

1. Introduction

Canada is one of the most LGBTQ2S+ friendly countries in the world (Pritchett, 2022). LGBTQ2S+ represents “lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, with the “Q” often meaning either “queer” or “questioning”” (Lasher & Campano, 2022). However, although Canada is well known as a country that welcomes members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and is LGBTQ2S+-inclusive, sexual minorities in Canada still suffer from discrimination in many forms, and there is no exception at workplaces. According to Lee (2016), about a third of Canadians consisting of half of LGBTQ2S+ people think that their workplace is not LGBTQ2S+-supportive and safe. In addition, 30% of LGBTQ2S+ workers in Canada say that they are discriminated at work, whereas only 3% of non-LGBTQ2S+ workers do, and 49% of transgender individuals believe they are terminated due to their sexual orientation (Morse, 2020). They are disadvantageous not only at workplaces but also at every stage of the employment process. Consequently, workplace discrimination and stressors resulting from it have a negative impact on LGBTQ2S+ employees.

According to Statistics Canada’s 2021 survey report, about one million people identify themselves as LGBTQ2S+, and almost a third of them are aged between 15 and 24. It means that approximately 30% of gender minorities in Canada are youth just entering the labour market. To protect them, Canada established and amended the Human Rights Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Government of Canada, n.d.). Government of Canada (n.d.) reports that by law, all Canadians have the rights to receive equal opportunity and be fairly treated regardless of their sexual orientation, and any employment discrimination against them is prohibited. Nonetheless, LGBTQ2S+ workers are still vulnerable and being marginalized at workplaces in Canada. This is why it is important to deal with this topic so that employment discrimination can be potentially mitigated or eliminated, and LGBTQ2S+ individuals can recover their infringed rights. In this

country they have rights to be equally treated and to have equal opportunities in any circumstances, and all human beings are equal.

In this research report, insights into ongoing workplace discrimination against sexual minorities based on LGBTQ2S + individuals' gender identity will be provided, focusing on situations that they experience in Canada. In the data analysis and discussions section, its results and comparison with the United Kingdom (UK) that provides good examples will be presented. It will be argued that Canadian individuals belonging to the LGBTQ2S+ community are discriminated in the forms of barriers to employment, wage gaps, harassment, and unfair dismissal. Also, these further impedes their career development. In the conclusion section, it will be argued that especially institutional and systemic supports at the government and organizational levels should be performed to combat discrimination by referring to the examples of the UK and practical strategies of experts.

2. Literature Review

Researchers show significant interest in investigating ongoing workplace discrimination against sexual minorities based on their gender identity in Canada, how the United Kingdom (UK) is coping with this issue and what practical strategies can be implemented to reduce discrimination against them. To begin with Waite et al. (2019)'s journal article, it clearly shows that LGBTQ2S+ employees in Canada receive unequal earnings and interview opportunities relative to cisgender men and women, and they are unfairly fired due to their sexual identity. Also, Drydakis (2017)'s journal article answers how the UK's situations on this issue are. Drydakis indicates that as a result of trans-supportive policies and work environment, transgender workers in England, Wales and Scotland reported higher levels of job satisfaction, mental health and life

satisfaction. To answer how to protect LGBTQ2S+ individuals in the Canadian labour market, it is obvious in the journal article published by Mara et al. (2020) that the government and organizations' systemic supports are important. They also offer possible strategies and recommendations on this issue. Using all the three academic sources, this research paper provides a compelling argument that LGBTQ2S+ people are still discriminated in the Canadian labour market. Ultimately, this problem should be solved for their well-being as equal members in society.

3. Methodology

This analysis of discrimination against LGBTQ2S+ individuals in the Canadian labour market is drawn from media contents and statistical analysis in the form of a literature review. Media contents include newspaper, journal articles and reports, as well as statistical analysis of data that comes from the government and private sector organizations. I systematically reviewed and thematically synthesized the LGBTQ2S+ literature on workplace discrimination and labour market inequality in Canada, supportive work environments in the United Kingdom, and strategies to protect them.

