Guild of Educators in TESOL International

PRESENT BUT NOT POWERFUL: GLASS CEILING ON THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTED LGBTQIA+ EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

To improve oneself and grow professionally, career development has been found to be crucial, as it serves as a roadmap for the professional growth of employees. However, a barrier, known as the glass ceiling, hinders the progress of employees, especially those in the LGBTQIA+ community. This study explores the impact of the glass ceiling on the career development of selected LGBTQIA+ individuals, shedding light on the barriers faced by this community in the workplace. The researchers used a qualitative multiple-case study and selected ten (10) LGBTQIA+ participants from large enterprises via the judgmental sampling technique. Through thematic analysis, psychological impact, workplace discomfort, lack of recognition, and career progress challenges emerged as the impacts of the glass ceiling on the participants. Strategies for overcoming glass ceiling barriers, such as resilience, self-reflection, and community support, are identified. Thus, the study found that glass ceilings are really evident in the context of businesses. With this, the proposed advocacy plan in the study suggests interventions like workplace inclusion training, mentorship networks, and seminars on employee rights. Furthermore, it emphasizes the call for ongoing research and advocacy efforts to dismantle barriers and cultivate workplaces that not only embrace diversity but also provide equitable opportunities for career growth.

Keywords: *Glass Ceiling, Career Development, Barriers, LGBTQIA+*

Introduction

Career development is vital for success at work, guiding individuals toward their professional goals. It involves self-discovery, exploration, decision-making, and action. This ongoing learning journey not only helps individuals get closer to their dream job and lifestyle (McKay, 2020) but also fosters personal growth and equity. Beyond personal and professional growth, career development unifies organizations. It became the conduit through which continuous opportunities for professional advancement permeated across all levels of employees, creating a harmonious and thriving work environment. This inclusive approach aimed to break down barriers, ensuring that every individual within the organization could chart their path to success.

A survey conducted by Job Street (2017) in the Philippines underscored the critical role of career development in shaping employee satisfaction. The findings revealed that a deficiency in career development opportunities and specific management styles stood out as primary contributors to job dissatisfaction among employees. This data shows the profound impact of organizational dynamics on the career progression, emphasizing that career development was not merely an individual endeavor but a symbiotic relationship between the aspirations of employees and the organizational structures in place.

A significant factor contributing to the deficiency in career development is the existence of the "glass ceiling" – a metaphorical barrier obstructing certain individuals, often linked to age, gender, or ethnicity, impeding their upward mobility within a company or organization. Coined in the 1980s and popularized by Gay Bryant's book "The Working Woman Report" (1984), the metaphorical "glass" nature of this barrier leaves individuals unaware of its presence until they confront it. Despite its invisibility, the glass ceiling disproportionately affects women, as indicated by studies examining its impact on women's career development (D'sa et al., 2023).

However, the repercussions of the glass ceiling extend beyond gender boundaries to encompass members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Discrimination, harassment, and exclusion result from stereotypes related to appearance, behavior, and perceived non-conformity to heteronormativity. While many companies claim support for LGBTQIA+ members, today's workplaces still fall short of being truly inclusive. Despite public gestures of support for LGBTQ+ rights, underrepresentation persists for LGBTQ+ women and trans employees in major corporations, leading to negative workplace experiences, heightened rates of harassment, and obstacles to career progression (America, 2020).

Despite declining levels of homophobia, individuals still faced attacks and harassment based on their sexual orientation, prompting many to conceal their identities. Transgender individuals endured similar mistreatment. Workplace discrimination against the LGBT community remained prevalent, with over 40% of LGBT workers experiencing unfair treatment, including termination, non-hiring, or harassment due to their sexual orientation or gender identity (Sears et al., 2021). This discrimination not only inflicted harm on individuals but also carried broader organizational implications, impacting productivity, increasing turnover, and damaging morale (Trevino, 2018). Moreover, gender inequality contributed to heightened stress, tardiness, and diminished job satisfaction.

In the realm of diversity research, a notable focus has been placed on women, leaving the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals underexplored. This research gap contributed to the underreporting of discrimination faced by the LGBT community, emphasizing the imperative for an in-depth exploration of LGBT issues in the workplace (Ng & Rumens, 2017).

