

2015

## The Australian Corporate Closet, why it's still so full!

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### Recommended Citation

Smith, Ian, The Australian Corporate Closet, why it's still so full!, Doctor of Philosophy thesis, Sydney Business School, University of Wollongong, 2015. <https://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/4563>



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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctorate of Business Administration

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Date: 21/07/2015

**TITLE**

The Australian Corporate Closet, why it's still so full!

## **Abstract**

Research into discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and identity is becoming increasingly relevant in the workplace. In many nations gay rights have progressed to be in the forefront of the political and social arena and organisations are now turning their focus towards optimising the benefits of increasing workplace diversity. Still, discrimination in the form of heterosexism of GLBT employees continues to be a problem. Heterosexism is defined as a socio-political system that rejects, defames, and stigmatises any non-heterosexual type of behaviour, association, or community, with the continued promotion of a heterosexual lifestyle and concomitant subordination of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender ones. Although a number of studies have begun to address this issue, large gaps remain in the literature. The aim of this study was to design a model to better understand the antecedents and outcomes of workplace heterosexist discrimination. Participants from multiple organisations from all states across Australia completed an online questionnaire regarding their experiences in the workplace to assess heterosexist harassment, in relation to organisational support and their concealment and disclosure in the workplace. Using a structural equation modelling framework the relationship between these variables was used to predict the well-being of employees in the Australian labour market. Well-being was measured in the form of psychological well-being, job satisfaction, satisfaction with life and mental health. The study indicated that disclosure and concealment of sexual orientation in the Australian workplace are not significantly affected by direct and indirect heterosexism. The study indicates significantly that organisational support plays a large role in influencing the type of heterosexism, which is present in the Australian workplace. The study indicated that when organisational support for GLBT employees is promoted in the form of policies and activities endorsing these policies, direct heterosexist behaviours decrease but indirect heterosexist behaviours increase. This suggests that employees engage in more underhanded/indirect ways of discriminating GLBT employees when organisations support for GLBT employees is present. This relationship was completely mediated by direct and indirect heterosexism. The study indicated that there were no differences between gay men and lesbians, providing evidence in support for the assumptions of minority stress theory specifically in relation to direct/indirect heterosexism. Implications of the study are that GLBT Australian employees have significant poor

well-being due to the presence of discrimination in the workplace in the form of indirect heterosexism.

### **Acknowledgements**

A number of people have contributed to the successful completion of this dissertation. Associate Professor Oades and McCarthy, my dissertation supervisors/advisors/mentors, thank you for taking on a project outside of your area of interest and allowing me to infect you, you have infected me with the research bug. Your encouragement and constructive feedback has been greatly appreciated and invaluable in my completing this study.

To Michelle, Mary, Colleen and Candice, thank you for your support, Candice your departure from this earth during my thesis was saddening, I am fortunate to have worked with you and the success of this thesis is partly because of you. Michelle, thank you for your expert technical support and helping me understand the intricacies of data collection. Your support was invaluable, I wish you success in your research career, I know you will do great things. Colleen and Mary, thank you for your expertise with the formatting. To Annie, my long-term friend and colleague thank you for your input, you will always have a place in my heart despite our distance apart. The time we spent together was memorable and the future contains more of these memories.

To my parents, thank you for teaching me the value of hard work and always seeking to do my best and for accepting me as ‘me’ no closet required. Without your support and acceptance, I would never have been able to be an advocate for others. I know you will look down at me on my graduation.

Finally, to S.A.M. who has stood by me through the difficult times of completing a doctoral thesis, your never ending support and technical knowledge have provided me with many moments of relief as a sound technical thesis emerged from the abyss we called our study. From the first day we met, you have been the shining star that has guided me and during this long process you have tolerated a lifetime worth of bad moods, foul language and self-doubt- thank you for putting up with me. I wish you good luck with your lifetime challenge; you will always hold a special place in my heart.

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## **Glossary of Terms**

*Bisexual:* A person who is attracted to people of both sexes.

*Coming Out:* The progression where a person begins to identify, admit and reveal their sexual orientation to themselves and others. This similarly pertains to gender. Intersex, transgender and gender neutral people who are gender ambiguous will often be asked to clarify their gender.

*Gay:* An individual whose principal expressive and sexual attraction is for individuals of the same sex/gender. The term is frequently related to homosexual men.

*Gender Identity:* The way in which a person sees themselves relative to the classification of 'man' and 'woman'. Some individuals identify as both male and female, whereas some individuals may identify as male in one setting and female in another. This implies a gender continuum more than just an opposition between one gender (male) and another (female). It is important to note that an individual's observed gender identity may alter through one's lifespan. Gender is consequently a fluid concept.

*Heterosexism:* This represents an ideological practice that rejects, degrades, and stigmatises any non-heterosexual type of behaviour, association, or group, with the persistent endorsement of a heterosexual existence and concomitant demotion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender ones.

*Homophobia:* Fear and hatred of homosexuality.

*Homosexual:* An individual whose sexual orientation and basic emotional affection is for partners of their own sex.

*Intersex:* A genetic state where an individual is born with the reproductive organs and/or sex chromosomes that are not solely male or female. Previously referred to as a hermaphrodite.

*Lesbian:* A female whose basic affective and sexual attraction is towards another female.

*Organisational Support:* This refers to how an organisation supports its GLBT employees through policies and other activities to create an environment which is conducive to one's disclosure of sexual orientation or sexual identity within the workplace.

*Queer:* A collective term that may incorporate a variety of different sexual and gender identities, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex.

*Sexuality:* This refers to the qualities apparent in an individual's affective and sexual relations with other people. Sexuality is formed by sexual orientation, gender and personality. It concerns who a person is, how they view themselves, their cognitive functioning, how they are viewed by others and how they articulate themselves in relationships.

*Sexual orientation:* This is a person's emotional and/or sexual attraction to another person, and may be either: heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual.

*Sexual identity:* This denotes a persistent self-recognition of the implications connected to sexual orientation and sexual behaviour. Sexual identity is fluid and may shift over time.

*The Corporate Closet:* A metaphor for GLBT employees who do not disclose their sexual orientation or identity in their workplace.

*Transgender:* This refers to people who do not identify with the gender established at birth. The terms male-to-female and female-to-male transgender are used to refer to individuals who are undergoing or have undergone a procedure of gender reassignment.

*Well-being:* Refers to demonstrable descriptors and individual appraisals of physical, material, communal and affective well-being, inclusive of individual growth and focused activity, all subjective by individual sets of values.

## ACRONYMS

ACON	Aids Council of New South Wales
AGFI	Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
AVE	Average Variance Expanded
BPNT	Basic Psychological Needs Theory
CR	Composite Reliability
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
DASS	Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale
DODS-II	Degrees of Disclosure Scale –II
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
ENDA	Employment Non-Discrimination Act
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index
GLBT	Gay men, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Transgender
GLB	Gay men, Lesbians and Bisexuals
GL	Gay men and Lesbians
GLBTI	Gay men, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transgender and Intersex
GLBTIQ	Gay men, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning/Queer
HIM	Health in Men
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LGB	Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals
LIHS	Lesbian Internalised Homophobia Scale
LVSEM	Latent Variable Structural Equation Modelling
MANOVA	Multivariate Analysis of Variance
OJS	Overall Job Satisfaction
RMR	Root Mean Square Residual
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SDT	Self Determination Theory
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SEQ	Sexual Experience Questionnaire



SO	Sexual Orientation
SSAY	Same Sex Attracted Youth
SWLS	Satisfaction With Life Scale
VGLRL	Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby
WEI	Workplace Equality Index
WHEQ	Workplace Heterosexist Experiences Questionnaire
WSIMM-R	Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure –Revised
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction to dissertation**

*‘People perform better when they can be themselves’ Anonymous*

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The focus on sexual orientation as an identity and as an oppressed status has received more attention in research since the late 1980s. In 1973 homosexuality was rejected as a mental disorder in 1973, and removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Ideology then shifted from sexual orientation as a deficit to sexual orientation as a cultural variable or identity (Arredondo, Toporek, Pack, Brown, Jones, Locke & Sanchez 1996). Given the growing diverse population in Australia, there are increasing efforts to affirm diversity in business and other groups (Richard 2000). Unlike skin tone, one’s sexual orientation is not a characteristic visible to others. As a result of this, gay men, lesbians, and even bisexual and transsexual populations are sometimes referred to as an ‘invisible minority’ (Fassinger 1991). Additionally all people are assumed to be heterosexual, thus making gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals even less visible. If one is not heterosexual and would like others to know this, one has to decide where, when and how to disclose one’s sexual orientation. In the face of negative stereotypes and varying degrees of legal protection against sexual orientation discrimination in their workplace, self-disclosure of a gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) identity is complicated. Croteau (1996) found in a review of literature on GLB workplace issues that 25 – 66 % of employees reported experiencing discrimination based on sexual orientation. It was found that employees who were more out reported more discrimination than those who were more secretive with regard to sexual orientation. Discrimination in one’s workplace based on diversity can involve job loss, lack of promotion and advancement, harassment, lack of partner benefits and social isolation (Fassinger 1995; House 2004). Workplace diversity problems such as heterosexism can influence work environments, work policies and interpersonal relationships at work (Croteau 1996; Waldo 1999).

A growing number of organisations have implemented their own policies stating that they do not permit harassment or discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or

identity. Companies that have anti-discrimination policies have fewer gay and lesbian employees reporting discrimination than companies without those policies (Button 2001; Ragins & Cornwall 2001). Gay and lesbian employees who report experiencing or observing less discrimination based on sexual orientation are more honest and open about their sexual orientation (Button, 2001; Ragins & Cornwall 2001). Some research suggests that the more GLBT employees are able to openly share their sexual orientation, the greater likelihood of positive work attitudes (Ragins & Cornwell 2001). Policies accommodating of gay and lesbian employees also have a direct impact on turnover intentions, organisational responsibility, job satisfaction and career loyalty from GLB employees (Button 2001; Day & Schoenrade 2000; Driscoll, Kelley & Fassinger 1996; Ragins & Cornwell 2001; Waldo 1999). Organisations have a vested interest in minimising the extent to which GLBT employees experience discrimination in the workplace.

Workplace diversity in an international context is comprised of the following: language, ethnicity, gender, age, cultural, religious belief, family obligations and sexual orientation (The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006). The word diverse encompasses being different and heterogeneous, therefore diversity embraces much more than merely equality. It is about treasuring these individual differences and crafting a culture, environment and practices that sustain these. Respecting differences in diversity refers to establishing a work environment that respects and includes these individual differences. It acknowledges the contributions that individuals with many types of differences make, thereby maximising the capacity of all employees (Harvey & Allard 2012). This entails respect and a promotion of institutional values for diversity for the benefit of individuals, organisations and society. Workplace diversity therefore involves recognising the value of these individual differences and how they are managed in the workplace. Internationally, this is embedded in the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and workforce diversity policies which are present as legislative directives in many countries.

In Australia, the Equal Employment Opportunity legislation serves to make certain that employees are selected for roles based on capability, that there is suitable access to employment, relevant professional development and involvement for people who are

poorly represented in the workforce (The Equal Opportunity Act 2010). The act strives to promote workplaces are free from acts of discrimination and harassment. It is noteworthy that the New South Wales Workforce Diversity Policy, Australia (Director-General, Department of Education and Training 2009) includes the following employees: “Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people; people with a disability; members of racial, ethnic and ethno-religious minority groups; people under 25; and women in senior leadership roles” (The Equal Opportunity Act 2010). Not included in this policy are gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered (GLBT) employees.

This research study builds on from extant Australian literature on diversity in the workplace with regard to GLBT employees and sexual orientation (which will be discussed in more detail in chapters 2, 5 and 6). Social divisions based on sexual orientation and sexual identity, are in conflict with organisational environments. Limited studies have focused exclusively on the workplace as a problematic environment for gay men, lesbians, bisexual and transgender employees, often resulting in poor mental health (Meyer 2003; Currie, Findlay & Cunningham 2005; Iwasaki & Ristock 2007; Matthews & Adams 2009). Amongst these studies, few have explored the heterosexist experience in the workplace and how GLBT employees have to manage their sexual orientation and identity at work. Early research into gay, lesbian and bisexual employees’ experiences reported incidents of discrimination, harassment and bullying on the basis of sexual difference (Ozturk 2011). A major unexplored research area is the examination of the perceptions of GLBT employees of the heterosexist nature of the workplace and how this affects sexual orientation and identity disclosure and concealment and the well-being of these GLBT employees. Research indicates that the more broad consequences of discrimination on employees in the same work environment have a bearing on staff retention (Houshmand et al. 2012) which equates to losses in productivity and profitability.

Workplaces are sexualised environments in which workers are coerced to adopt different, and sometimes inconsistent, sexual orientations and/or identities (Ward & Winstanley 2003). The workplace has also been referred to as a ‘gendered environment’ by feminist writers and has been posited as a signifier of sexualised and gendered norms (Acker 2012; McDowell 2004). For homosexual workers, the workplace can be a

complex difficult social environment. Studies on GLBQ<sup>1</sup> employees report experiences of abuse and heterosexism in the form of discrimination (Ozturk 2011). Authors from economically privileged countries such as the United States of America (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) have provided empirical evidence to emphasise how social discords among heterosexual and homosexual workers are sustained in the workplace (Aaron & Ragusa 2011; Barrett et al. 2011; Colgan et al. 2006 2007; Irwin 1999; King & Cortina 2010; Smith & Ingram 2004).

Investigations into sexuality and workplace inequality have also appeared from countries such as Turkey (Ozturk 2011) and Greece (Drydakis 2009). Researchers have begun to examine the intricacies of employing equality outcome measures and initiating GLBT employee driven networks for supporting change in public and private organisations (Colgan & McKearney 2012; Martinez & Hebl 2010; Monro 2010). Modest consideration has been afforded to incidents of heterosexist expressions and behaviours at work internationally and none to date in Australia, nor with any empirical models. Other international writers have questioned the processes through which heterosexist beliefs and examples are communicated in work relationships, particularly through direct and indirect acts of heterosexist discrimination (Drydakis 2009; Irwin 1999); verbal, physical and sexual abuse (Barrett et al. 2011; Colgan et al. 2006); and the basic assumption of heterosexuality (Rondahl et al. 2007; Ward & Winstanley 2003). Accordingly, homosexual workers feel constrained to cope with their disclosure at work and their GLBQ identities to others (Clair et al. 2005; Ragins et al. 2007).

The organisational advantages of GLBT employee's self-disclosure and the role of these employees who disclose are now being explored, thereby enabling wider cultural change within organisations (Martinez & Hebl 2010). Colgan and McKearney's (2012) study in the United Kingdom proposes that gay and lesbian employees give importance to GLBT organisational networks as an essential process for maintaining issues of

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<sup>1</sup> The acronyms GLBTIQQ (gay men, lesbians, bisexual, transgender, intersex, questioning and queer) are used as they have been used in the research and therefore there are varying combinations based on the type of cohort each researcher has used in their study. For example, GL would refer to gay men and lesbians only; GLBT would refer to gay men lesbians, bisexual and transgender individuals only. Q refers to individuals still questioning their orientation and not happy with any other label.

equality and sexuality on the corporate agenda. However, there are noteworthy variations in the level of support available to GLBT employee resourcefulness across organisations. This has been recently documented in Australia, but only in large corporate organisations, by Pride and Diversity who annually determine the ‘Top10’ most gay friendly organisations to work for, using Pride in Diversity's version of the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (AWEI), which evaluates and benchmarks GLBTQ inclusiveness in Australian workplaces (The AWEI is enlarged upon later in chapter 7).

International government focus on the enactment of various acts such as the Employment Equality Regulations (UK 2003) and Acts in the US and Australia (see Appendices I and II), which bars workplace discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or sexual identity, has forced organisations to implement equal opportunities policies in an attempt to prevent discrimination from taking place in the workplace. Research indicates that a number of organisations do no more than pay lip service to the legislation (Nazoo 2001). There have been changes in legislation internationally and in Australia, where changes in federal and State anti-discrimination laws have taken place (for example, The Anti-discrimination Act of NSW). It is important to address their effectiveness, in addition to using valid and reliable measures designed uniquely for this population. International studies have paved the way with findings suggesting that sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace exists and that it has deleterious health outcomes for GLBTQ employees (for example, Button 2001; Day & Schoenrade 2000; Ragin & Cornwell 2001; Samis 1995; Sandfort, Bos & Vet 2006; Waldo 1999). In spite of these diversity initiatives, intolerance of GLBT employees still exists in society and this naturally persists into the workplace, an element of greater society.

## **1.2 Legislation and Sexual orientation discrimination in Australia**

The Australian Human Rights Commission makes it against the law for someone to discriminate against anyone who is homosexual, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual based on their sexual orientation. Equal opportunity legislation aims to protect individuals from discrimination in the form of heterosexism, sexual harassment, victimisation and racial and religious maliciousness. In Victoria it is against the law to discriminate against individuals because of their ‘actual’ or ‘assumed’ sexual orientation, gender

identity or lawful sexual activity. This suggests that whomever one has sex with this should have no bearing on their right to any position, whether it be in the workplace or on the sports field. The Victorian Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Commission is a self-governing statutory body with accountability under three laws: The Equal Opportunity Act 2010, The Racial and Religious tolerance Act 2001 and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. For a comprehensive list of the legislation, see Appendices I and II.

Heterosexual relationships are regularly used as advantages in the work environment. It is usual for colleagues to have some degree of knowledge about their co-workers' private lives and this awareness can be a precarious component in founding the trust upon which networking and mentoring relationships are developed. GLBT employees often lack these networks and often do not encounter sufficient career and professional development. Additionally, if GLBT employees make their romantic relationship known, research indicates that they may encounter derision, isolation and possible job loss and less pay than their heterosexual colleagues (Drydakis 2009). From a business perspective, the pressure to maintain secrecy around one's sexual orientation with the concomitant need to assume false positions are likely to lead to a shortfall in productivity or proficiency consequential from emotional stress, now referred to as Minority Stress Theory (the theoretical paradigm used in this study and discussed in chapter 4, Meyer 1995 2003). This often leads to un-cohesive work teams, poor communication or even destructive conflict amongst workers (Moradi 2006). Furthermore, being a member of the minority group enhances social isolation, which reduces work commitment and performance (Irwin 2002). Previous international research is clear that gay men and lesbians fear discrimination in the workplace and often conceal their SO, preferring to stay in the corporate closet. It has been speculated that staying closeted can lead to an employee leaving the organisation, thus greater turnover, which cost organisations in the form of lost experience and training in addition to re-employment costs (Brenner, Lyons & Fassinger 2010). Discrimination in the workplace impacts on physical and psychological symptomatology (general well-being) which costs organisations due to lowered performance in the form of absenteeism and presenteeism. While these assumptions make sense, there is presently no research in Australia which systematically examines the emotional cost of non-

disclosure for GLBT employees. No Australian research to date has explored this with particular reference to the well-being of GLBT employees and their job satisfaction, psychological well-being and ultimately satisfaction with life.

Workplace discrimination in the form of heterosexism exists as a cause of workplace stress for GLBT employees. These minority stressors are linked with deleterious outcomes for GLBT employees and organisational outcomes and need to be understood in the Australian context. A significant issue in enhancing understanding of this is the application of a conceptual model. As drawbacks become more multifaceted, the practicality of the conceptual model increases. According to Bean (1990), sound conceptual models can offer a basic, but all-inclusive explanation of the question being studied by permitting researchers to centre on variables with large impact, while discounting those without significant statistical value. Some international models have been put forward (Day & Schoenrade 1997; Moradi, 2006, Ragins & Cornwall 2001, Waldo 1999). The model by Waldo (1999), has served as the foundation work for much of the work on heterosexism in the workplace. Waldo's model was the first to make use of structural equation modelling for testing variables under study with GLBT employees. Moreover, his scale was the first quantitative measure to be used to examine heterosexism in the workplace. Some authors have tested related models (for example: Moradi 2006; Ragins & Cornwall 2001), but insignificant sample sizes, questions of single institution homogeneity and inconstant methodology has produced latent constructs which are problematic to interpret. This study uses national level data with an adequate sample size to test latent constructs using suitable estimation methods and will therefore have a distinctive contribution to previous seminal work by Waldo (1999) and other authors in this area.

It is understandable that the well-being of GLBT employees will impact on employee engagement, customer satisfaction, productivity and hence organisational outcomes. Extensive international literature illustrates the presence of negative social attitudes towards GLBT people (for example, Berkley & Watt 2006; Flood & Hamilton 2005). It is not atypical for heterosexuals to communicate opposition towards GLBT groups in the form of heterosexist slurs and statements. Homophobia has been the most well-known term used to describe this phenomenon. However, it is argued later (in chapter3)



that heterosexism is now the more appropriate and inclusive construct, as do other authors (see Smith, Oades & McCarthy 2012). This distinction is important in the business world, as it draws attention to the normalising and privileging of heterosexuality and the existence of prejudice and social stigma around being a GLBT employee. It also highlights sexual orientation as a workplace diversity issue which is lacking in empirical data, with diversity issues in general only recently becoming important areas of study. The Australian workplace therefore provides an ideal context to study heterosexism as GLBT employees have no choice with regard to the attitudes of their co-workers. A Gallup study in 1998, found that 59% of Americans thought that homosexuality was immoral and an Australian study indicated that 35% of the Australian population aged 14 and older believed that being gay or lesbian is immoral (Flood & Hamilton 2005). This indicates that GLBT employees are always in the presence of colleagues of a majority group (heterosexuals) who hold adverse views towards these minority group members.

If homosexual employees who remain closeted have more negative work attitudes and thus lower performance, understanding more about these employees will contribute to the existing literature. The intent of researching this area is to highlight the minority stress and anxiety that GLBT employees experience due to perceived co-worker intolerance and fear of discrimination. Discrimination may be described as the marginalisation of minority parties from the distribution of power, and income (Lawler & Bee 1998) and the disproportionate conduct of some groups. Discrimination is a complicated phenomenon and is frequently motivated by an array of distinctive, often overlapping practices. Nevertheless, these practices can function conterminously to challenge the importance and efficiency of certain groups (such as GLBT employee minority groups). It is widely reported in the literature that workplace discrimination in the form of racism has a huge impact at both the individual and the organisational level. It is important to enhance GLBT employees' feelings of satisfaction with work and commitment to the organisation. About 10 % of workers in the UK have been projected to suffer emotional and physical ill health associated to work-related stress (HSW 2005).

To date, literature searches yield no studies in either the business or psychological literature using the variable of sexual orientation discrimination in the Australian labour market, using the valid and reliable measure listed above (including others discussed in chapter 7) and the relationship this variable has with well-being. The present study represents the first investigation of a model of the practice of heterosexism in the Australian workplace, demonstrating that organisational factors such as tolerance for heterosexism and how it contributes to the prevalence of discrimination may result in detrimental job-related and psychological sequelae.

### **1.3 Primary Statement and Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this dissertation is to contribute to the literature on the antecedents and outcomes of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace (for example; Button 2001; Day & Schoenrade 1997; Day & Schoenrade 2000; Driscoll et al. 1996; Ellis & Riggle 1995; Griffith & Hebl 2002; Ragins & Cornwell 2001; Rostosky & Riggle 2002; Waldo 1999). A significant gap that currently exists in this area of research is the experiences of self-disclosure as it specifically relates to the Australian workplace. Drawing on the theoretical literature and empirical findings from previous studies that investigated the experiences of sexual minorities at work, the goal of the study is to examine the environmental (e.g. organisational support, treatment of sexual minorities in the workplace), individual (perceptions of heterosexism) antecedents to disclosure of sexual orientation at work, in addition to how disclosure at work influences job satisfaction, psychological well-being, mental health and overall satisfaction with life.

The rationale for the study is to examine a model of heterosexism in the Australian labour market and to address the gaps in international and Australian research where there is limited empirical data, using valid and reliable measures, specifically designed for GLBT populations. The present investigation tests a model of such a process in the environment of workplace diversity, where understanding the workplace experiences of GLBT employees is valuable in explicating the theoretical issues concerning minority status and well-being. Furthermore, the study aims to highlight the negative health effects of heterosexist behaviour in the workplace with regard to well-being, with specific reference to psychological well-being and mental health. Non-heterosexuality itself is not indicative of mental health problems per se, but rather, the stress related to

being a sexual minority contributes to the emotional difficulties based on society's attitudes towards these minority groups. Finally, the study plans to contribute toward a greater understanding of the prevalence of heterosexism and its deleterious effects on GLBT employees.

#### **1.4 Research Aims and Main Questions**

The aim of the present study is to investigate the relationship between sexual orientation and sexual identity with specific regard to gay men, lesbians, bisexual and transgendered employees' disclosure and concealment, organisational support and perceptions of heterosexism, and how these affect well-being in the Australian labour market.

*Main Research Questions:*

- RQ1 How is reported sexual orientation/identity disclosure and organisational support associated with direct heterosexism, psychological well-being, mental health, job satisfaction and satisfaction with life?*
- RQ2. How is reported sexual orientation/identity concealment and organisational support associated with indirect heterosexism, psychological well-being, mental health, job satisfaction and satisfaction with life?*
- RQ3. What is the association between organisations with equal employment opportunity (EEO) policies and practices in place and heterosexism, psychological well-being, mental health, job satisfaction and satisfaction with life?*
- RQ4. Is disclosure and concealment and organisational support mediated by direct and indirect heterosexism?*

#### **1.5 Scope of the study**

A significant problem in sampling with the GLBT population has concerned the continuous use of convenience sampling rather than any type of probability sampling. This is a common factor in research carried out on gay men, lesbians, bisexual and transgender individuals. Owing to the absence of probability sampling, restraint must be

taken in generalising descriptive information to or formulating inferences about this cohort. Herek, Kimmel, Amaro and Melton (1991) advise that the negative effects of convenience sampling may be counterweighed to a limited extent by using a selection of recruitment strategies and by seeking out diverse sectors of the community. This is what was carried out in the present study where participants were obtained from five Australian states across a large number of organisational sectors. The study seeks to investigate the model in an Australian context to explain within the sample while at the same time studying the overall outcomes of the constructs on one another. It was not the intent of this study to generalise findings to the greater population because of the self-selected nature of the sampling technique. The purpose of the present study was to characterise the outcome of the effects of perceptions of heterosexism, for GLBT employees within the Australian workplace.

## **1.6 Organisation of the study**

The study is organised into nine chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction and brief background to the study. Included within is a brief outline of the purpose and scope of the study. Chapter two provides a brief theoretical basis for the study and defines important constructs. Chapter three is a published peer reviewed article and defines the constructs of homophobia and heterosexism and the utility of heterosexism as a more contemporary construct. Chapter four provides definitions of constructs used in the study and their relationship with well-being. Chapter five provides an exploration and chronology of the international literature. Chapter six is a published paper on the extant Australian literature on sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace. Chapter seven is an explanation of the research methodology and design, including details regarding the measures used in the construction of the questionnaire. Chapter eight contains the results of the research and chapter nine the final conclusions, implications, limitations and recommendations for future research.

Chapters 3 are 6 are peer reviewed articles where the major contribution was my work, with both my supervisor's input being limited to checking the article for scientific rigour and structure. The content of each chapter contributes to the knowledge in the area of workplace diversity with specific reference to the relevance of correct construct use and a review on the extant literature available on the well-being of gay men,

lesbians, bisexuals and transgender employees in the Australian labour market. The articles are located as standalone chapters where their content follows on from the previous chapter, thus contributing to the flow and content of the thesis. Both articles were published in the *Gay and Lesbian and Psychology Review*, vol. 8, no.1, 2012 and vol. 9, no. 1, 2013 respectively.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

To sum, the aim of the present study is to better understand the antecedents and outcomes of workplace heterosexist discrimination in the Australian labour market. Using a structural equation-modelling framework and heterosexism as a mediator variable, the relationship between the variables of organisational support concealment and disclosure will be investigated to determine the well-being of employees in the Australian labour market using a number of well-being outcome measures.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Health and well-being in the workplace**

#### **2.1 Introduction to Health and Well-Being in the workplace**

An average adult spends about a third of their life at work (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes 2002) and a fifth to a quarter of the disparity in adult life satisfaction can be attributed to satisfaction with workplace health and well-being (Campbell, Converse & Rodgers 1976; Judge, Thoresen, Bono & Patton 2001). The workplace is therefore a meaningful part of an employee's life, which affects employees' lives, their families, but also the community at large (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes 2002). There is the acknowledgment that an employee's work and personal lives are not distinct units but instead are interconnected domains having a mutual influence on each other (Zedeck & Mosier 1990). The nature of work, its everyday pattern and intricacy has been related causally to an employee's sense of control and low mood (Kohn & Schooler 1982). Some estimates place common mental health problems in the workplace affecting one in six adults with conditions such as depression, anxiety and stress related issues (Seymour 2010). Therefore, the capacity of the organisation to avoid mental illness and to promote health and well-being is of great interest to employers who devote considerable means to hiring employees to generate productivity and profitability (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes 2002).

Early research indicates that employees require greater value and individual development from their work and need it to be 'enjoyable, fulfilling and socially useful' (Avolio, Howell & Sosik 1999; Wresniewski, McCauley, Rozin & Schwartz 1997). At the most basic level, research indicates a link between a 'happy' employee (positive health and well-being) and work performance. Work is a prevalent and important part of an employee and the community's health and well-being. It concerns the quality of an employee's life, their mental health and can disturb the efficiency of communities. Well-being can be seen as the ultimate dependent variable in social science and in particular when it is defined by the employee; commonly referred to as subjective well-being.

Employers have come to realise that the future success of the organisation is dependent upon having motivated and healthy employees and that as a result of a healthy workforce, there will be: increased productivity, reduced absenteeism, enhanced employee relations, low levels of work-related stress, better-quality corporate image, better retention of staff and a reduced number of civil claims (Arandelovic, Stankovic & Nikolic 2006). As a result of decreased absenteeism and presenteeism and increased motivation, there is better productivity and profitability. Health and well-being encouragement will 'pay dividends' for the organisation as a whole. Workplace health promotion is seen as the combined efforts of employers, employees and society, to improve the health and well-being of employees at work (Arandelovic, Stankovic & Nikolic 2006). Johnson and Johnson reported that between 1995 and 2010 their workplace health promotion saved them an estimated \$250 million on employee health costs (Berry & Mirabito 2011).

The probable significance of these concepts and the associated research is clearly evident, given the consequences of workplace dimensions which interrelate with employee level factors affecting employee's overall experiences of work and life. Accordingly a clear goal for future research in this area is the persistent refinement of models of health and well-being. Such models, which draw on an interdisciplinary perspective such as psychological and other fields can contribute to the understanding of the intricate value of health and well-being in the workplace.

## **2.2 Conceptualisation of health and well-being**

Although descriptions and outcome measures of health and well-being abound in the literature (Danna & Griffin 1999; Emmet 1991; Felce & Perry 1995; O'Donnell 1986; O'Donnell 1989; O'Donnell 2008; O'Donnell 2009; Warr 1987; Warr 1990; Warr 1994; Warr 1999; Wolfe, Parker & Napier 1994), there are two well-known person-related thoughts that are often shared with a more societal-level viewpoint. One is that health and well-being may refer to the physical health of workers, described by physical symptoms and epidemiological frequencies of physical illnesses and diseases. The other thought is that health and well-being may indicate the mental, psychological, or emotional aspects of workers as designated by emotional states and epidemiological rates of mental illnesses and diseases.

Overall, *health* is a challenging construct to define and Emmet (1991) remarks that health is usually synonymous with the absence of disease. Further definitions are more embracing for example; the World Health Organisation defines health as a “state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (World Health Organisation 1998). The general conceptualisation of *well-being* is likewise unclear. Warr (1987 1990) provides some all-embracing reviews of well-being using health as a background by proposing that ‘affective well-being’ is only one element of mental health, amongst other elements such as; ‘competence, autonomy, aspiration, and integrated functioning’ (Warr 1987 1990). Affective well-being (a multi-dimensional construct) is theoretically comparable to the key medical condition of ‘ill’ or ‘not ill’ (Daniels, Brough, Guppy, Peters-Bean, & Weatherstone 1997; Warr 1987 1990). Further, Warr (1987) proposes that affective well-being is considered as two autonomous features called ‘pleasure’ and ‘arousal’ and that competence, autonomy, and aspiration are features of an individual’s behaviour in relation to their background. These habitually establish the degree of an employee’s affective well-being, tend to be regarded as markers of suitable mental health, and are differentiated on an ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ bases respectively.

The definition put forward by Felce and Perry (1995) broadens the meaning of health and well-being to a scope of distinctive aspects outside the established health ones. The definition recognises that an employee’s well-being is centred on their personal value set and includes ‘objective descriptors’ and ‘subjective evaluations’ of physical, material, social and emotional well-being, collectively with the range of individual growth and focused activity, all weighted by a particular set of values. Additionally, their definition supports the notion of health and well-being including the emotional aspects of employees as designated by emotional positions and frequencies and symptoms of mental illnesses.

The precise meanings of health and well-being are characteristically implied through working descriptions in empirical findings. This justifies the various explanations for both health and well-being, as well as for the various measurement strategies that have been utilised in the investigations of these concepts. Additionally, researchers are contradictory with the terms they use to refer to physical and/or psychological concerns. For example, some researchers use terms to define what they are measuring, such as:



‘psychological well-being’, (Buchanan & Fitzgerald 2008; Christopher 1999; Ragins, Singh & Cornwell 2007; Smith & Ingram 2004) ‘physical well-being’, (Frazer 1998), ‘mental health,’ and ‘physical health,’ (Larsen 1998) or ‘subjective well-being’ (Helliwell & Putman 2004), denoting physical and mental qualities either as a single unit or discrete constructs.

To provide understanding and reliability to the terminology employed within investigation and taking into question earlier descriptions of the concepts of health and well-being, Danna and Griffin’s (1999) conceptualisations are potentially effective ones for organisational study. They describe *health* as generally appearing to incorporate both psychological and physiological symptomology within a medical setting. Danna and Griffin (1999) propose the term *health* as applied to organisational settings be utilised when particular physiological or psychological signs are of concern.

Succeeding from Warr (1987 1990) well-being has a propensity to be a larger and inclusive conception that takes into thought the ‘whole person’. This takes the construct further than specific physical and/or psychological diagnoses related to health. Hence, *well-being* must be used as apt to include context-free outcome measures of life experiences (e.g., life satisfaction, happiness), inside the organisational enquiry scope to involve both generalised job-related incidences (e.g., job satisfaction, job attachment), including added facet-specific elements (e.g., satisfaction with pay or co-workers). Proponents of well-being argue that the occurrence of positive emotional states and positive appraisal of the individual and their affiliation within the workplace accentuate employee functioning and quality of life (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes 2002).

In light of the above conceptualisations of health and well-being in the workplace, the definition put forward by Diener (1985) for ‘subjective well-being’ is used in this study to locate the construct of well-being in the conceptual model described in chapter 7. Here Diener (1985, pg 71) describes it as a person’s global ‘experience in life’ and suggests that it fundamentally reveals a person’s ‘self-described happiness’. This concise definition is used as a best fit for the present study because of its focus on the person level, which explains changes within an individual’s experiences. It is these ‘individual experiences’, which are the focus of analysis of gay men, lesbians, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) employees in the present study. Additionally, Diener’s

conceptualisation of satisfaction with life is also used in this study. This he describes as 'contentment with' or 'acceptance' of an individual's life conditions or the recognition of an individual's needs and wants for one's lifespan. He also reports this to be the cognitive component of subjective well-being (1999), thereby linking these two constructs together.

### **2.3 Literature Review**

Health and well-being in the workplace and its association to business outcomes, have become recognisable themes in the media (cf. Coleman 1997), journals (cf. King 1995; Neville 1998) and progressively, in research journals (cf. Brine 1994; Christopher 1999; Cooper & Cartwright 1994; Danna & Griffin 1999; Harter, Schmidt & Keyes 2002; O'Donnell 2009; Helliwell & Putman 2004; Smith, Kaminstein, & Makadok 1995; Warr 1990; Wolfe, Parker & Napier 1994). A substantial but disjointed and unfocused amount of literature exists across various fields which relate directly or indirectly to health and well-being in the workplace. The literature deals with health and well-being from numerous areas as mentioned earlier, for example, the physical (cf. Cooper, Kirkaldy & Brown 1994), subjective, emotional, psychological (cf. Cartwright & Cooper 1993), and psychological perspectives (cf. Anderson & Grunert 1997).

Numerous findings on the health and well-being of employees in the workplace have shown potential risk considerations on the level of the position, the team and the company. Several studies have connected poor health and well-being in the workplace to appointment features such as low autonomy (Einarsen, Raknes & Matthiesen 1994; O'Moore, Lynch, & Daéid 2003; Vartia 1996; Zapf, Knorz, & Kulla 1996), role conflict (Einarsen et al. 1994; Hauge, Skogstad & Einarsen 2007; Notelaers & De Witte 2003; Neyens, Baillien, De Witte & Notelaers 2007), role ambiguity (Leymann 1996; Fils & Notelaers 2003; Vartia 1996), job insecurity (Hoel & Cooper 2000; Hoel & Salin 2003; Neyens et al. 2007; Notelaers & De Witte 2003), high workload (Einarsen & Raknes 1997; Vartia 1996; Zapf 1999), low skill utilisation (Einarsen et al. 1994) and lack of feedback (Hubert & Van Veldhoven 2001; Zapf & Einarsen 2003). Negative workplace incidents have been associated with several physical features such as high temperatures (Bell 1992), crowdedness (Lawrence & Leather 1999) and noisy work environments (Hoel & Salin 2003). Poor health and well-being in the workplace seems to be

supported by high co-worker interdependence (Zapf et al. 1996), particularly when shared with a competitive salary policy (Collinson 1988; Hoel & Salin 2003).

Brodsky (1977) divided negative well-being in the workplace on the level of the team and the organisation into four types of which the first and third are relevant for this study. Brodsky (1977) indicated that for discrimination to occur, the aggravating behaviours should occur in a culture which tolerates and rewards the aggravating behaviours. The first type refers to the 'culture' of the organisation. In this respect, studies have related poor health and well-being in the workplace with an intimidating work environment (Seigne 1998; O'Moore et al. 2003). Many GLBT employees view their workplace as being hostile due to the behaviour they experience from others. Brodsky's third type represents organisational transformations: for instance restructuring, down-sizing or amalgamations. In this setting, organisational transformation has been positively related with violence and aggression (Baron & Neuman 1996) and workplace bullying (Hoel & Cooper 2000; Rayner 1997). Several studies depict an indirect relationship between organisational transformation and bullying across interpersonal conflicts, increased workload and job insecurity (Hoel et al. 2002). Extant research on GLBT employees indicate that they experience both direct and indirect bullying and at times are faced with aggression (Seibold 2006).

Additionally, the relationship to psychological health and well-being in the workplace in men and women has been investigated with regard to: occupational complexity, control, sexual harassment, personal income (Adelman 1987; Drydakis 2009) and the differences between gender within the workplace (Bergman 2003; Bulan, Erickson & Wharton 1997; Cassirer & Reskin 2000; Evans & Steptoe 2002; Forret & Dougherty 2004; Melton 2004; Moen & Yu 2000; Peterson 2004; Van Emmerik 2002;). Sexual discrimination has largely been found to be related to gender quotients (i.e., the number of females associated to male employees). Whilst working amongst mainly male co-workers, female employees are inclined to be more easily and regularly victimised (Opdebeeck, Pelemans, Van Meerbeeck & Bruynooghe 2002). The likely meaning of these concepts and their related research is relatively evident, given the consequence of workplace elements which interact with employee elements affecting workers experiences of work and life. Although demographic variables such as sexual roles may affect experiences at work, these effects do not transpire in isolation. These experiences

are shaped by the larger context of work relations, and as mentioned earlier, by the culture of an organisation. Moreover, an interpersonal demographic viewpoint holds that the employee's experiences at work are influenced by the demographic structure of the manager-subordinate affiliation and one's colleagues (Tsui, Egan & O'Reilly 1992; Tsui & O'Reilly 1989). Numerous observable and non-observable demographic qualities have been examined in studies of relational demographics. These have included race, ethnicity, gender, education, age, attitudes, and tenure (see review by Tsui & Gutek 1999). However, very few have investigated the relationships between work experiences and sexual orientation/identity disclosure and well-being of GLBT employees (Button 2001; Day & Schoenrade 1997, 2000; Driscoll et al. 1996; Ellis & Riggle 1995; Griffith & Hebl 2002; Ragins & Cornwell 2001; Rostosky & Riggle 2002; Waldo 1999).

There is an increase in the growing research associated to health and well-being in the workplace with the largest area of research addressing work related or occupational stress (for example; Smith, Kaminstein & Makadok 1995; Spurgeon, Gompertz & Harrington 1996; Stellman & Snow 1986; Williamson 1994). This research review has indicated that the associations concerning the work place and health and well-being are multifaceted. Moreover, that modest consideration of workplace stress and latent physical dangers are insufficient, alongside extensive conformity that any model of occupational health should take into consideration discrete physical and psychological aspects in the milieu and their interaction (Gompertz & Harrington 1996) and that these should be the focus of analysis in further studies.

What is clear in the well-being research, is that there is extant examination on the effects of 'outness' (sexual orientation disclosure) on the work experiences of employees in mainstream journals and limited research in specific journals (for example, Gay & Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review, Sex Roles, Journal of Counselling Psychology, Journal of Homosexuality). Literature reviews indicate that the majority of sexual orientation disclosure research is prevalent in the Journal of Counseling Psychology but with a slant towards this field to the exclusion of most other sectors. Few empirically sound studies from the extant literature have compared the variable of outness (sexual orientation disclosure or concealment), its effect on workplace heterosexism and the psychological well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexuals and

transgendered employees in the workplace. Additionally, the research only begins to surface in more recent studies (see Bernstein, Kostelac & Gaarder 2003; Button 2001; Croteau 1996; Croteau, Anderson & Distefan 2000; Day & Schoenrade 2000; Herek 2004; Moradi 2009; Nawyn, Richman, Rospenda & Hughes 2000; Ragins, Cornwell & Miller 2003; Waldo 1999) which will be discussed later. Furthermore, earlier studies tend to focus on workplace harassment, sexual harassment and 'minority distaste' (Aigner & Cain 1977; Arrow 1973; D'Augelli 1989; Norris 1991; Schneider 1982). Owing to the stigmatised condition of sexual minority members in our culture, gay and lesbian employees hold wide-ranging positions and value systems pertaining to their sexual identity (Button 2001). Diversity research should push these issues further to provide evidence for causal connection within the workplace, given that up to 17% of the US workforce constitutes gay and lesbian employees (Gonsiorek & Weinrich 1991; Ragins & Cornwell 2001). With an estimated purchasing power of over \$800 billion in the U.S. the GLBT community represents an influential component both in the business and consumer landscapes. Importantly, this number is considered to be conservative due to the delicate and complex nature of workplace sexual orientation disclosure and the exclusion of other minorities in earlier studies such as: bisexual, transgender and questioning or queer individuals. Questioning and queer is a course of discovery by individuals who may be uncertain, still searching, and concerned with regard to using a social marker to themselves for several purposes.

Furthermore, despite the fact that homosexual employees represent a greater proportion of the workforce compared with other minority groups, outness (sexual orientation disclosure or concealment) has been discounted from the majority of empirical studies on diversity in the workplace (Badgett 1996; Croteau 1996). Judgement against employees who are homosexual (or appeared gay), was legal in most workplaces even in the late 1990s (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 1996) and in some countries and states around the world is still legal today (for example Uganda and Zimbabwe) where acts of sodomy are punishable by death. Egypt at the time of writing this thesis was imprisoning men identified as gay (October 2014). Devoid of protective legislation, GLBT employees are susceptible to discrimination, and current US investigations show that between 25% and 66% of homosexual employees describe sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace (cf. review by Croteau 1996). Nevertheless, these figures are considered conservative for the reason that most gay employees do not

entirely disclose their sexual orientation at work for fear of these very issues of discrimination and harassment (Badgett 1996; Schneider 1987). Importantly, most studies providing incidence rates do not take into account the extended range of sexual orientation minorities, namely bisexual and transgender employees and are therefore not fully inclusive. Even this study only looks at GLBT employees due to methodological difficulties explained in chapters 1 and 7.

In addition to sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace, gender and race have also been found to influence the choice to 'be out' in the workplace. This visibility may augment employees' chances of being targets of discrimination. Research indicates that disclosing one's sexual identity at work is frequently carried out on a cautious case-by-case basis. Here gay employees disclose their sexual orientation in circumstances where they feel safe and they trust colleagues with their disclosure (Badgett 1996; Friskopp & Silverstein 1996). However, the literature indicates that the decision to disclosure and conceal one's sexual orientation and identity is much more complex than this.

Extant studies have looked at this complex issue of 'coming out' or deciding to pass as straight (passing or counterfeiting) (for example: Belkin 2003; Day & Schoenrade 1997, Day & Schoenrade 2000; Griffin 1991; Griffith & Hebl 2002; Moradi 2006; Moradi 2009; Ragins & Cornwell 2001; Ragins, Singh & Cornwell 2007; Sandfort & Bos 1998; Smith & Ingram 2004; Woods 1993). For gay men and lesbians, divulging one's sexual orientation in the workplace is a complex choice, frequently producing negative consequences resulting in discrimination which involves a wide range of actions, both undertaken by the person being discriminated against (for example, withdrawal, isolation, hostility and even suicide) and the person doing the discrimination (for example slurs, snubs, jokes to overt hostility, aggression, violence and even murder). These actions have initially been termed homophobic in nature (Churchill 1967). Croteau (1996) in his seminal review on investigations in this subject suggested that there is large distinction in the degree to which gay men, lesbians and bisexual employees disclose versus disguise their sexual orientation in the workplace. Furthermore, he reports that gay and lesbian employee report that the level of outness is associated with their endeavours to cope with probable discrimination and alienation in the workplace. Moreover, that this is done via the use of management strategies, which have become conceptualised as identity management strategies in later studies.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

To sum, it is important in any discussion on health and well-being that understandings on health and well-being (constructs, theories and measures) are based on societal, cultural and situational assumptions and values (Christopher 1999). It is therefore critical to note that research of this construct requires knowledge of these factors when making the interpretive framework, thus limiting any bias or ambiguity around any inferences made.

Although studies which have contemplated relationships between sexual orientation, disclosure, concealment, discrimination, and work-related outcomes with GLBT employees, these have been limited and they provide a framework for examining further relationships with regard to the psychological health and well-being of GLBT employees. These early studies despite their methodological limitations have indicated positive relationships between homophobia and workplace distress due to disclosure in the workplace. Furthermore, in terms of understanding disclosure, researchers have investigated self-preservation strategies (more recently termed identity management strategies as mentioned earlier), such as: counterfeiting, avoiding and integrating, which range from denying and limiting identity disclosing information from colleagues or bosses at work, and to disclosing one's sexual orientation or identity and dealing with the associated consequences (see Anderson, Croteau, Ching & DiStefano 2001; Brenner, Lyons & Fassinger 2010; Chrobot-Mason, Button & DiClementi 2002; Lance, Anderson & Croteau 2010). Homophobia, despite being arguably the most popular term used, is argued as not being inclusive enough to encapsulate all the nuances involved in workplace discrimination against GLBT employees. Heterosexism has now become a universal and more appropriated term for reasons discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Homophobia to heterosexism: Constructs in need of re-visitation**

*Published paper:*

*Homophobia to heterosexism: Constructs in need of re-visitation*

*Ian Patrick Smith, Lindsay Oades & Grace McCarthy, 2012, Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology, Vol. 8, No.1.*

#### **Abstract**

*Although the concept of homophobia has been used extensively in the literature since the early 1960s, researchers have shown growing concern for its relevance in present day research. Additionally, there has been variance in its definition leading to an array of ambiguities resulting in methodological limitations in empirical studies with a disregard for ensuring that definitions used match the focus of study. There have been numerous attempts to locate the construct within a theoretical framework and this has also resulted in weak empirical design. These weaknesses in research on homophobia have resulted in the coining of the construct heterosexism as a more contemporary and more appropriate definition than that of homophobia to indicate anti-gay discrimination. This review considers both terms with regard to their appropriateness and distinction and the utility of the construct heterosexism as it is applied to contemporary research on non-heterosexual communities. It is concluded that homophobia can no longer be framed as a straightforward function of individual psyches or irrational fear and loathing and that heterosexism is more appropriate in defining prejudiced behaviours and their consequences for non-heterosexual communities.*

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Sexual orientation discrimination includes acts which range from subtle or slight slurs to physical attacks (queer bashing) and even murder (Silverschanz, Cortina, Konik & Magley 2008). There is an accumulation of literature which struggles to investigate this phenomenon, with a large number of methodological problems (for example, Croteau & Lark 1995; Croteau & von Destinon 1994; Fyfe 1983; Hall 1986; Hudson & Ricketts 1980; Levine & Leonard 1984; MacDonald 1976; Weinberg 1973). These problems are



complex and range from there being insufficient scientific language to encapsulate the distinctive features that sexual orientation discrimination of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender individuals (GLBT)<sup>2</sup> are subjected to, and the chosen theoretical paradigm to conceptualise these attitudes and behaviours, held both individually and by the community at large (societal prevalent attitudes).

A large pool of misrepresented language exists to describe negative attitudes and behaviours towards sexual minorities (for example, Brenner, Lyons, Fassinger 2010; Fassinger 2000; Powers 1996). Having the correct language to describe, understand and research sexual orientation discrimination is one step in helping researchers to create an opportunity for society to not only accept, but normalise same sex attraction, despite its minority membership. The constructs of homophobia and heterosexism have been reviewed and critiqued in relation to the numerous definitions put forward by researchers in the context of sexual orientation discrimination. Understanding terminology and its conceptualisation of an experience by a group is important in order to be able to (a) be more accurate and consistent in the use of terminology in research, (b) better understand the experiences of GLBTIQ individuals who experience sexual orientation discrimination, and (c) more accurately measure heterosexist experiences in different settings.

Due to profound changes in the attitudes of social science and society at large toward GLBT employees, most of what has been described descriptively and empirically since the early seventies (when research first started to be published in this area) demonstrates biases inherent in the actual research methodology. Researchers did not frame their constructs within an appropriate theory; and did not differentiate between attitude and assumptions, leading to ambiguity of hypotheses. Many studies therefore incorrectly labelled negative attitudes to homosexuality as homophobia (MacDonald 1976; Weinberg 1973). This was due to the then inaccurate theoretical framing of the

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<sup>2</sup>GLBTIQ is used by the authors as it is more inclusive and more representative of the sexual minority groups, thus separating them out from the majority heterosexual group. Sexual orientation is defined as the direction of sexual and romantic attractions. With regard to GLBTIQ research, this attraction is mainly towards people of the same sex (homosexuality), and for some it is towards either sex (bisexuality).

construct of homophobia and the manner in which researchers conceptualised their language around this. This review considers both terms with regard to their appropriateness and distinction and the utility of the construct heterosexism as applied to research on the GLBTIQ community.

### 3.2 Homophobia

For nearly fifty years the construct of homophobia has been defined in many different ways based on: (a) the theoretical paradigm used (Adam 1998; Bernstein, Kostelac & Gaarder 2003; Lyons, Brenner & Fassinger 2005; Matthews & Adams 2009; Smith & Ingram 2004; Szymanski, Kashubeck-West & Meyer 2008) and (b) the researcher's bias (Lyons, Brenner & Fassinger 2005; Silverschanz, Cortina & Konik 2008; Smith & Ingram 2003). These methodological factors have resulted in the following list of definitions for homophobia. Table 1 illustrates key results from a literature search on homophobia and heterosexism. The search was carried out on the 'Summons' database and yielded forty one journal articles. Of the forty one articles, nineteen were selected as relevant, relevance being determined by articles which contained definitions of homophobia and/or heterosexism by seminal authors in the field. Seminal authors were identified as having published over five peer reviewed articles since research began to appear in this field. These nineteen articles were located in thirteen different journals. This list has been recorded in chronological order in order to illustrate developments over time.

Table 1  
Definitions of Homophobia

Author	Date	Definition
Weinberg	1960's	Heterosexual people's fear, contempt and hatred of LGB people.
Weinberg	1972	Heterosexual person's unsound anxiety of being near or in close quarters with GLBT individuals
Macdonald	1976	An irrational persistent fear and dread of homosexuals
Morin & Garfinkle	1978	An individual's irrational fear, as well as a cultural belief system that supports negative stereotypes about gay people
Hudson & Ricketts	1980	A uni-dimensional construct composed of several emotional responses (e.g. fear, anger, disgust) that persons experience while interacting with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals
Fyfe	1983	Consists of negative attitudes, culture bound commitments to traditional sex roles and personality

Author	Date	Definition
		traits
Brittin	1990	Fear and dislike of lesbians and gay men
Adams et al.	1996	A construct that consists of negative attitudes, affect regulation and malevolence towards lesbians and gay men
Sears	1997	The prejudice, discrimination, harassment or acts of violence against sexual minorities, including lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered persons, evidenced in a deep-seated fear or hatred of those who love and sexually desire those of the same sex.
Adam	1998	Negative attitudes toward lesbian, gay and (sometimes) bisexual people
Herek	2000	The marginalisation and disenfranchisement of lesbians and gay men.
Kritzing	2001	One way in which strict adherence to gender role stereotypes is enforced and gender oppression maintained.
Herek	2004	Refers to individual's beliefs and behaviours emanating from personal ideology. Individual or social ignorance or fear of gay and /or lesbian people. Homophobic actions can include prejudice, discrimination, harassment, and acts of violence and hatred.

Note: 'Definitions were obtained from a literature search which yielded 19 articles in 13 different journals with key words of 'homophobia and heterosexism'

The conceptualisations in these definitions stem from the early 1960's. Prior to 1967, scholarly writings on homosexuality both mirrored and legitimised the negative attitudes about the 'sin' of homosexuality, the 'sickness' of gays and the 'unhealthiness' of the homosexual lifestyle. Early causes of homophobia were described as 'irrational fears of the opposite sex' and a 'deep fear of disease or injury to the genitals' (Bieber 1976). Bieber also reported that the homosexual lifestyle was due to the 'disturbing psychopathology of its members'.

The first attitudinal shift came from George Weinberg (1972) who argued that the 'pervasive denigration' of homosexuals (by both heterosexuals and homosexuals alike) represented a social rather than a personal pathology. Weinberg (1972) contended that the problem with homosexuality rested not in the condition itself, but rather in the way it had been constructed by society as an illness. This shift of attitude to a sociological conceptualisation of the relationship between normal society and the homosexual sub-culture resulted in Weinberg (1960s) coining the term homophobia. He first described it as heterosexual people's fear, contempt and hatred of gay men, lesbians and

bisexuals (minority group individuals). In 1972 Weinberg described it as a heterosexual person's irrational fear and dread of being in close quarters with LGB individuals. This term is taken to be an extension of Churchill's construct (1967) of homoerotomania which he described as the fear embedded in society or erotic or same sex contact with members of the same sex. Research, however indicates that Weinberg arrived at the concept of homophobia before Churchill's book was published (Herek 2004), thus calling into question the origins of this construct. Nevertheless, Weinberg's use of the word 'irrational' is noteworthy for two reasons. Firstly, it permits a delegitimising of the mainstream condemnation at the time and fear of homosexual individuals. Secondly, it implicated society in the violence, deprivation and separation that Weinberg considered to be the consequences of homophobia.

This was an important step forward, as it emphasised that it is not a person's sexual orientation per se that is the problem, but rather, that being a member of a sexual minority is what may make one vulnerable to discrimination (Brooks 1981; Meyer 1995). It is this minority group membership (GLBT) which then leads to the marginalisation and discrimination of individuals (Minority Stress Model, Meyer 1995). This discrimination is therefore based on the societal views or attitudes of the majority group which the individual experiences in the dominant culture (Meyer 1995). Minority Stress Theory is described as the manner in which individuals from stigmatised social categories (such as GLBT group members) experience excess stress and negative life events because of their minority status (Brooks 1981; Kelleher 2009; Meyer 1995, Meyer 2003). Additionally, this stress is derived from relatively stable underlying social structures, institutions and processes beyond the individual, rather than from biological characteristics of the person or from individual conditions (Meyer 2003). According to Meyer's (1995) Minority Stress Theory, GLB individuals often experience unacceptable or inconsistent thoughts, feelings or impulses with the rest of their personality as a result of existing in environments in which they are nearly always minorities (ego dystonic).

