The Experiences of Black LGBQ Canadians within the Workplace

Honours Thesis Research

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<u>Abstract:</u>

This research examines the experiences of Black LGBQ people within the workplace in the Lower Mainland. It is important to explore these experiences because there is a significant lack of research regarding the experiences of Black LGBQ people in not only British Columbia but Canada. The theoretical framework of this study included critical race theory, feminist theory, intersectionality, and queer theory. These theories supported the findings of this research and helped to analyze patterns that emerged from the data collected. The literature review of this study guided the development of the interview guide and analysis of data. The literature review argues the limited research literature on the experiences of Black LGBQ people. For this study, 1 semi-structured interview was conducted in-person, and 3 were conducted over the phone. There were 1 cisgendered lesbian, 2 cisgendered bisexual women, and 1 cisgendered gay man interviewed, 3 of whom had university degrees. Participants worked in a range of workplaces (e.g., childcare, educational services, health care, non-profit organizations, sales and retail, and transportation). The research findings illustrated intersectional experiences between both Black women and Black men. The 4 key themes found in this research were 1) racism within the workplace, 2) inequity in promotions and opportunities within the workplace, 3) supervisors and responses to racism within the workplace and 4) relationship with colleagues and supervisors within the workplace. In the discussion chapter, an analysis of the key findings are supported by the theoretical framework and research literature is undertaken. Three policy recommendations for workplaces within the service sector and the labour market are outlined to better equip workplaces with the knowledge and understanding of various forms of discrimination demonstrated within the workplace.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Chapter Summary

This chapter will first provide an introduction to the research project by explaining the purpose of this research, the socio-historical context, the orientation to the research, followed by a preview of the research methodology, theoretical framework, critical approaches, and the identification of some expectations and concerns surrounding this research. The introduction will be followed by a literature review which will unpack the situations that shape the experiences of Black LGBTQ people.

Purpose of Research

This project sought to unveil the experiences of Black LGBTQ Canadians. However, because trans participants were not recruited, the focus is on the experiences of Black LGBQ Canadians in workplaces within the service sector and the labour market (i.e., sectors of administration, childcare, communication, education, finance, food, healthcare, hospitality, housekeeping, insurance, manufacturing, media, public transportation, real estate, recreation, retail, sales and marketing, tourism, and trades). The acronym Black LGBQ refers to Black lesbian, bisexual, gay, and queer people. For this research, the meaning of a workplace represents work environments such as the labour market or service sector. The rational to conduct extensive research around Black LGBQ people stemmed from the desire and need to learn more about their everyday experiences including, experiences of employment, discrimination and feelings of oppression, experiences of criminalization and incarceration, and stereotypes and misconceptions. Researching this area is important because there remains a lack of information

and recognition surrounding Black LGBQ experiences, let alone within the workplace. This study aimed to address the research question, what are the experiences of Black LGBQ Canadians in workplaces within the service sector and the labour market? As well as unpacking additional research questions, which included, how are Black LGBQ people represented within the workplace? What are some noticeable barriers of oppression for Black queer people within workplaces? What is it about workplaces within the service sector and the labour market that Black LGBQ people susceptible to discrimination? How are discriminatory actions dealt with within a service sector and labour market workplace?

Furthermore, this research aimed to captivate public attention, as this matter requires the support of society as a whole. This research caters to audiences such as research participants, advocacy groups and organizations such as, Black Lives Matter Vancouver as well as policymakers, social justice institutions, academic scholars, faculties of social sciences, and post-secondary teachers and students to help create further recognition around the experiences of LGBQ people. The goal of this research was to generate critical qualitative analysis of the experiences and perspectives of Black LGBQ people within the workplace. It sought to unveil a range of experiences amongst Black LGBQ with the intention of magnifying an important social structural issue. Ultimately, this research aimed to answer the following question: What are the experiences of Black LGBQ Canadians in workplaces within the service sector and the labour market?

Socio-Historical Context

Both historical and current research examining the lives of Black Canadians and LGBQ people captured several socio-historical experiences of marginalization. Literature that examines the experiences of Black Canadians encompasses systemic oppression through acts of discrimination, slavery, immigration, and racial solidarity (Winks, 1997). Black slavery in Canada began in 1970; whereby, Britain began to import Black slaves into Quebec. Historical research surrounding Black Canadians explains that "the number of slaves increased rapidly. The defence of slavery received a number of vocal and well-informed advocates. Negro slaves virtually supplanted panis slaves, even in Quebec. Because many of the slaves came from larger plantations where they had been trained to specific skills, the variety of work done by Negroes was greatly expanded. Since a number of the Negroes were freedmen, slave, and free Negroes now lived side by side" (Winks, 1997, p. 28). This demonstrates how many people of colour and White Canadians, during the time, would automatically assume that the existence of Black individuals was solely for servitude.

The socio-historical marginalization of LGBQ people primarily focuses on the implementation, protection, and representation of queer human rights in Canada. Sexual regulation in Canada concerning the civil rights of lesbian and gay individuals led to national security campaigns commencing war against lesbian and gay individuals (Kinsman & Gentile, 2010). However, the establishment of queer activist movements made several successful incorporations and alterations to lesbian and gay human rights. Kinsman and Gentile's (2010) literature states, "there has been significant progress on basic human rights protection, spousal rights, family recognition rights, and same-sex marriage rights. This has led to some view the existing federal form of the Canadian state, and particularly the Charter, as crucial to queer

liberation" (p. xvi). Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* expresses the

rights and legal protection of LGBQ people under the *Rights of LGBTI persons* by interpreting

the experiences of many members of the LGBQ community in Canada before 1969. In 1977, The

first alterations were made to the *Canadian Charter*. The alterations were made to the provincial

charter of human rights; whereby, sexual orientation became a prohibited grounds for

discrimination (Heritage Canada, 2018). However, even with the formal incorporation of queer

rights, there continued to be a lack of social acceptance towards lesbian and gay individuals

(Kinsman & Gentile, 2010). Queer people continued to experience acts of violence and hate

crime due to their sexual identity. In 2014, Statistics Canada reported the rate of violent

victimization among individuals who self‑identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). After

controlling for other factors, the odds of violent victimization were higher for lesbian, gay, and

bisexual Canadians' than their heterosexual counterparts.

In 1969, homosexuality was deemed as a criminal offence due to acts of sexual deviance

(Everitt & Camp, 2014). The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) was authorized as a civil

service to surveil anyone suspicious of engaging in homosexual practices (Everitt & Camp,

2014). Those that were found to be either lesbian or gay were subjected to interrogation.

The government of Canada outlines the heritage, culture, and experiences of LGBQ under

the *Rights of LGBTI persons*. The document discussed the historical accounts of discrimination,

punishment, and criminalization of LGBQ people in Canada before 1969 (Heritage, 2018). It

incorporates the legal protection towards LGBQ people by highlighting the alteration made to the

Canadian Human Rights Act (1985) in 1996 to include sexual orientation as a prohibited grounds

for discrimination (Heritage Canada, 2018). However, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and*

Freedoms (1982) fails to incorporate sexual orientation under section 15, which states an individual's equality rights and the prohibited grounds for discrimination. Based on the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (1985), the prohibited grounds of discrimination are the following: race, nationality, ethnicity, colour, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, family status, and genetic characteristics (CHRA, 1985). The purpose of underlining the grounds of discrimination under the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (1985) is to maintain equal opportunity among all individuals. This allows for accommodating individual needs by providing equal opportunities. Identifying the legal protection and basic human rights of queer people of colour would increase representation and identified the gaps in the literature surrounding Black LGBQ people.

Orientation to Research

There remains a limited amount of research on the experiences of Black LGBQ people within the workplace (Mayeda, 2005). The thought of conducting this research transpired through wanting to learn more about the areas of social justice and the need to cultivate awareness around the experiences of visible minorities. This research intended to capture an authentic yet appreciative perspective around the experiences of Black LGBQ Canadians. This study intended to approach research data through an anti-oppressive and intersectional perspective.

Preview of Theoretical Framework

The theories that guided my research project were critical race theory, feminist theory, queer theory, and intersectionality. Firstly, critical race theory examines racism and power in

association with social, political, and economic inequality (McCann & Kim, 2003). The significance of this theory to this study is the identification and communication of racism in the experiences of Black LGBQ Canadians.

Secondly, feminist theory critically analyzes gender roles within social, political, and economic realms (Code, 2000). It explores issues surrounding gender inequality and creates reformative ideas for social change. Feminist theory also took into account concepts and beliefs that contribute to the marginalization of social groups, concepts such as patriarchy, capitalism, misogyny, sexism, and white feminism (McCann & Kim, 2003, p. 1). Most importantly, feminist theory explores the concept of intersectionality by Kimberle Crenshaw. Intersectionality refers to the inclusiveness of a diverse group of women with different identities (race, gender, sexual orientation, age, class, disability, and religion) (Code, 2000). This research examined the intersections of race, gender, and sexual identity based on individual interviews.

Lastly, queer theory analyzes gender and cultural studies that reflect issues among marginalized groups. Queer theory is representative of elements like individual identity, non-conformity of sexuality and gender norms, and the opposition to heteronormativity (Code, 2000). This theory supports a wide range of sexual identities alongside arguing against the normalization of heterosexual practices in several cultures and societies.

These theories guided my research by providing an understanding of key concepts and frameworks. They also helped to identify and explain issues by addressing the causal factors. The theoretical framework of this study supports the patterns that emerge from participant data as well as the research analysis. It also supports the key themes found through the research analysis.

This research also incorporated a qualitative methods approach. It also incorporated an anti-oppressive, intersectional, and activist approach. An anti-oppressive approach seeks to explore and eliminate various forms of oppression that certain social groups and individuals are forced to endure (Reid et al., 2017). An anti-oppressive approach also focuses on developing and sustaining social change by creating knowledge through anti-oppressive research (Potts & Brown, 2005). This approach seeks to centralize social justice as the ultimate goal of identifying the problems among different social and political groups and articulating the matter by addressing potential solutions that incorporate an anti-oppressive approach (Potts & Brown, 2005). Research by Potts and Brown (2005) justifies that by sustaining an anti-oppressive approach within a study helps to recognize practices of oppression and privilege among social groups and social relations. Intersectionality is based on a term coined by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) known as intersectionality. It is an approach that understands sexuality, gender, race/ethnicity, and class as intersecting with patriarchal power to shape one's experience (Reid et al., 2017). An activist approach focuses on the intersections of both gender identities and racial identities (Marine & Trebisacci 2018). This approach also implies that "activists also employ various strategies with peers, reframing conversations around hook-up culture and promoting healthy relationships" (Marine & Trebisacci, 2018, p. 649). Thus, reflecting the different ways to raise awareness surrounding societal issues.

Preview of Research Method

To answer the research question, what are the experiences of Black LGBQ Canadians in workplaces within the service sector and the labour market? As well as unpacking additional

research questions, which included, how are Black LGBQ people represented within the workplace? What are some noticeable barriers of oppression for Black queer people within workplaces? What is it about workplaces within the service sector and labour market that make it more susceptible for Black LGBQ people to be discriminated against? How are discriminatory actions dealt with within a service sector and labour market workplace? Research data was collected from 4 semi-structured, qualitative interviews. For this study, 1 semi-structured interview was conducted in person and 3 were conducted over the phone. The participants had to be 1) 18+ years old, 2) reside within the Lower-Mainland, and 3) identify as either Black, African, or Caribbean, and as members of the LGBTQ community. By conducting semi-structured interviews, it provided an insight into participants' experiences and a chance to obtain a greater understanding of the context behind each experience. Conducting interviews also allowed for questions to be tailored specifically to the research question, which provided the opportunity to collect a broad range of data including, various perspectives, opinions, and interpretations regarding the specific sample of interest. The sampling approach that was used in this research project was convenience sampling. Convenience sampling supports participant recruitment because it saves time and money at the expense of reliable information (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participant interviews ranged from 45 to 60 minutes. The data collected from participant interviews were audio-recorded with a tape recorder alongside handwritten notes. The semi-structured interviews were guided by an interview guide (Appendix B) developed with the principal investigator. A two-step coding process allowed us to analyze sections of each interview transcript and to highlight specific themes that emerged from the data (Reid et al., 2017). The theoretical framework also supported the analysis of this research. It also helped to

justify the experiences of discrimination of Black LGBQ people to develop greater awareness.

This research took into account four main ethical challenges when it came to conducting research

involving human participants, which included data security, maintaining confidentiality, avoiding

retraumatization, and obtaining a sufficient pool of research participants. Drawing on research

literature contributed to the overall context of this project. Next, I will discuss the research

literature on the experiences of Black LGBQ people, which was examined through academic

research, Canadian law, and Canadian legislative documents. The literature review of this study

focused on unpacking and providing context on the historical and contemporary experiences of

Black LGBQ people.

CHAPTER 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Chapter Summary

This chapter will discuss the theoretical framework for this study and how it guides the methodology, data analysis, and interpretation of the research findings. The theoretical frameworks (critical race theory, feminist theory, intersectionality, and split labour market theory) and an anti-oppressive approach. This chapter also focuses on examining the historical and contemporary literature on lived experiences of Black, LGBQ, and Black LGBQ people. I reviewed various forms of literature such as scholarly studies, legislative Acts, and reports. The research literature also incorporates Black LGBTQ people's lived experiences within the United States to ensure proper validation of systemic social structural issues. Both American and Canadian literature generates greater insight into the lives of Black LGBTQ people. The literature review not only encompasses the historical context, habitual experiences, experiences of employment, experiences of discrimination, and contributing factors such as stereotypes and misconceptions of Black LGBTQ people, but it also expands on the experiences of criminalization, incarceration, and oppression. By addressing these broader experiences of Black LGBTQ people it allows to capture various historical and contemporary forms of practice towards Black LGBTQ people. Both the theoretical framework and literature review supports the broader experiences of Black LGBQ people as it provides a better understanding of a marginalized population. Therefore, a more in-depth interpretation of the multiple factors that further instigate the experiences of Black LGBQ people within the workplace.

Part one of this literature review provides an exploratory and descriptive analysis of the representation and lived experiences of Black people throughout historical and contemporary

literature. This portion focuses on qualitative forms of research and aims to interpret the context

and reasoning behind the experiences of Black people. By examining the historical and

contemporary literature surrounding the lived experiences of Black people, I intended to obtain a

genuine interpretation of the experiences that Black people commonly face in society. These

experiences may or may not contribute to the overall experiences that Black people encounter

within the workplace. It was also important to keep in mind that even if some of the literature

surrounding Black people may seem less relevant to the specific research topic; these experiences

contribute to a greater understanding of the experiences of Black people.

Theoretical Framework

Critical race theory examines racism and power in association with social, political, and

economic inequality (Code, 2000). It examines the hierarchical influence that dominant groups

have on other racial groups (Furman et al., 2018). The importance of incorporating critical race

theory in this research is to identify and communicate power structures in society that contribute

to social inequality and various forms of oppression. Critical race theory exposes the struggles of

Black people and communities by focusing on the overarching structural power of racism

(Alderman et al., 2018). Critical race theory is said to "draw important relationships between race

and other axes thus illuminating the way racism links with other forms of injustice" (Alderman et

al., 2018, p. 233). This indicates that influential groups also have the power to affect other

marginalized groups. Research which examines the intersections of race, gender and class within

an educational context emphasizes how "critical race theorists argue that the majority of racism

remains hidden beneath a veneer of normality and it is only the more crude and obvious forms of

racism that are seen as problematic by most people" (Gillborn, 2015, p. 278). These forms of

racism are portrayed through limited opportunities, underrepresentation of groups, and a lack of

equality, which demonstrate the power imbalance amongst different racial groups in society

(Furman et al., 2018). Critical race theory also helps to understand the challenges associated with

a dominant perspective when it comes to transforming social structures to be more inclusive of

marginalized groups (Furman et al., 2018)

Feminist theory critically analyses gender roles within social, political, and economic

realms. It explores issues surrounding gender inequality and creates reformative ideas for social

change (Code, 2000). Feminist theory also takes into account the concepts and beliefs that

marginalize racial groups such as patriarchy, capitalism, misogyny, sexism, and racism (McCann

& Kim, 2003, p. 1). More importantly, the concept of intersectionality coined by Kimberlé

Crenshaw (1989) allows us to examine the multiple intersections of gender, sexuality, and

racism. Intersectionality is the understanding of different social identities (race, gender, sex,

sexual orientation, age, class, colour, nationality/ethnicity, disability, and religion) (Code, 2000).

According to Furman et al. (2018), intersectionality supports discussions around the implications

of White supremacy on the lived experiences of members of the queer community, especially

those that are queer and transgender. For example, Bostwick et al. (2018) research on depression

and victimization amongst a sample of bisexual and lesbian women, found that

> When considering the intersection of race/ethnicity and sexual identity, Black bisexual and
>
> Black lesbian women had significantly lower odds of depression than White lesbian
>
> women, despite their higher reports of victimization. (p. 131)

This demonstrates how using an intersectionality framework contributes to analyzing social problems, practices, and policies to encourage a better representation and understanding of the queer community.

Another theory that guides this research is split labor market theory. Split labor market theory examines the dynamics of equalization and exclusion within the Canadian labour market. This theory expands on the significance of class relations as a plausible means to higher-paid labour. However, ethnic and racial groups are said to be exploited for cheaper labour (Bonacich, 1972). The split labor market theory, according to theorist Edna Bonacich (1972), "emphasizes strategies of closure, pursued by high priced labour, and only briefly comments on an additional option or alternative. Higher-priced labour does tend to protect itself from the competition of cheap labour by closing off the market. But it can also be seen to follow a different course, that of equalization. It attempts to avoid being substituted or downgraded by raising the value of cheap labour, and thus eliminating, or mitigating, the competition between then" (p. 556). This theory supports this project by demonstrating how the Canadian labour market takes a capitalist stance and lacks perspective on the history and oppression of queer people. According to Bonacich's (1972) research, there are three dynamics to split labor markets. The first dynamic is business and employers, which aims to maintain a cheap labour force to compete with other businesses (Bonacich, 1972). A cheap labour force keeps the cost of labour lower. The second dynamic is, higher-paid labour, this group fears cheaper paid labour as it tends to forcefully relocate higher-paid labour such as farmers, small businesses, entrepreneurs. It also addresses the class conflict that exists between higher-paid labour and cheaper paid labour. The third dynamic is cheaper labour, whereby employers benefit by paying less for the cost of labour. However,

they seek a quick return (Bonacich, 1972). The split labor market theory argues the disparities that minority groups such as the queer communities experience within the workplace.

Queer theory is representative of elements like individual identity, non-conformity of sexuality and gender norms, and the opposition of heteronormativity (Code, 2000). This theory supports a wide range of sexual identities alongside arguing against the normalization of heterosexual practices in societies and cultures. The normalization of heterosexuality is understood as a form of coercion in society (Rumens et al., 2019). Queer theory also argues that there are an underrepresentation and a lack of queer activism in academic projects (Rand, 2006), thus imposing restrictions on the representation of the queer community within workplaces. Queer theory from an academic perspective mirrors queer activism as they both work towards identifying and understanding the queer community and their experiences (Rand, 2006).

