

**WORDS MATTER: USE OF GENDER IDENTITY PRONOUNS IN BUSINESS
COMMUNICATION**

by

Patricia Carlin

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This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the candidate's dissertation advisor, Dr. Len J. Treviño, Department of Management Programs, and has been approved by all members of the supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the College of Business and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

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Through this research, I provide quantitative evidence on the use of gender identity pronouns in business communication as it relates to sexual stigma theory and psychological safety theory in the workplace. This theoretically grounded, empirical investigation uncovers what impact, if any, psychological safety has on the use of gender identity pronouns in the workplace. My research measures the degree to which respondents feel psychologically safe enough to use their gender identity pronouns in a work context and which other factors (such as age cohort or the sociopolitical leanings of the company where they work) impact their decision to do so.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Attaining diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) has moved to the forefront of companies' human resource management agendas (Zugelder, 2017), and gender equality is one of the United Nations 17 societal development goals (SDG 5) (United Nations, 2015), making it a timely topic for research. While diversity research has historically focused on race, gender equality has been highlighted as a critically important issue that must be resolved (United Nations, 2015). Indeed, gender equality has been identified as the latest global civil rights movement (Corrales, 2015), and researchers have been weighing the benefits of diversity for companies' bottom lines (Herring, 2009). How companies address diversity is financially consequential; thus, they must address the gender diversity of the workforce. Gender diversity in the workforce is no longer simply a balance between male and female employees but an ever-evolving diverse group representing a spectrum of genders (Hernandez, 2020; Jaroszewski et al., 2018; Richey et al., 2019). This is a complex issue since research has shown that the rights of the LGBTQ community are dependent on where one lives (Boyon, 2023; Corrales, 2015), resulting in human resource management challenges for organizations in every locale.

Although much has been accomplished in the DEI literature, scholars have recently highlighted non-binary genders and trans youth as important issues that must be addressed in the workplace and beyond (Martinez, 2021). Transgender youth, as a subset of non-binary people, are an ever-growing part of the future workforce (Jones, 2021, 2023). According to the director of the UC Santa Cruz Gender Diversity Laboratory, Dr.

Phillip Hammack, the internet has informed generations of people regarding gender expression (Nawaz, 2021). The internet provides access to multiple sources of present and historical media objects that display or describe a wide array of gender and gender expressions that can inform younger audiences about the full spectrum of gender expression—information that would not have been available to previous generations.

Barsigian and colleagues (2020) identify three distinct cohorts in the U.S., the oldest of which is marked by a lack of language to describe their non-binary gender. The cohorts are defined by their historical experiences: *Pride* (Stonewall protest era), *Visibility* (AIDS outbreak era), and *Equality* (legalization of gay marriage era). While Gallup polls show a growing number of people declaring themselves to be bisexual (Jones, 2021), Hammack notes that bisexuality pre-existed social media and an openness to talk about sexuality (Nawaz, 2021). However, as people feel more comfortable displaying gender expressions with which they identify, openness about gender and sexuality is appearing in business communications and, more recently, in the form of gender-identifying pronouns in e-mails and other electronic platforms used in the workplace (Armitstead, 2022; Gonzales, 2022).

Unfortunately, companies' responses to diversity issues have been mixed, leaving some employees to feel safer in the workplace than others. On the positive side, an increasing number of companies are creating a more inclusive environment for members of the LGBTQ community (Human Rights Campaign, 2022). Conversely, sexual minorities experience discrimination, blowback, and harassment in some fields (Hill, 2009; Richey et al., 2019). As such, I study psychological safety, a construct that has been found to be a mediator for positive workplace outcomes that are beneficial for

employers, such as facilitating learning, organizational effectiveness (Edmondson, 1999; Kahn, 1990), creativity, and innovation (Clark, 2020; Hossain et al., 2020).

More specifically, I examine how psychological safety impacts the use of gender-identifying pronouns in the workplace. Developing a more nuanced understanding about how gender-diverse employees perceive their psychological safety in the modern workplace is important for several reasons. First, the percentage of people who do not identify in typical binary fashion is growing considerably (Jones, 2021). In a tight labor market, it is vital for employers to make all their employees feel safe in the workplace, or they risk attrition (Singh, 2018). Second, by creating an equitable and inclusive environment for non-binary employees, organizations can do their part to help the world achieve complete gender equality (Buscher, 2011) in our lifetimes. Finally, companies benefit from the innovation created by an inclusive and psychologically safe environment (Clark, 2020; Hossain et al., 2020).

One way that employers are trying to make LGBTQ workers feel safe is to support or encourage the use of gender identity pronouns in work communications. Regrettably, some approaches to building inclusion have not been empirically demonstrated to stem from psychological safety, a construct related to creating an inclusive workplace environment (Clark, 2020). As Johnson and colleagues (2021) note, there is little evidence that using gender identity pronouns is a best practice. While increased use of gender identity pronouns in business communications is notable, the reasoning behind their use by individuals both within and outside the LGBTQ community, including on social media sites (Kondakciu et al., 2022), office-based chat tools, and e-mail signatures featuring gender identity pronouns, is not fully understood.

Gonzales (2022) shares the story of one CEO who came out as transgender to her small company ($n=70$ employees) and explained her new pronouns. While this evidence is anecdotal, I am not aware of any empirical study that supports the efficacy of gender identity pronouns used in practice. My study addresses this gap in the literature by measuring the use of gender identity pronouns in the workplace and the factors that may impact their usage.

This current study is significant because it is not yet known if binary and non-binary employees feel comfortable with the use of gender-identifying pronouns. Is the use of gender identity pronouns a matter of social identity or a way to avoid stigma (Kondakciu et al., 2022; Ragins et al., 2007)? To address this shortcoming in the literature, I undertake a theoretically grounded, empirical investigation to uncover what impact, if any, psychological safety has on the use of gender identity pronouns in the workplace. My research measures the degree to which respondents feel psychologically safe enough to use their gender identity pronouns in a work context and which other factors (such as age cohort or the sociopolitical leanings of the company where they work) impact their decision to do so. Chapter II presents a review of the related literature.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The identity pronoun literature is in its nascent stage. To my knowledge, there is only one study that examined gender identity pronouns and psychological safety in the workplace, namely Johnson and colleagues (2021). In their research, the authors use a well-defined and experimental *what-if* scenario involving a fictional company's use of gender identity pronouns. In contrast, in the present study I collected primary data from respondents about how they use identity pronouns in their current jobs. Because I am breaking new theoretical ground and, as such, I do not have a lot of research from which to conceptualize my arguments, I build on Weinberg, Treviño, and Cleveland's (2019) research on gendered communication and career outcomes as well as Terpstra-Tong and colleagues' (2021) multi-level study who state that management research continues to use the binary masculine/feminine as a variable (sex at birth in the current study) rather than examining gender as a spectrum. Accordingly, I answer Terpstra-Tong et al.'s (2021) call in my research by adding a gender variable that moves beyond the binary male versus female paradigm in the extant literature, separating heterosexuals from the LGBTQ community in the dataset.