Homophobia in early research was taken to represent ways in which marginalisation is manifested towards gay and lesbian people and their sub-culture. These early attitudes and behaviours were premised on stereotypes of gay and lesbians as being 'sexually aggressive' and predatory (paedophiles), 'excessively effeminate' (in the case of gay

men) or overly masculine (in the case of lesbians) and referred to as ‘dykes’ and therefore opposing gender norms and values of society at the time (Herek 1984). The construct of homophobia represented a significant and dangerous pathology which was directly related to anti-gay victimisation. Some theorists have gone so far as to report that the effects of homophobia (irrational and intense fear, dread and disgust for GLBT individuals) have fostered ‘queer bashing’ and thus violence and discrimination against GLBT employees (Petersen 1991) based on their sexual orientation. The critique of this construct in its early use is that it posed a real threat to GLBT individuals and employees by instilling a self-hatred and fear that kept these individuals ‘in the corporate closet’, thus preventing them from disclosing their same sex attraction. It can therefore be surmised that the misuse of the word homophobia and its poor conceptualisation led to the belief in the majority culture that homosexuality is an individual’s pathology instead of a societal issue.

Prior to 1973, this resulted in homosexual individuals being declared ‘mentally ill’ according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) which proclaimed that homosexuality was inherently associated with psychopathology (Bayer 1987; Minton 2002). Gay men and lesbians were then treated as mentally ill and subjected to conversion ‘therapies’ including electro convulsive shock therapy (ECT). This continued up until the early 1980s in some countries, namely South Africa, where men who were serving their compulsory military service and who openly disclosed themselves as practicing homosexuals, were ordered to undergo ECT (Mr S Lloyd 1987, pers. comm. 30 July). This occurred, despite some countries such as Canada changing their Criminal Code as early as 1969 when homosexuality was decriminalised. Prior to this, homosexual acts were considered perverted and acts of gross indecency, ‘sinful, unnatural and sick’ (Herek 2004). Uganda at the time of writing this article was proposing the death penalty for acts of sodomy.

Homophobia as a construct is thus rife with negative consequences as it results in the formation and acquisition of a negative homosexual identity (internalised homophobia) where GLBT individuals develop a ‘self-loathing’ related to being a member of a minority group (Weinberg 1972). This is then compounded by the development of negative feelings around one’s own minority status resulting from the stigmatisation experienced from being a member of the minority group (Smith, Dermer, Ng & Barto

2007). It is important to note that the construct of homophobia was created in the midst of strong political rebellion against the medicalisation and pathologising of homosexuality, therefore placing it out of context in present day studies. Homophobia is thus limited in its representation of discrimination as basically the product of individual fear, that is, the fear of being close to gay and lesbian individuals. Homophobia therefore, does not as a construct encapsulate the dangerous societal pathology that is directly implicated in anti-gay and lesbian, bisexual and transgender victimisation and discrimination. I thus propose that homophobia is consequently an inadequate term with which to frame the many experiences of prejudiced behaviours and their consequences against the GLBTIQ community.

### **3.3 Heterosexism**

As a result of these negative attitudes, behaviours and consequences of the historical unfolding of the construct homophobia, it appears that the concerns about its use and focus on the individual thoughts, actions and behaviours of the homophobic person, have led to the construct of heterosexism being coined by Weinberg (1972).

Heterosexism was first used within the women's and gay liberation movement as a way to offer a political meaning and to present a common language with which to raise concerns around the systemic oppression of GLBT individuals (Kitzinger 1996). The construct of heterosexism was thus defined initially as philosophical system that rejects, degrades and stigmatises 'any non-heterosexual type of behaviour, relationships of community' (Herek 1990). Furthermore, Morin (1977) describe a belief system that positions the 'superiority of heterosexuality over homosexuality'.

Heterosexism has thus moved the conceptualisation from the individual to the cultural and in ecological terms (Smith, Dermer, Ng & Barto 2007). That is, where the majority group status (being heterosexual) is the assumed group membership for all individuals in the society or community unless there is evidence to the contrary. For example, when an individual openly discloses their homosexual orientation (Smith 2004) and thus comes out as a gay man to his friends and family. Heterosexism refers to the cultural ideology that maintains societal prejudice against sexual minorities (GLBT individuals) and acknowledges that this prejudice may take many forms, from slight slurs, snubs and queer jokes (Silverschanz, Cortine, Konic & Magley 2008) to overt hostile harassment

and physical violence (Bernat, Calhoun, Adams, & Zeichner 2001), such as occurs in ‘gay bashings’ and even murder as mentioned earlier.

Numerous definitions of heterosexism have existed within the literature since the early 1980s attempting to delineate all the nuances involved in this complex phenomenon of sexual identity discrimination. The following table outlines these definitions as obtained via a literature research carried out as described earlier.

Table 2  
Definitions of Heterosexism

Author	Date	Definition
Pharr	1988	The systemic display of homophobia in the institutions of society, creating the climate for homophobia with its assumption that the world is and must be heterosexual.
Neisen	1990	The continued promotion of a heterosexual lifestyle and simultaneous subordination of gay and lesbian ones
Herek	1990	Defined as an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, relationship, or community
Herek	1992	Defined as an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship, or community
Herek	1995	Refers to an ideological system that operates on individual, institutional and cultural levels to stigmatize, deny and denigrate any non-heterosexual way of being
Sears	1997	Incorporates antigay attitudes, prejudice, and discriminatory behaviour.
Herek	2004	Refers to the cultural ideology that maintains social prejudice against sexual minorities.
Alden & Parker	2005	A belief system that posits the superiority of heterosexuality over homosexuality.

*Note. <sup>1</sup>Definitions were obtained from a literature search which yielded 19 articles in 13 different Journals with key words of ‘homophobia and heterosexism’.*

From a review of these definitions, it can be seen that there is an absence of a universal definition which clearly defines the construct. Definitions have diverse elements such as (1) a display of homophobia in society, (2) the promotion of a heterosexual lifestyle, (3) a system that stigmatises any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, (4) a system that operates on an individual and cultural level, (5) the ideology that maintains prejudice against sexual minorities and (6) a system that posits the superiority of heterosexuality over homosexuality. It is therefore the reader’s choice to decide whether these

definitions are similar, interrelated, distinct from one another or indeed out dated and irrelevant due misleading or lacking empirical data to support these conceptualisations.

Furthermore, the definitions locate the construct as either a social, individual or combined phenomenon. In a number of the definitions, heterosexism is seen as being bound to the identity of the self which internalises the consequences of heterosexism, resulting in what has come to be referred to as 'internalised heterosexism' (Szymanski & Meyer 2008) previously referred to as 'internalised homophobia' (Weinberg 1972, p. 83). This adds a further dimension to the definition as it brings with it the construct of self-identity as a homosexual and the individual's identity formation process which will determine the individual's position on their identity and hence the manner in which they view themselves and their world. This also impacts and influences one's 'coming out' or decision to disclose their sexual orientation in various settings.

The other concern with this construct is its use in isolation from a theoretical framework. Only a few researchers have attempted to combine definitions with theoretical underpinnings (Bernstein, Kostelac & Gaarder 2003; Lyons, Brenner & Fassinger 2005; Smith & Ingram 2004; Waldo 1999), with a number of researchers having no theoretical framework in which to locate their research (Drydakis 2009; Silverschanz, Cortine, Konik & Magley 2008). The lack of a consistent theory further dissipates the strength of definitions used. There is however, a growing body of literature which indicates a leaning towards Minority Stress Theory (Meyer 1995) as the dominant theoretical framework, as this theory encapsulates and highlights the negative experience, negative life events and stress GLBT members' experience because of their minority status.

The criticisms of the definitions for heterosexism are therefore numerous due to: (a) the theories used to posit them and the lack thereof, (b) the bias of the researcher and (c) their failure to reflect the intolerant attitudes and behaviours of the majority group. Other terms such as sexual prejudice (Herek 2004), homosexual prejudice (Reiter, 1991) and heterosexist harassment (Silverschanz, Cortine, Konik & Magley 2008) have been used to capture the negative attitudes and hostility based on sexual orientation. Prejudice, as a construct, is helpful to define an attitude based on judgment which is directed at a specific social group, involving negativity and hostility, in contrast to the



term homophobia, which implies a fear with the encounter of the minority group. The latter definition is inconsistent with studies indicating that heterosexuals do not have a fear for homosexuals, but rather experience an intense anger and disgust for homosexual individuals and their 'behaviours' (Fyfe 1983).

Furthermore, due to the necessity to include the expanded range of possible heterosexual behaviours to include actions which create a climate of negativity towards sexual minorities, Herek (1990) has introduced additional constructs to account for these negative attitudes such as institutionalised favouritism and psychological heterosexism (p. 316) which represents individual-level heterosexism that may be manifested through both feelings/attitudes and behaviours and is usually discussed in terms of how it promotes and perpetuates violence against GLBT individual and employees. Additionally, Silverschanz, Cortina, Konik & Magley (2008, p. 178) also refer to heterosexual harassment which they define as insensitive verbal and symbolic (but non-assaultive) behaviours that convey dislike toward non-heterosexuals.

The advantage of using the construct heterosexism over homophobia, which is arguably the most recognised term used to describe the marginalisation and disenfranchisement of gay men and lesbians (Herek 2000), is that it acknowledges the collusion in anti-gay attitudes at all societal levels. The broad definition of homophobia is restrictive in its understanding of the negative reactions to gay individuals (Fyfe 1983). On the other hand, the disadvantage of heterosexism is that it also fails to sufficiently reflect the fervour of overtly intolerant attitudes and behaviours.

Heterosexism has been used in the literature as a more appropriate conceptualisation for a number of positive reasons. The construct is more inclusive as it includes the mental and physical health problems resulting from invalidating social environments created by the stigma, prejudice and discrimination carried out by the majority group e.g. (Fisher & Shaw 1999; Gee 2002; Meyer 2003). Additionally, it takes into account social injustice, which has been seen to contribute to diminished physical and mental health of GLBT individuals due to their being exposed to acts of oppression, discrimination and bias (Matthews & Adams 2009). One such bias noted in the literature is that of biased evaluations of competence of GLBT individuals within the workplace (Drydakis 2009),

where it is assumed that customers will be uncomfortable dealing with homosexual workers and thus take their business elsewhere.

Moreover, heterosexism is seen to include the political or legislative action (Russell 2000), where ramifications for both the environmental level (from relatively contained local systems to larger, national, political systems) and the person level, through social individual empowerment. This results in the manifestation of heterosexism in two primary ways; namely through societal customs and institutions (cultural heterosexism) and through individual attitudes and behaviours (psychological heterosexism viz. prejudice, harassment and violence). Further, heterosexism focuses on the 'normalising' and 'privileging' of heterosexuality, and is more than a simple fear of homosexuals. Therefore, it is not merely limited to the phobia of homosexuality, or to cruel acts, but theoretically incorporates discrimination toward other sexual orientations viz. bisexuality thus preventing the assumption that only 'homosexuals' suffer from the effects of discrimination due to sexual orientation. Heterosexism also highlights the persistence of threats and the perpetuation of false stereotypes held by heterosexuals about the GLBT individuals and with regard to gender identity in general. The construct also takes into consideration the minimising of alternate sexual orientation (GLBT) and the unsupportive responses which lead to non-heterosexuals feeling 'invisible' (Smith & Ingram 2004) in numerous settings, one of those being the workplace, where it is surmised that the level of openness is a trade-off between disclosure and possible discrimination (Badgett 1995). Heterosexism therefore operates on many levels and is inclusive of all forms of stigma, prejudice and discrimination. It lays bare the belief in the superiority of heterosexuality in which non-heterosexuality or non-heterosexual persons are consciously or unconsciously shut off from daily activities (Sears & Williams 1997). It thus exposes the notion that other sexual orientations are not considered and are even silenced, thereby promoting the notion of heteronormativity.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The review has described (1) the out-dated and inappropriate use of the construct homophobia (fear of man) compared with the conceptualisation of heterosexism, despite homophobia being arguably the most popular term used, (2) the lack of a universal definition of what is meant by the construct heterosexism and the lack of a theoretical framework when using the construct, to encapsulate all the nuances and invisible

experiences of heterosexism. Political opinions and discourse about sexual orientation has changed over time as LGBTIQ advocates try to win constituents and change laws. Homophobia can no longer be framed as a straightforward function of individual psyches or irrational fear and loathing. In its place, heterosexism highlights group beliefs, maintaining heterosexual privilege. Heterosexism strives to move beyond understanding homophobia solely in psychological terms and to invoke more dynamic ways of thinking about prejudiced behaviours and therefore is used in this study as a latent variable.

## CHAPTER 4

### Definitions of constructs used in the study and their relationship with well-being

#### 4.1 Introduction

In the last decade significant socio-political progress has been made in affording equal rights to sexual minorities (non-heterosexual individuals). One of the most remarkable examples of social progress has been the granting of marriage equality for same-sex couples around the world. Since the 1990s, several US states have begun to legally recognise same-sex marriages (for example Massachusetts, Human Rights Campaign 2009). On October 28, 2009, President Barack Obama endorsed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act into law, thereby granting the Justice Department authority to arraign perpetrators who violate others based on their actual or perceived race, colour, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. **Finally, in June of 2015 the US legalised same sex marriage in all states.** Substantial changes have also been made, internationally in instituting policies and procedures in the workplace that affirm sexual diversity. The repeal of the US military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy in September, 2011 which prohibited GLB individuals from openly serving in the armed forces is one of the most recent advancements in affording equal rights to sexual minorities in their workplace. In 1998, during President Clinton's administration, discrimination based on sexual orientation was prohibited in federal employment settings, which influenced many private organisations and state governments to implement sexual orientation non-discrimination policies as well. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) described that from February 2009, 423 (85%) of the 'Fortune 500' corporations amended their existing non-discrimination policy by adding sexual orientation to the list. Additionally, twenty state governments of the US and the District of Columbia implemented non-discrimination policies forbidding discrimination grounded on sexual orientation in private and public employment (HRC 2009).

In addition to the implementation of sexual orientation non-discrimination policies, the Kaiser Family Foundation found in their annual Employer Health Benefits report that 39% of the 1,927 organizations surveyed offered same-sex domestic partner benefits (KFF 2008). Prior research has shown that supportive policies and procedures, such as a

formal written statement of sexual orientation non-discrimination, same-sex domestic partner benefits, informal networks/groups for GLBT employees, the inclusion of GLBT related issues in diversity workshops, and welcoming homosexual partners to business occasions are related to less sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace (Button 2001; Ragins & Cornwell 2001). Research is now indicating that these policies and procedures have shown to relate to higher levels of job satisfaction and job commitment for gay men and lesbians (Griffith & Hebl 2002).

Despite the aforementioned social and legal developments, sexual minorities continue to be referred to as a stigmatised group because they continue to be treated as inferior to heterosexuals, discriminated against in institutional settings (e.g., religious institutions, the legal system, the workplace), and physically victimised (Chrobot-Mason, Button, & DiClementi 2001; Fassinger 1991; Herek, Chopp, & Stroh 2007; Herek, Gillis, & Cogan 2009; Morgan & Brown 1991; Ragins, Singh, & Cornwell 2007). Unlike other stigmatised groups (e.g., women, some racial and ethnic minorities), sexual orientation is not readily apparent to others unless it is disclosed, and oftentimes it is thought that an individual is heterosexual until a GLBT identity is disclosed (Schneider 1987). Therefore, sexual minorities decide when, and to whom, they reveal their sexual orientation, unless of course, they are involuntarily outed by another individual.

The terms 'coming out', or 'coming out of the closet', are often used interchangeably with disclosure of a sexual minority identity to imply the practice of withdrawing from a life of silence and suppression of one's identity. Secrecy, in general, has been reported to be cognitively and emotionally draining as it requires a great deal of energy to strategically keep the information hidden (Lane & Wegner 1995). The workplace is a context in which sexual minorities invest a great deal of time, and consequently, a major issue for them is determining how to navigate a stigmatised sexual identity in this context, especially as it relates to disclosure (Button 2004; Driscoll et al. 1996; Day & Schoenrade 1997). The choice to reveal one's sexual identity has been found to be a complex, emotionally taxing process, as individuals must weigh the pros and cons of revealing their identity (Button 2004; Gonsiorek 1993). For example, revealing one's sexual orientation or identity has been connected with greater levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction (Garnets & Kimmel 1993; Morris, Waldo, & Rothblum 2001; Smith & Ingram 2004), and disclosure specifically in the workplace has been

shown to be associated with positive work-related outcomes, a topic that will be discussed later in this chapter in section 4.15 and in chapters 5 and 6. On the other hand, some sexual minorities fear discrimination (e.g., job loss, isolation; Croteau 1996) if their sexual identity is made visible, and based on recent research findings, these fears are not unfounded. Lambda Legal's most recent Workplace Fairness Survey in the US (2005) found more than a third of lesbian and gay employees described being subjected to some form of discrimination in the last five years when they disclosed their sexual orientation. It is still legal in 29 of the US states to dismiss an employee due to their sexual orientation. Furthermore, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), a federal proposal that was first introduced in 1994 to protect sexual minorities and transgendered individuals from discrimination at work, has yet to be accepted into US legislation.

Not surprisingly then, sexual minorities who perceive less sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace are more likely to disclose their sexual orientation at work (Ragins & Cornwell 2001). In addition to less perceived sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace, several other factors have been found to influence revealing one's sexual orientation or identity in the workplace. The presence of supportive organisational policies and procedures, protective legislation, and gay co-workers have all been found to be associated with a higher degree of self-disclosure among lesbian and gay employees (Ragins & Cornwell 2001).

Lesbian and gay employees who disclosed their sexual orientation to family and friends and who believed that their employer was gay-supportive, disclosed to a larger degree at work, than employees who did not disclose to family and friends, and who believed their employer was unsupportive (Griffith & Hebl 2002). Internalised heterosexism, or the negative attitudes that sexual minority individuals harbour towards themselves (Herek, Chopp & Strohl 2007; Herek, Gillis & Cogan 2009; Weinberg 1972), was found to be negatively associated with disclosure at work (Griffith & Hebl 2002; Rostosky & Riggle 2002). The consequences of sexual orientation disclosure at work have also been examined. For instance, disclosure at work has been found to be positively related to higher job satisfaction (Day & Schoenrade 1997; Griffith & Hebl 2002), satisfaction with co-workers (Ellis & Riggle 1995), and psychological commitment to the organisation (Day & Schoenrade 2000) in samples of gay men and

lesbians. Among lesbians specifically, Driscoll et al. (1996) found that high disclosure was positively related to work satisfaction. Job/work satisfaction is important to study because it has been found to be positively related to productivity and negatively related to absenteeism and turnover (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes 2002).

Driscoll et al.'s (1996) study is one of only a few studies that have specifically examined lesbians' experiences of disclosure in the workplace. The limited research that has been conducted has revealed that lesbians utilise several sexual identity management strategies to keep their sexual orientation concealed. This includes passing as heterosexual by fabricating a heterosexual identity or avoiding personal discussions about intimate relationships, in order to prevent rejection and discrimination at work (Brooks 1981; Levine & Leonard 1984; Hall 1986; Woods & Harbeck 1991). Lesbians who have previously lost their job as a result of disclosure are reluctant to disclose in their current places of work (Schneider 1987). However, many of those who chose to conceal their sexual identity have also reported feelings of self-betrayal about not being true to themselves and constant preoccupation and anxiety focused on maintaining secrecy (Hall 1986; Levine & Leonard 1984). These findings speak to the oftentimes challenging decision to disclose at work. Nondisclosure on the other hand can potentially lead to decreased psychological well-being, yet disclosure can increase the risk of being a target for discrimination.

The purpose of the present study is to contribute to the literature on the antecedents and outcomes of sexual orientation and identity disclosure in the workplace within the Australian labour market as there is growing international research which indicates the deleterious effects of sexual identity discrimination (for example: Button 2001; Day & Schoenrade 1997, Day & Schoenrade 2000; Driscoll et al. 1996; Ellis & Riggle 1995; Griffith & Hebl 2002; Ragins & Cornwell 2001; Rostosky & Riggle 2002; Waldo 1999). A significant gap that currently exists in this area of research is the experience of self-disclosure as it specifically relates to Australian GLBT employees. Drawing on the theoretical literature and empirical findings from previous studies that investigated the experiences of sexual minorities at work, the goal of the dissertation is to examine the relationship between environmental (e.g. organisational support, treatment of sexual minorities in the workplace), individual (that is perceptions of heterosexism), antecedents to disclosure of sexual orientation at work, in addition to how disclosure at

work influences, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being and general satisfaction with life.

## **4.2 Sexual Orientation**

Theoretically explaining groups of individuals such as GLBT and advancing operational methods of ascertaining members of these populations have persistently confronted investigators. Sexual orientation is now considered a demographic variable similarly to ethnicity and it is critical to research and refine the conceptualisation of sexual orientation to enhance research in this new area. A review of the present literature indicates that investigators' conceptual descriptions of these groups are infrequently explained in the studies. Also, operational approaches used to measure sexual orientation, do not at all times relate to the shared conceptualisation (Sell & Petrulio 1996). It is therefore important to advance standardised definitions to label sexual orientation and that standardised methods are established for use in research studies investigating sexual orientation and/or identity. Thus, it is crucial to clarify what is actually being studied so that results can be compared with and across other studies.

Several dissimilar delineations have been offered for the construct of sexual orientation, with the earliest noted being by Ulrich in the 1880s. His definitions are categorisations used to describe males in three simple classes namely; Dionings, Urnings and Uranodionings. It is argued that these classes match with the labels referred currently as heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual. Mayne (1908), a supporter of Ulrich's, offered a definition of homosexuality in the seminal work on homosexuals. He defined a male homosexual as "a human being..." whose "sexual preference may quite exclude any desire for the female sex...". Ulrichs also had a major influence on other earlier researchers of sexual orientation, namely Krafft-Ebing 1886 and Moll (1891), (see Kennedy 2001), Carpenter and Gates (2006) and Hirschfeld (1914). As a result of Ulrich's seminal writings, the conceptualisations of sexual orientation repeatedly mentioned currently have their roots in the works of Ulrich.

Currently the constructs of heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual and transgender are the most frequently used terms by investigators to define sexual orientations and sexual identity. The common error found in research, is that transgender is commonly referred to as a sexual orientation, instead of a gender identity. Nevertheless, whilst few



constructs have been recommended to explain heterosexuality or even bisexuality, researchers and lay people have used a number of terms alike to describe homosexuality. These comprise: uranianism, homogenic love, contrasexuality, homoerotism, simlsexualism, tribadism, sexual inversion, intersexuality, transexuality and third sex. Sexual orientation has a disparity of definitions in the literature. These generally encompass one or both of two elements: a psychological and a behavioural element (Sell 1997). Mayne's (1908) description of the term and Urning and Benkert's (1869) of the term homosexual only includes a psychological state (Sell, 1997). Ellis and Symonds (1896) also defined homosexuality with a psychological element and omit a behavioural element. Krafft-Ebing (1886) expanded his definition by reporting that the defining aspect of being homosexual is the 'demonstration of perverse feelings for the same sex', the psychological component and 'not proof of the sexual acts with the same sex', the behavioural component. These definitions are out-dated and not effective nor contemporary ways to define sexual orientation.

More current classifications have embraced both elements. LeVay (1991, p. 1035) defined sexual orientation as the 'direction of sexual feelings or behaviour toward individuals of the opposite sex' (heterosexuality), 'the same sex' (homosexuality) or 'some grouping of the two' (bisexuality). Weinrich (1994) described homosexuality either (1) as a 'genital act' or (2) as a 'long-term sexueroetic status'. Here, the psychological conditions are the 'sexual feelings' and the behavioural consequence is the 'sexual behaviour', or what LeVay refers to as a 'genital act'. The psychological component has been referred to as the 'sexual attraction', 'feelings' or 'interest' and includes terms such as: sexual passion, sexual urge, sexual interest, affectional preference and the behavioural component is the 'genitally intimate activity' or the sexual activity which achieves organism (Sell 1997). Present literature then assumes that both psychological and/or behavioural components may be used to measure sexual orientation (Sell 1997).

It is important to note that there have been numerous critiques of the definitions proposed with the focus on using a definition which supports a study in focus and which is significant for the discussion in question. This is more than exemplified in the United States where 13 states have their own definition of sexual orientation. Only 13 states prohibit sexual orientation discrimination in employment (Jeffords, Kennedy,

Lieberman & Specter 2002). According to Leonard (1993) the state of Minnesota provides the most detailed description of sexual orientation and is still used at the time of writing the dissertation. This definition states:

*“Sexual orientation means having or being perceived as having an emotional, physical, or sexual attachment to another person without regard to the sex of that person or having being perceived as having an orientation for such an attachment, or having or being perceived as having a self-image or identity not traditionally associated with one’s biological maleness or femaleness”*

(Minnesota State Sec. 363.01(45) (1993).

The major consensus across the US is that in some form, their definition of SO means heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality. It is interesting to also note that Vermont and the District of Columbia have a clause to protect an employee who is ‘thought’ to be homosexual. Thus, it is very clear that definitions differ considerably from investigator to investigator and through occasion and indeed countries. What is therefore important in research is for the researcher to ensure that the chosen definition describes the same phenomenon and whether the operational measure of SO used is based upon this definition.

#### **4.3 Operational measures**

Operational measures of sexual orientation also vary widely in the research. The original accounts of considering sexual orientation have been situated in the papers of the Western Church when confessing one’s sins was encouraged (Sell 1997). In the early 1500s documents have been evidenced to show sensitive questioning around acts of sodomy, where priests were instructed to remain ‘calm’ when these sins were confessed (Lee 1993). Early measures were then based on these types of questions, which were designed to elicit ‘yes/no’ responses, and this was the beginning of dichotomous measures for the classification of sexual orientation. This simple dichotomous classification of sexual orientation has remained the prevailing one still used by scholars today, despite its limitations (e.g. Bell 1973; Bieber 1976). Contemporary researchers (e.g. LeVay 1993; Sell 1997) are beginning to change this focus.

Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin (1948) put forward the most important scale at the time in their reports on sexual behaviour. They proposed a 'bipolar' scale which permitted a continuum between 'exclusively heterosexual' and 'exclusively homosexual'. The bipolar model of classification had seven categories. Due to its seven categories, it is therefore not a true continuum. Additionally, the categories from two through to four are difficult to assign for individuals who have entertained a considerable number of both homosexual and heterosexual encounters. Correspondingly, the scale incorrectly measures homosexuality and heterosexuality on the same scale, making one compromise for the other. Therefore seeing homosexuality and heterosexuality separately rather than as a continuum where their range may be independently determined. A concluding critique of the Kinsey Scale is that it groups individuals who are substantially dissimilar grounded on diverse features of sexuality into the same groupings, resulting in a loss of information which may compound findings. The Kinsey scale has however been the one most widely used as it does permit people a degree of overlap in their sexual orientation. This Kinsey scale has been used in the present research to gain such valuable information.

Shively and DeCecco (1977) positioned a further 5-point scale to assess dualistic dimensions of sexual orientation, namely the 'physical and affectional' preferences, what is termed today the psychological and the behavioural aspects of sexual orientation. However, no empirical research carried out on these scales could be found in a literature search.

Klein, Sepekoff and Wolf (1985) indicated that the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid (KSOG) is made of seven dimensions incorporating sexual attraction, sexual behaviour, sexual fantasies, emotional preference, social preference, self-identification and heterosexual/homosexual way of life. The difficulties with the KSOG are due to its multiple dimensional nature. Also, that over time, researchers have limited the number of dimensions used to suit their research focus (Sell 1997). Researchers therefore aspiring to evaluate sexual orientation today have three simple measurement instruments (dichotomous measures viz. the Kinsey Scale, Klein Scale and the DeCecco Scales). However, not any of these have appeared to be adequate and what can be seen in the research to date is that researchers have devised their own measure based on variations of these measures to suit their focus of study. As Kinsey states, "Not all

things are black nor all things white” referring to the fact that variables do not fit neatly into categories.

Moradi et al. (2009) refer to sexual orientation as a particular display of sexuality as communicated through ‘sexual, affectional and relational predispositions’ to other people on the foundation of their gender. It is this definition of sexual orientation which is taken to support the present study which allows individuals to select an option which is ‘a model of best fit’. It must be noted however, that choices change over time and thus sexual, affectional and relational dispositions towards others will also change over time. That is, sexual orientation has come to be known as fluid. This is the difficulty of measuring such a complex issue as sexual orientation. Gay men and lesbians often get married to people of the opposite sex and then only ‘come out’ when the timing is right for them due to a number of complex cultural and socio-political reasons. This highlights Moradi et al.’s (2009) views that research on sexual orientation minorities is very challenging and complex and researchers need to conceptualise, define and develop a framework which explicitly explains the focus and analysis of a study, so that no ambiguities or misinterpretations can be made by the reader. As mentioned earlier, sexual orientation is the expression of one’s sexual preference through actions. This is however different from sexual identity, which may be defined as the claiming, identification, acknowledgment of self-labelling of these features which are important to the self (Moradi et al. 2009).

#### **4.4 Outness in the workplace and Sexual Identity formation**

‘Coming out’ in the workplace is acknowledged as a decision that requires a lot of consideration by GLBT employees (Humphrey 1999; Ward & Winstanley 2005; Ward & Winstanley 2006). There may be substantial implications for the public and economic standing during the disclosure of individual thoughts about sexuality and self to others, and socio-political consequences within the workplace. Choosing to disclose can have both advantages and disadvantages, which highlights the intricacy of negotiating the disclosure course across the permeable boundary between public workplaces and personal worlds (Asquith 1999; Schultz 2003). Reportedly, sexual disclosure at work indicates a higher level of psychological responsibility in employees to the employing organisation. Sexual disclosure at work is associated with less divergence between work and home life and decreases the likelihood that the GLBT employee will leave their

place of employment, and is also correlated with higher levels of job satisfaction (Day & Schoenrade 1997, Day & Schoenrade 2000). Several negative consequences of living the 'double life' in the corporate closet have also been reported, for example lower self-esteem and self-worth, and less positive attitudes toward work and careers in comparison with 'out' employees (Ragins et al. 2007). Employees also report experiencing physical and emotional stress from staying 'in the closet', and invest a lot of their time and energy into 'staying invisible', which has implications for their levels of productivity (Colgan et al. 2006; Ragins et al. 2007).

Disclosure is contingent on many internal and external factors, for example, the organisational climate (defined by how supportive the work environment is of GLBT employees), work team culture, and the availability of equal opportunity policies (Griffith & Hebl 2002; Rostosky & Riggle 2002). GLBT employees who do not wish to disclose their sexual identity at work may depend on a number of strategies for 'passing' as heterosexual. These employees may undertake elaborate measures for camouflaging features of the sexual self in order to present as a member of the dominant heterosexual group (Clair et al. 2005). Approaches for passing are contingent on the assumption of the workplace that the employee is heterosexual, and can include strategies such as deliberate concealment, such as evading questions about one's personal life or presenting oneself as 'asexual' (Chrobot-Mason et al. 2001; Woods & Lucas 1993). Passing as heterosexual for lesbian employees may involve the communication of conventional feminine markers, such as conversational references to marriage and motherhood (McDermott 2006). These strategies may result in stress for the employee and may prove difficult to sustain. Moreover, these strategies on the part of the employee do not eliminate the risk of disclosure, or 'outing' from other workers (Badgett 1996; Ward & Winstanley 2005).

Silence is a dominant topic in the work narratives of GLBT employees and what is left unsaid can be equally significant to what is expressed in the spoken word. At an organisational level, silence is present through the provision of uniforms, the disguising of differences and the neglect of GLBT employees and their relationships in HR policy (Skidmore 1999; Ward & Winstanley 2003, Ward & Winstanley 2006). Coming out at work does not naturally dispel the prevalent power of sexual silence. The act of greeting co-workers 'coming out' with silence may infer opposition to the visible presence of

GLBT identities (Ward & Winstanley 2003). Ward and Winstanley (2003) recognise the discourse of silence in the workplace as a conflicting position that is concurrently empowering and repressive for GLBT employees, repressive by concealing gay, lesbian and bisexual workers from visibility whereas inspiring through having to avoid assuming a permanent subject position within a 'heteronormativity agenda' (Ward & Winstanley 2003).

#### **4.5 Outness, Sexual Identity formation and discrimination**

From the previous discussion, recognising and accepting one's primary sexual orientation or identity as either GLBT within the context of a heterosexist society reflects a process that has come to be known as gay/lesbian/bisexual or transgender identity formation or 'coming out' to the self and to others (family, friends and colleagues). According to DeCecco (1990), coming out is a very personal process, which is also ideological and is a moment in one's life when the behavioural, expressive, constitutional and just qualities of one's sexuality 'powerfully converge' (pg. 376).

A growing body of evidence suggests that homosexuality is still negatively sanctioned in contemporary society and the decision to be 'out' about one's sexual identity is connected to a combination of personality, mental health and legitimacy in social relationships both in one's personal and work life (Cass 1979; Coleman 1982). The major determining factor in outness has been directly related to sexual orientation discrimination (Garnets, Herek & Levy 1990). Herek, Gillis and Cogan (1999) indicated that discrimination based personal attacks on GLBT individuals were more deleterious to mental health than any other kind of attack. Sexual orientation discrimination has been shown to elicit internalised heterosexism in the form of shame or guilt (D'Augelli & Grossman 2001). Outness or sexual orientation disclosure is then a complex decision and not simply a dichotomous decision between passing as a heterosexual and being explicitly GLBT.

Most theories of homosexual identity formation (the process of obtaining a same-sex sexual identity) are based on the assumption that internalised heterosexism and reaction to societal homonegativism must be resolved for adequate integration to occur. Through

a process of cognitive restructuring the meanings attached to homosexuality are changed and homosexual identities take on a more positive meaning. This positive acceptance has the ability to balance the disapproving and rejecting opinion of other groups which are enforced on GLBT individuals (Coleman 1982). Cass (1979) presented a developmental model of homosexual identity formation in which movement through stages is motivated by the desire to establish congruence between the individual's intrapsychic matrix and the environment (personal and work life). Coleman (1982) proposed a framework which was based on a number of concepts which have been proposed in other models, which supports people with same sex interests to recognise, acknowledge and appreciate their identity. Coleman's model (1982) was designed to help gay and lesbians adapt to their uniqueness in a primarily heterosexual society. His model consisted of five stages which gay and lesbian individuals may or may not pass through, namely: pre-coming out, coming out, exploration, first relationships and integration. The model is used as a framework for helping individuals facilitate through the stages to an identity acceptance and to a stage where they decide on their level of outness both in their personal lives and workplace environments.

Most theories of homosexual identity formation view the process as developmental and part of a general maturation process of achieving a coherent sense of personal identity (Coleman 1982). Reciprocal interactions between the individual, significant others and society determine the development and maintenance of an integrated self-image. Cass (1984) views homosexual identity formation as a result of changes in the intra-personality matrix developing as personal interpretations of socially prescribed notions which are integrated with self-developed formulations. Identity confusion is followed by periods of identity comparison, tolerance, acceptance and pride in which feelings of personal and social alienation are progressively confronted. There must be a necessary shift of the internalised heterosexist attitudes which may have deterred self-acceptance. Graham et al. (1985) found that homosexuals who believe it is important for them to be out in all areas of their lives report high levels of physical and mental well-being. It is thought that this is the same process that transgender individuals progress through during their transition, although they may have always battled with their identity confusion throughout their entire lives. A literature review indicates that limited new identity formation theories have been put forward since these seminal theories first surfaced. D'Augelli (1994) proposed a model on lesbian, gay and bisexual

development which has since been explored further by Brown (2002) with specific reference to bisexual women and men only. Brown (2002) proposed a model of bisexuality identity development which elaborates on the experiential differences of women and men. However this model is qualitatively based and is limited in its generalisability despite its strengths as a new model for bisexuals separate from homosexuals. Finally, McCarn and Fassinger (1996) also proposed a model of identity formation but only for lesbians and its implications for counsellors working with lesbians to assist them in this formation process.

It has been commonly assumed that GLBT individuals confront a dichotomous decision concerning 'passing' as a heterosexual and explicitly distinguishing oneself as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (sexual minority member). There is however a large variation in the degree to which GLBT individuals mask their sexual orientation versus revealing their sexual orientation in their personal lives and in their workplace, and that their outness may be related to a number of discriminatory variables in their workplace. The range of qualitative and quantitative studies discussed later suggest that this decision is much more multifaceted. Outness/disclosure regarding one's sexual orientation and no longer having to conceal one's sexual orientation is seen to be associated with negative psychological adjustment and negative psychological well-being. Research indicates that non-disclosure can negatively impact on occupational satisfaction and performance and thus also psychological health and well-being (Fassinger 1996). Evidence also indicates that divulging one's sexual identity in the workplace may result in deleterious outcomes in the workplace (due to heterosexism), resulting in enhanced anxiety as a result of minority status (Waldo 1999), and being fired, experiencing a loss of integrity and value as a result of sexual orientation discrimination (Croteau 1996). These negative consequences include reduced opportunities, complications with colleague relationships (Crocker & Major 1989) less pay (Berg & Lien 2002; Drydakis 2009) and less positive regard by co-workers (Chung 1995; Croteau, Anderson, DiStefano & Kampa-Kokesch 2000; Croteau, Bieschke, Fassinger & Manning 2008). These negative consequences include limited access to opportunities, difficulties with interpersonal relationships (Crocker & Major 1989). Sexual orientation discrimination is evident in the workplace and research indicates that gay and lesbian employees suffer negative consequences because of their minority group membership (Chrobot-Mason, Button & DiClementi 2001).



In the last decade, research into homosexuality/bisexuality and sexual identity has taken a different path, away from the former accent on aetiology and therapeutic intervention programs. Enquiry now focuses on the individual GLBT experiences and perceptions of GLBT employees. The shift of focus has provided new momentum to the enquiry of this previously ignored area of empirical study. As a result of this renewed impetus, how and why individuals embrace a GLBT identity has always interested scholars. The chief area of interest being GLBT employee's choice to reveal or camouflage their identity in the workplace. Sexual identity development (Coleman 1981; Coleman 1982), and identity acquisition (Troiden 1977), has been typified as, primarily, the course by which people begin to identify themselves as 'a GLBT individual'. Secondly, the transformation of this 'self-image' into a GLBT identity as a consequence of experiential interaction with other GLBT individuals follows. Penultimately, the emotional, intellectual, and interactive tactics used to accomplish such an identity in daily life ensues. The final stage of how GLBT individuals embrace their identity is accomplished by the manner their newly acquired identity is assimilated into an inclusive self-image.

Essentially, the stages of acquiring a sexual orientation and gender identity, is one of identity adjustment where the formerly held identity is substituted with a homosexual/bisexual/identity. The formerly held identity would have been a heterosexual one as most (except now where same sex couples are emerging with children) individuals are reared as heterosexual and the advancement of a stereotypical heterosexual identity is one of the most important aspects of socialisation in Western societies. GLBT individuals regularly describe this development process to be one of transformation from a heterosexual to a GLBT identity (Altman 1972; Berzon 1979; Clark 1977; Lewis 1979). It is this process of identity formation which also at times results in internalised heterosexism due to societal values imbued in heteronormativity.

#### **4.6 Theoretical Approach to the Closet and the Corporate Closet**

The theoretical context is informed by queer and post-structural appraisals of the closet. The metaphor of the closet, and the supporting logic of the heterosexual/homosexual binary, has received substantial attention from gender and queer theorists over the last twenty years (Butler 1991; Fuss 1991; Sedgwick 1990). The closet metaphor is a shared

symbol endorsed by GLBT identities in modern Western societies, indicating a socially constructed split between heterosexual and homosexual identities (Butler 1991; Fuss 1991). It has also implied a space of shelter and protection from homosexual subjugation by representing what Sedgwick (1990 p. 71) describes as the “defining structure for gay oppression” in the 20th century. This closet is synonymous with the coming out account and the political setting of the gay liberation movement during the 1970s (Grierson & Smith 2005). Accordingly, the coming out of the closet narrative has become part of a philosophy of storytelling about the sexual self in modernity (Plummer 1995). According to Judith Butler (1993 p. 225), the custom of naming, or ‘coming out’ is central to the development of sexual subjectivities. Mason (2002) contends that lesbian and gay lives seldom live either in or out of the closet but rather, negotiate its ‘metaphorical borders’ every day. In this sense, the closet can be felt as an unstable and unpredictable space for supporting sexual invisibility. It is also an unavoidable space as each new encounter with an unknown person conveys with it the potential assumption of heterosexuality (Sedgwick 1990).

In the United States, Seidman, Meeks, and Traschen (2002) emphasise that many GLBT employees are living life ‘beyond the closet’. While identifying the institutionalisation of heterosexual supremacy in North American culture, Seidman et al. (2002) argue that lesbian and gay lives are no longer prescribed around the division between straight and gay worlds. Lesbian and gay identities have been assimilated into regular arrangements of social life and everyday discourse. From early adolescence, many young individuals learn to hide their same-sex attractions as a consequence of both anticipating or directly experiencing heterosexist discrimination (Britzman 1997; Emslie, 1999; Telford 2003). This necessitates learning how to remain attentive to one’s immediate surroundings and self-censor public expressions of affection (Hillier et al. 2005). The process of concealing GLBT sexualities and controlling one’s actions can alienate GLBT employees, lower their sense of self-worth, and impair their capacity to build support networks (Emslie 1999; Hillier et al. 2005). In the present study, the relationship between people’s negotiations of the closet within the workplace and heterosexism are examined in the Australian context, and hence the Australian Corporate Closet.

#### **4.7 Theoretical Approaches Used to Conceptualise Heterosexism**

A review of the GLBT literature indicates that two main theoretical positions stand out which conceptualise the effect of heterosexism on the workplace lives of GLBT employees namely (i) Feminist Theory (cf. Brown 1988; Brown 1994; Rotosky & Riggle 2002; Szymanski 2005a; Szymanski 2005b; Szymanski 2006) and (ii) Minority Stress Theory (cf. Balsam & Szymanski 2005; Bos, van Balen, van den Boom & Sandfort, 2004; Brooks 1981; DiPlacido 1998; Meyer 1995; Meyer 2003). The first, feminist theory holds the view that one exists in a political arena and that this area impacts on an individual's personal world. That is, personal problems are all connected to the social, cultural and economic climate in which the individual lives. As a result of this, all problems encountered by employees with limited power in society may be seen as reactions to oppression (Brown 1988, 1994; Enns 2004; Worell & Remer 2003). Feminist theory therefore suggests that GLBT employee difficulties in the workplace such as discrimination, rejection, isolation and harassment are a likely result of heterosexism. Further, this position indicates that due to the varied forms of sociocultural heterosexism existing in society, GLBT employees internalise this heterosexism with a resultant psychological stress (Brown 1988; Szymanski 2005a). Consequently, this has been shown to be closely associated with poor mental health outcomes (Meyer 1995; Szymanski 2005b). There are numerous factors which come into play when an employee internalises heterosexism and this includes the type, degree and duration of the heterosexist behaviours the GLBT employee experiences from colleagues or managers. Of note here, is also the significance of the relationship between the perpetrators of heterosexism or heterosexist messages to the receiver of these messages. GLBT individuals also find family and religious views significantly more important to them. When family members' views are invalidating, the already present stress is amplified. The absence of GLBT-affirmative messages and heterosexual allies in the workplace further compounds this stress. Finally, consideration must be given to the level of self-acceptance and the meaning placed on GLBT identity by the person themselves.

In understanding Feminist Theory and its tenets, it is recommended that oppression of the GLBT employee is studied by focussing on the influence of the varied socially constructed parts of society for example, gender, race and sexual orientation/identity. It is important on exploring how these different sources of oppression influence and

affects the well-being of GLBT individuals which culminates in the internalised heterosexism (Brown, 1994; Szymanski 2005a; Szymanski 2005b; Szymanski 2008). A primary oppression viewpoint purports that one practice of oppression experienced by an individual with multiple facets, for example a gay male being both gay and male, will be the fundamental source of oppression and so directly affect psychosocial health. Moreover, a second tenet is that when a GLBT individual has more than one minority status (being lesbian and being a woman) the oppression of both external and internalised heterosexism is further compounded due to these direct effects. This culminates in poor mental health outcomes for the GLBT employee. This gives rise to a third feminist perspective which highlights the need to consider the multiplicative effects of numerous forms of heterosexism on GLBT employees' general well-being. For these reasons, many forms of heterosexism come together with other forms experienced by the GLBT employee and these strengthen the effect of the discrimination. Consequently, this combination of interacting groupings of varied discriminatory occurrences negatively affects the GLBT employee's overall health and well-being. Feminist theory views each GLBT individual's distinct position within the make-up of social structure and rejects a simple binary form of discrimination emphasising that an individual is 'greater than the sum of its parts'. An example of this is when a lesbian encounters discrimination and internalises invalidating meanings about her sense of community and this may be because she is a lesbian and not because she is a woman. The majority of GLBT experiences have been researched with a focus on the simple binary form of internal and external heterosexism as the main feature of oppression and hence discrimination (Szymanski, Kashubeck-West, & Meyer 2008). Limited studies (Chung & Szymanski 2006; From 2000; Moradi 2006; Piggot 2004; Szymanski 2005b) commenced understanding the varied forms of discrimination experienced by GLBT employees with multiple minority identities and these have been advanced by more recent studies (also limited in numbers) with more valid and reliable measures of assessment (Hoel, Lewis & Einarsdottir 2014; Lance, Anderson & Croteau 2010; Robinson & Berman 2010) investigating the negative outcomes with health.

It is important that study is embedded in theory in order to better understand the complex nature of discrimination against GLBT individuals. Here Szymanski and Kashubeck West (2008) have investigated the effects of discrimination in the form of internalised heterosexism from a feminist theoretical foundation looking at the resultant

psychological stress experienced by lesbian and bisexual women. From the limited research studies, Feminist theorists have provided a number of solutions for minimising the resultant negative effects of heterosexism on GOBT employees (for example: Brown 1988, 1994; Enns 2004; Kashubeck-West & Szymanski 2008; Szymanski 2005a; Worell & Remer 2003). The second theoretical position Minority Stress Theory has its origins in social stress theory (Dohrenwend 2000) and sociological theories in order to better understand how social environments containing prejudice, stigma and discrimination affect GLBT employees as a minority group (Allport 1954; Crocker, Major, & Steele 1998).

Minority stress theory proposes that individuals from discriminated social groups suffer more stress and negative life experiences because of their minority status (Brooks 1981; Meyer 1995; Meyer 2003). Minority stress is distinct and is socially created and is separate from all others stressors experienced by all people and thus requires further adjustment to process (Meyer 2003). Meyer (2003) postulates that minority stress, exists in stable society and societal activities outside the employee and not from the employee themselves. Linking this with the constructs of distal and proximal stressors (Lazarus & Folkman 1984), Minority Stress Theory assimilates both distal and proximal stressors into its tenets indicating the inclusion of both internal and external stress pathways (Balsam & Szymanski 2005; Bos et al. 2004; DiPlacido 1998; Meyer 1995; Meyer 2003). As mentioned previously in chapter 4 section 4.19 External, or distal, minority stressors are associated with GLBT discrimination and harassment actions, with external referring to internalised heterosexism and reflection of the self-based on social views and external being based on the heterosexist actions of others on GLBT employees (Lazarus & Folkman 1984). Minority stress theorists affirm that these negative actions result in stress of the GLBT employee and produce deleterious mental health problems. Meyer (2003) suggested that if a GLBT employee develops resilience along with adaptive coping skills and has a support system in place (e.g. GLBT social groups, services of a GLBT affirmative church) these can assist by improving the negative influences of minority stress. Furthermore, she indicated that features of one's minority identity (employee's sense of self) may be linked to minority stress and its effect on health, both in direct form and in collaboration with numerous stressors. While this may be true, one could agree with Meyer's argument (2003) GLBT group coping and support has the ability to moderate the effects of external heterosexist occurrences

on employee health. That is, resilience and social support may act as mediators between heterosexism and well-being. Cass (1979) in her sexual identity development model indicated that individuals with high internalised heterosexism will employ tactics to cover their true sexual identity, pass as heterosexual and maintain this true identity as a secret self. Further, she reports that for GLBT individuals to come out and reveal their sexual orientation and identity it is imperative that they decrease their internalised heterosexism and increase their minority social support. Having high internalised heterosexism is destined to significantly impact one's ability to cope in a healthy manner and ultimately lead to negative health outcomes. Covering one's true sexual identity and a decreased connection with social support groups ultimately leads to poor mental health outcomes. Similarly to Cass' theory, the literature indicates that internalised heterosexism is related to passing as heterosexual, negative coping styles, less contact with social support groups and less GLBT affiliation (Szymanski et al. 2008). Consistent with minority stress theory, the literature indicates that these internal and external stressor are distinctly connected to poor health outcomes (Diamond 2000; DiPlacido 1998; Kertzner 2001; Meyer 1995; Szymanski 2005b; Miller & Major 2000; Morris, Waldo & Rothblum 2001).

In summary, feminist and minority stress theorists argue that discrimination against GLBT individuals is a cause of internalised heterosexism and the associated consequences of poor health outcomes. But, the theorists differ in the stance they take. Feminist theorists have a strong socio-political perspective of the discrimination and minority stress theorists' slant is more of an employee psychological perspective. The two theories thus differ in their descriptions of the relationship between internalised heterosexism and psychological outcomes. Finally, feminist theory proposes that sexual identity formation and psychological distress is mediated by internalised heterosexism through community and social support. Whereas Minority Stress Theory supports the notion of direct and moderating affects through engagement with community and social support groups.

#### **4.8 Sexual Stigma and Minority Stress Theory**

According to Goffman (1963), stigma is an attribute that is discrediting and that oftentimes categorises the person that possesses the attribute as an inferior person. Sexual minorities are considered a stigmatised group in many parts of the world as they

are viewed as sick, immoral, and inferior to heterosexuals, and consequently, continue to be the victims of discrimination, harassment, and hostility (Herek, Chopp & Stroh 2007). Herek, Cogan, and Gillis (2009) define sexual stigma as ‘the negative regard, inferior status, and relative powerlessness that society collectively accords anyone associated with non-heterosexual behaviors, identity, relationships, or communities’ (p. 33).

Not surprisingly, and like other stigmatised groups (e.g., people of color, individuals with disabilities), sexual minorities experience stress that is directly related to their social status and conditions in society that perpetuate sexual prejudice. Minority stress theory has been extensively utilised in understanding stigma-related stress because it provides a useful framework for illuminating the unique stressors that sexual minorities experience (Meyer 1995; Meyer 2003). There are three assumptions underlying minority stress theory: (1) minority stress is cumulative to other stressors, such that stigmatised individuals experience general stressors that all individuals are likely to experience (e.g., loss of a loved one), in addition to stigma-related stressors (e.g., inability to marry one’s partner in several countries for example: Australia at the time of the thesis being written); (2) minority stress is chronic as oppression of stigmatised groups is inherent in most social and cultural structures (e.g., within religious organisations, in the law); and similarly, (3) minority stress is socially-based as opposed to originating from the individual. This last assumption is critical to the de-pathologising of sexual minorities as it offers a contextual and more valid explanation for the high prevalence of mental health problems among sexual minorities as compared to heterosexuals. Stated differently, chronic, socially-based stressors that are unique to sexual minorities place sexual minorities at risk for mental health problems as opposed to a deviant sexual orientation.

These socially-based stressors specific to sexual minorities, as outlined in the minority stress theory (Meyer 1995; Meyer 2003) include: (1) external, objectively stressful incidents and situations (e.g., heterosexism); (2) the anticipation of these occasions and the attention that it needs; (3) the internalisation of negative social attitudes, or internalised heterosexism; and (4) concealment of sexual orientation/identity. These stressors will be explained in further detail below prior to gaining a better understanding of how these stressors relate to sexual minorities’ experiences in the workplace.

#### **4.9 Heterosexism and Well-Being**

Rostosky et al. (2009) investigated psychological distress among sexual minorities across the US prior to, and following, the November 2006 election that included nine US state-marriage amendment initiatives. Their findings indicated that sexual minorities living in American states that passed the marriage amendment experienced negative media messages and conversations regarding sexual minorities and experienced increased psychological distress compared to individuals living in states that did not include a marriage amendment on the ballot. In addition, sexual minorities residing in states that passed the marriage amendment reported greater levels of psychological distress compared to individuals living in other states. This study speaks to the detrimental mental health consequences of heterosexism, in this case institutional heterosexism. Furthermore, in their national survey, Mays and Cochran (2001) compared sexual minorities and heterosexuals on perceived discrimination, in addition to several mental health indicators (e.g., depression, anxiety, substance dependence, etc.). Perceived discrimination is concerned with the recipient of an institutional or individual act and their appraisal of the incident as discriminatory. They found that sexual minorities perceived more day-to-day and lifetime discrimination, in addition to greater mental health problems as compared to their heterosexual counterparts. However, after controlling for experiences of perceived discrimination, sexual minorities and heterosexuals did not differ significantly on the mental health indicators. Taken together, these findings speak to the harmful effects of heterosexism and discrimination on the mental health of sexual minorities.

#### **4.10 Internalised Heterosexism**

Many sexual minorities, as a result of living in heterosexist environments, have received negative messages that sexual minorities are perverse, inferior, and sinful, and have unfortunately directed these negative attitudes towards themselves. This is commonly referred to as self-stigma, or internalised heterosexism (Herek et al. 2007; Herek et al. 2009; Meyer & Dean 1998; Weinberg 1972). When Weinberg (1972) first coined the term, homophobia, he included the process by which homosexual individuals negatively evaluate themselves, or internalised homophobia and now more appropriately referred to as internalised heterosexism. He reported that an individual, from an early life who



has loathed himself for homosexual impulses, arrives at this by a process precisely the same as the one occurring in heterosexuals who hold the prejudice against homosexuals.

#### **4.11 Internalised Homophobia and Well-Being**

(Homophobia used here as the measure is the Internalised Homophobia scale)

Internalised homophobia has been found to relate to depression, self-esteem, demoralisation, social support, and relationship quality in sexual minorities (Herek et al. 1997; Frost & Meyer 2009; Szymanski, Chung, & Balsam 2001). Most of the studies that have examined correlates of internalised homophobia have focused predominantly on gay men (Szymanski, Chung, & Balsam 2001), or have examined lesbian and gay men together. For instance, in a sample of highly educated, white lesbians and gay men, Herek et al. (1997) found that internalised homophobia was positively related to depressive symptoms and demoralisation, and negatively related to self-esteem among gay men. In addition, when lesbians who scored high on the internalised homophobia measure were compared to the other lesbian participants, significant differences were found such that higher internalised homophobia was related to greater depressive symptoms and demoralisation. It is important to note that lesbians scored significantly lower on the internalised homophobia measure than gay men, and Herek et al. (1997) concluded that it is possible that lesbians experience less internalised homophobia than gay men. This conclusion is problematic, however, because the scale that was used to measure internalised homophobia in this study was developed by Martin and Dean (1988) to assess gay men's experiences with internalised homophobia, and therefore may not be appropriate to use with lesbians (Szymanski, West & Meyer 2008). Furthermore, evidence of the caution researchers should take in utilising this measure with lesbians is indicated by the lower alpha coefficient on the internalised homophobia scale ( $= 0.71$ ) as compared to gay men ( $= 0.83$ ). Thus, in this dissertation, the Workplace Heterosexism Experiences Questionnaire (WHEQ Waldo 1999) is used as it incorporates GLBT individuals (discussed later in chapter 7, 7.9.1).

Similarly, Frost and Meyer (2009), in their study of internalised homophobia among 396 GLB individuals, found that internalised homophobia was significantly associated with greater depressive symptoms and relationship problems. A major strength of their study was the recruitment of a racially diverse sample of LGB individuals as many studies on sexual minorities have predominantly focused on well-educated, white

individuals (Croteau & Bieschke 1996); however, a limitation of their study is that they neglected to study any gender differences.

