Universidade de Évora - Escola de Ciências Sociais

Mestrado em Psicologia

Área de especialização / Psicologia da Educação

Dissertação

Career Development in Transgender People

Kristina Maria Holm

Orientador(es) / Paulo Miguel Cardoso

Madalena Melo

Évora 2023

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A dissertação foi objeto de apreciação e discussão pública pelo seguinte júri nomeado pelo Diretor da Escola de Ciências Sociais:

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O Desenvolvimento de Carreira em Pessoas Transgénero

Resumo

Os estudos indicam que minorias de género enfrentam discriminação em vários aspetos das suas vidas, sendo o local de trabalho um deles, e encontram desafios específicos que podem afetar o desenvolvimento das suas carreiras laborais. Assim, esta dissertação de mestrado visa como objetivo a investigação desses desafios compreendidos pelas minorias de género nas suas carreiras, os apoios que eles determinam com cruciais, e as estratégias de *coping* que são utilizadas pelos mesmos quando face a face com os desafios mencionados. Um total de 18 indivíduos com idades compreendidas entre os 19 e os 29 anos fizeram parte do estudo conduzido. Os dados obtidos foram analisados a partir da Consensual Qualitative Research. Os resultados sugerem que mesmo que os indivíduos em questão tenham a noção dos desafios existentes diretamente no local de trabalho, eles próprios colocam a enfase do impacto da discriminação sofrida no seu bem estar geral e na sua satisfação laboral, com destaque na significância do apoio familiar e apoio de amigos. Curiosamente foi descoberto que o procurar apoio relacional dentro do espaço laboral era menos comum comparado à utilização de estratégias de *coping* internas, como por exemplo, a regulação emocional.

Palavras-chave

Transgénero, Carreira, Barreiras, Apoios, Estratégias de *Coping*.

Career Development in Transgender People

Abstract

Research indicates that trans and gender diverse (TGD) individuals face discrimination in various aspects of their lives, including the workplace, and encounter unique challenges that can affect their career development. Thus, this thesis aimed to investigate the barriers perceived by TGD people in their careers, the supports they consider crucial, and the coping strategies they employ when faced with these challenges. A total of 18 TGD people, aged between 19 and 29, participated in interviews. The data was analyzed using Consensual Qualitative Research. The findings suggest that while TGD people acknowledge barriers in the workplace, they place greater emphasis on the impact of discrimination on their overall well-being and job satisfaction. This highlights the significance of support, particularly from friends and family. Interestingly, seeking relational support within the workplace was less common compared to relying on internal coping strategies, such as emotion regulation.

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Annexes

1. Introduction

Less than a century ago, individuals who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) faced persecution and criminalization in many countries worldwide. While progress has been made with legal recognition and protections in recent times, LGBTQ people continue to encounter hostility and discrimination in their daily lives (Bayrakdar and King, 2023; FRA, 2020). Despite sharing a minority status, TGD individuals experience the world differently compared to their cisgender lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual counterparts. Navigating a society that reinforces binary gender roles and expectations poses significant challenges for those who reject such norms. Research indicates that TGD people face discrimination across various aspects of life, including the workplace, where they are not exempt from gender-based discrimination (Lefebvre and Domene, 2020; McFadden, 2020). Although there have been considerable scholarly advancements regarding the workplace experiences of LGBTQ individuals, there remains a significant gap in understanding the unique experiences of TGD individuals, prompting scholars to call for further research in this area (McFadden, 2020; Prince, 2013). Conversely, while Portugal has made relatively recent strides in securing rights for TGD people and boasts one of the world's most comprehensive labor codes that prohibits discrimination against LGBTQ individuals, it is disheartening to note that 20% of LGBTQ individuals report experiencing workplace discrimination (Portugal, 2020, *cit in* Beatriz and Pereira, 2022).

Given the limited literature available on career-related issues specific to TGD individuals, this thesis aims to contribute to the existing research in Portugal by focusing on workplace experiences. Specifically, it seeks to explore perceived barriers, sources of support, and coping strategies employed by Portuguese trans individuals when faced with transphobic discrimination. The objective is to gain a comprehensive understanding of these experiences from the perspective of trans individuals in Portugal and shed light on the current state of workplace concerns for this community. The thesis is structured into three main parts: a literature review, divided into two sections—a brief introduction to TGD issues and a presentation of the existing research on workplace concerns for

TGD people. Following that, there is a detailed description of the empirical investigation, including the study's objective, methodology, participant demographics, and analysis of the results. Finally, the dissertation concludes with a comprehensive summary of the findings and their implications in the discussion, along with limitations and suggestions for future research.

2. Being Transgender

2.1 A Brief Introduction to Trans Identities

Transgender is an umbrella term that refers to any individual whose gender identity is incongruent with the gender they were assigned with at birth based on the appearance of external genitalia (American Psychological Association, 2015a). Labels such as "transsexual" and "transvestite" are considered outdated (Vidal-Ortiz, 2008). Transsexual is a medical term which describes people who seek medical assistance to change their sex characteristics (e.g., gender-affirming surgery); however, the plurality and experiences of gender non-conforming people is vast (Rodrigues, 2016), making TGD a more appropriate and comprehensive term[1], which will be used throughout this thesis. On the other hand, trans is also used as an abbreviation (McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2016; Nunes, 2016), In this sense, there are trans women, who were assigned male at birth; trans men, who were assigned female at birth (Green and Maurer, 2015); and non-binary trans people, who were assigned either male or female at birth, but experiencea gender identity that is outside of the binary gender spectrum, identifying as neither exclusively female nor male (Butler, 1990), a combination of the two, or "between or beyond genders" (Webb et al, 2016, *cit in* Losty and O'Connor, 2018, p.40).

2.2 Sex, Gender, and Gender roles

To be able to understand the trans experience, it's important to discuss the concepts of sex and gender. Sex refers to a person's physical and biological traits, typically categorized as male, female, or intersex (American Psychological Association, 2015a). These indicators include sex chromosomes, gonads, internal reproductive organs, and external genitalia. Gender, on the other hand, refers to the social and behavorial traits that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex (American Psychological Association, 2015b). In most cultures, only two gender categories exist, masculine and feminine, assumed to emerge naturally from binary sex categories, male and female (Nagoshi et al, 2012). Based on these categories, people are assigned gender roles. Gender roles are expectations regarding an individual's personality traits, physical appearance,

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[1] Trans and gender diverse (TGD) is a relatively new term and aims to be more inclusive than "transgender" or "trans".

mannerisms, and cultural expectations (Bornstein, 1998, *cit in* Nagoshi et al 2012). To Green (2004, *cit in* Nagoshi et al, 2012) the term transgender "reflects the concept of breaking gender roles and gender identity and/or transcending the boundaries of one gender to another gender" (p. 406). Therefore, TGD individuals challenge traditional conceptions about the nature of gender as their experiences and perceptions are significantly different from traditional binary gender roles (Ramalho, 2014).

2.3 The Sociocultural Construction of Gender

If society solely adheres to the gender presentation dictated by cisgender individuals as the norm, any other form of expression is often labeled as deviant, viewed with suspicion, and marginalized (Nachmias et al, 2019). However, being TGD is hardly a contemporary concept, or even one existing in Western society only. There is evidence of TGD life experiences dating back more than 4,500 years ago in ancient Mesopotamia texts (Enki and Ninmah, 2019, *cit in* Thyer, 2021). Indigenous North Americans have mentioned the existence of Two-Spirit people, described as a "third gender", neither male nor female (Thyer, 2021). Although a contemporary term, originating in 1990 and nowadays used as an umbrella term for LGBTQ indigenous people, evidence shows that, prior to the colonization of North America by European settlers, indigenous people had a "third gender" (Hunt, 2016; Thyer, 2021). In India, "hijras" are a community of people who refer to themselves as "the third gender", who are believed to possess special powers according to Ancient Indian myths (Kalra, 2012). In some Polynesian cultures, the term "mahu" describes someone who embodies both male and female spirit, and "fa'afafine" refers to a male with female spirit, raised as a "third gender child". Thus, by understanding gender as socially constructed, it is also possible to deconstruct and reconstruct marginalized perspectives (Nachmias et al, 2019, p.144).

2.4 Gender Dysphoria, the Process of Transitioning and "Passing"

Many TGD people experience high levels of distress due to the discrepancy between their birth-assigned gender and gender identity, which is known as gender dysphoria (Ashley, 2021). People who experience this distress may transition, which is a process where they begin to present themselves permanently according to their gender identity (Jones et al, 2019). Some people ease their dysphoria with a social transition

(change of name, pronouns, gender expression, etc.), and some may seek medical gender affirming procedures (White Hughto et al, 2017), undergoing physical surgeries and hormonal treatments to align their physical traits with their gender identity, whereas others may choose to take hormones only, or surgically alter some physical characteristics (Jones et al, 2019; Levitt and Ippolito, 2014a). The process of a gender transition often takes years (Sangganjanavanich and Headley, 2013). Research shows that transitioning and/or undergoing medical procedures can improve body satisfaction and alleviates gender dysphoria, however, not all trans individuals wish to or can transition (e.g., financial barriers; Holmberg et al., 2019; Whittle et al., 2007). Pinto (2014) highlights that the term "transition" can pose challenges as it perpetuates the notion that individuals' gender is determined solely by their outward expressions and physical characteristics, rather than their internal sense of self. Moreover, other TGD people who undergo these interventions may also experience gender euphoria, which is "the positive homologue of gender dysphoria" (Ashley and Ells, 2018, p.2). In other words, gender euphoria can describe the satisfaction or enjoyment one may feel by the correspondence of their gender identity and the features associated with the gender they identify with (Ashley, 2019). In the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V), gender dysphoria refers to "the discomfort that can accompany the incongruity between the experienced or expressed gender and the gender assigned to the individual" (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p.542). It is also noted that not every TGD person experiences gender dysphoria. Ashley (2019) argues that gender dysphoria is central to transgender health care, however, medical professionals routinely diagnosing TGD people with gender dysphoria can contribute to stigma and discrimination toward trans individuals. Moreover, unnecessary diagnoses of gender dysphoria contribute to the pathologization of TGD individuals, incorrectly framing the transgender experience as mental illness, which can cost them legal rights and social status.