Lastly, this project is also guided by an anti-oppressive approach that looks at eliminating oppression from various social groups and individuals (Reid et al., 2017). This approach also seeks to centralize social justice as the ultimate goal to increasing equity and reducing discriminatory behaviour. The integration of theoretical debates and an anti-oppressive approach helps to argue the situational extremities that Black LGBQ people tend to experience. It also helps to address the need for social structural change to better support the needs of Black people.

The integration of these theoretical perspectives guided the methodology, data analysis, and interpretation of my research findings. These theories supported my research by providing an understanding of the key concepts such as discrimination, workplace, the rights of queer people, and guiding the interpretation of the data (e.g. themes that emerge). These theories also helped to

identify and explain issues such as wage gaps, employment opportunities, and discriminatory actions experienced by Black LGBQ participants in the study.

Literature Review Part 1: The Experiences of Black People

Historical Context

The literature that examines the lived experiences of Black people encompasses systemic forms of oppression through acts of discrimination, slavery, immigration, and racial solidarity (Winks, 1997). Black slavery in Canada began in 1767; whereby, Britain began to import Black slaves into Quebec. Historical research by Winks (1997) surrounding Black Canadians explains the following:

> The number of slaves increased rapidly. The defense of slavery received a number of vocal and well-informed advocates. Negro slaves virtually supplanted panis slaves, even in Quebec. Because many of the slaves came from larger plantations where they had been trained to specific skills, the variety of work done by Negroes was greatly expanded. Since a number of the Negroes were freedmen, slave, and free Negroes now lived side by side. (p. 28)

This demonstrates how many people of colour and White people during the time, would automatically assume that the existence of Black individuals was solely for slavery. During 1813-1816, Black refugees were brought to Nova-Scotia after passing through the Atlantic for servitude (Winks, 1997). However, there were many more slaves then the Nova Scotian legislature and the British government had expected. This resulted in a mass population of Black slaves. Winks (1997) explains that "neither the Nova Scotian legislature nor the British

government was prepared to provide the long-range support or the careful planning necessary for the resettlement of a group of displaced persons so inadequately equipped to meet their own needs" (p. 120). This ultimately led to the starvation of many Black people as conditions slowly became uninhabitable due to the ineffective organization of proper residency by British and Nova Scotian governments. Nevertheless, the attempts to abolish slavery began in 1851 with the establishment of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada (Winks, 1997). The organization aimed to "aid in the extinction of Slavery all over the world', by any lawful and practical means" (Winks, 1997, p. 255). The Anti-Slavery Society of Canada emphasizes the global importance of abolishing African-American slavery for refugees to obtain freedom. However, Thornhill's (2008) research reveals that Black immigration in Canada prompted racial hostility of White people against Black people due to the fear of the protection and comfort of White people. Many of these socio-historical forms of marginalization continue to affect the lives and lived experiences of Black people today.

In 1850, the United States passed the *Fugitive Slave Act,* which allowed the federal government to capture Black slaves that were escaping enslavement and bringing them back to their slave owners (Basinger, 2003). The Act led to nearly 3,000 Black slaves to migrate to Canada through the underground railroad system within a month of the passing of this law (Reese, 2011). Research by Reese (2011) elaborates on how "Canada provided the most secure safe-haven in North America for Black fugitives. Canada also provided a safe-haven for free Black escaping the vicious and unremitting discrimination they faced in the U.S." (p. 209). As Canada became the promised land for many Black slaves, it was not long after that Blacks encountered the same type of mistreatment from Canada as they did from the United States

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(Reese, 2011). In the early 1900s, many Black people who were migrating to Canada in search of work and greater opportunities were faced with restrictions due to Canada's first *Immigration Act*, which was passed in 1869 (Archives Canada, 2019). The first immigration Act imposed barriers such as restricting entry into Canada for many racial groups, including Black communities.

Furthermore, in the 1960s and 1970s, African-Canadians were living in a small village called Africaville in Halifax, Nova Scotia (Remes, 2018). Approximately 400 former Black loyalists that had survived the American Revolution had settled and established a Black community in the area. Remes (2018) research on Africville explains how the City of Halifax destroyed many Black lives living in the area, and how "for years, Africville was deprived of municipal services, and left with inadequate police protection and sewage services, no running water, and no viable educational system, creating the very "slum" conditions which the city ostensibly sought to remedy by its destruction" (Remes, 2018, p. 223). Residence of Africville were forced to relocate by the city because of the plans to develop new housing. This historical context continues to shape Black LGBQ people's lives in Canada. These historical events impact Black LGBQ people's employment experiences.

Employment

The literature surrounding Black people and employment describe experiences of increased inequality within the Canadian labour market due to continuous forms of discrimination. Black people were found to be either unemployed, underpaid, or lack educational qualifications for job opportunities (Mensah, 2002). Black women, on the other hand, experienced a greater impact of

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gender inequalities when it came to working within the Canadian labour market. Mensah (2002) states

> While some of the labour market characteristics of Black women are similar to those of 'all visible minority women'. Black women have a higher labour force participation rate and a higher unemployment rate, and they derive a higher percentage of their income from government transfer payments. (p. 153)

This demonstrates how Black women face racial and gender disparity when it comes to seeking a job within the labour market.

One way racial degradation impacts Black lives today is within the labour market. Research literature surrounding labor market discrimination articulates the stereotypical generalizations conveyed against Black people (Pager et al., 2009). Research conducted by Pager et al. (2009) states,

> The growing importance of soft skills, ethnic heterogeneity, and job seekers with criminal records suggest the persistence or increasing incidence of discrimination in contemporary low-wage labor markets. Whether based on statistical generalizations or inaccurate stereotypes, preconceived notions about the characteristics or desirability of black men relative to other applicant types are likely to structure the distribution of opportunity along racial lines. (p. 780)

This research confirms that racial discrimination within the labour market exists. Nevertheless, the same study indicates that there is a staggering hourly wage difference between Black men and White men, which ranges between 10 to 20 percent (Pager et al., 2009). These findings demonstrate how race depicts one's wages; thereby, underlining a pressing issue of race

differences in human capital (Pager et al., 2009). This illustrates the effects of discrimination against Black people working within the labour market. Hasford's (2011) research also explores workplace oppression among Black youth and the concern towards increased amounts of racialization, stereotypes, unequal opportunities and gender-based disadvantages.

Mensah (2002) discusses how prevalent racism continues to be within the Canadian labour market, and how evident it is that the labour market sustains itself through a race-based hierarchy. In this hierarchy, White dominant groups are at the top of the labour market, and Black people are at the lower end of the latter (Mensah, 2002; Hou & Coulombe, 2010). Research surrounding the experiences of Black people within the labour market indicates that they are highly susceptible to mistreatment by others, specifically racism (Mensah, 2002; Hou & Coulombe, 2010). Intersectionality can also be used to understand how Black women face additional barriers and stigma in the labour market due to their intersecting racial and gender identities. Brown and Misra's (2003) research, which discusses the intersections of gender and race in the labour explains that "the evidence for intersections of race and gender in the labor market focuses on the three economic domains. The first two, wages and discrimination, lie at the heart of debates on labor market inequality. The third domain, immigration and domestic labor, represents one of the richest sources of research on intersectionality in the labor markets conducted by multiracial feminist sociologists" (p. 495). Ultimately, this unveils how intersections such as race and gender have a distinguishable oppressive effect on Black women.

Split labour market theory is one component of segmentation theory, which explains the increase in racial inequalities within the Canadian labour market. This theory expands on the reasoning behind capitalist economies (Mensah, 2002). The split labour market theory, according

to theorist Bonacich, "demonstrates how race is often used to differentiate the price of labour in a way that benefits employers and majority workers at the expense of Blacks and other minorities. Bonacich points out that in a split labour market, it is uncommon to find White workers using their racial privileges to monopolize the better-paying positions or to receive higher wages for doing the same work as their non-White counterparts" (Bonacich, 1972, p. 136). It shows how discrimination is a key structural conflict in the Canadian labour market. It may also unveil the conflict of interest between different racial groups (Bonacich, 1972). Additionally, the perception of both Black adults and youth tend to be affiliated with low-paying jobs that require a low skill set. However, according to Hasford (2011), Black youth, "tend to work in areas such as food services, retail, customer service, and factories, doing jobs that usually involve low pay, low skill, and low job security, with few meaningful opportunities for learning or applying skills, learned in school" (p. 19). This quality of work and skill set contributes to the oppression that Black people experience; however, it is also hard for Black youth to further develop their education and skill set at a young age to avoid stigmatization.

The labour market and service sector type jobs pay minimum wage. This type of work environment is often accompanied by wage discrimination, antagonism, competition, and inequality (Makabe, 1981). Literature by Calliste (1995) discusses the implications for people of colour on employment equity by arguing the split labor market theory by Edna Bonacich (1972). Calliste (1995) explains that "a split labor market exists when the cost of labor differs substantially along ethnic lines for the same work or would differ if they did the same work" (p. 299). Employees from ethnic backgrounds that work within the labour market are paid less in comparison to employees of dominant ethics groups. This is because employers choose to cut

labour costs by paying employees of visible ethnic groups less than dominant ethnic groups. This results in ethnic antagonism, under-representation of minority groups, and racial wage gaps within the workplace.

Additionally, Mensah (2002) includes a case study in his research called *The Case of Black Domestic Women from the Caribbean,* which focuses on the recruitment of Black women within the Canadian labour market. In the 1900s, Black women from overseas were recruited based on their job performances. However, these women received lower-wages than White recruits. The recruitment of Black women ended when panic-struck over the thought of an increase in Black women migrating to Canada. According to Thornhill (2008), in the 1950s, the Canadian government began recruiting young Black women from the Caribbeans. These women were designated to work and assist the needs of Canadian families. In 1955, the Canadian government began recruiting Black women from Jamaica and Barbados under a specific recruitment guideline. Mensah (2002) specifies that "eligible recruits had to be single, 18 to 35 years of age, in good health, and with a minimum of Grade 8 education" (p. 151). Black women were put to work in domestic services. After a year of employment, Black women were granted landed immigrant status. The majority of the Black women that were working in domestic services were servants. This case demonstrates the hardship of racial oppression that Black women were forced to endure as well as the lack of recognition of equity for people of colour working in the service sector and labour market.

Furthermore, Statistics Canada confirms that Black people are people of a visible minority. This racial status is part of the enactment of the *Employment Equity Act;* whereby, visible minorities are labelled to promote awareness within the workplace (Statistics Canada, 2019).

This Act requires employers to promote fair and proactive treatment of visible minorities. Although the *Employment Equity Act* is a means to encourage treatment towards visible minorities (Black people), it has also led to additional racial barriers and class matters concerning patterns of systemic discrimination (Statistics Canada, 2019). Ultimately, these patterns of systemic discrimination contribute to the ongoing experiences of discrimination and oppression.

Experiences of Discrimination and Oppression

There are only a handful of rights that protect Black LGBQ individuals in Canada. The Canadian government specifies the grounds of discrimination under the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (1977). This prohibits discrimination against an individual's race, gender, age, sex, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, and family status (CHRA, 1977). According to Dranoff (2011), the *Human Rights Act* states that discrimination is prohibited in employment, accommodation, services, and facilities in Canada. Nevertheless, discrimination continues to exist in Canadian workplaces. Research literature establishes that racism is apparent within the dominant culture and that systemic racism further contributes to unequal job access, mobility, and quality (Hasford, 2016). Discriminatory practices against Black people are a form of hate crime, which is most often disregarded by law enforcement officials and the public (Dranoff, 2011). This indicates that there is a need for further examination and alterations to discriminative policies surrounding people of a visible minority. However, the literature reveals that Black people in Canada continue to face discrimination in several areas in their lives.

To better understand the experiences of Black people, we must first consider Black people's experiences with racism through dehumanization, racial marginalization, stigmatization,

racial degradation, racial mythologies, and stereotypes and misconceptions. More importantly, Black people experience racism through a historical context of oppression (Maynard, 2017). This might be because of the high-level of racialization and a low-level of justification and accountability by the government that violence against Black people continues to exist. Likewise, critical race theory argues that there is systemic racism in society. By examining the experience of discrimination surrounding Black people, critical race theory acknowledges the deep racism which lies in political, social, and legal systems (Code, 2000; Solorzano et al., 2000) The experiences of Black people regarding issues of racism validates that discriminatory practices need further attention. Otherwise, racial degradation against Black people will continue into the near future and will find new ways to impact the lives of Black people.

Another contemporary form of discrimination that research unveils is the normalization of verbal and physical degradation of particularly Black transgender people (Browne et al., 2011). There are reportedly increasing rates of hate crime against Black transgender people, according to the Browne et al. (2011) study. Research further highlights that "the trans women of colour do not seem to have a claim to 'proper' femininity and thus to feminine victimhood. They are constructed as failing the norms of white respectable femininity. These norms are simultaneously 'cis norms' of alignment between genitals 'that nature intended' and perceived gender, entangled with norms of behaviour, sexuality and attire" (Vähäpassi, 2019, p. 94-95). The normalization of cisgender claims demonstrated through various forms of entertainment and media depictions is a major factor in the ongoing discrimination and oppression that Black transgender people today face.

Intersectionality theory supports anti-discrimination measures by emphasizing multiple forms of discrimination and its effects. A study by Mercat-Bruns (2017) explores issues of equality and liberty through an intersectional lens. They explain how "the single-ground approach of anti-discrimination law fails to recognize the discrimination experienced by people who are at the intersection of several grounds and, according to the American conception of discrimination, at the intersection of several classes of workers protected by the law. Consequently, the law does not reflect the unique characteristics of the factors of exclusion burdening these workers. Crenshaw gives the example of Black women, whose experiences are very different from those of white women" (p. 47). The *Canadian Human Rights Act* (1985) does not serve to protect the rights of Black LGBTQ people who sit in several intersections. The concept of intersectionality with relevance to the grounds of discrimination allows for a better representation of equality amongst Black LGBTQ people.

A central theme in the research literature was Black people's experiences and feelings of oppression. For example, Black youth are forced to deal with the psychological implications of racial oppression (Hasford, 2011). Black communities also face oppression through state control, psychological factors, political factors, and ecological levels (personal, relational, and collective) (Hasford, 2011). According to research literature, racial microaggressions are increasingly prevalent among ethnic groups such as the Black community (Hollingsworth et al., 2017). Racial microaggressions are described as "verbal, behavioural, and environmental racial slights or insults directed to a person who is an ethnic minority group member" (Hollingsworth et al., 2017, p. 105). They are found to contribute to high levels of stress and depression in many young Black adults. Racial microaggressions are said to produce feelings of self-doubt in many young Black

female adults, particularly those in college and university (Hollingsworth et al., 2017). Research

distinguishes that ongoing encounters with racial microaggressions among Black female students

result in significantly high rates of suicidal ideations (Hollingsworth et al., 2017). Critical race

theory, on the other hand, addresses that racial microaggressions represent a paradigm shift due

to racial discourses in education (Solorzano et al., 2000). Critical race theory also underlines that

the lack of cultural diversification and representation in education largely contributes to the

continuous subordination and discrimination of Black people.

The concept of intersectionality helps to identify the hierarchies amongst social classes and

races and how they interlock with oppressions. Moore explains how Black feminists are

challenging social structural matters by emphasizing the incorporation of intersectional

paradigms amongst agencies (Holder et al., 2015). Research surrounding Black feminist and

societal oppression explains how oppression remains a systemic issue due to systems and

organizations build upon power and dominance (Holder et al., 2015). It also acknowledges the

continuous experiences of oppression that Black women endure due to the long-standing impact

of colonialism, racism, and patriarchy. These experiences of oppression have ultimately led to

the normalization of traditional racialized customs.

Criminalization and Incarceration of Black People

After 1834, during the post-slavery era in Canada, hatred towards Black people became

increasingly pervasive (Maynard, 2017). People began to associate Blackness with immorality

and criminality. Black people were and continue to be heavily surveilled in their every movement

(Maynard, 2017). This is because Black men and women are deemed as threats to those in

society. This results in Black men being associated and charged with rape by not only falsified media representations but by the Canadian government and court system (Maynard, 2017). Likewise, Maynard (2017) explains that "hatred and fear of Blackness were thus used by all levels of government-buttressed by the police and the white settler population-to fuel further anti-Black policies and reinforce the perception that Blackness equalled criminality" (p. 42). Ultimately, this results in the increase in the criminalization of Black men, which is reflective of the misconceptions surrounding Black men being rapists, sexual predators, and excessively violent towards white women. This is also a reason for which Black men are highly incarcerated in North America. On the other hand, Black women are criminalized for engaging in the sex trade industry (Maynard, 2017). Research affirms that stereotypes of promiscuity of Black women deem them as a criminal. Maynard (2017) explains that "prostitution laws were weaponized to arrest and imprison Black and Indigenous women" (p. 45). However, some Black women have no other choice but to work within the sex trade industry due to low-wages earned in the labour market, lack of employment opportunities, or sex trafficking. Likewise, split labor market theory validates that Black women are disproportionately misrepresented, mistreated, and lack subsequent employment opportunities due to their race and gender (Bonacich, 1972). Black women are commonly criminalized and incarcerated mainly by attempting to find alternative forms of survival for either themselves or their families. This contributes to the historical and contemporary negative portrayal of Black women.

Black people are also portrayed as poor and are deemed to frequently commit crimes according to a study surrounding Black people, social norms, and cultural prejudices (De Lima et al., 2019; Maynard, 2017). The study further addresses that "analyzing this racially-based class

disparity from a social-psychological point of view, our research provided sufficient experimental evidence for the hypothesis that white individuals tend to support more easily the conviction of Black people from lower social classes when they commit a crime" (De Lima et al., p. 20-21, 2019). This underlines how influential powers such as an individual's skin colour, socioeconomic class, and cultural prejudice have an immense impact on sentencing a target to prison (De Lima et al., 2019). These measures were taken against Black people merely depriving them of humane treatment. On the other hand, the anti-prejudice norm is said to help protect Black targets from being sentenced to a prison term. Research by De Lima et al. (2019) explains how the anti-prejudice norm, "occurs only in the absence of other factors than race to explain individuals' behavior. When other possible factors for discrimination exist (e.g., belonging to a lower social class), individuals tend to convict the lower-class black target to a greater extent" (p. 18). In this case, there are multiple patterns of racial biases and judgments that influence participant responses regarding a verdict. It also conveys how some people possess preconceived notions and biases when determining a sentencing verdict.

Furthermore, to understand the brutality and oppression that Black people face, we must take into consideration an anti-oppressive approach. Whereby, the experiences of criminalization and incarceration of Black people is reflective of hierarchical oppression. This means that "the acceptability of a hierarchy, whereby one form of oppression is deemed more acceptable, or less unacceptable, than another form, can be said to collude with supremacist thinking which seeks to rationalize dominance and marginalization of one oppressed group in relation to another" (McDonald & Coleman, 1999, p. 25). An anti-oppressive approach assists to validate the experiences of oppression that Black people face, and further supports an affirmative role to

create social change. A case study focusing on the experiences of Black Canadian inmates, reported that "although Black inmates represent just 8% of the total inmate population, this heterogenous group accounted for 37% of all discrimination complaints to my office between 2008 and 2018" (CSC, 2014). This demonstrates how Black people continue to remain oppressed within correctional facilities across Canada, which also contributes to their overall marginalization in society.