Further, Weinberg and colleagues (2019) found that masculine versus feminine communication styles can affect compensation and career advancement. Building on this finding, I extend the boundary conditions of this literature stream to the use of pronouns in e-mail signatures and other electronic communication platforms as an overt expression of gender. Weinberg and colleagues (2019) aver that how gender is performed at work is

an area of opportunity for further investigation. In response, I examine gender identity pronouns in business communication as a way of performing one's gender (Kondakciu et al., 2022; Treviño et al., 2017) in the workplace, demonstrating to colleagues who they are in the process. Inspired by the tool developed by Weinberg and colleagues (2019), which measures how gender is performed irrespective of sex at birth, I encompass the full spectrum of genders who can perform their gender in the workplace by using gender identity pronouns.

I build on the work of Phillip Hammack (Nawaz, 2021) by showing to what extent social media and work-related electronic communications via email and work collaboration tools are used for gender expression. Hammack notes that, over the last century, people have become more and more at ease about sharing their gender identity (Nawaz, 2021). Therefore, I measure the use of gender identity pronouns to see if people feel psychologically safe enough to use their pronouns on social media and/or in business communications. Further, Hammack points out that people are making an intentional shift in the language they are using (Nawaz, 2021), but no statistics were provided for his assertion; therefore, my research can provide quantitative data to affirm or refute this claim.

The presence of non-binary participants in Gallup polls is steadily trending up, measuring the non-heterosexual population in the U.S. as 3.5% in 2012 and 5.6% in 2020 (Jones, 2021). The latest Gallup poll shows that over 7% of Americans identify as LGBT (Jones, 2023), which indicates the number of people who see themselves as members of the LGBT community is growing. While Gallup regularly studies this population in the U.S., finding similar longitudinal numbers for other countries is challenging. According

to demographers, those respondents who are still in the closet and the variance in survey methods prohibit the ability to generalize research outcomes worldwide (Gates, 2011). However, a thirty-country study conducted by Ipsos (Boyon, 2023) shows that the worldwide LGBT population is about 9% and confirms other research that shows that younger generations are more likely to identify as members of the LGBT community.¹ It naturally follows that if youth are awakening to their gender as something beyond the binary, their desire to find a suitable gender identity pronoun moves with them when they join the workforce (Chen, 2021). If this is the case, employers may need to adapt their communications policies to support the increasingly diverse population of employees. To address the efficacy of gender identity pronoun use in the workplace, I measure the level of gender identity pronoun usage by employees and their respective employers to determine if their use is moderated by age and mediated by their perception of psychological safety in the workplace.

In my data collection process, I include how supportive the workplace is for non-binary people because a company that supports diversity might be more likely to encourage or support the use of gender identity pronouns (Agugliaro & Sanchez, 2021; Chen, 2021; Gonzalez, 2022; Griffith & Hebl, 2002). While company policies surrounding gender identity pronoun use may be implemented for legal or marketing purposes, employees may experience the culture differently than management intended. Therefore, I expect that psychological safety and work relationships will be strong predictors of gender identity pronoun use (Johnson et al., 2021).

¹ Ipsos shows LGB+ populations measure 11% in Great Britain, 10% for Australia and New Zealand, and 9% for the United States (Boyon, 2023). For India, those who report being other than heterosexual were measured at 17% (Boyon, 2021).

In a study on employee diversity and identity, Singh and colleagues (2013) found that psychological safety was a mediator for workers' performance, which benefits companies. They recommend to practitioners that employees can better express themselves in a workplace that is psychologically safe. Thus, I argue that psychological safety serves as a mediator to show how respondents experience the work environment as it relates to discussing gender-related issues.

I measure the possible impact of having experienced discrimination in the past on the respondents' use of identity pronouns at work (Pizer et al., 2011) using a variable to indicate that a person has been denied a role, promotion, or project opportunity at their current workplace based on their gender or gender expression. Pizer and colleagues (2011) explain that a lack of legal protection for members of the LGBTQ community creates an environment where discrimination is possible. A company that operates in jurisdictions where members of the LGBTQ community do not have legal protections may impact whether employees feel psychologically safe enough to use their gender identity pronouns. For example, Tennessee is making headlines by restricting trans youth from playing sports (Martinez, 2021), passing legislation to ban drag performances (DiCamillo, 2023), and depriving trans youth of gender-affirming healthcare (Bacallao, 2023).

I build my argument on the work of Henry and Wetherell (2017), who empirically demonstrate the impact of laws that protect gay rights and move countries toward greater gender equality by showing that the laws of a country impact the work life of women and gender minority workers. Henry and Wetherell grouped countries into four regions, while

I only have data from three regions.² Henry and Wetherell found that in countries where women have greater legal protections, greater protection for gays and lesbians was also observed. However, they note that bisexual and transgender persons may not enjoy the same protections, and they encourage further research to examine these issues. I answer this call by examining additional genders and division of data by region in my regression models to determine if regional factors are significant (Bailinson et al., 2020). Given that rights for non-binary persons can vary by region, I expect that geography will be a predictor of gender identity pronoun use.

Theoretical Background

Social media affords some anonymity and can be a safe place to explore one's gender identity (Carrasco & Kerne, 2018; Leavitt, 2015); however, work-based media tools, such as Slack and email, eliminate anonymity at work and could be seen as a risk in the workplace if employees do not feel psychologically safe therein (Dym et al., 2019). Due to how members of the LGBTQ community are typically portrayed, heterosexual people misunderstand them (Dym et al., 2019). There is no real avenue for non-binary people to share their gender identity (Dym et al., 2019). It is important for the health of LGBTQ persons to be able to decide when and how to share their gender identity (Carrasco & Kerne, 2018).

Dym and colleagues (2019) note that electronic communications can shape the way people respond in the physical world. Thus, sharing gender identity pronouns in online communication tools could have an impact on employment outcomes or business/work relationships. As such, employers who encourage or discourage the use of

² I do not have any data from Africa.

gender identity pronouns at work need to consider the ramifications of this kind of policy. Smallets and colleagues (2021) found that having a workplace policy for gender blindness reduced psychological safety in the workplace. I advance the psychological safety research of Smallets and colleagues (2021) and Johnson and colleagues (2021), who studied gender identity pronoun use in corporate media materials through a survey of employee usage of gender identity pronouns. Specifically, I advance the theory of psychological safety by determining if it impacts gender identity pronoun use in the workplace.

According to Herek and colleagues (2009), it is important to consider both in-group and out-group attitudes when examining attitudes towards those who are not part of the heteronormative majority. As such, I compare the responses of heterosexual survey participants to respondents who are part of the minority in terms of their gender and sexuality. Because sexual orientation can be hidden (Creed, 2006; Herek et al., 2009), employees need to consider the possible stigma that might accompany using their preferred pronouns in the workplace. The repercussions of using gender identity pronouns in the workplace are unknown; however, prior research indicates that risks to one's career or physical safety could be a consequence of being out at work (Baker & Lucas, 2017).