Szymanski, Chung, and Balsam's (2001) study is one of the only studies on internalised homophobia that has exclusively focused on lesbians. They investigated the relationship between internalised homophobia and several psychological variables among 157 lesbian women. Internalised homophobia was measured with a scale designed specifically for lesbians, the Lesbian Internalised Homophobia Scale (LIHS; Szymanski & Chung 2001). The LIHS more broadly operationalises lesbian internalised homophobia to include five dimensions that are based on empirical and conceptual research specific to lesbians' experiences compared to the scale that was used by Herek et al. (1997) and Frost and Meyer (2009), the Internalised Homophobia scale (Martin & Dean 1988). This scale was developed based on the criteria for ego-dystonic homosexuality that were present in the DSM-III and narrowly operationalises internalised homophobia as the extent to which sexual minorities are uncomfortable with their same-sex desires and sexual feelings, avoid interactions with other sexual minorities, and reject their sexual orientation (Herek et al. 1997; Frost & Meyer 2009).

As already mentioned, however, the five dimensions of the LIHS may act more as correlates of internalised homophobia than actual dimensions. These concern involvement with the lesbian community, community recognition as a lesbian, personal views about being a lesbian, ethical and religious positions toward lesbianism, and thoughts toward other lesbians. A high score for internalised homophobia is understood to be positively associated with depression, passing regularly as a heterosexual, and confusion about one's sexual orientation, and finally negatively connected with general social support and satisfaction with social support. Unlike previous studies of its kind that either measured internalised homophobia exclusively in gay men, or combined gay men and lesbians in their sample, this study was unique as it highlighted lesbians' experiences of internalised homophobia.

In summary, internalised homophobia and experiences of heterosexism have been found to be negatively associated with sexual minorities' well-being. Internalised homophobia and experiences of heterosexism and discrimination have also been found to be

associated with disclosure of sexual orientation, and these specific findings will be thoroughly illustrated.

#### **4.12 Disclosure and Well-Being**

Revealing a stigmatised sexual identity has been found to relate to positive psychological outcomes. Jordan and Deluty (1998) found in their study of 499 lesbians that disclosure of their sexual identity was associated with less anxiety, more positive affectivity, greater self-esteem, and a greater level of social support. A more recent study (Beals et al. 2009) revealed similar findings. Beals et al. (2009) used disclosure diaries to measure gay and lesbian individuals' (47 men and 37 women) daily experiences of disclosure and concealment, in addition to a diary that measured their psychological well-being, and found that the individuals reported greater positive affect, self-esteem, and satisfaction with life on days when they disclosed their sexual orientation compared with days when they concealed their orientation.

The largest American national study on disclosure among lesbian and bisexual women (sample size of 2,401) found that women who were in a relationship with a woman, engaged in sexual behavior with a woman, and identified as lesbian as compared to bisexual were associated with greater disclosure of sexual orientation (Morris, Waldo, & Rothblum 2001). Furthermore, disclosure was negatively related to psychological distress.

#### **4.13 Disclosure in the Workplace**

Although the choice to reveal one's sexual identity in the workplace is a dichotomous decision (e.g. disclosure and nondisclosure), research has revealed that sexual minorities engage in several identity management strategies, or behaviors (as mentioned earlier), in the workplace to conceal or reveal their sexual identity (Button 2004; Chrobot-Mason, Button, & DiClementi 2001; Woods & Harbeck 1991; Woods 1993). One of the first studies of its kind qualitatively examined lesbian physical educators' experiences of managing their identity in school as they have been particularly vulnerable to homophobic, discriminatory actions e.g., viewed as child molesters (Woods & Harbeck 1991). The findings of this study indicated that these twelve women all engaged in behaviors to conceal their identity out of fear of losing their jobs. This included passing as heterosexual by altering pronouns (e.g., she to he) and names (e.g., Robyn to Robert)

when describing their intimate relationship. Taking a gay male friend to school events to act the part of a significant other. Self-distancing from others by avoiding communication of their personal lives with their colleagues and students by establishing strict interpersonal boundaries; and self-distancing from issues of homosexuality by ignoring homophobic comments made directly to them or in general, and refusing to talk to openly gay students about their identity. Although these strategies protected these women from losing their jobs, they often felt self-hatred, isolated, misunderstood, and dishonest, and these behaviors interfered with their ability to create meaningful relationships.

Some women engaged in risk-taking behaviors along a continuum of low-risk to high-risk of disclosure of their sexual identity. These behaviors included obliquely overlapping personal with professional by bringing their partner to a school event, but referring to her as a friend, or socialising with another lesbian teacher at school; actively confronting and supporting by challenging students who used homophobic terms and offering support to gay students; and lastly, overtly overlapping personal and professional by directly disclosing one's sexual identity, or by not denying it when others asked directly. It is important to note that the women who engaged in risk-taking behaviors also engaged in behaviors that concealed their identity as none of the women were completely out to everyone in their workplace.

Similarly, Woods (1993) qualitatively examined the sexual identity management strategies that gay men engage in to conceal and reveal their identity in the workplace. Although he used different terminology to describe the strategies that gay men engaged in, they are similar to the strategies that the lesbian physical educators engaged in (Woods & Harbeck 1991). Woods (1993) found that gay men engaged in three strategies: (1) counterfeiting, which is conceptually identical to the passing as heterosexual strategy identified in Woods and Harbeck's (1991) study; (2) avoidance, which is similar to the self-distancing from others strategy; and (3) integration, which is a combination of the risk-taking behaviors outlined above.

Button (1996 2004) extended this line of research to quantitatively test the utility of these strategies, to include both gay men and lesbians to identify any gender differences in the utilisation of these strategies, in addition to examining whether gay men and

lesbians utilise a combination of the strategies identified by Woods (1993), as opposed to only one strategy. To investigate these questions, he developed a scale to measure sexual identity management strategies in the workplace and conducted a factor analysis to confirm the three-factor model identified by Woods (1991). The results also indicated that both gay men and lesbians utilised the three strategies, and they did so in combination. For example, a lesbian may use counterfeiting strategies with coworkers who she fears will ostracise her in the workplace if they found out that she was a lesbian. However, with a trusted colleague who she knows is accepting of sexual minorities, or with a colleague who is also a sexual minority, she may use integration strategies.

One study (Chrobot-Mason, Button, & DiClementi 2001) examined the antecedents and consequences of these sexual identity management strategies among predominantly white, gay men and lesbians. The results indicated that a greater degree of sexual identity achievement and the more the individuals perceived that their organisations were affirming of sexual minorities predicted the use of an integration strategy, as opposed to counterfeiting and avoidance strategies. The results indicated that for lesbians, the use of an avoidance strategy negatively predicted open group process, or the degree to which all members of the group can express their opinions and are included in decision-making, and the use of an integration strategy positively predicted open group process. This finding suggests that the outcomes of engaging in specific sexual identity management strategies at work may look differently for gay men and lesbians.

The following sections of this literature review will continue to explore the research findings from studies that have investigated the antecedents and outcomes of sexual orientation disclosure at work. It is important to note that unlike the aforementioned studies that considered the complexity of disclosure by examining the sexual identity management strategies adopted by sexual minority individuals at work, the researchers in the following studies have typically operationalised sexual orientation disclosure dichotomously (e.g., disclosure or nondisclosure), or have measured the degree to which an individual has disclosed at work (e.g., disclosed to no one at work, to some, to most, etc.). The inconsistency in the conceptualisation and operationalisation of sexual orientation disclosure at work has been a major limitation of the research in this area.

#### **4.14 Internalised Heterosexism, and Organisational Policies and Practices**

The relationship between internalised heterosexism and sexual orientation disclosure has been examined specific to disclosure in the workplace, and disclosure to others (e.g., parents and friends). The common theme across studies suggests that greater internalised heterosexism is related to less sexual orientation disclosure. In the aforementioned study, Herek et al. (1997) found internalised heterosexism to be negatively associated with disclosure of sexual orientation to friends, yet not to parents. Similarly, Frost and Meyer (2009) also found that internalised heterosexism was negatively associated with sexual orientation disclosure. Although they did measure disclosure to family, friends, and co-workers independently, they did not report whether there were any independent effects for these variables (e.g., effect of internalised heterosexism on disclosure specifically to co-workers). Instead, they combined the three measures because they were more interested in the latent construct of outness.

Similar findings have been reported regarding the influence of internalised heterosexism on disclosure in the workplace. For instance, Griffith and Hebl (2002) explored the relationship between self-acceptance of one's sexual identity and disclosure at work among 220 gay men and 159 lesbians who were predominantly white and well-educated. Although the authors did not specifically define the construct of self-acceptance as internalised heterosexism, their goal was to measure attitudes that gay and lesbians harbour towards themselves as a gay man or lesbian. Additionally, they used items that are similar to items used to measure internalised heterosexism, e.g., I really wish I could change my sexual orientation (become heterosexual). Findings indicated that the more self-accepting the participants were of their gay or lesbian identity, the greater disclosure behaviors they engaged in at work.

Furthermore, Griffith and Hebl (2002) also found that the fewer heterosexist experiences that gay men and lesbians face in the workplace and the presence of affirming organisational policies were associated with greater disclosure behaviors. The policies included a written sexual orientation non-discrimination policy; diversity training that specifically includes gay and lesbian issues, same-sex partner benefits, a recognised gay and lesbian employee organisation, and showing support for gay and lesbian activities. The only policy that was not significantly related to more disclosure

behaviors was the presence of diversity training that did not include gay and lesbian issues, most likely because this policy is not specific to gay men and lesbians and most likely does not send a clear message that the organisation is supportive of sexual minorities. This study offers important insights into how individual (self-acceptance/internalised heterosexism) and structural (heterosexist experiences/affirming organisational policies) factors affect disclosure in the workplace. Unfortunately, the authors did not analyse whether any gender differences existed between the gay men and lesbians, nor were bisexual or transgender employees included in the study.

Rostosky and Riggle (2002) found that less internalised homophobia and working for employers with non-discrimination policies were positively associated with increased disclosure of sexual orientation at work among 261 gay and lesbian individuals who were mostly white and college-educated. Unlike other studies, the authors did explore whether differences existed between gay men and lesbians and did not find any gender differences suggesting that internalised homophobia and heterosexism, in this case the absence/presence of non-discrimination policies, have an effect on lesbians' disclosure at work.

Several other studies have explored the relationship between heterosexism at work and disclosure. One of the first and most comprehensive studies on this topic tested a model specifically addressing the consequences of heterosexism in the workplace (Waldo 1999). The antecedents of the proposed model included organisational climate, policies and resources, and job gender context. The outcomes of heterosexism included job satisfaction, health conditions, psychological distress, and job and work withdrawal. Two additional models were developed to take into account levels of outness in the workplace.

Participants included 287 lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals who were predominantly white and educated, and mostly men. The researcher did not investigate the presence of any gender differences. The present study will attempt to do this. Findings indicated that heterosexism was predicted by organisational climate, or the extent to which an organisation tolerated sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace, as opposed to organisational resources and policies (e.g., non-discrimination policy, same-sex partner benefits). Additionally, results indicated that sexual minorities who experienced

heterosexism also experienced greater degrees of emotional distress and health-related difficulties, along with diminished satisfaction with a number of facets related to their role. Moreover, greater disclosure of sexual orientation foretold auxiliary encounters of direct heterosexism, but fewer experiences of indirect heterosexism. Although Waldo did not state any potential explanations for this finding, a possible explanation is that sexual minorities may experience more indirect forms of heterosexism (e.g., ‘feeling as though you have to alter discussions about your personal life or being set up on a date with a member of the other sex’) before disclosing, especially if one is assumed to be heterosexual, as opposed to after disclosing their sexual orientation to colleagues. It seems less probable that a co-worker would attempt to set up a female colleague with a man after she discloses that she is a lesbian than before she discloses. Similarly, once a lesbian discloses her sexual identity, she most likely will be less inclined to alter discussions, or lie about her personal life than before she discloses her sexual identity. However, they are at risk for more direct forms of discrimination (e.g., denied a promotion or being left out of social events) because they are no longer assumed to be heterosexual by their colleagues. These explanations are given with the assumption that disclosure of sexual orientation specific to co-workers predicts differential experiences of indirect and direct heterosexism at work as it is unclear because the researcher included disclosure to parents, in one’s life in general, and to co-workers in his measure of outness.

Ragins, Cornwall and Miller (2003) examined the relationship between perceived sexual orientation discrimination and disclosure of sexual orientation, specifically to those at work. In addition to the factors that contribute to gay employees’ perceptions of workplace discrimination and the relationship between perceived workplace discrimination and work attitudes and organisational outcomes. Results of this study indicated that sexual minority employees perceived significantly less workplace discrimination when they had gay supervisors and when they had a higher proportion of gay co-workers in their work groups (Ragins & Cornwell 2001). Furthermore, sexual minority employees who worked in states in the US with protective legislation (e.g., legislation that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation) perceived significantly less workplace discrimination than employees who worked in states without protective legislation. Inconsistent with Waldo’s (1999) findings, organisational policies and practices had the strongest effect on perceived workplace discrimination,



such that the more supportive and gay affirming policies that were present in the organisation, the less workplace discrimination was reported by sexual minority employees. Results also indicated that sexual minority individuals who perceived more workplace discrimination and harassment were predictable in having to hide their sexual orientation in the workplace and held more negative job and career attitudes than gay employees who reported less discrimination.

An important finding is that the organisational practice of inviting same-sex partners to company social events had the strongest, negative relationship to perceived workplace discrimination and the strongest, positive relationship to disclosure in the workplace. In Waldo's (1999) study, he concluded that it is possible that he did not find a relationship between organisational policies and workplace discrimination because these policies are not proactive enough to send a clear message to all employees that heterosexism will not be tolerated. It appears as though organisations can implement practices, such as inviting same-sex partners to company events that will send a more direct message of the inclusion and acceptance of sexual minority individuals in the workplace (Ragins & Cornwell 2001). Another plausible explanation for this finding is that the act of bringing a same-sex partner to a company event is one way in which a sexual minority individual discloses their sexual orientation to their colleagues. This explanation is only speculative, and therefore there is a need to investigate how partner variables directly influence sexual minorities' disclosure at work.

#### **4.15 Outcomes of Disclosure in the Workplace**

Research on the outcomes of sexual orientation disclosure at work is critical because it can inform mental health professionals, career counsellors, and other professionals who work directly with sexual minority individuals regarding the potential implications of disclosure/concealment at work (Button 2004). In addition, this research can also increase human resource professionals' understanding of the importance of considering their sexual minority employees' experiences in the workplace. These experiences have been reported to influence their satisfaction at work, which has been shown to be positively related to productivity and negatively related to absenteeism, presenteeism and turnover (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes 2002). For example, a lesbian who works in an organisation that is disaffirming of sexual minorities may engage in sexual identity management strategies to conceal her identity. This emotional and cognitive energy that

is expended by monitoring her behaviors around her colleagues could instead be channeled into job-related activities. In addition, being able to be honest to her colleagues about her identity and not having to engage constantly in identity management strategies can potentially lead to greater job satisfaction.

#### **4.16 Job Satisfaction**

Over the years there has been an increase in the interest of researching job satisfaction with a large amount of research investigating the development of theoretical definitions for job satisfaction. In 1976, Locke offered one of the first definitions of job satisfaction as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from an appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (p. 1304). Hulin and Judge (2003) enlarged on this definition and stated that job satisfaction includes a multifaceted emotional consequence as a result of one’s work role and that these consequences result in rational, emotional and developmental features

It is noted that there are few studies which have investigated these facets and the validity of the findings of these studies is important for a number of reasons. It was proposed by Green (2010) that job satisfaction is a good predictor of future resignations. Furthermore, Drago and Wooden (1992) reported that job satisfaction consequences are negatively correlated to absenteeism. In a thorough review of 301 research studies, Judge et al. (2001) reported that job satisfaction is predictive of job performance.

According to Warr (1999) the reasons for job satisfaction can be categorised into ten job characters namely: personal control, opportunity for skill use, job demands, variety, environmental clarity (including job security), income, physical security, supportive supervision, interpersonal contact, and a valued social position. Here Warr (1999) adds that higher job satisfaction may be as a result of changes in the objective parts of the role to diminished role expectations or to restraining negative parts of the role whilst one gives greater importance to more satisfying parts of the role.

Previous investigations into job satisfaction have allowed for a variety of differences in between males and females (Clark 1997; Gazioglu & Tansel 2006) and wellbeing situations (Uppal 2005; Pagán & Malo 2009; Drydakis 2012a). The present research aims to supplement the literature by investigating the relationship between job

satisfaction and GLBT sexual orientation disclosure and concealment. Gay men in the workplace have previously experienced discrimination and been stigmatised. This has resulted in negative consequences in everyday work situations based on negative attitudes towards their sexual orientation (Herek 2000). Gay employees who are unfairly targeted at work because of their SO report varying behaviours of harassment which range from feelings of uneasiness to humiliation and negative slurs from co-workers and even marginalisation (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2009).

The results of several studies have focused on the influence of sexual orientation disclosure at work and work-related outcomes has predominantly shown that greater disclosure is related to more positive work-related outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction). Ellis and Riggle (1995) examined the relationship between the degree to which lesbians and gay men have disclosed their sexual orientation in the workplace and job satisfaction. Participants included 91 women who self-identified as lesbian from two distinct parts of the United States, San Francisco and Indianapolis. Participants were predominantly white and well educated. It is noteworthy that men were slightly more open about their sexual orientation at work than women. The results indicated that gay and lesbian individuals who were completely open at work were more satisfied with their co-workers than those who were closeted at work. In addition, employees who worked for employers who had a policy prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation were more satisfied with their job. Unfortunately, the researchers did not investigate whether those employees who worked for employers who had a non-discrimination policy were more open than those who worked for employers who did not have a non-discrimination policy. This study will expand on this line of research by examining whether sexual minority affirming policies and practices at work will influence greater disclosure, and whether disclosure will influence job satisfaction.

Other researchers have also found disclosure at work to be positively related to higher job satisfaction, and other work-related outcomes (Day & Schoenrade 1997; Griffith & Hebl 2002). Day and Schoenrade (1997) hypothesised that closeted workers would experience more negative attitudes towards work (lower job satisfaction, higher job stress, lower belief in top management support of anti-discrimination for gay workers, higher role ambiguity and conflict, and higher conflict between work and home) than those gay and lesbian employees who have come out at work. Participants included 259

lesbian women, 485 gay men, and 263 heterosexuals. It is notable that the lesbian and gay participants were grouped together when analysing and interpreting the results. The results indicated that more openly gay and lesbian workers showed greater affective commitment, higher job satisfaction, higher perceived top management support, lower role ambiguity, and lower role conflict between work and home, and these open workers did not differ in work attitudes as compared to heterosexuals.

Consistent with Day and Schoenrade's study (1997), Griffith and Hebl (2002) found that greater disclosure at work was related to higher job satisfaction among 220 gay men and 159 lesbians who were white and well-educated. They also found that greater disclosure at work was related to lower job anxiety. It is important to note that disclosure was measured differently in the two studies. Griffith and Hebl assessed disclosure by examining the identity management strategies that the participants adopted in the workplace (e.g., avoidance). Day and Schoenrade measured disclosure by examining the extent to which the participants disclosed to specific individuals in the workplace (e.g., supervisor, coworkers). The lack of consistency in measures across studies makes it more difficult to compare the results.

Driscoll et al.'s (1996) study was the first of its kind to hypothesise and test a model of work satisfaction that includes lesbian identity. They explored the relationships among disclosure of lesbian identity, perceived workplace climate, occupational stress and coping, and work satisfaction. Participants included 123 employed lesbians who were predominantly white and educated. The findings indicated that only 24% reported being out to all co-workers. In addition, perceived workplace climate significantly influenced occupational stress and coping, and work satisfaction, such that a sexual minority affirming climate at work was negatively related to occupational stress, and positively related to occupational coping and work satisfaction. The researchers did not find a relationship between sexual orientation disclosure at work and work satisfaction.

There are significant concerns with the disclosure measure that was developed for the Driscoll et al. study. The Cronbach alpha was 0.52, suggesting reliability problems with the measure, which is not unexpected since the items appear to be measuring different aspects of disclosure. For example, one of the items was, 'Is your workplace somewhere you feel comfortable being yourself?' and two other items were: 'Do you bring your

same-sex partner or date to work-sponsored events?’ and ‘Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to off-job parties or events given by employees and personnel from your workplace?’ The first item appears to be measuring workplace climate more so than disclosure, and the other items are measuring disclosure of one’s intimate relationship and assume that the participant is in an intimate relationship. However, 37% of the sample reported that they were not in an intimate relationship, yet the authors included these participants in the analyses. This is another methodological issue when working with GLBT cohorts. The researcher has to decide how to ‘clean’ the data in these instances when the sample size can be very small to start off with.

This study strives to address the limitations of previous studies that have examined the relationship between disclosure and employees perceptions of heterosexism and will lay the foundation for a new body of research which models these relationships in the Australian context. Another area of research that has been underexplored, which this dissertation seeks to investigate, is how disclosure in the workplace influences psychological well-being. The next section is brief in comparison to other sections as only one study has been identified that specifically examines disclosure at work and psychological well-being. It is anticipated that the findings of the present study will give emphasis to the knowledge of the job satisfaction level of a minority population to better support organisations to comprehend an extensive collection of significant questions about the general condition of GLBT employee well-being with the labour market via their levels of job satisfaction.

#### **4.17 Psychological Well-Being**

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, disclosure has been found to be associated with greater levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction (Garnets & Kimmel 1993; Morris, Waldo, & Rothblum 2001; Smith & Ingram 2004). The largest, national study on disclosure among lesbian and bisexual women (sample size of 2,401) found that disclosure was negatively related to psychological distress (Morris, Waldo, & Rothblum 2001).

The research is limited to one relevant study conducted by Fisher (2012), which shows a clear, though negative, correlation between the disclosure of sexual orientation in the workplace and heterosexism, and subsequent psychological and physical symptoms. Specifically, the study looked at the experiences of lesbians, gay men, and bisexual

employees who were predominantly white and well-educated. It explored the relationship between heterosexism, disclosure and the employee's physical and emotional response. While the findings are conclusive, the interpretation is not without limitation. When defining 'disclosure', individuals were only asked a question in relation to the degree to which they were open about their sexual orientation at work. In addition, there was no effort to further differentiate the experiences of the lesbians, gay men and bisexuals who participated in the study.

#### **4.17 Mental Health Outcomes**

The analysis of GLBT mental health and well-being historically was confounded by it being classified as a mental disorder between the 1960s and 1970s. This conventional viewpoint strived to suggest that being homosexual was a mental disorder (Bayer 1981). This convention was ceased in 1973 when homosexuality was excluded from the diagnostic and Statistical manual of mental Disorders version II (DSM-II; American Psychiatric Association 1973). However, ramifications have still continued. These ramifications have stained the debate regarding the health and well-being of GLB and now also transgender individuals by inferring that GLBT individuals have a greater prevalence of health and well-being disorders than their heterosexual counterparts. This has resulted in reinforcing a historical antigay stigmatisation and discrimination of GLBT individuals (Bailey 1999).

Lately, researchers have reviewed the investigation of GLBT health and well-being and indications from these studies show that GLB T individuals experience poorer mental health outcomes compared with heterosexuals. Moreover, that they experience difficulties with affective disorders, substance abuse and suicide (Cochran 2001; Gilman et al. 2001; Herrell et al. 1999; Sandfort, de Graaf, Bijl & Schnabel 2001). It is noteworthy that the rationale for these poor health outcomes within the GLBT community are due to prejudice, stigma and discrimination which collectively cause severe stress which culminates in mental health issues (Friedman 1999). This is articulated in terms of Minority Stress theory (Brooks 1981; Meyer 1995 described earlier in this chapter and expanded upon in the international literature review in chapter 5 and the limited Australian literature in chapter 6 of this dissertation. Current stress discussion has been concerned with secondary events that are demanding on people and surpass their ability to tolerate stress, thereby consequentially resulting in

psychosomatic disorders (Dohrenwend 2000). Stress has been defined as “any condition having the potential to arouse the adaptive machinery of the individual (Pearlin 1999a, p. 163). Stress scholars have recognised two aspects to stress, the individual and the social aspect and these are experienced as events and conditions such as being fired or death of a family member. These stressors are recognised as yielding an altering which necessitates a person to acclimatise and adapt to the situation at hand. Stress scholars accept that traumatic incidents such as work related pressures, in addition to daily difficulties and even non-events as diverse mechanisms of stress (Dohrenwend 1998a). The rationale here is that mental health consequences are a result of social situations and events and these include workplace occurrences. Therefore social stress is thus anticipated to have a robust influence on one’s life and especially to individuals in stigmatised minority groups namely GLBT individuals. In the same vein, expressions of intolerance and discrimination connected to heterosexism produce changes in one’s life which necessitate adjustment because of the associated stress.

#### **4.18 Social Stress as Minority Stress Model and Mental Health**

An expansion of social stress theory may be expressed as minority stress theory to illustrate that stigmatised minority populations like GLBT populations face stress as a consequence of their minority position. Evolving theory posits that the minority stress model arises from a number of social theories and that these theories debate the deleterious consequences of being stigmatised and these affect individual’s well-being (Major & Steele 1998; Link & Phelan 2001).

This thesis takes the more contemporary model put forward by Meyer (1995; 2003), as an employee psychological approach minority stress and uses this as the theory for the study (as discussed earlier in this chapter in 4.6, 4.7 & 4.8). Social theorists have been uneasy with the separation of individual groups from societal norms and structures. For example, social settings were essential to assisting Durkheim (1951) in understanding suicide. Durkheim reports that one requires social moral adjustment to govern one’s wants and ambitions, he reports that ‘anomie, a sense of normlessness’ has an absence of societal influence along with isolation may result in suicide as a consequence of rudimentary social essentials being absent.

A GLBT minority member is expected to come into contact with cultural structures and norms (values) which are neither in favour nor in line with the minority group. This difference or anomaly is an instance of the absence of social institutions for the minority member. A persisting example of this is marriage which endorses the typical family of a man, woman and their children. GLBT members still at the writing of this thesis cannot be married in Australia thus the absence of a social institution for GLBT individuals. As a result of this the health and well-being of GLBT individuals is conceded when such institutions contrast and the minority individual encounters this in the world. Social theory and philosophies offer a positive position for understanding the effect of being a minority and the consequences on health and well-being.

The psychological understanding of different group relationships is offered by philosophies of self-categorisation and social identity. These philosophies postulate that progression of categorisation activates significant intergroup procedures such as discrimination and stigmatisation (Turner 1999). Further, these academic viewpoints propose that discrimination and harassment in the form of prejudice and stereotyping with poor deleterious appraisal results in poor psychological outcomes. Likewise, Allport (1954) defined prejudiced behaviour as harmful situation for minority groups, proposing that it culminates in undesirable outcomes. He refers to these as “traits due to victimization (1954, p. 142). Over time, variations of these theoretical underpinnings have emerged from stress theory. Lazarus and Folkman (1984, p. 234) reported a ‘mismatch involving a person and their experience with society as ‘the essence of all social stress’. Similarly, Selye (1982) defined a feeling of concord between ones healthy living and their experience with their environment. Similarly, Allison (1998) reports that when there is discourse between a person and their environment (a majority group) the subsequent resulting stress can be substantial to the individual. In advancing the theory of minority stress, investigators' fundamental ideas of minority stress is that it is another stress which compounds normal daily stressors experienced by individuals, and consequently, stigmatised individuals are obliged to make an adjustment effort above that necessitated of comparable others who are not stigmatised; (b) is associated to moderately fixed fundamental social and cultural constructs; and (c) socially founded and arises from social developments, organisations, and constructions outside the person rather than discrete incidents that describe universal stressors of the person or a community. Appraising the texts on stress and one’s sense of identity Thoits (1999, p.



361) reported that understanding these stressors connected to minority groups as a 'crucial next step in the examination of identity and stress'. When minority stress model is related to GLBT individuals, it assumes that sexual identity and social bias of this causes harm (Herek 2000) and poor health and well-being (Brooks 1981; Cochran 2001; DiPlacido 1998; Krieger & Sidney 1997; Mays & Cochran 2001; Meyer 1995).

#### **4.19 Minority Stress Processes in GLBT Populations**

There has been little concurrence with regard to stress discourse in the literature involving GLBT employees. However, extant literature on the health of GLBT individual's as a minority group has provided some thoughts through the minority stress model. A distal-proximal division is recommended in the narrative and discourse as it depends upon stress conceptualisations that appear most pertinent to minority stress and due to the affect that society has on individuals and how they view other's circumstances.

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984, p. 321) social structures are defined as "distal concepts whose outcomes on a person be contingent on how they are manifested in the direct context of thought, feeling, and action, the proximal social experiences of a person's life". Accordingly 'distal cognitive appraisal' can then be seen as 'proximal hypotheses' having emotional significance for people. A similar variance among GLBT individuals' realities has been expressed by Crocker et al. (1998, p. 516) who report that "states of mind that the experience of stigma may create in the stigmatized". Crocker et al. (1998) voiced their concern that 'states of mind' are often grounded in societal discrimination and stigmas. Similarly, Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) early study supposes that stress in the form of minority stress may be appreciated as a continuum starting with distal stressors (objective experiences/occurrences of GLBT individuals) along the continuum to 'proximal personal' narratives, dependent upon idiosyncratic understandings of the events. In line with this thinking and supposing that idiosyncratic understandings of discriminating events act as an indicator of distal environmental occurrences of stress, minority stress can therefore be appreciated along this continuum and thus relevant for studies on GLBT employees. Three progressions of minority stress relevant to GLBT individuals have been noted in the literature (Meyer 1995; Meyer & Dean 1998), as described in chapter 4, section 4.8.

Research on stress has implied that the act of disclosing or choosing to reveal one's sexual orientation is a significant stressor. Concealing one's sexual orientation is described as a proximal stressor as it is experienced through psychological processes (Cole, Kemeny, Taylor & Visscher 1996a; Kemeny, Taylor & Visscher 1996b; DiPlacido 1998; Jourard 1971; Pennebaker 1995). Distal stressors on the other hand are not dependent upon idiosyncratic understandings or one's perceptions of discriminatory events although, one's narrative could be reliant upon attribution (Kobrynowicz & Branscombe 1997; Operario & Fiske 2001). Therefore, these distal stressors may be viewed distinctly from the GLBT individual's minority affiliation (Diamond 2000). For illustration, a female may enter a relationship with another female but she may not necessarily view herself or the relationship as homosexual nor see herself as a lesbian (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael & Michaels 1994). Conversely, others may view her as a lesbian and as a result of this affiliation she could experience stress related to discrimination associated with being from this minority group. Such identities fluctuate with regard to idiosyncratic meanings ascribed by the viewer and the resultant stress. Minority identity stress is experienced and present in various practices and behaviours. Different GLBT minority members can be attentive when dealing with expectations of others stigmatisation and conceal their orientation for fear of being discriminated against and this may also initiate internalised heterosexism. The importance of managing discrimination with GLBT employees has increasingly been promoted. Weinberg and Williams (1974, p. 150) described that "occupying a 'deviant status' need not inevitably interrupt upon GLBT day-to-day functioning" and urged researchers to "pay more attention to the human capacity for adaptation".

Morris, Waldo and Rothblum (2001) report that GLBT employees increasingly up skill themselves to cope with the harmful results of minority stress. However, it is the presence of this stress which indicates the probability of poor mental health of GLBT populations. GLBT groups lessen the effects of minority stress when they augment their group supports (Crocker & Major, 1989; D'Emilio, 1983). Similarly, Garnets, Herek, and Levy (1990) proposed that heterosexist discrimination whilst producing negative mental health outcomes, it provides opportunities for development while antigay violence produces a predicament with impending harmful mental health consequences, and it also offers occasions for later development.

Kertzner (2001) details that when narrating ones HIV/Aids stories to friends who are approving of their sexual orientation, the approval results in a positive association and self-satisfaction as a result of this support. Commensurate with this, Hershberger & D'Augelli (1995) found that in a study on GLB adolescents, familial support had a positive effect on the negative effect of prior SO discrimination and also improved health sequelae. Minority surviving can be theorised as a process at group level which is connected to a group's potential to effectively decrease the effect of the stigma. This requires individuals in the group to align themselves with the minority group to gain a sense of identity which is acceptable and validating, rather than viewing themselves as separate and different in a negative way. In this manner, a minority group member can possess the relevant skill set but lack association with the group and thus their resources.

Accordingly where a gay service person in the U.S. Armed Forces, where a “don't ask, don't tell” policy previously opposed associations with other GLB colleagues, may be incapable of accessing and using group level reserves and consequently be susceptible to unfavourable undesirable health concerns, regardless of their individual coping capabilities. Miller and Major (2000) report that it is imperative to acknowledge that coping with minority stress can have a traumatic effect on GLBT individuals. Hiding ones sexual orientation in the workplace and trying to manage the associated stress and emotional consequences has a negative effect on ones well-being (Smart & Wegner 2000). Conclusively, further complicated identity compositions can be linked to better health and well-being outcomes. Here identities may be arranged through categories as is seen necessary by the individual (Linville 1987; Rosenberg & Gara 1985).

In models of disclosing one's sexual orientation integration of one's identity suggest the best outcome for well-being and self-acceptance. Identity synthesis is seen by Cass (1979) as the final stage of gay identity formation which suggests a healthy integrated self. The most ideal identity formation process, all aspects of the self are assimilated into one and there is no limit to parts of the self, such as gender, culture or religion (Eliason 1996). It is with recognition from the above discussions on Minority Stress Theory, its utility and relevance to GLBT individuals that this is the chosen theoretical modality for the present study.

#### **4.20 Statement of the Problem**

Sexual minorities continue to be a stigmatised group around the world, and one specific context in which they are marginalised and discriminated against is the workplace. A unique experience that sexual minorities share, is deciding whether to disclose their sexual orientation at work. As previous literature has shown, this experience can be emotionally and cognitively demanding as there are a number of factors that influence sexual minorities' decision whether to disclose at work, such as the climate of the workplace, the presence or absence of affirming organisational policies and practices, and internalised heterosexism. Although disclosure at work can lead to positive outcomes, including job satisfaction and psychological well-being, studies have revealed that it can also lead to fear of discrimination, isolation, and job loss. This study will expand on this line of research as it relates specifically to GLBT employees in the Australian workplace. Most international studies thus far have included gay and lesbian individuals in their sample with limited attention to the unique differences between them. This study will endeavour to make a contribution to a largely neglected area of research by providing insight into the different experiences of gay men and lesbians by comparing separate models for these separate groups of employees and their well-being in the workplace.

#### **4.21 Hypotheses**

A conceptual model using latent variable structural equation modelling (LVSEM) was used to examine the research questions. The function of the latent variable structural equation model was to identify a parsimonious, substantively meaningful model, which fits the observed data adequately well to support the hypotheses. Both hypotheses and models were informed by previous research, which are enlarged upon in the literature review in chapters 5 and 6 and based upon a solid understanding of the issues surrounding the variables under study.

Research questions:

Main Research Questions:

RQ1 How is reported sexual orientation/identity disclosure and organisational support associated with direct heterosexism, psychological well-being, mental health, job satisfaction and satisfaction with life?

- RQ2. How is reported sexual orientation/identity concealment and organisational support associated with indirect heterosexism, psychological well-being, mental health, job satisfaction and satisfaction with life?
- RQ3. What is the association between organisations with equal employment opportunity (EEO) policies and practices in place and heterosexism, psychological well-being, mental health, job satisfaction and satisfaction with life?
- RQ4. Is disclosure and concealment and organisational support mediated by direct and indirect heterosexism?

It is hypothesised that with regard to GLBT employees in the Australian workplace:

- H1. Greater reported disclosure of sexual orientation and positive organisational support will be associated with positive indirect heterosexism, reduced psychological health, poor mental health and well-being, poor job satisfaction and poor satisfaction with life.
- H2. Reported concealment of sexual orientation and organisational support will be associated with positive direct heterosexism, reduced psychological health, poor mental health and well-being, poor job satisfaction and poor satisfaction with life.
- H3. Organisations with EEO policies and practices in place will be associated with negative heterosexism, positive psychological well-being and mental health, higher job satisfaction and positive satisfaction with life?
- H4. Disclosure and concealment and organisational support will be mediated by direct and indirect heterosexism?

#### **4.22 Conclusion**

The purpose of chapter 4 was to describe and discuss the constructs used in the study and to situate them in the present research questions and hypotheses. The chapter outlined the constructs and their definitions then contextualised these with regard to the issue of deciding to either conceal or disclose one's sexual orientation and/or identity in the workplace. The workplace literature around disclosure and concealment was discussed and the issues involved in this difficult phenomenon and the interaction of this around the perceptions of heterosexist discrimination. Moreover, theories around this commonly assumed dichotomous discussion were described where the theoretical

approaches to the corporate closed were enlarged upon. Finally Minority Stress Theory was defined as the chosen theoretical underpinnings for the study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **International Literature Review**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the international research to date on the experiences of GLBT employees. The small body of research into workplace SO discrimination encompasses: (i) varied methodological and theoretical approaches, (ii) disparate authors selecting a varied range of aspects of discrimination thus absents a unifying framework to guide research and lacking as yet seminal authorship to provide focus, iii) limited sampling of participants making comparisons difficult and further indicating the absence of a unifying framework with which to focus the research and iv) limited studies exclusively investigating workplace discrimination. The literature is presented chronologically, and where possible, it has linked studies together to indicate the commensurate nature of the studies to illustrate the deleterious effects of SO discrimination in the workplace.

#### **5.2 A review of early GLBT<sup>3</sup> workplace heterosexist experience literature from the 1980's to the mid 1990's**

During the 1980s and 1990s, a limited number of studies have focused exclusively on the experiences of gay, lesbian and bisexual employees in their workplace (for wider reviews see Chung 1995; Fassinger 1995; Morgan & Brown 1991; Pope 1995; Prince 1995). From the extant literature, only nine empirical studies were located from a literature search which examined sexual orientation discrimination within the workplace, and the employee's degree of outness. Three out of the nine studies were quantitative and six were qualitative in regard to the methodology used.

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<sup>3</sup>As per previous chapter, variations of GLBTIQ abbreviations are used to indicate which minority groups were used in each study. For example: GL = only gay men and lesbians; GLB = gay men, lesbians and bisexuals; GLBT = gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender individuals.

Table 3

Early studies on the work experiences of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual employees (1980s – 1990s)

Author	Sample	Aim of study	Research design
Qualitative studies			
Hall (1986)	13 lesbians in organizations	Explore experiences and strategies to manage sexual identity	Phenomenology
Griffin (1992)	13 gay and lesbian teachers	Describe the work experiences and empower participants	Participatory (employee and group)
Woods & Harbeck (1992)	12 lesbian teachers	To explore how participants describe and make meaning of their work lives.	Phenomenology (three employee interviews)
Olson (1987)	97 lesbian/ gay teachers	To study participants attitudes and perceptions about experiences in schools and	Survey (quantitative and qualitative self-report items)
Croteau & Lark (1995)	174 lesbian / gay / bisexual student affairs educators	To provide the first descriptive information about the work experiences of this group	Survey (quantitative self-report items and one qualitative item on discrimination experiences)
Croteau & Destinon (1994)	249 gay / lesbian / bisexual student affair educators	To obtain information about experiences during job searches	Survey (quantitative self-report items and one qualitative item on discrimination experiences)
Levine & Leonard (1984)	203 lesbians in various occupations	To explore the factors effecting employment discrimination against lesbians	Survey (quantitative self-report items)
Schachar & Gobert (1983)	79 lesbians in various occupations	To examine the areas of inter-role and intra-role conflict and factors influencing coping with conflict.	Survey (with various forms of measurement to test hypotheses about role conflict)
Schneider (1986)	228 lesbians in various occupations	To explore the relationship among workplace determinants, co-worker sociability and disclosure of sexual identity	Survey (with various forms of measurement for multiple variables to test structural equation modelling.

All nine empirical studies indicate from the accounts of gay men, lesbians and bisexual employees, that discrimination is persistent in the workplace. It was also indicated, that these negative actions toward these employees were a theme of the feedback of the participants' self-reported experiences in nearly all of the empirical investigations. In



the review, three investigations asked workers openly whether they had experienced discriminated in their workplace and work roles (viz. Croteau & Lark 1995; Croteau & von Destinon 1994; Levine & Leonard 1984) and these findings assert that 25–66% of participants described discrimination. Further evaluations of workplace harassment and discrimination are encapsulated by numerous writers (Levine 1979; Levine & Leonard 1984; Morgan & Brown 1991) and these appear to be uniform with these appraisals.

In the review, three studies explained a larger percentage of participants who described discrimination for employees who disclosed their sexual orientation more, rather than less, in the workplace (Croteau & Lark 1995; Croteau & Bieschke 1996; Levine & Leonard 1984). All three qualitative studies that examined discriminatory workplace incidents in an open-ended approach (Griffin 1992; Hall 1986; Woods & Harbeck 1992) discovered that respondents experienced or predicted workplace discrimination as a result of their sexual orientation. Exact approximations of workplace discrimination are difficult to measure owing to the unsupported self-report nature of the measurement data and because of the recruitment difficulties of sampling considered later in this chapter. Nonetheless, the data does ascertain that discrimination is felt as pervasive by GLB employees.

Discrimination against GLBT employees encompasses a variety of behaviours that are described as both formal and informal. Qualitative accounts of authentic and anticipated discrimination were found in all qualitative studies and in the findings of quantitative data in the analysis by Levine and Leonard (1984). Levine and Leonard (1984, p. 706) defines a division between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ workplace discrimination, and this difference similarly concurs with other studies. Formal discrimination is described as “institutionalised procedures to restrict officially conferred work rewards”. In the narratives of respondents from the qualitative analyses, formal discrimination is concerned with employer choices to terminate or not recruit individuals because of their sexual orientation. Additional prescribed discriminatory behaviours described by respondents incorporated being left out of promotions pathways, increases in salary, or enlarged job responsibilities. Respondents’ remarks about policies which omitted same-sex partners from employment remunerations is also categorised as formal discrimination. Informal discrimination as defined in the investigations comprised “harassment and other unofficial actions taken by supervisors or co-workers” (1984, p.

706). Participants' explanations of informal discrimination incorporated instances of vocal harassment and property damage. Accounts of loss of reliability, acceptance, or regard by colleagues and supervisors founded on an individual's sexual orientation are also categorised as informal discrimination. Levine and Leonard's (1984) initial study of formal and informal discrimination provides an impression of the quality and variety of harmful and discriminatory habits challenging GLBT employees.

Concern for discrimination is assiduous and is frequently described to be an essential reflection in how employees direct their GLBT identities at work. Levine and Leonard (1984) discovered more than 60% of the lesbians in different roles expected discrimination at work if their sexual orientation became recognised. Croteau and Lark (1995) established that 44% of LGB professionals working in a college expected workplace discrimination. Being anxious about discrimination, particularly especially when one is exposed in the workplace, is a key aspect of the subjective explanations of employees' experiences at work. Respondents mainly expected that workplace discrimination would transpire when and if they were outed or exposed. The distress and expectation of discrimination appears as the key factor in employees concealing their GLBT identities and therefore an important aspect in deciding to disclose one's sexual orientation in the workplace.

### **5.3 Adaptability in workplace outness (sexual orientation disclosure)**

The measure of concealment or outness regarding GLB identity in the workplace has been a main feature of attention for the nine investigations described earlier and this differs extensively through employees and organisational divisions. Schneider's (1986) cohort of 228 lesbian employees through a variety of professions and sectors differed to a large degree where 29% of the respondents described being closed about their SO. 32% of the respondents reported being somewhat open, 23% mostly open, and 16% completely out. Levine and Leonard (1984) reported that in a cohort of 203 lesbians working in different roles, 23% were out, 29% partly out. Moreover, that 27% of the lesbians reported not being out in the workplace and only out to family and friends. Croteau and Lark (1995) reported in their study of 174 college employees that 47% were open in the workplace, 32% reported that only a few of their colleagues were aware of their SO and 15% stated that only family and friends were aware of their SO. In a study of 249 college employees, Croteau and von Destinon (1994) found that 82

(38%) were open regarding their SO during the recruitment process and that the remaining 62% only disclosed their SO/identity until after a position had been offered to them.

In three of the above mentioned qualitative investigations which had small cohort sizes (Griffin 1992; Hall 1986; Woods & Harbeck 1992), hardly any of the lesbian and gay school teachers, lesbian physical education teachers, and/or lesbian women in corporate positions were overtly open about their sexual orientation. Collectively these results suggest large inconsistencies with regard to sexual orientation and identity disclosure in the workplace. These three qualitative studies suggest that this inconsistency is defined as a concealment versus outness scale and affords comprehensive explanations for the approaches utilised by gay and lesbian employees at different locations on this scale, thus strengthening what Kinsey refers to as “Not all things are black nor all things white”.

Woods (1993) defines four classes of strategies which are acknowledged in a model and along a scale. The first one is referred to as passing strategies and is situated at the closeted pole of the model and relies upon confabulations to pass as being heterosexual. The second covering set of strategies are located at the less closeted end of the model and implicates confabulating so that one is not identified by work colleagues as GLBT. The third strategy requires being implicitly out and is situated closer to the out end of the model. In these classes, individuals were honest in their responses, with the use of specific language which suggested their sexual orientation minority status. Colleagues were permitted to view the individual as either GLB supported upon their understanding of the words used by the individual. The last strategy concerned using comments indicating one is explicitly out of the closet. The strategies incorporated here are located at the out end of the model. In this model individuals located at the completely out/explicitly out end openly acknowledge their sexual orientation and/or identity to both colleagues and friends and family. The interpretation here is that workers stay in the corporate closet due to a fear of being labelled either GLTB and because of the accompanying fear of possible discrimination and harassment which goes with being GLBT. These strategies are then used to cover one's true sexual orientation and/or identity and pass as heterosexual. On the other hand, employees on the open end of the

model continuum are motivated by self-integrity and assimilate their personal and professional facets of the self in a healthy manner.

#### **5.4 Correlates of the Degree of Outness vs. Concealment**

Limited features connected to the level of disclosure and concealment of one's sexual identity and orientation in the labour market has been examined through numerous investigations. Throughout the 1980s and mid-1990s there was little quantitative research which suggested that greater outness about sexual identity at work was associated with discrimination and harassment (heterosexism). Two studies (Croteau & Lark 1995; Croteau & von Destinon 1994) revealed that of a group of professional staff working at an American college, discrimination was associated with being more open about one's sexual orientation compared with staff who tended to cover their sexual orientation. Levine and Leonard (1984) described a similar relationship with a cohort of lesbian workers in New York City. Studies by Levine and Leonard (1984) and Croteau and Lark (1995) showed that those who are more honest about the sexual orientation are more content with that level of outness than are those who are more closeted. No other aspects connected to disclosure or concealment was studied in more than one of these nine studies discussed above, prior to 1996.

Even with these studies proving heterosexism in the workplace because of sexual orientation, there are a number of methodological shortcomings, specifically with: sampling, data collection, and analysis and results. Some instigators argue that the methods used in recruiting participants for quantitative studies on GLBT cohorts is problematic and is a main feature of the methodological failings (e.g., Herek & Berrill 1990a; Herek & Berrill 1990b; Herek, Kimmel, Amaro & Melton 1991). Lonborg and Phillips (1996) concur with this argument which centres around the continued utility of convenience sampling which has been a repeated methodological consequence with investigating GLBT cohorts. Moreover, respondents in these studies were noted as being 'self-identified' as either GLBT and were linked to GLBT ally groups. Further, most respondents in the studies were white with a large degree of formal education. With regard to the quantitative studies, most were descriptive in nature and hardly any attempts were made to test relationships between variables. These studies are therefore limited in their applicability and findings should not be generalised across the GLBT minority sub-divisions. At the least, the studies are descriptive for white, well-educated

and self-identified GLBT individuals. Owing to the issue of not using probability sampling, it is important to note that care must be taken when making inferences about these populations. This weakness in sampling is also only acknowledged in three of the six studies (viz. Croteau & von Destinon 1994; Schneider 1986; Schachar & Gilbert 1983). It is acknowledged however, that these limitations can be offset on occasion when the purpose of the study is not to make generalisations about the GLBT population. Instead, most of the qualitative studies have strived to obtain data on the workplace experiences of GLBT employees, That is, to discern new narratives to account for the workplace experiences of GLBT employees.

Despite the fact that there are few qualitative studies, phenomenological information is presented about this population group, albeit only in a limited range of workers in this population (i.e., not inclusive of all GLBTIQ employees). The recruitment of respondents in the nine studies was determined using three strategies. The first strategy made use of snowball sampling, the second utilised clubs and social events to recruit participants. The third strategy used to recruit respondents entailed enlisting companies who had a history of addressing GLBT issues and who had some policies and procedures in place which informed sexual orientation/identity discrimination. This strategy is effective, but is limited to organisations that have such policies and procedures in place. Both mixed design and the qualitative studies offered evidence on the questionnaire return rates (Levine & Leonard, 1984). Two out of the five studies which described these findings had moderately low return percentages of 30% or less (Olson 1987; Shachar & Gilbert 1983). The issue here was that questionnaires were posted but the methodology lacked any follow up for enhancing feedback. It is interesting to note that return rates for the following three studies by Croteau and Lark (1995), Croteau and von Destinon (1994) and Schneider (1986) were 66%, 79%, and 81% respectively. It is plausible that the discrete measures for respondent recruitment may have resulted in the high return rates. Schneider (1986) utilised snowball sampling and asked participants to handwrite notes to potential participation.

Subsequently, a significant feature of sampling which needs to be advanced in future investigations involves the dearth of representation and diversity located in present cohorts. Investigators who pursue to generalise various forms of data from descriptive or inferential data from a specific investigation to all GLB employees need to solve the

difficulties of attempting to equal probability-sampling methods (Herek et al. 1991). Herek et al. (1991) assert that “the negative effects of sampling by convenience can be offset to a limited extent by using a variety of recruitment strategies and by targeting diverse sections of the community” (Herek et al. 1991, p. 959). The variety of respondent selection methods in the studies evaluated are an initial point in the development of recruitment strategies. However, researchers are required to also produce and use new strategies. For example, using an arrangement of convenience, quota and respondent sampling has been revealed to diversify the structure of samples. Investigation with added diverse samples is required and should be a research focus.

Altogether the qualitative data in the nine studies described above were gathered via either interviewing or written responses to open-ended questions on the questionnaires. Griffin’s (1992) study was the only one which utilised a range of data collection methods including focus groups. There was an absence of qualitative fieldwork methods and little information was provided about the structure of the interviews. The mixed design studies transcribed narrative responses and all measurements were traditional paper and pencil. Out of the nine studies, four (viz. Croteau & Lark 1995; Croteau & von Destinon 1994; Levine & Leonard 1984; Olson 1987) utilised single item measures to consider the variables in question. The items indicated face validity only and were not grounded in the literature, but distinctly designed for each particular study. The studies by Shachar and Gilbert (1983) and Schneider (1986) made use of measures grounded in the literature and/or multiple items to measure variables in question.

It is recognised in method literature and Croteau and von Destinon (1994) also suggest that quantitative investigators refrain from using single-item measures to support variables in research. Single item measures have questionable reliability and validity. The issue with single item measures is that important words can be misinterpreted and being single factor analysis is ruled out which may be used to correct misinterpreted items. In GLBT research, three theoretical constructs have been used as variables in order for them to be measured. These are discrimination, the level of disclosure one gives to one’s sexual orientation or identity and camouflaging techniques which are used to cover one’s sexual orientation. The issue of single item measures has been advanced by measures being designed to specifically relate to GLBT populations. The refinement of these measures lies in the structure of the measures and the number of

collective items which have been used to measure to theoretical construct. Individual items will refer to specific behaviours and these form the items as a question. Examples of these are located in the victimisation studies and the ones used in the present study. In the present study, items defining particular behaviours are recorded and participants respond to the items which represent different occurrences and types of discrimination due to sexual orientation or sexual identity.

Lastly, value-added quantitative measures indicating the kind of strategies employees use in managing their sexual orientation/identity in the workplace have been established because of the limitations designated above. Descriptive evidence about these strategies, located in the experiences of GLBT employees are noted in some qualitative studies (Griffin 1992; Hall 1986; Woods & Harbeck 1992). This has been the foundation for creating the Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure -WSIMM (Anderson, Croteau, Ching & DiStefano 2001) and the Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure – Revised - WSIMM-R (Lance, Anderson & Croteau 2010) as a quantitative measure of identity management strategies in the workplace (which are used in the current study and which will be discussed later in chapter 7; 7.9.1 & 7.9.2).

The main emphasis of four of the studies has been on descriptive statistics embracing the qualitative method (viz. Croteau & Lark 1995; Croteau & von Destinon 1994; Levine & Leonard 1984; Olson 1987), even though a few of these studies did test partial statistical associations amongst variables. There was initially a focus on investigating hypotheses and using t-tests and SEM (Shachar & Gilbert 1983; Schneider 1986). In all the studies, except the Levine and Leonard (1984) study, qualitative components were openly defined. This is important because the standardisation of statistical methods both qualitatively and quantitatively as afford the researcher with a methodology and any reader can then critique the method as it is laid out explicitly. Thus well-defined methods in studies are necessary so readers can understand how the study was designed and then evaluate it.

Further, within the limited nine studies Olson (1987) and Woods and Harbeck (1992) did not define their methodology nor offer an explanation. The other studies did define their qualitative procedures with some description. Griffin (1992, p. 172) provided the most comprehensive description around the analysis of the qualitative interview data

which as used. One investigator firstly classified the themes which were grounded in the data and a second researcher examined these themes to “confirm the grounding of the analysis in the interview data” (p. 172). Preliminary themes were then progressed by the investigators and were offered to the respondents where their comments were assimilated into the evaluation to advance the concluding themes. Croteau and von Destinon (1994) offered the most material with regard to analysis of qualitative recorded data, defining the stages concerned in the investigation and the intention of each stage. An important principle for appraising a qualitative analysis is the degree to which a person can comprehend the experiences of the participants through the investigators’ demonstration of results. All investigations defining qualitative data appeared to efficiently enable one to understand the data from the employee perspective. Overall encounters were plainly clarified and demonstrated with the individual accounts of participants comprising direct extracts. Nevertheless, the arrangement of the results contrasted. Hall (1986) offered an interpretation short of an overt organisational construct. Olson (1987) pithily précised participant replies to individual responses. The remaining four studies (Croteau & Lark 1995; Croteau & von Destinon 1994; Griffin 1992; Woods & Harbeck 1992) provided a company configuration representing employees’ experiences which appeared as themes from the data. As a result, these studies accepted the themes and then parcelled employee experiences within each theme.

Since studies carried out during the 1980s - 1990s, the chief feature of quantitative data analyses demanding review is the investigation of complicated relationships connected to variables. Schneider’s (1986) use of SEM to study numerous variables connected to sexual orientation/identity in the workplace demonstrates an improvement to quantitative data analysis. More current reports allocate the prospect of intricate relationships amid numerous variables that require testing through multivariate methods and through the practice of structural equation modelling (Moradi 2006; Moradi, Mohr, Worthington & Fassinger 2009). Further, the three studies by (Croteau & Lark 1995; Croteau & von Destinon 1994; Levine & Leonard 1984) reported findings that suggest GLBT employees who were more open about their sexual orientation in their workplace describe experiencing more heterosexist discrimination in the workplace but more satisfaction with their choice about how open they are regarding their sexual orientation. Refined methods are required to take this even further and multivariate analyses will be



necessary to better understand these multiple relationships and indeed plausible moderating effects. Accordingly methods of analysing data in qualitative investigations need to be outlined adequately to afford readers the ability to critique the analysis. Also, qualitative research results must clearly represent the lives and occurrences of the people under study and preferably need to be detailed in an organisational structure that surfaces from participants' experiences. This is supported by Moradi, Mohr, Worthington and Fassinger (2009) who propose comparable methods of investigation.

## **5.5 Validity for Expanding the Scope of Research on the Workplace Experiences of this Population**

Initial studies indicated that the research was inadequate in both content and methodology. Similarly within questionnaires/surveys, methods used were found to be inadequate, with specific reference to correlational quantitative designs. More consideration with regards to data that are descriptive and hypothesis testing are required to begin exploring studies to this group that have been overlooked (Phillips, Strohmer, Bethaume & O'Leary 1983). Accordingly, established constructs in this research for most groups may not be suitable or applicable.