Stereotypes and Misconceptions

Manzo and Bailey (2005) emphasize the social depiction of race and its influence on shaping racial identity. Thus, resulting in the formation of stereotypes surrounding specific races/ethnicities and cultures. Black people face stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding their race/ethnicity, which leads to an increase in mistreatment and misrepresentation. Stereotypes and misconceptions also contribute to the dehumanization of Black people, and the long-term oppression, marginalization, and hardship. For example, research surrounding young Black offenders provides insight into the discourse of stereotypes between race and crime. Manzo and Bailey (2005) emphasize the social depiction of race and its influence on shaping racial identity. Thus, resulting in the formation of stereotypes surrounding specific races/ethnicities and cultures (Manzo & Bailey, 2005). Some of the stereotypical categories surrounding Black people is the perception of danger through criminalization, physical appearance, and the behaviour of a gangster. Other stereotypes that surround Black people as research (Manzo & Bailey, 2005; Maynard, 2017) mentions the perception that "Black persons as entertainers, that is, as athletes, actors, musical performers and so on" (p. 290). This ultimately

demonstrates how pop culture and Hollywood contribute to formulating specific stereotypical images of Black people within the media. Stereotypes also perpetuate public fear towards blackness and its historical misrepresentations of being affiliated with criminal activity (Maynard, 2017). Nevertheless, criminal activity comes in various forms and may be interpreted differently among individuals.

Research literature surrounding the sexual stereotypes of Black men and gay men are said to have overlapping stereotypes (Calabrese et al., 2018). According to the literature, "across conditions, men who were Black or gay, even if not both, were commonly regarded as promiscuous and hypersexual. Concerning Black gay men, in particular, the four unique stereotypes that did emerge relative to Black men and gay men broadly—Down Low, Diseased, Loud, and Dirty—were all derogatory" (Calabrese et al., 2018, p. 152). The findings that emerge within the literature surrounding Black men and gay men highlight the intersectional analysis of sexual stereotypes.

Stereotypes surrounding Black people include the representation of Black Africa-American mothers as Welfare Queens (Peffley et al., 1997). Welfare Queens are considered to be less fortunate Black mothers that live off government aid/benefits. Welfare queens are stereotypically portrayed as aggressive, hostile, and lazy (Monahan et al., 2005). Literature reflecting stereotypes surrounding Black women remains a historical construction (Sandlin et al., 2011). This stereotype oppresses Black women and mothers who live in poverty and are struggling to make ends meet. The Welfare Queen stereotype also conveys a racist, sexist, and impoverished views of Black women (Sandlin et al., 2011). Likewise, feminist theory would argue that the formation of this stereotype is due to various systemic forms of oppression constructed by patriarchy.

An example of a misconception surrounding Black people, specifically Black men, is that they are perceived as aggressive and violent (Johnson, 2018). Black men frequently experience forms of racialization, marginalization, police brutality, criminalization, and incarceration (Maynard, 2017; Brooms & Perry, 2016). A past case involving a seventeen-year-old Black man named Trayvon Martin was shot to death in 2012 by a neighbourhood watchman (Johnson, 2018; McCann, 2014). Trayvon Martin's death immediately captured media attention and Black solidarity. Johnson's (2018) research underlines the aftermath of Trayvon Martin's death and the significance of "White gaze on the Black boy" by articulating that "the 'White gaze' as a means of objectifying 'the Black body,' constructing it as an 'entity to be feared, disciplined, and relegated to those marginalized, imprisoned, and segregated spaces that restrict Black bodies from 'disturbing' the tranquillity of White life, White embodiment, and White being' (p. 230). Trayvon Martin's death was a reminder that the Black body in a White space represented 'criminality itself" (p. 230). Trayvon Martin is just one of many Black individuals that have died due to racialized violence. Black men are also perceived as aggressive and violent based on their choice of apparel. Research surrounding the capabilities of a Black body within an athletic context states that "athletic feats suddenly turns to unexplained fear of that same body. This fear led one outspoken professional sports owner to suggest that he views a Black man in a hoody as he would a White man with facial tattoos. In fact, the irony is not lost on the fact that his team is primarily made up of, and successful due to, those Black men in hoodies that he fears" (Johnston, 2012, p. 235). This addresses a critical gap in the literature. The effects of racial profiling perpetuate stigma and social inequality for many Black men (Teasley et al., 2018; McCann, 2018). Racial profiling shapes perceptions of racial minority groups and further stigmatizes them,

such as young Black men. Likewise, Black bodies are perceived as a threat due to increased acts of racial profiling. According to Brooms and Perry's (2016) research, Black bodies are "associated with poverty, danger, and distrust-above all, with regard to anonymous young males" (p. 168). The negative aspects associated with Black bodies are better understood by integrating critical race theory. Critical race theory challenges structural racial oppression by identifying group disadvantages and challenging stereotypes. Thus, affirming the need to address and reform institutional structure and practices to be more inclusive of marginalized groups.

Current American research also indicates the increased saliency for Trump during the 2016 election. Findings from Swain's (2018) research addresses the "statistically significant association between negative stereotypes of African-Americans and support for excessive use of force by the police in their encounters with African-Americans. The results also show an association with one of the measures for negative African-American stereotypes with support for the police's excessive use of force and a preference for Donald Trump" (p. 120). These are the consequences that negative stereotypes surrounding Black Americans perpetuate and continue to perpetuate today. Findings from another study that also examines stereotypes regarding Black people identify the nonverbal bias through body language responses also compare the difference between people's depiction of a Black criminal and a White criminal (Meadors & Murray, 2014; Maynard, 2017; Pickett et al., 2012). Research discloses that participants of this study tended to display a closed posture when describing the White suspect. However, when describing the Black suspect, participants tended to display an open posture. The difference between closed posture and open posture is that closed posture conveys uncertainty, whereas open posture conveys openness. These findings are not adequate; therefore, researchers Meador and Murray (2014)

address the differences in nonverbal bias through body language responses between men and women concerning a Black suspect and a White suspect. They indicate,

> Men and women may be responding differently to the suspect according to how they were socialized to respond to this type of situation (e.g., men tend to face social pressure when displaying physical or emotional weakness). Furthermore, violent criminal stereotypes and counter-stereotypes may provoke a qualitatively different anxiety in men and women. Although there were no significant differences in ratings of anxiety or uncertainty among male encoders, men did display significantly more anxiety-related behaviors (i.e., clothing adjustments and body rubbing) in the White condition and more negative appraisals (i.e., face touches) in the Black condition. (Meador & Murray, 2014, p. 225)

By drawing a comparison between men and women's nonverbal responses towards a Black suspect and a White suspect, it seems as though that participant's preconceived notions of race, gender, criminality, and violence may also influence nonverbal bias responses. Nevertheless, these types of responses can help to determine specific behaviours (Meador & Murray, 2014).

Literature Review Part 2: The Experiences of LGBQ People

Employment

Canada holds a strong anti-idiscrimination framework that protects individuals from discrimination against one's gender and sexual orientation within the workplace (Waite, 2015). However, sexual minorities continue to remain marginalized within workplaces. Research conducted by Yavorsky (2016), surrounding trans women and inequality within the workplace, addresses:

In cisgendered system that devalues trans and feminine statuses, open trans women report that coworkers imposed unique constraints on their actions, limiting how trans women could navi-gate the workplace without incurring a cis or gender-related penalty. Multiple transwomen, with and without institutional authority, expressed constraints on how they could enact authority and reported pressures to avoid being labeled a "bitch" or aggressive. (p. 957)

Yavorsky's (2016) research findings interpret how a heavily cis-gendered work environment can create conflict within workplaces. Trans women are also reported to experience discriminatory actions, gender-based stereotypes, and stigmatization (Yavorsky, 2016).

Literature by Willis (2011) also mentions how some young queer populations that work in the labour market, are reportedly "negotiating the closet in social settings such as the school, home, or public street can be a significant stressor for many young queer people who report frequent encounters with homophobic abuse and bullying and heterosexist assumptions" (p. 959). Experiences and feelings of marginalization for queer people within workplaces can contribute to experiences of discrimination and abusive behaviours (Willis, 2011). This is why contemporary literature surrounding the experiences of queer people, aim to deconstruct the oppression that the queer community faces.

Canada's *Employment Equity Act* (1995) emphasizes the measures taken to provide equal employment opportunities for members of visible minorities within the workplace. The Act underlines the goal of eliminating any potential barriers that may cause underrepresentation of members of visible minorities. The Act emphasizes the duty of employers to uphold employment equity by ensuring the following measures:

(a) identifying and eliminating employment barriers against persons in designated groups

that result from the employer's employment systems, policies and practices that are not

authorized by law; and

(b) instituting such positive policies and practices and making such reasonable

accommodations as will ensure that persons in designated groups achieve a degree of

representation in each occupational group in the employer's workforce that reflects their

representation. (EEA, 1995)

All employers are expected to abide by the measures stated under Canada's *Employment Equity*

Act (1995). However, there is a significant gap in Canadian research literature on queer

employment outcomes and experiences (Waite et al., 2019). Specifically, Waite et al. (2019)

found

Few researchers have extended their analyses on LGBTQ2S+ identity to work and the

labour market. At the same time, the research that does exist also seems to focus on

particular segments of the LGBTQ2S+ community, i.e. gay men, lesbians and transgender

individuals. (p. 17)

There continues to be little to no research surrounding sexual minority employment outcomes in

Canada. Additionally, employment literature surrounding the queer community, addresses the

issue of wage gaps among marginalized groups such as queer community in Canada. Places like

Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal are some of the largest areas where sexual minorities

experience wage gaps (Waite et al., 2019). The research literature on intersectionality suggests

that this is more likely due to the lack of research surrounding the employment experiences of

sexual minorities in Canada thereby, producing ongoing barriers (Waite et al., 2019). On the

other hand, intersectionality theory underlines the lack of consideration to research regarding intersectional barriers of employment concerning queer people (Waite et al., 2019).

Another prominent issue among members of the queer community within workplaces is wage gaps. Issues of wage gaps are mostly seen in labour market type jobs, whereby wage gaps are larger among sexual minorities. The previous research literature on sexuality and the labour market found that "to date, there have only been a handful of Canadian studies exploring the relationship between sexual orientation and labour market stratification. In one of the first Canadian studies, Carpenter (2008) used the 2003 and 2005 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) and found that individuals self-identifying as gay had incomes that were 12% lower than comparable heterosexual men, while lesbians had incomes that were 15% higher than similar heterosexual women" (Waite et al., 2015, p. 115). These results demonstrate the inconsistent earnings of individuals based on their sexual orientation. Contemporary literature establishes that wage gaps within the labour market are not only by gender but also by sexual orientation (Waite et al., 2019).

The research literature on the employment experiences of queer people demonstrates that they are more susceptible to unequal treatment and underrepresentation within the workplace. The experiences of queer individuals within the workplace are found to be accompanied by challenges of converting workplaces into a queer-friendly environment. Baker and Lucas (2017) found that even by enhancing the security and safety for all employees, queer people experience some form of a threat towards their sexuality or gender identity within their workplace. This may be due to the lack of consideration and documentation of discriminatory practices against an employee's sexual identity within the workplace (Baker & Lucas, 2017). Another challenge that

Baker and Lucas (2017) identify is the fact that no formal workplace policies are surrounding the rights of queer employees. This can result in further mistreatment of queer employees and an increase in microaggressions within the workplace. According to Baker and Lucas's (2017) description of microaggressions, specifically against queer people, they articulate the following:

A taxonomy of seven common sexual orientation-specific microaggressions: (a) use of heterosexist and transphobic terminology (e.g., calling an LGBTQ employee a 'faggot,' 'dyke,' or 'tranny'); (b) endorsement of heteronormative or gender-normative cultures/behaviours (e.g., implicit dress codes that align with birth sex); (c) assumption of universal LGBTQ experiences (e.g., stereotyping lesbian women as being 'butch' or gay men as being into fashion or design); (d) exoticization (e.g., asking explicit questions about sex and genitalia); (e) discomfort/disapproval with LGBTQ experience (e.g., believing that LGBTQ couples should not raise children); (f) denial of societal heterosexism or transphobia (e.g., a co-worker telling an LGBTQ employee that they are being 'overly sensitive' about discrimination); and (g) assumption of sexual pathology/abnormality (e.g., believing that all gay men have HIV/AIDS or are child molesters). (p. 134)

Workplace discrimination continues to be apparent in the experiences of the queer community (Lloren & Parini, 2017). However, there has been some evidence suggesting that establishing queer-supportive policies within workplaces could help to reduce sexual and gender discrimination.

Experiences of Discrimination and Oppression

Intersectionality theory supports anti-discrimination measures by emphasizing multiple forms of discrimination and its effects on workers. A study by Mercat-Bruns (2017) explored issues of equality and liberty through an intersectional lens. Research literature conducted by Mercat-Bruns (2017), discusses how the single-ground approach does little to address the discriminatory actions demonstrated against those with intersectional identities. Nevertheless, there are some workers whereby, the anti-discrimination measures does not impose a burden on workers that do not possess intersectional characteristics (Mercat-Bruns, 2017). By applying the concept of intersectionality in the grounds for discrimination allows a far better representation of equality among not only queer people but everyone.

The research literature underlines the complexities of understanding invisible stigmas that surround members of the queer community. I refer to a previous study when thinking about the stigmas associated with disclosing one's sexual orientation within the workplace (Ragins et al., 2007). The research found that "gay and lesbian workers have indicated that they fear a range of negative repercussions to disclosure, from social isolation and ostracism to harassment, job loss, and career derailment (Ragins et al., 2007). Similarly, Friskopp and Silverstein's (1996) research reports that "interviews of gay and lesbian workers have indicated that they fear a range of negative repercussions to disclosure, from social isolation and ostracism to harassment, job loss, and career derailment" (p. 156). This demonstrates the perpetual fear that many queer individuals maintain to avoid discrimination and to have equal access to job opportunities. No one should have to fear being oppressed within the workplace, especially when it comes to deciding whether to disclose social identities.

An intersectional approach suggests that "intersectional subordination does not necessarily result from the intentional practices of systems and institutions but it's frequently the consequence of the imposition of one burden interacting with predisposing vulnerabilities to create yet another dimension of disempowerment" (Lee & Brotman, 2013, p. 164). These barriers that encompass many queer people's lives are difficult to overcome because of systematic structural oppression and violence.

Discrimination against one's sexual orientation is a prominent matter among queer youth in Canada (Almeida, 2009). Many queer adolescents are being stigmatized and viewed as a minority due to their sexual identity. This is resulting in many queer students developing signs of emotional distress, depression, and suicide concerning the level of discrimination they experience surrounding sexual orientation (Almeida, 2009). Nevertheless, schools are attempting to increase the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusivity by advocating the impact of discrimination on one's sexual orientation amongst queer students. Tillapaugh (2016) reflects on the insights and experiences of sexual minority men college students in Canada. The study draws upon an intersectional approach that takes into account the inclusiveness of social identities such as race, age, class, sexual orientation, gender. It also considers the medical and biological challenges of intersex bodies, which is a commonly known matter amongst transgender individuals (Code, 2000). Tillapaugh's (2016) research also highlights that "almost all of the participants shared instances—ranging in severity—of discrimination and/or harassment that they had encountered during college" (p. 99). These experiences of discrimination can often be retraumatizing for queer people as it puts them in both an oppressive position and state of mind.

Another form of oppressive behaviour encountered by members of the queer community is heterosexist harassment. Experiences of university students who identify as sexual minorities found frequent incidences of heterosexist harassment. Research conducted by Silverschanz et al. (2008) on the incidences and impacts of heterosexist harassment, reports the following:

Results confirm that a sexual-minority identity is not a prerequisite for encountering heterosexism, as nearly forty percent of heterosexual students reported some exposure to HH (heterosexist harassment) during the previous year on campus. Though some of the HH reported by heterosexuals may have been intended as "joking" or "kidding around," other factors may sometimes drive the behavior, including punishment of individuals who fail to conform to rigid gender roles. (p. 187)

Disrespectful forms of communication increase heterosexist victimization. Heterosexist harassment behaviour is the intersect between harassment and discrimination as it often perpetuates negative social environments, mental health problems, stigmatization, anti-gay behaviour, discrimination, and prejudices towards sexual minorities (Silverschanz et al., 2008). Ultimately, heterosexist harassment is prohibited grounds of discrimination according to the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (1985) as it denies members of the queer community to identify as nonhomosexual and permits any sort of nonhomosexual behaviour (Silverschanz et al., 2008).

Criminalization and Incarceration

Moreover, queer people are more likely to experience criminalization and incarceration because of their sexual identity. For example, Miller's (2013) research unveils that the majority of Canadians in Ottawa are in support of queer rights to defend sexual minorities. Foreign Affairs

Minister John Baird also mentions that "with respect to sexual minorities, we've focused on three things. One, against the criminalization of sexual minorities, two, against violence, and three against the death penalty -- and I think 99.9 percent of Canadians support us on those three issues" (Miller, 2013, p. 1). Similarly, research surrounding women of colour, transgender, and gender non-conforming people focuses on resilience, anti-prison movement, and alternatives to imprisonment to challenge experiences of gender oppression (Sudbury, 2008). Likewise, Sudbury's (2008) study explains the following:

> Nathaniel shared based on his experiences of advocacy work in Ontario prisons: [F]or trans people depression and suicide, you can have really high risk factors for that when you're consistently being denied for who you are. When people take away your opportunity to have self-determination which happens in many ways in prison, but can be so detrimental when you're a trans woman and you're put in a men's prison, and you're denied your hormones and you're denied being called the name that you choose and you're being called he all the time. (p. 15)

This indicates that there is a sense of denial when it comes to providing medical care sexually minoritized inmates. This experience also demonstrates the vulnerabilities of sexual violence that women of colour, transgender, and gender non-conforming people experience within correctional facilities (Ungar, 2000). Feminist theory strives to debunk the vulnerabilities associated with sexual violence against queer people of colour (Ungar, 2000). It also reveals the practices of state agencies such as police forces that inflict violence on queer people.

Stereotypes and Misconceptions

The literature surrounding queer people indicate that historical oppression continues today in the form of stereotypes and misconceptions. Research also indicates that this type of mistreatment, which stems from stereotypes and misconceptions against queer people, is due to the lack of communication, awareness, and education surrounding various sexual identities (Kosenko, 2008). An example of a misconception surrounding queer individuals, specifically transgender people, is the notion that transgender people are living with HIV/AIDS (Kosenko, 2008). This type of stigmatization increases the risks of transgender individuals developing mental health issues such as depression, substance abuse, and high-risk behaviour (Kosenko, 2008). Nevertheless, queer theory argues against such claims, emphasizing that "queer theories expand the politics of location and decenter essentialist notions of gender, race, social class, sexual orientation, and other hierarchical systems of oppression and privilege" (Goldberg & Allen, 2018, p. 180). This identifies and addresses the cultural insensitivity of those that are outside of the queer community.

