Job-related Well-being of Sexual Minorities: Evidence from the British Workplace Employment Relations Study

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Abstract

Despite the increasingly liberal views toward sexual orientation and the evolution of legal rights worldwide, sexual minorities have been an understudied demographic group, especially in mainstream management scholarship. Using a national representative employer and employee linked survey, this study examines the relationship between sexual minority identity and job-related well-being. Multilevel regression analysis reveals that bisexual employees have higher levels of anxiety and depression at work than their heterosexual counterparts. The difference is greater in industries that are not friendly to sexual minorities. When bisexual employees believe their managers are trustworthy and supportive, that difference disappears. No differences are found in well-being between lesbians, gay men, and their heterosexual counterparts. This study provides initial evidence on the effect of sexual minority identity on job-related well-being. It also sheds light on the different workplace outcomes between bisexual employees, lesbian women, and gay men.

Keywords: LGB, well-being, trust in management, minority stress

Introduction

The past two decades have witnessed a shift in attitudes toward sexual minorities. Support for LGB (lesbian, gay man, and bisexual) rights has increased among nearly all demographic groups, across different generations, and across religious faiths (Vegter & Haider-Markel, 2020). Scholarly attention to the experience and treatment of sexual minorities has also increased at a rapid rate. Researchers have consistently found that, despite society's improved attitude toward the LGB community, LGB individuals have an extra burden to bear when compared to their heterosexual counterparts. They are subject to prejudice, stigma, discrimination, rejection, and bullying (Day et al., 2021; Pachankis et al., 2020).

Organisational research on LGB workplace issues typically focusses on labour market outcomes, such as earnings (Aksoy et al., 2018; Badgett et al., 2021; Jepsen & Jepsen, 2022; Wang et al., 2018; Wang & Gunderson, 2019), employment opportunities (Drydakis et al., 2015; Flage, 2020; McFadden, 2020), and turnover rates (Cech & Rothwell, 2020; Lewis & Pitts, 2017). The general pattern in earnings research is consistent with the common belief in discrimination that men face more adverse consequences when violating traditional gender norms (Bettinsoli et al., 2019): gay men and bisexuals earn less than their heterosexual counterparts, but lesbians earn more than straight women. Research on employment opportunities and job satisfaction finds that gay men and lesbian applicants are less likely to receive invitations for interviews and more likely to leave their jobs.

Few studies have examined whether LGB employees' job-related well-being also suffers due to their sexual orientation (Byington et al., 2021; Webster et al., 2018). The scarcity of research is partly due to the underestimation of LGB populations, which results in a lack of understanding of the magnitude of the prejudice and discrimination faced by sexual minorities

(Coffman et al., 2016). As Ng and Rummens (2017) pointed out, sexual minorities experience unique forms of discrimination and mistreatment despite the implementation of anti-discrimination and diversity management policies. How these experiences affect the well-being of gay men, lesbians and bisexuals individually has not been the focus of the relatively small body of organisational research on LGB issues. However, studying the well-being of LGB individuals in the workplace is important because well-being directly affects how they think and feel about their job and organisation. Research has consistently demonstrated that employee well-being predicts job attitudes and performance (Peccei & Van De Voorde, 2019). Well-being in the workplace can also impact employees' work–life balance. Although workers spend about one-third of their waking hours at work, they do not completely leave their job behind them when they finish work (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). The experiences of LGB individuals at work can 'spill over' into their time off from work and impact their family and social lives (Holman, 2018).

In addition, LGB organisational research tends to group bisexual employees together with lesbians and gay men except in the research on earnings. Although it can be helpful to talk about sexual minorities as a homogenous group for the purposes of drawing attention to their experiences in comparison to heterosexuals, an increasing number of studies show that this is not the case. According to Arnett et al. (2019), bisexuals are subjected to additional prejudice and discrimination that leads to unique stressors, in addition to those directed toward gay and lesbian persons. Similarly, Green et al. (2011) found that bisexuals are not fully trusted by gay/lesbian persons, who stereotype them as unreliable, immature, flaky, and indecisive. As a result, bisexual persons are marginalised and stigmatised in unique ways that have been largely overlooked in much of the LGB research (Ng & Rummens, 2017).

Using data from the British 2011 Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS), this study examines the well-being of gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals separately. It contributes to the scholarly literature in several ways. First, this study contributes to organisational research on sexual minorities by providing initial empirical evidence on how sexual minority identity affects LGB employees' job-related well-being (i.e., anxiety and depression). Most studies on LGB well-being are in the health, medicine, and psychology fields (Hottes et al., 2016; Semlyen et al., 2016), with relatively few from organisational contexts. Most of those limited studies investigate how emotional exhaustion impacts LGB employees' job attitudes (Webster et al., 2018). By examining job-related anxiety and depression among LGB employees, this study enriches our understanding of LGB workplace experiences.

Second, we contribute to the theory of minority stress by identifying two contextual factors. Meyer's (1995, 2003) model of minority stress posits that individual coping strategies and community social support are important contextual factors that can alleviate the disproportionate stress that marginalised people experience. This study identifies two additional factors. One is industry sector. The observation that LGB persons are disproportionately represented in certain industries or occupations is not new (Tilcsik et al., 2015), but it is unclear whether LGB workers experience greater job-related well-being in these industries. The other factor is trust in management. Research suggests that when minority employees trust their managers, they are more satisfied with their job (Shantz et al., 2018), but it is not known if similar finding applies to LGB workers. By studying these two factors, this study attempts to extend Meyer's minority stress theory and provide a wider range of options to improve the well-being of LGB employees.

Finally, this study contributes to the limited research on the unique experiences of bisexual employees at work. The amount of research on bisexual workers is disproportionately small compared to research that focuses on lesbians and gay men (Ng & Rumens, 2017). As noted by Köllen (2016), the employment experiences of bisexuals are either overlooked or grouped together under the LGB category in the organisational literature. By studying bisexual workers separately from lesbian and gay men, this study enhances the understanding of how bisexual workers experience employment discrimination and how that experience impacts their well-being.

