

Managing Diversity Beyond the Binary: Organizational Policies and Workplace Inclusion for Sexual and Gender Minorities in Emerging Economies: A Mixed-Methods Study from Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The inclusion of sexual and gender minorities (SGM) in workplaces across emerging economies remains critically understudied, particularly in contexts where legal, cultural, and organizational norms create substantial barriers to equality. This mixed-methods study examines how organizational policies and inclusion practices shape the workplace experiences and career outcomes of SGM employees in Nigeria. Integrating Institutional Theory, Minority Stress Theory, and Organizational Inclusion frameworks, we investigate the relationships among policy strength, perceived inclusion climate, perceived organizational support (POS), job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Quantitative data were collected from 400 employees across Rivers, Lagos, Kogi, and Abuja using validated Likert-based scales. Qualitative insights were generated from 32 semi-structured interviews (24 SGM employees, 8 HR managers). Results indicate that policy strength positively predicts an inclusive climate, which in turn enhances job satisfaction and reduces turnover intentions. POS significantly mediates the relationship between inclusion climate and job outcomes, while regional differences moderate these effects. Qualitative findings reveal persistent policy–practice gaps, widespread fear of disclosure, leadership silence, and markedly varying inclusion climates across regions. This study provides novel empirical evidence from an under-researched emerging-economy context, identifies the structural and cultural constraints uniquely affecting SGM employees, and offers actionable, context-sensitive recommendations for HR practitioners, policymakers, and organizational leaders. The findings advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) discourse beyond binary gender categories and furnish a practical framework for designing policies that promote psychological safety, dignity, and belonging for all employees.

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1. Introduction

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) have evolved into central pillars of 21st-century organizational strategy, driven by increasingly heterogeneous workforces across dimensions of gender, sexuality, culture, and identity (Shore et al., 2021). In many emerging economies, however, workplace structures and policies remain anchored in binary and heteronormative assumptions, systematically overlooking the lived realities of sexual and gender minorities (SGM). Consequently, SGM employees must navigate professional environments profoundly shaped by discriminatory legislation, potent cultural and religious norms, organizational silence, and inconsistent policy enforcement (Elias & Chugh, 2022).

Nigeria presents a paradigmatic case of this challenge. Characterized by deep-seated socio-cultural and religious conservatism and the existence of laws such as the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act (SSMPA) of 2014 which criminalizes same-sex relationships and LGBTQ+ advocacy, the Nigerian workplace becomes a critical, often fraught, arena where SGM identity intersects with professional aspiration, psychological safety, and career mobility (Ibrahim & Ezema, 2024; Adebayo & Ogunleye, 2023). Although some multinational corporations and progressive private-sector firms claim to promote inclusive values, a significant chasm persists between aspirational policy and daily practice, a gap that widens considerably outside major metropolitan centers like Lagos and Abuja (Okafor & Udegbe, 2023). Rigorous, empirical research capturing the nuanced workplace experiences of SGM individuals in Nigeria remains scarce.

This study directly addresses this critical gap by examining the interplay of organizational policy effectiveness, perceived inclusion climate, and Perceived Organizational Support (POS) in shaping key workplace outcomes for SGM employees across four strategically selected Nigerian states: Rivers, Lagos, Kogi, and Abuja. Employing a convergent mixed-methods design, we integrate quantitative analysis of 400 survey responses with rich qualitative insights from 32 in-depth interviews. Our aim is to develop and test a context-sensitive model of SGM inclusion that accurately reflects Nigeria's complex legal, cultural, and institutional realities, thereby contributing both theoretical and practical knowledge to global and regional DEI scholarship.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Organizational Inclusion Beyond the Binary Framework

In contemporary organizational scholarship, inclusion is understood to extend far beyond numerical diversity or representation. True inclusion necessitates that all employees feel genuinely valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their full selves to their work (Nishii, 2023). A significant limitation of traditional DEI frameworks is their frequent reliance on fixed, binary (male/female) notions of gender, which renders invisible the experiences of transgender, non-binary, queer, and other gender-diverse individuals (Mor Barak, 2022). Emerging African scholarship stresses that effective inclusion frameworks must be adapted to account for the specific socio-cultural, legal, and institutional constraints prevalent in emerging economies, where universalist models often fail (Akinola et al., 2021; Maseko & Ndlovu, 2020).