There also exist many stereotypes surrounding queer people who work in the sex trade industry. Kosenko's (2008) research explains how there is this belief that "the hyper-sexualization and exotification of transgender individuals encouraged sex work in the trans-community" (p. 61). This creates sexual stereotypes regarding transgender sex workers and the matter of sexual objectification by members of the public (McKinnon, 2014). This captures the need for further development of public knowledge around queer people, and the importance of positive sexual communication (De Meyer et al., 2014). Research literature explains how teaching adolescents positive sexual communication does contribute to gender equality attitudes and positive experiences (De Meyer et al., 2014). Ultimately, conversations among adolescents

on gender inequality, sexual behaviour, and positive sexual experiences have demonstrated a positive influence on gender role attitudes (De Meyer et al., 2914).

Stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding those of the queer community continue to be highly prevalent in contemporary society. One of the most common forms of stereotypes and misconceptions is interpreted through disrespectful communication, which imposes social harm. According to the research conducted by Baker and Lucas (2017) on the experiences of queer individuals and their workplace, Baker and Lucus (2017) explain that

> Slurs, off-colour jokes, name calling, disparaging remarks about gender and sexuality, being the target of gossip, and ostracism were common. Some of the social harm was inflicted indirectly, such as when employees would over hear people using gay-phobic language (e.g., when a heterosexual customer defensively declared, "I'm not some sort of fag"), when coworkers used terms like "dyke" or "homo" to dis-credit people regardless of their sexual orientation, or lamenting that attractive men who are gay are "a waste". (p. 137-38)

Disrespectful communication within a workplace creates an unsafe, insensitive, and inequality environment for queer employees. It also shows how people get so accustomed to certain types of disrespectful language, and often do not see the need to change the way they communicate to others. On the other hand, queer theory argues the underrepresentation and a lack of queer activism in academic projects (Rand, 2006), thus imposing restrictions on the representation of queer people within the workplace.

Furthermore, research that incorporates queer theory and queer activism reflects on "queer nation" which is stated as "an illustration of the way in which the relationship between activism

and academia is often figured by queer theorists. For example, discussing the new kinds of identities or communities that might be described as "queer," Lisa Duggan turns to the comments of several members of Queer Nation in order to work through the contradictions that are embodied in queerness" (Rand, 2006, p. 6). Queer Nation not only conveys the public representation of queer activism and social change but also incorporates the notion of intersectionality as it promotes the wellness of queer folks and other sexual identities and gender identities.

Conclusion

Part one of the literature review examined the literature encompassing the lived experiences of Black people throughout history and today. The literature around Black people examine their historical experiences, habitual experiences, experiences discrimination, stereotypes and misconceptions, experiences of criminalization and incarceration, experiences of oppression, and experiences of employment have incorporated some form of oppression. A fair amount of the literature involving the experiences of Black people capture experiences of marginalization and systematic mistreatment. This is due to the perpetual stigmatization around Black people, and also a key finding in this literature review. Another key finding and limitation found in the research literature on the lived experiences of Black people is the limited incorporation of specific gender-based experiences. Also, the majority of literature examining the experiences Black people did not reveal the formal interview-based dialogue between the researcher(s) and participant(s), which could have enhanced the overall understanding and representation of the literature. I believe that the integration of theoretical debates helps to argue the significance of

not only this research project but the lived experiences of Black people. Theoretical debates and

an anti-oppressive approach will help to address the necessity for social change to better support

the needs of Black people and their societal experiences. Nevertheless, this literature review

reveals the gaps in literature surrounding the lived experiences of Black people in both American

and Canadian contexts.

Part two of this literature focused on queer people's experiences of employment,

discrimination and oppression, experiences of criminalization and incarceration, and stereotypes

and misconceptions. The literature surrounding the experiences of the queer community is

heavily entrenched in historical and contemporary representations of marginalization. The

literature addresses the different types of circumstances that members of the queer community

experience on a regular basis. It also conveys the distress of disclosing one's sexual orientation

or gender identity within the workplace. The literature explains the implications for individuals

who disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity in work environments and having to deal

with potential wage gaps, limited opportunities to grow within a workplace, and a lack of

inclusivity for members of the queer community. These experiences can be oppressive,

dehumanizing, and retraumatizing for sexual minorities. Contemporary literature surrounding the

queer community fails to provide sufficient information on specific experiences of sexual

minorities. There is a need for further research to be conducted in the queer community. Some of

the major gaps in queer literature transpire through the lack of research on the lived experiences

of queer people. My research will address gaps such as; lack of consideration and specification of

queer rights in the official documentation of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (1985). In addition

to the lack of research concerning wage gaps between cisgender people and queer people within

workplaces. As well as identifying the lack of Canadian literature surrounding the lived experiences of queer people. This limitation creates social barriers for queer people working in the labour market and/or service sector.

The literature that encompasses the experiences of Black LGBTQ people are experiences of oppression and marginalization. After examining the literature surrounding the experiences of Black LGBTQ people, I have found that there is a limited amount of literature on the experiences of LGBTQ people of colour. This finding in itself demonstrates the underrepresentation and lack of acknowledgment of LGBTQ people of colour. It also underlines the lack of advancement towards developing ways to create social change and positive representation of different social groups within the workplace. Findings from the literature also highlights the legislative documents that intend to represent the rights of members of the LGBTQ community and those of visible minorities. However, research conducted by Edna Bonacich (1972), Baker and Lucas (2017), and Waite et al. (2019) demonstrate the ongoing forms of oppression towards Black LGBTQ people within the workplace. Nevertheless, the major gaps in the literature surrounding the experiences of Black LGBTQ people is the lack of representation in workplaces. This limitation creates social barriers for Black LGBTQ people, especially for those working in the labour market or service sector.

CHAPTER 3: Methods

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I will outline my research methods by explaining the research design, participant

recruitment, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations process. The research

methods of this study that sought to answer the research question: What are the experiences of

Black LGBQ Canadians in workplaces within the service sector and the labour market?

Research Design

Conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews was the best method for this project because it

allowed for topics and issues relevant to the research to be discussed in more depth (Qu &

Dumay, 2011). This generated authenticity into the conversation between the interviewer and

interviewee. Because semi-structured interviews allowed the interviewer to tailor questions to the

research topic, it enabled the participant to answer the question however they wanted with

relevance to the research topic (Irvine et al., 2013). Semi-structured interviews also provided a

greater perspective on the lived experiences of research participants. This research benefited

from some of the key characteristics of qualitative research interviews, such as rapport and

naturalness, meaning and comprehension, monitoring responses and emotions, interest and

attention, and interview duration (Irvine et al., 2013). Conducting semi-structured interviews did

not only provide an insight into others' experiences but a chance at a greater understanding of the

context, including emotions and responses (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It created an opportunity to

collect a broad range of data, as well as different perspectives, opinions, and interpretations of

the sample. By capturing specific details and features throughout each interview process was one

way to generate authenticity for this research. The characteristics and key features of qualitative research interviews also contributed to the overall critical understanding of participants' narratives and accounts within the workplace. Participants' narratives and accounts found in semi-structured interviews had a significant amount of value because they exposed personal experiences. These experiences were critically analyzed with the support of the theoretical framework and the literature review of this research.

Participant Recruitment

The inclusion criteria to participate in this research project was the following: participants were required to identify as either Black, African, or Caribbean, participants were required to also identify as LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer), participants were required to be 18 years of age or older, participants were required to have experience working in a service sector or labour market workplace, participants were required to reside within the Lower Mainland, participants needed to speak English. The exclusion criteria regarding participant recruitment underline the following: individuals who were under 18 years of age, individuals who did not personally identify as either Black, African, or Caribbean, who did not identify as LGBTQ, who did not reside within the Lower Mainland, and that did not speak English. The rationale for the recruitment criteria was to remain authentic as possible to adequately represent the sample of interest.

The sampling approaches to this research project included convenience sampling and snowball sampling. Convenience sampling supports participant recruitment because it saves time and money at the expense of reliable information (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Convenience

sampling is also a type of sampling method that incorporates non-probability sampling that allows the researcher to select participants from a specific population to acquire a sample with ease. This research intended to incorporate the use of snowball sampling, which is a sampling method that seeks to recruit participants through the interest of others and people who know people (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These sampling approaches were the most ideal for this type of research as it focused more on individual experiences in a broader context. However, participants were recruited through convenience sampling. The recruitment process was solely through social media platforms.

I intended to recruit 5-8 participants for this research. Given the limited timeframe for the Honours program, we stopped recruitment at 4 participants. This research also included Black trans folks in the recruitment process. However, I was not presented with any participants of interest. Also, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the recruitment and interview process of this research was disrupted. One interview was conducted in-person and the other 3 interviews were conducted via telephone and ranged from 45 to 60 minutes.

I incorporated a recruitment process by hanging several posters in and around Kwantlen Polytechnic University campuses, town centres, grocery stores, and coffee shops, libraries, community organizations, and community centres. The poster has an email address where the co-investigator and principal investigator could be reached to arrange an interview. I also recruited participants through various social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. The research poster was posted on the co-investigator's Facebook and Instagram page. The research poster was also posted on the social media pages of Burnaby Pride, Pride Collective UBC, and ProChoices. I also reached out to organizations such as Black Lives Matter

Vancouver, Burnaby Pride, CampOut!, Capilano University, Fraser Valley Regional Library, MOSAIC, North Shore Women's Centre, Pride Collective of UBC, Prism Services, ProChoices, QMUNITY, TransCareBC, TransRightsBC, Vancouver Pride Society, Whistler Library.

Data Collection

During participant recruitment, the Government of British Columbia declared COVID-19 to be a public health emergency. For these reasons, the KPU REB issued the directive that all research involving face-to-face recruitment or data collection methods must transition to physically distanced methods. Therefore, the interview process had to be altered from in-person interviews to interviews via telephone. In response to KPU's REB directive, I sent in an amendment to KPU REB to grant permission for the participant informed consent form to be adjusted to include interviews via telephone rather than in-person. The research was granted permission to move forward with conducting interviews via telephone while maintaining KPU REB guidelines. None of the participants withdrew from the research at any point during the study.

I contacted participants by email briefly explaining the project and asking them to partake in a semi-structured interview via telephone (ranging between 45 minutes to an hour). If the participant responded to the email with interest in participating in the interview, they were then provided with a more in-depth explanation of the project and a formal letter of invitation as well as a copy of the informed consent form. In the formal letter of invitation that participants received via email, they were provided with a copy of the informed consent to review, sign, and hand back to me along with any possible questions regarding the study. I provided my signature

on the consent form and mailed it back to the participant along with the $30 Amazon gift card via post.

I collected data for this research project by conducting 4 qualitative, semi-structured interviews over the phone. One of the interviews was conducted in the participant's location of interest, which was Kwantlen Polytechnic University's library. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the KPU REB issued the directive that all research involving face-to-face recruitment or data collection methods must transition to distanced methods.

The interviews took place from January 2020 to March 2020. The language that was used amongst research participants was English. All interviews were audio-recorded with the participant's permission. Each research participant was interviewed once. The interviews ranged from 45 to 60 minutes. The data collected from participant interviews were audio-recorded with a tape recorder alongside handwritten notes. The semi-structured interviews were guided by an interview guide (Appendix B) (Arrington-Sanders et al., 2015) developed with the principal investigator.

Data Analysis

Theoretical debates such as intersectionality helped to analyze the overlapping intersect of various social identities. Intersectionality contributed to analyzing social problems, practices, and policies to encourage a better representation and understanding of the LGBQ community within the workplace (Furman et al., 2018). It also helped to validate the experiences of discrimination and exclusion of LGBQ people to develop awareness and inclusion (Furman et al., 2018).

This research incorporated both exploratory and explanatory forms of data analysis. Exploratory data analysis analyzes a set of data to compile a list of key characteristics that emerge from the data (Reid et al., 2017). Ultimately, exploratory data analysis helps to cultivate a pattern amongst the data collected. Explanatory data analysis assists in identifying one or two main findings amongst the data (Reid et al., 2017). Explanatory data analysis also provides the public with evidence-based research to better inform people of current issues that affect marginalized populations (Reid et al., 2017).

Each interview's audio recording was transcribed by using desktop transcription software. The data collected from each participant interview was then analyzed by listening to the audio recording of the interview session multiple times. In addition to reading each interview transcript several times, to analyze each interview adequately, a two-step coding process (open-coding and closed-coding) (Reid et al., 2017) was used to transcribe each interview. Each interview transcript was then coded according to specific labels such as words, concepts, work experiences, personal experiences, education, and processes to help better organize and understand the data. The codes throughout each participant interview were the same. Interview codes and descriptive codes were logged on a spreadsheet. I highlighted any key findings and connections to the literature for this research (Baker & Lucas, 2017). This two-step coding process allowed us to analyze coded sections of each interview transcript to highlight specific themes that emerged from the data (Reid et al., 2017). The themes included racism within the workplace, inequity in promotions and uncertainty within the workplace, supervisors and responses to racism within the workplace, and relationships with colleagues and supervisors within the workplace.

By coding data, I was able to reduce large amounts of information, which allowed the overall research to be clear and cohesive (Singh, 2013). I also analyzed data by comparing common and uncommon characteristics between the personal accounts of research participants. By analyzing the data in these ways, I was able to examine potential patterns that emerged from participant data. Through these methods of research analysis, we were able to recognize some of the similarities and differences among the research participants. Some of the similarities that emerged from the data were aspects such as racism within the workplace. This was demonstrated through racial microaggressions and hostile behaviours. One of the main differences that emerged from the data were aspects such as, the variation of unionized positions among participants. The theoretical framework and literature review both draw on the concept of intersectionality. Intersectionality explained the key themes that emerged throughout the research analysis process, as well as the patterns that developed from those themes.

The data collected from this research helps to answer the research question as it provided an understanding of the research participants' thoughts and feelings. The data collected from this research allowed us to examine potential patterns that emerged from the data collected. The data also helped to interpret the meaning behind people's experiences within workplaces. It also provided further insight into the lives of Black LGBQ people, which support the development of social change, especially in workplaces within the service sector and the labour market. The data collected from this research can inspire potential policy alterations and implementations within workplaces. It also provides easier access to others who may be curious about examining the lived experiences of Black LGBQ people.

Ethical Consideration

This was a minimal risk research project. While participants in this study may have been vulnerable to negative health outcomes and discrimination in the context of this research project, they were not vulnerable to risks beyond what they encounter in their daily encounters. This research took into account four main ethical challenges when it came to conducting research involving human participants, which included maintaining confidentiality and voluntariness, avoiding retraumatization, and data security.

Confidentiality and Voluntariness

This research maintained participant confidentiality, which retained a safe space for research participants and helped to build a sense of rapport. Kwantlen Polytechnic University Research Ethics Board (KPU REB) outline the procedures to maintaining participant confidentiality by explaining, "indication of what information will be collected about participants and for what purposes; indication of who will have access to information collected about the identity of participants, a description of how confidentiality will be protected, a description of the anticipated uses of data; and information indicating who may have a duty to disclose information collected, and to whom such disclosures could be made" (2012, p. 6). KPU REB established step-by-step measures on how participants' confidentiality will be maintained through the research process. Confidentiality was a key aspect of conducting ethical research to reduce potential harm to the research participants (Surmiak, 2019). When working with vulnerable groups, research members must maintain confidentiality as it prevents the risk of harm towards participants. The specific steps that were taken to ensure participant confidentiality was the

informed consent form and securing all electronic copies from each participant interview on a password protected computer in my home office. This allowed only the principal investigator and co-investigator to access participant information.

Three of the interviews were conducted via telephone while I remained in a private room to ensure participant confidentiality. I also informed participants to find a private room for the interview to ensure participant confidentiality. Before scheduling an interview, I sent the participant two copies of the informed consent form to sign through email or mail. The participant was required to sign both copies of the informed consent forms, returning one sign copy to me for my records, while keeping the other signed copy for the participant's records. I followed up and checked in with the principal investigator. There were several factors to consider when determining the best place for the interview to take place: convenience, accessibility, and the safety and comfort of both the participant and I as well as the need for a degree of privacy (not being overheard by a third party during the interview) (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I then emailed the participant to schedule a date and time for the interview. I informed the principal investigator of the interview details, such as date, time, and location.

This research also maintained participant voluntariness by both verbally informing participants as well as ensuring each participant signed an informed consent form. Before participants' signed off on the informed consent form, they were made aware of their right to request to withdraw from the study at any time. KPU REB outlines the procedures to maintain participant voluntariness by explaining how "free and informed consent must be voluntarily given, without manipulation, undue influence or coercion" (2012, p. 5). KPU REB addresses the requirements to obtain voluntary consent from participants. Participants' were informed that not

participating in this research will not have any negative consequences. These requirements

allowed for participants to be well-informed of their role as a participant in this research project.

Retraumatization

This research also took into account the importance of avoiding participant retraumatization by

incorporating questions that were related to the research topic, and not questions that coerced

participants to discuss traumatic experiences. The purpose of avoiding participant

retraumatization was because I was highly aware of the historical and contemporary oppression

of Black LGBQ people. The objective of this research was to foster individual empowerment

among participants rather than retraumatizing them. This research did not intend to go into depth

on participant's past experiences outside of the workplace; rather the past experiences of

participants provide further context into the lived experiences of Black LGBQ people. Research

conducted by Cutcliffe and Ramcharan's (2016) address that "one contemporary view, tied very

much to prior judgments of the ethics of qualitative research, is that the research interview has

the potential to retraumatize the participant. As such, the potential risks appear to be inherent in

the interview process, and the benefits exist largely for the wider population and much less for

the interviewees" (p. 1002-1003). Nevertheless, I managed to avoid potential risks by providing a

list of supportive resources to research participants, if needed.

Data Security

All data and information collected from participants were only accessible to the researcher and

primary investigator. Participant identity and information were kept confidential in a number of

ways, which included, ensuring that both the participant and I signed two copies of the informed consent form. Whereby, one copy was given to the participant for their records and the second copy was for the research team. Another way that participant information was kept safe was by using password protected computers when transfering files. As well as securely deleting each file from the handheld audio-recorder once they had been transferred onto the password protected computer.

All data collected throughout each interview was recorded on spreadsheets to organize the data. Interviews were transcribed and the transcriptions were spreadsheets that had all the identifying information. These spreadsheets were securely deleted once they held no further value to the project. The primary form of security concerning participant data was protected by the informed consent form or the alternative method of informed consent (via email) to ensure full protection of all participants' identities. Emails regarding participants' identity, information, and consent were kept confidential by communicating with participants through my password protected KPU email account. Participants' emails were kept in a separate folder in my KPU email account.

