

**Chapter Title:** A Systematic Literature Review on Trans\* Careers and Workplace Experiences

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**Abstract:**

This chapter presents a systematic review conducted on the academic literature related to the careers and workplace experiences of the trans\* population (including but not limited to: transsexual, transgender, genderqueer). Primarily situated in the career theory, human resources, and general business management disciplines, but including where relevant articles from other areas, this chapter examines the primary issues that a trans\* person faces in the workplace and during their career. The review examines major themes within the literature surrounding the topic, outlines major findings, and makes recommendations for HR practitioners and line managers promoting diversity and inclusion in their organization. The main themes unpacked in this chapter are *Pre-career, The job search, General-career, and Transitioning in the workplace.*

**1.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of a systematic literature review conducted on the workplace experiences and careers of trans\* people in the Western world. Trans\* is the most inclusive and recent term used to denote the large variety of people who identify with the transgender spectrum of identities (Collins et al., 2015), including transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, genderfluid, and asexual (see Collins et al.,

2015, for more detailed explanation of the different terms). Trans\* will be used throughout this chapter to denote all those within the transgender umbrella. The primary research question guiding this review is: what are the primary issues that a trans\* person faces in the workplace and during their career? This chapter builds on the results of an earlier systematic literature review on lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans\* (LGBT) workplace experiences and careers (McFadden, 2015). From a review of 263 articles, it is apparent that the careers of the trans\* subgroup are under-explored (McFadden, 2015). A great dearth of study is present on the topic of trans\* careers and workplace experiences (Carroll et al., 2002; Pepper & Lorah, 2008; Sangganjanavanich, 2009; Law et al., 2011). In many cases, the titles of articles found during the earlier systematic literature review included the word trans\* or a variant, but did not focus in any great detail on the unique aspects of this subgroup's careers or workplace experiences, a problem also noted by Pepper and Lorah (2008). Chung, in 2003, calls for theory development and empirical research to fill in this large gap in the business, management and career literatures over the next decade. This chapter, written over a decade later, highlights how well this call has been answered, and examines where further research is needed.

In total, 30 articles focused (either solely or as a large part of a broader study) in detail on trans\* experiences – 20 of these were specific to the subgroup and the remaining 10 were as part of a broader study, but focused a considerable portion of the overall discussion on trans\* issues which, as noted above, was rare. These 30 articles make up the review in this chapter, which discusses the extant research according to major stages in the trans\* person's career. In the vast majority of cases, the studies were conducted in and/or about the USA, with others taking a broadly Western perspective. Within this chapter, what is known about trans\* careers and

workplace experiences is elucidated. Importantly, what is not known is also explored, and recommendations for future research are given to fill the large gap in knowledge on trans\* careers and work experiences.

This systematic literature review follows closely the methods used by Tranfield, Denyer and Smart (2003) and Pittaway et al., (2004). The five-step method consists of an initial study, where general search terms (in this case, transgender, transsexual, trans etc.) are used to scope the field. From this, more search terms are discovered that are used in the pilot study, which tests the effectiveness of the search string, and is repeated if felt necessary. Literature is then included or excluded from the review according to metrics of quality, and remaining articles are categorized to a theme using open coding techniques. The themes identified in the literature on trans\* careers were *Pre-career*, *The job search*, *General-career*, and *Transitioning in the workplace*. Each of these are considered in more detail in relation to trans\* careers next.

## **1.2 Research on Trans\* Issues**

The work-lives of trans\* people are still very much unknown. Although academic research on lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) employees – with whom the trans\* community are historically, socially and culturally associated – has advanced substantially in the last decade, very little study has been conducted specifically on trans\* workers in the management literature (McFadden, 2015). As mentioned above, and shown in Table 1, those articles that have been written on trans\* issues in the workplace take a Western standpoint, particularly focusing on the USA.

There may be a number of reasons for this deficit. Trans\* people still suffer from much stigma; more even, than their LGB contemporaries, who are currently gaining

ground in terms of both civil rights and workplace policies throughout Europe. The disparity between the research on each group may be as a result of the further progress the gay civil rights movement has made in the last couple of years, in comparison to the trans\* rights movement. The trans\* population has been estimated to be 0.3% of the United States population (Gates, 2011) and 0.1% in the United Kingdom (Reed et al., 2009). However, as Gates (2011) points out, people may not wish to give potentially stigmatizing information about themselves. The stigma that still surround being trans\* may then result in an underrepresented population.

Using these estimates, we can infer that the trans\* population makes up a very small minority of the global workforce. As such, trans\* people may not represent a priority for companies or, consequentially, academic researchers in the business and management domain. However, research on trans\* workplace experiences will not only benefit the trans\* community, but also provide insight into the challenges and workplace experiences of other workplace minority groupings. Because research on trans\* workplace experiences and careers is extremely limited, it is even more important to set a research agenda for the future. This chapter outlines what research *has* been conducted and gives recommendations for scholars in the relevant areas for future areas of research, and practitioners who wish to promote trans\* inclusiveness in their workplace.

