

# Workplace Experiences of Transgender Individuals: A Scoping Review

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**Abstract:** This scoping review sought to explore the literature regarding the experiences of transgender people in the workplace. Through an examination of previously published quantitative and qualitative research studies, the experiences of transgender people in the workplace were considered in terms of the implications of the existing knowledge base for career development practice in the Asia Pacific region. Several key themes and patterns were identified: support, gender-related concerns, structural and institutional concerns, and resilience of transgender individuals. Subthemes for each are also explored. The review was guided by a strength-based perspective, highlighting the adaptability, flexibility, and resiliency of transgender individuals. The discussion includes recommendations for safe and non-discriminatory career development practice, workplaces, and policies.

## Introduction

Across the globe, more transgender individuals are beginning to feel comfortable disclosing their identity in society, and with this, a growing body of literature examining their personal experiences is emerging. Thus far, the literature indicates that transgender individuals often experience discrimination and barriers in various areas of life, including education, housing, and in the workplace (Bradford, Reisner, Honnold, & Xavier, 2013; Factor & Rothblum, 2007; Wang et al., 2019). Transgender people across the world, including in the Asia Pacific region, face discrimination and other barriers in obtaining employment (Winter et al., 2018), as well as in the workplace. Discrimination can occur as workplace verbal harassment, physical violence, and workplace policies, or lack thereof, that do not serve their transgender employees. The oppression transgender people face in employment can also relate to being restricted to certain types of jobs, such as sex work or doing makeup and hair, as that is what is made available and deemed acceptable for

them (Suriasarn, 2016). Therefore, much of the literature has previously focused on the experiences of transgender people involved in sex work (Nemoto, Bodeker, & Iwamoto, 2011). A more in-depth exploration of the literature on the experiences of transgender people, particularly within the workplace, is detailed below.

## Literature Review

Bradford et al. (2013) found that discrimination was related to a transgender person's location, socioeconomic status (SES), race/ethnicity, ability to obtain health care, being a survivor of abuse, and support, or lack thereof. Their study highlighted multiple

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intersections (e.g., ethnicity, SES) and the influence on discrimination and harassment.

Factor and Rothblum (2007) noted similar findings when they compared the experiences of transgender adults and their cisgender (i.e., non-transgender) siblings. The transgender

participants were more likely to experience harassment, discrimination, and violence compared to their cisgender siblings. In addition, they received less support from family than their cisgender siblings.

It is not uncommon for transgender people to also experience violence due to their gender identity and expression (Lombardi, Wilchins, Priesing, & Malouf, 2002; Rodriguez-Madera et al., 2017; Stotzer, 2009; Xavier, Bobbin, Singer, & Budd, 2005). Stotzer (2009), for example, found that transgender people experience violence from an early age, are at risk for various forms of violence, and the threat of violence is a lifelong concern. Testa et al. (2012) also reported that the vast majority of the participants in their study (97.7%) had experienced some form of physical violence. Violence against transgender people was often gender-related and carried out by a variety of perpetrators (e.g., stranger, family, partners). The authors also noted a low prevalence of reporting these incidences to the police due to a fear of further discrimination. Exposure to aggression, harassment, and other forms of discrimination has been associated with depression, anxiety, somatization (Sanchez & Vilain, 2009), substance abuse, and suicide (Xavier et al., 2005), indicating a need to address the concerns transgender people may face.

In terms of career development, across all gender identities, one's career is often a major part of a person's life and identity and can heavily influence one's mental health (Paul & Moser, 2006). Therefore, experiences of gender-based discrimination in the workplace specifically, can lead to poorer mental health and other negative effects (Hebl, Foster, Mannix, & Dovidio, 2002). These findings are

particularly important in the context of the current review because, as will be discussed, transgender people may experience significant barriers and discrimination in the workplace (Brewster, Velez, Mennicke, Tebbe, & Gonsiorek, 2014).

Focusing more closely on the experiences of transgender people in the Asia Pacific region, there has been a lack of research exploring these individuals' experiences in the workplace. Many Asian countries have large transgender populations, such as China which has around 400,000 transgender people (Sun, 2014), and there are approximately 9-9.5 million across the Asia Pacific region (Winter, 2012), indicating the importance of exploring their experiences. Asia Pacific covers a wide range of countries and cultures, and the perspectives on and experiences of transgender individuals is varied across the region. Many countries in Asia Pacific do not have laws explicitly banning LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) individuals from the professional sphere, but there are often no laws to protect them against discrimination or harassment. Some countries are generally more accepting and welcoming (e.g., Thailand, Cambodia, Bhutan). In contrast, other countries criminalize LGBTQ+ people and "acts", and enforce serious and negative consequences (e.g., death, public shaming) for being transgender (e.g., North Korea, Bangladesh, Brunei). Similar to other regions across the globe, it appears that transgender individuals in the Asia Pacific face discrimination that their cisgender counterparts do not.

Transgender people in the Asia Pacific region are often limited to careers in entertainment and sex work, due to discrimination in "everyday" jobs (Suriasarn, 2016). For example, Thailand is known for having a large LGBT+ community and is considered one of the more welcoming countries for LGBT+ people, in particular transgender people. In Thailand, transgender women specifically are referred to as *phuying*

(women), *phet thi sam* (third sex), or *kathoey*, although not often used, which translates to “lady-boy” in English. However, a recent news article highlighted the societal prejudices and occupational barriers that transgender people may face in Thailand (Villadiego, 2018), sometimes referred to as the transgender glass ceiling (Thongnoi, 2015). The transgender glass ceiling may include losing one’s job due to gender identity and the lack of legal protections for transgender people. Transgender people in Thailand also cannot change their gender on ID cards and official documents, which can create problems when entering the workforce. In addition, Villadiego (2018) noted that transgender people feel limited to pursuing careers in the entertainment industry, and have difficulty pursuing employment in more prestigious occupational fields, such as in medicine and law (Suriyasarn, 2016). Feeling limited to certain professions has also been seen in other countries in the Asia Pacific, including Cambodia (Culture Trip, 2018). In addition, *hijras*, or eunuchs, transgender, or intersex people, in Pakistan, are discriminated against in the workplace, and thus are forced to enter sex work to make a living (Abdullah et al., 2012). Nonetheless, there is a recognition in some countries within the Asia Pacific of the need to address the workplace needs of transgender individuals. For example, Thailand’s International Labour Organization (ILO) is working towards eliminating workplace discrimination for transgender people through legal protections, such as anti-discrimination laws.

The current scoping review examined published research to identify key themes and patterns concerning the experiences of transgender people in the workplace. It is important to note that many studies do not examine the strengths of transgender people. However, our exploration of the literature was informed by a strengths-based perspective on career development, which emphasizes the adaptability, flexibility, and resiliency of all

individuals, particularly those who encounter substantial barriers and/or marginalizing circumstances. Thus, a discussion of strengths will be included as part of the review. The review is focused on transgender individuals; sexual orientation may overlap in some studies but will not be the focus. The focus is also on the experiences of individuals in the workplace; barriers to obtaining employment is not the focus, although it is acknowledged as significant in the experiences of transgender people. Therefore, the goal of this paper is to answer the question: What are the experiences of transgender individuals in the workplace?

