

Trans-parency in the workplace: How the experiences of transsexual employees can be improved

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ABSTRACT

Very little research has focused exclusively on the workplace experiences of transsexual employees. Studies that have been done are either qualitative case studies (e.g., Budge, Tebbe, & Howard; 2010; Schilt & Connell, 2007), or aggregate transsexual individuals with lesbian, gay, and bisexual employees (e.g., Irwin, 2002). The current study focuses on this underexamined population and examines general workplace experiences, and both individual and organizational characteristics that influence transsexual employees' job attitudes. Results reveal that organizational supportiveness, transsexual identity centrality, and the degree to which they disclose to individuals outside of work all predict transsexual employees' disclosure behaviors in the workplace. These disclosure behaviors are positively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and negatively related to job anxiety. These relations are mediated by coworker reactions. This research expands knowledge about diverse employee populations and offers both theory and some of the first large-scale empirical data collected on the workplace experiences of transsexual employees.

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In the past decade, research on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations has increased with the exception of research that specifically examines transgender individuals. Either these individuals are not included at all in such studies or they are lumped together with the other nonheterosexual individuals and viewed similarly (for example, see Ellis, 1996; Irwin, 2002). While there is evidence that transgender and LGB individuals both experience discrimination, there are important differences between those who identify as transgender (one's psychological identification as male or female) and those who identify as LGB (one's sexual orientation). Transgender is an all-encompassing term that includes anyone who does not conform to the male/female binary (e.g., cross-dressers, drag queens, transsexuals, and gender benders). Included among transgender are transsexual individuals, who feel their gender does not match the sex assigned to them at birth and desire to make their bodies conform to the gender with which they identify. In accordance with previous researchers (Erich, Tittsworth, & Kersten, 2010; Gagne, Tewksbury, & McGaughey, 1997), we define transsexual individuals as including all of the following groups of individuals: those who have had gender reassignment surgery to change from one biological sex to the other, those taking hormones and other medications to help transition their physical body from one sex to the other, those who dress as the gender opposite of their biological sex because they feel that they were born as the wrong sex, and those who desire to be the gender opposite of their biological sex but have not yet taken steps to physically transition. Clearly, these individuals are inherently different from LGB individuals (who are characterized by romantic object choice, not gender identity) and deserve to be studied in their own right. Thus, the purpose of the current study

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is to explore the workplace experiences of transsexual individuals. Specifically, we are interested in examining the utility of disclosing one's transsexual identity as a strategy for improving job attitudes, and the individual- and organization-related factors that impact these disclosure behaviors as well as job attitudes.

This research is important for several reasons. First, while there are no concrete numbers concerning the prevalence of transsexualism in America, it is estimated that transsexual individuals represent somewhere between 1 out of every 500 and 1 out of every 2500 people (Conway, 2001). These estimates are based on the number of gender reassignment surgeries performed each year, thus it is likely that the actual number is higher given that not every transsexual individual opts to have gender reassignment surgery. Second, this population has been grossly understudied, and it is likely that while their experiences may be similar to other minority populations in some respects (e.g., they experience marginalization), they may be different in other ways (e.g., their stigma relates to gender, one of the most fundamental distinctions that our society makes; transsexualism is still considered a mental disorder under DSMIV-R so individuals must admit they have a mental disorder to gain medical coverage).

Third, although the research concerning transsexual employees is extremely sparse, the few studies that have examined this population suggest that, like other minority groups, transsexual employees experience substantial stigmatization in the workplace (Barclay & Scott, 2006; Berry, McGuffee, Rush, & Columbus, 2003; Dietert & Dentice, 2009; Gagne et al., 1997; Irwin, 2002); therefore, greater attention should be given to identify ways to remediate this discrimination. Research concerning disclosure of other stigmas (e.g., sexual orientation) in the workplace has shown that it can be a beneficial strategy with respect to improving job attitudes (Day & Schoenrade, 1997, 2000; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Ragins, Singh, & Cornwell, 2007), so it is possible that this strategy may also be effective for transsexual individuals. Disclosing one's transsexual status in the workplace may be inevitable in some situations (i.e., if one is in the process of transitioning); thus, it is important to understand the outcomes of this behavior. Fourth, it is unclear what psychological factors impact transsexual individuals' experiences in the workplace. It is likely that individual characteristics concerning one's identity influence the effect that stigmatization has in the workplace. Fifth and finally, little is known about what organizational initiatives can be enacted to improve the workplace experiences of transsexual employees. Transsexual individuals are not protected against employment discrimination under federal law, thus it is possible (and likely) that discrimination at work does occur. As seen with other minority groups, discrimination in the workplace may be more interpersonal and subtle in nature; however, its effects are nonetheless deleterious (Hebl, Foster, Mannix, & Dovidio, 2002; King, Shapiro, Hebl, Singletary, & Turner, 2006). Organizational supportiveness has been shown to be effective in improving workplace experiences for other minority groups (Barron and Hebl, 2010; Griffith & Hebl, 2002); thus it is possible that organizations can play a role in improving experiences for transsexual employees.

General experiences of transsexual employees

The small amount of research that has been conducted on transsexual employees focuses almost exclusively on case studies and other qualitative data. Much of this research provides accounts of the experiences that transsexual employees have pre- and post-transition, the responses these individuals receive from others, and the consequences of these experiences and others' reactions. For instance, research has shown that being open about transitioning in the workplace can lead to both challenges and acceptance by coworkers (Schilt & Connell, 2007). A series of interviews by Schilt and Connell (2007) showed that transsexual employees felt that their new cross-gender interactions changed post-transition. For example, some *transmen* (those transitioning from women to men) noted that post-transition, they were no longer included in "girl talk" (i.e., conversations about appearance, romantic interests, and menstruation) with female coworkers and were now expected to do heavy lifting or labor around the office when necessary (e.g., move furniture, hang pictures); while some *transwomen* (e.g., those transitioning from men to women) reported similar changes, such as being excluded from "guy talk" (i.e., conversations about sports, cars, and sexual objectification of women) with male coworkers. These changes in interactions may be the result of coworkers' stereotypes. For instance, coworkers may falsely assume that because one has physically changed their gender identity, they have also changed their interests to stereotypically gender congruent ones (Crocker & Lutsy, 1986). Some transsexuals welcomed this change while others did not. The transsexual individuals also noted that, in an attempt to be accepting of their transition, some coworkers attempt to help them adjust to new gender stereotypes, which led to some discomfort in workplace interactions. For example, transwomen noted that they were coached on how to properly put on makeup by female coworkers. Transmen reported similar gender "appropriate" socialization experiences, such as being shown how to properly knot a tie. Some transmen perceived these types of masculine lessons from male colleagues as over-stepping and tended to perceive it more negatively than did similar gender socialization experienced by transwomen from their female colleagues. In addition to coworker interaction changes, transsexual employees also experience other workplace-related changes as a result of their transition. These changes have been shown to be different for transmen and transwomen. For instance, transmen reported experiencing more positive workplace consequences (i.e., increased salary, authority, and respect) post-transition (compared to pre-transition), possibly due to societal norms that regard men more highly than women (Schilt, 2006; Schilt & Wiswall, 2008).

