Intersecting Diversity of Global Talent: A Qualitative Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Expatriates Working in Japan

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<Abstract>

The global talent pool is becoming increasingly diverse. Understanding the lived experiences of individuals with intersecting diversity can inform and transform global talent management efforts. The purpose of this study was to investigate how sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) diverse expatriates manage and deploy their multiple identities while working in Japan. Utilising a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006), data from interviews with 10 lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) expatriates were analysed. Based on the emergent themes, a conceptual framework was developed that considers the moderating variable of "foreigner" identity in the disclosure decision of LGBT expatriates in Japan. Findings suggest that LGBT expatriates are highly selective in disclosing their SOGI diversity, and that the disclosure decision is influenced by their perceived level of safety. Further, for LGBT expatriates in Japan, their foreigner identity appears to be more central to self-concept than their LGBT identity. Implications for global talent management are outlined. This paper extends the existing literature on LGBT expatriates by presenting a novel study within the Japanese business context.

<Keywords>

Global talent management, LGBT, expatriate, diversity, grounded theory

I. Introduction

Literature on expatriation has been traditionally defined by papers on cultural adjustment, global leadership and repatriation adjustment (see Tseng et al., 2010 for review), as well as expatriate failure (e.g. Yeaton and Hall, 2008). Samples have been heavily biased toward middle-aged, assumed heterosexual men (e.g. Rose et al.), and

intersections of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) diversity are rarely considered. Recognising a lacuna in the research, there have been some recent attempts to focus on underrepresented groups including women (McNulty, 2013), and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) expatriates (Gedro et al., 2013; McPhail et al., 2014; Paisley and Tayar, 2016).[1] However, to date, there has been no inquiry of LGBT expatriate experiences where Japan is the host country.

People are increasingly seeking job opportunities abroad independent of companies. According to Finnacord (2018), the number of expatriates globally amounted to about 66 million in 2017, with the largest share comprising so called 'individual workers', and the smallest, corporate transferees. Further, based on a survey of 18,135 expatriates, 21% of the sample found a job, started a business, or were recruited locally (the 'Go-Getter'), while only 10% of the sample were sent to work abroad by their existing employer (the 'Foreign Assignee'; InterNations, 2018).[2] For some, Japan represents a potential host country for expatriation. There have been studies of expatriate experiences in Japan, most notably the work of Peltokorpi (2008; with Froese, 2009, 2013). However, a particular intersection of diversity that warrants further investigation is that of LGBT expatriates. They take on the unique challenge of managing both visible (e.g. name, physical appearance) and invisible (sexuality) diversity. How they navigate dual or triple memberships in non-dominant identity groups is complex.

Management needs to be aware of this diversity within diversity. Understanding the lived experiences of LGBT expatriates can help companies improve their practices and policies, from the hiring process through performance appraisal, to be more inclusive of diverse global talent. The purpose of this study was to uncover the ways in which multiple identities are managed and deployed by LGBT expatriates working in Japan. With this in mind, the following research questions were posed: How do LGBT expatriates reconcile their visible "foreigner" identity with their less visible SOGI identity? How do LGBT expatriates assess the level of safety and inclusion of workplaces in the Japanese business context? It was determined that a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006) was best suited to answer these questions. Here, "LGBT" is used to describe any individual who is not heterosexual and/or cisgender.[3] "Expatriate" is defined here as an individual who has had work experience and is currently residing in

a country outside their home country. Responding to the evidence that diversity literature is itself not so diverse (see Jonsen et al., 2011 for review), this study presents a novel point of inquiry with an underrepresented group as the unit of analysis.

The remainder of the paper is structured thus: To begin, the current state of the literature concerning LGBT expatriates is assessed, revealing the rationale for the present study. After the literature review, the methodology is outlined. The sample population, research design, and process of data analysis are described. A conceptual framework is presented, and then the results of the analysis are detailed. Finally, the paper concludes with implications for companies and global talent management researchers and practitioners, before considering the limitations of the study and avenues for future research.

II. Literature Review

Studies concerning the experiences of LGBT expatriates have proliferated only quite recently. Major themes of inquiry include opportunities, challenges and barriers, discrimination and stigmatisation, and safety concerns. Drawing on social capital theory, a qualitative study of 20 lesbian and gay expatriates found that sexual minority status was viewed as both an enabler and a disabler in expatriation (McPhail et al., 2016). LGBT status was found to be an advantage for some employees, with lesbian and gay partners having greater mobility opportunities than their heterosexual counterparts. However, in a study of the role of employee resource groups and allies it was shown that, when it comes to the opportunity for them to have a say about matters of global mobility, discrimination and stigmatization still existed for many LGBT employees (McNulty et al., 2018). Location of expatriation may present challenges unique to LGBT individuals. McPhail and McNulty defined a dangerous location for LGBT expatriates as one where "there is any event or life circumstance that presents a threat, real or perceived, to the health, wellbeing, safety and security of an LGBT employee including a lack of social or legal protection on the grounds of sexual orientation" (2015: 745). They found that the comfort factor for participants was more important than the legal status of LGBT people in a particular host country (*ibid.*). It is notable that despite readily deploying the term LGBT expatriates, the previous two studies did not include trans individuals in their sample. In fact, most of the research