Consistent with our predictions, we find that gay men and bisexual employees have a significantly lower level of well-being than their heterosexual counterparts. In contrast, the well-being between lesbians and their heterosexual counterparts shows no differences. This finding suggests discrimination towards various sexual minorities within the LGB community and underscores the importance of investigating sexual minority groups separately.

Theoretical Background

LGB identity and job-related well-being

Well-being is a broad concept that can include both individual mental and physical health as well as satisfaction both at work and in life (Nielsen et al., 2017). In this study, we focus on job-related well-being, which refers to a collection of psychological states associated with work (Warr, 1990). It includes four correlated emotions and moods: anxiety, comfort, depression, and enthusiasm (Laguna et al., 2017; Warr, 1990). Of interest to this research is the extent to which sexual minority identity impacts work-related anxiety and depression.

The dominant theory regarding minority experiences of stress is Meyer's minority stress theory (1995, 2003), which is centrally concerned with the 'excess stress to which individuals from stigmatised social categories are exposed as a result of their social, often a minority, position' (Meyer, 2003, p. 676). The minority stress model outlines distal and proximal stressors that are unique and chronic for minority populations. Specific to LGB persons, stressors like stigma, homophobia, and heterosexism are central to the reduced well-being experienced by LGB persons and are at the root of some of the discriminatory attitudes held toward sexual minorities. Barton (2012) explains how these attitudes can be rooted in religious-based beliefs and prejudices, seeing sexual orientation as a matter of choice/preference, one that is immoral or even abhorrent. Anderson (2011) describes the complex fear of heterosexual men of being socially perceived as homosexual. LGB persons working in environments that harbour these sorts of attitudes can face a dilemma, forced to choose between the insults, threats, and hostility associated with disclosing their sexual orientation and the anxiety and stress associated with concealing it (Pachankis et al., 2020). This is likely to be particularly significant in gendered jobs with a strong masculine culture, such as skilled trades and policing (Richardson, 2020).

The reality for many LBT persons is that work is a discriminatory place, so the experience of coping with discrimination and protecting oneself from its harmful effects is commonplace (McFadden, 2015). Researchers have documented a variety of discriminatory practices in the workplace and in the labour market against LGB persons. LGB candidates receive fewer interview opportunities than heterosexual job candidates (Flage, 2020). Once hired, sexual minority employees are less likely to be promoted but more likely to be terminated (Besl et al., 2020), receive less pay (Badgett et al., 2021; Carpenter & Eppink, 2017; Jepsen & Jepsen, 2022; Wang et al., 2018), and potentially experience verbal or physical harassment and

antigay jokes or comments (Tatum, 2018).To avoid discrimination, some LGB employees attempt to conceal their sexual orientation at work, which takes a psychological toll on them. Research suggests that psychological well-being, life satisfaction, self-esteem, and positive work attitudes are lower among individuals who conceal their sexual identity compared to those who publicly and authentically admit it (Anteby & Anderson, 2014; Byington et al., 2021; Riggle et al., 2017; Webster et al., 2018). In addition to the overt discrimination, LGB employees can also face subtle discrimination, such as microaggressions and ostracism. This subtle discrimination has similar, if not worse, negative effects on the physical and emotional well-being of LGB individuals (DeSouza et al., 2017).

In conclusion, LGB persons face disproportionate amounts of discrimination and barriers to advancement and mobility in the workforce compared to their heterosexual counterparts. The fear of self-disclosure, the stigma and prejudice associated with it, and the real or anticipated discrimination they face all contribute to the negative experiences and reduced well-being of LGB employees at work.

LGB identity and industry segregation

Previous research has shown that sexual minorities are disproportionally represented in certain occupations and industries compared to heterosexuals. For example, gay men are less likely to work in male-dominated jobs, and lesbians are less likely to work in female-dominated occupations (Finnigan, 2020). Earlier research also found that sexual minorities ‘are overrepresented in the professions as a whole, and are concentrated in fields that focus on creativity, psychology/counselling, and law/ social work’ (Baumle et al., 2009, p.168). The reasons for those patterns have not always been clear. One explanation is that lesbian and gay

workers choose to work in certain industries to avoid discrimination (Gorsuch, 2019; Tilcsik et al., 2015). Because sexual minorities must deal with discrimination (actual or anticipated) that their heterosexual counterparts do not, they want to Avoid organisations and industries with a history of hostility toward sexual minorities and a lack of workforce diversity, such as the military, police, and firefighting (Cech & Rothwell, 2020). This also explains why sexual minorities are more likely to work in professional and technical occupations, as workers in these industries express more tolerant attitudes towards sexual minorities than workers in service or blue-collar occupations (Badgett et al., 2013).

Another explanation is that sexual minorities prefer to work in certain industries, especially those that are LGB friendly and where they would face limited backlash for disclosure (Anteby & Anderson, 2014). For sexual minorities, deciding whether to disclose their sexual orientation is a very difficult career challenge (Ragins et al., 2007). On the one hand, coming out and being true to themselves can improve their psychological well-being and interpersonal relations (Corrigan & Matthew, 2003). On the other hand, disclosure at work may lead to discrimination and termination (Besl et al., 2020; Flage, 2020). Unsurprisingly, to avoid this dilemma, sexual minorities often want to work in an industry that facilitates the disclosure of their sexual orientation. Certain industries, especially those in public sectors such as civil service, education, and health work, become attractive to LGB employees. Those industries are more likely to adopt diversity polices and have a greater incentive to embrace human rights legislation than many other industries (Groeneveld & Verbeek,2012). Furthermore, such industries have employed a disproportionately large number of sexual minorities (Tilcsik et al., 2015). LGB employees in these industries are more likely to spend time with people who have the same

sexual orientation and understand their experiences. They can express their concerns and support each other, reducing their feeling of being alone in the workplace (Gomez, 2020).

