parts of exploration to digest and converge into an overall trustworthy account. When executed correctly, what is accomplished is the experiences of the subjects become transcendent to the researcher. In the next stage, horizontalization, the researcher treated each statement provided by participants with equal value. Horizontalization pieces together participants, their conscious perceptions of experiences, and phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). Again, all personal thoughts of the investigator that would naturally occur were suspended during this phase of grasping the information. Each transcript was engaged to obtain the structure and identity of the shared lived experiences in the most unobscured form. What resulted was pure unadulterated clusters of overlapping or repetitive words and phrases that were prime for assembly into rich textural illustrations. The data collected from the transcripts from the 8 interviews symbolized and recognized the relevance of LGBTQ representation in higher education. Regardless of sexual orientation, faculty members have deeply personal affective stories that are interwoven in the fabric of American college and university campus culture. Therefore, it was a privilege to have the chance to articulate them.

### **Data Exploration**

One of the primary goals in qualitative analysis is finding and documenting repetitive pattern or consistencies in human behavior (Saldana, 2016). Raw data retrieved from the participant interviews was transcribed and imported into NVivo for Mac software. The researcher selected NVivo primarily for convenience and its user friendly content analysis.

NVivo's developers created the qualitative analysis tool to use algorithms on transcribed textual data to find associative patterns (QSR International, 2016). It is possible to manually phish for significant statements in the data and combine them into nodes. At the most basic level, the NVivo for Mac program allowed the researched to arrange and organize hours of data with a simple mouse click. Each node contained non-numerical qualitative information that were then analyzed for patterns that could be categorized as codes. Amplifying codes from statements of participants experiences is pertinent for themes to emerge for consideration (Moustakas, 1994). Depicted below in Appendix, is the NVivo for Mac workspace with a sample project displayed.

### **Data Visualization**

Research software used for qualitative inquiry has progressed to the point that the tools integrate ways to achieve superior coding that aid in identifying evolving themes. For example, NVivo has a word frequency query feature which identifies that words from the imported data that most frequently appear (QSR International, 2016). Relevant information was gathered centrally by the researcher in a NVivo for Mac project and was readily accessible for retrieval and observation. In Appendix E, there is depicted a word cloud created from a word frequency query of participant responses found in the 8 interview transcripts. The words were used to contextualize the experiences of faculty from their unique perspectives through the lens of minority sexual orientation.

### **Results**

As Merriam (1998) stated, "Our analysis and interpretation, our study's findings, will reflect the constructs, concepts, language, models, and theories that structured the study in the first place" (p. 48). To further review and analyze the data, this researcher chose to engage in a manual coding process subsequent to using NVivo software. The goal was to connect the



information collected with the research framework. Creswell (2015) suggested, “Manual coding gives you more control over and ownership of the work” (p. 22). Therefore, the manual coding that followed adopted the data analysis approach suggested by Saldana (2016) and Moustaka’s (1994) methods for a transcendental phenomenology. The integrated data analysis was also informed by the work of others in the existing knowledge base and found in the literature review. Research indicates that homophobia, biphobia, internalized heterosexism, and outness to the world are significant and unique predictors of LGBTQ persons’ psychological distress (Szymanski & Sung, 2010). Essentially, the coding system was used to group emergent data patterns into themes that describe the experiences of LGBTQ faculty with validity.

### **Coding and Thematic Analysis**

Saldana (2016) posited, “Descriptive coding documents and categorizes the breadth of opinions stated by multiple participants” (p. 7). Examination of the transcriptions from the audio recordings, placed a trained lens upon phrases or patterns in the data that potentially could explain how or why the phenomenon exists. The electronic transcripts of the 8 individual interviews were reviewed a total of three times. The first was by the investigator to establish a base of familiarity. Member checking was the second iteration by each participant for confirmation of accuracy and clarity. Finally, the researcher examined each transcript for a third time in order to specifically highlight quotes, phrases, and words that appeared to have particular relevance. As a result of three rounds of analysis, phenomenological reduction occurred in the context described by Moustakas (1994) of noema where the ‘what’ and noesis ‘how’ began to develop an overall textural description of the LGBTQ faculty experience.

Drawing symbolic or summative information from the text was a targeted effort by the investigator to promote broader understanding. Transcripts were scrutinized purposefully with

In Vivo and descriptive pattern coding techniques. “Depending on the researcher’s academic discipline, ontological and epistemological orientations, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and even the choice of coding method itself, some codes can attribute more evocative meanings to data” (Saldana, 2016, p. 4). At the end of the coding process, the researcher was able to identify and compile a comprehensive list of over 60 codes for the study.

Theming codes derived from the data was the outcome of trying to connect or establish causal relationships. “Themes are conceptual labels placed on discrete happenings, events, and other instances of phenomena” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61). For this study, themes were an indication of how experiences within higher education related in generalizable ways to the experiences of LGBTQ faculty. Using an inductive approach, themes that came from the data expressed characteristics that reflect the participant’s personal and theoretical orientations.

### **Major Themes**

Before, during, and after data analysis critical evaluation was integral in developing an explicit storyline. Wolcott (1994) advised, “The number of themes should be kept to a minimum to keep the analysis coherent” (p. 10). Consequently, four themes that described subtle or tacit processes and experiences emerged. Although the number of possible themes or thematic categories were numerous, the researcher identified those that were most directly from participants shared lived experiences. Those experiences encapsulated strategies, behaviors, characteristics, challenges, and responses to circumstances found in academic professional practice. Below in Table 3, themes and subthemes that were most recurrent during the oral recorded interviews are presented. The themes are presented at random because there was no significant importance delineating one over another.

The four themes shown in Table 3 were shared commonly across the sample participant population. They reflect detailed and thorough analysis of the information collected, transcribed, and coded from individual recorded interviews. They represent the opinions of this study's participants based on an exhaustive process of visualizing patterns, exploring data, and amplifying topical codes into trustworthy thematic references. Written below are excerpts from the transcribed interviews of all 8 participants. Each passage exemplified the range of responses for the individual theme and its related sub-themes as they pertain to the two research questions.

Table 3

*List of Themes and Sub-themes*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>
1. Sexuality is complicated	a. Sexual orientation is personal b. Aspects of identifying are undefined c. Identity is indistinct
2. Inclusion does not equal acceptance	a. Systemic heterosexism persists b. Sociology is equivalent to influence c. LGBTQ visibility is impacted
3. Environmental dynamics are integral	a. Supportive, safe, culture b. Inspirational, motivational, collegial c. Autonomy, academic freedom, professionalism
4. Satisfaction reflects participation	a. Induction: activism, awareness b. Deduction: Intent, consequence c. Social Justice: parity, neutrality

**Theme 1: Sexuality is Complicated.** According to a recent survey, 45% of LGBTQ people reported perceptions of differential treatment in the workplace depending on their sexuality (Gremore, 2017). Similarly, the participants in this study contributed to the learning environment by describing various experiences contribute to defining sexuality on their own

terms. Although their perceptions conflicted at times, each account was indicative of the tone of their college or university and interpretations as understood by their colleagues.

Turquoise noted:

Well, I think that for a long while there was a silence about being gay, being lesbian, but I think the university administrators at that time recognized the reality of the situation, even as way far back when I came in the mid-80's. They realized that this is there. Now, it is different. It has changed over the time that I've been here and I've been here for 30 years. At this point, the university recognizes the LGBT community as an important part of their service area in terms of the people and communities that we look out to reach.

Pink explained:

For maybe 35 years of my life I identified as a lesbian. Then my partner who was identifying as a lesbian came out as trans and so my identity, I don't know, I don't want to say it shifted. I had to rethink a lot of matters regarding identity. So these days, I should say that probably when I'm meeting people and we are at a sufficiently familiar level that we're mentioning our home lives, our private lives, do I always immediately qualify my use of "he/him" pronouns by saying, "Oh my partner is trans?" No, not always. But I would say, if I am seeking to connect and form a friendship with the person that I'm talking about, I will actually work the trans stuff into the conversation somehow because that's how you achieve intimacy with other human beings. So any time I want to pursue a deeper level of friendship with colleagues, I will certainly signal in one way or another that my partner is trans because that's important to our self- understanding and myself understanding as a queer person.

