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Protected, but Not Included? The Role of Workplace Inclusion for Sexual and Gender Minorities in the Federal Service

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The public workplace has traditionally been conceived of in heteronormative and cisnormative terms, wherein heterosexuality, the gender binary, and opposite-sex relationships are presumed and institutionalized in both word and deed. Recent policy changes and public opinion shifts regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals have placed an onus on employers to develop means to include sexual and gender minorities in the overall organizational culture and improve LGBT individuals' workplace experiences. Using multilevel data analysis, this study focuses on how LGBT federal workers' perceptions of inclusion at the agency, supervisory, and work unit levels affect their job satisfaction. The results indicate that LGBT employees' inclusion perceptions play a moderating role between their sexual or gender minority identities and individual job satisfaction. The findings suggest that interventions aimed at developing an inclusive culture that reduces or eliminates traditional heteronormativity and cisnormativity, both agency-wide and at separate organizational levels, may improve job satisfaction among LGBT workers.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, LGBT, Inclusion

Introduction

With its emphasis on diversity-minded recruitment, merit-based promotion and retention, and color-blind performance evaluation, the United States federal personnel system might be optimistically viewed as a model for 21st century public human resource management. Indeed, in the myths perpetuated in public administration theories of the late 19th and 20th centuries, such a system represents a sexless, rational, formal organizational system wherein value is placed in the work performed and the roles played by personnel, not on the personal identities or characteristics of those doing the work. The reality of the modern federal agency is more nuanced, however, as the individuals who compose that system bring their own styles, biases, and social tendencies to work, contributing to the formation of in-groups and out-groups within the larger organizations.

The business case for diversity (Thomas, 1990) and the benefits of diversity management (Pitts, 2009) have long been accepted, as has Sabharwal's (2014) more recent argument that performance is best enhanced via an inclusive work environment in which employees feel valued, fairly treated, and able to influence organizational practices. The case of lesbian, gay,

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bisexual, and transgender people's (LGBT[1]) social and workplace inclusion is particularly striking, as there exist two terms for LGBT individuals' organizational reality—*heteronormativity* and *cisnormativity*—that describe sexual and gender minorities' relative marginalization within the professional environment. Both terms effectively translate as the *exclusion* of LGBT people from the 'normal' or majority group, whether in word or in deed, while *inclusion* reflects disruption of hetero- and cis-normative practices and a move toward welcoming sexual and gender minorities in the overall group culture. As the nation's locus of public policy, largest single employer,[2] and cultural thought leader, the federal government appears to have recognized its responsibility to model inclusion behaviors and has specifically geared some of those to its LGBT employee population.

Numerous studies have examined workplace inclusion and LGBT experiences, but few have examined the synergies that exist between workplace inclusivity and LGBT employees' reaction to institutional attempts to include them in the overall workplace culture (Hur, 2020). Therefore, this work considers the behaviors from which LGBT inclusion might result, whether LGBT employees' experiences of inclusion are consistent across several consecutive years, and what effect such inclusion might have on employee satisfaction on the job. While there have been a handful of studies that have assessed the effects of inclusion on employee satisfaction, few have previously examined whether and how inclusivity demonstrated at different organizational levels affects satisfaction. Thus, as of this writing, this is the first study to assess whether actions taken by the federal agency, its supervisors, and its work units moderate the relationship between LGBT identity and employee satisfaction.

Conceptual Framework: Heteronormativity and Cisnormativity as Exclusion

To better comprehend inclusion and its effects on LGBT individuals, we must first understand the nature of their exclusion. Like members of other minority groups, sexual and gender minorities experience the dominant culture through interactions with individuals, groups, and institutions. While homophobia, understood as "a negative attitude toward an individual based on her or his membership in a group defined by its members' sexual attractions, behaviors, or orientation" (Herek & McLemore, 2013, p. 312), is the more commonly presumed, negative experience for LGBT individuals, homophobia falls short of explaining the extent of LGBT exclusion from the social and cultural benefits afforded to the heterosexual and cisgender majority. Rather, to fully appreciate the magnitude of LGBT individuals' exclusion from equitable treatment, research must examine the systemically heteronormative culture within which sexual and gender minorities operate. This approach necessitates use of a queer theory lens and an explicit 'queering' of administrative activities; that is, it examines agency-employer behavior and assesses the extent to which heterosexuality and cisgender identities permeate personnel policy to the exclusion of LGBT-identified individuals.[3]

Heteronormativity, defined as the "belief system underlying institutionalized heterosexuality" (Ingraham, 2006, p. 307), implicates the systemic structuring of society and the institutions within it to legitimize and afford privilege to heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships (Gusmano, 2010; Willis, 2009), while cisnormativity similarly privileges individuals who identify as one of the two binary genders, male or female, assigned to the individual at birth (Suárez et al., 2020). Both concepts rest on the premise that only two sexes, two genders, and opposite-sex relationship are socially and culturally 'normal' (Giddings & Pringle, 2011), and prescribe conventional ways for one to live their life (Jackson, 2006). In environments where an individual is presupposed to be heterosexual and identified as either female or male, heterosexual relationships and the gender binary are deemed normal, while non-conforming relationships or gender identities are considered aberrant. In short, whether at work or in a social setting, heteronormativity and cisnormativity translate to the cultural, interpersonal, and/or institutional exclusion of LGBT people.

Heteronormativity and preference for binary gender identities permeate workplace structures and cultures (Angouri, 2015; Rumens, 2016). Much like legal structures that have historically institutionalized heterosexuality and shaped the social order (Jackson, 2006), organizations create their own heteronormative social orders, manifesting as organizational cultures that define acceptable employee attitudes, identities, and behavior. LGBT individuals must constantly negotiate the institutional norms, practices, and values implicit in hetero- and cis-normative culture (Angouri, 2015; Rumens, 2016; Rumens & Broomfield, 2014; Ward & Winstanley, 2003). Such negotiation often revolves around the disclosure of one's LGBT identity, either explicitly or implicitly, as well as the contexts in which such disclosure might be made. This means, for instance, minding one's pronoun usage when discussing their partner or relationship, as well as conforming to gender norms in regard to dress and physical presentation. Because of this ongoing identity management and regardless of their myriad work-related skills, sexual and gender minorities are constantly reminded that because they do not conform to such norms, they are not full members of their respective organizations.

Inclusion and LGBT Personnel in the U.S. Federal System

Before assessing the degree to which any population experiences inclusion in the workplace, we must first consider the evolving definition and construction of the term 'inclusion.' Workplace inclusion has recently received notice as the inheritor and logical extension of diversity and diversity management initiatives in the workplace (Hur, 2020; Pink-Harper et al., 2017; Pitts, 2009; Sabharwal, 2014). The concept of inclusion has been described as reflecting organizational engagement (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998), cooperative work behaviors with colleagues (Gasorek, 2000; Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998), and participation in decision making (Davidson & Ferdman, 2002; Pelled et al., 1999; Sabharwal, 2014). Within the general population, prior research evaluates individuals' emotive experiences in the workplace and suggests that employees perceive inclusion within their work environment when they feel that they belong in their work group, are accepted by their supervisors and peers, and receive equal treatment from superiors within the organization (Melton & Cunningham, 2014). To clarify the meaning of inclusion as a workable construct, Shore et al. (2011) articulate two primary themes under which these and other manifestations of workplace inclusion may be organized: appreciation for uniqueness and sense of organizational belonging. Building on Ely and Thomas' (2001) argument, Shore et al. (2011) argue that inclusion simultaneously signifies the fulfillment of a person's need to belong while also being appreciated for the uniqueness they bring to work.