Even though many TGD people suffer from mental health related issues, these are usually a consequence of discrimination, stigma, and minority stress, and not because they are transgender. Being TGD and experiencing gender dysphoria is a part of human diversity and is increasingly understood as not pathologically concerning (Ashley, 2019; Thyer, 2021). On the other hand, there is concern that removing the diagnosis would lead to compromised care, as it may affect an individual's health

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insurance, thus making it more difficult to acquire medical or mental health treatment (Levitt and Ippolito, 2014b). In many circumstances, TGD people can feel great social pressure to represent themselves on one side of the gender binary paradigm or the other, or to "pass" as cisgender – individuals who identify with their assigned gender at birth (Levitt and Ippolito, 2014a; Thyer, 2021). The pressure and goal to "pass" is more often brought on by concerns of safety, unemployment, obtaining healthcare, among others, than personal preference. Even though maintaining discretion regarding their gender identities to avoid prejudice and violence may be easier, living a life in the closet can gravely negatively affect the well-being of transgender individuals (Cole et al., 2000, *cit in* Levitt and Ippolito, 2014b). When one hides one's gender identity, which requires constant monitoring and protection of the self, one becomes socially isolated and emotionally exhausted. In contrast, a person who is authentically expressing their gender is comfortable with oneself (Beauregard, 2021).

2.5   Discrimination   Against   Trans   Individuals

Navigating a world that perceives gender as strictly binary can present significant challenges for individuals who do not conform to these traditional norms, leading them to be marginalized within society and subjected to discrimination and rejection (Butler, 1990). Thus, TGD people face discrimination in a wide range of settings, including the workplace, educational, medical, and social settings (Grant et al., 2016, *cit in* Thyer, 2021). The first context where individuals often encounter rejection, discrimination, and marginalization is within their own families. Since the family unit gradually molds people's values, experiences, and emotions over time, the response they receive from their families can either undermine or strengthen their confidence, self-concept, and self-love (Nachmias et al, 2019). TGD individuals without systems of support may develop shame and self-hatred, alongside their own internalized perceptions of how to perform gender the "correct" way, thus, developing internalized transphobia, defined as "discomfort with one's own transgender identity as a result of internalizing society's normative gender expectations" (Bockting, 2020, p.15). Moreover, the term used to describe the discrimination and prejudice against TGD individuals is known as "transphobia" (Ansaraand Friedman, 2016). Transphobia can come in the form of negative thoughts or attitudes towards trans individuals, as well as inflicting verbal, physical or sexual abuse

(Levitt and Ippolito, 2014b; Mizock and Mueser, 2014). Transphobia can be identified as either indirect or direct. Indirect transphobia is considered any action, either intentional or unintentional, based in ignorance regarding being TGD. On the other hand, direct transphobia is any action that deliberately aims to cause harm (Forshee, 2010). In general, TGD individuals are exposed to more discrimination than in comparison to cisgender heterosexual individuals and other subgroups within the LGBTQ community. Being put a a high risk of violence and loss of employment can most definitely explain the fear of disclosure and stigmatization many TGD individuals experience. Furthermore, stigma against TGD individuals has been identified as a major obstacle to accessing medical and mental health services, as well as employment (Ayhan et al, 2020; Mizock and Mueser, 2014; Thyer, 2021). Difficulties in gaining employment may be particularly problematic as unemployed TGD people or those of lower economic status may not be able to afford medical procedures, mental health services, or legal defense. Homeless TGD people, especially adolescents who have been kicked out of their homes after disclosing their identity, are particularly vulnerable to violence (Fedorko and Berredo, 2017; Levitt and Ippolito, 2014b). In addition to providing security, one's career often plays a significant role in an individual's life and identity, exerting a substantial impact on their mental health. Consequently, being susceptible to gender-based discrimination within the workplace can result in numerous adverse effects and significantly shape the trajectory of one's career development (Lefebvre and Domene, 2020; McFadden, 2020). Therefore, TGD individuals may encounter a multitude of challenges and face various barriers in the workplace.

2.6 The Legal Status of Recognition and Protection of Trans People in Portugal

Legal recognition of TGD identities has been emphasized as an important human rights issue. Many essential activities in daily life require legal identification, such as applying for jobs, renting an apartment, opening a bank account, or voting. TGD people with documents incongruent with their gender identity and expression are at severe risk of marginalization and discrimination (Pinto, 2014). In Portugal, the legal recognition of TGD identities is relatively recent. On March 15th in 2011, a law was passed which allowed any Portuguese TGD person of 18 years or older, and that had clinical proof attesting that they have "gender identity disorder", to change their

name and gender identity. On February 21st in 2013, discrimination based on gender identity was legally recognized as a hate crime. Legal protection for TGD individuals in the workplace was then introduced in 2015. According to Leitão et al (2022, *cit in* Beatriz & Pereira, 2022),Portugal has one of the most comprehensive labor codes in the world that prohibits discrimination against LGBTQ individuals. Nevertheless, employers are not required to provide specific accommodations to employees. Furthermore, despite these protections, 20% of LGBTQ participants in Portugal reported experiencing workplace discrimination, according to a 2019 study by the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (Portugal, 2020, *cit in* Beatriz & Pereira, 2022). On August 7th of 2018, the right to self-determination of gender identity and expression was enacted, additionally allowing Portuguese TGD individuals to change their name and gender identity at the age of 16 without the need for clinical diagnosis. This law has been considered a significant advance in legal recognition and protection of TGD individuals in Portugal as it is one step closer to dismantling the pathologization of TGD identities. In 2019, a decree was issued stating that the educational system must actively promote the right to gender self-determination and gender expression, while also implementing measures to prevent discrimination. However, as of 2021, this matter is once again being debated in the Portuguese Parliament.

3. Career Development and the Role of Work in People's Lives

Briefly summarized, career development can be seen as a life-long process that encompasses one's experiences before, during and after career choice. In turn, career choice refers to the process of selecting and entering a specific career path. Career development sometimes incorporates career choice, and other time does not. The process of career development isn't considered linear and is not always positive in impact or completely dependent on personal agency. Additionally, career choice is not necessarily a one-time event, as some career choices are modified over time for a variety of reasons. Thus, career development is characterized as a stream of career-related events that do not imply forward movement or progression only, but captures the changing nature, considering the potential for devolvement or regression (Brown and Lent, 2013).

As previously mentioned, career development is a continuous process throughout

the lifespan, beginning in childhood that leads up to the transition into and adjustment to retirement, but what is the role of career in a person's life? What motivates individuals to make certain career choices? Simply put, why do people work? To Blustein (2008), one way to determine why people work is how it has the potential to fulfill three fundamental human needs: survival, relatedness, and self-determination. Without work, it is difficult to obtain basic yet fundamental necessities for survival, such as food and shelter. Through the lens of Abraham Maslow's (1943, *cit in* Brown and Lent, 2013) hierarchy, the need for survival is at the core of human experience, thus, a key motivator to obtaining work and working. Many jobs also provide the possibility to construct relational connections and obtain social support, therefore, fulfilling the need for relatedness. Finally, work can fulfill the need for self-determination when individuals are intrinsically motivated to engage in the activities of their careers and/or have internalized extrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000, *cit in* Blustein, 2008). Brown and Lent (2013) also mention the role of work in one's identity: constructing a self, becoming a person that an individual imagines themselves as or wants to be, can be a strong motivator in any form of work. This can hold either private or public significance. In other words, work can be an expression of one's self or public image, to construct a self and tell a story of who a person is and what role they have in society.

Naturally, the career experiences and roles of work may differ considering certain predictors, such as economic resources and social class (Juntunen et al, 2013), gender (Heppner, 2013), race and ethnicity (Fouad and Kantamneni, 2013), disability (Fabian and Pebdani, 2013) and sexual orientation (Prince, 2013). In vocational psychology, research pertaining to the career experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals emerged in the late 1980s and have grown substantially since, considered as "one of the most significant advances of scholarly efforts in this domain" (Prince, 2013, p.275). However, there appears to be a great dearth of study regarding TGD-specific career experiences, with only around 30 articles published since the early 2000s, almost all of them focusing on populations within the USA. Most researchers must draw conclusions from the findings of lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations and rely on informal sources like transgender organizations' websites (Chung, 2003; McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2016; Prince, 2013; Wada et al, 2019). Despite having several career experiences in common due to their shared minority status, TGD individuals have their own experiences that can be quite different in comparison to cisgender lesbian, gay, or

bisexual people (Brown and Rounsley, 1996; O'Neil et al, 2008, *cit in* Prince, 2013). Furthermore, little is known about the career experiences of TGD who do not medically transition (Goldberg et al, 2021). McFadden and Crowley-Henry (2016) suggested that both the stigma that surrounds being TGD and their minority status may result in underrepresentation, thus, there may not be a priority for companies or academic researchers to gain insight into their challenges and workplace experiences. To Wada et al (2019), the lack of research in this domain may be explained by the pathologization and exoticism of TGD identities in the field of psychology, where "normal" concerns, such as careers, may not be prioritized.

