

Not so Straightforward: Coming Out and Hetero-Professionalism at Work
Master Thesis on the Relationship between Homosexual Disclosure Status and Perceived Professionalism in the Workplace and the Effect of Heteronormativity in the Perceiver

Utrecht University

Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences

Social, Health and Organisational Psychology

Student: Daphne van Swaaij

Student number: 6861415

Date: 12-08-2022

Primary supervisor: Prof. Dr. Jojanneke van der Toorn

Secondary supervisor: Dr. Madelijn Strick

Author's note

Daphne van Swaaij, Social, Health & Organisational Psychology, Utrecht University. This manuscript should be made publicly accessible. For questions about this research, contact Daphne van Swaaij. Email: d.l.m.vanswaaij@students.uu.nl

Abstract

The current research aims to explore the relationship between being “out” as LGBT in the workplace and perceived professionalism and whether heteronormativity in the perceiver moderates this connection. The hypotheses predict significantly lower levels of perceived professionalism of a gay colleague who discloses his sexual orientation at work compared to a gay colleague who conceals his sexual orientation. Furthermore, a significant negative effect is predicted between levels of heteronormativity in the perceiver and perceived professionalism of the gay colleague. Lastly heteronormativity in the perceiver is predicted to positively moderate the relationship between disclosure status and perceived professionalism, meaning that respondents who score high on heteronormativity would perceive a gay colleague who has disclosed his sexual orientation at work as less professional than respondents who score low on heteronormativity. This research is an experimental vignette study, in which participants are randomly divided into one of two conditions. Both groups will read an anecdote about an imaginary colleague who is homosexual; in the first conditions this colleague has disclosed his sexual orientation at work, in the second condition the colleague conceals his sexual orientation at work. Participants are then asked to fill in questionnaires about their perceived professionalism of the colleague and their own level of heteronormativity. The results show significant effects in the predicted directions for both independent variables, confirming the first and second hypotheses. No interaction effect has been found, rejecting the moderation hypothesis.

Keywords: LGBT, sexual orientation disclosure, heteronormativity, professionalism

Coming Out and Hetero-Professionalism at Work: Research on the Relationship between Homosexual Disclosure Status and Perceived Professionalism in the Workplace and the Effect of Heteronormativity in the Perceiver

As is commonly known, feeling included in the workplace is an important factor of work enjoyment. Jansen (2015) defines inclusion as “the degree to which an individual perceives that the group provides him or her with a sense of belonging and authenticity.” Therefore, it is important that employees can be their authentic self in the work environment in order to feel included. This is also the case for LGBT employees. Previous research suggests that disclosing one’s sexual orientation at work has positive consequences and concealing one’s sexual orientation at work has negative consequences. Research by Griffith and Hebl (2002), for example, demonstrated that employees who disclose their sexual orientation at work are more satisfied with their job, while Newheiser and Barreto (2017) found that remembering or imagining a concealment situation in the workplace leads to lower levels of belonging, job satisfaction and work commitment for people with stigmatised identities.

However, disclosing about one’s sexual orientation is not always as straightforward for LGBT employees. Ragins, Singh and Cornwell (2007) found that those who had not disclosed their sexual orientation at work had fears associated with disclosure predicted job attitudes, psychological strain, work environment, and career outcomes.” Jansen, Otten and Van der Zee (2015) found that dissimilarity is negatively related to work group inclusion. This point relates to LGBT employees specifically through the notion of heteronormativity, which is the “assumption that everyone is ‘naturally’ heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is an ideal, superior to homosexuality or bisexuality,” (FRA, 2009). Heteronormativity states that belonging to the LGBT group means being different from the norm and as mentioned by Jansen, Otten and Van der Zee, being different leads to lessened feelings of inclusion. Heteronormativity is prevalent in the workplace (Reingardé, 2010) and it might even be a defining factor for professionalism in the workplace (Rumens & Kerfoot, 2015), which could lead to LGBT employees concealing their sexual orientation in order to be seen as professional (Brower, 2013). However, to this date, there has been no social psychological research performed to explore the connection between disclosing one’s sexual orientation, workplace professionalism and heteronormativity. Furthermore, sexuality in the workplace is in general still a field that is underrepresented and that lacks sufficient attention. The current study aims fill that gap. The research question is as follows: Does being “out” (vs. not “out”)

as LGBT in the workplace have a negative effect on one's perceived level of professionalism and is this effect positively moderated by the heteronormativity of the perceiver?

Disclosure Status and Perceived Professionalism

King, Reilly and Hebl (2008) performed a study that aimed to identify factors that may facilitate positive or exacerbate negative disclosure experiences from the perspectives of gay and lesbian employees. They conclude that gay workers who have disclosed their sexual orientation in the workplace might face backlash and discrimination when disclosing their sexual identity. Not only may LGBT colleagues face discrimination from their heterosexual colleagues, heterosexual job applicants are rated (Horvath & Ryan, 2003) and treated (Hebl, Foster, Mannix, & Dovidio, 2002) more positively than gay and lesbian applicants.

The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines professionalism as “the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize or mark a profession or a professional person.” Mizzi (2013) performed a study about the work experiences of gay male aid workers and the attitudes toward homosexuality of foreign staff members in international aid agencies in Kosovo. He suggests that employers generally understand that professionalism is necessary and acceptable to mediate behaviours in the workplace, but that Western aid workers may have homophobic and heterosexist beliefs and use professionalism to justify these beliefs. Brower (2013), in his paper that explores the US case laws on dress codes, states that “hiding or closeting sexuality, either homosexuality or female heterosexuality, may sometimes be demanded in workplace settings to project professionalism.” From these studies, it can be suggested that being “out” as LGBT in the workplace might be negatively associated with one's level of professionalism. This leads to the following hypothesis. *Hypothesis 1*: There is a significant positive connection between concealment of sexual orientation and perceived professionalism compared to disclosure of sexual orientation.

