ANTECEDENTS AND OUTCOMES OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION DISCLOSURE IN THE
WORKPLACE AMONG LESBIANS

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ABSTRACT

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Lesbians continue to be an invisible, stigmatized group in the United States, and as a result, engage in sexual identity management strategies to conceal and reveal their sexual identity across several different contexts. The experiences of sexual minorities in the workplace is one domain that has garnered scholars' recent attention, especially as it relates to sexual orientation disclosure; however, the unique experiences of lesbians' management of their sexual identity remains underexplored. Furthermore, while scholars assert that there is most likely an association between lesbians' disclosure of their sexual orientation in the workplace and their intimate relationship, this remains unclear. As such, the present study investigated antecedents and outcomes of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace among a sample of 201 self-identified lesbians in the context of their intimate relationship.

As hypothesized, a multiple linear regression revealed that the higher prevalence of affirming organizational policies and practices, less perceived treatment discrimination towards sexual minorities in the workplace, lower levels of internalized homophobia, and greater relationship commitment was associated with the use of greater sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian’s identity in the workplace. A multivariate General Linear Model (GLM) was utilized to assess the outcomes of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace among lesbians. As expected, the use of greater sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian’s identity was positively associated with higher levels of psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction. Contrary to what was predicted, the use of sexual identity management strategies was not significantly associated with job satisfaction, and possible explanations for this finding are addressed. Furthermore, two simple linear regression analyses revealed that greater relationship commitment was associated with bringing one's partner to
work-related events and bringing one's partner to work-related events was associated with greater relationship satisfaction.

This study improves present understanding of lesbians' experiences of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace. The findings are useful for organizations and practitioners in their pursuits to better understand their lesbian employees and clients, and will hopefully motivate other researchers in the field who are interested in contributing to the growing literature in this area. Limitations and implications for theory, research, practice, and training are discussed.
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L.D.F.
DEDICATION

For my uncle Howie,

with love and adoration.
Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Significant sociopolitical progress has been made in affording equal rights to sexual minorities (lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals; LGB individuals) in the last decade. One of the most remarkable examples of social progress in the last decade has been the granting of marriage equality for same-sex couples in Massachusetts in 2004. Since then, several other states have followed Massachusetts’ lead in recognizing same-sex marriages (Human Rights Campaign, 2009). On October 28, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act into law that grants the Justice Department power to prosecute perpetrators who violate others based on their actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. Substantial changes have also been made in instituting policies and procedures in the workplace that affirm sexual diversity. The repeal of the military’s “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy in September 2011 that prohibited LGB individuals from openly serving in the armed forces is one of the most recent advancements in affording equal rights to sexual minorities. In 1998, during President Clinton’s administration, discrimination based on sexual orientation was prohibited in federal employment settings, which influenced many private organizations and state governments to implement sexual orientation non-discrimination policies as well. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) reported that as of February 2009, 423 (85%) of the Fortune 500 companies added sexual orientation to their existing non-discrimination policy, and 20 state governments and the District of Columbia had implemented non-discrimination policies that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in private and public employment (HRC, 2009).
In addition to the implementation of sexual orientation non-discrimination policies, the Kaiser Family Foundation found in their annual Employer Health Benefits report that 39% of the 1,927 organizations surveyed offered same-sex domestic partner benefits (KFF, 2008). Prior research has shown that supportive policies and procedures, such as a formal written statement of sexual orientation non-discrimination, same-sex domestic partner benefits, informal networks/groups for LGB employees, the inclusion of LGB-related issues in diversity workshops, and welcoming same-sex partners to company events are related to less sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace (Button, 2001; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001). In addition, these policies and procedures have also been shown to relate to higher levels of job satisfaction and job commitment for gay men and lesbians (Griffith & Hebl, 2002).

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

The terms “coming out”, or “coming out of the closet”, are oftentimes used interchangeably with disclosure of a sexual minority identity to imply the process of leaving a
life of secrecy and concealment of one’s identity. Secrecy, in general, has been reported to be cognitively and emotionally draining as it requires a great deal of energy to strategically keep the information hidden (Lane & Wegner, 1995). The workplace is a context in which sexual minorities invest a great deal of time, and consequently, a major issue for them is determining how to navigate a stigmatized sexual identity in this context, especially as it relates to disclosure (Button, 2004; Driscoll et al., 1996; Day & Schoenrade, 1997). The choice to reveal their sexual identity has been found to be a complex, emotionally taxing process as individuals must weigh the pros and cons of revealing their identity (Button, 2004; Gonsiorek, 1993). For example, disclosure has been found to be associated with greater levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction (Garnets & Kimmel, 1993; Morris, Waldo, & Rothblum, 2001; Smith & Ingram, 2004), and disclosure specifically in the workplace has been shown to be associated with positive work-related outcomes, a topic that will be discussed below. However, on the other hand, some sexual minorities fear discrimination (e.g., job loss, isolation; Croteau, 1996) if their sexual identity is made visible, and based on recent research findings, these fears are not unfounded. For instance, in Lambda Legal's most recent Workplace Fairness Survey (2005), more than a third of gay and lesbian workers reported experiencing some form of harassment or discrimination in the past five years. Additionally, it is still legal in 29 states to fire someone because of their sexual orientation, and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), a federal bill that was first introduced in 1994 to protect sexual minorities and transgendered individuals from discrimination at work, has yet to be accepted into law.

Not surprisingly then, sexual minorities who perceive less sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace are more likely to disclose their sexual orientation at work (Ragins & Cornwell, 2001). In addition to less perceived sexual orientation discrimination in the
workplace, several other factors have been found to influence disclosure of sexual orientation in the workplace. The presence of supportive organizational policies and procedures, protective legislation, and gay co-workers have all been found to be associated with a higher degree of self-disclosure among gay and lesbian employees (Ragins & Cornwell, 2001). Additionally, gay and lesbian employees who disclosed their sexual orientation to family and friends and who believed that their employer was gay-supportive disclosed to a greater extent at work than those employees who had not disclosed to family and friends and who believed their employer was unsupportive (Griffith & Hebl, 2002). Furthermore, internalized homophobia, or the negative attitudes that sexual minority individuals harbor towards themselves (Herek et al., 2007; Herek et al., 2009; Weinberg, 1972), was found to be negatively associated with disclosure at work (Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Rostosky & Riggle, 2002).

The outcomes, or consequences, of sexual orientation disclosure at work have also been examined. For instance, disclosure at work has been found to be positively related to higher job satisfaction (Day & Schoenrade, 1997; Griffith & Hebl, 2002), satisfaction with co-workers (Ellis & Riggle, 1995), and psychological commitment to the organization (Day & Schoenrade, 2000) in samples of gay men and lesbians. Among lesbians specifically, Driscoll et al. (1996) found that high disclosure was positively related to work satisfaction. Job/work satisfaction is important to study because it has been found to be positively related to productivity and negatively related to absenteeism and turnover (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002).

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

One of the main reasons for the paucity of research dedicated to the study of lesbians in the workplace is due to the fact that researchers continue to study sexual minorities together (e.g., lesbians and gay men, and at times including bisexual men and women as well) despite assertions from other researchers that sexual minorities should not be treated as a homogenous group when conducting vocational psychology research (Etringer, Hillerbrand, & Hetherington, 1990; Elliott, 1993) and counseling psychology research (Moradi et al., 2009). Instead, researchers have noted the importance of exploring the unique within-group differences among sexual minority groups (Chung, 1995; Moradi et al., 2009), especially since gender differences have been reported in sexual minorities’ experiences across several variables. For instance, men have been found to disclose to a greater extent than women (Wells & Kline, 1987; Ellis & Riggle, 1995), women have been found to experience lower levels of internalized homophobia compared to men (Balsam & Mohr, 2007; Herek et al., 1997; Mohr & Fassinger, 2000), and lesbian couples have reported greater positive beliefs about relationships and greater relationship satisfaction compared to gay couples (Kurdek, 1988; Kurdek, 2003). Therefore, this dissertation
focuses exclusively on the experiences of lesbians. Specifically, this dissertation investigates how organizational policies and procedures, perceived treatment of sexual minorities in the workplace (heterosexism), and internalized homophobia relates to sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace, and how sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace relates to job satisfaction and psychological well-being. This dissertation seeks to expand on the literature that has focused exclusively on lesbians’ experiences in the workplace as that research, which has mostly been conducted in the 1980s, may no longer accurately describe their experiences in today’s society given the progress that has been made in LGB civil rights over the last two decades.

Furthermore, although researchers have given recommendations for the investigation of the intersection between lesbians’ intimate relationships and work (Driscoll et al., 1996), and more specifically partner effects on disclosure at work (Rostosky & Riggle, 2002), this area of research has not garnered much attention. Therefore, this dissertation aims to contribute to a largely neglected area of research by providing insight into the experiences of lesbians in the workplace in the context of their intimate relationships. More specifically, this dissertation explores how relationship commitment influences sexual orientation disclosure at work, in addition to how sexual orientation disclosure at work influences relationship satisfaction. The limited conceptual and empirical research that existed prior to this study provided preliminary evidence for the importance of including partner and relationship variables into the investigation of work-related experiences (Browning et al. 1991; Driscoll et al., 1996; Fassinger, 1995; Gonsiorek, 1993; Rostosky & Riggle, 2002). For instance, although it was not the primary focus of their study, Driscoll et al. (1996) found that the duration of lesbian relationship was positively related to disclosure of sexual orientation at work. The authors hypothesized that this
finding may indicate that being in a relationship may facilitate the process of disclosing at work as a lesbian navigates workplace events and discussions about personal matters.

Similarly, the theoretical literature on sexual identity development suggests that lesbians tend to disclose their sexual orientation while involved in an intimate relationship, perhaps because of the way in which women are socialized to embrace and nurture relationships (Lewis, 1984; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996), or perhaps because women, in general, tend to define themselves in relation to others (Chodorow, 1978). Thus, many lesbians who receive emotional support in their intimate relationships may find it more feasible to disclose their sexual orientation to others (Lewis, 1984). Other authors posit that lesbians may feel pressure to disclose in the context of a relationship because it requires more mental and psychological energy to keep a relationship secret to others (Roth & Murphy, 1996). Therefore, it seems plausible that lesbians who are in intimate relationships, especially long-term, committed relationships, may find it easier, or feel more pressure, to disclose their sexual orientation at work.

Only two studies have been identified that explored sexual orientation disclosure at work and relationship quality among lesbians, yet the authors did not find a significant relationship (Eldridge & Gilbert, 1990; Caron & Ulin, 1997). However, there are a number of concerns present in these studies, particularly regarding the disclosure measures they utilized, which will be highlighted more thoroughly in the literature review. It is important to note that 65% of the lesbians in Eldridge and Gilbert’s sample had not disclosed their sexual orientation to their employers, and 37% had not disclosed to anyone in their work environment. Similarly, Caron and Ulin’s (1997) sample also disclosed their sexual orientation to co-workers to a lesser extent as compared to their disclosure to their family and friends. It is possible that a high percentage
of lesbians were reluctant to disclose at work during the 1990s as the sociopolitical climate of the Unites States was starkly different than it is today. Since the 1990s, there has been an increase in positive attitudes towards sexual minorities, recognition of same-sex marriages and partnerships in several states, and implementation of affirming organizational policies and practices in the workplace, which may facilitate disclosure in the workplace. Therefore, it is important to investigate lesbians’ current experience with disclosure in the workplace in the context of their intimate relationships.

The purpose of this dissertation is to contribute to the literature on the antecedents and outcomes of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace (Button, 2001; Day & Schoenrade, 1997, 2000; Driscoll et al. 1996; Ellis & Riggle, 1995; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001; Rostosky & Riggle, 2002; Waldo, 1999). A significant gap that currently exists in this area of research is the experiences of self-disclosure as it specifically relates to lesbians. Drawing on the theoretical literature and empirical findings from previous studies that investigated the experiences of sexual minorities at work and in intimate relationships, the goal of the study is to examine the environmental (e.g. organizational climate/policies, treatment of sexual minorities in the workplace), individual (e.g. internalized homophobia), and relational (e.g., relationship commitment) antecedents to disclosure of sexual orientation at work, in addition to how disclosure at work influences relationship satisfaction, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being among lesbians who are in intimate relationships.
Lesbians, like many individuals in the United States, spend a great deal of time at work, and therefore it is important that they feel supported, safe, and comfortable in their work environment. Although lesbians have the choice to spend their nonworking hours with family and friends who are supportive of their sexual orientation, most do not have the ability to choose co-workers and supervisors who possess positive attitudes towards sexual minorities. Therefore, lesbians face a unique challenge at work as they have to negotiate whether or not to disclose their sexual orientation to those in their work environment, especially in a work environment that does not treat sexual minorities fairly.

The literature review will begin by providing a model of minority stress to explain the experiences of sexual minorities as stigmatized individuals in order to gain an understanding of the emotionally and cognitively exhausting process of managing one’s sexual identity at work and the factors that influence disclosure. This literature review will also elucidate the findings from previous studies on the antecedents and outcomes of disclosure at work to lay a foundation for the hypotheses that will be posed at the conclusion of this chapter. It is important to note that research findings on studies that have included both gay men and lesbians together will be described as such, and any gender differences reported will be noted; however, unfortunately, several authors did not report any differential effects that may have been present between lesbians and gay men.
Sexual Minorities as a Stigmatized Group

Sexual Stigma and Minority Stress

According to Goffman (1963), stigma is an attribute that is discrediting and that oftentimes categorizes the person that possesses the attribute as an inferior person. Sexual minorities are considered a stigmatized group in the United States as they are viewed as sick, immoral, and inferior to heterosexuals, and consequently, continue to be the victims of discrimination, harassment, and hostility (Herek, Chopp, & Strohl, 2007). Herek, Cogan, and Gillis (2009) define sexual stigma as “the negative regard, inferior status, and relative powerlessness that society collectively accords anyone associated with non-heterosexual behaviors, identity, relationships, or communities” (p. 33).

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

These socially-based stressors specific to sexual minorities, as outlined in the MSM (Meyer, 1995; 2003) include (1) external, objectively stressful events and conditions (e.g., heterosexism); (2) the expectation of these events and the vigilance that it requires; (3) the internalization of negative social attitudes, or internalized homophobia; and (4) concealment of sexual orientation. These stressors will be explained in further detail below prior to gaining a better understanding of how these stressors relate to sexual minorities’ experiences in the workplace.

*Heterosexism*

Herek, Gillis, and Cogan (2009) define heterosexism as “a cultural ideology embodied in institutional practices that work to the disadvantage of sexual minority groups even in the absence of individual prejudice or discrimination” (p. 34). As a result of the power differential that exists between heterosexuals and sexual minorities, sexual minorities are not afforded the same rights and treatment that are afforded to heterosexuals. Examples of heterosexism, which is also referred to as structural sexual stigma, include the military’s former “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy that prohibited sexual minorities from serving openly in the armed forces, state laws that prohibit same-sex marriage/“Defense of Marriage Laws”, and the absence of a federal law and, in some cases, state laws banning sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace (Herek et al., 2007; Herek et al., 2009).
Oftentimes researchers use the term heterosexism to include discriminatory acts directed towards an individual (e.g., the use of antigay terms, hate crimes), in addition to an individual’s perception of an organization’s climate specific to the treatment of sexual minorities (e.g., exclusion of sexual orientation in the organization’s non-discrimination policy). Throughout the literature review, use of terminology that the authors of the studies use to denote institutional and individual acts of discrimination will be used and how they operationalized their variables will be indicated. Regardless of the terminology, both heterosexism and discrimination towards sexual minorities have been found to relate to psychological distress.