### **Method: Analytic Method**

The current scoping review was informed by the protocols described in Arksey and O’Malley’s (2005) description of how to conduct a scoping review. Scoping reviews allow for a broad examination of the literature on a given topic and are not intended to be an exhaustive review of the literature. The method allows for the identification of key patterns across studies to encapsulate a particular field of study using evidence that is available. A scoping review was selected, as opposed to a systematic review of the literature because, as Arksey and O’Malley (2005) explain, it maps the existing literature onto a topic area, whereas a systematic review thoroughly examines the research regarding a specific question. A scoping review presents an overview of the literature, particularly if there is much research on the topic, and the studies are diverse in approach and methodology. It allows for inclusion of greater breadth of studies and does not aim to critically evaluate the studies. Conversely, systematic reviews are more focused and critical, assessing studies’ methodologies and risk of bias (Pham et al., 2014). In addition, scoping reviews are particularly helpful when attempting to identify the evidence on a particular topic, key characteristics of a phenomenon, and to identify gaps in the existing literature (Munn,

Stern, Aromataris, Lockwood, & Jordan, 2018). Since the goal of the current review was to explore a broad body of literature on the experiences of transgender people in the workplace, not to provide a critique of these studies, a scoping review was deemed the most appropriate methodology.

### Procedure

Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) article on scoping reviews guided the review process. The first step is identifying the research question and defining parameters. The authors recommended creating a general research question about a particular topic and/or population in order to cover a wide range of research. The second and third steps are to identify relevant studies and study selection, respectively. We examined the Science Direct, PsycINFO, Sage CRKN, and JSTOR Arts and Sciences databases using the following terms guided the literature search: *transgender*, *workplace*, *experiences*, *barriers*. Career-specific academic journals (e.g., Career Development Quarterly, Career Development Network Journal) were also searched. To focus on research about experiences in the contemporary workplace, peer-reviewed works published from 2009 to 2019 were used as filters. It was necessary to limit the scope of the search to the past decade to reflect the contemporary labour market and the fact that more transgender individuals are disclosing their identity in recent years due to a rise in feminism and social justice. Recent articles also use more appropriate terms (i.e., transgender), compared to more outdated terms (e.g., transsexual, transvestite). Peer reviewed articles and dissertations available in English online were selected. The initial search of the databases yielded 1,475 publications. Titles and abstracts were reviewed to determine eligibility. Fifteen articles were selected from the initial list, based on their relevance to the research question. Five additional articles were identified from the reference lists of those 10

articles. This process yielded a total of 20 articles, which were retained for analysis. An additional search conducted with the same terms and *Asia Pacific* was conducted. This search yielded 77 results. Five articles were identified as fitting the criteria. An additional 11 were found from the reference sections of the initial five articles. This yielded a total of 16 articles pertaining to the Asia Pacific region for the analysis, with a grand total of 36 articles used as main sources. Additional sources (e.g., news reports) were supplemental to the 36 articles.

Inclusion criteria involved original research publications centering around the experiences of transgender individuals within the workplace. Qualitative and quantitative studies as well as reviews were included. Articles that addressed policy and recommendations without an original research component were excluded from the scoping review, but were retained for use in the Discussion section. Research articles that focused on transgender people in sex work were not included as this area has been extensively researched, particularly in Asia (Nemoto, Bodeker, & Iwamoto, 2011), and reviews already exist on this particular topic (Nadal, Davidoff, & Fujii-Doe, 2013). In addition, it is important to understand the workplace and cultural climates that often force transgender people into criminalized work. Articles that investigated the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals without differentiating between different types of minority status were included because of their consideration of transgender individuals within their larger sample. Papers were excluded if the sole focus was on sexual orientation, rather than gender identity. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed post-hoc, as is typical for scoping reviews (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). The fourth step in creating a scoping review is charting the data, which allows for ease of sifting through the data and begin sorting into themes. Information was charted based on

Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) recommendations and used the following information from the articles: authors, year of publication, article type, population, aims, and methodology (see Table A1). The fifth, and final, stage of a scoping review is collating, summarizing, and reporting the results. This step involves organizing the literature into themes to allow for the coverage of a broad range of studies. Subthemes were also created by sorting themes into overarching superordinate themes. Themes and subthemes were determined through identification of similarities in research findings. The results are reported below.

Many articles selected were situated within the West and from a Western perspective. One reason for this is that there is more research conducted in the West regarding the experiences of transgender people in the workplace. For this same reason, existing reports on recommendations for the treatment of transgender people in the workplace in Asia often cite Western studies as well (Health Policy Project, Asia Pacific Transgender Network, UNDP 2015). In addition, the Westernization of many Asian countries influenced their perspectives on transgender people, and gender and sexual diversity more generally. For instance, same-sex relationships, particularly between men, was considered normal in China until Western, conservative Christian, colonial perspectives influenced these ideals, leading to the criminalization and stigmatization of same-sex relationships (Kang, 2009). Western ideas regarding LGBTQ+ individuals seeped into many Asian countries, and thus influenced their perspectives and treatment of LGBTQ+ communities. Therefore, Western literature on the experiences of transgender people, in some ways, is able to generally be applied to certain contexts in the Asia Pacific in which Westernization took place.

## Results

Several important themes and subthemes related to transgender individuals' experiences in the workplace emerged from the review. The first was support, including support from coworkers, externally, and the impact of a lack of support. The second theme focused on gender-related concerns, including gendered work environments and a pressure to perform gender according to society's expectations in order to be accepted within the workplace. The third theme was related to structural and institutional concerns. It involves policies at the organizational and government level, benefits and health insurance, and cultural climates and regulations. The fourth and final theme focused on the resilience of transgender individuals in the workplace, including their preparedness and various coping strategies. All emergent themes and subthemes are summarised in Table A2.

## Discussion

The current scoping review explored existing studies published in the literature regarding the experiences of transgender individuals in the workplace, with a particular focus on the Asia Pacific region. The four emergent themes and accompanying subthemes provide important information for career development practitioners in the Asia Pacific region and beyond.

## Support

Support in the context of this review refers to the support received, or not received, from others within the context of the examined career. Having a support network both inside and outside of the workplace is important. A lack of support has been found to be related to aggression from colleagues and discrimination within the workplace (Bess & Stabb, 2009; Brewster et al., 2014), as well as depression and anxiety for transgender employees (Dispenza, Watson, Chung, & Brack, 2012).

### **From coworkers**

Treatment by coworkers is a major factor in determining whether transgender people feel supported in the workplace. Several studies reported the significance of support, or lack thereof, in the workplace. Support could manifest in several ways, including showing verbal support, asking questions out of curiosity, demonstrating an understanding of transgender issues, treating the individual as they would a cisgender person (Brewster et al., 2014), and respect (Kuo, 2019). Having a supportive work environment made transition easier as participants were not concerned about negative responses from coworkers. Rather, they could focus their energy on their transition and completing their work as usual. There is promising reports of supportive coworkers and workplaces in Asia Pacific countries, such as China (Kuo, 2019; Sun, 2014).