Similar to prior conceptualizations of inclusion, the present study acknowledges that inclusion manifests as a latent construct comprising "separate though interrelated dimensions" (Andrews & Ashworth, 2015, p. 282) that may be difficult to parse out for analysis. Given the multidimensional character of workplace inclusion, it may be demonstrated in a variety of ways and at multiple organizational levels that collectively reflect the collaborative, organization-wide work to create a culture that recognizes all employees' individual contributions (Priola et al., 2014; Willis, 2009). Ultimately, inclusion of diverse populations into the agency culture requires holistic incorporation of inclusive practice at all organizational levels. Inclusion feasibly cannot manifest the same way at all organizational levels; rather, relationships between the employee and his or her agency, supervisors, and immediate work unit will relay an inclusive message through varying means and methods.

Much like other facets of organizational culture, inclusion cannot be expected to develop overnight. Rather, culture is a learned phenomenon that develops as groups adapt to environmental changes, and is communicated by a variety of procedures, explicit rules, and implicit norms developed by the group as it negotiates various challenges (Schein, 2010). Inclusion-oriented culture implicates an integration-and-learning process wherein group members acknowledge and recognize the value of individual differences within their diverse

body, and then integrate those differences into the whole (Shore et al., 2011). Given the institutionalized nature of hetero- and cis-normativity, the disruption and eventual dismantling of such organizational norms requires significant investment of time and energy across all facets of agency life. Drivers of such change may come in a variety of shapes and sizes, but, if successful, a culture supporting the inclusion of diverse individuals may evolve.

Within the U.S. federal personnel system, sexual and gender minorities historically have found themselves on the receiving end of policies aimed at their delegitimization and elimination from the employment ranks. Anti-LGBT rhetoric and paranoia surrounding LGBT individuals' suitability for federal employment dominated LGBT-focused federal personnel policies into the 21st century.[4] Up to that point, limited federal-level legal protections existed for LGBT workers, as no significant piece of legislation explicitly protected those with LGBT identities from discriminatory actions in the workplace. Few federal-level actions were taken to address sexual and gender minorities in the federal service until the late 1990s, and in fact, the most visible activity targeting LGBT federal employees at the turn of the 21st century—the Defense of Marriage Act of 1993 (DOMA) and President Clinton's 1994 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' (DADT) directive—further entrenched heterosexual norms in the federal service. DOMA defined marriage as existing between one man and one woman, thereby affording the rights and privileges of legal marriage to only those engaged in heterosexual marriages. DOMA further empowered the federal government, as an employer, to define significant terms, e.g., marriage, dependent, and family, in exclusively hetero-oriented nomenclature, thereby denying extension of federal benefits to LGBT employees' families and households if they were formed as the result of same-sex relationships. Meanwhile, though DADT eliminated the ban on LGBT military service members, it made service members' openness about their LGBT identities punishable by expulsion from the military and loss of veteran benefits. In short, by explicitly legitimizing only heterosexual orientation, binary gender identities, and opposite-sex relationships and marriages, DOMA and DADT largely served to entrench the otherization of LGBT individuals within the modern federal service.

Shifting cultural winds and political wills ushered President Obama into office in 2009, and his administration quickly utilized executive actions to address and eliminate overt anti-LGBT discrimination in the federal ranks. The Obama administration expanded access to spousal benefits for federal employees' same-sex domestic partners (Federman & Elias, 2017) and reversed DADT during the president's first term, and DOMA was later overturned by the Supreme Court. In response to the Supreme Court's finding in *United States v. Windsor* (2013) which ended the prohibition on federal recognition of same-sex marriage, the administration directed federal agencies to bring their programs in line with the decision and demonstrated the federal government's commitment, both socially and institutionally, to combatting the heteronormativity previously built into public policy. Post-*Windsor*, federal agencies immediately worked to extend federal benefits to LGBT employees and their spouses that had not been previously offered. By way of Executive Order 13672 in 2014, the administration also explicitly prohibited discrimination on the basis of LGBT identity and extended employment protections for LGBT employees who worked in or applied for federal contracting jobs.

Obama-era federal personnel guidance demonstrated the administrative state's commitment to inclusive workplace practices. In concert with President Obama's Executive Order 13583 which articulated the administration's commitment to diversity and inclusion, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) expressed the federal government's commitment to inclusive employment practices in its 2011 Government-Wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. OPM set out the federal government's understanding of inclusion as "a culture that connects each employee to the organization; encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness; and leverages diversity throughout the organization so that all individuals are able to participate and contribute to their full potential" (OPM, 2011, p. 5). OPM recommends an intentional approach to developing an inclusive culture and explains to federal workers that

"if [employees] do not intentionally, deliberately, and proactively include, [they] will unintentionally exclude" (OPM, 2014, 2:50).

During the Obama administration, OPM unambiguously identified as one of its goals the creation and maintenance of an inclusive organizational culture across federal agencies. Consistent with the integration-and-learning perspective on organizational inclusion (see Shore et al., 2011), OPM recognized the need to acknowledge and value differences among people and then integrate them into organizational function. While OPM's understanding of inclusion was notably similar to Shore et al.'s (2011), its understanding of inclusion represented a broader construction of the concept, drawing on the emotive experiences of employees who are included or accepted in the workplace culture. Inclusion within the federal personnel context emphasized affability, flexibility, and fairness to make employees feel welcome and important to the agency (OPM, 2014). Agencies' inclusive cultures were intended to encourage employees to believe their whole identity belonged at work, their unique contribution was valued by the employer, their perspective was considered, and they had a say in what happens at work (OPM, 2014).

The Obama-era OPM demonstrated its proactive perspective on inclusion by explicitly instructing agencies on inclusive personnel practices via memoranda, videos, and other materials, and then measuring inclusion with the New IQ survey items in its annual Employee Viewpoint Survey. Since 2012, OPM has used the New IQ, or inclusive intelligence quotient, to measure inclusive intelligence, which OPM defines as "the intentional, deliberate, and proactive acts that increase our group intelligence by making people feel they belong and are uniquely valued" (OPM, 2014, 2:40). OPM's recipe for inclusion includes five workplace habits that encourage inclusion: fairness, openness, supportiveness, cooperativeness, empowerment. OPM tracks the agency progress toward inclusion and encourages continued improvement, thereby indicating its commitment to developing a stronger culture of inclusion**.**

Job Satisfaction, Inclusion, and the LGBT Experience

The present work contends that perceptions of inclusion in the federal workplace will enhance the employee experience at work, and such a position is consistent with the dynamic reflected in social exchange theory. Blau (1964) defines social exchange as "voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others" (p.93). Social exchange theory posits that "people should help those who have helped them" and "people should not injure those who have helped them" (Gouldner, 1960, p. 171). After receiving benefit from their organization or being treated equitably with other employees, employees will reciprocate these favors with positive work attitudes (Aryee et al., 2002; Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005, p. 4). Thus, it may be argued that when LGBT employees perceive inclusive organizational practices such as support from supervisors, the equitable treatment received by coworkers, and development of inclusive personnel policies, they will reciprocate these good turns with positive work attitudes. Hur (2020) recently used social exchange theory to examine the synergies between workplace inclusivity and LGBT employees' reaction to institutional attempts to include them in the overall workplace culture, testing the effects of different inclusive work environment practices on LGBT employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Job Satisfaction