## **2. The Systematic Literature Review**

The selection of the papers that make up this literature review was performed within a number of steps that follow Tranfield et al. (2003) and Pittaway et al., (2004):

1. Initial Study, 2. Pilot Study, 3. Categorization of Literature, 4. Review of Literature, 5. Synthesis of Review.

## 2.1 Initial Study

The initial step of the systematic review is concerned with the identification of the key scholars across the disciplines publishing on the research topic and the creation of a search string that may be used to effectively and efficiently query the electronic databases (Pittaway et al., 2004; Tranfield et al., 2003). For the purpose of this review, the following databases were used: EBSCO Academic Source Complete (over 13,600 journals over a number of fields), EBSCO Business Source Complete (more than 2,400 peer-reviewed journals in the business and management areas), Thompson Reuters Web of Knowledge (over 23,000 journals in various fields) and the Google Scholar search engine. The first step of the initial study was a simple search of the databases using a broad search string, using keywords based on the author's prior experience (Pittaway et al., 2004), relating to both the *Sample* of interest in this research (the trans\* population) and the *Context* (the workplace, the career, employment, etc.). These articles were then filtered down by searching only within the title; only within the subject terms, excluding those not in peer-review journals, excluding those in an irrelevant field (for example, biology or chemistry) and those that were not in the English language (c.5%)

The remaining articles, still numbering in the thousands, were then filtered down further by selecting for relevance to the research question; this included selecting only those that exhibited the key words, phrases and areas of relevance to the research question (what are the primary issues that a trans\* person faces in the workplace and during their career?), and by deselecting those that were irrelevant. The citation histories of the remaining articles were then analyzed. The key authors within the field were identified based on the number of citations each had received, the

databases were queried with the names and initials of these key authors and additional, relevant papers by them were added to the review. The articles that cited these key authors' articles were then reviewed, and included or excluded based on their relevance to the research question.

By reviewing the titles and examining the myriad of keywords, synonyms and themes of each of the articles that had been chosen so far, a definitive search string was created with which to query the databases. This larger search string was constructed in a similar fashion to the initial search string (i.e. *Sample and Context*), but now included the various synonyms of the initial search terms (including transgender, transsexual, career, work, job, employment etc.; see end of chapter for a complete search string†).

## **2.2 Pilot Study**

The second step of the systematic review, the pilot study, tests the effectiveness of the search string created in the initial study (Pittaway et al., 2004), and gathers potential articles that will make up the basis of the review. Any changes to the search string that were felt necessary were performed in an iterative process early in the pilot study, and consisted of additional synonyms being added to the string, and words that resulted in more false positives than actual positive results were removed. The three databases were then queried with the established search string, and articles were included or excluded as per the criteria outlined above.

### 2.3 Categorization of Literature

The third stage of the systematic review involved including or excluding the articles that resulted from the previous steps from the review according to their relevance to the research topic: the workplace experiences and careers of trans\* people.

### 2.4 Synthesis of Review

The review was synthesized by taking note of a number of the characteristics of each article after reading. These included the area in which the study was based, the year it was published, the sampling methods used in the research, the methods used in data collection (interview, survey etc.), and the gaps in the extant literature identified by the author(s) of the article. A number of themes that overarched many of the articles were identified, and each publication was assigned to one or two of these themes. In assigning a theme to each article we gain an overview of the major directions in which the literature has, and continues to, progress, and an impression of the topics that require further development (Thomas and Harden, 2008; Pope et al., 2007).

## 3. Results

Steps one and two of the process, the Initial Study and the Pilot Study, resulted in 30 articles. From analysis of these papers, four meta key themes related to the careers and workplace experiences of the trans\* population emerged. They are:

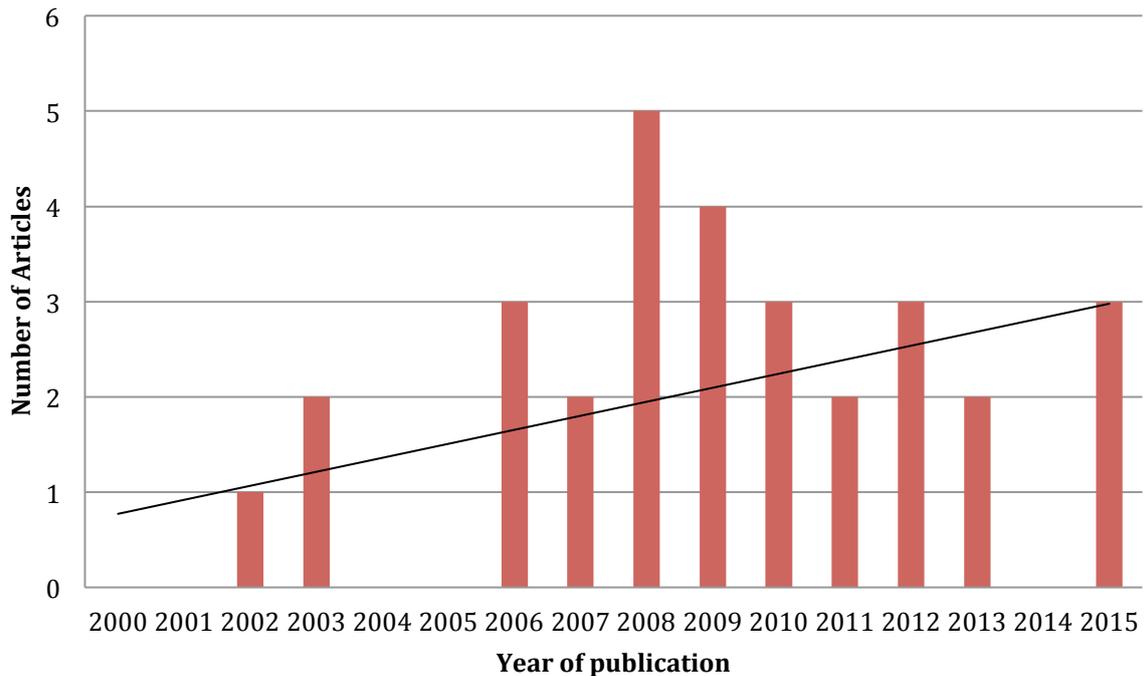
- i. **Pre-career** – Exploring personal, educational and social experiences that trans\* people go through that have an effect on their later careers.
- ii. **The Job Search** – Articles relating to the trans\* person's search for employment or a career. Most articles focused on post-transition.

- iii. **General Career** – Articles relating to general issues trans\* people face in their career, with the exceptions of transitioning and searching for employment.
- iv. **Transitioning in the Workplace** – These articles deal directly with the trans\* worker's transition process, the consequences and the social issues surrounding it.

Some of the papers reviewed discussed only one of themes above (e.g. Schilt and Connell, 2007, discuss transitioning in the workplace), while other articles (e.g. Pepper and Lorah, 2008) included discussion of a number of themes.

### **3.1 Characteristics of Literature**

Examining the characteristics of a literature may tell us much about the nature of the extant knowledge on this particular topic or phenomenon. Figure 1 shows the number of reviewed papers that were published from 2000 onwards in the EBSCO, Reuters Web of Knowledge and Google Scholar databases; we can observe a growth in the interest surrounding trans\* people and their careers in the past decade. In many cases we may only speculate as to why this recent surge has come about, but as Taranowski (2008) suggests, the increasingly liberal society in the Western world will encourage more trans\* people to publically transition to their desired gender. As the



**Figure 1.** Number of publications on trans\* workplace/career experiences per year, 2000 – 2015.

population increases, there is an increased impetus on scholars within the business, management, sociology and career theory areas to examine it, for the sake of both trans\* employees and organizations.

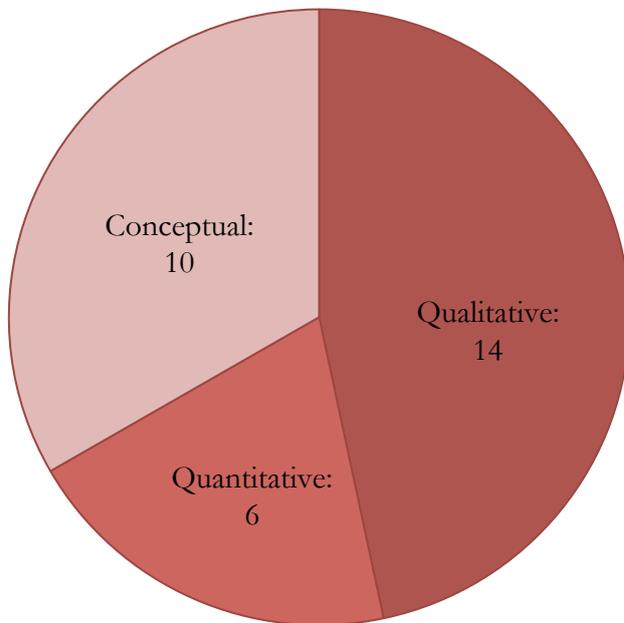
As shown in Table 1, research carried out in the United States dominates the vast majority of the literature pertinent to this review, with 25 out of 30 papers from or based in this country. A limitation of the existing limited studies on trans\* employees in the workplace is the USA-centricity. Even though the sample of the literature mostly comes from the USA, it may still inform researchers in other countries, where research on the topic may be scarce, but perhaps only on the major issues that trans\* people and their employers may face.