4. Career Development and Trans people

Indeed, TGD people represent a stigmatized group that face numerous forms of oppression in fundamental areas of life, and face a multitude of challenges in personal, educational, and social settings that impact self-efficacy, career development processes, and work experiences (Brown et al, 2012; Budge et al, 2010; Dispenza et al, 2012; Wada et al, 2019). This may explain why most research focuses on workplace discrimination, thus overlooking pre-career experiences, what influences career decisions, and how trans people evaluate different career paths (Goldberg et al, 2021).

4.1 Pre-Career Experiences

Prior to entering the workforce, TGD people are exposed to challenges in educational settings that may affect their career development and preparation. Career barriers (e.g., discrimination, bullying, stereotypes) begin for TGD individuals at school (Costa et al, 2020) which affect their academic success and, consequently, their employment prospects (Carvalho, 2015). According to UNESCO (2016), bullying based on sexual orientation or gender identity/expression hinders educational success. Research shows that LGBTQ students are more likely to have poorer results in school in comparison to their cisgender and heterosexual peers (Pearson et al., 2007, *cit in* Gato et al, 2020). Additionally, LGBTQ students also face challenges related to their identities, including difficulties with coping with victimization and self-acceptance, the absence of positive role models, loneliness, and coming out (Savin-Williams, 1998, *cit in* Gato et al,

2020). In general, LGBTQ youth experiencing school-based victimization have poor mental, physical, and cognitive health outcomes that persist into adulthood (Witcomb et al, 2019).

Scott et al (2011) report that there appears to be a lack of TGD-specific resources in many university career centers, preventing staff from providing trans students job- related advice that caters to their specific needs (e.g., explaining name and pronoun changes to employers). Furthermore, the authors find that trans youth face a bottleneck (Schmidt and Nilsson, 2006, *cit in* Scott et al, 2011) regarding career development as their identity development takes up much of their psychological resources, which may cause problems before and during their early career since the necessary preparation has not been taken. Additionally, besides lacking adequate guidance when applying for jobs, TGD students are less likely to be mentored not only by TGD-competent mentors, but also by mentors who are TGD, which may negatively impact their perceptions on their career paths and may force TGD students to seek support for their career-specific needselsewhere (Goldberg et al, 2021).

Goldberg et al (2021) found that, to some TGD graduate students, transitioning before and/or during university may interfere with their academic progress and career development. The participants in this study described transitioning as a "process that cannot be rushed" and, as such, navigating the emotional, psychological and sometimes medical aspects of it resulted in delays or disruptions in their academic and career goals. In addition, transitioning can be a costly process (e.g., hormones, gender affirming surgery and psychotherapy), creating financial stress that aggravates emotional stress. Moreover, TGD students' career trajectories may also be adversely affected by gender minority stressors in graduate school by affecting their perceptions of their field, and by distracting them from concentrating on their schoolwork and vocational decisions. For example, TGD students report that systems and structures that assume a gender binary identity, such as restrooms or forms, causes constant stress when trying to navigate their lives authentically. Gender minority stress theory (GMST; Testa et al, 2015) assesses stressors, such as discrimination, that are specific to the experiences of TGD individuals (e.g., misgendering) and negatively impact their well-being. Negative experiences related

to gender identity may result in TGD individuals expecting similar events to occur yet again in the future (e.g., anticipating future workplace discrimination); this is also identified as a stressor that affects well-being (Goldberg et al, 2021). This framework clarifies how TGD people's approach to career decisions can reflect an acute awareness of barriers to securing and thriving in a particular career. For TGD individuals, stigma and discrimination are still the most significant barriers to their professional development (Costa et al, 2020). For instance, due to safety concerns, TGD people may change their career goals, choosing one career over another (Budge et al, 2010). In contrast, some TGD students may continue in fields with unwelcoming climates to nondominant groups (e.g., science, technology, engineering, and mathematics - STEM) where finding a supportive workplace can be more challenging, even though TGD-friendly workplace climates are considered fundamental. Other TGD students report thatthey prioritize trans-friendly regions over others, making geographic climate another potential factor in career considerations. However, on the other hand, overly prioritizing workplace and geographic climate may gravely limit career options. In these situations, the lack of access to appropriate career guidance may aggravate the stress that TGD students experience (Goldberg et al, 2021). In turn, these challenges can lead to transitions and disruptions, such as transferring colleges or dropping out. Inclusion in the labor market may be even more fragile due to educational losses caused by dropping out (Costa et al, 2020; Goldberg et al, 2019; Goldberg et al, 2021; Scott et al, 2011).

The research on TGD students' issues is limited which can adversely impact the informed knowledge of career or guidance counselors. Witcomb et al (2019) hypothesize that the lack of research on TGD youth's experiences in school may be since many TGD individuals hide their identities until adulthood, thus, they never experienced bullying based on their trans identity. Additionally, research on TGD youth tends to be grouped inunder the LGBTQ umbrella (Chen and Keats, 2016). In other words, there is very little research on TGD students' experience specifically. Without appropriate support, and withmany obstacles to face, TGD students may feel that they must navigate these concerns alone and may not be able to fully devote themselves to optimal career planning(McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2016; Goldberg et al, 2021; Scott et al. 2011).

4.2 Seeking Employment

For TGD people, searching for employment presents its own unique challenges. 37% of TGD applicants across Europe claim discrimination on the basis of their gender identity while seeking employment, and 13% are believed to be unemployed (Fundamental Rights Agency - FRA, 2015). As a result of anticipated stigma, TGD people may take lower-skilled, lower-paid jobs than those they qualify for or remain unemployed(Ciprikis, 2020). In addition, TGD job applicants may be afraid to apply for certain jobs because they expect to be rejected. Some TGD people in the process of transitioning mayresign from their jobs due to anticipated discrimination (Köllen, 2018) and may try to find work more "suited" for their gender. In both Budge et al (2010) and Brown et al (2012), the trans women who participated in this study mentioned that, prior to transitioning, found themselves pressured to work in male-dominated fields, to prove or reinforce a masculine persona. Post-transition, many participants looked for work in traditionally female careers, which allowed them openly to express themselves as women,which they felt they were unable to while working in their previous jobs.

TGD people may also experience unequal job opportunities due to discrimination, restricting their inclusion and participation in certain jobs or industries (Beauregard et al, 2021; Dowers et al, 2019). For example, in the Asia Pacific region, TGD individuals are often limited to careers in entertainment and sex work and have difficulty in finding work in more "prestigious" occupational fields (e.g., medicine and law; Suriasarn, 2016; Villadiego, 2018, *cit in* Lefebvre & Domene, 2020). Even when discrimination is not apparently obvious, upon being rejected, TGD people still suspect itto be a reason (Brown et al, 2012). Once in employment, compared to their cisgender counterparts, TGD employees are less likely to be promoted and earn lower wages (Ciprikis 2020). A lack of visible representation may also prevent TGD individuals fromapplying to appropriate jobs. TGD applicants may look for companies that offer a TGD-friendly environment that have stories about trans employees on their websites (Budge et al, 2010). In Goldberg et al (2021), 23% of the participants stated that an inclusive diversity policy was fundamental when seeking employment. Ultimately, being TGD canimpact one's career choices or industry preferences (McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2016).

Interviewing for a new job is inherently stressful; for a TGD person who has transitioned medically, interviewing for a job presenting as a gender one is getting accostumed to may be even more so (Taranowski, 2008, *cit in* Beauregard, 2021). Presenting in a gender different than one that they were assigned with at birth comes with its own challenges, such as developing self-confidence, and worrying about how they may be perceived - whether they are sufficiently "passing" or not - which may complicate the interview process even more (Pepper and Lorah, 2008; Waite, 2012, *cit in* Beauregardet al, 2021). These concerns may differ for nonbinary trans people, who may face particular challenges in occupational settings dominated by gender binary categorization (Goldberg et al, 2019). Traditionally, women and men are expected to construct, express,and maintain binary gender categories in all aspects of their lives, and the workplace is of no exception (Thanem and Wallenberg, 2016, *cit in* Beauregard et al, 2021). There are, for example, gender-specific dress codes in many workplaces, which nonbinary trans employees consider a barrier (Brewster et al, 2014). Complying with such dress codes in a manner inconsistent with their identity can certainly cause stress, however, by not complying at all, they risk being fired (Levi, 2007, *cit in* Beauregard et al, 2021). Thus, nonbinary trans individuals may feel more pressure to "pass", to be able to successfully express themselves in traditional female or male categorizations. There is also the matter of gender neutral restrooms, which may not be accessible to nonbinary trans people. Additionally, Valentine (2015), a report on 895 nonbinary people in Scotland, revealed that only 4% of respondents always felt comfortable sharing their nonbinary identity at work, and 55% worried it would impact their career progression. Notwithstanding, little is known about the experiences of nonbinary trans individuals, or TGD individuals who do not undergo any medical procedures (Goldberg et al, 2021).

Additionally, TGD applicants face the choice of disclosing their gender identity or being exposed later on, despite the fact that these decisions are not binary opposites and in reality require constant renegotiation. A TGD person may have to disclose that they are trans to a potential employer in order to fully show their experience and skills acquired during their career, however, by doing so, they risk discrimination and stigma, ruling out the possibility of being hired (McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2016). In

contrast, if their TGD identity is withheld at the application stage and is revealed later on, this may be understood as being misleading (Budge et al, 2010). As such, it can be stressful to manage discrepancies in documents such as birth certificates, driving licenses, and qualifications, as well as providing references and work history (Pepper and Lorah, 2008).