While the concept of the glass ceiling had traditionally been associated with women, there was a conspicuous scarcity of research on the impacts of these barriers on the career development of LGBTQIA+ members. This study explicitly concentrated on the LGBTQIA+ spectrum, acknowledging the conservative stances of many companies and the prevailing preconceptions surrounding appearances and behaviors associated with gender norms. The overarching goal was to comprehensively understand the multifaceted impacts of the glass ceiling on the career development of LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to describe the impacts of the glass ceiling on the career development of LGBTQIA+ employees. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the glass ceilings (barriers) experienced by LGBTQIA+ employees?
2. How can the glass ceiling (barriers) impact the career development of members of the LGBTQIA+ community?
3. How can members of the LGBTQIA+ community overcome the glass ceiling (barriers) that impacts their career development?
4. Based on the findings, what advocacy plan can be proposed to help LGBTQIA+ employees overcome the impacts of the glass ceiling (barriers)?

Methodology

To address the primary objective of the study, researchers opted for a qualitative multiple-case study design. As emphasized by Moser and Korstjens (2017), this research approach serves as an exploratory tool, providing profound insights into real-world problems. In this instance, it played a pivotal role in acquiring a comprehensive understanding of the challenges posed by the glass ceiling for LGBTQIA+ employees. Furthermore, as clarified by Heale and Twycross (2018), this design facilitates a more in-depth understanding of individual cases by systematically comparing the similarities and differences within the dataset. The evidence derived from multiple-case studies is renowned for its robustness and reliability, contributing to the overall strength of the study's findings.

Population and Sampling

The study was composed of ten (10) participants from the LGBTQIA+ community, all employed in large enterprises, who were selected using the Purposive/Judgmental Sampling Technique. This sampling involves selecting participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the objectives of the study (Crossman, 2020), with predefined criteria that participants need to meet. For the study, these criteria included being members of the LGBTQIA+ community, working in large enterprises, having 3-5 years of work experience, and currently encountering barriers known as the glass ceiling, which hinder their promotion.

Instrumentations

To fulfill the primary objective of the study, the researchers used a semi-structured interview form. This approach involved open-ended questions to delve deeply into the participants' experiences with the glass ceiling, aiming to get comprehensive insights into their opinions, ideas, and thoughts (Doyle, 2020). This methodology fosters a more organic and nuanced exploration of the participants' perspectives on the challenges posed by the glass ceiling on career development. The interviews were facilitated online, particularly by Google Forms. This provided a convenient and accessible medium for participants to share their experiences freely. In addition, the researchers also used Messenger to ask follow-up questions.

Data Collection

The researchers created a set of interview guide questions that underwent content and face validation. This ensured alignment with the study's goals and what it was intended to measure. Following this, the researchers sought formal approval to proceed with the study. An official letter of request to the Directress of Immaculate Conception College of Balayan Inc. was prepared and submitted to pursue the study. This letter outlined the intention of conducting interviews with ten (10) LGBTQIA+ employees in different businesses. Upon receiving the approval, the researchers obtained consent from participants, discussed the purpose of the study, and recorded the interview process. Following the interviews, the researchers proceeded with a thorough analysis and interpretation of the collected data. This systematic approach underscores the researchers' commitment to the study's ethical conduct and the rigor of its execution.

Data Analysis

The researchers utilized thematic analysis to explore the impact of the glass ceiling on the career development of LGBTQIA+ employees, involving several key stages in the analytical process. Initially, coding was applied to familiarize the researchers with the data, systematically marking and categorizing text to highlight relevant points for effective analysis. This coding stage enabled the identification of patterns and key themes within the dataset. Subsequently, during the analysis phase, a comprehensive review of the coded data ensured its relevance to the main study objective. This step served as a critical examination of the marked text, confirming its alignment with the overarching research goals. Following this, the interpreting stage was employed to delve deeper into ideas, further elucidate the gathered data, and draw insightful conclusions. This involved a detailed examination of the codes and keywords identified in the previous coding stage, facilitating the categorization and interpretation of the data. Finally, the verification process was implemented to appropriately categorize the data, make relevant observations, and draw inferences. This step ensured the accuracy, consistency, and alignment of the findings with the intended purpose of the study. The overall thematic analysis approach allowed the researchers to derive meaningful insights into the impacts of the glass ceiling on the career development of LGBTQIA+ employees.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers conducted this research with due diligence, securing informed consent to pursue the study from the administrators of Immaculate Conception College of Balayan, Inc. Furthermore, they ensured the voluntary participation of the individuals involved in the study. Each participant received a detailed and comprehensive informed consent form outlining the study's purpose, procedures, and potential benefits. Careful consideration was given to the nature of the questions posed during interviews to minimize any potential harm to the participants. Upon completing their involvement, participants were provided with a debriefing statement elucidating the study's purpose. This process aimed to guarantee that participants departed with a clear understanding of their role, and any queries or concerns were duly addressed. In an additional measure to protect participant identities, researchers utilized alphanumeric codes (e.g., Participant 1, 2, 3) instead of real names. This approach was implemented to maintain the confidentiality of study participants throughout the research study, uphold ethical standards, and ensure the privacy of those involved.