Despite the different explanations for the occupational and industry self-sorting of sexual minorities, the impact of such sorting is believed to be related to the mental health of sexual minorities (Tilcsik et al., 2015). For example, fear of the consequences of disclosure has a detrimental effect on the work experiences of many sexual minorities (Drydakis, 2015). In LGB-friendly industries or occupations, sexual minorities are more likely be able to disclose their identity. The opportunity to interact with other LGB at workplaces diminishes the negative impact of isolation and enhances LGB's sense of well-being'. Cech and Rothwell (2020) found that federal employees in agencies with the highest representation of LGBT workers have more positive workplace experiences than those working in less represented agencies. Thus, we expect that sexual minorities experience higher levels of well-being when working in these industries and occupations, and that the differences in well-being between sexual minorities and their heterosexual counterparts is smaller.

Trust in management

Trust is a multi-dimensional construct that exists at different organisational levels. Rousseau et al. (1998, p. 395) defined trust as 'a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another'. Furthermore, they categorised trust into two forms: relational trust, the anticipation that another party will act in good faith, and institutional trust, the anticipation that another party will adhere to formal policies and practices. Using those definitions and based on stereotype threat theory, Shantz et al. (2018) found that disabled employees strongly value trust in management, which leads them to believe that management will make fewer stereotypical judgements about them. In

the same vein, we suggest that trust in management is especially relevant to LGB employees' well-being and can reduce the differences in well-being between LGB and heterosexual employees. This expectation is based on the following two reasons.

First, trusted leaders can create a climate that can improve inclusiveness and reduce discriminatory attitudes toward sexual minorities. Evidence shows that leaders who are interested in the thoughts of employees, treat employees fairly, and make efforts to address employees' concerns create a climate within which employees are willing to speak up and feel included (Detert & Burris, 2007). At the heart of an inclusive climate lies high respect for each other and all employees (including minorities), valuing equality, justice, and full participation (Nishii, 2013). There is less discrimination and harassment in inclusive climates because managers encourage cooperative behaviour, facilitate communication, and promote knowledge sharing among all workers (Nishii, et al., 2010). The extant research has documented that the perception of inclusion increases individuals' well-being and job satisfaction (Brimhall et al., 2017) because, in trusted and respected workplace environments, LGB employees have less need to hide their sexual identity. As a result they experience less stress and depression (Badgett et al., 2013; King & Cortina, 2010).

Second, trust in management can reduce LGB employees' fear of discrimination and rejection. According to the relational perspective, trust is the result of a social exchange and is the perception of mutual obligations (Brower et al., 2000). Managerial care and support are the main factors that create the obligation from employees (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Employees develop trust in leaders when leaders pay special attention to employee needs for achievement, particularly when leaders are empathetic, compassionate, and supportive (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Similarly, Kelloway et al. (2012) and Liu et al. (2010) found that trust in leaders is the

mechanism through which leaders influence employee well-being. Rousseau (2011) found that high trust in managers is related to positive feelings of support and inclusion. Others found that organisational leaders can help reduce the fears of LGB employees of real or anticipated discrimination associated with LGBT identity disclosure (Bowring, 2017; Colgan & McKearney, 2012; Ragins, 2008; Sabat et al., 2014).

Methods

Sample

The data for this study were drawn from the British 2011 WERS, an employer–employee-linked national representative survey conducted between March 2011 and June 2012. Its population includes workplaces that employed five or more people in Britain. For the employer survey, face-to-face interviews were conducted with senior managers who oversaw employee relations in the workplace. For the employee survey, self-completion questionnaires were distributed to a randomly selected number of employees in each workplace. If the workplace had fewer than 25 employees, the questionnaire was sent to all the employees. The overall response rate for the employee questionnaire was 46 percent. The final sample for this study includes all the employers and employees who answered all the questions related to the present study.

Measures

LGB identity

WERS asks employees ‘Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?’ The responses are: heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, other, and prefer not to say.

We created three dummy variables (i.e. gay, lesbian, and bisexual) for the measure of LGB identity, coded as 1 for employees identifying as either gay, lesbian, or bisexual and 0 for those identifying as heterosexual. A total of 125 respondents identified as lesbian, 203 as gay, and 119 as bisexual. Those who answered 'other' or 'preferred not to say' were omitted from the analysis.[1]

Job-related well-being

Well-being data are obtained from six questions in WERS. The questions are related to the six negative items from Warr's (1990) job-related anxiety–calmness and depression–enthusiasm scales. Employees were asked, 'Thinking of the past few weeks, how much of the time has your job made you feel. . . [this state]?' for each of six psychological negative states: tense, depressed, worried, gloomy, uneasy, and miserable. The frequency of experiencing the six negative states was reported on a five-point scale: (1) All of the time; (2) Most of the time; (3) Some of the time; (4) Occasionally; and (5) Never. Following Wood and Ogbonnaya (2018) who also used WERS, we combined the six items into a single scale item by taking the mean and coding it as missing if employees responded 'never' to three or more items. The well-being measure had a reliability coefficient (Cronbach's α) of 0.91, which is consistent with previous studies.

Trust in management

Following Shantz et al. (2018), we measured trust in management based on six items from the WERS. The survey asked employees to specify their level of agreement with six

[1] Seventy-eight employees reported 'other', and 800 answered 'prefer not to say'.

statements on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The five statements were as follows: 'Now thinking about the managers at this workplace, to what extent do you agree with – managers here (a) can be relied upon to keep to their promises, (b) are sincere in attempting to understand employees' views, (c) deal with employees honestly, (d) understand about employees having to meet responsibilities outside work, (e) encourage people to develop their skills, and (f) treat employees fairly.' The measure is the mean score of the six items (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.92$).

LGB-friendly industry cluster

We created a dummy variable *LGB-friendly Industry Cluster* and coded three industries in WERS (public administration and defence, education, and human health and social work) as equal to 1 and the other 14 industries listed in the WERS as equal to 0. Previous studies have found that sexual minorities are more likely to work in certain industries especially in education, public sector and health because these industries have a more tolerant attitude towards LGB employees and employed a large number of sexual minorities (Badgett et al., 2013; Baumle et al., 2009). *LGB-friendly industry cluster* is not intended simply to capture the quantitative prevalence of LGB employees in each industry, rather it is intended to capture qualitative differences in these industries that exhibit different values and attitudes towards LGB identity and perhaps a different level of respect for human rights legislation than other industries.

