

Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace: The Lived Experiences of Singaporean LGBTQ+ Individuals

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Introduction

In August 2021, Singapore Prime Minister (PM) Lee Hsien Loong announced that the Singapore government would introduce legislation to address discrimination at the workplace.¹ Subsequently, the Tripartite Committee on Workplace Fairness (TCWF) issued an interim report in February 2023 followed by a final report in August 2023 setting out its recommendations on the forthcoming Workplace Fairness Legislation (WFL), which were fully accepted by the government.²

In particular, the TCWF recommended that the WFL enshrine the following as protected characteristics: age; nationality; sex; marital status, pregnancy status and caregiving responsibilities; race, religion and language; disability and mental health condition. Despite calls to expand the scope of protected characteristics in the legislation to include characteristics such as sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), TCWF rejected doing so on the basis that the WFL should only “protect against the more common and familiar forms of discrimination, which support [Singapore’s] key social and economic objectives”.³

In a response to a forum letter by Action for Aids Singapore and Oogachaga calling for the WFL to recognise medical conditions, physical attributes, sexual orientation, and gender identity as protected characteristics under the WFL,⁴ the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) explained that the protected characteristics as recommended by the TCWF were selected on the basis that they accounted for almost all

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<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/ndr-2021-anti-discrimination-law-tafep-pm-lee-2143101>

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<https://www.mom.gov.sg/newsroom/press-releases/2023/0804-government-accepts-tripartite-committee-final-recommendations-for-wfl>

3

<https://www.mom.gov.sg/-/media/mom/documents/press-releases/2023/tripartite-committee-on-workplace-fairness-final-report.pdf>

4

<https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/forum/forum-proposed-workplace-fairness-law-needs-to-be-all-inclusive>

discrimination complaints reported to the Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) from 2018 to 2022.⁵

This report however shows that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people in Singapore also struggle with workplace discrimination on the basis of their SOGI and deserve legal protection from under the WFL. Based on a survey with almost 700 respondents, our findings reveal that almost one-third of them (n = 123, 30.07%) experienced at least one form of discrimination in the workplace due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, and close to half (n = 178, 43.52%) of them reported some form of harassment at the workplace.

SOGI discrimination in Singapore

Our findings are consistent with past studies on workplace discrimination in Singapore faced by LGBTQ persons. A submission from Oogachaga and Pink Dot SG to the United Nations Human Rights Council noted that members of the LGBTQ community in Singapore face discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.⁶ This follows many queer Singaporeans into the workplace - a 2014 survey by SOGI Singapore found that 15% of LGBT employees experienced discrimination from employers and fellow colleagues.⁷ Similarly, a 2022 AWARE survey found that LGBTQ people faced much higher rates of workplace discrimination (68%) compared to people who did not identify as LGBTQ (56%).⁸ Within the queer community, some groups are more vulnerable than others. A 2018 study by the Asia Pacific Transgender Network, Curtin University and the UNDP found that transgender people are significantly less likely than cisgender people to

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<https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/forum/forum-sending-a-strong-signal-there-is-no-place-for-workplace-discrimination-in-singapore>

⁶ "Human rights issues specific to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in Singapore". Joint submission of Oogachaga and Pink Dot SG to the 24th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review 2016. Available at:

<https://uprdoc.ohchr.org/uprweb/downloadfile.aspx?filename=2209&file=EnglishTranslation>

⁷ SOGI-Singapore. (2014). National LGBT Census: Singapore. Survey. SOGI Singapore.

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<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.aware.org.sg/2022/09/1-in-2-experienced-workplace-discrimination-aware-milieu-survey/&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1712683410497186&usg=AOvVaw3Vx11powc4seKXx9iKPHqH>

receive positive responses to job applications, despite having equivalent qualifications⁹.

Many of these negative experiences go unreported by victims. A 2018 survey on LBTQ women found that they did not report discriminatory hiring decisions as they were unaware of available avenues or did not believe that recourse was possible¹⁰. This leads to many employees having to silently navigate through unfair dismissals, harassment (sexual or otherwise), and poor job security. Threatened with job loss, many employees feel pressured to conform to gender stereotypes and censor their views on SOGI-related issues¹¹.

In this regard, it is not surprising that LGBTQ workers have not sought support or assistance from TAFEP between 2018 and 2022. During this period, section 377A of the Penal Code - which criminalises same-sex intimacy between men - made it potentially dangerous and practically impossible for LGBTQ people to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity to the authorities. It is also not clear whether TAFEP is able or willing to support LGBTQ persons who have experienced workplace discrimination.¹² The Singapore government only announced its intention to repeal section 377A in August 2022 and the repeal only took effect from 1 January 2023.¹³

⁹ Winter, S., Davis-McCabe, C., Russell, C., Wilde, D., Chu, T.H., Suparak, P. and Wong, J. (2018). Denied Work: An audit of employment discrimination on the basis of gender identity in Asia, p.31. Bangkok: Asia Pacific Transgender Network and United Nations Development Programme.

¹⁰

[https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Sayoni%20Human%20Rights%20Documentation%20on%20the%20violence%20and%20discrimination%20of%20LBTQ%20persons%20in%20Singapore%20\(EBook%20Version\).pdf](https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Sayoni%20Human%20Rights%20Documentation%20on%20the%20violence%20and%20discrimination%20of%20LBTQ%20persons%20in%20Singapore%20(EBook%20Version).pdf)

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[https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Sayoni%20Human%20Rights%20Documentation%20on%20the%20violence%20and%20discrimination%20of%20LBTQ%20persons%20in%20Singapore%20\(EBook%20Version\).pdf](https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Sayoni%20Human%20Rights%20Documentation%20on%20the%20violence%20and%20discrimination%20of%20LBTQ%20persons%20in%20Singapore%20(EBook%20Version).pdf)

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<https://www.facebook.com/heckin.unicorn/posts/earlier-today-we-posted-our-internship-position-on-social-media-by-afternoon-taf/852451511971028/>

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<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/ndr-2022-govt-will-repeal-section-377a-decriminalise-sex-between-men>

The slow progress on SOGI workplace discrimination is detrimental to the LGBTQ community and Singapore at large. LGBTQ people are experiencing adverse effects on mental wellbeing as a result of employment-related discrimination¹⁴. On a national scale, discriminatory work practices may result in decreased productivity and inefficient allocation of human capital, compromising Singapore's economic potential¹⁵.

Current legal framework on SOGI workplace discrimination and harassment

Singapore has historically adopted a business-case approach to workplace discrimination, which is focused on highlighting the benefits of diversity and non-discrimination to companies rather than to prohibit and punish discriminatory employment practices.¹⁶ There have therefore been limited legal protections against workplace discrimination in the context of wrongful dismissal, especially as it relates to pregnancy¹⁷ and age discrimination.¹⁸

Prohibitions against wrongful dismissal

Under common law, an employee may not be dismissed without just cause or excuse, including on the ground of discrimination. Section 14 of the Employment Act 1968 (EA) provides for an employee who considers that they have been so dismissed to lodge a claim for wrongful dismissal against their employer under the Employment Claims Act 2016 (ECA) for either of the following remedies: (a) reinstatement in their former employment; or (b) compensation.

¹⁴ Toh GW, Koh WL, Ho J, Chia J, Maulod A, Tirtajana I, et al. Experiences of conflict, non-acceptance and discrimination are associated with poor mental well-being amongst LGBTQ-identified individuals in Singapore. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*. 2023;42(5):625–55.

¹⁵ <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/lgbt-inclusion-development/>

¹⁶ Chia, A., & Lim, A. (2010). Singapore: Equality, harmony and fair employment. In *International Handbook on Diversity Management at Work*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

¹⁷ Section 84 of the EA prohibits the dismissal of an employee during pregnancy and maternity leave without sufficient cause.

¹⁸ Section 8 of the Retirement and Re-employment Act 1993 (RRA) prohibits the unlawful dismissal of an employee below the prescribed retirement age on the basis of that employee's age.

The Tripartite Guidelines on Wrongful Dismissal (TGWD) also expressly state that dismissing an employee because of discrimination e.g. against the employee's age, race, gender, religion, marital status and family responsibilities, or disability is wrongful. Section 20(7) of the ECA requires the employment claims tribunal (ECT) to have regard to the TGWD when deciding any claim involving a wrongful dismissal dispute.

The TGWD does not make any express reference to discrimination on the basis of SOGI. It is unclear whether the reference to "gender" in the TGWD is intended to cover SOGI as well.

Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices

In 2006, the Tripartite Alliance for Fair Employment Practices (TAFEP) was set up to develop guidelines on "fair employment practices" after such an initiative was first proposed by a parliamentary committee to address age discrimination. TAFEP subsequently issued the Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices (TGFEF) in 2007, which were updated in October 2011 to include a new section on "hiring and developing a Singaporean core".

The first of five principles of fair employment practices set out in the TGFEF requires employers to "recruit and select employees on the basis of merit (such as skills, experience or ability to perform the job), and regardless of age, race, gender, religion, marital status and family responsibilities, or disability". Like the TGWD, the TGFEF does not make any express reference to discrimination on the basis of SOGI though TAFEP had informed a local online LGBTQ retail store that it was not permitted to preferentially hire LGBTQ applicants.¹⁹ It is similarly unclear whether the reference to "gender" in the TGFEF is intended to cover SOGI as well.

In 2013, MOM introduced the Fair Consideration Framework (FCF) which imposes administrative penalties on errant employers for non-adherence to the TGFEF. From

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<https://www.facebook.com/heckin.unicorn/posts/earlier-today-we-posted-our-internship-position-on-social-media-by-afternoon-taf/852451511971028/>

January 2020 onwards, such errant employers may be subject to work pass debarment for a period of between 12 and 24 months. This includes both new work pass applications as well as renewals.

Regulation of workplace harassment

The Protection From Harassment Act 2014 (POHA) provides remedies for a person who has suffered harassment, alarm or distress due to threatening, abusive or insulting conduct from another person. It also prohibits unlawful stalking as well as false statements of fact. However, POHA does not specifically prohibit discrimination-related harassment or workplace harassment.

In 2015, the Tripartite Advisory on Managing Workplace Harassment (TAMWH) was issued to provide guidance to employers and employees on preventive measures to adopt to ensure a safe and conducive workplace. It also recommends proactive management and remedial actions that employers and affected persons can take if harassment occurs at the workplace.