2.2. Sexual and Gender Minorities in African Workplace Contexts

Globally, SGM employees report common challenges including identity concealment, exposure to microaggressions and overt discrimination, and exclusion from informal professional networks, all of which negatively impact job satisfaction, mental health, and

retention rates (Baams et al., 2022; Rabelo & Cortina, 2019). Within African contexts, these stressors are significantly amplified by restrictive legislation, pervasive religious conservatism, and deeply embedded cultural taboos (Ndlovu, 2022; Wahab et al., 2023). An intersectional lens (Crenshaw, 1991) is crucial here, as the compounded effects of SGM identity with other marginalized statuses, such as ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic class, and regional origin, create unique and intensified forms of workplace exclusion and limit access to organizational resources and support (Okoro & Mensah, 2021).

2.3. The Roles of Policy Strength and Inclusion Climate

Formal organizational policies, such as non-discrimination clauses and inclusive benefits, serve as vital signals of institutional commitment to SGM employees (Shore et al., 2021). However, their real-world impact is heavily mediated by leadership behavior, the robustness of enforcement mechanisms, and the prevailing workplace culture. An authentic inclusion climate, characterized by shared perceptions of fairness, genuine belonging, and psychological safety, is empirically shown to be a stronger predictor of positive employee outcomes than the mere existence of policies (Downey et al., 2022). This climate is what translates policy from paper into practice.

2.4. Perceived Organizational Support (POS) as a Critical Buffer

POS refers to employees' global belief that their organization values their contributions and genuinely cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2020). For SGM employees, who often navigate chronic minority stress, POS can function as a critical psychological buffer. It mitigates identity-related stress, enhances emotional engagement, and fosters stronger retention intentions (Hoogendoorn & Badal, 2024). POS thus represents the felt experience of organizational care, which can offset a hostile external environment.

2.5. Identified Research Gaps

Despite growing interest, significant gaps persist. Few studies employ robust mixed-methods designs to examine SGM workplace experiences within African contexts. Even fewer conduct comparative analyses across multiple locations within a single country to disentangle the effects of regional cultural and institutional variations. This study is designed to address these precise gaps, offering a geographically nuanced, empirically rich analysis of SGM inclusion in Nigeria.

3. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

3.1. Conceptual Model

Our conceptual model, presented in Figure 1, posits that formal Policy Strength is a foundational antecedent that fosters a positive Inclusion Climate. This climate, in turn, is hypothesized to directly increase Job Satisfaction and decrease Turnover Intentions. We further propose that Perceived Organizational Support (POS) serves as a key psychological mechanism, mediating the relationship between Inclusion Climate and these job outcomes. Crucially, we argue that Geographical Location (Rivers, Lagos, Kogi, Abuja) acts as a contextual moderator at all stages of this model, reflecting the powerful influence of local legal interpretations, cultural norms, and social attitudes.

