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## **SEXUAL ORIENTATION IN THE WORKPLACE**

ARE THERE WEAKNESSES IN THE CURRENT LEGISLATION  
WHICH MAY LEAD TO AN EMPLOYEE WHO IDENTIFIES AS LGBT  
FACING CONFLICTS IN THE WORKPLACE?

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by

RICARDO JAVIER ALEXIS COFRÉ PINTO

Registration N° 51710412

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*In memory of Rosa Amelia,  
who taught throughout her life,  
and never stopped learning...*

## ABSTRACT

This research aims to detect weaknesses in the current Irish legislation that may lead to an employee who identifies as LGBT<sup>1</sup> facing conflicts in the workplace. The study contains three parts.

The first part examines the literature on sexual orientation, conflicts in the workplace and compares Ireland and international legislation regarding LGBT employees' sexual orientation.

The second part involves a focus group that discusses with Irish and non-Irish male employees who considered themselves gay their awareness regarding the options available to face conflicts in the workplace.

The third part considers a series of personal interviews – eleven in total- which goes more profound in the employees' awareness, collecting relevant reflections and purposes.

Among the main outcomes of this research, it is possible to find: i) A list of the main factors that may lead a LGBT employee face conflicts in the workplace such as culture, company policies, and tolerance; ii) A positioning matrix where the main industries are located based on the perception of LGBT employees have regarding their level of tolerance and empathy. Industries such as Fashion, Hospitality, and Accounting are located in the first quadrant (more tolerant, and more empathetic), whereas industries such as Legal, Construction, and Engineering are located in the third quadrant (less tolerant, and less empathetic); iii) A set of suggestions from LGBT employees are turned into a strategic model oriented to ameliorate their experience in the workplace.

Finally, it is vital to prevent conflict through effective communication where the company policies are informed since the recruitment process and updated constantly, assuring a comfortable, comprehensive, and supportive workplace. Once the conflict arises, it is critical to take action, depending on the severity

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<sup>1</sup> LGBT: Acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender. Further information in Literature Review.

of the conflict and follow a strategy that considers the participation of third parties and the prevention of any retaliation.

## INTRODUCTION

More than 70 countries still have legislation that is hostile to LGBT+<sup>2</sup> people (PwC Global, 2018); being the workplace where people spend around forty hours per week, this fact not only affects daily people's life, also involves their professional life. The dictionary of Cambridge University defines conflict as an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles; conflicts may arise in the workplace depending on plenty of variables, especially for LGBT employees, affecting the relationship that exists between them and their employers, colleagues, and clients.

For LGBT employees, sexual orientation is a factor that may provoke conflict in their workplace. It is a contentious topic: internationally, homosexuality and other forms of expression of same-sex orientation are stigmatized. It is explicitly stated in the ICD-10<sup>3</sup> that "sexual orientation by itself is not to be considered a disorder". Sexual rights, including rights pertaining to sexual orientation expression, are integral to human rights. (Cochran, et al., 2014). Nearly one in five of the employees have experienced discriminatory or negative behaviour toward themselves or others at their company due to being LGBT+, this can be unconscious or unspoken bias (PwC Global, 2018).

The relationship between conflicts and their prevention or treatment is vital for this research due to this study aims not only to explore into LGBT employees' experience around workplace conflicts, it professes to create a model oriented to ameliorate their experience in the workplace, oriented firstly in the prevention of the conflict and when a conflict arises, to determine the best way to deal with it.

It is interesting to know if organisations are adapting methods or procedures to manage workplace conflicts. If such adaptations are not made, a misalignment might arise between the contemporary nature of conflict at work and how organisations go about addressing it, putting more emphasis on preventing workplace problems rather than on resolving conflict effectively once it arises (Teague, 2015).

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<sup>2</sup> LGBT+ acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender. With the plus sign signifying a desire to be inclusive.

<sup>3</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> version of the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 2019.

This investigation contains five chapters including conclusion, reflections, and recommendations.

The first chapter reviews study already carried out concerning sexual orientation in the workplace, contrasting and comparing relevant debates, concepts, and theories involving concepts such as culture, Human Rights, sexual orientation, discrimination, and discriminatory grounds. It includes a comparison and contrast between legislation that defends LGBT employees in Ireland versus The United Kingdom. It presents several Conflict Mapping Models which may be helpful before a workplace conflict regarding sexual orientation.

The second chapter refers to the research methodology and methods. It justifies the use of the inductive approach, talks about the philosophies of this study, explains the reason why focus group and personal interview were the main ways chosen to collect data, presents the ethics involved in this study due to is based on people perception, describes strategies, key definitions, choices, time horizon and research limitations. Among the key definitions, it is possible to find: i) *Volunteers*, people who were part of a pre-interview process, oriented to evaluate the questions to be included in future stages; ii) *Participants*, people who were part of the focus group session, and iii) *Respondents*, people who were interviewed. Volunteers, participants and respondents are national and international LGBT employees who work in Dublin, Ireland.

The third chapter presents the data, including tabulation of the answers collected, displaying emerged concepts during the focus group session and personal interviews. This chapter explain how focus group and personal interviews were developed. Keeping their anonymity, essential information about people who were part of this research is presented, such as nationality, age, educational level, and industry where they work. The answers of participants and respondents are displayed organised by questions, separating the results of the focus group session and personal interviews.

The fourth chapter consists of data analysis and findings, details the primary factors considered by people who participated in the survey, includes an analysis per question in three instances: i) An overview of focus group and personal interviews; ii) A particular study of focus group; and iii) A specific analysis of personal interviews. Special treatment of the data is being carried regarding conflict experienced by LGBT employees, their perception of different sectors or industries concerning the acceptance of LGBT

employees, and their suggestion to treat or prevent workplace conflict regarding sexual orientation.

The fifth chapter contains discussions and synthesises study data and concepts, exploring alternative outcomes. The main outcomes obtained were a positioning matrix that locates industries according to how welcoming LGBT employees perceive them and one strategic model oriented to ameliorate workplace experience for LGBT employees based on their purposes.

The positioning matrix considers empathy and tolerance as cartesian axes. On the one hand, with more tolerance and empathy, the first quadrant contains those industries perceived as more welcoming for LGBT employees such as fashion, arts, entertainment, hospitality, beauty, and healthcare. On the other hand, the third quadrant with less tolerance and empathy contains those industries perceived as less welcoming for LGBT employees, such as public forces, construction, politics and legal.

The model contributes to new dispute resolution strategies oriented to ameliorate the experience of LGBT employees in the workplace. It is supported by three pillars: the elaboration of the policy, the instances of the policy, and an action plan depending on the severity of the conflict.

The severity or level of the conflict is concept considered for many of the participants and respondents, determining how to face them. The last resort would be to fire a person who perpetrate an offence or an aggression against a LGBT employee.

The main conclusion is that workplace conflicts regarding sexual orientation are not only related to discrimination or exclusion, they also may include sexual harassment which is not exclusive to women. For LGBT employee, being out in the workplace make them feel comfortable due to is related to who they are.

Finally, the recommendations section advises future investigators who may feel interested in going deeper into this research. It presents possible limitations or difficulties, and at the same time gives some guidelines regarding new scopes that could be covered in the future, such as gender identity, sincere apologies, and exploring other cities different to Dublin with people from another age group.

## JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY

There is a series of interrogations regarding sexual orientation and the workplace that this research aims to respond to, such as: Does sexual orientation matters in the workplace? Can employees' sexual orientation make their workplace experience better or worse? Are there certain industries or sectors where sexual orientation can be an issue? Are LGBT employees facing conflicts in the workplace due to their sexual orientation? To answer this kind of questions is necessary to collect the opinion of LGBT employees through a survey process.

Non-heterosexuals face an enormous amount of hostility and discrimination from many heterosexuals in the workplace, being sexual orientation one of the most controversial and difficult issues to deal with. Addressing sexual orientation issues is both a personal and an organizational responsibility. The feelings and fears of individuals tend to work their way into company policy. (Zuckerman & Simons, 1996).

In Ireland, nearly 18% of people aged 18 years or over expressed that they felt discriminated, the highest rates of discrimination were reported by people who identify as LGBT+ (33.2%) (Central Statistics Office, 2019). It was not until 1999 that legislation was finally enacted to protect LGBTQ+<sup>4</sup> workers (Dublin LGBTQ+ Pride, 2020).

Due to some sources are suggestion that LGBT employees may face conflict in the workplace, this research aims to determine how protected they are in case of workplace conflict regarding sexual orientation, explores how aware LGBT employees are concerning the options available before a conflict situation, and discovers if some industries are perceived more welcoming than others for LGBT employees.

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<sup>4</sup> LGBTQ+ acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning. With the plus sign signifying a desire to be inclusive.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

For this reason, the research question has been planted as follows:

*Are there weaknesses in the current legislation which may lead to an employee who identifies as LGBT facing conflicts in the workplace?*

The research point is to state the problem clearly and concisely, which should be significant and delineated. Along the survey process will be possible to obtain the required information, find some answers, and draw conclusions related to the problem (Walliman, 2016). The research question involves the series of questions mentioned in the previous section, presenting the weaknesses of the current Irish legislation based on the experience of LGBT employees in their respective workplaces.

The research problem is often formulated in the form of a theoretical research question that indicates a clear direction and scope for the research project (Walliman, 2016). The content of this research is LGBT employees and the conflict they may face in the workplace regarding their sexual orientation, oriented to male workers who identify as gay.

## OBJECTIVES

From the research question emerge three objectives:

- 1) To identify and compare Irish and international legislation concerning LGBT employees' sexual orientation.
- 2) To detect the awareness that LGBT employees have regarding the options available to face conflicts in the workplace.
- 3) To contribute to new dispute resolution strategies to ameliorate the experience of LGBT employees in the workplace.



# CHAPTER 1:

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Introduction

The first chapter of this research presents themes, debates, and gaps in academic educational material regarding conflicts that LGBT employees may face in the workplace due to their sexual orientation. With a thematic approach, this section presents the two main fields where this research merges. On the one hand, sexual orientation. On the other hand, the legal aspect brought by the Irish and international legislation, the options available for LGBT employees to treat any conflict that may arise in the workplace, and several models that may help to identify conflicts.

This chapter contains several types of literature, Irish regulations such as the Employment Equality Act 1998, and international such as The Equality Act of The United Kingdom. It considers academic articles that present conflict mappings models and contrasts and compare critical national and international surveys regarding sexual orientation in the workplace.

To accomplish the first objective of this research: *“To identify and compare Irish and international legislation concerning LGBT employees’ sexual orientation”*, Ireland is being compared with The United Kingdom, which is similar to Ireland in demographics, culture, government, infrastructure and geography, according to the Country Similarity Index.<sup>5</sup>

The second and third objectives are being reached along the research in the survey period and posterior analysis.

More than 80% of LGBT+ and non-LGBT+ millennials (people born between 1980 and 1995) say that

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<sup>5</sup> Index which attempts to quantify how similar countries are to each other relative to other countries, available in <https://objectivelist.com/>

an employer's policies on diversity, equality, and workforce inclusion are an important factor when deciding whether to work for them, according to PwC research (PwC Global, 2018).

More than 80% of the LGBT+ employees said they feel comfortable being out at work. Less than 30% of the businesses have programmes specifically focused on the retention, development, and progression of LGBT+ talent. Many of the LGBT+ employees who do have access to such programmes are not even aware that they exist. LGBT+ inclusion is an increasingly powerful business differentiator, capable of driving significant value. More than 60% of employees believe that being out at work has improved their ability to do business and engage with customers. Most of the employees believe that their personal and professional experiences as LGBT+ people have helped to enhance their inclusiveness, resilience, authenticity, empathy, and adaptability (PwC Global, 2018).

## **2. Sexual Orientation**

The American Psychology Association defines sexual orientation as "an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic and/or sexual attractions to men, women or both sexes." This implies interest in a person due to different factors: biological, psychological, economic, cultural, religious, and social (Pérez, 2014).

Inadequate understandings of sexual orientation can reinforce heteronormative assumptions (i. e., assumptions that heterosexuality should be privileged within society) by maintaining a majority/minority divide between heterosexuality and other sexual orientations that historically has been normatively loaded and policed (Dembroff, 2016).

There are thirteen most recognised types of sexual orientation: heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, demisexual, anthrosexual, autosexual, graysexual, hyposexual, lithsexual, sapiosexual, and skoliosexual (Healtywaymag, s.f.). Their respective descriptions are presented in the following table:

Table N° 1: Types of Sexual Orientations		
N°	Sexual orientation	Definition
1	Heterosexual	Refers to people who feel attraction on an emotional, romantic or sexual level to people of the opposite sex.
2	Homosexual	Refers to people with a sexual preference for people of the same sex.
3	Bisexual	Refers to people who feels emotional, romantic, sexual, or affective attraction towards both sexes.
4	Asexual	Refers to people who do not feel attracted to any subject, no matter what their sex.
5	Pansexual	Refers to people who is attracted to any sex or gender.
6	Demisexual	Refers to people might not feel sexual or affective desire for someone, until they get to know them well and they can trust this person.
7	Anthrosexual	Refers to people who make connections with all different types of people.
8	Autosexual	Refers to people who feel attracted by themselves.
9	Graysexual	Refers to people who are located between asexuality and sexuality.
10	Hyposexual,	Refers to people who, as a consequence of external factors, are in a transitional phase with a lack of sexual, emotional or affective attraction to anyone.
11	Lithsexual	Refers to people who feel physical and emotional attraction towards a person, regardless of whether this feeling is corresponded.
12	Sapiosexual	Refers to people who feel attracted to others due to their cognitive and emotional abilities, through which they are able to make fundamental intellectual connections.
13	Skoliosexual	Refers to people who feel attracted to transgender and intersexual people, or other people with more open gender identities.
Source: Own elaboration base on <a href="https://healthywaymag.com/relationships/sexual-orientation">https://healthywaymag.com/relationships/sexual-orientation</a>		

Despite there are thirteen different sexual orientations, and terminology around this topic is continually evolving, the centre of this research are homosexual employees, the term homosexual will be replaced by the term “gay” into the acronym LGBT, described in the next section.

## 2.1 What LGBT stands for?

The term LGBT is mentioned several times along this research. For this reason, is vital to understand the meaning of each letter of this acronym:

Table N° 2: Acronym LGBT	
Letter	Meaning
L	Lesbian: a woman who is attracted to other women.
G	Gay: a man who is attracted to other men or broadly people who identify as homosexual.
B	Bisexual: a person who is attracted to both men and women.
T	Transgender: a person whose gender identity is different from the sex on their birth certificate.
Source: Own elaboration, based on <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-33278165">https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-33278165</a>	

The term LGBT will be considered, due to the research is oriented to gay male employees, being mentioned as LGBT employees.

Additionally, there are other acronyms that after letter T, includes the following letters:

**Q**- Queer: Someone does not want to identify with binaries (e.g. male/female, homosexual/heterosexual) or that they do not want to label themselves only by their sexual activity.

**Q**- Questioning: a person who is still exploring their sexuality or gender identity.

**I** - Intersex: a person whose body is not definitively male or female. This may be because they have chromosomes which are not XX or XY or because their genitals or reproductive organs are not considered standard.

**A** - Allies: a person who identifies as straight but supports people in the LGBTQQIAAP community.

**A**- Asexual: a person who is not attracted in a sexual way to people of any gender.

**P** - Pansexual: a person whose sexual attraction is not based on gender and may themselves be fluid when it comes to gender or sexual identity.

### **3. Workplace Environment**

Having a workplace environment where people could feel comfortable is a desirable scenario. Unfortunately, it is not possible to assure that every workplace has a comfortable environment, especially for LGBT employees who are exposed to discrimination, negative comments or are having limited opportunities of promotion, leading them to hide their sexuality to avoid this kind of conflicts, and even not taking action before a conflictive situation.

Regarding negative comments and discrimination, 18% of LGBT staff have been the target of negative comments or conduct from work colleagues in the last year because they are LGBT, and 35% of LGBT staff have hidden or disguised that they are LGBT at work in the last year because they were afraid of discrimination (Stonewall; YouGov, 2018).

In relation to promotion opportunities, 18% LGBT people who were looking for work said they were discriminated against because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity while trying to get a job in the last year. Regarding actions taken by LGBT employees before a conflictive situation, 12% lesbian, gay and bi people wouldn't feel confident reporting any homophobic or biphobic bullying to their employer (Stonewall; YouGov, 2018).

The gap between employee aspirations and actual experience highlights the extent to which many organisations are failing to create a sufficiently inclusive environment and a clear pathway for progression. The sectors with the most positive image to attract and retain LGBT+ talent are retail, communications, consulting, professional services, entertainment, pharmaceuticals, hospitality, and healthcare. Whereas the worst evaluated were defence, energy, utilities and mining, engineering and construction, and industrial manufacturing (PwC Global, 2018).

## **4. Legislation**

How protected are LGBT employees in Ireland and internationally? Are there regulations explicitly oriented to sexual orientation? What are the companies doing to assure a comfortable environment for LGBT employees? This section is taught to answer these questions and reach the first objective of this research: to identify and compare Irish and international legislation concerning LGBT employees' sexual orientation. For this, Ireland and The United Kingdom will be compared, contrasting their current legislation.

### **4.1 Ireland – Discriminatory Grounds**

In Ireland, the Employment Equality Act 1998-2015 regulates any type of discrimination within nine discriminatory grounds: i) Gender, ii) Civil status, iii) Family status, iv) Sexual orientation, v) Religion, vi) Age, vii) Disability, viii) Race, and ix) Membership of the Traveller community, particularly the fourth ground defend worker's sexual orientation. The Act is divided in eight parts, and it includes definition of key concepts to enhance the understanding. (Employment Equality Act, 1998).

It is essential to highlight that according to the Employment Equality Act, “Sexual orientation” means heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual orientation, which represents only three of the thirteen sexual orientations described previously in this section.

## **4.2 The United Kingdom – Protected Characteristics**

New CIPD<sup>6</sup> research suggests that more than 40% of LGBT+ employees have experienced workplace conflict in the past year (Graham, 2021). Equality in the workplace is concerned with breaking down the barriers that currently block opportunities for certain groups of people. It aims to identify and minimise the barriers that exclude people and to take action to achieve equal access to all aspects of work for everyone (Equality Act, 2010).

Diversity is about recognising, valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills, and experiences, and using those differences to create a productive and effective workforce. It's important to take account of diversity and involve people when assessing risk and managing health and safety. The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine 'protected characteristics' which are: i) Age, ii) Disability, iii) Gender reassignment, iv) Marriage and civil partnership, v) Pregnancy and maternity, vi) Race, vii) Religion and belief, viii) Sex, and ix) Sexual orientation.