Neither POHA nor the TAMWH offers any examples or illustrations in respect of workplace harassment on the basis of SOGI.

Forthcoming enactment of the WFL

In addition to the TCWF's recommendation against enshrining SOGI as protected characteristics in the WFL, the TCWF also recommended that the WFL should define "discrimination" as "making an adverse employment decision because of any protected characteristic".

This definition of discrimination would cover only direct discrimination, which refers to the unfavourable treatment of a person or group on the basis of their protected characteristic. It would not prohibit other forms of discrimination, such as indirect discrimination or the denial of reasonable accommodations.

The TCWF also rejected suggestions to prohibit harassment under the workplace fairness legislation, and to impose duties on employers to keep the workplace safe from harassment. Instead, the TCWF recommended that TAFEP work with the employer to put in place proper harassment prevention policies and procedures that are aligned with the TAMWH. For employers that are not cooperative, the TCWF recommended that TAFEP refer the matter to MOM to administer sanctions.

Methodology

This study was an exploratory cross-sectional survey conducted from March 2023 to August 2023 to examine the experiences of LGBTQ persons specifically with respect to their experiences of stigma in workplace settings. To be eligible for this study, participants had to be between 18 to 85 years old, identify as a SOGI minority, and have ever worked or been employed in Singapore. Ethics approval was obtained from the institutional review board at the National University of Singapore (NUS-IRB-2022-98) prior to data collection.

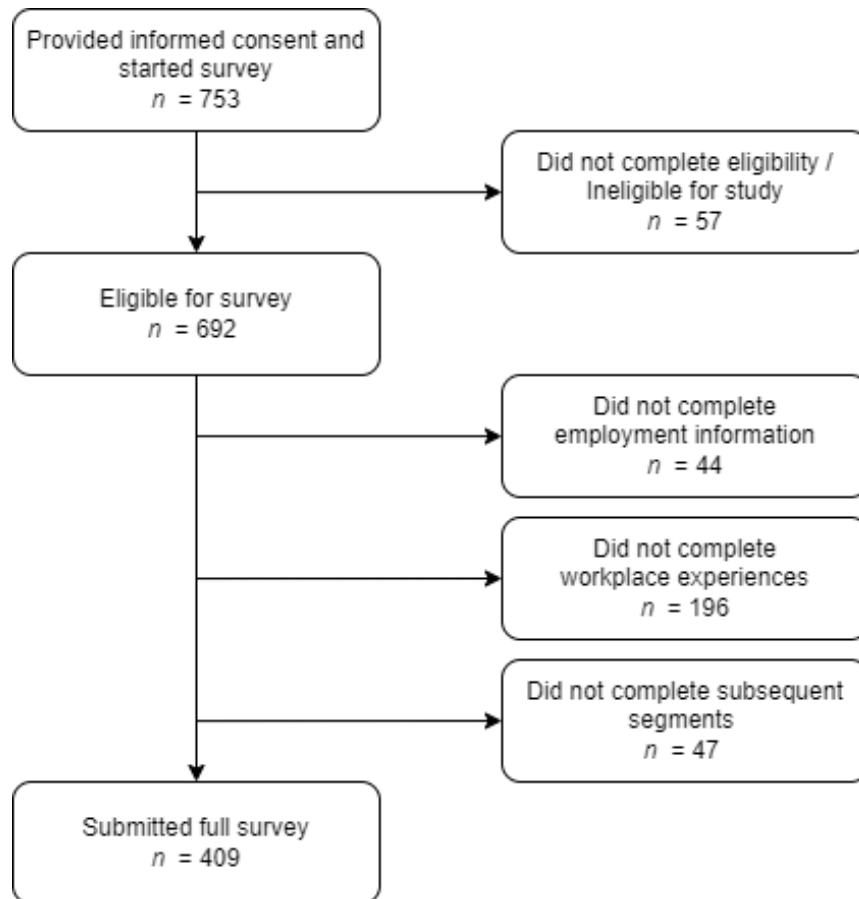
The survey was disseminated via the social media networks of LGBTQ community-based organizations in Singapore such as Pink Dot. Participants who agreed to take part in the survey would click on the survey link using their own devices and thus be given the full details of what the study would entail via the participant information sheet. Subsequently, participants would provide documented consent by clicking on the button to proceed with the survey. The survey was hosted on RedCap, a survey-administration web platform. No remuneration was provided to participants for taking part in this survey. Furthermore, no personal identifiers or IP addresses were collected in order to safeguard participants' identities.

Demographic information was collected from all participants, such as age, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, and religion. Additionally, they answered several components of employment discrimination, such as what types of discrimination and harassment they have experienced in their lifetime and their experiences of reporting their grievances.

The questions in this survey were based on the Employment Experiences Survey conducted by the Williams Institute in 2021, which was modeled on several similar prior studies done to assess employment discrimination and employees efforts done to avoid facing discrimination. Permission was obtained from the Williams Institute in order to make use of their survey questions, and small adjustments were made to localize it to the Singaporean context. Open-ended questions were also included in order to elucidate deeper understanding into their experiences of discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

A total of 753 participants provided informed consent and started the survey, and 57 participants either did not complete the eligibility segment or were ineligible for the study, leaving 692 eligible participants. Participants who selected gender identity response options that were either “male” or “female” and differed from either their sex assigned at birth or sex indicated on their NRIC / national identification document were classified as transgender. Those who selected gender identity options that matched their sex assigned at birth or sex indicated on their NRIC / national identification document were classified as cisgender. Those whose gender identity response options were either “non-binary” or “other genders” were classified as gender-diverse. Cisgender participants who reported that they were straight as their sexual orientation identity ($n = 4$) and participants who we could not conclusively identify as sexual orientation minorities or gender identity minorities ($n = 3$) were also excluded from analyses as they did not fit the eligibility criteria. Among the 692 eligible participants, 409 of them completed the survey and were included inside the analytic sample. A flowchart of this process can be found in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Flowchart for analytic sample



Statistical analysis was carried out using the statistical software STATA version 18 (Stata Corp, College Station, TX, USA). Basic descriptives were used to summarize sociodemographic information. Two-way tables of frequency counts were used together with Pearson's chi-square test for outcome variables and sociodemographic data to assess any associations at the bivariable level. Logistic regression was utilized to examine the associations between sociodemographic factors and the likelihood of experiencing any form of discrimination and harassment in their lifetime. Additionally, multivariable linear regression was used to examine the associations between the amount of lifetime experience of discrimination and harassment experienced, how out the participants were to their co-workers, the amount of covering behaviors they engaged in at the workplace, and a combined minority score (gender identity, sexual orientation, and race). Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Quotes included in this report were selected to illustrate a bigger picture of the discrimination and harassment experienced by respondents. They were edited to correct for issues like typos, spellings, and grammar, which did not impact the substance of the response.

Findings

Demographics of respondents

A summary of the demographic variables can be found in Appendix A-1. Overall, the mean age of the participants was 31.95 years old ($SD = 8.03$), with the majority being Chinese ($n = 309, 75.55\%$). The rest were Indian ($n = 30, 7.33\%$), Malay ($n = 27, 6.60\%$), and others ($n = 43, 10.51\%$). There were 240 (58.68%) females and 169 (41.32%) males as per sex assigned at birth. 73.35% ($n = 300$) were cisgender, 9.29% ($n = 38$) were transgender, and 17.36% ($n = 71$) were gender-diverse.

Most of the participants identified as gay ($n = 135, 33.01\%$) or lesbian ($n = 109, 26.65\%$), followed by bisexual ($n = 87, 21.27\%$) and other sexual orientations such as pansexual or asexual ($n = 64, 15.65\%$). There were 4 participants (.98%) who identified as questioning, who were subsequently folded into the “other sexual orientations” group for analysis due to the small group size.

Prevalence of discrimination and harassment

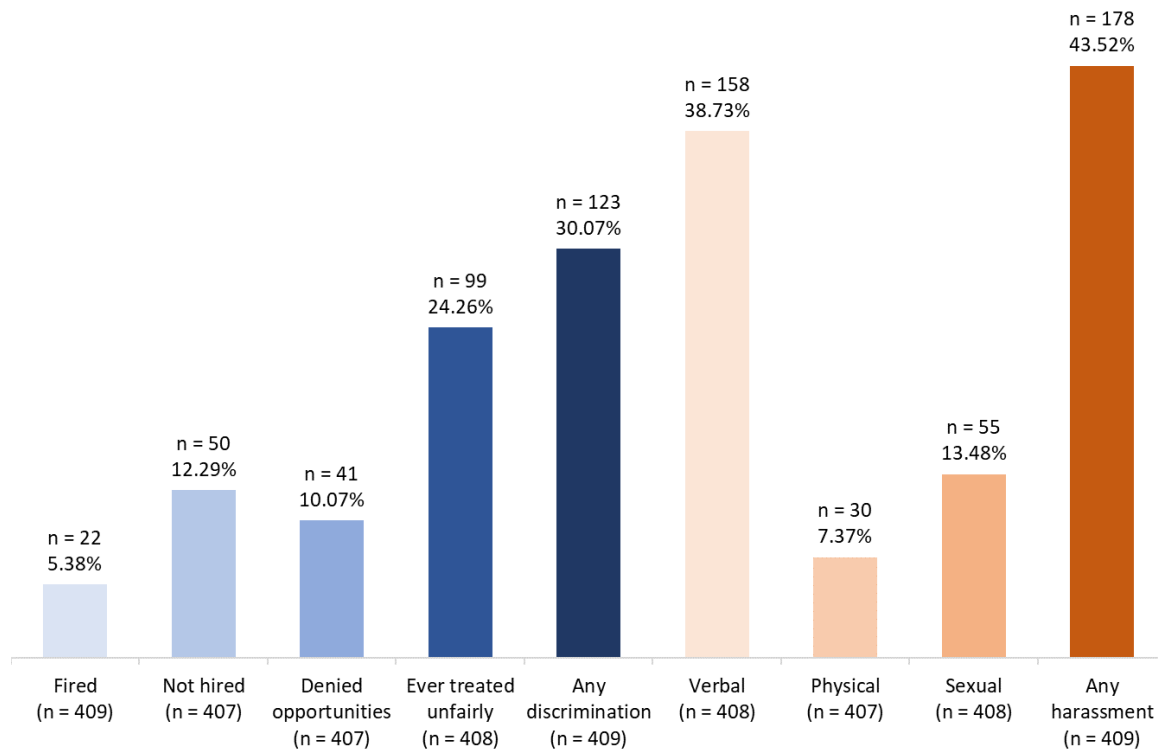
Overall trends for discrimination and harassment

A summary of the rates of discrimination and harassment experienced over the lifetime can be found in Appendix A-2. Over half of the participants ($n = 208, 50.85\%$) experienced at least one form of discrimination or harassment at the workplace due to their sexual orientation or gender identity in their lifetime. The type of employment discrimination experienced ranges from being fired from an existing job, not hired for a new job, being denied promotions or opportunities, and being treated unfairly in the workplace. Harassment in the workplace can vary from verbal, physical, to sexual.