According to the sexual stigma theory, gender minorities do not hold the same power as their in-group, heterosexual counterparts (Herek et al., 2009), so coming out to colleagues through the use of gender identity pronouns could be a risk. My research sought to quantify the risk of being stigmatized by measuring the behaviors and attitudes around the use of gender identity pronouns in business communications. I advance the

theory of stigma by examining it through the lens of gender identity pronoun use.

Hypotheses Development

Corporations make the Fortune 500 list based on revenue per fiscal year (Hayes, 2021), and given that Fortune 500 and Fortune 1000 data are publicly available, these large corporations are often included in scientific studies. Over 90% of these large Fortune 500 companies have protections in place for their LGBTQ employees (Monster, 2022). Further, Opall (2021) found that some companies felt pressured to create a more inclusive workplace by groups within the organization, as well as trying to keep up with other businesses in their home state of Minnesota. In addition, Johnston and Malina (2008) found no negative impact on shareholder returns for organizations adopting an inclusive posture for the gay community. Because many large companies are known to support the LGBTQ community (Badgett et al., 2021; Opall, 2021; Steiger & Henry, 2020; Weng et al., 2022), I reason that another way that they could demonstrate support for the LGBTQ community would be to include gender identity pronouns as part of their communication protocols.

Conversely, research shows that trust is greater among smaller groups (La Macchia et al., 2016), making company size an important variable to address. Although prior research on human resource policies that support gay and lesbian employees has used company size as a control variable (Everly & Schwarz, 2015; Padungsaksawasdi et al., 2022), to my knowledge, no one has tested this relationship directly when it comes to the use of gender identity pronouns. Everly and Schwarz (2015) mainly studied large firms and hence could not determine the power of small firms in their research on firms' adoption of LGBT-friendly human resource policies. To address this missing piece of the

puzzle, I include small, medium, and large companies in my study. In line with this reasoning, I propose the following hypothesis:

H1: *Use of gender identity pronouns in business communications will be more prevalent at larger firms.*

Next, I conceptualize how heterosexual versus non-heterosexual people would view the use of gender identity pronouns in the workplace. I argue that those people who agree with their sex at birth designation have little risk, reason, or incentive to use a gender identity pronoun in their communications, though some still do so as a way of showing support for LGBTQ peers or due to the climate of the workplace (Chen, 2021). Conversely, the populations most impacted by gender identity pronoun usage include androgynous, intersex, and transgender persons, as well as men who display more effeminate traits and females who exhibit more masculine traits in ways that may be inside or outside of things that they control. For example, clothing is something that may or may not be under an employee's control, but uniforms and dress codes may restrict how a person portrays their gender at work (Skidmore, 1999). Bornstein (2016) discusses *gender attribution*, which is one of the many gender indicators that we consider when determining if we are interacting with a male or a female, including cultural norms, physicality, personality traits, and sexual orientation. Thus, if one were unable to use these indicators to identify a person's gender, then a pronoun could help to clarify their identity. Indeed, a pronoun would prevent the need for an assumption of the gender of the person with whom they interact. Individuals may be wary of revealing their gender identity pronouns due to the possible stigma of being outside the heteronormative group and fear of potential discrimination (Dorton, 2020). However, Ragins and colleagues (2007) found that even those who had been discriminated

against were more likely to disclose their gender identity at work. Since pronouns can be another way of expressing gender for those who do not fit neatly into expected gender norms, I posit:

H2: *Members of the LGBTQ community are more likely to use gender identity pronouns at work.*

Pronouns have the power to reveal gender identity when visual cues fail to do so. While clothing has been used to demonstrate sexual orientation in the workplace (Skidmore, 1999), gender identity pronouns are a new way to reveal or hide one's gender at work. In addition, an LGBTQ employee might already have power or protection based on their title or tenure with the company. However, Skidmore (1999), who studied sexuality in organizations, notes that the emergence of gender in the workplace is linked to the power structures inherent in most companies. As Gonzales (2022) reported, the CEO of a small company felt safe to reveal her pronouns. Yet, I could find no evidence in the literature that people feel comfortable sharing their pronouns at other levels within the company. In some industries, the upper echelons are rewarded for doing what is fashionable. For example, information technology leaders enjoy greater pay and reputation when adopting what is trendy even before it proves to be beneficial to the company's bottom line (Wang, 2010). As such, it could be argued that jumping on the gender identity pronoun bandwagon will garner leaders some caché for standing up for diversity in their organizations. Research also shows that LGBTQ employees with more seniority are more likely to be out of the closet than lower-ranking workers (Bailinson et al., 2020). In this current study, I collected the participants' place in the company hierarchy to determine if one's seniority impacts their use of gender identity pronouns in the workplace.

Accordingly, I posit:

H3: *Those with higher seniority at work will be more likely to use gender identity pronouns in their business communications.*

Companies are incentivized to support the LGBTQ community, and gender diversity policies have been found to impact business performance positively (Hossain et al., 2020; Pichler et al., 2018), increase worker productivity (Shan et al., 2017), improve hiring, and reduce turnover (DiCamillo, 2023; Metcalf & Rolfe, 2011). Additionally, discrimination can be costly for businesses because of lawsuits and lost productivity (Clark, 2020; Thoroughgood et al., 2020). Not only are employees who feel psychologically safe more productive (Clark, 2020; Singh et al., 2013) and more engaged (Edmondson, 1999; Kahn, 1990), but the LGBTQ community is more likely to patronize companies that show respect for those outside of heterosexual norms (Padungsaksawasdi, 2022). LGBTQ employees are more open about their sexuality and gender in a supportive work environment (Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Padungsaksawasdi, 2022; Ragins et al., 2007; Singh et al., 2013). Thus, I reason that one way companies can show their support for the LGBTQ community would be to encourage the use of gender identity pronouns in business communications (Thoroughgood et al., 2020). To assess the efficacy of this recommendation, I propose:

H4: *Gender identity pronoun use will be greater at companies that support non-binary persons.*

Barsigian and colleagues (2020) identified three age-related cohorts present in the LGBTQ community. Their research intersects with the work of Hammack (Nawaz, 2021), who notes that younger generations will have a greater ability to express their

gender due to the availability of other gender examples in the media. About 16% of the Gen Z population is said to fall outside this binary (Jones, 2021). Much of the research and reporting on non-binary gender is based on school-aged respondents (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network [GLSEN], 2020; Martinez, 2021; McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2018). According to the Trevor Project (2020), about 25% of youth use non-binary pronouns such as those shown in the Gender Identity Pronouns Chart (Appendix B). Boyland and colleagues (2018) credited the benefits of pronoun use in primary through secondary school to the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN, 2020), where claims of the impact of the use of gender identity pronouns are not fully backed by quantitative research in an adult population. GLSEN (2020) published qualitative research in which a handful of child participants ($n=20$) discussed identity pronoun use. McGlashan and Fitzpatrick (2018) have done similar studies ($n=6$) in New Zealand; however, it is hard to say if their findings are generalizable to adults. GLSEN's (2020) recurring surveys and research *are* cited as sources for studies in the adult populations (Boyland et al., 2018; Catania, 2021; Hayfield, 2020; Lewis et al., 2019; Suárez et al., 2022).