The data collected throughout the interview process was protected and kept in the office of the principal investigator. The co-investigator maintained three copies of all data collected from the four interviews, which were two copies on two different portable memory sticks and one electronic file copy. These copies of data were stored in a locked cabinet for further reassurance of participant confidentiality. Participants were made aware of how data was collected, stored, and destroyed. The data collected throughout each interview process will be kept up to a year before it is destroyed. Data collected from each interview, including audio recordings,

handwritten notes, and electronic notes and physical files were destroyed by wiping all data from memory sticks and shredding any physical files to sustain the confidentiality of all research participants.

Participants agreed to have their interviews audio recorded. I used a handheld recorder to create the audio file. The file was then transferred from the recording device to my password protected personal computer as soon as possible and following that the recording was deleted from the handheld device. The audio files were shared with the principal investigator via a password protected USB. The audio files were then transferred to the principal investigator's password protected computer and were kept there until the principal investigators deemed the transcriptions of them were accurate following which the files were then deleted from both the principal investigator and my computer. Other electronic data (typed transcripts) were kept on a personal password protected computer. These files were shared with the principal investigator using a password protected USB and were transferred indefinitely to the principal investigator's password protected computer in their locked office, which was disposed of once the principal investigator deemed them to have no further value to the research project. The principal investigator will retain copies of the electronic copies of the interview transcripts for one year (following the completion of the project). These transcript files were kept and stored in a password protected KPU office computer. After a year, these files will be securely deleted by the principal investigator.

CHAPTER 4: Results

Chapter Summary

Key themes were identified through the analysis of the data collected in this study. The 4 key themes that emerged from the research are 1) racism within the workplace, 2) inequity in promotions and opportunities within the workplace, 3) supervisors and responses to racism within the workplace and 4) relationships with colleagues and supervisors within the workplace. Each key theme is supported by various participant experiences within workplaces in the Lower Mainland. In this chapter, I will outline each theme and give examples from the data that support the theme. In this chapter, I will present the findings of the research question, what are the experiences of Black LGBQ people within the workplace? I will begin by outlining the socio-demographics of participants.

Socio-demographics

There were 4 participants in this study: 1 cisgender Black man and 3 cisgender Black women. The participants' identified their sexualities as either lesbian, gay, or bisexual. This research was open to both Black cisgender and Black transgender (trans) individuals. However, no trans participants were recruited for this study. Participants ranged in age from 33 to 60+ years of age. Three out of the 4 participants had a partner, and 1 of the 4 participants had multiple partners. Two of the women had children and all participants had either a college or university education. While participants were found to have worked in different employment sectors (e.g., childcare, educational services, health care, non-profit organizations, sales and retail, and transportation), 3 currently worked in a unionized position. Employment position types varied among participants

(e.g., part-time, full-time, temporary, and contract). The number of hours worked within participants' current workplace range from 6 hours to 40+ hours per week.

Racism within the Workplace

Experiences of racism were found to be the most prominent findings in participants' workplace dynamics; however, these experiences varied between each participant. Participants' experiences of racism within different work environments also varied in levels of intensity. These levels of intensity related to racism ranged from displaying subtle forms of racism to hostile forms of racism.

This research found that racism was a much more powerful and damaging finding. Experiences of racism were prominent amongst the women (participants 1, 3, and 4). The findings of this research demonstrate the intersectional experiences between Black women and Black men. The experiences for Black women were vastly different due to factors related to health, gender, and appearance. Whereas, the experiences of the Black man were more focused on workplace relationships and homophobia. Black women's experiences with racism are much more prominent than their experiences with homophobia. Therefore, participants' work experiences are impacted by racism much more than homophobia. Intersectionality will largely support the findings that emerge from this research. It will also be used to help analyze key components of data to compare the experiences of Black women and Black men.

One way participants' experiences of racism were demonstrated was through racial microaggressions within the workplace. For example, participant 1 discussed how they

experienced hostility and racial microaggressions from other colleagues in a previous workplace. They explained a situation that had occurred within the workplace:

A coworker, uh at one of the clothing stores I worked at who uh, decided one day that she was going to start saying the N word, just like down the hall. And someone else said, like, "hey, don't say that because, you know, she might hear you. And I'm like, "it's not really about whether or not I'm here to hear that. Like, that's inappropriate and disgusting. And like there are other people of colour that work here". (Participant 1, Black lesbian)

Participant 1 also mentioned another situation that occurred within a previous workplace:

I think probably the example where I had that coworker who decided to start speaking and we're all over the place uhm is probably the biggest example. Uhm the same person. At one point notices quite a few years ago, but had posted a picture on her Facebook of like herself and two of our other mutual coworkers and uh tagged them as like, "oh, just me and my Aryan friends having fun" or whatever. And I was like, hold up. What? Like, why are you calling yourselves white supremacists? And then there was this whole thing of like, "I'm not calling myself a white supremacist". And like, "you don't know what Aryan means, though. Like you should probably look that up". And then, like, her mom jumped on the thread and I was like, what's going on? And it ended up spilling out into the workplace. Uhm, because the retail industry has a policy where basically, social media is considered part of the workplace. And because all of the people involved are all coworkers, they were like, "this is…" . . . Yeah. So it's kind of like, no, this is affecting the workplace. And, uhm, you know, it ended up being a conversation with managers which turned into uhm this person, getting very upset at me, having to apologize for upsetting them, which is always

how it goes. So like I ended up leaving that job not entirely because of this instance, but it was a huge motivation to get out of there when I did. And it was probably the first example of like something getting escalated to the point where I had to go to management. Uhm, and then the results being like. Sort of dismissed being like, you know, you're being too harsh on her. Like she doesn't know any better and you're like, "yeah, but me and the other coworkers of colour find this really inappropriate". And like…Yeah. And a lot of those people had approached me, like outside of work and like, "hey, like, thanks for speaking up". So there's definitely like things I think that don't ever get addressed that people are definitely feeling. But yeah, that's probably the biggest. And I'm sure that sort of stuff happens all the time. And I just don't see it like. (Participant 1, Black lesbian)

Additionally, participant 1 explained how people would express racial microaggressions within previous workplaces:

I've had a weird, a couple weird interactions [with customers], so I have a bit of like scarring on my arms and stuff, and because I have melanin in my skin, they show up differently than it would on a White person. And so I've had people comment on my scars before. And to me, that's kind of like, what? Like, why are you? Yeah. So people are kind of like I mean, it's always white people. And so they'll be like, what happened? Or whatever. And I'm like, "it's because I have melanin in my skin that they're showing up this way like it's fine" and they have super awkward or whatever. Or like, I'll make up some excuse but, uhm, or people will uhm. I mean you get the, "where are you from" question all the time from customers. (Participant 1, Black lesbian)

Participant 1's experiences with colleagues demonstrating hostility and racial microaggressions indicate consistent forms of racism within workplaces. These experiences of racism contribute to participants' feelings of uncertainty and lack of safety within the workplace.

Similarly, participant 4 explained one of her experiences of racism within the workplace. She explained how she was hired as a social worker within a mental health facility. Participant 4 and her supervisor at the time, were assigned to a couple who came in for a couples counselling session. Participant 4 mentioned how she was confronted by her supervisor after the session concerning the couple's request to not work with a Black person:

> So I came in. He didn't seem to notice that they wouldn't talk to him or ask my questions. Talk to me. Sorry. They wouldn't talk to me. They I would ask the question. They would look at him. They would ignore me. They would answer it like he just didn't notice that they would not talk to me. And then after the session, they said, um, well, we. So after the session. They I guess they called in or they came in the next day or something. And they they went to him and they said, we will not have the Black counselor. (Participant 4, Black bisexual woman)

Participants 1 and 4 expressed that these experiences concerning racism and microaggressions within workplaces had an impact on their sense of safety and mental wellbeing. For example, participant 4 explained the mental and physical repercussions of working in high-stressed related job roles and workplaces. Participant 4 discussed the development of her chronic illness and how it was related to racism:

> It's a weird illness . . . it's kind of an immune thing. It's almost like overprotection. Uh. So. And Black racialized people, Black women get it quite a bit. It's like long, long term stress.

There are certain illnesses that Black women get [laughter] for a lot over long term. So I

have no idea how much time I have on the planet because of it. (Participant 4, Black

bisexual woman)

Participant 4's experience demonstrates how hostility was directed towards an individual's racial

identity within the workplace. Participant 4's experience with developing a stress-related chronic

illness was due to ongoing matters of racial microaggressions and subordination within the

workplace. Critical race theory supports this finding and underlines the ongoing

microaggressions and racial discourses experienced by Black people (Solorzano et al., 2000), and

this will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

The experiences of racism within participants 3's current workplace within the childcare

industry were not discussed. However, participant 3 mentioned that she experienced various

forms of racism in previous non-profit workplaces. For example, she explained:

Most other workplaces are super racist. [laughter] Like I feel like I'm in a really lucky

situation, right now, but like, that's not the normal experience I've had. [laughter]. . . Yeah.

And it wasn't me, just me. It was like, there's like a fairly long history of like anti-Black

racism there. Um, and yeah, so like, yeah, I don't know what to say about that. (Participant

3, Black bisexual).

Participant 3's experiences with racism within previous workplaces were highly apparent.

Experiences of racism were exhibited through hostile behaviour and racialization directed

towards Black people. Participant 3's example of racism within previous workplaces also

establishes that she had witnessed several incidents of hostile behaviour and racialization

directed towards Black colleagues.

The findings of this research indicate that experiences of racism within the workplace were most prominent among women (participants 1, 3, and 4). Participant 2, the Black gay man, on the other hand, explained that he had not experienced racism within the workplace but had experienced homophobia within his current workplace. Participant 1, 3, and 4's experiences with racism in the workplace were mainly exhibited through hostile behaviour and racial microaggressions. These experiences of racism within the workplace contributes to the normalization of discriminatory behaviour towards Black people.

Black lesbian and bisexual women's experiences demonstrated some examples of racist microaggressions in the workplace. Intersectionality validates participant 1's experiences related to racism within the workplace and can be used to unveil the discriminatory actions and unequal measures against Black women (Mercat-Bruns, 2017). It addresses that Black women's experiences in the workplace are shaped by their social positions. Intersectionality would understand that Black women in the workplace are often targets of discriminatory behaviour. Participant 1's experiences demonstrate how people with intersectional identities continuously fear being oppressed within the workplace.

Inequity in Promotions and Opportunities within the Workplace

This research project found that participants' experienced inequity in promotions and opportunities within the workplace. Black lesbian and bisexual women were denied promotions and opportunities in their workplaces and reported discriminated based on their racial and gender identities. This impacts Black lesbian and bisexual women's chances of being presented with equitable promotions and opportunities within the workplace.

Participants stated that they preferred to be employed under union because it provided them with a sense of job security. This was because participants have experienced uncertainty in the longevity of their job roles. This research found that participants' choices in unionized workplaces were also because of the limited amount of stress associated with the job role. For example, participant 1 explained the challenges regarding the precariousness of their current position. Participant 1 described working within the transportation industry for a year and a half but in 3-month chunks. Because of participant 1's temporary employment position, they have not been guaranteed the job position. This uncertainty created anxiety and stress for participant 1, as she did not know whether she would have to look for another job in 3 months. She mentioned that although her current temporary job role is stressful regarding the precariousness, it is not as stressful as previous workplaces. Participant 1 also explained how previous workplaces were more fun but provoked stress because the job did not pay well. Participant 1 explained that "the main stress from this job is definitely like the precariousness of it, but the work itself is fairly neutral" (Participant 1, Black lesbian). Likewise, participant 1 expressed that their level of stress has the potential to be impacted by how stressful their day ends up being. These findings demonstrate the uncertainty and lack of safety that participant 1's temporary job role provides. It also demonstrates how stressful positions are within the service sector and the labour market.

Additionally, participants 1 and 4 talk about how they were denied opportunities rather than being presented with opportunities. Participants 1 and 4 were not presented with opportunities as often as their White male colleagues. Participant 4 explained witnessing a colleague who was a White man with less experience than herself, be promoted fairly quick within the workplace:

The organization I work for right now, I started with a guy, White guy, good looking guy,

charming, nice, good looking guy. . . There were 40 of us who started together. He is in a

directorial position in two and a half years. He was moved up to a directorial position in

this organization and the racialised women are still front line here, again, here I am with

this much experience decades and decades, and 4 degrees or whatever. Granted now I'm

kind of choosing to stay there. But even even a scooter or even a unionized supervisor

position, I don't. I can't get. (Participant 4, Black bisexual woman)

Participants 4's experience revealed the structural oppression that Black lesbian and bisexual

women continue to face in comparison to their male colleagues within the workplace. The

research literature supports this finding that Black women are subjected to discrimination within

the workplace due to racial and gender disparities (Mensah, 2002). Participant 4 also explained

the concept of aversive racism through workplace experiences and the tendency to hire White

people. The participant further explains the justification of unionized workplaces when hiring

White people:

That's what happens with union stuff, is that when you have criteria that kind of match,

right. Where you can kind of say, "well, you know, we need, you know, the seniority. But

there's this and there's that. And there's this. They'll find a way to justify the White person

position. But they'll. It It's something that you can't really argue with. And they don't

realize until you step back and do the big aggregate measure to say, do you realize that

you've hired this many White people? The ratio is this. But most people don't know that,

right. They just are looking at each individual interaction and they don't realize that. Until

you step back and do the big number there. They think they're just in each case being

reasonable. So, yeah, that's what aversive racism is. (Participant 4, Black bisexual woman)

Participant 4's experience demonstrates the imbalance of equity within the workplace with

relevance to race. This example also revealed the lack of recognition regarding the ongoing

hiring pattern seen within unionized workplaces.

Participant 4 also discussed how she is unlikely to obtain or maintain a supervisor position

within the workplace due to the precariousness of these types of positions:

I don't want to do management type of positions because it's too precarious for me. . . . I

just know what will happen, it doesn't matter how. It doesn't matter how nice I try to be.

[laughter] It's just it. I just know it'll happen. So. So given that so if we put aside that I

would like more power [laughter] and won't have chosen to not seek it. Um. And more

money, right. Um, then, I love that I can, you know, go to work and. Uh. Get into deeply

into uh whatever it is I'm developing or doing and then leave it at work because it's not my

responsibility when I go home, even when I try to have more responsibility, it's always no,

that person can do more. But you can't. [laughter] You know, there's a lot of that.

(Participant 4, Black bisexual woman)

Because of the precariousness in some participants' workplaces, they did not tend to remain in

job roles for a long period. The inconsistency of these job roles, the demands, and the overall

treatment they endure within workplaces eventually forced participants to seek other forms of

work. One of the research questions for this study was, how are Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and

queer people represented within the workplace? Black lesbian and bisexual women were highly

underrepresented within their workplaces. The findings of this research indicate that the

underrepresentation of Black lesbian and bisexual women made them more susceptible to mistreatment or discriminatory behaviour.

On the other hand, participant 1 discussed the restraints of their current temporary job role and the reasons why they were unable to receive equitable promotions and opportunities within the workplace:

I definitely feel like a little clerk in the corner that just does her thing, which in some ways I don't mind because nobody's bothering me or like, you know, I can just do my own thing. But I also often feel like, uhm, you know. Like I feel like I'm like I have a lot more knowledge, I have a lot more skills, I have a lot more than I could contribute to a workplace. Not necessarily this particular one, but it's weird to be kind of positioned at the bottom of the totem pole when in inside you're like, I'm worth more than this. Like I'm more valuable to this workplace that I do appreciate working for. Like, I like working for the transportation industry. . . But, uhm, being at that kind of like, bottom level can be a little bit harsh because people kind of dismiss you. (Participant 1, Black lesbian)

These findings indicate how participants did not receive equitable promotions and opportunities due to the structural inequities within the workplace. Participant 1's experience also demonstrates how they were more likely to be dismissed within the workplace due to their temporary position. Participant 1 also explained her experiences surrounding internal recruitment and the imbalance inequity within the workplace:

One thing that I find really interesting in my current position is like, you know, I just sort of joined the company. I realized that I'm like at the bottom of the totem pole like trying to maybe find my way up and whatever. And uhm they had advertisements, which is

interesting. And I sort of see this coming up a lot uh. These like diversity and inclusion like initiatives or something. So like, "oh, we're hiring a manager to run our diversity and inclusion and equity program, whatever it may. You know, if I'm looking at the job board or whatever it is company wide. Right. And it'll be like, "oh, one hundred and thirty K a year". And you're like, "oh, hell yes!". . . I have a degree in Anthropology. And I'm also a queer person of colour. I have a pretty good like. Yeah. Life experience and like pretty solid knowledge about these things like that to me is like a position that I could be well suited for with maybe a little bit of extra training, whatever. But like, uhm, I just think it's interesting a lot of times where they start these initiatives or like in a lot of job applications, you'll see like, "we're an equal opportunity employer". You know, you should definitely it's like they don't actually take that into consideration when they're hiring like they put it on the application, but like they never ask on the application, like, are you a visible minority or do you identify as gay? So it's like if you are trying to make your workplace more equitable. You're not actually even asking the questions to be able to monitor that? (Participant 1, Black lesbian).

Participant 1's experience illustrates the challenges surrounding their temporary employment position as well as the lack of recognition towards marginalized groups within the workplace. These findings also revealed how workplaces that were known to be equal opportunity employers did not incorporate proper workplace measures to ensure equal opportunities for applicants and employees.

Participant 2, on the other hand, mentioned how his opinion and judgement was valued in his workplace where he works as head of department,

I am uh department head so that involves some responsibility and some uh aptitude to have

my voice heard. It means that the others in the department uhm value my opinion and my

judgment on things. Uhm And so it's a consensus based decision making model but there

are times where you have to uh to be a little bit more executive and uh make some

decisions. Uhm, and so I'm comfortable doing that. And I consult with my colleagues

whenever I'm unsure about a decision. And uhm sometimes they disagree. And that's fine.

We talk through our disagreements. (Participant 2, Black gay man)

Participant 2's experience as a department head within the educational system demonstrates the

difference in experiences between Black gay men and Black lesbian and bisexual women.

Participant 2 is a Black gay man who obtained an equitable promotion within his workplace in

comparison to the Black lesbian and bisexual women participants.

Additionally, participant 4 explained an example of hostility when conducting anti-racism

workshops as part of her job. She also mentioned the physical toll it had on her body:

I have also found when I have done like workshops and stuff like that, when I do

workshop, when I have done workshops about LGBT. Although, of course, I can do like,

you know, I've developed. And, um, there was much there was easier for me. It's easier for

me to do presentations around LGBT stuff. And it easy and I have no problem, you know,

people being hostile or whatever or ignorant or [laughter], you know, asking silly questions

or whatever. I've I find that when I go home and I'm fine. Whereas whenever I do an

anti-racism workshop, I absolutely plan for bed for two days. Period. [laughter] Absolutely.

Nothing is going to happen for two days. Period. Yeah. . . Yeah, it's definitely recovery.

Um, I'm strong and all of that. And I, you know, stuff goes over my back blah blah blah.