Due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, almost one-third of participants ($n = 123, 30.07\%$) reported experiencing at least one form of employment discrimination in the workplace at some point of their lives, and 43.52% ($n = 178$) of them reported

experiencing some form of harassment at the workplace. Figure 2 summarizes the rates of the different types of discrimination and harassment experienced.

Figure 2. Rates of different types of discrimination and harassment experienced over the lifetime based on SOGI



Experiences of discrimination in the workplace

In terms of SOGI-based discrimination in the workplace, 5.38% (n = 22) of participants experienced being fired from their job, and 12.29% (n = 50) reported not being hired despite being adequately qualified once the employer found out about their sexual orientation or gender identity. Examples of such experiences include:

“(I was) terminated from the job after returning from trans-related surgeries, (and I) did not even (get) a month's notice.”

- Chinese transgender bisexual man

“I was fired after my supervisor found out I was lesbian. As I got closer with one of my colleagues I told him I was gay and the next day my

supervisor pulled me aside and started yelling at me in front of the ongoing crowd ... (I) finished my break and finished the shift and never came back."

- Javanese cisgender lesbian woman

"I was interviewing for a role ... I disclosed that I am a lesbian and LGBTQ community organizer. The external headhunter told me not to talk about these things in the interview with the company's HR team because a previous candidate had referred to "his husband" throughout his interview and the company's HR team told the external headhunter that they did not wish to proceed with that candidate because of the reference to his same-sex spouse."

- Chinese cisgender lesbian woman

"(I was) denied continuation of job interview/prospective job because of non-feminine dressing/the way I looked/presented."

- Chinese cisgender lesbian woman

"During job interviews, they would say I don't meet their expected "image" of the company."

- Chinese gender-diverse person

Aside from being fired or not hired, participants also experienced other forms of discrimination in the workplace due to their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression, such as being passed over for promotions and being denied opportunities that they were qualified for (n = 41, 10.07%), as well as being treated unfairly (n = 99, 24.26%). Some examples of their experiences are:

"(My boss) would not offer opportunities to me because I looked masculine presenting, while offering them to more feminine presenting females and the males in the office. Only I would be tasked to do heavy lifting while the other staff were not."

- Chinese cisgender woman

“At an end-of-year Work Review session, when I asked my Reporting Officer (RO) what my KPIs for the following years were to be appointed Key Personnel in school, I was told that I would not be appointed due to my sexual orientation.”

- Chinese cisgender gay man

“My boss at the time intentionally tried matchmaking me with other male colleagues in the office, and gave me a drastically poorer grade compared to other years' performance evaluation. It was also obvious he was leaving me and another queer colleague out of team gatherings/isolating us in terms of team dynamics.”

- Chinese cisgender lesbian woman

“I am under employment at the ministry of education, training to become a teacher. However when the ministry found out that I was transgender, they barred me from graduating with a teaching certification and forbade me from entering schools unless I get sex reassignment surgery. I feel that my genitals have no relation to what I teach and my job performance.”

- Indian transgender lesbian woman

“The worst experiences have been with my homophobic senior colleague who gave negative, prejudiced reports to my supervisor, shouted at me at work, and used derogatory words and gestures (toward me).”

- Indian cisgender bisexual woman

Experiences of harassment in the workplace

In terms of SOGI-based discrimination in the workplace, 38.73% (n = 158) of the participants experienced some form of verbal harassment, which included being

called names like “ah gua”, and experiencing humiliating or offensive jokes in relation to their SOGI. Examples of such experiences include:

“I experienced regular “you should be raped until you're pregnant then kicked and hit.” jokes directed at me from my boss and 2 female colleagues. My body was commented on, and made fun of. I was called an “it”.”

- Chinese gender-diverse bisexual person

“A manager pulled my chest binder and asked why I'm not wearing a bra. (He put) my full name on the roster instead of my preferred name, but a cis colleague with a totally different name from their IC could put their preferred name and when I asked why he said “is to remind me always and to let everyone know that I'm a girl.””

- Malay transgender bisexual male

“(My direct supervisor) constantly made jokes about my gender presentation, calling me “tomboy” to taunt me in front of my colleagues, humiliating me with hurtful and inappropriate comments in front of other colleagues by asking me “you sure you girl meh?” (and) referring to me as “The Lesbian” during meetings. All these were passed off as “jokes” which made it very difficult to express my discomfort, especially in front of other colleagues.”

- Chinese gender-diverse lesbian person

A smaller percentage of participants (n = 30, 7.37%) experienced some form of physical harassment in the workplace due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Some examples are:

“I fought with a female colleague out of self defense because she grabbed the back of my neck when I ignored her. I ignored her because she wanted me to watch a graphic rape scene and then a graphic anal

sex scene in an anime she was watching in the office. Another incident, she threatened me with a pair of scissors and I was cornered. She wouldn't back off despite verbal warnings and she moved even more into my personal space, so I shoved her away and tried to wrestle the scissors away from her."

- Chinese gender-diverse bisexual person

"Many male colleagues would threaten to punch me or hit me because, [they said] 'if I want to look like a man then I should be treated like one'."

- Chinese cisgender woman

13.48% (n = 55) of participants experienced sexual harassment at the workplace on the basis of SOGI. When asked to elaborate on their worst experiences of discrimination or harassment, many participants specifically wrote about their experiences of sexual harassment, which can be seen below.

"A female colleague who is married and slightly more superior kept making unwelcomed and lingering touches and even tried to hug me from behind while I was at the pantry. This continued even though I instantly expressed my discomfort verbally and non-verbally and asked her to stop. She would laugh happily because she was amused by my reactions and said she enjoys teasing me. It made me really uncomfortable when she kept commenting on my gender expression."

- Chinese cisgender lesbian woman

"Daily sexual harassment from co-workers that went on for months. They kept telling me if I had sex with them I would be "normal" again and not be attracted to women. They would even make obscene gestures to show how they would try to have sex with me. They even tried to touch me inappropriately but I walked away. I reported it to HR but I was told to suck it up and get used to it if I want to work in a male dominated industry."

- Chinese transgender man

“My sexual orientation was made public at a work event and (my identity) as a lesbian was fetishised by senior staff in front of many colleagues. I felt exposed and out of control - and felt I had to laugh and smile through it all in order to make OTHER people comfortable.”

- Eurasian cisgender lesbian woman

“Day in and day out my colleagues would slap my butt as I walked in the office and once there was one of them who touched my thigh really close to my crotch. My work was also undermined at the start because of distrust, everyone knew I was gay before I even entered.”

- Chinese gender-diverse gay person

Low reporting rates of experienced discrimination and harassment

Overall trends for reporting grievances

Despite participants experiencing high rates of workplace discrimination or harassment over their lifetime, overall trends indicate that participants are unlikely to report their grievances. Among the participants who have ever experienced some form of discrimination and harassment in their lifetime (n = 308), only 33 of them have ever reported their experience. 33 (10.71%) reported it within their company, 1 (0.32%) reported it to the Ministry of Manpower, and 3 (0.97%) reported it to TAFEP.

Among those who reported their experience, only 7 (21.88%) reported that actions were taken against their perpetrator. 50.00% (n = 16) of them had their cases dismissed without investigation, while another 7 (21.88%) were dismissed after the investigation concluded. 21.88% (n = 7) did not receive a response after the report was made. A summary of this information can be found in Appendix A-3.

Experiences when reporting grievances

Participants were also asked to share in detail about how their experiences with trying to report their grievances went. Their responses can be mainly grouped into three categories:

- (1) Told not to report - when trying to make a report, they were advised to drop the case instead

“The HR manager told me not to make waves when I told him I was unhappy with my ex-supervisor.”

- Chinese cisgender gay man

“Convinced me not (to) report the case due to my identity”

- Chinese cisgender gay man

- (2) Retaliation - when trying to make a report, they experienced retaliatory behaviors, including harassment, dismissal and other victimizing conduct.

“I was told to suck it up or I can quit if I'm unhappy about it. Nothing was done to the perpetrators. I was made fun of and laughed at, I was called weak and a snowflake for being so sensitive to being sexually harassed. They told me I should learn how to take a joke. I was also told that I should grow up if I want them to take me seriously because they think my complaints were just someone being whiny over some minor inconveniences.”

Chinese transgender man

“In my previous job they simply fired me without explanation when I was uncomfortably asked about my sexuality and visibly upset about it. In my current job, although management did reaffirm that discrimination has no place in the office, they did not investigate or resolve the issue. I was told to apologize to the aggressor.”

Chinese cisgender gay man

- (3) Legal ambiguity - Some employers choose not to take action on the basis that Singapore law does not protect or recognise LGBTQ persons.

“There was no redress, HR representative shrugged their shoulders and said their hands were tied as same-sex marriage is not legally recognised in Singapore. I ended up resigning.”

Chinese cisgender bisexual woman

Reasons for not reporting grievances

When asked to elaborate on why they chose not to report their experiences of discrimination and harassment, 67.38% (n = 188) said that it was because they expected a lack of support even if they made a report. 80.29% (n = 224) said they did not report it because they feared the risk of retaliation especially since they would have to out themselves to make a report. Figures 3 and 4 showcase the trends, while the specific rates can be found in Appendix A-4.