Results and Discussions

Presented below are the findings and data analysis gathered from the responses of the 10 participants. Through thorough data analysis, several themes emerged, shedding light on the experiences of LGBTQIA+ employees in the workplace and the ways how they cope up with the glass ceiling they are experiencing/experienced.

Table 1

Types of glass ceilings (barriers) being experienced by LGBTQIA+ employees in the workplace

Major Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Workplace Stereotyping and Underestimation	Stereotyping LGBTQIA+ Individuals	P1: Feeling underestimated because of gender identity
		P4: Mocked for being part of the LGBTQIA+ community
		P9: Offensive jokes and comments due to gender orientation
	Gender Identity Affecting Professionalism	P2: Teased for dress, presentation, and behavior
		P3: Feeling like a second option in professional situations
		P8: Not taken seriously when discussing work matters
Lack of Recognition and Opportunities	Lack of Recognition	P7: Absence of recognition for hard work
		P10: Feeling that suggestions and ideas are not taken seriously
	Limited Career Advancement	P7: No promotion opportunities
		P6: Exclusion from decision-making and idea contributions

Offensive Remarks and Discrimination	Offensive Comments and Jokes	P5: Hearing offensive comments, jokes, and words about being part of LGBTQIA+ P9: Offensive jokes and comments due to gender orientation P10: Feeling that suggestions are not taken seriously, possibly due to discrimination

The findings from Table 1 show the pervasive challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ employees in the workplace, particularly:

1. Workplace stereotyping and underestimation
2. Lack of recognition and opportunities
3. Offensive remarks and discrimination

Workplace stereotyping and underestimation

This theme encapsulates the experiences of LGBQIA+ who feel undervalued and subjected to stereotypes based on their gender identity or sexual orientation. Huffman (2018) asserts that discrimination significantly hampers the advancement of gay males to higher-level roles, highlighting the detrimental impact of stereotypes on career development. Similarly, Stonewall (2023) notes that discrimination in the workplace often manifests as bullying and harassment, echoing the reported experiences of participants related to gender orientation.

Under this theme, "Stereotyping LGBTQIA+ Individuals" emerged. Participants shared distressing accounts of feeling underestimated and mocked due to their gender identity or sexual orientation. Participant 1 expressed, "I feel that they are underestimating us because of our gender identity and that they think they can do better than us." In addition, participant 4 stated, "They mock me because of being part of the LGBTQIA+ community," while participant 9 said, "I hear some offensive jokes and comments at work because of my gender orientation."

In the sub-theme "Gender Identity Affecting Professionalism," participants revealed further challenges, such as teasing for personal appearance and behavior, feeling like a second choice in professional situations, and not being taken seriously during work discussions. In fact, Participant 2 stated that "I am being teased by my colleagues because of how I dress and present myself and how I act also," while participant 8 stated, "When I have ideas or am talking about work stuff, I feel that they don't take it seriously." These experiences align with the broader literature on workplace discrimination and its detrimental effects on LGBTQIA+ employees' career development and professional well-being.

Lack of recognition and opportunities

This major theme provides insight into the significant challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ employees, particularly concerning acknowledgment, and professional advancement. This theme underscores the disparities and limitations these individuals encounter within the workplace, primarily due to systemic barriers and biases. As highlighted by Huffman (2018), even individuals within the LGBTQIA+ community who possess managerial capabilities, especially gay males, often confront barriers that impede their progression into higher-level roles.

Under the sub-theme of "Lack of Recognition," the narratives of participants further show the struggles faced by LGBTQIA+ employees. Participant 7 stated that "I haven't received any recognitions for my work," and Participant 10's experiences add another layer, expressing a perception that suggestions and ideas are not taken seriously, reflecting a lack of appreciation for their intellectual input. "I feel like my suggestions and ideas are not taken seriously and are not getting any recognition" (P10).