Researchers may have to establish a model from a prospective focus in their future research. New investigations on psychological health and well-being of GLBT employees should persist at looking at models based on psychologically and socially based theories for direction in research on the workplace experiences of this group. Additionally, more suitable theory should be contemplated for its function to the findings for example of, Social Prejudice Theory, Institutional Matrix (Kostelac, Constance & Emily 2003), Stigma Theory (Heatherton, Kleck, Hebl & Hull 2000; Levin & van Laar 2006), Theory of Work Adjustment, (England & Lofquist 1964), Social Justice Theory (Albee 1983), Racial Prejudice Theory, (Bernstein, Kostelac & Gaarder 2003), sexual identity development theory (H Levine & Evans 1991) and the concept of internalised homophobia (Shidlo 1994) might demonstrate to be pertinent in work occurrences of this group.

Due to the fact that only nine studies were published (in the 1980s – mid 1990s), in the area of workplace experiences of gay men, lesbians and bisexuals and the

methodological shortcomings of these studies, the appropriateness to query whether this conclusion is adequate to describe this group's workplace experiences.

Nevertheless, exploratory work is vital in this area since descriptive evidence needs to be available before identifiable key variables and advanced measures which are appropriate can be used in this qualitative arena. Studies stressing the importance of using open ended investigations are perfect for producing such new information. Secondly, open ended investigation allows for constructs and models to surface from the distinctive phenomenological experiences and perceptions of this social minority faction. This allows the probability that constructs and models/methods will vary from the current conceptual and theoretical status that frequently reflects the values and apprehensions of the major social factions (Sang 1989).

## **5.6 A review of recent workplace heterosexist experience and outness literature from the mid-1990s - 2000s**

Within this time frame, the extant literature indicates that when a person discloses their sexual orientation or identity, it promotes positive personal and work related outcomes. However, when a person reveals their sexual orientation or identity they open themselves up as a target for discrimination and this heterosexist experience has the ability to produce psychological stress which can have deleterious personal and work related outcomes (Brenny, Lyons & Fassinger 2010; Croteau 1996; Croteau, Anderson, DiStefano & Kampa-Kokesch 2000; Button 2001; Griffith & Hebl 2002; Lay & Stotzer 2011; Morgan & Brown 1993; Ragins, Cornwell, & Miller 2003; Ragins, Singh & Cornwell 2007; Sandfort, Bos & Vet 2000).

The literature suggests that GLBT employee decisions on how to manage their sexual orientation and identity in the workplace is conceptualised as a number of strategies which they employ to effectively manage the stress associated with disclosure and the accompanying workplace discrimination (e.g., Croteau 1996; Croteau et al. 2000; Fassinger 1996; Griffin 1992; Griffith & Hebl 2002; Hall 1986; Levine & Leonard 1984; Ragins, Singh & Cornwell 2007; Woods & Harbeck 1992). Moreover, these disclosure and concealment strategies may be employed by the same employee in different areas and situations of their workplace. These strategies are thus not seen as being at opposite ends of a continuum but rather, are conceptualised as varied coping

techniques which employees use simultaneously at work. It is noteworthy that great concealment less disclosure are held to be associated with more stress in the workplace and hence with poorer well-being of the employee. These choices result in the employee being isolated and through this isolation from work colleagues work commitment and performance becomes reduced (e.g., Badgett 1996; Croteau 1996; Fassinger 1996; Herek 1996; Irwin 2002; Powers 1996). This isolation from colleagues is therefore closely connected with a GLBT employee's choices around their disclosure and concealment in the workplace and becomes extremely detrimental to the individual's work outcomes and performance when an organisation expects trust, unity, team membership and staff cohesion with colleagues (e.g., Boatwright, Gilbert, Forrest, & Ketzenberger 1996; Day & Schoenrade 1997; Griffith 2002; Griffith & Hebl 2002; Griffith & Vaitkus 1999; Moradi et al. 2009; Sinclair & Tucker 2006). A prime example of this is the armed forces (e.g., Moradi et al. 2009). Studies have associated concealment and disclosure of one's sexual orientation and identity in predictable directions with variables which closely relate to military unit cohesion. Hiding one's sexual orientation was negatively associated with group cohesion whereas disclosure was seen to be positively related to group cohesion. (e.g., Button; Chrobot-Mason, Button & DiClementi 2002; Day & Schoenrade, Ellis & Riggle 1995; Moradi 2006; Moradi 2009; Ragins & Cornwell 2001). As a result of the decisions around concealment and disclosure of one's sexual orientation and identity in the workplace, the literature analyses indicate that negative work related consequences and low job satisfaction are associated with sexual orientation concealment, and higher job satisfaction being associated with disclosure of one's sexual orientation and identity (e.g., Button 2001; Day & Schoenrade 1997; Griffith & Hebl 2002; Ragins & Cornwell 2001).

The literature has focussed its attention of decisions around disclosure and concealment with a number of studies investigating discrimination based solely on sexual orientation and identity as a significant workplace stress. Discrimination based solely on sexual orientation and identity has been indicated to associate significantly with psychological symptoms for GLBT employees (Smith & Ingram 2004; Waldo 1999).

In a study investigating the predictors of lesbian outness in the workplace, House (2004) used a model of internal and external predictors to hypothesise lesbian self-disclosure of

SO in the workplace. The study used SEM to answer two hypotheses. House (2004) found that direct heterosexism had a positive relationship with self-disclosure suggesting that as direct heterosexism increases so does self-disclosure of SO. Further, that organisational tolerance of heterosexism increased, so does the experience of direct heterosexism. This is understandable in the light that when people disclose their SO, they present as targets for heterosexism. Employees who conceal their SO will experience indirect heterosexism in the form of internalised heterosexism. This is commensurate with the work carried out by Waldo (1999). The House study is limited in its representation of all the sexual minorities and because of the absence of random sampling. Moreover, the measurement model (SEM) had to be changed to include fewer variables to decrease the number of parameters to be estimated due to the small population size. Nevertheless, results were commensurate with other studies in this area, despite these limitations and model re-specification which had to take place.

Workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and identity and the associated health indicators indicate lower job satisfaction and greater turnover of staff (Lyons, Brenner, & Fassinger 2005; Ragins & Cornwell 2001). In the same manner, SO disclosure and concealment, perceived workplace heterosexism (based on SO) is noted as being associated with variables comparable to group cohesion and shared organisational values (Button 2001; Lyons, Brenner & Fassinger 2005; Ragins & Cornwell 2001). The literature therefore supports conceptualisations of decreased disclosure of one's sexual orientation or identity in the workplace. This is due to employees experiencing discriminating heterosexist behaviours and wanting to avoid these by using covering strategies to try and manage these actions. The literature also supports the consequence of this discrimination being job related deleterious stressors. Markedly, these conclusions are commensurate with aspects of military unit cohesion and related constructs as mentioned earlier (see Moradi 2009). Of particular interest is that stress experienced by GLBT employees is suggested to decrease military unit cohesion and group membership (e.g., Griffith & Vaitkus 1999; Sinclair & Tucker 2006).

Subsequently, the suggestion here is that maintaining secrecy around one's sexual orientation and/or identity and the associated internalised heterosexism (stress) results in lower group and colleague cohesion (Moradi et al. 2009). Moradi et al. (2009) take this

concept poor unit cohesiveness further and to emphasise the need to better understand the role of social cohesion and task cohesion. Predominantly, unit social or interpersonal cohesion has been discovered to reflect the emotional connections among unit associates, while task cohesion is seen to involve a joint obligation to achieve a common goal or goals (e.g., Griffith 2002; Griffith & Vaitkus 1999; MacCoun, Kier & Belkin 2006; MacCoun 1996; Mullen & Copper 1994; Oliver, Harman, Hoover, Hayes & Pandhi 1999; Siebold 1999; Siebold 2006; Siebold 2007). Sexual orientation disclosure, concealment, and discrimination are likely to be associated directly to social cohesion given their postulated impact on social aspects of unit climate (e.g., Herek 1996).

From the perceptions of 445 gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender U.S. military veterans, Moradi et al. (2009) assessed hypothesised relationships of outness (sexual orientation disclosure), concealment and harassment with unit social and task cohesion. The findings indicated that disclosure of one's sexual orientation was positively associated with social cohesion and concealment of one's sexual orientation was negatively associated with social cohesion. When variables were taken together, disclosure related positively with social cohesion and a positive indirect relationship with task cohesion. Discrimination based on sexual orientation had a direct negative relationship with social cohesion and an indirect negative relationship with task cohesion Moradi et al. (2009). The work laid down by Moradi et al. (2009) provided significantly important work for the reassessment of military policies and procedures around GLBT military personnel and their experiences.

In their study of the workplace experiences of gay men, lesbians and bisexuals carried out in the UK, Hoel and Lewis (2011) found that as a group, GLB employees are more than twice as likely to be bullied and discriminated against compared with heterosexual employees. Lesbians and bisexual women are even more likely to be discriminated against and exposed to negative behaviours in the workplace than gay men. The study found that GLB employees are nearly three times more likely to be exposed to intrusive and sexualised behaviours than heterosexual employees and more likely to be exposed to social exclusion. The study further found that GLB employees' health is substantially worse than the health of heterosexuals, with lesbian and bisexual women

reporting the worst psychological and physical health outcomes as a result of the discrimination in the work place.

Hoel et al. (2014) found that whilst most GLB employees are open about their sexual orientation, one in five remains closeted due to the fear of being discriminated against. Respondents who indicated that they would like to be more open about their sexual orientation, reported higher levels of discrimination which lead to higher levels of poor health. This raises the issue of whether it is their concealment or the discrimination which leads to poor health. The study further indicated that a supportive manager who encourages disclosure and openness about sexual orientation may shield the effects of discrimination and reduce its occurrence. An unsupportive manager or a workplace where equality and diversity are not taken seriously can exacerbate the discrimination in the workplace. Whilst the study was a mixed method one and aimed at providing an accurate estimate of the prevalence and behavioural nature of discrimination of GLB employees and at risk groups within GLB populations, it did not include transgender employees nor did it use any measures which were designed specifically for GLBT individuals. The authors reported that they were able to make generalisable claims about their data and findings. However, this is not the case as the GLB cohorts were self-identified and targeted for later interviews and hence not randomly sampled. The study is however, one of the first to highlight the high incidences of discrimination of GLB employees in the UK workplace with a mixed method approach permitted for triangulation of data to enhance the results.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

Psychological poor health is related to sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace (Ragins 2008; Button 2004) and employees who have suffered heterosexism report fewer positive job attitudes (Day & Schoenrade 1997), obtain less promotions (Irwin 2002) and less compensation (Irwin, 1999). Nevertheless, the current research both internationally and in Australia is anomalous, and further rigorous research needs to take place to better understand the working experiences of GLBTIQ employees.

Pressurising sexual orientation minorities to conceal their SO is a particular form of discrimination related to psychological distress and SO discrimination correlates with reduced mental health (Cochran 2001; Warner et al. 2004). GLBTIQ employees make use of sexual identity management strategies in the presence of heterosexual employees

to attempt to manage the consequences of heterosexism in their place of work. However, they often end up leaving their employment because of the stress experienced. Current studies appear to denote that the decision to come out of the corporate closet hinges highly on the organisational context, but that further empirical research is needed to highlight this phenomenon.

## CHAPTER 6

### The Australian corporate closet

#### *Published paper*

*The Australian corporate closet, why it's still so full: a review of incidence rates for sexual orientation discrimination and gender identity discrimination in the workplace. Ian Patrick Smith, Lindsay Oades & Grace McCarthy, 2013, Gay and Lesbian issues and Psychology, Vol. 9, No.1.*

#### **Abstract**

*The paper reviews the extant Australian literature on sexual orientation (SO) discrimination within the Australian workplace. In the research, there is variation in organisational workplace and a bias towards health and educational sectors as a research setting, which raises some methodological considerations such as poor generalisability to other organisational contexts. The small body of Australian research into SO discrimination encompasses; (i) varied methodological and theoretical approaches, (ii) disparate authors selecting a varied range of aspects of discrimination thus absenting a unifying framework to guide research and lacking as yet seminal authorship providing focus, iii) limited sampling of participants making comparisons difficult and further indicating the absence of a unifying framework with which to focus the research and iv) limited studies exclusively investigating workplace discrimination. In this paper, the Australian literature is presented chronologically, and where possible, it has linked studies together to indicate the commensurate nature of the studies to illustrate the incidence rates of SO discrimination in the Australian labour market as a rationale for GLBTIQ employees remaining in the corporate closet.*

### **6.1 Introduction**

Self-disclosure - the act of revealing personal information about oneself - often involves unexpected information. One of these is revealing to co-workers that one is gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, intersex or questioning (GLBTIQ). It is estimated that between 4 and 17% of the workforce (Gonsiorek & Weinrich, 1999) are gay and lesbian and make up the largest minority group (Lubensky, Holland, Wiethoff & Crosby 2004). Estimates in other US studies reveal 10 to 14% of the US workforce is composed of non-heterosexual workers (Powers 1996). Numbers are expected to be much higher than



this due to the complex nature of this phenomenon where many GLBTIQ individuals stay in the corporate closet and therefore conceal their sexual orientation (SO) due to the stigmatisation and discrimination associated with disclosure, with individuals more likely to conceal their SO when they have witnessed or experienced workplace discrimination (Morrow & Gill 2003). Sexual orientation disclosure and concealment have thus been conceptualised as strategies that GLBTIQ employees use to manage their identities in the face of cultural and organisational stigma against non-heterosexuality (Croteau 1996; Fassinger 1996; Woods & Harbeck 1992). Disclosing one's SO is one of the toughest issues that GLBTIQ employees face because it involves considerable turmoil and a fear of retaliation, rejection (Bohan 1996; Ellis & Riggle 1995) and stigmatisation (Button 2001). At the same time, employees who remain in the corporate closet report lower levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction as a result of covering up their stigmatising identity (Button 2001; Ellis & Riggle 1995; Ragins & Cornwall 2001). Empirical evidence suggests that heterosexism is a particularly strong and persistent cause of these problems, with a need to further address these deleterious outcomes as they occur in minority groups such as GLBTIQ employees.

Minority Stress Theory has been used to indicate the significant impact minority stress has on minority groups such as GLTBIQ employees (Meyer 1995). Minority Stress Theory asserts that socially marginalised groups including sexual minorities can experience mental and physical health problems resulting from negative social environments created by stigma, prejudice and discrimination (for example: Fisher and Shaw 1999; Gee 2002, Meyer 2003). For GLBTIQ employees, minority stressors are conceptualised as internalised heterosexism. This relates to GLBTIQ members direction of societal negative attitudes toward the self, which relates to both expectations of rejection and discrimination and actual experiences of discrimination and violence. Following on from Brooks (1981), Meyer (1995) refers to an environment whereby an individual experiences minority stress where there is conflict between the minority member and the dominant social environment. For GLBTIQ individuals, this conflict is expressed in discordant values and norms regarding sexuality, intimacy and more generally human existence and purpose (psychological well-being). Meyer defines these stress processes as internalised homophobia which has now become known as internalised heterosexism (Smith, Oades & McCarthy 2012). Here the expectations of

rejection and discrimination and actual events of antigay violence are internalised and experienced as a form of self-discrimination. Internalised heterosexism is now seen as the most insidious of the minority process whereby GLBTIQ individuals direct the negative social attitudes towards the self, leading to a devaluation of the self, resulting in internal conflicts and poor self-regard. The combined effects of minority stress experienced both directly and indirectly force GLBTIQ employees to stay in the corporate closet.

Yet despite a now considerable body of research on sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace, little Australian research has examined how individuals decide to reveal their sexual orientation (SO) or gender identity, and the sexual identity management strategies involved in this process. Whilst measures such as the Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure-Revised (WSIMM-R) Lance, (Anderson and Croteau 2010), and the Workplace Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (WSEQ) (Waldo 1999) exist, there has been little application of them in Australia. The small body of Australian research into SO discrimination that does exist encompasses; (i) varied methodological approaches, (ii) disparate authors selecting a varied range of aspects of discrimination thus absenting a unifying framework to guide research and lacking as yet seminal authorship providing focus, iii) limited sampling of participants which while eventually contributing to construct validity, at this stage makes comparisons difficult and further indicates the absence of a unifying framework with which to focus the research and iv) limited studies exclusively investigating workplace discrimination. The following literature review presents existing Australian research in chronological order, and where possible, links studies together to indicate the commensurate nature of the studies.

## **6.2 Literature**

Hillier, Dempsey, Harrison, Beale, Matthews and Rosenthal (1998) conducted a telephone survey of Australian women aged between 16 and 59 years randomly selected from all states. Out of the 9134 women interviewed, 0.8% identified as gay, 1.4% as bisexual and 15.1% reported same sex attraction. This suggests a sum of 17.3% engaging in GLB activities. Moreover, Smith, Russell, Richters, Grulkich and De Visser (2003) found in their Australian study of health and relationships (N = 20000), that when a definition of sexuality includes the three domains of identity, attraction and experience, that up to 15% of the respondents had experienced same sex attraction.

Moreover, a study by the National Centre in HIV Social research of La Trobe University revealed that between 8-11% of young people are not unequivocally heterosexual (Hillier, Warr & Haste 1996). This is an important finding as their earlier results suggested that only 2% identified as non-heterosexual, suggesting higher numbers for this gay and bisexual group. Additionally, Hillier, Warr and Haste (1996) found in a study of 1200 rural youth in Tasmania, Victoria and Queensland that 11% were non-heterosexual. Hass (1979) reported that 11% of young women and 14% of young men aged 15-18 have had at least some homosexual experience, whether or not they associate this with being homosexual. Often young people feel embarrassed about what meanings hold regarding their sexual identity and thus do not disclose their sexual orientation. This adds support to the view that a fear of discrimination may prevent a component of these individuals from identifying as non-heterosexual. These studies indicate that there are a large number of non-heterosexual employees and future employees in the Australian population who make up GLBTIQ sexual minorities. It is emphasised that these numbers are thought to be conservative due to the sensitive nature of this issue and the fear of being a target for discrimination either directly or indirectly.

Hillier, Dempsey, Harrison, Beale, Matthews and Rosenthal (Writing Themselves In, The National Report 1998) in a study attempting to chart the baseline figures about young non-heterosexual people, also documented the experiences of verbal and physical discrimination and abuse of the 14-21 year old age group. The main findings in this regard were that nearly one third believed they had been discriminated against due to their SO, 46% had been verbally abused, and that males were more likely higher targets than females. Moreover, 13% had been physically abused, with 70% having being abused at school. Finally, with regard to disclosure, 20% had never spoken to anyone about their sexuality outside of the study. Limitations of the study were that the sample was not randomly selected, and therefore no claims can be made where results can be generalized to the broader population of young people. This, however, is a common limitation in studies of minority groups where, due to the exploratory nature of the research and the difficulties in reaching a potentially stigmatized and emotionally vulnerable population, it is considered ethical that participants self-select, thereby sacrificing the non-random selection sampling process. Although this study was not limited specifically to workplace experiences of sexual orientation discrimination, the results do indicate the presence of SO discrimination for individuals up to 21 years of

age, and a large number of Australian youth enter the workforce at an early age.

Irwin (1999) in a study on the workplace experiences of 900 gay men, lesbians and transgendered employees found that harassment and prejudicial treatment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity was widespread with 59% of her respondents experiencing heterosexism in their workplace. Irwin further found in her study that 50% of the respondents had been ridiculed in front of colleagues based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. For 97%, this was not a single incident but was ongoing and affected the way they felt about themselves, their workplace and their colleagues. Heterosexism experiences included sexual and physical assault, verbal harassment and abuse, destruction of property, ridicule, belittling and homophobic jokes. Prejudicial treatment in the workplace included unfair rosters, unreasonable work expectations, sabotaging and undermining of work and restrictions to career. Forty one percent of the participants considered they had been dismissed from their most recent job because of their homosexuality. Several participants also reported that they had been denied workplace entitlements which were available to other heterosexual colleagues, such as partner travel. In this study heterosexist harassment and prejudicial treatment spanned all occupations, industries and types of sizes of the employing organisation. However, discrimination was more likely to happen in traditionally male dominated occupations and industries such as mining. Transgender participants were more likely to experience heterosexism (75%) compared with gay men and lesbians. Just over 67% of lesbians and 57% of gay men experienced discrimination or harassment in their workplaces. The result of this heterosexism was increased stress, depression, loss of self-confidence, increased alcohol and drug usage and attempted suicide. Additionally, workplace performance was also negatively affected by presenteeism due to a preoccupation with internalised heterosexism and a fear of heterosexism. Many participants were out selectively because they felt unsafe to be entirely open about their SO or gender identity. The major limitation of this study, which is similar to that of other GLBTIQ studies, is the non-probability sampling technique due to the self-selected nature of this cohort and the need for confidentiality and the absence of bisexual employees. Despite these limitations, it is one of the larger Australian studies (N=900) on GLT employees, adding empirical support for the presence of heterosexist and transphobic discrimination.

In 2003, the Department of Health and Human Services in Tasmania commissioned a study on GLBT health and well-being needs, as research at the time indicated that health issues faced by GLBT people included higher rates of suicide, alcohol and drug use than the general (heterosexual) population. Additionally, research suggested that the health and well-being issues were an outcome of heterosexist harassment and SO discrimination or gender identity discrimination. Out of 131 gay men, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered employees, 40 % reported that they had suffered with depression. Additionally, the study found that only 31% of gay men, 71% of lesbians, 33% of bisexuals, 27% of transgendered and none of employees identifying as queer would disclose their sexual identity in the workplace for fear of heterosexist behaviours.

The Victorian Gay and Lesbian rights Lobby (VGLRL 2000) reported that at least 23% of a sample of gay men, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people in Victoria have experienced discrimination when seeking health care. Pitts, Smith, Mitchell and Patel (2006) found that people fear and avoid disclosing their sexuality to health providers for fear of sexual orientation discrimination or negative responses. Bowers, Plummer, McCann, McConaghy and Irwin (2006) found in a study on health service delivery in the NSW metro area that nursing and medical staff make derogatory comments about gay men, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered patients and that same sex partners of patients were ignored by medical staff and not informed of their partner's condition and faced exclusion from participation in decision making about their partner's case. Bowers et al. (2006) also noted that health care workers, as a result of this discrimination, do not disclose their own SO for fear of discrimination, harassment and rejection from colleagues and that these actions impact negatively on their career and job prospects (Rose 1994). Pitts, Smith, Mitchell and Patel (2006) found in their study that the fear of heterosexism caused 67% of GLBTI employees to modify their daily activities. Pitts et al. (2006) also indicated that one in eight GLBTI respondents had been physically assaulted (direct heterosexist discrimination) and 10% had been refused employment or promotion due to their sexual orientation. These findings are consistent with a finding in the Health in Men (HIM) study which was conducted by the National centre for HIV Epidemiology and Clinical research at the University of New South Wales, the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations and Aids Counsel of new South Wales (ACON) which found that around one in twelve men had been refused service or denied a job due to their sexuality (Prestage, Grulich, Van de Ven P &

Kippax 2002). Bowers, Plummer, McCann, McConaghy and Irwin (2006) carried out a qualitative study and found that the attitudes and behaviours of newly qualified clinicians (nurses) are influenced by attitudes and behaviours of more experienced clinicians and managers. Although qualitative in nature, the study highlights the effects of managers in an organisation and the role they play in modelling behaviour with regard to SO discrimination.

Irwin (2002), in her study on discrimination against gay men, lesbians and transgender teachers, academics and educators, found that just over 60% of the GLT teachers, academics and educators identified experiencing homophobic behaviour, harassment and discrimination and/or prejudicial treatment. Homophobic behaviour included being a target of jokes was reported at 35%, being asked unwelcome questions around their SO was noted as 31%. Twenty seven percent reported being outed, 23% reported being socially excluded, 18% reported being ridiculed, 16% being sexually harassed, 11% threatened with physical violence and 5% having property damaged. One respondent was sexually assaulted, and it was noted that perpetrators were more likely to be work colleagues employed at a similar or senior level. For school teachers, perpetrators included students and their parents. Many teachers, academics and educators also experienced prejudicial treatment in the form of: undermining and sabotaging of work 21.6%, unreasonable work expectations (15%), limited opportunities for career development (15%), threat of loss of promotion (13.3%). 17.5% stated they had been denied partner rights to superannuation. 9.1% had been denied entitlements available to heterosexual staff. Some teachers reported that staying in the corporate closet had prevented them from experiencing homophobic or prejudicial behaviour. 8% reported not being open to anyone at work, 35% reported being open to everyone at work. Teachers who were employed at religious institutions reported concerns about being out and the risk this posed for their continuing employment. Some reported being closeted due to past homophobic experiences. Participants reported that the fear of becoming a target of harassment affected the way they behaved. Furthermore, the participants reported a belief that the effects of discrimination caused problems with both physical and emotional health. Ninety percent identified an increase in anxiety and stress, 80% had suffered depression, 63% has experienced a loss of confidence, and 59% reported that the discrimination had a negative effect on their personal relationships. Sixteen percent had contemplated suicide and one person had attempted suicide. As a result of

ongoing heterosexist discrimination 34% had attended counselling and 34% had medical treatment. Fifty nine percent reported that heterosexism had resulted in them achieving less at work, referred to as Presenteeism. Thirty eight percent had resigned, 46% had taken sick leave, 49% had decided on a career change and 18% reported that they had been fired. Outing oneself was dependent upon how committed the institution appeared to be to the promotion of diversity. Irwin (2002) reported that less than half of the participants (45%) chose to take action against the perpetrators.

Commensurate with Irwin's empirical and exploratory study are Goody and de Vries's findings (2001), which indicate that anecdotal evidence suggests that heterosexist behaviour and offensive comments and gestures with respect to sexual orientation occur in Australian universities despite anti-discrimination clauses and legislation being present. Irwin's study adds support to, and deepens, the understanding of the existence of heterosexist behaviours in the Australian labour market, with particular emphasis on the education sector. In this sector previous research has demonstrated that higher education generally leads to greater acceptance of minority groups. There is a clear need to conduct further research in this area to fully understand the complex nature of SO discrimination in the workplace and to locate this in an appropriate theoretical paradigm. Irwin's study, although one of the largest in this area to date (with 900 participants and using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies), does not embed itself in a theoretical paradigm to account for the effects the harassment has on employees.

Further, Goody and de Vries (2002) explored the climate for GLBT people in the workplace of faculty employees of the University of Western Australia (UWA), and describe two projects which aimed to make the UWA a safer and a more productive and positive work and study experience for GLBT staff and students (The Rainbow Project). A survey was used with limited statistical data being reported (mainly percentage answered by respondents for variables), with 754 participants (92.4% heterosexual). The survey indicated a significant majority of students with homophobic attitudes and high levels of discomfort in regard to GLBT people. There was also an apparent ignorance of harassment issues on the part of the majority of students who held more positive attitudes. Findings were commensurate with those found in the Irwin (1999) study, where university employees reported experiencing UWA as an unsafe place to be

out and they experienced difficulty in attending GLBT group meetings for fear of being seen and targeted and having their SO made public against their will. Some employees reported 'invisibility', while others experienced direct anti-gay comments in faculty settings which resulted in GLBT employees feeling increasingly uncomfortable. The survey further pointed out that 85% highlighted that they knew someone who had made derogatory comments about gay people, 10% knew someone who had damaged the property of a gay person and 15.7 % of staff reported saying 'I avoid gay men' and 8.3% reported saying 'I avoid lesbians' (questions posed in the survey). Also, 39.8% reported that it bothered them to see two gay men being affectionate in public and 14% thought homosexuality was immoral. While Goody and de Vries (2002) do not explicitly embed their research in a theoretical paradigm, they use constructs such as stigmatisation, where an assumption is made that the study is based on stigma theory. They do however raise the important issue of challenging homophobia (heterosexism), making the invisible visible and initiating awareness to take steps in making universities a place where GLBT employees and students can thrive. This is significant as GLBT employee's careers (and lives) become characterised by a preoccupation with self-disclosure and skill in the management of sexual identity. Invisibility and isolation in the workplace become common manifestations of these difficulties which can lead to the aetiology of various pathologies.

In the 'You Shouldn't Have to Hide to be Safe' report on homophobic hostilities and violence against gay men and lesbians in NSW (2003), it was found that 56% of the respondents had experienced one or more forms of homophobic abuse, harassment or violence in the past 12 months. Eighty five percent had at some time experienced such abuse, harassment or violence. Although the study focused specifically on homophobic abuse and violence aimed at GLBT individuals in general and in multiple settings, it found that three quarters of the respondents were employed and that one of the most common locations of the abuse/harassment/violence was at or near work or the place of study of the participants. Workplace abuse was reported by 13% of the respondents. It was also reported that relatively more lesbians (20%) than gay men (9%) identified the at/near work or place of study as the location of the most recent abuse. Furthermore, 3% of respondents described the abuser as being a co-worker and a further 3% their abuser as a customer or client. This study has some methodological differences to other studies and hence no direct comparisons can be made. Although the study was not aimed



specifically at investigating work place sexual orientation discrimination, it does highlight the fact that 82% of the respondents reported that they had experienced homophobic verbal abuse, in any location, at some point in time.

McNair and Thomacos (2005) found in their study of 652 participants (GLBQIT; 90% Gay & Lesbian and 5.5% Bisexual) mainly from the Melbourne metropolitan area, that 75% had publicly concealed their same sex relationships at some time to avoid discrimination. Moreover, 81.5% of lesbians and 79.4% of gay men were aware of public insults and had experienced equal levels of verbal abuse because of their SO. In total, 71.5% had been harassed in a public space. Fifty nine percent of bisexual participants had been verbally abused and 68% had felt indirect insults. Thirteen percent of bisexual respondents had been sexually assaulted. Over 80.7% had felt publicly insulted due to indirect negative public statements about same sex relationships and this did not differ according to age, sexual identity, gender or ethnicity. Almost 20% had received explicit threats and 13% had been physically assaulted, with more men than women experiencing these levels of harassment. McNair and Thomacos (2005) also found unacceptable high and at times increasing levels of indirect public insult, verbal and physical harassment and discrimination within health and legal systems (20%). It was noted that the effect of these attitudes and behaviours was to force concealment of the same sex relationship in public by making GLBTI people feel vulnerable, which ultimately accentuates social inequality. With regard to disclosure, 54.7% had disclosed their SO to everyone, 34.6% had told almost everyone, 0.8% had told no one. Also, 75% had concealed their relationship at some time with friends and colleagues. Bisexual respondents were noted as having the highest concealment at 92%, suggesting a higher level of stigmatisation and fear of sexual orientation discrimination. A weakness of the study, however, is that this concealment may also be due to other personal factors unrelated to discrimination. Limitations of the study were that it did not cover specific questions around harassment, transgender issues were not specifically addressed, and that intersex participants comprised only 1% of the participants. The study was also conducted only in Victoria and mainly in the metropolitan city of Melbourne, making it difficult to generalise findings. Research indicates that rural minorities have different experiences to urban minorities. Anecdotal discussions make reference to these figures being much higher in rural localities due to ignorance around sexual orientation diversity and a lack of awareness of protective legislation. Moreover, rural GLBTIQ

individuals themselves feel isolated and face a more severe information deficit than do their urban peers. There is an absence of the sense of 'us' which is the essence of group identity afforded by other minorities. This absence of 'us' results in sexual minorities being socialized into values and beliefs discordant with their self-identity and this ultimately may result in internalized heterosexism. International and Australian literature now points to the mental health of individuals who find themselves in this situation, which ultimately results in these minorities turning to alcohol and drugs to alleviate this pain (Sanford, 1989). More serious, is that mounting evidence now indicates a strong link between homosexuality and suicide, particularly among young men (Bagley & Tremblay 1997; Ramafedi 1997).

Willis (2009), in his small qualitative study (N = 34) on the strategies young GLBQ employees use to resist and refute homonegative practices in Australian workplaces, found three prevalent forms of homonegativity encountered and described by this group of employees in their workplace. These are referred to as: symbolic practices, material practices and discriminatory practices. With regard to symbolic practices, 20% of respondents witnessed comments by heterosexuals reinforcing and consolidating heterosexual norms, 10% reported witnessing expressing of discomfort and disapproval towards GLBQ identities, 13.3% had been assumed to be straight by colleagues and service users. His study also showed that 20% of respondents had their sexual identity questioned by colleagues and service users, 20% had experienced expressions of homonegative humour to a group audience and 66.6% had witnessed homonegative expressions and espoused beliefs. With regard to material practices, one employee reported being physically assaulted and bullied by colleagues, 30% reported verbal abuse and harassment, 3.3% reported public vilification in local media and 6.6% reported sexual harassment from members of management. Finally, with regard to discriminatory practices, 6.6 % reported repeated criticism of work performance because of their SO, 10% reported unfair dismissal and 3.3% reported refusal of leave provisions based on their sexual orientation. Willis' findings from his qualitative study are limited in scope and generalisability and therefore are not transferrable to other organisational contexts. Moreover, as occurs in other research of this nature (mentioned earlier), the sample is comprised of self-selected GLBQ participants. The organisational sectors are also limited in that there are no trade industries represented. Nevertheless,

the findings highlight the challenges young GLBQ employees encounter when entering the Australian labour market as a result of their sexual orientation.

A study carried out by Robinson and Berman (2010) found that 53% of their respondents (GLBTI) had been harassed or abused within the last two years on the basis of their sexual orientation. The five most prominent forms of abuse experienced were: verbal abuse, spitting and offensive gestures, threats of physical violence, written threats and abuse and physical attack or assault (without a weapon). Of note, is that the major threats were in the form of blatant direct discrimination. Furthermore, 12% of the respondents counted their workplace as their most recent experience of abuse, harassment or violence and hence of direct sexual orientation discrimination. Robinson and Berman also found that 62% reported that fear was a major factor in concealing their sexual orientation at work, which is consistent with international literature as described earlier. Despite Robinson and Berman's study being reported as one of the most comprehensive within Queensland and Australia to date, 80% of the respondents were employed and 9% of the perpetrators of homophobic or transphobic abuse were found in the Queensland workplace. Little is therefore known about the heterosexist experiences of GLBTIQ employees across Australian states. Consequently, this 2010 study illustrates that despite legislation in Queensland having been around for seventeen years; sexual orientation discrimination in the Australian workplace is still prevalent.

In the 2010 'Writing Themselves in-again' study (Hillier et al.), 61% of same sex attracted youth reported that they had been exposed to extreme levels of verbal and physical abuse, which was up from 42% in 2004. This study also indicates that as a result of heterosexist discrimination, self-harming behaviour in Same Sex Attracted Youth (SSAY) is increasing along with alcohol and other drug usage, including heroin (7%). The study indicates that 64% of the SSAY had thought about suicide as a result of the SO discrimination they faced. Camilleri (2010) cites figures for gay male suicide as four times that of heterosexual males (20.8% vs. 5.4%). Although this is with same sex attracted youth, it is evidence for the presence of discrimination and the stigmatisation of GLBTIQ individuals as a result of heterosexism.

Barrett, Lewis and Dwyer (2011), in their quantitative study on the effects of disclosure of sexual orientation at work for 152 GLBTI employees in Queensland, found that 36%

of their respondents had experienced sexual orientation discrimination at one workplace and 34% at two workplaces based on their sexual identity. They found that the most frequent types of discrimination based on sexual identity were remarks (27%), ridicule (27%) and jokes (25%). Where more than one co-worker was present discrimination took the form of remarks (59%), ridicule (56%) and jokes (58%). With regard to single co-workers discrimination was evident in the form of written threats of physical abuse (100%). Where respondents had experienced discrimination in their current workplace more than three times, the types of discrimination were; death threats (80%), threats of physical abuse via telephone (67%), property damage (33%) verbal threats of sexual abuse (30%), verbal threats of physical abuse (29%) and verbal threats of sexual abuse via telephone (25%). Despite this quantitative study having a relatively low sample number and the common sampling problem found in GLBT research (non-random) and no even distribution with regard to the various sub categories, the research is based in a theoretical paradigm relevant to issues around discrimination placing it well to contextualise the findings. The study importantly raises relevant issues around GLBTI employees and discrimination. Important concerns raised are how respondents, who experienced discrimination more than three times, faced severe forms of discrimination. The threat of personal injury as a result of revealing ones sexual orientation is therefore extremely high. More importantly, the study confirms that in Australia 2010, discrimination is still directed at GLBTI employees in Queensland workplaces, despite ethical considerations and potential legal ramifications. Finally, as a result of sexual orientation disclosure, GLBTI employees are experiencing more sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace, despite anti-discrimination policies being in place. Due to the fact that sexual orientation is not readily observable, direct discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation requires knowledge or suspicion of an employee's orientation. Therefore, the potential for discrimination is seen to be higher when GLBTIQ individuals disclose their sexual orientation.

The studies discussed above provide insight into the extent and incidence of reported workplace sexual orientation discrimination and gender identity discrimination in the form of heterosexism. The challenge is that despite the presence of legislation at both federal and state level, organisational heterosexism needs to be addressed to respect the rights of all employees and to determine whether the present legislation is indeed having an impact in our current work environment. Furthermore, research needs to fully

investigate the relationship between sexual orientation disclosure/concealment and the effect this has on the psychological well-being, job satisfaction, mental health and satisfaction with life of sexual minority employees, and across all states and with multiple organisations. These studies then provide clear evidence for why the Australian corporate closet is still so full.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

The studies discussed above confirm that workplace discrimination against GLBTIQ employees still exists in Australian workplaces, and that these limited studies indicate positive relationships between heterosexism and workplace distress due to outness. Some studies indicating up to as high as 75% of participants experiencing workplace heterosexism (Irwin 1999). Existing reports (for example, Day & Schoenrade 2000; Moradi 2009; Waldo 1999) suggest conservative estimates of discrimination in the workplace due to GLBT employees not fully disclosing their sexual orientation at work due to the complexities involved. It has been indicated that greater reported disclosure of sexual orientation is associated with positive direct heterosexism. Respondents who conceal their sexual orientation have been least likely to experience sexual orientation discrimination but have higher levels of reduced psychological health and well-being outcomes.

Further research needs to empirically test these findings so that organisations can bring about required action to support sexual minority employees. Implications are that there are costs to organisations in the shape of absenteeism and presenteeism, for GLBTIQ employees in an environment which is discriminatory. Moreover, there is a need to investigate organisational compliance with workplace legislation. While national and state anti-discrimination laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity at work, many non-heterosexuals still experience both direct and indirect discrimination in the international and Australian workplace. The research indicates that this discrimination is more evident than is suggested by the incident rates present in the literature and by the numbers of formal complaints lodged with Gay and lesbian Lobby Groups in Australia. Finally, these studies have been limited to primarily gay men and lesbians, and often have not included bisexual, transsexual, intersex and questioning employees as these groups are difficult to research due to the sensitive nature of sexual orientation disclosure. There is therefore a need to better understand

minorities working in a majority context and the impact this has on their psychological well-being, especially when research indicates that self-disclosure is a necessary prerequisite for psychological wellness or well-being (Cain 1991). To conclude, there is clearly little doubt of the need for further empirical research using valid and reliable measures to improve the understandings and experiences of GLBITQ employees to overcome heterosexist behaviours and to enhance the workplace lives of sexual minority employees such as gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender, intersex and questioning individuals so that they no longer have to hide in the corporate closet.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **METHOD**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter begins by defining the epistemological position, the research design and then restating the research questions. This is followed by a description of the data collection procedure and sampling technique, the measures used and the questionnaire design. The pilot study carried out using the questionnaire to ensure all questions were clear and appropriate is then described. The conceptual model and an explanation of the independent and dependent variables are provided. The chapter then concludes with a description of latent variable structural equation modelling (LVSEM) the statistical analysis method used, with an examination of the steps required with AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) to facilitate analysis and interpretation of the data and reporting of the results.

#### **7.2 Positivist Epistemology**

Initially a positivist epistemology was chosen by taking a controlled and structural approach in conducting the study by identifying a research topic, constructing appropriate research questions and hypotheses and by adopting a suitable research methodology. The quantitative paradigm was used which is built upon the positivist foundation to ensure the approach to inquiry was scientific. This was necessary as there is extant scientific literature in the present field of study and to add to this it is important to ensure scientific rigour in research is strived for, in order for it to stand up in the scientific world and be seen as enriching the already present literature. During this process, it was evident that the study used more of a post-positivist approach. Post-positivism recognises that the way scientists think and work and the way we think in our everyday life are not distinctly different. Scientific reasoning and common sense reasoning are essentially the same process. There is no difference in kind between the two, only a difference in degree. Post-positivism recognises that all observation is fallible and has error and that all theory is revisable. It is this stance which guided the study as it used a self-report questionnaire.

The ontological stance of the quantitative paradigm is that data are in numerical form and can be classified, measured in a strictly objective way and are capable of being accurately described by a set of rules or formulae, or procedures which make the data clear and dependent of researcher perception. The quantitative paradigm used in the present study was Latent Variable Structural Equation Modelling (LVSEM- an empirical method).

### **7.3 Research Question**

Using a combination of previous models (Moradi 2006; Waldo 1999) and the theory of Minority Stress (Meyer 1995), the present study explores the relationships which exist among sexual orientation/identity (disclosure and concealment) and organisational support and if/how these are mediated by perceptions of heterosexism and the effect this has on the well-being of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender (GLBT)

Australian employees. The rationale for using a combination of the Models of Moradi (2006) and Waldo (1999) is that most of the research carried out in the Australian context has been on same sex attracted youth (Department of Education, Tasmania 2002; Department of Education, Tasmania 2003; Hillier, Dempsey, Harrison, Beale, Matthews & Rosenthal 1998; Hillier, Warr & Haste 1996,) and primarily by the varied state Health Departments in Victoria and Tasmania. Moreover, extant and disjointed studies have only recently touched on the issue of sexual orientation and identity discrimination in the workplace and no such study exists in the Australian workplace. The models of Moradi (2006) and Waldo (1999) are well established in the literature and hence applicable to the Australian context as a starting point for investigating this complex phenomenon. Finally, data were drawn from an online survey which was cross- sectional in design.

### **7.4 Research Design**

The research was designed as a cross-sectional study. The purpose of the study was descriptive and in the form of a survey. The aim was to describe a population of GLBT employees and two subgroup comparisons (gay men and lesbians) within the population with respect to an outcome and a set of factors which may positively or negatively affect the population. The cross-sectional study was carried out to investigate the associations between three factors namely; organisational support,



concealment/disclosure and perceptions of heterosexism and the outcome of interest (well-being). This design is limited, however, by the fact that it was carried out at one point in time and gives no indication of the sequence of events. This is a weakness of all studies carried out in this area where self-selected participants are required.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the aim of the present study was to examine the environmental (e.g. organisational support, treatment of sexual minorities in the workplace), individual (perceptions of heterosexism) antecedents to disclosure of sexual orientation at work, in addition to how disclosure at work influences job satisfaction, psychological well-being, mental health and general satisfaction with life. It was not the intent of this study to generalise findings to the greater population due to the self-selected nature of the sampling technique.

The purpose of the present study was to find a suitable model which characterises the outcomes of the effects of perceptions of heterosexism, for the population (GLBT employees) and two subgroups (gay men and lesbians) within the population at a given time point. The additional advantages with the cross sectional design is that many outcomes and risk factors can be assessed simultaneously. While the design itself is relatively simple, finding participants who are very similar (being either GLBT) can be difficult. This is discussed in this chapter, in the sampling section below in 7.6.

#### **7.5 The following questions were considered for the Australian workplace:**

- RQ1. How is reported sexual orientation/identity disclosure associated with direct heterosexism, psychological well-being, mental health, job satisfaction and satisfaction with life?
- RQ2. How is reported sexual orientation/identity concealment associated with indirect heterosexism, psychological well-being, mental health, job satisfaction and satisfaction with life?
- RQ3. What is the association between organisations with equal employment opportunity (EEO) policies and practices in place and heterosexism, psychological well-being, mental health, job satisfaction and satisfaction with life?
- RQ4. Is disclosure and concealment and organisational support mediated by direct and indirect heterosexism?

To answer these research questions, the following more specific questions were posed:

- Q1: What is the relationship between Disclosure and WHEQ (Indirect)?*
- Q2: What is the relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Indirect)?*
- Q3: What is the relationship between Concealment and WHEQ (Direct)?*
- Q4: What is the relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Direct)?*
- Q5: What is the relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Satisfaction With Life?*
- Q6: What is the relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Satisfaction With Life?*
- Q7: What is the relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Overall Job Satisfaction?*
- Q8: What is the relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Overall Job Satisfaction?*
- Q9: What is the relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Psychological Well-being?*
- Q10: What is the relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Psychological Well-being?*
- Q11: What is the relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Mental Health?*
- Q12: What is the relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Mental Health?*
- Q13: Is direct and indirect heterosexism significantly mediated by organisational support and all the well-being measures?*

## **7.6 Participants, sampling and sample size**

The sample consisted of 453 self-selected gay men, lesbians, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) participants via an online survey which was advertised on a number of GLBT social media websites.

The research used convenience and snowball sampling due to the sensitive nature of the research. It is well documented that sampling GLBT participants is inherent with problems (see review by Croteau 1996) and that the main concern in sampling GLBT individuals involves the constant use of convenience sampling instead of probability sampling. Utilising convenience sampling implies that caution must be taken in generalising descriptive information to or making inferences about these employees. Herek, Kimmel, Amaro and Melton (1991) suggest the disadvantages of using convenience sampling may be lessened to a certain degree by involving a number of recruitment methods and by ensuring that various communities are targeted when recruitment takes place. This was carried out in the present study where participants

were obtained from five Australian states across a large number of organisational settings (see table 5 in chapter 8).

Non-probability implies the sample is not a random selection of the general population. In the present study, due to the self-selection of participants who belong to a certain group (GLBT individuals), a variation of snowball sampling called respondent-driven sampling was also used. This method has been shown to allow researchers to make asymptotically unbiased estimates from snowball samples under certain conditions. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. These sampling methods assist with confidentiality issues as the self-selection process is anonymous. However, it is the anonymous nature of the survey itself, which will ensure confidentiality. This method has been used in previous research studies with GLBT participants and prevents face to face exposure, whilst still capturing relevant data (for example Waldo 1999; Moradi 2009).

## **7.7 Power and sample size**

The idea of power in statistical theory is described as the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis given that the null hypothesis is false. In the framework of structural equation modelling, the null hypothesis is described by the specification of fixed and free elements in relevant parameter matrices of the model equations. The arrangement of fixed and free elements characterises the investigators' initial hypothesis regarding the putative direct and/or indirect effects between the latent variables. The null hypothesis is evaluated by establishing a discrepancy function between the model-implied set of moments (mean vector and/or covariance matrix) and the sample moments. Several discrepancy functions may be formed contingent on the particular minimisation algorithm being utilised (e.g. maximum likelihood); nevertheless the goal stays the same. That is, to draw a test statistic that has a recognised distribution, and then to compare the obtained value of the test statistic against tabled values in order to make a decision vis-a-vis the null hypothesis.

The general goal of PSS analysis is to design a study such that the chosen statistical method has high power to detect an effect of interest if the effect exists. For SEM, MacCallum et al. (1996 1997 2006) and Kim (2005) recommend methods to compute

the necessitated sample size in (given a desired power) or the achieved power (given a sample size) to assess the fit of structural equation models based upon different fit indices for example; the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) or the Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI). With SEM there are two methods of determining the effective sample size. One method is by using a calculation method by performing a Power Analysis using either G\* Power, semTools or SAS Macro to conduct these power estimations (Friendly 2000; Kenny 2014). The second method is to use the general rule of thumb which suggests a certain ‘Ratio of Sample Size to the Number of Free Parameters’ which may be adequate (Bentler & Chou 1987; Kenny 2014; Tanaka 1987).

Kenny (2014) reports that the best way to determine if you have a large enough sample is to conduct a power analysis by either using the Sattora and Saris (1985) method or a power calculation as mentioned above. The second method as mentioned earlier is the rule of thumb where several ratios have been put forward (for example, Bentler & Chou 1987; Kenny 2014; Tanaka 1987). Kenny (2014) reports that Tanaka’s (1987) 20 – 1 ratio as being unrealistically high and a 10:1 as being satisfactory, with a more realistic goal at 5-1, suggested by Bentler & Chou (1987). The present sample (main model) is  $N = 367$  is well above this suggested ratio of 20:1 at 22:1. The two smaller models used for comparative analysis (gay men versus, lesbians) (gay men  $n = 168$ ; 45.78%) and lesbians ( $n = 128$ ; 34.88%) are smaller models with a lower power (Ratio of Sample Size to the Number of Free Parameters) but are still significantly powerful enough for SEM analysis at 7:1.

## **7.8 Procedure**

The survey was placed online and linked to a number of GLBT social media websites. With the number of internet users having increased rapidly, Internet based surveys via the web have important advantages such as: a reduction in research costs and efficient survey administration in terms of time and resource management (Kielser & Sproull 1989; Weible & Wallace 1998). This was the most cost efficient method to use. Moreover, response rate and speed have been reported higher than traditional mail surveys (Guterbock, Meekin, Weaver & Fries 2000), with the turnaround time being decreased dramatically (Schaefer & Dillman 1998). Finally, web-based surveys permit the inclusion of various features to make the survey more interactive for respondents

who can respond more quickly and the completion of an item is ensured by making respondents return to questions they may have omitted. This study consequently used an online questionnaire to benefit from these advantages over traditional pen and paper questionnaires as there is strong evidence supporting Internet administration of self-report instruments (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava & John 2004). It was found that 86.6 % of people who logged onto the survey completed the entire questionnaire. Informed consent was obtained from each participant and the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics committee approved the study. It is noteworthy that counselling was made available by a clinical psychologist for any participant who may have requested this due to any triggering questions. (See appendices C, after chapter 9). No counselling was requested by any participants.

## **7.9 Materials**

The online survey consisted of the following: (A) A Biographical section and (B) eight tools, namely: (1) The Workplace Heterosexist Experience Questionnaire (WHEQ), (2) The Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure-Revised (WSIMM-R), (3) The Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS), (4) The Degree of Disclosure Scale-11 (DODS-II), (5) The Workplace Equality Index (WEI), (6) Psychological Well-being Scale, (7) Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS) and (8) The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). All of these scales are well defined in the literature and have been shown to be valid and reliable tools, in that they measure what they are intended to measure and over time (see the following, WHEQ - Lance, Anderson & Croteau 2010; WSIMM – Waldo 1999; DODS-II - Driscoll, Kelly, & Fassinger, 1996; WEI – The Pride in Diversity Australian Workplace Equality Index in partnership with Stonewall, UK; Psychological well-being - Ryan and Deci 1995; SWLS - Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin 1985). (See Appendix III for entire questionnaire).

These tools were used to construct the survey with the intention of addressing the research questions and because they have been used in international research in the GLBT area and in other areas such as organisational psychology (for example, Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin 1985; Driscoll, Kelly, & Fassinger 1996; Lance, Anderson & Croteau 2010; Moradi 2009; Waldo 1999) making their utility for this study appropriate. Each of these tools will be discussed next.

### **7.9.1 The Workplace Heterosexist Experience Questionnaire (WHEQ)**

The WHEQ contains 22 items measuring direct and indirect experiences of heterosexism. Sample items include, “During the past 12 months in your workplace, have you ever been in a situation where any of your co-workers or supervisors made you feel it was necessary for you to ‘act straight’ (e.g., monitor your speech, dress, or mannerisms)?” and “During the past 12 months in your workplace, have you ever been in a situation where any of your co-workers or supervisors called you a ‘dyke,’ ‘faggot,’ ‘fence-sitter,’ or some other slur?” Participants were asked to rate how often they have experienced each event within the past 12 months (from 0 - never to 4 - most of the time). Waldo’s original timeframe for the WHEQ was 24 months; however, the timeframe was decreased to 12 months in the present study to achieve temporal parity with the other measures used. The range of scores for the WHEQ is 0 - 88. Waldo (1999) did not provide reliability data for the WHEQ. However, the WHEQ was designed to be similar to another measure of workplace harassment, namely, sexual harassment (Waldo 1999). The measure upon which the WHEQ was based is the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ; Fitzgerald et al. 1988). The SEQ contains 25 items and asks participants to indicate the frequency with which they have experienced sexual harassment (on a 3-point scale, with responses of 1 - never, 2 - once, or 3 - more than once). Fitzgerald et al. (1988) reported alphas for the SEQ ranging from 0.75 to 0.92. The WHEQ has been shown to be positively related to psychological distress, health problems, and organisational climate, the perception that the individual’s workplace environment was tolerant of heterosexism. In addition, the WHEQ was shown to be negatively related to job satisfaction (Waldo 1999). In the Smith and Ingram (2004) study, the WHEQ Cronbach’s alpha was 0.92 affirming it as a reliable measure.

Confirmatory factor analysis in LISREL VIII (Joreskog & Scorbom 1993) supported a two-factor structure with 7 items encompassing indirect experiences (e.g., “monitor your speech, dress, or mannerisms?”) and 15 items with more direct content (e.g., “called you a ‘dyke,’ ‘faggot,’ ‘fence-sitting’ or some other slur?”). These 7 and 15 items were used in the present study to measure the latent variables of indirect heterosexism and direct heterosexism respectively and are represented in the structural model.

### **7.9.2 The Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure-Revised (WSIMM-R)**

Anderson, Croteau, Chung and DiStefano (2001) first developed the Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure to measure four identity management strategies identified by Griffin (1992) in an investigation of gay and lesbian teachers. There is a connection with the three defined by Woods (1993) earlier. The four strategies identified were: (i) passing, (ii) covering, (iii) implicitly out and (iv) explicitly out. Passing strategies include actively forming an impression of being heterosexual; covering strategies involve concealing information that may divulge a same-sex orientation; implicitly out strategies include being authentic about personal information in ways that would permit others to deduce one's minority sexual orientation; and explicitly out strategies include being explicit about one's sexual orientation and thus labelling oneself as either GLBT. These strategies are designated as being located on a continuum from extreme concealment to actively revealing one's sexual orientation. Items on the Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure (WSIMM) were created to include the breadth of experiences GLBT employees described in prevailing qualitative research (e.g., Friskopp & Silverstein 1995; Griffin 1992; Hall 1986; Olson 1987; Woods 1994; Woods & Harbeck 1992).

The WSIMM was then revised by Lance, Anderson and Croteau (2010) which resulted in the development of the Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure - Revised (WSIMM-R, see appendix 3), to measure the frequency of employees' use of the sexual identity management strategies of passing (eight items; e.g., "Make up stories about romantic partners of the opposite sex"), covering (eight items; e.g., "Do not correct others when they make comments that imply I am heterosexual"), implicitly out (seven items; e.g., "Talk about activities that include a same-sex partner or date, but do not identify the kind of relationship I have with that person. That way people can assume whatever they want"), and explicitly out (eight items; e.g., "Am explicit that I am referring to someone of the same sex when I talk about romantic relationships and dating at work"). Response choices range from 1 (never) to 6 (always). This was an improvement on the WSIMM which had 4 response ranges. Internal consistency estimates which are measured with Cronbach's alpha and calculated from the pairwise correlations between items have been defined. It is routine in research to report coefficient alpha (Cronbach 1951) as the most commonly used measure of internal

consistency. When a multi item scale is administered, alpha can easily be calculated. Alphas ( $\alpha$ ) are widely used because research indicates that they are necessary and sufficient to assess reliability. Nunnally and Berstaien (1994) report that  $\alpha$  provides a good estimate of reliability because sampling of content is usually the major source of measurement error for static constructs. Ferketich (1991) recommended that corrected item-total correlations should range between 0.30 and 0.70 for a good scale. Internal consistency ranges between negative infinity and one, and 2-week test reliabilities for the initial WSIMM with a cohort of 172 gay and lesbian college and university student affairs professionals were characterised as follows: Passing ( $\alpha = 0.37$ ,  $r = 0.66$ ), Covering ( $\alpha = 0.73$ ,  $r = 0.59$ ), Implicitly Out ( $\alpha = 0.53$ ,  $r = 0.59$ ), and Explicitly Out ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ,  $r = 0.87$ ). Factor analytic findings somewhat supported the intended structure, producing three correlated factors (Passing/Covering, Implicitly Out, Explicitly Out), and correlations with a measure of sexual orientation disclosure were basically as expected. Similar to the present sample, this initial scale development sample ranged in age from 23 to 63 years and was predominantly (87%) white (Anderson et al. 2001). The WSIMM-R incorporates revision of three Implicitly Out items that Anderson et al. (2001) observed could be interpreted as examples of either covering or implicitly out behaviours as well as minor wording changes to include bisexual respondents. This was important as the present study was also targeting bisexual participants.