Nonetheless, there is more research on children and teens surrounding pronoun use than there is for adults and employees. On the one hand, one could argue that how children feel about educators using their preferred pronouns might be generalizable to the adult population. On the other hand, it could be argued that the same power structures in schools (McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2018) are perpetuated in the work environment (Skidmore, 1999) based on organizational structures and other physical infrastructure such as gendered bathrooms, leading to non-equitable environments. In their study of

high school students in New Zealand, McGlashen and Fitzpatrick (2018) argue that power is a key variable for those trying to navigate gender identity. Building on the work of Barsigian and colleagues (2020) and McGlashen and Fitzpatrick (2018), I argue that younger workers will be those that are more likely to use gender identity pronouns as an assertion of personal power (Kondakciu et al., 2022). Also, I reason that younger workers will be more likely to use gender identity pronouns based on the research done by Gallup (Meyer, 2019) which shows that younger generations are more likely to declare themselves part of the LBTBQ community. Further, the research by Barsigian and colleagues (2020) found that older cohorts have more difficulty finding the vocabulary to express their gender identity. Thus, I posit:

H5: *Younger respondents are more likely to use gender identity pronouns in their business communications than older respondents.*

Chapter III presents the data collection process, survey questions, demographics, variables, and instruments used for the data analyses.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Because research on gender identity pronoun use at work is very new, there were no data sets that I could use to answer my research questions. In this chapter I will discuss how data was collected, the nature of the sections in the survey, and how variables were measured. Two linear regression models were used to analyze the data. A conventional p value of .05 was used to determine statistical significance where $p < .05$ is statistically significant, $p < .01$ is moderately significant, and $p < .001$ is highly significant.

Data Collection and Survey Instrument

Data for this survey were collected online via Qualtrics. See the full version of the survey questions (Appendix A). Data collection began on April 27, 2022, and ended on September 15, 2022. In round one of the sampling, there were 500 respondents, of which 200 fell into the LGBTQ category. A second round of data collection focused on the transgender community and resulted in a sample of 50 transgender participants. A third round of approximately 150 respondents were surveyed to balance the sex at birth variable which was almost 70% female. After the final round of data collection, 346 males were present in a sample of 736 (or 47% men). Respondents who failed the attention check were eliminated (See Table 1 below for details). Respondent requirements were as follows: age 18 or over, English speaking, not residing in the European Union. Because each country has different legal protections for non-binary people, locale can be considered a predictor. Data were collected in countries where

English is designated as a legal language but outside of the European Union due to the more stringent privacy requirements of EUGDPR and the cost and time of localizing the survey questions. The United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, and Great Britain were included in the sample.

Survey Questions

The survey questions presented to respondents were divided into three categories: questions about the work environment, gender-related questions, and demographics. Demographics were collected in section three of the survey and functioned as control variables. I selected and adapted questions that recur in studies where work and gender are key components (James et al., 2016; Smallets et al., 2021). I expected some attrition due to the sensitivity of gender, income, and/or age-related questions. Indeed, over 3,000 responses were received, but those who did not complete key questions in the survey or those who failed Qualtrics quality measures were omitted from the data set (see Table 1). No personally identifying questions were included, as respecting the privacy of respondents was a crucial element of this study. Respondents were compensated at a rate equal to approximately \$10 USD.

Table 1

Sample Determination

Total Number of Survey Responses Received	3,309
Passed the Attention Check	913
Answered Questions Used in the Regression Models	874
Passed Validation Checks by Qualtrics	736
Final Sample	736

To control for common method bias, a question regarding mood was added to the survey. Per Podsakoff and colleagues (2003), a respondent's emotional state can impact the way they answer a question, and earlier questions can impact the mood of the respondent. As such, the survey opened with a prompt to gauge the respondent's mood using a Likert scale with responses ranging from "very poorly" to "very well." One can expect that someone having a bad day will give a different answer than they would if they believed they were having a good day. For example, Sanchez and colleagues (2004) asked respondents how their life was going as they believed that personal and professional lives are interconnected. As a means to ensure participants were giving thoughtful answers, the survey included an attention check by asking the respondent to give a score of '7' on one of the rating questions. Those respondents who failed the attention check were eliminated from the final data set (see Table 1 above).

When studying minority populations, the sample collection approach impacts the outcomes. According to Krueger and colleagues (2020), small changes in effect size are observed when minority communities are targeted for survey recruitment which must be balanced with the generalizability of results. Based on the research question for this study, over-sampling non-heterosexual respondents was beneficial as I sought to determine the effects of gendered pronouns on a minority population. However, it is advisable to run multiple regressions to compare sampling methods. Kreuger and colleagues (2020) also promote capturing diverse opinions through write-in responses for questions. As such, specific targeted questions were used in the survey, particularly given that definitions and categories of sexual orientation and gender are evolving, and some nuances could be captured through this sampling method.

As in related research (Gardberg et al., 2022; Johnston & Malina, 2008), I controlled for industry and condensed 20 industry categories into four categories to allow for greater generalization of results (see Appendix B). The following post-data collection aggregate categories were used based on a review of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021): work done electronically, helping others (Creed, 2006), making things, and moving things. Industry is added as a control variable per prior literature (Imborek et al., 2017; Knutson et al., 2019; Rands, 2009). Hopefully, this research can shed additional light on gender identity pronoun use as it relates to the type of industry in which the respondents work.

Measures³

Dependent Variables

To measure how common it is for fellow employees at a respondent's place of employment to use gender-identifying pronouns, I created a variable that is equal to the average score of how often pronouns are used in email signatures at the respondent's workplace and how often pronouns are used in online collaboration tools such as MS Teams, Slack or Skype at the respondent's workplace as reported by the respondent.⁴ In addition to the company's culture regarding gender-identifying pronoun use, individual employees may take it upon themselves to use identity pronouns in their email signatures or their profiles for online collaboration tools at their place of employment.

Similarly, to measure how frequently respondents *themselves* use gender-

³ A full list of variables and their descriptions can be found in Appendix C.

⁴ Two respondents left these questions blank, so I imputed those values based on the average of the variable for the entire dataset.

identifying pronouns at work, I created a variable to measure self-reported usage of identity pronouns, which is equal to the average score of pronouns used in email signatures at work by the respondent and the respondent's use of pronouns in online communication tools at work.⁵ It will be informative to measure if there is a significant difference between how individuals use gender identity pronouns versus what is common at their workplace. Examining gender identity pronoun use from both the employee and employer perspective has foundations in research by McNulty and colleagues (2018), who note that even when LGBT people are supported by the company through the creation of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), some employees decline to join the group for fear of how it might impact their careers or the careers of their significant other (Creed, 2006; Rostosky & Riggle, 2002). Adoption of gender identity pronouns could follow the same path as outing oneself in the workplace.