The sub-theme of "Limited Career Advancement" deepens the understanding of the challenges within this major theme. Participant 7 discloses a lack of experience in receiving promotions, indicating a clear barrier to upward mobility within their professional trajectory. Similarly, Participant 6 shares a profound sentiment of being underestimated in their ability to perform tasks, coupled with exclusion from decision-making processes, reinforcing

the notion of restricted career advancement. "They underestimate my ability to do work or tasks, excluding my ideas and suggestions in decision-making" (P6).

Offensive remarks and discrimination

This theme encompasses harmful comments and discriminatory practices, collectively creating a hostile work environment that acts as a significant barrier to their career progression. McKinsey (2020) underscores the multitude of challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals at work, with offensive remarks and discrimination being prominent among them.

Within this major theme, the sub-theme of "Offensive Comments and Jokes" specifically addresses the prevalence of inappropriate comments and jokes targeting LGBTQIA+ individuals. This sub-theme is identified as a significant and widespread concern within the workplace, further validated by research conducted by Sears (2021). Sears' findings highlight the persistence of workplace discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community, including the continued prevalence of offensive comments and jokes. This research emphasizes the detrimental impact of such discriminatory practices on the health and well-being of affected individuals.

Participant narratives within this sub-theme provide firsthand experiences that align with the broader issue. Participant 5 said, "Sometimes I hear comments, jokes, or words about being part of the LGBT community that are too offensive." This indicates a distressing atmosphere within the workplace. Participant 9 stated that, "I hear some offensive jokes and comments in my work because of my gender orientation." This reflects the discriminatory nature of such behaviors. Participant 10 adds another layer by expressing that their suggestions about their ideas are not taken seriously, potentially indicating a form of discrimination.

The analysis of these themes shows the systemic barriers and biases faced by LGBTQIA+ employees in the workplace, highlighting the imperative for organizations to address discrimination, promote recognition and opportunities, and create a more inclusive environment conducive to the professional growth and well-being of all employees.

Table 2

Impact of the glass ceiling (barrier) on the career development of LGBTQIA+ employees

Major Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Psychological Impact and Workplace Discomfort	Workplace Discomfort	P1: Feeling uncomfortable at work due to the glass ceiling
		P8: Feeling uncomfortable affects motivation and focus on work
	Erosion of Self-Confidence and Authenticity	P2: Increased self-consciousness about speech, dress, and behavior
		P2: Fear of judgment from colleagues.
		P2: Inhibiting personal expression at the workplace.
		P4: Feeling unwanted by co-workers
		P7: Doubting personal abilities and self-worth
		P10: Loss of trust and confidence in oneself
	Loss of Motivation and Job Satisfaction	P4: Impact on job satisfaction and well-being
		P5: Experiencing unhappiness with work
		P6: Decreased motivation due to perceived indifference
		P6: Loss of motivation due to feeling disregarded
		P9: Stress and self-doubt affecting job performance
Recognition and Career Progress Challenges	Lack of Recognition	P3: Feeling unrecognized for one's efforts
		P7: Deterioration of self-confidence due to lack of acknowledgment
		P3: Struggles in personal career development
		P4: Negative impact on career development

Table 2 shows the two (2) major themes regarding the impacts of the glass ceiling (barrier) on the career development of LGBTQIA+ employees particularly:

1. Psychological Impact and Workplace Discomfort
2. Recognition and Career Progress Challenges

Psychological Impact and Workplace Discomfort

This major theme delves into the psychological toll of bias, inequality, and discrimination within the workplace. The persistent issues of bias and discrimination are shown to significantly impact the professional experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals. Sears (2021) asserts that workplace discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community and its detrimental effects on health and well-being.

Within this major theme, several sub-themes provide a detailed understanding of the psychological impact experienced by participants. The sub-theme of "workplace discomfort" reflects a pervasive sense of unease and discomfort in the work environment. Participants articulate that this discomfort has a substantial impact on their career development, emphasizing the profound consequences of feeling uneasy within the workplace, which can undoubtedly hinder professional growth. Participant 1 states, "It gives a very big impact on my career development because I feel uncomfortable," and participant 8 said, "I feel uncomfortable inside where I am working."

