

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DIVISION OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

THE EXPERIENCES OF GAY AND LESBIAN FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS AT A
SMALL COLLEGE CAMPUS

KHALED ZAKKOUT
Spring 2020

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for a baccalaureate degree
in Corporate Communication
with honors in Letters, Arts, and Sciences

Reviewed and approved* by the following:

Beth Montemurro
Distinguished Professor of Sociology
Thesis Supervisor

Surabhi Sahay, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Corporate Communication
Faculty Reader

David Ruth
Associate Professor of History
Honors Advisor

* Electronic approvals are on file.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the subculture of gay and lesbian faculty and staff at a small college campus. In-depth interviews were conducted with six participants who identify as gay or lesbian. Four, were faculty and two, were staff. All participants were white and between the ages of 33 and 49. Five men, and one woman, constituted the interviewees. They were recruited by personal and professional relationships already established by myself and my advisor. Interviews revealed deeper connections between employees and their place of work. These relationships were observed through the prominent themes found in most or all of the data provided. These themes are: Community/Peer Support, Geographical Location, Visibility, Job Satisfaction, and Continuous outing. By gathering qualitative data from the participants, it could be observed that many factors were considered to gauge how gay and lesbian employees felt about the campus, the culture of the campus and the level of satisfaction with their roles.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
LIST OF TABLES	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Chapter 2 Literature Review.....	2
Higher Education and Student Support.....	2
LGBTQ Identity.....	4
Workplace identity and Leadership.....	4
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	6
Chapter 4: Findings.....	8
Peer Support.....	8
Location/Demographic of campus.....	9
Visibility.....	12
Job Satisfaction.....	14
Coming-out.....	17
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	20
Appendix A Table 1: Participant Demographics.....	23
BIBLIOGRAPHY	24
ACADEMIC VIDA.....	26

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Participant Demographics for Experiment.....23

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is the direct result of the constant support and immense persistence of my primary thesis supervisor, Dr. Beth Montemurro; as well as, Dr. Surabhi Sahay, serving as my secondary thesis advisor and academic advisor. Both provided support every step of the way, and persistently reminded me that my work is valid and crucial to society.

I am extremely grateful to Dr. Beth Montemurro for being a weekly resource and council in my time of stress and confusion. She truly was an amazing advisor and I will always be grateful for her patience and care.

I am also thankful for Dr. Surabhi Sahay for her knowledge of the realm of Corporate Communication, and her endless ability to share insight gained from her own studies and my faculty reader.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Discrimination in the workforce is an issue that is incited by reasons of sex, gender identity, age, race, socio-economic status, and other demographical categories (Dhanani, et al., 2017). Studies have found that there are direct negative results from experiencing discrimination in the workplace. For example, discrimination against racial minorities has led to an increase of tobacco and alcohol use to the point of observing a shift in mortality rates (Chavez, et al., 2015). I sought more information about higher education as a workplace, and wanted to look at a perspective that is not familiar to societal knowledge. My study focused on sexual minorities working at a small, college campus, to identify if there was discrimination or issues, present on the campus that created a hostile or uncomfortable environment for either gay, lesbian, or bisexual faculty and staff. The purpose of this thesis was to understand the viewpoints of sexual minorities that are employed at a college campus, and assess their comfort levels working there. Through the testimonies of a small college campus' gay, lesbian and bisexual staff and faculty, I collected the varying experiences and articulated them in a unified form.

Stakeholders are those with a vested interest in the success or failure of an organization, product, brand, etc. (McGrath & Whitty, 2017). Studying LGB faculty and staff, through an internal stakeholders' lens, was important because they are key factors in a higher educational setting. I identify as a gay Middle Eastern man in his undergraduate career, and I wanted to learn more about another minority that exists in high education. Understanding this group opens up discussions and issues that are prevalent in society and campus cultures all over the country, and prompts discourse as a tool to enact reforms.