Although some transmen report advantages in the workplace post-transition, others have noted encountering disadvantages. The qualitative data suggests that barriers often focus on transmen's appearance of youth (e.g., they lack facial hair and tend to be shorter and smaller than biological men; Schilt, 2006). Similarly, transwomen have noted increased workplace penalties such as loss of confidence in their competency from a supervisor and demotion from a high status position post-transition (Schilt & Connell, 2007). Additional case studies and interviews reveal that post-transition (versus pre-transition) transsexuals were subsequently more likely to be on disability and had more difficulty maintaining employment (Lindemalm, Körlin, & Uddenberg, 1986; Sorensen, 1981). Interview accounts suggest that the reason for this may be, in part, that these employees face a number of

negative reactions at work including: demotion, loss of job, and harassment from other workers (Davis, 2009; Gagne et al., 1997). As Davis (2009) noted in her own personal account, coworker harassment can become so severe that transsexual employees must take leave of absence due to mental health issues. Gagne et al. (1997) also found that individuals in their sample were likely to change to a lower-skilled, lower-paid job following transitioning.

Transsexual employees report both positive and negative post-transition experiences. Some of these experiences result from the direction that transsexuals transition. That is, transmen generally report more positive post-transition experiences than transwomen. This may be due, in part, to a shift in status that is related to gender. Consonant with social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000), men and women are distributed into very different societal roles. Men assume more agentic, powerful, independent positions in which they are more likely to be leaders, breadwinners, and higher status than women. Women assume more communal, caring, nurturing positions in which they are more likely to be interdependent, subservient, and lower status than men (see also Glick & Fiske, 1999). Furthermore, these status differences often materialize into sexist treatment toward women across many domains of life (Glick & Fiske, 1996) including the workplace (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004).

These gender stereotypes may have very different implications for and affect differently the post-transition experiences of transmen versus transwomen. For instance, according to gender norms and social role theory, transmen are moving into a higher status and are likely to gain more respect and tangible outcomes in the workplace (compared to before their transition and compared to transwomen) as a result of the fact that they are now male. Contrariwise, transwomen may lose status as a result of acquiring the stereotypes associated with being female. However, these processes are speculative with respect to transsexual individuals as previous studies have yet to directly compare the experiences of transmen to transwomen. Based on the preliminary qualitative research that indicates that transmen report positive workplace experiences post-transition (more so than transwomen; Schilt & Connell, 2007), it is likely that transmen will report more positive workplace experiences than transwomen when these two groups are compared directly. Thus, we anticipate that:

Hypothesis 1. Transmen (relative to transwomen) will have more positive workplace experiences as measured through higher job satisfaction (H1a), higher organizational commitment (H1b), lower job anxiety (H1c), and lower levels of turnover intentions (H1d), and more favorable coworker reactions (H1e).

As a whole, then, past qualitative studies have tended to depict transsexual employees as having relatively negative workplaces. Given that transsexual employees might experience less than optimal workplace experiences, we argue that it is also critical to consider strategies that transsexual employees might adopt to improve their workplace experiences. These strategies may either be enacted at the individual level (transsexual employees can adopt the strategy) or the organizational level (organizations can adopt the strategy).

Individual and organizational strategies to improving job attitudes

In our examination, we focus on four job-related attitudes that are commonly studied in the organizational literature: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job anxiety, and job turnover intentions. First, job satisfaction is an attitude that represents employees' cognitive (evaluative), affective (emotional), and behavioral responses to their jobs (Hulin & Judge, 2003). Employees tend to develop both global attitudes about their overall job and facet-level attitudes about specific parts of their job (e.g., supervisor, pay, coworkers). Second, organizational commitment refers to employees' psychological attachments to organizations and is often measured through three subscales (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). Specifically, *affective commitment* measures employees' desires to stay with an organization because they like working there, *continuance commitment* measures employees' desires to stay due to the cost associated with leaving, and *normative commitment* measures employees' desire to stay due to feelings of obligation to the organization. While affective and normative commitments generally reflect expressions based on positive feelings associated with the organization, continuance commitment typically reflects negative expressions.

Third, job anxiety refers to the negative emotion employees feel in response to their job. Such anxiety includes employees' feelings or awareness of personal dysfunction as a result of job related perceptions or events (Parker & De Cottiis, 1983). Furthermore, job anxiety may result from certain aspects of and/or the overall job experience. Fourth and finally, turnover intentions are defined as a deliberate and conscious set of actions that lead employees to leave an organization (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Such intentions are typically measured within some sort of timeframe (e.g., "I will leave within the next year.") and are the best predictor of actual turnover behaviors (Tett & Meyer, 1993).

Given the delineation of job attitudes, we now consider in some detail strategies that individuals and organizations might use to enhance job satisfaction and commitment, and decrease job anxiety and turnover intentions. For the current investigation, we examine one individual-level strategy and one organizational-level strategy that might improve job attitudes. We recognize that there may be many other individual- and organizational-level strategies but focus on these particular two because of their potential success shown in past research on other relevant populations (e.g., Griffith & Hebl, 2002).

Self-disclosure

Self-disclosure is an important aspect of relationship forming (Altman & Taylor, 1973) and has been linked with increased liking between individuals (Collins & Miller, 1994). Wegner and Lane (1995) outlined what they termed the "secrecy cycle," which highlights how the disclosure of hidden, stigmatized identities can result in positive outcomes. Concealing hidden identities can

involve constant identity management behaviors that can detract from work-related tasks (see Clair, Beatty, & Maclean, 2005). For instance, transsexual employees who keep their identities hidden always run the risk of being found out (see Goffman, 1963) and will likely devote considerable cognitive effort to monitoring whether others have discovered their secret, and keeping track of to whom they have and have not disclosed (Ragins, 2008). In addition, these employees may avoid interacting with their coworkers in order to avoid situations that may unintentionally reveal their secret (Button, 2004). Those who disclose, however, are relieved from having to constantly monitor their own actions and can establish more comfortable interactions with their coworkers, which are important for effective working relationships (Kronenberger, 1991; Schneider, 1986). Coworkers, who are recipients of such disclosures, may learn additional information about their transsexual coworkers that replaces stigma-related stereotypes with more valid and individuated information (Crocker & Lutsky, 1986).