The sub-theme of "Erosion of Self-Confidence and Authenticity" further delves into the psychological struggles faced by participants. Participants reveal increased self-consciousness about speech, dress, and presentation, highlighting the toll on authenticity. In addition, fear of judgment from colleagues is a recurrent theme, impacting the ability to be oneself at work. Others convey a feeling of being unwanted and experience lowered self-confidence and trust in themselves. In fact, participant 2 mentions, "I became more conscious of how I speak, dress, and present myself to them." He also added, "I am afraid of what my colleagues will think or say to me." and "It makes it hard for me to be myself inside my workplace; that's why I can't bring or do my best in my job." While participant 7 shares, "It lowers my self-confidence and makes me doubt myself," and participant 10 states, "It makes me lose my trust and confidence with myself." These narratives collectively underscore the erosion of self-confidence and authenticity because of workplace discrimination.

Lastly, the sub-theme of "Loss of Motivation and Job Satisfaction" delves into the impact on participants' motivation and satisfaction. Participants emphasize the link between workplace stress and decreased satisfaction. They also express unhappiness with work, which attributes a decrease in motivation to differential treatment and feeling disregarded compared to other workers. In relation, participants 4, 5, 6, and 9 state, "It does lead to workplace stress and decreased satisfaction," "I feel unhappy with my work," "My motivation in doing work decreases because of the difference in how they treat me compared to other workers," "I lose motivation because I feel disregarded," and "I tend to get stressed because of that, and I lose satisfaction in my work."

Recognition and Career Progress Challenges

Drawing on the research by Huffman (2018), which extensively examines the presence of glass ceilings, particularly for women, the identified theme shows similar barriers exist for sexual minorities. The study by McKinsey (2020) further underscores the challenges encountered by LGBT+ employees, including increased workloads, stress over performance evaluations, and obstacles to career advancement. Additionally, Stonewall (2023) identifies various forms of discrimination in recruitment, pay disparities, and limited career opportunities for LGBTQIA+ individuals. Biased perceptions of successful leadership, inadequate organizational policies, and challenges related to sexual and gender identity further compound these barriers (McKinsey, 2020).

Under this major theme, the sub-theme of "Lack of Recognition" highlights the experiences of participants who feel their contributions are undervalued or overlooked within the workplace. Participant 3 states, "They don't recognize my work. It affects me in a way that makes it difficult for me to develop myself as an employee or worker in the company. I think I can't give my best to my work." Participant 7 adds, "It lowers my self-confidence; I'm thinking that maybe what I'm doing is not the best; that's why they don't notice" and participant 4 stated that, "It negatively

impacts my career progression." Participants articulate a sense of frustration, stating that their work is not recognized, which in turn hinders their development as an employee. And the lack of recognition negatively impacts their self-confidence and raises doubts about the quality of their work and is detrimental effects of this lack of recognition on their career progression.

These challenges emphasize the urgent need for inclusive workplace policies, awareness, and education to address the discriminatory practices and biases faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals. Recognition of these challenges is crucial for fostering a workplace environment that promotes psychological well-being, authenticity, and equal opportunities for career development and progression. Addressing these issues can contribute to a more inclusive and supportive work environment for everyone, irrespective of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Table 3

Ways on how members of the LGBTQIA+ community overcome the glass ceiling that impacts their career development

Major Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Resilience and Self-Reflection	Self-Reflection and Patience	P1: Viewing challenges as part of personal growth
		P3: Hesitation to open up about challenges but hoping for understanding
		P8: Treating barriers as challenges to be overcome.
	Seeking Inspiration and Motivation	P4: Personal experiences serving as inspiration to strive and excel
		P5: Finding strength and motivation in facing challenges
		P7: Developing resilience through adapting to the environment
Support Systems and Community	Supportive Colleagues and Friends	P2: Finding strength in colleagues who provide support and acceptance
		P6: Understanding that others' opinions reflect their character, not one's worth
		P10: Seeking advice and support from friends
	Self-Belief and Acceptance	P9: Believing in oneself and accepting one's identity
		P5: Building resilience through self-acceptance

Table 3 shows two (2) major themes about the ways in which members of the LGBTQIA+ community overcome the glass ceiling that impacts their career development.

1. Resilience and Self-Reflection
2. Support Systems and Community

Resilience and Self-Reflection

This theme highlights the participants' ability to resiliently respond to adversity and engage in self-reflection as key strategies for professional growth. McKinsey (2020), suggests strategies to overcome the glass ceiling, emphasizing the importance of recognizing its existence, channeling frustration into purposeful action, and raising concerns, as individuals and managers navigate these challenges, resilience becomes a key factor.