Heteronormativity and Perceived Professionalism

This tendency to equate what is considered to be “professional” with heterosexuality might be exacerbated to the extent that one more strongly endorses heteronormativity. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA, 2009) defines heteronormativity as “what makes heterosexuality seem coherent, natural and privileged. It involves the assumption that everyone is ‘naturally’ heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is an ideal, superior to homosexuality or bisexuality.” According to Reingardé (2010), “the concept of heteronormativity focusses on heterosexuality as a normative notion that repeatedly asserts heterosexual life as the right life to live.” In other words, heterosexuality is considered the norm in our society, whereas being part of the LGBT community entails possessing a certain

sexuality. This could also reflect in the workplace. Since heterosexuality is the norm for people high in heteronormativity, being gay might be considered less professional than being heterosexual, because LGBT colleagues do not conform to the norm. Colgan and Rumens (2015) state that in the education environment “standards of professionalism which are constructed as neutral are in fact still deeply imbued with heterosexual privilege.” This leads to the following hypothesis. *Hypothesis 2*: Regardless of disclosure status, there is a significant negative effect between heteronormativity of the perceiver and perceived professionalism.

Reingardé has interviewed thirty gay men and lesbian women about their experiences at the workplace in Lithuania and concludes that “The denial of sexuality at work shows that heterosexual sexuality is taken for granted and often completely overlooked in everyday interactions at home or in the workplaces. It is not heterosexual sexuality in general but homosexual sexuality that is problematic at work.” Therefore, it might be considered acceptable and even normal for a heterosexual colleague disclose their sexuality at work (e.g., by referring to their partner), but unacceptable for an LGBT colleague to do the same. Rumens and Kerfoot (2005) conducted a qualitative study among ten gay men employed at the British National Health Services Trust. They conclude from these interviews that heteronormalising forces constrain these gay men from sustaining a sense of professional identity at work. In other words, heteronormativity might define what is and what is not considered professional in the workplace and so disclosing one’s sexuality is not.

These previous results are based mainly on qualitative research. So far, little to no quantitative social scientific research has been done to the connection between these variables. Based on the conclusions of these previous researchers, it can be suggested that being “out” in the workplace might be negatively associated with being considered professional and that professionalism might be based on heterosexual norms. Therefore, it is plausible that heteronormativity could strengthen the negative association between being “out” as LGBT in the workplace and being considered professional. The following and hypotheses are drawn from this: *Hypothesis 3*: Heteronormativity has a significant positive effect on the connection between disclosure status and professionalism. *Hypothesis 4*: There is no significant connection between disclosure status and professionalism for participants who score low on heteronormativity.