Figure 3. Participants expecting a lack of support reporting grievances (n=279)

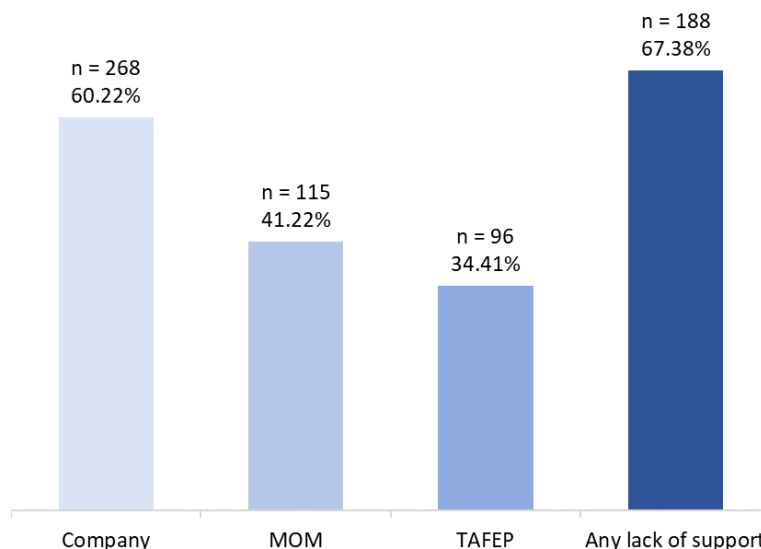
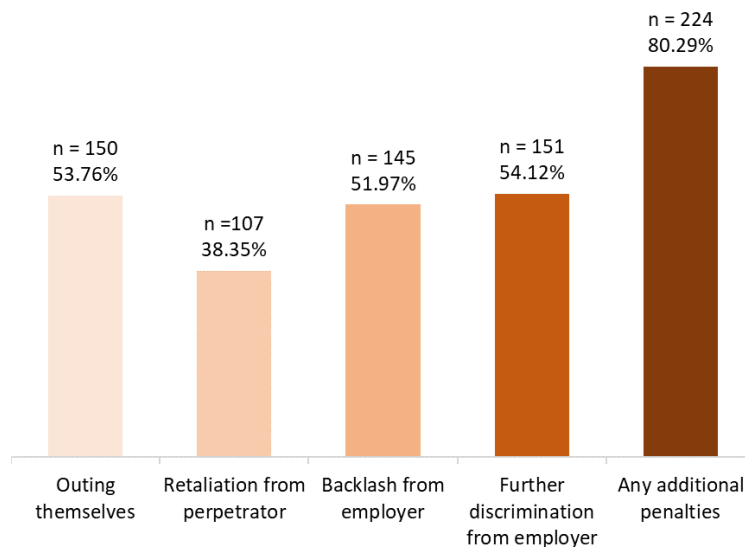


Figure 4. Participants expecting retaliation for reporting grievances (n=279)



Contributing factors for increased discrimination and harassment

Overall trends for experiencing increased discrimination and harassment

In order to gain a better understanding of what factors would lead to an individual potentially experiencing increased levels of discrimination and harassment in the workplace due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, bi-variable chi-square tests were done. This would allow us to tease out associations between the various types of discrimination and harassment experienced and factors such as race and gender identity. A summary of this data can be found in Appendix A-5.

When evaluating lifetime experience of discrimination and harassment by race, the minority races were more likely to report some forms of harassment compared to the Chinese. 55.56% (n = 15) of Malay participants and 50.00% (n = 15) of Indian participants experienced some form of verbal harassment compared to 34.74% (n = 107) of Chinese participants. In addition, 26.92% (n = 7) of Malay participants and 26.67% (n = 8) of Indian participants reported some form of sexual harassment compared to 11.97% (n = 37) of Chinese participants.

When comparing their experiences based on gender identity, transgender and gender-diverse participants reported higher lifetime rates of discrimination and

harassment due to their sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace compared to cisgender participants. Transgender participants were much more likely to have been fired or not hired compared to either cisgender or gender-diverse participants (fired: 23.68% vs 3.33% and 4.23%; not hired: 45.95% vs 7.36% and 15.49%). 54.05% (n = 20) of transgender participants were also ever treated unfairly in the workplace compared to 19.67% (n = 59) of cisgender participants and 28.17% (n = 20) of gender-diverse participants. In addition, both gender-diverse (n = 36, 50.70%) and transgender (n = 22, 59.46%) were more likely to experience verbal harassment compared to cisgender participants (n = 100, 33.33%). A graphic representation can be found in Figures 5 and 6.

Figure 5. Participants experiencing discrimination based on gender identity

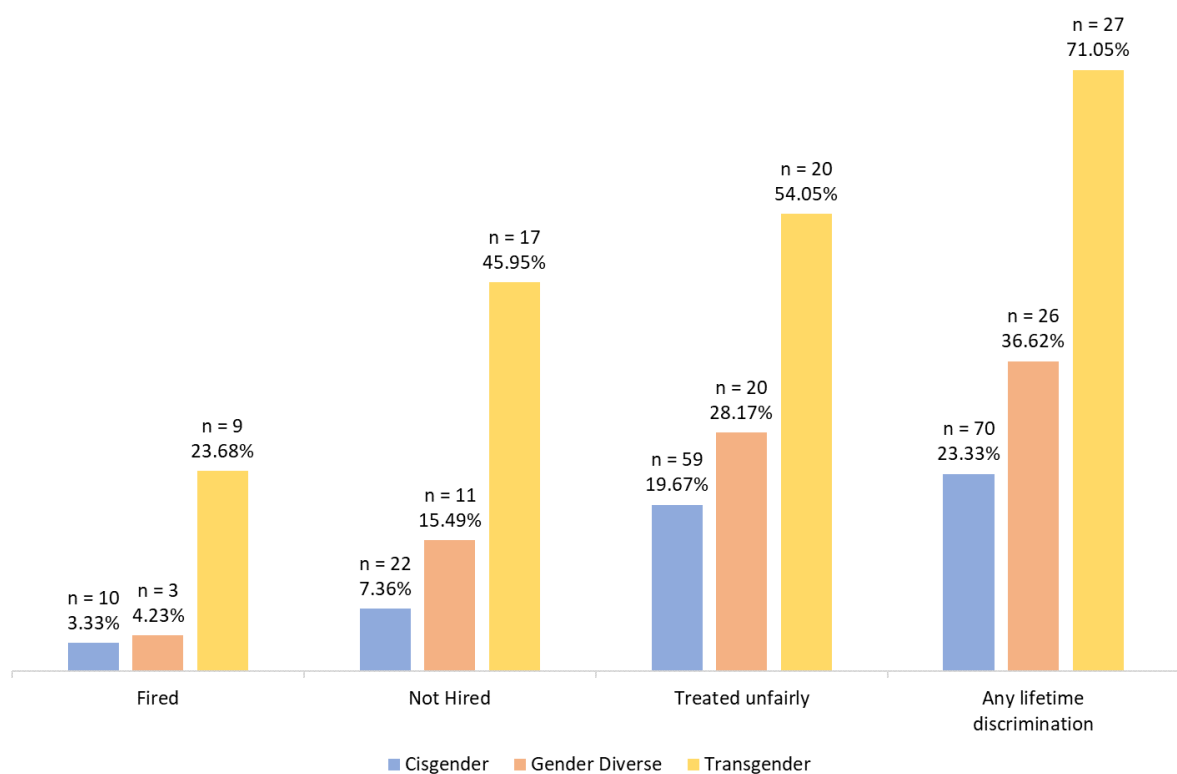
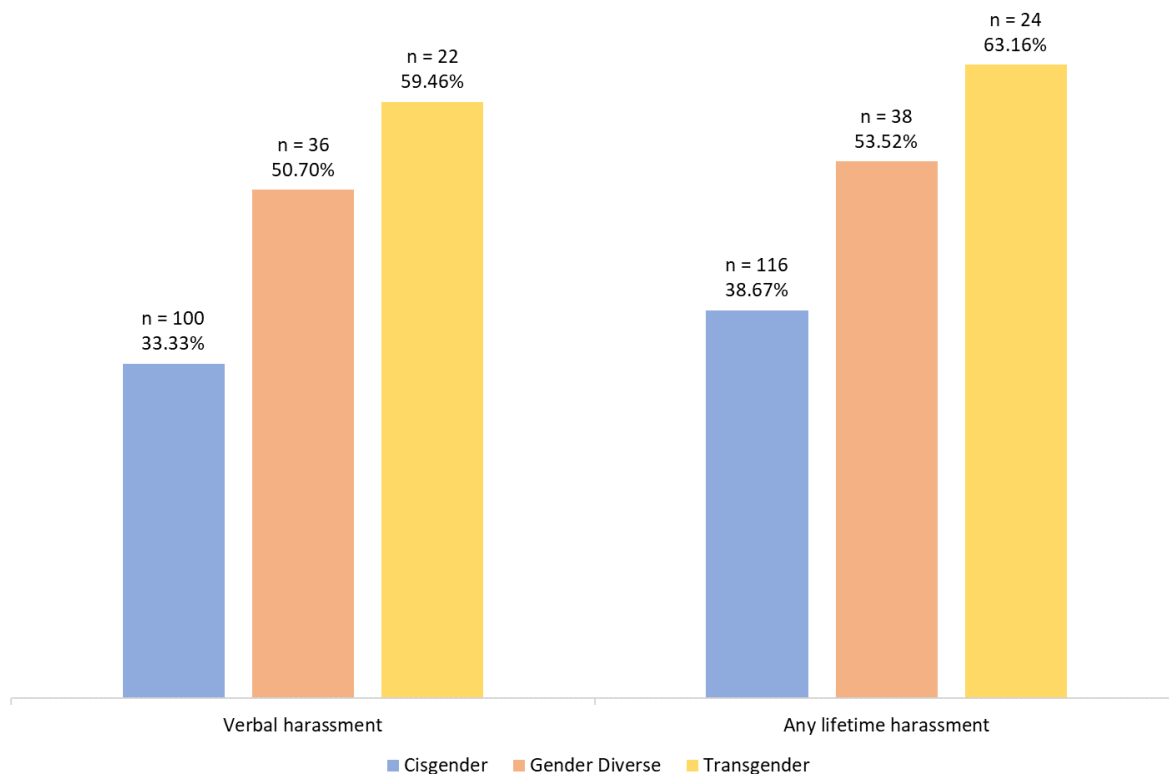


Figure 6. Participants experiencing harassment based on gender identity



In addition to just bi-variable chi-square tests, three logistic regressions were done to determine if age, gender identity, race, and sexual orientation would influence the likelihood of a participant having experienced any form of lifetime discrimination, lifetime harassment, or both. All three logistic regression models were statistically significant, $p < .01$. The comparison point for the models was a Chinese cisgender gay man, and the adjusted Odds Ratio (aOR) showcases how likely something is to happen in relation to the comparison point. It was found that transgender (aOR=5.71, confidence interval [CI] 2.25, 14.54) and gender-diverse (aOR=3.33, CI 1.80, 6.16) participants had higher odds of experiencing discrimination or harassment compared to cisgender participants. In addition, being Indian significantly increased the likelihood of experiencing lifetime discrimination (aOR=3.22, CI 1.39, 7.49), while being Malay significantly increased the likelihood of experiencing lifetime discrimination (aOR=2.51, CI 1.05, 5.96).