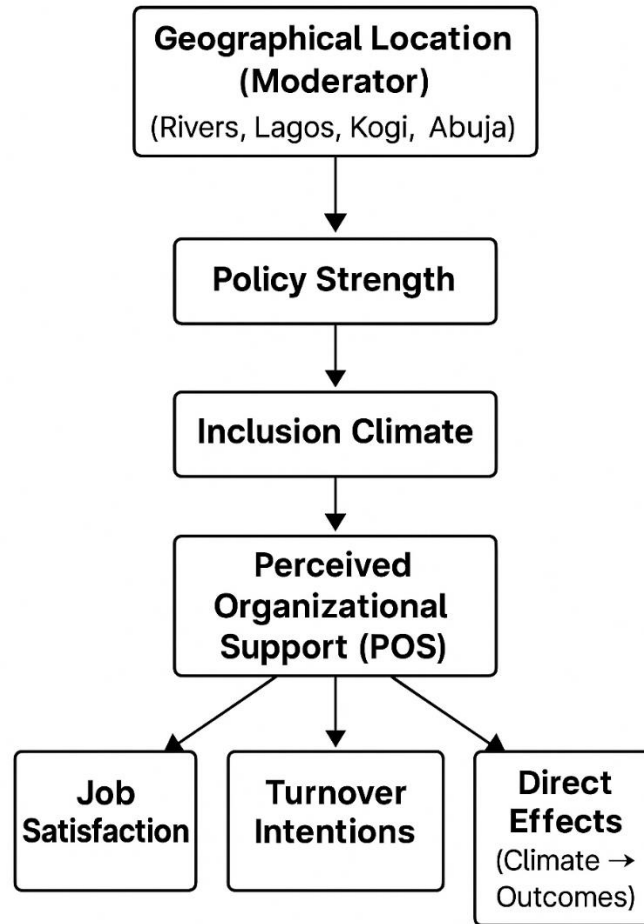


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of SGM Workplace Inclusion in Nigeria

3.2. Theoretical Integration and Contribution

This model advances Institutional Theory by demonstrating how isomorphic pressures for formal policy adoption (e.g., from global corporate standards) interact with, and are often filtered by, localized cultural-cognitive institutions to produce divergent inclusion outcomes. It extends Minority Stress Theory into the organizational domain of an emerging economy, specifying POS as a critical workplace resource that can buffer the chronic stress induced by a stigmatizing social and legal environment.

3.3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Questions:

RQ1: How strong and effective are organizational SGM inclusion policies across the four Nigerian locations studied?

RQ2: How do policy strength and inclusion climate relate to job satisfaction and turnover intentions among SGM employees?

RQ3: Does perceived organizational support mediate the relationship between inclusion climate and job outcomes?

RQ4: How do these relationships differ across the regions of Rivers, Lagos, Kogi, and Abuja?

Hypotheses:

H1: Policy strength will positively predict perceived inclusion climate.

H2: Inclusion climate will positively predict job satisfaction (H2a) and negatively predict turnover intentions (H2b).

H3: Perceived organizational support will mediate the relationships between inclusion climate and (a) job satisfaction and (b) turnover intentions.

H4: Geographical location will moderate all proposed relationships in the model, with relationships being stronger in Lagos and Abuja compared to Rivers and Kogi.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

We employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017), collecting and analyzing quantitative (survey) and qualitative (interview) data concurrently with the intent of merging results during the interpretation phase to provide a comprehensive, validated understanding of the research problem.

4.2. Ethical Considerations

This study received formal ethical approval from the University of Uyo Research Ethics Committee prior to data collection. All participants provided informed consent. For the survey, this was obtained digitally via a detailed information sheet outlining study purposes, risks, benefits, and confidentiality measures, with an 'I Agree' button required before proceeding. For interviews, written consent was obtained after verbal explanation, emphasizing voluntary participation and the right to withdraw.

Given the vulnerable nature of the population, we implemented several risk-mitigation strategies: (1) All data collection occurred via encrypted, secure platforms (Qualtrics for surveys, Zoom for interviews); (2) We minimized collection of personally identifiable information (PII); (3) Participants could skip any question or end participation without consequence; (4) We provided lists of local/national mental health and LGBTQ+ support resources at session conclusions. To further ensure privacy, interview participants were not asked to state their specific organization or department, and interviews were scheduled at times of their choosing to ensure secure, private settings.

All data were immediately anonymized. Survey responses were collected without IP/email tracking. Interview audio was transcribed by the lead researcher using pseudonyms, with all identifiers removed. Digital data are stored on a password-protected, encrypted server accessible only to the research team. Physical consent forms are stored separately in a locked cabinet.

4.3. Sampling and Participants

Quantitative Sample: Data were collected from 400 employees who self-identified as belonging to a sexual or gender minority (N=100 per location: Rivers, Lagos, Kogi, Abuja). Participants were recruited through professional LGBTQ+ networks, HR department contacts in participating organizations, and snowball sampling. While this network-based, non-probability sampling approach was necessary to access a hidden and cautious population, it

limits the statistical generalizability of our findings to the broader Nigerian SGM workforce. However, a post-hoc power analysis using G*Power 3.1 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) indicated that our sample of N=400 provided >99% power to detect medium-sized effects ($f^2 = 0.15$) at $\alpha = .05$, suggesting sufficient statistical power for the proposed analyses. Of 512 surveys distributed, 400 were fully completed (response rate: 78.1%).