Yellow shared, "I didn't, you know, walk in the first day and scream "I'm gay" or anything like that. But just kind of having it come up naturally in conversation worked just fine."

Red paused and then responded:

I identify myself as a bisexual. I'm very private. I believe I'm old school because I am old in that sense. I have very conservative views that I'd rather keep everything private in my life as a private. So I don't talk about it much with the other people, especially in my work environment. I'm not open. Nobody knows about my relationships. It basically stems from fear because my ex-wife is also in an academic setting. The science and the research environment here is very close-knit. I don't basically want to come out and for them to learn that I have a boyfriend. In that sense, I'm afraid of it. As I interact with my colleagues, I never bring it up. Obviously there are these trust issues, et cetera, et cetera. In some cases, I feel that I'm not that truthful with people because there obviously are a lot of these things in my mind which I can never share. And again, that comes from the trust issue. Do I blame them? No. It's just my own fears. But yeah, I'm sure it impacts how I talk and how I present myself.

Orange described a level of freedom due to the positive atmosphere at the institution. He articulated, "I always felt I was not being judged based on my sexuality but on my job performance. I don't think sexual orientation is playing much of a role in defining who academic faculty are." When answering the same line of questioning, Green revealed:

I have been out most of my life and I have been a feminist all my life. I don't think that the college actually understood that when I was hired. My closest friend at the college was an openly gay man. He and I were basically the only openly gay people on campus until just a few years ago. So, anything that was gay related either went to him or to me.

He and I were the lightning rods on the college campus. My colleague and I worked in the 80's and the 90's until now with gay, lesbian, and transgender students and questioning students and we helped put together there GSA and LGSA. At first, we actually had to have the meetings in secret because they were afraid to be known amongst their colleagues. That is a lot of responsibility, especially for this new generation of academics. They might not have signed on for that.

Although these direct experiences may not bear associations with heterosexism explicitly, as LGBTQ faculty, each met with outcomes related to minority stress in line their sexuality. Accordingly, the identity of sexual minority faculty has been proven intuitively impactful. Waldo (1999) asserted, "Perhaps indirect experiences have cumulative effects and act as chronic stressors, whereas the effects direct experiences are more acute" (p. 229). Overall, the cognitive effect of workplace climate associated with sexual identity possessed important implications for developing perceptions of satisfaction.

**Theme 2: Inclusion Does Not Equal Acceptance.** Brewster, Velez, DeBlaere, & Moradi (2012) cautioned, "Explicit outness can elicit more direct discrimination and direct discrimination may reduce outness, resulting in nonsignificant links between direct discrimination and level of outness" (p. 68). For this theme, the imagery conveyed by participant descriptions coincided with providing additional details surrounding diversity within the higher education community. Specifically, they debated whether inclusion through networking or creating alliances was possible indeterminate of sexual orientation in an academic environment. As Yellow explained, "I think partly the lack of diversity, in terms of diversity of sexual orientation, I think it's happened kind of accidentally. There is some diversity in some department. But I don't think they were trying to be inclusive." Turquoise further

acknowledged, “It's more an issue of how open you are about being gay or lesbian as opposed to the number of lesbian and gays that we have. I was more disturbed by oftentimes what I felt was the silence by the upper administration about LGBTQ issues.”

Other participants shared a different perspective. They stressed the importance of interpersonal connections with the working environment in addition to professional achievements and contributions. Indigo pointed out:

In the early years there was some question in my mind, and I suspect in the minds of others like me, to whether or not we had to hide our identity. I've not ever been not out, but I've been totally out and supported in that for the last 27 years. I think it's still true that academia is disproportionately white and male and heterosexual. The pace of change at the tenured level and even at the pre-tenure and tenure-eligible level is very slow, because, of course, hiring isn't that fast. So changing away from a population that was the predominate population at one point because of intentional exclusion has been, I think, very slow. And of course, with respect to sexual minorities it's more complicated because there's the question of intentional exclusion and then there's the question of our closetedness, which you can't really pull those apart.

Violet added, “So I think in terms of numbers, I think for like every institution, it's been a problem. We fall short. There's a collective consciousness that we would like to change and there are bigger kinds of systemic issues that make it difficult to get it to where we want to be necessarily.”

Additionally, Green shared an experience that was specific to the way diversity was embraced on their campus:

I am the “other other” so to say. I'm not Catholic, I'm not male, and I'm not heterosexual. I am the type of person that, if you put something in front of me that is an obstacle, I will work around it over and under it or through it. I decided it would have probably been easier for me to go to another school or another university. I didn't because I decided I would be that grain of sand that creates a pearl. And that I could probably make more of an impact with my students if they're coming from the same mindset to get them to think critically and differently, different from what they had been taught. I sort of just soldiered on, so to speak, and accepted that as a challenge.

This theme examined the perceptions of tenured LGBTQ faculty pertaining to academic workplace climate and inclusive experiences. From the shared opinions and observations that touched on internalized heterosexism and identity management strategies, it became evident to the researcher that further investigation was warranted. Environmental factors within academia that elicited strategic coping mechanisms to self-preserve or protect vulnerable individuals were considered carefully. Hence, the next theme looked at customary patterns in the higher education environment that act as agents of influence when LGBTQ faculty develop perceptions of job satisfaction.

**Theme 3: Environmental Dynamics Are Integral.** Meyer (2013) cautioned, “In the most proximal position along the continuum from the environment to the self, internalized homophobia represents a form of stress that is internal and insidious” (p. 11). This theme highlighted important aspects of social exchanges between faculty members within an academic setting. It revealed how culture affected the LGBTQ faculty identity from a sociological perspective. Pink began by discussing their adoption of a professional persona:



I think, overall, what attracted me to academia and what keeps me in the profession is that, mostly, I can be who I am and do what I love. I mean, I feel, quite supported. I feel valued, I feel like my work is important, and that can be communicated in a number of ways. I've always felt like my contributions were important and solicited. I have felt nothing but support, encouragement, and acceptance. At my first university, I was only the second woman hired in that department, but I was the second queer woman hired in that department, and so I already had evidence before me that my identity would not be problematic. At that university, we also socialized. Oftentimes at these get-togethers, partners were welcome. My partner, who is trans, was always accepted. It was always made very clear that he was welcome, and that his trans identity was understood. They were great with pronouns, and this was, oh my, it was many years ago. That was a rather progressive position, believe it or not, for the wider culture to take. I expected no less of my colleagues, of course, but I was delighted that it wasn't problematic.

Yellow emphasized, "I think there's definitely a kind of heteronormative feeling around campus. Although I will say that the students are kind of starting to change that." She clarified, "We've had some very outspoken students who have started planning programs and leading initiatives to get other students to kind of broaden their perception of sexuality and gender and things like that. And I think that the faculty have kind of latched on to that as well."

The experience for Indigo was a little different and started off on unstable footing. They remarked:

I was at one point at a Catholic institution many years ago and that was a big factor for me about how out I would be, because the leadership at a Catholic institution is governed by Catholic doctrine. And so in that context it was, I think, very difficult. I worried for

myself and also for my students, of whom some significant although not overwhelming percentage were always gay, that our presence would be deemed not welcome.

When I started at my current institution, even though it was in a relatively gay-friendly geographic area and arguably gay-friendly institution, there were still a lot of sort of ...

You know about half of the gay-faculty, and I'm using that in the broad sense of the word, not just gay in the narrow sense, only half of use were kind of known to the school.

The other half were known to those of us who were gay or are gay, but not necessarily to others at the school. This institution is a private University, not religiously-affiliated and not doctrinally-affiliated with anti-gay or anti-diversity if you will kinds of thinking.