Control variables

At the individual level, we included age, job tenure, race minority identity, marital status, and work status (permanent vs. temporary). We selected these control variables based on

established theories as well as published studies. First, the job experience model (Katz, 1980) suggests that the determinants of perceived workplace experience vary with time, including job tenure and age. Previous studies have found that people become less happy with their work as their tenure within a given organisation increases, but they become happier as they age (Dobrow Riza et al., 2018; Huo & Boxall, 2020). In this study, age is measured using nine ordered categories ranging from 16–17 years old to 65 or older; tenure is a five-category variable ranging from less than 1 year to 10 years or more. We treated the two variables as continuous in the regressions.

Second, Phinney (1996) introduced the term ethnicity-related stress, which refers to the perception of threat based on a person's knowledge of being a member of a particular ethnic group. It predicts that a minority racial identity is negatively correlated with psychological well-being. In addition to these theories, a substantial body of literature demonstrates a positive relationship between being married and well-being (e.g. Bayhan Karapinar et al., 2019; Kennedy et al., 2018). Finally, it is also important to control for work status—permanent vs temporary. Beard and Edwards (1995) identified four psychological experiences that are typical for temporary workers: job insecurity, lack of predictability and control, transactional psychological contract, and negative social comparison. Studies have reported that these psychological experiences are related to various negative employee outcomes, including anxiety and depression (Burchell, 2011).

At the organisation level, we added company size as a control variable (the logarithm of the total number of employees). Some researchers argue that the experience of working in larger firms is substantively different from that of working in small/medium firms in ways that are meaningful to employees. Tansel and Gazîoğlu (2014) showed that the difficulty in establishing

good management–employee relations in large firms results in lower job satisfaction, a situation that would lead to reduced well-being (Sironi, 2019).

Analyses

The sample is taken from employee–employer linked data, and employees are nested within workplaces. Employees who work in the same workplace are influenced by the same workplace practices and climate, and therefore observations at the employee level are not likely to be independent from each other. Multilevel analysis is one way to deal with such data. Thus, we analysed our data using multilevel hierarchical linear modelling with the Stata 15 command XTREG. The cluster identifier in the regression model is the organisation identification in the WERS dataset. The model for well-being y_{ij} of employee i in organisation y is specified as

$$y_{ij} = \beta_1 + \beta_2 x_{2ij} + \ldots\ldots + \beta_p x_{pij} + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

where $\beta_2 x_{2ij}$ through $\beta_p x_{pij}$ are covariates, including the control variable, independent variables, and interaction terms. ε_{ij} is the residual.

Specifically, the predictors were entered into the regression equation in four successive steps/models. In the first step, we entered only the dummy variable for sexual orientation with no control variables; this provides the raw gap in well-being. In the second step, all control variables were added for possible confounding effects. In the third step, the interaction terms of LGB identity and trust in management were entered. In the last step, we entered the interaction of LGB identity and industry cluster.

Results

Table 1 presents the summary statistics for all variables separated by sexual orientation. It shows that the difference between the well-being of gay men and lesbian women and their heterosexual counterparts is not significant, with bisexuals experiencing significantly reduced well-being compared to their heterosexual counterparts. When comparing gay and heterosexual men, gay men trust their managers more and are more likely to work in the public administration and defence, education, and human health and social work industry clusters. Gay men are also younger and less likely to be racial minorities or to be married. Compared with heterosexual women, lesbians are younger and have less tenure. In addition, the results clearly show that, compared with lesbians and gay men, bisexual individuals are more disadvantaged—they are the only group that is more likely to hold a temporary job than their heterosexual counterparts. They are also the only group that trust their managers less than their heterosexual colleagues. In addition, they are younger, more likely to be racial minorities, less likely to be married, and have less tenure.

Insert Table 1 about here

The multi-level regression results are given in Table 2 for gay men, Table 3 for lesbian women, and Table 4 for bisexuals. The dependent variable for all the models is job-related well-being, with the regressions estimated using random-effects generalised least squares (GLS). We used stepwise regressions to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying relationships among independent variables and interactions. Model 1 includes the results with only a dummy variable for sexual orientation; Model 2 adds the control variables; Model 3 adds an interaction term of

sexual orientation and trust in management; and Model 4 adds the interaction of sexual orientation and industry clusters.

Insert Tables 2–4 about here

Results for lesbians and gay men (LG): The effect of sexual minority identity

As indicated in Tables 2 and 3, the results for the control variables are generally in the expected directions. People report higher well-being when they get older but less when they stay in an organisation longer. Reduced well-being is also associated with employees who are visible minorities and those who work in large organisations. The results for marriage status confirm the influential thesis of Jessie Bernard, who claimed that marriage is distinctly beneficial to most husbands but not as much to most wives (Bernard, 1972). Contrary to predictions, holding a permanent job does not lead to greater job-related well-being. Instead, women in permanent jobs report significantly lower well-being than temporary workers. This finding may reflect the dilemma and struggle of career women to balance work and family. As Beham et al. (2019) found, part-time workers have better well-being than full-time workers. They also found a significant gender difference in this effect, where women in part-time work have a higher level of well-being than men in a similar situation.

As indicated in Model 1a of Table 2 and Model 1b of Table 3, the raw well-being differences between LG and their heterosexual counterparts is small and statistically insignificant (0.07 and 0.10, respectively). This is essentially the same after adding control variables in Models 2a and 2b. The similarity of the raw and conditional differences indicate that the control variables do not have an impact on the raw differences between LG and their heterosexual

counterparts, a finding that is at odds with Meyer's (1995, 2003) minority stress theory. Although more research is needed to identify the specific reasons, the increased tolerance of sexual minorities may be one of the explanations for this finding. The British Social Attitudes Survey (2012), which was conducted around the same time as WERS data were collected, documented the dramatic shift in attitudes in the way Britain thinks about lesbians and gay men. While in 1983 only 41% of Britain thought it was 'acceptable for a homosexual person to be a teacher in a school', in 2012 83% were accepting of their children being taught by a gay man or lesbian (Park et al., 2013).