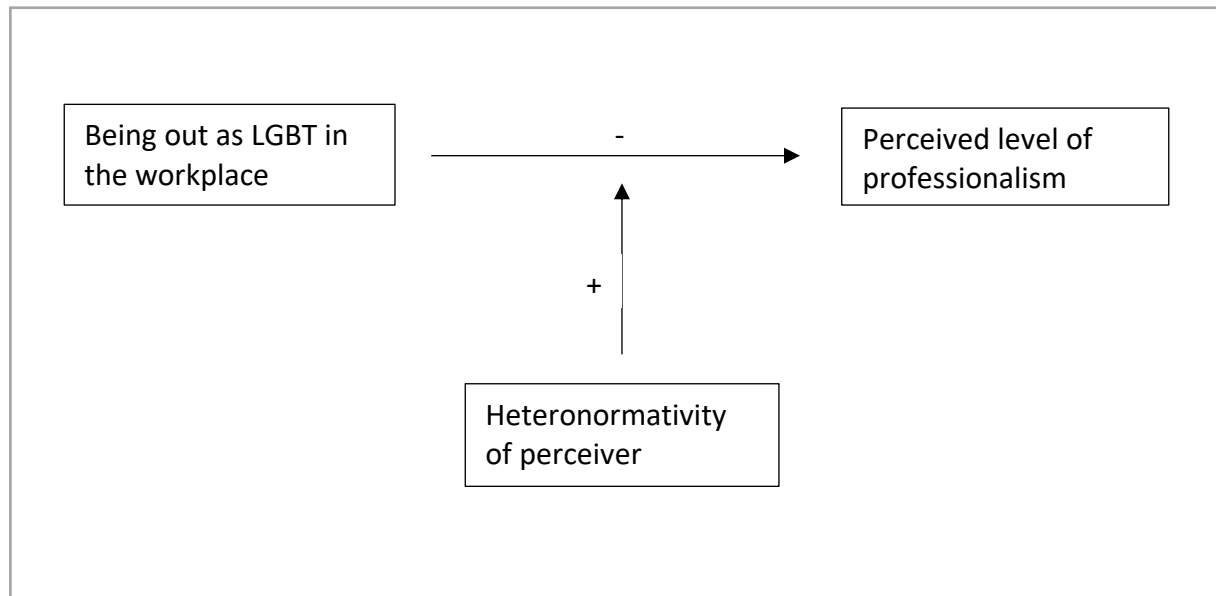


Figure 1. Process model of the current research

Method

Sample and Design

This research has been performed by the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of Utrecht University in The Netherlands. The research design is an experimental vignette study, with a between-subjects design, where participants have been randomly assigned to one of two groups. The independent variables in this research are *Disclosure Status* and *Heteronormativity*, while the dependent variable is *Perceived Professionalism*. The target group for this research is Dutch citizens over the age of 18 (N=147, response rate= 74.83%). The number of research participants is 147, of which 110 have been included in the final analyses. The minimum age in the sample is 18, while the maximum age is 75 ($M_{age}= 40.67$, $SD_{age}= 17.20$). In this sample 71.1% was female assigned at birth, 27.2% was male assigned at birth and 1.8% prefers to self-describe. Furthermore, 66.4% of respondents identifies as female (or trans male), 26.5% as male (or trans female), 1.8% as non-binary and 5.3% prefers to self-describe. 75% of respondents describes themselves as heterosexual, 11.6% as bisexual, 4.5% as asexual, 2.7% as lesbian, 1.8% as gay and 4.5% prefers to self-describe. The employment status of the participants is as follows: 62.6% is employed for wages, 19.1% is students, 2.6% is self-employed, .9% is in the military, 2.6% is out of work and looking for work, .9% is out of work but not currently looking for work, 7.8% is retired and 3.5% is unable to work.

Procedure

Potential participants have been approached through the social circle of the researcher. Friends, family and acquaintances were directly approached and a link to the survey has been posted on several social media websites. The data for this study has been collected through an online survey, hosted on the website Qualtrics, which participants could reach through a link. Participants were asked to fill in the survey not more than once. Respondents were only able to continue to the survey after agreeing to the informed consent form and confirming they were at least 18 years of age. The respondents could choose to fill in the survey in Dutch or English. They were able to fill in the survey whenever it fit best in their own time and the complete survey took around five to ten minutes to complete. The results of the questionnaire were saved automatically by Qualtrics and were completely anonymous. Respondents first got to read an anecdote about an imaginary gay colleague and subsequently were asked to fill in questionnaire about the level of professionalism of the colleague and their own heteronormativity. At the end of the survey, the following demographics have been collected: age, sex assigned at birth, gender identity, sexual orientation and employment status. Potential participants have been approached through the personal network of the researcher. Data of this survey will be analysed through multiple regression, using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Disclosure Status Participants read a short piece of information about an imaginary gay male colleague, as can be read in Appendix 1. The story is identical in both conditions with the exception being that in the disclosure condition, the colleague has told his co-workers about his sexual identity, whereas in the concealment condition he keeps his sexual identity to himself. The following text precedes the anecdote: *“Imagine you have just started a new job at a company and are getting to know your colleagues. Below is a description of one of your colleagues, Tim. Please carefully read the following person description. You will be asked questions about it later.”*

Heteronormativity Participants were asked to fill in the Heteronormative Attitudes and Beliefs Scale (Habarth, 2015) to determine their level of heteronormativity. This scale consists of sixteen statements; participants indicate on a Likert scale to which extent they agree with these statements, from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree). The order of these questions has been randomised to avoid any bias.

Perceived Professionalism The participants were asked to answer a short questionnaire, developed by the researcher, about the level of professionalism of this colleague. This questionnaire consists of four questions of which the participants were asked to judge how well they fit Tim, the colleague in the anecdote, on a Likert scale from 1 (Not at

all) to 7 (Very). These questions are “How competent do you perceive Tim to be?”, “How qualified do you perceive Tim to be?”, “How skilful do you perceive Tim to be?” and lastly “How professional do you perceive Tim to be?”. The order of these questions has been randomised to avoid any bias.

Results

Assumptions

Linearity As can be seen in figures 2 and 3, the assumption for linearity has been met for either of the independent variables.

Absence of multicollinearity The assumption of the absence of multicollinearity is met. Pearson’s correlation between the independent variables condition and heteronormativity is $r = 0.035$. Pearson’s correlation between condition and professionalism is $r = 0.167$ and between heteronormativity and professionalism is $r = -0.316$. Considering all of the correlations fall below $r = .8$ these are not problematic. Furthermore, the VIF scores fall well below 10 (VIF=1.001) while the tolerance scores are well above 0.2 (tolerance=0.999).

Independence of residuals A Durbin-Watson score of below 1 or higher than 3 are cause for concern. The Durbin-Watson score for this analysis is 1.777, which means the assumption of the independence of residuals is met.

Homoscedasticity As can be seen in figure 4, the scatterplot shows a random distribution of residuals and there is no sign of a funnel shape. This means the variation of the residuals is constant and the assumption of homoscedasticity is met.

Normal distribution of residuals The PP-plot in figure 5 shows the distribution of the residuals. The residuals appear to be lying close to the normal distribution line and therefore the assumption for the normal distribution of the residuals is met.

Absence of influential cases Looking at the Cook’s Distances, the highest distance has a value of .107. Considering none of the values fall above 1, it can be concluded that there are no influential cases and the assumption of the absence of influential cases is met.

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, confidence intervals and between variable correlations for the dependent variable, independent variables, age, sex assigned at birth and gender identity.

Furthermore, an analysis has been performed to test whether any of the demographic indicators significantly correlate with the dependent variable. If this is the case, these variables should be included in the regression analysis as covariates. Age has a significant negative correlation with perceived professionalism $r = -0.302$, $n = 114$, $p = 0.001$. This means that higher respondent ages are correlated with a lower rating of professionalism in the

colleague of the story compared to lower respondent ages. Furthermore, sex assigned at birth has a positive significant correlation with perceived professionalism $r= 0.213, n= 114, p= 0.023$. Lastly, gender identity has a significant correlation with perceived professionalism $r= -0.192, n= 113, p= 0.041$. Therefore, age, sex assigned at birth and gender identity have been included as covariates in the analysis.