Um, it's, but it's about it. There is something about when you really encounter. But two things. One is when you really encounter people's genocidal hatred. And they don't know that's what it is. [laughter] Do you know what I mean when people get to a place where it's just like, "oh, I'm a nice person and I'm. I care about this". And then they just get to this place where it's like, enough now. You know, I don't want to deal with this and I don't really actually see and hear you as a whole and complete human being. There's a place at which there's a point at which it's a deeply indoctrinated belief, especially in Canada, right? People in Canada think that they're not. Canada's doesn't have racism. They are they absolutely do think that. And so it's. It is a it's a deep. It's just a it's a core thing that, especially when people aren't even aware of it, [laughter] you know, or where it's coming from. Do you realize how absolutely erased my you know, my anyway. So there's that. And then there's also the enormity of it that um. You know, Canada really, you know, it's just the whole. You're studying this, right? It's it. You know this and you live it, right. So it's like that's just the denial of the how absolutely built into the history and structure of everything. Right, hierarchy is and then you and you look at the top of any organization and it's White guys up at the top and they have. And they have. And then there's some there's, And yet no acknowledgement, our understanding of how that happened. Like, they're it's just like that's just normal or the way it is or else I'm thinking about it or noticing it, right. (Participant 4, Black bisexual woman)

Participant 4 explained how she has experienced subtle forms of hostility within the workplace. She also explained how hostility, in general, has been ingrained into Canadian history and in the structures of organizations.

Participants' examples of inequity in promotions and opportunities within the workplace demonstrate how Black women were not as often recognized and were not being offered promotions within the workplace in comparison to Black men. Feminist theory argues that the causes for the marginalization of Black women in settings such as the workplace is because of issues related to patriarchy, capitalism, misogyny, sexism, and racism (McCann & Kim, 2003, p. 1). Feminist intersectional approaches also validate how discrimination based on gender and sex were visible within the workplace through the employer's actions when hiring, promoting, and training (Browne & Misra, 2003).

Supervisors and Responses to Racism within the Workplace

A third significant finding was that participants explained how supervisors within workplaces tended to respond to situations concerning racism inadequately. Supervisors within the service sector and labour market workplaces tended to respond to participants' experiences of racism by dismissing these matters. The findings demonstrate that the relationships between participants and their supervisors were distant and essentially nonexistent. These examples of supervisors' responses to racism within the workplace also illustrated how participants tended to defend themselves in these types of situations. For example, participant 4 explained how she was fired from a workplace after having to defend her racial identity:

> So he came to me and he said, well, um, they said that they didn't want to work with you, and I sort of said, oh, well, that kind of doesn't surprise me. They didn't seem interested. And he said, "yeah, well, what do you think was going on?", and I said, "I don't know. But I know that, you know, there's a real, you know, there's". And I'm looking and I'm going,

"do you know, what's going on in South Africa?". He didn't seem to. So anyway, I just sort

of said, "yeah [name of supervisor], you know, I guess maybe there's still a lot of that kind

of separation of uh from South Africa". And he just kind of went "well, I don't know about

that". And then so the next day he calls me and and he says, "well, you know, thought

about it. And I thought, your uh. You are somehow projecting uh, anti-White sentiment

onto these people, I don't know why they would have felt that way about you. And you do

wear these extreme and intimidating African hairstyles. And so, I think that until you get to

a place where you're more comfortable with your identity, um, I don't think you should

work here. I don't think you can work with. We've got lots of White clients. I don't think

you can work with White clients". (Participant 4, Black bisexual woman)

Participant 4 was fired from her job after her supervisor accused her of having anti-White

sentiment and criticized her for wearing "these extreme and intimidating African hairstyles".

Participant 4 was told that she was unable to work with White clients, which resulted in her being

fired from her job. Participant 4's experience is clearly racist treatment towards Black people

within the workplace.

Participant 4 further explained an incident that occurred within a previous work setting

related to her chronic illness:

I'm actually currently, you know, I'm a member at large and I do, you know, uh community

committee work and stuff like that. Union committee work. And uh, and it's harder for me

to get the time off to go off union work than it does for somebody else. And so I try and

bring that up to the union. You know, the reason that, most more people here who are not

racialised is because it's easier for them to get the time off. You know, I had a manager

who actually called the union and said, "what does she need the time off? What are they

doing? What are you doing? What do you need her to do?" Um. And they were like, "we've

never seen that before?". You know, and I was just like that's because they'd be like, "oh,

yeah, you're right actually? Because we did find that this person had a hard time getting

their um. (Participant 4, Black bisexual woman)

Because of these experiences that participant 4 has undergone in previous workplaces, she

constantly felt the need to justify her intellectual and physical potential to employers,

supervisors, and colleagues. Even though participant 4 was employed under a union, she still felt

the need to justify her intellectual and physical potential to remain employed. Similarly,

participant 1 explained how they were forced to deal with racism within the workplace and how

management disregarded this matter:

A lot of yeah, like unspoken stuff that I would say people of colour, especially like in retail

and stuff probably experience, which is the same thing that they'd experience sort of day to

day. But there's no like protection from your employer, from those types of things, like

even from your fellow employees or even from the people that, you know, they're supposed

to be managing and supervising. . . I think like a lot of employers like to call themselves

nondiscriminatory but they also don't have the tools or resources in place to actually

respond to racism within the workplace. (Participant 1, Black lesbian)

Participant 1's experience with racism within the workplace demonstrates the lack of attention

displayed by the participant's supervisor. This example also reveals the lack of acknowledgement

of participant 1's supervisor regarding the protection of employees of marginalized groups within

the workplace. These findings indicate that participant 1's experiences with supervisors and their responses to racism within the workplace had been overlooked.

The literature on the experiences of Black women allows us to understand the continuous subordination and undermining of Black women within the workplace. Previous research has demonstrated how intersections of race, gender, and sexuality are distinguishable factors for oppressive treatment towards Black women within the workplace. (Brown & Misra, 2003). With relevance to the research findings, intersections of race, gender, and sexuality were demonstrated to be a structural barrier between participants and their supervisors in the workplace. These barriers that Black women face contribute towards experiences of discrimination within the workplace.

Intersectionality also recognizes that Black women face additional barriers and stigma in the labour market. Brown and Misra's (2003) research, which discusses the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality in the labour market, explains how "the evidence for intersections of race and gender in the labor market focuses on the three economic domains. The first two, wages and discrimination, lie at the heart of debates on labor market inequality. The third domain, immigration and domestic labor, represents one of the richest sources of research on intersectionality in the labor markets conducted by multiracial feminist sociologists" (p. 495). Ultimately, this reveals how intersections such as race, gender, and sexuality have a distinguishable oppressive effect on Black women.

Relationships with Colleagues and Supervisors in the Workplace

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Participants were also found to have good relationships with their colleagues and supervisors. Black lesbian and bisexual women chose not to have close relationships with their colleagues and supervisors at work. An intersectional approach helps explain how Black lesbian and bisexual women's relationship with their colleagues is different than Black gay men. One way these differences are explained is through participants' workplace interactions with their colleagues and supervisors. Participants discussed how their colleagues and supervisors communicate with them and one another. These findings interpret how knowledgeable individuals and workplaces were regarding racism among marginalized groups that exist within workplaces. For example, participant 1 mentioned why she remained distant within the workplace:

> I tend to be quite introverted at work. And uhm because I do kind of have a steady stream of stuff to do, like I said, it's impossible to catch up. So there isn't really a time where you're like, oh, it's a chill afternoon at work. But like, there are a few folks in the office because I've been there for quite a while now, that like, will stop by my desk and have a little chat. How's your weekend? But it's usually very like, you know, those surface conversations. [laughter] Pleasant. (Participant 1, Black lesbian)

Although participant 1 has distant relationships with colleagues in their workplace, this was not the same for participant 2:

> I work with a group of about seven [others]. And I would describe myself as having uh close relationships with maybe about half of them. And good relationships with the remaining . . . Uhm all are younger than me. The least by five years or two and the most by a good couple of decades . . . Oh, yeah. I can rely on. I guess the workers through my work the longest. There are two of them and they're female and uhm they've been with me for

the majority of those 20 years. . . And I feel I could rely on them if I had a need outside of

our work . . . Yeah, I yeah I've called on them once or twice. And if there was something I

needed them for and if they can't, they're there for me. (Participant 2, Black gay man)

Nevertheless, participant 2 mentioned that he did not have close relationships with everyone

within his workplace, such as his supervisor. He explains that,

He is not taking the full time to get to know uh what myself and my team have achieved.

And so that introduces some tension in our relationship. But certainly we've been very

cordial with each other. Uhm and certainly the lines of communication so far have been

open. (Participant 2, Black gay man)

These findings illustrate both the employment type and job role of participants 1 and 2.

Participant 1 has maintained a temporary position within the transportation industry for the last

year and a half. Whereas, participant 2 has maintained a full-time position within the educational

system for over 20 years. These differences demonstrate how participants' relationships with their

colleagues within the workplace differ between Black lesbian and bisexual women and Black gay

men. The experiences of participants 1 and 2 also demonstrate how different unionized positions

can possess different types of relationships among colleagues within the workplace.

Participant 1 explained another interaction that occurred within a previous workplace:

It's hard to say because it's like I don't know how people would treat me otherwise because

they always see me as a Black person. Uhm, I would say in this city in particular, people

like to because I mean, Black people are like, I think 1 percent of the population in the

Lower Mainland or in B.C., I'm not sure. Uhm. People like to like when they recognize

something about you that they decide is like, "oh, that's blackness" they'll like pointed out

to you and you're kind of like, "okay thanks". Like, I know or I'm not doing this because

I'm Black. I'm just doing this and you're making these associations with it. Or like ways

that I might dress, especially like working in retail when I was like cause I worked in the

retail industry for a while. So like trendy cheap clothes. So I had like a much trendier

wardrobe at the time. And like, you know, you wear outfits and some people like, "oh,

you're dressed in Black today". And you're like, "not really. I'm just out wearing what I

thought was cool". So I think people um tend to attribute . . . Yeah, certain styles or just

like whatever behaviour they decide is blackness, they'll point it out to you or remark on it,

maybe not directly to you. And it's sort of like, that's a kind of a weird thing to say cause

it's sort of exotic to them. I would say, especially in the city. So whereas like at another in

another place, people probably wouldn't point that out. (Participant 1, Black lesbian)

Participant 1 further explained the lack of communication and protection within workplaces

when confronted by colleagues:

I happen to be the one that spoke up. But like other people in the other employees,

eventually they we're like, you know, "thank you for saying something" because like it's

making them feel uncomfortable, too. So I feel like there's uh. Um. A lot of yeah, like

unspoken stuff that I would say people of colour, especially like in retail and stuff probably

experience, which is the same thing that they'd experience sort of day to day. But there's no

like protection from your employer, from those types of things, like even from your fellow

employees or even from the people that, you know, they're supposed to be managing and

supervising. (Participant 1, Black lesbian)

Participant 1's experience with having to manage to communicate and protect themselves and other colleagues within the workplace demonstrates the relationship between participant 1 and their colleagues. This finding indicates how participant 1's colleagues at the time were thankful that they had acknowledged and spoke up about the inappropriate behaviour that transpired within the workplace. It also demonstrates how participants' workplaces dismissed matters concerning discriminatory actions against Black people that were undealt with at work.

Furthermore, participant 1 provided another example concerning their supervisor, whereby, they felt a sense of disconnection within the workplace:

> I think the position that I occupy there, uhm, really like, gives people permission to sort of treat me like less than in some ways and. Yeah, I don't know I think I know I look younger than I am, so people often think of me as like a younger person. And so sometimes, yeah, I feel like I'm like, well I have the lived experience and the knowledge and the wisdom to like, you know, be regarded as maybe. But it almost looks like that hierarchy itself is sort of problematic. But, [laughter] uhm, yeah, I do sometimes get the sense uh, especially from my supervisor. Being like, "oh, you little woman in the corner who does like…" he's, he's nice, but it's like very kind of belittling in some ways. Yeah. It's almost like a, this like weird, sweet, like the way you talk to a child, essentially. It's like you're pleasant and you're nice, but it's like you don't see me as an equal. (Participant 1, Black lesbian)

Participant 1 mentioned that the hierarchy of individuals was visible within the workplace and validated the challenges surrounding intersectionality. The experience of participant 1 answers one of the research questions of this study, which was, what are some noticeable barriers of oppression for Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people within the workplace? The findings

of this research reveal that barriers of oppression are far more noticeable in the workplaces of

Black lesbian and bisexual women than those of Black gay men. Because participant 1 is

currently working in a temporary job role, they do not want to risk mentioning anything to

superiors within their workplace that will get them into trouble. Participant 1 disclosed an

inappropriate situation that occurred between them and their supervisor:

> My direct supervisor uh, and like I said, I often listen to music when I'm working as day
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> typing away, uhm so I'm sitting at my desk on my headphones in. I'm just, you know,
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> carrying on. And just all of a sudden there's hands on my shoulders, like massaging my
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> shoulders. I was like, what is happening? And it was my boss. And he was like making a
>
> joke, like, aren't I a nice boss? I, like, give my employees massages. I was like, this is
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> incredibly inappropriate. I do not want you touching me. Like it was so wild. And it was
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> one of those things where I was like, is this really happening right now? Like, what the
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> heck? And so I kind of just like stood up and it was around lunchtime. So I'm still on for
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> lunch. I kind of walked it off. But like in another instance, if I had felt like I had, you
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> know, the power to do it, I would have been like, excuse me, what the hell are you doing?
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> Do not touch me. But because I'm so like temporary and it sort of feels like, yeah, you don't
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> want them to be like, yeah, we won't keep you on for another three months. Like we'll just
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> because they can't always just get another temp in there. So. Yeah. So stuff like that. Uhm,
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> that was probably the worst incident. Uhm. I've had a couple people in my office told me to
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> smile [laughter] which is always irritating. (Participant 1, Black lesbian)

This experience made participant 1 feel uncomfortable around their supervisor at work.

Participant 1's experience demonstrates the complexities that Black lesbian and bisexual women

face in a temporary employment position. Although participant 1 was currently employed under a union, they continued to fear the risk of being laid off. These findings also reveal that the experiences and temporary job role of participant 1 tended to prevent them from confronting inappropriate interactions that had occurred between them and their supervisor. This research indicates that these types of experiences have had an impact on participants' sense of certainty and safety within their workplace. The experiences of participant 1, in particular, demonstrated the adversities surrounding those with multiple intersectional identities within the workplace.

Also, participant 1 explained their feelings of having another Black colleague within the workplace:

It's like nice to have at least one other Black person in a workplace, to be honest. Like oftentimes you're the only one. Uhm, so in this case, we don't interact very much cause we have separate roles and stuff. But honestly, like anytime you're like, "oh my god, there's another Black person?!", there's like maybe that little bit of extra safety uh that, you know, might come in handy someday. You never put something that you definitely would take note of, for example, like you'd be like, "ah, I know that this person is here". So in my current job, I have never had to like, make use of that connection. But uh definitely is something that you take note of. Yeah, I'd say. (Participant 1, Black lesbian)

Participant 1 felt a sense of comfort whenever there was another Black or Black queer colleague within their workplace. This is because participants' experiences within different workplaces with relevance to their racial identity have contributed towards their sense of uncertainty and lack of safety. Critical race theory supports the understanding of racism and the injustices that lie within workplaces (Alderman et al., 2018). These barriers within workplaces have the power to affect

marginalized groups such as the Black community. These barriers of oppression within participants' workplaces are demonstrated through their colleagues and supervisors lack of knowledge around diversity and inclusivity within the workplace. Thus, these barriers of oppression experienced by Black lesbian and bisexual women within the workplace impact their relationships with colleagues and supervisors.

Participants were highly aware of their surroundings within their workplaces. Participants were aware of how colleagues and supervisors interact and treat one another. For example, participant 3 mentioned their experiences with colleagues and supervisors within the workplace. She explained how colleagues and supervisors understanding around diversity and inclusivity within the workplace has an impact on workplace relationships:

The [workplace] coordinator sort of sets the tone right and has kind of like, so she sets the tone for like, um, I'm gonna say, um, inclusion of diversity in the programming. She sets the tone for inclusion and diversity in terms of her, um, her staff, like she, she hires, you know, diverse staff, right? So that's like another layer. But like, the reality is that like, I can't always trust that all of those people just because their POC are going to not, um, engage on like anti-Black racism. So it's like, I like, there's this like, so let's say to a point, right, as POC, I know that there's a certain level of connection that we have, but, um, anti-Black racism is real and surprisingly a lot of POC (people of colour) folks don't get it. So, um, there's not the same kind of like. . . I want to say it's also very like diverse, which also makes a place nice to work at. Yeah. There's like a lot of different kinds of, um, like, um, I hate, I hate diversity, but like, um, there's also people of different ethnicities and. . . there's like, um, a couple of, Muslim staff. Like it's nice. There's even another Black person

that works for it, which is like a shocker for me. [laughter] It makes a huge difference. Like

one of the things about, um, so being Black and being queer, being Black, it's like, it's

really common to not have another Black coworker, you know? Um, and so there's certain,

you know, there's like certain things that even if I feel pretty included, it only goes so far.

You know what I mean? There's certain things that people aren't going to get and there's

certain things that are gonna like I'd say that people that aren't Black or non POC's or you

know, White people or whatever. I hope you don't mind. I'm just, cause uh White people,

um, like they mess up sometimes, you know, even if they don't mean to, you know, so I

think like, um, in general I have a pretty good workplace, but it's much nicer to have like

another person, like another Black person there. . . I know when I met, when I saw, uh,

um, the other Black staff person, like there was a certain kind of camaraderie that came up

and that was like really nice. And also, even the fact that we were both in that same

workplace was both validating for both of us. Do you know what I mean? For her to see me

there, she's like, okay, like this is probably okay. An okay place for me to be, if this

person's here. (Participant 3, Black bisexual woman)

Participant 3 explained how colleague's and supervisor's knowledge of diversity and inclusivity

within the workplace has an impact on workplace relationships. She also explained how

anti-Black racism is an act that contributes to the inequitable treatment of Black individuals,

especially within the workplace. Participant 3's experience indicates how often colleagues of

colour who are not Black do not always understand diversity and inclusivity within the

workplace. These experiences made participant 3 feel like she was not fully included in her

workplace. The experiences of participant 3 help to answer one of the sub-questions of this

research, that is, what is it about workplaces within the service sector and the labour market that make it more susceptible for Black LGBQ people to be discriminated against? The findings of this research indicate that Black lesbian and bisexual women were more susceptible to discriminatory actions within the workplace.

Participant 3 also discussed the increased lack of understanding around anti-Black racism among colleagues within a workplace. She also discussed how this made her feel:

Anti-Black racism is kind of like a real thing. And so I think that there's a certain certain level of trust that is reserved. Do you know what I mean? Like it takes, there's only so close that I get to people . . . Um, I think because I don't, cause I can't, I can't, I don't know. Yes, they're going to be around things. And also there's a part where like, um, I'll be honest, I'm kind of used to people at some point in the relationship, like letting me down or disappointing me around issues of race. Um, and it doesn't, it's not like, it's always a big thing. Sometimes it's a small thing, um, but it usually comes up at one point or another . . . Yeah. It still impacts you. (Participant 3, Black bisexual woman)

Participant 3 found that colleagues within the workplace, whether they are a person of colour or not, did not always tend to understand anti-Black racism and how it impacted Black people. Participant 3 described how anti-Black racism is a systemic matter which plays a huge factor when attempting to build relationships with colleagues or supervisors. This is one explanation as to why Black lesbian and bisexual women in this study tended to have distant relationships with colleagues within their workplace.