### **External support**

Brewster et al. (2014) also described the importance of having a system of external supports to help in one's transition. External supports may be especially useful in situations where coworkers are not supportive of the transgender individual. External supports identified by participants in this study included family, friends, partners, support groups, online support, religious services, and therapists. Research has demonstrated that support from family, friends, and significant others was helpful in the career decision-making process for transgender people (Schmidt, Miles, & Welsh, 2011). It is often difficult to feel supported when laws and policies are not in place to protect you. Such is the case in some Asia Pacific countries, and elsewhere around the world, where there are no laws to protect transgender people, or where there are laws that allow for the persecution of transgender people, creating a sense of uncertainty in terms of who these individuals can turn to for support (Uttom & Rozario, 2019; Villadiego, 2018).

### **Impact of lack of support**

Experiencing a lack of support from coworkers was identified as a significant stressor for many individuals, and research suggests that nearly 90% of transgender individuals experience harassment or mistreatment in the workplace, leading many to hide their gender (71%) or delay their transition (57%) for fear of discrimination (Grant et al., 2011). An unsupportive environment can manifest in many ways, including inappropriate questions and comments, using incorrect pronouns, exclusion, and dismissing of participants' identity (Barclay & Scott, 2006; Dispenza et al., 2012; Moolchaem, Liamputtong, O'Halloran, & Muhamad, 2015; Waite, Ecker, & Ross, 2019), which has been found to occur in work environments in Indonesia (Gordon & Pratama, 2017). A lack of support often leads to a fear of disclosure (Human Rights Report, China, 2017; Ozturk & Tatli, 2016), and thus, many participants in these studies reported experiencing anxiety and uncertainty at coming out, and some chose to keep their identity hidden for fear of repercussions. Similarly, fear of anticipated discrimination is strongly related to indecisiveness and uncertainty about career paths (Schmidt et al., 2011). More severe forms of discrimination, harassment, and violence within the workplace were evident in research on the South Korean military, wherein LGBTQ+ individuals may be subject to derogatory remarks, sexual assault, and physical violence (Griffiths, Kwon, & Hancocks, 2019; Yi & Gitzen, 2018). The level of co-worker discrimination has been attributed to the highly masculine nature of the military, and a culture of "necessary" aggression and dominance (Ikeya, 2014). Similarly, a study of transgender people in the workplace conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in China, the Philippines, and Thailand, found that 21%, 30%, and 23% of respondents, respectively, were harassed,

bullied, and discriminated against due to their gender identity or sexual orientation in their current or latest workplace (2018). Harassment included jokes or slurs, gossiping or spreading rumours, and making critical comments about how LGBTQ+ employees dress, behave, or speak. Little action was taken by the employer as only 6% in China, 41% in the Philippines, and 29% in Thailand said there were policies that protected them. Similarly, in China, Jun (2010) reported experiences of taunting and isolation at work due to being transgender.

Lack of support can also manifest as discrimination and aggression, which can occur in various ways in the workplace, and may be explicit or implicit (Sangganjanavanich & Cavazos 2010). Explicit forms can include demotions, not receiving promotions, termination of employment, losing health benefits, salary inequity, and poorer performance evaluations (Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2008; Pizer, Sears, Mallory, & Hunter, 2012), as has been the case for some transgender people who are “out” in Asia Pacific countries (UNDP & USAID, 2014a-h; Villadiego, 2018). A United Nations report on LGBT people in Cambodia provided a concrete example of such discrimination. They described a situation in which a transgender teacher received complaints from students who refused to be taught by a transgender person (UNDP & USAID, 2014a). Similarly, Villadiego’s (2018) article provided an example of a prominent transgender professor in Thailand who was suddenly fired for reasons that were attributed to bias from within the institution. In addition, a report conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) found that transgender employees in Thailand face frequent discrimination for not conforming to traditional norms, and this discrimination occurs in various areas: education, training, access to job opportunities, promotions, social security, and partner benefits (Howard & Hongladarom, 2014). To further support these findings, a

report conducted in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam by the Asia Pacific Transgender Network, Curtin University, and the United Nations Development Programme (Winter et al., 2018), sent resumes to organizations hiring for entry-level positions to determine how gender identity (cisgender or transgender) influenced the response to an application. It was found that transgender applicants were less likely to be invited for an interview and many did not receive a positive response to their resumes. Results also showed that Singapore indicated the highest levels of discrimination against transgender people, with Vietnam following closely behind.

Implicit forms of discrimination may include exposure to gossip, threats, denied medical leave (e.g., for surgery), workplace restrictions, and having competencies dismissed (Pepper & Lorah, 2008). In Brewster et al.’s (2014) study, almost all participants noted experiencing hostility from coworkers in the form of discrimination, termination of employment, conflict, ridicule, threats, exclusion, and intentional refusal to acknowledge the participant’s identity and accommodate their needs. In addition, Eliason, Dibble, and Robertson’s (2011) study with LGBTQ+ physicians found that, of their sample of 427, 22% had been ostracized due to their identity, 65% heard derogatory remarks, and 27% had witnessed discriminatory treatment of a LGBTQ+ coworker. Although the prevalence of discrimination has decreased significantly from earlier studies (Schatz & O’Hanlan, 1994), the numbers are still concerning and the experiences of those discriminated against continue to be negative and problematic.

Overall, the theme of support included results describing supports from coworkers, external networks, and impact of a lack of support. This is consistent with the broader literature, where support has been identified as integral in many people’s career development, motivation, planning, skills mastery, and often

acts as a protective factor against poor self-efficacy and discouragement in the job search process for a variety of populations (Chiaburu, Dam, & Hutchins, 2010; Hirschi, Niles, & Akos, 2011; Kuo, 2019; Renn, Steinbauer, Tyler, & Detwiler, 2014). In addition, social support has been found to be helpful in managing stress and fostering a sense of professional identity (Mikkola, Suutala, & Parviainen, 2018).

### **Gender-Related Concerns**

The theme of gender-related concerns encapsulates a variety of experiences of transgender people in the workplace. It includes transgender people's experiences of gendered workplaces and a pressure to perform gender based on society's expectations. Interestingly, such gender-related concerns were less evident in Asian Pacific countries than in other regions of the world, particularly with gender policing and holding transgender people to certain aesthetic expectations. However, there were often instances of transgender people, specifically transgender women, being expected to obtain employment in very specific spheres, such as in entertainment, hair and makeup, sex work, and other gendered fields (Abdullah et al., 2012; UNDP & USAID, 2014g).