Psychometric evaluation of the WSIMM-R provided information concerning reliability and validity. Internal consistency estimates were as follows: Passing = 0.59, Covering = 0.79, Implicitly Out = 0.75, and Explicitly Out = 0.95. Reliability for the Implicitly Out scale of the WSIMM-R was stronger than the reliability for the Implicitly Out scale of the original WSIMM, whereas reliability for the Passing scale remained low with little variance on most items. Correlations among the WSIMM-R scales were all statistically significant and consistent with the proposed structure of the measure. Moderate positive correlations between Passing and Covering provide evidence of convergent validity among scales that assess concealment of sexual orientation. Moderate positive correlations between Implicitly Out and Explicitly Out provide evidence of convergent validity among scales that assess use of revealing identity management strategies. Moderate negative correlations for Passing with both Implicitly Out and Explicitly Out, and moderately strong negative correlations for Covering with both Implicitly Out and Explicitly Out, provide evidence of discriminant validity among



scales at opposing ends of the continuum of identity management (Anderson et al., 2001). Correlations between the four WSIMM-R scales and the three IMS-R scales also provide evidence of convergent validity. Conceptually similar scales (e.g., Passing with Counterfeiting, Explicitly Out with Integrating) yielded statistically significant positive correlations, and conceptually dissimilar scales (e.g., Passing with Integrating, Explicitly Out with Avoiding) yielded statistically significant negative correlations.

Data from the Lance et al. (2010) study supports the usefulness of the WSIMM-R for measuring sexual identity management, while also pointing to the need for additional research. Reliability estimates for Covering, Implicitly Out, and Explicitly Out were acceptable. Correlations among the WSIMM-R scales and between WSIMM-R and IMS-R scales were all statistically significant and in the expected direction, providing evidence of convergent validity. In addition, statistically significant differences in WSIMM-R scale scores across groups self-identifying at distinct places on the identity management continuum provide evidence of discriminant validity among the four scales. The WSIMM-R is sufficiently well developed for continued use in research concerning the experiences of gay, lesbian and bisexual employees. Given the centrality of the experience of workplace identity management for GLB employees, it was recommended that researchers consider assessing this variable in future vocational research with GLB participants.

Taken together, data from the Lance et al. (2010) study and the initial scale development study (Anderson et al. 2001) suggests that the WSIMM-R is a promising measure of workplace sexual identity management, particularly for white GLB employees. In addition to the specific limitations of the WSIMM-R already addressed, more research is also needed to further examine the construct of identity management and provide stronger evidence of construct validity of the measure. From the above it is clear that this measure was extremely useful for this study and hence selected as the most important for measuring sexual identity disclosure.

### **7.9.3 The Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS)**

The DASS-42 is a set of three self-report scales designed to measure the negative emotional states of depression, anxiety and stress. The DASS was constructed not merely as another set of scales to measure conventionally defined emotional states, but

to further the process of defining, understanding, and measuring the clinically significant emotional states usually described as depression, anxiety and stress. Each of the three DASS scales contains 14 items, divided into subscales of 2-5 items with similar content. The Depression scale assesses dysphoria, hopelessness, devaluation of life, self-deprecation, lack of interest/involvement, anhedonia, and inertia. The Anxiety scale assesses autonomic arousal, skeletal muscle effects, situational anxiety, and subjective experience of anxious affect. The Stress scale is sensitive to levels of chronic non-specific arousal. It assesses difficulty relaxing, nervous arousal, and being easily upset/agitated, irritable/over-reactive and impatient. Subjects are asked to use 4-point severity/frequency scales to rate the extent to which they have experienced each state over the past week. Scores for Depression, Anxiety and Stress are calculated by summing the scores for the relevant items (see Lovibond & Lovibond 1995). Scores of Depression, Anxiety and Stress are calculated by summing the scores for the relevant items. The depression scale items are 3, 5, 10, 13, 16, 17, 21, 24, 26, 31, 34, 37, 38, 42. The anxiety scale items are 2, 4, 7, 9, 15, 19, 20, 23, 25, 28, 30, 36, 40, 41. The stress scale items are 1, 6, 8, 11, 12, 14, 18, 22, 27, 29, 32, 33, 35, 39.

Normative data is available on a number of Australian samples. From a sample of 2914 adults the means (and standard deviations) were 6.34 (6.97), 4.7 (4.91), and 10.11 (7.91) for the depression, anxiety, and stress scales, respectively. A clinical sample reported means (and standard deviations) of 10.65 (9.3), 10.90 (8.12), and 21.1 (11.15) for the three measures. The DASS-21 shortened version was used in the study. Its utility is supported by evidence which is well defined in the literature. Research illustrates that internal consistency for each of the subscales of the 42-item and the 21-item versions of the questionnaire are typically high (e.g. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of 0.96 to 0.97 for DASS-Depression, 0.84 to 0.92 for DASS-Anxiety, and 0.90 to 0.95 for DASS-Stress (Lovibond 1995, Brown et al 1997, Antony et al 1998, Clara 2001, Page 2007). There is good evidence that the scales are stable over time (Brown et al, 1997) and responsive to treatment directed at mood problems (Ng 2007). Evidence has been found for construct (Lovibond 1995) and convergent (Crawford & Henry 2003) validity for the anxiety and depression subscales of both the long and short versions of the DASS. The DASS was therefore used in the study to measure the negative emotional states resulting from workplace discrimination as it asked participants to choose the symptoms they

experienced due to having to manage their sexual orientation/identity in their workplace.

#### **7.9.4 The Degree of Disclosure Scale-II (DODS-II) and the Kinsey Heterosexual-Homosexual Scale**

The degree of disclosure II subscale is a five-item measure that was developed by Driscoll, Kelly and Fassinger (1996, p. 235) and was originally used to assess levels of workplace disclosure in a sample of “employed lesbians”. The first item asked, “How out are you at work?” and participants were directed to indicate their responses according to the following options on a Likert-type scale: 0 = “Out to nobody at work,” 1 = “Out to one co-worker,” 2 = “Out to two co-workers,” 3 = “Out to three co-workers,” 4 = “Out to immediate supervisor,” 5 = “Out to five co-workers,” and 6 = “Out to all co-workers/supervisors.” Driscoll et al. (1996) noted that “Out to immediate supervisor” and “Out to five co-workers” were both anchored as 4 because, they stated, “telling one’s immediate supervisor may be equivalent to telling several other colleagues” (p. 235). The remaining four items of the disclosure subscale II were arranged on the following Likert scale: 1 = “never,” 2 = “sometimes,” 3 = “always”. These items were “Is your workplace somewhere you feel comfortable being yourself?” “Are you involved in any lesbian or gay-related activities at work?” “Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to work-sponsored events?” “Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to off-job parties or events given by employees and personnel from your workplace?” Items scores were summed to yield a total score for the measure. The Cronbach alpha obtained for the original measure was 0.52, and the authors reported that analyses showed the items were both appropriate and psychometrically consistent for evaluating disclosure (Driscoll et al. 1996, p. 235). Item analysis conducted for this study showed an adequate internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.75$ ). The Scale was used to ensure consistency of disclosure as an adjunct to question 6 in Section A of the questionnaire, which asked about sexuality and the Kinsey Scale. Total scores, frequencies, and descriptives for the disclosure subscale II are discussed in the Results chapter.

#### **Kinsey Heterosexual-Homosexual Scale**

The Heterosexual-Homosexual Rating Scale, occasionally mentioned as the “Kinsey Scale,” was designed by Alfred Kinsey and his colleagues Wardell Pomeroy and Clyde Martin in 1948, in order to justify research findings that revealed people did not fit into

well-defined and exclusive heterosexual or homosexual groups. The Kinsey scale ranges from 0, for those who would classify themselves as exclusively heterosexual with no incidents with or aspiration for sexual activity with their same sex, to 6, for those who would identify themselves as exclusively homosexual with no incidents with or aspiration for sexual activity with those of the opposite sex, and 1-5 for those who would identify themselves with changing points of desire for sexual interest with either sex, including "incidental" or "occasional" desire for sexual activity with the same sex. The Scale was used to ensure consistency of disclosure as an adjunct to question 6 in Section A of the questionnaire, which asked about sexuality and the DODS-II.

#### **7.9.5 The Workplace Equality Index (WEI)**

The Workplace Equality Index is Britain's leading tool for employers to measure their efforts to tackle discrimination and create inclusive workplaces for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender employees. The Stonewall Workplace Equality Index is a yearly benchmarking practice lead by the gay, lesbian and bisexual rights charity Stonewall to establish and highlight the UK's top employers for gay, lesbian and bisexual employees. The index was inaugurated in 2005 as the Corporate Equality Index, altering its name to the Workplace Equality Index in 2006. Since 2005, more than 750 major employers have taken part in the Index using Stonewall's criteria as a model for good practice. It is now being used in a number of countries around the world including Australia under the auspices of Pride and Diversity (Ms D Hough 2012, pers. Comm., June). The Corporate Equality Index has been maintained for U.S. businesses by the Human Rights Campaign. A modified version of the UK WEI is now used in the Australian labour market and referred to as the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI). The screening criteria include mandatory language in a company's equal employment opportunity (EEO) statement prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, offering health benefits to same-sex partners or spouses of employees, along with other corporate benefits and privileges. Items request participants to report on whether their organisation has GLBT diversity policies and strategies linked to wider organisational goals. It requests a response on how an organisation is involved in providing an inclusive culture and employment for GLBT employees. It asks also whether organisations provide in-house diversity training. Finally, the index requests a response on the level of organisational GLBT community engagement.

In the present study, the 25 question measure was modified into 5 representative questions for each section of the index with a yes or no answer in regard to how the organisation's policies and strategies are GLBT inclusive. Each yes and no question had a value representative of the values in the original survey. In the present study, the WEI was used to measure the latent variable referred to as organisational support (theoretical construct), which is what the original index was intended to measure.

#### **7.9.6 Basic Psychological Needs Well-being Scale**

Central to Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is the concept of basic psychological needs that are assumed to be innate and universal. According to the theory (Deci & Ryan 2000), the needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, must be accordingly satisfied for people to develop and function in healthy or optimal ways. The essential for autonomy is described as a person's desire to make their own choices and to communicate their feelings without constraints (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Moreover, autonomy should ultimately lead to actions which are self-initiated. When this basic for autonomy is fulfilled, a person will feel competent to choose and manage their own actions (Deci, Eghrari, Patrick & Leone 1994; Deci & Ryan 2000 2002 2008; McDaniel 2011; Vallerand, 1997). This need for competence denotes a person's desire to bring about and influence the environment and to achieve a chosen outcome or outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This need is articulated by a person's predisposition to engage in selected actions which will permit him to employ his skills and to develop new capabilities (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Deci, Ryan, Gagne', Leone, Usunov & Kornazheva 2001).). Consequently, a person's need for competence is fulfilled when they are sufficiently skilled to carry out an action to the best of their ability, and accordingly, reach their goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2002; Koestner, Otis, Powers, Pelletier & Gagnon 2008; McDaniel 2011; Sheldon, Ryan, Deci & Kasser 2004; Vallerand 1997).). The need for relatedness denotes the person's aspiration to establish mutually caring connections and healthy associations with others (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Sheldon & Elliot 1999). This refers to the person's need to feel allied to others, to love and to care, and which is reciprocal in nature (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2002; Sheldon & Elliot 1999).

Many of the propositions of SDT derive from the postulate of fundamental psychological needs, and the concept has proven essential for making meaningful

interpretations of a wide range of empirically isolated phenomena. Properly SDT encompasses five mini-theories, each of which was progressed to describe a set of motivationally founded phenomena that arose from laboratory and field research. Each, consequently, concentrates on one facet of motivation or personality functioning. Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT) is one of the mini theories and enlarges the concept of evolved psychological needs and their relationship to psychological health and well-being. BPNT contends that psychological well-being and optimum functioning is grounded on autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Thus, contexts that promote versus obstruct these needs would invariantly impact well-being. The theory contends that all three needs are vital and that if any is hindered, there will be definite functional costs.

The Basic Psychological Needs Scale is a cluster of scales, which attends to need satisfaction in one's life overall. Encompassed in this is the work domain and the interpersonal relationships domain. The initial scale had 21 items regarding the three needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Certain studies have worked with only nine items. Specifically, three items per subscale. In the present study the nine item version was used to measure psychological well-being.

#### *Correlates of the Basic Psychological Needs Well-being Scale'*

Within SDT, need satisfaction is important for the well-being of employees. Several studies have shown a positive relationship between need satisfaction and well-being (Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan, 2000; Uysal, Lin, & Knee, 2010) and a negative relationship between need satisfaction and ill-being (Niemic, Ryan, & Deci, 2009), as well as between need satisfaction and daily fluctuations of well-being (Ryan, Bernstein, & Brown, 2010; Uysal et al., 2010). Largely, need satisfaction systematically leads to improved psychological well-being within numerous contexts, including family and friends (Milyavskaya & Koestner, 2011), sports (Reinboth, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2004), and education (Vallerand, Fortier, & Guay, 1997; Milyavskaya & Koestner, 2011). Organisational research has also shown that need satisfaction is positively linked to well-being (e.g. Kasser & Ryan, 1999), intrinsic motivation (e.g. Ryan & Deci, 2000), and higher performance (e.g. Baard et al., 2004) in the workplace, and is negatively linked to distress at work (e.g. Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, & Lens, 2008). Lastly, research that has considered autonomy, competence, and relatedness

individually has revealed that each of these three needs was positively related to employees' optimal functioning (Lynch, Plant, & Ryan, 2005) and intrinsic motivation (Gagné, Forest, Gilbert, Aubé, Morin, & Marloni, 2009). These results are in line with the idea that satisfaction of each of the three basic needs contributes to one's personal growth (Ryan, 1995).

#### **7.9.7 General Job Satisfaction (JS)**

General Job satisfaction was assessed using the well documented 5-item job satisfaction scale designed by Seibold and Lindsay (2000). These items are used to measure employee's satisfaction with their work and job as an entity. Participants rated these items on a 5-point continuum (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to indicate perspectives on their employment experiences. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for these items have been obtained in the high .80s and low .90s (Castro & Adler 2000; Seibold & Lindsay 2000). With regard to validity, job satisfaction scores established on these items have been indicated to be separate from non-work- associated factors such as parental status, marital status, or housing location (Seibold & Lindsay 2000). Cronbach's alpha for job satisfaction items in the Seibold and Lindsay sample was .95. Item ratings were gathered to yield a composite score, in order to form a single indicator factor. This is used in LVSEM for a number of reasons, one being when the researcher wishes to use summated rating scales. Here the error variance estimation for single indicator latent variables arises from the basic equation of the measurement model;  $\delta x = (1 - a) \times \sigma x$ .

#### **7.9.8 The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)**

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener 1985) was developed to assess satisfaction with a respondent's life as a whole. The scale allows respondents to integrate and weigh life domains in whatever way they choose and hence there are no specific domains such as health or finances for example. Normative data is available for the scale, which shows good convergent validity with other scales and with other assessments of subjective well-being. The Satisfaction with Life Scale was designed to assess a person's global judgment of life satisfaction which is theoretically predicted to depend on a comparison of life circumstances to one's standards. The items were generated on the basis of the guiding theoretical principal that life satisfaction represents a judgment by the respondent of his or her life in comparison to standards. An initial factor analysis indicated that the items formed three factors: Life satisfaction per se, positive affect and negative affect. Life satisfaction per se is referred by Diener et al. (1985) as the

cognitive-judgment aspect of subjective well-being. Ten items had loadings on the life satisfaction factor of 0.60 or above. This group of ten items was further reduced to five to eliminate redundancies or wording with minimal costs in terms of alpha reliability. The SWLS was developed as a scale to measure life satisfaction as a cognitive-judgment process only and to exclude other factors as occurred in previous Life Scales (Diener et al. 1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale has also been examined for both reliability and sensitivity and has shown strong internal reliability and moderate temporal stability. Diener (1985) reported a coefficient alpha of 0.87 for the scale and a 2 month test-retest stability coefficient of 0.82. Other researchers have found similar results (see Alfonso & Allison 1992; Magnus, Diener, Fujita & Pavot 1993). It is also noted to be suitable for use with different age groups (Diener, Emmons, Randy, Larson & Griffin 1985). Scores on the Satisfaction with Life Scale can be interpreted in terms of absolute as well as relative life satisfaction. A score of twenty represents the neutral point on the scale (person is equally satisfied dissatisfied) Scores between 21 and 25 represent slightly satisfied and scores between 15 and 19 represent slightly dissatisfied. Scores from 5 to 9 are indicative of extremely dissatisfied with life.

### **7.10 Pilot Study**

A short pilot study was carried out with the aim of pre-testing the survey instrument with particular reference to section A, the biographical section. This was to ensure that this section of the questionnaire was worded appropriately and therefore to increase the likelihood of the success of the study by avoiding any ambiguity in question construction (see Baker 1994, p. 182-3). The questionnaire was placed on Survey Monkey and 20 GLBT identified participants were asked to complete the survey and to then comment on the questionnaire in an open ended last question. Here feedback was provided on the demographic section only as all other measures were well defined in the literature as valid and reliable tools.

The following points were taken into consideration to determine the utility of the questionnaire:

1. Did each question ask what it was intended to ask?
2. Were all the words understood?
3. Did all respondents interpret the question in the same way?
4. Were all response choices appropriate?



5. Did the range of response choices actually used fit the question?
6. Did respondents correctly follow directions?
7. Did it create a positive impression that motivates people to respond?
8. To obtain feedback on how long it actually took to complete.
9. Did it collect the information required?

As a result of the feedback, some questions were changed. These were as follows:

- i) Atheist was added into the question on ‘What is your religious/spiritual background?’
- ii) (QA10) Current was left out in: ‘What is the best description of your employment status?’
- iii) (QA14) The categories for ‘how many people are employed in your workplace’ were set to match theoretical organisational categories for small to large organisations.

### **7.11 Statistical Methodology: Structural Equation Modelling**

Structural equation modelling (SEM) serves intentions comparable to multiple regression, but in a more formidable way which incorporates multiple latent independent factors each measured by multiple indicators, one or more latent dependents also each with multiple indicators; the modelling of mediators as both causes and effects, modelling of interactions, nonlinearities, correlated independents, measurement error, and correlated error terms. SEM can be utilised as a more effective substitute to multiple regression, path analysis, factor analysis, time series analysis, and analysis of covariance. That is, these techniques may be seen as particular cases of SEM.

Advantages of SEM paralleled to multiple regression include more flexible assumptions, remarkably permitting interpretation even in the face of multi-collinearity; use of confirmatory factor analysis to diminish measurement error by having multiple indicators per latent variable; the value of SEM's graphical modelling interface; the benefit of testing models overall rather than coefficients individually; the capability to test models with multiple dependents; the capacity to model mediating variables rather than be confined to an additive model (in OLS regression the dependent is a function of the sum of effects); the facility to model error terms; the capacity to test coefficients

across multiple between-subjects groups; and the ability to handle difficult data such as time series with auto correlated error, non-normal data, and partial data. Furthermore, where regression is extremely susceptible to error of interpretation due to misspecification, the SEM approach of comparing alternate models to evaluate relative model fit makes it more robust.

SEM is typically viewed as a confirmatory rather than exploratory method, using one of three approaches:

1. Strictly confirmatory approach: A model is tested utilising SEM goodness-of-fit tests to verify whether the pattern of variances and co-variances in the data is consistent with a structural (path) model specified by the researcher. But, as other unexamined models may fit the data as well or better, an accepted model is only a not-disconfirmed model.
2. Alternative models approach: One may test two or more causal models to decide which has the best fit. There are numerous goodness-of-fit measures, revealing different concerns, and usually three or four are described by the researcher. While advantageous in principle, this method runs into the real-world problem that in specific research areas, the researcher may not locate in the literature two well-developed alternate models to test.
3. Model development approach: In method, much SEM research unites confirmatory and exploratory purposes: a model is tested using SEM techniques, found to be inadequate, and an alternative model is then tested based on changes proposed by SEM modification indexes. This is the most customary method located in the literature (Cohen et al. 2003; Kline 2005; Schumacher & Lomax 2004). The difficulty with the model advancement method is that models confirmed in this way are post-hoc ones which may not be stable (may not fit new data, having been created grounded on the uniqueness of an initial dataset). Researchers might try to overcome this difficulty by employing a cross-validation strategy under which the model is established using a calibration data sample and then confirmed using an independent validation sample.

The present study uses approach one (1) to ascertain whether the hypothesised model is a model of good fit. Irrespective of approach, SEM cannot itself define causal arrows in

models or resolve causal ambiguities. It is completely conceivable that one model with arrows drawn in the opposite direction from a second model may fit the data equally well.

SEM is a statistical technique which includes and integrates path analysis and factor analysis. In effect, the use of SEM software for a model in which each variable has only one indicator is a type of path analysis. Use of SEM software for a model in which each variable has multiple indicators but there are no direct effects (arrows) relating the variables is a type of factor analysis. Typically, SEM represents a hybrid model with both multiple indicators for each variable (called latent variables or factors) and paths specified connecting the latent variables. Synonyms for SEM are covariance structure analysis, covariance structure modelling, and analysis of covariance structures. While these synonyms rightly specify that analysis of covariance is the focus of SEM, SEM also analyses the mean structure of a model. It is for these reasons that LVSEM was used in the present study along with the fact that SEM is now being used in more recent GLBT research (Moradi 2006; Ragins & Cornwell 2001) where numerous variables come into play and have an effect on each other. SEM is useful for this very reason as discussed earlier. The present study has three (3) independent variables and six (6) dependent variables making SEM analysis apt for this type of research project.

The statistical package used was the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) and this also served to support the initial stages of cleaning the data via data screening and determining whether there were outliers which needed to be dealt with.

## **7.12 Data Screening**

In the study, both the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) were used to screen the data. A strength of AMOS is that missing data can easily be estimated within the program by using the Estimate means and intercepts in analysis properties. This does not affect the input data file. However, when using this method, a number of fit indices are no longer calculated, nor can bootstrapping be performed. In SPSS, and taking into account the two main conditions for replacing data without unbiased estimates, that of i) missing completely are random (MCAR) and ii) missing at random (MAR) according to Rubin (1976), missing data in SPSS can be replaced irrespective of whether the data is missing completely at random

or missing at random. In the present study complete sets of data were missing and data in excel was initially used to deal with this. All missing data values in the original raw data were left empty despite the usual coding of 99 or 999 for missing data. This was simply a preference for easy identification as no analyses were needed to be run on the missing data. The empty data cells were removed when AMOS was used.

### **7.13 Outliers**

Datasets which contain univariate and multivariate outliers can have profound effects on fit indices and parameter estimates and as such need to be investigated particularly when using SEM. These outlier effects provide significant altered covariates in the variances/Covariance's matrices and hence on the goodness of fit statistics primarily on the Root Mean Square Residual (RMR). Often suggesting poor fit when the actual model would be a good fit if these outliers were dealt with. This is because the RMR is the square root of the mean squared residuals between the sample covariance's and the fitted (or implied) co-variances. What results is a significantly inflated mean of the residuals, which causes the poor fit in these indices. It was important to assess the raw data for any outliers to prevent type I and Type II from occurring. The main outlier which was identified in this study was whether the outlier was not a true member of the population sampled. In the present study this was taken to be any heterosexual participants as these would need to be deleted.

### **7.14 Multivariate Outliers**

SEM is particularly sensitive to violations of multivariate non-normality in which the combination of scores is unusual. The test for this is to use the *Mahalanobis distance* function of AMOS. This detects the distance of a point for a participant from the centre of the distribution for all participants. However, this function of AMOS cannot be used unless multiple regression analysis has taken place. The MR is not of interest here, but the procedure which gets the information required and a chi-square table needs to be used. This is used by identifying the number of IVs and critical cut off points at .001. If the maximum score for the participants in the data set is above this value relative to the number of IVs then there is evidence for at least one univariate outlier. One then simply explores the data set for any values above this value to determine how many multivariate outliers there are and these will need to be deleted. Finally, AMOS

provides a function called Mardia's (1970; 1974) which provides a test of multivariate normality which indicates multivariate non-normality. This error may cause the research to make both Type I and II errors (Boomsma 1983).

If one needs to adjust for the lack of multivariate normality, AMOS in analysis properties has a function called *perform bootstrap* and *Bollen-Stine bootstrap*, when these functions are selected; it sets a post-hoc adjustment to account for non-normality (Bollen-Stine 1992). This is a modification of the model chi-square, used to test for model fit, adjusting distributional misspecification of the model (that is adjusting for the lack of multivariate normality). Here, appropriate standard errors are produced in AMOS through the bootstrap function.

As mentioned earlier, Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) was used as the statistics package to not only screen the data but to draw up the path diagram and hence design the structural model. Based on the literature, there are a number of steps in AMOS modelling (8) to model conceptualisation, path diagram construction and final model specification and these were all followed in the present study. Step 8, model cross-validation which entails fitting the model to a new sample of data, was left out as no new data was collected due to the cross-sectional nature of the data collection.

## 7.15 Steps required when using AMOS

### Step 1: Model Conceptualisation

Model conceptualisation involved the development of a strong theory about the set of variables including how they relate to each other. This was based on the literature and resulted in my early ideas about my conceptual model. This process required clarity around the independent variables (referred to as exogenous variable in SEM) and the dependent variables (referred to as endogenous variables in SEM). In the present study, the following were modelled:

Table 4  
Types of variables and names

Theoretical construct	Type of variable	SEM variable
SO concealment (LV)	Independent variable	Exogenous variable
SO disclosure (LV)	Independent variable	Exogenous variable
Organisational support(LV)	Independent variable	Exogenous variable

Direct heterosexism (LV)	Dependent variable	Endogenous variable
Indirect heterosexism (LV)	Dependent variable	Endogenous variable
Job satisfaction (LV)	Dependent variable	Endogenous variable
Mental health (LV)	Dependent variable	Endogenous variable
Psychological Well-being (LV)	Dependent variable	Endogenous variable
Satisfaction with Life (LV)	Dependent variable	Endogenous variable

Notes: LV = latent variable

Structural models include not only the constructs and construct relationships such as those represented in Figure 1, but also the observed variables used to measure each of the constructs. These are indicated as manifest variables. In the full latent variable model, mental health is broken up into 3 variables making the total number of variables represented in the model to 12. Mental health = Depression, Anxiety and Stress variables.

## Step 2: Path Diagram Construction

Step two involved a formalisation of the model about both the relationship amongst the set of latent variables and how the latent variables could best be measured. This step indicated how the substantive (theoretical) hypotheses were visually represented and the measurement scheme. This resulted in the initial conceptual model being drawn based on the existing literature and was a pictorial representation illustrating the variables under consideration in the model and the relationship amongst them.

## The Conceptual Model

The conceptual model was designed from earlier international models and the present extant literature in this area (Moradi 2009; Ragins & Cornwell 2001; Waldo 1999) and is represented in figure 1.

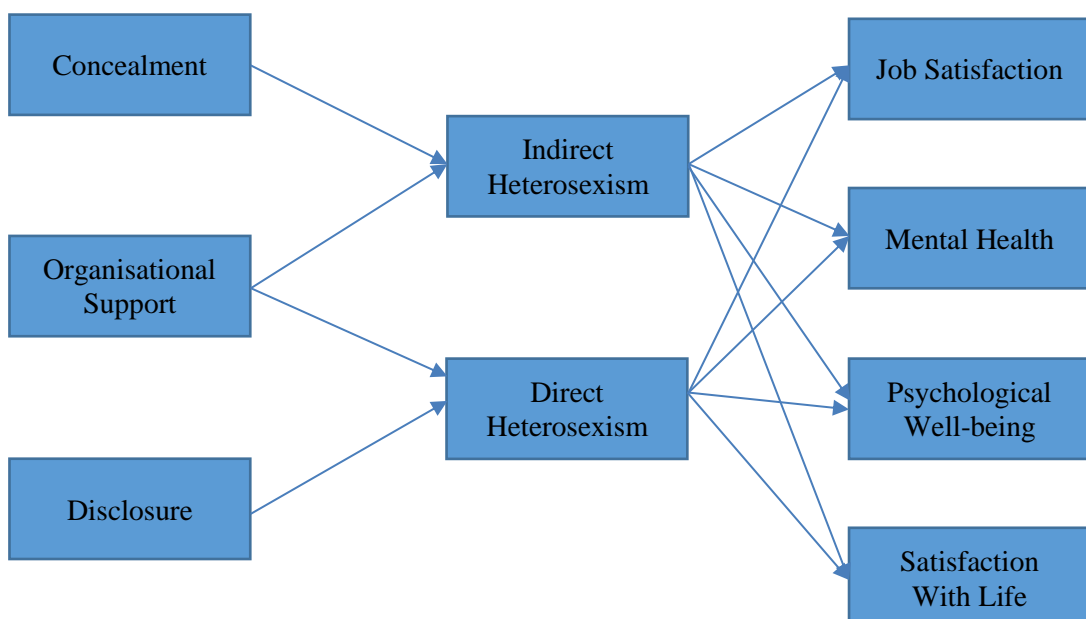


Figure 1

Conceptual Model relating concealment, organisational factors, heterosexism and well-being.

According to the conceptual model, perceptions of heterosexism act as a mediator for sexual orientation (disclosure or concealment) and organisational support. Thus perceptions of heterosexism (direct heterosexism and indirect) are directly influenced by SO and Organisational support. The mediator (perceptions of heterosexism) thus acts as a variable which represents the generative mechanism through which the focal independent variables are able to influence the dependent variable of interest, well-being. In general, a given variable may be said to function as a mediator to the extent that it accounts for the relation between the predictor and the criterion (Baron & Kenny 1986). Mediators thus explain how external physical events take on internal psychological significance. In the present study, heterosexism (the mediator) explains how sexual identity management and organisational support (external events) present as psychological phenomena such as minority stress, in the form of well-being. This step is closely related to step 3.

### **Step 3: Model Specification**

Step 3 was followed by using Amos graphics to draw the path diagram for the conceptual model. The hypothesised path diagram involved representing the parameters to be estimated. In AMOS path diagram construction and model specification are synonymous. That is, model specification is achieved by drawing the path diagram and hence steps 2 and 3 are closely related.

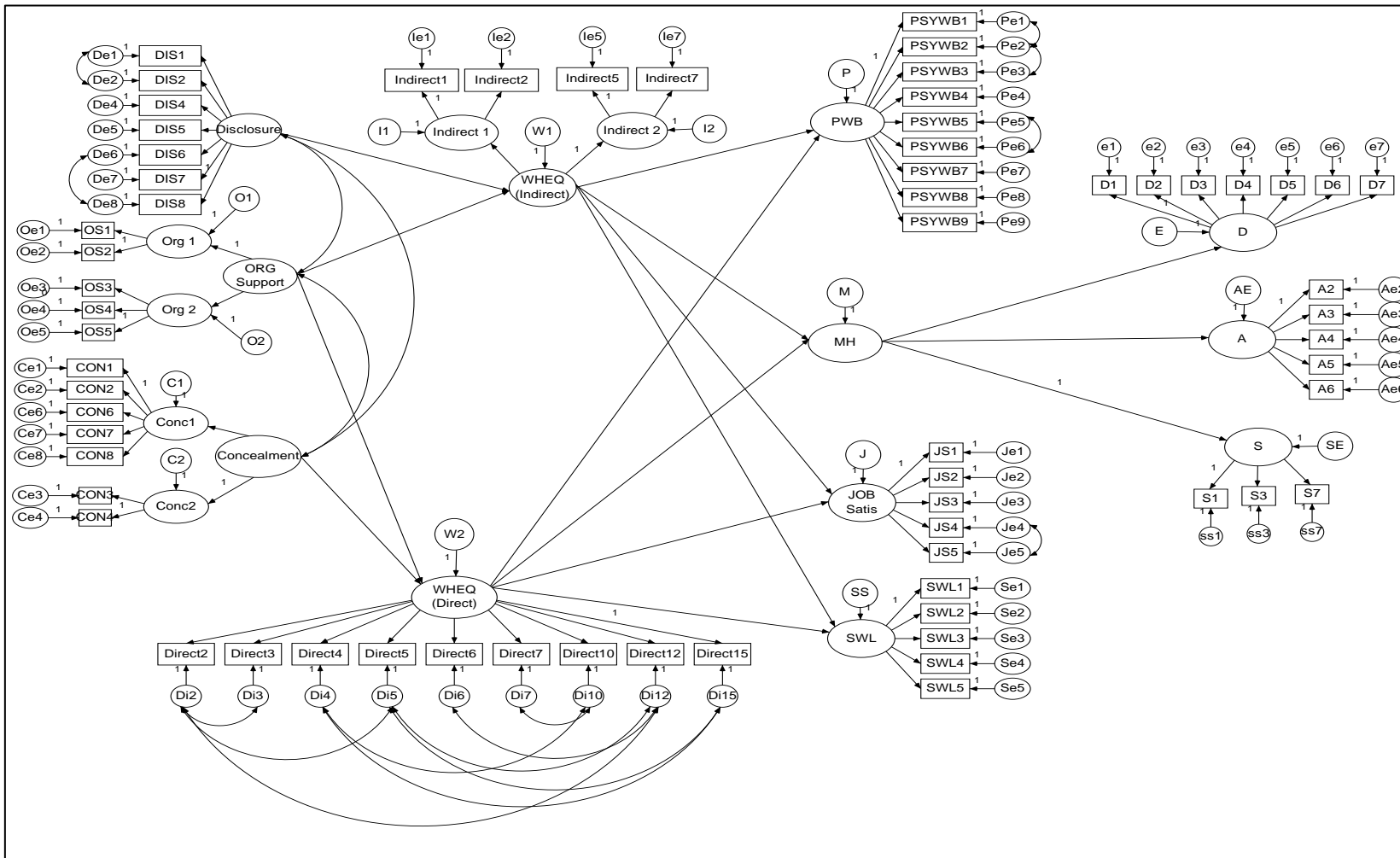


Figure 2  
Initial Structural Path Diagram



#### **Step 4: Model Identification**

This indicates that an 'identified' model is one for which each of the estimated parameters has a unique solution. To establish whether the model in the present study was identified or not, it was essential to compare the number of data points to the number of parameters to be estimated. Since the input data set is the sample variance/covariance matrix, the number of data points is the number of variances and covariance's in that matrix, which can be calculated as  $t \leq p(p + 1) / 2$ , where  $p$  is the number of measured variables. This is commonly referred to as the t-test (Bollen, 1989). If the number of data points equals the number of parameters to be estimated, then the model is "just identified" or "saturated." Such a model will fit the data completely, and consequently is of little use, although it can be used to approximate the values of the coefficients for the paths. If there are fewer data points than parameters to be estimated then the model is "under identified." In this case the parameters cannot be estimated, and the researcher needs to trim down the number of parameters to be estimated by deleting or correcting some of them. When the number of data points is greater than the number of parameters to be estimated then the model is "over identified," and the analysis can progress.

In the study, the t-rule was calculated as:  $t \leq 11(11 + 1) / 2$ ,  $(11 \times 11) / 2$ ,  $132/2 = 66$ . Therefore, there were 66 non-redundant elements in the sample variance-covariance matrix.  $t \leq 66$ , with  $t$  (number of free parameters) and  $t = 20$  in the model, the model was over identified and analysis could take place.

In addition to the identification of the model, the scale of each independent variable must be set to a constant (typically to 1, as in  $z$  scores) or to that of one of the measured variables (a 'marker variable', one that is assumed to be exceptionally well related to the this latent variable and not to other latent variables in the model). To fix the scale to that of a measured variable one simply fixes to 1 the regression coefficient for the path from the latent variable to the measured variable. This was carried out in AMOS on the path diagram. Most often the scale of dependent latent variables is set to that of a measured variable. The scale of independent latent variables may be set to 1 or to the variance of a measured variable.

In the present study, the measurement portion of the model was identified as it met the following requirements:

- There is only one latent variable, it has at least three indicators that load on it, and the errors of these indicators are not correlated with each other.
- There are two or more latent variables, each has at least three indicators that load on it, and the errors of these indicators are not correlated, each indicator loads on only one factor, and the factors are allowed to covary.
- There are two or more latent variables, but there is a latent variable on which only two indicators load, the errors of the indicators are not correlated, each indicator loads on only one factor, and none of variances or co-variances between factors is zero.

In the present study identification of the Structural Model was identified as it met the following requirements:

- None of the latent dependent variables predicted another latent dependent variable.
- When a latent dependent variable does predict another latent dependent variable, the relationship is recursive, and the disturbances are not correlated. A relationship is recursive if the causal relationship is unidirectional (one line pointing from the one latent variable to the other). In a non-recursive relationship there are two lines between a pair of variables; one pointing from A to B and the other from B to A. Correlated disturbances are indicated by being connected with a single line with arrowhead on each end.
- When there is a non-recursive relationship between latent dependent variables or disturbances. The present model is recursive.

### **Step 5: Parameter Estimation**

In the study a number of functions in AMOS were used for this step of parameter estimation, viz. 'Analysis properties'. Here three criteria were important, i) the feasibility of the parameter estimates, ii) the appropriateness of the standard errors and iii) the statistical significance of the parameter estimates. Here the primary focus of the estimation process was to yield parameter values such that the discrepancy (i.e. residual values) between the sample covariance matrix  $S$  and population covariance matrix

implied by the model was minimal. Here, the aim was to minimise the differences between the matrix sample variances and co-variances ( $S$ ) and the matrix predicted variances and co-variances ( $\Sigma$ ) generated from using a set of parameters that describe the model underlying the relationship amongst the variables.

#### **Step 6: Assessment of model fit**

A model is assessed, as a good fit if the difference between the sample variances and co-variances and the implied variances and co-variances derived from the parameter estimates is small. A number of goodness of fit statistics were used including the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio with the hypothesised model. Using AMOS, these included the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), the Root Mean Square Residual and Standardised Root Mean Residual (RMR), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (RMSEA; Preacher & Coffman 2006).

#### **Step 7: Model re-specification**

If the model is judged to be a poor fit, it is possible to make some modifications to the model to improve the fit. See chapter 8 for this.

#### **Step 8: Model cross-validation**

Step 8 refers to model cross-validation which entails fitting the model to a new sample of data. This step was left out as no new data was collected due to the cross-sectional nature of the data collection.

#### **Model Evaluation**

Uniform with other statistical methods such as multiple or logistic regression, a researcher using SEM must contemplate the degree of variance described by the model being advanced. Nevertheless, the degree of 'fit' that endures between the model and the available data must also be considered (Pascarella & Terezini 1991; Smart & Pascarella 1987). The most basic fit statistic is the chi-square ( $\chi^2_m$ ). It should be noted that chi-square is especially sensitive to sample size, with small samples increasing the likelihood of Type I error and large samples increasing the likelihood of type II error. For this purpose, Kaplan (2000) and Kline (2005) both caution against the exclusive use of a single goodness of fit measure. As an alternative, the use of multiple measures is

endorsed (Cabrera, Nora & Castaneda 1993; Napoli & Wortman 1998). In the present study, model fit was examined using a variety of additional fit indexes, including the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

### **Model Chi-Square**

As stated earlier, the model chi-square is the most basic fit index (Kaplan 2000; Kline 2005). All recursive models, where effects are in one direction only (as occurs in the model put forward) and where there are no feedback loops, the model is deemed identified. Models which are just identified offer a perfect fit between the data and the model. In a nutshell, there is only one answer. Just identified models occur when the number of model parameters is equal to the number of observations. When a path model has fewer parameters than observations, it is deemed over identified. Most real world problems offer multiple solutions and as such are over identified. In short, the chi-square compares the over identified model with a hypothesised just-identified model.

Further, the chi-square is susceptible to over inflation with large sample size (Kline 2005) and as such increases the likelihood of failing to reject the null hypothesis. Thus, researchers using SEM must not rely solely on the chi-square statistic to conclude appropriate model fit. This study will examine and report on additional indicators of fit. The comparative fit index (CFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) were also used to evaluate fit. The following rules of thumb were employed to evaluate model fit. For ‘good; fit:  $CFI \geq .95$ ,  $RMSEA \leq .06$ .

### **Root Mean Square Error of Approximation**

The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was planned to account for changing sample size. As such, it is deemed a parsimony-adjusted index. A value of zero is considered the best fit, with higher numbers signifying an increasingly worse fit. Results  $< 0.05$  are deemed a good fit (Kaplan, 2000).

### **Model Interpretation**

Kline (2005) cautioned that good fit does not mean high predictability. Sizable disturbances (unexplained variance) may mean that a model with a perfect fit may not have a good predictive ability. Researchers must also deliberate over the direct, indirect and total effects of one variable on another. Direct effects, or paths of coefficients act much like standard regression coefficients, in that a single unit change in the predictor variable represents a particular change in the subsequent variable. In this study Weighted Least Squares (WLS) is the procedure used to estimate path coefficients for each of the free parameters. Indirect effects are understood in the same way as direct effects and are considered as the product of a series of direct effects where one variable acts upon another through a third. Total effects represent the sum of direct and indirect effects of one variable on another.

### **Model Modification**

An understanding of both the model fit and the path coefficients permits the researcher to make modifications as required. The most familiar way to correct model fit is to relax restrictions. A restriction ensues when a model assumes that no direct effects exist between two variables. When a recursive model has zero restrictions, it is presumed to be just-identified and the data and model will have perfect fit. However most models are designed to assist the researcher better explain how predictor variables affect the criterion variable and as such, models that are just identified as complex as the data themselves do not allow for increased understanding. When comparing two models with approximately equal fit, Kline (2005) proposes that the simplest model or the one with the greatest number of restrictions should be preferred.

Structural equation modelling (SEM) has noteworthy advantages over customary statistical components, factor analysis and path analysis. As parameters are simultaneously estimated for both the measurement (confirmatory factor analysis) and the structural (path analysis) models, all parameters are comparative to the other observed variables and the model as a whole. It also permits the researcher to test not only the fit between the data and the model, but to assess the summative effects of the variable as they relate to one another.

AMOS was used in the study as it permitted an analysis of data and performs SEM functions. Moreover, AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) was chosen for this study as it is user friendly and is used for the analysis of means and covariance structures (as the name implies). AMOS has three options with which to work from: AMOS graphics where one works directly from a path diagram and two other methods which work from equation statements. In this study the AMOS graphics mode was used where all options related to the analyses are available from drop down menus and hence are user friendly. Moreover, all estimates derived from the analyses are represented in text format as well as graphically.

Data analysis using SEM is a multi-step process. The following is a step-by-step outline which details the process used to complete the analysis in this study.

### **Research Methodology**

In the present study relationships between numerous constructs and variables were examined making SEM an appropriate methodology of choice. As mentioned in chapter 6, SEM is designed to work with latent variables and it can simultaneously solve multiple related equations. It offers a number of advantages over some more familiar methods and therefore provides a general framework for linear modelling. SEM allows great flexibility on how the equations are specified.

Covariance-Based SEM analysis requires hard distributional assumptions and it estimates the model parameters so that the discrepancy between the estimated and sample covariance matrices is minimised. The present study examines the relationship between reflective constructs and thus covariance-based SEM analysis is the most suitable analysis technique.

### **Parameter Estimates**

In the study, the measurement model was estimated by the Maximum Likelihood method using the structural equation modelling programme AMOS 16.0. A two-step approach to model construction was adopted (Jin & Villegas 2007). The first step involves testing the hypothesised measurement model with the collected data for fit and construct validity using the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model, thereby building up the model one construct at a time. This is followed by testing the structural model

and the significance of the relationships.

It should be mentioned here that the use of CFA along with the SEM techniques is a relatively new way to test for the validity of constructs used in the model (Schumacher & Lomax 2004). This technique provides for a more rigorous analysis and has been found to provide better coefficient estimates as compared to the traditional regression analysis (Bollen 1989).

The goodness-of-fit measures assess the overall adequacy of a model, but do not provide information about individual parameters explicitly, and other aspects of the internal structure of a model (Bagozzi & Yi 1988). Indeed, it is possible that the various fit statistics might indicate a satisfactory model, but certain parameter estimates may not be significant and/or items with low reliability might exist. Therefore, it is important that researchers also scrutinise the individual parameters and internal structure of any model, in addition to the global fit measures (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). An important criterion in this regard is the examination of parameter estimates and the accompanying tests of significance (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). The t-test (the ratio of the parameter estimate to its estimated standard error) indicates whether individual parameter estimates are statistically different from zero. Based on a significance level of 0.05, critical ratio values, which are equivalent to t-values, associated with each of the loadings need to exceed 1.96 before the estimate can be considered reliably different from zero, the larger the critical ratio, the more significant the regression coefficient. The standardised regression weight or factor loading corresponds to effect size and should be at least 0.5 for the adequate reliability of individual items (Bagozzi & Yi 1988). The squared multiple correlation coefficient for each variable shows the proportion of variance in the respective items due to the hypothesised component. The closer the value is to one, the better that observed variable acts as an indicator of the latent construct, with values equal to or greater than 0.5 being acceptable.

## **7.16 Conclusions**

The chapter defined the epistemological position, the research design and the research questions. This was followed by a description of the data collection procedure and sampling technique, the measures used and the questionnaire design. The chapter also described the pilot study carried out on the questionnaire to ensure all questions were

clear and appropriate. This was followed by the presentation of the conceptual model and an explanation of the independent and dependent variables. The chapter then concluded with a description of latent variable structural equation modelling (LVSEM) the statistical analysis method used, with an examination of the steps required with AMOS to facilitate analysis and interpretation of the data and reporting of the results.



## **CHAPTER 8**

### **RESULTS**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the results of the study, including the measurement models and the full structural models. Empirical testing of the full structural model was used to ascertain whether the hypothesised relationships depicted in the conceptual model were supported by the sample data. The chapter also describes the respondent profile for all the data obtained.

#### **8.2 Descriptive data and respondent profile**

In total 367 questionnaires were obtained, which were either partially or fully completed. The analysis of respondents' biographical information, sexual orientation, and Employment Status is summarised below.

##### **8.2.1 Biographical Information**

###### **8.2.1.1 State of origin**

The distribution of respondents based on their state of origin show that there were 58.58% respondents from New South Wales, 13.62% respondents from Victoria, 11.72% respondents from Queensland, 7.90% respondents from ACT, 3.27% respondents from Tasmania, 2.18% respondents from Western Australia, 1.91% respondents from South Australia, and 0.82% respondents from the Northern Territory.

###### **8.2.1.2 Cultural affiliation**

It was observed that the cultural affiliation of 67.85% respondents were Australian, followed by South Asian (11.99%), Southern European (3.81%), South-east Asian (2.18%), North American (1.91%), South Asian (1.09%), Middle East (1.09%), North-east Asian (0.82%), South American (0.82%), Pacific Islander (0.54%), Indigenous Australian (0.54%), Eastern/Balkan European (0.27%), Muslim (0.27%), and Others (6.81%).

###### **8.2.1.3 Religious/spiritual background**

The religious/spiritual background of the respondents show that 38.15% were Atheist, 34.60% were Christian, 3.27% were Buddhist, (2.45%) were Jewish, 1.63% were

Islamic, and 0.54% of the respondents were Hindu. Further, it was also observed that 2.45% of the respondents refused to report their religious/spiritual background, and 16.89% of the respondents reported to be from different other religious and spiritual backgrounds.

#### 8.2.1.4 Level of education

The highest level of education of the respondents showed that the majority of the respondents held a Bachelor's Degree (36.99%) and Master's Degree (23.84%). Further, it was observed that there were 10.68% of respondents who held a higher school certificate (completed high school), 10.68% of the respondents held a Diploma. 7.95% of the respondents held a Trade or Technical and Further Education (TAFE, after High School) qualification. 7.4% of the respondents held a PhD/Doctoral Degree, and 2.47% respondents had Primary or Some Secondary School education.

Table 5  
Biographical Information

	Number of Respondents (N=367)	Percentage of Respondents (N=367)
<b>States</b>		
New South Wales	215	58.58%
Northern Territory	3	0.82%
ACT	29	7.90%
Victoria	50	13.62%
Queensland	43	11.72%
Western Australia	8	2.18%
South Australia	7	1.91%
Tasmania	12	3.27%
<b>Culture</b>		
Australian	249	67.85%
South-east Asian	8	2.18%
North-east Asian	3	0.82%
South Asian	4	1.09%
Northern European	44	11.99%
Southern European	14	3.81%
Eastern/Balkan European	1	0.27%
Middle East	4	1.09%
Pacific Islander	2	0.54%
Indigenous Australian	2	0.54%
North American	7	1.91%
South American	3	0.82%
Muslim	1	0.27%
Others	25	6.81%
<b>Religion</b>		
Christian	127	34.60%

Jewish	9	2.45%
Islamic	6	1.63%
Hindu	2	0.54%
Buddhist	12	3.27%
Atheist	140	38.15%
Refused	9	2.45%
Others	62	16.89%
<b>Education</b>		
Primary/Some Secondary School	9	2.47%
Higher School Certificate (Year 12/A-Levels)	39	10.68%
Trade or TAFE qualification	29	7.95%
Diploma	39	10.68%
Bachelor's Degree	135	36.99%
Master's Degree	87	23.84%
PhD/Doctoral Degree	27	7.40%

### 8.2.2 Sexual Orientation

The demographic information of the respondents related to their sexual orientation indicated that 49.59% of the respondents were male, 46.32% of the respondents were female, and 4.09% of the respondents were transgender. Further, the sexual orientation of the respondents showed that 45.78% respondents were gay men, 34.88% of the respondents were lesbian, 17.44% of the respondents were bisexual, and 1.91% of the transgender respondents were straight. The analysis of respondents' descriptions about their sexuality on the Kinsey scale indicated that 54.5% of the respondents were exclusively homosexual, 24.8% of the respondents were predominantly homosexual and only incidentally heterosexual, 8.72% of the respondents were predominantly homosexual but incidentally heterosexual, 5.99% of the respondents were equally heterosexual and homosexual, 4.09% of the respondents were predominantly heterosexual but incidentally homosexual, 1.63% of the respondents were predominantly heterosexual and only incidentally homosexual, and 0.27% of the respondents were exclusively heterosexual.

### 8.2.3 Current relationship status

The current relationship status of the respondents indicated that 44.41% of the respondents were same sex partnered, 27.52% of the respondents were single, 11.17% of the respondents were dating someone of the same sex, 3.81% of the respondents were in a same sex marriage, 2.72% of the respondents were cohabiting with someone of the same sex, 2.72% of the respondents were married to someone of the opposite sex, 2.45% of the respondents were divorced from someone of the opposite sex, 1.91% of

the respondents were divorced/separated from someone of the same sex, 1.36% of the respondents were partnered to someone of the opposite sex, 1.36% of the respondents were dating someone of the opposite sex, and 0.54% of the respondents were cohabiting with someone of the opposite sex.

Table 6  
Sexuality and relationship status

	Number of Respondents (N=367)	Percentage of Respondents (N=367)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	182	49.59%
Female	170	46.32%
Transgender	15	4.09%
<b>Sexuality</b>		
Gay (male to male sexual attraction)	168	45.78%
Lesbian (female to female sexual attraction)	128	34.88%
Bisexual (sexually attracted to both male and female)	64	17.44%
Straight (attracted ONLY to the opposite sex)	7	1.91%
<b>Kinsey Scale</b>		
Exclusively Homosexual	200	54.50%
Predominantly Homo only incidentally heterosexual	91	24.80%
Predominantly homosexual but > incidentally heterosexual	32	8.72%
Equally heterosexual and homosexual	22	5.99%
Predominantly Heterosexual but > incidentally homosexual	15	4.09%
Predominantly Heterosexual only incidentally homosexual	6	1.63%
Exclusively Heterosexual	1	0.27%
<b>Relationship Status</b>		
Same Sex Partnered	163	44.41%
Same Sex Marriage	14	3.81%
Cohabiting with same sex	10	2.72%
Divorced/separated from same sex	7	1.91%
Dating someone of the same sex	41	11.17%
Partnered to someone of the opposite sex	5	1.36%
Married to someone of the opposite sex	10	2.72%
Cohabiting with someone of the opposite sex	2	0.54%
Divorced from someone of the opposite sex	9	2.45%
Dating someone of the opposite sex	5	1.36%
Single	101	27.52%

### **8.3.1 Employment Status and location of employment**

The demographic information of the respondents related to their employment indicated that 77.11% of the respondents were in permanent employment, 14.99% of the respondents were in temporary/causal employment, 7.63% of the respondents were self-employed, and 0.27% of the respondents were unemployed. The geographical location of the respondents indicated that 90.46% of the respondents are working in organisations that were located in a metropolitan/city area, 8.45% of the respondents were working in organisations that were located in regional areas, and 1.09% of the respondents were working in organisations that were located in rural/farm areas.

### **8.3.2 Organisational sectors**

The demographic profile of the respondents indicated that 23.71% of the respondents worked in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector, 13.9% of the respondents worked in the Education and Training sector, 8.72% of the respondents worked in the Public Administration and Safety sector, 6.54% of the respondents worked in the Information Media and Telecommunications sector, 5.99% of the respondents worked in the Financial and Insurance Services sector, 5.45% of the respondents worked in the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services sector, 4.9% of the respondents worked in the Retail and Trade sector, 4.63% of the respondents worked in the Accommodation and Food Services sector, 4.09% of the respondents worked in the Arts and Recreational Services sector, 2.45% of the respondents worked in the Transport, Postal and Warehousing sector, 1.91% of the respondents worked in the Administration and Support Services sector, 1.09% of the respondents worked in the Wholesale and Trade sector, 0.82% of the respondents worked in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector, 0.82% of the respondents worked in the Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services sector, 0.54% of the respondents worked in the Construction sector, 0.54% of the respondents worked in the Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services sector, 0.54% of the respondents worked in the Manufacturing sector, 0.27% of the respondents worked in the Mining sector, and 13.08% of the respondents work in Others sectors.

### **8.3.4 Organisation size**

The demographic profile of the respondents indicated that 34.33% of the respondents worked in organisations with 1000+ employees, 27.25% of the respondents worked in organisations with 20 to 199 employees, 10.9% of the respondents worked in organisations with 6 to 19 employees, 10.9% of the respondents worked in organisations

with 200 to 499 employees, 9.26% of the respondents worked in organisations with less than 5 employees, and 5.45% of the respondents worked in organisations with 500 to 999 employees. In addition, it was observed that 1.91% of the respondents worked as an independent consultant.

### 8.3.5 Salary distribution

The salary distribution of the respondents indicated that 28.34% of the respondents earned between \$51000-\$75000 per annum, 19.07% of the respondents earned between \$76000-\$100000 per annum, 17.98% of the respondents earned between \$100000-\$150000 per annum, 12.81% of the respondents earned between \$26000-\$50000 per annum, 8.72% of the respondents earned over \$150000 per annum, 7.9% of the respondents earned less than \$15000 per annum, and 5.18% of the respondents earned between \$15000-\$25000 per annum.