conducted thus far on "LGBT" expatriate populations has focused only on lesbian and gay expatriates. This also holds true of the literature on LGBT employees in general. There are only a few studies that give voice to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans employees (e.g. Ozeren et al., 2016), as well as those that focus specifically on bisexual (e.g. Köllen, 2013) or trans (e.g. Budge et al., 2010; Law et al., 2011, Ozturk & Tatli, 2016) employees. Recognising this shortfall, the aim of the present study was to capture as diverse a sample as possible.

In terms of identity management, various typologies have been developed to describe the disclosure of LGBT identities, framed as concealable stigmas (Jones & King, 2014; Capell et al., 2016) or invisible social identities (Clair et al., 2005; Creed and Scully, 2005). Three strategies identified by Chrobot-Mason et al. (2001) are: (1) *integrating*, which involves disclosing and managing the consequences of disclosing in the workplace; (2) *counterfeiting*, which involves lying about one's identity and/or changing facts about one's identity in order to conceal the stigma; and (3) *avoidance*, that is, circumventing situations in which the stigma may come up so that coworkers prevent the stigma from being made known altogether. Similarly, Ragins (2008) described three identity states that represent varying degrees of disclosure across life domains: identity denial, identity disconnects, and identity integration. Differential disclosure of identities across work and nonwork domain (i.e. identity disconnects) could potentially lead to psychological anxiety and stress (*ibid.,* 209). There have been some studies that examine the identity management strategies of Japanese LGBT individuals (e.g. Mackie, 2008; Dasgupta 2017). Lunsing's (2001) research, which included SOGI diverse participants, explored the context-dependant and performative nature of self-presentation. Additionally, there is at least one study in English that considers the deployment of "foreigner" identity in the Japanese workplace. Employing an interactional sociolinguist approach, Moody (2014) concluded that the *gaijin* (foreign) identity was co-constructed by the individual and their coworkers, and that this outsider position could be leveraged to manage social relationships and complete tasks efficiently. The intersection of the foreigner identity and SOGI diverse identities is something that has yet to be explored in the context of the workplace in Japan. With the LGBT expatriate as the unit of analysis, this research marks the first attempt to qualify the construction of self-concept and to empirically measure perceptions of safety and inclusion in the workplace.

III. Methodology

Sample

Thirty-one individuals from Tokyo were recruited to participate in a qualitative study between September 2017 and May 2019. Of the sample, ten were considered LGBT expatriates and are the focus of analysis in this paper. Moreover, according to the criteria established by Andresen et al. (2014), they are all self-initiated expatriates (SIEs). Unlike in the case of assigned expatriates (see also Tharenou, 2013), the individual, not the company, initiates the expatriation process. Years spent residing in Japan ranged from 1 year to 20 years ($M = 8$). All but one of the participants had gained at least a bachelor's degree (or equivalent) with two completing *senmongakkō* (technical college) and three earning master's degrees. Eight of the participants were employed on a full-time basis, and the other two were a part-time employee and an independent contractor, respectively. Length of time employed in current workplace ranged from 3 months to 11 years ($M = 4.8$ years). Occupations held by participants spanned a range of industries including: automotive, IT, fashion, media, and tourism (see appendix A for more detailed information about participant occupation and job role). Regarding gender, eight participants were cisgender, one participant was non-binary, and one was gender fluid.[4] Sexual orientations included lesbian ($n = 2$), gay ($n = 3$), bisexual ($n = 2$), and pansexual ($n = 3$).[5] The participants' ages ranged from 25 to 40 ($M = 31$). Four of the participants were from the USA, and the other six were from the UK, Italy, Panama, Brazil, Sweden, and Mexico.

Interview Protocol

The primary instrument for this study was a semi-structured interview, which was developed based on the extant literature and personal experience as an LGBT expatriate. The researcher identifies as a gay man, and is cisgender. The initial protocol was changed many times over the course of the research, and was often tailored to a specific participant. For example, questions were asked about an online resource for the LGBT community one of the participants was developing (see appendix B for example of interview protocol questions including probing questions). This flexible, reflexive approach to data collection is typical in qualitative research, as outlined by Creswell (2007):

> Sometimes the research questions change in the middle of the study to reflect

better the types of questions needed to understand the research problem. In response, the data collection strategy, planned before the study, needs to be modified to accompany the new questions (pp. 19).

