# Study Reveals Homophobic Discrimination Faced by LGBTQ+ Entrepreneurs



A study conducted by Dublin City University (DCU) and Technology University Dublin (TUD) has explored the experiences of LGBT+ entrepreneurs in managing their sexual identity within the business environment. Led by Professor Maura McAdam (DCU), Dr. Etain Kidney, and Professor Thomas Cooney (TUD), this research focused on how gay entrepreneurs navigate homophobia and heterosexism in professional settings.

The findings were derived from in-depth interviews with fourteen lesbian and gay entrepreneurs, revealing that many encounter discrimination from clients, suppliers, and customers. Forms of discrimination identified included harassment, verbal and violent abuse, passive homophobia, and hypersexualisation. These prejudices were frequently described as commonplace or as “everyday prejudices” by the participants.

Additionally, the study indicated that the expectation of discrimination may lead many lesbian and gay entrepreneurs to refrain from openly identifying themselves as such in the workplace. This reluctance is often a strategy to achieve an autonomous career trajectory while managing minority stress. The researchers also found that entrepreneurs' degree of openness about their sexuality could affect how they experience discrimination. Specifically, those who can and choose to pass as heterosexual may employ this as a strategy to avoid prejudice.

The study underscores significant challenges that are unique to lesbian and gay entrepreneurs, emphasizing the pervasive nature of heterosexist discrimination within the business community. The complete research findings are published in the International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research.