Chapter 2

Literature review

Research has primarily looked at institutional or campus adaptations for LGBT students by examining LGBT student support (Linley, et al., 2016), legal rights (Broadhurst & Martin, 2019), and cultural values (Castro & Dockendorff, 2017). There are examples of campuses adapting to become more accepting of LGBT students (Broadhurst & Martin, 2018). Studies have generally discussed the importance of support for LGBTQ students by promoting their visibility and initiating conversation about the role of queer culture in our society.

Higher Education and Student Support

A collection of essays, case studies and research were put together to aid higher education faculty and staff in supporting LGBTQ students (Hawley, 2017, pp.467-471). This example of anecdotal evidence, with the purpose of impacting college life, works well as primary evidence that support does exist in higher education settings. Qualitative data has been shown as a mode to expand the knowledge of an LGBTQ population on campus. LGBTQ student support is also discussed from a student affairs perspective that showcases sluggish acceptance rates in universities in the South (Broadhurst & Martin, 2019, p.327). Fighting for visibility and acceptance is found to be more difficult in the South, as state policies have not grown to a level where all civil rights are protected on a university basis. This is an example of a lack of support by university and state policy. Research has shown that while there have been movements in policy changes towards the protection of certain people and identities, cultural changes are still

limited in terms of how LGBTQ norms are expressed in higher education (Broadhurst, et al., 2018).

In other study, Garvey and Drezner (2019) expanded this scope to encompass alumnx giving and looked at how campus experiences impacted post-graduate behaviors (Garvey, Drezner, 2019). This perspective shed light on how LGBTQIA alumni treat their universities through a philanthropic lens. It was found that those with less attachment to their universities, gave the least or not at all, in comparison to the population that had strong bonds to their universities. The crux of the study was to understand how a sense of belonging increases comfort levels and the concept of happiness, and if there was a direct relationship between loving the job and loving the place. In terms of student support, this data testified to the cultural value of being LGBTQ within higher education. While feelings of university belonging are essential, they are also difficult to cultivate. In another study, Linley et al. (2016) collected qualitative data from a national study of LGBTQ student success with the support of faculty. The data, collected through a series of surveys and also interviews, shows that provision of support and acceptance by some universities does not automatically mean that all LGBTQ people will feel properly supported in terms of their academic and personal success (Linley, et al. 2016). Both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied to best gauge the experiences of those interviewed and surveyed. The surveys provided a general census of LGBTQ perceptions and levels of varying feelings; while the interviews collected specific and personal opinions. Both aided in gathering information about support of the LGBTQ community in higher education.

LGBTQ Identity

While not specifically contextualized in higher education, studies have been conducted that look at the role of identity in family communication and workplace settings. Dougherty et al. (2013) looked at personal lives of queer parents, and offered the notion of being “othered” as nontraditional families. Moreover, various types of intersectionality exist when discussing identities, and these impact students when they are trying to find community and build strength as queer students (Miller, 2018).

Workplace identity and Leadership

From a workplace and identity perspective, we still remain very limited in terms of using critical race theory, postcolonial theory, and queer theory (McDonald, 2015). However, we understand that power dynamics play an important role in enacting and analyzing both internal versus external environments. Generally, from a leader member exchange [LMX] perspective, we understand that leader-follower relationships can increase job satisfaction (Fix & Sias, 2006). Fix and Sias conducted a study to understand how interpersonal communication and interaction served to benefit the working relationships of those in leadership positions, and those that follow them. Additionally, the way employees perceive their bosses affects how they viewed their own job. However, LMX is also known to create workplace barriers and in-group vs. out-group perspectives. Lamude et al. (2004) in their study concluded that there are always those that are in “in-groups” and “out-groups” in organizational structures (Lamude, et al., 2004). Depending on how long a person has been in their position or place of work, the more they tend to become a part on the “in-group.” This means they are trusted more amongst the senior staff, and have stronger relationships than other employees that may have started recently.