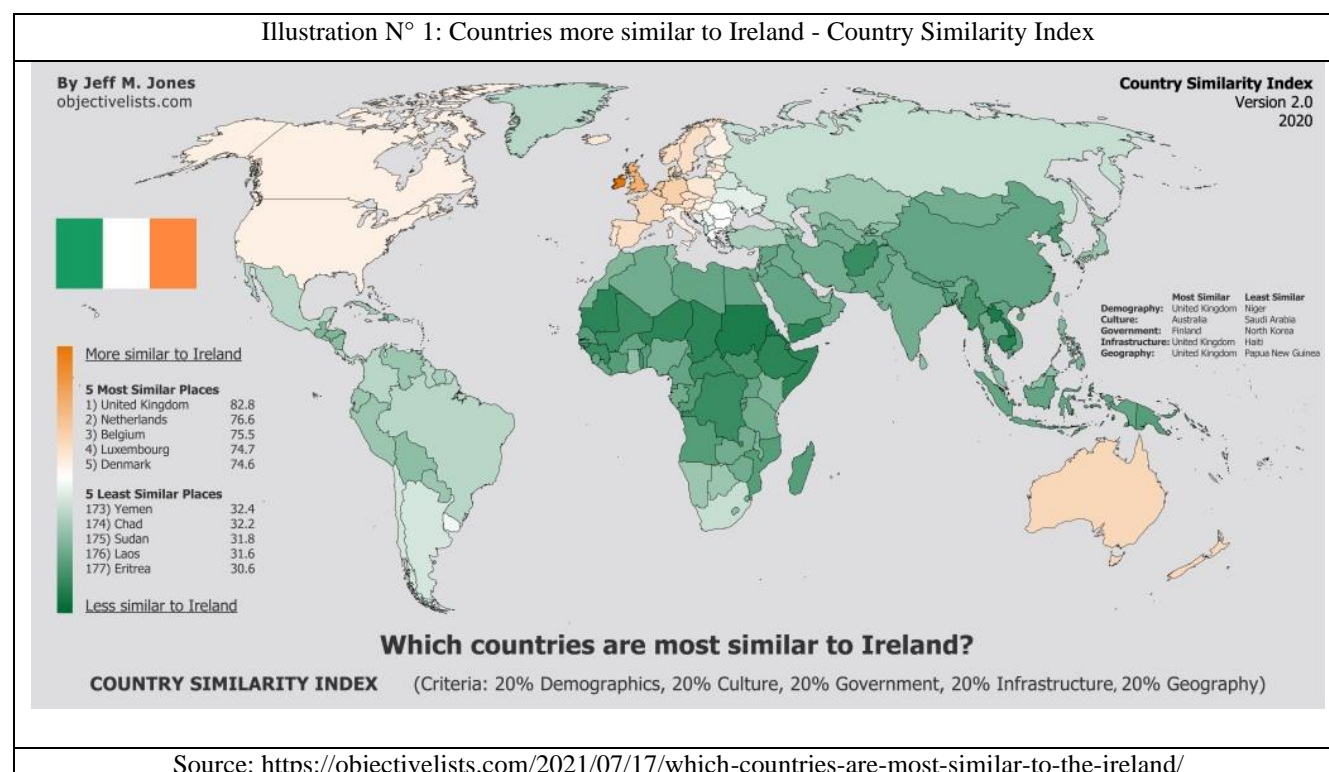
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<sup>6</sup> CIPD stands for Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (UK).

### 4.3 Ireland and The United Kingdom

The selection of The United Kingdom as a country to be compared with Ireland was through the Country Similarity Index, which considers five comparison parameters giving importance of 20% each: *demographics, culture, government, infrastructure and geography*. As a result, the most similar country to Ireland is The United Kingdom, with 82.8% of similarity.

Illustration N° 1 shows the results of the Index:



Regarding regulations in Ireland and The United Kingdom, equivalent parameters are presented between Employment and Equality Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010, specifically the Discriminatory Grounds for Ireland and the Protected Characteristics for The United Kingdom:



Table N° 3: Contrast between regulation in Ireland and The United Kingdom			
<b>Ireland</b> Discriminatory Grounds Employment and Equality Act 1998		<b>The United Kingdom</b> Protected Characteristic Equality Act 2010	
i)	Gender	i)	Age
ii)	Civil status	ii)	Disability
iii)	Family status	iii)	Gender reassignment
iv)	Sexual orientation	iv)	Marriage and civil partnership
v)	Religion	v)	Pregnancy and maternity
vi)	Age	vi)	Race
vii)	Disability	vii)	Religion and belief
viii)	Race	viii)	Sex
ix)	Membership of the Traveller community	ix)	Sexual orientation
Source: Own elaboration			

Have the same name as Discriminatory Grounds and Protected Characteristics: Sexual Orientation, Age, Disability, and Race.

Could be categorised as similar: Gender from Discriminatory grounds with Gender Reassignment, and Sex from Protected Characteristics. At the same time, Civil status and Family status from Discriminatory Grounds can be associated with the Protected Characteristic: Marriage and civil partnership. Religion from Discriminatory Grounds can be linked to the Protected Characteristic Religion and belief.

Finally, as an exclusive Discriminatory Ground, Ireland presents Membership of the Traveller community, whereas as an exclusive Protected Characteristic, The United Kingdom have Pregnancy and maternity.

As it was already mentioned, Discriminatory Grounds and Protected Characteristics contain Sexual Orientation, being the most crucial topic for this research. Any workplace policy in Ireland and the United Kingdom must consider the Employment and Equality Act 1998, and the Equality Act 2010.

## 5. How to deal with Workplace Conflicts?

One way to deal with differing perceptions is to discuss each other's perceptions in a frank and honest manner without either side blaming the other (Fisher & Ury, s.f.).

More than talent, *dealing with conflicts* can be defined as a skill that could be improved through studies, specialisations, and the use of specific models that help to understand the conflict by itself.

The nature of every practice profession is that the first critical skill the practice professional must have the ability to diagnose, to determine the root cause of a specific problem. Theory alone is inadequate for good diagnosis, then specific practice models and tools are required to assist the professional, summarised in two steps: (1) Effectively diagnosis a conflict, and (2) Taking action to manage the conflict based on the diagnosis. There are two requirements for an effective and useful conflict analysis model: (1) Diagnosis: Simplicity vs. Complexity, and (2) Strategic Guidance. The former refers to balance simplicity and complexity, an overly complex model will be difficult to put into practice, and a shallow model is a waste of time; whereas the latter says the clearer the strategic direction the model gives, the more practical and applicable it becomes (Furlong, 2005).

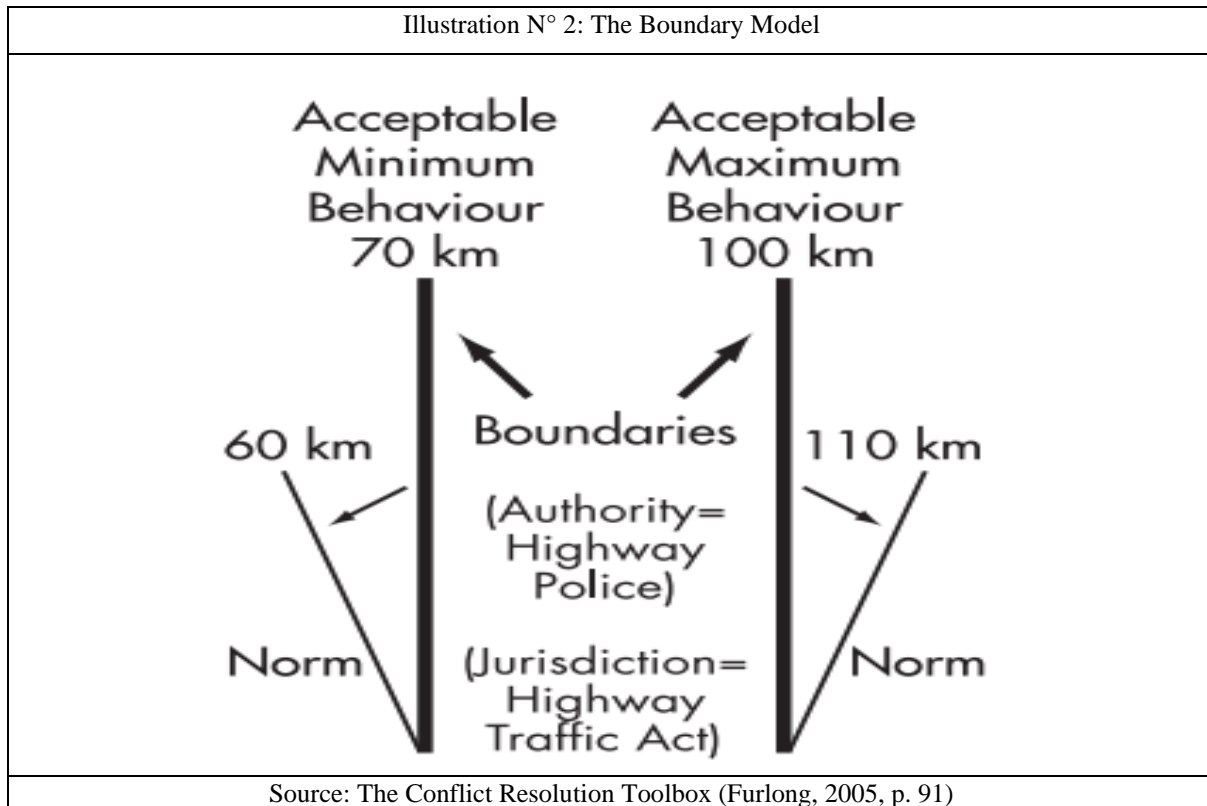
For creating an accurate strategy to deal with any conflict, it is essential to understand the conflict fully, is in this moment when conflict mapping becomes necessary. The Conflict Resolution Toolbox presents eight *Conflict Mapping Models* which were selected, according to Furlong, due to their good balance simplicity and complexity, and their clarity giving direction and guidance to approach the conflict.

## 5.1 Conflicts Analysis Models

Table N° 4: Conflicts Analysis Models	
Model	Description
<b>The Circle of Conflict</b>	It looks at different causes or drivers to conflict, locating them into six categories: Values, Relationships, Moods/Externals, Data, Structure, and Interests. This model suggests different ways to manage each driver.
<b>The Triangle of Satisfaction</b>	It looks at different types of interest and takes that assessment to a more functional level. It is an extension of the Circle of Conflict. Suggests three types of interests: Result or substantive interest, Process or procedural interests and Psychological or emotional interests, offering different strategies for each.
<b>The Boundary Model</b>	It looks at conflict from a structural behavioural point of view, suggesting that conflicts occur depending on how people manage boundaries. This model proposes that conflict occurs when parties disagree on boundaries.
<b>Interests, Rights and Power</b>	This model is foundational to the field of negotiation and conflict resolution. It is focused on the different processes people use to deal with conflict: Interest-based, right-based or Power-based and suggests a way of working for each process.
<b>The Dynamics of Trust</b>	It tackles the dynamics of trust; it helps to understand how trust is broken and how blame and lack of trust can make resolution difficult, giving strategies for rebuilding enough trust to facilitate the resolution process.
<b>The Dimensions of Conflict</b>	It looks broadly at three different dimensions where the modelling can be focused: the Cognitive dimension (how people perceive the conflict), the Emotional dimension (how people feel about the conflict) and the Behavioural dimension (what people do about the conflict).
<b>The Social Style Model</b>	It focused on understanding personality conflict, and conflict related to personal communication styles, identifying four basic personality and communication styles: Driving, Analytical, Amiable, and Expressive, offering strategies for working with each type.
<b>Moving Beyond the Conflict</b>	It looks at the emotional process that people go through when trying to let go of conflict and move on, similar to the process of grieving. This model helps identify the stages of the process: Denial, Anger and Acceptance.
Source: Own elaboration with information of The Conflict Resolution Toolbox (Furlong, 2005)	

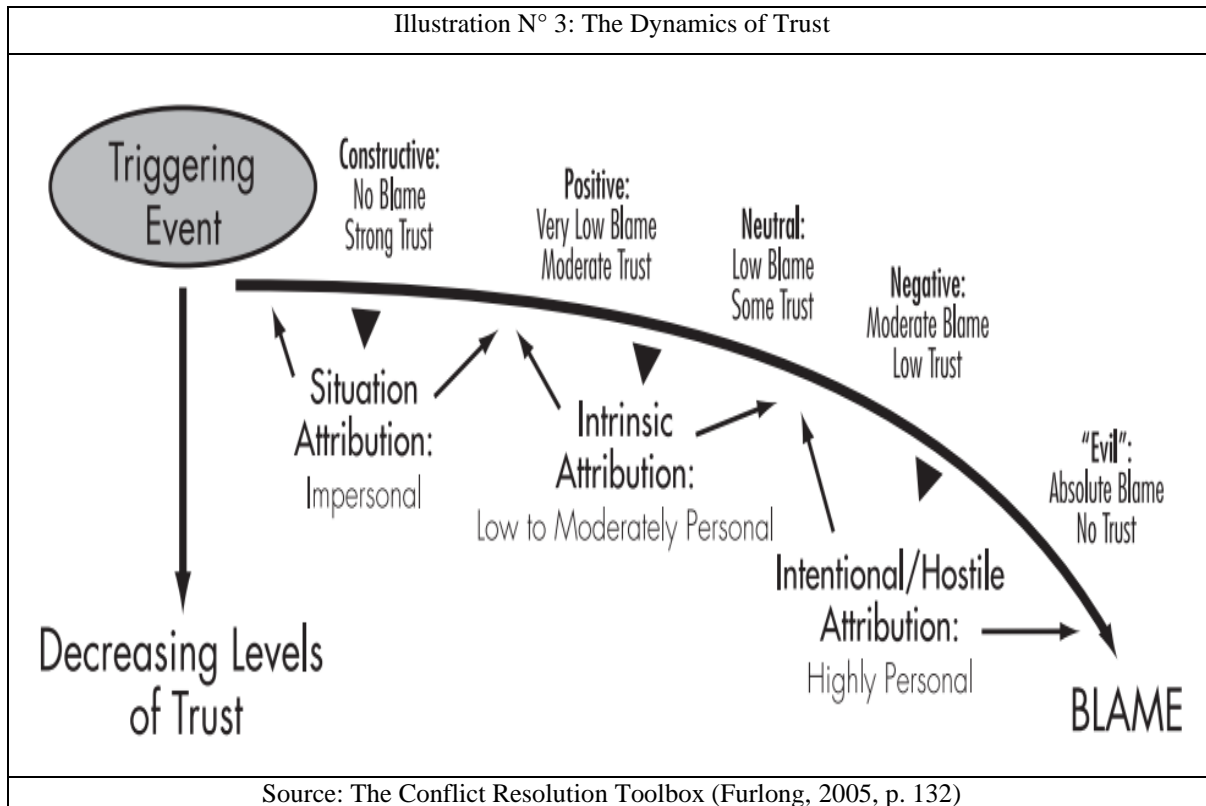
From the eight models briefly described previously, four of them will be described, for effects of this research, due to the relationship that may exist between them and a workplace conflict: The Boundary Model, The Dynamics of Trust, The Dimensions of Conflict, and Moving Beyond the Conflict, which will be contrasted with the results of the research.

### 5.1.1 The Boundary Model



This model suggests that the common element that all things, people and organisms share is “boundaries”, which operates on a physical, and in a behavioural level. Boundaries in human society take the form of laws, agreements, contracts, rules, procedures, conventions, orders, and decisions. Defining 4 critical elements of boundaries: i) Defined Standards for Behaviour: boundaries must have defined standards for maximum and or minimum allowable behaviour; ii) Jurisdiction or Legitimacy: Boundaries must have “jurisdiction,” which is a source of legitimacy for existing at all; iii) Authority or Enforcement: Boundaries must have some form of an entity, process, or person(s) responsible for enforcing the boundary; and iv) Norms: are the reasonable latitudes around the boundary that we accept without perceiving the boundary to have been violated. (Furlong, 2005).

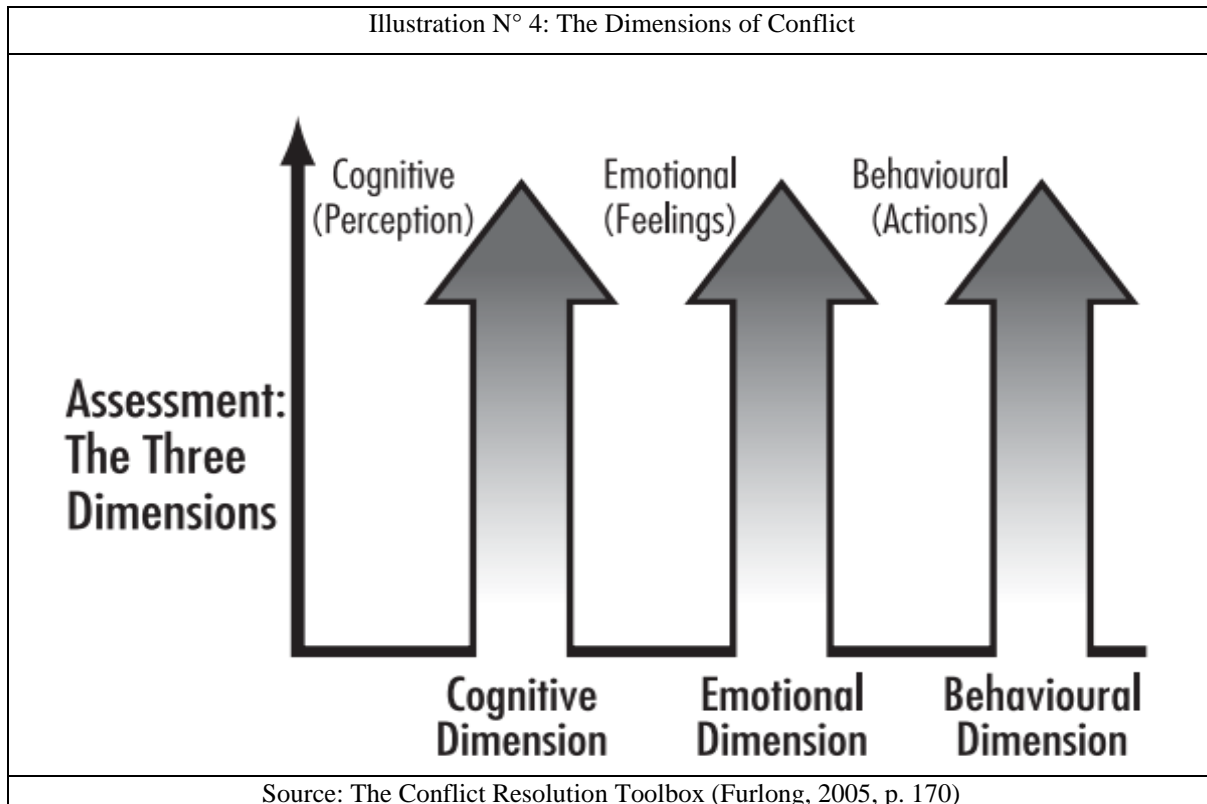
### 5.1.2 The Dynamics of Trust



This model sets “trust” as one of the core issues in conflict resolution between parties; the more we can access trust with the parties, the more useful and effective it becomes in reaching resolution. A simple definition of trust is to have positive expectations about another’s motives and intentions, having two key elements: i) Risk: that exists (being small or large) when people are exploring, testing and building trust; and ii) Motives and Intentions: that are inferable based on people’s behaviour (Furlong, 2005).