Turquoise, Orange, and Red reflected on how an environment supportive of academic freedom compelled their motivations and the manner in which they developed feelings of total autonomy. For example, Violet mentioned, "Within my field, the old-timers, you know the old guys, the old crowd was very traditional and things like that. And in theory maybe I tried to fit in when I was working with them, and now I'm lucky I've made it all the way and got all my promotions, so I don't care what anybody thinks."

Turquoise articulated:

I don't identify primarily with my institution. I think I get my sense of identity as an academic or scholar in that I'm doing something that I really enjoy doing. I'm given the freedom and the autonomy and the support to do it. It's studying things, reading things, whatever, engaging intellectually in things that I find interesting and keep me going. I guess if I was to describe myself as a professor is that I'm somebody who basically finds the world a very interesting place and I have some very interesting questions I want to explore. Being a college professor is an ideal place to do that. In the case of the LGBT

studies program, I have the strong support of my program chair, the dean of our college, the director of the gender and sexuality program, a lot of faculty. I have the support, not so much in terms of agreement about what is the appropriate way of doing this, more it's about well, it should be done.

Orange declared, "We are a small community and small university where everybody knows everybody. It is very family-like. Very collegial, friendly and collaborative." He added, "I have never experienced harassment, discrimination or marginalization in the workplace. Doesn't mean it doesn't happen, but I have never experienced it. It is great to work in a welcoming and accepting environment. I probably would not stay in a place where homophobia was present."

Red commented on how politics have at times crossed over into academia exerting emphasis on identity. He divulged:

I believe that even though we are living in 2017, first of all in the political climate, I feel that there is still a lot of anti-LGBTQ attitudes in this country. I hear the comments.

Although it's supportive in my current work situation, I think we still need to embrace more diversity. I don't know specifically about sexual discrimination because I haven't had that experience. I don't know anybody who would have been refused a good position based on homophobia in academia. I think academia is, as a matter of fact, more tolerant of the LGBTQ community, for example, if you compare it with the financial institutions.

The internalization of homophobic behaviors in the workplace indicated obstructive patterns that were sanctioned socially over time. And so, the final theme illuminated how job related outcomes has demonstrable influence on minority stress. From concealing one's sexuality to trying to assimilate into the majority culture to avoid discrimination, the impact of heterosexism

on LGBTQ individuals exposed adverse effects including stigmatization and inferior social status (Lehavot & Simoni, 2011).

**Theme 4: Satisfaction Reflects Participation.** The interpretations received from the participants went in great detail and extended far beyond cavernous lecture halls. The safety and wellbeing of LGBTQ people has reached an apex at the pinnacle of public and political debate. “These debates have resulted in notable improvements for lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals around the world, including the extension of partner benefits to same-sex couples and legal protections for LGB individuals who face hate crimes” (Lick, Durso, & Johnson, 2013, p. 521). However, it must be understood that the lived experiences shared by the sample varied. For each individual, a different connotation for satisfaction was ascribed. As a result, their perceptions of the sacrifice and cost for both attaining and protecting contentment differed notably. Violet asserted:

On that dimension, I mean honestly, I don't pretend that this is characteristic of most experiences, but at my institution I definitely think they have no concerns or issues at all. I think that the policies of the school are very equally accessible to all. I can't think of one policy related issue or benefit or anything like that where I'm treated any differently than anybody else. In terms of recruitment and things like that, I think we're an employer of choice for gay and lesbian people. You know, just an example, when I had my kids I had full access to all the very generous benefits that they offer in terms of paternity leave and things like that to other colleagues who are in the same boat. So there's always ways to make employees more satisfied. It honestly just never strikes me that there's any differences. I didn't see any bias built into any of the policies, formal policies or the informal norms of the culture.

Pink added a similar, effusive description:

I think one of the reasons that I have very high levels of job satisfaction is that the departments I have worked in have been completely supportive. It has always felt like we're all working together toward the same goals. I've been very fortunate to have a wonderful colleague who supported me in all of my endeavors, who worked to help me develop an academic network when I first arrived, and who wanted to see me succeed. I fit well here and I think I can reach my potential here as a researcher and as a teacher, even the service I do here, I believe, is valuable and constructive.

Turquoise, Green, and Indigo shared a common understanding of connecting workplace responsibilities with social activism. It was out of heightened awareness and self-expressed involvement in the push for obtaining parity for LGBTQ faculty that their perceptions of satisfaction originated. Turquoise proposed:

Well, a lot of it had to do with the sense that ... I think if there was an event you can point to, it was the gay marriage thing because basically that legitimized lesbian and gay people and made it official and formal. Now it seems like it's the right time to do. I think also it's that the community, the gay and lesbian and queer and transgender community down here is becoming a lot more visible, a lot more active and a lot more ... There's an awareness saying, "This is a community that we have to talk to." Particularly you look at the universities in our area but also universities that we see as peer institutions. You see that they're doing it too. This is something that is seen as being an important thing.

Green contributed their own personal perspective by noting:

I actually say that my role is to be an active citizen, an active and engaged citizen. I helped found the largest rural LGBT community center for my region basically to service

that whole block...I should note that for a long time I had what I would call my safe research and then my more radical research and my safe research was on property rights and that has now developed into my more radical research. But I did both. I present myself as being someone who walks the walk and talks the talk. If I believe in social justice, if I believe in the concept of equality, I have to be practicing it. That's just values that you pin on yourself and then you watch other people not have them.

The researcher interjected and questioned if participant Green ever felt apprehensive when challenging heteronormative stereotypes. It was important to deduce if active resistance to discrimination made it seem more difficult by influencing how the individual was viewed or treated by their peers. She contemplated it for a minute before responding:

In the profession, or the world at large, of academia, I think that where you find cutting edge work, research being done, has been at the LGBTQ rights. That's where the cutting edge work is being done in my opinion. You actually find, for instance, on a lot of the national organizations, you'll also find a lot of straight allies working on these issues. Prior to this current president, I think we were not only defending women's rights or human rights. We have been told that gay rights are also human rights. Too bad we haven't made healthcare a human right. I think academically, as a country, we understand that we are more progressive on what is being researched but I think that if we think that now that there's marriage equality that things have ended, we are very much mistaken when it comes to that.

Continuing, Green stated:

So, my wife and I were the first couple, the first non-heterosexual couple to be covered by health benefits on campus, which actually meant that we weren't paying

double. So because of our tax system, I was being taxed as if her health insurance was a benefit that I was getting and paying. That's a governmental issue that recently, two years ago, has disappeared with the federal government now accepting same-sex marriages and marriage equality.

At this point, participant Green shared a quick anecdote. It was a passionate and poignant illustration about the fight for marriage equality and protecting the rights of spouse in same gender relationships. She declared:

So, this is what I tell my students. If I went down, say, to Atlantic City and I got really drunk gambling and he's the podiatrist sitting next to me at the poker table, right? And we went and got married the next day, I would have been able to go back to the college to human resources and say I married John last night and immediately he would have been put onto my benefits. If I then crossed Route 9 and got hit by a bus and died, he would then also easily own half of what I own, legally. He inherited my whole half. Right? No questions asked. With my wife, if it was before the federal government accepted marriage equality, I would have had to produce all this documentation to show that we have co-mingled our resources, that we have cohabitated. If I was heterosexual, I didn't have to do that. A heterosexual couple didn't have to do that because if a heterosexual couple had to do that, that actually makes it more unsafe in cases of domestic violence. A woman being the victim of abuse wouldn't then be able to have a separate pot of money if she had to co-mingle all of her resources. So on the administrative end of things, right, benefits and stuff, it has been harder for LGBTQ faculty to get parity because they had to jump higher, leap higher buildings, etc.

Indigo concluded:

I'm not sure how you separate those, self-expression and comfort level. I mean there's certainly some of us who are more political and therefore not being out is ridiculous, so in that sense I would say I suppose that falls under self-expression in a sense. It's an expression of values. Well, I'm like everybody in that sort of minority; I do feel the effects or the impact of sort of micro-aggressions, and I'm also aware of the effects of micro-aggressions on my colleagues who are minorities in other ways, but with whom I'm allied. And I've noticed for a long time the tendency in say faculty hiring and so forth that even though there's kind of an inclusionary impulse of the social norm, in terms of the academic norms and sort of opening to people who are minorities who tended to be thinking and working on things that were perhaps more progressive for some very good reasons.