Table 7  
Employment Status

	Number of Respondents (N=367)	Percentage of Respondents (N=367)
<i>Employment Status</i>		
Unemployed	1	0.27%
Self-Employed	28	7.63%
Temporary/Causal Employment	55	14.99%
Permanent Employment	283	77.11%
<i>Work Hours/Week</i>		
Average	37.66 hours/week	
<i>Duration at organisation (years)</i>		
Average	6.03 Years	
<i>Location of Organisation</i>		
Metropolitan/City	332	90.46%
Regional	31	8.45%
Rural/Farm	4	1.09%
<i>Size of Organisation</i>		
Less than 5	34	9.26%
6 to 19	40	10.90%
20 to 199	100	27.25%
200 to 499	40	10.90%
500 to 999	20	5.45%
1000+	126	34.33%
I work as an independent consultant	7	1.91%
<i>Industry</i>		
Health Care and Social Assistance	17	4.63%
Education and Training	7	1.91%
Public Administration and Safety	3	0.82%
Information Media and Telecommunications	15	4.09%
Financial and Insurance Services	2	0.54%

	Number of Respondents (N=367)	Percentage of Respondents (N=367)
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	51	13.90%
Retail Trade	2	0.54%
Accommodation and Food Services	22	5.99%
Arts and Recreational Services	87	23.71%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	24	6.54%
Administration and Support Services	2	0.54%
Wholesale Trade	1	0.27%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	20	5.45%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	32	8.72%
Construction	3	0.82%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	18	4.90%
Manufacturing	9	2.45%
Mining	4	1.09%
Others	48	13.08%
<i>Current Salary</i>		
Under \$15000	29	7.90%
\$15000 - \$25000	19	5.18%
\$26000 - \$50000	47	12.81%
\$51000 - \$75000	104	28.34%
\$76000 - \$100000	70	19.07%
\$100000 - \$150000	66	17.98%
Over \$150000	32	8.72%

#### 8.4 Formative versus Reflective Measurement

An important issue in SEM Analysis is whether to specify the items measuring a particular construct as reflective or formative. Reflective measures, otherwise termed effect measures, are “items that are seen as empirical surrogates for the unmeasured latent variable. They should be partially or entirely intercorrelated because of their underlying common cause (i.e. the latent variable)” (Mathieson et al. 2001, p. 94). Formative or causal indicators, on the other hand, suggest that each item is causally influencing the latent variable, with a change in one indicator not necessarily resulting in a similar directional change for the other indicators. It can be challenging to decide whether a construct should be represented using a formative or reflective indicator measurement model. To this end, Jarvis et al. (2003) provided some criteria for distinguishing between formative and reflective indicator models. The data for the present study is presented in Table 8 below, which were used to justify the decision regarding how to model each of the latent constructs.

Table 8  
Criteria for evaluating formative and reflective indicators in the models.

Criteria	Satisfaction with Life	Overall Job Satisfaction	Psychological Well-being	WHEQ	WSIMM-R	WEI	DASS
Direction of causality from construct to measure implied by conceptual definition	Construct to items	Construct to items	Construct to items	Construct to items	Construct to items	Construct to items	Construct to items
Are items defining characteristics or manifestations?	Manifestations	Manifestations	Manifestations	Manifestations	Manifestations	Manifestations	Manifestations
Would changes in items cause changes in the construct?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Would changes in construct cause changes in items?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Should items have the same or similar content?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Should items share a common theme?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Would dropping an item influence the conceptual domain of the construct?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Should items covary?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Should a change in one item be associated with changes in other items?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Are the items expected to have the same antecedents and consequences?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CONCLUSION	REFLECTIVE	REFLECTIVE	REFLECTIVE	REFLECTIVE	REFLECTIVE	REFLECTIVE	REFLECTIVE

Notes: *WHEQ* = Workplace Heterosexist Experience Questionnaire; *WSIMM* = Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure-Revised; *Workplace Equality Index*; *DASS* = Depression, Anxiety and stress Scale.



## **8.5 Diagnostic Analysis of Study Variables (Reflective Constructs)**

### **8.5.1 Treatment of missing observation**

In order to perform SEM analysis in SPSS AMOS, the missing values were treated first. It was observed that, there were 10 cases where data was missing completely at random. These cases were removed from further analysis. Similarly, it was observed that there were 30 cases where data was missing at random. For these cases, the missing values within each construct were replaced by the average score of other indicators within that construct.

### **8.5.2 Multivariate Outliers**

In order to proceed further with the statistical analysis, it was necessary to identify and remove any multivariate outliers in the data. Multivariate outliers were identified using the Mahalanobis distance, which is a measure of the distance between the specific case's values on the predictor variables and the centroid of the independent variables (Cohen et al. 2003; Kline 2005). Mahalanobis distance was evaluated as chi-square with degrees of freedom equal to the number of variables within each multivariate construct. Therefore, any case with a Mahalanobis distance greater than the corresponding chi-square value was acknowledged as a multivariate outlier (Tabachnick & Fidell 1996). Based on this rule of thumb, there were 4 cases with signs of multivariate outliers, which were removed from further analysis.

## **8.6 Sample Size and Response Rate**

In total 367 questionnaires remained for analysis using AMOS. However, 14 cases out of 367 were removed due to missing observations. The final analysis used based on 353 cases, making the overall response rate approximately 96%.

## **8.7 Confirmatory factor Analysis**

### **8.7.1 The Satisfaction With Life (SWL) Construct**

Initially, EFA was conducted with all the indicator variables. As expected, one factor was extracted for the SWL construct and it explained 81.12% of the variance in the indicator scores (Table 9). The resulting Cronbach's alpha obtained for the one factor for the SWL construct was well above acceptable at 0.938. Furthermore, there were no items with an item-to-total correlation that fell below 0.5.

Table 9  
EFA results for Satisfaction with Life (SWL) construct

Items	Factor Loadings
SWL1	0.929
SWL2	0.918
SWL3	0.938
SWL4	0.882
SWL5	0.833
Number of Cases:	353
Eigenvalue:	4.06
Percentage of Variance Extracted:	81.12
Cronbach's Alpha:	0.938

A measurement model was then constructed using the explored factor structure, as illustrated in Figure 2. The SWL construct was found to be reflective due to the homogeneity of the items, and the high degree of correlations between the items. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then carried out. The CFA results indicated that all of the parameter estimates were significant at the five percent level, and all the model fit indices were above/below the acceptance level (GFI=0.985, CFI=0.995, RMR=0.039, RMSEA=0.067). It was concluded that the original measurement model with all the indicators as specified in Figure 3 indicated a good model fit for the data. Furthermore, the composite reliability (CR) for the one factor of SWL construct (0.942) was well above the acceptable limit. Similarly, the average variance extracted (AVE) for the one factor of SWL construct (0.766) was above the threshold value. It was concluded that the one factor of SWL construct was internally reliable and met convergent validity.



Figure 3  
Final measurement model for Satisfaction with Life (SWL) construct

### 8.7.2 Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS) Construct

EFA was initially conducted with all the indicator variables. As expected, one factor was extracted for the OJS construct and it explained 79.92% of the variance in the indicator scores (Table 10). The resulting Cronbach's alpha obtained for the one factor of OJS construct was well above acceptable at 0.937. Furthermore, there were no items with an item-to-total correlation that fell below 0.5.

Table 10  
EFA results for Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS) construct

Items	Factor Loadings
OSJ1	0.895
OSJ2	0.896
OSJ3	0.898
OSJ4	0.865
OSJ5	0.914
Number of Cases:	353
Eigenvalue:	4.00
Percentage of Variance Extracted:	79.92
Cronbach's Alpha:	0.937

The initial measurement model was then constructed using the explored factor structure, as illustrated in Figure 4. The OJS construct was reflective due to the homogeneity of the items, and high degree of correlations between the items. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then carried out. The CFA results indicated that all of the parameter estimates were significant at the five percent level, and all the model fit indices were above/below the acceptance level, except for RMSEA (GFI=0.968, CFI=0.984, RMR=0.024, RMSEA=0.116). It was then concluded that the original measurement model, as specified in Figure 4, did not fit the data well.



Figure 4  
Initial measurement model for Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS) construct

In order to improve the model fit and obtain a feasible solution, the model was re-specified based on existing literature, modification indices and the standardised residual covariance matrix, to improve the model fit. A correlation between JS4 and JS5 in the initially hypothesised OJS construct was added. After re-specification, the CFA results for the final measurement model, as shown in Figure 5, indicated that all the parameter estimates were significant at the five per cent level, and all the model fit indices were above/below the acceptance level (GFI=0.991, CFI=0.997, RMR=0.012, RMSEA=0.054). Furthermore, the composite reliability (CR) for the one factor of OJS construct (0.935) was well above the acceptable limit. Similarly, the average variance extracted (AVE) for one factor of the OJS construct (0.741) was also well above the acceptable limit. It was concluded that the one factor of OJS construct was internally reliable and met convergent validity.

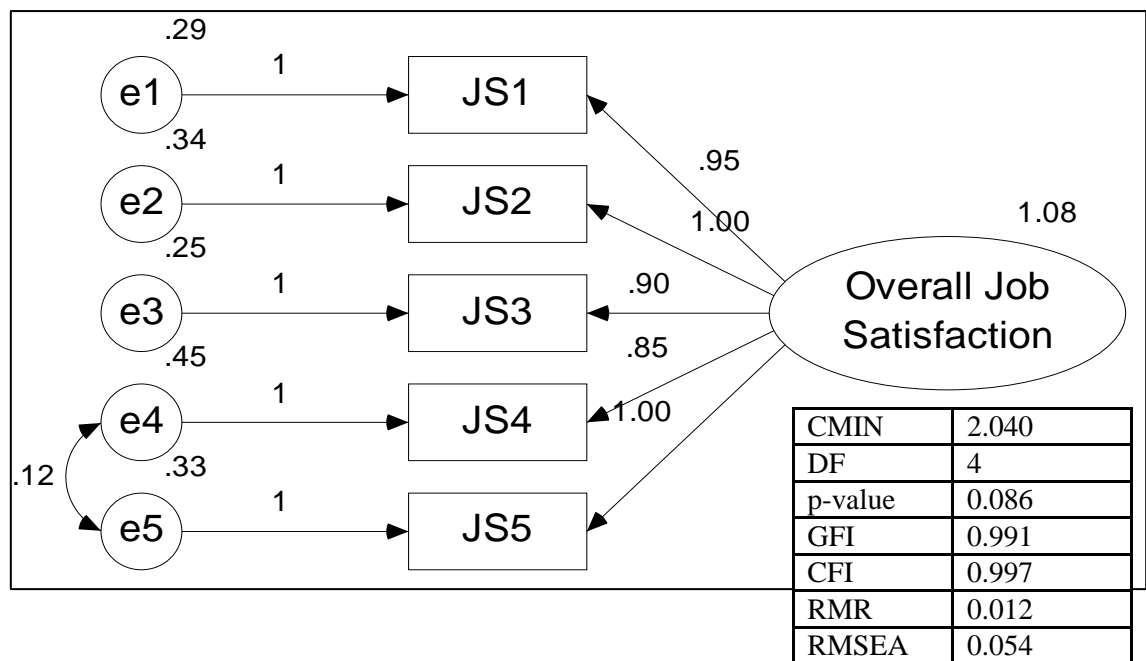


Figure 5  
Final measurement model for Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS) construct

### 8.7.3 Psychological Well-Being (PSYWB) Construct

EFA was initially conducted with all the indicator variables. As expected, one factor was extracted for PSYWB construct and it explained 61.73% of the variance in the indicator scores (Table 11). The resulting Cronbach's alpha obtained for the one factor of PSYWB construct was well above acceptable at 0.920. Furthermore, there were no items with an item-to-total correlation that fell below 0.5.

Table 11  
EFA results for Psychological Well-Being (PSYWB) construct

Items	Component
PSYWB1	0.761
PSYWB2	0.829
PSYWB3	0.831
PSYWB4	0.773
PSYWB5	0.806
PSYWB6	0.819
PSYWB7	0.802
PSYWB8	0.707
PSYWB9	0.731
Number of Cases:	353
Eigenvalue:	5.555
Percentage of Variance Extracted:	61.727
Cronbach's Alpha:	0.920

The initial measurement model was then constructed using the explored factor structure, as illustrated in Figure 6. The PSYWB construct was reflective, due to the homogeneity of the items and the high degree of correlations between the items. The CFA results indicated that although all of the parameter estimates were significant at the five percent level, the model fit indices were not above/below the acceptance level (GFI=0.847, CFI=0.894, RMR=0.110, RMSEA=0.149). It was then concluded that the original measurement model, as specified in Figure 6, did not fit the data well.

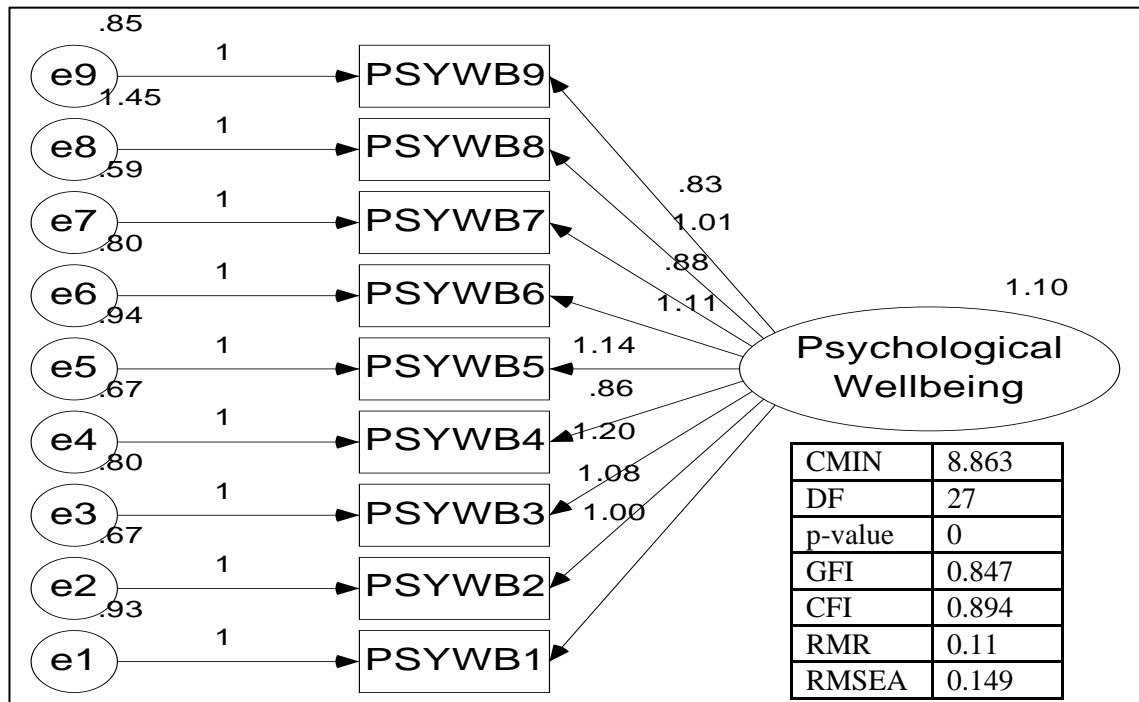


Figure 6  
Initial measurement model for Psychological Well-Being (PSYWB) construct

In order to improve the model fit and obtain a feasible solution, the model was re-specified. This was based on modification indices, the literature and the standardised residual covariance matrix, to improve the model fit. A correlation between PSYWB5-PSYWB6, PSYWB2-PSYWB3, and PSYWB1-PSYWB2 in the initially hypothesised PSYWB construct was specified. The CFA results for the final measurement model, as shown in Figure 7 below, indicated that all the parameter estimates were significant at the five per cent level, and all the model fit indices were above/below the acceptance level (GFI=0.952, CFI=0.973, RMR=0.068, RMSEA=0.081). Furthermore, the composite reliability (CR) for the one factor of PSYWB construct (0.919) was well above the acceptable limit. Similarly, the average variance extracted (AVE) for the PSYWB construct (0.559) was well above the acceptable limit. It was concluded that the PSYWB construct was internally reliable and met convergent validity.

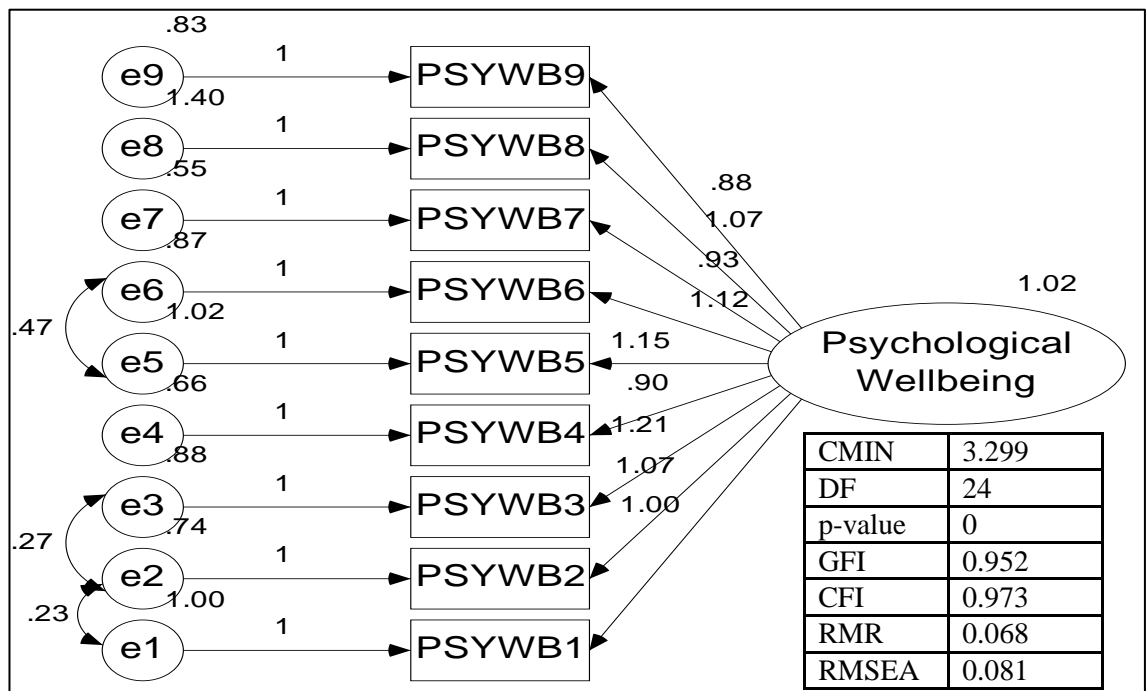


Figure 7  
Final measurement model for Psychological Well-being (PSYHWP) construct

#### 8.7.4 Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS)

EFA was initially conducted with all the indicator variables. As expected, three factors were extracted for the DASS and together they explained 73.05% of the variance in the indicator scores (Table 12). The resulting Cronbach's alpha obtained for each of the three factors of DASS was well above acceptable at 0.947 (for depression), 0.917 (for

anxiety), and 0.919 (for stress). Furthermore, within each of these constructs, there were no items with an item-to-total correlation that fell below 0.5.

Table 12  
EFA results for Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS) construct

	1	2	3
S1		0.772	
S2		0.586	
S3		0.869	
S4		0.647	
S5		0.767	
S6		0.575	
S7		0.854	
A1			0.651
A2			0.659
A3			0.600
A4			0.857
A5			0.850
A6			0.726
A7			0.621
D1	0.685		
D2	0.830		
D3	0.805		
D4	0.676		
D5	0.728		
D6	0.758		
D7	0.803		
Number of Cases:	353	353	353
Eigenvalue:	12.429	1.597	1.315
Percentage of Variance Extracted:	59.185	7.602	6.261
Cronbach's Alpha:	0.947	0.919	0.917

The initial measurement model was then constructed using the explored factor structure, as illustrated in Figure 8. The DASS was reflective, due to the homogeneity of the items and the high degree of correlations between the items. The CFA results indicated that although all of the parameter estimates were significant at the five percent level, many of the model fit indices were not above/below the acceptance level (GFI=0.853, CFI=0.937, RMR=0.043, RMSEA=0.085). It was concluded that the original measurement model as specified in Figure 8, it did not fit the data well, despite the DASS being a well-known measure in the literature.

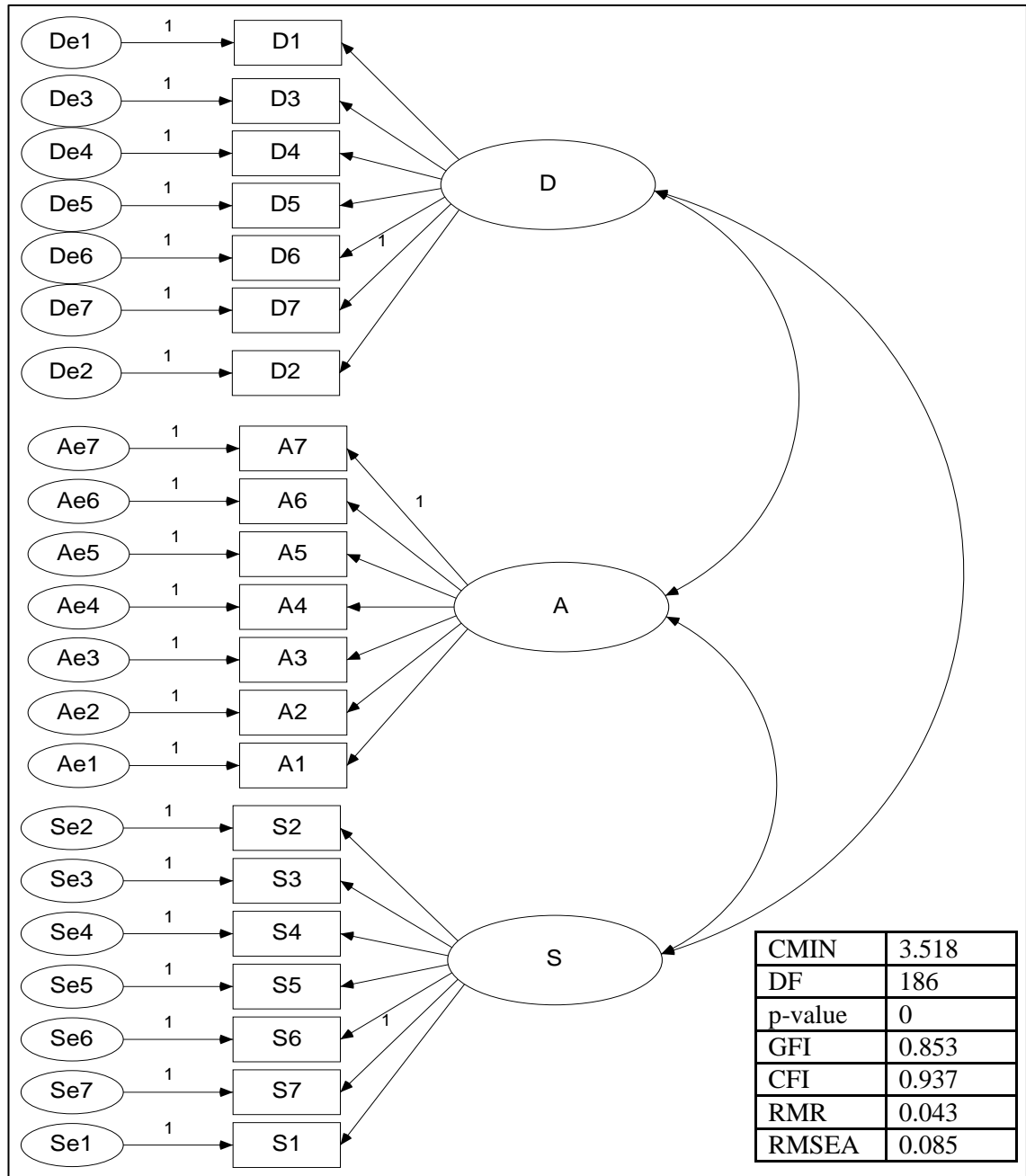


Figure 8  
Initial measurement model for Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS) construct

In order to improve the model fit and obtain a feasible solution, the model was re-specified. This was based on modification indices and the standardised residual covariance matrix, to improve the model fit. In a step-by-step manner S2, S4, S5, S6, A1, and A7 were deleted from the initial hypothesised DASS model. The CFA results for the final measurement model, as shown in Figure 9, indicated that all the parameter estimates were significant at the five per cent level, and all the model fit indices were above/below the acceptance level (GFI=0.929, CFI=0.977, RMR=0.026,



RMSEA=0.064). Furthermore, the composite reliability (CR) for each of the three factors of the DASS were well above the acceptable limit 0.950 (for depression), 0.926 (for anxiety), and 0.918 (for stress). Similarly, the average variance extracted (AVE) for each of the three factors of the DASS were well above the acceptable limit 0.732 (for depression), 0.718 (for anxiety), and 0.791 (for stress). After re-specification, it was then concluded that the DASS construct was internally reliable and met convergent validity.

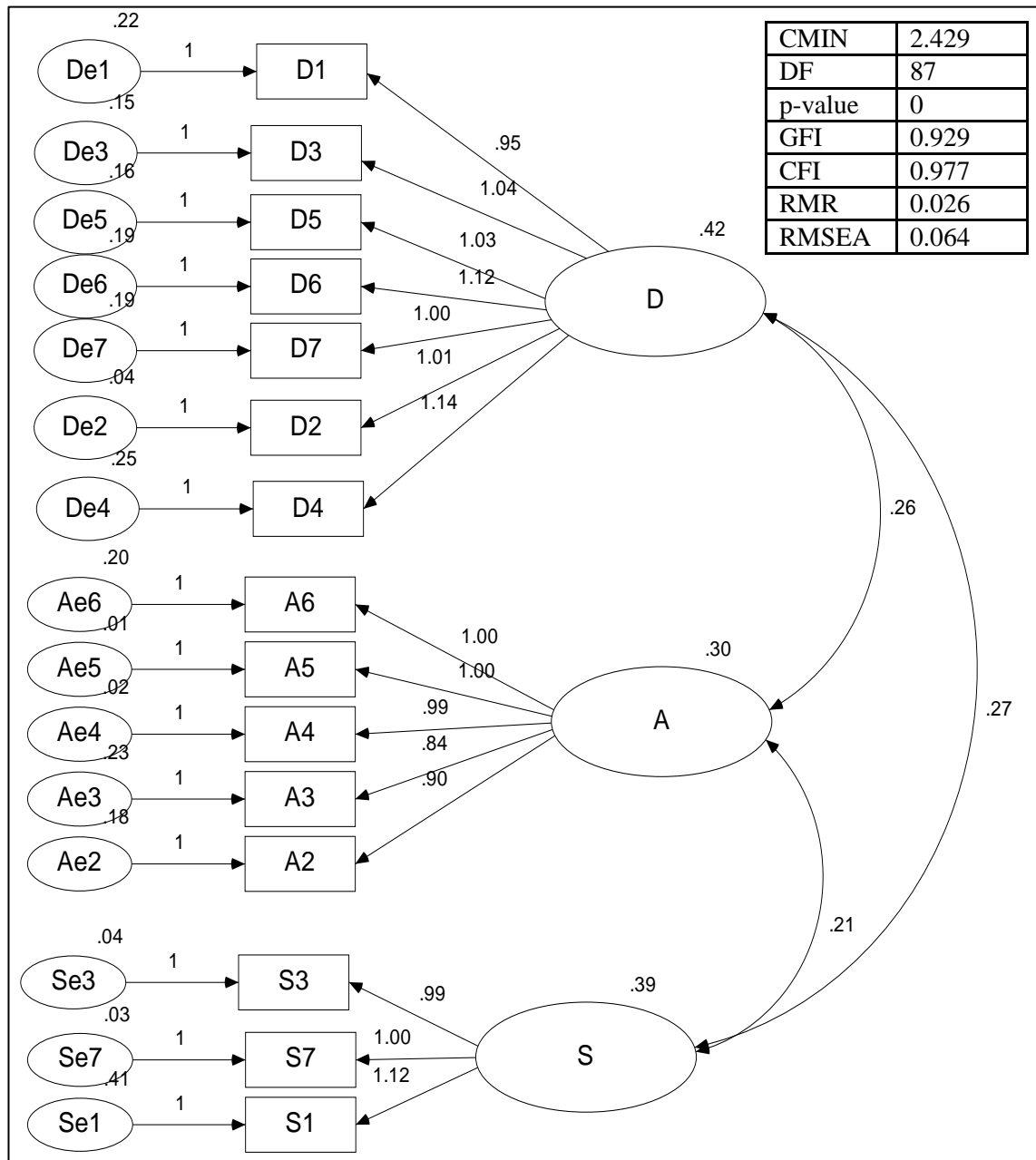


Figure 9  
Final measurement model for Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS) construct

### 8.7.5 Workplace Equality Index (WEI) Construct

EFA was initially conducted with all the indicator variables. Contrary to expectations, two factors were extracted for the WEI construct and together explained 77.28% of the variance in the indicator scores (Table 13). The resulting Cronbach's alpha obtained for each of the two factors of the WEI construct were well above acceptable at 0.823 (for WEI-I), and 0.756 (for WEI-II). Furthermore, within each of these constructs, there were no items with an item-to-total correlation that fell below 0.5.

Table 13  
EFA results for Workplace Equality Index (WEI) construct

	1	2
OS1		0.872
OS2		0.903
OS3	0.795	
OS4	0.917	
OS5	0.853	
Number of Cases:	353	353
Eigenvalue:	2.552	1.312
Percentage of Variance Extracted:	51.035	26.241
Cronbach's Alpha:	0.756	0.823

The initial measurement model was then constructed using the explored factor structure, as illustrated in Figure 10. The WEI construct was reflective due to the homogeneity of the items, and high degree of correlations between the items. The CFA results indicated that the model solution was not appropriate because of negative error variance.

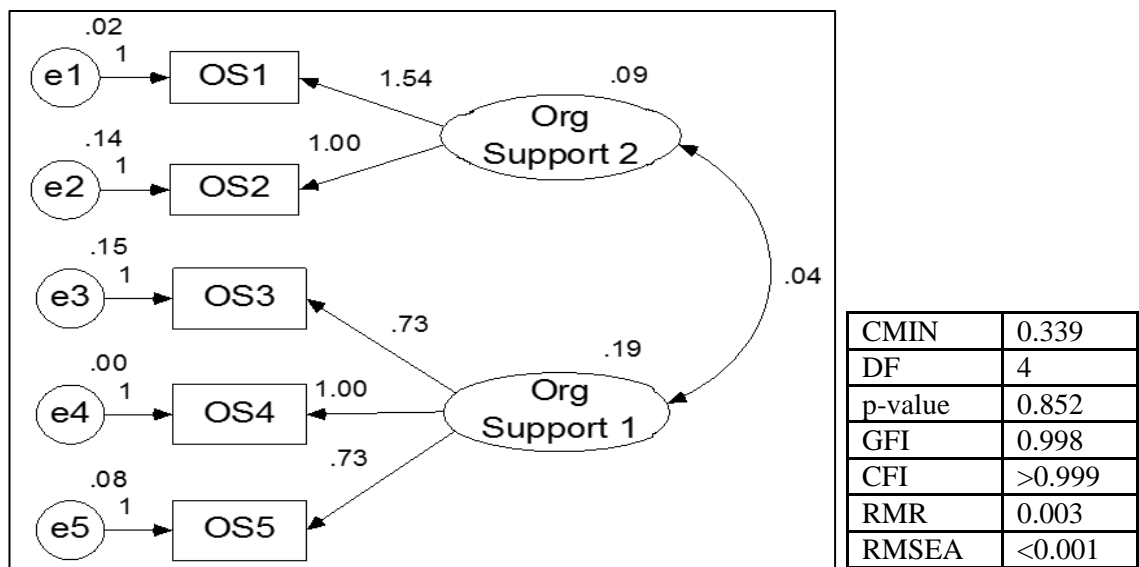


Figure 10  
Initial measurement model for Workplace Equality Index (WEI) construct

In order to obtain a reasonable solution, the model was re-specified based on the variance estimates, the literature, where the error variance of the OS4 was constrained to zero, and the model was rerun. The CFA results for the final measurement model, as shown in Figure 11 below, indicated that all the parameter estimates were significant at the five per cent level, and all the model fit indices were above/below the acceptance level (GFI=0.998, CFI=0.999, RMR=0.003, RMSEA=0.001). Furthermore, the composite reliability (CR) for each of the two factors of the WEI construct was well above the acceptable limit 0.790 (for WEI-I), and 0.849 (for WEI-II). Similarly, the average variance extracted (AVE) for each of the two factors of WEI-construct was well above the acceptable limit 0.663 (for WEI-I), and 0.661 (for WEI-II). It was then concluded that the WEI construct was internally reliable and met convergent validity.

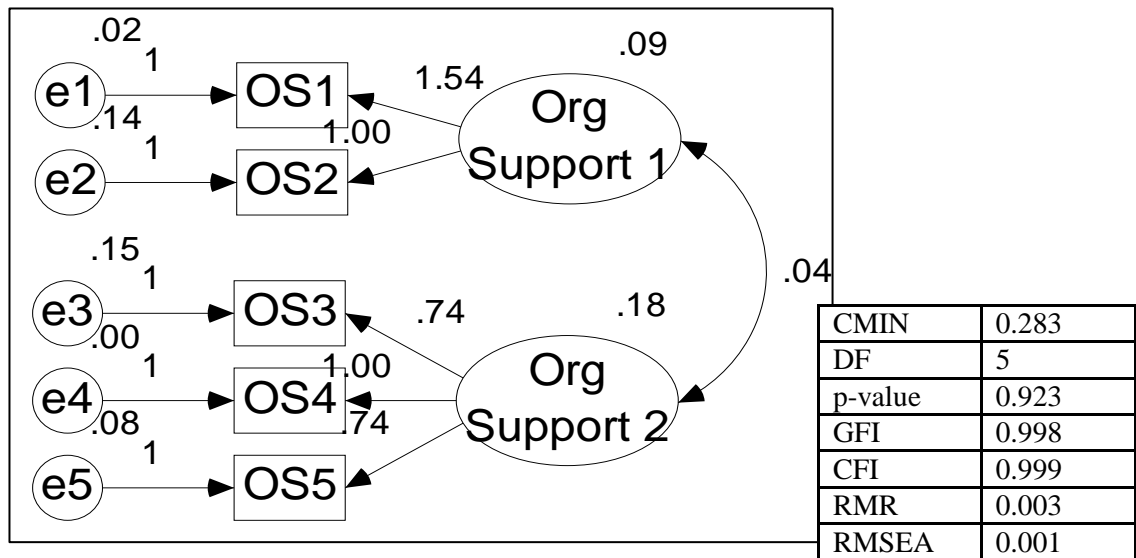


Figure 11  
Final measurement model for Workplace Equality Index (WEI) construct

#### 8.7.6 Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure (WSIMM) Construct

EFA was initially conducted with all the indicator variables. Contrary to expectations, three factors were extracted for the WSIMM construct and together they explained 72.30% variance in the indicator scores.

The resulting Cronbach's alpha obtained for each of the three factors of WSIMM construct was well above being acceptable at 0.943 (for WSIMM-I), 0.968 (for WSIMM-II), and 0.901 (for WSIMM-III). Further, within each of these constructs, there were no items with an item-to-total correlation that fell below 0.5.

Table 14

EFA results for Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure (WSIMM) construct

	WSIMM-I	WSIMM-II	WSIMM-III
DIS1			0.802
DIS2			0.843
DIS3			0.489
DIS4			0.816
DIS5			0.818
DIS6			0.722
DIS7			0.814
DIS8			0.735
CON1	0.817		
CON2	0.853		
CON3		0.984	
CON4		0.985	
CON5	0.925		
CON6	0.921		
CON7	0.901		
CON8	0.909		
Number of Cases:	353	353	353
Eigenvalue:	5.972	1.899	3.697
Percentage of Variance Extracted:	37.322	11.872	23.108
Cronbach's Alpha:	0.943	0.968	0.901

The initial measurement model was then constructed using the explored factor structure, as illustrated in Figure 12. The WSIMM construct was reflective due to the homogeneity of the items, and high degree of correlations between the items. The CFA results indicated that all of the parameter estimates were significant at the five percent level, and all the model fit indices were above/below the acceptance level, except for RMR (GFI=0.926, CFI=0.939, RMR=0.119, RMSEA=0.062). It was concluded that the original measurement model, as specified in Figure 12, did not fit the data well.

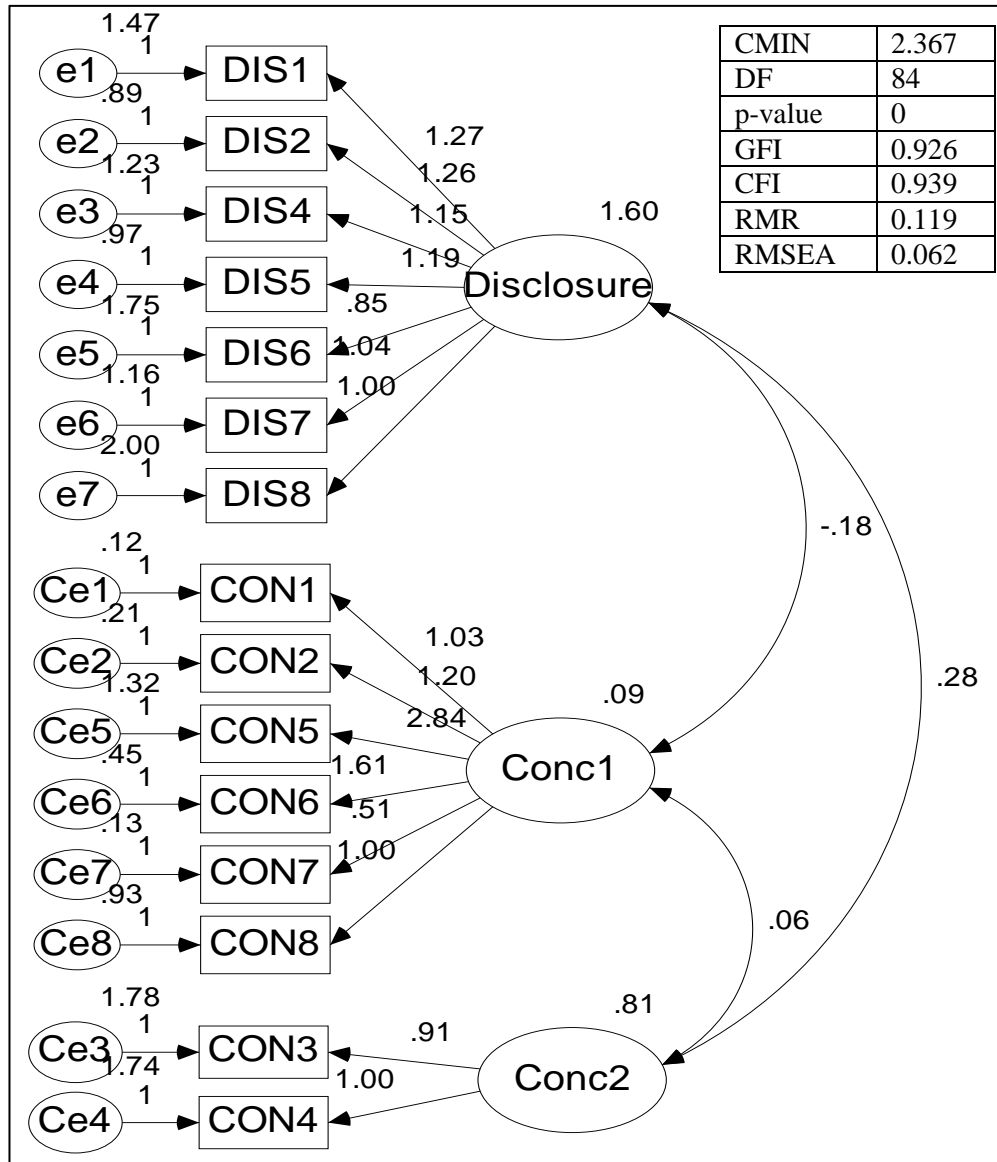


Figure 12  
Initial measurement model for Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure-Revised (WSIMM-Revised) construct

In order to improve the model fit and obtain a reasonable solution, the model was re-specified. This was based on modification indices and the standardised residual covariance matrix, to improve the model fit. In a step-by-step manner DIS3, and CON5 were deleted from the initially hypothesised WSIMM construct. The CFA results for the final measurement model are shown in Figure 13. This indicated that all the parameter estimates were significant at the five per cent level, and all the model fit indices were above/below the acceptance level (GFI=0.916, CFI=0.948, RMR=0.065, RMSEA=0.081). Furthermore, the composite reliability (CR) for each of the three factors of WSIMM construct were well above the acceptable limit 0.937 (for WSIMM-I), 0.982 (for WSIMM-II), and 0.906 (for WSIMM-III) respectively. Similarly, the

average variance extracted (AVE) for each of the three factors of WSIMM construct were well above the acceptable limit 0.748 (for WSIMM-I), 0.965 (for WSIMM-II), and 0.583 (for WSIMM-III) respectively. It was concluded that each factor of the WSIMM construct was internally reliable and met convergent validity.

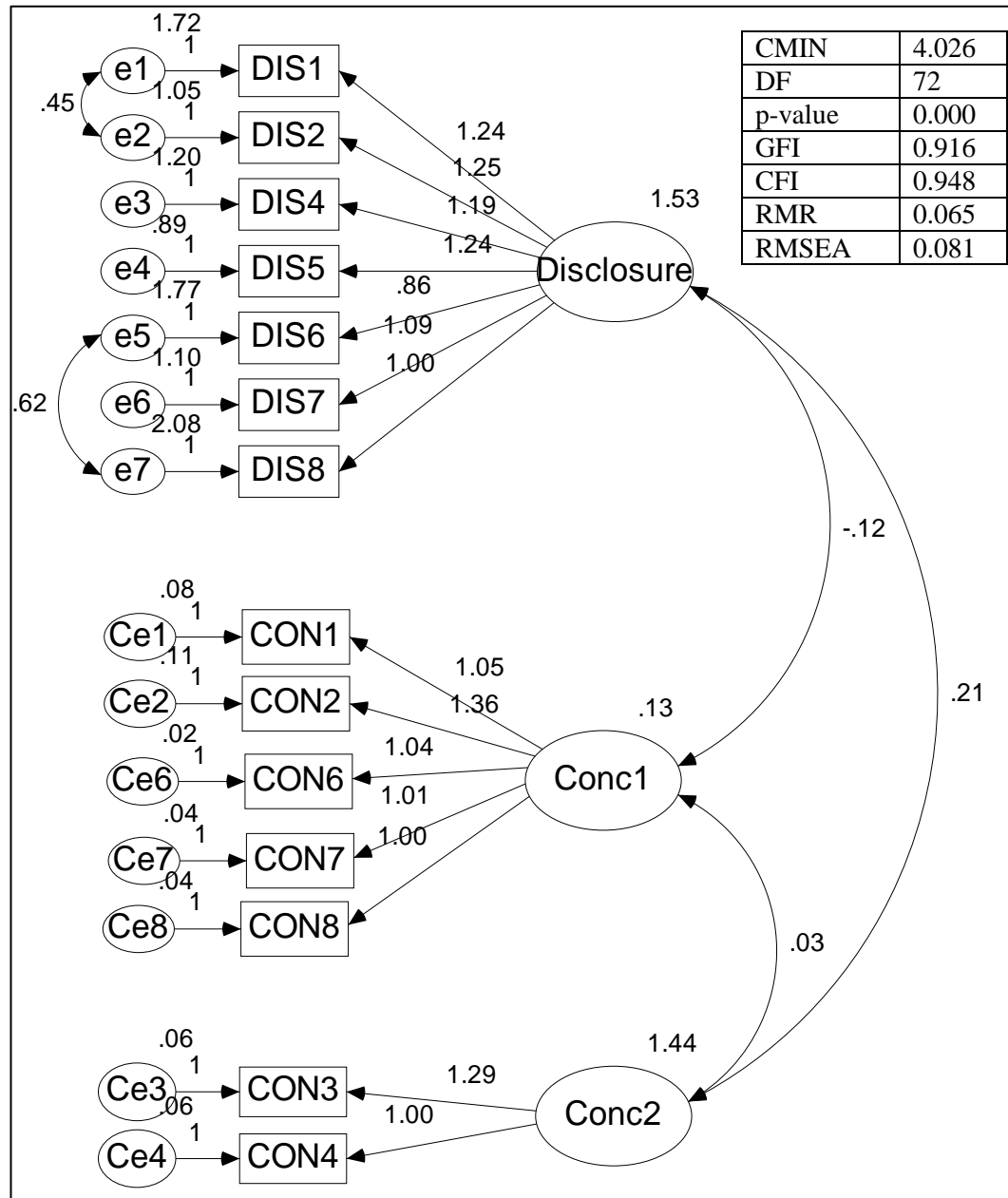


Figure 13  
Final measurement model for Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure-Revised (WSIMM-R) construct

### 8.7.7 Workplace Heterosexist Experience Questionnaire (WHEQ) Construct

EFA was initially conducted with all the indicator variables. Contrary to expectations, four factors were extracted for the WHEQ construct and they together explained

84.49% variance in the indicator scores. Table 15 presents the results of the EFA for the WHEQ construct. The resulting Cronbach's alpha obtained for each of the four factors of WHEQ construct were well above acceptable at 0.981 (for WHEQ-I), 0.617 (for WHEQ-II), 0.930 (for WHEQ-III), and 0.818 (for WHEQ-IV). Furthermore, within each of these constructs, there were no items with an item-to-total correlation that fell below 0.5.

Table 15  
EFA results for Workplace Heterosexist Experience Questionnaire (WHEQ) construct

	WHEQ-1	WHEQ-2	WHEQ-3	WHEQ-4
Indirect1			-0.834	
Indirect2			-0.796	
Indirect3			-0.682	
Indirect4		0.613		
Indirect5		0.912		
Indirect6		0.912		
Indirect7		0.895		
Direct1	0.877			
Direct2	0.912			
Direct3	0.910			
Direct4	0.902			
Direct5	0.910			
Direct6	0.921			
Direct7	0.915			
Direct8				0.846
Direct9				0.836
Direct10	0.925			
Direct11	0.673			
Direct12	0.905			
Direct13	0.725			
Direct14	0.780			
Direct15	0.814			
Number of Cases:	353	353	353	353
Eigenvalue:	13.904	2.281	1.302	1.100
Percentage of Variance Extracted:	47.161	17.274	12.325	7.730
Cronbach's Alpha:	0.981	0.930	0.818	0.617

The initial measurement model was then constructed using the explored factor structure, as illustrated in Figure 14. The WHEQ construct was reflective due to the homogeneity of the items, and the high degree of correlation between the items. The CFA results indicated that all of the parameter estimates were significant at the five percent level, and all the model fit indices were above/below the acceptance level, except for GFI and RMSEA (GFI=0.759, CFI=0.916, RMR=0.035, RMSEA=0.123). It was concluded that the original measurement model, as specified in Figure 12, did not fit the data well.

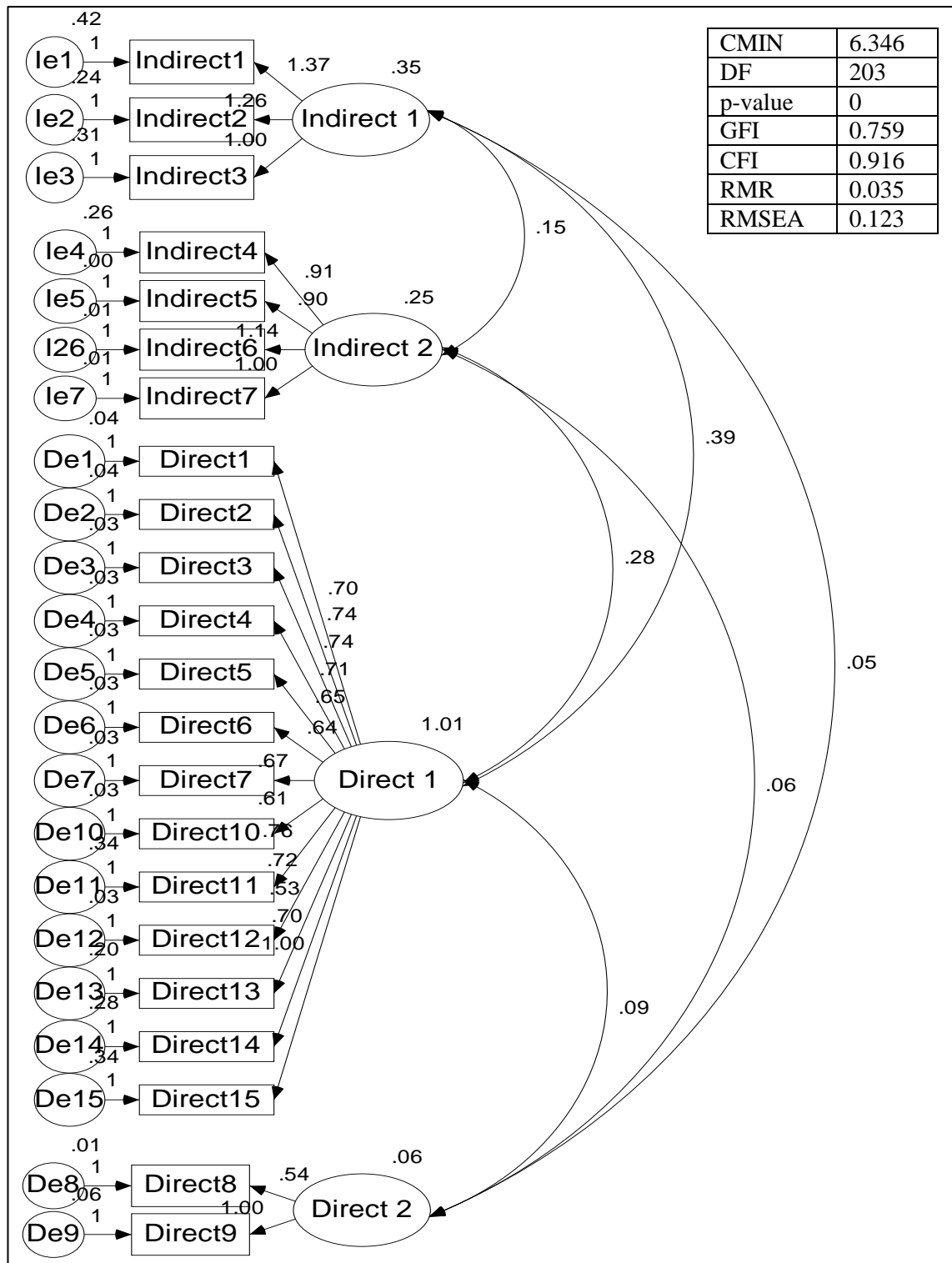


Figure 14  
Initial measurement model for Workplace Heterosexist Experiences Questionnaire (WHEQ) construct

In order to improve the model fit and obtain a reasonable solution, the model was re-specified. This was based on modification indices and the standardised residual covariance matrix to improve the model fit. In a step-by-step manner DIRECT1,



DIRECT8, DIRECT9, DIRECT11, DIRECT13, DIRECT14, INDIRECT3, INDIRECT4, and INDIRECT6 were deleted from the initially hypothesised WSIMM construct. The CFA results for the final measurement model, as shown in Figure 15, indicated that all the parameter estimates were significant at the five per cent level, and all the model fit indices were above/below the acceptance level (GFI=0.931, CFI=0.984, RMR=0.009, RMSEA=0.081). Furthermore, the composite reliability (CR) for each of the three factors of WHEQ construct were well above the acceptable limit 0.990 (for WHEQ-I), 0.985 (for WHEQ-III), and 0.818 (for WHEQ-IV). Similarly, the average variance extracted (AVE) for each of the three factors of WHEQ constructs were well above the acceptable limit 0.913 (for WHEQ-I), 0.970 (for WHEQ-III), and 0.694 (for WHEQ-IV). It was concluded that each factor of the WHEQ construct was internally reliable and met convergent validity.

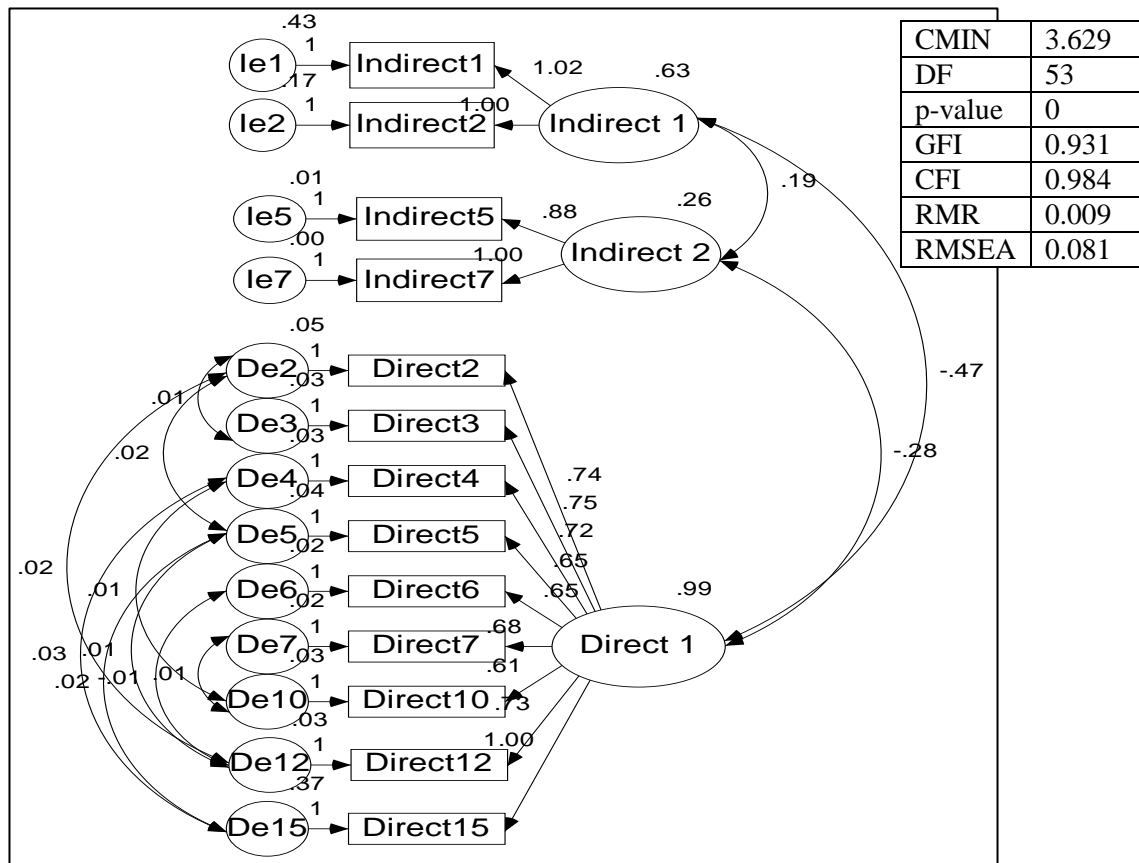


Figure 15  
Final measurement model for Workplace Heterosexist Experiences Questionnaire (WHEQ) construct

## **8.8 Construct Validity and Reliability**

### **8.8.1 Reliability and Convergent Validity**

Reliability is a measure of stability and consistency of a measurement instrument. It measures the extent to which a measurement instrument yields the same results on repeated trials. The CFA analysis results indicated that the Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.6 for each construct as recommended by Hair et al. (1998). In addition, it is observed that the composite reliability of each measurement model is greater than 0.6 (Tseng et al. 2006). Further, according to Dillon, Goldstein and Bagozzi (1991), average variance extracted of greater than 0.50 indicates the validity of both the construct and the individual indicators. The CFA results show that the AVE for each measurement model is greater than 0.5. It was therefore concluded that each measurement model was reliable and met convergent validity. This is the rationale behind SEM methodology for building a model one factor at a time, which was rigorously carried out in the present study.