Interviewees were given the space to elaborate, and the conversation often went on tangents. Time limitations were usually discussed ahead of the interview. Sometimes interviews had to be cut short due to work or other commitments. Researcher voice was injected into the conversation to contest, relate to, or empathise with the interviewee. Fontana and Frey (2008: 117) describe this as an emphatic approach in which "the interviewer becomes an advocate and partner" in the research. And as Suddaby (2006, 638) noted, grounded theory is an interpretive process in which the researcher is considered an active element. Consequently, the data are shaped by both interviewer and interviewee.

Process

The participants were recruited through direct and indirect means, mostly through informal networks. Direct recruitment was achieved through the use of gay social apps. A call for interview participants was appended to the profile of the researcher. Indirect recruitment occurred at social gatherings and in professional settings. Often, this research was brought up in conversation, and those listening would refer the researcher to a potential interview participant, acting as an intermediary. The other most common method was snowball sampling, whereby the interviewee would refer the researcher to another potential participant. The use of convenience sampling strategies is common in research pertaining to LGBT workplace issues. In a review of nine studies, Croteau (1996: 202) concluded that it is not problematic to use convenience sampling in a single qualitative study where the goal is to discover and detail lived experience rather than to generalise. It is important to recognise that the data provide phenomenological information about only a narrow range of LGBT expatriates within the population. To increase sample diversity, opportunities to interview gay men were forgone and individuals belonging to other identity categories were much more aggressively recruited. Location of interview was determined by convenience and comfort of the interviewee. For the most part, interviews were conducted in cafes, although a few were conducted in the interviewees' place of residence. All interviews were conducted in English. Participants were given an informed consent statement to read and sign before

the interview commenced. Interviews were audio recorded and lasted between 22 and 127 minutes ($M = 81$ min). Recordings were subsequently transcribed in full with the aid of Spext, an auto-transcription app.

Data analysis

Interview transcripts were organised using a grounded theory approach as advanced by Charmaz (2006). Data collection and analysis occurred concurrently, and the emerging theory determined which data should be collected next. Grounded theory is a good design to use when theory is not available to explain a process; or when the literature may have models available, but they were developed and tested on samples and populations other than those of interest to the qualitative researcher (Creswell, 2007: 67). In this case, there is no existing framework available to explain the phenomenon under inquiry, that is, how LGBT expatriates in Japan manage their identities. The transcripts were coded in three separate phases. The first phase consisted of line-by-line coding. Participant's words that were considered relevant to the research question were coded into more compact statements, while those deemed irrelevant were excluded. Through this process, *in vivo* codes emerged. These were used as category labels that featured in the next phase. The second phase of analysis included a combination of focused and axial coding. NVivo (version 12), a qualitative data analysis software package, was used to create a database where all the transcripts were stored.Using NVivo, codes from the first phase were placed into higher order categories. Each time an interview was completed, the codes were compared and new categories were added. No new categories emerged from the final interview, a good indicator that theoretical saturation had been reached. At this point, the third phase of analysis, theoretical coding, took place. Theoretical codes specify possible relationships between the categories that were developed in the previous phase (Charmaz, 2006: 63). All of the higher order categories relevant to the experiences of LGBT expatriates in Tokyo were distilled into larger themes.

Conceptual framework

Based on the themes that emerged from the grounded theory analysis, a conceptual framework that describes how LGBT expatriates in Japan manage and deploy their multiple identities was developed (see figure 1). Here, *perceived level of safety* describes the independent variable and *disclosure decision* describes the dependent variable. The

moderator variable, in this case *"foreigner" identity*, affects the strength of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable (Baron and Kenny, 1986: 1174). For the LGBT expatriate, deploying the "foreigner" identity strengthens the positive relationship between perceived level of safety and the disclosure decision. Simply put, the safer the individual feels, the more likely they are to disclose their SOGI diversity. Extant research has not considered the moderating effect of "foreigner" identity on the relationship between safety and the disclosure. The next section will elaborate on the themes that informed this conceptual framework.