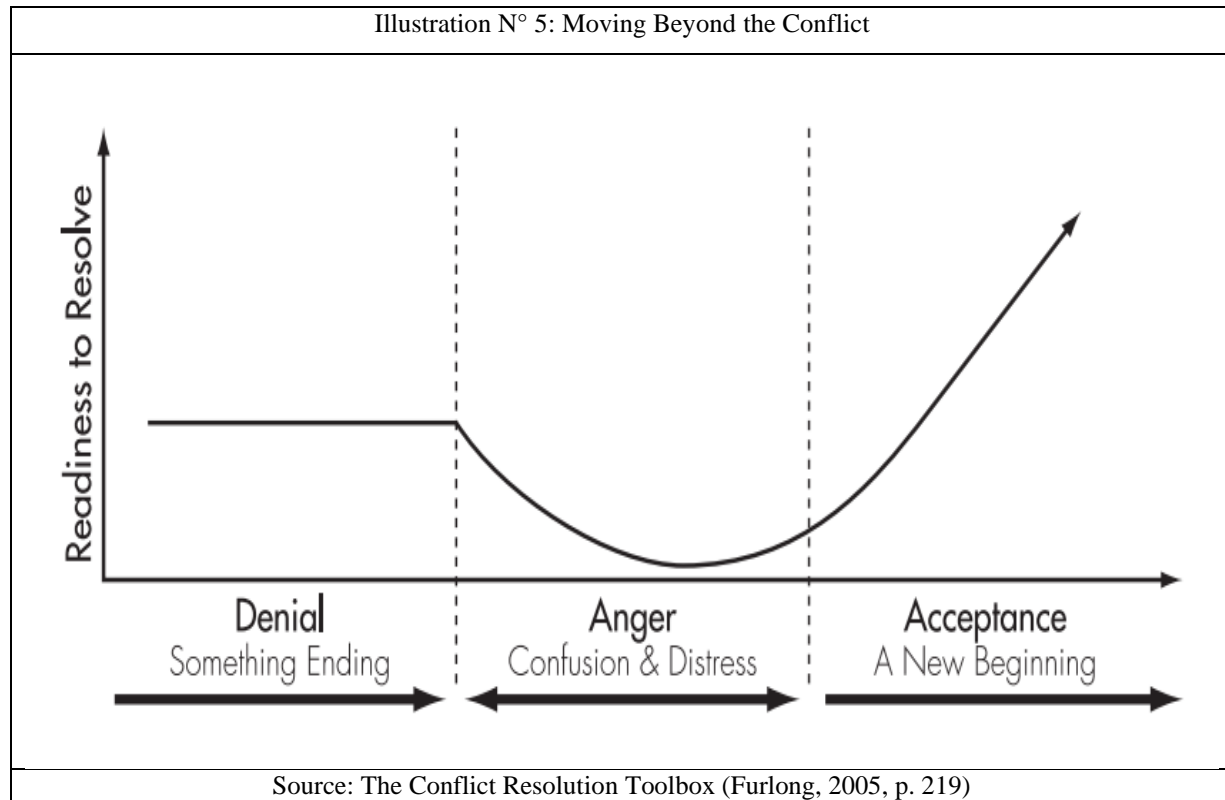
The Dynamic of Trust Model identifies two types of trust: i) Interpersonal Trust: is the trust we place in a structure or process we are involved in, as opposed to the individual; and ii) Procedural Trust: significantly different from interpersonal trust, procedural trust processes can be collaboratively built and agreed by the parties themselves (Furlong, 2005).

### 5.1.3 The Dimensions of Conflict



This model is directed at understanding the dynamics of how the conflict unfolds, and how it interacts on different levels. It allows the practitioner to assess three crucial “dimensions”: i) The Cognitive or Perceptual Dimension: This dimension looks at how the disputants think about and perceive conflict, carrying beliefs and perceptions about themselves and the other party, maintaining assumptions that contribute to the conflict process; ii) Emotional Dimension: people react emotionally to conflict and overlay a wide range of feelings based on their perceptions; and iii) Behavioural Dimension: people make choices about what actions they will take, how they will behave in response to the conflict. Once the practitioner has assessed the conflict along these dimensions, they can begin to understand what dimensions are most strongly affecting the conflict and begin to look at what interventions might be most helpful (Furlong, 2005).

### 5.1.4 Moving Beyond the Conflict



This model addresses the “letting go” process, considering that parties become hurt and blame the other side, erroneously attributing bad intentions to the other side, and building up or exaggerating the “wrong” done to them. Letting go and moving beyond is a form of grieving which has three stages: i) Stage One – Denial: denial is the process of refusing to accept that something has ended, that something we do not like has happened to change our life, ignoring the problem(s), inventing reasons why it has nothing to do, and denying reality; ii) Stage Two – Anger: anger, confusion, and distress are connected, are a reaction to dealing with situations we do not want/like. and iii) Stage Three – Acceptance: acceptance fits with a New Beginning; once people accept that it is not simple to stamp their feet and get everything they want and recognize that they need to find the best solution and move on, at that moment people begin to focus on a New Beginning after the conflict is gone (Furlong, 2005).

### 5.1.5 Cohesion of the four models

The four models selected can be related to the creation of a workplace policy, oriented to protect sexual orientation, constituting the first approach to reach the third objective of this research, which combined with the purposes of LGBT employees, will try to purpose a model oriented to ameliorate the experience of LGBT employees in their workplace.

In this way, the policy will constitute the *boundary* that will define what can and cannot be done, considering variables on any employee's behaviour against LGBT employees, going from inappropriate comment to verbal or physical aggression.

*Trust* is an element that must be present specifically between LGBT employee and the employee, considering the structure of the organisation and procedures of the policy by itself.

When a conflict arises, it is vital to address it in an accurate way, assessing it along the three dimensions mentioned in the *Dimension of Conflict*, and then decide the best way to treat it. It must consider how the parties perceive the conflict, how they could react from their emotions, and how they would act.

With the *Moving Beyond Model*, the idea of overcoming the conflict and moving beyond appears along its three stages, reaching a new beginning due to is difficult to continue working in a workplace where a conflict regarding sexual orientation emerges.



## **6. Summary of the Literature Review**

The literature review is based on Irish and international regulations regarding sexual orientation, international surveys that studied the relationship between LGBT employees and their workplace, oriented to accomplish the first research objective, and conflict resolution models that can constitute the first approach to the third research objective.

Sexual orientation is a human characteristic that is a scope of life directly related to the identity of the people. “Being out” in the workplace means having the freedom of being who you are. It is linked to authenticity, putting aside the necessity of hiding the sexual orientation for feeling afraid; this constitutes a comfortable environment in the workplace. The more comfortable the people in the workplace feel, the best performance could have.

In this chapter, legislation around sexual orientation was made comparing specific sections of the current regulation of Ireland and The United Kingdom, based on their similarities as countries according to the Country Similarity Index that consider demographics, culture, government, infrastructure, and geography as comparison parameters.

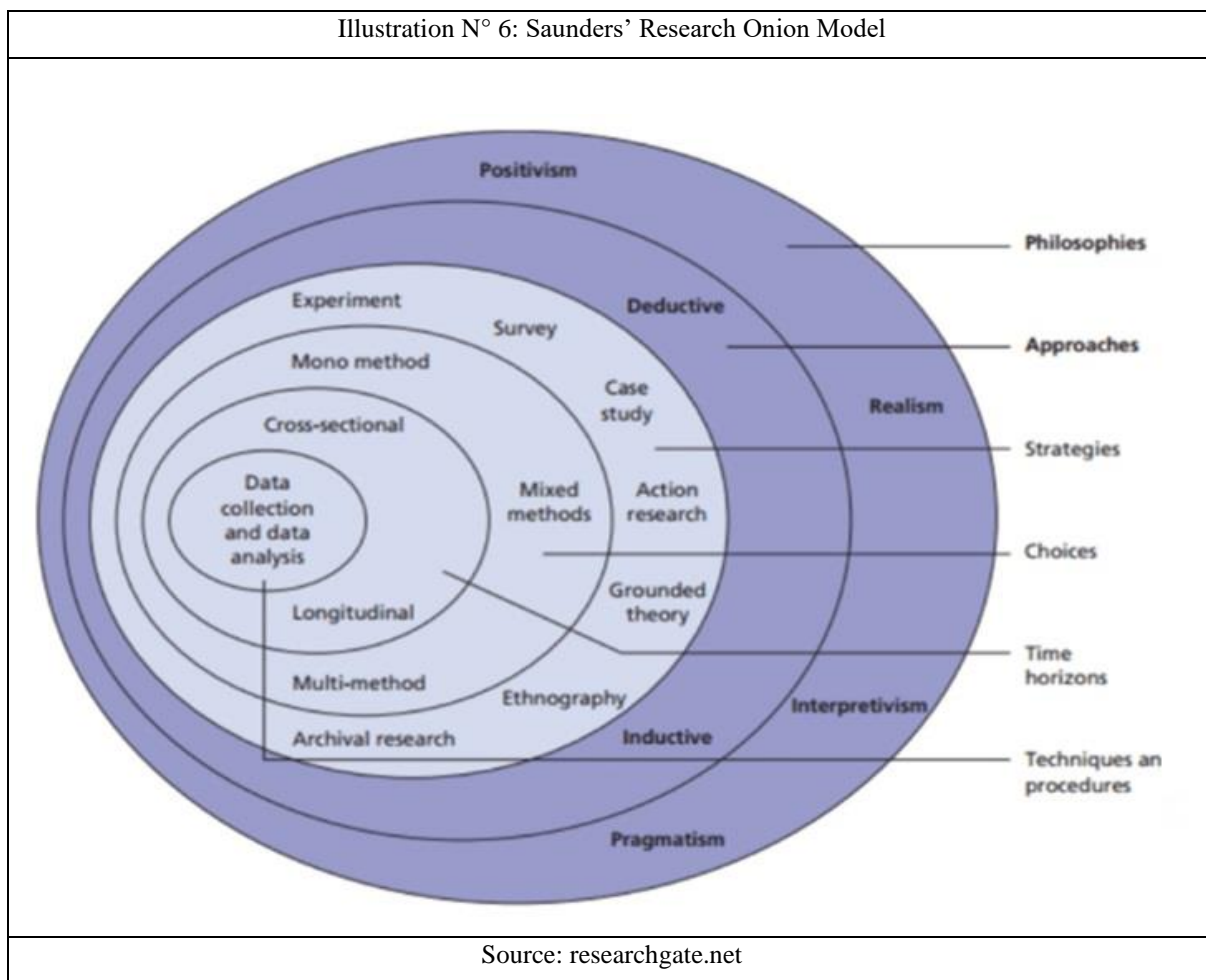
To deal with workplace conflicts is vital to do an accurate assessment since the beginning. In this section, from eight models studied, four were selected as the possible basis to purpose a model oriented to ameliorate LGBT employees work experience, accompanied with survey results and author’s thoughts.

## CHAPTER 2:

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This chapter presents the procedure that this investigation will follow to answer the research question: *Are there weaknesses in the current legislation which may lead to an employee who identifies as LGBT facing conflicts in the workplace?* Explaining the reasons why one strategy is selected over other, and how the research is being developed, the nature of the knowledge (ontology) and how this knowledge will be found (epistemology).

This research will be based on the Research Onion Model, presented as follows:



The use of this model will contribute making this research accurate, objective, evaluable and unbiased.

## **1. Philosophies**

This research is based on *relativism ontology* which refers to people feelings and perceptions.

Because humans are reflective beings, they are not simply determined by their surroundings. Cause-and-effect relationships are complex and difficult to determine, so a less deterministic approach can provide useful understanding about society, without the need for the kind of verifiable facts aimed for in the natural sciences. It is also impossible for a researcher to take a completely detached view of society, so investigation is necessarily dependent on interpretation (Walliman, 2016).

Subjects of this research are male employees over 20 and under 40 years old, who consider themselves gay, and work in Dublin, Ireland. Due to the kind of conflicts that a gay male employee could face in the workplace is personal and unique. This research is *relativism ontology* and *EMIC epistemology*, based on people's opinions and experiences which could depend on multiple variables, factors, and situations.

## **2. Approaches**

Due to this research is *relativism ontology* and *EMIC epistemology*, the most accurate approach is the inductive approach. There is no hypothesis, this research aims to seek into people's experiences through pre-interviews, a focus group session, and personal interviews.

## **3. Strategies**

The strategy used in this research is a survey oriented to collect people's interpretation about the weaknesses that current Irish legislation may have, that lead to a LGBT employee facing conflicts in the workplace. Including a pilot interview, two pre-interviews, a focus group session, and eleven personal interviews, which their parameters are been explained along this chapter.

### 3.1 Key Definitions

For the effects of this research, it is crucial to consider the following key definitions.

**Volunteer:** Subject of research who is interviewed individually during the *pre-interview process*. Two people participated in this process, one national and one international.

**Participant:** Subject of research who takes part in the *focus group session*. Five people participate, one national and four internationals.

**Respondent:** Subject of research who is interviewed individually during the *interview process*. Eleven people were part of this stage, three national and eight internationals.

## 4. Research Methodology

Before doing this research was necessary to set the main guidelines and understand which may be the conflict that LGBT employees are facing in Ireland being national or international workers; for this, a pilot interview with a person from the organisation LGBT Dublin took place.

Understanding the timing and structure of interviews during a pre-interviews stage was necessary to have the first approach for the next activities. A focus group session helped to listen the interaction among the participants, to finalise with the personal interviews where the respondent could share more private information. Once these main stages are done, the final analysis takes place.

### 4.1 Subjects of study

Subjects of this research are male employees over 20 and under 40 years old, who consider themselves gay, and work in Dublin, Ireland. Two *volunteers*, five *participants* and eleven *respondents* were part of this research.

People who were part of this research were convened through social networks, mainly Facebook groups related to the LGBT community in Dublin.

## 4.2 Study stages and activities

The stages and activities of this research methodology are as follow:

Table N° 5: Research Methodology		
Stage	Activity	
Setting guidelines	A	Pilot Interview in LGBT Dublin
Understanding timing and structure of interviews	B	Pre-Interviews
	C	Qualitative analysis to set guidelines for next step
Focus group	D	Focus group session
	E	Online survey oriented to collect <i>participants'</i> basic information
	F	Transcription
	G	Qualitative analysis to set guidelines for next step
Interviews	H	Individual interviews
	I	Online survey oriented to collect <i>respondent's</i> basic information
	J	Transcriptions
Analysis	K	Qualitative: Of answers of participants and respondents
	L	Quantitative: Of basic information of participants and respondents
Source: Own elaboration		

## 5. Choices

The essential difference between quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis is that with the former, you need to have completed your data collection before you can start analysis, while with the latter, analysis is often carried out concurrently with data collection (Walliman, 2016).

This research is monomethod, qualitative due to is based in participants' interpretation. Along this study, different stages took place, where qualitative analysis was necessary to set the guidelines for the next steps described as activities C, G and K from Table N° 5: Research Methodology. The only quantitative aspects of this study are related to the tabulation, in the one hand, basic information of participants and respondents such as age and years of experience. On the other hand, tabulation of emerged concepts during the stages of this research, for knowing which concepts are the most repeated and trying to detect a tendency, firstly generally and secondly question by question, into the activity L, described as quantitative analysis of basic information of *participants* and *respondents*.

## 6. Ethics

Ethical issues in research can be viewed from two perspectives: the value of honesty, frankness and personal integrity, and ethical responsibilities to the subject of research such consent, confidentiality and courtesy (Walliman, 2016). Ethical approval was necessary for doing this research. An *Informed Consent Form*<sup>7</sup> was filled and signed for people who participated in this research.

Honesty is essential to engender a level of trust and credibility that promotes debate and the development of knowledge, must be maintained in all aspects of the research work (Walliman, 2016).

## 7. Time Horizon

The time horizon for this research is cross-sectional; it must be submitted the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2021. Cross-sectional design Research that often uses survey methods, and surveys are often equated with cross-sectional studies. It entails the collection of quantitative or qualitative data on more than one case, generally using a sampling method to select cases, collected at a single point in time in order to examine patterns of association between variables (Walliman, 2016).

Among the variables that are being analysed, it is possible to find age, home country, and type of job and industry where participants and respondents are working work.

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<sup>7</sup> Available in Appendix A.

## 8. Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection will be through a focus group session and semi-structured interviews with open-format questions. In this type of questions respondents are free to answer in their own words and style (Walliman, 2016). This is fundamental for the research oriented to collect LGBT employee experiences and perceptions around sexual orientation in the workplace.

The elaboration of the measuring instrument will be gradual, having pre-interview questions that will be tested on volunteers to be improved and applied during the focus group session and interviews.

### 8.1 Pre-interview questions<sup>8</sup>

The main objective of this stage is to evaluate how understandable the questions are for the volunteers, determine if the number of questions is accurate, and set the duration of the interviews. It contains nine questions.

### 8.2 Focus group and Interview questions<sup>9</sup>

These questions were selected to be applied in focus group session and personal interviews, which are open enough to give freedom to *participants* and *respondents* to answer. For some cases where people were given short answers, it was necessary to add prompt questions to obtain more details.

Question 1 to 4 are related to the second objective of this research: *To detect the awareness that LGBT employees have regarding the options available to face conflicts in the workplace*. These questions were presented to participants and respondents beforehand to give them enough time to think about their experiences.

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<sup>8</sup> Question and their respective objective and justification available in Appendix B.

<sup>9</sup> Question and their respective objective and justification available in Appendix C.

Question 5 is related to the third objective of this research: *To contribute to new dispute resolution strategies to ameliorate the experience of LGBT employees in the workplace.* This question was not presented to participants and respondents beforehand, to avoid any biased answer due to the possibility they do some research to give a more complete answer.

### **8.3 Online surveys**

Another instance to collect information were online surveys. Their main objective was to collect, in an efficient way, basic information such as age, nationality, and years of work experience. Each participant and respondent had their participant/respondent number, which was informed beforehand to match information afterwards.

#### **8.3.1 Online Survey after Focus Group session<sup>10</sup>**

An online survey after the focus group session was sent to each participant to collect basic information in an efficient way.

#### **8.3.2 Online Survey after Personal Interviews<sup>11</sup>**

An online survey was sent to the respondents after each personal interview with the same objective that the online survey applied after the focus group, this time including some emerged concepts during the focus group session, where respondents had the option to choose factors may lead to workplace conflicts regarding sexual orientation.

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<sup>10</sup> Available in Appendix D.

<sup>11</sup> Available in Appendix E.

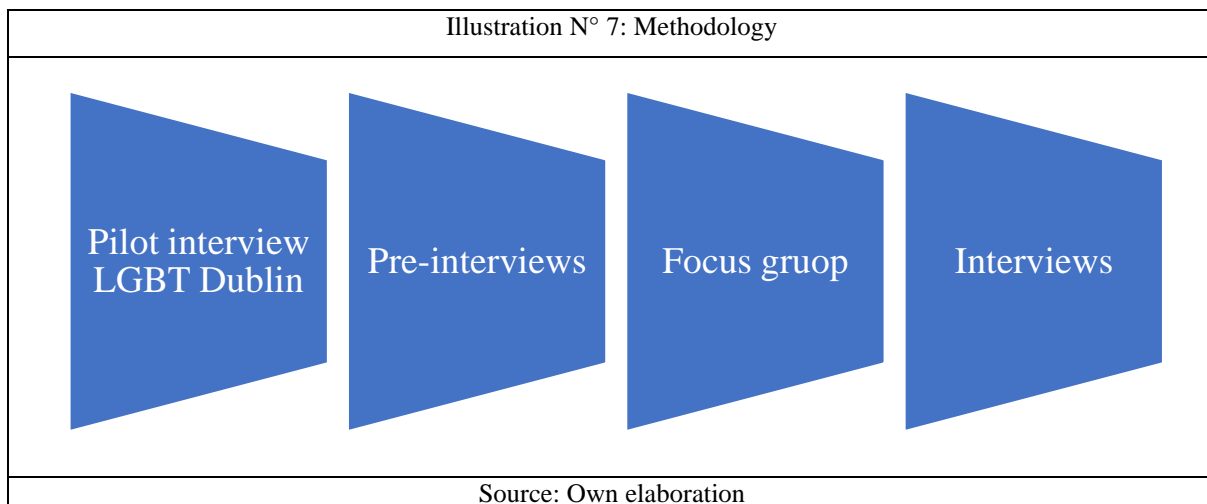


## 9. Methodology

The method of data collection in this research has four stages: pilot interviews, pre-interviews, focus group, and interviews. Every stage sets the guidelines for the next one.

### 9.1 Stages

Illustration N° 7 presents the main stages of this research:



In this way, table N° 6 shows the main objective of each stage and how many people was involved:

Table N° 6: Research stages		
Stage	People involved	Objective
Pilot interview	Director of LGBT Dublin	To orientate the study to a particular issue that may affect LGBT employees.
Pre-interviews	Volunteers (2)	To determine the accuracy of the questions and set the interview's structure, duration, and technical issues.
Focus group	Participants (5)	To generate interaction among participants and obtain new concepts and guidelines for further activities.
	Online survey	To collect basic information of the participants including their participant number.
Interviews	Respondents (11)	To obtain in-depth information based on the experience, opinions, and perceptions of the respondents.
	Online survey	To collect basic information of the respondents, including their respondent number.
Source: Own elaboration		

The following lines will provide further information about methodology:

### **9.1.1 Pilot interview**

Before this instance, the author had the idea of doing a study related to the LGBT community, but with a vague clue about the research's focus. The pilot interview consists of an interview with the director of LGBT Dublin to discuss interesting issues that may affect the LGBT community based his reviewed cases.