She continued:

If you're accustomed to be rich and in power, you are comfortable working on things to be rich and in power, I'm thinking in that sense of that sort of white Anglo-Saxon male heterosexual model. And if you're making sense of your world and you're not one of those, you're going to be having to pay attention to things that maybe the WASP culture, although I must confess I am a WASP but not heterosexual ... But you can see how there would be a predominating comfort level with certain kinds of topics and no other kinds of topics. As a political matter in terms of hiring and just comfort, I found most importantly that there needed to be, and this is one of the reasons I became more out, was that there couldn't be silence around these issues. That, when hiring was going on, there had to be a recognition that this is an instance in which we are actually considering somebody who is



doing something different and is different than the predominating norms. It makes for a lot, even in a context like mine, it makes for stress. And if you don't do that, then you've got the problem of both the silence and the context in which silence let's micro-aggression proliferate.

The fourth theme in this study has shown, for many minorities but expressly the LGBTQ community, it has been a long journey towards equality. The work environment has traditionally structured itself as the kind of occupational scenario in which individuality in scholarship has been developed and protected. However, violations of an ethical nature merited individuals of all backgrounds and orientation to relate to a common, antagonistic experience. Ross, Dobinson, & Eady (2010) said:

Experiences of discrimination were perceived to affect mental health both directly (e.g., anxiety associated with fear of sexual orientation based violence) and indirectly, through their effects of interpersonal relationships (e.g. distress associated with relationship problems) and on individuals' senses of self-worth and self-esteem. (p. 501)

Therefore, the climate within higher education necessitated in practice a new form of decorum that was constructive and did not attempt to silence victims with harmful ignorance.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

In Chapter 4, the researcher presented the various methods of data collection and analysis used to evaluate the responses of eight sample participants. A combination of manual coding and NVivo for Mac software analyses were implemented to compare material across all datasets. The identification of a plethora of codes was informed by the conceptual framework established previously in the literature review and preceding chapters. From the initial set of coded data, themes were derived from audio recorded interviews that were later transcribed. The interviews

and transcripts were integral to the integration of descriptive examples of the workplace environment found in higher education as part of Chapter 4.

In general, the topic of marginalized groups is neither unfamiliar or uncommon. However, trustworthy representation of the voices of those oppressed is undervalued and underrepresented in literature. This study endeavored to offer enlightenment and clarification. Blumenfeld (2017) stated:

Stigmata include symbols, piercings, or brands used throughout recorded history to mark an outsider, offender, outcast, slave, or an animal. Many forms of oppression and enforced stigmata (as well as dominant group privileges), however, are not as apparent, especially to members of dominant groups. Oppression in its fullest sense also refers to the structural or systemic constraints imposed on groups even within constitutional democracies like the United States. Stigmatized groups live with the constant fear of random and unprovoked systematic violence directed against them simply because their social identities. Whenever any group views any other through lenses of stigmata, this horizontal stigmatization and oppression only further entrenches the vertical hierarchical power structures. (para. 8)

Final analysis of the interviews confirmed that they contained valid narratives of the lived experiences of LGBTQ faculty from their highly personal perspectives. It is important to note that each participant provided a significant opportunity to expand the existing knowledge base of queer theory. The investigator was very ardent regarding bracketing to avoid introducing the bias into the descriptions of higher education culture and climate. The four themes that emerged from the data depicted the perspectives of a unique minority group that requires further

elaboration. In Chapter 5, the results and findings will be discussed in detail and explicitly related to each of the research questions.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

Understanding workplace experiences germane to LGBTQ faculty is valuable for clarifying the concept of minority status in relatable terms. The researcher believed the challenges faced by the participants in this study and members of the LGBTQ community at large were in need of sufficient acknowledgement. Media and other news sources have often perpetuated inaccurate or damaging stereotypical images of the LGBTQ (Ross, Dobinson, & Eady, 2010). Minority stress theory suggests that such persons often experience dystonic psychological states as a result. Simply put, the workplace with its intrinsic culture may be physically disruptive and emotionally toxic. Negative or biased misrepresentation has been allowed to permeate workplace attitudes and societal behaviors and has never been contextualized extensively for queer folk. Waldo (1999) affirmed:

In certain ways, the workplace provides an ideal context to study the process of heterosexism in gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) adults. Although many GLB people may choose to spend their nonworking hours with friends or family members who are supportive of their sexual orientation, few have a choice about the attitudes and behaviors of their coworkers. Moreover, most people spend a very large proportion of their lives in their workplaces and a substantial majority of Americans are heterosexual, this making GLB working people spend a considerable amount of time being in a small minority.

(p. 219)

Practical examples of psychological distress deriving from lack of diversity or inclusive occupational populations are uniquely associated with being a member of stigmatized minority groups. As a result, this study uncovered a finding be specific that is more complicated than the

various forms of homophobia. Heterosexism in the form of indirect heterosexism is subtle in nature and often unrecognized. Lack of widespread inclusivity in higher education culture reflects a reality that even those affected by it may be themselves blithely unaware.

### **Research Questions**

American colleges and universities have traditionally been at the forefront of promoting academic freedom. They were and continue to strive to be diverse, representative microcosms of the world while preparing individuals to enter the workforce. They are places where robust learning occurs, competitive debate abounds, and heterogeneous ideas are able to flourish. However, recent legal rulings that impact federal discrimination statutes Title VII and Title IX have been at the center of heated bipartisan debates about whether sexual orientation should and will factor heavily upon changes in employment practices at American institutions of higher education. With colleges and universities under the same umbrella, Title VII is a federal employment statute that makes it illegal to discriminate based on sex. “In July 2017, the US Department of Justice filed an amicus brief saying that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 does not cover employment discrimination based on sexual orientation” (Ruggiero & Park, 2017, para. 6). Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 takes it a step further by prohibiting forms of exclusion based on sex if the institution or program receives financial funding from the federal government (Raupp, 2017). With that in mind, the two research questions this study investigated were carefully crafted to explore existing LGBTQ faculty experiences. By conducting a transcendental phenomenological methodology, each question extracted trustworthy data for the purpose of explicating the core essence of participant experiences significant to their sexual orientation. The research questions were:

1. How do lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) tenured university faculty perceive workplace climate including direct and indirect experiences?
2. How does sexual orientation and identity in higher education settings affect LGBTQ tenured university faculty members' job satisfaction i.e. self-expression, acceptance, achievement, advancement, retention, and job security?

### **Interpretation of Findings**

Regressive heteronormative behavior and heterosexism in the workplace devalues the professional queer voice and image (Smith & Ingram, 2004). Therefore, this study sought to provide context for the experiences and perceptions of LGBTQ faculty. It placed a spotlight on factors that were self-identified by participants as contributors to repressive activity leading to adverse physical and psychological outcomes. Sexual orientation, employee satisfaction, identity, and workplace culture has great potential to intersect. As such, an exhaustive review of organizational or communal behaviors was required to gain accurate perspective. According to data from a recent US census, it is projected that by 2050, at least fifty-four percent of the population will be comprised of individuals who currently are categorized as minorities (Seifert & Umbach, 2008). Thus, critical reflection by college administrations is necessary in order to successfully prepare for, adapt with, and respond to the continually expanding levels of diversity.

After careful review and analysis of the data collected from participants, 4 major thematic findings were established in Chapter 4. Those themes were:

1. Sexuality is complicated.
2. Inclusion does not equal acceptance.
3. Environmental dynamics are integral.
4. Satisfaction reflects participation.

Each theme introduced in Chapter 4 further illustrated implicit meanings derived from experiences each participant conveyed. In addition to recognizing sexual orientation and identity in research, this study captured the essence of LGBTQ faculty lived experiences. The narratives are intended to provide understanding of unaccounted differences that are distinct in minority groups. The research questions created by the investigator addressed these thematic conclusions specifically.