In the sub-theme "Self-Reflection and Patience," participants describe their coping mechanisms in the face of workplace challenges. Participants view challenges as part of their professional journey, demonstrating a resilient mindset. On the other hand, others opt for self-restraint, refraining from opening up about problems to avoid potential negativity. Others share a similar outlook, perceiving challenges as opportunities for personal and professional growth. Participant 1 states, "I just think of them as part of my challenge at work." Participant 3 adds, "I didn't do anything, afraid that even opening up about my problem would be taken negatively by them," and Participant 8 mentions, "I just think of those as part of my challenges at work that I need to overcome."

The sub-theme "Seeking Inspiration and Motivation" reveals how participants draw inspiration and motivation from their experiences. Participant 4 turns their challenging experiences into a source of inspiration and an impetus for putting in extra effort. Other participants like 5 and 7 share, "I become resilient for myself, thinking that it is just part of the challenges that will ultimately motivate me to work," and "As I get used to their treatment, doing my best is my way to cope with the barrier I am experiencing."

Support Systems and Community

This theme is closely aligned with McKinsey's (2020) study, which recognizes the significance of maintaining and bolstering support networks and implementing workplace policies that cultivate safe and inclusive environments specifically tailored for LGBTQ+ employees. These networks become essential avenues for emotional support, reassurance, and motivation. Colleagues, for instance, can offer a sense of belonging and understanding, making the workplace a more affirming space for LGBTQ+ individuals. Additionally, the implementation of workplace policies that explicitly support LGBTQ+ employees contributes to the creation of a safe and inclusive environment. These policies may address issues such as nondiscrimination, equal opportunities, and inclusivity training.

In the sub-theme "Supportive Colleagues and Friends," participants express the meaningful impact of external support on their professional experiences. Participant 2 draws reassurance and motivation from the support offered by colleagues, viewing it as a source of affirmation for their identity. This shows how a supportive work environment, fostered by colleagues, can contribute to a positive and affirming atmosphere for LGBTQIA+ individuals. "The support and reassurance from some colleagues have been helpful for me as it serves as a source of motivation and affirmation," said participant 2. Participant 6 adopts a resilient mindset, understanding that external opinions do not define their worth. This showcases the importance of building resilience through a supportive social network, enabling individuals to withstand external challenges without compromising their self-worth. Participant 10 actively seeks advice and support from friends, recognizing the value of diverse perspectives. This emphasizes the role of external networks, beyond the workplace, in providing valuable insights and encouragement.

In the sub-theme "Self-Belief and Acceptance," the focus shifts to participants' internal resilience. Participant 9 underscores the significance of self-belief and acceptance as fundamental elements for navigating challenges. This internal strength allows individuals to maintain a sense of self-worth despite external pressures. Believing in oneself and embracing one's true identity becomes a cornerstone for facing external criticism and biases. S/He said, "By just believing in myself and accepting what I am, as well as accepting that people can say a lot about a person despite not knowing their true self," Participant 5 asserts sentiment, highlighting how self-belief and acceptance serve as powerful tools for confronting challenges and extracting motivation from them. This internal resilience becomes a driving force, enabling individuals to not only withstand external adversities but also find empowerment and motivation within themselves. "I just become resilient for myself, accepting and letting comments from others, viewing them as challenges that motivate me to work," said Participant 5.

The themes discovered a need for an integrated approach to address challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ employees. Acknowledging the existence of the glass ceiling, fostering supportive workplace environments, and nurturing internal resilience are crucial steps for promoting the professional development and well-being of LGBTQIA+ individuals in the workplace.

Table 4

Proposed Advocacy Plan

Advocacy Plan to Address the Impacts of Glass Ceiling on the Career Development of LGBTQIA+ in Workplace