Regression analysis

A linear regression analysis has been performed on the data of this research using Andrew Hayes Process Model 1 for moderation (significance $\alpha = 0.05$) in SPSS (Version 27.0). This analysis has been run twice, once without the aforementioned covariates and once where age, sex assigned at birth and gender identity have been included as covariates.

Analysis without Covariates *Hypothesis 1* assumes that being “out” as LGBT in the workplace is perceived as less professional than not being “out”. A significant positive effect has been found between disclosure status (i.e. being “out” in the workplace) and perceived professionalism, with $b= 0.375, SE_b= 0.191, t(110)= 1.965, p= 0.052$. This means that concealment ($concealment=1$), as opposed to disclosure ($disclosure=0$), is not significantly related to higher levels of professionalism. Hypothesis 1 is therefore not supported by the results.

Hypothesis 2 assumes that regardless of disclosure status, LGBT employees are seen as less professional by people scoring high (versus low) on heteronormativity. A significant negative effect has been found between heteronormativity and perceived professionalism, with $b= -0.445, SE_b= 0.165, t(110)= -2.687, p= 0.008$. This means that higher levels of heteronormativity are significantly related to lower levels of professionalism. Hypothesis 2 is therefore supported by the results.

Hypothesis 3 assumes that being “out” as LGBT in the workplace is perceived as especially lacking professionalism by people scoring high (versus low) on heteronormativity while *Hypothesis 4* assumes that being “out” as LGBT in the workplace is perceived as equally professional as not being “out” by people scoring low (versus high) on heteronormativity. No interaction effect has been found between disclosure status and heteronormativity on perceived professionalism, with $b= -0.019, SE_b= 0.259, t(110)= -0.072, p= 0.943$. This means that heteronormativity does not impact the relationship between disclosure status and level of perceived professionalism. Thus, hypothesis 3 is debunked, while hypothesis 4 is confirmed.

Analysis with Covariates *Hypothesis 1* assumes that being “out” as LGBT in the workplace is perceived as less professional than not being “out”. A significant positive effect

has been found between disclosure status (i.e. being “out” in the workplace) and perceived professionalism, with $b= 0.485$, $SE_b= 0.182$, $t(107)= 2.668$, $p= 0.009$. This means that concealment ($concealment=1$), as opposed to disclosure ($disclosure=0$), is significantly related to higher levels of professionalism. Hypothesis 1 is therefore supported by the results.

Hypothesis 2 assumes that regardless of disclosure status, LGBT employees are seen as less professional by people scoring high (versus low) on heteronormativity. A significant negative effect has been found between heteronormativity and perceived professionalism, with $b= -0.402$, $SE_b= 0.153$, $t(107)= -2.623$, $p= 0.010$. This means that higher levels of heteronormativity are significantly related to lower levels of professionalism. Hypothesis 2 is therefore supported by the results.

Hypothesis 3 assumes that being “out” as LGBT in the workplace is perceived as especially lacking professionalism by people scoring high (versus low) on heteronormativity while *Hypothesis 4* assumes that being “out” as LGBT in the workplace is perceived as equally professional as not being “out” by people scoring low (versus high) on heteronormativity. No interaction effect has been found between disclosure status and heteronormativity on perceived professionalism, with $b= -0.176$, $SE_b= 0.253$, $t(107)= -0.694$, $p= 0.490$. This means that heteronormativity does not impact the relationship between disclosure status and level of perceived professionalism. Thus, hypothesis 3 is debunked, while hypothesis 4 is confirmed.

Discussion

The first hypothesis in this research assumed a significant positive effect between concealment of sexual orientation in the workplace and perceived professionalism compared to disclosure of sexual orientation. Based on the results of the analysis with covariates, it can be concluded that this effect has been found and therefore *hypothesis 1* has been confirmed. The second hypothesis of this research assumed a significant negative effect between heteronormativity of the perceiver and the perceived professionalism of the colleague. Based on the results of the analysis, this effect has been found and *hypothesis 2* has been confirmed. The third hypothesis in this research assumed a significant negative moderating effect from heteronormativity on the relationship between disclosure status and perceived professionalism. Based on the results of the analysis, this effect has not been found and *hypothesis 3* has been debunked. The fourth hypothesis assumed no interaction effect in people scoring low on heteronormativity. Based on the results of the analysis, this effect has been found and *hypothesis 4* has been confirmed.

These results are based on the analysis in which the covariates age, sex assigned at birth and gender identity have been included. If these covariates had not been included, *hypothesis 1* would not have been confirmed, since there was no significant effect.

Theoretical Implications

There has not been much previous quantitative research in this direction of psychology. Therefore, the current research aimed to fill this gap. The results of this research are partly in line with the expectations, considering both direct effects were found to be significant and in the expected directions, but no interaction effect has been found. The direct effects are in line with previous qualitative research as discussed in the introduction section of this thesis. On the other hand, no significant moderation effect has been found in the current research and the correlation between the independent variables was low ($r= 0.04$). The lack of interaction effect between the concealment condition and heteronormativity on professionalism could be explained by the fact that in both stories the colleague is gay and therefore a person high in heteronormativity would always consider this colleague to be low in professionalism compared to someone low in heteronormativity. This could explain why the level of heteronormativity did not affect the relation between disclosure status and perceived professionalism. However, this research did not include a comparison condition where the colleague in the story was a heterosexual male, so further research would be necessary to confirm this hypothesis.

