



Original research

Associations between workplace characteristics and 'outness' in LGBTI workers in Austria

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ABSTRACT

Objectives Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) individuals are often subjected to negative attitudes in the workplace, which may lead to non-disclosure of their sexual orientation and/or gender identities. We aimed to determine the prevalence of workplace disclosure of sexual or gender identity (ie, 'outness'; being 'out') and to examine its associations with workplace characteristics in LGBTI workers in Austria.

Methods This cross-sectional study analysed sociodemographic, work-related and well-being-related data from self-identifying gender and/or sexual minority participants elicited by an online questionnaire between February and June 2017. From the initial 1268 respondents, 1177 (93%) provided complete data and were included in the subsequent analyses.

Results The largest proportion of the sample were 26–35 years old (39.1%), cisgender gay men (40.0%) in full-time employment (63.9%). Overall, 51.7% of the sample were 'out' at the workplace. Being bisexual (OR=0.46, 95% CI 0.27 to 0.81), the provision of antidiscrimination guidelines in the workplace (OR=0.53, 95% CI 0.32 to 0.90), living alone (OR=0.50, 95% CI 0.32 to 0.79) and in shared households (OR=0.49, 95% CI 0.25 to 0.96) were associated with a decreased likelihood of being 'out' at work.

Factors associated with being 'out' at work were being middle aged (36–45 years old; OR=1.74, 95% CI 1.07 to 2.85), having been in employment for >10 years (OR=2.03, 95% CI 1.08 to 3.81), an LGBTI-friendly work environment (OR 1.61, 95% CI 1.36 to 1.91), labour-management antidiscrimination contract (OR=2.02, 95% CI 1.23 to 3.32) and work council protections (OR=1.56, 95% CI 1.04 to 2.36).

Conclusions Instating antidiscrimination protections might facilitate 'outness' of LGBTI workers and lead to a better promotion of diversity in the workplace.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the improving legal situation and a more egalitarian societal climate in many countries^{1–4} discrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people persists with 58% of sexual and gender minority Europeans reporting experiences of discrimination in daily life.³ LGBTI individuals are often confronted with people and workplace structures that condone negative attitudes in the workplace.⁵ A recent report by the

Key messages

What is already known about this subject?

- ▶ A high proportion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people experience discrimination in the workplace, and as a consequence conceal their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- ▶ Lower workplace outness is associated with decreased job satisfaction, poorer health and work-related outcomes.

What are the new findings?

- ▶ Data from 1177 participants were analysed concerning workplace characteristics and outness for the first time in Austria.
- ▶ Only half of surveyed participants were out about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in the workplace.
- ▶ Workers who were middle-aged, employed for more than 10 years, worked in an LGBTI-friendly environment, enjoyed legally binding antidiscrimination and work council protections were more likely to be out at work.

How might this impact on policy or clinical practice in the foreseeable future?

- ▶ Policy-makers should include legally binding antidiscrimination measures specifically targeting the LGBTI working population.
- ▶ Creating inclusive workplaces where people are able to be open about their sexual orientation and gender identity may increase productivity and improve health outcomes.

Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) of the European Union (EU) showed that one in four LGBTI individuals hide their identity at work, with one in five saying they felt discriminated against in the workplace.³

Discrimination of LGBTI workers may not always be overt,⁶ and can have a range of consequences such as conflict with coworkers, career development problems or economic inequity. Furthermore, LGBTI workers are exposed to heteronormative and cisnormative work culture, meaning that being heterosexual and having a cisgender identity (ie, that biological sex matches gender identity) are assumed applicable to all workers.⁷ This creates further specific challenges where LGBTI workers



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may feel pressured to not disclose their identity or to 'stay in the closet'.⁸ For transgender people the assumption of cisnormativity may enforce stereotypical binary gender roles pressuring them to present as and perform gender roles based on their sex as assigned at birth, rather than their affirmed gender.⁹