Results for bisexuals: The effect of sexual minority identity

As indicated in Model 2c of Table 4, the control variables do not substantially change the effect of being bisexual on job-related well-being differences. The magnitude, direction, and significance level found in LG prevails for bisexuals, although bisexual employees who hold permanent jobs have lower well-being than their heterosexual counterparts, which is similar to the finding for lesbians but not for gay men.

However, contrary to the results for LG, which showed no significant difference in well-being, the differences between bisexual employees and their heterosexual counterparts is significant and substantial after controlling for the other determinants of well-being (r= -0.25, p = .002). Specifically, bisexuals have 0.25 lower job-related well-being than heterosexual employees. This result is at odds with most of the literature, which suggests that all sexual minorities have reduced well-being compared to their heterosexual counterparts. One of the explanations for this is that previous studies did not separate bisexual employees from gay men and lesbians (e.g. Meyer, 2003, 2015; Williams et al., 2020). Thus, the effect of sexual minority identity may just reflect the negative effect for bisexual employees only. Another explanation, as

indicated previously, is that bisexual people face additional prejudice and discrimination in addition to those directed toward LG persons. The literature contains consistent negative portrayals of bisexuals, mostly from heterosexuals but also from within the LG community (Arnett et al., 2019). By being poorly understood, bisexuals are often stereotyped as confused, lacking courage, and indecisive (Kleese, 2011). These types of negative attitudes toward bisexuals have been shown to be commonplace, with gay, lesbian, and heterosexual individuals all holding biphobic attitudes that are stronger than the negative attitudes toward most minority groups based on religion, race, ethnicity, and politics (MacLeod et al., 2015).

Results for the interaction effects of sexual minority identity and trust in management

To capture whether trust in management has a differential effect for sexual minorities, we add an interaction term of trust in management with sexual monitory identity in Model 3. As indicated in Models 3a and 3b, the coefficients for LG and the two-way interaction terms are all statistically insignificant. The trust in management variable is significant as well, and the positive effect of trust in management is similar for women (0.36) and men (0.34). These results indicate the well-documented psychological benefits of trusting relationships between employees and their managers. The insignificance of the interaction terms shows that a trusting relationship is equally important to LG individuals and their heterosexual counterparts. This further demonstrates Britain's more liberal attitudes toward LG people, resulting in reduced discrimination-based stress for LG employees in the workplace.

Model 3c displays differential results for bisexual employees. The coefficients for bisexual identity, trust in management, and the two-way interaction terms are all statistically significant. Figure 1 is the plot of the interaction effect, which shows that bisexual employees

have lower well-being than heterosexual employees when trust in management is low, but they have higher well-being when trust in management is high. A simple slope test shows that the difference under low trust in management is significant (p = .096), but it is not significant when trust is high. This suggests that low trust in management is detrimental to the well-being of bisexual employees, but high trust will benefit both bisexual and heterosexual employees similarly.

Results for the interaction effects of sexual minority identity and industry clusters

To determine if the industry cluster has a moderating effect on the well-being of sexual minorities relative to their heterosexual counterparts, Model 4 adds a two-way interaction effect. As indicated in Models 4a, 4b, and 4c, the interaction effect is not significant for lesbians but is significant for gay men (r= .27, p = .07) and bisexuals (r=.36, p= .03). As indicated in Figure 2, gay men who work in the public administration and defence, education, and human health and social work industry clusters have higher well-being than those who do not, while there are no differences in the well-being of heterosexual employees regardless of the industry in which they work. Furthermore, the non-industry cluster slope indicates that heterosexual men have greater job-related well-being than gay men (the simple slope test is significant at p = .042), while the industry cluster slope shows that gay men enjoy higher well-being than their heterosexual counterparts (however the difference is not statistically significant).

Figure 3 is the plot of the interaction effect of industry cluster and bisexual identity. It demonstrates that bisexual employees have lower job-related well-being than heterosexual employees regardless of whether or not they work in the industry cluster, but the gap is much larger when they work outside of the cluster industry. Like gay men, bisexual employees who

work in the public administration and defence, education, and human health and social work industry clusters have greater well-being than those who do not work in that industry cluster, but there are no differences in heterosexual employees. The simple slope test is not significant under an industry cluster, but it is significant under a non-industry cluster (p = .001). This confirms previous research findings showing that sexual minorities experience more discrimination and stress in industries that are not friendly to their sexual orientation.

Results for binary measure of dependent variables

We re-ran the model using a binary measure on all the six components of well-being (feeling tense, depressed, worried, gloomy, uneasy and miserable). We coded the dependent variable (DV) = 0 if employees answered 'all' or 'most' and DV = 1 for 'some', occasionally' or 'never'. A value of 1 indicates a high level of well-being, whereas 0 indicates a low level. The estimates for the separate components are broadly similar to the regressions with the indexed dependent variables[2]

Discussion

In this study, we sought to provide empirical evidence of the job-related well-being of sexual monitories. The results were consistent with prior literature documenting the negative impact that minority stress (e.g. perceived discrimination and stigmatisation) can have on sexual minorities (Pachankis et al., 2020). Our findings support the notion that bisexual people are a

[2] First, being a gay man is negatively related to feeling tense and worried but not other components of the well-being index; being a lesbian has no impact across the six components; and being a bisexual significantly and negatively related to all the components of the well-being index. Second, trust in management does not have a moderating effect for gay men and lesbians across all the components, except for lesbians in the feeling gloomy category; trust in management has a moderating effect on bisexuals feeling tense, worried, uneasy, and miserable but not on feeling depressed and gloomy. Lastly, the industry has a moderating effect on gay men feeling depressed and worried, lesbians feeling tense and bisexuals feeling worried. Regression results and tables are available upon request.

unique group who face additional stressors compared to lesbians and gay men. We discuss the theoretical and practical implications below.