Strengths and Limitations

Experiment The current research is an experimental research, meaning participants were divided into one of two research conditions at random. The participants were also unaware of the fact that there were two conditions, so their answers could not have been influenced by this knowledge.

Questionnaire While an existing questionnaire has been used in this research to measure heteronormativity, the anecdotes for the conditions as well as the scale to measure perceived professionalism have been created by the researcher. The Heteronormative Attitudes and Beliefs Scale (Habarth, 2015) is a valid and reliable scale that has been used in multiple studies. The measures for the other variables have been constructed by the researcher herself and therefore need to be looked at with caution.

Sample

Sample size

The sample size of the current research was large enough ($N=147$) to detect strong effects between variables.

Type of sample

The target population for this research was Dutch citizens of 18 years and older. In order to find research participants to fill in the survey of this research, the researcher has used to full extend of her own social circle in order to spread the survey to as many potential participants as possible. A link to the survey was posted and shared to various social media websites (Facebook, LinkedIN, WhatsApp), family members and friends of the researcher have been asked to participate and asked to share the survey with their personal social circle. This has led to enough research participants, so a student population sample has not been used. By using this method, a wide arrange of participants could be reached. However, since the researcher herself is part of a higher educated social environment, this could skew the representation of the sample. If the questionnaire is filled in primarily by higher educated participants, this is not an accurate representation of the Dutch society. This could in return influence the way the questions of the survey were answered. Level of education was not included in the demographic questions of the survey, so this cannot be checked.

Assumptions All assumptions for a linear regression analysis have been met.

Missing cases The participants were able to leave the questionnaire at any point if they did not want to continue the survey for whatever reason. A certain amount of participants has indeed not completed the questionnaire, which has led to missing cases within the data. To partially compensate for this, it has been decided to use the mean scores for the results of the heteronormativity scale and the professionalism scale as opposed to the cumulative scores.

Practical Implications

Both hypotheses for the direct effects have been confirmed by the analysis of the research data. It can be concluded from this that both concealment of one's sexual identity and a higher level of heteronormativity in the assessor can lead to higher levels of perceived professionalism of a gay colleague. This is a concerning finding, because this would mean that in order to considered more professional, people that are part of the LGBT community are better off when they conceal their sexual orientation in the work environment. This research did not include a comparison condition where the colleague in the story was a heterosexual male, so no conclusions can be made about whether LGBT colleagues are considered to be less professional in the work environment in general than their heterosexual colleagues.

As stated in the introduction section of this master thesis, it is important for LGBT persons to be able to disclose their sexual orientation in the work environment, because this leads to higher levels of work satisfaction, belonging and commitment. Therefore, it would be

wise to inform and educate organisations on the risks of this pitfall. Brower (2013) concludes that “visibility of LGBT sexual orientation can influence employees’ perceptions and treatment at work but that legal and workplace protections, although important, may not necessarily create equal treatment or social change for LGBT employees.” LGBT colleagues would benefit from education (courses, workshops) aimed at heterosexual colleagues that would highlight this pitfall and reduce the levels of heteronormativity in persons that score high on this feature. This is especially important for people who score high on heteronormativity in managerial positions, considering they are the people who make the most important decisions about projects as well as about the people working for them.

Ethics

As stated in the method section of this thesis, participants read and agreed to an informed consent form before continuing to the questionnaire part of the survey. The information about the purpose of the research was purposely kept short and vague, to not give away too much information which could influence the answers of the participants. Participants were also unaware the setup of the survey was an experimental design with two conditions, again to ensure this information could not influence the answers. The email address of the supervising researcher is mentioned in the informed consent form in case a participant has a question about the research.

The responses of the survey have been anonymously gathered, analysed and stored and will not be able to be traced back to individual persons.

Follow-up Research

Follow-up research could focus on explaining the lack of interaction effect when both independent variables had a significant direct effect on the dependent variable. More specifically, it should focus on the relationship between heteronormativity and perceived professionalism. Based on the results of this research, the following hypotheses can be created: Being LGBT has a significant negative effect on perceived professionalism; heteronormativity has a significant positive effect on the connection between being LGBT and professionalism. The research design of this follow-up research can be similar to the one in the current research, with the addition of a third condition in which the colleague in the story is heterosexual.

Furthermore, this research focuses exclusively on the perceived professionalism of a gay man in the work environment, so no conclusion can be made about other members of the LGBT community. Further research could focus on the perceived professionalism of a lesbian woman or a transgender person and whether or not they are considered to be less professional

if they disclose this information to their colleagues. Again, this research design can be similar to the current research as well as the research question and hypotheses.

Conclusion

In summary, the results of this research mostly align with the predictions and with previous qualitative research in this field. Further research will need to confirm the reliability of the current research as well as confirm the importance of the covariates. In response to the results of the current research, it is important that these results can be replicated by other researchers. If this result cannot be replicated, other potential predictors for perceived professionalism, related to being LGBT should be taken into consideration.

For the wellbeing and job satisfaction of LGBT persons, as well as the productivity of organisations, it is important that LGBT people will not have to hide part of their identity in the workplace in order to be considered as professional as their heterosexual colleagues. Unfortunately, the current research shows that being “out” could lead to lower levels of perceived professionalism. In case this result will be replicated by other researchers, organisations will need to come up with solutions to make sure everyone feels comfortable enough to be themselves in the workplace and this will not be at the expense of their value.