Workers often 'come out' (ie, disclose sexual or gender identity) to certain individuals at work and choose the extent to which they openly disclose their identity as a continuous process.¹⁰ Heteronormative and cisnormative working environments may lead to non-disclosure of sexual and gender identity, especially where discrimination goes unreported or unsanctioned. Extant literature demonstrates that less workplace outness¹¹ is associated with decreased job satisfaction,^{12,13} poorer health (ie, lower well-being and increased depressive symptoms¹⁴ and work-related outcomes (such as lower productivity).¹⁵ The potential for negative consequences may be the main reason why LGBTI workers choose not to disclose their identity.¹⁶ Conversely, outness at work is associated with reductions in workplace discrimination³ as well with improved job satisfaction, workplace commitment¹⁷ and improved productivity of the whole work collective.¹⁸

In Austria, legal protections for LGBTI individuals have been advancing and various reports indicate rising societal support for LGBTI equality.^{3,4,16} However, there is a paucity of studies examining the LGBTI working population, with one 2015 report indicating that 48% of LGBTI people in Vienna are not open about their sexual orientation in the workplace,¹⁹ however, this lacked any data on workplace characteristics or environment.

The majority of the literature concerning LGBTI workers focuses on economic and corporate outcomes, as well as productivity,^{17,20,21} overshadowing implications of workplace characteristics on workers' outness. However, results from few available studies highlight the importance of workplace characteristics that influence the level of outness of LGBTI workers.⁷ For example, studies indicated that implementation of non-discrimination and supportive policies facilitate outness in LGBTI workers²² but also lower discrimination, improve mental health outcomes and positively affect performance at work.²³ However, there is a considerable paucity of studies investigating workplace outness and experiences of LGBTI workers. Therefore, we aimed to determine the prevalence of workplace outness among LGBTI workers in Austria and the associated workplace characteristics. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first such study from Central Europe.

METHODS

A cross-sectional study using an online-based questionnaire was conducted between February and June 2017. The study link was distributed among various LGBTI organisations in Austria, and the participants were asked to disseminate the link among their own networks. The study was commissioned by the Vienna Chamber of Labour, who examined and approved the questionnaire and methodology. Given that this paper presents a secondary analysis of data, no other ethical approval was sought. Participants were anonymous, with no personal information being asked, as well as no email or Internet protocol (IP) addresses being saved. Participation was voluntary and was conducted in accordance with the Helsinki declaration in its current revision.

Study population

Participants between 16 and 65 years of age, residing in Austria, who were in paid employment and self-identify as a gender and/or sexual minority were included in the study.

Questionnaire

Overall, the questionnaire consisted of 50 questions, which were multiple and single choice and were specifically designed for this study. The questionnaire addressed, outness at the workplace, sociodemographic characteristics, workplace characteristics and protections against discrimination at the workplace and took roughly 10 min to complete.

Outness at the workplace

Outness at the workplace was determined using the question 'Are you 'out' as LGBTI when it comes to the following persons in your private and professional environment: immediate colleagues, other coworkers, superiors and clients'. For each category, participants could choose from a Likert type scale (1–5) including (1) Yes, with all; (2) Yes, with most; (3) Yes, with some; (4) No and (5) Not applicable. Participants (n=16) who chose 'not applicable' across all categories or did not disclose any information about their outness status at the workplace were excluded from analysis. We calculated a score based on the outcomes and dichotomised the workplace outness based on a median split, with lower scores indicating higher degrees of outness.

Covariates

Sexual and gender identity

Sexual and gender identity were ascertained with the following two questions: 'How would you describe your sexual orientation?' (1) gay; (2) lesbian; (3) bisexual; (4) heterosexual; (5) other (please note); (6) I don't want to assign myself, and 'How do you define your sex or gender self-image?' (1) born as a woman and living as a woman; (2) born as a man and living as a man; (3) born as a man and living as a woman; (4) born as a woman and living as a man; (5) born intersexual and living as a man; (6) born intersexual and living as a woman; (7) born intersexual and living neither as a woman nor as a man; (8) other and (9) I don't want to assign myself.

Sociodemographic characteristics

Eight questions concerned age, citizenship, migration background, level of education (based on the International Standard Classification of Education), living situation and postal code (to determine the degree of urbanisation based on DEGURBA classification), and overall life and work satisfaction (based on agreement with the statements 'I am very satisfied with my life as it is now' and 'I am happy at my work' on a 1–4 scale; 1='does not apply at all' and 4='applies fully').