Independent Variables

I examined the relationship between respondents' use of gender identity pronouns at work and on social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. In a ground-breaking study by Jiang and colleagues (2022), the researchers show that gender identity pronoun use on Twitter grew by one-third from 2020 to 2021. They note that the use of non-binary pronouns is a way to create an inclusive environment.

While some respondents may experience reprisal for items on their social media pages (Robards & Graf, 2022), company policies regarding social media use are beyond the scope of this study. Indeed, Robards and Graf (2022) found that social media posts can have an impact on employment. Thus, I believed that the respondents' reported use of

⁵ Eleven respondents left COLSAFE and/or SIGSAFE blank so I imputed those values based on the average of the UOPS for the entire dataset.

pronouns in their social media would act as a moderator for both dependent variables.

Armitstead (2022) reports that the attitudes about pronoun use are not defined by being on the left or the right politically, yet this question has not been answered by research. In contrast, Creed (2006) points out that politics can influence homophobia in the workplace. Therefore, I asked respondents to rate how liberal or conservative their company's social-political views are (Weng et al., 2022) as well as how liberal or conservative the respondent is socio-politically. Since liberal-leaning companies are shown to have policies that support LGBTQ workers (Weng et al., 2022), it is more likely that these companies may include a gender identity pronoun use communication policy in support of their LGBTQ employees. I propose that the more liberal-leaning the workplace, the more likely it is that respondents will report the use of gender identity pronouns. Thus, I expect the coefficient for the social-political leaning of the company to be positive.

For this study, size is a demographic defined as the number of employees in the respondent's workplace as a proxy for company size (see Appendix D). Firm size is operationalized as a categorical dummy variable. For this survey, small firms have 99 or fewer employees, medium-sized firms have 100 to 999 employees, and large firms have over 1,000 employees. These brackets are based on a collapsed version of firm size classes as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2022). At a small company, it is more likely that the respondent could get to know everyone at the office, which might make pronouns more sensitive. While one might expect psychological safety to be higher in a closer-knit work community, exposure is also risky as it might be hard to blend in if one has the hidden stigma of gender non-conformance (Ragins et al., 2007). In

a large company, a respondent would probably interact with a smaller percentage of people at the office, so it might be easier to blend in and avoid the issue of coming out through the use of pronouns (Hogg, 2016). One might feel more anonymity at a larger company (La Macchia et al., 2016; Neville, 2016). Additionally, larger companies face issues of retention, which could be mitigated by having LGBTQ-favorable diversity policies (Steiger & Henry, 2020). As such, the survey results from this current study should be of use in determining if either psychological safety (supportive corporate environments) or stigma theory (fear of coming out at work) are at play.

Since laws protecting LGBTQ persons vary by country (Henry & Wetherell, 2017), I included the region of the world in which the respondent resides. In this study, the proxy for region is currency, which the respondent reported being paid in. I paired countries to create three geographic regions where laws and/or culture were similar. Both Canada and the United States have employment protection for members of the LGBT community, as do the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand; however, protections may vary by state or region where legal language is inconsistent according to a study of United Nations members (Mendos et al., 2020). For this study, North America includes data from Canada and the U.S. ($n=361$). Great Britain and India are grouped together because the two Indian respondents lived in Great Britain ($n=308$). Australia and New Zealand are grouped together ($n=67$).⁶ In June 2020, Judge Alito of the U.S. Supreme Court spoke about a Title VII ruling regarding the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which found that firing somebody due to gay or transgender status is illegal, saying it could also mean that failure to use someone's preferred pronouns could hence forth be

⁶ Only two respondents were paid in Euros, and they were included in the group based on where they reside (one in the U.S., and one in Australia).

considered as sex discrimination (Liptak, 2020; Parrington, 2019). However, Steiger and Henry (2020) found that companies that embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion will extend protections to LGBT persons regardless of their protected status under the law, particularly at companies with female board members. LGBTQ citizens in Australia enjoy broad legal protections in housing, education, employment, gender identity, gender expression, and marriage (Ecker et al., 2019; ILGA World Database, 2023a).

Since 2017, Canada has recognized gender identity as a protected class for employment, healthcare, education, and housing (ILGA, 2023b). India has had gender identity protections since 2020; however, sexual orientation protections are not covered by law (ILGA, 2023c). New Zealand offers employment protections for members of the LGBTQ community, and gender identity can be self-declared (ILGA, 2023d). Since the 1970s, U.S. Law has guaranteed employment protections based on sexual orientation and based on gender identity since the 1990s (ILGA, 2023e); however, recent legislation at the state level threatens freedoms for transgender individuals (Blow, 2023; Hassan, 2023). In the United Kingdom, employment protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity have been in place since 2003 and 1999, respectively (ILGA, 2023f).

I measure how accepting workplaces are of non-binary people to determine if this impacts gender identity pronoun use. Shan and colleagues (2017) found that firms who treat their LGBT staff, stockholders, and customers well enjoy greater financial returns in the form of stock prices, worker productivity, and increased valuation in the market. Maks-Solomon and Drewry (2021) found that pressure from employees was a strong impetus for corporations to engage in pro-LGBTQ activity, including making public comments on anti-LGBTQ legislation. Evidence exists that employers are paying

attention to internal pressure from employees to get benefits for same-sex partners (Biscoe & Safford, 2010); therefore, human resources might also consider lower-cost ways to embrace non-binary employees through gender identity pronoun policies. Based on findings from prior research, I expected the coefficient for the level to which companies support non-binary people to be greater than zero.

Demographics for the initial regression model include whether the respondent is part of the LGBTQ community (Gallup, 2022), as almost 40% of people in the U.S. do not have knowledge of gender identity pronouns (Geiger & Graf, 2019), so I was curious to see if this statistic was impacted by in-group and out-group memberships. See Appendix E for the Gender Identity Pronouns Chart. I include the respondents' age bracket (Barsigian et al., 2020; Dilmaghani, 2021) and how they evaluate their compensation (JPAY) due to the research on decent work (Duffy et al., 2017), which includes compensation as a factor. Additional control variables include the gender of the respondent's manager with the expectation that non-binary managers or female managers might have a different impact on workplace culture as they tend to support marginalized groups (England et al., 2020; Kelley & de Santos, 2022), are more comfortable than men when it comes to working with non-binary people (Norton & Herek, 2013), and might be more inclined to be more concerned about the needs of others (Bem, 1974). I include race in the initial model because it informs much of the literature on diversity and because race is legally protected (Herring, 2009) even where gender may not be. Further, Herring (2009) notes that race cannot be changed in the way gender can be performed (Kondakciu et al., 2022; Weinberg et al., 2019). Race and gender, when studied together, can enhance our understanding of the role of layers of stereotypes on respondents (Rosette et al.,

2018), which is referred to as intersectionality in the literature.