4.3 General Career Experiences

Most of the research on the career experiences of TGD individuals focuses on discrimination within the workplace (McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2016). TGD people face the highest levels of discrimination at work, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2017, *cit in* Beauregard et al, 2021). In De Vries et al (2020), 43% of TGD individuals report experiencing discrimination in their work life over the past two years. Stonewall (2018) reports that out of 871 TGD people surveyed, 51% continue to hide their gender identity at work due to fear of facing abuse. As TGD individuals have varying gender identities, different subgroups (e.g., trans men; trans women; non- binary) may experience very different workplace challenges. Non-binary trans employees, individuals who reject binary gender classifications, may find even greater challenges in the workplace (Budge et al., 2010).

Discrimination experienced within and outside of the workplace may impact the career development trajectory of TGD individuals (Dispenza et al, 2012). There is a higher level of anxiety and stress reported by TGD people, in comparison to cisgender individuals, which likely translates to the workplace as well (Beauregard et al, 2021; Brewster et al, 2014). Like all employees, TGD people experience common workplace stressors, in addition to stressors related to their identity, such as hostility from coworkers, lack of employee protection policies, and gendered spaces (e.g., bathrooms; Brewster et al, 2014). According to some estimates, 30% of TGD employees have been fired, denied a promotion, or mistreated at work (Human Rights Campaign, 2019). Within an organization, discrimination against TGD employees can be grouped into two main forms: formal discrimination and informal discrimination. Discrimination that occurs in the course of a formal employment function, such as hiring, promoting, or disciplining employees, is referred to as formal discrimination. In contrast, informal discrimination

occurs more interpersonally, for example, between coworkers, and can manifest as stereotyping, verbal and physical harassment, and microaggressions (McFadden, 2020).

4.3.1 Formal Discrimination

As explored above, TGD individuals face "somewhat of a Catch-22" (McFadden,2020, p.5) while seeking employment. Providing relevant resources, such as qualifications and references, under their new identity can put them at risk of having their trans identity exposed, if hirers follow up on this experience. If they provide documents under their former name, the hirer becomes immediately aware of their trans identity. Finally, there is the possibility of starting over completely; however, in these circumstances, their experience cannot be shared and end up suffering career-related consequences (McFadden, 2020; Sangganjanavanich, 2009). Fearing discrimination certainly can cause distress for some trans individuals, therefore contributing to non-disclosure of their identity within the organization and during the hiring process (Brown et al, 2012; Goldberg et al, 2021).

Another significant issue is underemployment, as many of these individuals may be unable to find employment or earn a living (Minter and Daley, 2003, *cit in* Dispenza et al, 2012). A survey conducted by Grant et al (2011) shows that a large amount of TGD people in the United States consider themselves underemployed because of their trans identity. In the same survey, 23% of respondents reported that they had been denied a promotion for the same reason. Being denied promotions and getting demoted is another concern for TGD employees (McFadden, 2020). In Brewster et al (2014), 49% of respondents reported being denied promotions or having been fired upon their managers discovering their plans to transition. According to another study, some trans women were demoted for perceived undervaluation of their competencies (Schilt and Connell, 2007). Grant et al (2011) report that 26% of respondents were fired due to being TGD, and eventhough these dismissals are often justified as budget cuts or redundancies, many TGD individuals suspect they were targeted for being trans (Budge et al, 2010; Sangganjanavanich, 2009).

Finally, wage disparities have also been reported by TGD employees. Little is known of the wage differences between TGD and cisgender employees, nevertheless, some surveys based in the United States (e.g., Grant et al, 2011) have found that a large percentage of TGD individuals have incomes below the national average, with some living in extreme poverty. Some studies have investigated wage outcomes after transitioning, finding that differences in wages for TGD people follow traditional wage gaps - trans women's earnings fall, and trans men's earnings either remain the same or raise slightly (Geijtenbeek and Plug, 2015; Schilt & Wiswall, 2008). Ciprikis et al (2020) also report that, even though TGD employees have the same human capital characteristicsbefore transitioning, their wages may be affected afterwards.

4.3.2 Informal Discrimination

Transitioning in the workplace is a highly stressful period for TGD people. As social relationships change because those in the organization begin to see TGD people ina different way, this can produce negative outcomes (Beauregard et al, 2021). During and after transitioning, TGD individuals often experience rejection from colleagues, friends, and family members, which may put them at higher risk to suffer depression, anxiety or suicidal ideation (Sawyer & Thoroughgood, 2017). The most common form of informal discrimination that TGD employees experience at work is harassment (Bender-Baird, 2011, *cit in* Beauregard et al, 2021). Harassment specifically experienced by the TGD community can include transphobic slurs, asking inappropriate questions about genitalia or one's sex life (Brewster et al, 2014), malicious gossip (Sangganjanavanich, 2009), suggesting that TGD employees should permanently leave the workplace (Falconi, 2014), outing one as TGD to others, or stopping an individual from using their corresponding bathroom (Rudin et al. 2014). For TGD people,bathrooms represent a place of fear and vulnerability (Kade, 2016 *cit in* Beauregard et al,2021) and the discussion of TGD individuals and bathrooms is still a very controversial topic in politics and media (McFadden, 2020). Some employers have instructed TGD employees to use bathroom facilities for disabled employees, however, as a result, some individuals may feel that their identity is not respected (Marvell et al, 2017, *cit in* Beauregard et al, 2021).

Researchers have also discussed more subtle forms of mistreatment can be just as harmful, such as deliberate isolation from colleagues (e.g., refusing to interact with them on breaks or excluding TGD co-workers from social gatherings; Brewster et al, 2014; Dispenza et al, 2012; Falconi, 2014; Sangganjanavanich 2009) and microaggressions. Microaggressions are described as "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals of their group membership" (Sue, 2010: xvi, *cit in* McFadden, 2020, p.8). According to McFadden (2020), a general misunderstanding or intentional ignorance and stereotypes regarding TGD identity is at the core of microaggressions directed at TGD individuals. These subtle forms of verbal harassment can include using one's deadname (the name they used before their transition) and deliberate misgendering (e.g., calling a transwoman "he"; Budge et al, 2010). TGD employees experience intentional misgendering frequently in the workplace, as well as hearing many transphobic comments (Fernandez et al, 2017, *cit in* Beauregard et al, 2021) and often find coworkers unable to change their perceptions and be respectful post transition (Falconi, 2014). Common stereotypes concerning TGD people include, suffering from mental health issues, acting in an extremely "gendered" manner, as if they're making a mockery, or that they are "confused" (Howansky et al, 2019). Interestingly, besides the stereotypes regarding TGD identities, TGD individuals may alsoexperience traditional binary gender stereotypes as well. For example, some research hasfound that, post transition, trans men can be assigned traditionally masculine-coded tasks,such as carrying heavy equipment or unloading boxes (Schilt and Connell, 2007). Additionally, trans men have shown to be accorded greater authority and respect than trans women, who report that their expertise was devalued after they transitioned (Levitt and Ippolito, 2014b; Shilt and Connell, 2007).

TGD employees can still face mistreatment from colleagues even in environments that foster acceptance. Many trans employees never report due to fear of retaliation, not being believed or dismissal (Beauregard et al, 2021). In McNeil et al (2012), 81% of TGD employees have reported experiencing silent harassment - being stared at and/or whispered about - and 38% had received physical intimidation and threats. Valentine (2015) reports that 42% of non-binary trans employees had heard that they were "not normal" and 21% were called an incorrect name on purpose. In Stonewall

(2018) 12% of the respondents had experienced physical violence by colleagues or customers. As gender roles and expectations are deeply entrenched in society, there is often confusion and ignorance on how to treat trans people, outside and inside of the workplace. In workplaces that heavily reinforce a gender binary, with gender-specific bathrooms and uniforms, trans employees are particularly vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion and can experience copious amounts of stress (Brewster et al, 2014). This kind of interpersonal discrimination can also lead to significant, continuous psychological stress for trans people (Beauregard et al, 2021; Budge et al. 2010; Dispenza et al, 2012). Work discrimination has been conceptualized by Chojnacki and Gilberg (1994, *cit in* Dispenza et al, 2012) as multidimensional or multilayered; understanding how multilayered experiences of discrimination may potentially affect trans people and their career trajectories is crucial for the advancement of accepting workplace climates.

4.4 Workplace Support

Even though discrimination and rejection are common events in the TGD community, some studies reported a climate of acceptance for TGD employees. According to a comprehensive analysis of studies involving LGBTQ individuals, it was discovered that supportive relationships with co-workers have the most significant influence on positive work attitudes and well-being, surpassing other forms of workplace support, such as support from the organization itself (Webster et al., 2018). Cancela and Stutterheim (2022) also observed a direct correlation between perceived support from co-workers and job-related attitudes. Specifically, when TGD employees perceived their co-workers to be supportive, they reported higher levels of job satisfaction, stronger emotional commitment to their job, reduced job anxiety, and lower intentions to leave their current employment.

Support within the workplace can manifest as verbal support (e.g., words of encouragement), accommodating private spaces (e.g., bathrooms), coworkers and employers acting as they would normally, asking questions out of genuine curiosity, and demonstrating an understanding of trans issues (Brewster et al, 2014; Budge et al, 2010). Similarly, Huffman et al (2021) found that the most significant way coworkers and

employers could show support is with the correct use of pronouns and titles. Supportive workplace environments and job satisfaction have been consistently linked to life satisfaction, financial stability, and positive mental and physical health and workplace climate and job satisfaction have especially important implications for the well-being of trans people (Goldberg et al, 2021; Huffman et al, 2021).

Some studies have identified possible external supports, including family members, friends, significant others, support groups, religious services, online communities, and therapists (Brewster et al, 2014; Goldberg et al, 2021). Peer support has also been found to be helpful in the career-decision process for trans individuals (Schmidt et al, 2011) and can reduce the effects of discrimination (Bockting et al, 2013).