Managing one's identity in the workplace can be done in several different ways. For instance, Chrobot-Mason, Button, and DiClementi (2001) identified three identity management strategies that employees with hidden stigmas can enact: integrating, counterfeiting, and avoidance. Integrating involves disclosing and managing the consequences of disclosing in the workplace. Counterfeiting involves lying about one's identity and/or changing facts about one's identity in order to conceal the stigma. Finally, avoidance involves circumventing situations in which the stigma may come up so that coworkers prevent the stigma from being made known altogether.

Furthermore, disclosing can be motivated by several different objectives. For instance, Creed and Scully (2000) describe three types of motivations for disclosing: claiming (owning the stigmatized identity as a matter of fact), educative (providing clarity or inviting questions), and advocacy (illuminating injustices or inequities). These motivations are not mutually exclusive. For example, the disclosure associated with revealing a transsexual identity is likely motivated by different factors, independently or in tandem. An employee who discloses could do so because of a need to feel authentic (claiming), a need to address misconceptions about being transsexual (educative), and/or a need to expand company diversity policies to include protection for gender identity (advocacy).

Empirical support for the efficacy of disclosing has been reported in past research. For instance, Day and Schoenrade (1997, 2000) found that disclosure was related to higher affective organizational commitment and lower conflict between work and home (1997, 2000) and higher job satisfaction and belief in support from management, and lower role ambiguity and role conflict (2000). Additionally, disclosure has been shown to be related to more satisfaction with coworkers (Ellis & Riggle, 1996), higher job satisfaction and lower job anxiety (Griffith & Hebl, 2002). Similarly, Button (2001) and Chrobot-Mason et al. (2001) found that adopting an identity management strategy of integrating was related to positive organizational climate. While this research lends support to the benefits of disclosure, the overwhelming majority of it has been done on gay and lesbian samples with no specific regard to transsexuals. Budge, Tebbe, and Howard (2010) have investigated the disclosure experiences of transsexual employees using qualitative interviews and found that these experiences are often traumatic, varied, and highly important to one's well being and long-term career outcomes. Davis (2009) also describes the harsh negative reactions from coworkers that can follow disclosure. However, this research did not examine job-relevant attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, anxiety, and turnover intentions.

While research to date has not examined the influence of disclosing on workplace attitudes of transsexual employees, we anticipate, at least in this particular domain, that results will be similar to those documented for gay and lesbian employees. Although sexual orientation and gender identity are different, both characteristics are stigmatized and involve concealing an identity, which can lead to the negative consequences of constant identity management previously mentioned. Thus, it is likely that the act of disclosing will be beneficial in releasing this pressure as it is with gay and lesbian individuals. As such, we believe that the degree to which one discloses a transsexual identity will be related to improved workplace attitudes such as higher job satisfaction, affective and normative commitment and lower continuance commitment, job anxiety, and turnover intentions.

Thus, we predict the following:

Hypothesis 2. Degree of disclosure will be positively related to job satisfaction (H2a), affective commitment (H2b), and normative commitment (H2c); and negatively related to anxiety (H2d), turnover intentions (H2e), and continuance commitment (H2f).

Organizational supportiveness

Organizational supportiveness, as indicated through the presence of organizational policies and practices, is likely related to employee attitudes about the job. Having formal policies in place communicates that discrimination and intolerance will not be condoned in the organization and is related to decreased reports of discrimination from gay and lesbian workers (Button, 2001). Tsui and Gutek (1999) argue that challenges associated with having a demographically heterogeneous workforce can be overcome by organizational interventions. In addition, having formal diversity policies that include transsexual employees in place may lead to a better workplace climate (see Huffman, Watrous-Rodriguez, & King, 2008), higher job satisfaction (Day & Schoenrade, 2000; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001) and organizational commitment (Day & Schoenrade, 2000). As such, we expect that having organizational support policies that include transsexual employees will be related to more positive workplace attitudes.

Hypothesis 3. Organizational supportiveness will be positively related to job satisfaction (H3a), affective commitment (H3b), and normative commitment (H3c); and negatively related to anxiety (H3d), turnover intentions (H3e), and continuance commitment (H3f).

Characteristics associated with who is likely to disclose

Disclosure is a decision that requires a careful evaluation of the consequences that will result. Disclosure may be positive with respect to one's own self-concept, but can potentially strain interactions with others and result in negative workplace outcomes (i.e., withholding of resources). For some, the anticipation of negativity outweighs the potential benefits of disclosure. This anticipation may be even more heightened in workplace situations because individuals' professional status and job is at stake. Given this, it is likely that some workplace characteristics and individual differences may increase the likelihood that transsexual employees will disclose. We next discuss some of these characteristics.

Organizational supportiveness

In addition to potentially improving job-related attitudes, organizational supportiveness may also increase the likelihood of transsexual employees deciding to disclose in the workplace. Indeed, having organizational policies in place and perceiving the working environment to be supportive has been shown to be significantly positively related to disclosure decisions (Ragins et al., 2007). Huffman et al. (2008) reported that organizational support was related to disclosure behaviors of gay, lesbian, and bisexual workers. Similarly, even the perception of organizational and coworker supportiveness has been shown to be related to disclosure behaviors at work (Cain, 1991; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001). Moreover, having a sense of job security and a sense of immunity from negative consequences were found to be related to disclosure behaviors at work (Ellison, Russinova, MacDonald-Wilson, & Lyass, 2003). Taken together, these findings suggest that organizational support is a powerful tool in helping individuals feel comfortable disclosing personal information that is commonly stigmatized. We believe that having organizational policies in place will be related to disclosure behaviors in the workplace.

Hypothesis 4. Organizational supportiveness of transsexual employees will be positively related to transsexual employees' disclosure of their gender identity at work.