References

- Brower, T. (2013). What's in the closet: dress and appearance codes and lessons from sexual orientation. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 32(5), 491-502. Retrieved at <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-02-2013-0006>
- Colgan, F., & Rumens, N. (2015). Sexual Orientation at Work. *Contemporary issues and*. Retrieved at api.taylorfrancis.com
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights – FRA (2009). Homophobia and Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in the EU Member States: Part II – The Social Situation. Retrieved at https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/397-FRA_hdgso_report_part2_en.pdf
- Griffith, K. H. & Hebl, M. R. (2002). The disclosure dilemma for gay men and lesbians: "Coming out" at work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(6), 1191-1199. Retrieved at <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.6.1191>
- Habart, J. (2015). Development of the heteronormative attitudes and beliefs scale. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 6(2), 166-188. Retrieved at <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1080/19419899.2013.876444>
- Hebl, M., Foster, J. M., Mannix, L. M., & Dovidio, J. F. (2002). Formal and interpersonal discrimination: A field study examination of applicant bias. *Personality and Social Psychological Bulletin*, 28, 815–825. Retrieved at: [doi:10.1177/0146167202289010](https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167202289010)
- Horvath, M., & Ryan, A. M. (2003). Antecedents and potential moderators of the relationship between attitudes and hiring discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. *Sex Roles*, 48, 115–131. Retrieved at: [doi:10.1023/A:1022499121222](https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022499121222)
- IBM Corp. Released 2021. IBM SPSS Statistics for MacIntosh, Version 27.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.
- Jansen, J.S. (2015). *Social inclusion in diverse work settings*. (Doctoral dissertation, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands). Retrieved from ResearchGate
- Jansen, J.S., Otten, S. & Van der Zee, K.I. (2015). Being different at work: How gender dissimilarity relates to social inclusion and absenteeism. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 20(6), 879-893. Retrieved at <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1177/1368430215625783>
- King, E. B., Reilly, C., & Hebl, M. (2008). The best of times, the worst of times: Exploring

- dual perspectives of “coming out” in the workplace. *Group & Organization Management*, 33(5), 566-601. Retrieved at <http://gom.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/33/5/566>
- Mizzi, R. C. (2013). “There Aren't Any Gays Here”: Encountering Heteroprofessionalism in an International Development Workplace, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 60:11, 1602-1624. Retrieved at <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.824341>
- Newheiser, A., Baretto, M. (2017). People Like Me Don't Belong Here: Identity Concealment is Associated with Negative Workplace Experiences. *Journal of Social Issues*, 73(2), 341-358. Retrieved at <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1111/josi.12220>
- Professionalism (n.d.), in *Merriam-Webster's dictionary site*. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/professionalism>
- Qualtrics. Released 2018. Provo, Utah: Qualtrics
- Ragins, B. R., Singh, R., & Cornwell, J. M. (2007). Making the invisible visible: fear and disclosure of sexual orientation at work. *Journal of applied psychology*, 92(4), 1103.
- Reingardé, J. (2010). Heterosexuality and silenced sexualities at work. *Culture and Society: Journal of Social Research*, 1(1), 83-96.
- Rumens, N., & Kerfoot, D. (2009). Gay men at work: (Re)constructing the self as professional. *Human Relations*, 62, 763–786. Retrieved at <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1177/0018726709103457>

Table 1

Correlations and confidence of variables

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Condition (1)			-	0.04	0.21*	0.05	-0.11	0.04
Heteronormativity (2)	2.36	0.75	0.04	-	-0.32**	0.17	-0.04	0.01
Perceived professionalism	6.39	1.06	0.21*	-0.32**	-	-0.30**	0.21*	0.19*
Age (4)	40.67	17.20	0.05	0.17	-0.30**	-	0.04	0.24*
Sex assigned at birth (5)			-0.11	-0.04	0.21*	0.04	-	0.68**
Gender identity (6)			0.04	0.01	0.19*	0.24*	0.68**	-