Figure 1 Conceptual framework of identity deployment of LGBT expatriates in Japan
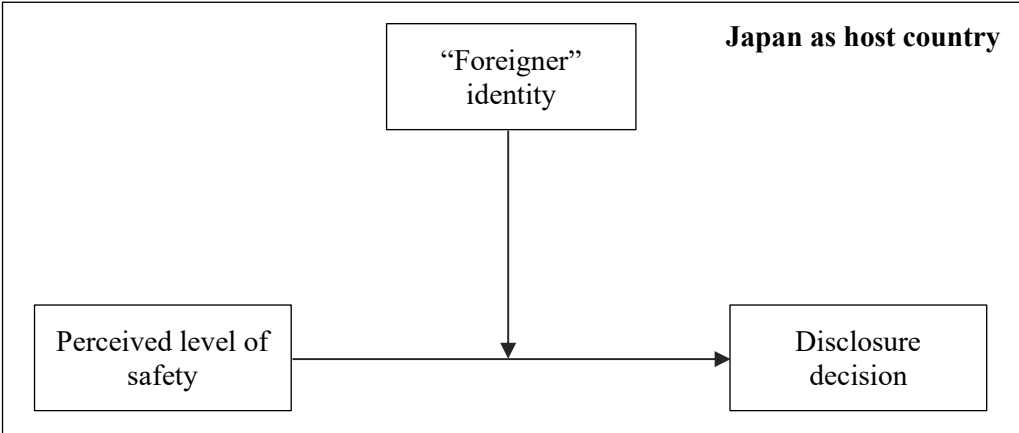
IV. Findings

With the conceptual framework established, it is time to explore each of the variables in detail:

1. Constructing self-concept as an LGBT expatriate.
2. Perception of safety as an LGBT expatriate.
3. Navigating the disclosure decision within and outside the workplace.

The first theme corresponds to the moderator variable; the second theme to the independent variable; and the third theme to the dependent variable. The following results reflect the complexity and interrelatedness of these processes. Although structured as such in this paper, it is important to recognise that these processes are not phases of a linear model. Rather, they operate, consciously and subconsciously, in the daily lives of LGBT expatriates in Tokyo. The subthemes impart the salient underlying

mechanisms that drive these processes, and help to frame the similarities across participant experiences (see Table 1). All quotes in this section include a pseudonym chosen for each participant.[6]

Table 1 Major emergent themes and subthemes (*in vivo* categories are italicised)

Major Theme	Subtheme
Constructing self-concept as an LGBT expatriate	*If I were Japanese*
	"Foreigner" identity
Perception of safety as an LGBT expatriate	Country comparison
	Law and policy
Navigating disclosure decision within and outside of the workplace	Selectively out
	Taken seriously

Constructing self-concept as an LGBT expatriate

If I were Japanese. By its very nature, expatriation marks a separation from the social structures and routines of the home country. This distancing is an opportunity for exploration of identity. Taken for granted assumptions are brought to the surface, and questions of self, outside of one's socialised context, can be examined. For an LGBT individual, it could be argued that discrimination plays a significant role in the construction of self-concept. Understanding how discrimination affects LGBT individuals in workplace settings has been the crux of several studies (see Ozeren, 2014 for a systematic literature review). Similarly, understanding how discrimination manifested for LGBT expatriates was an important line of inquiry in this research. Interestingly, when some of the interviewees talked about experiences of discrimination, or more often a lack thereof, they would offer that their experience would be different if they were Japanese. For example, Leonardo believed that if he were born Japanese, being gay in Japan could have been 'more tough'. Similarly, when David responded to my question about how he sees LGBT discrimination manifest in Japan, he concluded that,

> 'I don't really get [discriminated] cause I'm a foreigner; I don't get the same treatment. If I was Japanese it would be different.'

Discrimination based on invisible LGBT group membership is precluded by visible "foreigner" group membership. At work, Ashton has not disclosed his identity as a gay man. Not being Japanese means that it's easier for him not to be out:

'…if I were Japanese I think the experience might be different. But here being a foreigner, the people are not really aggressive, I mean aggressive towards you…like even, you know, *sempai* and *kohai* kind of things; people don't really apply that to me here…I'm never even worried that somebody would ask me the question directly, in the normal work setting.'

Ashton feels that social structures that position individuals vis-à-vis others, such the *sempai/kohai* dynamic, do not apply to him, and he is consequently insulated from being asked directly about his sexuality.

"Foreigner" identity. As these examples show, participants tended to gravitate toward their foreigner group membership, rather than their LGBT group membership, when positioning themselves within Japanese society. The organisation of multiple selves has been conceptualised in different ways. The notion of centrality is useful here. Rosenberg (1979) viewed components of self, including social identities, as varying in the degree to which they are central or peripheral parts of self. Hence, a hierarchical structure forms. In Japan, Cory's trans identity is subsumed under her "foreigner" identity:

'I don't really see myself as a trans person in Japanese society. I see myself as a foreigner in Japanese society. And I think that that's maybe an advantage perhaps? When people expect you to be weird, it's less stressful when you actually are.'