Studies surrounding LGBTQ population in higher education have predominantly focused on student support. However, we have very little research that looks at LGB faculty and staff and their higher education support needs. This study aims to take a deeper dive into qualitative data and provide a rich description of LGB faculty and staff perspectives on campus, which differs from earlier quantitative studies. Furthermore, it adopts an organizational communication lens to explore how support structures such as leader-member relationships, in-group and out-groups, and other similar structures influences LGB faculty and staff perspectives and their identity.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Research was conducted via face-to-face interviews with the intention of analysis of a small-scale college campus. I conducted qualitative research to collect data pertaining to my thesis question: What is the experience of being a gay, lesbian, or bisexual faculty or staff member at a small college campus? I held confidential interviews, using an interview guide, and attained verbal consent at the beginning of each interview. Five interviewees were in person, and one was through a secured email chain, that only the participant and I had access to. After recording the interviews via an audio recorder, I transcribed them all, except for the sixth interview that was already in a digital form.

Snowball sampling, and relationships already held at the college, were the mode in which I found my participants. Each participant was emailed available time slots for their interview, and the interviews were held in their own private office to ensure confidentiality and privacy. While I prepared questions, each participant's answers dictated how I followed up with the next question. The participants also had the option of not answering any questions they did not wish to. As I progressed with each participant, consistent with qualitative research methods, my questions shifted slightly, to adapt to what kind of information the prior participant(s) offered. Adjusting questions, or adding questions, helped to increase the information I could possibly gather from my participants. After all information was collected, I began coding to identify patterns in the responses. Finding similarities was not the goal, but it does offer themes that reflect either individual or universal beliefs, that the participants hold. Additionally, the themes

reinforce how the LGB faculty and staff community truly feels about their roles and presence on this college campus.

Six participants were interviewed; they were in their 30's and 40's. Sexual identity is how the participants identified who they are attracted to. Gender identity is their preferred gender expression. In this study, all of the participants happened to identify as "White," and five out of the six, were men; and one participant identified as a woman. All of the men also identified as "gay," while the only woman identified as "lesbian." All of the participants have been employed by the university for at least three years, and no one had been there for more than seven years. In respect to their gender identities, they all identified as cisgendered.

Chapter 4

Findings

In analyzing interview data, I discovered the following five predominant themes. These themes: Community/Peer Support, Geographical Location, Visibility, Job Satisfaction, and Continuous outing, show the factors that impact comfort levels or feelings of acceptance for a sexual minority faculty or staff member. Below, I describe these themes.

Peer Support

A prominent theme that is present in all of the testimonies, is the establishment of relationships with peers, and the support that they either do, or do not provide. Peer support was referenced as a coping mechanism, and a way to utilize other faculty and staff members for dealing with everyday stresses. Participant 1, Martin, states, “I was lucky enough to be in environments and colleges and universities that are very affirmative and supportive, and especially here I think it’s very affirmative and supportive.” As an LGBTQ faculty member, Martin clearly appreciates working in a place that will support him in his role, regardless of his intersectional identities.

Participant 2, Brian, concurs with the belief that support from those that he works with and for, provides a feeling of comfort. In our interview he stated, “You feel more comfortable being out when supervisors.../, /...supervisors and colleagues are also out. To add to that point, college is a more liberal place so I feel more comfortable talking about it here.” Brian also believes that his comfortability at work is a result of being surrounded by peers and leaders that

also identify as a sexual minority, as well as, being in a place that appreciates difference. Finally, Participant 6, Matt, also highlighted the importance of peer support. He explained, “None of that is possible without faculty and staff that are absolutely top-notch, warm, and gracious. The entire organization- but especially [Person X] and [Person Y], and various students who have stayed in communication throughout the year- have really encouraged me and allowed me to feel that what I’m doing matters.” I found this to be interesting because a part-time faculty member, also found a sense of community and belonging, even without being on campus more than a few hours a week. Of course, it is also a factor that he has employed at the university for seven years, and is an alumnus.

All participants made claims that by having strong relationships with their peers, they feel more comfortable being out, they are happier, and feel a sense of community. Matt, Martin and Brian are all white men, that identify as gay and fall between the ages of 33 and 41, an eight-year range. However, Martin and Brian have been employed for almost half the time that Matt has been employed at the campus. Therefore, time spent on campus did little to affect peer support with all three participants because all noted they felt comfortable and supported. In other words, those who had been in this environment for a shorter period of time felt no less peer support. The fact that they are all white could be accredited to the privilege of being white and not incurring much societal and professional backlash.