Centrality

Centrality refers to the relative importance of a characteristic (e.g., race, gender) to one's self-concept. For those who consider the fact that they are transsexual to be a personally defining characteristic, this will be extremely central to them. Transsexual employees who consider their gender identity to be a central part of their self-concept may feel inauthentic by keeping this a secret from coworkers. Self-verification theory states that individuals are motivated to have others see them as they see themselves and therefore strive to reduce any discrepancy between others' perceptions and one's own self-perception (Devor, 2004; Swann, 1983, 1987). Having a characteristic that is hidden from others increases this discrepancy, especially if the characteristic is important for the individual. Disclosing, and thus reducing this dissonance, may be worth the risk of stigmatization (Shallenberger, 1994). The importance of centrality to disclosing stigmatizing information has been found throughout the literature for various stigmatized groups. For instance, gay and lesbian employees who considered their sexual orientation to be a central part of themselves (Griffith & Hebl, 2002), and childhood cancer survivors who felt that being a survivor was central to their identity (Martinez, 2010) were more likely to disclose to their coworkers. Additionally, employees with psychiatric disabilities who did not consider themselves to be "disabled" were much less likely to disclose in the workplace than those who did use this term to refer to themselves (Dalgin & Gilbride, 2003). These results indicate that the importance of the characteristic to the employee is related to disclosure behaviors. As such, we predict that the centrality of one's transsexual status to their self-concept will be positively related to their willingness to disclose.

Hypothesis 5. Centrality will be positively related to the degree to which transsexual workers disclose their gender identity to others in the workplace.

Outness

"Outness" is a popular term that is typically associated with the degree of disclosing a gay or lesbian identity. However, this term can readily be applied to any hidden characteristic, including being transsexual. While it is true that as transsexual employees begin the transition process they essentially "out" themselves (as a result of beginning to live as the other gender), "outness" does not refer to whether an individual can "pass" as nonstigmatized or not. Rather, "outness" refers to one's psychological willingness and behavioral experiences with disclosing to family and friends, regardless of whether they have transitioned or not. Experiences with disclosing to family and friends about being transsexual likely inform decisions about whether to disclose in the workplace. Positive reactions from friends and family constitute positive social support and will likely lead to more disclosure in other domains (for a review, see also Ragins, 2008). Furthermore, prior disclosures can decrease fears of rejection, and increase practice and experience with managing one's transsexual status successfully. "Outness" to friends and family has been shown to be related to disclosure in the workplace for gay and lesbian employees (Griffith & Hebl, 2002) as well as childhood cancer survivor employees (Martinez, 2010). In addition, Budge et al. (2010) reported that all transsexual participants they interviewed had

disclosed outside of the workplace before disclosing at work. As such, we predict that “outness” to friends and family will be positively related to willingness to disclose at work.

Hypothesis 6. Disclosure to more family members and friends will predict increased degree of disclosure at work.

Who will likely benefit from disclosing?

Existing research concerning the disclosure of hidden identities in the workplace has investigated how disclosure affects one's attitudes about the job. As discussed previously ([Hypothesis 2](#)), we predict that disclosing one's transsexual status in the workplace will be related to positive workplace attitudes. However, these outcomes will probably depend on the reactions of coworkers and supervisors. That is, coworkers and supervisors may not actually react positively or be supportive in interpersonal interactions. Past research has highlighted the varied reactions that transsexual employees received at work ([Budge et al., 2010](#); [Schilt & Connell, 2007](#)). In cases in which coworkers react negatively, the positive job-related outcomes (e.g., higher job satisfaction and commitment) will likely not be realized.

This assertion is consonant with research highlighting the importance of social support for well-being. This research identifies social support as being crucial because it can act as a buffer for negative events (see [Cohen & Wills, 1985](#)). In the context of disclosing one's status as a transsexual employee, receiving positive reactions from coworkers can communicate that the employee is genuinely liked, regardless of their gender identity. Feeling accepted by one's peers can assuage negative feelings that transsexual employees may experience as a consequence of deciding whether or not to disclose and/or navigating their social space in instances in which the reactions are not positive. That is, feeling accepted by coworkers can at least put one's mind at ease and at best bolster positive emotions towards one's coworkers and the organization as a whole. However, receiving negative reactions from coworkers can exacerbate negative emotions by confirming fears that transsexual employees may have had about disclosing and by creating interpersonal tension among coworkers that may not have been present before. We believe that for those who disclose, only favorable reactions from coworkers will result in more positive attitudes about the job. Furthermore, [Griffith and Hebl \(2002\)](#) provided empirical support for this relation in a sample of gay and lesbian workers. As such, we predict that the relation between disclosure and job attitudes will be mediated by coworkers' reactions.

Hypothesis 7. The relation between disclosure behaviors and job satisfaction (H7a) affective (H7b), continuance (H7c), normative commitment (H7d), anxiety (H7e), and turnover intentions (H7f) will be mediated by coworkers' reactions toward transsexual workers.

To clarify the large number of relations that we are predicting, we include [Fig. 1](#), which represents a visual depiction of the specific hypothesized relations.

Method

Participants

A total of 114 individuals participated in the study and fully completed a 45-minute survey. Since we were only interested in a transsexual sample for the current study, we asked participants to describe their gender from the following choices (check all that apply): a) biological male, b) biological female, c) identify as male, d) identify as female, e) male to female (have transitioned), f)

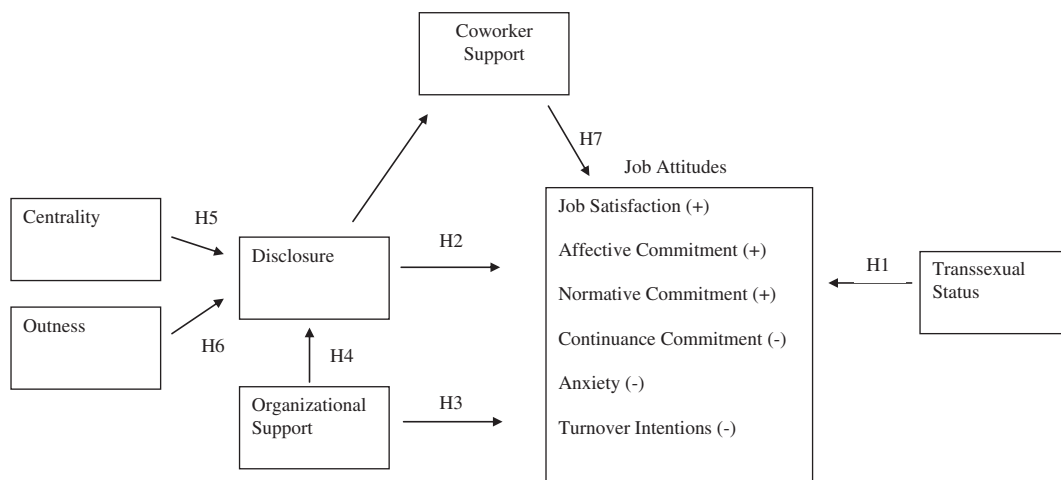


Fig. 1. Hypothesized relationships of factors influencing transsexual employees' job attitudes.