The study ascribes to the definitions of job satisfaction that point to individuals' affective responses to their jobs (Kim, 2005), such as how favorably an employee feels toward their job (Gruneberg, 1979), the degree to which a positive emotional state results from the work experience (Locke, 1976; Locke & Henne, 1986), and the congruence between what employees want or expect from their jobs and what they believe they receive from them (Wright & Davis,

2003). This work explores LGBT employees' job satisfaction in the years immediately following modifications to the federal personnel system to make it more inclusive of LGBT employees and their families. While many potential factors may moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and sexual or gender minority status (see, e.g., Aldén et al., 2020; Day & Schoenrade, 1997; Jin & Park, 2016), the majority of the research on the subject suggests that job satisfaction should be expected to vary with sexual orientation and gender identity (Aldén et al., 2020; Hur, 2020). With few exceptions, and across national contexts, the literature indicates that LGBT individuals report lower job satisfaction than heterosexual employees.

Reports of employee job satisfaction have long been considered indicative of employees' perceptions of their treatment at their employers' hands. Given recent shifts in public opinion, significant public policy changes, and federal court rulings recognizing LGBT rights, the experiences of LGBT individuals in the workplace warrant examination. While job satisfaction may be one of the most studied concepts in organizational research, the literature takes a largely piecemeal approach to the topic (Cantarelli et al., 2016) and leaves significant room to study the satisfaction of diverse subpopulations. Lewis and Pitts (2017) find that LGBT individuals are less satisfied on the job than their heterosexual and cisgender colleagues within the federal service. The authors attribute the LGBT-heterosexual difference in satisfaction to a number of possible causes, including age, experience, and racial differences between the LGBT and non-LGBT samples. However, in their study of federal security agency employees, Federman and Elias (2017) find little difference between the experiences of LGBT and non-LGBT persons. Several international studies have also examined the relationship between LGBT identity and job satisfaction. In studies of Greek workers (Drydakis, 2015) and Canadian workers (Leppel, 2014), job satisfaction has been found to vary with sexual orientation and gender identity, and LGBT employees tend to report lower satisfaction than their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts.

Inclusion

By its very definition, inclusion serves to encourage diffuse groups and individuals to be recognized as belonging to the whole. Mor Barak's (1999) conceptual model of organizational inclusion provides that an individual's sense of inclusion in the organizational system results from the interplay between personal characteristics, organizational policy, and organizational culture. Mor Barak also examines the role of inclusion as an independent variable on work attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, finding that differing perceptions of supervisor, group, and organizational inclusion have relationships with organizational satisfaction (Mor Barak, 1999). Findler et al. (2007) test a comprehensive theory by analyzing the relationship between organizational variables and work attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, finding that both demographic characteristics and organizational factors have relationships with job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

For LGBT individuals, inclusion involves an additional facet: disruption of the hetero- and cis-normativity that historically has relegated them to organizational out-groups. Inclusion's many dimensions, whether defined pursuant to OPM's five habits of inclusion, Mor Barak's (1999) conceptual model, or Shore et al.'s (2011) theoretical framework, undermine and ultimately delegitimize the hetero- and cis-normative structures, policies, and attitudes that had prevented sexual and gender minorities' full membership in the larger group. As those old barriers come tumbling down at the hand of inclusive organizational practices and the organization recognizes LGBT individuals' value and fit within the overall culture, their workplace attitudes will come to reflect such inclusion. The social exchange dynamic suggests that a workplace that promotes an inclusive culture in which diverse individuals are met with respect and a sense of belonging will foster job satisfaction levels among LGBT individuals that rival the job satisfaction of those in the sexual majority.

Given the "separate though interrelated dimensions" inherent in the inclusion construct (Andrews & Ashworth, 2015, p. 282), it can be useful to assess the relationships between job satisfaction and elements of inclusion identified in previous studies. Prior works largely indicate that the various constituent elements of inclusion have positive ramifications for LGBT job satisfaction. Pink-Harper et al. (2017) find that the presence of diversity culture within a federal agency, as measured on a scale developed from three New IQ Index items, predicts increased job satisfaction among LGBT employees. This diversity culture includes diversity-promoting workplace programs and policies, supervisor support for a representative workforce, and supervisors' successful work with diverse employees. The construct corresponds well to the inclusion framework defined by Shore and colleagues (2011), as it speaks to employees' uniqueness via policies and programs at the agency and supervisor level, while it also implicates the belonging demonstrated by supervisors' integration of employees' differences into a functioning work unit. Likewise, Lewis and Pitts (2017) find that LGBT federal employees concurrently experience lower job satisfaction than their heterosexual, cisgender counterparts and lower perceptions of fairness at work.

Supervisor Level Inclusion

Agency supervisors and work unit leaders take active roles in stimulating employees' sense of inclusion (Buengeler et al., 2018). Supervisors directly convey inclusivity by instilling a sense of belonging, respect, and value in their subordinates. For LGBT employees, in particular, supervisors possess the ability to proactively demonstrate inclusivity by engaging in supportive relationships (Willis, 2009) and providing LGBT people with a voice within the organization to, for example, articulate dissatisfaction or contribute to decision making (Bell et al., 2011; Dundon et al., 2005). Given that LGBT employees have traditionally been dissuaded by the hetero- and cis-normative organizational culture from expressing their individuality or fully participating in the decision-making processes available to those in the majority group, supervisors' invitations to completely engage in organizational life can convey to those employees that they truly belong. Such inclusive supervisory behaviors, e.g., the demonstration of respect for an employee regardless of their sexuality or gender identity, respect for the employee's work-life balance irrespective of their family composition, and listening to and investing in the employee's performance and personal opinion of the workplace, will contribute to increased job satisfaction among sexual and gender minorities in the federal workplace. Therefore, it is hypothesized:

H1: Supervisor-level inclusion practices will increase LGBT job satisfaction.

Work Unit Level Inclusion

Within the work unit, employees interact with their peers, colleagues, and supervisory staff in a close environment and at a personal level. They become familiar with one another, share details of their personal and family lives, and operate in concert with one another. In this context, inclusion frequently comprises the equitable treatment received by a worker in the unit, e.g., all workers, regardless of identity or personal characteristics, are evaluated on the same scale, against the same measures, and in a fair way. As efforts are made within work units to equitably include all members of the unit, regardless of identity or minority status, evidence suggests that all workers benefit from such activities, resulting in a more inclusive workplace climate in which LGBT workers may find themselves treated more favorably by their heterosexual peers (Ng & Rumens, 2017; Pichler et al., 2017).

Of OPM's five habits of inclusion, fairness is most frequently included and measured at the work level and speaks to an employee's perceptions of fairness in performance evaluation, equity and appropriateness in the allocation of awards, and correct/suitable punishment or sanction of poor performance. Evidence suggests that one's job satisfaction can be expected to increase as a sense of fairness, the significant element of work unit inclusion, develops within

the work unit (Choi & Rainey, 2014). Further, Lewis and Pitts (2017) find that significant, statistical differences in fairness perceptions between LGBT and heterosexual employees persist after controlling for a variety of demographic characteristics, and that lower levels of fairness translate to lower levels of job satisfaction among LGBT workers. It is therefore hypothesized:

H2: Work unit-level inclusion practices will increase LGBT job satisfaction.