Cory's "weirdness" as a trans person is mediated by her "weirdness" as a foreigner. Cooley's (1902) theory of "looking-glass self" posits that self-concepts are formed as a reflection of the responses and evaluations of others. This has been previously utilised as a theoretical framework in studies of ethnic minority groups (e.g. Moghaddam et al., 1994; Oikawa and Yoshida, 2007). For LGBT expatriates in Japan, it seems that the construction of a "looking-glass self" self-concept leads to the centrality of the "foreigner" identity. This is in line with Adler's (1987) qualitative study of 52 female expatriate managers in Asia. She notes that, against expectations, the primary descriptor of female expatriate managers was "foreign", not "woman". Female expatriates are seen as foreigners who happen to be women, not as women who happen to be foreigners (*ibid.*, 188). Applying the same logic here, LGBT expatriates may be viewed as foreigners who happen to be queer, not as queer people who happen to be foreign. In fact, their queer identity may not be acknowledged at all, particularly if it is not readily visible.

Perception of safety as an LGBT expatriate

Country comparison. McNulty and Hutchings (2016) observed that, in the context of foreigner-status overshadowing LGBT identity, some countries may have been perceived as safer destinations for expatriation (p. 707). It is important however, to acknowledge that for the participants, perceived level of safety was not a significant factor in their decision to expatriate to Japan. Rather, safety was contextualised through comparison of host and home countries. Discussion of safety most often centred around physical safety in public spaces. Renata, who was interviewed with her partner said,

> 'I feel very comfortable. I mean we hold hands on the street. Sometimes we give a little kiss.'

In public, being the target of discrimination can be activated or avoided based on association. Ruth had a husband (heterosexual pairing) and a girlfriend (homosexual pairing). When she was with her husband and read as "straight", she recognised this as privilege. Viewed through a feminist theory lens, privilege refers to the systematic dominance conferred to certain social groups, imbuing them with an unearned advantage (McIntosh, 1992: 34). Ruth's unique situation reveals an underlying, often unacknowledged, system of oppression, namely heterosexual privilege. When she is with her girlfriend, Ruth lost that privilege. She compared loss of privilege in host and home country contexts:

> 'Here in Japan the loss of privilege is just like, weird looks and people being like, "Oh, that's one of those people." But, in Texas, it's a little bit more violent; people can get in between you or yell at you or that sort of thing.'

Other interviewees contrasted safety and acceptance. Michelle noted that she was cognizant of safety more so when she was with her (now) ex-girlfriend. She perceived the US to be more accepting than Japan of a relationship between two women, while also acknowledging that Japan is a safer place than the US for two women in a relationship. Similarly, Márcia compared Japan and Brazil:

> 'I like Japan. It's a very safe place…compared to Brazil. Brazil is not so good now…in general I think people in Brazil they're accepting more.'

Again, safety and acceptance are not seen as mutually exclusive. Finally, as David puts it, '…it's not that living here [in Japan] is harder as a gay person, it's just more progressive in other places.' Japan is not evaluated in isolation but in comparison to

other countries.

Law and policy. Safety was related to socio-cultural, micro-level interactions, as in the previous subtheme. Analysis of the data found that safety was also framed in terms of government or company macro-level protections. When asked about her coming out experience, Michelle connected risk of expatriation with national law:

> 'And as far as work goes, I was very honest about my sexuality while I was interviewing just because I know it could have been a risk coming to Japan, since I'm from the US and we have more rights and protections as LGBT individuals there compared to here.'

Michelle went on to indicate that while job seeking she actively sought after companies that visibly supported LGBT rights. Being upfront about her bisexuality during the interview stage could be seen as another way to screen potential employers, in the same way that companies evaluate the suitability of potential employees. Japan remains the only G7 nation in which employees are not protected from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the workplace (ILGA, 2019: 131). At the time of looking for work in Japan, Michelle was living in the US with her Japanese (national) partner. Uncertainty about how marriage would affect their move to Japan proved stressful. For LGBT expatriates, (lack of) legal rights could be a determining factor in country selection. Conversely, studies have found that the so-called 'comfort factor' tends to override legal status when determining LGBT-friendly locations (McPhail and McNulty, 2015; McPhail et al., 2016). As Leonardo muses:

> 'Yeah, when it comes to something official and policy and, like to be recognized as a couple or as a gay person, it sometimes can be difficult. But, on the other hand, you can have some other kind of freedom here [in Japan] that maybe you wouldn't have in other parts of the world.'

Laws and policies, while certainly not airtight, are material and can be objectively compared across countries or across companies. Arguably, the feeling of freedom is much more subjective and can only be understood once expatriates have arrived in the host country.