**Question 1: How do LGBTQ tenured university faculty perceive workplace climate including direct and indirect experiences?**

There was a clear indication from participants in this study that their professional and personal obligations were intertwined with the culture within higher education workplaces. This stemmed primarily from association with a historically stigmatized minority group. Queer individuals have often been the recipients of negative social attitudes in the form of homophobia. Social stigma and prejudice is far more expansive and inclusive due to the varying identities that encompass sexual orientation. A more appropriate term, heterosexism, ranges from explicit or malicious anti-gay jokes to physical aggression, assault and violence (Waldo, 1999). Legal, religious, and medical underpinnings have continued to perpetuate behaviors that affect modern attitudes regarding sexual orientation. Therefore, participants found it complicated to define or fully take ownership of their sexuality.

**The Sexual Identity Process is Fluid**

It was evident from descriptors used by participants in this study that the process of self-identifying as LGBTQ faculty is deeply private and multidimensional. The data supported the premise that identity may equally be indistinct and a natural outgrowth of one's rank or designated role. Discrimination including microaggressions, rejection, and even expectations of

slights compounds the cognitive burden of negotiating for position while trying to establish a comfortable level of outness (Frost, Lehavot & Meyer, 2015). It also revealed how higher education campuses provide ideal settings in which to study the lived experiences of LGBTQ persons. “As Meyer’s (1995) theory of minority stress suggests, people often experience dystonic psychological states as a result of existing in environments in which they are virtually always minorities” (Waldo, 1999, p. 219). In addition to being a highly pressurized atmosphere in which professional practices affect ratings based on performance as educators, each faculty member experienced a unique and often emotional transitional period of personal introspection. They detailed instances or occurrences that intensified perceptions of alienation and acceptance as well as inspired their commitment to specific fields and disciplines. In reality, the identity of LGBTQ faculty is something that cannot be easily compartmentalized or labeled according to a specific sexual orientation. It is an innate characteristic that is predetermined involuntarily at the most basic genetic level. In essence, perceptions of bias or hate are imposed cultural stereotypes that stem from archaic presuppositions and become self-appraised minority stressors.

### **Visibility Versus Acceptance**

Since 1972, the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago has conducted the General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS, a national probability survey, monitors and reports on social and demographic changes representative of the US population (Sears & Mallory, 2011). As faculty members, each participant in this study expressed a shared sense of commitment to their professional practice. Duly noted was the level of comfort and productivity of LGBTQ faculty still varies due to prevalent and persistent systemic heterosexism in higher education. Outness remains deeply entangled with the conscious and unconscious development of LGBTQ faculty identity. From the sentiments shared, there were evident descriptions of the



specific activities that characterized their roles as educators. There were numerous examples extolling the importance of teaching and research, engaging in rigorous scholarly work, and facilitating student learning. Never did the responsibility of being faculty take precedence over their own personal sexual orientation.

In 2014, former president Barack Obama signed Executive Order 13,762 to prohibit the federal government and its contractors from employment discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation (Harvard Law Review, 2015). This was a step towards creating public policy that advocated against regressive and discriminatory workplace sociology. Sears & Mallory (2011) noted:

The executive order underscored data from national surveys like the GSS that found many LGBTQ employees were prone to negative physical and psychological outcomes as a result of working in environments that weren't tolerant or accepting. Conversely, organizational support positively affected the same demographic in terms of job satisfaction and levels of outness at work. (p. 12)

Homophobia and other exclusionary methods within higher education has persisted. On the contrary, incidents of discrimination based on sexual orientation have evolved. Exclusion has become a subtle, nuanced aspect of occupational sociology that demands individualized identity management strategies. Epidemiological evidence shows that sexual minorities report poorer physical and mental health as a result of exposure to social stigmatization unpredictably, daily, or episodically (Ross, Dobinson, & Eady, 2010).

In summary, some LGBTQ faculty interviewed appeared to cope by principally self-identifying as academic faculty as opposed to adopting a highly visible queer faculty identity. According to those participants, what they perceived and valued most was administrative

support, collegial respect, and absolute autonomy over the trajectory of their careers. This may be attributable to a new component of minority stress that manifests as an overly accepting or docile nature in LGBTQ faculty. In higher education, LGBTQ faculty visibility was disproportionate to campus wide and national goals of increasing inclusion and diversity. With the burden of protecting their personal safety and career trajectories, it was important to for all participants to disallow external societal views on sexual orientation to introduce bias. Therefore, many knew of other faculty who were part of the sexual minority that remain incognito when participating within the campus culture incognito thereby ensuring acceptance and avoiding risk.

**Question 2: How does sexual orientation and identity in higher education settings affect LGBTQ tenured university faculty members' job satisfaction i.e. self-expression, acceptance, achievement, advancement, retention, and job security?**

The second research question expressly examined participant perceptions in relation to the higher education workplace and job satisfaction. From the responses collected in this study, it was indicated that certain adjustments were strategically employed by the LGBTQ to protectively counterbalance heterosexist or unsupportive interactions. Ragins, Singh, & Cornwell (2007) contended:

Some individuals have stigmas that are readily discernable, such as stigmatized racial identities, obesity and physical disfigurements. Other individuals, such as gay men and lesbian women, individuals with invisible disabilities (e.g., HIV/AIDS, epilepsy, mental illness), and those with stigmatized religious affiliations, have invisible stigmas. These individuals face unique challenges not faced by those with visible stigmas. (p. 1103)

Therefore, a critical threat to the overall job satisfaction of LGBTQ faculty was the worrisome burden of evaluating if the workplace climate was conducive for disclosing their hidden stigmatized identity. Despite this ever present challenge and the incidence of direct and indirect heterosexism in higher education setting, most participants in this study described themselves as being comfortable and well-adjusted.

### **Cultural Shifts Compromise Autonomy**

Integral to this study's investigation of higher education workplace dynamics on LGBTQ faculty was providing trustworthy content to fill gaps in existing literature. Vivid participant accounts aided in illustrating work experience constructs germane to being sexual minorities and working higher education professionals. For this reason, the researcher carefully analyzed and contextualized prevailing occupational practices within American colleges and universities. Perceptions of the academic culture on campuses provided participant reflections on discrimination, exclusion, and sexual identity management techniques which deconstructed what typifies the current environment. "Individuals who were more open about their sexual orientation reported experiencing more instances of heterosexism" (Smith & Ingram, 2004, p. 58). It is important to note here that the incidence of heterosexism and unsupportive social interactions were low in this particular sample. This may have been due to the varying degrees that participants disclosed their sexual orientation or introduced the personal details of their lifestyle with superiors and colleagues.

Under the leadership of President Donald J. Trump, the Department of Justice (DOJ) led by Attorney General Jeff Sessions, has attempted to undo policies implemented to deter employers from discriminating against LGBTQ personnel because of sexual orientation. The DOJ has argued that sex discrimination previously protected under Title VII of the 1964 Civil

Rights Act no longer applies because the legalese as written by Congress addresses discrimination according with sex assigned at birth and not orientation (Bollinger, 2017). Conservatives argued that rolling back the provisions provided by executive order under the administration of former President Barack Obama had more to do with protecting religious freedom than obstructing the rights of sexual minorities (Blumenfeld, 2017). A conservative perspective which seeks to reclassify homosexuality as a mental disorder, places LGBTQ people at greater risk of emotional distress and physical disorders due to social stress (Meyer, 2013). External events and conditions within the workplace environment is acutely congruent with a minority person's perceptions and further perpetuates stigmatized social categories. The introduction of a heterosexist tone on American campuses undermines the development of collegial feelings. It was unanimous that unwavering support, motivation, and safety are key issues to reduce the impact of injustices. Changes that alienate LGBTQ faculty introduce an atmosphere of hatred onto campuses and may effectively reduce perceptions of professionalism, autonomy, and academic freedom.