Agency Level Inclusion

At the agency level, inclusion manifests as the disruption of agency procedures and policies that conform to historical, hetero- and cis-normative standards. Agency policies provide the standard for proper behavior in the workplace (Angouri, 2015) and enjoy positive relationships to the creation and preservation of an organizational climate supportive of some sexual minority groups, e.g., gay men (Tejeda, 2006). Development of inclusive personnel policies and procedures places employees on equal footing, regardless of one's identity, orientation, or presumed minority status. Within the context of workplace regulations or standards, in an inclusive agency there exists no disparate treatment of employee groups. With regard to LGBT-identified individuals, the legitimacy of employees' orientations, identities, partnerships, or marriages is not judged based on their presumed gender or sex, nor that of their spouse or partner; discrimination is not tolerated; diversity is promoted in hiring and promotion processes; and employees who belong to cultural out-groups are eligible to be full members of agency culture.

In the context of federal workers, President Obama's pre-*Windsor* executive order that directed federal benefits be provided to employees' same-sex partners and their children demonstrated the federal personnel system's move to include LGBT workers and legitimized their identities and partnerships. Such policies correspond to the 'LGBT-supportive policies' described by Pichler et al. (2017) and demonstrate the federal government's commitment to the equal treatment of LGBT personnel and their families. These moves further indicate the government employer's rejection of hetero- and cis-normative personnel policies and the exclusion that naturally accompanies them. Once included as full and equal members of the agency, LGBT employees should experience the benefits of that inclusion and are expected to report greater satisfaction on the job. Based on the disruption of the traditional hetero- and cis-normativity vis-à-vis inclusive workplace policies directed toward LGBT employees, it is hypothesized:

H3: Agency-level inclusion practices will increase LGBT job satisfaction.

Data and Method

Research on LGBT experiences in public employment, and particularly the federal service, has lagged, in part, due to a dearth of data on the subject (Lewis & Pitts, 2011). Large-scale collections of public employee data have not routinely queried respondents' sexual orientation or gender identity until very recently, which has limited previous scholarly inquiries into LGBT employees' experiences at work. In 2012, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) began incorporating a survey item on sexual and gender minority status in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) which it administers annually to hundreds of thousands of federal employees. For individual-level data, we use three years of FEVS data from 2013 to 2015, conducted by OPM. Particularly, this study uses subsets of survey data including LGBT demographics to examine the impacts of the different levels of inclusion factors on employees' job satisfaction. OPM has published LGBT datasets for four years from 2012 to 2015 and we excluded the year 2012 data due to missing information on employee racial identity. Since

then, OPM has stopped publishing LGBT datasets, making these datasets the most recent FEVS data that report the LGBT variable.

After excluding the respondents who selected 'preferred not to identify' for the survey question of LGBT identification or those who did not respond to the question, the sample for each year is approximately 300,000. To avoid mischaracterization of the data, best practice recommends excluding respondents who answer Prefer Not to Say[5] (Badgett, 2009). This study also collected agency level of data. Agency-level data are derived from FedScope (Federal Human Resources Data), also collected and distributed by OPM. Consequently, 36, 27, and 27 federal agencies are represented in the sample in 2013 to 2015, respectively.

Dependent Variable

Following previous studies (Choi, 2013; Pitts, 2009), a proxy index of overall job satisfaction is measured using two items. For each question, all respondents were asked to answer the extent of satisfaction with their job and organization with the following statements: (1) 'Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job?', and (2) 'Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your organization?' (Choi, 2013). The Cronbach's alpha for the job satisfaction index is .83 for the three years of data.

Independent Variables

For 2013–2015, the FEVS survey item read, 'Do you consider yourself to be one or more of the following? (mark as many as apply): Heterosexual/straight, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, I Prefer Not to Say.' To protect respondents' identities, FEVS data report the data in three categories: heterosexual/straight, a collapsed sexual and gender minority variable labeled LGBT, and Prefer Not to Say. Based upon best practice recommendations to exclude the respondents who select Prefer Not to Say (Badgett, 2009), our models utilize a binary sexual and gender minority status variable where LGBT=1 and heterosexual/straight=0.

The New IQ index consists of 20 items that are related to organizational inclusion. Given this study's core research question, the original 20 New IQ items were reviewed and those that explicitly identify agency, supervisor, and work unit behaviors were identified based upon their wording in the FEVS, lending face validity to their use as aggregate measures of each construct. For example, several questions merely ask the respondents' feeling about inclusion and the others do not reference the respondents' agency, work unit, or supervisors. Using principal factor analysis with varimax rotation methods, we confirm that, in fact, those isolated behaviors collectively measure what we believe they measure. Supervisor-level, work unit-level, and agency-level inclusion variables are derived from 12 observed variables that originate from the New IQ index constructed by OPM (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2015). Also, inspired by previous studies (Ng & Rumens, 2017; Pichler et al., 2017), two additional variables were included for the work unit-level inclusion, leading to a total of 14 variables.

Supervisor-level inclusion refers to the employee perception of inclusive behaviors exhibited by their superiors (Hoang et al., 2022). Six items were used to measure supervisor-level inclusion: (a) my supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues; (b) my supervisor is committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society; (c) my supervisor provides me with constructive suggestions to improve my job performance; (d) my supervisor listens to what I have to say; (e) my supervisor treats me with respect; and (f) in the last six months, my supervisor has talked with me about my performance. The Cronbach's alpha for this measurement is 0.88 for all three years of data.

Work unit-level inclusion, which emphasizes the perceived inclusion in the employee work unit (Choi & Rainey, 2014; Ng & Rumens, 2017; Pichler et al., 2017), was measured using five items: (a) the people I work with cooperate to get the job done; (b) in my work unit, steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve; (c) in my work unit, differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way; (d) awards in my work unit depend on how well employees perform their jobs; and (e) employees in my work unit share job knowledge with each other. The Cronbach's alpha is 0.81 for all three years.

Finally, agency-level inclusion, which focuses on perceived inclusion at the organizational level (Angouri, 2015; Pichler et al., 2017), consists of three items: (a) policies and programs that promote diversity in the workplace; (b) arbitrary action, personal favoritism, and coercion for partisan political purposes are not tolerated; and (c) prohibited personnel practices are not tolerated. The Cronbach's alpha for this measurement is 0.76 for all three years (See Appendix A).

Table 1 reports the Cronbach's alpha values of the three levels that are consistent across the three years and between 0.76 and 0.88. Also, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) confirmed the validity of the indices. The comparative fit index (CFI) is 0.950 and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.079 for all three years, showing that the measurement model fits the data (Hooper et al., 2008). These different levels of inclusion factors were tested to analyze each inclusion factor's effects on employee job satisfaction. For comparative purposes, a single, predicted factor was constructed and used to analyze the summed effect of all three levels of inclusion variables on job satisfaction. For this single, predicted factor, the Cronbach's alpha values are 0.90 for all three years.