### **Gendered environments**

Gender is a phenomenon that occurs in virtually every aspect of life, so it is no surprise that it occurs in the workplace as well. Heteronormativity and gender stereotypes are some ways in which it may take place. Heteronormativity was identified in Brewster et al.'s (2014) study, and refers to the position that heterosexuality and the gender binary (i.e., only men and women) is the norm. In the workplace, it is generally assumed that all employees are heterosexual, cisgender, and fit into the gender binary. Transgender men in Indonesia reported experiencing pressure to adhere to traditional gender norms, and were often strictly held to the gender binary (Gordon

& Pratama, 2017). Furthermore, participants mentioned their coworkers, and society more generally, viewed them as women and attempted to force them to look and behave as such. Transgender individuals were also less open to disclosing their identity to coworkers for concern that they would not be understood (Yoder & Mattheis, 2016). In addition, those who do not adhere to society's expectations of gender often experience backlash in the form of harassment, discrimination, and threats (Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Rudman, 2010).

The gender binary can also manifest in other ways within the workplace, including division of labour (i.e., to whom tasks are assigned based on gender), uniforms (i.e., "men's" uniforms and "women's" uniforms), and use of bathrooms. Virtually all societies reinforce some form of the gender binary, making it difficult for those who do not fit into either to integrate and be accepted by society. Gender stereotypes also occur in the workplace, as examined by Yoder and Mattheis' (2016) study on queer people in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). They found that, while many participants deemed their workplaces safe in terms of disclosure for LGBTQA people, the experiences of participants varied in terms of support, workplace climate, and gendered expectations. In more male-dominated fields, such as STEM, members of the community were expected to uphold male stereotypes (e.g., not express emotions, dress a certain way). Similarly, it has been found that transgender women were more likely to pursue female-dominated professions as they felt it would better fit with their gender identity (Brown et al., 2012).

### **Pressure to perform gender**

A common theme in this review, and in much of the literature concerning transgender individuals, is the controversial concept of "passing." "Passing" refers to transgender people being correctly identified as their gender (Teich, 2012). It is based on what is deemed acceptable for the genders (e.g.,



women wear makeup, men must be muscular). It is often considered desirable, and many feel safer and experience less discrimination if they “pass” (Godfrey, 2015; Ozturk & Tatli, 2016). “Passing” typically focuses on physical appearance, but may also include behaviours (e.g., how one walks, sits, interacts with others). A related concept to “passing” is gender performativity (Butler, 1990). Gender performativity refers to how one physically presents and acts in situations according to societal expectations of gender. It may involve self-monitoring of appearance and behaviour in order to fit the context and gain acceptance from others. Those who do not “perform” their gender according to societal expectations may be pathologized, excluded, or discriminated against (Klemmer, Arayasirikul, & Raymond, 2018). Brewster et al. (2014), Budge, Tebbe and Howard (2010), Mizock et al. (2017), Mizock et al. (2018), and Ozturk and Tatli (2016), all mentioned “passing” and gender performance as significant in the workplace experiences of transgender employees. In Brewster et al.’s (2014) article, an intrapersonal factor identified as important was distress over not performing as expected for their gender. It can be related to depression, anxiety, and a fear of how their coworkers respond to them if they do not pass. In Mizock et al.’s (2017) study, gender presentation was identified as a coping strategy, as it helped participants feel safer and less “visible” in the workplace, and therefore less subject to discrimination and harassment. In another study by Mizock et al. (2018), workplace gender policing was a significant form of transphobia that created unpleasant work environments, and this is further supported by Gordon & Pratama’s (2017) study with transgender men in Thailand. Gender policing referred to how participants were treated based on their gender, and how they were regulated and expected to look and behave. It sometimes included changing office dress codes due to the presence of transgender employees, reactions of coworkers to

participants’ appearance, and even acts aggression (e.g., yelling, intimidation). Similar to these studies, Ozturk and Tatli (2016) found that gender nonconformity was related to exclusion, discrimination, and dismissing of competencies due to identity and appearance. As previously mentioned, it is interesting that this particular theme did not necessarily occur often for transgender people in the Asia Pacific region. The reason may be the paucity of any research about transgender individuals conducted in the region. However, the authors also speculated that less support for gender-related concerns in the Asia Pacific region could also, in part, be due to different cultural norms for men and women in Asia, in terms of appearance, and potentially that transgender individuals themselves do not feel as concerned with the physical presentation aspect, due to cultural norms.

Connell’s (2010) article examined West and Zimmerman’s (1987) theory of “doing gender,” and specifically how this related to transgender people in the workplace. The theory suggests that we are constantly having to do, undo, and redo gender in our interactions with others, including in the workplace. Connell’s (2010) qualitative findings suggest that transgender individuals experience pressure to conform to societal expectations, in addition to unique challenges pertaining to passing and safety within the workplace. She goes on to refine West and Zimmerman’s theory to fit with the experiences of transgender people in the workplace, referring to it as “doing transgender.” The revised theory incorporates the added challenges and pressure transgender individuals may face in the workplace. It moves past the gender binary and allows for more diversity in gender expression. One question that remains unanswered is how applicable the modified theory is for Asia Pacific workplace contexts.

The gender-related results identified in this study are also present in the broader career-development literature. There is a long history

of research, extending into the present day, that demonstrates the complex and pervasive presence of gender in the workplace (Betz & Hackett, 1986; Domene & Arim, 2016; Dozier, 2018; Lips & Colwill, 1988; Phillips & Imhoff, 1997; Powell, 2018; Tien & Wang, 2015; Weerahannadige Dulini & Cohen, 2011), including in Asia Pacific countries. For instance, Indonesia is generally considered a more conservative country (Sebastian & Nubowo, 2019), and therefore enforces more traditional gender norms, such as in the division of labour (Fischer, Eagly, & Oosterwijk, 2013; Sohn, 2015). With this, comes a stricter adherence to the gender binary and heteronormativity (Gordon & Pratama, 2017, however this is beginning to change (Utomo, 2016). Gender expectations and discrimination can manifest itself through gendered career choice, behaviour, work-life balance, and workplace presentation, roles and expectations. The findings of the current review suggest that the issue of gender and career development can become even more salient and complex for transgender people than for other populations in the workplace.

### **Structural and Institutional Concerns**

Perhaps one of the largest and most difficult barriers to overcome lies at the structural and institutional level. This can include policies, laws, and regulations, both within the organization and the government, as well as the cultural climate. In the Asia Pacific region, there are many countries that have varying cultural norms, policies, and laws concerning, or not concerning, transgender people. Very little information is provided regarding company policies, health benefits, and insurance for transgender people in these countries, so exploring these particular areas is difficult. However, a common example can be the ability, or inability, to change one's name and gender on legal documents, which is allowed in some Asia Pacific countries (e.g., South Korea), but not others (e.g., North

Korea), a major barrier for transgender people in trying to live authentically. Understandably, structural and institutional issues are the most difficult to address, which is especially concerning given their wide reach and influence. The literature has addressed these areas in terms of policies, benefits and health insurance, and cultural and workplace atmospheres.