Areas	Objectives	Activities/ Actions Taken	Target Date	Persons Involved	Resources/ Budget	Expected Outcomes
Workplace Inclusion Training	Increase awareness and understanding of the impacts of glass ceilings on LGBTQIA+ employees' career development among colleagues and supervisors.	1. Develop and implement a workplace inclusion training program that addresses issues related to Workplace Stereotyping and Underestimation, Lack of Recognition and Opportunities, and Offensive Remarks and Discrimination. 2. Conduct interactive sessions to educate employees on the experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals and the specific challenges they face in career development. 3. Provide resources and case studies highlighting the importance of recognizing and addressing glass ceiling barriers.	January-June 2024	-All employees including LGBTQIA+ employees -Human Resource department -External facilitators with expertise in LGBTQIA+ workplace issues	Allocate budget for external facilitators, training materials, and promotional resources that will come from the training and development budget.	1. Increased awareness and empathy among employees regarding the challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ colleagues. 2. Improved workplace culture with reduced instances of stereotyping, underestimation, and offensive remarks. 3. Enhanced understanding of the importance of recognizing and promoting LGBTQIA+ employees' contributions.
Mentorship and Support Networks	Establish mentorship programs and support networks to provide guidance and encouragement for LGBTQIA+ employees in overcoming glass ceiling barriers.	1.Create a mentorship program connecting LGBTQIA+ employees with experienced mentors who have successfully navigated their careers. 2. Facilitate networking events and support group meetings to encourage the exchange of experiences and advice. 3. Promote the importance of supportive colleagues and friends through internal communications and recognition programs.	April-June 2024	-LGBTQIA+ employees -Human Resource department -LGBTQIA+ employee volunteers	Allocate budget for mentorship program administration, networking events, and recognition incentives. that will come from the training and development budget.	1. Increased mentorship opportunities for LGBTQIA+ employees. 2. Strengthened support networks, fostering a sense of community within the workplace. 3. Recognition and celebration of LGBTQIA+ employees and their allies contributing to a positive work environment.

| Seminar for Employee Rights | Increase awareness and understanding of employee rights, regardless of their gender and advocate for the effective implementation of the new Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) policy to strengthen mechanisms addressing LGBTQIA+ discrimination and promoting their active participation in policy formulation. | 1. Develop and conduct a seminar series covering topics such as workplace discrimination, equal opportunities, and legal rights of all genders.

2. Conduct informational campaigns/seminar to educate the LGBTQIA+ community and the public about the policy's importance. Mobilize support through social media, webinars, and community events.

3. Collaborate with legal experts, human rights activists, and LGBTQIA+ advocacy groups to provide comprehensive information during the seminars.

4. Collaborate with LGBTQIA+ advocacy groups, human rights organizations, and legal experts to understand the policy's nuances and potential challenges.

5. Schedule meetings with key government officials, including the committee leaders, to discuss the policy's effective implementation and address potential gaps.

6. Create informational materials, including brochures and online resources, to distribute among employees. | July 2024 - January 2025 | -All employees including LGBTQIA+ employees

-LGBTQIA+ advocacy groups

-HR department

-Legal department and experts

- Government officials involved in policy implementation | Allocate budget for expert speakers, seminar materials, promotional resources, social media campaigns, webinar, event logistic, and advocacy material that will come from the training and development budget. | 1. Increased awareness among employees about their rights, fostering a sense of empowerment, increased awareness and understanding of the new policy within the LGBTQIA+ community.

2. Improved understanding of LGBTQIA+ rights and protections in the workplace.

3. Mobilized public support for effective policy implementation.

4. Productive advocacy meetings leading to a clearer roadmap for policy execution.

5. Creation of a more inclusive and informed workplace culture |

Advocacy Plan to Address the Impacts of Glass Ceiling on the Career Development of LGBTQIA+ in Workplace

The proposed advocacy plan addresses the impacts of the glass ceiling on the career development of LGBTQIA+ employees, aiming to foster inclusivity, awareness, and support within the workplace. The plan unfolds in three interconnected parts, each serving a distinct purpose to bring about positive change.

The first component, the "Workplace Inclusion Training Program," reflects a commitment to education and awareness. By conducting training sessions and collaborating with external experts, the objective is to cultivate a deeper understanding of LGBTQIA+ workplace issues among colleagues and supervisors. This initiative recognizes that fostering inclusivity requires not only awareness but also informed perspectives, ensuring a workplace that values diversity and acknowledges the challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ professionals.

The second facet, "Mentorship and Support Networks," acknowledges the significance of guidance and encouragement. Creating a mentorship program and facilitating networking events are practical steps to provide LGBTQIA+ employees with the support needed to overcome glass ceiling barriers. This initiative recognizes the value of supportive colleagues in fostering an environment where LGBTQIA+ professionals can thrive, develop, and advance in their careers.

The third and final part, the "Seminar for Employee Rights," highlights the importance of knowledge and empowerment. By raising awareness about employee rights, particularly those related to LGBTQIA+ inclusivity, the advocacy plan aims to empower employees and create a culture that actively supports their career development. Collaborating with experts, advocacy groups, and engaging with officials reflects a comprehensive approach to ensuring the effective implementation of anti-discrimination policies.