While straight (heterosexual) is included as a sexual orientation and has a noticeably high odds ratio for lifetime experience of both discrimination and harassment, it may not be an accurate depiction as all 10 straight participants were also transgender.

This may have led to their experiences being non-indicative of a cisgender heterosexual person. Figures 7 to 9 summarizes the odds that someone different from the comparison point would experience the same level of discrimination and harassment based on gender identity, race, and sexual orientation. The full odds ratio can be found in Appendix A-6.

Figure 7. Odds ratios from logistic regression (gender identity)

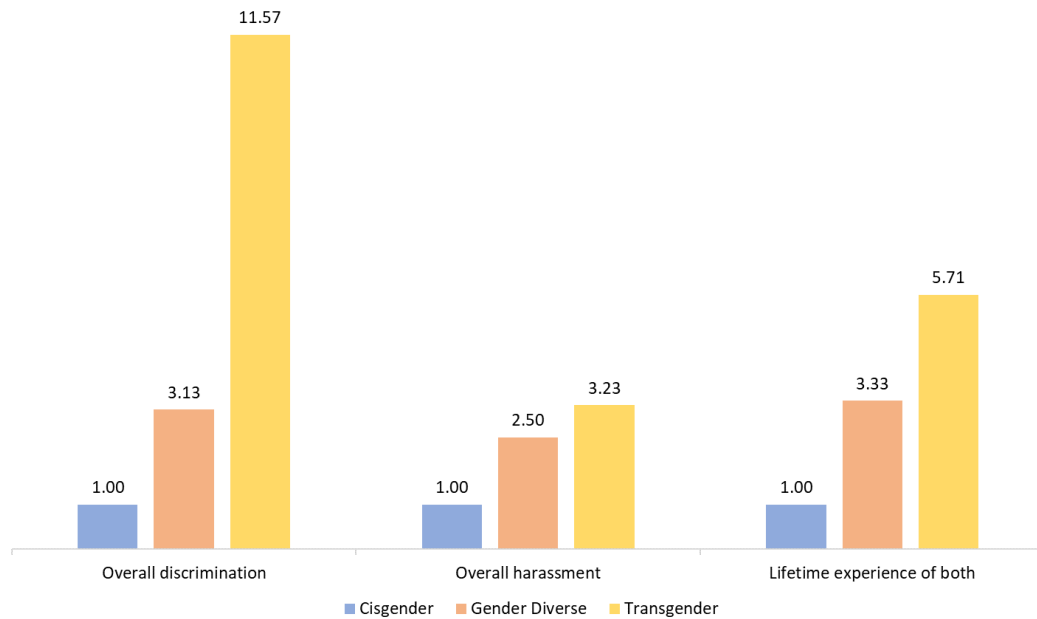


Figure 8. Odds ratios from logistic regression (race)

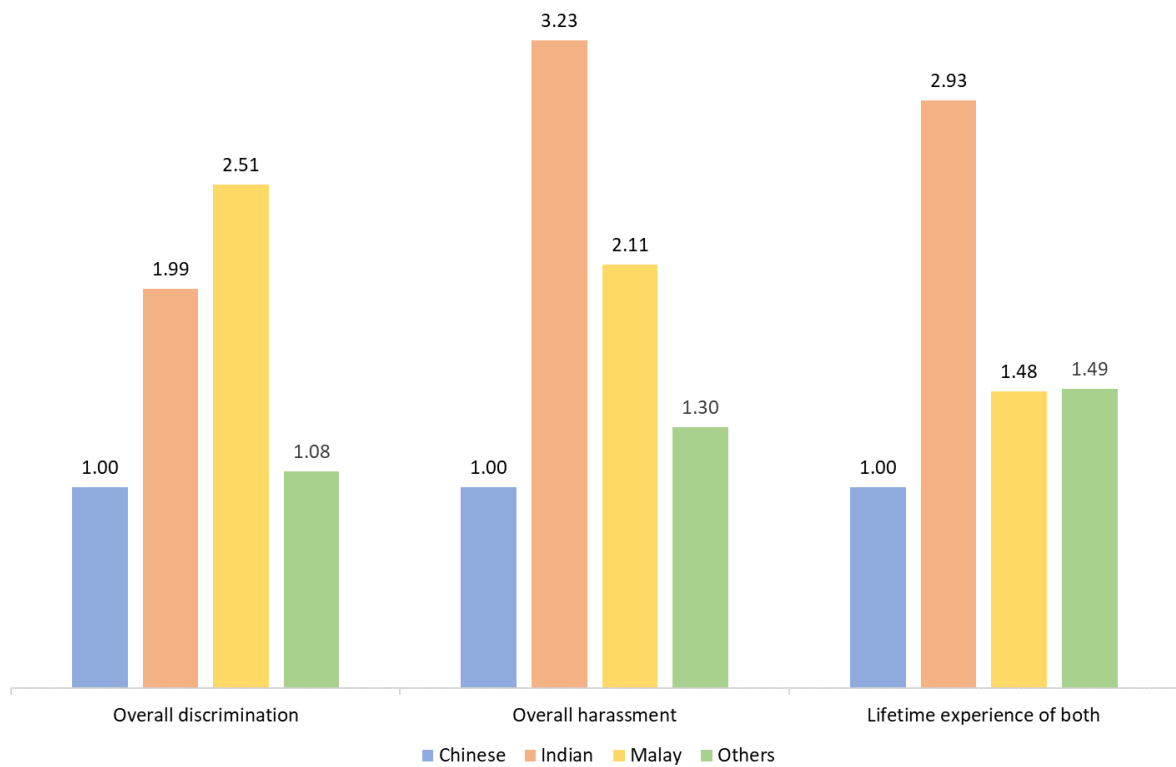
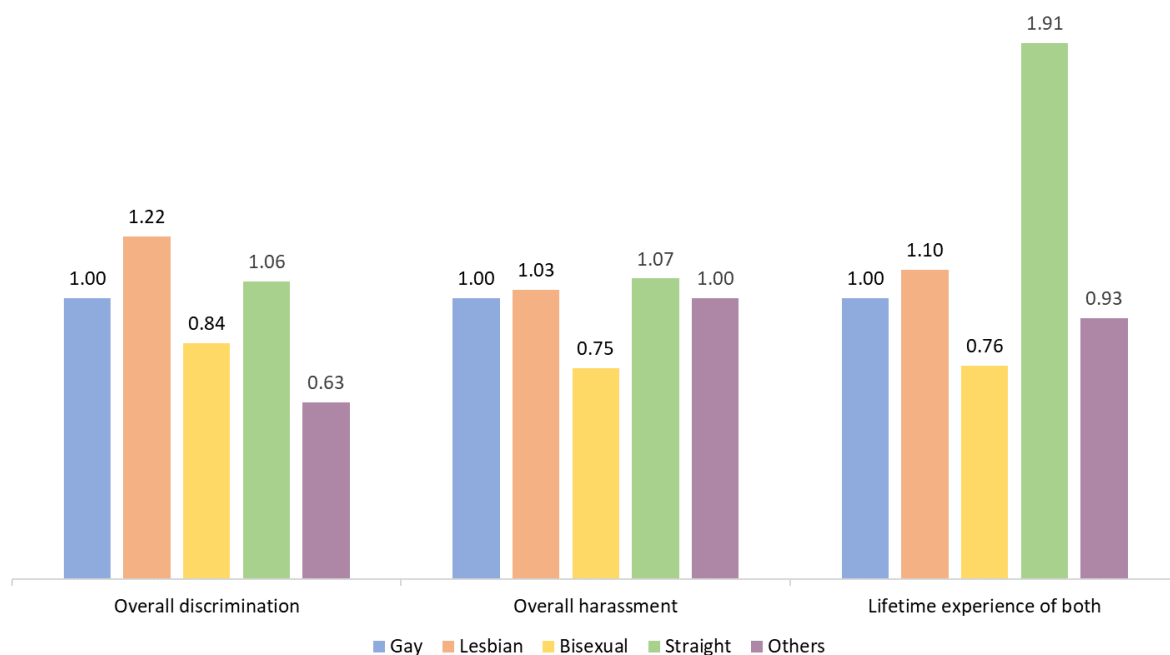


Figure 9. Odds ratios from logistic regression (sexual orientation)



Intersectionality of contributing factors

Aside from race and gender identity contributing independently to the likelihood of experiencing an increased level of discrimination and harassment, we had to explore intersectionality, in which we evaluated if having multiple minority identities would be a greater contributing factor. In order to analyze this, a multiple linear regression involving age, how out the participants were to their co-workers, the amount of covering behaviors they engaged in at the workplace, and a combined minority score (gender identity, sexual orientation, and race) was done.

How out the participants were to their co-workers (adjusted coefficient [$\alpha\beta$]=0.19, CI 0.10, 0.28) and the combined minority score ($\alpha\beta$ =0.51, CI 0.29, 0.73) had a significant positive regression weight, indicating that participants who were more out and had more minority statuses would have experienced increased levels of lifetime discrimination and harassment. The amount of covering behaviors engaged in also had a positive regression weight, indicating that participants who engaged in more covering behaviors at the workplace would have also experienced increased levels

of lifetime discrimination and harassment. Age did not contribute significantly to this model.