### **Policies**

One subtheme that emerged concerns organizational and federal policies. There are policies in place in some countries that prohibit discrimination based on gender identity and expression, and allow for the filing of complaints if people face such discrimination. For example, in India, transgender women are able to seek protection under laws for women. In addition, the government in India has policies to setup welfare boards for transgender employees and create employment policies to benefit transgender people (ILO, 2016). However, while these promising policies exist, and certainly it is progress, it does not mean they are enforced, nor does it necessarily mean that it will be taken up by others (Ozturk & Tatli, 2016). Several countries in the Asia Pacific region (e.g., Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines) do not have laws or policies allowing legal gender recognition, and only China allows for the changing of gender markers on official identity documents, so long as the individual fits specific criteria (Wiriyapong, 2017). Official identification is often used to discriminate against transgender people as these documents are difficult to change, and discloses the sex individuals were assigned at birth, rather than their correct gender. Therefore, official documentation has been used to discriminate against transgender people in Indonesia and Hong Kong in the workplace (Emerton, 2004; Gordon & Pratama, 2017). As this review has highlighted, there is still much progress to be made and many transgender people still face overt and covert discrimination in the workplace. Moreover,

filing a complaint may add to the negative experiences faced if it is not well received by the employer.

Companies and organizations also have their own policies and regulations that can create unpleasant environments for transgender people. Some organizations may not have policies addressing the needs of transgender employees, and in some places, policies may exist that allow for discrimination against transgender people. Some studies reported that employers changed policies such as dress codes in response to the presence of transgender employees, and these dress codes were used to police transgender employees (Mizock et al., 2018). An example of existing discriminatory policies includes Article 92-6 in South Korea, which allows many gay and transgender soldiers serving in the military to be persecuted for engaging in non-cis/non-heterosexual sex, or “indecent” sex as it is referred, which can lead to humiliating interrogations, criminal charges, and suspension from the military (Sang-Hun, 2019; Yi & Gitzen, 2018). Sangganjanavanich and Cavazos (2010) also noted that transgender employees may receive poorer evaluations on the basis of dress code violations (e.g., dressed “inappropriately”) as a form of discrimination. Expressing criticism in such a way masks discrimination as dress code violations are deemed an “appropriate” basis for negative evaluations.

### **Benefits and insurance**

Some participants reported having coverage for certain procedures, and felt this made their transition easier, as well as feeling supported by their organization as their needs were included in health plans. Conversely, many do not feel there is adequate coverage or benefits for transgender employees. In the U.S., The National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (2009) found that only 40% of transgender employees were satisfied with the insurance coverage they received. In addition, most plans did not cover any surgeries or procedures (e.g.,

hormones, counselling), nor did many organizations allow for time off. In the Asia Pacific region, coverage for gender-related procedures and interventions (e.g., gender affirmation surgery, hormones) is generally limited. For instance, while Thailand is generally considered more accepting of transgender individuals, surgeries and hormone treatment are not normally covered, and thus, many have to go through private channels, which may be expensive. However, gender affirmation surgery in Thailand is considered among the most advanced in the world, and many travel to Thailand to have it performed. Those outside of Thailand may have coverage and thus have greater access (Gooren, Sungkaew, & Giltay, 2013). In addition, transgender women are more highly prioritized in Thailand, whereas transgender men are not, and therefore the men have less access to gender affirming procedures, such as hormones (Gooren, Sungkaew, Giltay, & Guadamuz, 2015).

### **Cultural and workplace environments and regulations**

Another major subtheme was the cultural and workplace atmospheres. Often, workplaces are influenced by larger, societal climates, so it is important to consider society’s perspective on transgender individuals. One U.S. study found that heterosexual adults had more negative attitudes towards transgender people compared to gay men, lesbians, and bisexual people (Norton & Herek, 2013). This study only captured the opinions of a few people, so it is difficult to generalize and truly assess cultural attitudes, but it can also be reflected in certain practices. For example, education on transgender topics is limited to non-existent. In Eliason et al.’s (2011) study of LGBT physicians, 76% of participants reported receiving no education on transgender health. Participants who did receive education reported only an average 0.9 hours of training in medical school. These findings reveal that there is a need for more education and

awareness of the experiences of transgender people. Furthermore, a qualitative research study with Vietnamese LGBTQ+ youth demonstrated that many still conform to heteronormativity, societal gender norms, and essentialist perspectives, indicating the pervasiveness of cultural norms despite progress towards equality (Yên, 2016).

To summarize, the structural and institutional issues identified in this study were substantial, and included policies, benefits and insurance plans for transgender employees, and the broader cultural climate. For transgender employees, this can involve access to coverage for transgender related interventions (e.g., surgeries, hormones) and identification documents. In many Asian countries, except for China, transgender people are not able to change their gender marker on identification, which impacts how they are treated in the workplace. In addition, policies may not be enforced or followed, which can create unpleasant work environments. Existing literature indicates that inclusive and considerate policies can create a sense of support and encouragement for a variety of populations (Perry-Jenkins, Smith, Wadsworth, & Halpern, 2017). The present review confirms the importance of having workplace policies that are protective of all employees, including those who are transgender.

### **Resilience**

The final major theme to emerge highlighted the strength and resiliency of transgender individuals. As discussed, transgender employees often experience discrimination, aggression, a lack of support, institutional barriers, and unpleasant work environments. In spite of this, there is a strong commitment to oneself and living authentically. Many individuals engage in advocacy to improve the quality of life of transgender people (Yên, 2016), and to raise awareness of the issues they may face. These strengths are reflected in two subthemes: preparedness and adaptive coping.

### **Preparedness**

Extensive planning and preparation may be needed for transitioning and/or for disclosing one's identity to coworkers. Preparing for others' responses, creating a strong support system, and preparing for the process of transitioning, however that may look for an individual, were identified as aspects of the workplace experiences of transgender individuals in Brewster et al.'s (2014) and Budge et al.'s (2010) studies. Many, including those in Asia Pacific countries (Gordon & Pratama, 2017), also gave much thought into the disclosure of the identity, in terms of who to tell, when, where, and how, as well as the possible repercussions and responses from fellow coworkers and employers. Physical changes were also identified as an important part of preparation. It could involve removal or growth of facial hair, binding (flattening breasts to appear flat-chested), tucking (putting one's penis between and behind one's legs so it is not visible), figuring out what clothing to wear, and adjusting vocal tones. Preparation also involved having back-up careers in case they were not supported at work, as well as preparing documents to change their name and gender identity if possible. Knowing one's rights and the existing laws, regulations, and policies was also found to be important. Knowledge and preparedness include knowing what law firms and organizations could act as advocates if they face discrimination at work. Similarly, Sangganjanavanich and Cavazos (2010) noted the importance of preparation, specifically in counselling, and understanding that responses from coworkers may also be positive.