Theoretical implications

Our research provides several important theoretical implications. First, the present study makes a significant contribution to minority stress theory, specifically regarding the situational influences on job-related well-being. Our findings reveal that trust relationships between employers and their managers, as well as the industry in which people are employed, are meaningful additions to the contextual factors contained in the minority stress model. Meyer's (1995, 2003) concept of minority stress suggests that individual coping strategies are important forces that alleviate stress. However, critiques of minority stress theory have pointed out that the model is over reliant on the individual personalities and coping efforts of sexual minorities and fails to acknowledge other contextual factors that may impact individual mental health (Holman, 2018). It is important for researchers to continue to shift the focus from individual factors in the model to the potential factors in workplaces.

Second, our study contributes to the literature on the effects of trust on employee well-being. Although employees' perceived trust in management has been linked to individual turnover intention and well-being (see the review by Arnold, 2017), it is not clear whether everyone appreciates trustworthy leaders to the same extent. Is it possible that members of minority employee groups need trustworthy leaders more to feel secure and included? This study answers that question by establishing the two-way interaction of LGB identity and trust in management and examining it in three different groups. The results indicate that, although all employees benefit from a trusting relationship with their managers, only the gap of well-being

between bisexuals and their heterosexual counterparts is mitigated by high levels of trust in management.

Third, this study provides evidence on bisexual experiences in the workplace. Although the bisexual population is the single largest group within the LGBTQ community (Gates, 2011), most organisation studies limit their focus to gay men or lesbians, ignoring the category of bisexuals all together or combining bisexual employees with other groups of sexual minorities. The results of this study demonstrate that bisexual employees are a distinct group of sexual minorities and experience reduced job-related well-being compared to their heterosexual counterparts in ways that LG persons do not. The reduced well-being observed among bisexual individuals highlights the importance of examining this sexual minority group separately from others.

The result that bisexual employees experience different effects compared with lesbians and gay men helps map the landscape of LGB's well-being and underscores the importance of considering their employment separately. The relatively large bisexual–straight well-being disparities and significant industry effect may result from bisexual employees' greater exposure to industries where they are most likely to be discriminated against. The relatively new concepts of anti-bisexual discrimination, biphobia and bi-negativity are a testament to the recognition of the unique experiences bisexuals face and the problems associated with ignoring the differences within the broad category of "sexual minorities" (Ng & Rummens, 2017). Further research can investigate how the discrimination against bisexual employees may shape bisexual–straight disparities in other aspects of workplace experiences.

Finally, this study also contributes to the LGB management literature by improving sampling strategies. Most LGB studies use convenience samples from social and professional

websites, LGB conference attendees, and members of LGB national organisations (Webster et al., 2018). It is not likely that such convenience samples represent the overall LGB population, with many studies of sexual minorities using samples containing individuals with more education and higher earnings than national averages (Webster et al., 2018). Those samples might also be less representative for lesbians and bisexual woman, who typically have less post-secondary education and are underrepresented in higher levels of many organisations (Ueno et al., 2013). Furthermore, due to sampling difficulties, most LGB organisational studies focus only on the LGB population without comparing their experience to those of heterosexual employees. Exceptions include studies on labour economics that compare the earnings of LGB and heterosexual employees (e.g. Aksoy et al., 2018), but those studies used measures of sexual contact or the gender of partners to identify LGB employees, which is also problematic (Wang & Gunderson, 2019). By using a sample from the nationally representative British WERS (2011) and self-identified LGB identity as the measure, the findings of this study have enhanced external validity.

Practical implications

In addition to important theoretical implications, our research has significant practical implications. Our findings reveal that trust in management makes a difference, especially for bisexual employees. This is important for organisations interested in improving LGB employees' job-related well-being, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic which took a toll on employees' mental health. Our findings also suggest the importance of organisations taking actions to increase employees' trust in management, especially within a diverse workforce. To achieve this goal, employers can train their line managers to project trustworthiness—to listen actively to

employees, provide feedback, show support, and be honest/reliable. To address the unique needs of LGB employees, organisations can recruit empathetic and open-minded managers or train incumbent managers to be inclusive leaders. Furthermore, managers can be trained and encouraged to act as role models to create an inclusive workplace that makes all employees feel valued by virtue of being treated fairly and respectfully. Organisations and their managers could also be encouraged to articulate their commitment to diversity, create space for others to contribute, and be attentive to others' differences.

The results that bisexual employees experience different effects compared with lesbians and gay men suggest that organisations may be negatively affected by the inequalities in job-related well-being. Bisexual employees' reduced well-being may negatively impact their physical health and increase their intention to leave the company. As the largest LGB group, bisexual employees' turnover, sick leave, and absenteeism are costly to employers (Cech & Rothwell, 2020). To improve bisexuals' well-being, organisations can consider encouraging employees to set up bisexual employee resource groups that can provide the much-needed space for bisexual employees to find one another, receive support, prevent isolation, and improve their well-being.

Limitations and future research

This research has several limitations, which suggest future research areas. First, all the major variables are from a single source, which raises a concern of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). We applied several strategies to tackle this problem. For example, we conducted multiple interaction regression analysis, which is less likely influenced by respondents guessing about the relationship being questioned. The dataset we used, WERS, also applied a

rigorous sampling design to reduce common method variance (e.g., using different scale points and anchors for different variables and separating the measures proximally). Nevertheless, we suggest that future research investigate the relationship using data from multiple sources to further minimise common method bias.

Second, due to data restrictions we did not include personality variables in the regressions. Previous studies have found that personality can influence a person's mental health. For example, Zoeterman and Wright (2014) showed that LGB individuals who are open to experience are less likely to develop negative feelings about their sexual minority identities and thus more satisfied with their lives. Cramer et al. (2016) found that conscientiousness is positively associated with LGB individuals' active coping strategies (e.g., seeking support, avoiding negative emotions), which in turn lead to fewer mental health symptoms. Thus, future studies could include personality factors and replicate the present study to examine whether the findings remain the same.