4.5 Coping with Transphobia

Coping is a multifaceted concept that has been extensively studied in the field of psychology. One of the earliest models, the transactional model of stress and coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1987, *cit in* Mara et al., 2021), proposes that stress is the result of the relationship between an individual and their environment. In other words, if an individual perceives stress as a threat to their well-being and lacks the resources to manage it, they may activate two coping strategies: problem-solving and emotion-focused coping. Coping is comprised of two important components: a rational component focused on problem-solving, and an emotional component focused on managing the emotional response to stress. In addition, Compas et al (2001, *cit in* Mizock and Mueser, 2014, p.148) define coping as "conscious, volitional efforts to regulate emotion, thought, behavior, physiology, and the environment in response to stressful events or circumstances." The responses of coping can be either voluntary or involuntary (Compas et al., 2001; Miller and Kaiser, 2001). Engaging actively with a stressor refers to voluntary coping, while involuntary coping means to disengage from the source of stress (Compas et al., 2001). Coping with stigma can involve both engagement and disengagement strategies (Compas et al., 2001; Miller and Kaiser, 2001), and the choice of coping style can depend on the specific source of stress. Each form of coping carries its own distinct advantages and values, depending on the nature of the stressor (Compas et al., 2001)

Regarding marginalized groups and coping strategies utilized to confront and overcome the challenges posed by stigma, there is a dearth of literature available. This literature indicates that effective coping strategies can help mitigate the negative consequences of stigma (Denton et al., 2014). Within the realm of TGD individuals, there has been some research exploring unique coping strategies used in the workplace to navigate transphobia (Budge et al, 2010; Mizock and Mueser, 2014). Mizock and Mueser (2014) categorized coping with transphobia into three levels: individual, interpersonal, and systemic coping strategies. Several studies have examined the utilization of these coping mechanisms by trans individuals in the workplace (Brewster et al., 2014; Budge et al., 2010; Grant et al., 2011; Ozturk and Tatli, 2016). Mizock et al (2017) also discovered that some TGD individuals may resort to maladaptive coping strategies, such as substance abuse and self-harm, as a means to cope with transphobia. Existing research suggests that effective coping with discrimination can reduce stress, enhance functioning, and lessen the impact of stigma on workplace performance in other marginalized groups (Miller and Kaiser, 2001). However, further research is necessary to explore how trans employees specifically cope with discrimination in the workplace.

5. Purpose of the Current Study

As TGD individuals are becoming more comfortable disclosing their authentic selves in society, research examining their lives and experiences is growing (Lefebvre and Domene, 2020). Trans people are discriminated against in the workplace and often encounter barriers throughout their careers (Winter et al, 2018, *cit in* Lefebvre and Domene, 2020). Nevertheless, scholars still consider that, across the globe, "there is still simply too little research on the experiences of transgender employees in the literature" (McFadden, 2020, p.12). There has been a call for more research on TGD people in different parts of the world, considering different sociocultural and legislative contexts, as the results of such research may vary (McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2016). In Portugal, gender is a relatively recent interest of the research in social sciences, used more as a "statistical variable than an analytical tool" (Amâncio, 2003, *cit in* Pinto, 2014, p.8), thus contributing to a dearth of study on TGD individuals (Pinto, 2014). To Hilário and

Marques (2020), Portugal has often been considered at the forefront of LGBTQ rights around the world, consequently providing an important context to explore the experiences of trans people. However, Beatriz and Pereira (2022) find that LGBTQ people in Portugal still experience discrimination in the workplace, despite legal protections. Similarly, Costa et al (2010, *cit in* Pinto, 2014) found that, to the general population, trans people were perceived as the most discriminated population in the country.

The purpose of this study is to explore the career experiences of TGD people in Portugal, contributing to a much-needed expansion of research across the globe and the development of research on TGD individuals in Portugal. To understand these unique experiences, three key research questions were developed:

1) What are the career barriers perceived by TGD people?
2) What support is there for the career development of TGD people?
3) How do TGD people manage perceived discrimination at work?

It is hoped that the results of this research will significantly enhance both career development theory and practice. Specifically, this study aims to identify crucial factors that career counselors should consider when working with TGD clients, thus facilitating their career development. Furthermore, this study also seeks to add to the ongoing conversation about the rights and needs of TGD individuals in society and encourages future research on their experiences and lives.

6. Method

6.1 Participants

A total of 18 people who are identified under the TGD umbrella (e.g., transwomen, transmen, nonbinary trans) participated in this study. It is worth mentioning that originally the study was to include transmen and transwomen only, however, as there was uncertainty as to who would show interest in participating, all options were kept open. A specific age range was also not implicit for the same reason. Therefore, 5 nonbinary trans people, 8 trans men, 4 trans women, and one participant who identified as "questioning" were recruited. The participants ages ranged from 19 to 29 years of age (M=23.27, SD=7.45). All participants were either currently employed or had previous job

experience. 10 participants were employed full time, 6 participants were working students, 1 participant was a full-time student, and one participant was unemployed. Table 1 shows demographic data of each participant, including age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, education, and current occupation. Participants were predominantly white, with three being biracial. Most participants had completed high school, two had completed a bachelor's degree, and three had completed a master's degree. To ensure the privacy of each participant, their names were substituted with codes. The code starts with the interview number followed by an initial of one of their names.

Table 1. Participants' demographic data.

Participant	Age	Gender	Sexual orientation	Ethnicity	Education	Occupation
1A	24	Nonbinary	Bisexual	White	Master's degree	Interpreter
2N	29	Trans woman	Lesbian	White	Highschool	Unemployed
3D	24	Trans man	n/a	White	Highschool	Fitness instructor
4A	22	Trans woman	Pansexual	White	Highschool	Student
5L	24	Trans man	Bisexual	White	Highschool	Working student
6T	23	Questioning	Bisexual	White	Highschool	Cashier
7W	19	Trans man	Gay	White	Highschool	Working student
8S	26	Nonbinary	Asexual	White	Master'sdegree	Artist/bartender
9D	26	Trans man	Heterosexual	White	Highschool	Canteen employee
10E	25	Nonbinary	Pansexual	White	Bachelor's degree	Marketing/social media management
11E	21	Trans man	Pansexual	Biracial	Highschool	Working student
12I	20	Nonbinary	Omnisexual	White	Highschool	Working student
13V	20	Trans man	Pansexual	Biracial	Highschool	Working student

14V	20	Trans man	Pansexual	White	Highschool	Waiter
15V	22	Trans man	Pansexual	White	Highschool	Working student
16V	22	Nonbinary	Bisexual	Biracial	Highschool	Interpreter
17V	26	Trans woman	Lesbian	White	Bachelor's degree	Call center
18C	26	Trans woman	Lesbian	White	Master'sde gree	Marketing

Table 1. (continued)

6.2 Measures

6.2.1 Demographic Questionnaire

To gather basic information about the participants, a demographic questionnaire was utilized (annex A). The collected data included the following details: age, gender, sexual orientation, educational attainment, and occupation.

6.2.2 Interview Protocol

A semistructed interview was developed after reviewing the literature found to construct this study's theoretical framework. Seven main questions were formulated, with respective probes: 1) Tell me about your transition process, either physical, social, or both. (Probes: Did you experience any internal conflict regarding your transition? Have you experienced discrimination? Did you receive any support?); 2) Tell me about your current occupation. (Probes: Are you happy with your current occupation? If yes: Tell me why. If no: Tell me why; what would you rather be doing?); 3) What factors influenced your career aspirations and/or choices the most? (Probes: Is being trans one of them? If yes or no: Tell me why); 4) Do your employers and/or coworkers know that you are trans? (Probes: How did you reveal your identity? Can you describe the events that lead up to revealing your identity? What were the results of coming out? Have you experienced discrimination based on your identity in the workplace? Have you received support in the workplace?); 5) What support, if any, have you received regarding your career aspirations

and/or choices?; 6) What coping strategies, if any, do you use to deal with discrimination inside or outside the workplace?; and 7) What are your career plans for the future? In case the participants needed further clarification of any questions, additional probes were also asked. All interviews were conducted and recorded using Zoom. Participants were not required to use videocamera, to ensure and respect their privacy and comfort.

6.3 Procedure

6.3.1 Recruiting Participants

Participants were recruited via social media and snowballing. The intentions and requirements of the current study were explained on various social media platforms and were shared by individuals who knew of people who may have been interested in participating. One of the participants in this study used their connections to various trans and LGBTQ activist groups in Portugal to recruit participants. A total of 56 people showed interest in participating; however, many of them ceased contact after the researcher explained the context of the study. Some contacts were kept in the event that, for whatever reason, the interviews had to be discarded; however, this fortunately was unnecessary.

Participants signed a consent form (annex B) containing the conditions and requirements for the study, namely, its goals and anonymity. Moreover, participants were informed that data would only be used for the current study and destroyed after the study had been finished.

6.3.2 Data Analysis

Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and subsequently analyzed using Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR; Hill et al, 2005), which is considered by researchers to be ideal for providing comprehensive descriptions of an individual's inner experiences. Due to its constructivist nature, this approach is particularly suited for investigating different realities (Hill et al, 2005). The process began by developing a rough draft of domains, which were based on the literature review and interview questions. For each domain, a list of core ideas, comprising similar statements and ideas, was compiled, and categorized. The categories were further subdivided into sub-

categories, which specified the content of each core idea. Through a continuous review of each interview, the domains, and categories, the researchers (my supervisors and I) achieved consensus until the data were well-summarized and accurately represented.

6.3.3 Procedures to Ensure Study Trustworthiness

Several procedures were implemented to ensure the trustworthiness of this study. These procedures include:

1. Interview Construction: The interview questions were carefully constructed to ensure clarity and precision, reducing any potential ambiguity.