### **Coping strategies**

Several studies have examined the coping strategies and adaptability of transgender individuals (Budge, Tebbe, & Howard, 2010; Budge et al., 2013; Dispenza et al., 2012; Singh & McKleroy, 2011). Brewster et al. (2014) categorized these strategies in the following ways: identity-based (e.g., acknowledging

ability to continue transition), cognitive strategies (e.g., reframing experiences to something positive, adapting to difficult situations), interpersonal (e.g., counselling, communities), and advocacy and activism (e.g., challenging oppression, becoming a role model; Y en, 2016). Specifically in terms of advocacy and activism, there are people who, despite these challenges and very real threats, fight for the rights of transgender people with the goal of creating safer and more welcoming spaces in many Asia Pacific countries where transgender people may face significant challenges and barriers (Smith, 2018, 2019). S anchez and Vilain (2009) noted the importance of interpersonal strategies, specifically by connecting with other transgender individuals (i.e., collective self-esteem). dickey, Walinsky, Rofkahr, Richardson-Cline, and Juntunen (2016) reported that transgender people who transition, and subsequently feel comfortable in the gender, have greater self-awareness and are better able to make career decisions. Although more research is needed to fully explore the resilience of the transgender community, the existing literature reveals that transgender people are aware of potential problems they may face in the workplace, and take active steps to prepare for and cope with situations they may encounter.

Most of the existing research on transgender individuals in the workforce tends to focus on gaps and ways to improve and make advancements rather than on the strengths of transgender people. Nonetheless, consistent with the results of the present review, personal strength and resilience has been identified as important and as a common theme for transgender individuals (Riggle, Rostosky, McCants, & Pascale-Hague, 2011). In addition, the theme of workplace resilience and its promotion is directly related to the question of what career development practitioners and others can do to better address the needs of transgender individuals in the workplace.

## Recommendations

As previously mentioned, one of the primary purposes of a scoping review is to summarize an existing body of literature to identify recommendations for practice (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). The current scoping review revealed several recommendations for practice, workplaces, and policies to address the needs of transgender employees.

### Career development practice and counselling

The National Career Development Association (NCDA, 2009), Sangganjanavanich and Cavazos (2010), and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH; Coleman et al., 2012) all offer recommendations for working with transgender individuals, both in the workplace and in counselling. The focus of this section will be on Sangganjanavanich and Cavazos's (2010) specific recommendations and considerations for counsellors working with transgender individuals in the area of career. Career development practitioners and counsellors must consider their biases and assumptions of transgender individuals. Some ways include engaging in self-reflection and challenging biases through participating in groups, journaling, reading, and educating oneself on the experiences of transgender individuals (Carroll, Gilroy, & Ryan, 2002; NCDA, 2009). The authors also emphasized the importance of creating a safe and trusting environment, and affirming the client's identity. Using empathy, a non-judgemental stance, and appropriate pacing are some ways to achieve this (Bess & Stabb, 2009). Similarly, supporting clients during their transition will help build self-awareness and confidence in career decision-making (dickey et al., 2016). Affirmative career counselling is one such approach that actively incorporates intersectionality, embraces clients' gender identity, and utilizes important skills, such as empathy (Speciale & Scholl, 2019; Wada, McGraorty, Tomaro, & Amundsun-Dainow,

2019). Third, practitioners need to be aware of the discrimination and oppression transgender individuals may face. Failure to do so may invalidate the client's experiences and reinforce social structures. Part of being aware of discrimination also involves communicating this knowledge to others (e.g., employers, organizations) to spread awareness and understanding. Fourth, Sangganjanavanich and Cavazos (2010) and the NCDA (2009) highlight the need for career development practitioners and counsellors to be aware of policies and resources that are available. Preparing clients was also identified as a significant consideration. Preparing clients includes preparation for transition, coworkers' reactions (including positive), and company policies and insurance benefits. The intention is to prepare for challenges so that the client may be able to cope with them if they arise (Sangganjanavanich & Headley, 2013). Advocacy, at the micro- and macro-levels, was also outlined as an essential part in working with transgender clients, and is important in affirmative career counselling (Wada et al., 2019). It may include influencing policy, educating employees and employers, participating in activism, and being a part of, or acting as an ally to, the transgender community. Lastly, NCDA (2009), Bess and Stabb (2009), and the World Health Organization (WHO; Thomas et al., 2017) all emphasize the importance of learning, educating oneself, and engaging in supervision and consultation to better work with the transgender clients.

Building on Sangganjanavanich and Cavazos' (2010) recommendations, in light of the increasing professionalization of career development practice in many Asia Pacific countries, it may also be important for associations serving career professionals in the Asia Pacific to encourage their members to engage in professional development and supervision/consultation around working effectively with transgender people. In addition, many transgender individuals, specifically

transgender women, in Asia Pacific countries in particular are restricted to careers in entertainment, hair and makeup, and other "gender-typed" careers (Suriyasarn, 2016; Thongnoi, 2015; Villadiego, 2018). Although it is perfectly acceptable to pursue these career paths, there is a need for career development practitioners and counsellors to be aware of their biases towards "gender-typed" professions for clients, and allow them to explore and pursue other possibilities for work, if it is of interest to their clients. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize a collective identity in cultures in which collectivism is more strongly embraced than individualism (Weiss, 2015). Weiss (2015) stated that encouraging community among transgender and LGB individuals in Southeast Asia regions is empowering and will facilitate movement towards equality.

The ethical guidelines of the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (2017) explicitly call for career development practitioners to "avoid all forms of stereotyping and discrimination, e.g., racism, sexism, ageism, classism, and pro-actively overcome the impact of these forms of oppression on clients' access to full participation in meaningful education and employment." Similarly, the mission statement of the Asia Pacific Career Development Association (2019) describes one of the purposes of the association as advocating "for exemplary workforce policies and practices that foster inclusion and access to decent work for all." Problems may occur, however, if career development practitioners and counsellors do not have sufficient knowledge about the transgender community or the concerns transgender individuals may face to go beyond stereotypical assumptions about transgender people. Unconscious biases and assumptions may also manifest themselves in covert and implicit ways that can be detrimental to the client. It is our hope for career development practitioners and

counsellors who work with transgender clients in the Asia Pacific region to obtain adequate training, supervision, and consultation to ensure the ethical nature of our work with the transgender community.

### **The workplace**

There are several ways in which organizations can create safe and welcoming spaces for transgender employees. They can incorporate gender-sensitive practices, which may include elimination of gender specific work (i.e., roles employees are assigned to) and uniforms. Having single-stall washrooms (and locker rooms, change rooms, etc.) for all genders, rather than enforcing the gender dichotomy, may help create an atmosphere of acceptance. Diverse gender identification options (e.g., on forms) should also be used, and should be based on the individual's self-described identity. In addition, workplace education and training opportunities are important in creating more awareness and understanding. The organization should discourage discrimination towards transgender employees by explicitly addressing it in their policies. An example would be to remove Article 92-6, which allows for the persecution of gay and transgender soldiers in South Korea. It would also be beneficial to consider transitioning in workplace policy and coverage for employees, which may require consultation with employees, health professionals, and advocacy organizations (e.g., the Gender/Sexuality Rights Association Taiwan). Certain policies (e.g., dress codes) should be gender-neutral and should not stereotype or target transgender employees. Ensuring that policies address the needs of transgender employees is important, and working to instate health benefits that include transgender individuals would also be beneficial (Human Rights Campaign, 2019).