Third, following previous studies, we treated the Likert-type measured dependent variable as a continuous (cardinal) variable. This variable implicitly assumes that the movement from one category to the next has the same meaning for movements between all categories. This assumption is probably not valid; thus, caution is required in interpreting the meaning of the estimated coefficients.

Finally, future studies could aim to reproduce the model in this study with individuals from other diverse group of employees. For example, it would be informative to know whether the model applies to disabled employees' minority stress. Furthermore, Nadal et al. (2015) suggest that sexual orientation might interact with other aspects of one's identity, such as race, ethnicity, and religion. Future research could therefore study how multiple minority identity can

affect the well-being of LGB individuals, in line with the growing body of research based on intersectionality. It is likely that some identities or cultures may be more accepting of one's LGB identity than others, suggesting an opportunity to use data from different countries/regions to replicate this study's findings.

Conclusion

This study examines the job-related well-being of groups of lesbians, gay men, and bisexual employees compared to their heterosexual counterparts using data from the British 2011 WERS. The results show small and statistically insignificant differences between the well-being of gay men compared to heterosexual men and between the well-being of lesbians and heterosexual women. However, bisexual employees are found to have lower levels of well-being than heterosexual employees, and these differences are larger and statistically significant. More specifically, bisexual employees have higher levels of anxiety and depression at work than their heterosexual counterparts. When bisexual employees believe their managers are trustworthy and supportive, that difference disappears. Moreover, the difference in well-being is smaller in industries that are friendly to sexual minorities (e.g., public administration and defence, education, and human health and social work).

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Tables and Figures

Table 1A. Summary Statistics by Sexual Minority Identity
Gay Men and Lesbians

	Men					Women				
	Gay		Heterosexual		T-Statistic	Lesbian		Heterosexual		T-Statistic
Variable	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Well-being	3.47	.87	3.53	.78	1.01	3.46	.80	3.58	.76	1.40
Trust in management	3.48	.92	3.35	.94	-1.89*	3.47	.99	3.52	.87	0.53
LGB-friendly industry cluster (Yes=1; No=0)	.45	.49	.27	.44	-5.86***	.58	.49	.59	.49	0.20
Age (7 categories)	5.43	1.29	5.81	1.39	3.85***	5.46	1.15	5.71	1.39	1.98*
Job Tenure (5 categories)	3.42	1.26	3.57	1.31	1.60	3.28	1.23	3.49	1.31	1.76*
Racial minority (Yes=1; No=0)	.03	.16	.07	.26	2.58***	.06	.23	.07	.25	0.4700
Married/partnered (Yes=1; No=0)	.44	.50	.73	.44	9.05***	.69	.46	.68	.47	-0.27
Permanent Job (Yes=1; No=0)	.95	.23	.94	.24	-0.55	.94	.25	.93	.26	-0.41
Organization Size (Ln # Employees)	4.93	1.61	4.90	1.54	-0.31	4.72	1.54	4.64	1.59	-0.59
Sample size	203		8795			125		11067		

Source: British 2011 Workplace Employment Relations Study (WERS). The sample means and standard deviation are fully weighted to account for the complex survey design.
Notes: *p <0.1, **p <0.05, ***p <0.01.

Table 1B. Summary Statistics by Sexual Orientation
Bisexuals

	Bisexual		Heterosexual		T-*Statistic*
Variable	**Mean**	**S.D.**	**Mean**	**S.D.**	
Well-being	3.28	.99	3.56	.77	3.39***
Trust in management	3.11	1.04	3.45	.90	3.93***
LGB-friendly industry cluster (Yes=1; No=0)	.45	.50	.45	.50	-0.05
Age (7 categories)	5.34	1.54	5.76	1.39	3.24***
Job Tenure (5 categories)	3.09	1.38	3.53	1.31	3.58***
Racial minority (Yes=1; No=0)	.17	.38	.07	.25	-4.22***
Married/partnered (Yes=1; No=0)	.60	.49	.70	.46	2.39**
Permanent Job (Yes=1; No=0)	.88	.32	.93	.26	2.02**
Organization Size (Ln # Employees)	4.80	1.71	4.75	1.58	-0.30
Sample size	119		19741		

Table 2: Multi-level GLS Regression Analyses of Sexual Minority Identity on Well-being (Gay Men vs Heterosexual Men)

Independent Variables	Model 1a	Model 2a	Model3a	Model 4a
Gay Men	-.07	-.07	-.14	-.20**
Omitted Category: heterosexual men	(.07)	(.07)	(.25)	(.09)
Trust in Management			.34***	
			(.01)	
LGB-friendly Industry Cluster				-.01
				(.06)
Gay Men x Trust in Management			-.01	
			(.07)	
Gay Men x Industry Cluster				.27*
				(.15)
Age		.03***	.03***	.03***
		(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Job Tenure		-.04***	-.01	-.03**
		(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Race Minority Status		-.14***	-.13***	-.13***
(yes=1; no=0)		(.04)	(.04)	(.04)
Marriage Status		.07***	.06*	.06**
(1=married; 0=not married)		(.02)	(.03)	(.03)
Permanent		-.05	.03	-.03
(1=permanent; 0=temporary)		(.05)	(.06)	(.05)
Organization Size		.01	.03***	.01
		(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Constant	3.54***	3.46***	2.92***	4.13***
	(.01)	(.07)	(.18)	(.18)
Wald Chi-Square[a]		51.46***	999.65***	80.49***

Notes: *p <0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01. Standard errors are in parentheses.

[a] Wald Chi-Square test of improvement in model fit over Model 1a.