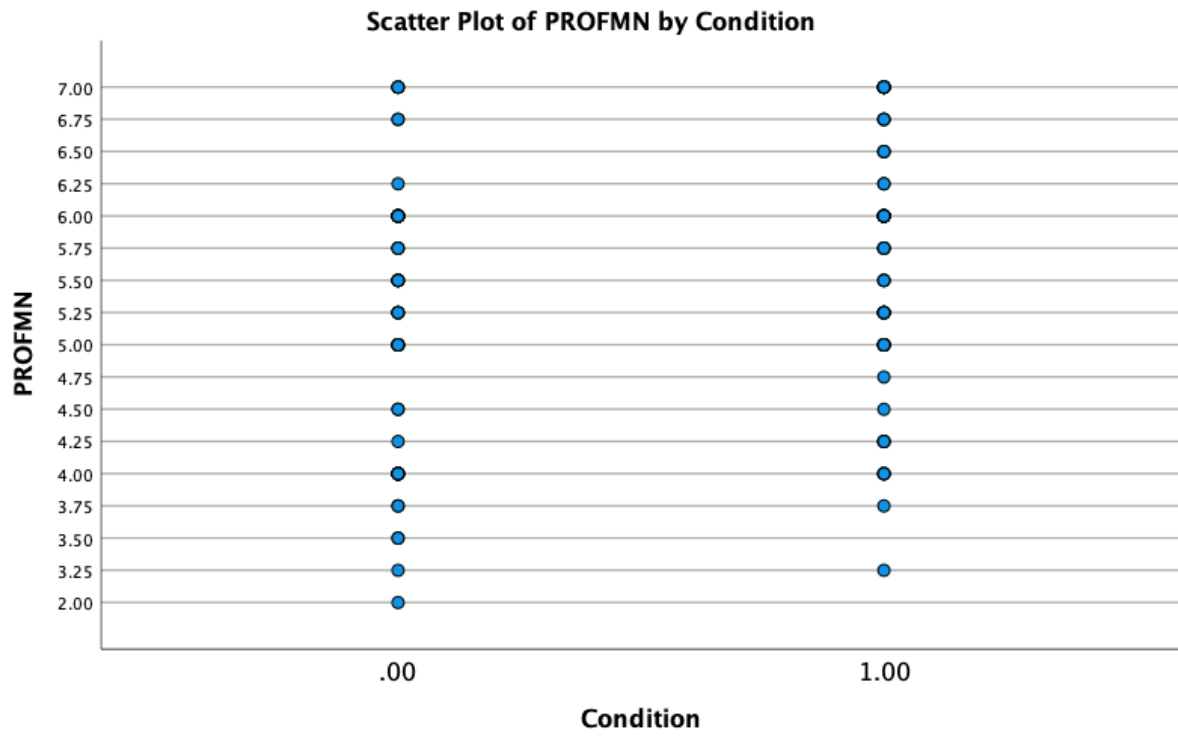


Figure 2. Scatterplot of the correlation between disclosure condition and perceived professionalism.

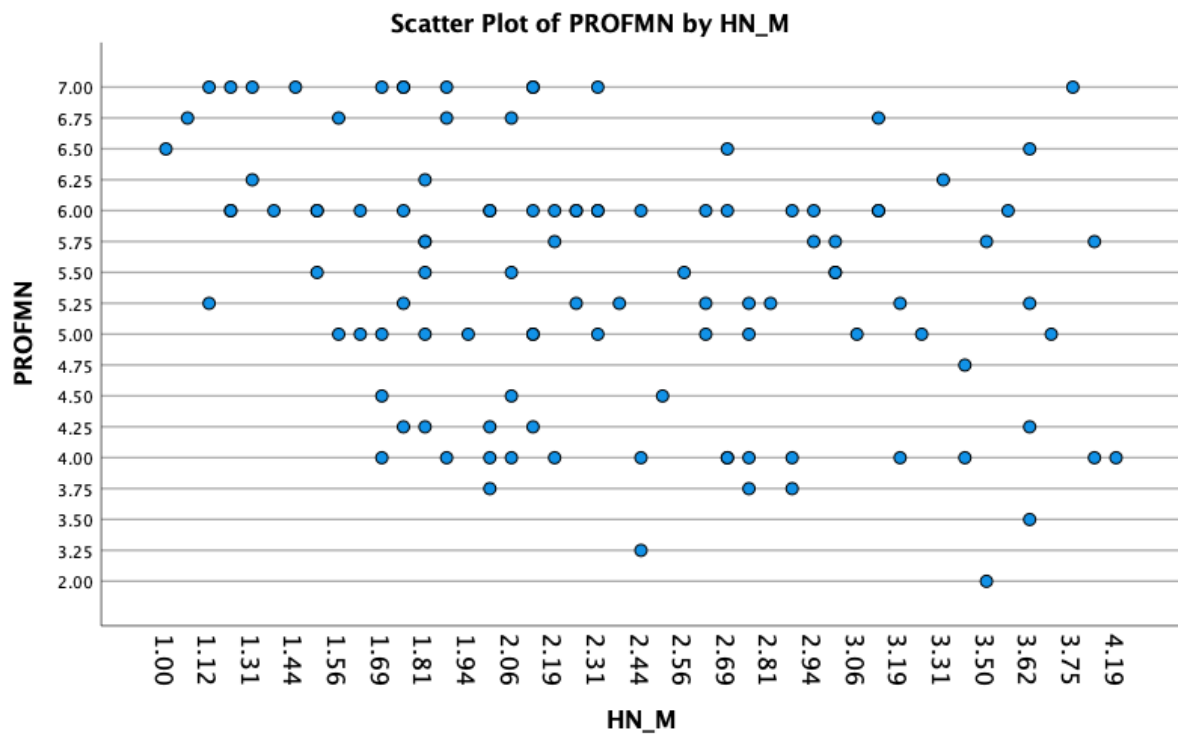


Figure 3. Scatterplot of the correlation between heteronormativity and perceived professionalism.