**Heterosexism and Well-Being**

Rostosky et al. (2009) investigated psychological distress among sexual minorities across the nation prior to, and following, the November 2006 election that included nine state-marriage amendment initiatives. Their findings indicated that sexual minorities living in states that passed the marriage amendment experienced negative media messages and conversations regarding sexual minorities and experienced increased psychological distress compared to individuals living in states that did not include a marriage amendment on the ballot. In addition, sexual minorities residing in states that passed the marriage amendment reported greater levels of psychological distress compared to individuals living in other states. This study speaks to the detrimental mental health consequences of heterosexism, in this case institutional heterosexism.

Furthermore, in their national survey, Mays and Cochran (2001) compared sexual minorities and heterosexuals on perceived discrimination, in addition to several mental health indicators (e.g., depression, anxiety, substance dependence, etc.). Perceived discrimination is concerned with the recipient of an institutional or individual act and their appraisal of the incident as discriminatory. They found that sexual minorities perceived more day-to-day and
lifetime discrimination, in addition to greater mental health problems as compared to their heterosexual counterparts. However, after controlling for experiences of perceived discrimination, sexual minorities and heterosexuals did not differ significantly on the mental health indicators. Taken together, these findings speak to the harmful effects of heterosexism and discrimination on the mental health of sexual minorities. Another debilitating stressor that many sexual minorities experience, and oftentimes is the result of heterosexism and individual discrimination, is internalized homophobia.

*Internalized Homophobia*

Many sexual minorities, as a result of living in a heterosexist environment, have received the negative messages that sexual minorities are perverse, inferior, and sinful, and have unfortunately directed these negative attitudes towards themselves. This is commonly referred to as self-stigma, internalized homophobia, or internalized heterosexism (Herek et al., 2007; Herek et al., 2009; Meyer & Dean, 1998; Weinberg, 1972). When Weinberg (1972) first coined the term, homophobia, he included the process by which homosexual individuals negatively evaluate themselves, or internalized homophobia. He wrote, “the person who from early life has loathed himself for homosexual urges arrives at this attitude by a process exactly like the one occurring in heterosexuals who hold the prejudice against homosexuals” (p. 83).

Since Weinberg coined this term, researchers have operationalized, and subsequently measured, this construct in several different ways (Herek et al., 1997). For instance, internalized homophobia has been narrowly operationalized as the negative feelings towards one’s homosexual desires and behaviors (Herek et al., 1997; Frost & Meyer, 2009), and more broadly conceptualized as concealment of one’s sexual orientation, connection with the gay and lesbian community, attitudes towards other gay men and lesbians, and acceptance of societal stereotypes.
about homosexuality (Ross & Rosser, 1996; Shildo, 1994; Szymanski & Chung, 2001). However, these other concepts (e.g., disclosure) have been argued to be correlates, or outcomes, rather than components, of internalized homophobia (Frost & Meyer, 2009). For example, a lesbian or gay man who chooses to conceal their sexual identity at work may do so because they are working in a heterosexist environment and fear negative repercussions, and not because they harbor negative attitudes about their sexual identity. In this regard, this study operationalizes internalized homophobia more narrowly as the negative feelings that a lesbian has towards her sexual identity.

*Internalized Homophobia and Well-Being*

Internalized homophobia has been found to relate to depression, self-esteem, demoralization, social support, and relationship quality in sexual minorities (Herek et al., 1997; Frost & Meyer, 2009; Szymanski, Chung, & Balsam, 2001). Most of the studies that have examined correlates of internalized homophobia have focused predominantly on gay men (Szymanski, Chung, & Balsam, 2001), or have examined lesbian and gay men together. For instance, in a sample of highly educated, White lesbians and gay men, Herek et al. (1997) found that internalized homophobia was positively related to depressive symptoms and demoralization, and negatively related to self-esteem among gay men. In addition, when lesbians who scored high on the internalized homophobia measure were compared to the other lesbian participants, significant differences were found such that higher internalized homophobia was related to greater depressive symptoms and demoralization. It is important to note that lesbians scored significantly lower on the internalized homophobia measure than gay men, and the authors concluded that it is possible that lesbians experience less internalized homophobia than gay men. This conclusion is problematic, however, because the scale that was used to measure internalized
homophobia (the IHP) in this study was developed by Martin and Dean (1988) to assess gay men’s experiences with internalized homophobia, and therefore may not be appropriate to use with lesbians (Szymanski, West, & Meyer, 2008). Furthermore, evidence of the caution researchers should take in utilizing this measure with lesbians is indicated by the lower alpha coefficient on the IHP ($\alpha = .71$) as compared to gay men ($\alpha = .83$). Thus, in this dissertation, a measure of internalized homophobia developed specifically for lesbians, the Lesbian Internalized Homophobia Scale (LIHS; Szymanski & Chung, 2001), was utilized.

Similarly, Frost and Meyer (2009), in their study of internalized homophobia among 396 LGB individuals, found that internalized homophobia was significantly associated with greater depressive symptoms and relationship problems. A major strength of their study was the recruitment of a racially diverse sample of LGB individuals as many studies on sexual minorities have predominantly focused on well-educated, White individuals (Croteau & Bieschke, 1996); however, a limitation of their study is that they neglected to study any gender differences.

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

As already mentioned, however, the five dimensions of the LIHS may act more as correlates of internalized homophobia than actual dimensions. They include connection with the lesbian community, public identification as a lesbian, personal feelings about being a lesbian, moral and religious attitudes toward lesbianism, and attitudes toward other lesbians. A total score for internalized homophobia was found to be positively associated with depression, frequency of passing as heterosexual, and confusion about one’s sexual orientation, and negatively associated with overall social support and satisfaction with social support. Unlike previous studies of its kind that either measured internalized homophobia exclusively in gay men, or combined gay men and lesbians in their sample, this study was unique as it highlighted lesbians’ experiences of internalized homophobia.

In sum, internalized homophobia and experiences of heterosexism have been found to be negatively associated with sexual minorities’ well-being. Internalized homophobia and experiences of heterosexism and discrimination have also been found to be associated with disclosure of sexual orientation, and these specific findings will be thoroughly illustrated. However, first it is important to understand the process of disclosing a sexual minority identity to others, in addition to the sexual identity management strategies that individuals engage in to keep their identity concealed, and the emotional and cognitive consequences that are the result of concealing one’s sexual identity.
Disclosure

*Concealable Status and Disclosure*

Unlike other minority groups (e.g., women, some individuals with disabilities, some racial and ethnic minorities) an individual’s sexual identity is not readily visible, and consequently, sexual minorities most often have the option of disclosing their sexual orientation to others. However, as a result of sexual minorities’ awareness of the existence of sexual stigma, and because some have internalized negative attitudes about their sexual identity, some choose not to disclose their sexual orientation to others. Instead, sexual minorities engage in sexual identity management behaviors, oftentimes out of fear that they will experience negative consequences (Ragins, Singh, & Cornwell, 2007). In his writing about managing information related to one’s stigmatized status, Goffman (1963) writes, “To display or not to display; to tell or not to tell; to let on or not to let on; to lie or not to lie; and in each case, to whom, how, when, and where” (p. 42).

This process of managing/concealing a stigmatized identity is emotionally taxing, and can lead to harmful psychological consequences (Ellis & Riggle, 1996; Pachankis, 2007). Many have noted the anxiety that is experienced by sexual minority individuals when considering disclosing their identity, especially if they are unsure that the receiver’s response will be favorable (Cozby, 1973; Wells & Kline, 2001). In their qualitative study regarding disclosure of a sexual minority orientation, Wells and Kline (2001) found that the women in the study disclosed their sexual orientation when they wanted to develop a deeper friendship, there was a high degree of trust, and for self-affirmation. Although most gay men and lesbians believed that disclosure was oftentimes a risk, all of the respondents had disclosed their sexuality to someone. One individual stated, “At times I run a great risk, but I run a risk within myself that’s greater by
denying who I am” (p. 195). Similarly, Fischer (1972), cited by Wells and Kline (2001), posited that every time a sexual minority individual conceals their identity to others, they hurt themselves, which has an additive effect on their well-being.

Disclosure and Well-Being

Not surprisingly then, revealing a stigmatized sexual identity has been found to relate to positive psychological outcomes. For instance, Jordan and Deluty (1998) found in their study of 499 lesbians that disclosure of their sexual identity was associated with less anxiety, more positive affectivity, greater self-esteem, and a greater level of social support. A more recent study revealed similar findings. Beals et al. (2009) used disclosure diaries to measure gay and lesbian individuals’ (47 men and 37 women) daily experiences of disclosure and concealment, in addition to a diary that measured their psychological well-being, and found that the individuals reported greater positive affect, self-esteem, and satisfaction with life on days when they disclosed their sexual orientation compared with days when they concealed their orientation.

The largest, national study on disclosure among lesbian and bisexual women (sample size of 2,401) found that women who were in a relationship with a woman, engaged in sexual behavior with a woman, and identified as lesbian as compared to bisexual were associated with greater disclosure of sexual orientation (Morris, Waldo, & Rothblum, 2001). Furthermore, disclosure was negatively related to psychological distress. It is important to note that 65% of the sample reported being in a relationship with a woman, which speaks to the high prevalence of lesbians who are in relationships, a topic that will be explored later in the literature review.
Sexual Minorities in the Workplace

Disclosure in the Workplace

Although the choice to reveal one’s sexual identity in the workplace is a dichotomous decision (e.g. disclosure and nondisclosure), research has revealed that sexual minorities engage in several identity management strategies, or behaviors, in the workplace to conceal or reveal their identity (Button, 2004; Chrobot-Mason, Button, & DiClementi, 2001; Woods & Harbeck, 1991; Woods, 1993). One of the first studies of its kind qualitatively examined lesbian physical educators’ experiences of managing their identity in school as they have been particularly vulnerable to homophobic, discriminatory actions (e.g., viewed as child molesters; Woods & Harbeck, 1991). The findings of this study indicated that these twelve women all engaged in behaviors to conceal their identity out of fear of losing their jobs, including *passing as heterosexual* by altering pronouns (e.g., she to he) and names (e.g., Robyn to Robert) when describing their intimate relationship and taking a gay male friend to school events to act the part of a significant other; *self-distancing from others* by avoiding communication of their personal lives with their colleagues and students by establishing strict interpersonal boundaries; and *self-distancing from issues of homosexuality* by ignoring homophobic comments made directly to them or in general, and refusing to talk to openly gay students about their identity. Although these strategies protected these women from losing their jobs, they oftentimes felt self-hatred, isolated, misunderstood, and dishonest, and these behaviors interfered with their ability to create meaningful relationships. For example, one woman stated,

“This is the first year that I am in conflict with becoming a pretty good friend of a [teacher] who is straight and who does not know anything about me. The worst part is being so secretive…It is a friendship right now that is based on lying, because I do lie. She’ll ask me, “Who [are] you seeing?” And I say, “I’m not seeing anyone.” “That’s hell for me.”
Some women engaged in risk-taking behaviors along a continuum of low-risk to high-risk of disclosure of their sexual identity. These behaviors included obliquely overlapping personal with professional by bringing their partner to a school event, but referring to her as a friend, or socializing with another lesbian teacher at school; actively confronting and supporting by challenging students who used homophobic terms and offering support to gay students; and lastly, overtly overlapping personal and professional by directly disclosing one’s sexual identity, or by not denying it when others asked directly. It is important to note that the women who engaged in risk-taking behaviors also engaged in behaviors that concealed their identity as none of the women were completely “out” to everyone in their workplace.

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

Button (1996, 2004) extended this line of research to quantitatively test the utility of these strategies, to include both gay men and lesbians to identify any gender differences in the utilization of these strategies, in addition to examining whether gay men and lesbians utilize a combination of the strategies identified by Woods (1993), as opposed to only one strategy. To investigate these questions, he developed a scale to measure sexual identity management strategies in the workplace and conducted a factor analysis to confirm the three-factor model.
identified by Woods (1991). The results also indicated that both gay men and lesbians utilized the three strategies, and they did so in combination. For example, a lesbian may use counterfeiting strategies with coworkers who she fears will ostracize her in the workplace if they found out that she was a lesbian; however, with a trusted colleague who she knows is accepting of sexual minorities, or with a colleague who is also a sexual minority, she may use integration strategies.

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

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

Antecedents to Disclosure in the Workplace

*Internalized Homophobia, Heterosexism, and Organizational Policies and Practices*

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

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

Furthermore, Griffith and Hebl (2002) also found that the less heterosexist experiences that gay men and lesbians face in the workplace and the presence of affirming organizational policies were associated with greater disclosure behaviors. The policies included a written sexual orientation non-discrimination policy, diversity training that specifically includes gay and lesbian issues, same-sex partner benefits, a recognized gay and lesbian employee organization, and showing support for gay and lesbian activities. The only policy that was not significantly related to more disclosure behaviors was the presence of diversity training that did not include gay and lesbian issues, most likely because this policy is not specific to gay men and lesbians and most likely does not send a clear message that the organization is supportive of sexual minorities. This study offers important insights into how individual (self-acceptance/internalized homophobia) and structural (heterosexist experiences/affirming organizational policies) factors affect disclosure in the workplace. Unfortunately, the authors did not analyze whether any gender differences existed between the gay men and lesbians.

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

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

Participants included 287 lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals who were predominantly White and educated, and mostly men. The researcher did not investigate the presence of any gender differences. Findings indicated that heterosexism was predicted by organizational climate, or the extent to which an organization tolerated sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace, as opposed to organizational policies and resources (e.g., non-discrimination policy, same-sex partner benefits). Additionally, results indicated that sexual minorities who experienced heterosexism also experienced higher levels of psychological distress and health-related problems, as well as decreased satisfaction with various aspects of their jobs. Furthermore, greater disclosure of sexual orientation predicted more experiences of direct heterosexism, but fewer experiences of indirect heterosexism. Although the author did not state any potential explanations for this finding, a possible explanation is that sexual minorities may experience more indirect forms of heterosexism (e.g., “feeling as though you have to alter discussions about your personal life” or “being set up on a date with a member of the other sex”).
before disclosing, especially if one is assumed to be heterosexual, as opposed to after disclosing their sexual orientation to colleagues. For example, it seems less probable that a co-worker would attempt to set up a female colleague with a man after she discloses that she is a lesbian than before she discloses. Similarly, once a lesbian discloses her sexual identity, she most likely will be less inclined to alter discussions, or lie about her personal life than before she discloses her sexual identity. However, they are at risk for more direct forms of discrimination (e.g., “denied a promotion” or “being left out of social events”) because they are no longer assumed to be heterosexual by their colleagues. These explanations are given with the assumption that disclosure of sexual orientation specific to co-workers predicts differential experiences of indirect and direct heterosexism at work as it is unclear because the researcher included disclosure to parents, in one’s life in general, and to co-workers in his measure of “outness.”

As already stated, some of the research on sexual minorities neglects to examine gender differences when studying gay men and lesbians together. In addition, much of the research also neglects to examine racial differences, most likely because the samples have been composed of predominantly White individuals. One valuable study, however, explored the relationship between gender and race on lesbian and gay individuals’ reports of heterosexism and the decision to disclose their sexual orientation at work (Ragins, Cornwell, & Miller, 2003). The authors used a stratified random sampling technique to recruit participants in which they sent surveys to three national gay rights organizations in the United States, including a national gay Latino/a organization and a national gay African American organization, and then selected equal numbers of men and women by geographic region. The sample consisted of 168 lesbians and 363 gay men. Although the authors attempted to recruit a racially diverse sample, the majority of participants were White (67.6%). It is important to note, however, that this percentage of
participants of color is much higher than other studies that focus on heterosexism and sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace.

Results of this study indicated that gay and lesbian individuals of color were less likely than White lesbians and gay men to disclose their sexual orientation at work. The authors hypothesized that this could be attributed to gay and lesbian people of color encountering racism at work, and not wanting to disclose their sexual orientation as it may increase their experiences of discrimination. The authors found no significant race or gender effects in reports of heterosexism at work when holding state protective legislation and disclosure constant. This study is unprecedented as it is one of the first of its kind to examine sexual minorities of color and their experiences in the workplace.