The director of LGBT Dublin recommended using the acronym *LGBT* and the word *international* along with this research. The former refers to LGBT employees, whereas the latter refers to people who were subject of this research who is non-Irish, avoiding the term *foreign* due to it may sound offensive for some people. Undoubtedly, this instance helped to set the focus of this research: Workplace conflicts regarding sexual orientation. Afterwards, this idea was developed with the help of the research supervisor.

### **9.1.2 Pre-interviews**

It consists in a process where two *volunteers* participated in testing the questionnaire and the main guidelines of the interviews, evaluating the accuracy of the questions, setting technical issues of the interview, and having an idea about how long the interviews may take.

### **9.1.3 Focus group**

After the pre-interview process a focus group session with five *participants* took place. A focus group is a group interview which concentrates a particular topic with an element of interaction. The group is often made up of people who have experience or knowledge about the subject of the research (Walliman, 2016). The interaction generated among LGBT employees helped to detect concepts not foreseen by the author before, which may be included in the next step.

### **9.1.4 Interviews**

There are three types of interviews: i) *Structured interview*, standardised questions read out by the interviewer according to an interview schedule, answers may be closed-format; ii) *Unstructured interview*, a flexible format where no closed-format questions are used, usually based on a question guide but where the format remains the choice of the interviewer; and iii) *Semi-structured interview*, one that contains structured and unstructured sections with standardised and open-format questions (Walliman, 2016). For this research, semi-structured interviews will be developed. It contains five questions that are asked to all the *respondents* and, depending on their participation prompt question will be necessities, especially if the people are giving short answers without contextualising their ideas.

The main restriction that the author had set about the personal interview is about time; they should not be longer than 25 minutes, considering the posterior transcription process.

## **9.2 Basic information**

Basic information of *participants* and *respondents* can be tabulated to do a quantitative analysis, such as nationality, age, industry or sector where they work, position and years of experience in their current job. In contrast, their answers can be summarised to find common patterns and contrast their opinions, perceptions and experiences.

### **9.2.1 Matching information**

Two different surveys were designed, one to collect the information of five *participants* and another one to collect the information of eleven *respondents* and their respective participant or respondent number (assigned beforehand to them). Participant and respondent numbers were vital at the moment of matching information.

### 9.3 Interview resources

The pre-interviews, the focus group session and the personal interviews were made remotely using the teleconferencing software called *Zoom Meetings* which facilitated the process while COVID-19 restrictions were being applied. All people who were part of this research agreed in being recorded during the meeting for academic purposes. Although the use of camera was voluntary, all the people kept their cameras on.

#### 9.3.1 Duration of Zoom meetings

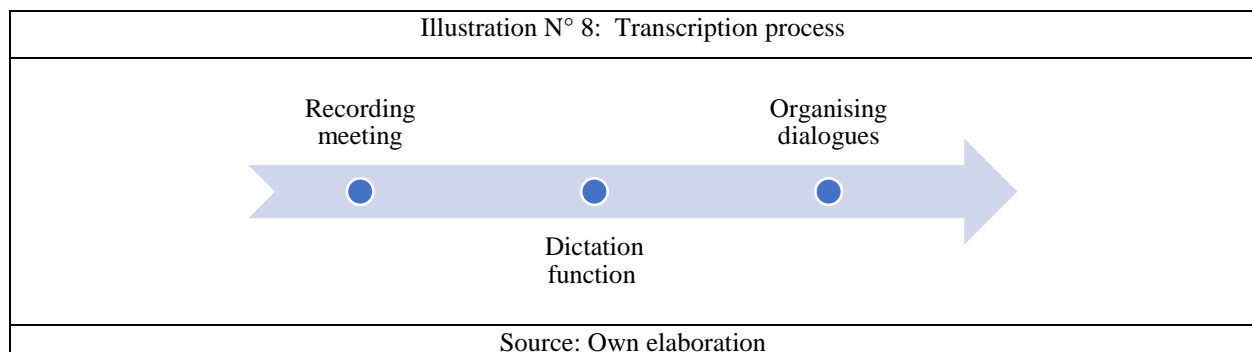
The following table shows how long each activity was:

Table N° 7: Duration of activities		
Stage	Activity	Duration
Pre-interviews	Pre-interview 1	27:25
	Pre-interview 2	11:48
Focus group	Focus group	1:09:13
	Online survey	N/A
Interviews	Interview 1	23:58
	Interview 2	26:04
	Interview 3	21:34
	Interview 4	23:37
	Interview 5	21:11
	Interview 6	27:15
	Interview 7	22:20
	Interview 8	15:18
	Interview 9	14:58
	Interview 10	22:26
	Interview 11	15:51
	Online survey	N/A
Source: Own elaboration		

### 9.3.2 Transcription process

Transcription is a lengthy process. (Bryman, 2004, p. 331). For every 10 minutes recorded, 1.5 hours were necessary to do the respective transcription. In this way, the transcription of the focus group session took 10.35 hours, whereas an average of 3.15 hours took the transcription of each interview.

For this process, the dictation function available in Microsoft Word was helpful and helped to save time. Unfortunately, this function does not make difference in who is speaking, and writing everything in prose, being necessary a review process to adequate dialogues, structure, and grammar. An illustration that represents this process is as follows:



## 10. Research Limitations

Every research has its limitations. This study, in particular, has a limited number of responses and could present bias from the people who participated. Along the following lines, the limitations of this research are presented:

### 10.1 Sampling

The sampling methodology is based on a non-probabilistic method, due to it is not possible to study the whole population of LGBT employees who work in Ireland. This research will be focused in an specific sector of the LGBT community, in this case, male employees who consider themselves as gay. The predominant limitation surrounding the interviews is that the answers are subjective to the interviewees. As such, the responses relayed by the interviewees are based on each of their perceptions and experiences.

## **10.2 Pandemic Situation**

COVID-19 regulations applied in Ireland during the pandemic situation limited the option of having face-to-face meetings and led to do the research mainly based on sources from the internet.

## **10.3 Transcriptions**

For some participants and respondents, it was necessary to listen several times to fully understand what they were saying by looking at the wider context of the sentence to make sense of it as a whole.

There were a few difficulties encountered throughout the transcription process of the interviews recorded for this dissertation. One of these issues was the accents of some of the interviewees, native speakers use more connected speech than speakers of other languages, which results in linking sounds together or sometimes losing sounds that a word might have when spoken in isolation. Generally, the speakers of other languages were easier to comprehend.

In addition to these challenges regarding accents, there were also issues with background noise, especially in one particular interview.

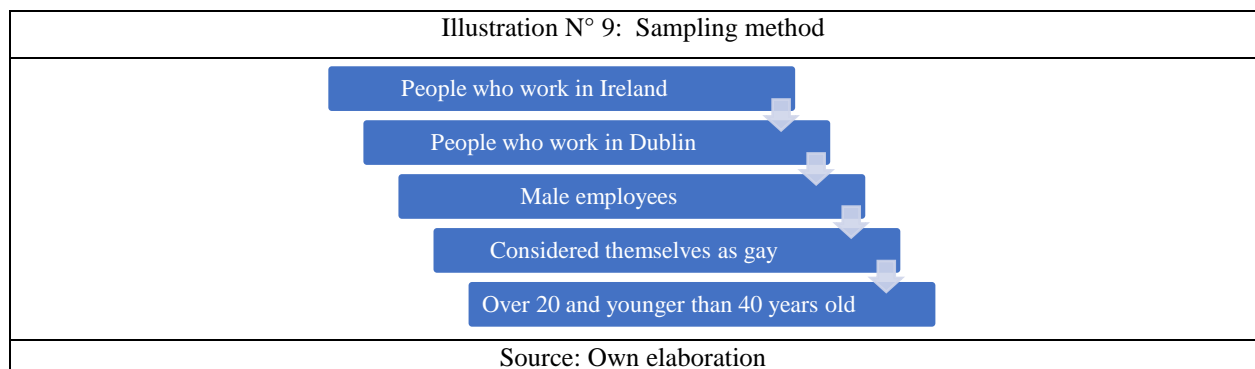
Regarding the volume of some of the speakers, although the speakers were close to their microphones, some of them spoke quietly; however, by listening to these sections multiple times, it was possible to understand what they were saying by looking at the broader context of the sentence to make sense of it a whole.

# CHAPTER 3:

## PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

### 1. Sampling method

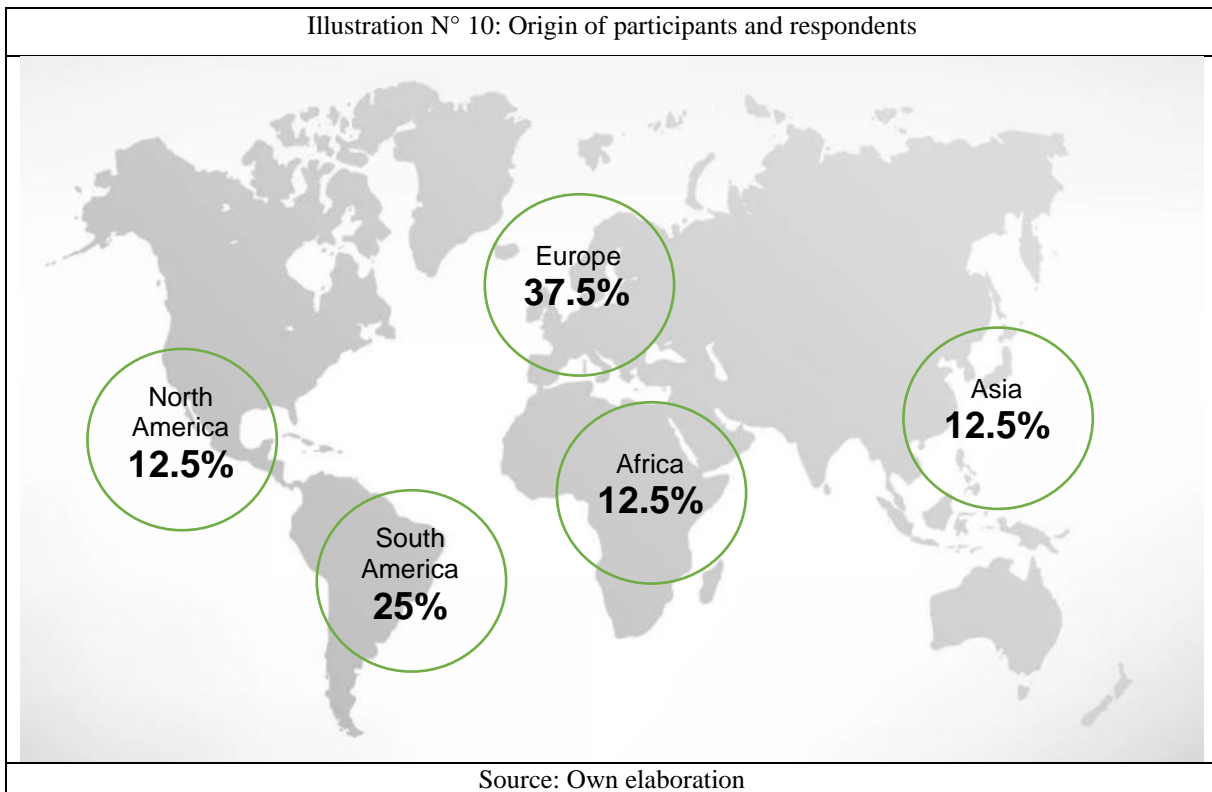
The sampling method is non-probabilistic. The research population comprises male employees who are working in Ireland, specifically in Dublin, in different industries or sectors, who consider themselves gay and are over 20 and under 40 years old.



### 2. Basic Information of participants and respondents

For effects of this research, among the essential information is considered the following data: nationality, age, industry or sector where the employee works, current position, experience in their current job and educational level. This study involved people from Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chili, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Spain, South Africa, Nigeria, and The Philippines.

Worldwide distribution of participants and respondents' origin are presented as follow:



## 2.1 Focus Group: participants

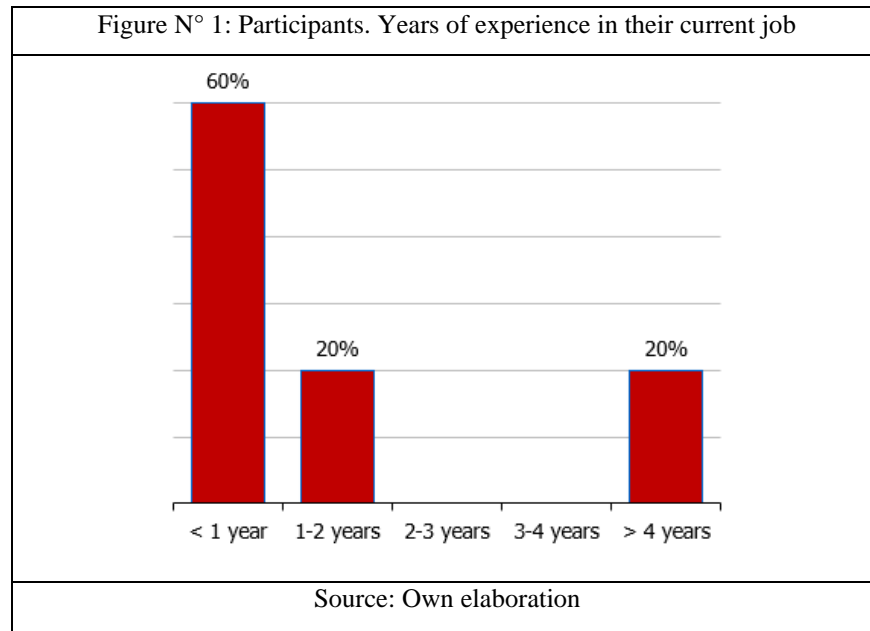
There were five different nationalities represented by the participants: Irish, Brazilian, Mexican, Spanish and South African. Several sectors including the airline industry, education, the accounting profession, business and social care.

The youngest participant is 23 years old, whereas the oldest is 34. The average age was 30 years old.



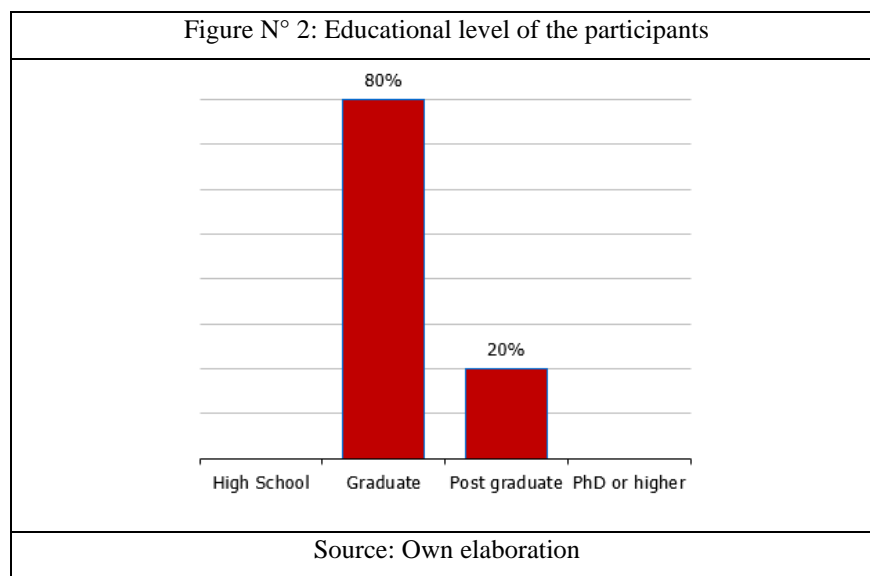
### 2.1.1 Participants' job experience

The participants' experience in various industries ranged from less than a year to more than four years. Three participants had less than a year of experience in their current job, one participant between one and two years, and one participant with more than four years.



### 2.1.2 Educational level of the participants

There was also a mix of educational levels, either graduates (4 participants) or postgraduates (1).



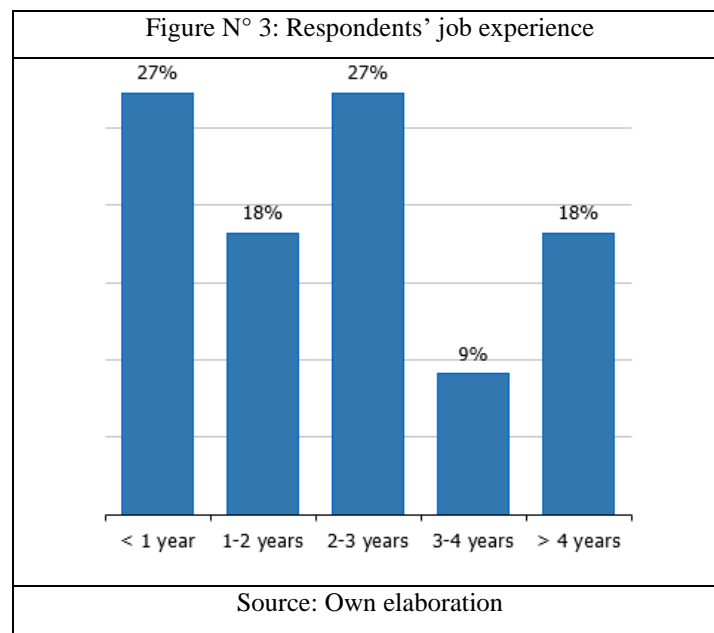
## 2.2 Interviews: respondents

The respondents represented eight different nationalities: Irish, Northern Irish, Mexican, Brazilian, Chilean, Argentinian, Nigerian, and Filipino. Several sectors included education, sales, hospitality, accounting, healthcare, and a non-profit organisation.

The youngest respondent is 26 years old, whereas the oldest is 39. The average age was 31 years old, one year older than the average participant's age.

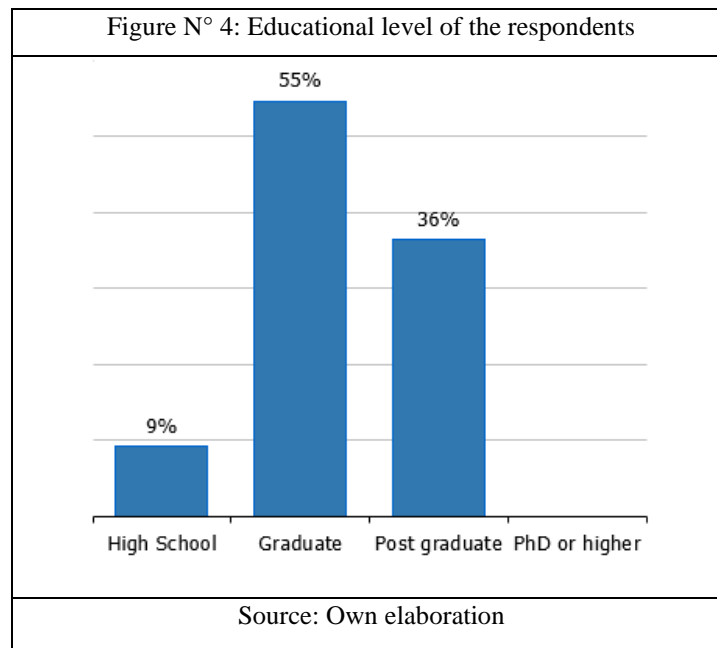
### 2.2.1 Respondents' job experience

The experience of the respondents ranged from less than a year to more than four years. Three respondents had less than a year of experience in their current job, two participants between one and two years, two respondents between two and three years of experience, one respondent between three and four years, and two respondents with more than four years.



