



New Gender Identity In The Fashion Global Workforce

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Introduction

In the new global workplace, there is an estimation of at least 40% of employees do not identify as either male or female but rather transgender meaning non-binary, not identify as either male or female (Inclusion, 2023). While there is some acceptance of non-binary employees in the workplace, there are still challenges these individuals face from other LGBTQ employees. It is important that inclusion and diversity are among the human resources practices for all genders. In the United States, the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) was created as part of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which as an effort to address racial discrimination in voting, education, and other aspects of daily life, including discriminatory hiring and workplace practices (Inclusion, 2023). Gender, social inclusion, and diversity policies are important to business organizations to create an enabling environment for impartiality, progress towards diversity goals, and support organizations to develop a business case for gender equality.

Purpose of Research

To investigate how companies in the fashion business view gender diversity. It is estimated that at least 40% of workers do not identify as either male or female, but rather as transsexual, which means non-binary. While there is some recognition of non-binary employees in the workplace, these people still face challenges from other LGBTQ employees. Previous research has focused on prejudices from the viewpoint of LGBTQIA+ workers. This was investigated in relation to diffusion theory. Employers in the United States' fashion business were questioned for this research, and open-ended queries about gender variety in the workplace were used. A qualitative examination of the findings from 25 employers is being conducted to identify themes that will be addressed.

Theoretical Framework

Everett Rogers' Diffusion of innovation theory describes the trends in the distribution of innovation among a population. Innovation describes brand-new concepts, items, functions, or behaviors. New concepts or goods diffuse through time through a process called diffusion. The theory proposes five groups at the beginning to the end of the adoption process: (1). Innovators; (2). Early adopters; (3). Majority; (4). Late majority; (5). Laggards. The new idea/product (innovation) has to be perceived as having particular characteristics for successful adoption: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability (Rogers, 1983). Findings demonstrate that adoption of gender specific policies is early in the adoption process. Gender inclusion/diversity has been fully adopted conceptually, but in comparison, adoption of related policy is earlier in the adoption process. The participants indicated that young populations are more familiar with the concept of gender diversity. Targeting these groups as early adopters might help facilitate the adoption of policies.

Methods

To further studies a divided survey featuring open-ended questions related to workplace policies along with demographics was sent to individuals working in the fashion industry in the United States most specifically in urban settings. Participants of this survey ranged from ages 24 to 25 five were Hispanic, five were Black/African American, five were white, three were Asian, and one was Native American in total 25 people participated hailing from the northeastern region of the U.S. which are New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Vermont, Delaware and Pennsylvania. The portion of the instrument included questions such as:

- Have you ever witnessed an employee questioning an individual of a non-binary gender? Discuss the circumstance
- Does your company have a policy related to gender expression?
- Does your company have a policy related to gender identity?
- Have you ever had to discuss the dress with an employee? Was the dress related to his/her gender?
- What types of training on gender diversity is needed for students/new employees? Explain).
- How do employers propose to educate employees about gender diversity?
- To what extent are dress cues accurate in conveying gender identity? Provide examples where applicable and explain.

The second half of the instrument dealt with the participants demographics. Question about the participants household income, political orientation, ethnicity, highest level of education

Literature Review

Moya and Moya-Garófano (2019) investigated discrimination within the workplace of those who identify within the LGBTQ+ community and have reported facing discrimination due to their sexual orientation. This resulted in employees having a higher prevalence of job stress, mental illnesses, and depression. Persistence of job discrimination and its negative implications underscore the need for initiatives to eliminate prejudice against LGBTI people in the workplace. The study found identical results in two independent indicators of psychological well-being: (1) mental diseases and (2) depression. With a study conducted with 377 participants answering questions pertaining to their sexuality and the workplace. Answers revealed some participants felt that their sexual orientation has posed a problem or had caused difficulty in several elements of their career. Most participants expressed their sexuality has become a negative factor when applying for a job, while in the workplace one's sexual orientation has hampered the ability to advance to positions of responsibility in their career shifting the focus from work to the individuals sexual becoming a topic of discussion or a joke creating harassment. Due to discrimination in the workplace one can be overwhelmed by excessive amount of stress can elevating one's blood pressure causing fatigue along with mental disorders such as memory/concentration problems, experiencing symptoms of insomnia and irritability. Spain appears to have the world's lowest rate of discrimination along with prejudice against LGBTQ individuals.