2. Pilot Interviews: Three pilot interviews were conducted to test the effectiveness of the questions. This allowed for identification and elimination of any ambiguities or issues that could arise during the actual interviews.

3. Audio Recording and Transcription: The interviews were recorded and transcribed in their entirety. This approach ensures accurate preservation of the participants' responses, minimizing the chances of misinterpretation or misrepresentation

4. Involvement of Judges and an Auditor: Two judges and an auditor were involved in the study. Their presence provided an additional layer of objectivity and impartiality to the analysis process, reducing potential bias.

5. Addressing Bias: Prior to data analysis, the judges engaged in discussions to identify and address potential sources of bias in the analysis. Particular attention was given to mitigating power relations to ensure a fair and unbiased interpretation of the data.

By implementing these procedures, the study aimed to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, ensuring a rigorous and reliable research process.

7. Results

Table 2 shows the domains, categories and sub-categories resulting from CQR.

Based on Hill et al.'s (2005) recommendation, core ideas were classified as follows: ideas were deemed general if they appeared in all cases, typical if they appeared in over half of the cases, variant if they appeared in less than half but at least two cases, and rare if they appeared in only one or two cases. As the list is extensive, the researchers decided to focus on typical findings in each category; table 2 can be consulted for variant and rare findings. For the same reason, examples of core ideas will not be presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Domains, Categories & Sub-categories, and Frequencies.

Domain	Category and sub-category	Frequency
Gender identity experiences	*Transition*	
	Social	Variant
	Social and physical	Typical
	No desire to transition	Rare
	Internal conflict regarding transition	
	Gender dysphoria	Typical
	Uncertainty	Typical
	Internalized transphobia	Variant
	Anticipated stigma	Typical
	Fear of surgery complications	Rare
	External reactions to coming out	
	Acceptance	Variant
	Rejection	Variant
	Violence	Variant
	Invalidation	Variant
	Mixed reactions	Typical
Career experiences and interests	*Job satisfaction*	
	Nature of work	Typical
	Remote work	Variant
	Inclusive work environment	Variant
	Calm work environment	Rare
	Gaining work experience	Rare
	Financial support	Variant
	Supportive clientele	Rare
	Job dissatisfaction	
	Nature of work	Rare
	Lack of work-life balance	Variant

		Low income	Variant
		Incompetent counselors	Rare
		Physical and mental exhaustion	Variant
		Discrimination	Typical
		Communication failures	Variant
		Peer pressure	Rare
	Career path influences		
		Gender identity	Typical
		Self-concept	Variant
		Personal interests	Typical
		Friends	Rare
		Family	Variant
		Teachers	Variant
		LGBT professionals	Rare
		Financial	Variant
		Social alienation	Rare
Career plans	*Coming out at work*		
		Plan to be out	Variant
		No plan to be out	Typical
	Future career plans		
		Desire to change job	Typical
		Remain in the same company	Rare
		Desire to relocate geographically	Variant
		No career plans	Variant
	Other plans		
		Desire to begin physical transition (HRT, gender reassignment surgery)	Variant
		Desire to be out to family members	Rare
		Start or finish university	Variant
		Improve artistic skills	Rare
Barriers	*Career*		
		Lack of opportunities	Variant
		Financial barriers	Variant
		Lack of education	Rare
		Lack of investment in field	Rare
		Recruitment discrimination	Variant
		Gender minority stress	Variant
		Mental health	Variant
		Family pressure	Variant
	Bureaucracy		
		Legal documents	Variant
Supports	*Social support*		
		Friends	Typical
		Significant other	Variant
		Family	Typical
		Teachers	Variant

	LGBT community	Variant
	Job support	
	Employers	Variant
	Coworkers	Variant
	Supervisor	Rare
	Clients	Rare
	Financial support	
	Family	Variant
	Current job	Variant
	Anonymous donations	Rare
	Outside professional support	
	Legal rights	Variant
	Activism groups	Variant
	Online resources	Variant
	TV programs	Rare
	Therapy	Variant
	Career counseling	Rare
Coping strategies	*Individual coping mechanisms*	
	"Roleplaying"	Variant
	Understanding/empathy	Variant
	Managing and adapting emotional responses in the presence of discrimination	Typical
	Interpersonal coping mechanisms	
	Acquiring relational supports	Rare
	Withdrawing or detachment from uncomfortable situations/sources of transphobia	Variant
	Systemic coping mechanisms	
	Educating others	Variant
	Make a complaint (if possible)	Variant

Table 2. (continued)

Six domains were defined: (1) Gender Identity Experiences, (2) Career Experiences and Interests, (3) Career Plans, (4) Barriers, (5) Supports and (6) Coping Strategies. The first domain is defined by (a) transition, (b) internal conflict regarding transition and (c) external reactions to coming out. The typical finding in transition is defined by the sub-category social and physical, meaning that most of the participants in this study have either already transitioned or are currently in the process of transitioning,

both socially and physically. To illustrate this idea, one participant said:

> I'm still transitioning. I started taking hormones two years ago, but my social transition started a year prior (participant #5L).

Next, three typical ideas arose in internal conflict regarding transition, including uncertainty, fear of negative reactions to coming out, and gender dysphoria. In other words, participants described internal conflict related to their transition, such as the experience of gender dysphoria, which refers to the feeling of discrepancy between their gender identity and gender assigned with at birth:

> I always knew something was up...I felt disconnected to my body and a lot of rage, which I initially thought wasn't associated with my gender, but as soon as I started taking testosterone blockers, I immediately started to feel better and knew what the problem was. (participant #18C)

Feelings of uncertainty and fear regarding possible negative outcomes also occurred with typical frequency. Illustrating participants' uncertainty, one participant mentioned:

> I started to transition in 2019, but I was questioning whether I should or shouldn't for nearly two years and even brought this question up in therapy. However, one day I decided that this is what I really wanted to do. (participant #6T)

Another participant described their concerns about negative reactions from others:

> "Taking hormones is something that scared me, that still scares me, because it means that...because everything else, my pronouns and my name, they're things that I can keep to myself, that I can hide. I don't have to expose myself to everyone. And with hormones, suddenly I must think about how I'm going to disclose this process to my family, for example, because my body is going to change, or, in other cases, when I need to show my identification, such as in hospitals...overall, I have to be out as a trans person, and that is scary." (participant #8S)

The category "external reactions to coming out" yielded typical findings that are characterized by mixed reactions. This means that when participants disclosed their trans identity, they received responses that were neither completely negative nor positive, but rather a combination of both:

My sister wasn't supportive of me at all when I came out to her. She told me that it was against the will of God, which was very strange to me, since she's never been religious. My mother has been supporting me in any way she can. My father lost it when he found out, but he came around later, thanks to his girlfriend, who has been helping him understand my situation. Other than that, my girlfriend has been my biggest supporter. I've also found a lot of support through Twitter and other social media platforms. (participant #2N).

The categories that define the domain "Career Experiences and Interests" are as follows: (a) job satisfaction, (b) job dissatisfaction, and (c) career path influences. The typical reported factor in job satisfaction is the nature of the work itself. Participants generally found their job roles to be satisfying due to the nature of the work they were doing:

When I applied for this job, I didn't really have any great expectations, but once I started working, I ended up really enjoying what I do, it's even related to what I want to do in the future. It's very fulfilling because I help people every day. (participant #5L)

Regarding job dissatisfaction, discrimination is the typical idea. This finding can be attributed to either personal experiences of discrimination among participants or observations of discriminatory behavior within their workplaces. Participants have reported various examples of such situations:

My colleagues would try to prevent me from working with our clients as often as possible. They said I would confuse people, but that never happened, at least not with the clients. I couldn't even change my clothes in the changing room, they made me change my clothes in the bathroom stalls so I wouldn't be seen. (participant #11E)

As an interpreter, sometimes I must interpret situations that aren't very comfortable, like emergency calls. Other times I must interpret racist or sexist comments, homophobic and sometimes even transphobic comments, and this makes me feel very uncomfortable. It's one of the reasons that I am happy to have remote work, so I am not physically present in these situations. (participant #16V)

In "career path influences", the two typical findings were gender identity and personal interests. Nearly all the participants regarded their gender identity as a significant consideration in their career choices and job applications, citing a range of reasons. Some explained that they viewed their gender identity as an important factor because it served as a representation for other transgender individuals. For those who were artistically inclined, their identity was often a focal point of their artwork, or they wanted to explore themes related to their identity in their creative work. Others highlighted concerns for their personal safety and therefore ruled out career paths that could potentially jeopardize their well-being. One participant stated:

Prior to transitioning I wanted to apply to the military. I found out that I would even have hormones and surgeries paid for, but they told me that they couldn't guarantee my safety. The possibility of fearing for my life made me choose to not apply at all. In that sense I consider my gender identity had an impact on the career choices I've made so far because I don't want to risk my safety. (#15V)

Personal interests refer to the hobbies and other activities that participants believe have a significant influence on their career aspirations, as revealed by participant #7W:

Drawing has always been a hobby of mine, and videogames. Videogames are what made me think that I could follow a career path in art and videogames simultaneously.