female to male (have transitioned), g) male to female (have not transitioned), h) female to male (have not transitioned), i) gender queer, j) do not adhere to gender dichotomy, and k) other. In addition, participants were asked the following: I currently identify as: a) male to female, b) female to male, c) intersex, d) androgen, e) gender queer, f) she male, g) drag queen, h) cross dresser, or i) not sure. To determine transsexual status, we included individuals who directly identified themselves as male to female or female to male (whether or not they had transitioned), and those who were biologically born as one gender but currently identify as the other. Participants who did not meet these constraints (e.g., those who selected “do not adhere to gender dichotomy” or “gender queer”) were not included in data analyses. We acknowledge that these individuals are considered part of the transgender community, but they are not necessarily transsexuals therefore their experiences may be different from those of the population of interest. Furthermore, individuals who omitted both items were also not included in data analyses. Of the 114 participants, 24% ($N = 27$) self-identified as transman, 54% ($N = 61$) self-identified as transwoman, and 22% ($N = 26$) did not indicate a transsexual gender identity. The final sample used in analyses was ($N = 88$). This sample was primarily Caucasian (81%), 15% were minority group members, and 4% did not indicate ethnicity. Participant age ranged from 19 to 65 ($M = 41$, $SD = 12.6$), with transwomen ($M = 46$) being older on average than transmen ($M = 32$).

Procedure

Participants were recruited in two ways. First, approximately 45% of participants were recruited at the Transhealth Conference in Philadelphia, PA. Researchers set up a table in the vendor area of the conference and handed out surveys to those who were interested in completing a survey on transsexual issues. Second, the survey was converted from the paper version to an online version in SurveyMonkey™, and participants completed this survey via the Internet. These participants were recruited using a nationwide convenience sample and snowballing method. One of the authors had connections with individuals who conducted research using a transsexual population and/or who were active in organizations catering to the transsexual community. This author recruited five of such individuals, who distributed hyperlinks of the survey to their respective groups and individual contacts using e-mail listservs, message boards, and individual e-mail messages. Additionally, each individual participant was asked to forward the link to other transsexual individuals whom they knew.

Measures

Identity centrality

Ten items were used to measure the gender identity centrality of survey respondents. These items were a composite of adapted items from Phinney's (1992) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure as well as the “importance to identity” subscale developed by Luhtanen and Crocker (1992). Additionally, this measure included items from Waldo's (1999) Self-Acceptance Scale. An example survey item measuring identity centrality is, “My identity as a gender variant individual is extremely central to my self-concept.” Respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = “strongly disagree”, 7 = “strongly agree”). The reliability for this composite was coefficient $\alpha = .75$.

Organizational support

Six items were used to measure perceptions of organizational support. These items were adapted from existing literature (Friskopp & Silverstein, 1995; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001), which have been used to measure organizational cultures that are supportive of gay and lesbian employees. An example of one of the adapted items for this measure is, “My organization has a written policy that prohibits discrimination based on gender identity.” Respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = “strongly disagree”, 7 = “strongly agree”). The reliability for this composite was $\alpha = .89$.

Outness

Five items were used to assess participants' degree of disclosure outside of the workplace. These items were adapted from Griffith and Hebl's (2002) Outness Scale and evaluated the degree of disclosure to various groups (e.g., family, friends, other acquaintances). Respondents indicated the amount of disclosure on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = not disclosed to any of them, 7 = disclosed to all of them). The reliability for this measure was $\alpha = .77$.

Degree of disclosure

To measure degree of disclosure, we used items adapted from Griffith and Hebl's (2002) Disclosure Scale as well as self-developed items. These items exhibited fairly high intercorrelations so we conducted a principle components exploratory factor analysis with promax rotation. This analysis revealed three factors, which we termed *sexual relationship status*, *disclosing*, and *passing*. It was determined by two of the authors that both the disclosing factor and passing factor deal with issues related to disclosure of transsexual status (the former containing items dealing with disclosure and the latter containing items dealing with trying not to disclose or hiding); however, the third factor dealt more with revealing sexual orientation status. Thus, the eight items from the disclosure and passing factors were retained to create the Degree of Disclosure scale ($\alpha = .80$) while the items comprising the third factor were dropped. In addition, this composite was compared with a dichotomous scale of disclosure (e.g., “have you disclosed to your supervisor?” [y/n]). The Degree of Disclosure scale was highly correlated with this scale, provided more variability, and included a broader yet still comprehensive domain of interest, and was thus used instead of this dichotomous scale. Example items from the Degree of Disclosure scale include, “At work, I put a lot of effort into trying to hide the fact that I am

gender variant,” and, “If I am asked about being gender variant I answer honestly.” Respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = “strongly disagree”, 7 = “strongly agree”).

Coworker reactions

Fourteen items were used to measure perceptions of coworker support ($\alpha = .92$). These items were adapted from Griffith and Hebl's (2002) Coworker Reactions Scale. An example of an item from this section is, “My coworkers ask me about my personal life.” Respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = “strongly disagree” and 7 = “strongly agree”).

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured using 3 items adapted from Griffith and Hebl's (2002) modified version of Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson and Paul's Job in General Scale (1989). An example from this measure is, “I am happy with my current job.” Respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = “strongly disagree” and 7 = “strongly agree”). The coefficient α of reliability for this composite was .93.

Organizational commitment

Commitment was measured using Meyer et al.'s (1993) three-factor model of organizational commitment. All three measures of commitment used a 7-point Likert type scale (1 = “strongly disagree” and 7 = “strongly agree”). Alpha reliability coefficients for affective, continuance, and normative commitment were .82, .80, and .88, respectively.

Job anxiety

Job anxiety was measured using one item developed for the purpose of this study (“I experience considerable anxiety at work.”).

Turnover intentions

One item was used to measure turnover intentions (“I have been thinking about quitting my job in the near future”).

Results

To examine the results, we first assessed attitudes and experiences of transsexuals to determine whether they differed as a function of gender identity (i.e., transmen versus transwomen). Next, we examined the individual- and organizational-level strategies that might improve job-related attitudes. We then examined predictors of disclosure, and finally we tested a mechanism to explain why disclosing might improve transsexual employees' job-related attitudes. Table 1 provides descriptive statistics and zero-order correlation coefficients for all study variables.

First, we examined differences in workplace experiences between transmen and transwomen. As predicted, a *t*-test analysis revealed significant differences in the positivity of coworker reactions (H1e) experienced by transmen ($M = 5.28$, $SD = 1.31$) and transwomen ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.33$), $t(85) = 2.09$, $p < .05$. However, no significant differences in experiences emerged between transmen and transwomen with regard to job satisfaction (H1a), any of the organizational commitment subscales (H1a), job anxiety (H1c), or turnover intentions (H1d). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was partially supported.