There is a relative lack of quantitative study performed in the business and management areas on trans\* issues (also noted by Law et al., 2011), with just less than 20% of the literature reviewed containing such research. The very low numbers

**Table 1. Details of the articles reviewed**

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Country/ Perspective</b>	<b>Methodology</b>
Badgett et al.	2009	Discrimination	USA	Quantitative
Barclay & Scott	2006	Transitioning	UK	Qualitative
Berry et al.	2003	Discrimination	USA	Qualitative
Brewster et al.	2012	Research Issues	USA	Quantitative
Brown	2012	General Career	USA	Qualitative
Budge et al.	2010	Transitioning	USA	Qualitative
Chung	2003	Research Issue	Western	Conceptual
Collins et al.	2015	HR	Western	Conceptual
Connell	2010	Gender	USA	Qualitative
Datti	2009	Career Counseling	USA	Conceptual
Davis	2009	HR	USA	Conceptual
Dietert & Dentice	2009	Discrimination	USA	Qualitative
Dietert & Dentice	2009	Discrimination	USA	Qualitative
Dispenza et al.	2012	Discrimination	USA	Qualitative
Hines	2010	General Career	UK	Qualitative
Irwin	2002	Discrimination	Australia	Quantitative
Kirk & Belovics	2008	General Career	USA	Conceptual
Law et al.	2011	General Career	USA	Quantitative
Mathy	2006	Disclosure	USA	Qualitative
O'Neil	2008	Career Counseling	USA	Conceptual
Pepper & Lorah	2008	Career Counseling	USA	Conceptual
Rudin et al.	2013	Inclusion	USA	Quantitative
Sangganjanavanich	2009	Transitioning	USA	Conceptual
Sangganjanavanich & Headley	2013	Transitioning	USA	Conceptual
Schilt	2006	Gender	USA	Qualitative
Schilt & Connell	2007	Transitioning	USA	Qualitative
Schilt & Wiswall	2008	Transitioning	USA	Quantitative
Scott et al.	2011	Pre-career	USA	Conceptual
Sowden et al.	2015	General Career	USA	Qualitative
Taranowski	2008	General Career	USA	Conceptual

of trans\* people (Gates, 2011), as well as issues concerning identity disclosure and fear of stigmatization, may render quantitative studies that focus solely on the trans\* population very challenging to perform. We can observe in Figure 3 that the



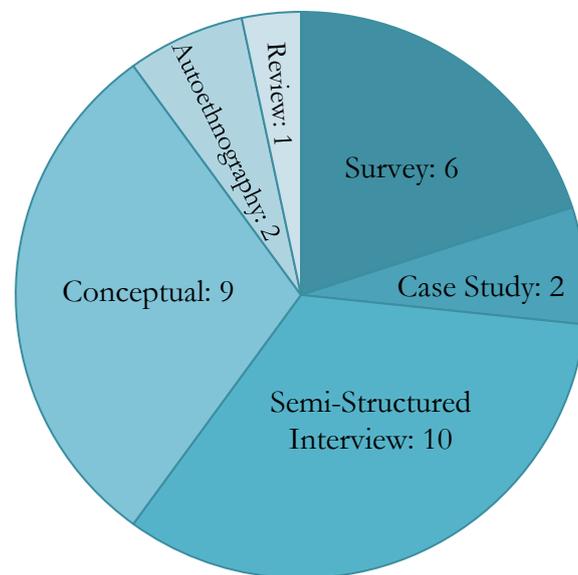
**Figure 2.** Type of research conducted in the 30 reviewed articles.

literature on the careers and workplace experiences of trans\* people is mostly comprised of semi-structured interview-centered articles, which seek to explore the phenomenon at first hand; or general explanatory articles, which seek to better understand it.

This tells us, perhaps, that the career of the trans\* person, and the common experiences and occurrences within it, remains somewhat of a mystery to the career scholar; there is too little theory built for it to be tested, or to be connected with more well studied contexts and

frameworks, as the research is still in its infancy. Even in the literature surrounding the careers and workplace experiences of the LGBT population, there exists little on specific trans\* issues (Law et al., 2011).

Where trans\* experiences



**Figure 3.** Types of method used in the 30 reviewed articles.

are noted, it is only as an aside, even in those articles that include the “LGBT” acronym in its title (Pepper & Lorah, 2008). It appears that the career and business

literature surrounding the trans\* population is somewhat of an island, small and almost uninhabited, cut off from the mainland. There is very little research that bridges the links between the careers of this subpopulation with the larger LGBT group, a fact that this may have repercussions in the pursuit of effective and equitable workplace policies and guidelines which assist both the individual and the company.