Location/Demographic of campus

Several participants commented on the geographical location of the campus, and the benefits that brings to them, as well as to the campus’ cultural norms. This observed theme,

while not directly about the institution, affects those that are employed there. Martin, a 39-year-old faculty member who identifies as gay, stated:

Sometimes you go to more graduate focused institutions and liberal arts colleges and [students] can predominantly come from more well-off backgrounds and so sometimes they lived in a bubble and they haven't gotten out of that bubble. And they don't know what it's like to be a racial minority, or a sexual minority, and so here I think a lot of our students are more deeply affected by poverty, by prejudice, discrimination, racism, sexism- I think they are more aware of those issues and even though they have live in the [City] bubble, and so I want them to break that bubble and get out and study abroad, I think that... yeah they're just down to Earth.

Even though the behaviors and lives of students do not directly impact Martin's life, he, as a gay faculty member that also lives in the same city, finds an appreciation in his students when they bring their own experiences to the classroom. The location of the campus is viewed as a place where Martin also sees students and those on campus as people that are aware of societal issues, (although yet, as he noted, they can also be blind to them.)

Claire, a 49-year-old staff member who identifies as lesbian, who is the only woman and mother among the participants, also believes that the location of the campus matters. She stated:

Well, I think with our...the demographics alone with [this university and campus] I think being situated outside of a large city, it's a little easier in a way. There are more resources in our area. --generally

speaking, there always could be more--but I think that alone makes it a lot easier for people to...maybe be open to at least hearing someone's perspective. In this case someone who identifies as LGBT.

Being positioned near a large city, Claire claims, makes being different easier because of the resources available, and offers a better opportunity to find acceptance by others. Once again, while the demographics are independent of Claire, her feelings on being accepted are as a result of where the campus is situated in terms of geography. While not explicitly stated, Claire has experienced instances that support her role within an in-group community. Others support her and clearly trust her as an employee and individual. These are signals of being an in-group member. Additionally, Claire's reciprocated feelings of being a supporter of diversity and her strides to be inclusive and also signs of her bringing others into the in-group; the in-group being, those on campus that believe in social justice, acceptance and the value of diversity.

John, a 44-year-old faculty member who identifies as gay, with a similar profile as the other men interviewed (See Chart 1), also identifies the campus' location, and subsequently, it's diverse population, as a strength. He stated:

I love teaching at this campus because it super diverse and I have experiences of teaching at really not diverse campuses *laughter* for the last three years before I came here, so this is what --this is the kind of college I went to [on the West Coast], and this is the kind of experience I wanted as a professor. Uhm. to be able to teach the kind classes I'm teaching. I live in [City], I love be able to live in a city...and come to work, so yeah. A lot of it has to do with support.

Similar to the other participants, John speaks about the city demographic, and how that, in turn, affects the students that attend the campus. He even comments on his past, and how his ambitions were to work at an institute that is supportive and progressive in thought.

In summary, the geographical and demographic makeup of this campus speaks to the kind of atmosphere that a faculty member could experience, if they wanted to work at a campus that was both diverse in background, and in perspective. As reported by several participants, this is a place that an LGB people can find a career where they are supported and comfortable. It can be observed that the Northeast region is one that is more liberal in thoughts and ideals. This plays a factor in the overall perspective of the participants.

Visibility

Visibility of race, gender and age, while ambiguous, are much more identifiable than sexuality. Sexuality cannot be seen, as it is the sexual attraction to a certain person. It helped participants when other faculty and staff were open or out about their sexuality. The more visible the presence of LGB colleagues, the more comfortable the environment. John spoke about the LGBTQIA faculty and staff group that originated in the 2019 Fall Semester on this campus. He stated, “It was great. I figured maybe three would show up, and we had 12 or 15. And there were still other people that wanted to come that couldn’t. And these were people that I see around campus, but I had no idea that they identified on the sexuality spectrum. So, it was amazing. It was really great.”