Qualitative Sample: We conducted 32 semi-structured interviews, comprising 24 SGM employees and 8 HR managers (8 total participants per location), to gain deeper, contextual insights. Interviewees were selected to maximize variation in industry sector, organizational level, and specific SGM identity. Interviewing ceased after 32 participants as thematic saturation was reached; subsequent interviews yielded no substantively new themes relevant to the research questions.

Table 1. Qualitative Participant Overview

Location	Survey N	Interview N (SGM/HR)	Reported SGM Identities (Interview)	Primary Sectors Represented
Lagos	100	8 (6 SGM, 2 HR)	Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender	Finance, Tech, Consulting, NGO
Abuja	100	8 (6 SGM, 2 HR)	Gay, Lesbian, Non-binary	Govt, Diplomatic, Legal, NGO
Rivers	100	8 (6 SGM, 2 HR)	Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual	Energy, Engineering Services
Kogi	100	8 (6 SGM, 2 HR)	Gay, Lesbian	Education, Civil Service, SME

Table 1b. Demographic Profile of Quantitative Survey Sample (N=400)

Characteristic	Category	% or Mean (SD)
Age		31.4 years (6.7)
Gender Identity	Man/Male	54.5%
	Woman/Female	38.0%
	Transgender	3.5%
	Non-binary	4.0%
Sexual Orientation	Gay/Lesbian	62.0%
	Bisexual	28.5%
	Queer/Other	9.5%
Organizational Tenure		4.2 years (3.1)
Primary Sector	Public Sector	25.0%
Primary Sector	Private Domestic Firm	45.5%
	Multinational Corp. (MNC)	22.0%
	NGO/Non-Profit	7.5%

4.4. Measures and Instruments (Quantitative)

All scales used a 5-point Likert response format (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). See Appendix A for sample items.

- **Policy Strength:** Adapted from McKay et al. (2007). 6 items ($\alpha = .88$).
- **Inclusion Climate:** Adapted from Nishii (2013). 8 items ($\alpha = .91$).

- **Perceived Organizational Support (POS):** Shortened version of Eisenberger et al. (1986). 8 items ($\alpha = .86$).
- **Job Satisfaction:** Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire subscale (Cammann et al., 1983). 3 items ($\alpha = .84$).
- **Turnover Intentions:** Scale from Mobley et al. (1978). 3 items ($\alpha = .79$).

Construct Validity: Exploratory (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) on a holdout sample confirmed the distinct five-factor structure with excellent fit indices (CFI = .96, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .04), establishing validity within the Nigerian context.

4.5. Qualitative Protocol

Semi-structured interview guides were tailored for SGM employees and HR managers. Questions explored personal experiences of inclusion/exclusion, perceptions of policy implementation, interactions with leadership and colleagues, and the influence of local context. Interviews averaged 45 minutes, were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and anonymized. During analysis, HR manager transcripts were initially coded separately to identify institutional narratives and policy rationales. These codes were then integrated with the thematic structure from SGM employee accounts to illuminate contrasts between managerial intent and employee experience, crystallizing the core 'Policy-Practice Chasm' theme.

4.6. Data Analysis Plan

Quantitative Analysis: Data were analyzed using SPSS 28 and AMOS 28.

1. Hierarchical Regression to test H1 and H2.
2. Mediation Analysis using Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 4) with 5,000 bootstrap samples to test H3.
3. Multi-Group Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the moderating role of location (H4), comparing model paths across four regions.

To assess the robustness of our proposed model, we tested two plausible alternative configurations. A model specifying direct effects from Policy Strength to POS and job outcomes showed significantly worse fit ($\Delta\chi^2 = 42.1, p < .001$). A model reversing the proposed mediation (e.g., job satisfaction influencing POS) also demonstrated inferior fit (CFI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.07). While no specific social desirability scale was included, our procedural safeguards (anonymity, separation of measures) were designed to minimize its influence.

Common Method Bias Assessment: Harman's single-factor test showed the first factor accounted for 32.4% of variance. A CFA single-factor model showed poor fit ($\chi^2/df = 8.7, CFI = 0.52, RMSEA = 0.14$).

Missing Data: Handled using full information maximum likelihood (FIML).