Ozeren (2014) investigated how companies discriminate towards employees who identify within the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (GLBT) community. Specifically, how employees of the LGBT community are hired for a job and only later experience discrimination resulting in wage inequality and a lack of inclusiveness. Specifically, how employees face discrimination in the workplace such as wage inequality, the concept of wage differences among gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (GLBT) and heterosexual employees that can lead to termination, searching for new employment resulting. In addition, workplace discrimination can create an unhealthy environment which includes inappropriate jokes, inequitable hiring practices, and promotional discrimination which all can be detrimental to the company's reputation.

Anouk and Lorena (2016) investigated the concept of sexuality and the diverse expansion as related to employees who have come out in society, sexually identifying as something different from what has been defined as the norm in society, as in male or female gendered. Current LGBT workplace policies that are established by companies have been able to reduce sexual discrimination and increase LGBT employees' overall health. Relationships of employees/employer need to be examined once an individual choose to "come out" in public, including workplace relationships. This examination of relationships can document any unfair treatment by governments or business. A quantitative study indicated how LGBT are affected by employment policies. The study revealed gendered employees identify with race, age, and cultural background. In addition, diversity management positively improved LGBT employees by lowering prejudice and improving overall well-being at work, however, LGBT psychological health may not have indicated the same outcome.

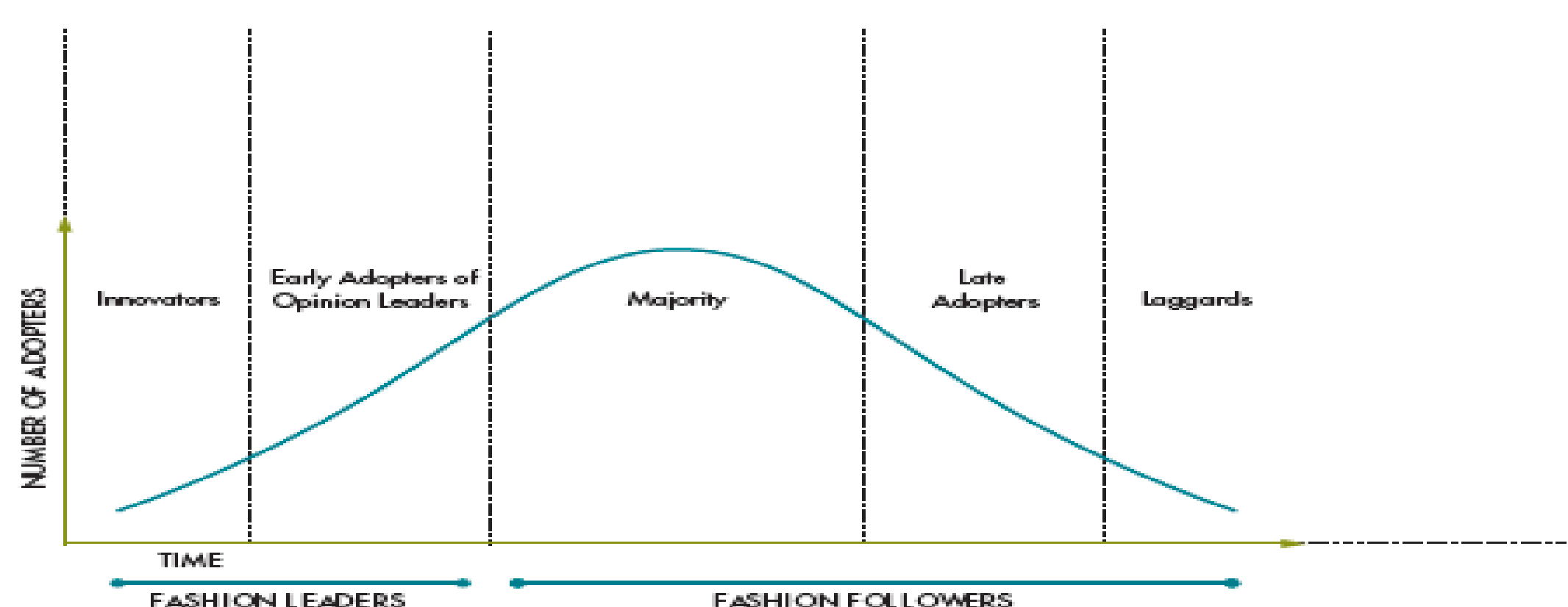


Table 1. Roger's 1964 Diffusion on Innovation Curve

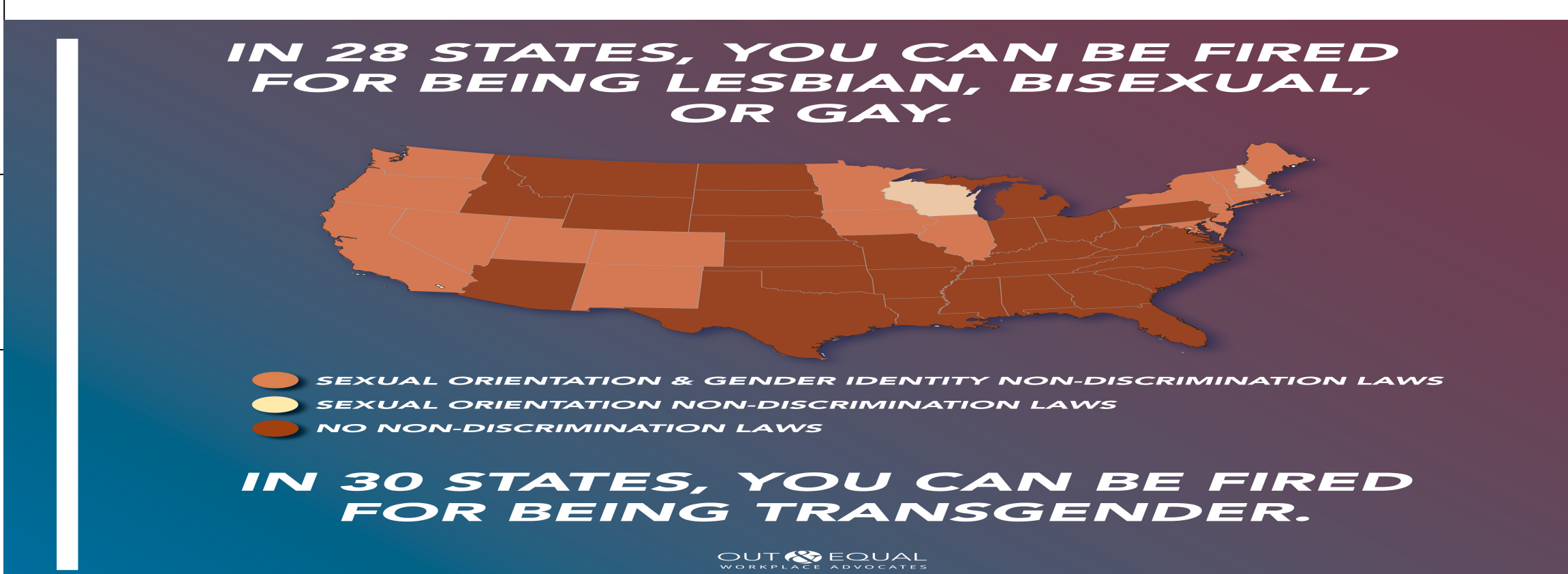


Table 2. Out & Equal Workplace Fact sheet

Conclusion

Companies have difficulties accommodating employees who identify within the GLBT communities. When applying to a job one may fear of being rejected due to sexual orientation or sexual identity. Those who were successful at land the job found themselves the butt of office jokes centered around their sexuality, being misgendered on purpose by colleagues resulting in harassment which can cause a stressful environment due to the lack of inclusivity, attacking one's mental state.

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