### **8.8.2 Discriminant Validity**

Discriminant validity tests whether concepts or measurements that are supposed to be unrelated are, in fact, unrelated. Campbell and Fiske (1959) introduced the concept of discriminant validity within their discussion on evaluating test validity. They emphasised the importance of using both discriminant and convergent validation techniques when assessing new tests. A successful evaluation of discriminant validity shows that a test of a concept is not highly correlated with other tests designed to measure theoretically different concepts. The results in Table 16 summarise the square root of AVE for each construct and the correlation between the construct score. It can be observed that the square root of AVE, for each construct, is higher than the correlation of the construct with other items. Thus, it was concluded that each construct met divergent validity

Table 16  
Correlation coefficients between different constructs

	SWL	OS	OS	JS	PSYW B	D	S	A	CONC	DISC	CONC	Direct	Indirect	Indirect
SWL	<b>0.875</b>													
3 factor OS	-0.158	<b>0.813</b>												
2 factor OS	0.012	0.000	<b>0.814</b>											
JS	0.580	-0.109	0.054	<b>0.861</b>										
PWB	0.697	-0.143	0.012	0.586	<b>0.748</b>									
D	-0.438	0.000	-0.029	-0.351	-0.416	<b>0.856</b>								
S	-0.257	0.116	0.039	-0.236	-0.296	0.000	<b>0.889</b>							
A	-0.217	-0.001	0.045	-0.152	-0.271	0.000	0.000	<b>0.847</b>						
6 CONC	-0.098	0.036	-0.030	-0.117	-0.153	0.079	0.009	0.098	<b>0.865</b>					
DISC	0.370	-0.143	-0.074	0.255	0.435	-0.147	-0.166	-0.056	0.000	<b>0.763</b>				
2 CONC	0.023	0.037	0.001	-0.065	0.053	0.093	-0.028	-0.028	0.000	0.000	<b>0.983</b>			
13 Direct	-0.142	0.044	-0.007	-0.123	-0.192	0.069	0.056	0.070	0.342	-0.025	0.101	<b>0.956</b>		
4 Indirect	-0.081	0.039	-0.091	-0.093	-0.155	0.119	0.082	0.225	0.032	-0.029	-0.038	0.000	<b>0.985</b>	
3 Indirect	-0.182	0.092	0.140	-0.212	-0.239	0.060	0.132	0.186	0.080	-0.151	-0.015	0.000	0.000	<b>0.833</b>

Note: SWL = Satisfaction with Life; OS = organisational support; JS = Job satisfaction; PWB = Psychological Well-being; DSA = Depressions, Stress & Anxiety; CONC = concealment; DISC = Disclosure; Direct = Direct heterosexism; Indirect = indirect heterosexism.

## **8.9 SEM Analysis**

The structural analysis is used to determine the consistency of the data with the hypothesised effects among the latent constructs (Cohen et al. 2003; Schumacher & Lomax 2004). The structural model formalises the key elements in a theory by specifying the relationships among theoretical constructs (Anderson & Gerbing 1982). In the structural model, also called the inner model, the LVs are related with each other according to substantive theory. In the following SEM model it can be observed that all the latent variables are modelled as reflective variables.

### **8.9.1 Full SEM Model**

The initial model for measuring the relationship among different measurement models is summarised in Figure 15. This model is based on final CFA model of the individual constructs. The model is reflective due to their inter-changeability, and a high degree of correlation exists between the items of each particular construct. The SEM results indicate that all of the parameter estimates are significant at the five percent level, and all the model fit indices are above/below the acceptance level, except for GFI and RMR (GFI=0.767, CFI=0.932, RMR=0.091, RMSEA=0.049). It was concluded that the proposed model, as specified in Figure 16, did not fit the data well.

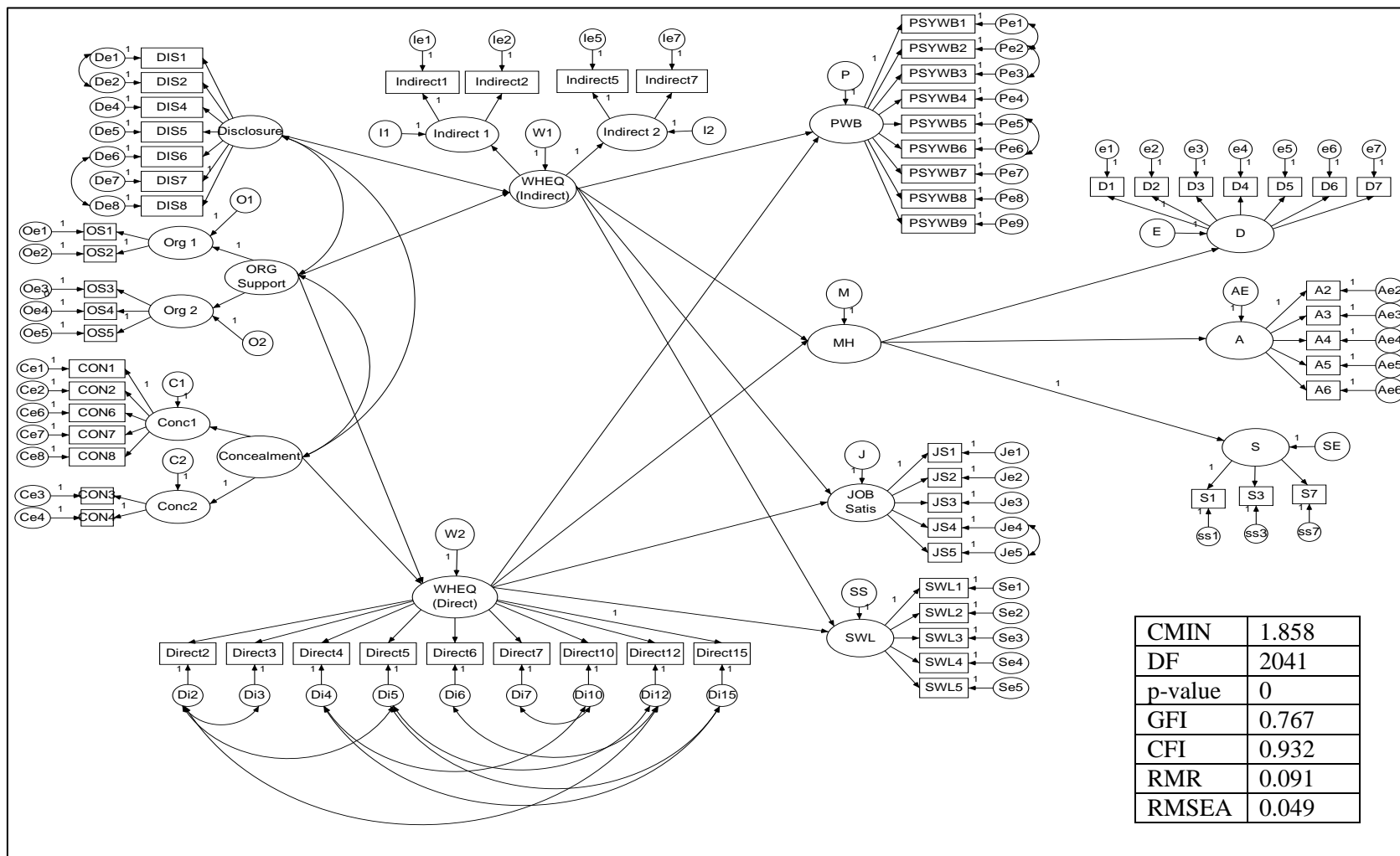


Figure 16  
The initially hypothesised full structural model

In order to improve the model fit and obtain a reasonable solution, the model was re-specified. This was based on modification indices and the standardised residual covariance matrix. In a step-by-step manner indicators from the initially hypothesised structural model were deleted. The results for the final structural model, as shown in Figure 17, indicated that all the parameter estimates were significant at the five per cent level, and all the model fit indices were above/below the acceptance level (GFI=0.903, CFI=0.976, RMR=0.047, RMSEA=0.035).

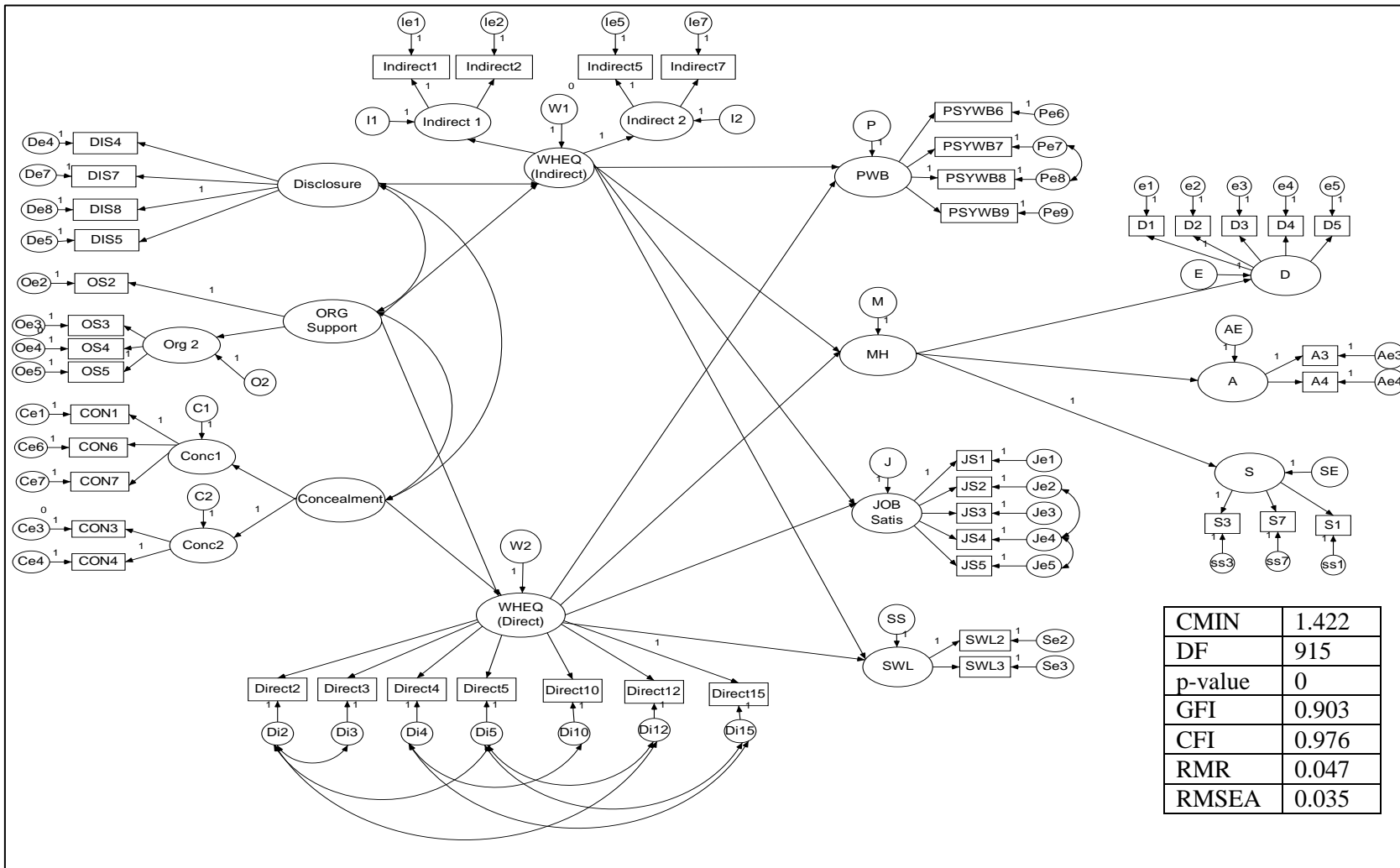


Figure 17  
The final hypothesised structural model

As in the measurement phase of model testing, findings of good fit between the hypothesised structure and the sample data provide evidence that the model is consistent with the theory (Bentler & Dudgeon 1996; Cohen et al. 2003). As the model cannot be rejected statistically, it is a plausible representation of the structure proposed.

The structural model tested in the current study was complex and the number of parameters that needed to be estimated (120) was large. However, given the ratio of sample size to the number of parameters of three to one that is recommended (Bentler & Chou 1987), at a minimum, the sample size of 353 was sufficient to test the model proposed in the current study.

### **8.9.2 Hypothesis Testing for Direct Effects**

The hypotheses tests conducted in the structural equation modelling (SEM) context fall into two broad classes: tests of overall model fit and tests of significance of individual parameter estimate values (Schumacher & Lomax 2004), analogous to the testing of the measurement models. Here the model fit indices are acceptable. This shifted the focus on the parameter estimates in terms of their statistical significance. That is, whether a relationship exists, effect size, i.e., the strength of the relationship, and size, and whether it matches the theoretical expectations. Unidirectional arrows indicated directional influences of predictors on the criterion; the strength of each effect is indicated by the weight of each arrow. The exogenous variables in the model, i.e., the antecedent constructs, are permitted to covary because their causes are not represented in the model (according to Kline 2005).

### **8.9.3 Model Hypothesis (All Groups)**

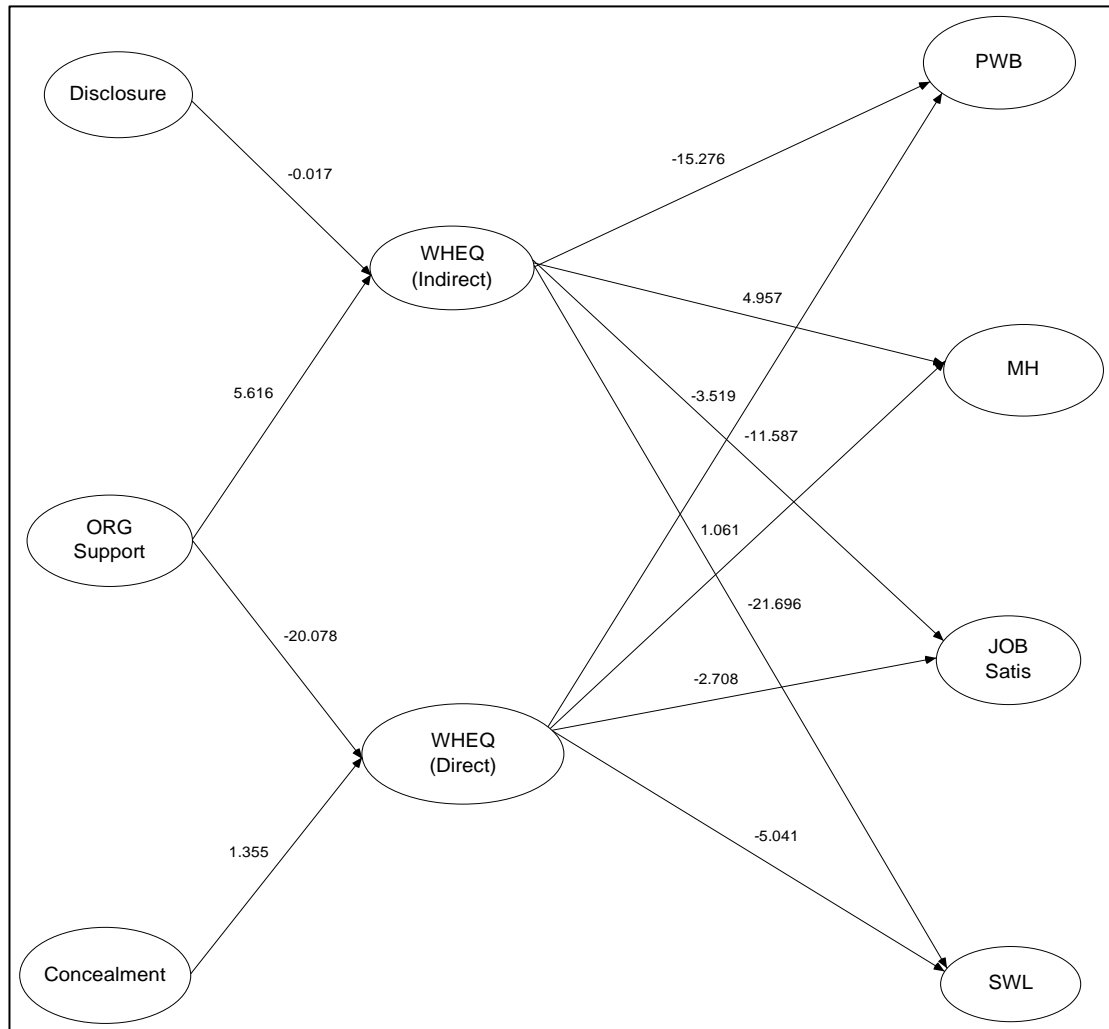
The path coefficients testing the relationship between latent constructs for all respondents are summarised in Table 17 below.



Table 17

Path coefficients testing the relationship between latent constructs for all respondents

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
WHEQ_(Indirect)	<---	Disclosure	-0.017	0.033	-0.522	0.602
WHEQ_(Indirect)	<---	ORG_Support	5.616	2.31	2.431	0.015
WHEQ_(Direct)	<---	Concealment	1.355	8.264	0.164	0.87
WHEQ_(Direct)	<---	ORG_Support	-20.078	13.237	-1.517	0.129
SWL	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	-21.696	6.806	-3.188	0.001
SWL	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	-5.041	1.833	-2.751	0.006
JOB_Satis	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	-11.587	3.645	-3.179	0.001
JOB_Satis	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	-2.708	0.981	-2.76	0.006
PWB	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	-15.276	4.802	-3.181	0.001
PWB	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	-3.519	1.289	-2.731	0.006
MH	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	4.957	1.577	3.143	0.002
MH	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	1.061	0.422	2.513	0.012



Note: WHEQ = Workplace Heterosexist Experience Questionnaire; PWB = Psychological Well-being; MH = mental health; SWL = Satisfaction with Life

Figure 18

Full structural model for all respondents (GLBT)

**H1: The relationship between Disclosure and WHEQ (Indirect)**

The SEM analysis results for all the respondents indicate that there is a small and negative association between Disclosure and WHEQ (Indirect). However, this relationship is statistically insignificant ( $\beta = -0.017$ ,  $p = 0.602 > 0.05$ ). Hence, there is a small relationship between Disclosure and WHEQ (Indirect), albeit insignificant. As strategies to disclose one sexual orientation or identity are employed, indirect heterosexist behaviours decrease.

**H2: The relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Indirect)**

The SEM analysis results for all the respondents indicated that there is a positive association between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Indirect). Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = 5.616$ ,  $p = 0.015 < 0.05$ ). A positive relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Indirect) exists. As organisational support is present in the workplace, indirect heterosexist behaviours increase in the form of subtle slurs, jokes, remarks and behaviours of avoidance.

**H3: The relationship between Concealment and WHEQ (Direct)**

The SEM analysis results for all the respondents indicated that there is a positive association between Concealment and WHEQ (Direct). However, this relationship is statistically insignificant ( $\beta = 1.355$ ,  $p = 0.87 > 0.05$ ) as it was noted that there is only a weak relationship between Concealment and WHEQ (Direct). The more GLBT employees employ strategies to conceal their sexual orientation and identity, the more direct heterosexist behaviours are experienced in the form of the following: being asked about one's personal life, being set up on dates with the opposite sex, being made to alter one's discussion and pretend to be straight.

**H4: The relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Direct)**

The SEM analysis results for all the respondents indicated that there is a negative association between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Direct). Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -20.078$ ,  $p = 0.129 > 0.05$ ). When an organisation is supportive of sexuality and sexual orientation, direct heterosexist behaviours decrease.

**H5: The relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Satisfaction With Life**

The SEM analysis results for all the respondents indicated that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Indirect) and Satisfaction With Life. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -21.696$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ). There is a negative relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Satisfaction With Life. As indirect heterosexist behaviours increase GLBT employee satisfaction with life decreases.

**H6: The relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Satisfaction With Life**

The SEM analysis results for all the respondents indicated that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Direct) and Satisfaction With Life. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -5.041$ ,  $p = 0.006 < 0.05$ ). There is a negative relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Satisfaction With Life. As direct heterosexist behaviours increase GLBT employee satisfaction with life decreases

**H7: The relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Overall Job Satisfaction**

The SEM analysis results for all the respondents indicated that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Indirect) and Overall Job Satisfaction. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -11.587$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ). There is a negative relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Overall Job Satisfaction. As indirect heterosexist behaviours increase in the workplace, GLBT employee's job satisfaction decreases.

**H8: The relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Overall Job Satisfaction**

The SEM analysis results for all the respondents indicated that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Direct) and Overall Job Satisfaction. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -2.708$ ,  $p = 0.006 < 0.05$ ). There is a negative relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Overall Job Satisfaction. As direct heterosexist behaviours increase in the workplace, GLBT employee's job satisfaction decreases.

**H9: The relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Psychological Well-being**

The SEM analysis results for all the respondents indicated that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Indirect) and psychological well-being. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -15.276$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ). There is a

negative relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Psychological Well-being. As indirect heterosexual behaviours increase in the workplace, GLBT employee's psychological well-being decreases.

#### **H10: The relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Psychological Well-being**

The SEM analysis results for all the respondents indicated that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Direct) and psychological well-being. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -3.159$ ,  $p = 0.006 < 0.05$ ). There is a negative relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and psychological well-being. As direct heterosexual behaviours increase in the workplace, GLBT employee's psychological well-being decreases.

#### **H11: The relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Mental Health**

The SEM analysis results for all the respondents indicated that there is a positive association between WHEQ (Indirect) and Mental Health. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = 4.957$ ,  $p = 0.002 < 0.05$ ). There is a positive relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Mental Health. As indirect heterosexual behaviours increase in the workplace, GLBT employee's mental health scores increase which indicates poorer mental health outcomes.

#### **H12: The relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Mental Health**

The SEM analysis results for all the respondents indicated that there is a positive association between WHEQ (Direct) and Mental Health. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = 1.061$ ,  $p = 0.012 > 0.05$ ). There is negative relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Mental Health. As direct heterosexual behaviours increase in the workplace, GLBT employee's mental health scores increase which indicates poorer mental health outcomes.

### **8.10 Discussion of full model**

#### **8.10.1 Concealment and Disclosure, Organisational support and perceived direct and indirect heterosexism**

The study indicated that disclosure and concealment of sexual orientation in the Australian workplace are not significantly affected by direct and indirect heterosexism. Rather, that organisational support plays a large role in influencing the type of

heterosexism which is present in the workplace. The study indicated that when organisational support for GLBT employees is promoted in the form of policies and activities endorsing these policies, direct heterosexist behaviours decrease but indirect heterosexist behaviours increase. This suggests that employees engage in more underhanded/indirect ways of discriminating GLBT employees when organisations support for GLBT employees is present.

Moreover, the findings indicate that when organisational support for GLBT employees is endorsed the increase in indirect heterosexism has a significant negative effect on the well-being of GLBT Australian employees. As indirect heterosexism behaviours increase GLBT employees' psychological well-being becomes poor as does their mental health. Additionally, as a result of the increase in indirect heterosexism, job satisfaction and general satisfaction with life also become significantly low. The inference here is that the value system of people does not change and that they simply find alternative ways to express their value system and held beliefs that homosexuality is immoral, based on certain societal values (such as religion or socio-cultural). An Australian study indicated that 35% of the Australian population who are 14 and older believed that homosexuality is immoral (Flood & Hamilton 2005). This indicates that GLBT employees are always in close contact or near heterosexuals (a majority group) who hold damaging views towards them. It is inferred that individuals will adapt their behaviours to a context but remain true to their value system.

The study also indicates that although there is no significant relationship between concealment and direct heterosexism (the relationship between organisational support and the type of discrimination used in the workplace on GLBT employees), a trend exists suggesting that as direct heterosexism increases GLBT employees will actively employ strategies to conceal their sexual orientation and that this relationship has a significant negative impact on their well-being.

The study indicates that direct heterosexism has a significant negative relationship with psychological well-being where, as direct heterosexist behaviours increase in the work place, psychological well-being of GLBT employees deteriorates. There is a similar significant effect with the mental health of GLBT employees where, as direct heterosexist behaviours increase mental health becomes poor, thereby supporting the

assumptions of Minority Stress Theory (which will be discussed in more detail later in this discussion). Moreover, as direct heterosexist behaviours increase there is a significant decrease in job satisfaction and general satisfaction with life. The study clearly indicates that an increase in direct heterosexist behaviours has a negative effect on the well-being of GLBT employees in the Australian labour market.

These findings are commensurate with the literature where Waldo (1999) indicates that heterosexism is associated with poor psychological health, poor job outcomes and that revealing one's sexual identity in the workplace has negative consequences at work resulting in increased stress, thereby supporting Minority Stress Theory (Meyer 2003). The findings of Lou and Stotzer (2011) indicate that heterosexism is associated with negative psychological outcomes, reduced satisfaction with life and poor mental health. Regmi, Naidoo and Regmi (2009) report similar outcomes in their study which showed that indirect heterosexism is associated with increased stress and poor mental health and decreased job satisfaction. This again supports the assumptions of Minority Stress Theory as a cause of these poor mental health outcomes.

The present study is also aligned with the work carried out by Ragins and Cornwell (2001) whose study indicated that despite the presence of organisational support, disclosure is still associated with heterosexism. Their study indicated a decrease in direct heterosexism but an increase in indirect heterosexism when there was poor organisational support. This is consistent with the findings of the present study for the Australian labour market.

The trend suggests that as direct heterosexism increases, GLBT employees will conceal their sexual orientation resulting in a relationship which has a significant negative impact on the well-being of GLBT employees. This is commensurate with the literature (Ellis & Riggle 1996; Hall 1986; Levine & Leonard 1984;) and these findings indicate that concealment of one's sexual orientation in the workplace is associated with perceived heterosexism and that this non-disclosure of one's sexual orientation leads to decreased psychological well-being.

The present findings are not consistent with other studies which have shown that an increase in organisational support increases the fair treatment of GLBT employees

(Button 2001; Griffith & Hebl 2002). Day and Schoenrade (1997) reported that high disclosure in the workplace was positively related to higher job satisfaction. Rather, the present study indicates that in the Australian labour market organisational support of GLBT employees serves to bring about a change in the type of heterosexism used. That is, the policies and activities employed to create awareness in staff that, discrimination against GLBT employees is not acceptable, serves only to cause individuals to change their type of discrimination practices. As described earlier in the chapter, the inference here is about the value system of individuals which is embedded in the resultant heterosexist actions themselves. Where heterosexism is a philosophical system that rejects, degrades, and stigmatises any non-heterosexual type of behaviour, relationship, or community, with the continued promotion of a heterosexual lifestyle and concomitant subordination of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender ones. The discrimination then becomes more indirect and the literature indicates that indirect discrimination has a large effect on internalised heterosexism (Ellis & Riggle 1996; D'Augelli 1989; DiPlacido 1998) creating internalised stress and job anxiety in support of the assumptions of Minority Stress Theory with a resultant decrease in job satisfaction. Herek et al. (1997) also found that internalised homophobia (heterosexism) was positively related to depressive symptoms supporting the present findings of this study. Frost and Meyer (2009) similarly found that internalised homophobia (heterosexism) of GLB employees was significantly associated with greater depressive symptoms. Badgett (1996) also found that indirect discrimination leads to poor outcomes, consistent with the present study.

### **8.10.2 Findings and Minority Stress Theory**

The findings of the present study support the assumptions of minority stress theory where minority stress theorists assert that the stressors of being a minority group (GLBT employees) creates mental health problems and that these mental health stressors both internally and externally are associated with poor mental health (DiPlacido 1998; Meyer 1995; Szymanski 2005b). The assumptions supported by the study are that minority stress is experienced by GLBT employees as external, objectively stressful events and conditions (during heterosexist experiences either direct or indirect); through the expectation of these events and the vigilance that it requires; the internalisation of negative social attitudes (internalised heterosexism); and by the concealment of sexual orientation/identity. Non-heterosexuality itself is not indicative of mental health

problems per se, but rather the negative outcomes related to being a sexual minority contributes to the emotional difficulties based on society's attitudes towards these minority groups. In the present study, this is indicated by the poor psychological and mental health outcomes experienced by the respondents as a result of both direct and indirect heterosexism.

DiPlacido (1999) in his study on minority stress on GLB individuals focused on the stress experienced by GLB employees as a result of their minority status and found that disclosure resulted in negative life events because of heterosexist behaviours and that these behaviours led to emotional inhibition and poor health outcomes for the GLB employees. Szymanski, Kashubeck-West and Meyer (2008), support the notion of minority stress where their study illustrated that because of the negative attitudes held in society about GLBT individuals, GLB individual internalised these negative beliefs, which in turn led to poor health outcomes. Meyer (1995) in her study on 741 gay men reported that minority stress as a result of these negatively held attitudes about non-heterosexuals was significant evident in association with a number of health measures. Further, Waldo (1999) in his study on 287 GLB found that poor psychological health and poor job related outcomes were consequences of minority stress experienced as a result of heterosexism in the workplace. Further, Waldo found that GLB employees who believed their organisation to be accepting of heterosexism were more likely to experience significant heterosexism compared with those employees who thought their employer to be more intolerant. This is supportive of the present study where despite there being legislation in support of EEO policies employees simply changed the style of their heterosexist behaviours to a more indirect subtle method.

### **8.10.3 Summary of the full model**

The presence of organisational support was not a shielding factor preventing heterosexism in the workplace and greater effort is necessary to stop heterosexism. Heterosexist actions and behaviours can be very subtle (indirect heterosexist behaviours) and are not easily amenable to change. GLBT employees who experienced heterosexist behaviours showed greater levels of stress and health related problems along with decreased satisfaction with work and overall satisfaction with life. The results are consistent with the minority stress theory in that GLBT employees working in a majority context experienced distress when their minority status is emphasised. The



results support the theoretical claim that experiencing heterosexism leads to adverse negative outcomes, suggesting that GLBT employees have distinct stressful experiences associated with their minority status. The current study indicates that GLBT employees experience elevated levels of psychological poor well-being. Minority stress theory proposes that the etiology of GLBT employee psychological distress lies in the discrimination against the GLBT minority status, and thus is discrimination based sexual orientation or identity of the employee.

**In response to the initial research questions:**

RQ1: How is reported sexual orientation/identity disclosure associated with direct heterosexism, psychological well-being, mental health, job satisfaction and satisfaction with life?

RQ2: How is reported sexual orientation/identity concealment associated with indirect heterosexism, psychological well-being, mental health, job satisfaction and satisfaction with life?

RQ3: What is the association between organisations with equal employment opportunity (EEO) policies and practices in place and heterosexism, psychological well-being, mental health, job satisfaction and satisfaction with life?

RQ4: Is disclosure and concealment and organisational support mediated by direct and indirect heterosexism?

**After analysis:**

RQ1: Sexual orientation/identity disclosure is associated with positive direct heterosexism, negative psychological well-being (poorer PWB), positive mental health (poorer mental health due to higher scores equating to poorer outcomes for MH), negative job satisfaction and negative satisfaction with life?

RQ2: Sexual orientation/identity concealment is associated with negative indirect heterosexism, negative psychological well-being (poorer PWB), positive mental health (poorer MH due to higher scores equating to poorer outcomes for MH), negative job satisfaction and negative satisfaction with life?

RQ3: Organisations with equal employment opportunity (EEO) policies and practices in place result in positive indirect heterosexism and negative direct heterosexism, poor psychological well-being, poor mental health outcomes, negative job satisfaction and negative satisfaction with life?

RQ4: Only organisational support is completely mediated by direct and indirect heterosexism

## 8.11 Comparative Analysis

### 8.11.1 Model Hypothesis (Lesbians)

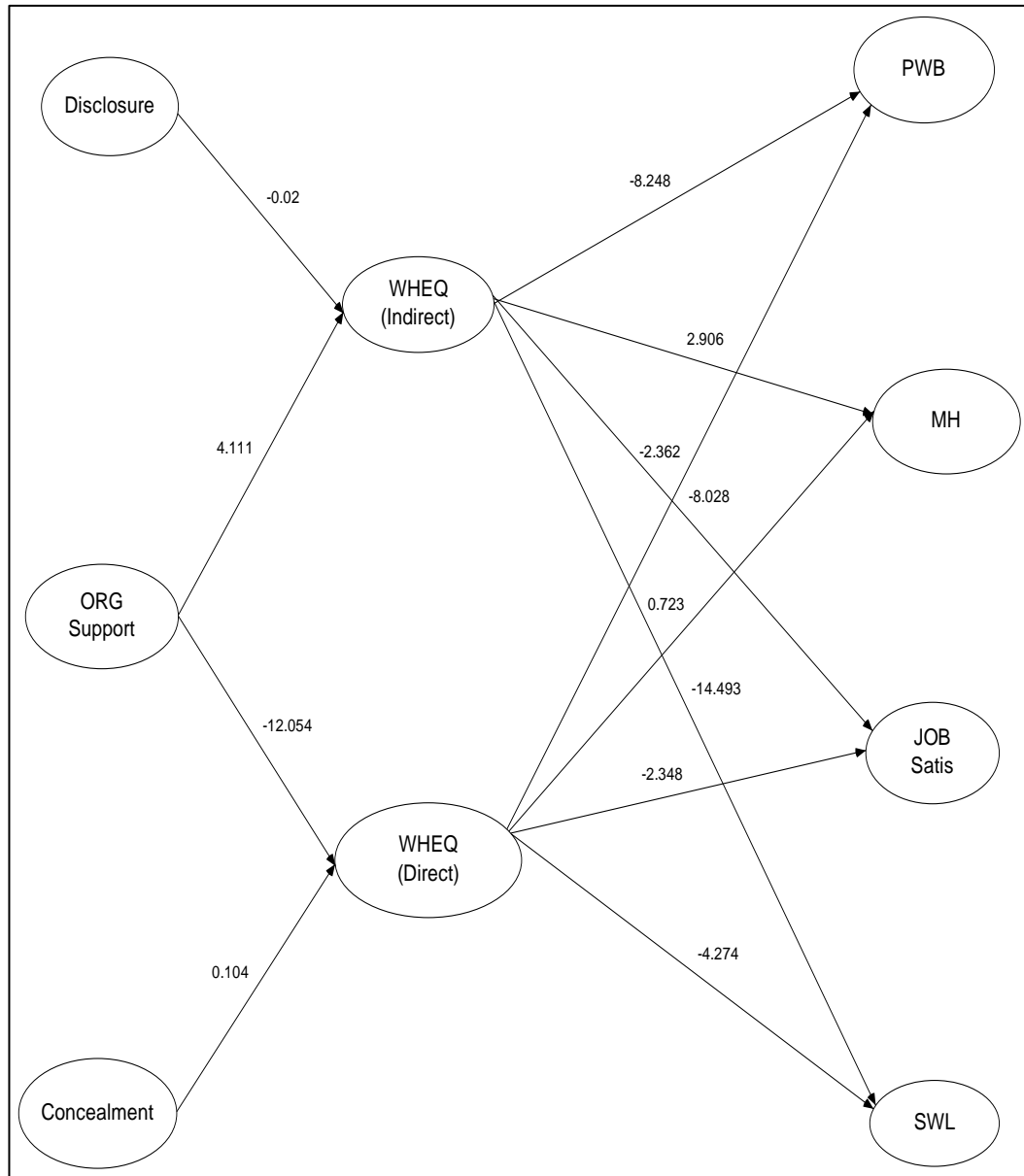
The path coefficients testing the relationship between latent constructs for lesbian respondents are summarised in Table 18 below.

Table 18

Path coefficients testing the relationship between latent constructs for lesbian respondents

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
WHEQ_(Indirect)	<---	Disclosure	-0.017	0.033	-0.522	0.602
WHEQ_(Indirect)	<---	ORG_Support	5.616	2.31	2.431	0.015
WHEQ_(Direct)	<---	Concealment	1.355	8.264	0.164	0.87
WHEQ_(Direct)	<---	ORG_Support	-20.078	13.237	-1.517	0.129
SWL	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	-21.696	6.806	-3.188	0.001
SWL	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	-5.041	1.833	-2.751	0.006
JOB_Satis	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	-11.587	3.645	-3.179	0.001
JOB_Satis	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	-2.708	0.981	-2.76	0.006
PWB	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	-15.276	4.802	-3.181	0.001
PWB	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	-3.519	1.289	-2.731	0.006
MH	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	4.957	1.577	3.143	0.002
MH	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	1.061	0.422	2.513	0.012

Notes: WHEQ = Workplace Heterosexist Experience Questionnaire; PWB = Psychological Well-being; MH = mental health; SWL = Satisfaction with Life; JOB Satis = Job Satisfaction.



Note: WHEQ = Workplace Heterosexist Experience Questionnaire; PWB = Psychological Well-being; MH = mental health; SWL = Satisfaction with Life

Figure 19  
Full structural model for lesbians only

### H1: The relationship between Disclosure and WHEQ (Indirect)

The SEM analysis results for the lesbian respondents indicated that there is a negative association between Disclosure and WHEQ (Indirect). Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -0.020$ ,  $p = 0.019 < 0.05$ ). As strategies are employed by lesbians to disclose their sexual orientation in the work place, indirect heterosexist behaviours decrease.

**H2: The relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Indirect)**

The SEM analysis results for the lesbian respondents indicate that there is a positive association between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Indirect). Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = 4.111$ ,  $p = 0.019 < 0.05$ ). As organisational support is present in the workplace, lesbians experience an increase in indirect heterosexual behaviours in the form of subtle slurs, jokes, remarks and behaviours of avoidance.

**H3: The relationship between Concealment and WHEQ (Direct)**

The SEM analysis results for the lesbian respondents indicated that there is a positive association between Concealment and WHEQ (Direct). However, this relationship is statistically insignificant ( $\beta = 0.104$ ,  $p = 0.453 > 0.05$ ). The more lesbian employees employ strategies to conceal their sexual orientation and identity, the more direct heterosexual behaviours are experienced in the form of the following: being asked about one's personal life, being set up on dates with the opposite sex, being made to alter one's discussion and pretend to be straight.

**H4: The relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Direct)**

The SEM analysis results for the lesbian respondents indicate that there is a negative association between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Direct). Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -12.054$ ,  $p = 0.018 < 0.05$ ). When an organisation is support of sexual orientation (lesbian), direct heterosexual behaviours decrease in the workplace.

**H5: The relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Satisfaction With Life**

The SEM analysis results for the lesbian respondents indicated that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Indirect) and Satisfaction With Life. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -14.493$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ). As indirect heterosexual behaviours increase lesbian employee satisfaction with life decreases.

**H6: The relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Satisfaction With Life**

The SEM analysis results for the lesbian respondents indicated that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Direct) and Satisfaction With Life. Moreover, this

relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -4.274$ ,  $p = 0.005 < 0.05$ ). As direct heterosexist behaviours increase lesbian employee satisfaction with life decreases

**H7: The relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Overall Job Satisfaction**

The SEM analysis results for the lesbian respondents indicate that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Indirect) and Overall Job Satisfaction. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -8.028$ ,  $p = 0.002 < 0.05$ ). As indirect heterosexist behaviours increase in the workplace, lesbian employee job satisfaction decreases.

**H8: The relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Overall Job Satisfaction**

The SEM analysis results for the lesbian respondents indicate that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Direct) and Overall Job Satisfaction. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -2.348$ ,  $p = 0.007 < 0.05$ ). As direct heterosexist behaviours increase in the workplace, lesbian employee job satisfaction decreases.

**H9: The relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Psychological Well-being**

The SEM analysis results for the lesbian respondents indicate that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Indirect) and Psychological Well-being. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -8.248$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ). As indirect heterosexist behaviours increase in the workplace, lesbian employee psychological well-being decreases.

**H10: The relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Psychological Well-being**

The SEM analysis results for the lesbian respondents indicated that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Direct) and Psychological Well-being. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -2.362$ ,  $p = 0.006 < 0.05$ ). As direct heterosexist behaviours increase in the workplace, lesbian employee psychological well-being decreases.

**H11: The relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Mental Health**

The SEM analysis results for the lesbian respondents indicated that there is a positive association between WHEQ (Indirect) and Mental Health. Moreover, this relationship is

statistically significant ( $\beta = 2.906$ ,  $p = 0.002 < 0.05$ ). As indirect heterosexist behaviours increase in the workplace, lesbian employee mental health scores increase which indicates poorer mental health outcomes.

#### **H12: The relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Mental Health**

The SEM analysis results for the lesbian respondents indicate that there is a positive association between WHEQ (Direct) and Mental Health. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.723$ ,  $p = 0.025 < 0.05$ ). As direct heterosexist behaviours increase in the workplace, lesbian employee mental health scores increase which indicates poorer mental health outcomes.

### **8.12 Model Hypothesis (Gay men)**

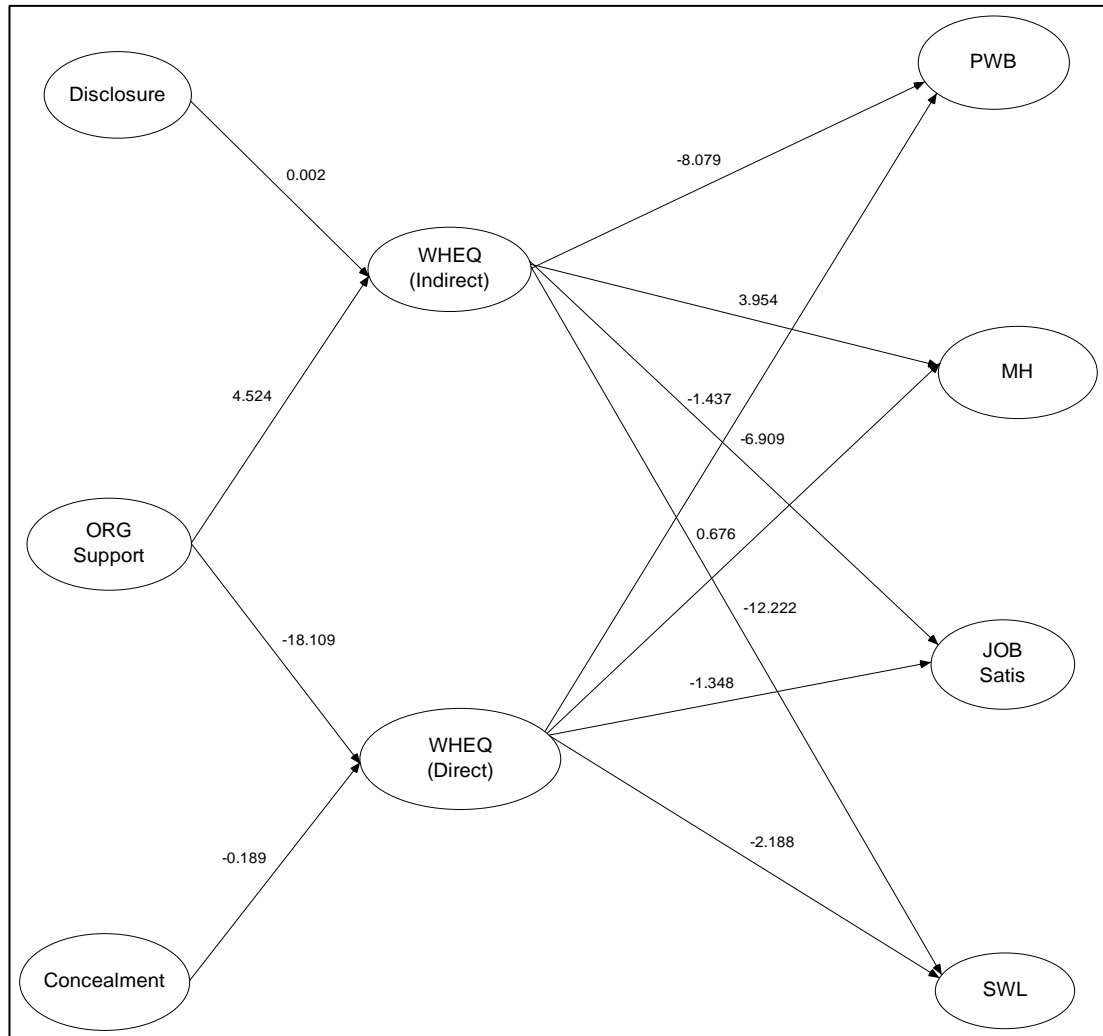
The path coefficients testing the relationship between latent constructs for gay men respondents is summarised in Table 19.

Table 19

Path coefficients testing the relationship between latent constructs for gay **men** respondents

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
WHEQ_(Indirect)	<---	Disclosure	0.002	0.009	0.184	0.854
WHEQ_(Indirect)	<---	ORG_Support	4.524	1.088	4.16	***
WHEQ_(Direct)	<---	Concealment	-0.189	0.282	-0.669	0.504
WHEQ_(Direct)	<---	ORG_Support	-18.109	4.312	-4.2	***
SWL	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	-12.222	3.51	-3.483	***
SWL	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	-2.188	0.827	-2.646	0.008
JOB_Satis	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	-6.909	2.05	-3.37	***
JOB_Satis	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	-1.348	0.483	-2.79	0.005
PWB	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	-8.079	2.414	-3.347	***
PWB	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	-1.473	0.559	-2.638	0.008
MH	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	3.954	1.167	3.388	***
MH	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	0.676	0.272	2.484	0.013

Notes: WHEQ = Workplace Heterosexist Experience Questionnaire; PWB = Psychological Well-being; MH = mental health; SWL = Satisfaction with Life; JOB Satis = Job Satisfaction



Note: WHEQ = Workplace Heterosexist Experience Questionnaire; PWB = Psychological Well-being; MH = mental health; SWL = Satisfaction with Life

Figure 20  
Full model for gay males only

### H1: The relationship between Disclosure and WHEQ (Indirect)

The SEM analysis results for the gay respondents indicated that there is a small and positive association between Disclosure and WHEQ (Indirect). However, this relationship is statistically insignificant ( $\beta = 0.002$ ,  $p = 0.854 > 0.05$ ). As strategies are employed by gay males to disclose their sexual orientation in the work place, indirect heterosexist behaviours increase.

### H2: The relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Indirect)

The SEM analysis results for the gay respondents indicate that there is a positive association between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Indirect). Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = 4.524$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ). The null hypothesis

was rejected and it was concluded that there is a positive relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Indirect). As organisational support is present in the workplace, gay male employees experience an increase in indirect heterosexual behaviours in the form of subtle slurs, jokes, remarks and behaviours of avoidance.

**H3: The relationship between Concealment and WHEQ (Direct)**

The SEM analysis results for the gay respondents indicated that there is a negative association between Concealment and WHEQ (Direct). However, this relationship is statistically insignificant ( $\beta = -0.189$ ,  $p = 0.504 > 0.05$ ). The more gay male employees employ strategies to conceal their sexual orientation and identity, the less direct heterosexual behaviours are experienced in the form of the following: being asked about one's personal life, being set up on dates with the opposite sex, being made to alter one's discussion and pretend to be straight.

**H4: The relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Direct)**

The SEM analysis results for the gay respondents indicated that there is a negative association between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Direct). Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -18.109$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ). When an organisation is supportive of sexual orientation direct heterosexual behaviours towards gay male's decreases in the workplace

**H5: The relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Satisfaction With Life**

The SEM analysis results for the gay respondents indicated that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Indirect) and Satisfaction With Life. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -12.222$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ). As indirect heterosexual behaviours increase gay male employee satisfaction with life decreases.

**H6: The relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Satisfaction With Life**

The SEM analysis results for the gay respondents indicated that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Direct) and Satisfaction With Life. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -2.188$ ,  $p = 0.008 < 0.05$ ). As direct heterosexual behaviours increase gay male employee satisfaction with life decreases.



**H7: The relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Overall Job Satisfaction**

The SEM analysis results for the gay respondents indicated that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Indirect) and Overall Job Satisfaction. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -6.909$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ). As indirect heterosexist behaviours increase in the workplace, gay male employee job satisfaction decreases.

**H8: The relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Overall Job Satisfaction**

The SEM analysis results for the gay respondents indicated that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Direct) and Overall Job Satisfaction. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -1.348$ ,  $p = 0.005 < 0.05$ ). As direct heterosexist behaviours increase in the workplace, gay male employee job satisfaction decreases.

**H9: The relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Psychological Well-being**

The SEM analysis results for the gay respondents indicated that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Indirect) and Psychological Well-being. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -8.079$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ). As indirect heterosexist behaviours increase in the workplace, gay male employee psychological well-being decreases.

**H10: The relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Psychological Well-being**

The SEM analysis results for the gay respondents indicated that there is a negative association between WHEQ (Direct) and Psychological Well-being. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = -1.473$ ,  $p = 0.008 < 0.05$ ). As direct heterosexist behaviours increase in the workplace, gay male employee psychological well-being decreases.

**H11: The relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Mental Health**

The SEM analysis results for the gay respondents indicated that there is a positive association between WHEQ (Indirect) and Mental Health. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = 3.954$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ). As indirect heterosexist behaviours increase in the workplace, gay male employee mental health scores increase which indicates poorer mental health outcomes.

### **H12: The relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Mental Health**

The SEM analysis results for the gay respondents indicated that there is a positive association between WHEQ (Direct) and Mental Health. Moreover, this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.676$ ,  $p = 0.013 < 0.05$ ). The null hypothesis was rejected and it was concluded that there is a positive relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Mental Health. As direct heterosexist behaviours increase in the workplace, gay male employee mental health scores increase which indicates poorer mental health outcomes.

### **8.13 Group Comparison between Gays and Lesbians Respondents**

The comparison of path coefficients, showing the relationship between latent constructs, between lesbian and gay respondents is summarized in Table 20.

Table 20

Comparison of path coefficient between gay and lesbian respondents

			C.R.	P
WHEQ_(Indirect)	<---	Disclosure	1.827	>0.05
WHEQ_(Indirect)	<---	ORG_Support	0.200	>0.05
WHEQ_(Direct)	<---	Concealment	-0.933	>0.05
WHEQ_(Direct)	<---	ORG_Support	-0.906	>0.05
SWL	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	0.401	>0.05
SWL	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	1.208	>0.05
JOB_Satis	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	0.343	>0.05
JOB_Satis	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	1.011	>0.05
PWB	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	0.048	>0.05
PWB	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	0.862	>0.05
MH	<---	WHEQ_(Indirect)	0.694	>0.05
MH	<---	WHEQ_(Direct)	-0.111	>0.05

### **H1: The Relationship between Disclosure and WHEQ (Indirect)**

The group comparison results testing the Disclosure and WHEQ (Indirect) relationship between Gay and Lesbian respondents indicated that this relationship does not differ significantly between the gay and lesbian respondents.

### **H2: The Relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Indirect)**

The group comparison results testing the Organisational Support and WHEQ (Indirect) relationship between Gay and Lesbian respondents indicated that this relationship does not differ significantly between the gay and lesbian respondents.

**H3: The Relationship between Concealment and WHEQ (Direct)**

The group comparison results testing the Concealment and WHEQ (Direct) relationship between Gay and Lesbian respondents indicated that this relationship does not differ significantly between the gay and lesbian respondents.

**H4: The Relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Direct)**

The group comparison results testing the Organisational Support and WHEQ (Direct) relationship between Gay and Lesbian respondents indicated that this relationship does not differ significantly between the gay and lesbian respondents.

**H5: The Relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Satisfaction With Life**

The group comparison results testing the WHEQ (Indirect) and Satisfaction With Life relationship between Gay and Lesbian respondents indicated that this relationship does not differ significantly between the gay and lesbian respondents.

**H6: The Relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Satisfaction With Life**

The group comparison results testing the WHEQ (Direct) and Satisfaction With Life relationship between Gay and Lesbian respondents indicated that this relationship does not differ significantly between the gay and lesbian respondents.

**H7: The Relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Overall Job Satisfaction**

The group comparison results testing the WHEQ (Indirect) and Overall Job Satisfaction relationship between Gay and Lesbian respondents indicated that this relationship does not differ significantly between the gay and lesbian respondents.

**H8: The Relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Overall Job Satisfaction**

The group comparison results testing the WHEQ (Direct) and Overall Job Satisfaction relationship between Gay and Lesbian respondents indicated that this relationship does not differ significantly between the gay and lesbian respondents.

**H9: The Relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Psychological Well-being**

The group comparison results testing the WHEQ (Indirect) and Psychological Well-being relationship between Gay and Lesbian respondents indicated that this relationship does not differ significantly between the gay and lesbian respondents.

**H10: The Relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Psychological Well-being**

The group comparison results testing the WHEQ (Direct) and Psychological Well-being relationship between Gay and Lesbian respondents indicated that this relationship does not differ significantly between the gay and lesbian respondents.

**H11: The Relationship between WHEQ (Indirect) and Mental Health**

The group comparison results testing the WHEQ (Indirect) and Mental Health relationship between Gay and Lesbian respondents indicated that this relationship does not differ significantly between the gay and lesbian respondents.

**H12: The Relationship between WHEQ (Direct) and Mental Health**

The group comparison results testing WHEQ (Direct) and Mental Health relationship between Gay and Lesbian respondents indicated that this relationship does not differ significantly between the gay and lesbian respondents.

**8.14.1 Discussion with regard to comparisons between gay males and lesbians**

Although there were no significant differences between the two groups, there were two trends which varied and which are of note. The first difference was that as strategies are employed by gay males to disclose their sexual orientation in the work place, indirect heterosexual behaviours increase. However, as strategies are employed by lesbians to disclose their sexual orientation in the workplace, indirect heterosexual behaviours decrease. The second difference is that the more gay male employees employ strategies to conceal their sexual orientation and identity, the less direct heterosexual behaviours are experienced in the form of the following: being asked about one's personal life, being set up on dates with the opposite sex, being made to alter one's discussion and pretend to be straight. However, the more lesbian employees employ strategies to conceal their sexual orientation and identity, the more direct heterosexual behaviours are experienced in the form of the following: being asked about one's personal life, being set up on dates with the opposite sex, being made to alter one's discussion and pretend to be straight.

Firstly, the finding that there is no difference between the disclosure of gay males and lesbian sexual orientation is consistent with the literature where Ragins, Cornwell and

Miller (2003) report similar findings that gay men are as likely to disclose their sexual orientation in the workplace, as are lesbians. Moreover, Button (2004) found similar results which revealed that the same patterns existed for gay males and lesbians and that the magnitude of the factor loadings was equivalent for both groups. In the present study, there were no significant differences between the groups.

The reason for the difference in heterosexist behaviours towards these two groups is not wholly understood in the extant literature. The literature suggests that one reason for this may be because gay men have more to lose financially when disclosing their sexual orientation. Gay men have been found to be paid up to 22% less than heterosexual men (Badgett 1996; Berg & Lien 2002; Drydakis 2009). This requires men to be better at camouflaging their sexual identity and therefore direct heterosexism may decrease for this reason. However, Button (2004) reported that both gay males and lesbians tend to use the identity management strategies to camouflage their sexual orientation in the same way, disputing this claim. Another reason reported in the literature is the type of industry one is employed in (Badgett 1996). Badgett (1996) reports that understanding these differences in heterosexist behaviours is not a simple phenomenon. Rather, the type of industry a GLBT employee works for may have a certain culture of tolerance and acceptance of gender roles. This may result in the type of heterosexist behaviours found in this industry. A participant (Ms Pierce 2014, pers. Comm., September) reported that it was acceptable to disclose one's sexual orientation as a flight steward, but not acceptable to disclose one's sexual orientation if they were a pilot in the same industry. Therefore, the type of industry one is employed in may interfere with this variable.

### **8.15 Hypothesis Testing for Mediation Effect**

The SEM bootstrap method (Efron 1979, Efron *et al.* 1993, Preacher and Hayes 2004) with 1000 bootstrap samples was used to examine for indirect (mediating) effects. This procedure has been found to be a more robust method compared to the Sobel's (1982) test to produce unbiased estimates of mediating effect (Preacher & Hayes 2004, Iacobucci *et al.* 2007; Cheung & Lau 2008; Kenny 2008). However, in order to draw a comparison between the two procedures, Sobel's test results are also presented in this study. There are sixteen possible mediating effects in the hypothesised structural model

examined in this study. The results for each mediating effect are summarised in Table 21.