Control Variables

The models include a number of controls for individual and organizational level characteristics. Regarding individual characteristics, manager position (manager=1), BIPOC (BIPOC=1; Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), gender (female=1), tenure (1=15 or more years) and age (1=50 or older) are included as dummy variables. In addition, two organizational-level characteristics are included to account for the relative diversity present in each agency, which has been previously demonstrated to have important ramifications on the inclusion-job satisfaction relationship in the literature (Cho & Sai, 2012; Hur, 2020). Agency-level control variables are collected from FedScope which is managed by OPM. First, the proportion of BIPOC employees in the agency was calculated by dividing the number of BIPOC employees by the total number of employees in the agency. Using the same method, the second variable, the proportion of female employees in the agency, was calculated that the number of females was divided by the total number of employees in the agency. These two organizational-level variables are critical for this study to control for the diversity management of agencies because the proportions of BIPOC and females indicate the organizational demographic diversity (Choi, 2009; Choi, 2013; Choi & Rainey, 2010; Ivancevich & Gilbert, 2000).

Model Specification

Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) was applied to the pooled three years (2013 through 2015) of data to test the study's hypotheses. Initially, we tested if HLM fits better than regression models for all three years and the results suggest that adoption of a multilevel model better explains the data. HLM provides more flexibility from which each agency has a unique intercept, leading the models to avoid inaccurate results (Choi, 2013). As a result, we adopt HLM with individual survey responses (Level 1) that are clustered within agencies (Level 2). The calculated intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) is 0.01; that is small but highly significant ($p<0.01$), indicating that there are significant differences among agencies. Second, diagnostic analysis (Collin test) uncovered no multicollinearity issues among the explanatory variables. In particular, we find no collinearity issues among the supervisor-level, work unit-

level, and agency-level inclusion practices. Lastly, following George and Pandey (2017) and Fuller et al. (2016), potential issues derived from common source bias (CSB) were tested. Harman's one-factor test shows that the percent of covariances of the single factor is 54.5. The result with the scale reliabilities (Cronbach's α) of 78.7 indicate that Common Method Variance (CMV) is low to generate CSB. Furthermore, the combined administrative data and included interaction variables significantly reduce the possibility of CSB (Fuller et al., 2016).

1. HLM with the Predicted Aggregated Inclusion Factor

$$\text{Level 1: } Satisfaction_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} Predicted\ factor_{ij} + \beta_{2j} LGBT_{ij} + \beta_{3j} Tenure\ 15\ or\ more_{ij} + \beta_{4j} Age\ 50\ or\ older_{ij} + \beta_{5j} Supervisor_{ij} + \beta_{6j} BIPOC_{ij} + \beta_{7j} Female_{ij} + \beta_{8j} LGBT * Predicted\ factor_{ij} + \beta_{9j} Year_{ij} + e_{ij}$$

$$\text{Level 2: } \beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} Proportion\ of\ BIPOC_j + \gamma_{02} Proportion\ of\ Female_j + \gamma_{03} Year_j + u_{0j}$$

2. HLM with the Three Levels of Inclusion Factors

$$\text{Level 1: } Satisfaction_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} Supervisor\ level\ inclusion_{ij} + \beta_{2j} Work\ unit\ level\ inclusion_{ij} + \beta_{3j} Agency\ level\ inclusion_{ij} + \beta_{4j} LGBT_{ij} + \beta_{5j} Tenure\ 15\ or\ more_{ij} + \beta_{6j} Age\ 50\ or\ older_{ij} + \beta_{7j} Supervisor_{ij} + \beta_{8j} BIPOC_{ij} + \beta_{9j} Female_{ij} + \beta_{10j} LGBT * Supervisor\ level\ inclusion_{ij} + \beta_{11j} LGBT * Work\ unit\ level\ inclusion_{ij} + \beta_{12j} LGBT * Agency\ level\ inclusion_{ij} + \beta_{13j} Year_{ij} + e_{ij}$$

$$\text{Level 2: } \beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} Proportion\ of\ BIPOC_j + \gamma_{02} Proportion\ of\ Female_j + \gamma_{03} Year_j + u_{0j}$$

Findings

Table 1 summarizes the variables across the three years and reports the differences between LGBT and non-LGBT employees. Overall, it shows that the average values of the responses to the job satisfaction questions and the average values of all inclusion factors are consistent across the three years. This overall pattern holds for both LGBT and non-LGBT subgroups. As Table 1 indicates, the mean scores for LGBT employees on all measures of job satisfaction and perceived inclusion are lower than those in non-LGBT employees, suggesting that different perceptions on all key variables likely exist between LGBT and non-LGBT employee groups. We also found that perceived inclusion at the agency level incrementally increases over time. The mean values of all three levels of inclusion are 2.48, 2.50, and 2.52 in 2013, 2014, and 2015, respectively.[6]

Three percent of the survey respondents identified themselves as LGBT individuals, 43–44% of the respondents have been working for the agency for 15 or more years, and 49–51% of their age is 50 or more. Additionally, 19–21% of them responded that they are in manager positions. Lastly, the percentages of BIPOC and female employees at the organizational level are similar with the survey responses, indicating that FEVS survey represents the federal workforce. For instance, 34% of the respondents are BIPOC and the average percent of BIPOC at the agency level is either 36% or 37%. Overall, we found consistent trends of all the variables along with consistent standard deviations across the three years.

HLM analysis (Table 2) illustrates the effect of the aggregated inclusion factor and the three levels of inclusion on employee job satisfaction. First, while the aggregated inclusion is significantly associated with job satisfaction in Model 1 and 2, the LGBT variable has a significantly negative relationship with job satisfaction ($p<0.001$). More importantly, Model 2 indicates that LGBT employees who experience inclusion are more likely to be satisfied in their jobs, as demonstrated by the significant relationship between the LGBT and inclusion interaction term and the job satisfaction variable. Additionally, we found that the effects of inclusion are significantly increased over time.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis

Variables	2013		2014		2015		Scale
	Mean (s.d.)	Cronbach's α	Mean (s.d.)	Cronbach's α	Mean (s.d.)	Cronbach's α	
LGBT	n=8,815		n=9,386		n=10,535		
Satisfaction	2.36 (0.76)		2.34 (0.77)		2.37 (0.76)		
Inclusion (all 3 levels)	2.42 (0.51)		2.42 (0.51)		2.43 (0.51)		
Supervisor-level Inclusion	2.61 (0.55)		2.62 (0.55)		2.63 (0.55)		
Work Unit-level Inclusion	2.17 (0.61)		2.18 (0.61)		2.20 (0.61)		
Agency-level Inclusion	2.39 (0.67)		2.37 (0.67)		2.38 (0.67)		
Non-LGBT	n=279,003		n=285,616		n=307,991		
Satisfaction	2.46 (0.71)		2.44 (0.72)		2.47 (0.71)		
Inclusion (all 3 levels)	2.48 (0.48)		2.48 (0.49)		2.50 (0.48)		
Supervisor-level Inclusion	2.66 (0.52)		2.67 (0.52)		2.68 (0.51)		
Work Unit-level Inclusion	2.24 (0.59)		2.25 (0.60)		2.27 (0.60)		
Agency-level Inclusion	2.46 (0.61)		2.46 (0.62)		2.47 (0.62)		
Total	n=287,818		n=295,002		n=318,526		
Satisfaction	2.46 (0.71)	0.83	2.44 (0.72)	0.83	2.46 (0.72)	0.83	2 items, Likert (1–3)
Inclusion (all 3 levels)	2.47 (0.49)	0.90	2.48 (0.49)	0.90	2.50 (0.48)	0.90	14 items, Likert (1–3)
Supervisor-level Inclusion	2.66 (0.52)	0.88	2.66 (0.52)	0.88	2.68 (0.51)	0.88	6 items, Likert (1–3)
Work Unit-level Inclusion	2.24 (0.59)	0.81	2.24 (0.60)	0.81	2.27 (0.60)	0.81	5 items, Likert (1–3)
Agency-level Inclusion	2.45 (0.62)	0.76	2.45 (0.62)	0.76	2.46 (0.62)	0.76	3 items, Likert (1–3)
Control Variables–Individual							
LGBT	0.03 (0.17)		0.03 (0.18)		0.03 (0.18)		Dummy (1=LGBT)
Tenure 15 years or more	0.44 (0.50)		0.43 (0.50)		0.44 (0.50)		Dummy (1=15 or more)
Age 50 or older	0.49 (0.50)		0.51 (0.50)		0.51 (0.50)		Dummy (1=50 or older)
Manager	0.19 (0.40)		0.20 (0.40)		0.21 (0.41)		Dummy (1=manager position)