Another study, using the same sample reported above, examined the relationship between perceived sexual orientation discrimination and disclosure of sexual orientation, specifically to those at work, in addition to the factors that contribute to gay employees’ perceptions of workplace discrimination, and the relationship between perceived workplace discrimination and work attitudes and organizational outcomes (Ragins & Cornwell, 2001). However, unlike the study above, gender and racial differences were not reported.

Results of this study indicated that sexual minority employees perceived significantly less workplace discrimination when they had gay supervisors and when they had a higher proportion of gay co-workers in their work groups (Ragins & Cornwell, 2001). Furthermore, sexual minority employees who worked in states with protective legislation (e.g., legislation that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation) perceived significantly less workplace discrimination than employees who worked in states without protective legislation. Inconsistent with Waldo’s (1999) findings, organizational policies and practices had the strongest effect on
perceived workplace discrimination, such that the more supportive and gay affirming policies that were present in the organization, the less workplace discrimination was reported by sexual minority employees. Results also indicated that sexual minority employees who perceived greater workplace discrimination were more likely to conceal their sexual orientation at work and held more negative job and career attitudes than gay employees who reported less discrimination.

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

**Intimate Relationships**

The prevalence of lesbians in intimate relationships is high. For instance, the National Lesbian Health Care Survey found that 60% of the sample was in an intimate relationship with a woman, and an additional 17.5% were “somewhat involved with a woman” (Bradford, Ryan, &
Despite the prevalence of lesbians who are in relationships, and the literature that suggests that lesbians may disclose in the context of their intimate relationships (Driscoll et al., 1996; Fassinger, 1995; Lewis, 1984), there is still a paucity of research that has explored the influence of lesbians’ intimate relationships on disclosure in the workplace. The studies that have been conducted, however, have provided notable findings that speak to the importance of investigating this relationship further. One such study examined the relationship between internalized homophobia and workplace non-discrimination policies on an individual’s disclosure status at work, in addition to the relationship between the intimate partner’s internalized homophobia and work environment on an individual’s disclosure status (Rostosky & Riggle, 2002). Participants were 118 gay and lesbian couples who were mostly White and college-educated. Similar to the findings in the aforementioned studies, less internalized homophobia and working for employers with non-discrimination policies were positively associated with increased disclosure of sexual orientation at work. However, interestingly, results also indicated that an individual’s disclosure at work was negatively associated with their partner’s internalized homophobia and positively associated with their partner having a non-discrimination policy at work. The only gender difference found was that lesbians reported less household income compared to gay men. Based on the findings, the authors concluded that disclosure at work is not only related to an individual’s experiences, but also related to an individual’s partner’s experiences, which is indicative of the interdependent nature of relationships.

Although Driscoll et al. (1996) did not intend to examine the influence of lesbians’ intimate relationships in their study of lesbians’ disclosure in the workplace, 63% of the sample reported being in a committed relationship. Furthermore, they found a significant, positive
correlation between duration of lesbian relationship and disclosure at work. They hypothesized that this finding may be due to women disclosing their sexual orientation to others in the context of their intimate relationships because of the important role that relationships play in women’s lives. Furthermore, they stated, “perhaps having a partner necessitates some level of disclosure, as a lesbian in a partnered relationship needs to decide how to manage or navigate work-related functions such as company parties or picnics as well as workplace discussions focusing on personal issues” (p. 239). Given these findings, the authors suggested that future research should explore the relationship between lesbians’ intimate relationships and their workplace experiences, which is a focus of this dissertation.

Outcomes of Disclosure in the Workplace

Research on the outcomes of sexual orientation disclosure at work is critical because it can inform mental health professionals, career counselors, and other professionals who work directly with sexual minority individuals regarding the potential implications of disclosure/concealment at work (Button, 2004). In addition, this research can also increase human resource professionals’ and organizational administrators’ understanding of the importance of considering their sexual minority employees’ experiences in the workplace as their experiences can influence their satisfaction at work, which has been shown to be positively related to productivity and negatively related to absenteeism and turnover (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). For example, a lesbian who works in an organization that is disaffirming of sexual minorities may engage in sexual identity management strategies to conceal her identity. This emotional and cognitive energy that is expended by monitoring her behaviors around her colleagues could instead be channeled into job-related activities. In addition, being able to be
honest to her colleagues about her identity and not having to engage constantly in identity management strategies can potentially lead to greater job satisfaction.

**Job Satisfaction**

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

Other researchers have also found disclosure at work to be positively related to higher job satisfaction, and other work-related outcomes (Day & Schoenrade, 1997; Griffith & Hebl, 2002). Day and Schoenrade (1997) hypothesized that closeted workers would experience more negative
attitudes towards work (lower job satisfaction, higher job stress, lower belief in top management support of anti-discrimination for gay workers, higher role ambiguity and conflict, and higher conflict between work and home) than those gay and lesbian employees who have come out at work. Participants included 259 lesbian women, 485 gay men, and 263 heterosexuals; however, the lesbian and gay participants were grouped together when analyzing and interpreting the results. The results indicated that more openly gay and lesbian workers showed higher affective commitment, higher job satisfaction, higher perceived top management support, lower role ambiguity, and lower role conflict between work and home, and these open workers did not differ in work attitudes as compared to heterosexuals.

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

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

There are significant concerns with the disclosure measure that was developed for this study. The Cronbach alpha was .52, suggesting reliability problems with the measure, which is not surprising since the items appear to be measuring different aspects of disclosure. For example, one of the items was “Is your workplace somewhere you feel comfortable being yourself?” and two other items were “Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to work-sponsored events?” and “Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to off-job parties or events given by employees and personnel from your workplace?” The first item seems to be measuring workplace climate more so than disclosure, and the other items are measuring disclosure of one’s intimate relationship and assume that the participant is in an intimate relationship. However, 37% of the sample reported that they were not in an intimate relationship, yet the authors included these participants in the analyses.

Interestingly, the authors also found a significant, positive correlation between duration of lesbian relationship and disclosure of lesbian identity at work, which they hypothesized to be due to lesbians needing to negotiate workplace functions and conversations about personal issues when they are in a longer intimate relationship. In addition, results indicated that the longer a lesbian was in a relationship, the less occupational stress the lesbian experienced at work. As such, the authors suggested that future research could explore the relationship between lesbians’ intimate relationships and their work-related experiences. Although this study has its limitations,
this study has been instrumental in acting as a foundation for my dissertation. My goal is to address these limitations in my dissertation and to accept the authors’ suggestion to examine how lesbians’ intimate relationships are connected to disclosure in the workplace in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of lesbians’ disclosure in the workplace.

**Relationship Satisfaction**

There are very few studies that have examined the relationship between disclosure at work and relationship satisfaction among sexual minorities, and only one study that has exclusively focused on lesbians. One such study investigated the relationship between anti-discrimination policies, disclosure of sexual orientation at work, and work-home conflict among gay and lesbian employees. The researchers found that gay and lesbian employees who disclosed their sexual orientation at work and worked for an organization that had a non-discrimination policy experienced less work-home conflict (Day & Schoenrade, 2000). Day and Schoenrade (2000) postulated that working for a more gay-friendly organization may decrease conflict between partners because the gay or lesbian employee does not have to hide their relationship at work. Additionally, they speculated that those companies who had non-discrimination policies may also have same-sex partner benefits, which could lead to less work-home conflict.

The only study that exclusively investigated lesbians’ disclosure at work and relationship quality did not find a relationship, yet the authors did find a relationship between greater disclosure to family and friends and relationship quality (Caron & Ulin, 1997). However, there are a number of concerns present in this study. First, it is unclear how many participants were employed at the time, and if not employed, how the authors accounted for this. They also did not report other work-related variables that could have influenced disclosure at work, such as
organizational climate and experiences with discrimination at work. Lastly, and possibly most importantly, they operationalized disclosure to include potential correlates of disclosure (e.g., “Those work associates who know I am a lesbian approve of this” and “When my work associates invite me to a social gathering, they invite my partner as well”), thereby contaminating this measure and decreasing its validity.

Another study examined dual-career lesbian couples and their relationship satisfaction (Eldridge & Gilbert, 1990). They did not find a significant relationship between self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction; however, the self-disclosure measure that they used was not specific to disclosure at work as it measured disclosure to family members, friends, and co-workers concurrently, and therefore they did not report the differential effects of disclosure (Eldridge & Gilbert, 1990). Interestingly, they did find that the greater discrepancy that existed between partner’s levels of career commitment was related to lower relationship satisfaction among each partner, which highlights the importance of investigating how career-related variables influence lesbians’ intimate relationships.

Other studies have examined disclosure to individuals outside of the workplace (e.g., friends, family) and its influence on the satisfaction of one’s intimate relationship (Balsam & Szymanski, 2005; Beals & Peplau, 2001; Berger, 1990; Jordan & Deluty, 2000; Murphy, 1989). The results of these studies have been mixed, however. For example, Jordan and Deluty (2000) found that lesbians who disclosed their sexual orientation to a greater extent reported greater relationship satisfaction, and Murphy (1989) found that disclosure to one’s parents had a positive effect on a lesbian’s relationship. Similarly, Berger (1990) found that gay and lesbian individuals who were more open about their sexual orientation to significant others (parents, siblings, etc.) reported greater relationship satisfaction.
On the other hand, however, Beals and Peplau (2001) did not find a relationship between disclosure and relationship quality among lesbian couples, yet there are a couple of concerns that should be mentioned regarding this study. First, although the study was published in 2001, the sample consisted of data collected over thirty years ago in 1979, thereby making it difficult to generalize these findings to lesbians’ experiences today. Secondly, the disclosure measure used in this study was inadequate because it narrowly captured disclosure by asking the extent to which a lesbian had disclosed to five individuals (mother, father, best heterosexual female friend, best heterosexual male friend, and supervisor). Furthermore, the authors combined the responses from these five items and then coded each individual as low disclosure or high disclosure, which precluded the ability to examine context. For example, only 18% of the lesbians disclosed to their supervisors; however, despite this statistic, the lesbians who did not disclose to their supervisors may have been coded as “high disclosure” if they had disclosed to the other four individuals. A more recent study by Balsam and Szymanski (2005) also did not find a relationship between disclosure and relationship quality among lesbian couples, and although their measure of disclosure was more adequate as it assessed their disclosure in three aspects of their lives including family, religion, and work, the authors decided to combine the three subscales together to create an overall outness score. Therefore, this measure failed to consider the potential differences that may have existed depending on the context (e.g., at work) and relationship to others (e.g., family versus co-workers). For example, a lesbian may be out to her friends, but closeted from her co-workers, yet this measure did not illustrate this potential difference.

This dissertation will address the limitations of previous studies that have examined the relationship between disclosure and relationship satisfaction already mentioned and will lay the
foundation for a new body of research that will investigate lesbians’ experiences of disclosure at work and how this affects their relationship satisfaction. Another area of research that has been underexplored, but this dissertation seeks to investigate, is how disclosure in the workplace influences psychological well-being. The next section is brief in comparison to other sections as only one study has been identified that specifically examines disclosure at work and psychological well-being.

*Psychological Well-Being*

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

The one study that has been identified explored the relationships between workplace heterosexism, heterosexism-specific unsupportive social interactions (the use of minimizing and blaming statements from others when discussing heterosexist experiences), disclosure, and adjustment (depression, psychological symptoms, and physical symptoms) among lesbians, gay men, and bisexual individuals who were predominantly White and well-educated (Smith & Ingram, 2004). Findings indicated that disclosure of sexual orientation at work was negatively correlated with heterosexism and psychological symptoms. Disclosure at work, however, was narrowly assessed using one item that asked individuals the degree to which they were open about their sexual orientation at work. In addition, any differences that potentially existed
between lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals were not examined, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings.

Statement of the Problem

Sexual minorities continue to be a stigmatized group in the United States, and one specific context in which they are marginalized and discriminated against is the workplace. A unique experience that sexual minorities share is deciding whether to disclose their sexual orientation at work. As previous literature has shown, this experience can be emotionally and cognitively taxing as there are a number of factors that influence sexual minorities’ decision to disclose at work, such as the climate of the workplace, the presence of affirming organizational policies and practices, and internalized homophobia. Although disclosure at work can lead to positive outcomes, including job satisfaction and psychological well-being, studies have revealed that it can also lead to fear of discrimination, isolation, and job loss. This dissertation will expand on this line of research as it relates specifically to lesbians; most studies thus far have included gay and lesbian individuals in their sample with limited attention to the unique differences between them. Additionally, this dissertation will attempt to make a contribution to a largely neglected area of research by providing insight into the experiences of lesbians in the workplace in the context of their intimate relationships, specifically how relationship commitment affects disclosure at work, and how disclosure at work affects relationship satisfaction with one’s intimate partner.

Furthermore, most studies that have researched disclosure in the workplace among sexual minorities have narrowly conceptualized disclosure along a continuum of disclosing to no one at work to disclosing to everyone at work. However, disclosure in the workplace has been shown to be a more complex process. As lesbians navigate interactions with their coworkers, they
engage in various strategies to manage their identity. For this reason, this dissertation assessed the sexual identity management strategies that lesbians employ in the workplace to obtain a more nuanced understanding of their experiences with disclosure.

Hypotheses

Antecedents to self-disclosure at work:

*Hypothesis 1.* The higher prevalence of affirming organizational policies and practices, less perceived treatment discrimination (heterosexism) towards sexual minorities in the workplace, lower levels of internalized homophobia, and greater relationship commitment will be associated with the use of greater sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian’s identity in the workplace.

Outcomes of self-disclosure at work:

*Hypothesis 2.* The use of greater sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian’s identity will be positively associated with higher levels of psychological well-being, greater job satisfaction, and greater relationship satisfaction.

Self-disclosure of relationship at work:

*Hypothesis 3.* Relationship commitment will be positively associated with bringing one’s partner to work-sponsored events, and off-job parties or events given by employees from one’s workplace.

*Hypothesis 4.* Bringing one’s partner to work-sponsored events, and off-job parties or events given by employees from one’s workplace will be positively associated with relationship satisfaction.
Chapter III

METHOD

Recruitment/Procedure

Approval to initiate the study was first sought from the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Once approval was received, participants were recruited to participate in this study. The “community venues sampling” approach was utilized to recruit participants (Meyer & Wilson, 2009). LGB organizations and other venues and events that are frequented by lesbians (e.g., coffee shops, bars, bookstores, concerts, gay pride parades) were identified in various cities and towns in the United States, and flyers were distributed with the information regarding the study. In order to increase variability in terms of age, race, and ethnicity, and to decrease bias, the ethnographic method utilized by Meyer, Schwartz, and Frost (2008) and described by Meyer and Wilson (2009) was also used in this study. Specifically, a diversified selection of venues was identified based on type (e.g., businesses, sports teams, clubs and bars, etc.), location (e.g., the five boroughs of New York City, several cities in the Greater Boston area, suburban towns), and population (e.g., venues frequented by Latinas, Black women, etc.).

Individuals who were known to the principal investigator were also asked to distribute information regarding the study via the Internet to other self-identified lesbian women. This Web-based “snowball” sampling approach has been extensively used with research specific to sexual minorities due to the invisibility of this population (Meyer & Wilson, 2009). This approach recruited a more diverse sample as lesbians from across the United States were able to participate in the study. In the emails and on the flyers, the principal investigator’s contact
information, a brief description of the study, and a link to the online survey were provided (see Appendix A for the Participant Solicitation Email).