Another intersectional aspect of participants in this study was sexuality. Homophobia in the workplace was not reported to be prevalent among participants in this study. Although

participant 2 mentions that his experiences of homophobia are infrequent, these are the experiences that are known to contribute towards microaggressions within the workplace.

Participant 4's relationships with their colleagues and supervisors were not specified throughout the findings. Participants' relationships with colleagues and supervisors within the workplace varied between men and women in this study. Participants' experiences revealed a limited understanding of the intersections of diversity and inclusivity within the workplace. Participants' relationships and sense of belonging at work also varied because of their employment type (e.g., part-time, full-time, temporary, and contract). The lack of communication in participants' workplaces has also proven to have an impact on participants' livelihood. The lack of acknowledgement of participants' thoughts, feelings, and ideas has forced some participants to look elsewhere for employment.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Chapter Summary

This chapter includes an explanation of the research findings, which will be supported by the

theoretical framework of this thesis and academic literature. Participant experiences will largely

be interpreted through an intersectional lens. This chapter also includes some policy

recommendations for the service sector and labour market based on the research findings and

participant recommendations. Lastly, this chapter will address some of the limitations and

directions for future research as well as providing a conclusion to this study.

Explanation of Findings

This study found 4 key themes among participants' experiences within the workplace. These

themes included 1) racism within the workplace, 2) inequity in promotions and opportunities

within the workplace, 3) supervisors responses to racism within the workplace and 4)

relationships with colleagues and supervisors within the workplace. These key themes articulate

the mistreatment that Black people experienced in workplaces and each will be explained below.

Racism within the Workplace

The most consistent finding in this study was the pervasiveness of racism within the workplace.

The majority of the participants experienced racial microaggressions, hostile behaviours, and

chronic health issues within their workplaces. This finding is supported by academic research

that has found that "in the world of work, microaggressions contribute to the glass ceiling effect

for Black employees by sending messages of exclusion and expectations of failure and by

sapping their psychological and spiritual energies in the workplace" (Sue et al., 2008, p. 330). Previous research on Black people's experiences with racial microaggressions has proven to impose a harmful impact on their mental and physical well-being as well as their access to equitable treatment within the workplace (Sue et al., 2008).

This study found that participants experienced many different forms of racism in their workplaces. This study's finding of the pervasiveness of racism within the workplace is also well supported by previous research on Black experiences with racism within the workplace in the United States. American research has demonstrated that by "focusing on Black Americans, we examine 'everyday' discrimination, those subtle and pervasive manifestations of racism faced by Blacks on a daily basis in the workplace" (Deitch et al., 2003, p. 1300). This research demonstrates how Black people experience everyday racism within their workplaces. It also indicates that these experiences of racism that Black people endure within their workplace significantly impact their wellbeing. Research literature and critical race theory support the findings of racism within the workplace.

From a theoretical perspective, Black lesbian and bisexual women's experiences demonstrate the lack of understanding around racialization within the workplace. The findings of this research validate the challenges for Black lesbian and bisexual women in the Lower Mainland. Critical race theory unveils the inequitable treatment and measures taken against racial groups within power structures in society (Furman et al., 2018). Critical race theory supports this finding that "racism is an "integral, permanent and indestructible component of this society. Critical race theory presupposes a racial realist perspective, in that there is an ever-present reality of racism that is systemic in nature and institutionalized throughout all economic, social, and

political systems" (DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2016, p. 392). Critical race theory demonstrates how racism is rooted in the foundation of society and seeps into workplaces. Black lesbian and bisexual women in this study were targets of racist experiences within their workplace. Critical race theory also supports this finding by explaining how "these outward manifestations mask the deep fundamental roots of sexism, racism, power, and White privilege that plague our society. While these roots are invisible, they give rise to visible manifestations of racial and sexual oppression. Consequently, diversity within organizations cannot be sustained unless based on an understanding of the root causes of racism" (Bernier & Rocco, 2003, p. 14). Critical race theory supports the understanding that racism and sexism are ingrained into society but are ignored due to increased structural oppression. This is why organizations are unable to maintain an understanding of the causes of racism. Academic research and critical race theory support the experiences of Black lesbian and bisexual women within their workplace.

Black lesbian and bisexual women in this study reported experiencing historical and contemporary structural oppression. This has resulted in Black lesbian and bisexual women being forced to face experiences of racism within the workplace. The literature surrounding Black women within the workplace explains that they experience the hardship of racial and gender oppression and inequitable treatment within the service sector and labour market workplaces (Mensah, 2002). An intersectional approach also recognizes that Black women working within the service sector and labour market face challenges around the intersections of gender and race. Previous research studies have also found that Black women endure mistreatment, microaggressions, and hostile behaviour within the workplace due to the long-standing impact of colonialism, racism, and patriarchy (Holder et al., 2015). It explains how Black women's

experiences of oppression have ultimately led to the normalization of traditional racialized

customs within the workplace (Holder et al., 2015). Black lesbian and bisexual women in this

study reported that their experiences of racism within the workplace had an impact on their sense

of safety and mental wellbeing. This was because participants' workplace dynamics were found

to lack knowledge around the root causes of racism. These findings indicate the lack of

understanding of diversity within Black lesbian and bisexual women's workplaces. Black lesbian

and bisexual women also reported high-levels of mental and physical stress stemming from

experiences of racism within their workplaces. This finding is consistent with the academic

literature examining Black women. For example, racial microaggressions, which are described as

"verbal, behavioural, and environmental racial slights or insults directed to a person who is an

ethnic minority group member" (Hollingsworth et al., 2017, p. 105), were found to contribute to

high levels of stress and depression in many Black women. Racial microaggressions were said to

produce feelings of self-doubt in many Black women (Hollingsworth et al., 2017). This is one of

the reasons why Black women have to take medical leave from work while continuing to justify

their potential and belonging within the workplace to remain employed (Hollingsworth et al.,

2017). This demonstrates the ongoing subordination that Black lesbian and bisexual women

experience within the workplace. Research further supports the discriminatory behaviour against

Black lesbian and bisexual women by emphasizing the stressors that they develop:

> The particular stressors in the lives of African American women reflect their distinct
>
> history, sociocultural experience, and position in society. These stressors differ in
>
> magnitude and content from those of White women, White men, and African American
>
> men. The usual stressors of the working environment may be unbearable because Black

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women can be easily singled out and treated differently than their colleagues.

Discrimination in the workplace on the basis of race and gender is a chronic stressor for

Black women. (Hall et al., 2012, p. 209)

This research highlights the fact that Black women are susceptible to ongoing stressors within the

workplace due to historical and contemporary discriminatory practices embedded in the service

sector and the labour market.

Previous research surrounding the experiences of Black women highlights the difference in

experiences between White women and men as well as Black men in comparison to Black

women. Experiences differ for Black women because they possess multiple intersectional

identities' including, race, gender, and sexuality. Intersectionality recognizes the subordination

that Black women endure in more dominant and hierarchical social organizations such as

workplaces within the service sector and the labour market (Feinstein, 2017). Intersectionality

also acknowledges how Black women's identities have been marginalized and erased due to the

discriminatory behaviours of more racially privileged groups in society (Feinstein, 2017). Black

lesbian and bisexual women in this study faced oppressive treatment when having to

communicate their health matters to their employers. For example, participant 4 mentioned how

her chronic illness prevented her from going into work. This meant that participant 4 required

time off from work, according to her health care practitioner. However, participant 4 was asked

several ongoing questions from her employer regarding the purpose of their time off work. This

emphasizes the barriers that Black lesbian and bisexual women are subjected to within the

workplace. It also demonstrates how intersections of race and gender are distinguishable factors

for oppressive treatment towards Black lesbian and bisexual women within the workplace.

(Brown & Misra, 2003). These barriers contributed towards the overall experiences of discrimination that Black lesbian and bisexual women in this study faced within the workplace. It also demonstrates how Black lesbian and bisexual women faced racist injuries and various forms of discrimination within their workplace due to their intersectional identities. Research by Mohr and Purdie-Vaughns (2015), examined intersectional identities and the impacts of discrimination on Black women, also explained how:

> Early work examining the experience of discrimination from the target's perspective has uncovered evidence of cumulative disadvantage for intersectional individuals. For instance, Black women report that employers expect to pay them less in comparison to Black males and White females. In addition, Black lesbians who were interviewed about stressors associated with their triple subordinate identity status claim that racism, sexism, and heterosexism are significant sources of stress in their lives. (p. 392)

The results of Mohr and Purdie-Vaughns (2015) study demonstrated that Black women within the workplace experience stressors that are associated with discriminatory behaviour directed towards their intersectional identities.

The experiences of Black lesbian and bisexual women in this study were different that those of participant 2, the Black gay man, who, did not report experiencing racism within the workplace. He did, however, experience occasional homophobia within his current workplace. Using an intersectional approach can help us understand this gender difference. One way to understand this difference is that participant 2 has the privilege of rarely encountering homophobic experiences within his current workplace. This finding also demonstrates the privilege that participant 2 has not ever experienced racism within his current workplace for 20

years. The Black lesbian and bisexual women in this study, on the other hand, encountered multiple experiences of racism within various workplaces. This finding can be understood through intersectional Black feminist theory, which argues that there is a distinction of Black women's situations from Black men's as well as from White women and men (Feinstein, 2017). An intersectional approach helps to understand racism within the workplace and can be used to unveil the discriminatory actions and unequal measures against Black lesbian and bisexual women (Mercat-Bruns, 2017). Both the theoretical framework and previous academic research support this finding that Black lesbian and bisexual women experienced increased amounts of racism within their workplaces. These experiences of racism within the workplace contributes to the normalization of discriminatory behaviour towards Black lesbian and bisexual women. One way discriminatory behaviour is normalized is by the denial of employment opportunities and promotions, which will be discussed in the next key finding.

Inequity in Promotions and Opportunities within the Workplace

The second key theme found in this research is that Black lesbian and bisexual women in this study experienced inequity in promotions and opportunities within their workplace. This was demonstrated through Black lesbian and bisexual women's inability to access higher-status jobs and restrictions with temporary employment positions. These findings unveiled that Black lesbian and bisexual women were not presented with promotions and opportunities within their workplaces as often as their White male counterparts. For example, participant 4 explained witnessing a colleague who was a White man with less experience than herself, be promoted fairly quickly within the workplace. Participants 4's experience demonstrates the structural

oppression that Black lesbian and bisexual women continue to face in comparison to White men within the workplace. For example, a study on the experiences of gender and race at work explained how the perception of Black women in leadership roles is least typical, which suggests that Black women have to work harder than other groups within the workplace to achieve higher-status job roles (Rosette et al., 2018). This means that Black women also have to display a greater amount of competence than other groups within the workplace to be recognized for their work. Research reveals that this type of inequitable treatment towards Black women is said to result in "the 'glass cliff,' which suggests that women, in general, are more likely to be asked to lead organizations in financially precarious positions because they are perceived to possess the attributes that are suitable for managing these situations. Therefore, although Black women may experience benefits once they access leadership roles because of dominance stereotypes, their presumed incompetence likely impedes their attainment of top roles and at least partially explains their immense underrepresentation in leadership roles" (Rosette et al., 2018, p. 7). The split labor market theory argues that the precariousness experienced by Black women is likely due to the disparities that minority groups such as Black lesbian and bisexual women experience within the workplace. Split labor market theory explains how Black women are likely to be denied employment opportunities because of their minority status and the undermining of their competence by both the employer and other groups within the workplace.

Additionally, a study conducted in the US examined Black women's experiences within the labour market. It demonstrated intersections of race and gender as factors contributing to inequality within the labour market. Browne and Misra's (2003) research found "a sense of isolation from a corporate environment in which the majority of managers were White men, and

they perceived a White male culture that was inhospitable and alien. . . Black women had fewer

resources such as network contacts to fit into the organization. . . Black women also felt greater

pressure to perform better than their male colleagues (almost all of whom were White) and were

much less likely to have role models that were the same gender and race as themselves" (Browne

& Misra, 2003, p. 501). This demonstrates the difference in obtaining equity in opportunities

between Black women and White men within the workplace, which was similar to the experience

described by participants in this study. Browne and Misra's (2003) research also demonstrates

how Black women are faced with greater pressure than White men within the workplace to

perform better.

Furthermore, this research found a difference between Black lesbian and bisexual women

and Black gay men's experiences with inequity in promotions and opportunities within the

workplace. Black lesbian and bisexual women experienced far more inequity in promotions and

opportunities within their workplaces in comparison to participant 2, a Black gay man.

Participant 2 mentioned how his opinion and judgement were valued in his workplace, where he

worked in a senior role. The theoretical framework supports this finding by providing an

intersectional analysis of Black lesbian and bisexual women's experiences of inequity within the

workplace. Intersectionality recognizes that Black women are not only subjected to racism and

sexism but are targeted by various forms of discrimination throughout their lives based on their

intersecting identities. Research by Hollis (2018) explains that Black women face, "unfavorable

class, sexual orientation, religion, language, and national origin, identities potentially outside of

the mainstream, are positions that can keep women of color locked out of opportunity. . .

Intersectionality 'addresses the manner in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression, and other

discriminatory systems create inequalities that structure the relative positions of women, races, ethnicities, classes and the like" (p. 76-77). Participant 2's experience demonstrates the difference in experiences of equity and workplace discrimination between Black gay men and Black lesbian and bisexual women. Research supports this finding as it has been previously explained that Black women experience increased negative stereotypes due to being both a woman and Black (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Black women are said to experience a lack of promotions, increased segregation, pressure to perform better, lack of advancement over Black men, and limited career opportunities due to racism and sexism (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Participants of this study, on the other hand, have another intersectional position where they are vulnerable to discrimination in the form of homophobia. Black women are also said to experience unfair treatment in training, promoting, and opportunities. Therefore, this research study demonstrates the combination of restrictions that Black lesbian and bisexual women encounter within the workplace, including experiences of lower promotion rates. Further research acknowledges the barriers that Black lesbian and bisexual women face within the workplace. Research by Meyer (2017) explains these barriers that Black women are subjected to, such as "the experience of 'not being heard' and 'undervalued' can only be overcome when racial group dynamics are broken through communication and cooperation on a one-by-one interaction" (p. 150). Meyer's (2017) research supports the findings on the inequity in promotion and opportunities within the workplace. It allows us to understand that Black women are undervalued due to the likelihood of their voices not being heard. Both the theoretical framework and academic research help validate the findings of this research, which is that Black lesbian and bisexual women were found to experience increased inequity in promotions and opportunities

within the workplace in comparison to Black gay men. This was demonstrated through Black lesbian and bisexual women's challenges regarding their intersectional identities as well as stereotypical barriers of oppression integrated into workplace practices.

Supervisors and Responses to Racism within the Workplace

This research found that Black lesbian and bisexual women were forced to defend their racial identity when confronted by their supervisor's responses to experiences of racism within their workplace. This was displayed through the Black lesbian and bisexual women in this study experiencing discrimination towards their hair and the need to defend their intellectual and physical potential within the workplace. For example, participant 4's supervisor spoke about her hair in degrading ways. Brown's (2018) research supports this finding that Black women are faced with negative judgments and opinions regarding their hairstyles within workplaces. Brown's (2018) study on Black women found that "deeming a Black woman's hair as gross is unacceptable and creates an oppressive work environment for Black women" (p. 68). Intersectionality is demonstrated through participants' experiences with their supervisors and responses to racism within the workplace. Another example of research on Black women's experiences with racial tensions within workplaces is the study by Hunte (2016) which provides an example of a Black woman's experience working within the trades industry and how she faced repeated racialization. Like participants in this study, she experienced racism within workplaces, which has resulted in chronic health consequences. "being in a workplace where the microaggressive behaviors of being undermined, publicly ridiculed, and threatened with termination by her supervisor continued unchecked was detrimental to Shonda's mental health

and livelihood" (p. 441). Similar to the experiences of Black lesbian and bisexual women in this study, the above example also demonstrates how Black women's experiences concerning racism within the workplace are not unacknowledged by their supervisors in comparison to their White counterparts. Hunte's (2016) research supports the findings of this research as it recognizes the adversities and discriminatory behaviour experienced by Black lesbian and bisexual women. It also validates that Black women working within the service sector and the labour market are treated differently by their supervisors in comparison to their White counterparts.

This research also reported that Black lesbian and bisexual women had to defend their intellectual and physical ability to employers. Academic research supports this finding by examining Black women's experiences with managers and their discriminatory perceptions of employees of colour. A study examining Black women's experiences and communication tactics within organizations, explain,

> White managers' perceptions of their minority employees revealed that over two-thirds of the White interviewees had characterized their Black employees negatively, typifying the Black women in particular as lazy and unmotivated and the Black men as shiftless. Additionally, White managers expressed frustration at their Black employees' claims of discrimination or maltreatment, arguing that such complaints were groundless. Some of the managers interviewed had extremely limited contact with their employees of color, but still negatively characterized them during interviews. The researcher surmised that the White managers' answers invoked stereotypes that helped them to better support their already-formed perceptions of their minority employees' deficiencies and shortcomings. (Adesaogun et al., 2015, p. 45)

This reveals how negative perceptions of Black lesbian and bisexual women by their supervisor impacts the type of response that supervisors provide to issues concerning racism within the workplace. This research supports the participants' findings as it demonstrates how Black women are treated by their supervisors in their workplace. This treatment affects how Black lesbian and bisexual women's supervisors respond to racist accounts that transpire within the workplace.

Academic research also supports this finding by explaining how Black people experienced subtle, persistent forms of discrimination within the workplace based on their racial identity. Imoagene's (2018) research demonstrates the lack of support and guidance provided to Black people that work within organizational and institutional settings. Imoagene's (2018) research describes how Black employees felt that they received a lack of support and mentorship compared to their White colleagues. Black employees explained their doubts in their competence and ability to succeed in the company (Imoagene, 2018). This demonstrates how some workplaces fail to respond to experiences of discrimination against Black workers. A study on race, gender, and power within the workplace found that, "relative to White men, all groups encounter increasing inequality at higher levels of power, but only Black women seem to experience this form of inequality as a result of direct discrimination" (Elliott & Smith, 2004, p. 365). Research indicates how racially minorized women, such as Black lesbian and bisexual women, are exposed to racial, gender, and sexual inequalities within the workplace. The research by Elliott and Smith (2004) further indicates that this is likely because "employers might let women and minorities into low positions of authority, they are much less likely to let them into high positions that involve greater control" (p. 366). Elliott and Smith's (2004) research recognizes that workplaces such as those within the service sector and the labour market consist

of invisible barriers of oppression. These barriers increase inequality and disadvantages for Black lesbian and bisexual women.