### **Policy**

In some Asia Pacific countries, there are policies, regulations, and laws at the national and local level that aim to protect the rights of

transgender individuals. For example, the Government of India (2016, 2019) has passed Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bills to combat discrimination against and to promote the social welfare of transgender people. Policies and laws such as these are designed, and should be designed, to prevent organizations from discriminating against potential or actual employees based on the gender identity or expression (Grant et al., 2011). More education and awareness is needed for policy makers as they hold the power for what gets implemented. Often the problem with policy is that it may not be taken seriously by individuals, or the workplace environment may be unpleasant but harassment may be difficult to prove, although very real, because it may be more implicit or covert (e.g., exclusion from employee activities outside work). To ensure policies are implemented, the government or organization should monitor employees, particularly hiring staff, and incorporate training (Grant et al., 2011). Furthermore, Grant et al. (2011) in their report with the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, stated that governments should refrain from penalizing transgender people, and provide more employment opportunities, rather than utilizing resources and funding on arresting, prosecuting, and incarcerating those forced into sex work.

### **Research**

The current scoping review yielded several possibilities for future research to consider. Further research more generally on the experiences of transgender people in the workplace is needed (Waite et al., 2019). Chung (2003) also noted the dearth of theoretical, empirical, and practical literature on transgender people in career counselling, highlighting a greater need for research in this area. As was mentioned, there is no research on the concept of "doing gender/transgender" in the Asia Pacific region, so this is a potential avenue for exploration. In addition, exploring how to promote strength and resiliency in the

workplace for transgender people in the Asia Pacific should be a priority for future research, as this will determine what will help empower transgender people, rather than solely focusing on what is lacking. Research should continue to promote advocacy for the rights of transgender people as a way to address discrimination, oppression, and violence, and encourage openness, empowerment, and safety in all spaces. It is also important that we increase knowledge and understanding of the experiences of transgender people, particularly in the Asia Pacific region, as a lack of awareness can lead to non-medically approved hormone use (Winter & Doussantousse, 2009), and poorer physical and mental health more generally (Gooren et al., 2013).

### Limitations

As with all reviews, it is entirely possible that some relevant articles were missed (Pham et al., 2014). In addition, scoping reviews are not intended to systematically assess the quality of articles, but rather gather the information to inform themes and recommendations. Therefore, it is possible that some of the published studies included in this review were of poorer quality, calling into question the value of their contribution. Scoping reviews also address broader questions and are more targeted towards policy, practice, and recommendations, so the results should not be interpreted within the clinical assessment context. As was discussed, many of the articles included were situated within a Western context. The reason was due to the permeation of Western ideals, specifically regarding same-sex relations and gender, across the globe. Westernization and colonization occurred in many Asian countries, thus many of the beliefs and perspectives regarding transgender people in the West mirror those in the Asia Pacific region. However, we do not claim that the findings from Western studies can be directly applied to Asian countries, rather that there may be

similarities in perspectives due to the origin of these beliefs. More research is needed in the Asia Pacific region to better understand the experiences of transgender people more generally. Lastly, the results of this scoping review should not be generalized to every transgender person, nor to every workplace within the Asia Pacific region. Rather, this review is to inform on the existing literature and create more awareness on the topic. Each individual person should be treated as such, as they have their own unique experiences, and every individual workplace should be considered in terms of its unique characteristics.

### Conclusion

The current scoping review explored the experiences of transgender people in the workplace and highlighted several key themes that are relevant for career development practice in the Asia Pacific. Recommendations for practice, organizations, and policy were also discussed. The goal of this review was to create more awareness about the experiences of transgender people in the workplace and the ways we, as individuals and as a collective, can help create safer spaces. It is our hope that readers will be able to consider and apply the themes we have discussed in order to provide helpful and useful career development practices and advocacy when working with individuals from the transgender community.

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Appendix A  
Table A1  
*Characteristics of Articles Included in the Scoping Review*

Authors	Date	Publication type	Sample	Aims	Method
Abdullah, M., Basharat, Z., Kamal, B., Sattar, N., Hassan, Z., Jan, A., & Shafiqat, A.	2012	Research.	8 Hijras. Pakistan.	To understand the experiences of Hijras with work and social exclusion.	Qualitative. Interviews and focus groups.
Brewster, M., Velez, B., DeBlaere, C., Moradi, B., & Tracey, T.	2012	Research. Assessment of scales and psychometric properties.	263 transgender individuals. United States.	Assess scales and determine improvements /modifications	Quantitative. Modified Workplace Heterosexist Experiences Questionnaire (WHEQ); the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Climate Inventory (LGBTCL); and the Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure (WSIMM)
Brewster, M., Velez, B., Mennicke, A., Tebbe, E., & Gonsiorek, J. C.	2014	Research.	139 transgender individuals. United States.	Explore experiences of transgender people at work, and provide advice.	Quantitative. Thematic analysis.
Brown, C., Dashjian, L. T., Acosta, T. J., Mueller, C. T., Kizer, B. E., & Trangsrud, H. B.	2012	Research.	9 “male-to-female transsexuals” (outdated term – transgender women). United States.	Understand the career experiences of transgender women.	Qualitative.
Budge, S., Tebbe, E., & Howard, K.	2010	Research.	18 transgender individuals. United States.	Explore the work experiences of transgender people, particularly throughout transitioning.	Qualitative.
Connell, C.	2010	Research.	19 transgender people. United States.	Exploring negotiation and management of gendered interactions at work, and how it	Qualitative. Semi-structured interviews

Dietert, M., & Dentice, D.	2009	Research.	26 transgender men. United States.	may do, redo, or undo gender To explore workplace discrimination in relation to gender identity against transgender people.	Qualitative. Interviews.
Dispenza, F., Watson, L. B., Chung, Y. B., & Brack, G.	2012	Research.	9 transgender women. United States.	To examine the experience of discrimination and its relationship to career development.	Qualitative. Semi-structured interviews. Grounded theory.
Eliason, M., Dibble, S., & Robertson, P.	2011	Research.	427 LGBT physicians. United States.	Understand experiences of LGBT physicians in the workplace.	Quantitative. Online survey.
Gordon, D., & Pratama, M. P.	2017	Research.	14 transgender men. Indonesia.	To map transgender men's experiences of discrimination, and create recommendations.	Qualitative. Interviews, focus groups, and participant observation.
Grant, J. M., Mottet, L. A., Tanis, J., Harrison, J., Herman, J. L., & Keisling, M.	2011	Research.	6436 transgender people. United States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and U.S. Virgin Islands.	To highlight the discrimination transgender people may face.	Quantitative. Surveys.
ILO, UNDP	2018	Research.	1571 LGBTI people. China, the Philippines, and Thailand.	To highlight experiences of employment discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics.	Qualitative and quantitative.
Jun, P.	2010	Autobiographical essay.	1 transgender male. China.	To explore the author's experiences as a transgender person in Chinese culture, including the influence of family and religion.	Autobiographical essay.
Khan, S., Hussain, M., Parveen, S., Bhuiyan, M., Gourab, G.,	2009	Research.	50 Hijra. Bangladesh.	To understand transgender people's (or Hijra – used	Qualitative. 50 interviews, 20 key-informant interviews (Hijra