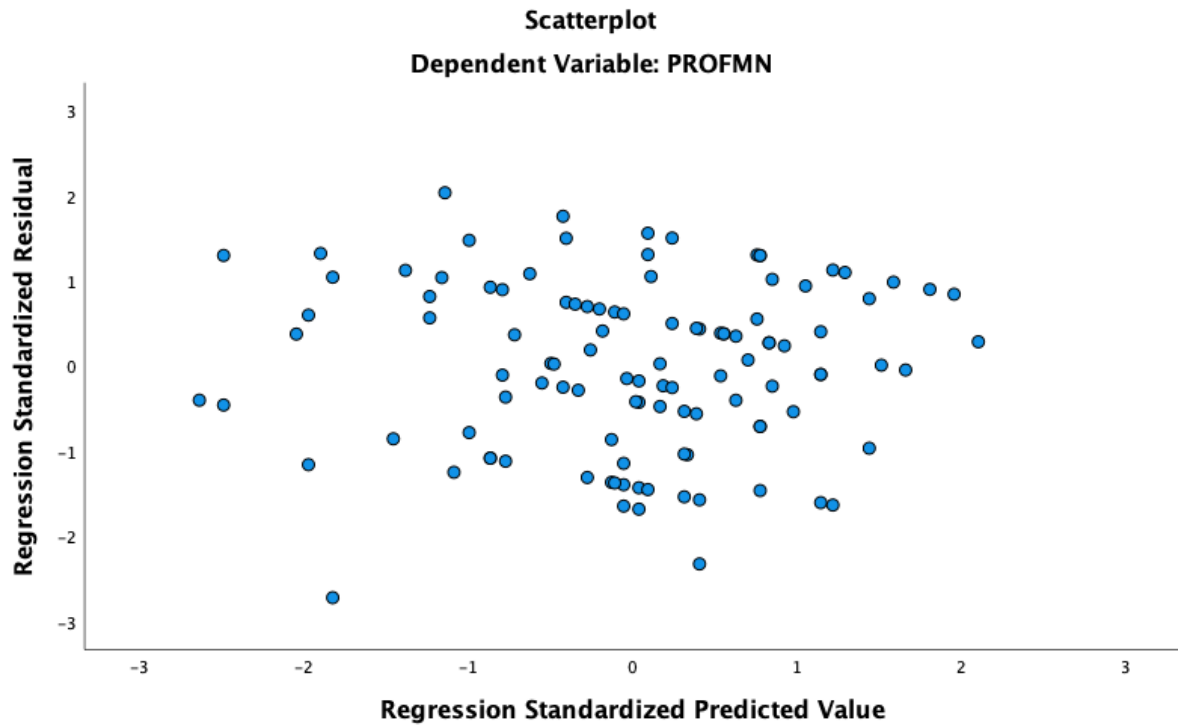


Figure 4. Scatterplot of the residuals pertaining to the predictor.

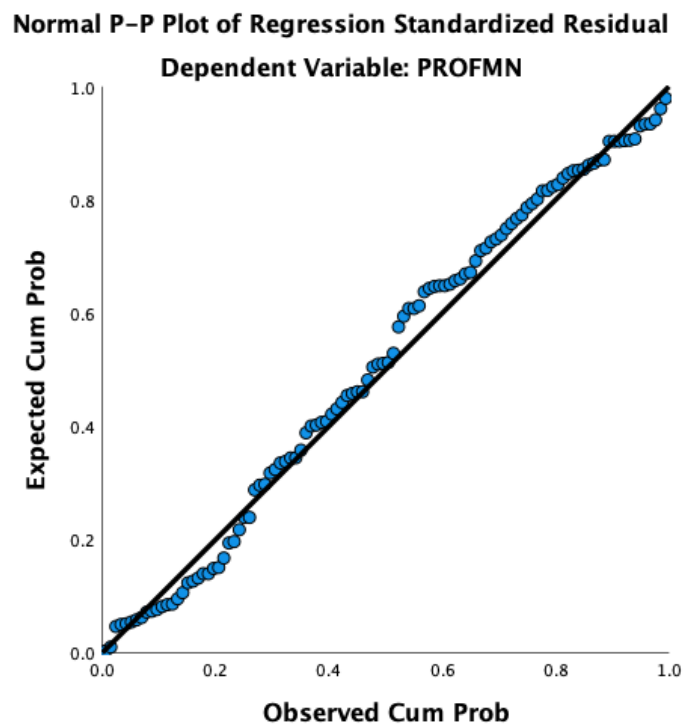


Figure 5. P-P plot of the perceived professionalism variable for normality.

Appendix 1

Anecdote Disclosure Condition in Dutch and English

Tim is een 37 jarige collega die nu drie jaar voor het bedrijf werkt. Hij werkt hard, is nonchalant en kan over het algemeen goed overweg met zijn collega's. Hij woont in een dorp in de buurt met zijn hond en zijn vriend waarmee hij 6 jaar samen is, en hij deelt zijn seksuele oriëntatie in zijn gesprekken met collega's. In zijn vrije tijd houdt hij van voetballen, het lezen van non-fictie boeken en het bijwonen van klassieke rock concerten.

Tim is a 37 year old colleague who has been working at your current workplace for three years. He is hard-working, has a casual attitude and generally gets along with his co-workers. He lives in a nearby village with his dog and his boyfriend of 6 years and shares his sexual orientation in his conversations with co-workers at work. In his spare time, he likes to play football, read non-fiction books, and attend classic rock concerts.

Anecdote Concealment Condition in Dutch and English

Tim is een 37 jarige collega die nu drie jaar voor het bedrijf werkt. Hij werkt hard, is nonchalant en kan over het algemeen goed overweg met zijn collega's. Hij woont in een dorp in de buurt met zijn hond en zijn vriend waarmee hij 6 jaar samen is, maar hij deelt zijn seksuele oriëntatie niet in zijn gesprekken met collega's. In zijn vrije tijd houdt hij van voetballen, het lezen van non-fictie boeken en het bijwonen van klassieke rock concerten.

Tim is a 37 year old colleague who has been working at your current workplace for three years. He is hard-working, has a casual attitude and generally gets along with his co-workers. He lives in a nearby village with his dog and his boyfriend of 6 years, but he does not share his sexual orientation in his conversations with co-workers at work. In his spare time, he likes to play football, read non-fiction books, and attend classic rock concerts.