### **Neutrality Threatens Equality**

Though work-related job satisfaction is a well-documented, highly researched topic, the present investigation contributed to the knowledge base in a unique way. This study acknowledged intersectional ways that academic workplaces exert influence on the development of perceptions of overall satisfaction amongst LGBTQ faculty. Ideally, higher education institutions should address the physical and emotional needs of their personnel both pragmatically and holistically. Colleges and universities are expected to be responsive communities with high ethical principles that eschew all forms of discrimination (Bronstein & Farnsworth, 1998). The pattern of minority stress itself is such that it initiates indirect and direct

exclusionary practices that inform and skew the opinions of individuals who are more likely to be metaphorically sidelined. Therefore, the researcher chose to document social exchanges characteristic of the academic environment and commonly shared by faculty with self-identified queer identities for relevance with determining satisfaction.

In several participant accounts, there were detailed indications of select issues found in occupational culture that mattered most to their demographic. Ironically, the descriptors used suggested that sexual identity or orientation did not overwhelmingly dictate fluctuating levels of contentment. Actually, environmental underpinnings were ostensibly considered more of a contributing factor to LGBTQ faculty engagement and approval. Participant responses were also not dissimilar to the findings of Herzberg's (1974) motivation-hygiene theory. Herzberg's analyses detailed factors leading to employee attitudes and motivations in order to expose triggers indoctrinated within the culture of work environments (Herzberg, 1974). Narratives included in this study provided examples of motivators regarding physiological needs on par with those of heterosexual colleagues. For example, earning competitive salaries to secure or maintain adequate nourishment and shelter. Another motivator was having protective company policies that provided comprehensive health insurance coverage for themselves and their spouses. In contrast, a hygiene characteristic of the academic setting was predisposed to bear greater psychological or emotional effect. Particularly, this sample was more inclined to express their discontent pertaining with restricted academic autonomy or reduced advancement potential.

As outlined in Homan's (1961) social exchange theory, participants were also acutely aware of how they were affected by interactions with colleagues. There was a recurrent desire to receive well earned respect and unequivocal collegial support. Being treated as an equal irrespective of sexual proclivity was tantamount to the satisfaction of LGBTQ faculty surveyed.

Assessing the intent or consequences behind the words and actions of their fellow academics was an intrinsic part of the formation of satisfied outlooks. Human beings naturally decide how much effort to place on developing and maintaining relationships based on how well or poorly they are treated (Cook & Rice, 2003). In the instance of LGBTQ faculty, they weighed the cost of outness with the benefit of forging beneficial alliances. As a result, parity instead of apathy is what most thought they deserved. That level of awareness of whether they were treated justly or fairly created the difference between satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

### **Implications**

It was important to the researcher to conduct a study that accurately conceptualized the lived experiences of LGBTQ faculty from their own perspectives. The findings of this investigation found the nature of social relational exchanges in academia to transcend rank, race, age, and gender. It was postulated that sexual orientation or sexual identity comprises, to an extent, how the trajectory of queer individuals' careers is influenced in collegiate work settings. As described, socialization entails how members of an organization process, reinforce, and expect certain values and modes of behavior (Tierney, 1997). In higher education, there are cultural norms and practices endemic of socialization that exert critical influence. Faculty belonging to a minority group especially have to take into consideration the context of their interactions before forging and when maintaining alliances within the organizational culture. Reductive traditions and heterosexist hierarchies that exist often stem from homophobia which originates in underlying assumptions of monosexual customs.

Thoroughly examining and understanding some of the sociological tenets presently found in academic workplaces was an ambitious point of origin for this study. Career theory has not always considered or may have misunderstood a myriad of environmental factors that

institutional administrators took for granted. Initiating a national conversation on the interconnected nature of sexual orientation with faculty roles highlighted the importance of restructuring heterosexist culture within two-year and four-year colleges and universities. Activities that possess both implicit and explicit biases provided ample examples of the kind of subversive behaviors participants perceived to be condoned on campuses. Their narratives indicated that enriching collaboration was significant for determining well-being and overall job satisfaction. As such, supportive relationships in which allies joined with LGBTQ colleagues to openly counteract inequities that persist, held relational importance to career success. Previous work has observed identity concealment's association with psychological distress, victimization, and discrimination (Puckett, Surace, Levitt, & Horne, 2016). A unified approach amongst faculty from all sexual orientations was what most conveyed as required to reduce the extent of identity concealment and encourage higher levels of outness.

### **Recommendations for Action**

As defined by Chung (2001), "work discrimination is unfair and negative treatment of workers or job applicants based on personal attributes that are irrelevant to job performance" (p. 34). Career development literature, including conceptual and practical articles, missed the mark of documenting existing barriers regarding the requisite needs and associated coping mechanisms of marginalized individuals. Accordingly, this investigation exposed how often in theoretical and empirical research, the distinct lived experiences of sexual minorities in workplace settings continue to be overlooked. In particular, the purpose of this study was to expand the existing knowledge base while validating the narratives of LGBTQ tenured faculty. Those who participated in the sample were not only courageous for identifying themselves as queer but also for being completely transparent and forthcoming while disclosing personal

information. Their portrayal suggests it is imperative to point out that workplace administrators ought to proactively investigate ways to manage and maintain the well-being of all employees with impartiality. Therefore, a recommended course of action is that all academic institutions that receive federal funding conduct multi-year site assessment in effort to foster a continuous cycle self-evaluation. Hopefully higher education administrators would be trained and become well equipped to discern typical vocational behaviors and perform trend analyses specific to understanding the multidimensional modes of discrimination. Improving methods of evaluation and implementing purposeful interventions could become a part of professional development used to facilitate a level of fruitful engagement with personnel that is warranted and overdue. A compelling universal approach with fervent commitment should manifest into opportunities for the expansion of positive environments and climates conducive for inclusion. As numerous studies have clearly shown, there is vital importance in climate and its effect on work outcomes like retention and job satisfaction (Callister, 2006).

An unsupportive environment that originated from regressive employment policies in existence on college and university campuses perpetuate a variety of microaggressions. Participants in this study intimated how they internalized and processed such scenarios explicitly. Their responses were without limitation ranging from confrontational to nonassertive. For that reason, management strategies to address inclusion should not be mutually exclusive. According to a survey conducted by the online website LGBTQ nation, 78 % of employees perceived employers as not doing enough to support them (Gremore, 2017). Ironically, 77 % of executives believed they strongly encouraged diversity initiatives (Ilgaz, 2012). Thus, another recommended action is to advocate for the provision of a more comprehensive picture of actual and potential discrimination. Circumventing such attempts would include taking into account



those visible LGBTQ faculty affected while encompassing others who are less open with their sexual orientation. The higher education environment possesses unique traits that distinguishes it from other occupational sites. Cultivating a climate that is supportive emphasizes how meaningful exchanges that are respectful of all backgrounds and orientations, steers the entire academic populace in a more ethical direction.

A final recommendation is to appoint or elect administrators that favor social activism representative of all sexual identities from faculty. “Culture gets defined as the sum of activities – symbolic and instrumental– that exist in the organization and create shared meaning” (Tierney, 1997, p. 3). Moving beyond traditional strategies may prove more effective for introducing an inclusive mindset starting at the top down to the bottom. Improvements that modify recruitment targets to truly signify inclusion would support decision making that exemplifies to the entire campus a shift in tone. Employees should not consciously or subconsciously feel they have to omit or disguise their sexual orientation due to fear of reprisals. With clear channels for open dialogue and constructive feedback, optimizing efforts that support diversity can be nurtured.

### **Recommendations for Future Study**

This transcendental phenomenology contextualized conditions for LGBTQ faculty in higher education. With rich narratives, examples of an affective climate were defined. Several important dimensions of identity, social exchanges, and sexual orientation were juxtaposed against overall job satisfaction. Through using a conceptual framework that examined the well-being of LGBTQ faculty to answer the two research questions, quality of relationships and perceptions of isolation were scrutinized. The enormity of fostering a supportive occupational culture was suggested after comprehensive review. As Callister (2006) affirmed, “There is a strong direct effect of department climate on outcomes suggesting that department climate is an

important factor for universities to consider when attempting to improve faculty job satisfaction and intentions to quit” (p. 373). However, as is the case with any research study, there may be some limitations that affect the findings.