### 2.2.2 Educational level of the respondents

The educational levels were even more varied than the focus group, having one respondent who had completed high school as the educational level completed, six respondents are graduates, and four postgraduates.



It is essential to mention that none of the participant was a respondent in the interviews, which may help to obtain varied answers.

### 3. Presentation of the Data per question

#### 3.1 Question N°1

**Are you comfortable with people in the workplace knowing what your sexual orientation is?**

##### 3.1.1 Focus group

Table N° 8: Participants' answers in question N° 1	
Participant	Answer
1	Yes. As long I feel safe and comfortable in the workplace.
2	Yes. I am always open about my sexuality.
3	Yes. I do not mind.
4	Yes. Only with my colleagues but not with my clients.
5	Yes. Now I do. I was transferred from a branch in a small town to a city.
Source: Own elaboration	

##### 3.1.2 Personal interviews

Table N° 9: Respondents' answers in question N° 1	
Respondent	Answer
1	Yes. No problem with that at all. I would openly tell people, but I do not change my behaviour to hide it.
2	Yes. In general, I think even if that means being confronted by some people involved in your sexual orientation. I think nowadays, being older means to me being more prepared to deal with it.
3	Yes. Maybe before, it was different, but right now, this is not a problem.
4	Yes. Absolutely comfortable.
5	Yes. I think Ireland is a very liberal country in terms of how they deal with people who are gay or lesbian or different. It doesn't really affect the quality of work I put forward if I am gay or straight or anything.
6	Yes. I work for an LGBT organisation
7	Yes. I think it is because I work on a university campus, and often there are LGBT awareness campaigns around the university.
8	Yes. I have never had any problem at work saying what's my sexual orientation.
9	Yes. Absolutely, a hundred percent, in three countries that I have worked.
10	Yes. Of course, it is part of my personality.
11	Yes. I do not disclose what my sexual orientation is unless people ask.
Source: Own elaboration	

## 3.2 Question N°2

**Have you ever experienced conflicts in the workplace related to your sexual orientation or do you know someone who ever has?**

### 3.2.1 Focus group

Table N° 10: Participants' answer in question N° 2	
Participant	Answer
1	No
2	No
3	No
4	Yes. I had received some comments totally out of the blue.
5	No
Source: Own elaboration	

### 3.2.2 Personal interviews

Table N° 11: Respondents' answer in question N° 2	
Respondent	Answer
1	No.
2	Yes. I had two main significant experiences at work which involves my sexual orientation. (In my country).
3	Yes. I suffered sexual harassment from one director. (In my country)
4	No.
5	No.
6	No. But I know someone who has. I work with trans people who have been bullied in the workplace.
7	No, but I have some colleagues who have.
8	No.
9	No.
10	Yes. I suppose a couple of small incidents in the past.
11	No. But I have a friend who was pulled out of that specific engagement just because the client was uncomfortable with his sexual orientation.
Source: Own elaboration	

### 3.3 Question N°3

**Are you aware about any policy in your workplace regarding conflicts related to sexual orientation?**

#### 3.3.1 Focus group

Table N° 12: Participants' answers in question N° 3	
Participant	Answer
1	No.
2	No.
3	No.
4	Yes. In my current job, they mentioned the policy in the job interview and shared it when I started to work.
5	Yes. An anti-bullying and anti-sexual harassment policy.
Source: Own elaboration	

#### 3.3.2 Personal interviews

Table N° 13: Respondents' answers in question N° 3	
Respondent	Answer
1	No. Not at all, I do not think there is anything really that address it up.
2	No. I am aware ok policies in the workplace or respecting your peers and your co-workers, but nothing is specifically about sexual orientation, not that I know well.
3	No. They started a few months ago to build the human resources' policies, but I do not know anything about sexual orientation.
4	No. I am working without a contract.
5	Yes. "Proper workplace behaviour", and part of proper workplace behaviour, teaches us there are people with different sexual orientations.
6	Yes. There is an anti-bullying, and anti-harassment policy that covers sexual orientation.
7	No. I think there is the usual legal obligation to provides. A workplace that is free of discrimination of any kind, but I cannot tell you exactly what that legislation is. I would have to check my contract.
8	No. As far as I notice, there is no policy regarding that where I am working.
9	No. At least to my knowledge - there is not any exact trainings or orientations on this however we are provided with code of conduct that we must read.
10	Yes, I think, because of the Medical Council that I am under, I know that, and this is applied to most of the hospitals.
11	Yes, there is a policy that boils down to discrimination regardless of whoever you are, whatever the race is, whatever your sexual orientation is.
Source: Own elaboration	

### 3.4 Question N°4

**Do you think that sexual orientation is treated differently depending on the sector or industry?**

#### 3.4.1 Focus group

Table N° 14: Participants' answers in question N° 4	
Participant	Answer
1	Yes. I think could definitively vary from industry to industry.
2	Yes. In some industries is expected to have certain dress code, appearance and behaviour.
3	Yes. It depends on the industry and the location. An office job, more educated level it is different, and changes from what you are in a more handy-job place, or like construction site.
4	Yes. I think there are some types of companies that they had put a focus on LGBT projects, whereas other places where is not their priority.
5	Yes. It would vary between industry. It would depend on location.
Source: Own elaboration	

#### 3.4.2 Personal interviews

Table N° 15: Respondents' answers in question N° 4	
Respondent	Answer
1	Yes, completely. I would reckon there would be a lot of conflicts in the construction industry.
2	Yes, absolutely. If we think about politics which is a more conservative sector of the workplace, for example.
3	Yes, of course. That is something completely hit.
4	No. Considering that I have worked in two different industries: childcare and hospitality, I haven't had any problem in both areas.
5	Yes, probably in the arts and entertainments is more accepted.
6	Yes, definitely. There are many different sectors where - because gay and bisexual people thrive; I suppose others could be seen as the more masculine sectors.
7	Yes, I suppose it is. I have had different experiences within the Education sector.
8	Yes, I am not a hundred per cent sure. In construction might be a little bit harder for someone LGBT to be working in that area.
9	Yes, definitely. In my view, blue-collar work is a bit more prejudiced about this aspect. I would say that they are keener into heavy masculine roles or feminine, typical heteronormative stuff, whereas for typical white-collar work it is not the case.
10	Yes, possibly.
11	Yes, I think so.
Source: Own elaboration	

### 3.5 Question N°5

**What do you think is the best way to solve conflict in the workplace regarding sexual orientation?**

#### 3.5.1 Focus group

Table N° 16: Participants' answers in question N° 5	
Participant	Answer
1	To write into the Human Resources policy and enforcing it and making sure that is clear, and training staff and why it is important to bring awareness around diversity and inclusion in the office space.
2	The company must go beyond policies, creating a safe environment.
3	I believe that is more about the aim/goal for the company and as individuals and co-workers to respect each other, more than trying to make everyone understand why everyone has their sexual orientation.
4	I think the best way to deal with these things is about educating everyone.
5	To catch up the literature in the Human Resource policy, to begin with, that would protect all employees, not just LGBT.
Source: Own elaboration	

#### 3.5.2 Personal interviews

Table N° 17: Respondents' answers in question N° 5	
Respondent	Answer
1	Training and more terms, like even when the company is onboarding employees, make them aware of inclusion policies.
2	Firstly, making the policy very clear since the beginning. When the conflict arises, deal with it individually.
3	Well, I think it will depend on the kind of conflict, illegal or minor.
4	Well, I think it depends on the level of conflict and making people aware that always there are gay people around them.
5	If it does not affect the quality of work you put out, the terms of agreement you sign what it is you are supposed to do, you do your job to the best of your abilities and your knowledge.
6	First of all, workplaces need to have comprehensive policies to deal with bullying and harassment and cover LGBT staff.
7	If I had a problem, or if I felt that someone was discriminating against me because of my sexual orientation, I would try to speak to that person because I think the best way to deal with these things to face upfront, you know, a frank conversation.
8	I always think the best way to solve conflicts at work is by talking, regardless of the sexual orientation of the person. I do not think there might be a different way to solve this kind of conflict when the reason for that is a sexual intention.
9	I think education is the best way to inform them about how the world works, trying to destroy stereotypes.
10	I think creating an environment where people are comfortable to be open with their sexuality, as I have experienced in healthcare.
11	I think one of the best ways is to put someone in a high position or in a management position, someone who is member of the LGBT community.
Source: Own elaboration	



## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **DATA ANALYSIS / FINDINGS**

This research will contemplate mainly qualitative analysis as the data was collected by a focus group session and personal interviews. However, there was a quantitative approach in the initial stages of the focus group to discern what factors were relevant regarding sexual orientation and potential conflict in the workplace.

#### **4. General Analysis**

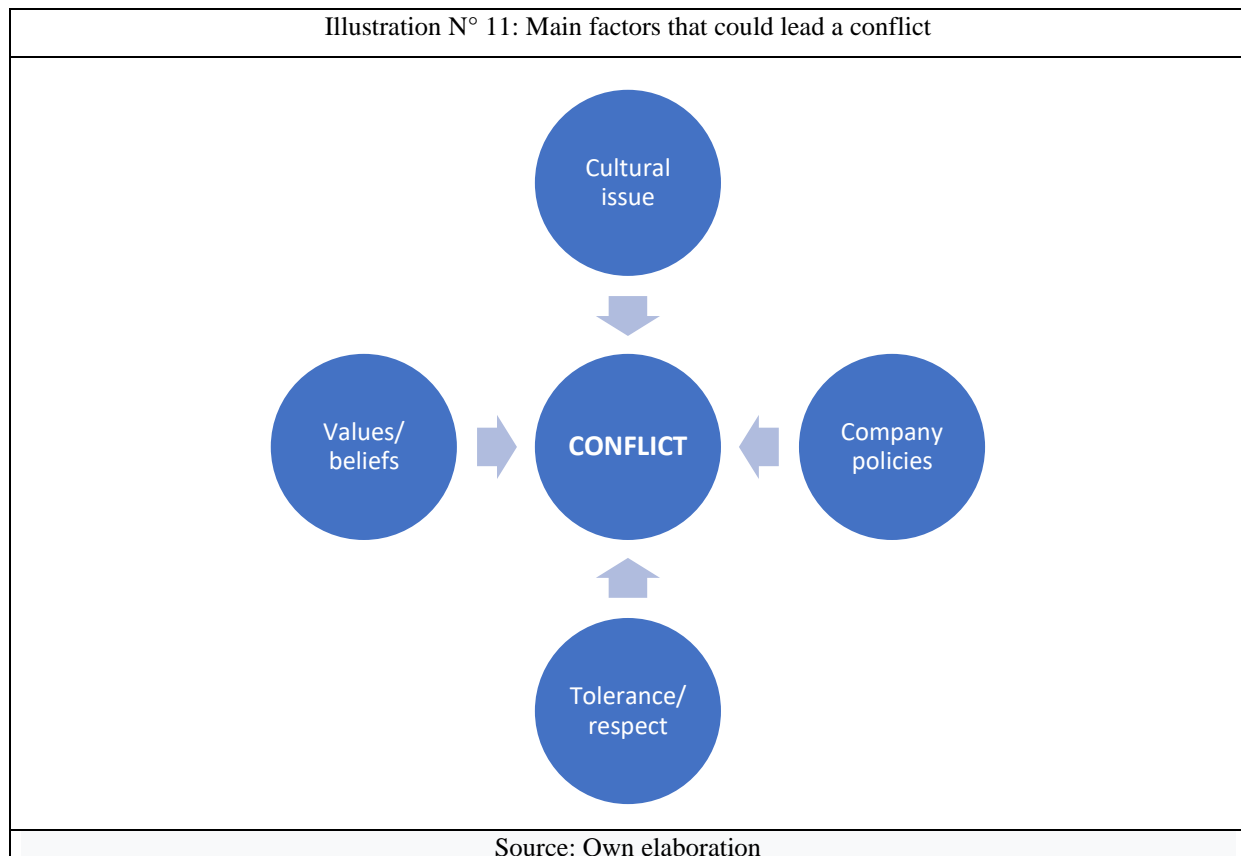
The basic information obtained will be tabulated to do graphs and charts. The rest of the answers will be transcribed and analysed to detect possible common patterns.

Concepts that emerged during the focus group led the author to include them in the online survey applied after each personal interview in the following question: *In your opinion: Which of the following fourteen factors are relevant when talking about conflicts in the workplace regarding sexual orientation?* People had the option of choosing up to 5 factors among *Cultural issue, Industry/sector of the company, Company policies, Company size, Company location (big city vs. town), Relationship with people from the company (internal), Relationship with people related to the company (external), Working online/working face to face, Level of education, Understanding/comprehension, Tolerance/respect, Values/believes, Training, and Recruitment*, having the option to add other. Results are as follows:

Respondents had the option to add a concept if they wish; in this case none of them added concepts.

Table N° 18: Factors selected by respondents – organised by importance	
Concept	Times chosen
Cultural issue	10
Company policies	7
Tolerance/respect	6
Values/beliefs	6
Industry/sector of the company	5
Training	4
Company location (big city vs. town)	3
Relationship with people from the company (internal)	3
Company size	2
Level of education	2
Understanding/comprehension	2
Working online/working face to face	1
Recruitment	1
Relationship with people related to the company (external)	0
Source: Own elaboration	

In this way, according to respondents' answers, the main factors may lead workplace conflicts are:



According to the respondents' answer, the most essential concepts involved in an eventual conflict related to sexual orientation is a *cultural issue* with ten times selected, followed by *company policies* with seven times, and *tolerance/respect*, and *values/believes* chosen six times each.

On the contrary, among the concepts without a relationship with this matter or are less important, it is possible to find: *relationship with people related to the company (external)* with no times selected, and *recruitment* and *working online/working face to face*, chosen one time each.

## **5. Analysis per question**

Before analysing question by question, it is essential to have a general idea about the most mentioned concept by participants and respondents along with the focus groups session and personal interviews. People said more than three hundred concepts; they were labelled, tabulated and counted, to afterwards being categorised considering how many times were mentioned. It is possible to say that Culture, Behaviour, Company Policy, Training, Communication, and Discrimination were the most mentioned concepts being grouped in the category I with 10 or more mentions.

Among category II, with concepts mentioned between 6 and 9 times, it is possible to find Personality, Workplace environment, Type of job, Level/severity of the conflict, Mediation, Offense and Personal life.

Finally, in category III mentioned between 4 and 5 times, it is possible to find concepts such as Education, Masculinity, Religion, and acceptance.

Table N° 19: Most mentioned concepts by participants and respondents along the research		
Category	Concept	Times mentioned
I	Culture	19
	Behaviour	12
	Company policy	12
	Training	12
	Communication	10
	Discrimination	10
II	Personality	9
	Workplace environment	8
	Type of job	8
	Level/severity of the conflict	7
	Mediation	6
	Offence	6
	Personal life	6
III	Education	5
	Masculinity	5
	Religion	5
	Acceptation	4
	Bias	4
	Legal	4
	Parties	4
	Prejudgment	4
	Protection	4
	Supportiveness	4
Source: Own elaboration		

The punctuation of the three categories mentioned was created within a general analysis the emerged concepts, considering all the questions.

For analysing the questions separately was necessary to reorganise the categories, being category I concepts mentioned four or more times, category II concepts mentioned three times, and category III those concepts mentioned two times or less.

## 5.1 Question N°1

### Are you comfortable with people in the workplace knowing what your sexual orientation is?

Regarding this question along focus group session and personal interview the concepts more mentioned, located in category I, were personality and discrimination. The former was mentioned by participants and respondents saying that feeling comfortable with people in the workplace knowing your sexual orientation is related to personality, whereas the former was mentioned If there were discrimination in the workplace regarding sexual orientation, they would not feel comfortable.

Table N° 20: Most mentioned concepts by participants and respondents in question N° 1		
Category	Concept	Times mentioned
I	Personality	6
	Discrimination	4
II	Acceptation	3
III	Culture	2
	Empathy	2
	Environment	2
	Inclusion	2
	Interaction	2
	Liberal	2
	Open-minded	2
Source: Own elaboration		

All participants had answered they do feel comfortable with people in the workplace knowing that their sexual orientation is. For this reason a separated analysis is not being presented.

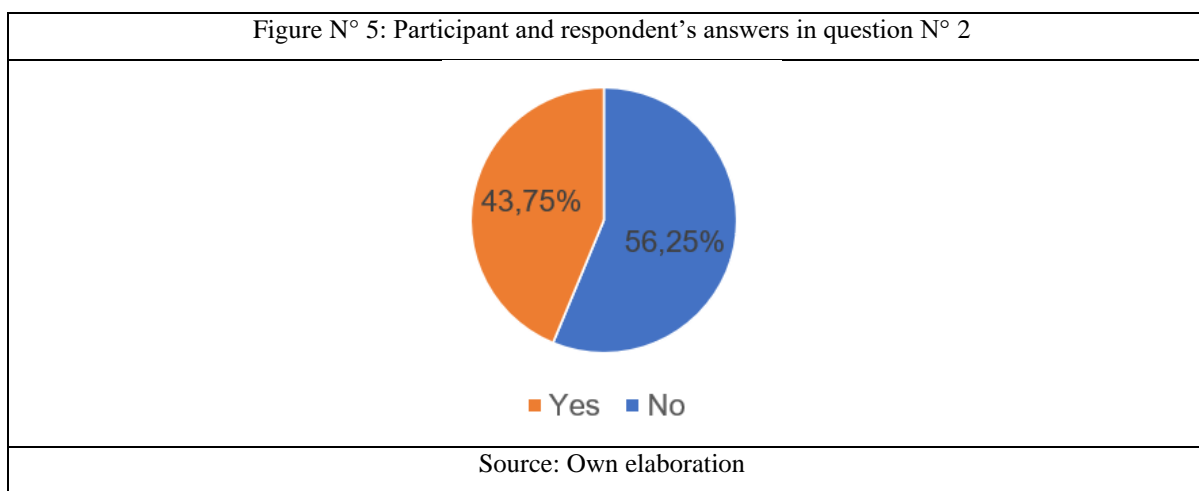
## 5.2 Question N°2

**Have you ever experienced conflicts in the workplace related to your sexual orientation or do you know someone who ever has?**

The culture was the most mentioned concept, especially by international workers, who were comparing their home country with Ireland, saying that Ireland has a different culture, being a more open-minded country.

Table N° 21: Most mentioned concepts by participants and respondents in question N° 2		
Category	Concept	Times mentioned
I	Culture	4
II	Behaviour	3
	Personal life	3
III	Environment	2
	Exclusion	2
	Harassment	2
	Policy	2
	Prejudgment	2
	Treatment	2
Source: Own elaboration		

43.75% of participants and respondents had suffered conflicts related to sexual orientation or know some who ever has.



### 5.2.1 Focus group

Only one of five participants mentioned something regarding workplace conflict related to sexual orientation: “I would not say it was a conflict by itself, but I had received some comments totally out of the blue, like: ‘Oh, I know a gay guy likes to set you up together’ or ‘You are gay but you are broke, anyway’”

### 5.2.2 Personal interviews

During the personal interview process was possible to find three situations described as follows:

Table N° 22: Situations depending on conflicts experienced by respondents in their workplace related to sexual orientation		
Situation	Description	Respondent number
I	Respondents who have never experienced any conflict related to sexual orientation in the workplace and do not people who ever has either.	R1, R4, R5, R8, R9
II	Respondents who had experienced conflicts related to sexual orientation in the workplace.	R2, R3, R10
III	Respondents who have never experienced any conflict related to sexual orientation in the workplace but know someone who ever has.	R6, R7, R11
Source: Own elaboration		

Regarding the second objective of this research, this question aims to detect LGBT employees’ awareness have regarding workplace conflicts concerning their sexual orientation, having suffered a conflict directly, or knowing someone who ever has. For this reason, in the following lines only answers of people in situations II and III will be analysed.