BIPOC	0.34 (0.47)	0.34 (0.47)	0.34 (0.47)	Dummy (1=BIPOC)
Female	0.46 (0.50)	0.46 (0.50)	0.46 (0.50)	Dummy (1=female)
Control Variables–Org				
% of BIPOC	0.36 (0.08)	0.36 (0.07)	0.37 (0.08)	Proportion
% of females	0.46 (0.13)	0.46 (0.13)	0.46 (0.13)	Proportion

Note. BIPOC=Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Table 2. HLM Analysis of All Employees

	Model 1 (b/se)	Model 2 (b/se)	Model 3 (b/se)	Model 4 (b/se)
Inclusion				
All three levels inclusion	**0.664***** (0.006)	**0.663***** (0.006)		
Supervisor-level			**0.240***** (0.001)	**0.240***** (0.001)
Work unit-level			**0.273***** (0.001)	**0.272***** (0.001)
Agency-level			**0.266***** (0.001)	**0.265***** (0.001)
LGBT	**−0.049***** (0.005)	**−0.046***** (0.005)	**−0.042***** (0.005)	**−0.040***** (0.005)
Tenure 15 years or more	−0.036*** (0.002)	−0.036*** (0.002)	−0.037*** (0.002)	−0.037*** (0.002)
Age 50 or older	0.064*** (0.002)	0.064*** (0.002)	0.058*** (0.002)	0.058*** (0.002)
Manager	−0.024*** (0.002)	−0.024*** (0.002)	−0.054*** (0.002)	−0.054*** (0.002)
BIPOC	0.092*** (0.002)	0.092*** (0.002)	0.101*** (0.002)	0.101*** (0.002)
Female	0.082*** (0.002)	0.082*** (0.002)	0.086*** (0.002)	0.086*** (0.002)

Year (reference year: 2013)				
2014	**0.008****	**0.008****	**0.007****	**0.007****
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
2015	**0.011*****	**0.011*****	**0.009****	**0.009****
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Level 2				
% of BIPOC	−0.254*	−0.254*	−0.217+	−0.217+
	(0.113)	(0.113)	(0.114)	(0.114)
% of females	−0.014	−0.016	0.042	0.042
	(0.109)	(0.109)	(0.116)	(0.116)
Interaction				
LGBT * Inclusion		**0.024*****		
		(0.005)		
LGBT * Supervisor-level				**−0.013***
				(0.006)
LGBT * Work unit-level				**0.024****
				(0.007)
LGBT * Agency-level				**0.020****
				(0.007)
Constant	0.066	0.067	0.023	0.023
	(0.066)	(0.044)	(0.046)	(0.046)
Number of observations	626,137	626,137	626,137	626,137
Number of groups	36	36	36	36
Wald Chi-square	17961.89***	18033.33***	493075.10***	493151.61***

Note. + p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table 3. HLM Analysis of Non-Manager Position Employees

	Model 1 (b/se)	Model 2 (b/se)	Model 3 (b/se)	Model 4 (b/se)
Inclusion				
All three levels inclusion	0.661*** (0.006)	0.660*** (0.006)		
Supervisor-level			0.230*** (0.001)	0.231*** (0.001)
Work unit-level			0.273*** (0.001)	0.273*** (0.002)
Agency-level			0.270*** (0.001)	0.269*** (0.001)
LGBT	−0.057*** (0.006)	−0.052*** (0.006)	−0.049*** (0.006)	−0.041*** (0.006)
Tenure 15 years or more	−0.038*** (0.002)	−0.038*** (0.002)	−0.037*** (0.002)	−0.037*** (0.002)
Age 50 or older	0.074*** (0.002)	0.074*** (0.002)	0.067*** (0.002)	0.067*** (0.002)
BIPOC	0.087*** (0.002)	0.087*** (0.002)	0.095*** (0.002)	0.095*** (0.002)
Female	0.081*** (0.002)	0.081*** (0.002)	0.087*** (0.002)	0.087*** (0.002)
Year (reference year: 2013)				
2014	0.003 (0.002)	0.003 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)
2015	0.004 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)
Level 2				
% of BIPOC	−0.187 (0.121)	−0.187 (0.121)	−0.143 (0.122)	−0.143 (0.122)
% of females	−0.083 (0.117)	−0.084 (0.117)	−0.034 (0.122)	−0.035 (0.122)

Interactions				
LGBT * Inclusion		0.025***		
		(0.006)		
LGBT * Supervisor-level				−0.012+
				(0.007)
LGBT * Work unit-level				0.025**
				(0.008)
LGBT * Agency-level				0.020**
				(0.008)
Constant	0.075	0.076	0.032	0.032
	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.048)	(0.048)
Number of observations	476,248	476,248	476,248	476,248
Number of groups	36	36	36	36
Wald Chi-square	16434.55***	16494.79***	374065.35***	374122.80***

Note. + p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Models 3 and 4 in Table 2 illustrate the different effects of each inclusion level. Although all three levels of inclusion practices are positively associated with employee job satisfaction, the results report that it is highly unlikely that LGBT employees' job satisfaction is the same as non-LGBT employees' job satisfaction in the population. We also found that there is a negative effect of supervisor-level inclusion practices on LGBT employees' job satisfaction, indicating that the data do not support hypothesis 1. On the other hand, work unit-level inclusion and agency-level inclusion have significantly positive relationships ($p<0.01$) with LGBT employees' job satisfaction. These results confirm our hypotheses 2 and 3.

When testing supervisor-level inclusion, we ran the same models without respondents who are in a manager position. Table 3 reports interesting findings that there is no significant increased effect of inclusion over time. Also, it shows that supervisor-level inclusion has a negative relationship with LGBT employees' job satisfaction, although the statistical significance became marginalized. These findings suggest that there might be different perceptions of inclusion between managers and lower-level employees.