Workplace characteristics

Thirteen questions elicited participants' employment status, working hours, type of employment contract and position level, monthly income from work, employment sector, company size, duration of employment, perceived job security (based on the question 'Do you consider your job as...' with 1='very insecure' and 4='very secure'), general perceived attitude towards LGBTI persons at the workplace (based on agreement with the statement 'How would you assess the general mood and attitude towards LGBTI people and LGBTI issues at your workplace/work location?' on a 1–7 scale; 1='very negative' and 7='very positive'), and presence of LGBTI supervisors and colleagues.

Discrimination protections at the workplace

A further eight questions on discrimination protections at the workplace were included, such as the presence of guidelines for

dealing with LGBTI, presence of a works council (and whether LGBTI interests are represented therein), presence of a diversity representative, presence of a trusted person at work, presence of labour-management contracts to prevent LGBTI-based discrimination, presence of support for LGBTI-networking within the company, and presence of targeted diversity management.

Statistical analysis

Descriptive analyses included means and SD for metric variables, and categorical variables are presented as frequencies and percentages. To assess differences between workers who were categorised as out at work and those who were not, we used t-test and Mann-Whitney U test, depending on data distribution with χ^2 test being used for differences in categorical variables.

We performed a multivariable logistic regression model (mutually adjusted, listwise exclusion of cases) to assess which worker and workplace characteristics were associated with workplace outness. Variables in the model were chosen based on the univariate analysis using the cut-off point of $p < 0.2$,²⁴ with the largest group chosen as the reference in the model. Statistical analyses were done using SPSS for Windows V.26.0, all tests were two tailed, with p values less than 0.05 denoting statistical significance.

RESULTS

Sample characteristics

A total of 1268 individuals participated in the study. Cases were excluded if data on sexual orientation or gender identity were missing or if there were more than 50% missing entries. Overall, 1177 (93%) participants were included in our analysis with 51.6% ($n=608$) reporting being out at the workplace. Descriptive characteristics of the study sample and differences based on outness at the workplace are shown in [table 1](#). Most participants were sexual minority and cisgender (68.6%; $n=808$) young adults (39.1%; 26–35 years old), had tertiary level education (43.9%), were living with a partner (35.9%), had full-time employment (63.9%), held their current position for less than 3 years (44.3%), had LGBTI coworkers (56.5%), but no outed LGBTI superiors (69.2%), with the overall job perception as ‘safe’ ($M=3.15$) and their work environment as LGBTI-friendly ($M=5.14$; $SD 1.45$).

Factors associated with outness: univariate analysis

The univariate analysis revealed significant differences between participants who were out at work and those who were not with respect to the following variables ([table 1](#)): sexual and gender identity, age, migration background, living situation, managing responsibility, company size, duration of employment at current workplace, perceived job stability, perceived workplace LGBTI friendliness, happiness in life, happiness at work, having LGBTI coworkers or superiors, having a labour-management antidiscrimination contract, targeted diversity management and works council protections.

Factors associated with outness: multivariable regression model

Associations between workplace outness, workplace and socio-demographic characteristics are presented in [table 2](#). Participants who self-identified as bisexual were 2.17 times more likely to conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity at work. Presence of antidiscrimination guidelines in the workplace was associated with two times lower likelihood of being out at work.

Those who reported living alone or living in shared accommodations were also two times less likely to be out at work.

Participants who were working for more than 10 years at the same workplace, middle-aged workers (35–50) had higher odds to be out at the workplace. Workplace characteristics significantly associated with higher likelihoods of workplace outness were: perceived LGBTI friendliness, having a works council and a labour management antidiscrimination contract ([table 2](#)).

DISCUSSION

Our study explored workplace and workers’ characteristics and their associations with being out in the workplace among a sample of LGBTI workers in Austria. Overall, 1177 workers were analysed with half of our participants reporting being out in the workplace. In our model, we found higher likelihoods of outness at work among workers aged 36–50, who had worked for more than 10 years at the same workplace, that positively perceived LGBTI workplace friendliness, had a presence of works council protections, and a labour-management antidiscrimination contract. The opposite was found for those who identified as bisexual, had antidiscrimination guidelines at work, were living alone, or in shared households without a partner ([table 2](#)).