As he reflected on the group and his time on campus, he admitted to finding enjoyment from finally meeting other LGBTQIA faculty and staff members. While he is in his fifth year at

the campus, he had yet to meet a significant number of LGBTQIA employees on campus, and was surprised by the amount of people that attended the first group meeting. This has evidently brought him a new sense of community and visibility on campus; thereby adhering to the characteristics of an in-group member, similar to Claire.

Clark, a 40-year-old faculty member is also a part of the same group and had his own comments about the group on the topic of visibility. He stated:

I know all of the people on--many of the people in that group, uhhmm it is kind of disappointingly like white-cis-gendered and male *laughter. * But in some ways that reflects that we need to put more effort in diversifying. It reflects the population that happens to be here. But I think it's great. I think it does--I think it does ... some of that representation work. And I think (pauses) groups like that help to advocate for needs that are not so obvious.”

This supports the claim that the group is in fact creating an impact among queer faculty and staff. Having a presence on campus is the goal of this group; however, Clark claimed that there is a lack of racial diversity within the newly founded organization. However, he did bring up the importance of being given a platform to share concerns, opinions and general discourse during the meetings.

This group seems to have potential to create a new image for LGBTQIA faculty and staff on campus. Claire, a mother of two children who are of varying races to both each other, and herself, also contributed to the role of the LGBTQIA faculty and staff group. Claire admitted to

finding support from peers for being a single-working-mother, and she attested to the benefit of being around other Queer employees in the lens of visibility. She stated:

Yeah, it's been, maybe more informally. People have tried, you know, to pull people together and have kind of socials, maybe, outside of our jobs, our roles here just to like have that support. It does...you know...it can get....it can feel a little isolating at times. So, knowing you have some allies across the academic realm too is helpful. Especially when again, we're dealing with students all the time in various ways, and we have to communicate well.

Having three participants testify on the importance of this group, it can be concluded that having a prominent cause, and being exposed to a personal support network, strengthens the participants' appreciation for the campus, and the movements the campus is making to fulfil a need to be seen and heard.

Job Satisfaction

The overall outlook of working for the campus and university is positive, in the perspective of these six employees. To conclude each interview, after having prompted the participants' thinking, they all expressed joy, comfortability and satisfaction, performing in their current positions and roles. Clark stated, "HHaa-Haaa-happy! That's a BIG question. In terms of job satisfaction, one hundred percent. I really, I love my job. Culturally, like in terms of like feeling like I can be myself and get work accomplished, and be respected, and be--yes! one hundred percent." It is clear through his enthusiastic response, how he feels about what he does

on campus, and even his feelings about the campus itself. Being respected and feeling acknowledged have surely given Clark a sense that he should be working here.

John, another participant with an enthused perspective stated:

Uh yeah. Yeah, I love my colleagues. The people in this department are amazing. Uhm, I feel completely well supported, as a scholar and as a teacher, but also as an openly gay man. I love teaching at this campus because it super diverse and I have experiences of teaching at really not diverse campuses *laughter* for the last three years before I came here, so this is what --this is the kind of college I went to [on the West Coast], and this is the kind of experience I wanted as a professor. Uhm. to be able to teach the kind classes I'm teaching. I live in [city], I love be able to live in a city...and come to work, so yeah. A lot of it has to do with support.

Beyond just the basic standards of the role, John also expressed such a passion for his colleagues that have been with him over the years, and how they supported him and his work. He addressed the location, the people, and his work, while explaining why he is conclusively satisfied with being an employee at this campus. Through a multi-faceted reflection, he truly believes and trusts where he decided to put his time and effort.

Matt, a part-time professor, expressed much appreciation and admiration towards the students and several other employees of the campus. In his interview, he stated:

Yes. I'm a big believer in not staying in one place if you aren't happy! All the clichés here are true - I teach students, but often

learn more from them; this yields a sense of purpose for me, and a true feeling of giving back to a school and community that I love. None of that is possible without faculty and staff that are absolutely top-notch, warm and accepting, and gracious. The entire organization - but especially [two particular colleagues], and various students who have stayed in communication throughout the years - have really encouraged me and allow me to feel that what I'm doing matters.