On-line surveys have become quite effective in targeting hard-to-reach, invisible populations, especially sexual minorities (Mustanski, 2001; Riggle et al., 2005) as it has been found that they spend more time on the Internet than non-sexual minorities (Harris Interactive, 2001 cited in Riggle et al., 2005). Furthermore, by providing sexual minorities the opportunity to participate in on-line research that ensures anonymity, researchers are able to obtain participation from sexual minorities who are not comfortable disclosing their sexual orientation/being identified as such (Mustanski, 2001). Nontraditional sampling methods, including the use of the Internet, have been criticized due to selection bias and response rates; however, Kock and Emrey (2001) found that the gay and lesbian participants who completed their on-line survey were demographically similar to a national sample of gays and lesbians, and the response rate was similar to unsolicited paper-and-pencil surveys.

Participants completed the survey via surveymonkey.com. This on-line survey service assigned a unique IP address to each participant; however, the participant could not be identified through this address. This ensured the participants’ anonymity. The online survey included a description of the research, informed consent, and information regarding participants’ rights (see Appendix B). Individuals who decided to continue to participate were then asked if they met the inclusion criteria to participate in the study (self-identified lesbians who are at least 18-years-old and who live in the United States, currently in a same-sex relationship, and employed; however, not self-employed or employed for a LGBT-servicing organization). Those individuals who met inclusion criteria were then asked to respond to demographic questions followed by several measures (see instruments section). The data was temporarily stored on surveymonkey.com and
password protected so that the principal investigator was the only person to have access to viewing and downloading the data. Once the data had been gathered, the information was downloaded to a password protected computer, thereby ensuring confidentiality.

Participants

A total of 332 individuals logged on to the online survey. Of the 332 individuals, 24 individuals did not meet inclusion criteria (self-identified lesbians who were at least 18-years old, who reported being in a same-sex relationship, who were currently employed, and who lived in the United States). Only self-identified lesbians were included as opposed to bisexual and queer-identified women because several of the measures utilized in the study were validated solely with lesbians. Lesbians who lived in the United States were included because the sociopolitical climate as it relates to equal rights for sexual minorities varies substantially in different countries. In addition, 18 individuals indicated that they were self-employed or worked for a LGBT-servicing organization, and therefore were excluded from participation in the survey. Self-employed individuals were excluded because they do not work for an organization and would be unable to complete certain instruments included in this study. Individuals who work for LGBT-servicing organizations were excluded from participation because several of these organizations’ missions are to promote a LGBT-affirming environment for LGBT employees nationwide (e.g., Lambda Legal and the Human Rights Campaign).

Due to attrition, of the remaining 290 individuals, 205 individuals completed the survey in its entirety, resulting in an overall response rate of 71%. Almost half of the participants who dropped out (n = 39), stopped completing the survey during the psychological well-being questionnaire; this questionnaire consists of 84 items, and therefore it is seems likely that many of them dropped out due to fatigue or frustration. Based on the results using the macro
developed by DeCarlo (1997) to test for multivariate outliers, four outliers were identified and were excluded from the analyses, resulting in 201 total participants. DeCarlo’s macro (1997) gives a list of the five cases with the largest Mahalanobis distances, which are cases that are far from the centroid (the multidimensional mean) of all other cases, or potential outliers. The macro also gives Bonferroni adjusted critical values for testing for a single multivariate outlier using the Mahalanobis distances.

Sample Characteristics

The sample consisted of 201 participants who self-identified as lesbian (see Table 1 for demographic information). The average age of the participants was 32.43 (SD = 8.34), and participants’ ages ranged from 18 to 63. The majority of participants reported that they lived in New York (29.4%), Massachusetts (28.9%), California (8.5%), and Ohio (7.5%). Other states that were represented included Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Virginia, Missouri, Oregon, Illinois, Rhode Island, Maine, Texas, Maryland, Florida, New Mexico, North Carolina, Washington, Indiana, and Washington, D.C. In terms of racial background, 79.6% of the sample identified as White (n = 160), 8.0% Asian/Pacific Islander (n = 16), 5.0% Hispanic/Latina (n = 10), 3.5% African American/Black (n = 7), 2.5% multiracial (n = 5), 1% Middle Eastern (n = 2), and 0.5% Native American (n = 1). With regards to the highest level of education completed, approximately 95.5% of participants reported having completed some form of higher education (5.0% associate’s degree, 41.8% bachelor’s degree, 36.8% master’s degree, 11.8% doctorate), while 4.5% listed high school/GED as the highest level completed. In terms of relationship status, 27.9% of the sample reported being married, having a domestic partnership or civil union, 67.7% reported being either engaged or in a committed relationship, and 4.5% reported being in a casual/non-committed relationship. Length of time in
the relationship was fairly well-distributed across the sample; 22.9% have been in their relationship for 6 to 12 months, 22.9% have been in their relationship for 12 to 24 months, 27.4% have been in their relationship for 2 to 5 years, 20.4% have been in their relationship for 5 to 10 years, and 6.5% have been in their relationship for greater than 10 years. Approximately two-thirds of the sample (62.7%) reported that they are currently living with their partner.

The majority of participants reported being employed full-time (86.6%; see Table 2 for employment characteristics). In terms of length of time in their current position, 28.4% have been employed less than one year, 35.3% have been employed one to three years, 17.4% have been employed three to five years, 15.4% have been employed five to ten years, and 3.5% have been employed for more than ten years. Regarding salary, 7.5% of participants reported that they earned less than $20,000 per year, 24.4% earned between $20,000 and $40,000, 28.9% earned between $40,000 and $60,000, 15.9% earned between $60,000 and $75,000, 13.4% earned between $75,000 and $100,000, and 10.0% earned more than $100,000. A wide range of occupations were represented with 24.4% indicating that they were employed in education, 11.9% in health, 9.0% in finance, and 8.0% in human services. Other occupations that were reported include law, entertainment, government, advertising, retail, and technology.
Table 1

Demographic Characteristics for the Entire Sample (N = 201)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>32.43</td>
<td>8.34</td>
<td>18-63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latina</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School/GED</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
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<td>5.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>41.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>36.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/DP/CU</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged/Committed</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>67.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual/Non-Committed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship-Length of Time</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 12 months</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22.9</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 2 years</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – 5 years</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 – 10 years</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20.4</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10+ years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Together</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: DP = domestic partnership; CU = civil union
Table 2

*Employment Characteristics for the Entire Sample (N = 201)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>86.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time in Position</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1 year</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 3 years</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – 5 years</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 10 years</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+ years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; $20,000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 – 40,000</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 – 60,000</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 – 75,000</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 – 100,000</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; $100,000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: median salary for full-time women workers in 2009 was $36, 278 (DeNavas-Walt et al., 2010); median number of years that wage and salary women workers have been with their current employer (employee tenure) was 4.2 years in January 2010 (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

**Instruments**

*Personal demographic questionnaire.* Participants were asked to answer several demographic questions (see Tables 1 and 2 above for results; Appendix C for the questionnaire).

*Organizational policies and practices.* Items used in prior research were used to assess gay-affirmative organizational policies and practices (Button, 2001). Specifically, participants
were asked: Does your organization: (1) have a written policy prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation? (2) have a diversity training program that includes awareness of gay and lesbian issues? (3) have a diversity workshop or training session devoted exclusively to gay and lesbian issues? (4) engage in public support of gay and lesbian issues or activities (e.g., corporate representation at Gay Pride events)? (5) have an unofficial organization/network of lesbian and gay employees? (6) have an officially recognized organization of lesbian and gay employees? (7) offer same-sex domestic partner benefits that include health insurance? (8) offer same-sex partner benefits that include bereavement leave for the death of a same-sex partner? (9) offer same-sex partner benefits that include sick-care leave (to care for a same-sex partner)? (10) welcome same-sex partners to company social events? (see Appendix D).

Participants responded to each item by indicating “yes” or “no.” An overall index of this measure was created by scaling the nine policies, such that each policy that is present within an organization was assigned a value of 2, and each that is absent was assigned the value of 1. These values were then summed to create an overall index of gay-affirmative organizational policies and practices with higher values indicating the presence of greater gay-affirmative organizational policies and practices (Button, 2001).

Perceived treatment discrimination (heterosexism) toward sexual minorities. Perceived treatment discrimination towards sexual minorities in an organization was assessed with the 9-item scale created by Button (1996; 2001). This scale measures specific affirming, and non-affirming, aspects of an organization as it relates to sexual diversity (see Appendix E). Higher scores indicate a more affirming organization. Participants responded to the items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Button (1996) and Chrobot-Mason, Button, and DiClementi (2001) reported internal consistency reliabilities of .89
and .88, respectively, with a gay and lesbian sample. Reliability analyses for the present study revealed an alpha of .91. Button (2001) found that less perceived treatment discrimination was significantly related to higher levels of job satisfaction ($r = -.27$) and job commitment ($r = -.22$) among gay and lesbian employees. Additionally, Chrobot-Mason et al. (2001) found that lesbian and gay employees who perceived less treatment discrimination adopted an integration strategy at work ($r = .32$), or were more likely to indirectly, or directly, disclose their sexual orientation.

**Relationship commitment.** Relationship commitment was assessed using Rusbult, Martz, and Agnew’s (1998) measure of commitment (see Appendix F). The initial development study consisted of undergraduates from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who participated in the study to partially fulfill the requirements for introductory psychology courses and whose sexual orientation was not reported; however, a recent study has used the commitment scale with gay and lesbian individuals (Kurdek, 2007).

Participants responded to seven items on a 9-point Likert scale from 0 (do not agree at all) to 8 (agree completely). The scaled score is obtained by averaging the items. The measure of commitment was one of four measures that were developed by Rusbult (1998) to assess four relationship constructs, including commitment level, satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and the monetary and social resources attached to the relationship. Rusbult et al. (1998) reported good reliability for the items (alphas ranged from .91 to .95), and the coefficient alpha for the sample in this study was .84. In addition, Rusbult et al. (1998) found acceptable convergent validity as the measure was moderately associated with other constructs that measure positive relationship functioning (e.g., dyadic adjustment ($r = .56$); Spanier, 1976). A relatively weak association was found between scores on the commitment measure and scores on several measures of personal dispositions (e.g., self-esteem ($r = .11$); Hoyle, 1991), in addition to the
Self-Deception ($r = .02$) and Impression Management ($r = .17$) subscales of the Balanced Inventory of Desired Responding (Paulhus, 1991), providing evidence of discriminant validity. It is important to note that level of commitment was found to have a weak, positive relationship to duration of relationship. In addition, Kurdek (2007) reported that he found a strong positive correlation ($r = .98$) with Sternberg’s (1988) measure of commitment in a sample of 113 gay and lesbian partners.

*Internalized homophobia.* Internalized homophobia was measured using the Personal Feelings about Being a Lesbian (PFL) subscale of the Lesbian Internalized Homophobia Scale (LIHS; Szymanski & Chung, 2001; see Appendix G). The LIHS is a five subscale measure; however, only the PFL subscale was used as it has been argued that the constructs the other subscales measure (e.g., Public Identification as a Lesbian, Connection With the Lesbian Community) are correlates, rather than components, of internalized homophobia (Frost & Meyer, 2009). The Personal Feelings about Being a Lesbian subscale of the LIHS consists of 8 items that measure feelings of self-hatred and acceptance as it relates to one’s lesbian identity. The items are assessed on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Higher mean scores indicate less internalized homophobia. Acceptable internal consistency reliability for scores on the PFL subscale have been reported as $.79$ (Szymanski & Chung, 2001). The coefficient alpha for the sample in this study was $.83$. Convergent validity has been found for the scale through positive correlations with loneliness, depression, and psychological distress, and negative correlations with self-esteem and social support (Szymanski & Chung, 2001; Szymanski, Chung, & Balsam, 2001; Szymanski, 2006). Convergent validity has been established for this subscale as Szymanski and Chung (2001) found that the PFL was
significantly correlated with self-esteem, $r = -0.22$, and significantly correlated with loneliness, $r = 0.38$.

*Bringing one’s partner to work-related events.* Two of the five items that Driscoll et al. (1996) included in their assessment of disclosure in the workplace were specific to disclosure of one’s relationship and these two items were utilized in this study (see Appendix H). These items are “Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to work-sponsored events?” and “Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to off-job parties or events given by employees and personnel from your workplace?” The word “date” will be excluded from the two items because the sample will consist of women who are in same-sex relationships. Participants responded to these items using a 3-point Likert scale whose anchors are 1 (never), 2 (sometimes), and 3 (always). A total score was obtained by summing the scores of the individual items. Higher scores indicate greater disclosure. The coefficient alpha for these two items and for the sample in this study was 0.82. Driscoll et al. (1996) reported a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.52 for the five-item scale.

*Sexual identity management strategies.* The sexual identity management strategies that lesbians engage in at work was measured using a scale developed by Button (1996, 2001). The measure assesses the degree to which lesbians engage in specific sexual identity management strategies, including counterfeiting, avoiding, and integrating (see Appendix I). The counterfeiting subscale is a 6-item scale that assesses the degree to which a lesbian engages in behaviors to make her appear heterosexual (e.g., “I sometimes comment on, or display interest in, members of the opposite sex to give the impression that I am straight”). The avoiding subscale is a 7-item scale that assesses the degree to which a lesbian engages in behaviors that minimize the likelihood of receiving personal questions (e.g., “I avoid personal questions by never asking others about their personal lives”). The integrating subscale is a 10-item subscale.
that assesses the degree to which a lesbian engages in behaviors that reveal her identity (e.g., “Whenever I am asked about being a lesbian, I always answer in an honest and matter-of-fact way”). All of the items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). Construct validity was established as counterfeiting and avoiding strategies were negatively related to self-disclosure, \( r = -.66, -.63 \), respectively, and integrating was positively related to self-disclosure \( r = .81; \) Button, 2004). In Chrobot-Mason, Button, and DiClementi’s (2001) study, they reported coefficient alpha’s for the counterfeiting, avoiding, and integrating subscales of .76, .86, and .89, respectively. In this study, the scores for the three subscales were aggregated to create a global sexual management strategies score because the principal investigator was interested in utilizing a more nuanced scale of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace that captured the use of sexual identity management strategies that specifically revealed a lesbian's identity. The alpha coefficient for this scale was .96. Higher scores indicate greater use of sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian’s identity.

Convergent validity has been found as the greater degree of sexual identity achievement and the more that lesbians perceived that their organizations were affirming of sexual minorities was positively related to the use of an integration strategy, \( r = .39, .32 \), respectively, and negatively related to the use of counterfeiting \( r = -.31, -.15 \) and avoidance strategies \( r = -.23, -.37; \) Chrobot-Mason, Button, & DiClementi, 2001). Additionally, they also found that the use of an avoidance strategy was negatively related to open group process \( r = -.32 \) and the use of an integration strategy was positively associated with open group process \( r = .22 \).

**Job satisfaction.** Overall job satisfaction was assessed using the three-item General Satisfaction Scale from the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS; Hackman & Oldham, 1974, 1975). The
measure assesses the degree to which the employee is satisfied and happy in her work (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, 1975; see Appendix J). Participants responded to each item on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly). The items are averaged to obtain an overall score for job satisfaction in which higher scores indicate greater job satisfaction. Hackman and Oldham (1974, 1975) reported adequate internal consistency reliability of .76 on a sample of 658 employees working in 62 different jobs in seven organizations. The coefficient alpha for the sample in this study was .85. The scale demonstrated satisfactory discriminant validity as the median “off-diagonal” correlation of the items that measure General Satisfaction with the other measures of “affective responses to the job” was .25. The scale also demonstrated adequate convergent validity as it was positively correlated to other work-related measures, such as experienced meaningfulness of the work ($r = .42$), and specific measures of satisfaction (e.g., supervisory satisfaction, $r = .46$; Hackman & Oldham, 1974, 1975). It is important to note that the sexual orientation of the participants was not reported when validating this scale.