Navigating disclosure decision within and outside the workplace

Selectively out. Of the 10 LGBT expatriates interviewed, none were out in all domains of their life. Indeed, as Hill (2009) puts it, coming out of the closet "is a complex process

that occurs at multiple levels and is never fully complete" (p. 40). Table 2 plots level of disclosure across four different life domains— work, friends, family, and public—where 5 indicates 'completely out' and 0 indicates 'completely closeted'. Although the scale is by no means scientifically rigorous, it is clearly illustrative of the varying levels of disclosure individuals navigate across different private and public domains. When compared with the Japanese LGBT subpopulation of the sample (M = 2.1), LGBT expatriates were on average more out at work (M = 3.2). This lends credence to the idea that, internalising "foreigner" identity and feeling less pressured by societal expectations, LGBT expatriates feel safer to come out in the workplace than their Japanese counterparts. Of course, there are a number of other variables to consider, including internal (e.g. personality) and external (e.g. job industry) factors. Also, individuals may belong to multiple SOGI diverse groups. Ruth was bisexual, polyamorous, and gender fluid.[7] At work, she was only open about her bisexuality:

> 'I definitely have different levels of disclosure about that because I really dislike questions about my marital status…I've gotten a lot of really rude questions around polyamory in the States, or expectations around what kind of person I am.'

Ruth had decided not to disclose her relationship with her girlfriend at work. Similarly, though she telegraphed her gender fluidity by subverting gender roles through clothing, she was not ready to talk about it explicitly. Having a social media presence which is readily accessible by the public, or speaking in a public capacity, LGBT individuals have to make decisions about when and to what extent they deploy aspects of their identity. For example, when speaking in public, Ruth mentioned that she would actively deploy her bisexual identity only when the talk included LGBT content. For David, he was reticent to post information about his SOGI diversity on Facebook as he worried it would be deemed 'unprofessional'. The important point here is that no one is completely out or completely closeted, as the case may be, all of the time.

Table 2 Level of disclosure across different life domains

Name	Work	Friends	Family	Public
David	4	4	**5**	0
Ashton	0	3	2	0
Leonardo	4	4	**5**	3
Carlos	3	3	2	0
Márcia	4	3	2	0
Petra	4	4	4	0
Renata	0	4	**5**	1
Michelle	4	**5**	**5**	0
Cory	4	4	3	3
Ruth	4	**5**	4	4
Mean	3.2	3.9	3.8	0.4

Taken seriously. After the LGBT expatriate in Japan has come out, another hurdle may present itself, as revealed by the data: being taken seriously. David noted that since it is rare for people to be out in Japan, especially at work, when he has come out as gay, usually at *nomikai* (drinking parties), he has had to convince people that it is not a joke. The "niji voice 2018" survey conducted by NPO Nijīro Diversity in conjunction with the Centre for Gender Studies (2019) indicated that only 32.5% of LGBT participants had come out to at least one person in the workplace (calculated average). In light of this, it stands to reason that coworkers and supervisors may not know how to receive this kind of information. David continued:

> 'I came out to my cofounder, the CEO of the company, I think three times before he actually believed me...until that point I just thought it was, understood, because I was like, "I told you before." He was like, "I thought you were joking before."'

In this case, the CEO was supportive and he and David maintained smooth relations. In some cases however, interpreting what is meant as a sincere and vulnerable declaration as a joke could be extremely invalidating and dismissive, prompting the LGBT individual to backpedal in order to go along with the joke. Carlos described reactions to his coming out as bisexual:

> 'There's that initial shock, because apparently I don't look like the type of guy that likes other guys.'

Depending on the person, the schema of an LGBT individual may be very limited and based on pejorative stereotypes. When Cory first started wearing dresses to work, she

was met by a senior staff member with laughter. Cory did not try to interpret the intent of the laughter, but recognised that it, '...affected me emotionally to some extent'. In Japan, *onē*-talent (typically men who cross-dress) remain a staple of the entertainment industry, and laughter is the expected and learnt response to this form of entertainment. *Onē*-talent and the image of an LGBT person have become conflated (McLelland, 2000). Not wanting to be stereotyped, and wanting to be taken seriously as a professional in their place of work, the LGBT expatriate might ultimately choose not to come out in Japan.

V. Discussion

An important contribution of this study is the focus on the lived experience of LGBT expatriates in Japan, whereby the issue of workplace inclusion is recontextualised to consider the experiences of those who may be falling through the gaps. In answering the first research question (*how do LGBT expatriates reconcile their visible "foreigner" identity with their less visible SOGI identity?*), it became apparent that LGBT expatriates perceived themselves and were perceived by others as foreign, first and foremost. On the one hand, this meant that it was easier for some of the interviewees, such as Ashton, to conceal their SOGI diversity in the workplace because they were not held to the same societal expectations as their Japanese counterparts. On the other hand, the deployment of subversive behaviour or visual appearance was relegated to one's foreignness, not one's queerness, as Cory explained. In this way, the SOGI identity is invalidated and erased. When asked about what advice he might give an LGBT individual wanting to expatriate to Japan, David argued that learning about Japanese culture should take precedence over deciding how to present one's SOGI diversity. It is reasonable to suggest that for SOGI diverse individuals moving to Japan, many will find that other facets of their identity will supersede their SOGI identity in their daily lives as expatriates.