There is a lack of literature examining the prevalence of workplace outness and workplace characteristics. However, a recent report by FRA stated that EU-wide around 26% of participants hid their sexual orientation at work.³ A study by Lloren and Parini in a Swiss sample of LGBTI workers reported overall outness of 87%,²⁵ with only 42% of workers being out to everyone. The difference in the reported prevalence of workplace outness most likely stems from the way outness was conceptualised and measured in our respective studies.

Our sample included 808 (68.6%) gay and lesbian participants, and 221 (18.8%) bisexual respondents who were more frequently identified as ‘not out’ (13.5% vs 24.4%) and were found to be 2.17 times more likely to conceal their identity at the workplace. These findings are consistent with other studies.^{10 26 27} Bisexual individuals are widely exposed to both biphobia and homophobia, leading to a unique form of minority stress in bisexual individuals.²⁸ Bisexual people thus face double stigmatisation by being discriminated not only by the heterosexual majority but also by other sexual minorities²⁸ often by denying the existence or legitimacy of a bisexual identity²⁹ or being ascribed binegative stereotypes such as being untrustworthy or promiscuous.³⁰ Such attitudes seem to stem most from non-bisexual men.^{29 31} Due to these circumstances, bisexual employees are often silenced or invisible due to discrimination from other sexual minorities but also the heterosexual majority,^{26 28} which may lead to internalised biphobia²⁷ that appears to be more detrimental if associated with discrimination from gay and lesbian peers.³² In order to increase the level of outness at workplaces it is important to acknowledge the double stigma experienced by bisexual employees by actively increasing awareness of bisexual identities and their explicit inclusivity in antidiscriminatory policies, in turn leading to higher levels of perceived safety.³³

Even though gender minority groups share some discriminatory experiences with sexual minority groups, they are likely to be faced with distinct and unique challenges in the workplace.^{34 35} There is a general lack of studies specifically examining non-cisgender participants of the workforce,³⁶ possibly due to the relatively lower visibility under the LGBTI identity umbrella. However, the second EU-wide LGBTI survey in 2019

Table 1 Sociodemographic and work-related characteristics of the study population stratified by outness status