Sarker, G., . . . Sikder, J.				interchangeably here) experience with social exclusion and discrimination, including in the workplace.	leaders), 5 life interviews, and 10 focus groups.
Law, C. L., Martinez, L. R., Ruggs, E. N., Hebl, M. R., & Akers, E.	2011	Research.	88 transgender people. United States.	Explore workplace experiences of transgender people.	Quantitative. 45 minute survey.
MacDonnell, J., & Grigorovich, A.	2012	Research.	4 transgender men. Canada.	Explore work and health of transgender health providers.	Qualitative. Comparative life history methodology. Semi-structured interviews. Critical gender analysis.
Mizock, L., Riley, J., Yuen, N., Woodrum, T., Sotilleo, E., Ormerod, A., & Corrigan, P. W.	2018	Research.	45 transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) individuals. United States.	Explore coping strategies TGD individuals may use at work.	Qualitative. Grounded theory.
Mizock, L., Woodrum, T., Riley, J., Sotilleo, E., Yuen, N., & Ormerod, A.	2017	Research.	45 transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) individuals. United States.	Explore transphobia in the workplace.	Qualitative. Grounded theory.
Moolchaem, P., Liamputtong, P., O'Halloran, P., & Muhamad, R.	2015	Review.	31 qualitative studies. Authors from Australia. Four studies from Asia.	To analyze the literature on experiences of transgender people, including workplace discrimination.	Review. Meta-ethnography.
National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.	2009/2012	Research.	6,436 transgender individuals. United States.	Explore discrimination in various areas, including employment.	Quantitative. 70 question survey.
Ozturk, M., & Tatli, A.	2016	Research.	14 transgender and gender-queer individuals. United Kingdom.	Explore the workplace experiences of transgender people in the UK.	Qualitative.
Pizer, J. C., Sears, B., Mallory, C., & Hunter, N. D.	2012	Review + Recommendations (legal, workplace).	N/A. Authors from United States.	To explore workplace discrimination of LGBT people. Policy-focused.	Review + recommendations.
Sangganjanavanich, V., & Cavazos, J.	2010	Review + Recommendations for counsellors.	N/A. Authors from United States.	Explore experiences of aggression and discrimination	Review + recommendations.

UNDP, USAID	2014a	Report.	N/A. Cambodia.	against transgender people in the workplace and provide recommendations for counsellors. To outline the experiences of LGBT individuals in Cambodia, with consideration of discrimination and workplace experiences.	Report. Collaboration with organizations, government departments, and private organizations.
UNDP, USAID	2014b	Report.	N/A. China.	To outline the experiences of LGBT individuals in China, with consideration of discrimination and workplace experiences.	Report. Collaboration with organizations, government departments, and private organizations.
UNDP, USAID	2014c	Report.	N/A. Indonesia.	To outline the experiences of LGBT individuals in Indonesia, with consideration of discrimination and workplace experiences.	Report. Collaboration with organizations, government departments, and private organizations.
UNDP, USAID	2014d	Report.	N/A. Mongolia.	To outline the experiences of LGBT individuals in Mongolia, with consideration of discrimination and workplace experiences.	Report. Collaboration with organizations, government departments, and private organizations.
UNDP, USAID	2014e	Report.	N/A. Nepal.	To outline the experiences of LGBT individuals in Nepal, with consideration of discrimination and workplace experiences.	Report. Collaboration with organizations, government departments, and private organizations.
UNDP, USAID	2014f	Report.	N/A. The Philippines.	To outline the experiences of LGBT individuals in the Philippines, with consideration of discrimination and workplace experiences.	Report. Collaboration with organizations, government departments, and private organizations.

UNDP, USAID	2014g	Report.	N/A. Thailand.	To outline the experiences of LGBT individuals in Thailand, with consideration of discrimination and workplace experiences.	Report. Collaboration with organizations, government departments, and private organizations.
UNDP, USAID	2014h	Report.	N/A. Vietnam.	To outline the experiences of LGBT individuals in Vietnam, with consideration of discrimination and workplace experiences.	Report. Collaboration with organizations, government departments, and private organizations.
Waite, S., Ecker, J., & Ross, L. E.	2019	Systematic review and thematic synthesis.	N/A. Canada.	To compile the literature on employment and earnings of LGBTQ2S+ people in Canada.	Review and thematic synthesis.
Winter, S., Davis-McCabe, C., Russell, C., Wilde, D., Chu, T.H., Suparak, P. and Wong, J.	2018	Research.	3,000 jobs were targeted. 6,000 applications sent. Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.	To explore employment discrimination based on gender identity in Asia and the Pacific.	Audit research.
Yên, M. T.	2016	Research.	17 young queer people in Vietnam.	To explore the experiences of queer youth in Vietnam, particularly with regards to identity and discrimination.	Qualitative. Interviews, observations, and interactions with participants outside interviews.
Yi, H., & Gitzen, T.	2018	Review.	N/A. South Korean.	Exploration of experiences of transgender people in the South Korean military.	Review.
Yoder, J., & Mattheis, A.	2016	Research.	1427 LGBTQA participants in STEM. United States.	To explore the workplace experiences of LGBTQA in STEM	Quantitative. 58-item questionnaire.

Table A2  
*Themes and Subthemes that Emerged from the Scoping Review*

Theme and Subtheme Name	Examples
Theme 1: Support	
1a. From coworkers	Inclusive language, inclusion in activities, treated respectfully (e.g., proper pronoun use)
1b. External support	Friends, family as primary/additional supports
1c. Impact of lack of support	Threats of violence and aggression, demotions, termination of employment, and other forms of discrimination
Theme 2: Gender-related concerns	
2a. Gendered environments	Uniforms, assigning tasks based on gender, gendered bathrooms
2b. Pressure to perform gender	Women wearing “feminine” clothes, makeup, “acting” feminine; men appearing more dominant and “masculine”
Theme 3: Structural and institutional concerns	
3a. Policies, or lack thereof	Organizational (e.g., anti-discrimination policies), federal (e.g., anti-discrimination laws)
3b. Benefits and insurance	Coverage for gender affirming procedures (e.g., gender affirmation surgery, hormone treatment)
3c. Cultural and workplace environments and regulations	Dress codes, restrictive legislation (e.g., gender expectations, transgender employees and IDs)
Theme 4: Resilience	
4a. Preparedness	For others’ reactions (positive, negative, and neutral), plan B for employment (i.e., if needing to seek employment elsewhere)
4b. Coping	Acknowledging personal strengths and resilience, building support systems