Finally, I aimed to determine if individual contributors were less likely to use gender identity pronouns due to having less clout in the company following Draeger's (2009) call to include relative seniority in research. Draeger (2009) notes that disadvantaged groups can be more at risk for layoffs or mistreatment, particularly if they are less senior in the company. Also, research has shown that seniority is a tool that has been used against women and minorities (Weber, 1997). Chapter IV presents the results of this study.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

To address the efficacy of gender identity pronoun use in the workplace, I collected primary data from respondents about how they use identity pronouns in their current jobs. I test the level of gender identity pronoun usage by employees and their respective employers to determine if their use was impacted by age or by their perception of psychological safety in the workplace. My research measures the degree to which respondents feel psychologically safe enough to use their gender identity pronouns in a work context and which other factors (such as age cohort or the sociopolitical leanings of the company where they work) impact their decision to do so. I also examined data by region in my regression models to determine if regional factors were significant. Given that rights for non-binary persons can vary by region, I predicted that geography would be a predictor of pronoun use.

Overview of Hypotheses

H1: <i>Use of gender identity pronouns in business communications will be more prevalent at larger firms.</i>	Not supported
H2: <i>Members of the LGBTQ community are more likely to use gender identity pronouns at work.</i>	Not supported
H3: <i>Those with higher seniority at work will be more likely to use gender identity pronouns in their business communications.</i>	Not supported
H4: <i>Gender identity pronoun use will be greater at companies that support non-binary persons.</i>	Supported
H5: <i>Younger respondents are more likely to use gender identity pronouns in their business communications than older respondents.</i>	Supported

To recap all hypotheses, H1 was not supported because the firm size, as reported by respondents, was statistically insignificant in both regression models. While it may be expected that members of the LGBTQ community would be the most likely to use gender identity pronouns in the workplace, results showed that heterosexuals were more likely to believe that gender identity pronouns should be mandated. As such, H2 was not supported in the survey results. Even though prior research shows that those with higher seniority at work are more likely to feel safe sharing their gender identity pronouns, the current study does not support those findings, thus H3 was not supported. Support for non-binary persons in the workplace was a statistically significant indicator for the use of gender identity pronouns in business communications. Thus, H4 is supported. As for H5, this research confirms the assertions of prior research that older generations are less likely to use gender identity pronouns at work. The next section discusses each of the regression models used to produce these results.

Model 1 Results

The R Square for Model 1 was .345 (see Model 1 Summary, Appendix F). This model demonstrated that region, industry, and the sociopolitical views of the company had no statistical significance when it came to predicting gender identity pronoun use at work (see the coefficients in Table 2). The regional variable insignificance is surprising because the laws regarding LGBTQ protections vary by region, and prior literature has shown this variable to be significant (Bailinson, et al., 2020). Industry type was not significant in this study, and more research on this variable is needed because most extant research is industry specific (Johnson et al., 2021; Peytcheva, 2022) while this current study encompasses multiple industry types; thus, industry impact on gender identity

pronoun use remains an open question. The sociopolitical leanings of the company had a negative and statistically insignificant impact on gender identity pronoun use.

Table 2

Model 1 and 2 Coefficients

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error
Constant	1.574*	0.618	1.238**	0.434
Work Relationships	0.222**	0.084	0.236**	0.073
Denied Opportunity at Work	0.461***	0.036	0.466***	0.034
Psychological Safety at Work	-0.095*	0.048	-0.099*	0.047
Support for Non-Binary Persons	0.33***	0.084	0.345***	0.079
Large Company	0.05	0.215	0.152	0.199
Medium Company	0.257	0.211	0.338	0.194
Age 18 to 24	-0.106	0.267	-0.073	0.258
Age 35 to 44	-0.293	0.219	-0.34	0.212
Age 45 to 54	-0.539*	0.268	-0.546*	0.255
Age 55 and Over	-0.781**	0.283	-0.803**	0.269
Asian	-0.013	0.341		
Black	-0.251	0.302		
Hispanic	0.434	0.584		
Multiracial	-0.064	0.511		
Native American	-0.737	0.907		
Other Race	2.221	2.235		
Great Britain and India	-0.031	0.186		
Australia and New Zealand	-0.225	0.317		
Individual Contributor	0.03	0.181		
Compensation	0.045	0.085		
Workplace Socio-Political View	-0.045	0.060		
Female Supervisor	0.048	0.183		
Non-Binary Supervisor	0.215	0.637		
Does not report to a Supervisor	-0.282	0.359		
LGBTQ Community Member	0.116	0.183		
Electronic Industry Type	-0.162	0.232		
Manufacturing Industry Type	-0.239	0.240		
Logistic Industry Type	-0.24	0.231		
Other Industry Type	-0.654	0.510		

p <.05*, p<.01**, p<.001***

Next, I looked at the work environment itself where all variables were statistically significant. Remarkably, psychological safety had a small, yet negative, impact on gender identity pronoun use in the workplace. The survey questions regarding psychological safety were repurposed from Johnson and colleagues' (2021) research on pronouns. These questions are posed in the negative and may have confused survey takers who measured their discomfort or concern in a range between "always" and "never." Similarly, those denied projects or opportunities at work were mildly more likely to use gender identity pronouns, and these results were highly significant. It could be that using their gender identity pronouns outed them at work and led to some discrimination.

Respondents with strong interpersonal relationships at work were more likely to use gender identity pronouns in their communications, and this statistic was highly significant. If one is close with one's colleagues, using pronouns is more common. At workplaces that support non-binary persons, gender identity pronoun use was positive and highly significant. Thus, H4 is supported. Next, I focus on the attributes of the respondent.

At the respondent level, their role as an individual contributor at work, the gender of their immediate supervisor, their compensation, and whether they are members of the LGBTQ community also proved to be insignificant. The results from the LGBTQ respondents are unexpected since pro-LGBTQ organizations often promote the use of gender identity pronouns (International Labour Organization, 2022; LGBTQIA Resource Center, 2021). However, this result is consistent with Turner's (2018) finding, who reported that according to data from the Human Rights Campaign, about half of the LGBTQ community do not disclose their gender at work. The use of gender identity

pronouns at work might result in sexual stigma or discrimination (Rostosky & Riggle, 2002), leading members of the LGBTQ community *not* to use them.

In terms of demographics, race did not have any significant impact on gender identity pronoun use. Much has been written about intersectionality, where people report having multiple factors which amplify they are being discriminated against (Rosette et al., 2018). As such, it is important to look at a possible sexual stigma as exposed by gender identity pronouns used alongside race. Consistent with prior literature, older generations are not likely to express gender in the way their younger counterparts are—empowered with knowledge about gender expression as seen in the media (Nawaz, 2021). Age was a strong negative predictor of gender identity pronoun use in respondents over 45. The age group variable was statistically significant for respondents aged 45 to 54 and highly statistically significant for those aged 55 and above. As such, H5 is supported. In the subsequent regression, I removed the insignificant variables to refine the model and remove the noise of insignificant variables.