**Relationship satisfaction.** Global relationship satisfaction was assessed by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS; Schumm et al., 1986). Schumm et al. (1986) developed this scale to be a brief assessment of relationship satisfaction in heterosexual couples as prior established measures were quite lengthy (see Appendix K). The KMS scale is a three-item scale, and the items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 7 (extremely satisfied), with higher scores indicating greater relationship satisfaction. A total scaled score was obtained by summing the items. Schumm et al. (1986) reported an internal consistency reliability of .93. They also provided evidence of adequate concurrent validity as it was significantly correlated with the Dyadic Adjustment Scale ($r = .83$, Spanier, 1976), the dyadic satisfaction subscale ($r = .77$), in addition to the Quality Marriage Index ($r = .91$; Norton,
They had more difficulty finding evidence of discriminant validity for the KMS scale as it was correlated with measures of marital social desirability and “miscellaneous” other satisfaction items (e.g., paying taxes). However, they posit that marital social desirability may possibly be a measure of marital adjustment, and satisfaction with paying taxes may possibly be measuring satisfaction with family income.

The KMS items were reworded as they have been in previous studies to make them appropriate for the use with sexual minorities (Kurdek, 2000b; Mohr & Daly, 2008). For instance, “How satisfied are you with your husband as a spouse?” was reworded to “How satisfied are you with your partner in her role as a partner?” Recent studies that have adapted this scale for the use with sexual minorities have reported internal consistency reliabilities of .98 and .93 (Kurdek, 2000b; Mohr & Daly, 2008). The coefficient alpha for the sample in this study was .94. Validation for the use of the scale with sexual minorities was found as higher levels of internalized homonegativity was associated with lower levels of relationship satisfaction ($r = - .32$; Mohr & Daly, 2008).

**Psychological well-being.** Psychological well-being was assessed using the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB; Ryff, 1989) that was theoretically constructed as a more comprehensive measure of positive psychological functioning (see Appendix L). The scale originally consisted of six, 20-item subscales that correspond to six dimensions that Ryff (1989) identified as theoretically central to psychological functioning: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. However, the scale has been shortened to 14-items per subscale and each subscale has shown strong correlations with its 20-item parent subscale. Participants responded to the items on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). The items of the six
subscales were combined to obtain a composite score, in which higher scores indicate greater overall psychological well-being.

The six, 14-item subscales demonstrated good internal consistency as the coefficients ranged from .83 to .91. Additionally, the 14-item per subscale PWB scale was utilized in a study examining faith experiences and psychological health for White LGB individuals (Lease, Horne, & Noffsinger-Frazier, 2005), and they reported an internal consistency of .96. The coefficient alpha for the sample in this study was .96. Lease et al. (2005) also found that the PWB scale was negatively correlated with internalized homonegativity ($r = -.45$) and positively correlated with life satisfaction ($r = .19$), which provides more evidence for convergent validity.
Chapter IV

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Sample size.

The present study examined the antecedents and outcomes of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace. Participants included 201 lesbians who were employed and in a same-sex relationship.

Outlier tests and normality.

DeCarlo’s (1997) SPSS macro revealed four multivariate outliers that were excluded from the analyses; however, analyses were also performed with the outliers included and the results are presented in Appendix M. These results are consistent with the results found with the outliers excluded except for one finding: in hypothesis one, relationship commitment was not found to be significantly associated with sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace ($p = .05$). The skew and kurtosis values were moderately high for the Internalized Homophobia (skewness = -1.66, kurtosis = 3.26), Relationship Satisfaction (skewness = -1.23, kurtosis = 1.23), and Relationship Commitment measures (skewness = -1.88, kurtosis = 3.34). The Small’s test for multivariate skew and kurtosis estimated from DeCarlo’s (1997) SPSS macro was 196.84 $p < .0001$ and 50.78 $p < .0001$, respectively, suggesting multivariate non-normality. Therefore, a reflect log transformation was conducted and multivariate normality was obtained for these scales. The transformed values for these scales are included in Table 3.

Descriptive statistics.

The descriptive statistics for the overall sample are presented in Table 3, which shows the mean, standard deviation, range, and reliability coefficient for each of the untransformed
variables used in this study. The skewness and kurtosis values listed in Table 3 for the relationship commitment, internalized homophobia, and relationship satisfaction scales reflect the results of the reflect log transformation. The intercorrelations among all of the variables were calculated and are reported in Table 4.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics (N = 201)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Skew</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>$\alpha$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POL</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>1.0 – 2.0</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>-.54</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISC</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.7 – 7.0</td>
<td>-.65</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMIT</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.7 – 8.0</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOBIA</td>
<td>6.34</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>2.9 – 7.0</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WELL</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>3.1 – 5.7</td>
<td>-.61</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELP</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>2.7 – 7.0</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>-.91</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOB</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.0 – 7.0</td>
<td>-.98</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANAGE</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>2.8 – 7.0</td>
<td>-.86</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRING</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>2.0 – 6.0</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.85</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* POL = organizational policies and practices; DISC = perceived treatment discrimination (heterosexism) towards sexual minorities; COMMIT = relationship commitment; PHOBIA = internalized homophobia; WELL = psychological well-being; RELP = relationship satisfaction; JOB = job satisfaction; MANAGE = sexual identity management strategies; BRING = bringing one’s partner to work-related events. The skewness and kurtosis values listed in the table for the relationship commitment, internalized homophobia, and relationship satisfaction scales reflect the results of the reflect log transformation.
Table 4

Variable Inter-correlations ($N = 201$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. POL</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.47**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. DISC</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. COMMIT</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. PHOBIA</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. WELL</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. RELP</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. JOB</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. MANAGE</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. BRING</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*indicates that the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; ** indicates that the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. Correlations are based on the transformed variables.

Note: POL = organizational policies and practices; DISC = perceived treatment discrimination (heterosexism) towards sexual minorities; COMMIT = relationship commitment; PHOBIA = internalized homophobia; WELL = psychological well-being; RELP = relationship satisfaction; JOB = job satisfaction; MANAGE = sexual identity management strategies; BRING = bringing one’s partner to work-related events.
The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 15.0. In an effort to ascertain whether there were any significant differences in participant responses on each of the measured variables based on participants’ race, an analysis of variance (ANOVAs) was conducted. Results revealed that there were no significant differences on any of the measured variables between White participants and participants of Color. Differences between participants’ responses on each of the measured variables based on age were also explored using a multivariate GLM. The analysis for age revealed a significant effect in the overall model, (Wilks’ Λ= .86, $F(8,192) = 3.83, p < .05, \eta^2_m = .14$), where $\eta^2_m$ is the multivariate effect size. Specifically, results revealed a significant effect for age on the Policy Scale, $F(1,199) = 14.08, p < .01, \eta^2 = .07$, and on the Sexual Identity Management Strategies Scale, $F(1,199) = 6.13, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$, such that older participants reported the presence of greater gay-affirmative organizational policies and practices in their workplace and the use of greater sexual identity management strategies that revealed their lesbian identity in the workplace than the younger participants. As a result, age was included as a covariate in the analyses to control for age differences.

Analyses Testing Hypotheses

Antecedents to self-disclosure at work:

Hypothesis 1. The higher prevalence of affirming organizational policies and practices, less perceived treatment discrimination towards sexual minorities in the workplace, lower levels of internalized homophobia, and greater relationship commitment will be associated with the use of greater sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian’s identity in the workplace.

Analysis. A multiple linear regression was performed with the items that assessed organizational policies and practices, perceived treatment discrimination toward sexual
minorities, relationship commitment, and internalized homophobia as predictor variables and the scale that assessed sexual identity management strategies as the outcome variable to determine significance and the direction of the relationships. Because preliminary analyses had revealed a significant difference in participants’ age on the Policy and Sexual Identity Management Strategies Scale, age was included as a covariate in the regression analysis. Results revealed that the overall model was significant, overall \( R^2 = 0.44, F(5, 195) = 30.78, p < .01 \) (see Table 5). Furthermore, analyses revealed that organizational policies and practices, \( \beta = .13, t = 2.03, p < .05 \), perceived treatment discrimination toward sexual minorities, \( \beta = .33, t = 5.16, p < .01 \), relationship commitment, \( \beta = .12, t = 2.19, p < .05 \), and internalized homophobia, \( \beta = .38, t = 6.65, p < .01 \), all significantly contributed to the overall model and predicted sexual identity management strategies. Age was not found to be significant, \( t = 1.61, p > .05 \). The hypothesis was supported such that the higher prevalence of affirming organizational policies and practices, less perceived treatment discrimination towards sexual minorities in the workplace, lower levels of internalized homophobia, and greater relationship commitment predicted the use of greater sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian’s identity in the workplace.
Table 5

*Linear Regression: Sexual Identity Management Strategies Predicted by Organizational Policies and Practices, Perceived Treatment Discrimination towards Sexual Minorities, Relationship Commitment, Internalized Homophobia, and Participants’ Age (N = 201)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POL</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISC</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMIT</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOBIA</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: R squared = 0.44; F = (5, 195) = 30.78; (p < .01); POL = organizational policies and practices; DISC = perceived treatment discrimination towards sexual minorities; COMMIT = relationship commitment; PHOBIA = internalized homophobia.*

Outcomes of self-disclosure at work:

*Hypothesis 2.* The use of greater sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian’s identity will be positively associated with higher levels of psychological well-being, greater job satisfaction, and greater relationship satisfaction.

*Analysis.* A multivariate GLM was performed with the scale that assessed sexual identity management strategies as the predictor variable and the scales that assessed psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction as criterion variables to determine significance and the direction of the relationships. Because preliminary analyses had revealed a significant difference in participants’ age on the Sexual Identity Management Strategies Scale,
age was included as a covariate in the analysis. Results revealed that the model was significant overall, Wilks’ Λ = .86, p < .01; η²_m = .14, where η²_m is the multivariate effect size (see Table 6). Furthermore, analyses revealed that sexual identity management strategies predicts relationship satisfaction, F (1, 198) = 14.52, p < .01, η² = .07, and psychological well-being, F (1, 198) = 26.63, p < .01, η² = .12; however, sexual identity management strategies was not found to predict job satisfaction, F (1, 198) = 1.94, p > .05, η² = .01. Age was not found to be significant overall, Wilks’ Λ = .99, p > .05, η² = .01. Therefore, hypothesis two was partially supported such that the use of greater sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian’s identity was positively associated with higher levels of psychological well-being and greater relationship satisfaction; however, sexual identity management strategies was not related to job satisfaction.

Table 6

Multivariate GLM: Relationship Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction, and Psychological Well-Being
Predicted by Sexual Identity Management Strategies with Age as a Covariate (N = 201)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>Univariate η²</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELP</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>3.81***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOB</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WELL</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>5.16***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001; Wilks’ Λ = .86, p < .01, Multivariate η² = .14; RELP = relationship satisfaction; JOB = job satisfaction; WELL = psychological well-being
Self-disclosure of relationship at work:

*Hypothesis 3.* Relationship commitment will be positively associated with bringing one’s partner to work-sponsored events, and off-job parties or events given by employees from one’s workplace.

*Analysis.* A simple linear regression was performed with the scale that assessed relationship commitment as the predictor variable and bringing one’s partner to work-related events as the outcome variable. Results indicated that the overall model was significant, $R^2 = 0.04$, $F (1, 195) = 8.50, p < .01$ (see Table 7). Relationship commitment positively predicted bringing one’s partner to work-related events, $\beta = .20$, $t = 2.92$, $p < .01$. Therefore, hypothesis three was supported such that greater relationship commitment was associated with bringing one’s partner to work-sponsored events, and off-job parties or events given by employees from one’s workplace.

Table 7

*Linear Regression: Bringing One’s Partner to Work-Related Events Predicted by Relationship Commitment (N = 197)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMIT</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* COMMIT = relationship commitment; $R^2 = 0.04$; $F (1, 195) = 8.50, p < .01$.

*Hypothesis 4.* Bringing one’s partner to work-sponsored events, and off-job parties or events given by employees from one’s workplace will be positively associated with relationship satisfaction.
Analysis. A simple linear regression was performed with the scale that assessed bringing one’s partner to work-related events as the predictor variable and relationship satisfaction as the outcome variable. Results indicated that the overall model was significant, \( R^2 = 0.07, F (1, 195) = 15.20, p < .01 \) (see Table 8). Bringing one’s partner to work-related events was positively associated with relationship satisfaction, \( \beta = .27, t = 3.90, p < .01 \). Therefore, hypothesis four was supported such that bringing one’s partner to work-sponsored events, and off-job parties or events given by employees from one’s workplace was associated with greater relationship satisfaction.

Table 8

**Linear Regression: Relationship Satisfaction Predicted by Bringing One’s Partner to Work-Related Events (N = 197)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>( \beta )</th>
<th>( t )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELP</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: RELP = relationship satisfaction; \( R \) squared = 0.07; \( F (1, 195) = 15.20, p < .01 \).*
Chapter V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the literature on sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace among lesbians and to help inform practitioners, organizations, and researchers regarding the factors that influence disclosure, and the outcomes of disclosure in the workplace. More specifically, the current study investigated the environmental (e.g. organizational climate/policies, treatment of sexual minorities in the workplace), individual (e.g. internalized homophobia), and relational (e.g., relationship commitment) antecedents to disclosure of sexual orientation at work, in addition to how disclosure at work influences relationship satisfaction, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being among lesbians who are in intimate relationships. This study is unique as it focused on a more comprehensive understanding of lesbians’ experiences of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace by examining both the antecedents and outcomes, and it is one of only a few studies to investigate these relationships specifically among lesbians who are in intimate relationships to highlight the intersection between work and relationships in this population. While efforts were made to recruit a more diverse sample of lesbians for participation in the current study, the sample consisted predominantly of well-educated, White women; however, the sample in this study was slightly more diverse than prior studies in this area in terms of race/ethnicity. This study also utilized a measure of sexual orientation disclosure that was more nuanced than other measures of disclosure that have been used in prior studies as it examined the sexual identity management strategies that lesbians engaged in as opposed to asking the degree to which a lesbian has disclosed her sexual orientation (e.g., to no one, some, most, all). Scholars have recently urged researchers to "abandon" this latter measure of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace in
favor of the former (Croteau, Anderson, & VanderWal, 2008) as this measure more accurately
captures the continuum of behaviors and decisions that lesbians engage in to reveal and/or
conceal their sexual orientation in the workplace. This measure also explicitly assessed
disclosure as opposed to correlates of disclosure, a major critique of past research.

In this chapter, a discussion of the research findings will be summarized. The chapter
will conclude with a consideration of the implications of these research findings in the context of
research, theory, practice and training. Limitations of the study will also be presented.

Summary of Research Findings

Hypothesis One. A multiple linear regression was utilized to examine the antecedents of
sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace among lesbians. As predicted in hypothesis one,
the higher prevalence of affirming organizational policies and practices, less perceived treatment
discrimination towards sexual minorities in the workplace, lower levels of internalized
homophobia, and greater relationship commitment was associated with the use of greater sexual
identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian’s identity in the workplace.

The significant relationship found between the presence of affirming organizational
policies and practices and the greater use of sexual identity management strategies that reveal a
lesbian’s identity is consistent with previous research that has found that working for employers
with non-discrimination policies (Rostosky & Riggle, 2002) and other affirming organizational
policies and practices, including diversity training that specifically includes gay and lesbian
issues, same-sex partner benefits, a recognized gay and lesbian employee organization, and
showing support for gay and lesbian activities was associated with increased sexual orientation
disclosure among gay men and lesbians (Griffith & Hebl, 2002). The finding in this current
study provides additional support for the influence that the existence of affirming organizational
policies and practices has on sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace, specifically among lesbians.