Measurement Invariance: Metric invariance was supported ($\Delta CFI = -0.008$). Scalar invariance was not fully supported ($\Delta CFI = -0.015$).

Controls: All analyses controlled for organizational tenure, sector, managerial status, and SGM identity category.

Qualitative Analysis: Interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) in NVivo 14. Thematic analysis was conducted by the lead author and a trained

research assistant. An initial codebook was developed inductively and refined through discussion. To enhance reliability, both coders independently analyzed 25% of the transcripts (n=8). Inter-coder agreement, calculated using Cohen's Kappa, was $\kappa = 0.78$, indicating substantial agreement. All discrepancies were resolved through consensus discussion. Trustworthiness was ensured through peer debriefing and audit trails.

Integration: A joint display table (Table 4) illustrates convergence between quantitative and qualitative findings.

4.7 Preliminary Data Screening

Little's MCAR test indicated missing data was missing completely at random ($\chi^2=15.32$, $*p*=.22$). Structural Equation Modeling with Maximum Likelihood estimation is considered robust to deviations from normality with our sample size.

5. Results

5.1. Quantitative Results

Diagnostic checks confirmed no issues of multicollinearity (all VIFs < 2.5) or heteroscedasticity. Table 2 presents descriptive statistics, intercorrelations, and region-specific means.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Region-Specific Means

Variable	Overall Mean (SD)	Lagos Mean	Abuja Mean	Rivers Mean	Kogi Mean	1	2	3	4	5
Policy Strength	3.42 (0.71)	3.55	3.48	3.35	3.30	1				
Inclusion Climate	3.11 (0.83)	3.45	3.30	2.95	2.75	.48**	1			
POS	3.25 (0.74)	3.50	3.40	3.10	3.00	.32**	.51**	1		
Job Satisfaction	3.58 (0.69)	3.75	3.65	3.50	3.42	.29**	.44**	.52**	1	
Turnover Intentions	2.44 (0.88)	2.20	2.30	2.60	2.65	-.21*	-.37**	-.41**	-.55**	1

*Note: ** $p < .01$, $p < .05$. **Hypothesis Testing:**

- **H1 Supported:** Policy strength significantly predicted inclusion climate ($\beta = .47$, $*p* < .001$).
- **H2 Supported:** Inclusion climate positively predicted job satisfaction ($\beta = .41$, $p < .001$) and negatively predicted turnover intentions ($\beta = -.35$, $p < .001$).
- **H3 Supported:** Mediation analysis revealed significant indirect effects. Inclusion climate influenced job satisfaction indirectly through POS (indirect effect = 0.18, 95% CI [0.11, 0.26]). The effect on turnover intentions was also mediated by POS (indirect effect = -0.15, 95% CI [-0.22, -0.09]).
- **H4 Supported:** Multi-group SEM revealed significant moderation by location ($\Delta\chi^2(18) = 45.32$, $p < .001$). Supplementary Table S1 presents the region-specific standardized path estimates with confidence intervals, confirming the moderation pattern. Key paths (e.g., Inclusion Climate \rightarrow POS) were indeed stronger in Lagos ($\beta = .58$, 95% CI [.47, .69]) and Abuja ($\beta = .55$, [.44, .66]) than in Rivers ($\beta = .42$, [.30, .54]) and Kogi ($\beta = .38$, [.25, .51]).

5.2. Qualitative Results: Core Themes

Table 3. Summary of Qualitative Themes

Theme	Description	Illustrative Quote	Prevalence
1. Calculated Concealment & Fear	Strategic identity management due to fear of repercussions	"My sexuality is my best-kept secret at work. The law is one thing, but the gossip and sidelining are what would end my career. (Lesbian female, Kogi)"	28/32
2. The Policy–Practice Chasm	Policies exist on paper with negligible implementation	"We have a beautiful diversity statement on the website. But when a colleague made a homophobic joke in a meeting, the manager just changed the subject. The policy is a ghost. (Gay male, Rivers)"	30/32
3. Leadership Silence as Complicity	Managers' avoidance of SGM topics as tacit endorsement	"Silence from leadership speaks volumes. It tells everyone this is not a safe topic, that we are not worth defending. (Non-binary person, Abuja)"	29/32
4. Geographic Mosaic of Risk/Safety	Clear hierarchy of perceived safety across regions	"In Lagos, my team knows I have a partner; they do not ask questions. When I was posted to Port Harcourt, I instantly went back into the closet. (Bisexual male, Lagos/Rivers)"	32/32