Individual and organizational strategies to improving job attitudes

We were then interested in the potential workplace benefits of disclosure. We predicted that the degree of disclosing one's transsexual identity would be positively related to job satisfaction (H2a), affective commitment (H2b), and normative

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of study variables.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Degree of disclosure	4.74	1.25	(.80)										
2. Organizational support	3.42	1.84	.40**	(.89)									
3. Centrality	4.93	.95	.32**	.15	(.75)								
4. Outness	5.80	1.16	.43**	.20	.40**	(.77)							
5. Job satisfaction	4.30	1.67	.11	.24*	.09	-.08	(.93)						
6. Affective commitment	3.37	1.32	.22*	.28**	.04	.01	.59**	(.82)					
7. Continuance commitment	4.62	1.34	-.23*	-.08	.10	-.13	-.18	-.10	(.80)				
8. Normative commitment	3.27	1.51	.08	.29**	.06	.06	.51**	.54**	.09	(.88)			
9. Coworker reactions	4.83	1.35	.36**	.29**	-.05	-.16	.49**	.30**	-.33**	.34**	(.92)		
10. Turnover intentions	3.64	2.01	.14	-.02	.15	.24*	-.28**	-.23*	-.18	-.18	-.08	-	
11. Job anxiety	4.07	1.91	-.30**	-.08	-.04	.05	-.41**	-.22*	.38**	-.05	-.48**	.28**	-

Note. Internal consistency reliability coefficients (alphas) appear in parentheses along the diagonal.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

commitment (H2c); and negatively related to job anxiety (H2d), turnover intentions (H2e), and continuance commitment (H2f). As predicted, results showed that disclosure was positively related to job satisfaction, $\beta = .25, p = .01$, and affective commitment, $\beta = .25, p = .01$, and negatively related to job anxiety, $\beta = -.38, p < .001$, and continuance commitment, $\beta = -.24, p = .01$. Unexpectedly, disclosure was not related to normative commitment, $\beta = .11, p = .23$ or turnover intentions, $\beta = .04, p = .70$. In sum, **Hypothesis 2** was partially supported.

Next, we examined the extent to which organizational supportiveness predicted job satisfaction (H3a), affective commitment (H3b), normative commitment (H3c), job anxiety (H3d), turnover intentions (H3e), and continuance commitment (H3f). As predicted, regression analyses revealed that organizational support predicted job satisfaction, $\beta = .36, p < .001$, affective commitment, $\beta = .37, p < .001$, and normative commitment, $\beta = .34, p < .001$, but not continuance commitment, $\beta = -.07, p = .48$ or turnover intentions, $\beta = -.11, p = .25$. Results for the relationship between organizational support and job anxiety showed the expected trend; however, results were not significant, $\beta = -.17, p = .07$. Thus, **Hypothesis 3** was partially supported.

Who is likely to disclose?

We conducted three regressions to test **Hypotheses 4–6**, which examine organization- and individual-level factors that influence disclosure behaviors. As predicted, working in organizations that are highly supportive of transgender issues was positively related to disclosure (H4), $\beta = .42, p < .001$. Also as predicted, the centrality of one's transsexual identity (H5), $\beta = .39, p < .001$, and "outness" to family and friends (H6), $\beta = .52, p < .001$, were both positively related to disclosure behaviors at work. Thus, **Hypotheses 4–6** were fully supported. A multiple regression including organizational supportiveness, centrality, and outness showed that each of these constructs predicts disclosure independent of each other, $\beta = .30, p < .001$; $\beta = .18, p = .04$; and $\beta = .40, p < .001$, respectively.

Who will likely benefit from disclosure?

Finally, **Hypothesis 7** predicted that the relationship between disclosure and job attitudes would be mediated by coworkers' reactions. First, we used the criteria outlined in Baron and Kenny (1986) that: a) disclosure must be significantly related to job attitudes; b) disclosure must be significantly related to coworkers' reactions; c) coworkers' reactions must be significantly related to job attitudes after controlling for disclosure; and d) the effect of disclosure on job attitudes should be zero when controlling for coworkers' reactions. Specifically, we examined the relations between disclosure and job satisfaction, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and job anxiety because these relations met the first criterion for mediation. As seen in Table 2, all criteria were met for each relation, except in the case of job anxiety, suggesting full mediation for job satisfaction, affective commitment, and continuance commitment. In the case of job anxiety, the first three criteria were met and the effect of disclosure on job anxiety was reduced when controlling for coworker reactions, suggesting that this relation was partially mediated. Next, we tested the significance of all indirect effects using the Sobel test (MacKinnon & Dwyer, 1993; MacKinnon, Warsi, & Dwyer, 1995). The results of this test were significant for job satisfaction, $Z = 3.81, p < .001$, affective commitment, $Z = 3.05, p = .001$, continuance commitment, $Z = 2.82, p = .002$, and job anxiety, $Z = 2.02, p = .002$. To further test mediation, we performed the bootstrapping mediation test proposed by Preacher and Hayes (2004) to further test for indirect effects. As seen in Table 3, bootstrapping analyses further supported the results of all mediation analyses. In sum, the results of all mediation analyses indicate that coworkers' reactions fully mediated the relationship between disclosure and job satisfaction, affective and continuance commitment, and partially mediated the relationship between disclosure and job anxiety. Thus, there is sufficient evidence to support **Hypothesis 7**.

Discussion

The current study adds to the extremely sparse body of literature concerning transsexual individuals' experiences in the workplace. The results reveal a number of general findings about transsexual employees. For instance, very few differences in the

Table 2
Regressions for analyses of coworker reactions mediating the relationship between disclosure and job attitudes.

	Job attitudes							
	Job satisfaction		Affective commitment		Continuance commitment		Job anxiety	
	R ²	β	R ²	β	R ²	β	R ²	β
Model 1	.06**		.06*		.06**		.14***	
Disclosure		.25**		.25*		-.24**		-.38***
Model 2	.27***		.14**		.12**		.30***	
Coworkers' reactions		.50***		.30**		-.26**		-.43***
Disclosure		.04		.13		-.14		-.20*

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Results of bootstrap analyses for mediation tests.