Table 1. Results from Regression Analysis for Overall Discrimination and Harassment by Age, Outness to Co-workers, Covering Behaviors at the Workplace, and Minority Score.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	p	Tolerance	VIF
Outness to Co-workers	.194	.046	.000	0.925	1.08
Minority Score	.509	.111	.000	.942	1.06
Covering Score	.182	.022	.000	.945	1.06
Age	.015	.0089	.073	.958	1.04

Differences across industries

Overall prevalence of discrimination and harassment across industries

Finally, we explored the prevalence of participants experiencing specific types of discrimination and harassment in the workplace across different types of employers. While the group sizes across the different employer types differed greatly, looking at the percentages allows us to get a sense of the prevalence of discrimination and harassment within each employer type and compare it across.

Overall, discrimination can be seen across all types of employers, but there are slightly more cases of participants being either not hired or denied opportunities within the civil service compared to other employers. In terms of being treated unfairly, it is more noticeable among law enforcement and for-profit employers. In terms of harassment, verbal harassment is more prominent within the military and law enforcement, while physical and sexual harassment is more prevalent within the military. A visual comparison can be seen in Figures 10 and 11, while the full comparison can be found in Appendix A-7.

Figure 10. Prevalence of discrimination among different employer types.

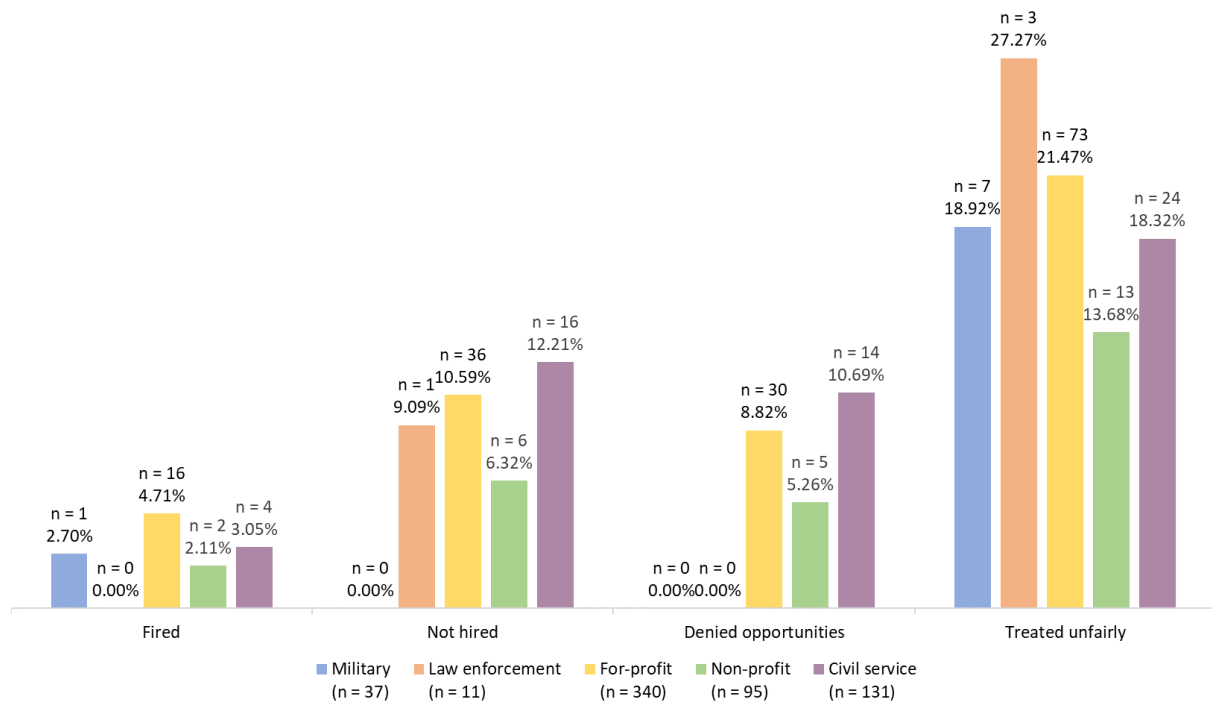
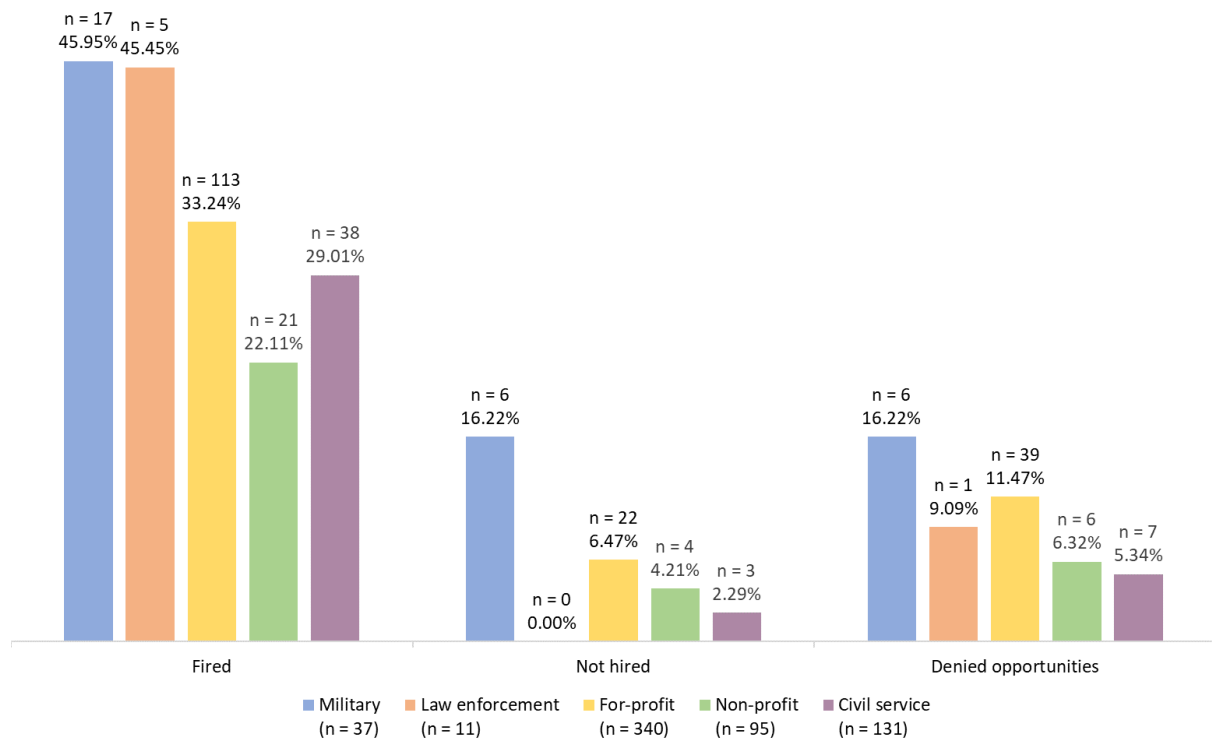


Figure 11. Prevalence of harassment among different employer types.



Discussion

Exclusion of SOGI from the WFL

The foregoing section demonstrates that there is a troublingly high rate of workplace discrimination and harassment on the basis of SOGI. This has serious effects on LGBTQ employees and the wider community. A 2023 analysis of the National LGBT Census 2013 found significant correlation between workplace discrimination and poor mental well-being²⁰. Transgender people are a vulnerable subgroup; a 2018 study in Cambodia found significantly higher proportions of depressive symptoms among transgender women who had difficulties finding and maintaining employment, and who perceived that their colleagues were unsupportive of their transgender identity²¹. On a national scale, economies suffer. A 2019 report by the Williams Institute concluded that exclusionary treatment of LGBT people led to lost labour time, decreased productivity, and inefficient investment and allocation of human resources; resulting in reduced economic output. Concurrently, GDP per capita was higher in countries with more legal rights for LGB people²². A 2011 study by the same institute further found that companies with SOGI-related nondiscrimination policies experienced improved productivity, recruitment, retention, customer service and innovation²³.

Yet, there is limited protection available to LGBTQ workers who experience workplace discrimination and harassment on the basis of SOGI. While the forthcoming enactment of the WFL presents an opportunity to address this policy gap, it is troubling that the government has accepted the TCWF's recommendation

²⁰ Toh GW, Koh WL, Ho J, Chia J, Maulod A, Tirtajana I, et al. Experiences of conflict, non-acceptance and discrimination are associated with poor mental well-being amongst LGBTQ-identified individuals in Singapore. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*. 2023;42(5):625–55.

²¹ Yi, S., Tuot, S., Chhim, S. *et al*. Exposure to gender-based violence and depressive symptoms among transgender women in Cambodia: findings from the National Integrated Biological and Behavioral Survey 2016. *Int J Ment Health Syst* 12, 24 (2018).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13033-018-0206-2>

²² <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/lgbt-inclusion-development/>

²³ Sears, B., Mallory, C., & Hunter, N. (2011). Economic Motives for Adopting LGBT-Related Workplace Policies. *UCLA: The Williams Institute*. Retrieved from
<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2nr871sf>

not to recognise sexual orientation or gender identity as protected characteristics under the WFL.

Instead, the TCWF has suggested that LGBTQ workers and other groups that are not protected by the WFL would continue to be protected by the TGFEP, which will continue to protect against all other forms of workplace discrimination. According to MOM, the WFL will not recognise SOGI as protected characteristics in the WFL because it did not feature prominently among the complaints made to TAFEP between 2018 and 2022.

As our findings reveal, this does not mean that LGBTQ workers do not experience workplace discrimination. Instead, it is quite the opposite. This discrepancy between the number of complaints made to TAFEP and our findings can be attributed to the fact that the TGFEP does not make any express reference to sexual orientation or gender identity. There is also no express indication on TAFEP's website or its materials that TAFEP is open or able to support LGBTQ workers who have experienced workplace discrimination. It is therefore not surprising that few LGBTQ workers have sought assistance from TAFEP over the years.