This is interesting because while he may have the same feelings towards the institution, his passion for his students and peers outweighs, in terms of job satisfaction. Regardless of what the position provides to him, he is more interested in the relationship gained by being in that position, and that certain department. This perception is a testament to the impact of being a part of a supportive and inclusive community, with a mission to educate the next generation of scholars.

These participants, Clark, John and Matt, all share their own unique reasons for finding satisfaction with their positions. However, they are all in agreeance that this campus provides them the opportunity to explore their fields, learn from diversity, and the security of being supported by both students and employees. These shared experiences have proven to make a positive impact on the basis of job satisfaction.

Coming-out

The final theme observed is the repetitive task of coming out. Many of the participants expressed that they always go through moments when they must come out to either their classes, or other faculty and staff. Claire, in reflecting on her role as a staff member, and a mother, stated:

You come out all the time, throughout your life, I mean, you never stop coming out. It's a continuous process. Wither it's, you know, a job, or a new organization you've joined, or you've become active in the community, or you become a parent. And then its teachers and administrator, and other parents, and kid's friends. It's a continuous...think, where sometimes you feel like "oops, they don't know what to do with information," and you hope in the space where I am, that its doesn't impact my kids, and their friendships. Because that's where I can't control that all the time. And that's where it gets a little tricky, so.

Claire highlighted a core characteristic of being an LGB employee within higher education, while also offering an insight of being a working mother, and the thought process that comes along with it. This is a unique insight, as Claire is the only woman in this study, as well as, the only single parent. Information about her situation is helpful when trying to understand what it means to be a parent, while also being in a college environment.

Coming out for Clark, there were different factors he considered, that varied from Claire's coming-out process. Clark stated:

I think that's something queer people carry with them all the time.

Coming out is not something you-I did when I had my job and- certainly

did it when I had my job interview, but it's something you do continuously in given rhetorical situations. Uhm... I'm thinking about ethos, I'm thinking about like ok so, well so ok *laughter* - Right? It's just something you're always doing, you're always aware of that dimension of your, your identity and when and where that's gonna be advantageous and when and where it's gonna possibly disadvantageous.

Clark voiced that he considers the consequences of when and where he comes-out to students and potential employers. The continuous and repetitive nature of coming-out, to Clark, is a part of him anticipated routine whenever he enters a professional situation. Thinking of coming-out, as a way to potentially benefit his professional career, as well as, his personal life, Clark is more of a strategic planner. Coming-out, to him, is both a part of his identity, and a method to support him in the classroom.

John's perspective was given in respect to his previous place of employment and his time at this campus. He stated:

So, I had some concerns coming out to the students because I knew there was a real conservative element on that campus. I still did, because the campus itself was very open and welcoming and the department was great about that but...So I guess by the time I got here I had time to work through...some of those issues. And also, we have one of the most, we have the most diverse student body in all of [this university] campus'. Literally the most diverse student body. So, I wasn't really worried about--

and it's an urban area and a suburban area so I was much less worried about that. It was one of the reasons I chose--took this job.

This is valuable data because it delves into how his mindset around coming-out shifted depending on his relationship with his place of employment. He went from being conservative, in a more conservative university, to being open, in a liberal and accepting institution. Having that feeling of being accepted into a community, has clearly proven that John has found a place where he can be out, and not have to worry about backlash from this campus.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Through the six interviews that I held, Community/Peer Support, Geographical Location, Visibility, Job Satisfaction and Continuous outing, were all themes that most, or all, participants could speak about. These themes proved to be an essential part of building supportive relationships and environments for LGB faculty and staff. In the perspectives collected, it is held true that this campus, and campuses such as this one, pride themselves in affirmative action, value diversity of all kinds, and strive for inclusivity for not only queer students, but also faculty and staff. It was also observed that attaining more support by coworkers and students increased likeability of their jobs and positions as well; the participants' positive outlooks, were a testament to the personal relationships formed, rather than only professional. This data is important to society because it offers a unique perspective that is not so commonly explored in the academic world. Having more information about LGB faculty and staff, is also socially beneficial as it provides more insight on the marginalized lives of sexual minorities in both higher education and a general professional setting.