Table 21  
Analysis results summarising the mediation effect

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Inference
ORG_Support--->WHEQ_(Direct)	-20.078	13.237	-1.517	0.129	Insignificant
Disclosure--->WHEQ_(Indirect)	-0.017	0.033	-0.522	0.602	Insignificant
ORG_Support--->WHEQ_(Indirect)	5.616	2.31	2.431	0.015	Significant
Concealment--->WHEQ_(Direct)	1.355	8.264	0.164	0.87	Insignificant
WHEQ_(Indirect)--->MH	4.957	1.577	3.143	0.002	Significant
WHEQ_(Direct)--->MH	1.061	0.422	2.513	0.012	Significant
WHEQ_(Direct)--->SWL	-5.041	1.833	-2.751	0.006	Significant
WHEQ_(Indirect)--->SWL	-21.696	6.806	-3.188	0.001	Significant
WHEQ_(Indirect)--->JOB_Satis	-11.587	3.645	-3.179	0.001	Significant
WHEQ_(Indirect)--->PWB	-15.276	4.802	-3.181	0.001	Significant
WHEQ_(Direct)--->PWB	-3.519	1.289	-2.731	0.006	Significant
WHEQ_(Direct)--->JOB_Satis	-2.708	0.981	-2.76	0.006	Significant
ORG_Support--->PWB	16.327	24.995	0.653	0.514	Insignificant
ORG_Support--->SWL	11.343	13.843	0.819	0.413	Insignificant
ORG_Support--->JOB_Satis	0.131	13.383	0.01	0.992	Insignificant
ORG_Support--->MH	19.119	6.301	3.034	0.002	Significant

Notes: ORG support = organisational support; WHEQ = Workplace Heterosexist Experience Questionnaire; MH = mental Health; SWL = Satisfaction with Life; JOB SATIS = Job satisfaction; PWB = Psychological Well-being;

Table 22  
Summary of Mediation effect

Mediator	Path	Inference
WHEQ_(Indirect)	Disclosure--->SWL	Does Not Mediate
WHEQ_(Indirect)	Disclosure--->JOB_Satis	Does Not Mediate
WHEQ_(Indirect)	Disclosure--->PWB	Does Not Mediate
WHEQ_(Indirect)	Disclosure--->MH	Does Not Mediate
WHEQ_(Indirect)	ORG_Support--->SWL	Complete Mediation
WHEQ_(Indirect)	ORG_Support--->JOB_Satis	Complete Mediation
WHEQ_(Indirect)	ORG_Support--->PWB	Complete Mediation
WHEQ_(Indirect)	ORG_Support--->MH	Partial Mediation
WHEQ_(Direct)	ORG_Support--->SWL	Does Not Mediate
WHEQ_(Direct)	ORG_Support--->JOB_Satis	Does Not Mediate
WHEQ_(Direct)	ORG_Support--->PWB	Does Not Mediate
WHEQ_(Direct)	ORG_Support--->MH	Does Not Mediate
WHEQ_(Direct)	Concealment--->SWL	Does Not Mediate
WHEQ_(Direct)	Concealment--->JOB_Satis	Does Not Mediate
WHEQ_(Direct)	Concealment--->PWB	Does Not Mediate
WHEQ_(Direct)	Concealment--->MH	Does Not Mediate

Notes: ORG support = organisational support; WHEQ = Workplace Heterosexist Experience Questionnaire; MH = mental Health; SWL = Satisfaction with Life; JOB SATIS = Job satisfaction; PWB = Psychological Well-being;

### **8.15.1 WHEQ (Indirect) as Mediator**

#### **Relationship between Disclosure and Satisfaction With Life**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Indirect) on the relationship between Disclosure and Satisfaction With Life, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Disclosure and WHEQ (Indirect) was statistically insignificant, ( $\beta = -0.017$ ,  $p = 0.602 > 0.05$ ). It was concluded that WHEQ (Indirect) does not mediate the relationship between Disclosure and Satisfaction With Life.

#### **Relationship between Disclosure and Overall Job Satisfaction**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Indirect) on the relationship between Disclosure and Overall Job Satisfaction, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Disclosure and WHEQ (Indirect) was statistically insignificant, ( $\beta = -0.017$ ,  $p = 0.602 > 0.05$ ). It was concluded that WHEQ (Indirect) does not mediate the relationship between Disclosure and Overall Job Satisfaction.

#### **Relationship between Disclosure and Psychological Well-being**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Indirect) on the relationship between Disclosure and Psychological Well-being, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Disclosure and WHEQ (Indirect) was statistically insignificant, ( $\beta = -0.017$ ,  $p = 0.602 > 0.05$ ). It was concluded that WHEQ (Indirect) does not mediate the relationship between Disclosure and Psychological Well-being.

#### **Relationship between Disclosure and Mental Health**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Indirect) on the relationship between Disclosure and Mental Health, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Disclosure and WHEQ (Indirect) was statistically insignificant, ( $\beta = -0.017$ ,  $p = 0.602 > 0.05$ ). It was concluded that WHEQ (Indirect) does not mediate the relationship between Disclosure and Mental Health.

### **8.15.2 WHEQ (Direct) as Mediator**

#### **Relationship between Concealment and Satisfaction With Life**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Direct) on the relationship between Concealment and Satisfaction With Life, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Concealment and WHEQ (Direct) is statistically insignificant, ( $\beta = 1.355$ ,  $p = 0.870 > 0.05$ ). It was concluded that WHEQ (Direct) does not mediate the relationship between Concealment and Satisfaction With Life.

#### **Relationship between Concealment and Overall Job Satisfaction**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Direct) on the relationship between Concealment and Overall Job Satisfaction, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Concealment and WHEQ (Direct) was statistically insignificant, ( $\beta = 1.355$ ,  $p = 0.870 > 0.05$ ). It was concluded that WHEQ (Direct) does not mediate the relationship between Concealment and Overall Job Satisfaction.

#### **Relationship between Concealment and Psychological Well-being**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Direct) on the relationship between Concealment and Psychological Well-being, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Concealment and WHEQ (Direct) was statistically insignificant, ( $\beta = 1.355$ ,  $p = 0.870 > 0.05$ ). It was concluded that WHEQ (Direct) does not mediate the relationship between Concealment and Psychological Well-being.

#### **Relationship between Concealment and Mental Health**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Direct) on the relationship between Concealment and Mental Health, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Concealment and WHEQ (Direct) was statistically insignificant, ( $\beta = 1.355$ ,  $p = 0.870 > 0.05$ ). It was concluded that WHEQ (Direct) does not mediate the relationship between Concealment and Mental Health.



### **8.15.3 WHEQ (Indirect) as a Mediator**

#### **Relationship between Organisational Support and Satisfaction With Life**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Indirect) on the relationship between Organisational Support and Satisfaction With Life, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Indirect) is statistically significant, ( $\beta = 5.616$ ,  $p = 0.015 < 0.05$ ).

Moreover, it was observed that WHEQ (Indirect) significantly influences the dependent construct Satisfaction With Life ( $\beta = -22.002$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). Further, the direct path between Organisational Support and Satisfaction With Life was found to be insignificant ( $\beta = 32.655$ ,  $p = 0.704 > 0.05$ ). This indicated that WHEQ (Indirect) completely mediates the relationship between Organisational Support and Satisfaction With Life.

#### **Relationship between Organisational Support and Overall Job Satisfaction**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Indirect) on the relationship between Organisational Support and Overall Job Satisfaction, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Indirect) was statistically significant, ( $\beta = 5.616$ ,  $p = 0.015 < 0.05$ ).

Moreover, it was observed that WHEQ (Indirect) significantly influences the dependent construct Overall Job Satisfaction ( $\beta = -11.750$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). Further, the direct path between Organisational Support and Overall Job Satisfaction was found to be insignificant ( $\beta = -0.313$ ,  $p = 0.986 > 0.05$ ). This indicated that WHEQ (Indirect) completely mediates the relationship between Organisational Support and Overall Job Satisfaction.

#### **Relationship between Organisational Support and Psychological Well-being**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Indirect) on the relationship between Organisational Support and Psychological Well-being, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Indirect) was statistically significant, ( $\beta = 5.616$ ,  $p = 0.015 < 0.05$ ).

Moreover, it was observed that WHEQ (Indirect) significantly influences the dependent construct Psychological Well-being ( $\beta = -11.750$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). Further, the direct path between Organisational Support and Psychological Well-being was found to be insignificant ( $\beta = -0.313$ ,  $p = 0.986 > 0.05$ ). This indicated that WHEQ (Indirect)

completely mediates the relationship between Organisational Support and Psychological Well-being.

### **Relationship between Organisational Support and Mental Health**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Indirect) on the relationship between Organisational Support and Mental Health, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Indirect) was statistically significant, ( $\beta = 5.616$ ,  $p = 0.015 < 0.05$ ). Moreover, it was observed that WHEQ (Indirect) significantly influences the dependent construct Mental Health ( $\beta = -5.026$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). Further, the direct path between Organisational Support and Mental Health was found to be Significant ( $\beta = 21.972$ ,  $p = 0.986 < 0.05$ ). This indicated that WHEQ (Indirect) partially mediates the relationship between Organisational Support and Mental Health.

#### **8.15.4 WHEQ (Direct) as a Mediator**

### **Relationship between Organisational Support and Satisfaction With Life**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Direct) on the relationship between Organisational Support and Satisfaction With Life, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Direct) was statistically insignificant, ( $\beta = -20.078$ ,  $p = 0.049 < 0.05$ ). Moreover, it was observed that WHEQ (Indirect) significantly influences the dependent construct Satisfaction With Life ( $\beta = 5.116$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ). Further, the direct path between Organisational Support and Satisfaction With Life was found to be insignificant ( $\beta = 32.655$ ,  $p = 0.704 > 0.05$ ). This indicated that WHEQ (Direct) completely mediates the relationship between Organisational Support and Satisfaction With Life.

### **Relationship between Organisational Support and Overall Job Satisfaction**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Direct) on the relationship between Organisational Support and Overall Job Satisfaction, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Direct) was statistically significant, ( $\beta = 21.420$ ,  $p = 0.049 < 0.05$ ). Moreover, it was observed that WHEQ (Direct) significantly influences the dependent construct Overall Job Satisfaction ( $\beta = 2.748$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ). Further, the direct path between Organisational Support and Overall Job Satisfaction was found to be

insignificant ( $\beta = -0.313$ ,  $p = 0.986 > 0.05$ ). This indicated that WHEQ (Direct) completely mediates the relationship between Organisational Support and Overall Job Satisfaction.

### **Relationship between Organisational Support and Psychological Well-being**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Direct) on the relationship between Organisational Support and Psychological Well-being, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Direct) was statistically significant, ( $\beta = 21.420$ ,  $p = 0.049 < 0.05$ ). Moreover, it was observed that WHEQ (Direct) significantly influences the dependent construct Psychological Well-being ( $\beta = 3.570$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ). Further, the direct path between Organisational Support and Psychological Well-being was found to be insignificant ( $\beta = 15.755$ ,  $p = 0.527 > 0.05$ ). This indicated that WHEQ (Direct) completely mediates the relationship between Organisational Support and Psychological Well-being.

### **Relationship between Organisational Support and Mental Health**

In order to test the mediating effect of WHEQ (Direct) on the relationship between Organisational Support and Mental Health, the coefficient of each path was evaluated. The results indicated that the relationship between Organisational Support and WHEQ (Direct) was statistically significant, ( $\beta = 21.420$ ,  $p = 0.049 < 0.05$ ). Moreover, it was observed that WHEQ (Direct) significantly influences the dependent construct Mental Health ( $\beta = -1.078$ ,  $p = 0.010 < 0.05$ ). Further, the direct path between Organisational Support and Mental Health was found to be Significant ( $\beta = 21.972$ ,  $p = 0.004 < 0.05$ ). This indicated that WHEQ (Direct) partially mediates the relationship between Organisational Support and Mental Health.

### **8.15.5 Discussion**

It is clear from the findings that the direct and indirect heterosexism significantly mediates the relationship between organisational support and all the well-being measures, viz. psychological well-being, job satisfaction, satisfaction with life and the mental health measure (DASS). Not only does this mediation support the hypothesised model, but it also supports the limited few current studies that heterosexism in the workplace is mediated by organisational support (Ragins & Cornwall 2001; Waldo

1999) and that because the average Australian spends more time working than doing anything else, events in the workplace are connected not only to feelings about one's role, but also to psychological well-being and mental health.

### **8.16 Conclusion**

Using a structural equation modelling framework, the relationship between these variables was used to determine the well-being of employees in the Australian labour market. Well-being was measured via four measures viz. psychological well-being, job satisfaction, satisfaction with life and the depression, anxiety and stress scale. The study indicated that disclosure and concealment of sexual orientation in the Australian workplace are not significantly affected by direct and indirect heterosexism. Rather, that organisational support plays a large role in influencing the type of heterosexism, which is present in the Australian workplace. The study indicated that when organisational support for GLBT employees is promoted in the form of policies and activities endorsing these policies, direct heterosexist behaviours decrease but indirect heterosexist behaviours increase. The study significantly indicated that employees engage in more indirect/underhanded ways of discriminating GLBT employees when organisations support for GLBT employees is present. Additionally, the study found that the relationship between organisational support and well-being is completely mediated by both direct and indirect heterosexism. The study also showed that there were no differences between gay men and lesbians. The study also provided evidence in support of the assumptions of minority stress theory.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **Limitations of the study and future directions for research**

#### **9.1 Introduction**

In light of the existing statistical information concerning GLBT employees internationally and in Australia, the survey data from the present study provides an opportunity to learn more about defining features of this largely invisible community. Findings from the study also allow for a better understanding of the nature of heterosexism in the Australian workplace and that there are no differences between gay men and lesbians in this regard. Finally, by documenting this Australian model of heterosexism in the workplace it supplements the groundwork for future researchers who are engaged in the struggle to address the marginalisation and de-legitimisation of GLBT individuals in the workplace.

Since this thesis represents the first model of heterosexism in the Australian workplace, it contributes to the understanding of heterosexism in the Australian workplace and the effect this has on the well-being of these employees. Despite these findings, it also highlights the fact that what we know about GLBT individuals is obscured by the purposive sampling method of distribution. Harry (1990) argues that there is an urgent need to initiate large scale probability samples in order to achieve a more representative sample of GLBT employees and hence a more comprehensive picture of the full extent and nature of GLBT heterosexism. Despite the methodological limitation (discussed further below) of the purposive method and the need for data procured through probability sampling, the data captured in the present study contributes to our general understanding of some important issues raised in the merging literature concerned with the effect of heterosexism and the effect it has on the well-being of Australian employees.

#### **9.2 Substantiative Issues and Concerns**

##### **9.2.1 Cross-sectional Nature of the Study**

While the findings of the research supported the hypothesised models, they contained some shortcomings, respectively offering directions for future research. As stated above, the *cross-sectional* nature of the data precludes making conclusive responses

about the causal sequencing in the models, suggesting the need for longitudinal research. Although a concerted effort was made to obtain as diverse a sample of GLBT employees as possible, it is difficult to include individuals who are less open about their sexual identity in research of this kind. Consequently, the participants in this research are likely to be more open about their sexual orientation. As with most research on lesbian and gay related topics, this limits the certainty with which these findings can be generalised to the population. But this was not the intent of the present study. In addition, the sample included relatively few racial/other minority members. Each of these limitations highlights the need for future research to replicate the observed results and examine the extent to which the findings can be utilised. Bearing in mind that this was a cross-sectional study and that sexuality is fluid, a longitudinal study may highlight the changes that take place as individuals move through their identity formation process. Further research needs to be longitudinal to investigate this phenomenon in an empirical manner.

Moreover, the sample were mostly white adults over 18 and the number of bisexual and transgendered participants was small compared to the exclusively gay male and lesbian (GL) participants. The small sample of bisexuals did not allow the examination of the diversity of experiences that characterises bisexuals. Future research, with larger samples of bisexuals can assess whether openness moderates the relationship between sexual minority stress and psychological well-being and the interaction of sexual orientation and outness on physical and psychological outcome measures.

The results emphasise the importance of studying gay males and lesbian employees and bisexuals and transgendered employees as separate groups. Bisexuals and transgendered employees may have a unique experience distinct from exclusively GL individuals. Bisexuals and transgendered employees could be considered a double-minority when compared to the heterosexual majority within a sexual minority community. Future research should focus on understanding the various contributions to bisexuals and transgendered psychological functioning. Important variables to consider include outness / disclosure about sexual orientation, sexual identity (self-perception), sexual behaviours, clear definitions of bisexuality and transgendered identities, multiple psychological outcome measure, and measure of sexual minority stress. Obtaining a larger sample of bisexual and transgendered employees will allow for multiple variables

to be considered simultaneously and for important interactions with openness to be investigated.

Prospective research would benefit from including further bisexual and transgendered employees, and increasing the focus on the other minorities, such as the ethnicity and race of employees, as it would be remarkable to observe the likely effects of being an increased minority and how these occurrences vary to those of homosexual men and lesbians.

Though every effort was made to include the WHEQ items in order for respondents to report individual circumstances of possible biased towards them due to their sexual preferences or how they identified, there is chance that some respondents in this group may have misinterpreted specific reactions as heterosexists, and driven by different judgements such as sexism, racism or another reason.

Furthermore, as is unfortunately often the case in sexual minority research, the correlational design did not allow the teasing out of whether minority stress precedes dysphoria, or the reverse occurs, or whether both dysphoria and stress are related to other variables.

When looking at these models, the interest of the antecedents would benefit from some evaluation with further studies in order for the outcomes to be best expressed. In relation to the comparison of health and other relevant findings, a further discussion around obtaining valid medical records instead of expecting symptomatic checklists, for example, “self-report” medical measures, the findings are less than accurate according to Watson and Pennebaker (1989).

The delivery of EEO and policies also compared participants self-reporting, however it may have been better to look at the possibilities more empirically, that is through real company policies, although this is difficult within itself and may have been advantageous for respondents to rank their believed appropriateness of the current resources and policies or to the effect they personally believed the management brings policies alive in the workplace, or whether they simply exist as a list on a wall. As an addition, it would benefit to gauge the respondents to see whether GLBT employees

were in senior positions within organisation and whether this has an effect or not on the outcomes. It may be said having employees of closeted GLBT identity in superior roles may, perhaps, create a negative workplace environment. With respect to self-report, the most important question concentrates on the possibility that the findings may show relevance to methodical variance, or a general trend to reply non-positively. This shows the possible relationship between organisational environment and heterosexism that can be more appropriately described through the 'whiner', as well as, the variant method within the hypotheses. This denotes the trend of employees who are apprehensive in regard to endorsing items and rank the organisation less forbearing with heterosexism.

An additional enhancement in forecasting heterosexism would benefit from focussing on individual variations. It shows that the presence of an increased proportion of males suggests heterosexism, as well as men (and women) displaying certain indicators that show possible social attitudes towards GLBT employees that are negative. According to Herek (1994), these attitudes include religious beliefs, political views and ideology, as well as their views on authority. These specific characteristics would benefit from further research, it may not serve benefit to attempt to understand them however, it may be more advantageous to look at the organisation as a whole with regard to minimising heterosexism within the place of employment, and doing this, through channels of interventions. Some workplaces may be in agreement to try and bring about change with regard to altering the sexual attitudes in workplace integrity.

A further methodological drawback of the study is with regard to the distribution of participants amongst organisations. It is likely that research might be improved with the capture of members from a single organisation because organisational characteristics may be evaluated more accurately. However, other studies comparable to the present one have shown difficulties locating a large catchment of GLBT employees within a single organisation (Day and Schonerade, 1997). If, for arguments sake, a workplace existed, there would be substantial compromise with the minority stress theory in regard to the dynamics within the organisation. Changing the research paradigm may overcome a few of the issues regarding confidentiality that limit the present research. Qualitative research within one or more organisations, containing in depth interviews with lesbian and gay employees, their co-workers, managers and top management, could



expand on more rich and varied data. But, the issue of such an organisation existing is doubtful and the consequential compromise of minority stress disadvantageous.

A further issue to take into consideration is examining current heterosexism in work place settings. According to Badgett, (1996), it has been suggested that GLBT employees make decisions regarding occupational issues on the perception of tolerance. While it is difficult to evaluate those variables, occupational context is an important consideration. The difference in heterosexism could be presented where a homosexual interior designer, will have a different experience of heterosexism, than, for example a gay professional football player.

Navigating the fluid boundaries between visibility and invisibility within the workplace denotes a secondary course of labour that is not essential or expected of heterosexual employees. This is an onerous responsibility for new GLBT employees who have limited experience in establishing work relationships and steering their way through organisational hierarchies and politics. It also compromises the claim of GLBT workers to partake in safe employment and, like other social situations, affects their psychosocial development and general well-being (D'Augelli, Pilkington & Hershberger 2002). Remaining in the workplace closet can hinder employee's efforts to foster social networks at work as well as decrease their likelihood of pursuing support from senior colleagues when necessitated. At the same time, the closet may be an essential and provisional space for some employees who do not feel included as GLBT employees or who need time to gauge their work relationships and climate of their organisation. A further study of employees first seeking and entering employment may assist in understanding the importance of sexual identity in their primary perception of job-seeking. Lastly, there is a call for broader recognition of employee agency in finding understanding colleagues and linking with other GLBT workers in the face of the workplace obstacles confined through the silencing of diverse sexualities and identities.

The variability of approaches has been fairly limited within survey and correlational quantitative designs with focus on descriptive data collection and limited theory based hypotheses testing. Initially these methods are warranted when first studying a new population where conceptualisations designed for the general population are not suitable

for a specific population (viz. GLBT). Researchers need to move beyond this framework of focussing on description and move more towards theory based hypothesis testing to find appropriate models specific to GLBT populations. Qualitative methodology is growing in acceptance as a technique to discover more appropriate models of best fit. At present the literature is scattered and limited in its methodological rigour and future research trends needs to push these boundaries to address these limitations.

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As discussed in the method chapter 7, research into consequences of sexual orientation in organisation is problematic due to the highly delicate nature of the topic and consequential need for stringent confidentiality. The matter of causality was not focused on in this study. Although relationships were found that supported all four hypotheses, causal relationships in these variables cannot be established by the multiple regression analysis of this cross-sectional sample. A longitudinal design would facilitate this type of enquiry. Such a design presents practical complications, given the delicate and confidential character of the theme and the need to evaluate an individual's responses longitudinally. In addition to investigating causal issues, a longitudinal investigation would further elucidate valuable research questions. Some of the consequences of a lack of disclosure in one's home life and resulting conflict as well as it impacts on commitment and job satisfaction undoubtedly have evolving components which must be explored to determine their full nature and effects. The course of 'coming out' may be better conceptualised as a longitudinal concept, where a homosexual employee might start by informing close associates about their orientation, and then continuing either laterally through the organisation or upwardly into the management structure. Again, this type of research would be tremendously challenging, given the demand to confidentially survey the same respondents over a period of time.

Additionally, neither qualitative model resolves the problem of acquiring data from employees who decide to keep their sexual orientation secret. Consequently while qualitative methods may propose some advancement, the fact remains that while a valuable and timely issue, the investigation of work attitudes of gay and lesbian employees is a testing challenge.

Research exploring the incidence of antigay and lesbian violence and harassment and discrimination is growing. Both qualitative and quantitative data describing both formal and informal discrimination highlights the need to address these deleterious acts of heterosexism in the workplace. The development of cumulative scoring across items is providing increased reliability and measurement of universal constructs of discrimination. The degree of concealment and disclosure associated with heterosexism are now universally accepted constructs which can be measured. Greater consistency is now evident in such measures and other measures need to follow suit to ensure the comparability of research findings across investigations.

### **9.2.2 Recommendations**

It is the intention to present these findings at a number of GLBT interest groups to inform relevant stakeholders (for example; Pride and Diversity, Human Resources Divisions and GLBT advocacy groups) of the outcomes and how they affect GLBT employees. This will provide evidence for creating an awareness of the fact that simply the presence of a policy and activities endorsing these policies, is not enough to stop heterosexist activities in the workplace. Those employees engage in more underhanded/indirect ways of discriminating GLBT employees when organisations' support for GLBT employees is present in the form of these policies. The purpose is also to make organisations aware that there need for there to be safe avenues for reporting of these heterosexist discriminatory actions and behaviours and consequences for employees who engage in such behaviours which ensures the safety of GLBT employees and with no further backlash. This would contribute toward securing a healthy work environment for GLBT minority groups in the Australian context.

### **Legislative and Policy Reform:**

It is clear from the results that Federal Health policy needs to adapt a social model of health and to recognise that GLBT people often have particular health and well-being needs which require specific strategies, services and programs. The Federal Government should identify issues of health and well-being that are particularly pertinent to the GLBT community and identify situations of inequality of access to health services due to workplace distress. The Federal Government should ensure that its health policy is adequately informed by consultation with the GLBT community and related organisations such as Pride and Diversity. The results from this study will be discussed

with Pride and Diversity and steps to bring about change in this discourse of indirect heterosexism in the workplace will need to be addressed.

What is of positive significance is that Pride in Diversity has announced that the 2014-2015 edition of the Australian National Recruitment Guide (ANRG) will be distributed in early October 2015. This was developed with two significant aims; to demonstrate to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex graduates and Jobseekers that they can start their careers in organisations that are inclusive of LGBTI employees and to highlight organisations across all sectors in Australia that are actively engaged in making their workplaces truly inclusive of sexual and gender diversity. Although this is a positive step forward for GLBT employees in the Australian workplace, it will only take place in October 2015. It is clear that much is to be done to ensure the well-being of GLBT Australian employees.

Given the findings of the study, a national strategic approach to address GLBT employee health and well-being is urgently required. Some of the mechanisms which could achieve a comprehensive approach are a Federal Ministerial or departmental advisory committee, a resource unit or a specific national strategy focused on GLBT employee health and well-being in the Australian labour market. The present findings along with the Victorian Ministerial Advisory Committee on gay and lesbian health could serve as a useful model because it has taken an innovative approach and addressed many areas, such as poor mental health outcomes, from a GLBT perspective.

### **9.2.3 Conclusion**

This study represents the first examination of a model of the process of heterosexism in the Australian workplace, demonstrating that organisational support determines the type of heterosexist behaviours which are prevalent in the workplace and that it is this prevalence of heterosexism, which is associated with undesirable job related, health related, psychological related and satisfaction with related poor outcomes. As such, this study provides insight into not only the deleterious effects of workplace heterosexism but also some possible ways to counter it and make the Australian workplace a safer place for GBLT employees. The study posits an important contribution to the research on GLBT employees. At the least, it provides a framework for future researchers to use as a foundation to further explore the variables surrounding heterosexism in the

workplace. Tolerance and acceptance for sexual orientation and identity diversity in the workplace is of great importance even in the most conservative of workplaces. Continued research in this area is crucial and researchers need to extend this current knowledge base to bring about greater tolerance and acceptance of human workplace diversity.

This study supported by the theoretical orientation of minority stress theory represents the first examination of a model of the process of heterosexism in the Australian workplace, demonstrating that organisational factors and the perception of heterosexism contribute and are related to unfavourable job-related, health related and psychological well-being. As such, this study provides insight into not only the relationship between perceptions of heterosexism and ones decision to disclose or conceal ones SO based on a level of organisational support, but also on the outcomes of such a decision making process, the resultant GLBT employee well-being.

This research represents a critical step in area that has been largely neglected by organisational researches in Australia. The results significantly revealed that identity management is more complex than deciding whether to pass as a heterosexual or to openly identify as a gay male or lesbian. Individuals may counterfeit a false heterosexual identity, avoid the issue of sexuality altogether, or integrate a gay or lesbian identity into the organisational setting. The study indicates significantly that organisational support plays a large role in influencing the type of heterosexism, which is present in the Australian workplace. The study indicated that when organisational support for GLBT employees is promoted in the form of policies and activities endorsing these policies, employees engage in more underhanded/indirect ways of discriminating against GLBT employees. Additionally, this relationship was completely mediated by direct and indirect heterosexism. The study also showed that there were no differences between gay men and lesbians. The study provided evidence in support for the assumptions of minority stress theory and made recommendations for further research and policy/regulatory changes.

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## APPENDICES A

### Federal and State Anti-discrimination Laws in Australia related to SO and Sexual Identity

Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986	Grounds of discrimination here refer to breaches of human rights by any Commonwealth body or agency and discrimination in employment on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, social origin, age, medical record, criminal record, marital status, impairment, disability, nationality, sexual preference, trade union activity. The areas covered are: Commonwealth body or agency; employment and occupation.	
Disability Discrimination Act 1992	Grounds of unlawful discrimination here refer to physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological or learning disabilities; physical disfigurement; disorders, illness or diseases that affect thought processes, perceptions of reality, emotions or judgment, or results in disturbed behaviours; presence in body of organisms causing disease or illness (eg HIV virus). Areas covered: Employment; education; access to premises; accommodation; buying or selling land; activities of clubs; sport; administration of Commonwealth laws and programs; provision of goods; and services and facilities	
Sex Discrimination Act 1984	Grounds of unlawful discrimination here refer to: sex, marital status, pregnancy, family responsibility (dismissal only). Other unlawful conduct refers to sexual harassment and the areas covered here refer to: Employment; partnerships; qualifying bodies; registered organisations; employment agencies, education; goods, services and facilities; accommodation; land; clubs; awards; superannuation and enterprise agreements.	
Australian Capital Territory Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)	The ACT Human Rights Commission can take complaints of unlawful discrimination under the ACT Discrimination Act 1991. For the Human Rights Commission to be able to take action on a complaint there must be three elements. These are:	Protected Attributes - the protected attributes a person must have, and are the reason for the unfair treatment: 1. Aid of an assistance animal

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allegations of unfair treatment because of</li> <li>2. Certain 'protected attributes' as defined by the Discrimination Act 1991, and</li> <li>3. In a part of 'public life', as defined by the Discrimination Act 1991.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Age</li> <li>3. Breastfeeding</li> <li>4. Disability, including possible future disability</li> <li>5. Relationship status</li> <li>6. Industrial Activity</li> <li>7. Political conviction</li> <li>8. Pregnancy, including potential pregnancy</li> <li>9. Profession, trade, occupation or calling</li> <li>10. Race</li> <li>11. Religious conviction</li> <li>12. Sex</li> <li>13. Sexuality</li> <li>14. Status as a parent or carer</li> <li>15. Gender Identity</li> <li>16. Spent conviction</li> <li>17. Association with a person who has an attribute listed above</li> <li>18. Sexual harassment</li> <li>19. Vilification because of race, sexuality, gender identity or HIV/AIDS Status</li> <li>20. Victimisation because of making a complaint</li> </ol>
New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)	<p>Grounds of discrimination covered in NSW:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Age discrimination</li> <li>2. Age discrimination and job advertisements</li> <li>3. Pregnancy and breastfeeding discrimination</li> <li>4. Carers' responsibilities discrimination</li> <li>5. Disability discrimination</li> <li>6. Homosexual discrimination</li> <li>7. Infectious diseases discrimination</li> <li>8. Marital or domestic status discrimination</li> <li>9. Race discrimination</li> <li>10. Sex discrimination</li> <li>11. Transgender discrimination</li> </ol>	<p>Other unlawful conduct here refers to: sexual harassment; vilification on the basis of race, homosexuality, transgender and HIV/AIDS status. The areas covered are: employment; partnerships; trade unions; qualifying bodies; employment agencies; education; access to places and vehicles; provision of goods and services; accommodation; registered clubs.</p>
Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act 1996 (NT)	<p>Discrimination takes place if a person treats or proposes to treat another person who has or had, or is believed to have or had an attribute; or a characteristic imputed to appertain to an attribute; or a characteristic imputed to appertain generally to persons with an attribute, less favourably than a</p>	<p>Protected attributes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Race</li> <li>2. Sex</li> <li>3. Sexuality</li> <li>4. Age</li> <li>5. Marital status</li> <li>6. Pregnancy</li> <li>7. Parenthood</li> </ol>



	<p>person who has not, or is believed not to have, such an attribute. This Act applies to prohibited conduct in the areas of activity in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>education; and</li> <li>work; and</li> <li>accommodation; and</li> <li>goods, services and facilities; and</li> <li>clubs; and</li> <li>insurance and superannuation.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breastfeeding</li> <li>Impairment</li> <li>Trade union or employer association activity</li> <li>Religious belief or activity</li> <li>Political opinion, affiliation or activity</li> <li>Irrelevant medical record</li> <li>Irrelevant criminal record</li> <li>Association with a person who has, or is believed to have, an attribute referred to in this section</li> </ol>
Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (QLD)	<p>The Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of the following attributes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sex</li> <li>Relationship status</li> <li>Pregnancy</li> <li>Parental status</li> <li>Breastfeeding</li> <li>Age</li> <li>Race</li> <li>Impairment</li> <li>Religious belief or religious activity</li> <li>Political belief or activity</li> <li>Trade union activity</li> <li>Lawful sexual activity</li> <li>Gender identity</li> <li>Sexuality</li> <li>Family responsibilities</li> <li>Association with, or relation to, a person identified on the basis of any of the above attributes.</li> </ol>	<p>Other unlawful conduct is Sexual harassment and the areas covered are: Work and work related; education; goods and services; superannuation and insurance; disposal of land; accommodation; club membership; administration of state laws and programs; local government; existing partnership and in pre-partnership.</p>
South Australia Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)	<p>Grounds of unlawful discrimination are referred to by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Age</li> <li>Association with a child (in customer service)</li> <li>Caring responsibilities</li> <li>Chosen gender</li> <li>Disability</li> <li>Marital or domestic partnership status</li> <li>Pregnancy</li> <li>Race</li> <li>Religious appearance or dress (in work or study)</li> <li>Sex</li> <li>Sexuality</li> </ol>	<p>Other unlawful conduct is sexual harassment and the areas covered are: Employment; partnerships; clubs and associations; qualifying bodies; education; provision of goods and services; accommodation; sale of land; advertising (including employment agencies); conferral of qualifications; superannuation.</p>

Tasmania Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (TAS)	<p>12. Spouse or partner's identity</p> <p>Grounds of unlawful discrimination:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Age</li> <li>2. Breastfeeding</li> <li>3. Disability</li> <li>4. Family responsibilities</li> <li>5. Gender/sex</li> <li>6. Industrial activity</li> <li>7. Irrelevant criminal record</li> <li>8. Irrelevant medical record</li> <li>9. Lawful sexual activity</li> <li>10. Marital status</li> <li>11. Relationship status</li> <li>12. Parental status</li> <li>13. Political activity</li> <li>14. Political belief or affiliation</li> <li>15. Pregnancy</li> <li>16. Race</li> <li>17. Religious activity</li> <li>18. Religious belief or affiliation</li> <li>19. Sexual orientation</li> </ol>	Other unlawful conduct is referred to as sexual harassment; inciting hatred on the basis of race, disability, sexual orientation or religion. With the areas covered by: Employment (paid and unpaid); education and training; provision of facilities, goods and services; accommodation; membership and activities of clubs; and in relation to some grounds, administration of any law of state; and awards, enterprise agreements and industrial agreements.
Victoria Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (VIC)	<p>Grounds of unlawful discrimination</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Age</li> <li>2. Carer or Parental status (including Family responsibilities),</li> <li>3. Disability (including physical, sensory and intellectual disability, work related injury, medical conditions, mental, psychological and learning disabilities)</li> <li>4. Employment activity</li> <li>5. Gender identity,</li> <li>6. Lawful sexual activity,</li> <li>7. Sexual orientation</li> <li>8. Industrial activity</li> <li>9. Marital status</li> <li>10. Physical features</li> <li>11. Political belief or activity</li> <li>12. Pregnancy,</li> <li>13. Breastfeeding</li> <li>14. Race (including colour, nationality, ethnicity and ethnic origin)</li> <li>15. Religious belief or activity</li> <li>16. Sex</li> <li>17. Personal association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these personal characteristics.</li> </ol>	Other unlawful conduct is Sexual harassment with areas covered by: employment; partnerships; firms; professional and other organisations; qualifying bodies; employment agencies; education; provision of goods and services; accommodation (including alteration of accommodation); clubs or community service organisations; municipal or shire councils.
Western Australia Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)	<p>Grounds of unlawful discrimination</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Age</li> <li>2. Family responsibility or family status</li> <li>3. Gender history</li> <li>4. Impairment</li> </ol>	Other unlawful conduct is referred as sexual harassment; racial harassment and the areas covered are: Employment; partnerships;

5. Marital status	professional or trade
6. Pregnancy	organisations; qualifying
7. Race	bodies; employment
8. Racial harassment	agencies; applicants and
9. Religious or political conviction	employees and commission
10. Sex	agents; application forms;
11. Sexual orientation	advertisements; education;
	access to places and
	vehicles; provision of good
	services and facilities;
	accommodation; clubs;
	land.

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## APPENDICES B

### Protected attributes by Australian State/Territory

Australian Capital Territory	New South Wales	Northern Territory	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria	Western Australia
Age	Age discrimination	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age
Aid of an assistance animal	Age discrimination and job advertisements	Breastfeeding	Breastfeeding	Association with a child (in customer service)	Breastfeeding	Breastfeeding	Family responsibility or family status
Breastfeeding	Pregnancy and breastfeeding discrimination	Impairment	Family responsibilities	Caring responsibilities	Disability	Carer or Parental status (inc. Family responsibilities)	Gender history
Disability	Carers' responsibilities discrimination	Irrelevant criminal record	Gender identity	Chosen gender	Family responsibilities	Disability	Impairment
Gender Identity	Disability discrimination	Irrelevant medical record	Impairment	Disability	Gender/sex	Employment activity	Marital status
gender identity or HIV/AIDS Status	Homosexual discrimination	Marital status	Lawful sexual activity	Marital or domestic partnership status	Industrial activity	Gender identity	Pregnancy
Industrial Activity	Infectious diseases discrimination	Parenthood	Parental status	Pregnancy	Irrelevant criminal record	Industrial activity	Race
Political conviction	Marital or domestic status discrimination	Political opinion, affiliation or activity	Political belief or activity	Race	Irrelevant medical record	Lawful sexual activity	Racial harassment

Australian Capital Territory	New South Wales	Northern Territory	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria	Western Australia
Pregnancy, including potential pregnancy	Race discrimination	Pregnancy	Pregnancy	Religious appearance or dress (in work or study)	Lawful sexual activity	Marital status	Religious or political conviction
Profession, trade, occupation or calling	Sex discrimination	Race	Race	Sex	Marital status	Physical features	Sex
Race	Transgender discrimination	Religious belief or activity	Relationship status	Sexuality	Relationship status	Political belief or activity	Sexual orientation
Relationship status		Sex	Religious belief or religious activity	Spouse or partner's identity	Parental status	Pregnancy	
Religious conviction		Sexuality	Sex		Political activity	Race	
Sex		Trade union or employer association activity	Sexuality		Political belief or affiliation	Religious belief or activity	
Sexuality		Association with a person who has, or is believed to have, an attribute referred to in this section	Trade union activity		Pregnancy	Sex (inc. sexual harassment)	

Australian Capital Territory	New South Wales	Northern Territory	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria	Western Australia
Spent conviction			Association with, or relation to, a person identified on the basis of any of the above attributes.		Race	Sexual orientation	
Status as a parent or carer					Religious activity		
Association with a person who has an attribute listed above					Religious belief or affiliation		
Sexual Harassment					Sexual orientation		
Victimisation because of making a complaint							
Vilification because of race, sexuality, gender identity or HIV/AIDS							
Status							

## APPENDICES C

### Questionnaire



## PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET

### TITLE:

*The effects of sexual orientation disclosure and perceived discrimination on the well-being of GLBT employees.*

### PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:

This is an invitation to participate in a study conducted by researchers at the University of Wollongong. The purpose of the research is to investigate the relationship between sexual orientation disclosure and concealment and discrimination in the workplace (referred to as heterosexism) and the effect this has on the well-being of GLBT employees with regard to psychological well-being, mental health, job satisfaction and satisfaction with life.

### INVESTIGATORS:

Dr Lindsay Oades (Team Leader)  
Sydney Business School  
02 42214067  
[loades@uow.edu.au](mailto:loades@uow.edu.au)

Dr Grace McCarthy  
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02 42214067  
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Ian Smith  
Sydney Business School  
0414 734 511  
[ips043@uowmail.edu.au](mailto:ips043@uowmail.edu.au)

### METHOD & DEMANDS ON PARTICIPANTS:

I am looking for GLBT individuals over 18 years of age who may wish to complete a 15 minute anonymous on line survey regarding ONLY their experiences in the workplace. The survey contain a biographical section and eight short tools. Participation is completely voluntary and if you wish to discontinue participation at any time, you are free to do so without a problem. However, once you complete the survey (and press submit) you will not be able to withdraw/discontinue your participation and your data as the anonymous responses will be saved. No findings which could identify any individual participant will be published (for example in the thesis or any other article publications which may arise from the study). The anonymity of your participation will be assured and only aggregate data will be published. Only my supervisors and I will have access to the data, which will be combined with those from other participants and stored for five years in accordance with the university regulations. Your completion of the survey indicates your consent. Additionally, information obtained in the course of this research project may be used for another research project. You will consent by completing the survey. The tools to be completed:

- (1) The Workplace Heterosexist Experience Questionnaire (WHEQ),  
This asks questions about your experiences in your workplace in relation to your sexual orientation.

- (2) The Workplace Sexual Identity Management Scale (WSIMM),  
This asks questions about how you manage your sexual identity in your workplace.
- (3) The Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS),  
This tool asks questions around what symptoms you may experience due to you managing your sexual identity in the workplace.
- (4) The Degree of Disclosure Scale (DODS),  
This asks questions as to how out you are in your workplace.
- (5) The Workplace Equality Index (WEI),  
This ask questions about how supportive your workplace is regarding your sexual orientation.
- (6) Psychological Well-being Scale,  
This asks questions around your autonomy, relatedness and competence in your workplace.
- (7) Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS) and  
This asks general questions around how you feel about your job.
- (8) The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS).  
This asks general questions about how you feel about your life in general.

#### **POSSIBLE RISKS, INCONVENIENCES & DISCOMFORTS:**

Apart from the 15-20 minutes of your time completing the online questionnaire, there is a small possibility of emotional distress due to the sensitive nature of some of the questions. However, in the event that completing the survey reminds you of personal issues you would like to discuss, you may wish to contact me (as I am a registered Clinical Psychologist) via email [ips043@uowmail.edu.au](mailto:ips043@uowmail.edu.au) or telephone directly on 0414 734 511. In the event that you need to contact me, your confidentiality will be maintained. You may wish to call the team leader (Dr Lindsay Oades: [loades@uow.edu.au](mailto:loades@uow.edu.au)) who is also a Clinical Psychologist and you may also search the Australian psychological Society website and click on the 'find a psychologist' and then type in your area or postcode to find a psychologist near you who will bulkbill their services (<http://www.psychology.org.au/>. Or APS in Google).

#### **FUNDING & BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH:**

This study is not funded. The researcher is intending to advance knowledge on the experiences of GLBT employees in the Australian labour market. It is intended that the research findings will then support international literature in this field and also advocate for the presence of supportive Policies and Practices within organisations to provide an environment which is free from sexual orientation discrimination. Findings from the study may be published in journals. If you would like a summary of the research findings, you are welcome to contact me in this regard.

#### **ETHICS REVIEW & COMPLAINTS:**

This study has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee, (Social Sciences) of the University of Wollongong, reference no. HE12/269 If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way this research has been conducted you can contact the UOW Ethics Officer on 02 4221 3386 or email [rso-ethics@uow.edu.au](mailto:rso-ethics@uow.edu.au) .



Thank you for your interest in this study.

**Ian Smith**

**Clinical Psychologist**

**Doctoral Candidate UOW (DBA)**

## Demographic Information

### 1. What state/territory do you live in?

- ☐ NSW
- ☐ NT
- ☐ ACT
- ☐ Victoria
- ☐ Queensland
- ☐ Western Australia
- ☐ South Australia
- ☐ Tasmania

### 3. What is your age? .....years

### 4. Which cultural background do you identify with?

- ☐ Australian
- ☐ South-east Asian (Vietnamese, Indonesian, Filipino, Malay, etc)
- ☐ North-east Asian (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, etc)
- ☐ South Asian (Afghan, Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc)
- ☐ Northern Europeans (British, Irish, German, French, Dutch, etc)
- ☐ Southern Europeans (Greek, Italian, Cypriot, Turkish, etc)
- ☐ Eastern/Balkan European (Polish, Russian, Fmr Yugoslavia, Serbian, Bosnian, etc)
- ☐ Middle East (Arab, Lebanese, Iraqi, Iranian, Egyptian, etc).
- ☐ Pacific Islanders (Samoan, Fijian, Tongan, etc)
- ☐ Indigenous Australian (Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander)
- ☐ Muslim / Moslem
- ☐ Other (please specify): .....

### 5. What is your religious/spiritual background?

- ☐ Christian/Catholic
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Islamic
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Other (please specify): .....
- ☐ Refused

**6. Gender**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ Intersex

**7. Sexuality**

- ☐ Gay (male to male sexual attraction)
- ☐ Lesbian (female to female sexual attraction)
- ☐ Bisexual (sexually attracted to both male and female)
- ☐ Straight (attracted ONLY to the opposite sex)

**8. What is your current relationship status?**

- ☐ Partnered/de facto/civil union...
  - ☐ Married.....
  - ☐ Cohabiting.....
  - ☐ Divorced.....
  - ☐ Dating .....
  - ☐ Single
- } someone of the:
- ☐ same sex      ☐ opposite sex

**9. How would you describe your sexuality on the following Kinsey scale?**

- ☐ Exclusively homosexual
- ☐ Predominantly homosexual, only incidentally heterosexual
- ☐ Predominantly homosexual, but more than incidentally heterosexual
- ☐ Equally homosexual and heterosexual
- ☐ Predominantly heterosexual, but more than incidentally homosexual
- ☐ Predominantly heterosexual, only incidentally homosexual
- ☐ Exclusively heterosexual

**10. Highest Level of Education:**

- ☐ Primary/some secondary school
- ☐ Higher School Certificate (Year 12/A-Levels)
- ☐ Trade or TAFE qualification
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ PhD/Doctoral Degree

**11. What is the best description of your current employment status?**

- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Temporary/Casual employment
- ☐ Permanent employment
- ☐ Retired

**12. How many hours do you work per week? .....**

**13. How long have you worked for your current organization? ....years ....months**

**14. What best describes the geographical location of your workplace/organization?**

- ☐ Metropolitan/city
- ☐ Regional
- ☐ Rural/farm

**15. How many people are employed in your workplace/organisation?**

- ☐ 1-10
- ☐ 11-50
- ☐ 51-100
- ☐ 100+
- ☐ I primarily work as an independent consultant

**16. What industry best describes your workplace sector?**

- ☐ Accommodation and Food Services
- ☐ Administrative and Support Services
- ☐ Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- ☐ Arts and Recreation Services
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Education and Training
- ☐ Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services
- ☐ Financial and Insurance Services
- ☐ Health Care and Social Assistance
- ☐ Information Media and Telecommunications
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Mining

- ☐ Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
- ☐ Public Administration and Safety
- ☐ Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services
- ☐ Retail trade
- ☐ Transport, Postal and Warehousing
- ☐ Wholesale Trade
- ☐ Military/Armed Forces
- ☐ Other .....

**17. Current annual salary**

- ☐ Under \$15000
- ☐ \$15000 - \$25000
- ☐ \$26000 - \$50000
- ☐ \$51000 - \$75000
- ☐ \$76000 - \$100000
- ☐ \$100000 - \$150000
- ☐ Over \$150000

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## WORKPLACE HETEROSEXIST EXPERIENCES QUESTIONNAIRE (WHEQ)

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### YOUR EXPERIENCES IN YOUR WORKPLACE

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Below are some questions about your experiences in your workplace. Some of the questions may apply to you more than others, but please try to respond to each item *even if you have never told any of your co-workers that you are lesbian, gay, or bisexual*. Please remember that your answers are COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL.

DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS in your workplace, have you been in a situation where any of your supervisors or co-workers:

	Never	Once or twice	Sometime s	Often	Most of the time
a) told offensive jokes about lesbians, gay men or bisexual people (e.g., "fag" or "dyke" jokes, AIDS jokes)?	0	1	2	3	4
b). made homophobic remarks in general (e.g., saying that gay people are sick or unfit to be parents)	0	1	2	3	4
c). ignored you in the office or in a meeting because you are gay/lesbian/bisexual?	0	1	2	3	4
d). made crude or offensive sexual remarks about you either publicly (e.g., in the office) or to you privately?	0	1	2	3	4
e) made homophobic remarks about you personally (e.g., saying you were sick or unfit to be a parent)	0	1	2	3	4
f). called you a "dyke," "faggot," "fence-sitter" or some similar slur?	0	1	2	3	4
g). avoided touching you (e.g., shaking your hand) because of your sexual orientation?	0	1	2	3	4
h)..denied you a promotion, raise or other	0	1	2	3	4

	Never	Once or twice	Sometime s	Often	Most of the time
career advancement because of your sexual orientation?					
i). made negative remarks based on your sexual orientation about you to other co-workers?	0	1	2	3	4
j). tampered with your materials (e.g., computer files, telephone)because of your sexual orientation?	0	1	2	3	4
k) physically hurt (e.g., punched, hit, kicked or beat) you because of your sexual orientation?	0	1	2	3	4
l). set you up on a date with a member of the other sex when you did not want it?	0	1	2	3	4
m). left you out of social events because of your sexual orientation?	0	1	2	3	4
n) asked you questions about your personal life that made you uncomfortable (e.g., why you don't ever date anyone or come to office social events)?	0	1	2	3	4
o). displayed or distributed homophobic literature or materials in your office (e.g. electronic mail, flyers, brochures)?	0	1	2	3	4
p). made you afraid that you would be treated poorly if you discussed your sexual orientation?	0	1	2	3	4
q). implied faster promotions or better treatment if you kept quiet about your sexual orientation?	0	1	2	3	4
r). made it necessary for you to pretend to be heterosexual in social situations (e.g., bringing an other-sex date to a company	0	1	2	3	4

	Never	Once or twice	Sometime s	Often	Most of the time
social event, going to a heterosexual "strip" bar for business purposes)?					
s).made it necessary for you to lie about your personal life (e.g., saying that you went out on a date with a person of the other sex over the weekend or that you were engaged to be married)?	0	1	2	3	4
t). discouraged your supervisors from promoting you because of your sexual orientation?	0	1	2	3	4
u). made it necessary for you to "act straight" (e.g., monitor your speech, dress, or mannerisms)?	0	1	2	3	4
v). made you feel as though you had to alter discussions about your personal life (e.g., referring to your partner as a "roommate")?	0	1	2	3	4



## WORKPLACE SEXUAL IDENTITY MANAGEMENT MEASURE (WSIMM)

Below are some questions about your experiences in **your workplace**. Some of the questions may apply to you more than others, but please try to respond to each item, by clicking on one, *even if you have never told any of your co-workers that you are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender*. Please remember that your answers are COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL.

1. **I would bring someone of the same gender to a work related social function and introduce that person as my date or partner.**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. **I would tell coworkers when I'm going to a gay/lesbian/bisexual identified location or event because I am open about my sexual orientation.**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. **I would say negative things about gay/lesbian/bisexual content in movies and television shows if I think that such comments will help convince coworkers that I am heterosexual.**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. **I would make up stories about romantic partners of the opposite gender.**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. **I would wear or display commonly known gay/lesbian/bisexual symbols (eg, buttons, jewelry, T-shirts, bumper stickers) that reveal my sexual orientation to co-workers.**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. **I would bring someone of the other gender to a work-related social function and introduced that person as my date or partner.**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. **I would be explicit that I am referring to someone of the same gender when I talk about romantic relationships and dating at work.**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. **I would use names or pronouns of the other sex to refer to the same-sex person with whom I was dating or living with.**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. **I would dress or behave in ways that are gender traditional so that others will think I am heterosexual.**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. **I would tell most or all of my coworkers that I am gay/lesbian/bisexual.**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. **I would raise objections to gay jokes or homophobic slurs by telling others that I am gay or lesbian and find that offensive.**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 12. I would correct others when they make comments that imply I am heterosexual (e.g. they ask if I have been in a relationship with someone of the other sex) by explaining that I am gay/lesbian/bisexual.**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 13. I would wear or display material with a heterosexual content (eg, T-shirts, pictures, posters) in order to make me appear heterosexual.**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 14. I would join others in telling demeaning gay jokes or saying negative things about gay men, lesbians or bisexuals so that people will think I am heterosexual.**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 15. I would be active in trying to obtain equal access and treatment for me at my workplace (eg, asking for insurance coverage for my same sex partner ,trying to get an antidiscrimination statement that is inclusive of sexual orientation ,etc).**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 16. I would join in discussion with members of my own gender about being attracted to members of the other gender when I don't feel such heterosexual attractions.**

Never	Sometimes	Seldom	Frequently	Almost always	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS)

Below are some questions related to your emotions and behaviour as a result of the above **workplace experiences**.

Please read each statement and select a number 0, 1, 2 or 3 which indicates how much the Statement applied to you *as a result of your workplace experiences*. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any statement.

*The rating scale is as follows:*

**0 Did not apply to me at all**

**1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time**

**2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time**

**3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time**

1. I found it hard to wind down	0	1	2	3
2 I was aware of dryness of my mouth	0	1	2	3
3 I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all	0	1	2	3
4 I experienced breathing difficulty (e.g., excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion)	0	1	2	3
5 I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things	0	1	2	3
6 I tended to over-react to situations	0	1	2	3
7 I experienced trembling (e.g., in the hands)	0	1	2	3
8 I felt that I was using a lot of nervous	0	1	2	3
9 I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself	0	1	2	3
10 I felt that I had nothing to look forward to	0	1	2	3
11 I found myself getting agitated	0	1	2	3
12 I found it difficult to relax	0	1	2	3
13 I felt down-hearted and blue	0	1	2	3
14 I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing	0	1	2	3
15 I felt I was close to panic	0	1	2	3
16 I was unable to become enthusiastic about	0	1	2	3
17 I felt I wasn't worth much as a person	0	1	2	3
18 I felt that I was rather touchy	0	1	2	3
19 I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (e.g., sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat)	0	1	2	3
20 I felt scared without any good reason	0	1	2	3
21 I felt that life was meaningless	0	1	2	3

### **Degree of Disclosure Subscale II (At work)**

**Please answer the first question by selecting the box adjacent to the response that most closely applies to you.**

1. How out are you at work?

- ☐ Out to nobody at work
- ☐ Out to one co-worker
- ☐ Out to two co-workers
- ☐ Out to three co-workers
- ☐ Out to immediate supervisor
- ☐ Out to four or five co-workers
- ☐ Out to all co-workers/supervisors

**Please answer questions 2-5 by selecting the response that most closely applies to you.**

2. Is your workplace somewhere you feel comfortable being yourself?

- |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Never                    | Sometimes                | Always                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. Are you involved in any lesbian or gay-related activities at work?

- |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Never                    | Sometimes                | Always                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to work-sponsored events?

- |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Never                    | Sometimes                | Always                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to off-job parties or events given by employees and personnel from your workplace?

- |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Never                    | Sometimes                | Always                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Workplace Equality Index

Please answer questions 1-5 by selecting either **yes** or **no**.

1. Does your organisation have a LGBT diversity policy/strategy linked to the wider organisational goals / aims?

Yes

☐

No

☐

2. Is your organization involved in providing an inclusive culture and employment?

Yes

☐

No

☐

3. Does your organization provide in LGBT diversity training?

Yes

☐

No

☐

4. Is your organization involved in GLBT community engagement?

Yes

☐

No

☐

5. Is your organization involved in any other GLBT activities?

Yes

☐

No

☐

6. Other.....

## Psychological Well-Being

### Basic Psychological Needs

Please read each of the following items carefully, thinking about how it relates to your life, and then indicate how true it is for you. Use the following scale to select your response:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all true		somewhat true			very true	

#### A) AUTONOMY

#### SCORE

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I feel like I am free to decide for myself how to live my life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2. I generally feel free to express my idea and options.           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3. I feel like I can pretty much be myself in daily situations.    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

#### B) COMPETENCE

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. People I know tell me I am competent at what I do.         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2. Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from what I do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3. I often feel very capable.                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

#### C) RELATEDNESS

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I get along well with people I come into contact with.           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2. I consider the people I regularly interact with to be my friend. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3. People in my life care about me.                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Source: short-form of Ryan and Deci Basic Psychological needs scales (Ryan and Deci 2000, 2001)

**Overall Job satisfaction:**

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Please selection from 1 - 5.

(1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*)

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Your work provides you with a sense of pride.             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Your work makes good use of your skills.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. You like the kind of work you do                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Your job gives you the chance to acquire valuable skills. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. You are satisfied with your job as a whole.               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |



## Section I

### Satisfaction with life scale

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each item by selecting the appropriate number next to each statement.

	Strongly disagree						strongly agree
1. In most ways my life is close to ideal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The conditions of my life are excellent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I am satisfied with my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**IF YOU KNOW OF ANY GLBT INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY ALSO LIKE TO  
COMPLETE THIS SURVEY, PLEASE REFER THEM TO THE LINK.  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.**

#### INVESTIGATORS:

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