## **Situation II:**

### **People who had experienced conflicts related to sexual orientation in the workplace**

Respondent number 2 had mentioned two experiences occurred in his home country, considered by himself as a conservative country, both in the educational industry where he used to work as a teacher. The first experience is related to being censored by his line manager on what he comments on social networks related to his sexual orientation due to it could affect the school's image.

The second one happened when he decided, as a head teacher support a student, who was being bullied because his peers perceived him as gay, asking respect for him. Respondent number 2 had mentioned he believed some students inferred that he was gay. Therefore, he was removed from the group due to one of the parents ask to the principal to do it. About the second situation, the respondent's reflection was: "That really marked me and made me feel very uncomfortable about the whole situation and it is very frustrating to go through these things especially at workplace because it is strongly connected with who you are".

Respondent number 3 mentioned had suffered workplace conflict in his country, specifically sexual harassment, and mistreatment from one director. He reported the situation to his line manager who escalated the conflict, but no measure occurred. In the end he decided leave his job.

Respondent number 10 mentioned have being treated in a derogatory manner about his sexual orientation while he was having a training in a sexual health clinic. He did not mention the situation to anybody else, during the interview he said: "I haven't said anything about it, and I had had to discuss it with my seniors at the medical school as well to say that it happened but I am unsure if anything ever came of it at the time", he also had mentioned hierarchy matters: "I probably felt too junior I suppose, I felt it probably was not my place to upset the hierarchy, which looking back on it, was incorrect". During the interview the respondent was asked about how his reaction would be facing the same situation now, he answered: "I would feel more confident and enabled to do that and, maybe that is a reflection of myself and that I am more secure... I can question other people's choices in their language and their behaviours"



Respondents number 2, 3 and 10 had suffered situation in their workplace that made them feel uncomfortable, not feeling accepted for who they are. Low professional experience and a low position in the hierarchy are aspects discouraged them to face the situation in a deeper way.

Questions such as *Have you ever experienced conflicts in the workplace related to your sexual orientation or do you know someone who ever has?* had a level of openness that allow to receive answers like respondent number 2 gave. Sexual harassment is a kind of conflict where LGBT employees are not exempt, this kind of conflict was not considered before for the author. If the question were asking only about discrimination, maybe this answer would not emerge.

### **Situation III:**

#### **People who have never experienced any conflict related to sexual orientation in the workplace but know someone who ever has**

Respondent number 6 said: “I work with people who have had conflicts, especially some trans people who have been bullied in the workplace, but of course it happens to gay and lesbian people too, and as much as we have developed in this country in terms of legal protections, that does not mean necessarily that all workplaces are free of prejudice. After asking him to describe a specific situation, he mentioned the following: “A gay man was exposed to jokes and insidious and homophobic comments from a coworker, who identify as straight, regarding being feminine and being interested in doing activities with female members of the staff rather than male members”.

The answer of respondent number 7 was: “I have some gay colleagues (teachers), who have mentioned their partners in class with students who are learning English, some of them might come from very conservative and religious backgrounds and these students have subsequently approached the school management and asked to be transferred to another class”.

Respondent number 11 expressed two situations. The first situation talks about specific client concerns:

“A friend of mine was assigned to do specific work to do (accounting), but just because he is gay, he was pulled out of that specific engagement due to the client was not comfortable with that”. The second situation refers to promotion: “A friend of mine has the same level as the other guy, but then the other guy was promoted first even though my friend is better than him, so he said the reason why is basically that he is gay”.

Respondents number 6, 7 and 11 had mentioned knowing someone who had experienced a workplace conflict regarding sexual orientation, which demonstrates they understood the question and validates the awareness they have to identify workplace conflicts regarding sexual orientation, where concepts related to culture predominated.

### 5.3 Question N°3:

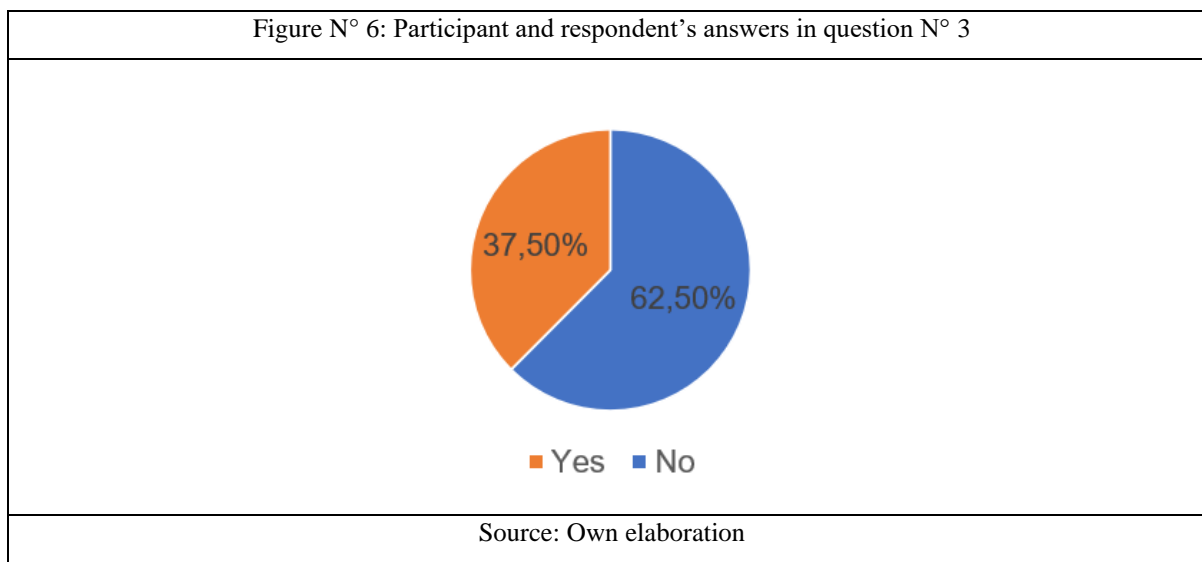
**Are you aware about any policy in your workplace regarding conflicts related to sexual orientation?**

#### 5.3.1 General

Besides *policy*, the most mentioned concepts by participants and respondents were communication, contract, discrimination, and offence. *Communication* regarding the necessity to communicate the policy; *contract* saying that is the official document where the policy must be mentioned; *discrimination* and *offence*, regarding that the policy must be clear in what to do before any of these cases.

Table N° 23: Most mentioned concepts by participants and respondents in question N° 3		
Category	Concept	Times mentioned
I	Policy	7
II	Communication	3
	Contract	3
	Discrimination	3
	Offence	3
III	Behaviour	2
	Legal	2
	Parties	2
	Procedure	2
	Protection	2
	Recruitment	2
	Training	2
Source: Own elaboration		

62.5% of participants and respondents are not aware of policies in their workplace regarding conflicts related to sexual orientation.



### 5.3.2 Focus group

Only two of five participants are aware of policies regarding sexual orientation. It is essential to mention that participant who are not aware work in education, airline and business sector, whereas the participants that are aware work in hospitality (participant 4) and participant in accounting (participant 5).

### 5.3.3 Personal interviews

Four of eleven respondents are aware of policies in their workplace regarding sexual orientation; they work in business (respondent 5), in a non-profit organisation (respondent 6), healthcare (respondent 10), and accounting (respondent 11). Respondents 5, 6 and 11 mentioned a policy specially orientated to sexual orientation, whereas respondent 10 did not have further information.

## 5.4 Question N°4:

**Do you think that sexual orientation is treated differently depending on the sector or industry?**

This question is related to the perception that LGBT employees have regarding industries or sectors.

### 5.4.1 General

The most mentioned concept by participants and respondents was *culture*, followed by *type of job*, *behaviour* and *masculinity*. In *culture* was mentioned *culture of the country* and *company culture*. In *type of job* the concepts *blue-collar job*<sup>12</sup> and *white-collar job*<sup>13</sup> were mentioned, saying that the former is typically associated with industries less welcoming to LGBT workers, contrary to white-collar jobs. The concept *behaviour* was mentioned in the context that the worker behaviour could be judged depending on the industry.

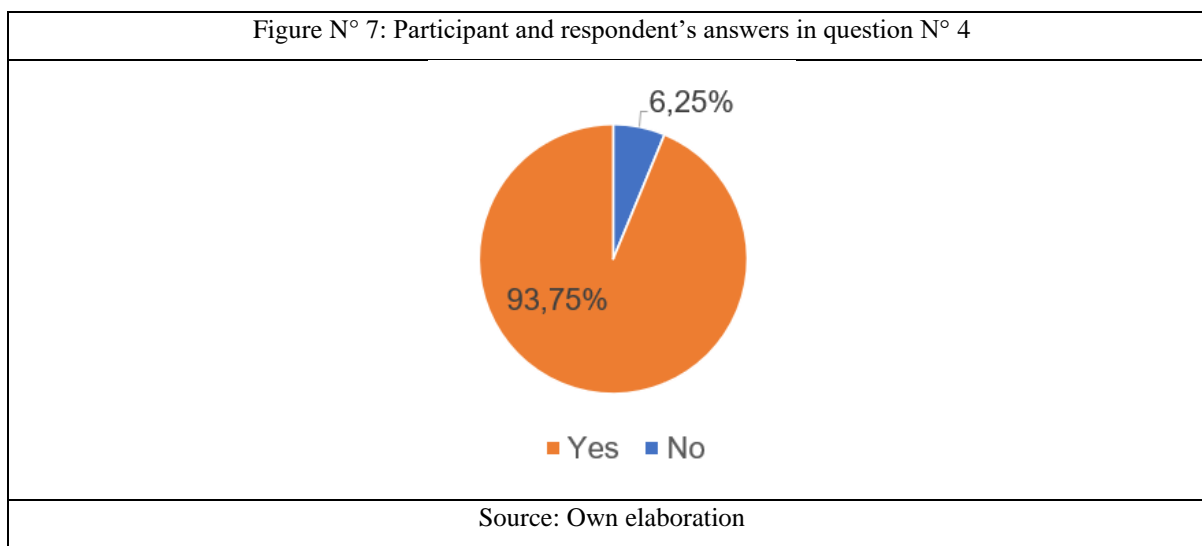
Finally, *masculinity* was associated to blue-collar jobs and industries less welcoming for LGBT employees or where they would not feel comfortable working.

Table N° 24: Most mentioned concepts by participants and respondents in question N° 4		
Category	Concept	Times mentioned
I	Culture	10
	Type of job	8
	Behaviour	6
	Masculinity	5
II	Dress code	3
	Personality	3
	Prejudgement	3
	Training	3
III	Environment	2
	Integration	2
	Religion	2
	Supportiveness	2
Source: Own elaboration		

Close to 94% of participants and respondents think that industries or sectors treat differently sexual orientation:

<sup>12</sup> Blue-collar job: Job where workers perform manual labour.

<sup>13</sup> White-collar job: Job where workers perform administrative work.



Specific answers in focus group and interviews presented as follows:

#### 5.4.2 Focus group

All participants answer yes to this question. It was not possible to detect a common pattern among their answers but *location*, mentioned by participants 3 and 5.

#### 5.4.3 Personal interviews

Only one respondent does not think that industries o sectors treat differently the sexual orientation. The rest of respondents answered affirmatively, mentioning spontaneously as welcoming industries: childcare, hospitality, and entertainment. On the contrary, mentioned as less welcoming construction and those where the job is more associated with masculinity.

## 5.5 Question N°5:

**What do you think is the best way to solve conflict in the workplace regarding sexual orientation?**

This question is related to the third research objective, oriented to ameliorate the experience of LGBT employees in the workplace which considers solving conflict, but it also considers their prevention.

### 5.5.1 General

Regarding the most mentioned concepts (category I), participants and respondents have included in their answers: *training*, *communication*, *level/severity of the conflict* and *mediation*. People mentioned that *training* the staff regarding sexual orientation is necessary. In this way they would have a better understanding and comprehension about it, reducing the possibility of discrimination or saying inappropriate comments. They believe that policy and any upgrade must be communicated. Communication between the parties involved is vital; the conflict must be treated depending on its *level/severity*, including a *mediation* process when necessary.

Table N° 25: Most mentioned concepts by participants and respondents in question N° 5		
Category	Concept	Times mentioned
I	Training	7
	Communication	6
	Level/severity of the conflict	6
	Mediation	5
II	Aggression	3
	Culture	3
	Education	3
	Policy	3
	Respect	3
	Understand	3
	Warning	3
III	Awareness	2
	Discipline	2
	Discrimination	2
	Environment	2
	Escalation	2
	Intervention	2
	Offend	2
	Parties	2
	Prevention	2
	Sanction, suspension	2
	To come out	2
Source: Own elaboration		

### **5.5.2 Focus group**

During the focus group session, participants mainly highlighted the importance of having a safe workplace environment, where education and training exists.

### **5.5.3 Personal interviews**

Respondents emphasised: the importance of education and training to all staff regarding sexual orientation, a conversation between parties involved. The severity of the conflict that must be considered to treat it.



## CHAPTER 5:

### DISCUSSION

This section presents the main findings obtained from primary and secondary research in each objective, accompanied by the author's thoughts.

#### 1. First Research Objective

*To identify and compare Irish and international legislation concerning LGBT employees' sexual orientation.*

This objective was accomplished with literature review. Undoubtedly the Country Similarity Index helped to determine a country comparable with Ireland because it is pointless to make an unequal comparison, with a country more developed or with a developing country, both countries must have similar conditions. The mentioned index compares considering five parameters: *demographics, culture, government, infrastructure, and geography*, assigning 20% to each. In this case the similarities between these two countries lead to have a similar legislation.

The main similarity in legislation matters between Ireland and The United Kingdom are the nine *Discriminatory Grounds* from the Employment and Equality and the *Nine Protected Characteristics* from the Equality Act from The United Kingdom, both having a Sexual Orientation topic by itself, which must be the basis for any workplace policy.

For future research in this objective, it is recommended to analyse and compare actual company policies from Ireland and The United Kingdom considered as referent for being welcoming for LGBT employees.

## **2. Second Research Objective**

*To detect the awareness that LGBT employees have regarding the options available to face conflicts in the workplace.*

This objective was reached through primary research: a focus group session and eleven personal interviews. Four of the five survey questions were related to this objective,

### **2.1 Awareness**

The awareness that LGBT employees have about the options available to face conflicts in the workplace is low. 62.5% of participants and respondents are not aware of them.

### **2.2 Positioning Matrix for industries/sectors**

Particularly, question number 4 provided enough information to develop an outcome not considered before: A positioning Matrix.

A positioning matrix is a mathematic resource, which within two axes gives a specific position to different elements according to the value assigned in each axis. In this case, a Positioning Matrix for Industries/Sectors was developed. The question that had provided enough resources create this outcome was: *Do you think that sexual orientation is treated differently depending on the sector or industry?* Which was applied during the focus group session and personal interviews.

During the focus group session, participants were spontaneously mentioning industries where, according to their perception, exist more *tolerance*. During a personal interview, the concept of *empathy* emerged as an attribute of industries that are welcoming with LGBT employees. In this way, tolerance and empathy were considered into this outcome, being respectively the abscissa and the ordinate axis of the positioning matrix.

As participants and respondents were mentioning industries perceived as welcoming for LGBT employees, the author was asking them to mention industries that their perceive as the opposite to

generate a contrast among industries. All the industries were mentioned spontaneously by participants and respondents; they were not select from a list to reduce bias.

The positioning matrix obtained based on participant and respondent’s perception as follows:



The matrix is formed for two axles which divide it in four quadrants, starting with quadrant 1 in the upper right corner, going to the next ones in an anti-clockwise sense. The quadrants are explained in the next table:

Table N° 26: Quadrants of Positioning Matrix		
Quadrant	Representation	Tolerance (T), and Empathy (E)
1	Q1	(+T, +E)
2	Q2	(-T, +E)
3	Q3	(-T, -E)
4	Q4	(+T, -E)
Source: Own elaboration		

### 2.2.1 Quadrant 1

Symbolised as Q1 is the area that contains the industries perceived as the most welcoming for LGBT employees, being the most empathetic and tolerant. In this way, Tolerance and Empathy are positive<sup>14</sup>, represented by Q1: (+Tolerance, +Empathy). In this quadrant, it is possible to find the industries: fashion, arts, beauty, entertainment, hospitality, healthcare, retail, accounting, and marketing.

Doing a further analysis, it is possible to say that each industry has different positions along the quadrant. The further up and to the right the industry is, the more perceived as welcoming for LGBT employees is. In this way fashion is perceived more welcoming than marketing, despite they are in the same quadrant.

### 2.2.2 Quadrant 2

Symbolised as Q2, where Tolerance is negative<sup>15</sup>, whereas Empathy is positive, this quadrant is represented by Q2: (-Tolerance, +Empathy). It contains the industries public relationships, education and finance, which are perceived as more empathetic than tolerant.

<sup>14</sup> In this context, “positive” means to have a high level of Tolerance/Empathy.

<sup>15</sup> In this context, “negative” means to have a low level of Tolerance/Empathy.

### 2.2.3 Quadrant 3

Symbolised as Q3 is the area that contains the industries perceived as the less welcoming LGBT employees, where Tolerance and Empathy are negative, represented by Q3: (-Tolerance, -Empathy), this quadrant is opposite to quadrant 1. In this quadrant, it is possible to find the industries: Public forces, construction, politics, legal, engineering, technology and gaming. The further down and to the left the industry is, the less perceived as welcoming for LGBT employees is. In this way public forces are less welcoming than technology despite there being in the same quadrant.

### 2.2.4 Quadrant 4

Symbolised as Q4, in this quadrant. Tolerance is positive, whereas Empathy is negative. Q4: (+Tolerance, -Empathy) represents it. It contains the industries medicine, architecture and software. These industries are considered by participants and respondents as more tolerant than empathetic, which is the opposite of quadrant 2.

For future research is recommended to do a positioning matrix with a more significant sample to present an improved version and assure more certainty.

## 3. Third Research Objective

*To contribute to new dispute resolution strategies to ameliorate the experience of LGBT employees in the workplace.*

This objective was accomplished with a mixture of secondary and primary research. In other words, information from literature reviews, and answers obtained during the focus group session and the personal interviews. The outcome is a strategic model oriented to ameliorate LGBT employee's workplace experience.

Regarding the third research objective oriented to ameliorate the work experience of LGBT employees, participants and respondents answered the question: *What do you think is the best way to solve conflict*

*in the workplace regarding sexual orientation?* Outcomes as follows:

### **3.1 Outcome of the focus group**

In the following paragraphs, concept and interactions that emerged during the focus group are presented and contextualised.

*Awareness:* Considering participant respondents, some common ideas emerged. Firstly, they said that is essential to be aware of the company policy not only about procedures regarding workplace conflict associated to sexual orientation.

*Retaliation:* is a concept not considered by the author before. It is related with the actions that the offender/aggressor/perpetrator can take against the LGBT employee if the latter decides to report a conflictive situation. A possible way to avoid retaliation is giving the affected the option to report the conflictive case in anonymity.

*Training and educating:* these concepts were mentioned concerning teaching staff in sexual orientation matters, to educate them, bringing the awareness about diversity, making them understand that sexual orientation is not something that people could “choose”. This training must be more orientated in sexual orientation matters rather than teach people how to be respectful with others, because people should know that. There was a discussion about who should receive this training, all staff or just people in higher positions.

Collect the most common question that the staff would have regarding sexual orientation and the LGBT community.

*Treating the conflict:* The person treating the conflict must know about sexual orientation matters and Alternative Dispute Resolution. If this person cannot deal with the conflict as a third party, then it will be necessary to call someone specialised in those subjects.