The data collected from the participants could be linked to existing literature in communications and workplace environments. The most prominent theory is Leader-Member Exchange. As the theory dictates, in a workplace environment, two groups are usually formed through both professional and professional interactions. Those in the In-group, reap the rewards of being accepted by those with higher standings in the company or organization. This group benefit from more support by peers and supervisors, being included in decision making, more opportunities for growth and development, and just being liked by those around them. The In-

group members are typically those with high social skills, intelligent, trustworthy and sometimes, they have been with the organization for a greater duration. The participants that claimed they had or have peer support, classify as in-group, and thus enjoy the benefits that brings. Luckily, no participant had a negative experience with being an Out-group member at this campus. However, all participants did experience, at some point in their higher education career, some form of Out-group treatment, as a result of being an LGB professional, or even during their time as students.

My research into existing literature came short in ascertaining data on queer faculty and staff. All of the found literature pertained to the support or the role of queer students, and how university employees play a role in supporting them. As a result, I had no prior qualitative data on the perspectives of LGBTQ employees of higher education. My data aided in filling those gaps, and now can serve others, looking for qualitative data on this topic.

While I gathered much data on the experiences of gay and lesbian faculty and staff at a small college campus, I was only able to interview six participants. While the perspective of the six employees are valid and valuable, more interviews would have increased the sample size, thereby, providing more data. With a greater amount of data, more connections to literature could have possibly been made, as well as, a more varied collection of perspectives. In future studies about this topic, there should be at least ten participants, with hopefully more differing demographics. It could have been insightful to know if race and gender played a main role in dictating how LGB employees viewed their roles and relationships with peers and students. The value in a diverse interviewee pool, is in the possible diversity of thought and experiences. There is no guarantee that having more participants would have yielded different results, but it would have been a more accurate reflection of how different people feel about a single topic or

question. It was interesting to see that gay-white-men, were more accessible for this study, than any other group. While this was a limitation, it is also data that reflects who is easily accessible for such studies, and who has a deep enough relationship with this campus to allows for these opportunities. In conclusion, campuses that appreciate differences and value unique perspectives lead to employees that feel comfortable and enjoy their positions and place of occupation.

Appendix A

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Participants	Demographics						
	Sexual identity	Gender Identity	Gender Pronoun	Age	Race	Duration of employment	Faculty/staff?
Participant #1: Martin	Gay	Man	He/him/his	39	White/Caucasian	5th year	Faculty
Participant #2: Brian	Gay	Man	He/him/they/theirs	33	Caucasian	3rd year	Staff
Participant #3: Clark	Gay	Man	He/him/his	40	White	3rd year	Faculty
Participant #4: Claire	Lesbian	Woman	She/her/hers	49	White	4th year	Staff
Participant #5: John	Gay	Cisgender Masculine	He/him/his	44	White/Caucasian	5th year	Faculty
Participant #6: Matt	Gay	Man	He/him	41	Caucasian	7th year	Faculty

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Broadhurst, C., & Martin, G. (2019). Becoming a tempered radical: Student affairs administrators as advocates for LGBTQ students at eight higher education institutions in the south. *Journal of College and Character*, 20(4), 327-344.
doi:10.1080/2194587X.2019.1669462
- Broadhurst, C., Martin, G., Hoffshire, M., & Takewell, W. (2018). “Bumpin’ up against people and their beliefs”: Narratives of student affairs administrators creating change for LGBTQ students in the south. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 11(4), 385-401.
doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/10.1037/dhe0000036
- Castro, E. L., & Dockendorff, K. J. (2017). Expanding the circle: Creating an inclusive environment in higher education for LGBTQ students and studies ed. by John C. Hawley (review). *The Review of Higher Education*, 40(3), 467-471. doi:10.1353/rhe.2017.0016
- Chavez, J. Laura MPH, India J. Ornelas PhD, Courtney R. Lyles PhD and Emily C. Williams PhD, MPH. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 2015-01-01, Volume 48, Issue 1, Pages 42-49, Copyright © 2015 American Journal of Preventive Medicine
- Dhanani, LY, Beus, JM, Joseph, DL. Workplace discrimination: A meta-analytic extension, critique, and future research agenda. *Personnel Psychology*. 2018; 71: 147– 179.
https://doi-org.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/10.1111/peps.12254
- Dixon, J., & Dougherty, D. S. (2014). A language convergence/meaning divergence analysis exploring how LGBTQ and single employees manage traditional family expectations in the workplace. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 42(1), 1-19.