The categories (a) coming out at work, (b) future career plans, and (c) other plans define the domain "Career Plans". The category "coming out at work" pertains to the participants' potential plans of revealing their trans identity to their colleagues and employer. The results showed that the sub-category "no plan to be out" was typical. This means that many participants expressed their intention to keep their gender identity

confidential from their coworkers and employer for various reasons. Some participants explained they wanted privacy, others mentioned they didn't want to put themselves at risk to any potential harm. Others stated that they didn't think it was relevant or important to reveal to their coworkers and/or employers. To provide an example of this concept, one participant shared:

> Even though I have the option of using a different name while at work, I don't exactly feel comfortable doing so, because I'm afraid of being questioned and having my reasons for wanting to change my name rejected [by my employer]. (participant #16V)

In terms of future career plans, typical findings suggest that participants considered changing jobs. The reasons and motivations for seeking such changes vary greatly. For some, it may be a desire to find a more fulfilling job, while for others, the motivation may be to pursue higher-paying positions. There are also those who seek a fresh start on their career path and aspire to pursue education in their desired field. In essence, the participants expressed a desire to explore new career paths in the future. One participant shared:

> In the future I hope to have a good job, one that I feel comfortable in and where I am properly financially compensated. (participant #1A)

The fifth domain, Supports, encompasses several categories, namely: (a) social support, (b) job support, (c) financial support, and (d) outside professional support. In this context, support pertains to the assistance that participants found helpful in achieving their career aspirations and/or affirming their gender identity. In "social support", most participants cited their family and friends as their primary source of support when it comes to their career choices and/or transition:

> The biggest supporters I've had have got to be my friends, the people I'd consider closest to me. They've always supported me and they're probably one of the main reasons I'm still here today. Those people always saw me for whom I really am and helped me when I had no one or nothing else. (participant #17V)

I think my parents helped me the most [with my career]. They put me in private school, they bought me a computer to use for my classes, and other electronics that I needed to complete my education...bottom line is, they gave me whatever I needed to get an education. (participant #18C)

Finally, the domain "Coping Strategies" aims to highlight the methods that participants used to cope with discrimination. Based on Mizock & Mueser's (2014) levels of coping with transphobia, this domain includes three categories: (a) individual coping mechanisms, (b) interpersonal coping mechanisms, and (c) systemic coping mechanisms. Management and adaptation of emotional responses was the typical finding in the "individual coping mechanisms" category. Specifically, many participants reported modifying their emotional reactions in the presence of discrimination and frequently mentioned ignoring such situations as a common approach. To further illustrate this concept, a participant shared the following statement:

Regarding transphobia...I think that everyone who is LGBTQ has experienced some form of discrimination, unfortunately. In my opinion, you just have to ignore it. The people who make unnecessary comments don't know what we've been through, what we are feeling, and don't have the right to have an opinion on something they know nothing about. (participant #14V)

8. Discussion

As far as we know, this study represents one of the first of its kind in Portugal that examines the career development of TGD individuals. The literature review uncovered a paucity of available research and a notable dearth of studies conducted within the country itself. It should be noted that this study is exploratory in nature, aiming to gather information based on general themes derived from previous literature. It aims to analyze what barriers and supports participants perceive in regard to their career development as well as how they manage challenges faced within the workplace, namely discrimination. To address this purpose, three key research questions were formulated, which represent the main objectives of the current study:

a) What are the career barriers perceived by TGD people?

b) What support is there for the career development of TGD people?

c) How do TGD people manage discrimination at work?

In this section, a detailed analysis of this study's results will be provided, as well as a description of how the findings address each of the research questions.

While the primary focus of this exploratory study is the career development of TGD individuals, the findings related to the domain of Gender Identity Experiences underscore the significance of such experiences in contextualizing and comprehending the participants' career journeys. Consequently, most participants in this study had either undergone or were currently undergoing a process of social and physical transition. It was common for participants to describe experiencing gender dysphoria, a well-known phenomenon among transgender individuals (Ashley, 2021). These findings align with previous research, indicating that participants embarked on their transition journey to alleviate the distress caused by gender dysphoria (Jones et al., 2019; White Hughto et al., 2017). Many participants expressed uncertainty about their transition, without providing specific reasons for their uncertainty, but often describing it as a sense of not knowing if it was the "right" decision. Drawing from Magalhães et al.'s findings (2020), this uncertainty may stem from various factors such as fear of it being a phase, indecisiveness, or doubts about one's own identity. Transitioning is a complex and resource-intensive process, both physically and emotionally, and it is natural to have doubts about embarking on such a journey. Additionally, some participants shared that they initially didn't understand what they were feeling and only realized they were TGD after conducting research or learning from media representations of TGD individuals. This highlights how a lack of knowledge about TGD experiences and gender identity can contribute to confusion about one's own feelings. Nevertheless, despite these doubts, the overall well-being of individuals who choose to transition tends to improve (Ashley and Ells, 2018; Beauregard et al., 2021; Holmberg et al., 2019; Verbeek et al., 2020). On the other hand, participants also expressed fear of rejection and potential negative reactions, often referred to as anticipated stigma. Verbeek et al (2020) note that this fear of stigmatization persists even after the completion of the transition, as the fear itself becomes ingrained. Our findings underscore the multiple forms of oppression that

TGD individuals face in various aspects of life (Ayhan et al., 2020; McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2016; Wada et al., 2019), which explains why they often fear mistreatment in all areas of their lives, both before and after transitioning. Participants also shared their experiences of receiving mixed reactions when disclosing their identity. These responses were neither completely negative nor positive but rather a combination of both. As research shows, TGD individuals frequently encounter stigmatization from family members and peers (Abreu et al., 2019; Nachmias et al., 2019). A common theme was the initially negative reaction from family members, which gradually changed over time, becoming more positive. Some participants described instances where their family members even resorted to physical abuse when the topic of their identity emerged. Similar to findings in Abelson (2016) and Aramburu Alegría (2018), although some family members may initially struggle with acceptance, they can evolve and eventually come to accept and become supportive of their TGD identities.

With regard to more specific content related to the participants' careers, we begin by delving into the factors that contributed to their job satisfaction as reported in this study. Participants frequently expressed satisfaction with their job roles due to the nature of the work they were engaged in. In addition, participants also placed importance on inclusive working environments or remote job opportunities and the financial compensation associated with their work. These findings indicate that job satisfaction is strongly influenced not only by the nature of the work tasks but also by the working conditions and financial rewards tied to their employment. Existing literature on job satisfaction among TGD employees primarily emphasizes the positive impact of peer support and workplace transitioning on their work attitudes and overall job experiences (Cancela and Stutterheim, 2022; Drydakis, 2017; Huffman et al., 2021; McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2016). Additionally, job satisfaction is positively linked to perceptions of a culture of diversity and inclusion (Yousuf et al., 2022). According to Locke's definition (1976) cited in Judge and Klinger (2008, p. 394), job satisfaction refers to "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the evaluation of one's job or job experiences". The findings align with some of the facets of job satisfaction described by Smith et al. (1969, *cit in* Judge and Klinger, 2008) and Locke (1976, *cit in* Judge and Klinger, 2008), which emphasize the importance of pay, working conditions, and the

actual work performed. Additionally, researchers often categorize job satisfaction into intrinsic and extrinsic elements (Judge and Klinger, 2008), with the nature of the job itself, remote job opportunities, and financial compensation falling into the extrinsic category. However, itappears that no research has specifically investigated extrinsic job satisfaction factors among TGD individuals to date.

In contrast, participants frequently mentioned discrimination when discussing job dissatisfaction. In this study, "discrimination" is being used in a broader context to encompass both the personal experiences of discrimination reported by participants and the observations of discriminatory behaviour within their respective workplaces. Participants shared personal accounts of discrimination in the workplace, ranging from being denied the use of their preferred name and pronouns to being restricted from using appropriate restrooms. They also mentioned instances of horizontal discrimination and sexual harassment. Participants also shared accounts of witnessing coworkers, employers, or clients engaging in discriminatory behaviour or using discriminatory language towards their colleagues, which made them feel uncomfortable, aligning closely with findings in Beatriz & Pereira (2022). Existing literature has linked discrimination to job dissatisfaction (Wright et al., 1995, *cit in* Gelfrand et al., 2005). As observed in previous studies, TGD employees often describe facing various negative experiences (McFadden, 2020), making it unsurprising that discrimination emerged as a significant factor contributing to job dissatisfaction among our participants. The findings in this study align with the results of Beatriz and Pereira (2022, p.19), who identified that "LGBTQIA+ workers continue to face discriminatory experiences at work, including harassment, homophobic and transphobic jokes, and job loss." Similarly, the research conducted by Kaosayapandhu (2021) revealed that the TGD employees included in the study encountered discrimination in the workplace, and those who expressed dissatisfaction with their job were less inclined to exhibit commitment to their organizations, as well as a higher likelihood of resigning due to their discontentment.

When discussing the factors that influenced their career decisions, almost all of the participants highlighted the importance of their gender identity and personal interests in shaping their career choices and job applications. Regarding gender identity, these findings align with the results reported by Schneider and Dimito (2010), who found that

LGBTQ students considered their sexual orientation when making career decisions. Additionally, participants emphasized the role of hobbies and other activities that they believed significantly influenced their career choices. Among the existing literature, we report similar findings only in Goldberg et al's study (2021), who also acknowledge their study as one of the first to explore career considerations and decisions among transgender individuals. The main distinction is that their findings centered on career interests driven by specific goals, such as a desire to work with LGBTQ youth. In contrast, our findings centered on personal interests that directly influenced career aspirations, such as an interest in astronomy leading to a career path in astrophotography. Apart from Goldberg et al.'s study (2021), to our knowledge, no research has been conducted thus far on the considerations influencing career paths in TGD individuals.