*Creating a safe environment:* During the focus group session, people said that creating a safe environment is necessary to make the company policy work. This concept can be associated to the

Dynamic of Trust Model. Sometimes people work in certain jobs where they do not feel comfortable only because they need money.

*Communication and following up:* Regarding company policy, people said it is essential to communicate it and to do follow up to ensure that the staff is aware of it.

### **3.2 Outcome of the Personal Interviews**

Due to the interviews being personal, there are no interaction among respondents, the main concepts mention by them are presented as follows:

*Respondent #1:* Through the participation of a mediator educated in LGBT matters and policies, depending on the company's size. In this way, the bigger the company is, the more options to receive mediator participation has.

*Respondent #2:* Strategies are necessary, which takes time. Firstly, making the company policy very clear (since people start work at the company) that this is under no circumstances tolerated any discrimination that includes sexual orientation. Secondly, to deal with conflicts individually, so there should be probably a person in charge of that in the company, for example a psychologist from Human Resources, that would talk to the people involved and if necessary make a *warning*, that would probably help at least to control the situation and make people *aware* of the rules, and that independently of your thinking of your opinion, other people that work with you must be respected, independently of anything such as beliefs When respondent #2 was asked about that person should have knowledge related to LGBT matters, he said: "I think initially maybe it should not be mandatory, but it would definitely make a difference for this professional when dealing with these conflicts, for example if it is a person that is and directly connected to LGBT people, or even is a LGBT person him or herself, that would undoubtedly make things different because this person understands or would understand the difficulties and the odds of being in a hostile environment or workplace"

*Respondent #3:* Well, I think it will depend on the kind of conflict, obviously and the level of conflict, because sometimes they will be deal with something illegal, so when it is something illegal I think, the best way is to report to the Garda, or the authorities because the company cannot be involved in that kind of things, they cannot cover or hide something illegal. But, besides that, all that kind of minor conflicts that maybe can be solved by mediation between the people who have the conflict.

*Respondent #4:* Well, I think it depends on the level of conflict. I really know that many people that have some religious points of view regarding sexual orientation, as long as they are respectful to me, I do not mind. Suppose there is a conflict regarding lack of respect or verbal or physical aggression that must be treated differently. In that case, anyone who acts violently at work should be fired or sued, even is related to sexual orientation or not. If there is a disagreement that could be easy to talk about between the people involved, if it is something deeper, somebody else must act to intermediate, someone from Human Resources who can be objective, listen to both people and make decisions.

*Respondent #5:* In response, respondent #5 planted three questions: Why would someone be concerned about another person's sexual orientation in the workplace? Does sexual orientation affect your performance? Does this affect how we relate to people? I do not think that should be an issue in the workplace concerning gays, straights, or anything.

*Respondent #6:* First of all, workplaces do need to have comprehensive policies to deal with bullying and harassment, and that must cover LGBT staff. The best thing for people in those workplaces before any conflict can arise is to ensure that they receive adequate training from an LGBT organisation, such as 'Dublin Pride', 'Belong To', and 'Shout Out'. I think that is very important, especially for management, because they will know how to intervene if a conflict arises, with a degree of sensitivity. I believe it is important if an organisation or business has a culture where these issues can be discussed. I suppose training, mediation, and policy would be the three biggest things an organisation should have to solve or avoid workplace conflict.



*Respondent #7:* If I felt that someone was discriminating against me because of my sexual orientation, I would try to speak to that person because I think the best way to deal with these things is with a face-to-face frank conversation. If I do not get a positive reaction from that, I would probably discuss it with my colleagues who are at the same level as I am to ask for advice, and then I would go to my line manager to ask about how to proceed.

*Respondent #8:* I always think the best way to solve conflicts at work is by talking, regardless of the sexual orientation of the person. I do not believe there might be a different way to solve this kind of conflict when the reason for that is a sexual intention - I always think the way to solve those problems is by talking with parties involved. I believe that the way to solve the problem is talking, and if it is necessary, some disciplinary action should be taken. I believe that the sanction should not be the worst like to be fired, because if it is the worst that person would take a kind of revenge.

*Respondent #9:* Education, I think is the best way - informing them about how the world works, how people are, trying to destroy stereotypes and making sure they know, and they understand what gay people actually are and basically dispelling ignorance – I think when people understand us better, their prejudices go away much more quickly. About treating the conflict, I think it would depend on what the conflict is, like the first and second offence would be like a warning, a reprimand and being forced to take a class for sensitivity training, and then, harder stuffs like suspensions.

*Respondent #10:* Firstly, creating an environment where people are comfortable being open with their sexuality - you definitely feel more comfortable if there are people who naturally understand the struggles that LGBT people have. Secondly, having representation within the workplace. Thirdly, having cleared assigned pathways. And then, I suppose the official documentation of what is accepted and what is not accepted the workplace and what your options are of how you can deal with it if you are allowed to remove yourself from the situation which obviously should be the case.

*Respondent #11:* Firstly, I think one of the best ways is to put in a management position, a member of the LGBT community. Just because we are members of the LGBT community – does not mean that we cannot do the job. Secondly, educating people in the workplace through seminars, training, and communications related to LGBT.

If a conflict emerges, I will try to confront the person in a nice way, then if it does not work, I will escalate it to a higher level, and then if that thing happens again, I would report it to an upper management or in Human Resources.

### **3.3 Common patterns**

Along with the participant's opinion, it is possible to detect some aspects similar to the emerged during the focus group session. Particularly, the common patterns seen in the personal interviews are:

#### **3.3.1 Comfortable Workplace Environment**

The employer must provide an environment where LGBT employees feel comfortable, without the necessity of hiding their sexual orientation.

#### **3.3.2 Education**

All the staff must be educated in LGBT matters to understand the diversity around sexual orientation, guarantying all the people will respect each other.

#### **3.3.3 Skills of the person who treat the conflict**

People in Human Resources must have knowledge in Alternative Dispute Resolution and LGBT matters, solving and preventing conflicts.

#### **3.3.4 Severity or level of the conflict**

The treatment of the conflict will depend on its severity. The more complex the conflict is, the more specialised the intervenor must be.

#### **3.3.5 Hierarchy**

Having a low position in the company should not discourage reporting any conflictive situation.

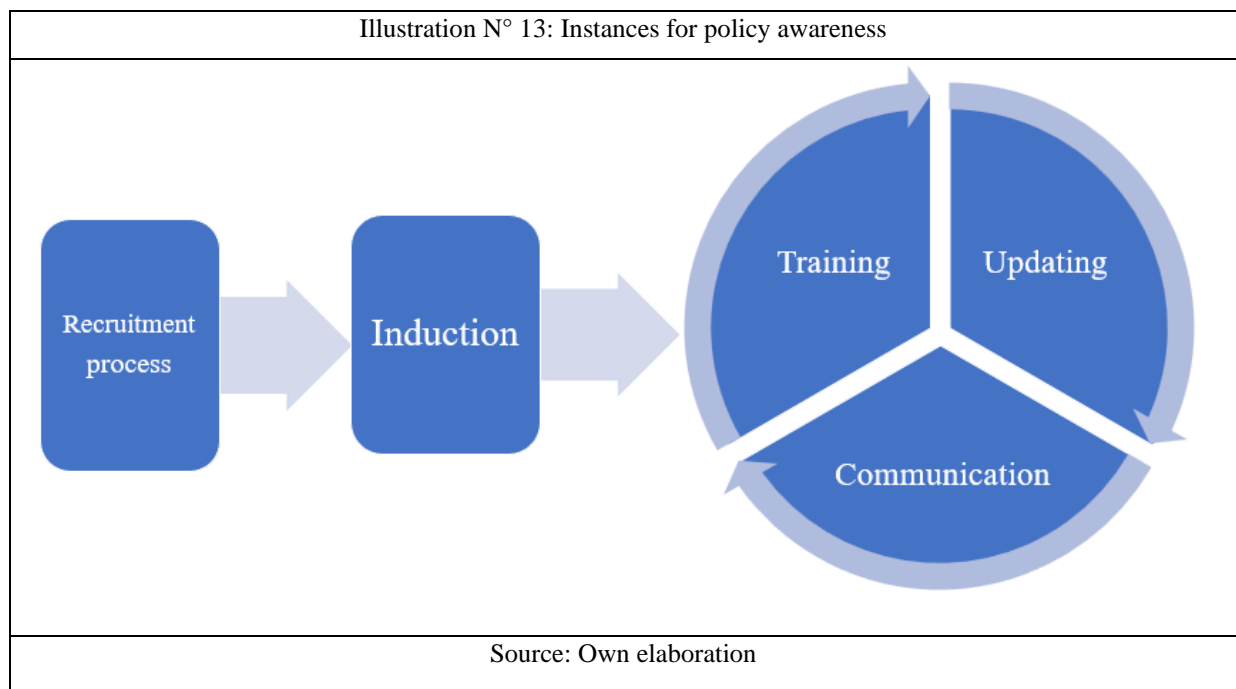
### 3.3.6 Retaliation or revenge

The employer must guarantee that reporting a conflict would not provoke any posterior action from the person who is being accused.

## 3.4 Instances for Policy Awareness

It does not seem to be enough to elaborate a valid policy, as a result of the research. The company policy must be mentioned at the beginning of the recruitment process since the first job interview and reinforced during the induction process, once the applicant is an employee. After the induction process, there must be training, updating and communication around the policy.

The following illustration represents an ideal scenario regarding policy awareness:

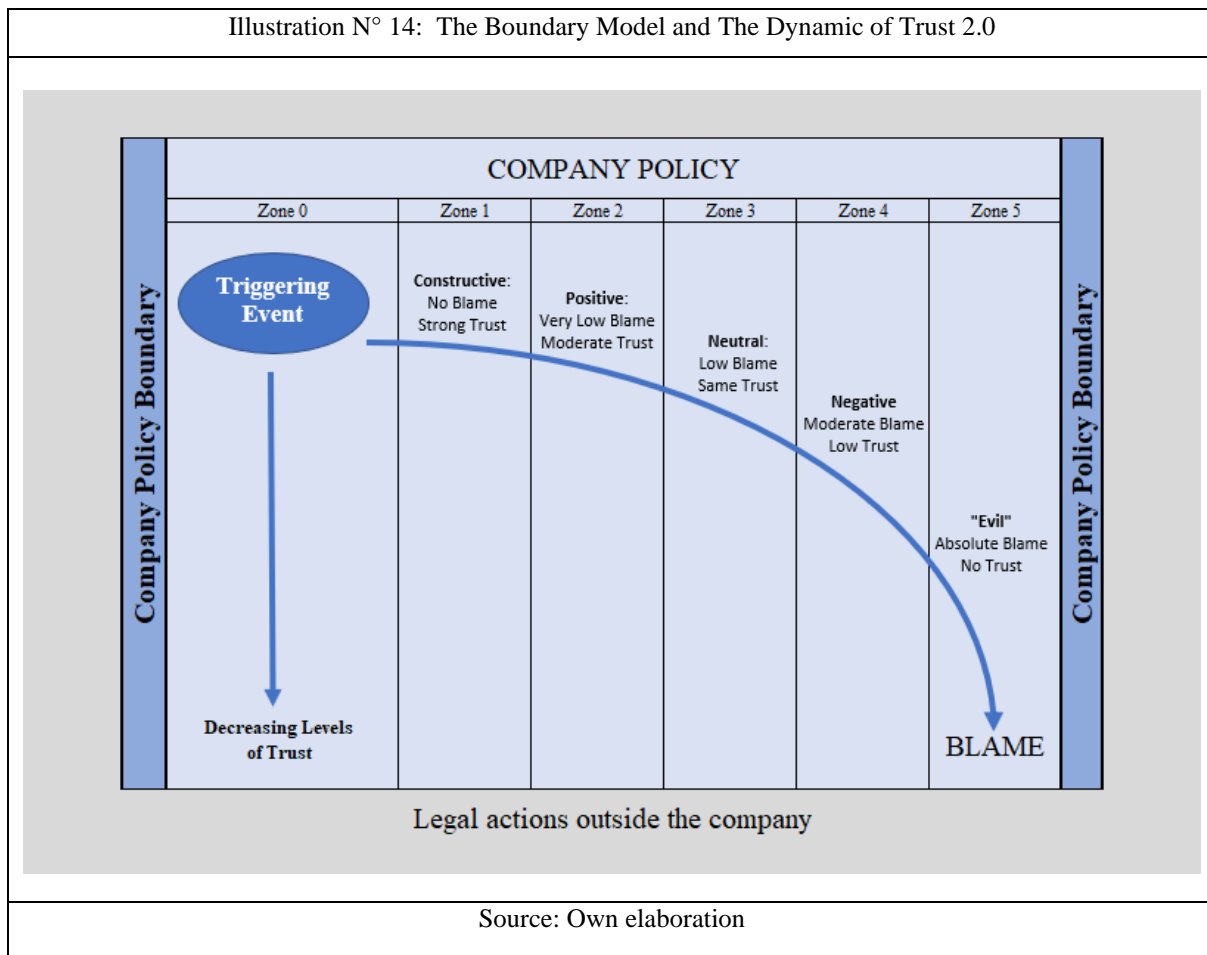


Due to the awareness LGBT employees have concerning their options before workplace conflict regarding sexual orientation is low, these instances of awareness are purposed. The ideal scenario is all the companies considering this procedure as a guideline to increase awareness.

### 3.5 Assessing the conflict

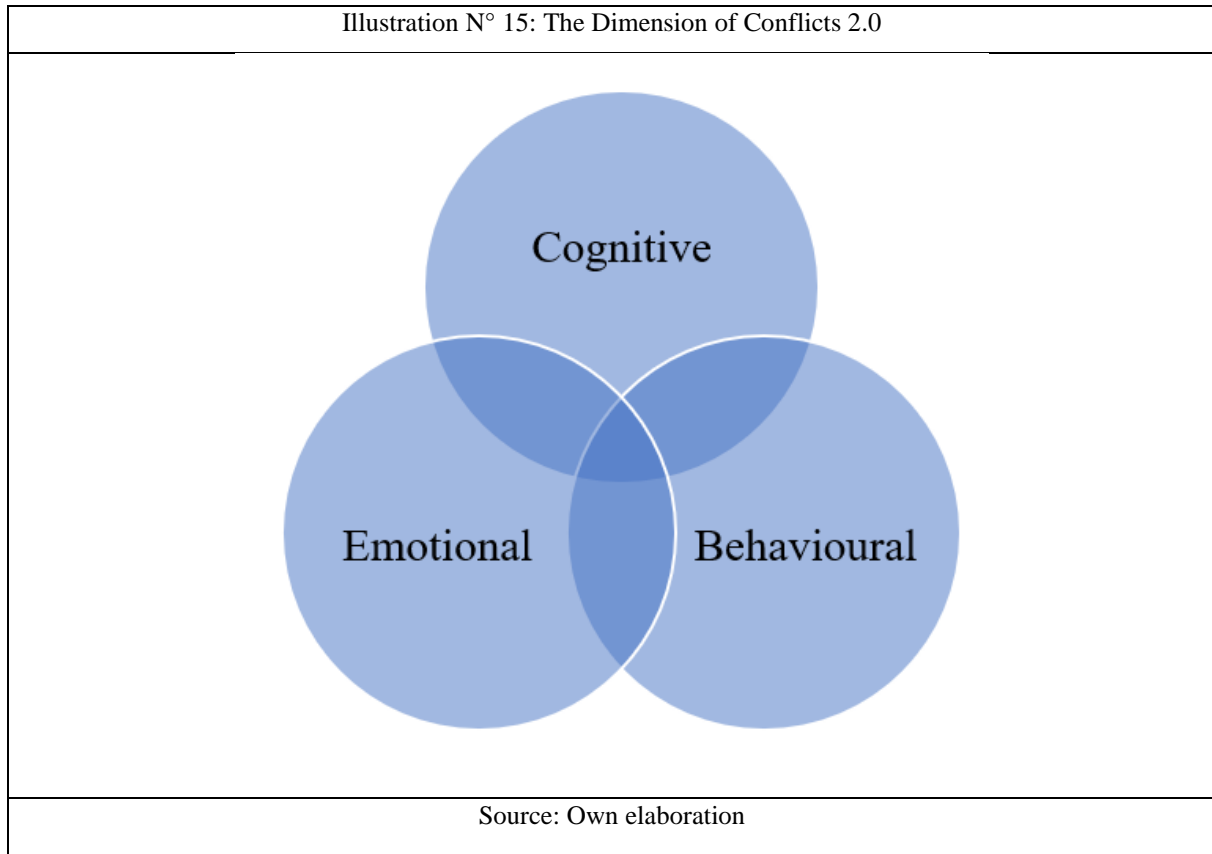
Regarding The Boundary Model and The Dynamic of Trust, the author suggests a mixture between them. The company policy represents the boundaries: what is allowed and what is not. The Dynamic of trust goes through 6 zones (from 0 to 5): zone 0 is where the triggering event occurs, going from zone 1 with a strong trust and no blame, to zone 6 with no trust and absolute blame.

Boundaries and trust are vital building a healthy relationship between employer and employee, not exclusively LGBT. This model could be extended in further research.



Any situation that is outside the boundaries must be treated with legal actions.

An alternative to the Dimension of Conflicts presented in the Literature Review, where the three dimensions are shown separately, after doing the research, the author recommends combining the three dimensions being assessed simultaneously as a whole, like the following illustration is showing it.

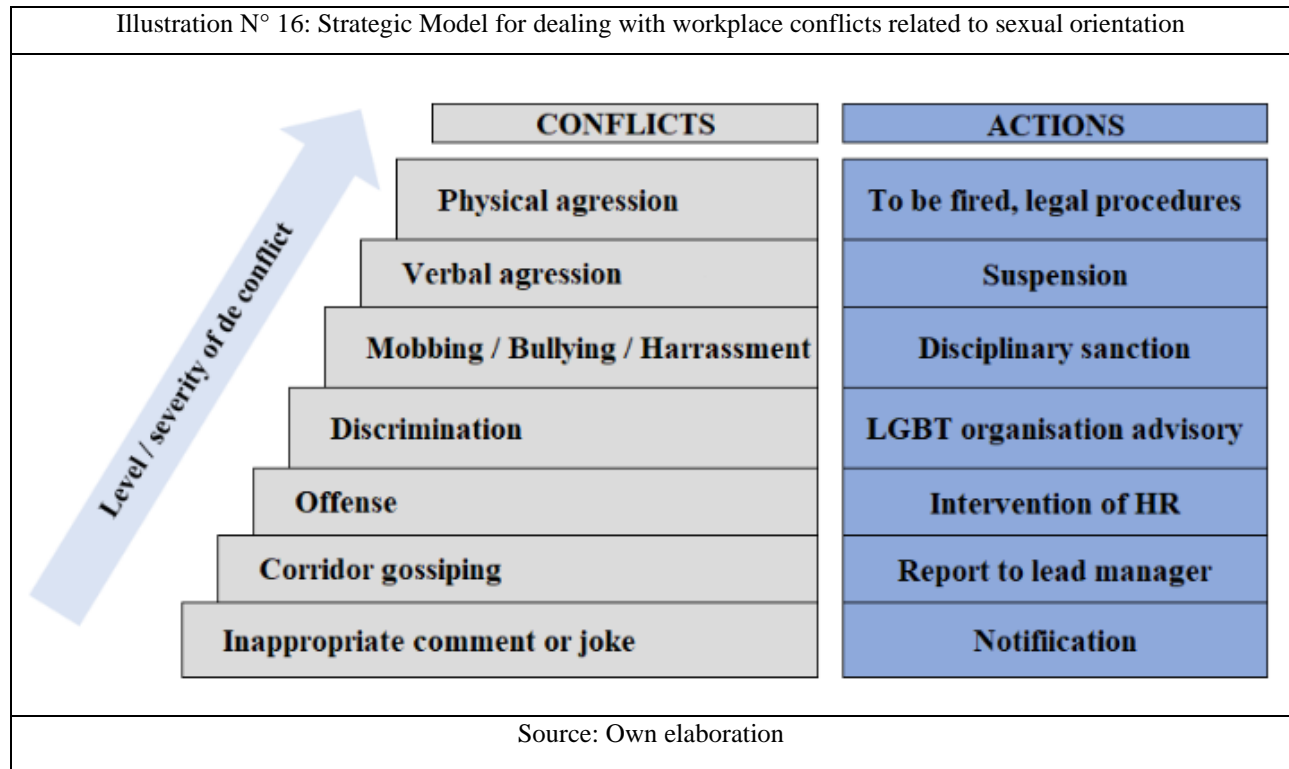


The most central area must be the target of the people who are assessing the conflict.