Relationships with Colleagues and Supervisors within the Workplace

Black lesbian and bisexual women's relationships with their colleagues and supervisors at work were complicated. This finding is supported by the theoretical framework, which helps to explain the purpose of this finding with relevance to intersectionality. Intersectionality theory recognizes the injustices related to Black lesbian and bisexual women's intersectional identity as it is reported to "understand experiences of the 'Other', or marginalized people and groups, within institutions that maintain discriminatory practices and social inequities. Therefore, it is necessary to illuminate how the intersections of race and gender, as well as other personal and social identities, interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's employment experiences" (McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017, p. 395). This research supports the findings of this research because it addresses the reason to which Black lesbian and bisexual women experience discriminatory behaviour concerning either their racial, gender or sexual identities within the workplace. This research also identifies why women of colour, such as Black lesbian and bisexual women, chose to maintain distant relationships with their colleagues and supervisors within the workplace. It is because of the discouragement that Black lesbian and bisexual women face from their colleagues and supervisors that play into how understanding people are around diversity and inclusivity within the workplace. Research by Opie and Roberts (2017), which examined Black lives within the workplace, expresses the voices of Black workers, stating, "when Black people share their thoughts about racism with White people, White people may

become defensive, deny racism, blame Black people for racism and resist structural changes designed to eliminate workplace racism. Such denial and blaming tends to divert attention from Black voices onto how and why White people are not complicit in creating, maintaining or benefitting from structural systems that disadvantage Black people. This underscores how people are happy to talk about diversity in the abstract but unwilling or resistant to concrete discussions about race, racism and inequalities" (p. 711). This research addresses the concerns of Black people within the workplace with relevance to workplace racism. It also acknowledges the unwillingness of some workplaces to discuss and combat workplace racism to help increase aspects of diversity and inclusivity within the workplace.

Additionally, this research found that the limited understanding of intersections of diversity and inclusivity within the workplace is demonstrated by predominantly White workplaces. Canadian legislative documents such as Canada's *Employment Equity Act* (1995) emphasizes the measures taken to provide equal employment opportunities for members of visible minorities within the workplace. The Act further underlines the goal of eliminating any potential barriers that may cause underrepresentation of members of visible minorities. However, the findings of this research demonstrate that Black lesbian and bisexual women experienced the opposite of what the act describes. The findings of this research unveiled that participants' experiences concerning discriminatory behaviour tended to be left undealt with at work. The research literature reaffirms how anti-Black racism continues to be a systemic issue in Canadian contemporary society. Research explains how "anti-black racism in Canada is often subtle and is generally not accompanied by overt racial slurs or explicitly prohibitive legislation. However, it is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions, policies and practices, such that anti-black racism

is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the larger white society. Canadian Anti-black racism in its contemporary form continues the historical practices of racial segregation, economic disadvantage and social division" (Mullings et al., 2016, p. 23). Anti-Black racism is explained to be apparent within Canadian society as it contributes to the racism, lack of opportunities, and the dehumanization of Black people. Likewise, participants reported that the lack of understanding of anti-Black racism being a systemic matter was a factor when attempting to build relationships with colleagues and supervisors. This research also found that anti-Black racism largely contributed towards the inequitable treatment of Black lesbian and bisexual women within the workplace.

The research findings revealed that participants' relationships with colleagues and supervisors within the workplace were impacted by their level of understanding around diversity and inclusivity within the workplace. Although Black lesbian and bisexual women had good relationships with their colleagues and supervisors, they remained distant from them within their workplace. On the other hand, the Black gay man in this study had closer relationships with their colleagues. The theoretical framework supports these findings by explaining how intersectionality addresses the gender issues that create hierarchies and power relations within workplaces. It is because of the limited understanding of diversity and inclusivity within the workplace that Black lesbian and bisexual women in this study remained distant from colleagues and supervisors.

The research literature also supports this finding that Black lesbian and bisexual women have distant relationships with colleagues and supervisors because of the discriminatory behaviour they experience for being viewed as members of a marginalized group (Miles, 2008).

Research also emphasized the unwillingness of some workplaces to discuss the causes of racism within the workplace as well as the importance of diversity and inclusivity within the workplace (Opie & Roberts, 2017). Nevertheless, research justifies how anti-Black racism is seen within institutions and organizations (Brewster & Rusche, 2012). This finding reveals the gaps found in the research literature surrounding diversity and inclusivity as well as the lack of understanding on anti-Black racism within the workplace. However, legislative documents on employment equity do not help to protect Black lesbian and bisexual women within their workplace. This lack of understanding and recognition of anti-Black racism contributes to systemic matters. It also impacts Black lesbian and bisexual women's relationships with colleagues and supervisors within the workplace.

Policy Recommendations

With relevance to the research findings and to assist in reducing workplace racism, employers should emphasize and uphold the measures included under Canada's *Employment Equity Act* (1995), which support equal employment opportunities for members of visible minorities within the workplace. The act underlines the goal of eliminating any potential barriers that may cause underrepresentation of members of visible minorities. The act emphasizes the duty of employers to uphold employment equity by ensuring the following measures:

> (a) identifying and eliminating employment barriers against persons in designated groups that result from the employer's employment systems, policies and practices that are not authorized by law; and

(b) instituting such positive policies and practices and making such reasonable

accommodations as will ensure that persons in designated groups achieve a degree of

representation in each occupational group in the employer's workforce that reflects their

representation. (EEA, 1995)

All employers should abide by these measures to help reduce workplace racism and increase the

representation of marginalized groups such as Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people.

Current workplace policies surrounding discrimination within the workplace do not offer enough

protection for Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer workers.

This study also found that the measures addressed in legislative documents such as the

Canadian Human Rights Act (1985), were not consistently maintained in Black lesbian, gay,

bisexual, and queer peoples workplaces. The Act discusses sexual orientation under section 15,

which states that an individual's equality rights and the prohibited grounds for discrimination.

Based on the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (1985), the prohibited grounds of discrimination are

the following: race, nationality, ethnicity, colour, religion, gender, gender identity, gender

expression, sex, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, family status, and genetic

characteristics (CHRA, 1985). This Act, if abided by, would have provided participants with the

protection against discrimination and equal opportunities within their workplace. Identifying the

legal protection and basic human rights of Black LGBQ people would have increased

representation within their workplaces.

One participant recommended that workplaces incorporate more understanding around

gender diversity. The participant explained the level of understanding on gender diversity

amongst their colleagues, stating, "I would say maybe a further third have paid lip service to it

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and then and then maybe one third, uh I don't think, have done any of their gender homework yet". This is because the research found that some participant's workplaces lacked the knowledge and understanding around lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people. In this case, queer theory argues that there are an underrepresentation and a lack of queer activism in academic projects (Rand, 2006). This contributes to the oppression that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people face on a regular basis. It also contributes to the normalization of heterosexual practices within societies and cultures (Rumens et al., 2019). Research surrounding workplace diversity explains how "members of those groups protected by law still face considerable discrimination, and some groups have yet to be covered by equal employment policies (for example, LGBT status is often neglected). As long as inequalities still exist, there is a need to establish and enforce basic equal opportunity protections" (Bond & Haynes, 2014, p. 185). This is why specific policy recommendations need to address the increase in workplace diversity in all levels within an organization to help reduce discrimination and promote inclusive practices.

Another policy recommendation is adjusting hiring, training, and promoting practices to include both the recruiters and applicants understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusivity within the workplace. One recommendation put forth by a participant was that workplaces incorporate the consideration of visible minorities and queer people when hiring. The participant recommended that workplaces "should definitely like, they don't actually take that into consideration when they're hiring like they put it on the application, but like they never ask on the application, like, are you a visible minority or do you identify as gay?". If workplaces were to consider incorporating the identification of visible minorities or queer people on applications, this would demonstrate that workplaces are attempting to provide a more equitable

work environment. Research also suggests that "the organizational practice that has been identified as most critical to diversity is clarity about what person or unit is ultimately responsible for tracking and monitoring. When organizations establish clear compliance structures, it seems to not only increase numerical representation of minority groups, but it also seems to improve the impact of training and mentoring programs" (Bond & Haynes, 2014, p. 186). This recommendation will help to create an inclusive work environment for all employees and support equity amongst marginalized groups.

Limitations and Future Directions

One of the main limitations found in this research was the ability to recruit a sufficient number of participants. The objective was to recruit 5 to 8 participants to this study. Given the limited timeframe for the Honours program and the disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we stopped recruitment at four participants. Also, due to COVID-19, the recruitment and interview process of this research was disrupted. Alternative measures directed by KPU REB were implemented in response to COVID-19 as discussed in the methods chapter. Having additional interviews may have strengthened the findings or allowed the recruitment of transgender participants.

Another limitation of this research is the absence of Black transgender experiences within the workplace. This research could not fully answer the research question, what are the experiences of Black LGBTQ people within the workplace? Because there were no transgender people in the study. Given the underrepresentation of Black transgender experiences in this research, there is a need for future research to examine the experiences of Black transgender

people within the workplace. These experiences could potentially include unique findings because of the small sample size and the heterogeneity of Black LGBQ individuals and communities. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized broadly.

Another limitation in this study was the time and financial constraint. Because of these constraints, I was unable to ask participants to engage in the data analysis with me. By involving participants in the data analysis process, they would have helped to offset any potential biases in the analysis. Interviews were thereby, self-reported and may have been susceptible to response biases.

More work is needed to identify the experiences of Black transgender and queer people within the workplace. The experiences of Black transgender and queer people could have helped to establish further similarities and differences within participants' workplaces. More data on the experiences of Black transgender and queer people would have helped to strengthened the key themes identified in this research, which included racism, inequity in promotions and opportunities, supervisors and responses to racism, and relationships with colleagues and supervisors within the workplace.

Conclusion

This study is the only known study examining Black LGBQ people's experiences in the workplace in the Lower Mainland. The research revealed that Black lesbian and bisexual women experienced increased mistreatment and various forms of discrimination within their workplace. The theoretical framework of this research assisted in interpreting the findings, which included critical race theory, feminist theory, intersectionality, and queer theory. The literature review also

assisted in interpreting the findings of this research. Some of the major gaps in literature surrounding the experiences of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people is the lack of representation in workplaces. This research sought out participants' perspectives, interpretations, opinions, and feelings regarding their experiences as Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people within the workplace. By conducting semi-structured interviews over the phone, this research was able to gain insight into participants' experiences and a chance to obtain a greater understanding of the context behind each experience. This study found that Black lesbian and bisexual women's experiences were reflected through racism within the workplace, inequity in promotions and opportunities, supervisors and responses to racism within the workplace, and relationships with colleagues and supervisors within the workplace. This research also provides some policy recommendations for workplaces within the service sector and the labour market. These recommendations include upholding measures of Canada's *Employment Equity Act* (1955), and adjusting hiring, training, and promoting practices to include both the recruiters' and applicants' understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusivity within the workplace. These policy recommendations will help workplaces to be better equipped with the knowledge and understanding of various forms of discrimination demonstrated within the workplace. They will also provide further protection by the employers to members of marginalized groups that work within the service sector and the labour market.

The findings of this research found that Black lesbian and bisexual women experienced increased mistreatment concerning their racial identity in comparison to Black gay men within the workplace. The findings of this research were supported by the theoretical framework and research literature. The theoretical framework and research literature provided explanations and

examples to help represent the key themes found in this research. The four key themes that this chapter examined in more depth included 1) racism within the workplace, 2) inequity in promotions and opportunities within the workplace, 3) supervisors responses to racism within the workplace and 4) relationships with colleagues and supervisors within the workplace.

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Appendices

Informed Consent Form

RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

Consent Form

Title of Research Project: The Experiences of Black LGBTQ Canadians within the Workplace
Principal Investigator: Dr. Tara Lyons (Criminology)
Application #2020-01

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time. You should ask the principal investigator listed below any questions you may have about this research study. You may ask the principal investigator questions in the future if you do not understand something that is being done or have any questions. The investigators will share any new information that may develop while you are participating in this study that might impact your continued willingness to participate.

This consent form explains the research study you are being asked to join. Please review this form carefully and ask any questions about the study before you agree to join. You may also ask questions at any time after joining the study. See below for persons to contact.

Purpose of Research Project: We are doing this research project to gain a better understanding and to create awareness around the experiences of Black LGBTQ Canadians within the workplace. Personal interviews will be conducted with members of Black LGBTQ community in the Lower Mainland of Vancouver to talk about experiences within conventional workplaces

such as jobs within the service sector (e.g. retail, restaurants) or the labour market (e.g. construction, factory).

Procedures: The project involves a semi-structured interview with you in your capacity as a member of the Black LGBTQ community. The interview will be approximately 45-60 minutes in length and held via telephone. The interview will focus on questions from an interview guide that I have designed, under the supervision of the principal investigator.

If you consent to the audio-recording of the interview, I will use a handheld digital recorder - not a personal smartphone - to create a digital audio file.

If you do not consent to the audio-recording of the interview, I will take handwritten notes during the interview.

I will transcribe (type up) the audio files into transcripts. The interview transcripts will be analyzed to find themes among yours and others' experiences in the workplace.

Risks of harm/Discomforts/Inconvenience: This project is Minimal-Risk Research. The risks associated with participation are comparable to risks encountered in everyday life.

Benefits: Compensation will be provided to research participants in form of a $30 dollar Amazon gift card. This is to show appreciation for your expertise and to acknowledge your time involved in the interview process.

Confidentiality: Your name and any identifying information, including the name of your workplace, will not be used in any publications and will not be shared with anyone. You may choose to use a participant number (Participant #1) or a pseudonym (e.g., made up name) in all written publications. Your workplace will only be identified by its sector (e.g., retail, restaurant). All data collected from you will be stored in a locked cabinet in the office of the principal investigator. Only myself and the principal investigator will have access to the consent forms and interview files. Research data (notes, interview audio files and interview transcripts) will be used to analyze findings for my thesis. By consenting to participate in this research project, you are not waiving your rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm.

The interviews will be conducted via telephone, I will ensure to be in a private room during the course of the interview. The research team highly encourages you to also find a private room to

ensure your confidentiality. All copies of data will be kept on password protected computers and/or in locked cabinets in the principal investigator's office at KPU.

Research data will be kept for one year after the project is due, and then it will be securely deleted if electronic and shredded if paper.

The research team will email two copies of the informed consent form to you prior to the interview. You will be required to sign both copies of the informed consent form, returning one sign copy back to the research team for our records, while keeping the other signed copy for your records.

Research data will be published in the Kwantlen Open Resource Access (KORA) which is a database for all KPU research and scholarly publications of student research. It may also be used for classroom and conference presentations as well as academic journal articles.

Withdrawal from the Study: Your participation is completely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the research at any time, including during or after the interview. If you wish to withdraw, contact me or the principal investigator and we will stop the analysis of any data based on your interview, and all data (electronic and hard copy) will be securely deleted and destroyed.

Persons to Contact: If you want to talk to anyone about this research study because you think you have not been treated fairly or think you have been hurt by joining the study, or you have any other questions about the study, you should call the principal investigator, Tara Lyons (604-599-3433 or tara.lyons@kpu.ca) the KPU Research Ethics Board (604-599-3163 or reb@kpu.ca).

Once you have read this document, or the document has been read and explained to you, and you have been given the chance to ask any questions, please sign or make your mark below if you agree to take part in the study.

Print Name of Subject:_____

_____ I consent to the audio recording of this interview (indicate *yes* or *no*)

_____   _____

Signature or Mark of Subject or Legally Authorized Representative   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Signed copies of this consent form must be 1) retained on file by the principal investigator and 2) given to the participant

Interview Guide

General Topics	Questions
Personal Background	● Where are you living right now? (What area of the city?) ● Are you living with friends, family, by yourself? ● Are you in a relationship or seeing anyone right now? If so, how long have you been together?
Gender	● Could you tell me a bit about your gender identity? (Transgender, cisgender, trans, woman, non-binary?) ● (If appropriate, could you tell me a bit about your journey to your current gender identity?) ● What are your pronouns?
Sexuality	● Could you tell me a bit about your sexual identity? ● How do you identify (e.g., queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual etc.)? ● (If appropriate, could you tell me a bit about your journey to your current sexuality?)

In this section I will ask you some questions about your work	● Where are you working right now?
	  ○ How long have you been at the job/place?
	  ○ (If not working right now, can you tell me about your last job)?
	● What is your current job role?
	● Can you tell me about how you got the job? (through a friend? you applied?) What was the interview process like?
	● How long have you been there?
	● Do you have to commute for your job?
	● What do you like best about your job?
	● What is a challenging aspect of your job? Can you give me an example?
	● Most days, how do you feel at work? (happy, sad, calm, stressed, anxious, annoyed)
	● Do you feel safe at work?
	● Do you feel like your voice is heard at work?
	  ○ Can you give me a time when you felt your voice was/wasn't heard?

Employment Relationships	● What are your relationships like with your co-workers?
	  ○ Can you tell me about a coworker that you have a good relationship with?
	  ○ Can you tell me about a coworker that you do not have a good relationship with?
	    ■ How did this feel like for you?
	    ■ What emotions did this bring up?
	● What are your relationships like with your managers/supervisors?
	  ○ Do you believe that they have knowledge around LGBTQ individuals?
	● Could you tell me about a time that you or someone else at work experienced mistreatment?
	● Do you feel like you are treated equally at work?
	  ○ How is this demonstrated?
	● Do you feel like you are part of a team?
	● Are there colleagues you can trust?
	● Do you feel like you get paid equally in comparison to other coworkers?
	  ○ Do you feel you are paid well?
	  ○ Do you make enough money to live well?

Customer Interactions	● Can you talk about how customer interactions are at your work? (If applicable)
	  ○ Have you faced any issues concerning your sexuality/gender identity?
	  ○ Have you faced any issues concerning your racial identity?
	    ■ How was this issue dealt with? Was a manager/supervisor involved?
	● Do you have a customer base at work?

Gender & Work	● Are you out at work? (with fellow employees? managers?) ● Can you talk about how your gender impacts your work? ○ Can you talk about an example? ● Can you talk about how your gender impacts your relationships with coworkers and managers? ● Do coworkers and managers use your pronouns? (If applicable)

Sexuality & Work	● Can you talk about how your sexuality/sexual identity impacts your work?
	  ○ Are you out at work?
	    ■ How was this experience? (If applicable)
	    ■ Are there challenges for you when coming out at work?
	  ○ Have your colleagues met your partner?

Race & Work	● Can you talk about how being Black impacts your relationships with coworkers?
	  ○ Managers?
	  ○ Clients?
	● How many other Black people work with you?
	  ○ How does it feel being the only one? (If applicable)
	● Have you experienced racism at work? Can you give me an example if you feel comfortable
	  ○ Have you reached out to coworkers and/or managers about this experience? (If applicable)

Demographics	● How old are you? ● What is your highest level of education completed? ● Do you have a physical and/or mental disability? ○ Does it affect your work performance? (If applicable)
Final questions	● Is there anything you would like to add? Is there anything I should have asked you that I did not? ● Any questions for me?