4. Data Analysis & Discussions

This section of the research paper provides the analysis of content and statistical data of workplace discrimination against LGBTQ2S+ people in Canada in forms of barriers to employment, wage gaps, harassment and unfair dismissal. Moreover, how they are affected due to the unfair treatment and comparison with other leading countries are analyzed.

LGBTQ employment experiences in Canada

LGBTQ individuals particularly face barriers at every stage of the employment process. The literature finds that sexual minorities in Canada experience structural barriers to employment and receive fewer interview opportunities than non-labelled job applicants (Bauer & Scheim, 2015, p. 3; Waite et al., 2019, p. 14). According to Bauer and Scheim (2015), Ontarian transgender workers could not include their job histories in their applications due to “systems that are not designed for the possibility of trans experience” (p. 3). 58% of them received academic transcripts with the wrong name and pronoun, and 28% experienced the same when they received employment references (Bauer & Scheim, 2015, p. 3). Based on these situations, Bauer and Scheim (2015) argue that it makes transgender people unable to include their actual job histories and fairly present their experience in their job applications (p. 3). In addition, according to Adam’s study on law firms in Ontario (1981, as cited in Waite et al., 2019), “Gay and lesbian signaled job applicants received fewer interview offers than non-signaled, ostensibly heterosexual, job candidates. Non-labelled female job seekers received twice as many interview offers than lesbian-signaled job applicants” (p. 14). These studies clearly show that LGBTQ2S+ job seekers in Canada are disadvantageous in gaining employment and unfairly treated in the employment process.

Furthermore, even if they enter a company, the situation is not different. Canadian gender minorities are more likely to receive lower income and report workplace harassment than cisgender workers (Waite et al., 2019, p. 2, 13). Using the Statistics Canada data (2022), it is found that “Among the employed population aged 25 to 64, heterosexual people had the highest before-tax median earnings (\$55,000), compared with gay or lesbian (\$50,100) and bisexual (\$39,200) individuals.” Also, Statistics Canada (2022) reports that gay men received lower

income of \$51,400 compared to heterosexual men (\$61,400), and bisexual women earned \$38,500, which is less than heterosexual women (\$47,300). According to Statistics Canada (2004), the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) shows that “gay men had personal incomes that were 12% less than heterosexual men” (cited in Waite et al., 2019, p. 7). For transgender employees in Canada, the earning gap is wider. Bauer et al. (2010) report that in Ontario, about half of transgender individuals receive \$15,000 or less per year while 71% have at least college or university diploma (cited in Bauer et al., 2011, p. 1).

In terms of workplace harassment, it is found that 35% Canadian public service employees who identified them as gender diverse experienced harassment at work (*Government of Canada*, 2018). Compared to them, only 16% and 19% of heterosexual male and female employees faced workplace harassment (*Government of Canada*, 2018). It shows that relative to cisgender employees, LGBTQ employees are about 2 times more likely to report workplace harassment in Canada. Inappropriate behaviours that they face at work are shown in various forms. Jaffray (2020) reports that 19% and 33% of sexual minority men and women experienced inappropriate sexual jokes, and 27% and 15% of them reported experiencing unwanted sexual attention, respectively. Unwanted sexual attention includes “comments, gestures, body language, whistles, or calls, and it was about 2.4 times more than heterosexual Canadians” (Jaffray, 2020). For example, the Law Society of Ontario reported in 2017 that 20% of articling students in the province had got unwelcome comments based on their sexual identity (Small, 2018). Also, more than 25% of sexual minority women experienced unwanted physical contact (Jaffray, 2020).

In addition, LGBTQ2S+ workers are denied their job or fired from their job due to their sexual orientation. Bauer and Scheim (2015) demonstrate that trans-negative and unsafe work environments create barriers to employment as 18% of transgender employees in Ontario had

been fired from their job, and 17% had been denied their job because they were transgender (p. 3). Due to reasons they were regarded as related to being transgender, another 15% believed that they were dismissed and another 32% suspected that they were rejected (Bauer & Scheim, 2015, p. 3). Being members of the LGBTQ2S+ community in Canada, they are unfairly terminated and lose their job.