5.3. Integrated Mixed-Methods Findings

Table 4. Joint Display of Integrated Results

Quantitative Finding	Qualitative Theme	Interpretative Insight
Policy Strength → Inclusion Climate (H1 supported)	Theme 2: Policy–Practice Chasm	Policies set a baseline expectation, but their weak correlation with POS underscores the chasm; formal rules lack social power without enforcement.
Inclusion Climate → POS (Stronger in Lagos/Abuja)	Theme 4: Geographic Mosaic	The moderated quantitative path is lived as a stark difference in daily psychological safety and trust in organizational support between regions.
POS mediates climate → outcomes (H3 supported)	Theme 1: Calculated Concealment	POS is the tangible 'proof' that reduces the need for concealment. Its absence exacerbates fear and the cognitive load of identity management, driving dissatisfaction and exit thoughts.
Leadership Silence (Theme 3)	(Not directly measured quantitatively)	This theme provides a mechanism for why inclusion climate often fails to translate into POS, highlighting a critical failure point in the leadership pipeline.

6. Discussion

6.1. Synthesis and Interpretation

*Note: ** $p < .01$, $p < .05$. The central role of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) as a mediator is a key finding. It suggests that for SGM employees, abstract feelings of inclusion must be made concrete through tangible demonstrations that the organization cares and will support them. POS acts as the crucial psychological bridge between a positive climate and positive outcomes. Conversely, our qualitative data reveal that leadership silence actively erodes this bridge, creating a policy–practice chasm that renders formal commitments meaningless.

The powerful moderating effect of location underscores that organizational inclusion does not occur in a vacuum. It is filtered through and shaped by the local socio-legal milieu. The relative "havens" of Lagos and Abuja, with their more cosmopolitan environments and

concentrations of multinational firms, facilitate stronger climate–POS–outcome pathways. In contrast, the more conservative environments of Rivers and Kogi suppress these relationships, forcing employees into deeper concealment and offering them less organizational solace.

6.2. Theoretical Contributions

Our work makes three primary contributions:

1. **To Institutional Theory:** We demonstrate the decoupling of policy from practice is not merely symbolic but has severe human costs. We show how global isomorphic pressures for inclusion are locally "translated" and often neutralized by stronger cultural-cognitive institutions, resulting in a geographic mosaic of inclusion.
2. **To Minority Stress Theory:** We empirically identify POS as a contextually salient protective factor within the workplace, extending the theory's repertoire of coping resources. We also delineate leadership silence as a novel, potent workplace stressor that exacerbates identity threat.
3. **To Gender and Sexuality Studies:** We move "beyond the binary" in a substantive way, centering the experiences of diverse SGM identities. We frame the policy–practice gap and leadership silence as mechanisms of organizational heteronormativity and queer erasure, showing how workplaces can become sites that reproduce, rather than challenge, broader societal exclusion.

6.3. Practical Implications

For practitioners in Nigeria and similar contexts:

- **Move Beyond Paper Policies:** Invest in mandatory, scenario-based training for all leaders on SGM inclusion, bystander intervention, and the business costs of silence.
- **Foster Brave Leadership:** Incentivize and train managers to visibly champion inclusion, address microaggressions, and create team-level psychological safety.
- **Build Concrete Support Systems:** Establish clear, confidential reporting channels for discrimination and fund verified Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) for SGM staff.
- **Adopt a Context-Sensitive Approach:** Tailor DEI strategies to regional realities. In high-risk areas, focus initially on confidential support and leadership accountability before public advocacy. Organizations must navigate the ethical tension between visibility and safety. In high-risk areas, initial focus should be on confidential support and leadership accountability rather than public advocacy that could inadvertently increase risk for employees.

6.4. Limitations and Future Research

Causal and Endogeneity Limitations: The cross-sectional nature of our quantitative data precludes definitive causal claims. While our model is theoretically grounded and alternative model structures showed worse fit, reverse causality or endogeneity remains possible. We conducted robustness checks by controlling for tenure and sector, and testing reversed mediation models, but future longitudinal or quasi-experimental designs are essential to establish causality.