The criteria that established the parameters for inclusion in this study’s sample was a limitation. Therefore, it is recommended that participants be recruited from a single college or university. By having a single cohort with contributing variables controlled for, the various ways heterosexism and homophobia is internalized can be determined with consistency. A major part of the current methodology was to have LGBTQ faculty from across the nation self-report the organizational characteristics found on their respective campus. This type of purposeful sampling was conducted in order to collect a broad baseline of representative responses. In the future, studies like this could recruit greater numbers of faculty with LGBTQ sexual orientations at a single, large academic workplace i.e. a major university consortium. This may enhance the researcher’s ability to assess traits endemic of the culture more reliably. Within that one system, organizational dynamics relating with minority status and identity could be analyzed using a more sizable subset of individuals.

Using the Internet to access Web based LGBTQ communities was effective. However, not controlling for the level of outness in the online survey limited this study. As evidenced by individuals who expressed initial interest, reviewed the survey, answered a few questions, then withdrew. This was an unanticipated finding of this study. For that reason, the extent of interaction and visibility within the campus community from a LGBTQ identity varied for each person that participated in the individual interviews. Therefore, another recommendation for future study, is ensuring that data collected will be from completely anonymous sources rather than confidential sources. With anonymity guaranteed, a greater number of respondents may

potentially be recruited. In doing this, it may also enlarge the scope of responses and provide more trustworthy results. For example, given the paucity of transgender participants in this study, future studies should devise ways to retain participants that fully represent the breadth of all classifications of queer sexual orientation.

A final recommendation is conducting a longitudinal study that further establishes the directional relationship between sexual orientation and LGBTQ faculty. It is important to note that this study included participants who had fully disclosed their sexual identity at work as well as others who had not. LGBTQ faculty visibility possesses a unique set of characteristics and experiences that this study was limited in ability to generalize. Ragins, Singh, & Cornwell (2007) affirmed:

Although LGB employees who reported having gay or lesbian colleagues had less fear and disclosed to greater extent than those in primarily heterosexual work groups, when holding the perceived sexual orientation of the work group constant, LGB employees with supportive coworkers and supervisors reported less fear and disclosed more than those who lacked a supportive group. This suggests that the presence of supportive heterosexual coworkers may help alleviate fears of disclosure and allow LGB employees to bring their true identity to work. (p. 1114)

Thus, an ongoing, future assessment could examine and compare those challenges particularly related with disclosure. Perceptions may change over time and it would be interesting to subsequently study how outcomes shift or if they remain the same.

### **Conclusion**

This study gave voice to LGBTQ faculty working in the traditionally heterosexist environment of higher education. It was determined that individuals who felt unsupported, elect

not to willingly identify themselves according with their sexual orientation. These perceptions often lead to a reduction in engagement with others and decreased overall satisfaction. Another observation was that the tone of the work environment set by administrators and supervisors played a major role in either encouraging inclusion or perpetuating discrimination. Therefore, it was understood that addressing diversity requires a multidimensional approach.

Contemporary forms of exclusion include microaggressions like apathy, neutrality, or reticence from colleagues on matters that affect sexual minorities. Challenging stereotypes and antiquated narratives in academia require moving past idyllic, heteronormative tropes with activism and social justice. Alliances with heterosexual colleagues are imperative to the disruption of delusional ideologies cloaked under oppressive policies protecting religious liberties. In summary, the identity of LGBTQ faculty encompasses more than who they are attracted to, sleep with, or marry. Faculty possess the power to define their professional profile as it should be, without limit or prejudice. There is no template that easily appeases societal expectations of who academic faculty are or are restrictively thought to be. The LGBTQ faculty identity is contextually diverse. Therefore, the existence of minority faculty with fluid sexual orientations correlate with a postmodernist view culture. One culture or sexual identity is not better than another, only different (Tierney, 1997). There exist multiple possibilities to complete the portrait that is definitively representative of higher education climate. Most importantly, all members must be acknowledged, appreciated, supported, and respected equally.

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## APPENDIX A. INFORMATIONAL LETTER

**Project Title:** Contextualizing LGBTQ Faculty Experiences: An Account of Sexual Minority Perceptions

**Principal Investigator(s):** Travis D. David, Researcher (347) 410-4416 or [tdavid1@une.edu](mailto:tdavid1@une.edu). Faculty advisor Brianna Parsons, Ed. D. (207) 299-3627 or [bparsons4@une.edu](mailto:bparsons4@une.edu)

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is purely informational and serves as a preliminary invitation for you to consider participating in a study I am conducting. As a part of the Doctor of Education program at University of New England, this investigation will satisfy the dissertation requirements for a degree in Educational Leadership.

The combination of work-related perceptions and levels of contentment has a direct and powerful impact on academics' behavior, intentions, and values. In particular, noting how supportive or oppressive campus environmental factors are, is consistent with acknowledging unique societal influences associated with sexual orientation. Through repeated lived experiences, LGBTQ faculty, develop distinctive perceptions and expectations of their professional surroundings. Hence, the purpose of this study is to provide accounts of how lived experiences in the work environment affects the job satisfaction perceptions of LGBTQ tenured academic faculty.

Despite the importance of faculty retention initiatives, colleges and universities often have little more than a basic understanding of how institutional issues, workplace climate, diversity variables, and job satisfaction impacts faculty on a national level. This study will focus on how higher education institutions place intrinsic and extrinsic demands on sexual minority individuals. Capturing the essence of job satisfaction perceptions from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer faculty will add to the existing knowledge base on career theory. It has implications for future research on a demographic which may be at risk due of underrepresentation and adequate professional development within the academic community.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will consist of an initial online survey to collect demographical, descriptive statistics. Then, it may be followed by a semi-structured interview at a mutually convenient time. Withdrawal from the study is allowed at any time and you may also decline to answer any question without negative reprisal. With informed consent, all data collected will be recorded and kept in the strictest of confidence. Names and other personal identifiers shall be stripped prior to analysis and will not appear in the resulting dissertation. Pseudonyms will be assigned to each participant. You will also be given the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the interview transcripts before analysis. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. Be assured that this study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at University of New England. If you have any questions, or would like additional information, you make contact me or my lead faculty advisor via email. I look forward to receiving your consent and voluntary participation in my study. I

hope that the resulting doctoral dissertation contributes to the larger research and academic community.

Warmest Regards,

*Travis D. David*

Travis D. David, Principal Investigator  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of New England

## APPENDIX B. PARTICIPANT CONSENT AGREEMENT

**Project Title:** Contextualizing LGBTQ Faculty Experiences: An Account of Sexual Minority Perceptions

**Principal Investigator(s):** Travis D. David, Researcher (347) 410-4416 or [tdavid1@une.edu](mailto:tdavid1@une.edu). Faculty advisor Brianna Parsons, Ed. D. (207) 299-3627 or [bparsons4@une.edu](mailto:bparsons4@une.edu)

### **Introduction:**

- Please read this form, you may also request that the form is read to you. The purpose of this form is to provide you with information about this research study, and if you choose to participate, document your decision.
- You are encouraged to ask any questions that you may have about this study, now, during or after the project is complete. You can take as much time as you need to decide whether or not you want to participate. Your participation is voluntary.

### **Why is this study being done?**

- The purpose of this study is to explore how the culture within higher education institutions places intrinsic and extrinsic demands on sexual minority individuals employed. Capturing the essence of job satisfaction perceptions from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) faculty will add to the existing knowledge base on career theory.
- I do not have a consultative or financial interest related with conducting this study. The study is solely for the purpose of adding to the existing knowledge base while satisfying the Doctor of Education Degree dissertation requirements of University of New England.

### **Who will be in this study?**

- Tenured university faculty from the 50 United States whom self-identify as LGBTQ are identified for inclusion as potential participants.
- All participants must be at least 18 years of age to participate.
- As a transcendental phenomenological study, a maximum of 8 and minimum of 5 participants will be selected from the total study population for individual interviews. This will allow for data saturation. The individual interview responses will serve to validate and explain the lived experiences of tenured LGBTQ faculty with credibility from their own unique perspectives.