The findings concerning demographic variables show that the individual-level age 50 or older, BIPOC and female control variables have significantly positive relationships with job satisfaction as shown in Tables 2 and 3. The results also show that managers and those whose tenure year is 15 or more are significantly less satisfied with their job. It is worth noting that while the percentage of female employees is not associated with job satisfaction, the percentage of BIPOC employees has a negative relationship with job satisfaction (Table 2).

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings uncover real and significant differences between LGBT and heterosexual federal employees relative to inclusion and job satisfaction. The findings reported in Table 1 indicate that LGBT employees' inclusion perceptions at the supervisor, work unit, and agency levels lag those of non-LGBT employees. Comparison of the three inclusion measures demonstrates that while the differences between the two employee groups marginally fluctuate across the three years of data, LGBT employees consistently report lower perceptions of inclusion than those in the majority group. These findings are consistent with prior works, e.g., Hur (2020), that demonstrate that sexual and gender minorities will perceive lower inclusion levels than their heterosexual counterparts. While not statistically confirmed, the substantial size of each subsample suggests that the difference in the mean values for each inclusion index across the three years is likely meaningful. Similarly, the findings indicate that sexual and gender minorities in the federal workforce report their job satisfaction to be lower than their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts. As demonstrated in Tables 2 and 3, identification as a sexual or gender minority has a significant, negative relationship to global job satisfaction, which comports with previous findings (e.g., Hur, 2020; Pink-Harper et al., 2017; Sabharwal et al., 2019).

The results reported in Model 2 demonstrate that LGBT employees who report greater levels of aggregated inclusion will enjoy greater job satisfaction, as the relationship between the LGBT and inclusion interaction term and job satisfaction is statistically significant and the impacts increase over time. Thus, consistent with prior work (e.g., Hur, 2020; Pink-Harper et al., 2017), increased inclusion perceptions among LGBT employees enjoys a significant, positive relationship with reported job satisfaction. Further, the relationship between the aggregated inclusion factor and LGBT job satisfaction changes across the three years of the study, gaining in both strength and statistical significance. Such changes in this relationship might be attributed to the cumulative effect of federal efforts to build an inclusive culture; however, based on the nature of the data, we interpret these findings with a degree of caution. At minimum, the large sample sizes permit a measure confidence in this assertion and demonstrate the need for continued research to ascertain the cumulative effects of organizational inclusion culture on LGBT job satisfaction.

The relationships between the various levels of inclusion and job satisfaction for LGBT individuals vary in strength and consistency. The results show that supervisor-level inclusion and job satisfaction among LGBT employees does not possess a positive relationship over the three years of data. In fact, it is opposite of the expected direction, suggesting that supervisor-level inclusion's effect on LGBT job satisfaction requires further study. On the other hand, we found that work unit-level inclusion and agency-level inclusion have a positive impact on LGBT employees' job satisfaction. The variation in the relationships between job satisfaction and the various levels of inclusion suggests that a sense of inclusivity develops in different places, at different times, and for different reasons across an organization, rather than as a result of a single training, policy shift, or other intervention. Lastly, as shown in Table 3, the effects of inclusion for non-manager employees do not increase over the three years, suggesting that these lower-level employees may perceive the organizational inclusion practices differently.

Multiple implications arise from the findings of this study. First, using the concept of heteronormativity and its counterpart, cisnormativity, as its theoretical framework, this work offers a glimpse into the inclusion perceptions of sexual and gender minorities, an "invisible population" frequently neglected in the literature (Priola et al., 2014, p. 488). Heteronormativity and cisnormativity create cultural categories into which individuals may be placed. Historically, a person has been sorted into the 'in' category as a heterosexual, cisgender person who engages in opposite-sex relationships, while a person who identifies as other than heterosexual or cisgender and/or engages in relationships that are not opposite-

sex in nature has been assigned to the 'outside' category. The results of this study suggest that LGBT individuals—those who have historically been placed in the 'outside' category—continue to perceive their federal agencies as less inclusive than do their majority-identity colleagues, and that their perceptions have a real and negative effect on their overall job satisfaction. For these and other marginalized groups, inclusion is not about blindness to difference or ignoring variation from majority norms. Rather, inclusion reflects the acknowledgement of difference, acceptance of those who are different, and the placement of equitable, real and tangible value, either personal or institutional, on those differences (Shore et al., 2011). This means that rather than attempt to fit LGBT individuals into normative categories, the inclusive federal employer will acknowledge the legitimacy of and accept as full members those who do not adhere to majority norms. As federal agency practice and policy disrupt and dismantle hetero- and cis-normative cultures through initiatives aimed at inclusivity, the results of this study suggest that LGBT employees will find greater satisfaction on the job.

Additional significance in this work is found in the cultural implications associated with the ebb and flow of the relationship between LGBT employees' sense of inclusion and their overall job satisfaction. For LGBT employees, the aggregated inclusion factor predicts increased job satisfaction across the three years studied, despite fluctuation in the relationship between job satisfaction and the three inclusion levels that compose the whole. Thus, notwithstanding weakness in inclusion perceptions at one or more organizational levels during the three-year period, the overall effect on job satisfaction brought about by a sense of inclusion among LGBT employees appears positive. We surmise that organizational progress comes in fits and starts as agencies adopt new inclusive practices and policies, but that inclusivity also accrues over time, and therefore must be closely monitored by agency leaders at the several agency levels to ensure continued improvement. As Schein (2010) reminds us, organizational culture reflects a set of attitudes, behaviors, and norms that evolve as organizational members face challenges as a group. As inclusivity and its concurrent disruption of heteronormativity permeate the culture, we may expect positive impacts on employees' work attitudes and satisfaction on the job.

Further, the punctuated, but generally positive, effect of inclusion on job satisfaction across three organizational levels may occur as a result of significant administrative changes, modifications in training protocols, or inclusion initiatives undertaken by the federal employer, which in turn affect LGBT job satisfaction. For instance, the effect of agency-level inclusion perceptions on job satisfaction may have resulted from high-profile policy changes, such as Obama-era executive orders or federal court decisions like *United States v. Windsor,* that demonstrate a shift in LGBT legitimacy and inclusion in society as a whole or in the federal personnel system. Also, given that the FEVS data were collected during the latter half of the Obama administration and the majority of employees had been employed in the federal service for a number of years prior, we might surmise that the administration's efforts to develop a more inclusive culture by way of highly publicized personnel policy changes and broad personnel training initiatives may have likely reached those respondents and affected their perceptions. The present work provides a clear argument in favor of continued inclusion efforts at the agency level, as well as a foundation for future research to better ascertain the extent to which particular policy shifts or personnel programs affect perceptions of agency inclusiveness.

Finally, the ability of supervisors and work units to create cultural change by way of implementing training protocols and leading by example (Schraeder et al., 2005) suggests that employers' efforts to create an inclusive culture will accrue over time and have a cumulative, positive effect on employees' work experiences. In this sense, the findings that supervisor-level inclusion has little to no impact on LGBT employees' job satisfaction, and perhaps a slightly negative effect, imply that work unit- or agency-level inclusion efforts may be more critical to these employees than the inclusion practices experienced in the employee-supervisor relationship. Future research ought to assess LGBT individuals' positions on particular policy

shifts and human capital initiatives, whether specific changes affect sexual and gender minorities' experience of inclusion more than others, and how such experiences impact individual job attitudes.