More specifically, the greater presence of affirming organizational policies and practices, including a written policy prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, a diversity training program that includes awareness of gay and lesbian issues, a diversity workshop or training session devoted exclusively to gay and lesbian issues, public support of gay and lesbian issues or activities (e.g., corporate representation at Gay Pride events), an unofficial organization/network of lesbian and gay employees, an officially recognized organization of lesbian and gay employees, welcoming same-sex partners to company social events, and same-sex domestic partner benefits that include health insurance, bereavement leave for the death of a same-sex partner, and sick-care leave (to care for a same-sex partner) most likely sends a message to lesbian employees that the organization is accepting of their sexual orientation, thereby potentially increasing lesbians’ feelings of safety to disclose their sexual orientation in the workplace without fear of negative ramifications. In addition, sexual orientation disclosure is required in order to access some of these policies and practices. For example, a lesbian worker who is interested in obtaining same-sex partner benefits for their partner must disclose her sexual orientation, at the very least to a human resource professional. Furthermore, membership in an unofficially and/or officially recognized organization/network of lesbian and gay employees necessitates a degree of disclosure in the workplace.

The current study found a significant association between less perceived treatment discrimination (heterosexism) towards sexual minorities in the workplace and the greater use of sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian’s identity in the workplace, a finding that is consistent with prior research that found that sexual minority employees who perceived
less workplace discrimination were more likely to disclose their sexual orientation at work (Ragins & Cornwell, 2001) and engage in the use of sexual identity management strategies that revealed their sexual identity (Chrobot-Mason, Button, & DiClementi, 2001). The results of the current study provide support for the sexual stigma theory and minority stress model (Herek, Cogan, & Gillis, 2009; Meyer, 1995; 2003) that suggest that sexual minorities continue to be a stigmatized group, and therefore vulnerable to socially-based stressors, in this case perceived treatment discrimination in the workplace, which is associated with engaging in sexual identity management strategies that conceal one’s sexual identity.

Another socially-based stressor specific to sexual minorities, and that was examined in this study, is internalized homophobia, or the internalization of negative attitudes/feelings towards one’s same-sex desires and behaviors (Herek et al., 1997; Frost & Meyer, 2009). Internalized homophobia is conceptualized as the result of living in a heterosexist society that denigrates and devalues sexual minorities. Sexual minorities receive negative messages that they are perverse, inferior, repulsive, and sinful, and some unfortunately direct these attitudes towards themselves. This is not to say that there have not been recent shifts in public attitudes toward greater acceptance of sexual minorities over the past two decades. For example, the results of the General Social Survey found that from 1991 to 2010, the percentage of individuals who considered homosexual behavior “always wrong” declined from 72% to 44% (Smith, 2011). Despite these positive shifts, however, sexual minorities continue to face anti-gay sentiment in this society. While campaigning in New Hampshire in January 2012, Rick Santorum, Republican presidential candidate and former Pennsylvania senator, commented that children are better off with a father in prison than with lesbian parents. He has also pledged to amend the United States constitution to make same-sex marriage permanently illegal and has commented
that the military’s repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” is a “social experiment” and “tragic.” These messages can have a profound, negative effect on sexual minorities’ well-being, especially on those individuals who internalize these messages and believe that they are in fact inferior to heterosexuals.

Not surprisingly, internalized homophobia has been found to be associated with lower levels of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace among sexual minorities (Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Rostosky & Riggle, 2002). In the current study, lower levels of internalized homophobia was associated with the use of greater sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian’s identity in the workplace, thereby providing additional support for the theory of sexual stigma and the minority stress model, specifically as it relates to lesbians' experiences in the workplace (Herek, Cogan, & Gillis, 2009; Meyer, 1995; 2003). Of the four variables that were found to be significantly associated with sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace, internalized homophobia was found to have the strongest association. This finding provides additional support for the importance of having positive feelings about one’s sexual identity as this process of greater acceptance of self facilitates greater sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace among lesbians.

Studies have found that 60% to 65% of lesbians are in an intimate relationship (Bradford, Ryan, & Rothblum, 1994; Morris, Waldo, & Rothblum, 2001). Despite this statistic, the current study is one of the first studies of its kind to specifically examine the interplay between lesbians' intimate relationships and sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace. Researchers have also posited that being in an intimate relationship may facilitate disclosure in the context of trying to navigate personal discussions and deciding whether to bring a partner to informal or formal workplace functions (Driscoll et al., 1996). Driscoll et al. (1996) specifically found a positive
association between duration of lesbian relationship and disclosure at work. As hypothesized in this study, greater relationship commitment was associated with the use of greater sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian’s identity in the workplace. This finding provides further support for the notion that being in a relationship, specifically a committed relationship, does in fact facilitate sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace. Perhaps lesbians who are in more committed relationships find it more emotionally and cognitively taxing to hide such a significant part of their life, or perhaps as a result of their commitment to their partner, these lesbians place more of an emphasis on their intimate relationship by engaging in greater "integrating" sexual identity management strategies as a means of integrating their work and home lives. While not investigated in this study, lesbians who report greater relationship commitment may also be married/in a civil union with their partner and are receiving same-sex partner benefits, which would necessitate disclosure in order to be eligible for these benefits. Furthermore, perhaps lesbians who experience greater relationship commitment decide to have children with their partner, which would also necessitate a greater degree of disclosure in terms of receiving benefits for their children (Reimann, 2001). It would most likely also be quite challenging for a lesbian to conceal her relationship/sexual orientation in the workplace if she were to become pregnant in the context of a same-sex relationship, or if the lesbian worker needed to take time off from work for the birth of her child being carried by her partner (Clair, Beatty, & MacLean, 2005).

Hypothesis Two. A multivariate GLM was utilized to assess the outcomes of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace among lesbians. As predicted in hypothesis two, the use of greater sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian’s identity was positively associated with higher levels of psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction. Contrary
to what was expected, sexual identity management strategies was not significantly associated with job satisfaction.

Results of past research on lesbians' disclosure in the workplace and job satisfaction have been mixed. Driscoll et al. (1996) did not find a relationship between sexual orientation disclosure at work and work satisfaction among lesbians; however, Griffith and Hebl (2002) and Day and Schoenrade (1997) found a positive association between disclosure and job satisfaction among gay men and lesbians. Perhaps, for the sample of lesbians in this study, the cognitive and psychological strain of concealing a hidden identity may be related to other work variables, such as job productivity and performance, as opposed to job satisfaction. For example, a lesbian who expends a great deal of emotional and cognitive energy in the workplace by engaging in sexual identity management strategies to conceal her identity may have more difficulty completing her job responsibilities in an efficient manner compared to a lesbian who is out in the workplace and can devote this energy to her work. Another explanation is that the reactions of colleagues and relationship with them after engaging in "integrating" sexual identity management strategies, and working in an affirming organizational environment that allows for disclosure, may be more crucial in terms of job satisfaction as opposed to the actual act of engaging in these strategies. For example, Ellis and Riggle (1995) found that gay and lesbian individuals who were completely open at work were more satisfied with their co-workers than those who were closeted at work. In addition, employees who worked for employers who had a policy prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation were more satisfied with their job. Consistent with these results, while Driscoll et al. (1996) did not find a relationship between greater disclosure and work satisfaction among lesbians, they did find that a sexual minority affirming climate at work was positively related to work satisfaction. Results of the correlational analyses
in the present study support this argument as the presence of greater affirming organizational policies and practices and less perceived treatment discrimination towards sexual minorities in the workplace were both significantly and positively correlated with job satisfaction. While not a specific focus of this study, a significant, positive correlation between bringing one's partner to work-related functions and job satisfaction was found. Perhaps this finding speaks to the meaningfulness of being out in the workplace in the context of one's intimate relationship and to being able to include one's partner in one's work life. For example, a lesbian may completely reveal her sexual identity in the workplace to all of her colleagues; however, perhaps as a result of her partner's discomfort with being lesbian (internalized homophobia) and not wanting her sexual identity to be revealed, the partner who is completely out at work is unable to fully integrate her work and nonwork lives, which may lead to decreased job satisfaction, in addition to work-home conflict.

The finding that sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace among lesbians is positively associated with psychological well-being is consistent with a prior study that found a negative relationship between sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace and psychological symptoms; however, that study focused on lesbians, gay men, and bisexual individuals and differences based on gender or sexual orientation were not reported, and disclosure was measured using only one item (Smith & Ingram, 2004). Therefore, the finding in this current study is important as it contributes to a relatively limited body of empirical research in this area, and supports theoretical literature that suggests that revealing one's identity in the workplace can foster a more secure and authentic sense of self, increase self-esteem, decrease social isolation, facilitate closer, more genuine interpersonal relationships, and relieve the individual of the psychological strain associated with concealing their stigmatized identity (Cain, 1991; Clair,
In Ragins' (2008) conceptual article that focuses on the antecedents and consequences of disclosing invisible stigmatized identities in work and nonwork domains, and in DeJordy's (2008) conceptual article that focuses on passing in the workplace, they both discussed the positive consequences of disclosure across different contexts. These scholars argue that individuals disclose in work and nonwork domains in order to obtain a more coherent and stable self-concept and to have their identities affirmed, or to have others view them as they view themselves. This process subsequently promotes more supportive, closer interpersonal relationships and leads to greater psychological well-being (DeJordy, 2008; Ragins, 2008).

Ragins (2008) also posits that "disclosure disconnects," or disparate degrees of disclosure of a stigmatized identity across work and nonwork domains (e.g., if a lesbian is "out" in the context of her intimate relationship, yet keeps her sexual orientation hidden in the workplace), can lead to psychological distress and work-home conflict. Consistent with this theoretical assertion, researchers have found that gay and lesbian employees who disclosed their sexual orientation at work experienced less work-home conflict (Day & Schoenrade, 2000; Tuten & August, 2006). In the current study, the greater use of sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian's identity in the workplace was found to be associated with relationship satisfaction, perhaps as a result of a reduction in work-home conflict. This finding will be more fully explored in the context of discussing the results of hypotheses three and four as they are related to the association between relationship variables and disclosure in the workplace among lesbians. Taken together, these results suggest that, for this particular sample of lesbian workers, there are significant benefits to disclosure in the workplace.
**Hypotheses three and four.** In hypothesis three, a simple linear regression was performed to assess the relationship between relationship commitment and bringing one's partner to work-related events, and in hypothesis four, a simple linear regression was performed to assess the relationship between bringing one's partner to work-related events and relationship satisfaction. As predicted, greater relationship commitment was associated with bringing one's partner to work-related events and bringing one's partner to work-related events was associated with greater relationship satisfaction. These two findings, in addition to the finding from hypothesis one that indicated that greater relationship commitment was related to sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace and hypothesis two that revealed that sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace is related to greater relationship satisfaction, provides support for the intersection between lesbians' intimate relationships and work.

Ragins (2008) and Driscoll et al. (1996) posit that being in an intimate relationship may motivate lesbians to disclose their sexual orientation in the workplace, and these scholars emphasized the need for empirical research to extend this assertion. Findings from this study suggest that it is not simply being in an intimate relationship that facilitates disclosure in the workplace, but it is related to the degree of commitment in the relationship that is associated with greater levels of sexual orientation disclosure and bringing one's partner to work-related events. Research has found that intimate partners act as a critical source of social support for lesbians (Kurdek, 1988). Perhaps lesbians who feel more committed to their partner also receive more social support from their partner, which may help to buffer any negative consequences of revealing one's sexual identity in the workplace. Ragins (2008) theorizes that the stress of managing two separate identities, concealment of one's lesbian identity in the workplace and openness regarding one's lesbian identity in nonwork domains (e.g., being in an intimate
relationship), is likely to create psychological stress and role conflict, in addition to inhibiting the growth of the relationship (Berzon, 1988). These consequences may facilitate disclosure in the workplace in an attempt to alleviate this distress and promote a more harmonious relationship. The results of this study support these ideas as lesbians who disclosed to a greater degree in the workplace and who brought their partner to work-related events were associated with greater relationship satisfaction.

**Implications**

**Theoretical considerations.** Stigma theory (Goffman, 1963) has been utilized to understand the unique experiences of sexual minorities, which contends that some individuals are stigmatized as a result of possessing attributes that are devalued by others. Sexual minorities are considered a stigmatized group because they are not afforded the same legal rights and benefits as heterosexuals at the state and federal level, and they continue to be at risk of direct and indirect experiences of discrimination and prejudice. Sexual minorities are an invisible stigmatized group because their sexual identity is not readily apparent to others unless it is disclosed. The minority stress model (Meyer, 1995; 2003) identifies disclosure of sexual orientation as a socially-based stressor unique to sexual minorities (Meyer, 1995; 2003). Disclosure of sexual orientation in the workplace has been a focus of scholars’ recent attention. Specifically, scholars have described the process of engaging in sexual identity management strategies, or a continuum of behaviors that sexual minorities engage in to conceal or reveal their sexual identity in the workplace, within the context of stigma theory (Clair, Beatty, & MacLean, 2005; Ragins, 2004, 2008). For example, Clair et al. (2005) posit that the decision to engage in sexual identity management strategies is influenced by individual (e.g., propensity for risk-
taking, identity development) and contextual factors (e.g., organizational climate, nature of interpersonal relationships).

Clair et. al (2005) also theorize that there are potential costs and benefits to concealing/revealing one's invisible stigmatized identity in the workplace. For example, they posit that potential costs to concealing a stigmatized invisible identity include psychological strain, social isolation in the workplace, and potential disruption in intimate relationships if the partner's "existence is denied or her importance minimized" (p. 89). They assert that the benefits of revealing an invisible stigmatized identity in the workplace may include closer interpersonal relationships with colleagues, promotion of feelings of a more genuine sense of self, and acknowledgment of a significant other; however, they also recognized that in certain situations, revealing one's invisible stigmatized identity may place the individual at risk of discrimination and stigmatization.

This study lends empirical support for the minority stress model as results revealed that socially-based stressors unique to sexual minorities, specifically internalized homophobia and treatment discrimination, were associated with sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace. Furthermore, and consistent with stigma-based theoretical frameworks, results indicate that individual, contextual, and interpersonal characteristics contribute to the decision to engage in sexual identity management strategies in the workplace among lesbians in intimate relationships. More specifically, the presence of more affirming organizational practices and policies, less perceived treatment discrimination towards sexual minorities in the workplace, lower levels of internalized homophobia, and greater relationship commitment was associated with the use of greater sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian’s identity in the workplace.

Furthermore, for this sample of lesbians, this study revealed that there are interpersonal
and individual benefits to engaging in sexual identity management strategies in the workplace that reveal a lesbian's identity, specifically increased psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction; however, greater sexual orientation disclosure was not found to be associated with job satisfaction, and alternate explanations for this finding were presented. Although significant benefits to sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace were found in this study, it is important to note that the lesbians in this sample, based on the average score, reported that they experienced low levels of perceived treatment discrimination in their workplace. Therefore, caution must be taken when interpreting these results because lesbians who are not working in supportive, affirming workplaces may place themselves at risk for discrimination and stigmatization following the disclosure of their sexual orientation, which most likely would lead to a decrease in their psychological well-being, and perhaps, their relationship satisfaction as well.

The results of this study also provide support for the spillover theory (Wilensky, 1960) of work that asserts that work will "spillover" into other non-work domains (e.g., home). For example, greater sexual orientation disclosure at work was found to be associated with greater relationship satisfaction. Scholars have extended this model to include the interface between home and work as well, and how conflict at home can spillover into work (Carlson & Frone, 2003; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The findings of this study contribute to the extension of this theory by providing evidence for the bidirectionality of this model as relationship commitment was found to be associated with greater sexual orientation disclosure at work. While not investigated directly, the significant, positive correlation between relationship satisfaction and job satisfaction found in this study provides additional support for this theory.
**Research considerations.** While efforts were made to recruit a more racially and socioeconomically diverse sample of lesbians, the sample is predominantly comprised of White and well-educated lesbians. Croteau et al. (2008) encouraged the inclusion of greater racial/ethnic diversity to increase variability in experiences related to sexual identity management strategies in the workplace, and to explore how the intersection of several sociocultural identities influences disclosure in the workplace. In addition, the lesbians in this study, based on the average score, engaged in a high degree of sexual identity management strategies that revealed their sexual identity. Future research should attempt to recruit a sample of lesbians who engage in a greater variability of sexual identity management strategies across the continuum from counterfeiting to integrating.

