

companies smaller than 775 employees (Rynes et al., 2005).

An interesting paradox exists in the study of the effects of both GS and PS programs on organizational performance. Lawler (1988) wrote that moderators of the success of GS plans include a climate of trust between labor and management; and Kim (1999) noted that success depends on whether or not the company is financially sound and able to make reward payments. Similarly, PS plans work better in companies that have shown an increase in stock price over the preceding two years (i.e., are generating a profit) (Kruse, 1993).

Lawler (1988) suggested that if companies are high on the two moderators listed for GS, they will not stand to gain a lot from implementing a GS plan. It is likely that this proposal holds for PS plans as well. Therefore, one key issue that remains to be resolved for both GS and PS plans is whether the GS or PS plan is a cause of organizational performance or an effect of organizational performance (Lawler, 1988; Kruse, 1993).

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See also Compensation; Team-Based Rewards

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GAY, LESBIAN, AND BISEXUAL ISSUES AT WORK

Gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) individuals are physically and emotionally attracted to individuals of their own gender. These individuals compose a substantial proportion of the workforce (estimates range from 5%–15%) but face unique challenges because of their sexual orientation. Consequently, researchers and practitioners in industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology have begun to develop frameworks for considering GLB issues in the workplace, investigating challenges facing GLB employees, and discussing strategies for the equitable and effective management of sexual orientation diversity.

A STIGMA FRAMEWORK

Although a GLB identity is a positive and proud identity for some people, it is often deemed a devalued social identity in the larger societal context. Consistent with a conceptualization of stigma, GLB individuals are targets of negative stereotypes, social isolation, and discrimination. Accordingly, we use stigma theory and research to understand the experiences of GLB individuals at work. In fact, many of the issues facing GLB employees emerge as a function of the stigmatization of homosexuality in contemporary American society.

There are a number of dimensions on which stigmas are categorized, including three that are particularly important characteristics relevant to understanding the GLB stigma: controllability, concealability, and fear of contagion. First, controllability refers to the fact that the stigma of homosexuality is largely perceived to be a volitional choice and a controllable condition. Across stigmas, perceived responsibility is associated with negative attitudes and increased discrimination toward those who are stigmatized—particularly increased hostility, decreased sympathy, and motivations to avoid.

Second, the concealability of the GLB stigma refers to the fact that most GLB individuals can choose to conceal or reveal their sexual orientation. Given the fact that most gay and lesbian employees can *come out of the closet*, they face disclosure dilemmas in the workplace. They must decide if, when, how, and to whom they should disclose their orientation. Some decide not to disclose to anyone, whereas others decide to disclose to a trusted few or to everyone. Unfortunately, sometimes GLB individuals report being *outed* or having their identities disclosed without actually choosing to do so themselves. For the most part, the concealability aspect sometimes necessitates that individuals spend a great deal of energy and preoccupation managing their identity, and such a situation contributes to challenges for GLB employees and their organizations.

Third, fear of contagion refers to the fact that many people perceive that the GLB identity is threatening. Those interacting with GLB individuals face the possibility of being stigmatized (and perceived as GLB themselves) simply for associating with GLB individuals. In addition, because of its historical linkage with HIV-AIDS, the GLB orientation is perceived to be a contagious one possibly resulting in disease and even death. Given these associations, many individuals prefer to sever ties with GLB individuals.

There are individual differences that lead some employees and organizations to display particularly negative attitudes and behaviors against gay men and lesbians. In general, women tend to be more accepting of the GLB identity than men; and as a result, women are much less likely to show prejudice and discriminate. In addition, people who are more conservative and religious are also more likely to discriminate against gay men and lesbians. The stigma framework and the association of homosexuality with controllability,

concealability, and contagion helps I/O psychologists examine the challenges faced by GLB employees and their organizations.

GLB CHALLENGES AT WORK

In considering GLB issues in the workplace, it is important to examine the challenges that organizations face as well as the issues that affect GLB employees on a personal level. As bearers of social stigma, GLB employees are likely to face discrimination. Because discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation remains legal, there are few legal actions that GLB employees can take when they face stigmatization. In fact, there have been some highly publicized and recent instances of individuals losing their jobs (e.g., those in the military, leaders of churches, leaders of children's groups such as the Boy Scouts) when their sexual orientation is revealed. Fortunately, many of these sanctions are now being challenged in the court system, and some local and city ordinances are trying to combat such discrimination. In fact, research suggests that because of pressure toward political correctness and genuine attitude change, discrimination toward GLB individuals is typically manifested in subtle, rather than overt, behaviors. That is, instead of blatantly discriminatory actions, sexual orientation discrimination may take the form of negative nonverbal behaviors including decreased eye contact and increased interpersonal distance and social isolation.

In addition to discrimination, GLB individuals face the challenge of the *disclosure dilemma*. GLB employees who elect to disclose their sexual orientation in their workplace may fear the possibility of becoming the targets of harassment. Moreover, they may fear that such disclosure could even lead to the termination of their employment. However, when GLB employees elect to keep their sexual orientation a secret, they might face other possible negative outcomes. Research suggests that the stress of keeping their personal lives secret at work may negatively affect employees' levels of stress, immune systems, and loyalty to their organizations. Therefore, GLB employees face a double-edged sword in their decision to conceal or disclose their sexual orientation. Even when the challenge of disclosure is overcome, GLB employees have to negotiate the integration of their work and nonwork lives. For example, openly gay employees must decide whether to bring their partners to company social functions, to display their

partners' photos on their desks, or even to discuss weekend plans with coworkers and supervisors. These decisions are persistent, salient challenges facing GLB individuals at work every day.