Regarding the model: Moving Beyond the Conflict, its application will depend directly on the severity of the conflict and if the parties involved are willing to move on. Sometimes the situation could seriously affect LGBT employees that they decide to quit their job.

#### 4. Strategic Model to treat Workplace Conflicts regarding sexual orientation

The ideal scenario is preventing conflict instead of treating them. If, despite all the measures taken, a conflict arises, a model to treat workplace conflicts is presented based on participants and respondents' suggestions:



After assessing the conflict, actions must be taken depending on its severity. On the left side of the illustration, different types of conflicts are presented, from the less severe in the base: inappropriate comment or joke, to the most severe in the top: physical aggression. On the right side of the illustration, different actions are presented regarding the severity of the conflict. In this way, for the first level of conflict: inappropriate comment or joke must be treated with a notification, whereas physical aggression firing the aggressor and applying legal procedure.

# CONCLUSION

This section presents the principal conclusion emerged from this research; in a first instance a general conclusion will be presented to continue with conclusion per research objective.

## 1. General Conclusion

Doing research based on people perceptions is challenging, especially in a sensitive topic such as sexual orientation. Many factors that may lead to a person be concerned about sexual orientation such as culture, beliefs, background, etc. In this way, if the study subject were varied types of employers the findings would different and challenging to analyse due to the many of variables involved.

The sampling method in this research was non-probabilistic, doing a pre-interview process with two volunteers, a focus groups session with five participants, and a personal interview process with eleven respondents.

These stages were made consecutively; the pre-interview process was useful to set the parameter of the interviews and to having the first approach to an interview, testing the questionnaire; the focus group session brought new ideas and concepts that were included in the personal interview process. Every stage had its objective in a learning process.

There were two questionnaires, one applied during the pre-interview process, and a second one, the improved version of the first one after being tested with the volunteers. The questionnaire was reduced from nine to five questions, prioritising the open questions that allow the people to express themselves freely.

More than five open questions may do the interview longer and more difficult to transcript and analyse. Some of the questions seemed simple but provided plenty of information even to develop a positioning matrix regarding how welcoming the industries are with LGBT employees. After recording, the transcription process is necessary to collect all the information and analyse it step by step.

Sixteen LGBT employees were the subject of this study, five participants and eleven respondents. The opinion of the two volunteers do not due to the pre-interview process being developed exclusively to set technical parameters for the interviews. Among these people, a small number of conflicts was detected (only one participant and three respondents had suffered conflicts directly regarding their sexual orientation). The author was expecting more conflicts. Additionally, all participants and respondents feel comfortable with people in the workplace knowing what their sexual orientation is. The author was expecting something different. A largest study might include more conflict.

## **2. Conclusion regarding First Research Objective**

*To identify and compare Irish and international legislation concerning LGBT employees' sexual orientation.*

Despite legislation exists, is difficult to guarantee that in all the companies are being accomplished, frequent control and support are required. In this role LGBT organisation such as 'Dublin Pride', 'Belong To', and 'Shout Out' can collaborate providing adequate training to the staff.

To protect the LGBT employee is not an easy task, especially after the conflict is reported. If this is not treated correctly in anonymity, retaliation could emerge. Any conflict must be reported, it does not matter which position the affected has in the company, the policy should encourage this person to report any conflictive situation, going from an inappropriate comment to physical aggression.



### **3. Conclusion regarding Second Research Objective**

*To detect the awareness that LGBT employees have regarding the options available to face conflicts in the workplace.*

62.5% of participants and respondents are not aware of policies in their workplace regarding conflicts related to sexual orientation. Unfortunately, a few companies had specific policies regarding sexual orientation.

The awareness that LGBT employees have regarding the options to face conflicts in the workplace is low. Some factors such as experience and position in the company can determine how the affected could react. Particularly, respondents number 2, 3 and 10 had suffered situation in their workplace that made them feel uncomfortable, not feel accepted for who they are. They have in common that they had low professional experience and a low position in the job regarding hierarchy, which discouraged them from facing the situation in a more profound way or looking for more options.

The level of awareness can be increased with proper procedures based on sharing the policy starting in the recruitment process. In other words, every employee must know the policy since the first job interview. Once the applicant is part of the company, is the employer responsible for updating and communicate them opportunely.

#### **4. Conclusion regarding Third Research Objective**

*To contribute to new dispute resolution strategies to ameliorate the experience of LGBT employees in the workplace.*

To adopt a strategy oriented to prevent conflict is the ideal scenario for any company.

According to participants and respondents' perception, some industries are more welcoming than others, located in quadrant 1 of the positioning matrix, such as fashion, arts, beauty, entertainment, hospitality, healthcare, retail, accounting, and marketing. It is vital to know what they are doing well and try to imitate it.

Controlling seems to be an excellent way to detect any unregular situation. For this doing surveys about the level of satisfaction that staff is having with the company, in this instance is possible to detect any condition that may lead to a conflict and prevent it.

# REFLECTION

## Questions

*Why would someone be concerned about another person's sexual orientation in the workplace? Does sexual orientation affect your performance? Does this affect how we relate to people?* These three questions were planted by one of the respondents in his interview.

I am not able to answer the first question. I do not know why nowadays still some people are concerned about other's sexual orientation.

Regarding second and third question, I would answer NO. Unfortunately, some people might think the opposite. This fact was one of my main motivations for doing this study, and even after the research, I cannot understand why some people think that way.

## Learnings

The learning occurred along with the research; the knowledge obtained in a particular stage was used for the next one. This procedure was identifiable during the pre-interview process and focus group session where emerged some concepts did not consider before, which were used for the interviews process. During the focus group, international participants spontaneously compared their original counties with Ireland, which was interesting and included as a prompt question for international respondents during the personal interview stage.

## Sample

This study was centred on people over 20 and younger than 40 years old. If the study subjects were people over 40 years old, maybe the results and outcomes would be different due to is other generation. The sampling method and the selection of participants and respondent was slow, due to the sample is specific, and not all the people were willing to share this kind of information.

## Participants and respondents

Based on the experience of one of the respondents, it is possible to say that sexual harassment is a conflict that LGBT employees can suffer and is not only suffered by women. To come out in the workplace helps LGBT employees to feel more comfortable not hiding who they are. This concept involves authenticity and own identity.

The possibilities of solving conflict regarding sexual orientation can be limited to the company's size which directly could affect the resources assigned to it.

## Confidentiality

Along with this study, the leading primary research was a focus group session and personal interviews. The former is less private than the latter. In the one hand, this fact may affect the willingness of the participants to share confidential information or sensitive experiences in front of unknown people. On the other hand, with personal interviews, respondents could feel more confident at the moment of expressing themselves. The following table presents the main differences between focus group session and personal interviews:

Table N° 27: Contrast between focus group session and personal interviews		
Parameter	Focus group session	Personal interviews
Interaction	There is an interaction among participants	There is no interaction among respondents
Privacy	Less private	More private
Information shared	Tent to be more general	Tent to be more intimate
Quantity	1	11
Duration	More than one hour	Average 21 minutes
Source: Own elaboration		

## Transcriptions

At the moment of setting a methodology, it is essential to keep in mind how long each stage could take. Transcriptions take an essential amount of time to be done; for this reason, it is recommendable that interviews should not be longer than 30 minutes. For this research, the focus group session lasted 69 minutes, with a transcription of 10,35 hours, whereas interviews took an average of 21 minutes where their respective transcriptions took 3,15 hours each.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

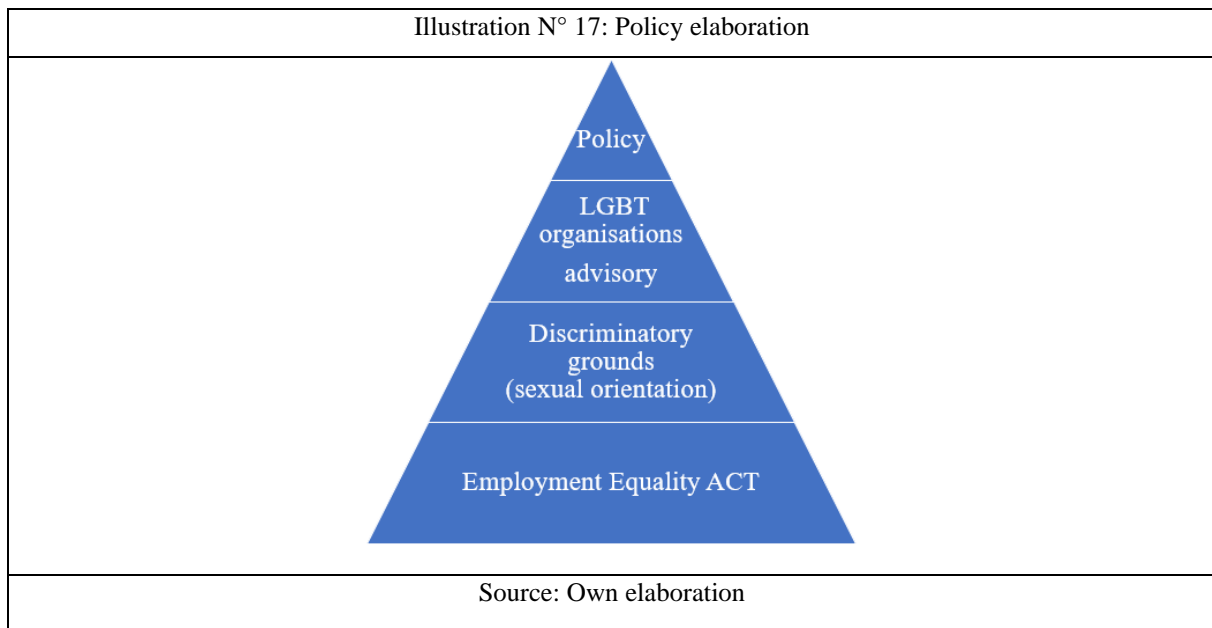
This section presents recommendations based on the finding of primary and secondary research, accompanied by author's thought. Before giving the recommendations is vital to review the research question plated at the beginning of this study: *Are there weaknesses in the current legislation which may lead to an employee who identifies as LGBT facing conflicts in the workplace?*

While LGBT employees have conflicts in their workplace regarding their sexual orientation, it is possible to answer the research question affirmatively. Which are these weaknesses, then?

Considering the outcomes obtained along with this study, the main weakness is in the applicable policies in each company. Despite being regulated by the Employment and Equality act, not all companies have policies explicitly oriented to the Discriminatory Ground Sexual Orientation.

## 4.1.1 Recommendation to Policy Makers

The principal author's recommendation is addressed to the policymakers and what a policy must include. An illustration in a pyramid shape is presented, which contains the basis for creating a valid policy.



The policy must be based on the Employment Equality Act, emphasising one of the nine Discriminatory Grounds: Sexual Orientation. Advisory from LGBT organisations may be necessary to understand the implications of having a varied workplace regarding sexual orientation.

In the following lines, recommendations addressed to researchers are presented:

#### **4.1.2 Recommendations to Researchers**

To explore the *Moving Beyond Model*, presented in the first chapter, and study how sincere apologies may help overcome a conflict and reach reconciliation between the parties involved, exploring restorative practices.

To extend the study to other cities, different to Dublin, and determine if there is a relationship between the possibility of having workplace conflict regarding sexual orientation and the place of residence.

To investigate how to avoid retaliation from those who offended the LGBT employee once some measures are taken.

To develop the concept “being out at work” related to be open regarding sexual orientation, in life and the workplace and study if there is a relationship in how comfortable people feel in their workplace with their developing opportunities.

To study if there is a relationship between the company’s size and how comfortable an LGBT employee feel in the workplace.

To orient the research to LGBT organisation and their role as an intervenor in the workplace conflict suffered by LGBT employees.

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# APPENDICES

## A. Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

### Informed Consent Form for Research Project / Dissertation

**Research Study Title:** Are there weaknesses in the current legislation which may lead to an employee who identifies as LGBT facing conflicts in the workplace?

**Purpose of Research:** To detect the awareness that LGBT employees have regarding the options available to face conflicts in the workplace.

Dear enter name of participant here.,

You are being invited to take part in this research study as you have had experience in the Irish workplace as a worker who is part of the LGBT community. This research study aims to gain an understanding of what leads to LGBT employees facing conflicts in the workplace.

This research is being carried out by Ricardo Javier Alexis Cofré Pinto as part of a MA in Dispute Resolution at Independent College Dublin.

Type of participant:

- I enter name here. voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves be part of a focus group.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
- This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in my research project
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities. They may discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in possession of the supervisor of this research Orla Tuohy, securely until November 2021.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview (in which all identifying information has been removed) will be retained for a period of two years.

Independent College Dublin, Block B, The Steelworks, Foley Street, Dublin 1. D01 X997  
Tel: 01-877-3901  
email: [info@independentcolleges.ie](mailto:info@independentcolleges.ie)

- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

**Below to be completed by research participant**

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☐ By checking this box, I confirm that I have read all of the above information and that I agree to participate in this research.

Signature of research participant

Enter your name here.

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Date

15/09/2021

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## B. Pre-interview questions

- 1) *Have you ever felt discriminated for your sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation? If your answer is YES, could you give more details?* Volunteers were overthinking how to answer it, maybe *discrimination* is a strong word and could limit the investigation. This question is not been considered for next stages.
- 2) *Have you ever had a conflict in the workplace regarding your sexual orientation? If your answer is YES, could you give more details?* This question is more open in comparison with the previous one, it may consider any kind of conflict, not only discrimination. This question was kept for next stages with slight modifications.
- 3) *Do you feel free to talk about your sexual orientation in your workplace? Why?* Volunteers understood this question as a fact of starting a conversation about their sexual orientation. It will be reoriented, considering the option that people in the workplace could know in different circumstances what their sexual orientation is.
- 4) *Do you think that sexual orientation can be an issue in the workplace? Why?* The word *issue* was too open for volunteers. This question is not being considered for next stages due to the word *issue* is too wide.
- 5) *Do you think there are sectors/industries more worried about worker's sexual orientation? If your answer is YES, could you give more details?* It was necessary to explain it, for this reason this question was reoriented for next stages focusing on industries or sectors.
- 6) *Do you know how to identify a situation/conflict of discrimination against sexual orientation in your workplace? If your answer is YES, could you explain how?* This question is oriented to discrimination which is not the only possible conflict that an LGBT employee may face, this question immediately limits the possible answers.

- 7) *Do you know any organisation or supporting network where you could go in case of a conflict related to discrimination against sexual orientation in the workplace?* In this question national people could have an advantage over the international, due to is referring to supporting networks available in Ireland.
- 8) *How do you identify a good place to work where conflicts regarding sexual orientation do not exist?* In an implicit way this question is saying that a good place to work is where there are not conflicts regarding sexual orientation, it is a biased question which is not been considered for next steps.
- 9) *Which measures/policies/procedures exist in your workplace in case of discrimination against sexual orientation?* This question aims to detect the awareness of LGBT employees regarding workplace conflicts related to sexual orientation but is including the word *discrimination* which could reduce the possible answers, for this reason it will be slightly modified.

## C. Focus group and interview questions

*1) Are you comfortable with people in the workplace knowing what your sexual orientation is?*

Objective: To know how people feel in their workplace, if they care about other people knowing what their sexual orientation is and the main reasons for their answers.

Justification: This question contemplates the option that people in the workplace could know their sexual orientation directly from them or not.

*2) Have you ever experienced conflicts in the workplace related to your sexual orientation or do you know someone who ever has?*

Objective: To detect the awareness that participants and respondents have in relation to workplace conflict regarding sexual orientation.

Justification: If the person has not experienced any conflict, the second part of this question “Do you know someone who ever has?” helps to confirm if the person fully understood the question, talking about the experience of someone else.

A definition of conflict is not included, for not limiting the answers of participant and respondents, making broader the spectrum of situations narrated.

*3) Are you aware about any policy in your workplace regarding conflicts related to sexual orientation?*

Objective: To detect the awareness of LGBT employees regarding policies oriented to solve conflicts.

Justification: This question is not about fully know the policy, it is oriented to know if they are aware about its existence and, depending on the *respondent* or *participant*, the answer could be more extended.

*4) Do you think that sexual orientation is treated differently depending on the sector or industry?*

Objective: To compare industries or sectors in relation to the treatment they gave to the sexual orientation of their employees.

Justification: This question is not giving a multiple-choice selection; it is open for knowing which industries or sectors are perceived as the most or less welcoming for LGBT employees.

5) *What do you think is the best way to solve conflict in the workplace regarding sexual orientation?*

Objective: Oriented to the third objective of this research.

Justification: To know from people directly involved or affected when a workplace conflict arises regarding sexual orientation which could be the best solution, for trying to find common patterns to create a strategic model oriented to treat conflicts and ameliorate LGBT employee's workplace experience.

Patterns of association between variables are examined to detect associations (Walliman, 2016). To test the question before applying to all the subjects of investigation is vital to create an accurate measuring instrument, assuring that it is understandable.

## D. Online survey (focus group)

<https://aweform.com/view/771003421984555009/focus-group-confidential-information/>

**Your participant number:**

**Your country:**

**Your age:**

**In which industry/sector do you work?**

**What position do you have in your current job?**

**For how long have you being working in your current job?**

A < 6 months

B 6 months - 1 year

C 1-2 years

D > 2 years

E N/A



Which is your current educational level?

A Secondary School

B Graduation

C Post graduation

D Doctorship

E Other

How do you define your own sexual orientation?

Enter your answer here

FINAL QUESTION:

If you have any general comment about this focus group, please let me know.

Enter your answer here

## E. Online survey (interviews)

<https://www.encuestafacil.com/respweb/cuestionarios.aspx?EID=2776394>

1.- Interview: Sexual orientation in the workplace (additional questions)

**\*1. What is your respondent number?**

0/4000

**\*2. What is your nationality?**

0/4000

**\*3. How old are you?**

0/4000

**\*4. What position do you have in your current job?**

0/4000

**\*5. For how long have you been working in your current job?**

... ▼

...

< 1 year

1-2 years

2-3 years

3-4 years

> 4 years

N/A

**\*6. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?**

... ▼

...

High School

Bachelor's Degree

Post graduate

Master's Degree

PhD or higher

**\*7. How do you define your own sexual orientation?**

0/4000

**\*8. In your opinion:**

**Which of the following concepts are relevant when talking about conflicts in the workplace regarding sexual orientation?**

**-If you want, you can add a new one in the option "other".**

**-Please choose up to 5 concepts.**

- ☐ Cultural issue
- ☐ Industry/sector of the company
- ☐ Company policies
- ☐ Company size
- ☐ Company location (big city vs. town)
- ☐ Relationship with people from the company (internal)
- ☐ Relationship with people related to the company (external)
- ☐ Working online/working face to face
- ☐ Level of education
- ☐ Understanding/comprehension
- ☐ Tolerance/respect
- ☐ Values/believes
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Recruitment
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**9. If you have any comment/suggestion, please write it down in the box below.**

0/4000