### **3.2 Pre-Career**

The pre-career theme deals with career-related issues of trans\* people before they actually enter employment, and mostly involves articles on personal, educational and social experiences. There is a very large gap of literature on the issues facing trans\* students, compared to research on lesbian, gay and bisexual students (Scott, Belke & Barfield, 2011). This translates into a lack of informed knowledge for those in positions to help trans\* students, such as career or guidance counselors in universities. As Goodrich (2012) points out, many college counselors are not knowledgeable about trans\* issues. As explored below, there are a number of unique challenges that trans\* people go through during their careers, including discrimination, transitioning and interpersonal problems surrounding their gender, so it is critical that information is available for those trans\* people who are just about to enter the workforce.

Schmidt and Nilsson (2006) find that LGB youth face a *bottleneck* when it comes to career development, because so much of their psychological resources are taken up with identity development. This may therefore lead to trouble before and during their early career, as proper preparation has not been taken. This bottleneck hypothesis has been widened to include trans\* students (Scott et al., 2011), who face similar identity development issues, and also experience added pressures to do with their transitioning to another gender presentation. Effrig, Bieschke and Locke (2011) find that trans\*

college students, whether or not they were seeking treatment, had higher levels of distress and victimization in comparison to their cisgender (non-trans\*) peers. Worries surrounding discrimination at school, future workplace discrimination or presenting as a new gender successfully at work compound to cause additional psychological stress that distracts some trans\* students from in-depth vocational decision making and thinking (Scott et al., 2011). However, as Datti (2009) suggests, processing internal psychological issues surrounding one's gender identity may be crucial for optimal career planning.

The lack of detailed and specific information and support available for trans\* students may be a crucial determinant in their future career success. With many unique obstacles and challenges to navigate, yet very limited resources upon which to draw, trans\* students find that they alone have to guide themselves through their career. However, the challenges they face before they enter the workplace mean they are unable to devote themselves fully to the task. Trans\* people and companies alike would benefit from the provision of expertise in school and university career guidance resources, in order to encourage more open communications with trans\* employees in the workplace, over the course of their careers.

### **3.3 The Job Search**

Articles in this theme were associated with the issues trans\* people face while looking for employment. Searching and applying for a job presents unique issues for the trans\* person who has transitioned, and who may have career experience obtained primarily under a different gender presentation and name (Pepper and Lorah, 2008; Sangganjanavanich, 2009). Walworth (2003) finds that starting at a new job can make it easier for those who have transitioned when it comes to interpersonal relations with

colleagues. Even if one desires to start afresh, however, institutional factors may make it difficult for one to leave their old life behind.

Budge et al. (2010) describe the difficulty trans\* people have in gaining employment in the USA. Not passing as one's preferred gender in job interviews was cited as a major reason, with employers realizing that the interviewee was trans\* and discriminating against them. Sometimes this is not openly communicated but was still suspected by the applicants to be the reason (Brown et al., 2012). In Ireland, a report by McNeil et al. (2013) found that 14% of the trans\* respondents believed they had denied a job on the basis of their trans\* identity, and 24% were unemployed and seeking work.

Even for those who successfully 'pass', a variety of problems still exist when searching for jobs in the trans\* person's life. The move from one gender expression to another, usually accompanied by a new name, can affect any trans\* person's *career capital*. Career capital is the assets that one has that can aid the success of one's employment and overall career (Inkson and Arthur, 2001), and is divided into *knowing-why* (the motivation and sense of purpose one has for one's career), *knowing-how* (the skills and knowledge one has) and *knowing-whom* (one's reputation, relationships and network). For example, the skills and experience that one can bring to a role may be misjudged or not seen by potentially new employers, if most of this experience occurred before transition (Sangganjanavanich, 2009), affecting the perceived *knowing-how* capital of that person. To fully show their experience and skills built up during their career, a person may have to disclose their trans\* status to the potential employer, running the risk of discrimination and stigma, and ruling out the possibility of a completely fresh start in their new gender

expression. 7% of respondents in a report by McNeil et al. (2013) said that they had not provided references from a previous job due to their gender history, in effect, cancelling out their *knowing-whom* capital. 8% of respondents reported not applying for certain jobs due to fear of being discriminated against or harassed at work, similar to participants in Brown et al.'s (2012) study. This suggests that the motivation and identification with one's work that makes up one's *knowing-why* capital may also be affected if one is trans\*. This also highlights that companies have a definite role to play in signaling to potential job applicants that their workplaces are inclusive of trans\* people.