Sampling Limitations: Our sample, while sizable for this context, was non-probable and network-based. This may over-represent individuals connected to SGM communities or progressive sectors, potentially skewing perceptions. This likely over-represents SGM individuals connected to communities or formal sectors, potentially underestimating the challenges faced by isolated individuals or those in the informal economy. Transgender and non-binary individuals were notably underrepresented in our quantitative sample (7.5% combined). Their experiences, often involving more visible stigma and distinct discrimination forms, may be more severe than captured here.

Measurement and Generalizability: While we established metric invariance for cross-group comparisons, the lack of full scalar invariance suggests regional differences in response styles or interpretation. The lack of full scalar invariance, while allowing for comparison of structural relationships, suggests participants in different regions may have used the Likert scale with different baselines. This reinforces the 'geographic mosaic' argument but cautions against direct comparison of raw mean scores as absolute measures. Our findings are context-bound to Nigeria's specific legal-cultural milieu; transferability to other African contexts with different legal frameworks requires verification through comparative studies.

Future Research Directions: (1) Longitudinal studies tracking inclusion climate evolution; (2) Comparative research across African nations with varying legal standings; (3) Intersectional analyses considering how ethnicity, class, and disability compound SGM workplace experiences; (4) Intervention studies testing context-sensitive inclusion training programs.

7. Conclusion

This study illuminates the complex reality of SGM workplace inclusion in Nigeria. We find that the path to genuine inclusion is paved not merely with policy documents but with the daily actions of leaders, the tangible support offered by the organization, and the courage to counteract silencing local norms. While formal policies provide a necessary foundation, it is the lived experience of psychological safety and organizational care, often mediated by geography, that ultimately determines job satisfaction and retention for SGM employees.

Our findings argue for a shift from a compliance-oriented, policy-centric approach to a culture-building, support-centric model of inclusion. For organizations operating in emerging economies with restrictive environments, this means recognizing that their role is not just to avoid discrimination but to actively create pockets of safety and affirmation within a broader landscape of constraint. By doing so, they not only fulfill ethical imperatives but also unlock the full potential of their diverse talent, contributing to a more just and effective global economy.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Instrument – Sample Items and Scales

Note to Reviewers: This appendix presents the core scales and sample items used in the quantitative survey. The full instrument consisted of a demographic section, the construct measures presented below in a randomized order to mitigate common method bias, and a final open-ended comment section. All scales used a 5-point Likert-type response format (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Scale reliabilities (Cronbach's α) were calculated for the present sample. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) confirmed the distinct five-factor structure with acceptable model fit (CFI = .96, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .04).

Demographic Section (All participants were pre-screened to self-identify as a sexual or gender minority)

1. Age: ___ years
2. Gender Identity: [] Male [] Female [] Transgender [] Non-binary [] Other (please specify): _____
3. Sexual Orientation: [] Gay/Lesbian [] Bisexual [] Queer [] Other: _____
4. Geographical Location (Primary Workplace): [] Lagos [] Abuja (FCT) [] Rivers State [] Kogi State
5. Job Role/Level: [] Senior Management [] Middle Management [] Junior Staff [] Non-Managerial Professional
6. Organizational Tenure: ___ years
7. Primary Sector: [] Public/Civil Service [] Private Domestic Firm [] Multinational Corporation [] NGO/Non-Profit

Construct Measures

1. **Policy Strength** (Adapted from McKay et al., 2007; 6 items; $\alpha = .88$)
 - "My organization has clear, written policies that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity."
 - "There are effective and confidential procedures in place for reporting discrimination or harassment against SGM employees."
2. **Inclusion Climate** (Adapted from Nishii, 2013; 8 items; $\alpha = .91$)
 - "In my work unit, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities are treated with equal respect."
 - "The leaders in my organization are genuinely committed to creating a workplace where everyone can be themselves."
3. **Perceived Organizational Support (POS)** (Shortened version of Eisenberger et al., 1986; 8 items; $\alpha = .86$)
 - "My organization really cares about my well-being."
 - "The organization strongly considers my goals and values."
4. **Job Satisfaction** (Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire subscale; Cammann et al., 1983; 3 items; $\alpha = .84$)
 - "All in all, I am satisfied with my job."
 - "In general, I like working here."
5. **Turnover Intentions** (Scale adapted from Mobley et al., 1978; 3 items; $\alpha = .79$)
 - "I often think about leaving this organization."
 - "I will probably look for a new job in the next year."