Collectively, these advocacy plans represent a strategic and multi-faceted effort to create a workplace that not only recognizes the challenges posed by the glass ceiling for LGBTQIA+ professionals but actively works towards dismantling those barriers. The goals of promoting inclusivity, raising awareness, and fostering a supportive environment align with broader efforts to create workplaces that are diverse, equitable, and conducive to the professional growth of all employees.

Conclusions

This study shows the challenges that LGBTQIA+ employees encounter in the workplace, offering a perspective on the impact of glass ceiling barriers on their professional development. The identified themes of workplace stereotyping and underestimation, lack of recognition and opportunities, and offensive remarks and discrimination collectively underscore the diverse and layered nature of these challenges. The study recognizes that the experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals in the workplace are shaped by a complex interplay of biases and discriminatory practices, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive understanding of these issues.

The impact of the glass ceiling on the well-being and career development of LGBTQIA+ employees becomes apparent through the identified themes of psychological impact and workplace comfort, as well as recognition and career progress. These findings emphasize the critical importance of prioritizing mental well-being within the workplace and creating environments that not only acknowledge but actively support equal opportunities for career advancement. The study highlights that a workplace's commitment to inclusivity and fairness significantly contributes to the overall success and satisfaction of LGBTQIA+ professionals.

Moreover, the research shows the resilience and resourcefulness exhibited by LGBTQIA+ individuals in navigating and overcoming these barriers. The identified themes of resilience and self-reflection, coupled with support systems and community, underscore the crucial role of personal strength and a sense of community in effectively addressing the professional challenges posed by workplace discrimination. This resilience not only enables individual growth but also contributes to fostering a more supportive and understanding workplace culture.

The proposed advocacy plans outlined in the study represent tangible and pragmatic steps to address the identified challenges. Initiatives such as workplace inclusion training, mentoring and support networks, and the seminar for employee rights present proactive measures to cultivate a more inclusive workplace culture. By fostering awareness,

providing support mechanisms, and actively empowering LGBTQIA+ employees, these initiatives aim to create an environment that values diversity and champions the well-being and professional development of all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Recommendations

In addressing the different challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ employees, it is imperative for organizations to undertake a comprehensive approach that acknowledges and actively dismantles biases and stereotypes. Firstly, organizations should implement robust awareness programs and training sessions aimed at combating stereotypes and biases that hinder the career progression of LGBTQIA+ individuals. These initiatives should be complemented by the development and enforcement of inclusive policies specifically targeting issues such as "Stereotyping LGBTQIA+ Individuals" and "Gender Identity Affecting Professionalism." Moreover, regular diversity and sensitivity training sessions can foster a workplace culture that values and respects individual differences, laying the groundwork for a more inclusive environment.

Furthermore, prioritizing the psychological well-being of LGBTQIA+ employees is essential. Organizations should establish initiatives focused on fostering psychological comfort in the workplace. This can include the implementation of diversity and inclusion programs, mental health support services, and anti-discrimination policies. Providing confidential support systems and creating open communication channels for employees facing challenges related to the glass ceiling can also play a significant role in promoting mental well-being and creating a supportive work environment where LGBTQIA+ employees feel valued and respected.

Promoting resilience and establishing support networks are crucial aspects of overcoming the challenges posed by the glass ceiling. Organizations should proactively address the glass ceiling by fostering a supportive environment that acknowledges its existence and encourages open communication about related challenges. Creating policies that sustain support networks and cultivate a workplace culture valuing diversity and inclusion can empower LGBTQIA+ employees to navigate professional obstacles more effectively, viewing challenges as opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Advocacy for inclusivity within the organization is paramount. This involves prioritizing inclusive training programs to raise awareness among all employees about the challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ colleagues. Additionally, promoting a positive workplace culture by recognizing and celebrating the contributions of LGBTQIA+ employees and allies through internal communications and recognition programs can foster a sense of belonging and appreciation. Encouraging open communication and implementing ongoing initiatives promoting inclusivity, with the involvement of both managers and employees, can further contribute to creating a more inclusive workplace culture.

Supportive advocacy plans should be developed, integrating various strategies such as workplace inclusion training, mentoring and support networks, and the Seminar for Employee Rights. These plans should be effectively communicated throughout the organization, emphasizing the commitment to diversity and the importance of dismantling glass ceilings. Continuous improvement and feedback mechanisms should also be established to ensure responsiveness to the evolving needs of the workforce. By implementing these recommendations, organizations can create an environment that not only supports the professional growth and well-being of LGBTQIA+ employees but also fosters a culture of inclusivity and diversity.

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