From the perspective of organizations that employ GLB individuals, additional challenges arise. Broadly, organizations must decide how to manage sexual orientation diversity. Specifically, organizations and organizational leaders must examine the formal policies and informal organizational climate for GLB issues. Organizations must decide whether to introduce formal policies that support GLB employees or ignore sexual orientation as a diversity characteristic in organizational policies. In addition, organizations must determine the extent to which they will work toward creating a supportive informal climate for sexual orientation diversity. The consequences of formal and informal efforts to support sexual orientation diversity create additional challenges.

On the one hand, when organizations elect to include sexual orientation in nondiscrimination policies, they must be prepared to encounter employees who are unwilling to accept or comply with those policies. On the other hand, failure to include such policies may result in dissatisfied GLB employees, high turnover rates, and potential litigation. Successful implementation of sexual orientation diversity programs and policies will likely depend on top management support and employee buy-in. Further, although such formal policies might protect GLB employees from overt forms of discrimination, organizations may still face the challenge of eliminating subtle, interpersonal forms of discrimination. Thus efforts to reduce GLB discrimination in the workplace must be developed and evaluated carefully.

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

There are clearly strategies individuals and organizations can adopt to reduce GLB discrimination. Ideally, the burden of reducing discrimination should not be on the victims but, rather, should live with the stigmatizers themselves. However, it is important to note that GLB individuals, their coworkers, and the organizations of which they are a part can engage in behaviors that can alter the course of prejudice. At the individual level a growing body of research has shown that disclosing one's GLB status can be a beneficial strategy but only given certain conditions. For example, research suggests that organizational climates that are

supportive, waiting a delayed period of time before disclosing, and ensuring some degree of coworker support are hugely predictive of positive *coming out* experiences. Other research shows that employers may be particularly likely to stigmatize GLB employees when little is known about them other than their GLB status. Thus GLB individuals who try to individuate themselves or who provide employers and coworkers with a body of information (that is typically unrelated or counter to GLB stereotypes) and reveal their strengths and skills as employees can allay others' inclinations to discriminate. Another strategy that GLB individuals might use is to compensate for the prejudice that they believe others will show toward them. Compensation typically involves verbal behaviors such as listening skills and nonverbal behaviors, including eye contact and nodding, that focus on conversational maintenance and continuation, all of which also attempt to put interaction partners at ease.

At the organizational level, there are a number of strategies that institutions can adopt to reduce discrimination toward GLB employees. Many strategies involve the implementation of formal GLB-related policies. For example, institutions that adopt same-sex partner benefits, diversity training programs with a focus on appreciation for sexual orientation diversity, diversity officers, GLB support groups, and antidiscrimination policies are all more likely to result in more satisfied GLB employees. Such formal steps are also likely to lead to a more accepting informal climate. Research reveals that much discrimination occurs at the interpersonal level and the institution of formal policies likely sends a clear message to employees about the culture and the message that interpersonal discrimination is not tolerated. Moreover, because much of the discrimination does occur at the interpersonal level, it is important to promote supervisor and coworker support of GLB employees. Such support has been shown to be particularly likely to result in more favorable outcomes for GLB employees.

CONCLUSION

GLB issues are, and will continue to be, important to organizations. It is hopeful that as more employees disclose their sexual orientation identities and as more organizations implement supportive policies, pressure on lobbyists and lawmakers will eventually afford GLB individuals with liberties and legal rights that are

now denied to them. To some extent, great strides have already been taken to reduce the stigmatization of GLB individuals. One important example of such change is the removal of homosexuality as a disorder from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition (DSM-IV)*. Researchers and practitioners should build on this growing body of knowledge and use it to work toward allowing GLB individuals full and nondiscriminatory participation in society. When managed equitably and effectively, diversity, in all its forms, can benefit both employees and their organizations.

—Michelle R. Hebl, Eden B. King,
and Charles L. Law

See also Diversity in the Workplace; Diversity Training

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GENERALIZABILITY THEORY

An important criterion on which psychological measures are judged is the degree to which their scores reflect persons' true standing on an attribute of interest, such as cognitive ability and conscientiousness. Measurement theories recognize that scores on a

measure reflect at least two components: a *true* component and an *error* component. Although theories differ in terms of the way they define these components, the degree of relation between them, and the types of error on which they focus, they all share a concern for measurement error. Generalizability theory (G-theory) is a measurement theory that provides methods for estimating the contribution of multiple sources of error to scores and quantifying their combined effect with a single index—a generalizability coefficient (G-coefficient).

FUNDAMENTALS OF G-THEORY

At the root of G-theory is the idea that the variability in persons' scores because of error (i.e., *error variance*) can be partitioned into components, each reflecting a different source of error. For example, in attempting to measure a person's level of interpersonal skill using an interview, error might arise from

- the specific question asked, such as differences in how interviewees interpret the question;
- the specific interviewer conducting the interview, such as differences in the familiarity of the interviewer with each interviewee; and
- the particular occasion on which the interview was conducted, such as the mood of the interviewee on the day of the interview.

All the differences noted previously could influence a person's interview score for reasons that have nothing to do with the person's interpersonal skills. By taking a fine-grained approach to examining error, G-theorists gain critical insight into the factors that decrease the quality of their measures.

Partitioning Variance in G-Theory

Within G-theory, variance in scores is typically partitioned through analysis of variance (ANOVA). The type of ANOVA conducted follows from the *measurement design*, which describes how a given attribute is measured. G-theorists describe measurement designs in terms of *facets of measurement*—the set of measurement conditions under which data on the *objects of measurement* (the entities being measured) are gathered. Continuing with the interview example, facets of measurement might include questions, interviewers, and occasions; whereas the objects of measurement would be interviewees. In