Being trans\* may also have an impact on the types of jobs or industries one wishes to work in. Brown et al. (2012) found that, in their sample of male-to-female trans\* participants, many of the respondents had initially, before transitioning, worked in typically masculine and male-dominated fields, in an attempt to fulfill societal and familial expectations to act like a man. Post-transition, however, these pressures alleviated, and many participants moved to more traditionally female careers, which allowed them to express previously hidden aspects of their personality.

### **3.4 General Career**

Articles in this theme are related to the general issues that trans\* people face during their career that are not directly related to transitioning or looking for employment. The majority of these articles dealt with that discrimination that trans\* people face in the workplace. Employment discrimination is a prevalent issue for a large number of trans\* people, including, difficulty in getting a job (as explored above), losing jobs or being denied a promotion, healthcare coverage problems and interpersonal sexual or verbal harassment. Employment discrimination against trans\* people is an ongoing

problem. For instance, in Ireland today, 43% of respondents in one study (McNeil et al., 2013) report problems with work due to their trans\* identity. This included being fired or dismissed from their job (9%) and leaving a job due to harassment or discrimination (9%). In many countries, it may be easier for trans\* people to hide their trans status, if they wish, but in Ireland, where the population is much smaller, this may prove more difficult. One who wants to appear as cisgender in the workplace may then find themselves being outed at work, or at least be fearful of that happening, causing anxiety.

Dispenza, Watson, Chung and Brack (2012) outline the multitude of types of harassment and discrimination that trans\* people can face in the work: from interpersonal remarks or subtle micro-aggressions, for example, a colleague deliberately using incorrect gender pronouns when addressing the trans\* person, to more institutionalised discrimination, like workplaces not offering enough protection for trans\* people who have been discriminated against. Trans\* people can also face covert discrimination like malicious gossip and deliberate isolation from colleagues (Sangganjanavanich, 2009). In addition, interpersonal discrimination can lead to a large amount of continuous psychological stress for trans\* people (Budge et al., 2010; Dietert & Dentice, 2009; Irwin, 2002). Awareness of this within organizations would encourage counselling services specifically tailored to trans\* issues to be developed, as well as diversity training for the entire staff.

Collins et al. (2015) discuss how trans\* people suffer from exclusion in the workplace due to implicit gender roles and stigmatization, and offer suggestions as to how HRD practitioners can encourage the inclusion of trans\* people in the workplace. These include introducing a zero-tolerance policy for discriminatory actions and language;

having inclusive dress codes that allow fluid gender expression; modifying workplace policies to be inclusive of all gender identities; and learning how other companies have improved their workplace with regard to trans\* issues.

### **3.5 Transitioning in the workplace**

Most of the literature on trans\* careers reviewed focuses on the transition stage. Transitioning is the term used to describe one's change from one gender expression to another, and may refer not only to those who have crossed the gender binary, (i.e. male-to-female (MTF) and female-to-male (FTM) individuals), but also those who have begun and are in the midst of a gender presentation change (Brown et al., 2012).

A transition is a very complex and multi-faceted process that includes many challenges, both psychological and social (Sangganjanavanich & Headley, 2013). Transitioning may be subdivided into three distinct stages: *Pretransition*, *During Transition*, and *Posttransition* (Budge et al., 2010), but naturally may not always represent every person's experience. Pretransition involves coming out as trans\* to HR and colleagues but may not necessarily involve changing one's gender presentation yet (Budge et al., 2010; Grant, et al., 2011).

The next phase of the transition includes changing one's presentation to match that of one's innate gender identity. Changing one's gender presentation to another may include wearing clothes associated with that gender; changing the pronouns with which others identify you, including he, she or the gender-neutral they, zie and hir; or acting in a manner traditionally associated with that gender. During transition, typically gendered behaviors, conversation and social groups may change; this might be difficult for the transitioning person, particularly if social standing and

relationships change also (Schilt & Connell, 2007). This phase of transitioning may also involve the “real life experience” (RLE). The RLE is a period where the trans\* individual lives in their desired gender presentation, and depending on the jurisdiction, may be a requirement before gender reassignment is performed (Sagganjanavanich, 2009). Transitioning in the workplace can lead to the trans\* person facing a loss of respect, subtle stigmatization, emotional abuse, and physical threats (Budge et al., 2010).