While this study's primary implications speak to the employee experience of employer inclusion efforts in the public service, it also serves as a modest stride forward in public administration research. Building on multiple important works (see, e.g., Federman & Elias, 2017; Lewis, 1997; Lewis & Pitts, 2011, 2017; Hur, 2020; Sabharwal et al., 2019), this work continues to raise the visibility of LGBT individuals and their legitimacy as full members of the public service and responds to Meyer and Millesen's (2022) recent call to 'queer up' public administration research. While queer theory has not yet been widely applied in public administration scholarship, work in this area has increased in recent years, both in volume and in rigor, and the move of Generation Z—widely known to be the most diverse generation in the nation's history—into the workforce suggests that this body of knowledge must continue to grow.

From a pragmatic standpoint, as Larson (2022) argues, public administrators must be equipped with the tools to manage a new generation of employees, and conversations like those surrounding inclusion of LGBT employees must continue. As such, public employers should continue their work to assess how 'invisible,' marginalized populations experience the workplace and, using that information, continue developing a more inclusive environment for all. In the case of LGBT individuals in the public workplace, the disruption of hetero- and cis-normative institutional cultures extends far beyond flying the Pride flag on public buildings every June. Rather, public managers must push their agencies to adopt sexual and gender minority-inclusive personnel policies that communicate agency inclusion priorities. As Elias and Colvin (2020) recommend for non-binary gender policies in federal workplaces, such inclusive public personnel policies "should aim to be simple, timely, low cost, transparent, and maintain the privacy" of sexual and gender minorities (p. 206). Further, such policies must be grounded in fundamental public values like transparency and equity (Elias et al., 2018). Additionally, public sector institutions, supervisors, and work units ought to actively foster LGBT ally-ship among heterosexual and cisgender employees for the purpose of creating an ever more inclusive institutional culture. These efforts might begin by raising awareness of institutionalized language usage and the removal of blinders to traditional—but exclusionary—workplace language, or perhaps encourage an appreciation for all employees' identity expression vis-à-vis their workplace attire, physical presentation, and chosen pronouns.

In addition to personnel policy modifications and encouragement of ally-ship, to be truly inclusive as defined by Shore et al. (2011) and others, institutions must meet sexual and gender minorities where they stand and not prescribe the traditional forms of identity, presentation, or relationships expected within the dominant culture. After all, not all members of the queer community identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Thus, it is incumbent on the inclusive organization to acknowledge identities not covered by the 'LGBT' moniker, recognize the vastness of the queer community, and explore ways within the organization to culturally legitimize the broad spectrum of sexual and gender identities that exist within its ranks.

Final Remarks and Recommendations for Future Research

Like any study, this one possesses limitations. The FEVS data utilized to investigate the primary research question are limited, as they treat lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender identities as monolithic within the LGBT variable. While this treatment protects the identities of those who self-identify as LGBT within the federal ranks, combining sexual and gender minorities under a single heading obscures the differences between those minority individuals' experiences, neglects other sexual and gender minority identities (see, Meyer & Millesen, 2022, for discussion of these identities), and fails to address the varying heterosexual attitudes

and institutional treatment toward each of those minority identities (Herek & McLemore, 2013). Similarly, the FEVS data do not parse out different racial, ethnic, or other minority identities, so intersectional identity differences cannot be included in the analyses. Additionally, intersectional analysis between LGBT identity and gender, which is reported in the FEVS data as male or female, would further perpetuate the dominant gender binary to the exclusion of those who identify somewhere else on the gender spectrum, e.g., nonbinary. While this study mainly focuses on LGBT employees' inclusion experiences and job satisfaction, future research needs to delve into the differences among the various intersectional subgroups using more robust demographic data.

Additional limitations result from shortcomings in the data. For instance, the study would benefit from objective measures of agency inclusivity practices; however, such data do not exist for the population and years under study. Notwithstanding this limitation, we may still benefit from analyzing respondents' personal observations of the phenomenon. In the present study, respondents' reports of inclusive behaviors in their agencies, supervisors, and work units provide valuable insight into their organizational and cultural realities. As Meier and O'Toole (2013) remind us, survey items that query others' observable behaviors, rather than respondents' self-reported attitudes or behaviors, appear to be less influenced by undue bias associated with the survey items' common source and may be considered legitimate, while also being interpreted with a degree of caution. Also, we were able to use only three years of FEVS data. Considering the outcome of the 2016 presidential election, incorporation of several more years of data would have been beneficial as we might have been able to compare between Obama and Trump administrations, but 2015 was the last year that FEVS reported LGBT demographic information. Finally, multi-year, cross-sectional analyses fall short of tracing the within-individual evolution of the relationship between inclusion and job satisfaction. Future research ought to utilize panel data in order to better ascertain the longitudinal effects of inclusion and inclusion culture on sexual and gender minorities, as well as other marginalized populations.

Notes

1. While somewhat dated both in the literature and the American social context, the term LGBT is used in this study to identify those individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. This notation is consistent with the term's construction in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey data analyzed in this study, as well as the terminology utilized by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and other federal agencies when referring to sexual and gender minorities.
2. According to the Department of Labor (2021), the U.S. federal government is the nation's largest employer across all sectors; Wal-Mart is the nation's largest private employer.
3. See Larson (2022) and Lee et al. (2008) for broader discussion of queer theory in public administration.
4. For thorough accounts of LGBT individuals' history in the federal personnel system, including the various tactics used to vilify, intimidate, and purge employees from the federal system, see Federman and Elias (2017), Lewis (1997), and Merit Systems Protection Board (2014).
5. Badgett (2009) recommends excluding respondents who respond as "Prefer Not to Say" to a demographic question about sexual orientation, as "Prefer Not to Say" respondents tend to identify as heterosexual or LGBT at the same rate as the general population.
6. These findings are not reported in Table 1, as they are not used for the analyses.

Disclosure Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest that relate to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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Appendix A. Survey Questions

Variables	FEVS Survey Questions	Sources for References
Job Satisfaction	• Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job? • Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your organization?	Choi, 2013; Pitts, 2009
Supervisor Level of Inclusion	• My supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues. • My supervisor/team leader is committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society. • My supervisor/team leader provides me with constructive suggestions to improve my job performance. • My supervisor/team leader listens to what I have to say. • My supervisor/team leader treats me with respect. • In the last six months, my supervisor/team leader has talked with me about my performance.	Hoang et al., 2022; OPM's New Inclusion Quotient; Sabharwal et al., 2019; Shore et al., 2011.
Work Unit Level of Inclusion	• The people I work with cooperate to get the job done. • In my work unit, steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve. • In my work unit, differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way. • Awards in my work unit depend on how well employees perform their jobs. • Employees in my work units share job knowledge with each other.	Choi & Rainey, 2014; Ng & Rumens, 2017; OPM's New Inclusion Quotient; Pichler et al., 2017
Agency Level of Inclusion	• Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (for example, recruiting minorities and women, training in awareness of diversity issues, mentoring). • Arbitrary action, personal favoritism and coercion for partisan political purposes are not tolerated. • Prohibited Personnel Practices (for example, illegally discriminating for or against any employee/applicant, obstructing a person's right to compete for employment, knowingly violating veterans' preference requirements) are not tolerated.	Angouri, 2015; OPM's New Inclusion Quotient; Pichler et al., 2017