Despite research indicating that expressing one's identity can lead to positive outcomes for marginalized individuals (Law et al., 2011; Martinez et al., 2016), the participants in our study expressed a reluctance to disclose their TGD identity in the workplace. This finding supports the ManpowerGroup's research (2021, *cit in* Beatrizand Pereira, 2022), which indicates that most LGBTQ individuals in Portugal feel uncomfortable revealing their sexual orientation to colleagues. In turn, our finding also aligns closely to the findings in Goldberg et al (2021), Grant et al (2011), and Kaosayapandhu (2021), highlighting the motivations for concealing one's TGD identity at work, usually due to concerns about how they might be treated. Regarding future career plans, our findings indicate that participants commonly considered changing jobs. The reasons and motivations behind these desires varied greatly. Some sought more fulfilling employment, while others aimed for higher-paying positions. There were also individuals seeking a fresh start in a new career path and expressing a desire to pursue education in their desired field. Participants expressed a willingness to explore new career paths in the future. Hartzell et al. (2009) noted that individuals who experience job loss due to their gender identity are more likely to switch careers rather than finding similar employment within the same sector. While other studies often highlight financial motivations for career changes among TGD individuals to support their transition (Pepper and Lorah, 2008), our results suggest that the participants' motivations were unrelated to their transgender identity and primarily driven by their career aspirations, similar to the findings in Kaosayapandhu's study (2021), in which participants expressed positive

motivations for leaving their current positions and seeking employment elsewhere, such as a desire to explore new opportunities or pursue further education.

Participants identified friends and family as the primary source of support that played a crucial role in both realizing their career aspirations and affirming their gender identity. It is important to recognize that TGD individuals are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, which can have numerous negative effects and significantly impact their career development (Lefebvre and Domene, 2020; McFadden, 2020). Given that one's career is often intertwined with their life and identity, it can influence their mental health and well-being. When it comes to career aspirations, social support not only directly affects individuals' career behaviors and outcomes but also influences them through career self-efficacy (Lent et al., 2003). Support from significant individuals reinforces an individual's values and helps them confront any irrational expectations they may have about their career, thereby enhancing their decision-making and planning processes (Rodriguez, 2012). A study focusing on college athletes' career development conducted by Chan (2020) found that social support positively contributed to the prediction of career beliefs and career self-efficacy. In other words, receiving positive support and opinions can foster a sense of optimism and effectively establish career values and aspirations. Moreover, social support has been recognized as a pivotal element in mitigating the adverse consequences of minority stress experienced by TGD individuals (Bockting et al., 2013). It serves as a protective factor that can mitigate the harmful effects of stress associated with being a member of a marginalized group.

Existing research indicates that TGD individuals employ various coping strategies to mitigate the impact of transphobia (Brewster et al., 2014). In this study, participants disclosed their coping strategies in response to transphobic incidents, including maintaining composure and selectively filtering or disregarding the situation, which is consistent with the findings of Mizock and Mueser (2014). However, it is important to acknowledge that the availability of external resources for coping may vary for different individuals, depending on their specific contexts. As highlighted by Mara et al. (2021), most coping strategies identified in studies come from Western countries such as the USA, Canada, and the UK. It is essential to recognize that coping mechanisms employed by TGD individuals may differ based on cultural and societal factors. This emphasizes

the need for ongoing research on TGD individuals in diverse contexts worldwide.

Based on the analysis of the study findings, addressing the first research question, which focused on perceived career barriers among TGD individuals, it is worth noting that although participants mentioned various career barriers, such as limited opportunities, financial constraints, lack of education, inadequate investment in chosen careers, recruitment discrimination, gender minority stress, mental health issues, family pressures, and bureaucratic obstacles, none of these barriers emerged as typical findings in terms of career development. Only one previous study (Budge et al., 2010) identified perceived barriers faced by TGD individuals, including direct discrimination, job loss due to transgender identity, difficulty in securing employment, restroom discrimination, gender stereotypes, and the need for greater effort to compensate for their transgender status. Our study revealed similar findings, particularly regarding recruitment discrimination, while other forms of discrimination were more commonly associated with job dissatisfaction rather than being perceived as barriers. This suggests that career barriers were not as prominent as discrimination in terms of dissatisfaction at work, highlighting the importance of well-being in the workplace for TGD individuals. However, it is important to recognize that discrimination against TGD individuals in all areas of life can create career barriers, underscoring the significance of support.

Regarding the second research question, findings suggest that social support from friends and family plays a crucial role in the lives of TGD individuals. It serves as a vital resource not only in pursuing career aspirations but also in affirming gender identity, mitigating the negative effects of discrimination, and fostering positive career development outcomes. The working conditions, such as remote work or an inclusive work environment, were also identified as contributing factors to job satisfaction and potentially impacting the career development of TGD individuals. These findings align with previous research by Kaosayapandhu (2021), which suggested that individuals who associate discrimination with job dissatisfaction are more likely to be disinterested in their jobs or even consider quitting.

Furthermore, many participants expressed a desire to change jobs, although they did not explicitly attribute their reasons to discrimination. This highlights a strategy

employed by TGD individuals to counteract workplace dissatisfaction, leading us to the final research question, which focused on how TGD individuals navigate and cope with perceived discrimination in the workplace. This study's findings suggest that TGD individuals primarily rely on their internal resources to manage discriminatory experiences, while seeking external support, such as relational support, appeared to be uncommon. This hesitation to seek support may be attributed to the discomfort TGD employees feel in revealing their identity. It is important to consider that coping mechanisms utilized by TGD individuals may vary based on cultural and societal factors, as suggested by Mara et al. (2021). Despite the Portuguese Labour Code prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, participants in our study chose to "just ignore" workplace discrimination, highlighting the complex realities faced by Portuguese trans workers (Beatriz and Pereira, 2022).

8.1 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

One limitation of this study is the small number of judges involved in the coding process, which may restrict the range of perspectives on the data and hinder the establishment of a more comprehensive consensus. However, the study's trustworthiness was upheld through procedures designed to address power imbalances during consensus building. Prior to the analysis, the power dynamics within the judging team were examined to ensure that all team members felt comfortable expressing their opinions, including a master-level student who served as one of the judges. Another limitation of this study is the underrepresentation of non-white TGD participants, as our sample was predominantly composed of white individuals. Research indicates that non-white TGD individuals encounter heightened obstacles in terms of employment opportunities and economic marginalization, which have been linked to an increased vulnerability to poor health (Eger, 2018; Hill et al., 2017). The absence of non-white participants in this study restricts our understanding of how different intersecting identities influence career decisions.

One aspect that remains unclear in this study is the impact of gender identity on the career choices of TGD individuals. Additionally, this study has opened up another line of investigation regarding the extrinsic factors influencing job satisfaction among TGD individuals. Furthermore, despite the inclusion of nonbinary trans participants,

limited knowledge exists regarding their unique needs and challenges in career development, as suggested by existing research. Lastly, future studies should delve deeper into the examination of perceived career barriers that are unrelated to gender identity. These topics are highly relevant for future research in this field, highlighting the importance of continued investigation into the experiences of TGD individuals in diverse contexts globally.

9. Conclusion

While Portugal has made significant strides in terms of recognizing and protecting the rights of TGD individuals, this study highlights that workplace discrimination remains a major concern for Portuguese TGD individuals. The study reveals that TGD individuals greatly value social support from friends and family, which plays a significant role in shaping their career paths. Moreover, trans individuals tend to rely on personal inner resources, such as managing their emotional responses, rather than seeking support from coworkers, in order to cope with discrimination. This underscores the need for stronger workplace protections and increased education on TGD issues, both in educational institutions and professional settings.

Employers and coworkers should be knowledgeable about what it means to be TGD, ensuring that new team members who identify as trans are not only safe but also feel welcomed and comfortable in their jobs, just like any other employee. TGD individuals, like everyone else, are fundamentally human beings. Part of the human experience involves finding purpose in our lives, and many of us do so through our careers. Every individual deserves the right to a meaningful, safe, and inclusive job environment. As Ramalho (2021, p.123) notes, "diversity is an inherent aspect of social reality, and therefore, the unique characteristics that both connect and distinguish various social groups or categories should not give rise to discrimination, inequality, or exclusion".

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ANNEXES

Annex A. Demographic Questionnaire (translated from Portuguese)

1 – What are your pronouns?

2 – How old are you?

3 – What is your gender?

4 – What is your sexual orientation?

5 – What is your ethnicity?

6 – What's the highest level of education you've completed?

7 – What is your current occupation?

Dear participant,

      This study takes place within the scope of the Masters in Educational Psychology, at the University of Évora, and is conducted by me, Kristina Maria Holm, under the guidance of Professor Paulo Cardoso and Professor Madalena Melo. We ask you to read this text with special care, to ask any questions you may have and to participate in this study only if you agree with the information in this document.

      We consider it essential that you understand the purpose of this study and that you understand the aspects of participating in it. Our objective is, basically, to see what are the barriers and supports for the career development of trans people and, on the other hand, to explore the discrimination that they have already faced in the workplace.

      To carry out this study, we prepared a semi-structured interview, with questions that seek to know their experiences and opinions on this subject. We ask that you answer the questions we are going to ask you sincerely, emphasizing that we do not make any value judgments and that there are no right or wrong answers, especially taking into account the diverse and complex human experience and the variety of experiences of each person. We also ask for authorization for the audio recording of the interview, with the sole purpose of later transcription, in order to accurately analyze its content. The recording will be immediately destroyed after transcription.

      The requirements for participation are:

A. be a transgender person;

B. be between 18 and 65 years of age;

C. be in the job market or have had work experience;

D. sign the consent form.

It is hoped that this study will allow a deeper understanding of the career development of this population, and eventually inspire future investigations related to the topic.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without prejudice if you feel any discomfort that leads you to opt for this decision. In this way, any information collected will be treated completely anonymously and confidentially, being used solely for the purposes of this investigation, thus guaranteeing the total secrecy of any personal information and the subsequent destruction of data no longer necessary for the investigation.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Researcher's signature_____

Informed consent

Taking into account everything mentioned above, I declare that I agree with this information, that I became aware of the purpose of this study, of the aspects related to my participation, thus accepting to participate in this investigation.

Date: /   /

Interviewee's signature _____