Variable % (n)	Total	Out	Not out	P value
	100% (n=1177)	51.66% (608)	48.34% (569)	
Sexual and gender identity				<0.001
Gay men	40.0% (471)	44.1% (268)	35.7% (203)	
Lesbian women	28.6% (337)	28.9% (176)	28.3% (161)	
Bisexual men/women	18.8% (221)	13.5% (82)	24.4% (139)	
Transgender and intersex people	7.5% (88)	9.7% (59)	5.1% (29)	
Other sexual and gender identity	5.1% (60)	3.8% (23)	6.5% (37)	
Age				<0.001
16–25	15.5% (182)	12.3% (75)	18.8% (107)	
26–35	39.1% (460)	33.7% (205)	44.8% (255)	
36–50	35.4% (417)	42.4% (258)	27.9% (159)	
51–65	10.0% (118)	11.5% (70)	8.4% (48)	
Austrian citizenship				0.280
Yes	70.6% (831)	69.6% (423)	71.7% (408)	
No	8.2% (97)	9.0% (55)	7.4% (42)	
Migration background				0.021
Yes	22.9% (270)	25.5% (155)	20.2% (115)	
No	55.9% (658)	53.1% (323)	58.9% (335)	
Education				0.081
Primary/vocational (ISCED 2–3)	13.9% (164)	15.8% (96)	12.0% (68)	
Secondary (ISCED 4–5)	21.1% (248)	20.9% (127)	21.3% (121)	
Tertiary (ISCED 6–8)	43.9% (517)	42.1% (256)	45.9% (261)	
Living situation				<0.001
Alone	26.9% (317)	23.0% (140)	31.1% (177)	
With partner	35.9% (422)	40.5% (246)	30.9% (176)	
With partner and child (ren)	4.2% (50)	5.6% (34)	2.8% (16)	
Other (flat sharing, with parents, etc)	11.6% (137)	9.4% (57)	14.1% (80)	
Urbanisation				0.626
Cities (densely populated)	53.8% (633)	53.0% (322)	54.7% (311)	
Towns and suburbs (intermediate)	10.3% (121)	11.0% (67)	9.5% (54)	
Rural areas (thinly populated)	11.0% (130)	10.7% (65)	11.4% (65)	
Employment status				0.433
>35 hour/week (full time)	63.9% (752)	62.8% (382)	65.0% (370)	
<35 hour/week (part time)	36.1% (425)	37.2% (226)	35.0% (199)	
Managing responsibility				<0.001
No	81.6% (960)	468 (77.0%)	86.5% (492)	
Yes	18.4% (216)	139 (22.9%)	13.5% (77)	
Monthly income (after tax)				0.01
Up to €1000	14.2% (167)	12.0% (73)	16.5% (94)	
Up to €2000	44.3% (521)	44.2% (269)	44.3% (252)	
Up to €3000	29.8% (351)	30.1% (183)	29.5% (168)	
More than €3000	9.4% (111)	11.5% (70)	7.2% (41)	
Company size				0.003
1–10 employees	20.6% (242)	22.7% (138)	18.3% (104)	
11–50 employees	26.8% (315)	26.8% (163)	26.7% (152)	
51–250 employees	20.6% (242)	18.1% (110)	23.2% (132)	
251 and more employees	26.4% (311)	23.2% (141)	29.9% (170)	
Duration of employment at current workplace				<0.001
Up to 3 years	44.3% (521)	35.9% (218)	53.3% (303)	
4–10 years	32.7% (385)	34.2% (208)	31.1% (177)	
More than 10 years	22.9% (269)	29.6% (180)	15.6% (89)	
Perceived job stability, mean (SD)	3.15 (0.69)	3.21 (0.68)	3.10 (0.69)	0.006
Perceived workplace LGBTI friendliness, mean (SD)	5.14 (1.45)	5.69 (1.28)	4.58 (1.40)	<0.001
Happiness in life, mean (SD)	3.24 (0.74)	3.34 (0.72)	3.12 (0.74)	<0.001
Happiness at work, mean (SD)	3.21 (0.88)	3.31 (0.87)	3.11 (0.88)	0.001
LGBTI coworkers				<0.001

continued

Table 1 continued

Variable % (n)	Total	Out	Not out	P value
Present	56.5% (665)	60.7% (369)	52.0% (296)	
Not present	34.4% (405)	27.6% (168)	41.7% (237)	
LGBTI superiors				<0.001
Present	21.0% (247)	26.8% (163)	14.8% (84)	
Not present	69.2% (814)	60.9% (370)	78.0% (444)	
Antidiscrimination guidelines				0.144
Present	24.6% (290)	25.7% (156)	23.6% (134)	
Not present	65.3% (769)	61.7% (375)	69.2% (394)	
Diversity representative				0.408
Present	25.6% (301)	25.8% (157)	25.3% (144)	
Not present	64.4% (758)	61.5% (374)	67.5% (384)	
Labour-management antidiscrimination contract				0.008
Present	31.8% (374)	34.2% (208)	29.2% (166)	
Not present	58.2% (685)	53.1% (323)	63.6% (362)	
Targeted diversity management				0.031
Present	16.8% (198)	18.6% (113)	14.9% (85)	
Not present	73.2% (861)	68.8% (418)	77.9% (443)	
Works council protections on LGBTI matters (if works council present)				<0.001
Present	25.5% (300)	27.6% (168)	23.2% (132)	
Not present	31.9% (376)	24.2% (147)	40.2% (229)	

ISCED, International Standard Classification of Education; LGBTI, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex.