Table 3: Multi-level GLS Regression Analyses of Sexual Minority Identity on Well-being (Lesbians vs Heterosexual Women)

Independent Variables	Model 1b	Model 2b	Model3b	Model 4b
Lesbians	-.10	-.11	.18	-.20
Omitted Category: heterosexual women	(.09)	(.08)	(.29)	(.13)
Trust in Management			.36***	
			(.01)	
LGB-friendly Industry Cluster				-.06**
				(.02)
Lesbian x Trust in Management			-.10	
			(.08)	
Lesbian x Industry Cluster				.14
				(.17)
Age		.03***	.03***	.03***
		(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Job Tenure		-.02***	-.01	-.02***
		(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Race Minority Status		-.15***	-.16***	-.14***
(yes=1; no=0)		(.04)	(.03)	(.04)
Marriage Status		.02	-.01	.02
(1=married; 0=not married)		(.02)	(.02)	(.02)
Permanent		-.12***	-.05	-.12***
(1=permanent; 0=temporary		(.04)	(.04)	(.04)
Organization Size		-.02***	.01	-.01**
		(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Constant	3.58***	3.70***	2.33***	3.7***
	(0.1)	.0594646	.0673671	.0594705
Wald Chi-Square[a]		49.48***	1308.25***	58.96****

Notes: *p <0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01. Standard errors are in parentheses.

[a] Wald Chi-Square test of improvement in model fit over Model 1a.

Table 4: Multi-level GLS regression analyses of sexual minority identity on well-being (Bisexuals vs Heterosexuals)

Independent Variables	Model 1c	Model 2c	Model3c	Model 4c
Bisexuals	-.27***	-.25***	-.88***	-.45***
Omitted Category: Heterosexuals	(.08)	(.08)	(.23)	(.12)
Trust in Management			.35***	
			(.01)	
LGB-friendly Industry Cluster				-.03**
				(.02)
Bisexual x Trust in Management			.23***	
			(.07)	
Bisexual x Industry Cluster				.36**
				(.17)
Age (Years)		.03***	.03***	.03***
		(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Job Tenure		-.03***	-.01	-.03***
		(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Race Minority Status		-.14***	-.14***	-.14***
(yes=1; no=0)		(.03)	(.03)	(.03)
Marriage Status		.03**	.01	.03*
(1=married; 0=not married)		(.02)	(.01)	(.02)
Permanent		-.09***	-.04	-.09***
(1=permanent; 0=temporary		(.03)	(.03)	(.03)
Organization Size		-.01	-.01	-.01
		(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Constant	3.56***	3.60***	2.29***	3.60***
	(.01)	.0468981	.0513468	.0473334
Wald Chi-Square[a]		84.97***	2430.80***	107.66***

Notes: *p <0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01. Standard errors are in parentheses.

[a] Wald Chi-Square test of improvement in model fit over Model 1a.

Figure 1: Moderation Effect of Trust in Management on the Association Between Sexual Minority Identity and Job-Related Well-being on Bisexual Employees (Predictive Margins)

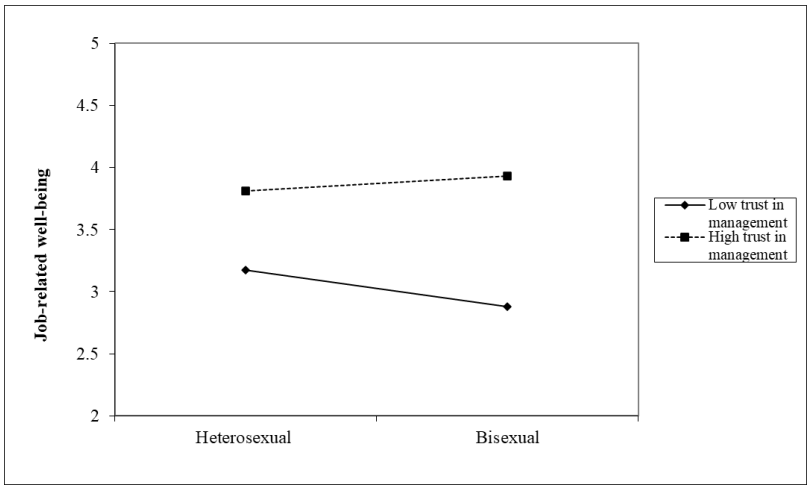

Figure 2: Moderation Effect of Industry Cluster on the Association Between Sexual Minority Identity and Job-Related Well-being on Gay men (Predictive Margins)

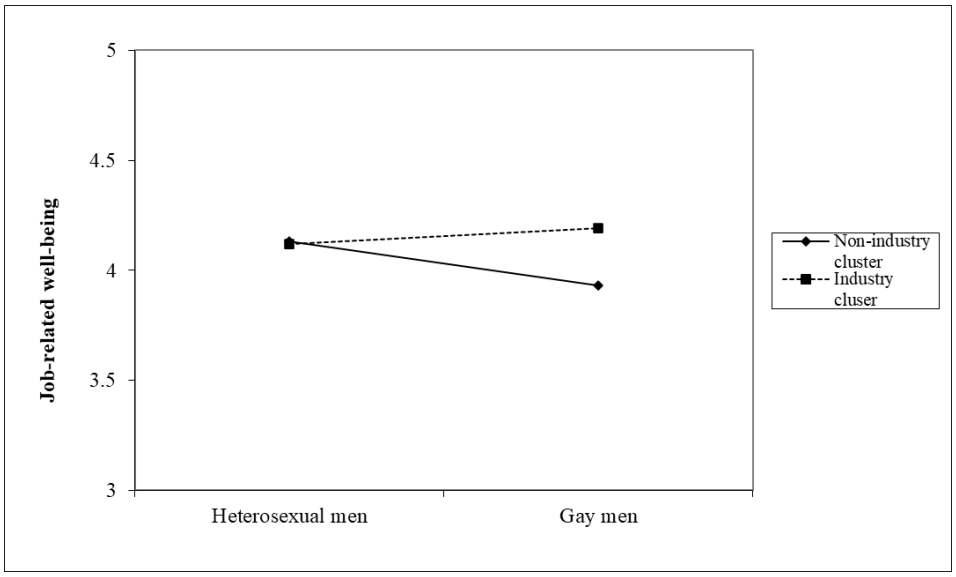

Figure 3: Moderation Effect of Industry Cluster on the Association Between Sexual Minority Identity and Job-Related Well-being on Bisexual Employees (Predictive Margins)