Furthermore, this study focused on the unique experiences of lesbians in intimate relationships and examined relationship variables. Future research might perhaps explore the couple as the unit of analysis in a similar way as Rostosky and Riggle (2002) and Jordan and Deluty (2000) examined in their studies of same-sex couples. In investigating the couple as the unit of analysis, a more nuanced understanding of the intersection between lesbians' work and intimate relationships could be obtained. For example, Jordan and Deluty (2002) explored the discrepancy between couples regarding disclosure of sexual orientation and relationship satisfaction. This current study could be replicated by examining the discrepancies that exist between couples regarding sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace and the outcome variables explored in this study, including relationship satisfaction, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being. In line with this recommendation, future research might also investigate the work-home interface and home-work interface among lesbians who are in intimate relationships, and may utilize the work spillover measure (Small & Riley, 1990) to do
so, which also includes a subscale for partners to complete. A suggestion would be for researchers to examine how pressure from one's partner to disclose/not disclose one's sexual orientation in the workplace may be associated with work-related variables (e.g., job productivity, job satisfaction) or how a lesbian's partner's openness regarding her sexual orientation in work and nonwork domains may be associated with the extent to which a lesbian discloses her sexual identity in the workplace. It may also be interesting to extend Tracy and August's (2006) study that explored work-home conflict among lesbian mothers by examining any differences in work-home conflict between lesbians in relationships with and without children and the degree of disclosure in the workplace. Perhaps having children drives sexual orientation disclosure above and beyond relationship commitment.

Additional research is also warranted to gain increased understanding regarding the influence of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace on work-related outcomes. In this study, sexual orientation disclosure was not related to job satisfaction; however, researchers might want to examine additional work variables, including job autonomy, job productivity, job performance, job stress, and reactions of co-workers following disclosure, which has been found to mediate the relationship between disclosure and job attitudes (Griffith & Hebl, 2002). Furthermore, scholars have argued that scales measuring job satisfaction should include both cognitive and affective components, and so perhaps the measure utilized in this study was too simplistic to capture the theoretical underpinnings of job satisfaction (Grandey, Cordeiro, & Crouter, 2005; Spector, 1997).

Based on qualitative research that describes the sexual identity management strategies that sexual minorities utilize in the workplace, Croteau et al. (2008) encourages researchers to continue to use quantitative measures that assess these strategies as opposed to measuring the
degree to which an individual has disclosed in the workplace (e.g., no one, everyone, etc.) as this
does not reflect the actual behaviors that sexual minorities engage in to reveal or conceal their
sexual identity. Furthermore, by uniformly operationalizing sexual orientation disclosure as the
sexual identity management strategies that sexual minorities engage in, comparisons across
studies can be examined.

Qualitative studies were instrumental in increasing understanding of the sexual identity
management strategies that sexual minorities utilize to navigate disclosure in the workplace
(Woods & Harbeck, 1991; Woods, 1993). Researchers should consider using qualitative and
mixed method approaches to obtain a more nuanced understanding of the antecedents and
consequences of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace among lesbians. Utilizing only
quantitative methodology may overly simplify the complicated process of disclosure in the
workplace and its ramifications. For example, King et al. (2008), through the use of content
analyses of narrative descriptions of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace among gay
men and lesbians, found that the supportiveness of the organizational climate was more strongly
associated with a positive disclosure experience than method (e.g., direct disclosure) or timing of
disclosure (e.g., disclosing earlier in the professional relationship) among gay men and lesbians.
The present study could be replicated using qualitative methods by asking lesbians in intimate
relationships to describe the individual, interpersonal, and situational factors associated with
engaging in specific sexual identity management strategies and the individual, interpersonal, and
situational outcomes of engaging in these strategies. This knowledge could help more fully
explain how specific antecedents are related to disclosure (e.g., how relationship commitment is
associated with greater disclosure) and how disclosure is related to specific outcomes (e.g., how
disclosure in the workplace is related to greater psychological well-being).
**Practice and training considerations.** The results of this study have important implications for clinical/counseling, vocational, and organizational psychologists. The American Psychological Association's most updated and revised guidelines for psychological practice with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients (APA, 2011) include, under guideline 18, that "psychologists strive to understand the unique workplace issues that exist for LGB individuals" (p. 25). The guideline specifically addresses how LGB individuals face sexual stigma in the workplace and engage in identity management strategies to conceal/reveal their sexual orientation. This study is important and timely as it contributes to psychology's growing knowledge base in this area, specifically in regards to sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace among lesbians.

The results of this study can help assist psychologists'/career counselors' who work directly with lesbians who may be contemplating whether or not to engage in sexual identity management strategies to reveal their sexual identity in the workplace. Practitioners may provide education regarding the potential benefits of disclosure in the workplace, including greater psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction. While job satisfaction was not found to be associated with sexual orientation disclosure in this study, prior studies have found a significant relationship, and therefore it may be good practice to inform lesbian clients of these mixed results, and perhaps inquire about any expectations that they have regarding changes in level of job satisfaction and other work-related outcomes (e.g., support from co-workers, increased job productivity) following disclosure of their sexual identity.

Prior to deciding to engage in "integrating" sexual identity management strategies, a practitioner working with a lesbian may encourage exploration specific to the characteristics of the organization in which she works, specifically whether or not the organization has affirming policies and practices and whether she perceives indirect and direct forms of heterosexism in the
workplace. The presence of greater affirming organizational policies and practices and less perceived treatment discrimination towards sexual minorities was found to be associated with greater sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace, most likely because these factors increase feelings of safety and send a clear message that the organization values diversity. Exploration regarding her feelings related to being lesbian and how she has integrated this part of herself into her self-concept is also important, as internalized homophobia was associated with engaging in greater identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian's identity. Depending on the extent of her internalized homophobia, it may be useful to incorporate psychotherapeutic interventions focused on coping with shame related to her sexual identity, while simultaneously working to reconstruct a more positive view of herself. Consideration of specific factors related to her intimate relationship, such as her commitment to the relationship, and her intentions to bring her partner to work-related events may be a valuable discussion, as the results of this study suggest that a positive outcome of engaging in "integrating" identity management strategies, and bringing one's partner to work-related events, is greater relationship satisfaction.

Career counselors who are working with a lesbian to assist her with identifying a career that would meet her interests, skills, and goals should consider issues of sexual identity, the intersection of work and intimate relationships, and sexual orientation disclosure as part of the vocational assessment. For example, if a lesbian is hoping to disclose her sexual orientation in the workplace, a career counselor could help to obtain information regarding the presence of state protection, in addition to the presence of organizational supportive policies and procedures. A career counselor could also investigate the organizational climate of several organizations by contacting the human resource professional at these organizations, in addition to obtaining the corporations’ equality index provided by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a rating of
companies based on their policies and practices specific to LGBT employees. The HRC’s 2012 Corporate Equality Index rating criteria includes, but is not limited to, a sexual orientation non-discrimination policy, same-sex partner benefits, diversity training specific to LGBT issues, an LGBT employee group or diversity council, and LGBT employee recruitment efforts. In addition, a career counselor may want to explore how her intimate relationship may play a role in choosing a particular career (e.g., presence of same-sex partner benefits, desire to integrate her partner into work events and functions). It is important to note, however, that given the current economic crisis plaguing the United States and lack of employment opportunities, a lesbian who ideally wants to be open about her sexual identity in the workplace may have to accept a position in a company that does not have affirming policies and practices and a supportive organizational climate for sexual minority employees. Therefore, a career counselor may be tasked with helping her cope with navigating a potentially unsafe workplace environment and the negative consequences of keeping her sexual identity hidden.

The results of this study also have implications for organizations. Psychologists who consult with organizations that want to create an environment that is safe for sexual minorities/recruit sexual minority employees can play a crucial role in recommending implementation of policies and practices that are affirming of sexual minorities. Psychologists could also conduct a climate survey of the workplace to assess for perceived treatment discrimination towards sexual minorities, and based on the results of this survey, they could work with organizations on implementing a "Respect in the Workplace" workshop for its employees aimed at increasing understanding of workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and the legal ramifications of engaging in such discrimination.

Psychologists have the opportunity to act as agents of change by engaging in advocacy
efforts at the state and national level to promote equal rights for sexual minorities in the workplace. Such efforts could include contacting state and federal legislative officials to advocate for equality rights in the workplace for sexual minorities. For example, on the American Civil Liberties Union website, there is a formatted letter that can be completed that urges President Obama to issue an executive order that would protect LGBT employees who work for federal contractors from discrimination based on sexual orientation in the workplace. This directive, if enacted, would be a remarkable victory for equal rights for sexual minorities as the federal government contracts with over 90,000 companies.

The American Psychological Association's revised guidelines for psychological practice with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients (APA, 2011) also emphasize the importance of education and training in graduate education specific to LGB issues. In terms of issues unique to the experiences of sexual minorities in the workplace, psychology graduate programs should be strongly encouraged, at the very minimum, to assign readings and facilitate discussion regarding the identity management strategies that sexual minorities engage in to reveal/conceal their sexual identity, and the antecedents and outcomes of engaging in these strategies. This study adds to this literature as it applies to lesbians, and could be one of the assigned readings to assist in increasing students’ knowledge and awareness in this area. Psychology graduate students should also be aware of the presence of sexual orientation non-discrimination laws in the state in which they practice. Lastly, professors who teach classes that focus on career development, vocational psychology, and industrial-organizational psychology may want to consider incorporating a social justice/advocacy practicum experience into their curriculum to further promote multicultural competence and systemic change (Ali et al., 2008; Fassinger & Galor, 2006). For example, students could identify local businesses in the area that do not afford protections
against sexual orientation discrimination or that do not have same-sex partner benefits, and encourage these businesses through contact with administration to implement these policies and practices. Students could also develop and conduct assessments of companies' climate as it relates to indirect and direct forms of discrimination towards sexual minority employees and provide recommendations to these companies on how to improve the climate in order to create a safer workplace environment.

Limitations

Several limitations must be considered when interpreting the findings from this study. Perhaps most importantly, results of this study need to be interpreted with caution, as the sample of lesbians in this study is not representative of all lesbians. The snowball and Web-based sampling methods utilized in this study, while advantageous at identifying participants with invisible social identities, limit the variability of participants' experiences. This may explain the lack of racial/ethnic and educational diversity within the sample. Furthermore, participants were also recruited through LGB organizations and other venues and events that are frequented by lesbians (e.g., coffee shops, bars, bookstores, concerts, gay pride parades). These women are most likely more comfortable with their sexual orientation, and potentially more "out", compared to the general population of lesbian workers, and are perhaps more representative of lesbians who are active in the LGBT community (Rothblum, 1995). Therefore, while efforts were made to recruit a more diverse sample of lesbians, the invisibility of sexual identity makes recruitment of lesbians who experience greater levels of internalized homophobia and who engage in less integrating sexual identity management strategies more challenging.

Another limitation is related to the cross-sectional research design of the study and the inability to infer causality, and therefore only suggestions can be made regarding causality. In
this study, results revealed that engaging in sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian's identity in the workplace was related to greater psychological well-being; however, perhaps greater psychological well-being leads to an increase in sexual identity management strategies that reveal a lesbian's identity. This relationship and others that were explored in the study (e.g., relationship commitment and sexual identity management strategies) are most likely bidirectional in nature. Future research may help to elucidate the direction of the relationships between these variables through the use of qualitative and longitudinal research methodologies.

Furthermore, and with all self-report measures, factors such as socially desirable responding may have inflated the observed relationships. A measure of social desirability was not included in this study, and therefore it is unclear if some participants were concerned with presenting themselves, their relationship, and their workplace in a favorable light. Lastly, the length of the psychological well-being measure appears to have resulted in possible frustration and/or fatigue, as a significant percentage of participants dropped out of the study while responding to this measure, which introduced potential response bias. Future research should consider utilizing a subscale of this measure, or utilizing another measure that assesses psychological well-being.

Conclusions

“To display or not to display; to tell or not to tell; to let on or not to let on; to lie or not to lie; and in each case, to whom, how, when, and where” (Goffman, 1963, p. 42). This quote, taken from Goffman's book on stigmatized identities, represents the emotional and cognitively taxing process that sexual minorities must undergo to manage their sexual identity in different contexts. By integrating stigma theory and the minority stress model, this study broadens our understanding of the contextual, relational, and individual antecedents of sexual orientation...
disclosure in the workplace among lesbians, in addition to the outcomes of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace. More specifically, the findings point to the importance of supportive organizational policies and practices, an affirming organizational climate, and positive feelings related to being lesbian in increasing sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace. Furthermore, and perhaps more critical in terms of lesbians' mental health/emotional functioning, sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace was associated with greater psychological well-being.

Recent theoretical literature on disclosure of a stigmatized identity emphasizes the importance of exploring how disclosure of sexual orientation involves relationships with other people, and how disclosure affects work and nonwork domains (Ragins, 2008). The findings from this study provide support for the intersection of work and relationships among lesbians as greater relationship commitment was associated with sexual orientation disclosure and bringing one's partner to work-related events. In addition, greater sexual orientation disclosure and bringing one's partner to work-related events was related to relationship satisfaction.

In summary, the results of this study offer new insights into lesbians' unique experiences of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace that will hopefully assist employers, organizational, vocational, counseling and clinical psychologists, career counselors, and other mental health professionals in their pursuits to better understand their lesbian employees and clients. It is also hoped that this study will inspire other researchers to extend this line of inquiry and continue to contribute to the emerging theoretical and empirical literature related to lesbians' management of their stigmatized sexual identity in the workplace.
References


Herek, G. M., Cogan, J. C., Gillis, J. R., & Glunt, E. K. (1997). Correlates of internalized


Todosijevic, J., Rothblum, E. D., & Solomon, S. E. (2005). Relationship satisfaction,
affectivity, and gay-specific stressors in same-sex couples joined in civil unions. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 29,* 158-166.


Appendix A

Participant Solicitation E-mail

My name is Lauren Fisher and I am currently a doctoral student at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York. I am in the process of conducting my dissertation and would like to ask for your participation in my project. This study examines lesbians' experiences in the workplace. The information gained from this study will be useful in informing treatment, addressing career concerns, and implementing organizational efforts to affirm sexual diversity in the workplace. Participation is strictly anonymous and voluntary. This project has IRB approval (Application # 10-288) through the Office of Sponsored Programs at Teachers College, Columbia University (212-678-4105).

Please note that the requirements to participate in this study are that you must identify as a lesbian, be at least 18 years old, and be currently in an intimate relationship with a woman for at least six months. By clicking on the following link, you will be redirected to a confidential and anonymous online survey. Your e-mail address will not be linked to your survey results at any time.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/lauren

Feel free to pass this survey along to anyone else that you think may be interested in participating. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me at fisherla13@yahoo.com.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lauren Fisher, MA
Appendix B

Teachers College, Columbia University

INFORMED CONSENT

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH: You are invited to participate in an online research study on lesbians’ experiences. You will be asked to answer demographic questions followed by questions pertaining to your experiences in the workplace, your feelings related to being lesbian, your satisfaction in your intimate relationship, and your overall well-being. It is my hope that the findings of this study will be of benefit in increasing mental health professionals, career counselors, and organizational administrators’ knowledge of the issues that directly affect lesbians so that they can provide effective therapeutic interventions, and in the case of organizational administrators, implement procedures and policies that are lesbian-affirming.