showed a rise in perceived workplace discrimination in transgender respondents (36%) compared with the first survey in 2012 (22%), whereas the rise was notably lower for lesbian, gay and bisexual respondents (21% vs 19%).³¹⁶ Transgender workers made up 7.5% of our study sample with differences among sexual orientation and gender identity groups being significant vis-à-vis workplace outness, however a non-cisgender identity was not found to be significantly associated with workplace outness in the regression model. Moreover, in absolute numbers, transgender and intersex respondents were more commonly out (9.7%, n=59) than not (5.1%, n=29). The long and complicated process of gender transitioning and recognition (including medical, social and legal procedures) might force non-cisgender workers to come out at work, which combined with social and legal identity recognition issues might lead to greater vulnerability. It has been reported that transgender employees face more physical violence in the workplace than sexual minority employees.⁹ Even though Austrian and EU law prohibits workplace discrimination based on gender identity, these protections lose their meaning when one is unable to legally change the gender assigned to them at birth. Negative consequences of 'forced' outing in transgender workers could be improved by targeted antidiscrimination measures and wider legal change.

Interestingly, our results also showed that the presence of anti-discrimination guidelines at the workplace was associated with less outness. Even though these may have been introduced to reduce discrimination at work, or to mitigate against problematic workplace circumstances, they are nevertheless a 'softer' form of protection and thus their efficacy depends on how seriously employees and supervisors take them, and the extent to which they may not be uniformly interpreted and applied throughout all parts of the same organisation.³⁷ This was seen in our study where labour-management contracts with discrimination protections were found to be associated with two times higher odds of outness at work. Studies have shown that organisations, with enacted workplace protections, also enjoy higher outness levels in LGBTI employees,²² which is consistent with our findings.

Also, it is important to note that our study focused on measures specifically targeting discrimination against sexual and/or gender minorities. Non-discriminatory measures that are not specifically focusing on LGBTI discrimination might not achieve the same results. The difference may also be explained by the top-down nature of guidelines, as opposed to horizontal impact of antidiscrimination contracts.

While our Austria-based LGBTI sample predominantly consists of gay men, one of the strengths of the study include a large sample of bisexual and transgender individuals, who are more commonly under-represented in this type of research. To our knowledge, this is one of the largest samples of LGBTI individuals focusing on workplace outness, and the first study exploring these issues in a central European context. Further, the use of an extensive questionnaire covering different areas of workplace characteristics provides a robust and in-depth picture of the experiences of LGBTI workers. This study was open to workers from a variety of occupational sectors and workplace sizes, further underpinning the variety of work-based experiences captured. However, our study results need to be viewed in light of some inherent limitations. An important limitation was the recruitment strategy with self-selection of the study participants. Data collection occurred online, which might have led to overrepresentation of younger, more educated, urban and affluent participants, causing an overestimation of outness at work. Furthermore, the questionnaire was propagated through personal contacts of already recruited individuals, which might have further contributed to the selection bias by oversampling similar participants. For the purposes of our analysis, our characterisation of outness at work was dichotomised via a median split, which can be argued dilutes inherent sample heterogeneity and inevitably this prevented us from stratifying degrees of outness (and related characteristics) among respondents. This may lead to an overrepresentation of risk as indicated by the OR. However, recent evidence does provide a defence of this analytical technique.³⁸ Further, outness as a construct is multifarious and non-uniformly described in the literature with a range of antecedents and individual consequences. Even though a worker was considered out, their disclosure might not have