From a procedural perspective, a worker who has experienced workplace discrimination on the basis of their SOGI as well as a protected characteristic under the WFL (e.g, race or disability) would have to commence their claims separately via the ECT (for the race or disability discrimination claims) and the civil courts (for the SOGI claims). As our findings suggest, those with multiple minority identities are more likely to have experienced workplace discrimination. This means that these workers would either have to forgo their SOGI claims or incur additional time and money to pursue their claims via the civil courts.

From a substantive perspective, there are several legal issues that arise from the exclusion of SOGI from the WFL.

First, our findings also raise serious doubt as to whether the TGFEP is sufficiently effective to address SOGI discrimination at the workplace. Given that the intention of the WFL is to give the government more teeth to combat and deter workplace discrimination, it is troubling that LGBTQ workers will not be afforded the same protection simply because they did not report their experiences to TAFEP in the past.

Second, the exclusion of SOGI from the WFL means that LGBTQ workers would not be able to avail themselves of the legal protection from retaliation. As our findings show, a significant proportion of victims chose not to take any action because they feared retaliation from their employers. As it currently stands, the TGFEP does not address or expressly prohibit retaliation by employers against employees who speak up or report non-compliance with the TGFEP or applicable law.

Third, the WFL cannot adequately address claims of intersectional, or combined, discrimination. This refers to cases where the discrimination experienced by the claimant is because of their SOGI combined with another protected characteristic (e.g., gender or disability).

For example, a gay man may experience combined discrimination if an employer dismisses him after discovering his sexual orientation because the employer thinks that the employee is likely to be HIV-positive. This is a form of combined discrimination based on a stereotype specific to gay men on the basis of their sexual orientation combined with their gender. This is not a form of discrimination solely on the basis of the worker's sexual orientation or gender since the employer would not have treated a heterosexual man or a lesbian woman in the same way.

Another example is discrimination due to SOGI combined with religion. For example, a transgender Muslim worker may be dismissed by their employer who believes that Muslims specifically cannot be transgender. This employer employs other employees who are either transgender or Muslim but not both. The discrimination that the transgender Muslim worker faced is not solely on the basis of their gender identity or

religion since the employer did not treat other transgender non-Muslim or cisgender Muslim employees in the same way.

From a comparative perspective, the lack of protection for LGBTQ workers in Singapore may result in a brain drain to other jurisdictions in the region that offer such protection. As it currently stands, a growing number of countries in Asia Pacific, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, Australia and New Zealand, have legislatively prohibited SOGI discrimination at the workplace.²⁴

From an international law perspective, the exclusion of SOGI may also be inconsistent with Singapore's obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In its Concluding Observations, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) recommended that the Singapore government ensure that lesbians, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons are effectively protected against all forms of discrimination in law and in practice.²⁵

Exclusion of government employees from the WFL

Assuming that the WFL would protect LGBTQ workers, insofar as the WFL would apply to the same categories of employees as set out in the ECA, it may nonetheless fail to protect LGBTQ workers in the military, law enforcement and the civil service.

Currently, the ECA defines an "employee" as an individual who has entered into and works under a contract of service with an employer, and includes any employee of the Government within a category, class or description of such employees prescribed to be employees under the ECA. However, to date, no group of government employees has been prescribed as employees under the ECA.

²⁴ <https://database.ilga.org/discrimination-employment-lgbti>

²⁵ <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n17/392/58/pdf/n1739258.pdf?token=3D19PQX7WaulpLoMLP&fe=true> at para 41.

The exclusion of government employees from the WFL is troubling, given the high rate of workplace discrimination and harassment experienced by LGBTQ workers in the military, law enforcement and the civil service in our findings. In addition, given our finding that most LGBTQ workers who have experienced workplace discrimination and harassment do not feel safe or supported to report such incidents, extending the protection of the WFL to LGBTQ government employees would send a clear and unequivocal message that such discrimination and harassment would not be tolerated at all workplaces.

Prevalence of workplace harassment experienced by LGBTQ workers

Our findings show that workplace harassment, particularly sexual harassment, continues to be a serious issue affecting LGBTQ workers. This suggests that the current legal framework may not be adequate to provide effective protection and recourse to persons who have experienced workplace harassment.

As a starting point, while a victim of workplace harassment may apply for a protection order under POHA, it may not be an appropriate remedy in the context of the workplace. This is because a protection order under POHA may only be made against a respondent in relation to the victim or any related person of the victim. This means that the Protection from Harassment Court (PHC) cannot impose any duties or obligations on an employer to take remedial action if the harassing conduct comes from a specific person at the workplace.

In order to further evaluate the relationship between discrimination and harassment, supplementary analysis involving the correlation between discrimination and harassment was done (Appendix A-8). As our findings show, there is a moderate positive correlation between any lifetime discrimination and any lifetime harassment ($r = 0.425$, $p < 0.00$), showcasing that a relationship between the two exists. LGBTQ workers do not only experience discrimination or harassment at the workplace;

instead, many who experience discrimination would have also faced harassment and vice versa.

Insofar as the WFL does not address workplace harassment, such an employee would have to file separate claims under the WFL and POHA respectively to seek recourse. This may impose additional practical and psychological burden on the employee. From a policy perspective, this bifurcated framework may also result in under-reporting of workplace discrimination and harassment as employees may elect to seek recourse only either through the WFL or POHA.

Recommendations

Workplace Fairness Legislation

Recommendation 1: Include SOGI as protected characteristics in the WFL.

This study and others have found that LGBTQ people face significant levels of workplace discrimination in Singapore. Many were unaware of available avenues or did not believe that recourse was possible. Express recognition of SOGI as protected characteristics in the WFL is important to addressing this issue. Doing so will deter employers from discriminating against LGBTQ employees and reduce underreporting.

Explicitly including SOGI in the WFL would also protect LGBTQ employees from retaliation. As our survey shows, an overwhelming majority of respondents did not seek help because of the fear of retaliation. Given that the WFL will prohibit retaliation by employers against employees who report cases of workplace discrimination, including LGBTQ employees would encourage reporting and deter employers from engaging in discriminatory employment practices on the basis of SOGI.

Additionally, including SOGI in the WFL protects employees of multiple minority identities. As this study has shown, discrimination is often intersectional and people with multiple minority identities experience an increased level of discrimination and

harassment. If SOGI are not protected characteristics under the WFL, employees who experience discrimination based on multiple characteristics will be forced to artificially split their claims under those which are protected under the WFL and those which are not. Such employees would then have to take two courses of action, namely, mediation with TADM under the WFL, and either mediation with TAFEP under the TGFEF, or commencing a claim against the employer under common law.

In certain situations, it may not even be possible for the employee to do so. As we have found in this study, Malay LGBTQ employees experience higher levels of discrimination than LGBTQ employees of other races. In a hypothetical situation where a company routinely promotes Chinese LGBTQ employees and cisgender, heterosexual Malay employees, but not Malay LGBTQ employees, the Malay LGBTQ employees would not be able to file a claim under the WFL despite race being a contributing factor to the discrimination because their claim is not based on race alone.

Alternatively, MOM is not prepared to include SOGI in the WFL at this stage, we recommend that the WFL be reviewed within the next two years with a view to include SOGI as prohibited characteristics at the time. This two-year timeline is aligned with the request from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Committee) for the Singapore state to provide an update to the CEDAW Committee on the steps taken to implement its recommendation that the WFA prohibits discrimination against lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women.²⁶ During this two-year period, MOM and/or TAFEP should collect data on the frequency of discrimination and harassment cases submitted to TAFEP broken down by company size, protected and non-protected characteristics such as sexual orientation, gender identity, medical conditions, and prison history. Should discrimination on the basis of SOGI be found to be higher than previously reported during this data collection process, the WFL should be amended as soon as possible, before the two-year timeline, to explicitly recognise SOGI as protected characteristics.

²⁶

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/160/22/pdf/n2416022.pdf?token=U5QkKPA5WruSylwaBk&fe=true> paras 44(a) and 64.

Recommendation 2: Include workplace harassment as a form of prohibited conduct under the WFL.

As this study found, LGBTQ workers face high levels of workplace harassment. However, as it currently stands, a person who has experienced harassment must seek recourse through the Protection From Harassment Court (PHC). This means that a worker who has experienced both discrimination and harassment at the workplace must commence parallel proceedings with the ECT and PHC respectively. This may mean that some aggrieved workers would abandon one of their claims to reduce the time and costs involved in seeking recourse.

To encourage workers to report cases of workplace discrimination and harassment, workplace harassment should be prohibited under the WFL and the ECT should be empowered to hear cases of workplace harassment and grant relief otherwise available to a claimant under POHA. Doing so is also in line with the fact that the TCWF has recommended that the WFL prohibit employers from retaliating against employees who report cases of both workplace discrimination and harassment.

Tripartite Guidelines

Recommendation 3: Revise the TGFEP and TGWD to expressly state that discrimination based on SOGI is prohibited.

As explained in the Introduction section, it is not clear from the TGFEP and TGWD that these guidelines prohibit sexual orientation or gender identity-based discrimination. This ambiguity is exacerbated by the fact that Section 377A of the Penal Code was repealed only in 2023, and TAFEP informing an ecommerce store that it was not allowed to specify in a job advertisement that it was looking for LGBTQ employees. As a result, LGBTQ employees may assume that they are not protected under the TGFEP or TGWD.

The TGFEP and TGWD should be revised to make clear that SOGI are prohibited grounds of discrimination. Illustrations involving SOGI should also be included in both documents to raise awareness and assure LGBTQ workers that they are

protected under these guidelines. Amending the TGFEP and TGWD to explicitly refer to SOGI-based discrimination would also send a clear and unequivocal signal to employers that such discrimination is prohibited.

Recommendation 4 Strengthen the levers under the TGFEP by requiring employers to adopt fair and progressive employment practices in respect of LGBTQ employees.

The TCWF's final report noted that new and stronger enforcement actions will be introduced against non-cooperative employers. In addition to the suspension of work pass privileges and the public naming of employers involved in egregious cases, we recommend that MOM consider other levers that require employers to adopt fair and progressive employment practices in respect of LGBTQ employees.

This includes requiring errant employers to:

1. attend LGBTQ sensitivity workshops;
2. send internal circulars affirming that the organisation does not tolerate LGBTQ discrimination; and
3. organise internal events to raise awareness about LGBTQ issues and how employees can help to foster a safe and inclusive environment for LGBTQ employees.