Model 2 Results

The subsequent regression (Model 2) for reported use of gender identity pronouns at work included the following variables: having been denied opportunities at work based on gender or gender appearance, support for non-binary persons in the workplace, firm size, psychological safety in the workplace, age of respondent, and having close interpersonal relationships at work. For this regression model, the R Square is .337 (see Model 2 Summary, Appendix G). In this sample, just over half of the respondents reported some level of being denied an opportunity at work due to their gender or gender appearance. Supporting that statistic, the coefficient for this variable was highly

significant. Having close personal relationships at work was also highly significant. Again, psychological safety had a statistically significant yet negative impact on gender identity pronoun use. It may be that the stigma of coming out at work via the use of a gender identity pronoun was too great for some respondents (Bailinson et al., 2020; Ragins et al., 2007).

Consistent with the research, older generations were less likely to use gender identity pronouns at work (Nawaz, 2021). For those aged 45 to 54, the coefficient was significant and negative, meaning this age group was less likely to use gender identity pronouns. For those over 55, the *p* value was negative and highly significant. For those in younger age groups, there was no statistical significance for pronoun use at work. For participants whose companies supported non-binary people, the results were highly significant. All calculations were performed at a 95% confidence interval. The VIF for all variables in the model was approximately one.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

In This research I aimed to determine whether psychological safety impacts the use of gender identity pronouns in the workplace or if revealing one's gender identity via pronoun use could lead to stigmatization, shown here as discrimination. The results of this study can inform companies that are considering implementing a gender identity pronoun communication policy regarding which factors may impact employee adoption of the practice of sharing their pronouns in email or other online communication tools in the workplace. For organizations that already have a gender identity pronoun policy, they may use these results to identify factors that might impact the expected success of such a campaign. Younger generations show a greater concentration of non-binary people (Jones, 2023; Meyer, 2019), and they adopt gender identity pronouns at a greater rate than those in older generations. Thus, employers should consider the age of their workforce when electing to implement gender identity pronouns as part of communication protocols. These results were significant irrespective of industry. Supervisor involvement could amplify the results of a burgeoning gender identity pronoun adoption since the use of pronouns by senior-level managers could be a way to show support for their LGBTQ employees (Bailinson et al., 2020).

According to Riley (2008), people at the top like to adopt these trends to show they are DEI-friendly. Studies show that managers who adopt fashionable trends get paid more and are more popular (Wang, 2010); thus, managers could benefit from using their gender identity pronouns or encouraging others to use them. Allowing employees to

decide whether to share their gender identity pronouns affords them what researchers call “selective visibility” and will enable members of the LGBTQ community to feel safe (Dym et al., 2019). Since many popular online communication tools allow users to select and display their gender identity pronouns, companies can easily integrate gender identity pronouns in their daily communications (Chen, 2021).

Weinberg and colleagues (2019) discuss how feminine communication styles are beneficial in the workplace. However, my research extends their findings by showing that, among respondents of all genders, the participants rated themselves overall higher on feminine characteristics rather than on masculine ones, despite the composition of the sample in terms of sex at birth. Weinberg and colleagues discuss the need for research that helps us understand the organizational role of gender performance, and I have gathered data to show that a broad spectrum of people reveal their gender through use of gender identity pronouns when they feel safe to do so, particularly when they enjoy close personal relationships at work. This is a relatively new organizational phenomenon. Further, Weinberg and colleagues point out the continued confusion between gender and sex, an issue my research confirms.

Managerial Implications

The debate about the business value of an inclusive workplace is ongoing (Herring, 2009). Research has shown that a diverse workplace enhances employee performance and strengthens bonds with shareholders, yet not all companies embrace creating a diverse workforce, even where the law compels them to do so (Collins, 2012). An ever-changing political environment results in a patchwork of protections for workers. In an era where state, federal, and international laws are in a state of flux and non-

congruence, it is of value to examine the ramifications of LGBTQ policies for those in the gender minority. Companies have the choice to protect and defend members of the LGBTQ community irrespective of local laws, and many choose to do that (Steiger & Henry, 2020).

In a study published in the months after I concluded my data collection, Peytcheva (2022) conducted three experiments about the impact of masculine pronouns in the professional documentation used by auditors in the field of accounting. Peytcheva found that cis-gendered females were significantly impacted by the use of he, him, and his in the documentation samples used in the experiment. We can see here that even *reading* pronouns has an impact on an employee. Peytcheva also found that people who are college-educated have a more positive view of the LGBTQ community, while my study showed educational level to be insignificant when it came to using gender identity pronouns.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

In future studies, localized versions of the survey can be created, and additional locales can be considered. While this study included many English-speaking countries, it would have been beneficial to inquire if participants worked at multinational companies since their legal and human resources teams must consider laws in multiple regions (Collins, 2012). In a future study, this should be included in the survey questions. Given that laws vary by state in the U.S., perhaps state-level data should also be collected. My study only collected the country of the respondent.

Gendered pronouns can be a helpful clue for difficult or foreign names, easing both gender and cultural identities; perhaps these impacts could be measured in a future

study. Using pronouns on name badges is said to reduce microaggressions against LGBTQ employees (Bailinson et al., 2020), but this has not been tested. Changes within a specific company could not be measured in a before and after scenario, so a longitudinal study could shed more light on the effects of adopting a gender identity pronoun policy for a given organization (Nagele-Piazza, 2019). In an ideal situation, a researcher could work with one or more companies that are rolling out a gender identity pronoun campaign and measure changes in stigma and psychological safety before and after.

Recruiting and compensating non-binary respondents for inclusion in the survey was perhaps the greatest difficulty faced during data gathering. Jaroszewski and colleagues (2018) recommend using Tumblr to reach a more gender-diverse audience. Future researchers in all management studies should consider how to be inclusive in order to provide more accurate and generalizable results. For example, adding non-binary gender options to survey questions and considering more than simply male and female when building theories or hypotheses. Viewing the use of gender identity pronouns through the lens of social identity could advance theory in this domain, given the in-group dynamics and power of being part of the norm (La Macchia et al., 2016).