Table 2 Variables associated with outness status at work

Variable	OR	95% CI	P value
Sexual and gender identity (ref: gay men)			
Lesbian women	0.87	0.54 to 1.42	0.585
Bisexual men/women	0.46	0.27 to 0.81	0.007
Transgender and intersex people	1.33	0.51 to 3.50	0.561
Other sexual and gender identity	0.27	0.06 to 1.16	0.079
Age (ref: 26–35)			
16–25	1.33	0.63 to 2.84	0.456
36–50	1.74	1.07 to 2.85	0.027
51–65	1.36	0.64 to 2.88	0.426
With managing responsibility	1.10	0.64 to 1.90	0.721
Monthly income (ref: up to €2000)			
Up to €1000	0.70	0.28 to 1.75	0.445
Up to €3000	0.86	0.54 to 1.37	0.523
More than €3000	0.57	0.27 to 1.22	0.145
Company size (ref: 11–50 employees)			
1–10 employees	1.22	0.57 to 2.61	0.601
51–250 employees	1.27	0.73 to 2.23	0.401
251 and more employees	0.83	0.49 to 1.41	0.485
Duration of employment at current workplace (ref: up to 3 years)			
4–10 years	1.26	0.77 to 2.06	0.355
More than 10 years	2.03	1.08 to 3.81	0.027
Perceived job stability	0.84	0.62 to 1.15	0.289
Perceived workplace LGBTI friendliness	1.61	1.36 to 1.91	<0.001
LGBTI coworkers not present	0.73	0.45 to 1.19	0.202
LGBTI superiors present	1.57	0.97 to 2.54	0.068
Antidiscrimination guidelines present	0.53	0.32 to 0.90	0.018
Labour-management antidiscrimination contract present	2.02	1.23 to 3.32	0.005
Targeted diversity management present	0.96	0.57 to 1.61	0.880
Works council protections present	1.56	1.04 to 2.36	0.033
Happiness in life	1.03	0.75 to 1.40	0.877
Happiness at work	1.18	0.92 to 1.52	0.203
With migration background	1.52	0.96 to 2.39	0.073
Education (ref: tertiary. ISCED 6–8)			
Primary and vocational. ISCED 2–3	1.63	0.91 to 2.91	0.102
Secondary. ISCED 4–5	0.99	0.61 to 1.62	0.969
Living situation (ref: with partner)			
Alone	0.50	0.32 to 0.79	0.003
With partner and child(ren)	1.57	0.59 to 4.18	0.365
Other (flat sharing, with parents, etc)	0.49	0.25 to 0.96	0.039

All variables with a $p < 0.2$ in the univariate analysis were added to the model and are listed below. All variables were entered into the model simultaneously. ISCED, International Standard Classification of Education; LGBTI, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex.

had an impact on the way they were perceived by their employer or their perceptions of their workplace. Indeed, in our analysis happiness at work and happiness with life did not predict employee outness which may, in part, be attributable to workplace happiness being understood by respondents as reflecting their own workplace self-efficacy and career development opportunities. As this is the

first such analysis in an Austrian context to our knowledge, this study provides a useful benchmark for future, more nuanced assessments of this issue. Also, discrimination often starts before employment, with LGBTI individuals facing employment issues due to their identity.³⁹ It could, therefore, be that an a priori selection occurred, where LGBTI employees from organisations already providing a friendly workplace environment were more likely to respond. The sample consisted mostly of middle-aged employees. Considering the rapid development of legislative protections of LGBTI individuals in general, younger individuals may have had more protections than their older counterparts.¹ Moreover, social attitudes are rapidly improving across countries,⁴ with rising numbers of young people being open about their identity at school and at work.³ Increased visibility and decreased stigma of younger LGBTI workers might translate to a more accepting workplace culture. Moreover, given the low representation of transgender and intersex participants in our study, we were unable to investigate the specific aspects of their experiences. The overall lack of literature on the experiences of trans workers has been noted.³⁶

This study employed a cross-sectional design, making it impossible to investigate causal links between workplace characteristics and outness, with a probability of reverse causation that cannot be definitively excluded. For example, important associations were found that require further exploration in longitudinal designs. Finally, an intersectional approach would be needed to identify specific challenges faced by the various LGBTI subgroups.⁴⁰ Taking into account the interplay of participants' sociodemographic, workplace and identity characteristics in a longitudinal study design might provide further insights into how to increase visibility and provide support for the most marginalised members of the workforce, in a rapidly changing societal and legal climate.

CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE

In our study on 1177 participants, we found that 52% of LGBTI participants were out at the workplace. Our analysis showed that participants who identified as bisexual and those living alone had the lowest levels of outness, and those enjoying longer duration of employment and binding internal non-discrimination contracts had the higher odds of being out at the workplace. In terms of managerial workplace intervention, we saw that more elaborate labour-management contracts of non-discrimination were found to be associated with higher odds of outness at work. An overall accepting workplace culture was also associated with higher odds of workplace outness. Changes in these workplace characteristics would increase visibility of LGBTI workers and lead to a better promotion of diversity in the workplace.

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