	β	95% CI	
		Lower bound	Upper bound
Job satisfaction	.26	.15	.41
Affective commitment	.13	.04	.24
Continuance commitment	-.11	-.23	-.02
Job anxiety	-.26	-.40	-.14

experiences of transmen and transwomen in the workplace were identified. The one exception to this was that transmen reported more favorable coworker reactions than did transwomen. This finding somewhat parallels what is found in the literature on gay men and lesbians. With these populations, when differences emerge (and they often do not), there is often less stigmatization toward lesbians than gay men (Herek, 1988). A woman who acts in a masculine way is not typically as devalued as a man who acts in a feminine way (see Whitley & Aegisdottir, 2000). Similarly, gay men, who are seen as effeminate or “sissies”, typically represent a more egregious violation of gender norms than lesbians, who are seen as tomboyish (Kerns & Fine, 1994). In the same way, transmen may be seen as more acceptable than transwomen because gender violations for men (transwomen) are stigmatized more harshly than for women (transmen). In addition, transmen may simply be enjoying the higher societal status enjoyed by men, while transwomen may be subject to the lower status of women. These perceptions are likely more salient for transsexuals post-transition because they have experienced both roles in society and may thus be more attuned to the difference between being male and female (because they have experienced each) than someone who has been in the same role their whole lives. Consonant with this, in the current study, there is less stigmatization toward women transitioning to men than vice versa. However, it seems the psychological experiences that transmen versus transwomen have in the workplace seem to be more similar than different. Although few differences were seen, it is interesting to note that the mean age difference between transwomen ($M = 46$) and transmen ($M = 32$) was significantly different, $t(83) = 5.23, p < .001$. This sample make-up is similar to a difference found in a study by Schilt and Wiswall (2008). These authors state that perhaps this difference may suggest that transwomen wait until later in life to transition in an attempt to preserve status associated with the male gender, while transmen transition earlier in an attempt to gain this status more quickly. The demographics of our sample lend support to this hypothesis; however, future research should empirically examine age differences in transsexual employees further.

The current results also clarify individual and organizational factors that may positively influence job-related attitudes. At the individual level, our findings suggest that disclosure of one's gender identity has some positive benefits. Specifically, disclosure was positively related to job satisfaction and affective commitment, and negatively related to continuance commitment and job anxiety. However, it was not significantly related to normative commitment or turnover intentions. The lack of relation between disclosure and normative commitment suggests that one's loyalty to their organization is independent of their disclosure behavior. The negative relationship between disclosure and continuance commitment suggests that those who are more likely to disclose are less likely to be committed to an organization because they feel that the cost of leaving is too great. This finding is not surprising in that those who feel uncomfortable being themselves in an organization are probably more likely to perceive more emotional costs due to staying with the organization which may potentially outweigh any costs of leaving. These findings are consistent with previous literature examining other minority groups. For example, disclosure has been shown to be related to more positive workplace outcomes for gay and lesbian employees (Day & Schoenrade, 2000; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Ragins et al., 2007), employees with HIV (Emler, 2006), and employees with mental (Dalgin & Gilbride, 2003) and physical illness (Wilton, 2006).

Consistent with previous research (Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Huffman et al., 2008), our findings suggest that individual and organizational characteristics influence one's disclosure behaviors. Those who reported that their gender identity was very central to their identity and reported having disclosed to friends and family outside of work also reported more disclosure behaviors. In addition, those who reported that their organizations were more supportive also engaged in more disclosure in the workplace.

In addition to influencing disclosure behaviors, and in line with previous findings (Day & Schoenrade, 2000; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001), organizational support also directly influenced job attitudes. Organizational support was positively related to job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment, and not related to continuance commitment, job anxiety, or turnover intentions. This suggests that those who work in organizations that are supportive are more likely to be committed because they genuinely like and feel a sense of loyalty toward their organizations, not because they feel like the costs associated with leaving are too high.

Our results also highlight the importance of social support in the workplace. Individuals who disclose and have supportive coworkers who respond positively toward them tend to be more satisfied at work and more committed to their organizations because they genuinely enjoy working there (affective commitment). These results are consistent with previous findings (Griffith & Hebl, 2002) and suggest that coworkers play an essential role in influencing positive outcomes for others. Social support has been linked with protecting, or “buffering” individuals from negative experiences (see Cohen & Wills, 1985) and has been shown to be positively related to life satisfaction (Huffman et al., 2008). There can be high levels of stress related to deciding whether to disclose in the workplace (Wegner & Lane, 1995). If transsexual employees have disclosed and receive positive reactions from coworkers, they can be buffered from the stress they may have been feeling with respect to their identity as a transsexual.

Implications

The results of the current study have several implications that benefit transsexual employees. First, these results have implications for empirical investigations of transsexual individuals. Our results are consonant with previous research examining gay and lesbian employees. As such, the case could be made that transsexual employees need not be studied on their own and can instead merely be included in studies focused on the larger LGBT community. However, it is likely that the differences between LGBT and transsexual employees were minimized in the current study because the topic of our investigation (disclosing a hidden stigmatized characteristic at work) may be very similar, regardless of the type of stigma that is being revealed (Dalgin & Gilbride, 2003; Ellison et al., 2003; Emler, 2006; Figueiredo, Fries, & Ingram, 2003; see Wilton, 2006).

Despite the fact that the current results mirror, to some extent, those reported in Griffith and Hebl (2002), there are likely many situations in which transsexual employees might respond differently than LGBT employees. For example, being transsexual is considered a mental disorder in the DSM-IVR (gender identity disorder), but the Americans with Disabilities Act and the federal Rehabilitation Act specifically exclude “transsexualism” from employment discrimination rights protection (Tan, 2008). Thus, transsexuals face an extra level of stigmatization that gay or lesbian employees do not (homosexuality being removed from the DSM in 1973). In addition, legal protections on the basis of sex were expanded beyond biological sex to include gender nonconformity in *Price v. Waterhouse*. However, individual courts have inconsistently interpreted this ruling to include protection for transsexual individuals (Tan, 2008). Thus, transsexual employees face a more tenuous legal landscape than many other stigmatized groups who have more clear legal precedents. Taken together, we strongly promote the continuation of research that specifically examines the experiences of transsexual employees, independently of other minority groups.

A second implication of this study concerns transsexual employees who are considering whether or not they should disclose their gender identity. In some cases, individuals may be in the process of transitioning while continuing in the same organization, therefore, it becomes necessary to disclose. These results suggest that disclosing one's minority gender identity can lead to positive affective benefits. Similarly, this study informs the general body of literature on disclosure, providing additional support that this can be a useful strategy in improving workplace outcomes.