Post-transition, trans\* people report that the changes in their gender presentation lead to changes in how they are treated both socially and professionally. Interpersonal harassment that one faces because of their transition may lead to their leaving a job (Dietert & Dentice, 2009) or being absent from work due to mental health problems (Davis, 2009), which may lead to obvious problems with their career progression and workplace performance. Some male-to-female (MTF) transsexuals report that their skills and abilities become devalued after they transition (Schilt and Connell, 2007) also find that, while conversely, female-to-male (FTM) transsexuals report increases in perceived authority and respect post-transition (Griggs, 1998), suggesting that, similar to cisgender people, gender-based discrimination is at play. Similarly, Schilt and Connell (2007) find that their MTF respondents report a loss of earnings of almost one third, while their FTM respondents report a slight increase in earnings. These findings suggest that it may be useful to study trans\* populations separately, rather than treating them as a homogenous sample – there clearly are unique challenges that each must face, intertwined with and related to more traditional issues of gender. Additionally, as mentioned above, research like this on trans\* issues is

relevant for employee groupings beyond the trans\* population, in this instance broader gender-related matters.

## **4. Implications for the Workplace**

### **4.1 Education**

A characteristic of the literature that is noted above is the relatively large proportion of the literature that was dedicated to explaining and clarifying concepts surrounding trans\* people. This highlights the lack of understanding in many places of what a trans\* person feels, and experiences. Without a basic grasp of this concept, however inaccessible it may be to cisgender practitioners, it is difficult to imagine how practices and policies that can help the trans\* employee could be introduced, or even entertained. As Collins et al. (2015) propose, there still exists confusion over how to treat trans\* people, because of traditionally accepted gender roles. A portion of the stigma surrounding being trans\*, and the resultant discrimination, may then be due to ignorance rather than sheer inherent malice on the part of colleagues or bosses. To combat this, information must be disseminated to all members of the company. Collins et al. (2015) highlight how HRD practitioners can aid the dissemination of information and the support of trans\* employees. Being proactive in this regard, rather than reactive, is important to ensure that trans\* people feel welcome in the workplace. For instance, interviews and/or focus groups with trans\* employees, openly sharing their experiences would benefit organizational stakeholders in better understanding the specific challenges they face in the workplace.

## **4.2 Hiring trans\* employees**

Employers have a large role to play in promoting the hiring of trans\* people, who, as discussed above, may feel alienated from a particular industry or workplace due to their trans\* identity. Employers should be aware that a trans\* person's work experience may have been undertaken using a different name and gender presentation. An open dialogue is therefore encouraged between HR practitioners and candidates who have openly identified as trans\*. In practical terms, when following up on work references for a candidate, it is recommended that the prospective employer to check with the candidate if their referees know them by a different name, in case they inadvertently "out" them, harming interpersonal relations and the candidate's career capital.

Employers can also ensure that their workplace is seen to be inclusive of trans\* people by promoting diversity in their hiring materials, for example, their website or graduate recruitment information. Applying to be included on a list of diversity champions (e.g. the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index in the USA, or Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index in the UK) will provide both a checklist of criteria to increase one's inclusivity and a chance to promote it to the public.

## **4.3 Bathroom Facilities**

In the past, many employers preferred employees undergoing transition to their desired gender to use single-room bathroom facilities or those available to people with disabilities, in order to avoid incidents of discrimination or complaints from other employees (Pepper & Lorah, 2008), or customers (e.g. as in Brown et al., 2012). Trans\* rights organizations (Human Rights Campaign, 2015; Transgender at Work,

2015) are unequivocal in advocating that a trans\* person must be allowed use the bathroom corresponding to their full-time gender presentation, whether or not they have fully transitioned yet. As Pepper and Lorah (2008) point out, trans\* individuals who are forced to use a bathroom not corresponding to their gender presentation will suffer considerable damage to self-esteem and confidence. From a HR perspective, this lowered morale may lead to less productivity (Pepper & Lorah, 2008) and a very toxic work environment for trans\* employees. One alternative may be to offer gender-neutral bathrooms for the use of all employees (Collins et al., 2015). The HRD function of an organization, (or, if this is not available, a HR manager) should contain in its initial training program generalized guidelines for employees on trans\* issues in the workplace (Collins et al., 2015), ensuring that employees are knowledgeable about their issues, and are able to ask questions, without singling out any trans\* people in the workplace as an example.

## **5. Recommendations for Future Research**

### **5.1 Income Disparities**

Many wage differential studies have been performed for the lesbian and gay community (examples include Allegretto & Arthur, 2001; Badgett, 1995, 2001; Blandford, 2004, Carpenter, 2007, Klawitter & Flatt, 1998), but only a small number (e.g. Schilt & Wiswall, 2008) have been performed to assess how the income of trans\* people differs from their cisgender peers. Those that do study this question, however, include in their sample only direct male-to-female or female-to-male transsexuals, i.e. those who have directly crossed the binarized gender line; research

on the income of gender-queer, intersex and other non-gender binary identified workers is still required. As described below, most research is confined to the United States; for tailor-made recommendations to take place, localized wage studies must be performed.