Appendix B: Aggregate Demographic Profile of Interview Participants

Table B1. Summary characteristics of the 32 participants in the semi-structured interview phase.

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)
Primary Location	Lagos	8
	Abuja (FCT)	8
	Rivers State	8
	Kogi State	8
Reported Gender Identity	Woman / Female	14
	Man / Male	11
	Non-binary	5
	Transgender	2
Reported Sexual Orientation	Gay or Lesbian	18
	Bisexual	8
	Queer	6
Organizational Role Level	Junior Staff	15
	Professional Staff (Non-managerial)	8
	Middle Management	6
	Senior Management	3
Primary Organizational Sector	Private Domestic Firm	13
	Public Sector / Government Parastatal	9
	Multinational Corporation (MNC)	5
	Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)	5
Organizational Tenure	Mean (Standard Deviation)	3.4 years (1.6)
	Range	2–7 years

Note: The purposive sampling strategy aimed to achieve maximum variation across locations, gender identities, and sectors.

Data are presented in aggregate form to protect participant confidentiality and anonymity, in strict adherence to the ethical protocol approved for this study.

Appendix C: Qualitative Analysis Codebook with Illustrative Data

Table C1. Final thematic structure derived from the inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of 32 interview transcripts.

Core Theme & Sub-Themes	Operational Definition	Illustrative Quotation (Pseudonym, Location)	Prevalence (n=32)
1. Fear of Disclosure & Identity Management	Strategies of concealing or carefully managing one's SGM identity due to perceived risks.		30
1.1. Professional	Fear that disclosure would harm	"Promotion is tied to perception. If	28

Core Theme & Sub-Themes	Operational Definition	Illustrative Quotation (Pseudonym, Location)	Prevalence (n=32)
Risk	career progression or lead to job loss.	they even suspect you're gay, you become 'a risk' too controversial. (Rivers)"	
1.2. Social Ostracization	Anxiety about being isolated from collegial networks and workplace social capital.	"It's the lunchroom conversations you're suddenly excluded from... You become professionally invisible. (Kogi)"	26
2. The Policy–Practice Gap	Stark divergence between formal policies and their practical implementation.		32
2.1. Symbolic Existence	Policies present in documents but absent from daily discourse and priorities.	"We have a beautiful diversity statement... But here it's never mentioned. (Lagos)"	30
2.2. Absence of Accountability	Lack of consistent consequences for policy violations.	"Someone made a derogatory comment. My manager said, 'Let's not make a big case out of it.' (Abuja)"	28
3. Leadership Silence as Tacit Endorsement	Managers' avoidance of SGM topics interpreted as validation of status quo.		31
3.1. Active Avoidance	Deliberate steering of conversations away from diversity topics.	"Whenever the topic comes up, there's a quick subject change. (Multiple)"	30
3.2. Missed Teachable Moments	Failure to address microaggressions or biased language.	"A colleague joked about 'men being men'... The team lead just laughed along. (Rivers)"	27
4. Geographic Mosaic of Safety	Significant variation in perceptions of safety across locations.		32
4.1. Urban vs. Provincial Divide	Major cities offer greater anonymity and progressive tolerance as buffer.	"In Lagos, you can find your community outside work. That makes the workplace bearable. (Lagos)"	32
4.2. Local Cultural Enforcement	Infiltration of local religious/traditional norms into workplace.	"Here, the church and the workplace are connected. You feel the community's eyes on you. (Kogi)"	30

Note on Analysis: Thematic prevalence indicates the number of participants whose transcripts contained data coded to that theme. All identifiable details have been removed to protect anonymity.

Supplementary Materials Submitted Separately:

- 1. Supplementary Table S1:** Region-Specific Standardized Path Estimates with 95% Confidence Intervals
- 2. Professional Version of Figure 1:** Created with MS Word drawing tools