Reporting Processes

Recommendation 5: Ensure that all reporting and dispute resolution processes are LGBTQ-inclusive.

All reporting and dispute resolution processes should be LGBTQ-inclusive so that LGBTQ employees who have experienced workplace discrimination and harassment are able to seek recourse effectively on an equal basis as others. In this regard, staff and representatives from TAFEP, TADM, MOM and the ECT should receive relevant training so that they are able to support LGBTQ employees whom they communicate or interact with.

TAFEP, TADM and MOM's websites and resources should also explicitly state that they are open to LGBTQ employees who have experienced workplace discrimination

and harassment and can provide support and advice on such cases. Forms that include questions on sex or gender should also include gender-diverse options so that gender non-binary employees do not feel excluded.

Recommendation 6: Collect regular data on LGBTQ discrimination and harassment at the workplace.

This study has identified numerous structural and cultural factors, which have resulted in significant under-reporting of workplace discrimination and harassment. Moving forward, MOM should work with TAFEP and LGBTQ groups to carry out regular data collection exercises to determine the prevalence of such discrimination and harassment. This would allow MOM to evaluate the effectiveness of the WFL, TGFEF and the reporting mechanisms in addressing LGBTQ discrimination and harassment at the workplace. Both qualitative and quantitative data should be collected so that appropriate policy reforms and strategies can be developed and implemented to encourage LGBTQ workers to report SOGI-based discrimination and harassment.

Other Recommendations

Recommendation 7: TAFEP should partner with LGBTQ groups to organise workshops, trainings and talks on SOGI-based discrimination for employers.

To increase awareness about LGBTQ discrimination at the workplace, TAFEP should actively collaborate with LGBTQ community groups to organise workshops, trainings and talks on SOGI-based discrimination for employers. These events can help companies build capacity so that they can implement LGBTQ-affirming policies and foster a safe and inclusive workplace for their employees.

Given the low level of awareness among LGBTQ workers that they are entitled to protection from workplace discrimination on the basis of their SOGI under the TGFEF, such events would also send a clear and strong signal to LGBTQ employees that they can seek support and advice from TAFEP.

Recommendation 8: The Public Service Division (PSD) and all public authorities should strengthen their HR policies in public sector organisations to address SOGI-based discrimination.

This study has found that there are significant levels of discrimination and harassment in the military, law enforcement and civil service. As it currently stands, public officers who are employees of the Government are not eligible to seek assistance from TAFEP or TADM and they are not covered by the Employment Act, the ECA or WFL. To ensure that public officers can work in a safe and inclusive environment that is free of workplace discrimination and harassment, they should ideally be entitled to seek recourse under the WFL and ECA in the same way as other employees in Singapore. However, if public officers will be excluded from the WFL, PSD and all public sector organisations should ensure that their HR policies expressly protect LGBTQ employees from workplace discrimination and harassment on the basis of their SOGI.

Appendix

A-1. Demographics of participants

Variable	Mean	SD
Age	31.95	8.03
Variable	n	%
Race		
Chinese	309	75.55
Malay	27	6.60
Indian	30	7.33
Others	43	10.51
Sex assigned at birth		
Male	169	41.32
Female	240	58.68
Gender identity		
Cisgender	300	73.35
Transgender	38	9.29
Gender-diverse	71	17.36
Sexual orientation		
Straight	10	2.44
Gay	135	33.01
Lesbian	109	26.65
Bisexual	87	21.27
Other sexual orientations	64	15.65
Questioning	4	0.98

A-2. Rates of discrimination and harassment based on SOGI

	n	%
Lifetime discrimination and harassment		
Combined rates (n = 409)	208	50.86
Discrimination		
Any lifetime discrimination (n = 409)	123	30.07
Fired (n = 409)	22	5.38
Not hired (n = 407)	50	12.29
Denied promotion / opportunities (n = 407)	41	10.07
Ever treated unfairly (n = 408)	99	24.26
Harassment		
Any lifetime harassment (n = 409)	178	43.52
Verbal (n = 408)	158	38.73
Physical (n = 407)	30	7.37
Sexual (n = 408)	55	13.48

A-3. Rates of reporting grievances and their outcomes

Rates of reporting any lifetime discrimination and harassment (n = 308)

Variable	n	%
Have ever reported	33	10.71
Within company	33	10.71
MOM	1	0.32
TAFEP	3	0.97

Outcomes from reporting experiences of discrimination and harassment (n = 32)

	n	%
No response	7	21.88
Dismissed without investigation	16	50.00
Dismissed with investigation	7	21.88
Actions taken	7	21.88

A-4. Reasons for not reporting grievances

	n	%
Expected a lack of support from...		
Company	268	60.22
MOM	115	41.22
TAFEP	96	34.41
Overall	188	67.38
Expected additional penalties		
Outing themselves by reporting	150	53.76
Retaliation from perpetrator	107	38.35
Backlash from employer	145	51.97
Further discrimination from employer	151	54.12
Others	52	18.64
Overall	224	80.29

A-5. Rates of discrimination and harassment by race / gender identity

Rates of lifetime experiences of discrimination and harassment based on SOGI by race

	Chinese		Malay		Indian		Others	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Lifetime discrimination and harassment								
Combined rates	146	47.25	16	59.26	20	66.67	26	60.47
Discrimination								
Any lifetime discrimination	86	27.83	13	48.15	11	36.67	13	30.23
Fired	15	4.85	4	14.81	0	-	3	6.98
Not hired	34	11.04	5	19.23	6	20.00	5	11.63
Denied promotion / opportunities	27	8.77	4	15.38	5	16.67	5	11.63
Ever treated unfairly	69	22.40	12	44.44	8	26.67	10	23.26
Harassment								
Any lifetime harassment***	122	39.48	16	59.26	19	63.33	21	48.84
Verbal***	107	34.74	15	55.56	15	50.00	21	48.84
Physical	18	5.86	3	11.11	4	13.33	5	11.63
Sexual***	37	11.97	7	26.92	8	26.67	3	6.98

*sig at 0.00

**sig at 0.01

***sig at 0.05

Rates of lifetime experiences of discrimination and harassment based on SOGI by gender identity

	Cisgender		Gender Diverse		Transgender	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Lifetime discrimination and harassment						
Combined rates*	133	44.33	45	63.38	30	78.95
Discrimination						
Any lifetime discrimination*	70	23.33	26	36.62	27	71.05
Fired*	10	3.33	3	4.23	9	23.68
Not hired*	22	7.36	11	15.49	17	45.95
Denied promotion / opportunities	26	8.70	8	11.27	7	18.92
Ever treated unfairly*	59	19.67	20	28.17	20	54.05
Harassment						
Any lifetime harassment**	116	38.67	38	53.52	24	63.16
Verbal**	100	33.33	36	50.70	22	59.46
Physical	17	5.67	9	12.68	4	11.11
Sexual	35	11.71	13	18.31	7	18.42

*sig at 0.00

**sig at 0.01

***sig at 0.05

A-6. Odds Ratio from Logistic Regression for Overall Discrimination and Harassment by Age, Gender Identity, Race, and Sexual Orientation

Odds Ratio	Overall discrimination*	Overall harassment**	Lifetime experience*
Age	1.05**	1.04**	1.06*
Gender Diverse (Ref: Cisgender)	3.13**	2.50**	3.33*
Transgender (Ref: Cisgender)	11.57*	3.23**	5.71*
Indian (Ref: Chinese)	1.99	3.23**	2.93***
Malay (Ref: Chinese)	2.51**	2.11	1.48
Other races (Ref: Chinese)	1.08	1.30	1.49
Lesbian (Ref: Gay)	1.22	1.03	1.10
Bisexual (Ref: Gay)	0.84	0.75	0.76
Straight (Ref: Gay)	1.06	1.07	1.91
Other Orientations (Ref: Gay)	0.63	1.00	0.93
cons	0.05*	0.15**	0.11*

*sig at 0.00

**sig at 0.01

***sig at 0.05

A-7. Prevalence of discrimination and harassment by employer type

	Military (n = 37)		Law Enforcement (n = 11)		For-Profit (n = 340)		Non-Profit (n = 95)		Civil Service (n = 131)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Discrimination										
Fired	1	2.70	0	-	16	4.71	2	2.11	4	3.05
Not hired	0	-	1	9.09	36	10.59	6	6.32	16	12.21
Denied promotion / opportunities	0	-	0	-	30	8.82	5	5.26	14	10.69
Ever treated unfairly	7	18.92	3	27.27	73	21.47	13	13.68	24	18.32
Harassment										
Verbal	17	45.95	5	45.45	113	33.24	21	22.11	38	29.01
Physical	6	16.22	0	-	22	6.47	4	4.21	3	2.29
Sexual	6	16.22	1	9.09	39	11.47	6	6.32	7	5.34

A-8. Correlations between discrimination and harassment

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Fired from job		0.407*	0.353*	0.321*	0.236*	0.224*	0.096	0.206*	0.364*	0.234*
2. Not hired	0.407*		0.322*	0.332*	0.303*	0.238*	0.137	0.276*	0.572*	0.368*
3. Denied promotion / opportunities	0.353*	0.322*		0.499*	0.305*	0.218*	0.130	0.283*	0.512*	0.329*
4. Ever treated unfairly	0.321*	0.332*	0.499*		0.430*	0.303*	0.248*	0.436*	0.862*	0.555*
5. Verbal harassment	0.236*	0.303*	0.305*	0.430*		0.279*	0.218*	0.904*	0.432*	0.780*
6. Physical harassment	0.224*	0.238*	0.218*	0.303*	0.279*		0.466*	0.322*	0.267*	0.277*
7. Sexual harassment	0.096	0.137	0.130	0.248*	0.218*	0.466*		0.451*	0.228*	0.389*
8. Any lifetime discrimination	0.206*	0.276*	0.283*	0.436*	0.904*	0.322*	0.451*		0.425*	0.863*
9. Any lifetime harassment	0.364*	0.572*	0.512*	0.862*	0.432*	0.267*	0.228*	0.425*		0.645*
10. Any lifetime discrimination / harassment	0.234*	0.368*	0.329*	0.555*	0.780*	0.277*	0.389*	0.863*	0.645*	

*sig at 0.00