## **5.2 Identity Management**

Identity management refers to the strategies and decisions involved in choosing if and how to disclose one's trans\* status, sometimes known as "coming out". Whilst a relatively large amount of research has been conducted on the strategies, antecedents and consequences of a lesbian or gay person's identity management strategies in the workplace (e.g. Ragins and Cornwell, 2001; Ragins et al., 2007; King et al., 2008; Madera, 2010), less is known about the corresponding process with trans\* workers.

Similar to other members of the LGBT community, it may not just be a case of being "out" or "not out"; it is likely that there is a wide variety of strategies the trans\* person uses over the course of their life, according to the context, the workplace or group of people they are addressing. Knowing what antecedents would lead a trans\* person to come out in the workplace may be important in promoting an inclusive workplace for trans\* employees; however, more research is required to fully understand this phenomenon.

## **5.3 Research Methods**

A number of research methods are not represented in the reviewed article, for example, longitudinal studies and diary methods. Diary methods may be useful in this regard as it would allow the respondent complete control over the content of the data; as trans\* experiences have had not been researched much, the more exploratory

aspect to diary methods may open avenues of investigation that would not occur to a researcher using semi-structured interviews or survey methods, and highlight previously unseen phenomena or experiences. Longitudinal studies would provide more detailed information on ongoing phenomena, such as gender transition in the workplace.

### **5.3. Areas of study for future research**

As noted above, most of the research conducted on trans\* issues has taken place in the USA. These studies may inform scholars and practitioners interested in this topic of the major issues affecting trans\* employees, however, different cultural, policy and legislative contexts should also be taken into account. As American states differ greatly in the presence and scope of LGBT anti-discrimination laws, as well as cultural, religious and social perceptions of LGBT people and civil rights legislation, this may prove problematic when attempting to generalize U.S. studies for other countries, and even other U.S. states. For example, results from studies based in California will not be similar to results from studies based in India, where there is a very different social, political and historical landscape, and so any conclusions or implications drawn may not be of benefit. Many of the studies in this review were performed using participants from only one or two states, and thus may not be generalizable to another, more or less liberal state or area. Studies situated in other parts of the world are recommended to remedy this problem. Studies from a non-Western perspective were not found in this review (although articles not in the English language were excluded from the search). Academics, practitioners and trans\* people in non-Western countries therefore do not benefit from the limited amount of study that has been performed.

## 6. Conclusion

This chapter presented a systematic review conducted on the academic literature related to the careers and workplace experiences of the trans\* population, and examined the primary issues that a trans\* person faces in the workplace and during their career. The main themes unpacked in this chapter, *pre-career*, *the job search*, *general-career*, and *transitioning in the workplace*, all had a background of ongoing stigmatization for trans\* people, who can face challenges at every part of their career. The literature on trans\* issues was found to be USA-centric, with most of the articles containing research conducted in this country. While this research can indeed inform other countries practices, more specific knowledge which included political, cultural and social findings would help local trans\* populations, particularly those in non-Western countries. As previously noted by the first author (McFadden, 2015), many studies contained the acronym 'LGBT' in their title, but did not contain much discussion on the trans\* population. While there are many historical, social and political connections between the subgroups, in some cases, trans\* experiences may be different, and therefore require separate unpacking, or indeed separate studies.

Tran\* research, whilst nominally focused on one tiny population, may be useful in informing the general diversity debate. For example, to study trans\* issues is to draw attention to issues of gender and the hegemonized gender binary, as discussed by Schilt and Connell (2009) and Collins et al. (2015), and so could inform debate about the wider cisgender workplace population.

This is only the second major review of the literature surrounding the careers and workplace experiences of the trans\* population, the first being Chung (2003). It is the first to look solely at the trans\* population, rather than the aggregate LGBT grouping,

and so highlights in more detail the challenges and issues that this subpopulation face in the workplace and during their careers. It is also the first to review the literature in a systematic fashion, a method that is growing in popularity in the business and management fields. This chapter is relevant not only to the trans\* individuals who are facing or perhaps will face some of the issues raised here, and plan accordingly, but also to HR practitioners and line managers who are increasingly encountering issues surrounding workplace transitions (of both a physical *and* social nature) and the challenges associated with them. Scholars interested in diversity within the business setting may also take interest in the policies recommended here.

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†**Final Search Strings used to query databases:**

Lesbian, lesbians, gay, gays, bisexual, bisexuals, transgender, transgendered, transsexual, homosexual, homosexuals, homosexuality, bisexuality, sexual orientation, sexual identity, sexuality, sexual minority, same-sex, same-gender, queer, queering, female- to-male, male-to-female, LGBT, GLBT, GLB, LGB, heterosexism, heterosexist, identity disclosure, coming out, come out, homophobia, homophobic, workplace closet, stigma

Workplace, work, working, employment, employee, employer, employed, job, career, organization, organizational, workforce, diversity, vocation, vocational, career development

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