Answering the second research question (*how do LGBT expatriates assess the level of safety and inclusion of workplaces in the Japanese business context?*), safety and inclusion were found to be measured comparatively, whereby the home country becomes the standard by which the host country is assessed. Safety was conceptualised as freedom to express oneself and freedom from physical and verbal acts of violence.

Implications for global management

Organisations in Japan wishing to tap into the global talent pool should sensitise HR and recruitment channels to the possibility that they will encounter SOGI diverse candidates that have unique legal circumstances to navigate as individuals or as part of a familial unit when expatriating to Japan. For example, hiring one half of a same-sex couple in a trailing spouse situation and then not having measures in place to assist with any visa challenges they might face could lead to a negative return on investment if the couple decides to leave. Having an up-to-date knowledge of legislation that directly or indirectly affects SOGI diverse individuals could help inform policies and procedures, ensuring smooth recruitment and mitigating losses. Removing both the male/female binary gender field on forms and the requirement for an applicant to provide their "real" (legal) name acknowledges and validates gender diverse individuals. Also, a corporate website may be the first point of exposure an overseas applicant has to an organisation. Diversity and inclusion statements that are readily accessible send a clear message about the kind of workplace culture being propagated.

Overseas hire candidates may be explicit about their SOGI diversity at the earliest possible opportunity, as Michelle demonstrated. Recruiters should be prepared to respond appropriately, and should appreciate the gravity of the candidate's decision to disclose. Conversely, companies should recognise that LGBT expatriates may come out at any point after being hired, or may not come out at all. The duplicity matrix developed by McPhail and Fisher (2015) presents an in/out dichotomy of the disclosure decisions of LGBT expatriates inside the organisation and outside the organisation. It articulates the various paradigms of identity management that LGBT expatriates navigate based on social or organisational acceptance. The data analysed in the present study shows that such a matrix is overly simplistic. Inside the workplace, some of the interviewees were out only to select coworkers or supervisors. Similarly, outside the workplace, they were selectively out to some or all of their friends or family members. Maintaining a workplace climate that assumes all employees are heterosexual and cisgender is erroneous at best, and damaging at worst. Outcomes that only serve heteronormative ways of life reinforce institutional structures of discrimination and erasure.

Some interviewees talked about people they knew of being fired because of their SOGI diversity. These 'horror stories' become part of the broader discussion around being

LGBT in Japan, and can influence perceptions of safety for LGBT expatriates. Knowing that job security is compromised based on LGBT group membership could be stressful for the individual, impacting their productivity and wellbeing in the workplace (see Sears and Mallory, 2011 for review; see also Jones and King, 2014). Education was found to be one of four actions that can be used to create change in organisations (Brooks and Edwards, 2009: 144). Education has to be more than just a checklist of dos and don'ts, which can be seen as prescriptive and superficial, having little to no relation to actual workplace interactions. In their review of the literature on diversity training, Benschop et al. (2015) found that interventions that: do not address power; are not part of a larger organisational development effort; and do not adopt a more experiential approach are seldom effective in transforming the structure and culture of an organisation (p. 560). By examining extant power structures and the status quo, companies can begin to uncover the ways in which they are not meeting the needs of their diverse employee base. This could require the expertise of an external consultant, or could be instigated from within the organisation itself by working with SOGI diverse employees.

Finally, a diverse customer base requires a diverse organisation. Not allowing space for disparate and fresh perspectives, including the perspectives of SOGI diverse individuals, is a missed opportunity to better provide products and services that meet the needs of all potential customers. In a 2019 survey of 18,059 expats, Japan ranked 32nd out of 33 countries, a downward trend from previous surveys (HSBC). Organisations in Japan eager to remain attractive to global markets cannot afford to let SOGI diversity fly under the radar.

Limitations and avenues for future research

Focusing on the lived experiences of LGBT expatriates in Japan, this research extends the literature on expatriation and global talent management. However, several limitations should be noted. First, convenience sampling and purposive sampling using snowballing meant that the whole population was not accessible. The research examined only those who have undertaken expatriate work; future research should take into account the views of individuals who have declined or avoided expatriation to Japan and what they see as the challenges that affect them with respect to opportunities (or lack thereof). Second, the sample represented a cohort of independent individuals that were responsible only for themselves for the most part. None of the participants had children

or dependants, and all but one was single when they expatriated. As such, they didn't have the need to access partnership or family-related benefits from their companies. Future research should investigate LGBT individuals expatriating as part of various family formations, including expatriate single parents, split family expatriates, or multigenerational expatriate families.