Consequences of LGBTQ2S+ discrimination at workplaces in Canada

As a result of workplace discrimination against LGBTQ2S+ individuals, the literature finds significant negative impacts on them. Homophobic and transphobic work environment not only reduce LGBTQ workers' productivity and job satisfaction but also result in poor health (Waite, 2020, p. 1838). According to Irwin (2002, as cited in Waite, 2020, p. 1838), "Those who had experienced homophobia and prejudicial treatment had increased stress, depression, loss of confidence, increased alcohol and drug use, and attempted suicide. This had a negative impact on workplace productivity and decreased commitment to the job." Eventually, stressors resulting from workplace discrimination make sexual minority workers want to leave their job (Waite, 2020, p. 1845). It is reported in Waite's study (2020) that they have a greater desire to quit their job than employees who are cisgender or non-minority (p. 1845). Consequently, as minority employees leave their job, it contributes to an increase in employee turnover that incurs expenses of hiring and training new employees (Waite, 2020, p. 1852). Also, costs related to absenteeism and lost productivity are incurred (Hango & Moyser, 2018). These researches clearly show that workplace discrimination negatively affects companies as well as well-being of LGBTQ2S+ employees.

Overall, barriers to employment, unequal pay, wrongful dismissal, and job instability ultimately impede LGBTQ2S+ individuals' career development and harm their mental health.

Cases of the United Kingdom

The literature shows the results of an investigation on the United Kingdom (UK) that supports LGBTQ employees in their companies. The UK is regarded as a country that is tolerant of transgender individuals and reported to be the highest country that has higher positive and lower negative attitudes toward sexual minorities among 50 countries (ILGA-Europe, 2015).

According to Drydakis (2017), transgender workers in England, Wales and Scotland in the UK experienced better mental health and higher life satisfaction and job satisfaction after sex change surgery (p. 8, 9). Drydakis adds, "If transition entails higher job satisfaction, then this pattern might be important for workplace supportive policies towards transitioning employees" (p. 2). This study in the UK shows that companies and employers' trans-supportive policies, attitudes and work environment are highly related to transgender workers' job satisfaction and their lives, and it ultimately has a positive impact on them.

5. Conclusion

This research paper clearly displays evidence that members of the LGBTQ2S+ community experience high rates of workplace discrimination in Canada. It is true that the Government of Canada committed to combating discrimination against gender minorities, welcoming diversity and respecting minority groups by supporting and protecting them under law; however, they are still victims of homophobia and transphobia in the employment process and workplace. It is evident that Canadian LGBTQ2S+ people are still vulnerable in society,

especially in the labour market. As a result, this paper finds that it not only leads to LGBTQ2S+ employees' poor well-being and job dissatisfaction but also companies' loss. Also, they are more likely to leave their job than non-minority employees, and these situations further become obstacles to their career advancement. Therefore, it is crucial to manage work environments because sexual minority employees can keep developing their career while being satisfied with their job and organizations can also benefit from improved job quality and less employee turnover rate.

To address unfair discrimination against gender minorities at work, institutional and systemic supports at the government and organizational levels are required. Mara et al. (2020) argue that companies and organizations should enforce LGBTQ2S+ -inclusive workplace policies, raise awareness and promote education on LGBTQ2S+ issues at work, have support groups for minority employees, and implement employment policies that prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual identity (p. 346). Moreover, the government should include courses on gender orientation in secondary schools, implement structural employment policies that protect LGBTQ2S+ individuals, and raise the private sector and the general public's consciousness about LGBTQ2S+ issues (p. 346). Waite et al. (2019) suggest a more detailed solution, which is clearly indicating "sexual orientation and gender identity" to encourage employers to hire minority workers in the Federal Employment Equity Act (p. 17). Well-structured legal frameworks and good policies can have a positive impact on sexual minority employees' lives at work and also their advancements of positive personality and career.

If LGBTQ2S+ workplace issues are not properly addressed and LGBTQ2S+ employees keep victimized in the labour market in Canada, it can cause significant problems in their lives. They will be more marginalized socially and economically and left out in the cold. Also, they

will experience higher levels of depression and suicide. Thus, living up to its reputation as a country that welcomes and includes sexual diversity, Canada should implement practical policies to protect sexual minorities from workplace discrimination and guarantee their rights and freedoms.

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