While disclosure was positively related to affective commitment, it was negatively related to continuance commitment. These results suggest that while disclosure is a decision that has positive affective benefits, it is also a decision that may influence one's perception of the costs and benefits of their job. A transsexual employee who is likely to disclose may be less likely to be attached to the organization simply because the costs associated with leaving are too great. Instead, these individuals (those likely to disclose) may be attached to their organization because of the support they receive from coworkers and the general enjoyment they have at the organization. These individuals may be more likely to leave the organization if they receive negative reactions from coworkers as a result of their disclosure. An anonymous reviewer suggested that perhaps continuance commitment is a predictor of disclosure as opposed to a consequence. We acknowledge that this is indeed a possibility, in which case transsexual employees would make the decision of whether to disclose based in part on the perceived costs and benefits associated with leaving the organization. For instance, an employee who has made the decision to disclose may do so with the knowledge and understanding that this decision may put their job in jeopardy (due to a lack of formal protection). Thus, it could be the case that employees who disclose are not bound by perceived costs of leaving, but rather have made the decision that disclosing is more important than maintaining employment. However, it is likely that the relationship between disclosure and continuance commitment is bidirectional, and thus the costs and benefits of disclosure and the related consequences are simultaneously considered by transsexual employees. Furthermore, regardless of directionality, employees who are willing to disclose are generally those whose minority gender identity is central to their self-concept, thus they may be less willing to compromise happiness for employment at a particular organization. This is important for organizations to note as they seek to retain qualified transsexual employees.

In a similar vein, these results also have implications for the recruitment and retention of qualified transsexual employees. From an attraction–selection–attrition perspective (Schneider, 1987), these results suggest that organizations who want to recruit, select, and retain qualified diverse employees should have organizational policies in place that support issues related to these employees. Organizational support in the form of formal policies not only sends a positive supportive message to transsexual applicants and employees, but also sends a firm message to others that negativity against this group is unacceptable. Recent research has even suggested that formal organizational support can help to reduce interpersonal discrimination against a minority group (Barron, 2009). In addition to attracting qualified transsexual employees, organizational support can help to positively influence these employees' organizational commitment, which has been shown to be negatively related to turnover intentions (Griffith, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). This is beneficial to both employees and organizations because organizations invest a great deal of time and money into their workforce; therefore, it is important to retain valuable employees.

Finally, the results from this study have implications for coworkers of transsexual employees. Specifically, supportive coworkers, much like supportive organizations, positively influence job-related outcomes for transsexual employees. Our results suggest that when transsexual employees receive support from their coworkers after disclosing their gender identity, they report being happier at work. This is important because not only does it benefit transsexual employees, but it may also influence the culture and morale of all employees in the workplace.

Limitations

While the current study elucidates the workplace experiences of transsexual employees, there are also some limitations to the research. First, this study relied on a nonrandom sample of transsexual individuals who may have been more willing to disclose

than a random sample of transsexual individuals. Specifically, approximately 40% of the data were collected at a conference targeted at the transgender community. There may be many transsexual individuals who internally identify as the other gender but have yet to openly acknowledge this to others. The other portion of this sample was recruited online mainly through listservs and snowball techniques. These transsexual participants could have participated anonymously and without fear of being identified; thus, we are hopeful that we recruited transsexual employees who ranged the gamut of disclosing.

Nonrandom sampling can pose potential issues with the interpretation of results as only a portion of the population (in this case those who actively go to transgender events and those connected within a particular transgender social network) who have similarities that may not extend to those in the entire population are studied. There may be (and likely are) transsexual individuals who have disclosed their gender identity status at work and were met with negative reactions which may have led to negative psychological job related outcomes. These individuals may be more hesitant to venture out to transsexual related events or respond to surveys related to gender identity related experiences. Transitioning or longing to transition from one gender to the other is a very sensitive matter, thus the limitations of sampling are inevitable. However, this limitation should not deter researchers from striving to investigate the transsexual population. We acknowledge the potential seriousness of this issue; however, this method is often necessary when studying a population that is inherently hard to identify. Researchers of LGBT issues have noted that both snowball and outcropping (i.e., recruiting from locations frequented by those within the population) sampling methodologies are among the most frequently used methods to study LGBT populations due to their feasibility (Dean et al., 2000; Griffith & Hebl, 2002). Furthermore, we note that the difficulty in finding representatives in this population to serve as participants also contributed to the relatively small sample size, which could potentially pose problems with detecting results. A retrospective power analysis, however, revealed that the sample size used in this study was large enough to detect a small effect ($d = .15$) with sufficient power ($>.80$). As research becomes more prevalent in this area, we are hopeful that it may be easier to obtain data from this population and urge researchers to replicate the results obtained in this sample.

A second limitation of this study involves some of the measures. Specifically, two of the measures (job anxiety and turnover intentions) consisted of only one item. While this is not optimal, some research has suggested that one-item measures can be useful and can have moderate reliabilities (Wanous, Reichers, & Hudy, 1997). In particular, recent studies found that a one-item measure of anxiety (Davey, Barratt, Butow, & Deeks, 2007) and a one-item measure of job satisfaction (Nagy, 2002; Wanous et al., 1997) showed good comparability with respective extended measures. Similarly, other research has found that single item attitudinal measures have similar levels of predictive validity as do multiple-item attitudinal measures (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007).

A third and final limitation involves data interpretation, particularly determining causality in some of the relationships measured. It is possible (and likely) that some of the relationships examined are bidirectional in nature. For instance, although we examined coworker reactions as a mediator variable between disclosure and job-related outcomes, it is possible that positive coworker reactions to transsexual issues may lead to greater willingness to disclose (see Collins & Miller, 1994). Likewise, we examined organizational support as a predictor to disclosure. While it is possible that individuals are attracted to organizations with supportive transsexual policies, it is likely that many organizations have not adopted supportive transsexual policies. Also, as suggested by an anonymous reviewer, it is likely that continuance commitment affects degree of disclosure. Thus, as seen with other minority groups such as gay and lesbian individuals, it is also possible that individuals' vocal disclosure leads to organizational change. Future research should examine the directionality of these processes, and explore alternative explanations such as situational variables that make one directional change more likely.

Conclusion

This study is important because it empirically examines a greatly understudied population. Furthermore, it is unique in that it examines the experiences of transsexual individuals in the workplace from their own perspective beyond qualitative interview studies. This study sheds light on both individual and organizational factors that can positively influence job attitudes for transsexual employees, and it explores characteristics that make the implementation and success of these strategies more likely. While this study is a step in the right direction in terms of better elucidating the experiences of transsexual employees, we encourage continued research attention on this population. It is our hope that such research will equip transsexual employees, their coworkers, and organizations with the knowledge and strategies that are helpful in improving the workplace experiences of these employees.

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