Third, home countries of the LGBT expatriates in this sample were exclusively in the Americas and Europe. Although there was some ethnic diversity present, the sample was predominantly white. Ethnicity may affect level of privilege, access to social capital, and how individuals are perceived by host country nationals. Comparing samples of LGBT expatriates from different cultural, regional, and ethnic backgrounds could expand understanding of how workplaces can be made more safe and inclusive. Fourth, this research was conducted in a single geographic region (i.e. Tokyo). Research into LGBT expatriate experiences in other parts of Japan could reveal new, and possibly contradictory, insights. Fifth, the sample comprised solely of self-initiated expatriates, and therefore the experiences of company-assigned expatriates were not considered. Future research could explore how companies can better develop and support assigned LGBT employees pre-departure, as well as during their assignment in Japan.

<Endnotes>

[1] In line with the definition provided in the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care (SOC; 2011), trans is an umbrella term defined here as an "adjective to describe a diverse group of individuals who cross or transcend culturally defined categories of gender. The gender identity of trans people differs to varying degrees from the sex they were assigned at birth (Bockting, 1999).

[2] The other categories in the typology of expatriates developed based on the survey are as follows: the Optimizer (16%), the Romantic (12%), the Explorer (12%), the Traveling Spouse (8%), and the Student (7%).

[3] Cisgender means having a gender identity that matches one's assigned sex (WHO, 2016).

[4] The participants self-identified using these terms. Non-binary and gender fluid fit under the umbrella of trans as defined in this paper.

[5] Someone who is pansexual is capable of being attracted to any and all gender(s) (Mardell, 2016: 12).

[6] Ellipses (…) are used to indicate an omission. False starts and redundancies have been removed, and some additions, appearing in parentheses, have been made for the sake of clarity.

[7] Polyamory is the practice or desire of relationships involving more than two people (Mardell, 2016: 12).

8   Heteronormativity: "The processes through which social institutions and social policies reinforce the belief that human beings fall into two distinct sex/gender categories: male/man and female/woman. This belief (or ideology) produces a correlative belief that those two sexes/genders exist in order to fulfil complementary roles, i.e., that all intimate relationships ought to exist only between males/men and females/women" (Queen et al., 2004: 3).

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<Appendices>

Appendix A: Participant Summary

Name	Age	Gender/ Sexuality	Pronoun	Country of Origin	Industry	Position
David	31	CG gay M	He	USA	IT (Start-up)	CTO (Cofounder), FT
Ashton	40	CG gay M	He	USA	Automotive	Assistant manager (product planning), FT
Leonardo	25	CG gay M	He	Italy	Fashion (design)	Stylist, PT
Carlos	27	CG bisexual M	He	Panama	Tourism	Tour Leader/Co-ordinator, FT
Márcia	40	CG lesbian W	She	Brazil	Government (consulate)	Passport renewal, FT
Petra	26	CG pansexual W	She	Sweden	Media (photography)	Retoucher (assistant), FT
Renata	33	CG lesbian W	She	Mexico	Media (entertainment)	Projection designer, FT
Michelle	23	CG bisexual W	She	USA	Sales and HR (recruitment)	Consultant, FT
Cory	41	T non-binary pansexual	She	UK	Education; Music	Consultant, C; Instrumentalist
Ruth	31	T gender fluid bisexual	She, They	USA	IT (software development)	Designer, FT

Notes
- CG = Cisgender; T = Trans; M = Man; W = Woman
- FT is used to indicate full-time, PT to indicate part-time, and C to indicate independent contractor

Appendix B: Interview protocol sample questions

1. Have you come out to: Family | Friends | Coworkers | Supervisors | Clients?
2. If no: If you came out to your (Family/friends/coworkers/supervisor) do you think your situation would become better, worse, or remain about the same? (Probes: Why do you think that? What do you think their reactions would be?)
3. If yes: After coming out, what has your experience been like in the workplace? (Probes: co-workers' reactions? What kinds of support did you need from your workplace? What was the best part? The worst part?)
4. How would you describe the workplace environment for LGBT individuals in your company; in general? (Probes: what is your outlook on Japanese society as a whole?)
5. Do you feel that any of the ideals of your company would resonate with LGBT individuals looking for employment? (Probes: What does "LGBT-friendly" mean to you?)
6. Have you participated in any LGBT-related events? (Pride parade, roundtable discussion, information session, contest etc.)
7. Do you know if LGBT-supportive policies exist in your company? (Probes: what are they? Is

this information easily accessible?)

8. Do you know of any other LGBT individuals in your workplace? (Probes: If so, what is your relationship with these individuals like?)

9. Are you currently working at a career/job that you consider ideal? (Probes: If yes: What makes it ideal? If no: What has gotten in the way of your ideal job or career? What would your ideal job/career be? What would you need to do in order to find your ideal job?)

10. When seeking employment, what conditions do you consider important? (Probes: Do you want to work for an employer that you could come out to? What kinds of policies are important to you?