The principal investigator of this study is Lauren Fisher, MA, a doctoral student in Counseling Psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University. This study is under the supervision of Dr. George V. Gushue, an associate professor of Counseling Psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University. If you have any questions as a result of participating in this study, you may contact us at fisherla13@yahoo.com or gvg3@columbia.edu, or by phone at 781-608-0213. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board at Teachers College, Columbia University at 212-678-4105 or write to them at 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY, 10027, Box 151.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: Potential risks are minimal. You may experience some discomfort while completing the questionnaire or you may be inconvenienced from taking time out of your day to complete the questionnaire. We believe that your participation will help guide future research on lesbians’ experiences and contribute to the improvement in training and educational programs, as well as organizational efforts to affirm sexual minorities in the workplace.

PAYMENTS: There will be no payment for your participation in this study.

DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY: All of your responses will be kept secure on the surveymonkey.com server and accessed only by the principal investigator using a password protected account. This online survey service strips away all identifying information from the participants’ responses. This will ensure that your confidentiality and anonymity will be protected. Once the data has been gathered, the information will be downloaded to a password protected computer only accessible by the principal investigator. When the data is not being analyzed, and after the data has been fully analyzed, it will be stored in a locked file cabinet. The data will be kept for no longer than 5 years and then it will be destroyed.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation in the study should take no more than 15-30 minutes to complete.

HOW WILL RESULTS BE USED: The results of the study will be used for the principal investigator’s dissertation, a requirement of the doctoral program. The results will also be presented at professional conferences and published in relevant professional journals.
PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

Principal Investigator:  Lauren Fisher, MA

Research Title:  Testing a model of sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace among lesbians

- I have read the Research Description. I understand that I can contact the principal investigator to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.
- My participation in research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future medical care, employment, student status or other entitlements.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at her professional discretion.
- If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the investigator, who will answer my questions. The investigator's phone number is (781) 608-0213.
- If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board /IRB. The phone number for the IRB is (212) 678-4105. Or, I can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY, 10027, Box 151.
- I should print a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Rights document.
- By continuing with the survey, I am agreeing to participate in this study.
Appendix C

Demographic Questionnaire

What is your age?

What is your race or ethnicity?
- Black (non-Hispanic/Latina)
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- White (non-Hispanic/Latina)
- Hispanic/Latina
- Native American
- Middle Eastern
- Multiracial/Multiethnic
- Other (please specify) __________

What is your highest level of education completed?
- Elementary School
- Middle School
- GED
- High School
- Associates
- Bachelors
- Masters
- Doctorate
- Other (please specify) __________

What state are you currently residing in?

Which best describes your relationship status?
- In a casual/non-committed relationship
- In a committed relationship
- Married
- Domestic Partnership
- Civil Union
- Other (please specify) _______

How long have you and your partner been together?
- 6 – 12 months
- 12 – 24 months
- 2 – 5 years
- 5 – 10 years
- 10 + years

Are you and your partner living together?
- Yes
- No
What is your employment status?
   Full-time
   Part-time

How long have you been employed in your current position?
   < 3 months
   3-6 months
   6 months – 1 year
   1 year – 3 years
   3 years – 5 years
   5 years – 10 years
   > 10 years

What is your yearly salary at work?
   < $20,000
   $20,000 - $30,000
   $30,000 - $50,000
   $50,000 - $75,000
   $75,000 - $100,000
   > $100,000

What industry are you employed in?
   Education
   Health
   Government
   Service
   Manufacturing
   Finance-Insurance
   Retail
   Advertising-Publishing
   Travel-Transportation
   Human Services
   Design-Fashion
   Other (please specify)___________
APPENDIX D

Organizational Policies and Practices (Button, 2001)

Please respond “yes” or “no” to each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Does your organization:

(1) have a written policy prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation?
   
| 1 | 2 |

(2) have a diversity training program that includes awareness of gay and lesbian issues?
   
| 1 | 2 |

(3) have a diversity workshop or training session devoted exclusively to gay and lesbian issues?
   
| 1 | 2 |

(4) engage in public support of gay and lesbian issues or activities (e.g., corporate representation at Gay Pride events)?
   
| 1 | 2 |

(5) have an unofficial organization/network of lesbian and gay employees?
   
| 1 | 2 |

(6) have an officially recognized organization of lesbian and gay employees?
   
| 1 | 2 |

(7) offer same-sex domestic partner benefits that include health insurance?
   
| 1 | 2 |

(8) offer same-sex partner benefits that include bereavement leave for the death of a same-sex partner?
   
| 1 | 2 |

(9) offer same-sex partner benefits that include sick-care leave (to care for a same-sex partner)?
   
| 1 | 2 |
Please take a moment and consider the organization that employs you. Then, using the scale below, respond to each of the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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</table>

1. My employer is affirming toward lesbians and gay men.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

2. The leaders of this organization are committed to the equitable treatment of lesbian and gay employees.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

3. The policies of this organization are fair and equitable to gays and lesbians.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

4. This organization does not treat lesbians and gay men fairly.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

5. This organization takes steps to ensure that homosexuals are treated just like heterosexuals.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

6. My co-workers are more likely to be supportive of lesbian and gay people because of the training programs maintained by this organization.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

7. This organization unfairly discriminates against gays and lesbians in the distribution of job-related opportunities (e.g., promotions, work assignments).
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

8. This organization unfairly discriminates against gays and lesbians in the distribution of benefits.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

9. This organization discourages employees from bringing same-sex dates to company related social functions (e.g., company picnics).
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
APPENDIX F

Commitment Scale (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998)

1. I want our relationship to last for a very long time (please circle a number).

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<th>3</th>
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<th>7</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do Not Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Agree</td>
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2. I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner.

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<td>Do Not Agree</td>
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3. I would not feel very upset if our relationship were to end in the near future.

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4. It is likely that I will date someone other than my partner within the next year.

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<td>Do Not Agree</td>
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5. I feel very attached to our relationship—very strongly linked to my partner.

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<td>Do Not Agree</td>
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6. I want our relationship to last forever.

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<td>Do Not Agree</td>
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7. I am oriented to the long-term future of my relationship (for example, I imagine being with my partner for several years from now).

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<tbody>
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<td>Do Not Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
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<td>Agree</td>
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APPENDIX G

Personal Feelings About Being a Lesbian Subscale of the Lesbian Internalized Homophobia Scale (Syzmanski & Chung, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I hate myself for being attracted to other women.
   1       2       3       4       5       6       7

2. I am proud to be a lesbian.
   1       2       3       4       5       6       7

3. I feel bad for acting on my lesbian desires.
   1       2       3       4       5       6       7

4. As a lesbian, I am loveable and deserving of respect.
   1       2       3       4       5       6       7

5. I feel comfortable being a lesbian.
   1       2       3       4       5       6       7

6. If I could change my sexual orientation and become heterosexual, I would.
   1       2       3       4       5       6       7

7. I don’t feel disappointment in myself for being a lesbian.
   1       2       3       4       5       6       7

8. Being a lesbian makes my future look bleak and hopeless.
   1       2       3       4       5       6       7
APPENDIX H

Bringing One’s Partner to Work-Related Events
(Driscoll, Kelley, & Fassinger, 1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to work-sponsored events?

| 1     | 2         | 3      |

Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to off-job parties or events given by employees and personnel from your workplace?

| 1     | 2         | 3      |
APPENDIX I

Sexual Identity Management Strategies Scale (Button, 1996)

Instructions. The following items concern how lesbians handle information related to their sexual orientation in the workplace. Some people are completely “closeted” (e.g., hide their lesbian identity), while others are completely “out” (e.g., have revealed their lesbian identity). Still others use a combination of approaches; they are open with some co-workers and closeted around others.

Please take a moment and consider how you currently handle information related to your sexual orientation during your daily work-related activities. Then read the following statements and indicate, using the 7-point scale below, how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Your answers should reflect how you conduct yourself, on average, across all of your co-workers. Finally, references to “co-workers” should be understood to include your superiors, peers, and subordinates, as well as customers, clients, and other business associates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Counterfeiting Items

1. To appear heterosexual, I sometimes talk about fictional dates with members of the opposite sex.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. I sometimes talk about opposite-sex relationships in my past, while I avoid mentioning more recent same-sex relationships.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. I sometimes comment on, or display interest in, members of the opposite sex to give the impression that I am straight.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. I have adjusted my level of participation in sports to appear heterosexual.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. I make sure that I don’t behave the way people expect gays or lesbians to behave.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. I sometimes laugh at “fag” or “dyke” jokes to fit in with my straight co-workers.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Avoiding Items

7. I avoid co-workers who frequently discuss sexual matters.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. I avoid situations (e.g., long lunches, parties) where heterosexual co-workers are likely to ask me personal questions.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. I let people know that I find personal questions to be inappropriate so that I am not faced with them.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. I avoid personal questions by never asking others about their personal lives.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. In order to keep my personal life private, I refrain from “mixing business with pleasure.”
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. I withdraw from conversations when the topic turns to things like dating or interpersonal relationships.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. I let people think I am a “loner” so that they won’t question my apparent lack of a relationship.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Integrating Items

14. In my daily activities, I am open about my homosexuality whenever it comes up.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. Most of my co-workers know that I am a lesbian.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. Whenever I’m asked about being a lesbian, I always answer in an honest and matter-of-fact way.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. It’s okay for my gay and lesbian friends to call me at work.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18. My co-workers know of my interest in gay and lesbian issues.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

19. I look for opportunities to tell my co-workers that I am a lesbian.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

20. When a policy or law is discriminatory against lesbians, I tell people what I think.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

21. I let my co-workers know that I’m proud to be a lesbian.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. I openly confront others when I hear a homophobic remark or joke.

23. I display objects (e.g., photographs, magazines, symbols) which suggest that I am a lesbian.
## General Satisfaction Subscale of the Job Diagnostic Survey
*(Hackman & Oldham, 1974, 1975)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

1. Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.
   1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7

2. I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job.
   1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7

3. I frequently think of quitting this job.
   1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7
## APPENDIX K

The Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale  
(Schumm et al., 1986)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Somewhat Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. How satisfied are you with your relationship?

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

2. How satisfied are you with your partner in her role as partner?

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

3. How satisfied are you with your relationship with your partner?

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your life. Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle the number that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree Slightly</th>
<th>Agree Slightly</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Most people see me as loving and affectionate.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Sometimes I change the way I act or think to be more like those around me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizons.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel good when I think of what I’ve done in the past and what I hope to do in the future.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out.</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am not afraid to voice my opinions, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. The demands of everyday life often get me down.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. In general, I feel that I continue to learn more about myself as time goes by.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I live life one day at a time and don’t really think about the future.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. In general, I feel confident and positive about myself.</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. I am the kind of person who likes to give new things a try.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. I tend to focus on the present, because the future nearly always brings me problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. I feel like many of the people I know have gotten more out of life than I have.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. I enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members or friends.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. I tend to worry about what other people think of me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. I don’t want to try new ways of doing things - my life is fine the way it is.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. I have a sense of direction and purpose in life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Given the opportunity, there are many things about myself that I would change.</td>
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<td>25. It is important to me to be a good listener when close friends talk to me about their problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Being happy with myself is more important to me than having others approve of me.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. I often feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me.</td>
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<td>30. I like most aspects of my personality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>31. I don’t have many people who want to listen when I need to talk.</td>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>If I were unhappy with my living situation, I would take effective steps to change it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>When I think about it, I haven’t really improved much as a person over the years.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>I don’t have a good sense of what it is I’m trying to accomplish in life.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>I made some mistakes in the past, but I feel that all in all everything has worked out for the best.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>I feel like I get a lot out of my friendships.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>People rarely talk to me into doing things I don’t want to do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>I generally do a good job of taking care of my personal finances and affairs.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>In my view, people of every age are able to continue growing and developing.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>I used to set goals for myself, but that now seems like a waste of time.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>It seems to me that most other people have more friends than I do.</td>
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<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>It is more important to me to “fit in” with others than to stand alone on my principles.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>I find it stressful that I can’t keep up with all of the things I have to do each day.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td>With time, I have gained a lot of insight about life that has made me a stronger, more capable person.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>47.</td>
<td>I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td>For the most part, I am proud of who I am and the life I lead.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49. People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>50. I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>51. I am good at juggling my time so that I can fit everything in that needs to be done.</td>
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<tr>
<td>52. I have a sense that I have developed a lot as a person over time.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>53. I am an active person in carrying out the plans I set for myself.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>54. I envy many people for the lives they lead.</td>
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<tr>
<td>55. I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>56. It's difficult for me to voice my own opinions on controversial matters.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>57. My daily life is busy, but I derive a sense of satisfaction from keeping up with everything.</td>
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<tr>
<td>58. I do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things.</td>
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<tr>
<td>59. Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>60. My attitude about myself is probably not as positive as most people feel about themselves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>61. I often feel as if I'm on the outside looking in when it comes to friendships.</td>
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<tr>
<td>62. I often change my mind about decisions if my friends or family disagree.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>63. I get frustrated when trying to plan my daily activities because I never accomplish the things I set out to do.</td>
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<tr>
<td>64. For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.</td>
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<td>Agree Slightly</td>
<td>Agree Somewhat</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. I sometimes feel as if I’ve done all there is to do in life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>66. Many days I wake up feeling discouraged about how I have lived my life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>67. I know that I can trust my friends, and they know they can trust me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>68. I am not the kind of person who gives in to social pressures to think or act in certain ways.</td>
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<tr>
<td>69. My efforts to find the kinds of activities and relationships that I need have been quite successful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>70. I enjoy seeing how my views have changed and matured over the years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>71. My aims in life have been more a source of satisfaction than frustration to me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>72. The past had its ups and downs, but in general, I wouldn’t want to change it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>73. I find it difficult to really open up when I talk with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>74. I am concerned about how other people evaluate the choices I have made in my life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>75. I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>76. I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago.</td>
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<tr>
<td>77. I find it satisfying to think about what I have accomplished in life.</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78. When I compare myself to friends and acquaintances, it makes me feel good about who I am.</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>79. My friends and I sympathize with each other’s problems.</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80. I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.</td>
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</table>
Circle the number that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree Slightly</th>
<th>Agree Slightly</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81. I have been able to build a home and a lifestyle for myself that is much to my liking.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82. There is truth to the saying that you can’t teach an old dog new tricks.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83. In the final analysis, I’m not so sure that my life adds up to much.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84. Everyone has their weaknesses, but I seem to have more than my share.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX M

Results with outliers included

Hypothesis 1

Linear Regression: Sexual Identity Management Strategies Predicted by Organizational Policies and Practices, Perceived Treatment Discrimination towards Sexual Minorities, Relationship Commitment, Internalized Homophobia, and Participants’ Age (N = 205)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POL</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISC</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMIT</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOBIA</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: R squared = 0.45; F = (5, 199) = 32.11; (p < .01); POL = organizational policies and practices; DISC = perceived treatment discrimination towards sexual minorities; COMMIT = relationship commitment; PHOBIA = internalized homophobia.
Hypothesis 2

Multivariate GLM: Relationship Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction, and Psychological Well-Being Predicted by Sexual Identity Management Strategies with Age as a Covariate (N = 205)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>Univariate $\eta^2$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELP</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>4.09***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOB</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WELL</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>5.28***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; Wilks’ $\Lambda = .85$, $p < .01$, Multivariate $\eta^2 = .15$; RELP = relationship satisfaction; JOB = job satisfaction; WELL = psychological well-being

Hypothesis 3

Linear Regression: Bringing One’s Partner to Work-Related Events Predicted by Relationship Commitment (N = 201)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMIT</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: COMMIT = relationship commitment; $R squared = 0.04$; $F (1, 199) = 7.51$, $p < .01$. 
Hypothesis 4

Linear Regression: Relationship Satisfaction Predicted by Bringing One’s Partner to Work-Related Events ($N = 201$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELP</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: RELP = relationship satisfaction; $R^2 = 0.07$; $F(1, 199) = 15.71$, $p < .01$. 