- The time commitment of the 5-8 participants purposefully selected for individual semi-structured interviews is approximately 30-45 minutes.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

- If selected for a semi-structured individual interview, the participant will be contacted by the researcher and interviewed in a manner that they deem comfortable (i.e. in person, web conference, telephone) at a mutually convenient time lasting approximately 30-45 minutes. From a total of fifteen interview questions, responses will be recorded and transcribed using the Rev.com app and then analyzed by NVivo software. Recurring themes will be analyzed to the fullest extent to gain a holistic perspective of the higher education perspective from LGBTQ faculty. Participants may skip or refuse to answer any question for any reason.

Participants that agree to comply with an individual interview will provide written consent either in-person or electronically. Then, the participant will be contacted via a preferred mode of contact of their choice at a mutually beneficial time to the interviewer and interviewee. The interview will be conducted face to face or over the telephone. Audio recordings for each interview will be obtained using an Android telephone app by recording and transcription services online site Rev.com. The time commitment of the individual interview will not exceed approximately 30-40 minutes. The principal investigator will be the only person collecting the data recordings to ensure the confidentiality of the participants, settings, as well as to provide uniform collection procedures. All data will be kept on only one personal home computer, password protected and accessed only by the principal investigator, with a back-up external hard drive system on site. Identifiable data will be omitted from the dissertation text and results will be summarized based on participant responses. Individual responses will be reported without the use of participant's names or institutional affiliations and will not be accessible for use in future studies.

### **What are the possible risks of taking part in this study?**

- There are minimal foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study.
- Participants may fear the potential of others discovering their identity and loss of confidentiality.
- Participants may also feel burdened by the time commitment made to complete research study procedures.

- Any problems or discomfort will be addressed immediately as they occur by the researcher and their advisory committee. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not impact or affect the participant in any way. The decision to participate will have no impact on your current or future relations with the University of New England. Participation will also not impact your relationship with your employer.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?**

- There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. However, through repeated lived experiences, LGBTQ faculty develop distinctive perceptions and expectations of their professional surroundings. Data collected may provide valid, informative accounts of how lived experiences in the higher education work environments affect the perceptions of LGBTQ tenured academic faculty.

### **What will it cost me?**

- There are no known costs associated with participation in this study.

### **How will my privacy be protected?**

- All demographical information, descriptive statistics, and interview question responses collected from participants during the individual semi-structured interviews will be kept strictly confidential. Only the principal investigator will be aware of the identity of participants. The data collected from this study will be used in a published doctoral dissertation and stored in the online centralized institutional repository of the University of New England.
- Only the principal investigator will have access to the identity of the participants. All research records will be kept in a locked file in the locked home office of the principal investigator. As an added provision of privacy, the identity of participants will not be revealed at any time and pseudonyms will be assigned (i.e. Participant #1). Following receipt of verbal and signed consent, your name or school affiliation will not be shared with anyone else. Any audio or video recording will be protected in compliance with the University of New England's research with human participants' policies and procedures.

### **How will my data be kept confidential?**

- Data collected will be given a random numerical code to maintain the confidentiality of individually identifiable interview transcripts and recordings. Research data will be physically destroyed or erased after the dissertation is completed and has been deposited in the institutional repository of the University of New England.

- Regulatory agencies and the Institutional Review Board may review the research records. A copy of your signed consent form will be maintained by the principal investigator for at least 3 years after the project is complete before it is destroyed. Consent forms will be stored in a secure location that only members of the research team will have access to and will not be affiliated with any data obtained during the project. You will be informed of any significant findings developed during the course of the research that may affect your willingness to participate in the research. Enquiries or concerns about the research can be directed to the Principal Investigator or the IRB office at University of New England.

### **What are my rights as a research participant?**

- Your participation is voluntary. Your decision to participate will have no impact on your current or future relations with the University of New England.
- You may skip or refuse to answer any question for any reason.
- If you choose not to participate, there is no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive. You are free to withdraw at any time, for any reason.
- You will be informed of any significant findings developed during the course of the research that may affect your willingness to participate in the study.

### **What other options do I have?**

- You may choose not to participate.

### **Whom may I contact with questions?**

- The researchers conducting this study are Travis D. David, Principal Investigator (PI) and Brianna Parson, Ed. D., Lead Faculty Advisor. For questions or more information concerning this research study, you may contact Travis D. David, PI at (347) 410-4416 or [tdavid1@une.edu](mailto:tdavid1@une.edu). Lead Faculty Advisor, Brianna Parsons, Ed. D., may be contacted at (207) 299-3627 or [bparsons4@une.edu](mailto:bparsons4@une.edu).
- If you choose to participate in this research study and believe you may have suffered a research related injury, please contact Travis D. David, PI at (347) 410-4416 or [tdavid1@une.edu](mailto:tdavid1@une.edu) or Brianna Parsons, Ed. D., Lead Faculty Advisor at (207) 299-3627 or [bparsons4@une.edu](mailto:bparsons4@une.edu).
- If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may call Olgun Guvench, M.D. Ph. D., Chair of the UNE Institutional Review Board at (207) 221-4171 or [irb@une.edu](mailto:irb@une.edu)

### **Will I receive a copy of this consent form?**



- You may print/keep a copy of this consent form.

Participant's Statement

**I understand the above description of this research and the risks and benefits associated with my participation as a research subject. I agree to take part in this research and do so voluntarily.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature or Legally  
Authorized representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name

Researcher's Statement

**The participant named above had sufficient time to consider the information, had an opportunity to ask questions, and voluntarily agreed to be in this study.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name

## APPENDIX C. ONLINE DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

**Contextualizing LGBTQ Faculty Experiences: An Account of Sexual Minority Perceptions****Travis D. David, Researcher**

1. Do you work for a college or a university?
2. Have you received tenure?
3. What is your professional job title?
4. Is your institution a four year senior or two-year junior college?
5. Is your workplace public or private?
6. What is your age?
7. What is your ethnicity?
8. What gender do you identify as?
9. Are you transgender?
10. If you are transgender, what was your assigned gender at birth?
11. Do you identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer?
12. What is your current relationship status?
13. Is your current relationship with someone of the same gender?
14. Do you reside in a rural, urban, suburban, collegiate, farming, or industrial type of community?
15. If you identify as LGBTQ, have you disclosed your sexual orientation?

## APPENDIX D. INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**Contextualizing LGBTQ Faculty Experiences: An Account of Sexual Minority Perceptions****Travis D. David, Researcher**

- 1) What attracted you to your current profession and keeps you at that workplace?
- 2) What is the work environment like on your campus and in your department?
- 3) How would you describe your job satisfaction?
- 4) What ideals, attitudes, standards, or behaviors within professional academic settings do you feel obligated to conform with?
- 5) How do historical demographics of academic faculty in the US impact your level of comfort and self-expression as an LGBTQ professional?
- 6) How do you share your sexual orientation, relationship status, or describe your significant other with colleagues and superiors?
- 7) How does your campus and department address inclusion and sexual diversity amongst faculty?
- 8) What changes in workplace climate would affect your level of job satisfaction?
- 9) What are some hassles at work that you perceive to be related with sexual identity?
- 10) How do stressors, fears, or concerns associated with being LGBTQ in an academic environment impact you?
- 11) What is your perception on overt and covert forms of harassment, discrimination, exclusion, marginalization, and heterosexism in academia?
- 12) What would prevent you from socializing with colleagues or publicizing your stance regarding sexuality and LGBTQ issues in a work environment?

- 13) How do direct and indirect questions or comments from superiors and colleagues regarding sexual orientation and the LGBTQ community make you feel?
- 14) How do you define yourself in comparison with traditional descriptions of academic faculty?
- 15) What work related factors and experiences impact the development of your job satisfaction most?

## APPENDIX E.

Screenshot of the NVivo for Mac Workspace (QSR International, 2016)