- Fix, B., & Sias, P. M. (2006). Person-centered communication, leader-member exchange, and employee job satisfaction. *Communication Research Reports*, 23(1), 35-44.
- Garvey, J.C., & Drezner, N.D. (2019). Towards a Culturally Inclusive Understanding of Alumnx Philanthropy: The Influence of Student Involvements and Experiences on LGBTQ Alumnx Giving. *The Review of Higher Education* 42(5), 363-392.
doi:10.1353/rhe.2019.0056.
- Jodi L. Linley, David Nguyen, G. Blue Brazelton, Brianna Becker, Kristen Renn & Michael Woodford (2016) Faculty as Sources of Support for LGBTQ College Students, *College Teaching*, 64:2, 55-63, DOI: 10.1080/87567555.2015.1078275
- Lamude, K. G., Scudder, J., Simmons, D., & Torres, P. (2004). Organizational newcomers: Temporary and regular employees, same-sex and mixed-sex superior-subordinate dyads, supervisor influence techniques, subordinates communication satisfaction, and leader-member exchange. *Communication Research Reports*, 21(1), 60-67.
- McDonald, J. (2015). Organizational communication meets queer theory: Theorizing relations of “difference” differently. *Communication Theory*, 25(3), 310-329.
doi:10.1111/comt.12060
- McGrath, S. and Whitty, S. (2017), "Stakeholder defined", *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 721-748. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMPB-12-2016-0097>
- Miller, R. A. (2018). Toward intersectional identity perspectives on disability and LGBTQ identities in higher education. *Journal of College Student Development*, 59(3), 327-346.
doi:10.1353/csd.2018.0030

ACADEMIC VITA

Academic Vita of Khaled Zakkout

Kpz5048@psu.edu

Education:

Corporate Communication Major
Business Minor

Honors:

Honors in Corporate Communication

Thesis Title:

The Experiences of Gay and Lesbian Faculty and Staff Members at A Small College Campus

Thesis Supervisors:

Beth Montemurro, Ph.D. Professor of Sociology, Psychological & Social Sciences
Surabhi Sahay, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Corporate Communication

Work Experience:

2016-2018

Lion Ambassador

Provided campus tours to potential students and employees with the mission of increasing retention rates.

The Pennsylvania State University, *Abington, PA*

Supervisors: Katie Murt and Lantanya Moore

Summer 2018

Orientation Leader

Welcomed new students to Penn State Abington through community and passion.

The Pennsylvania State University, *Abington, PA*

Supervisor: Catherine Brice

2019

Peer Assistant

Supported new students in their transitioning period, and informed them of necessary information of the campus.

The Pennsylvania State University, *Abington, PA*

Supervisor: Lisa Chewning, Ph.D.

Fall 2020
Internship at Elmwood Park Zoo
Event Planning Department
Norristown, PA
Supervisor: Jane Dempsey

Grants Received [*whether from Schreyer Honors College (e.g., Schreyer Ambassador Awards) or from other sources; please specify*]:

Awards:

Dean's List
Wolfe Trustee Award
Schreyer Honors College

Community Service Involvement:

THON Communications Committee Member, 2016
THON Member, 2017-2020
Lion Ambassador, 2016-2018
Peer Assistant, 2019

Language Proficiency:

Fluent in English
Proficient in Arabic