The time limitation did not allow for reviewing the abandonment of the survey or an analysis of which questions respondents skipped. A deeper analysis of the abandonment data could shed light on which questions were too sensitive or those which should be rephrased for clarity. In a future study, it might improve results if the psychological safety questions were measured in the positive, asking respondents to rate their comfort levels on certain discussion topics at work, avoiding a double negative in

their thought processes. Another example of confusing questions from this study was asking if respondents would categorize themselves as genderqueer or non-binary, which might appear to be a dichotomy rather than a single category for members of the heterosexual community (Meyer, 2019). As such, it seems that this question yielded a lot of false positives. Thirty-five males whose sex at birth was male and who identified as male answered yes to being non-binary; however, only three of them identified as female or non-binary in another survey question. Of these males, 14 identified as something other than heterosexual. The confusion between sexual orientation and gender is visible in the respondents' answers. Among the female respondents, 31 stated they were born female and identified as female; only one claimed to be heterosexual, indicating that women better understood the difference between sexual orientation and gender. This unique respondent identified as a male despite being marked as female at birth. Gates (2011) writes about the difficulty of studying the LGBTQ community as confounding factors of this demographic can vary based on the time span studied, how survey questions are phrased, the fluidity of the sexuality of the respondent, methods that vary across domains, and the inconsistent study designs. So, I would add to Gates' list that respondents may not have a clear understanding of the difference between their gender and their sexuality, which makes it challenging to analyze study results fully. Additionally, half of the subjects might be closeted based on Human Rights Campaign analyses in 2018—another factor that could impact survey results (Gates, 2011; Turner, 2018).

Researchers should also consider that inquiring about heterosexism or company support of non-binary employees or customers could impact the accuracy of responses

since participants might be wary of saying something prejudiced even in an anonymous survey (Creed, 2006). The influence of social media and the political climate cannot be ignored when researching sensitive topics (Corrales, 2015; Leavitt, 2015). While many studies show that LGBTQ employees want gender-neutral bathrooms and healthcare benefits equivalent to their heterosexual colleagues (Bailinson et al., 2020), further research about gender identity pronoun use is needed to confirm if employees are positively impacted by their usage. Misgendering and micro-aggressions could be studied to see if pronouns would alleviate or exacerbate these negative impacts in the workplace (Bailinson et al., 2020).

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Full Survey Instrument

How is your day going?

Very poorly, Poorly, Somewhat poorly, Neither poorly nor well, Somewhat well, Well, Very well

Below are a variety of statements about factors that contribute to job satisfaction. Please respond to each statement using the scales provided.

My job is secure.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree

My opportunities for advancement are high.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree

I have close interpersonal relationships at work.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree

My income is high.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree

My job allows me to have a work life balance.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree

What is the gender of your immediate supervisor?

Male

Female

Neither of the above adequately describe the gender of my supervisor.

I am self-employed or an entrepreneur. I don't report to anyone at work.

What gender identity pronouns do you ask people to use to refer to you?

He, his

She, hers

They, their

Ze, hir

No pronouns. I ask people only to use my name. I don't ask people to use specific pronouns.

Pronouns not listed above (please specify) __

For the next section use a scale from 1 to 9 where 1 is never true and 9 is always true

People at my place of employment use gender identity pronouns in email signatures.

People at my place of employment use gender identity pronouns in online collaboration tools such as MS Teams, Slack, or Skype.

I add gender identity pronouns to my work email signature.

I add gender identity pronouns to my work online communication tools such as MS Teams, Slack or Skype.

I add gender identity pronouns to my public social media profiles (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram).

I include gender identity pronouns in job applications and/or on my resume.

On job applications I see options for gender identities besides male and female.

I prefer to work for an employer that mandates the use of gender identity pronouns in business communication.

At my current employer, I have been denied a project, a role, or a promotion because of transgender status, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

What sex were you assigned at birth? This is the sex on your birth certificate.

Male

Female

Another designation

Ignoring the sex that shows on your birth certificate, how do you define your Gender Identity?

I identify as male

I identify as female

Neither of the above describe my gender adequately

Do you identify as more than one gender, or as no gender (such as genderqueer or non- binary)?

No

Yes

What term best describes your current sexual orientation?

Asexual

Bisexual

Gay

Heterosexual/Straight Lesbian

Pansexual Queer

Same-gender loving

A sexual orientation not listed above (please specify)_____

Which of the following best describes your employment status?

Full Time (working 30 or more hours per week)

Part Time (working less than 30 hours per week)

Unpaid (volunteer worker)

What size is the company you work for?

Small (1-99 employees)

Medium (100-999 employees)

Large (1,000 or more employees)

Which of the following categories best describes your role at work? Select one.

Individual Contributor

Mid-level Manager (manages other people)

Director or above

**Which of the following categories best describes the Industry in which you work.
Select one.**

Business or Financial Operations, Real Estate, Insurance Computer or
Mathematical

Architecture or Engineering Office and Administrative Support

Life, Physical or Social Science (Biologist, Chemist, Astronomer, etc.) Healthcare
or Medical Technician (Doctor, Nurse, Radiologist, etc.)

Healthcare Support (CNA, Orderly, Occupational or Physical Therapist, Dental or
Medical Assistant)

Protective Service (Police, Fireman, Correctional Officer, Animal Control,
Detective, Security Guard)

Community, Social Service, Non-profit

Public Administration, Law, Education, or Government Education, Instruction, or
Library

Art, Design, Entertainment, Sports, Music, or Media Food Preparation and
Service

Farming, Fishing, Hunting, or Forestry Construction or Mining

Installation, Repair and Maintenance Production or Manufacturing

Sales, Wholesale Trade, or Retail Trade Transportation, Logistics, Moving,
Tourism Utilities, Sanitation, or Telecommunications Other (please
specify)

**When it comes to social policy do you usually consider yourself a liberal, moderate
or conservative?**

strong liberal, leaning liberal, moderate, leaning conservative, conservative, strong
conservative

**When it comes to social policy do you consider your workplace liberal, moderate or
conservative?**

strong liberal, leaning liberal, moderate, leaning conservative, conservative, strong
conservative

**Where you work, rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is never
true and 7 is always true.**

I would feel uncomfortable talking about gender because I would worry something I said might be held against me.

I would not feel safe to bring up tough issues about gender relations.

People might reject me if I said something about gender with which they disagree.

Talking about gender would be too risky.

It would be difficult for me to ask others what they think about gender issues.

For the purposes of this survey, “non-binary” is defined as having a gender that is not adequately described by the terms male or female. (Adapted from Hegarty et al., 2018)

On average, how supportive are your co-workers with people that are non-binary?

Very supportive

Supportive

Neither supportive nor unsupportive

Unsupportive

Very unsupportive

Not applicable as there are no non-binary customers or employees where I work (please respond to the question below).

If you responded “not applicable” above, please rate how supportive you think your co-workers would be with people who are non-binary if there were some at your workplace.

Very supportive

Supportive

Neither supportive nor unsupportive

Unsupportive

Very unsupportive

What is the highest level of education you have achieved so far?

High School or GED

2 Year college or Associates Degree Bachelor’s Degree

Graduate Degree (Masters’ or PhD)

Which age bracket do you fit into?

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55 and over

With which race do you most closely identify? Select one.

White

Black

Native American

Asian

Hispanic

Multiracial

Other Race that better describes you

Do you live with a partner?

No (Single, Widowed, Divorced, 1 or more roommates)

Yes (Living with a spouse or partner)

What is your annual household income? If you are living with a spouse or partner, include their income in the total.

Under 13,000

13,001 to 25,000

25,001 to 75,000

75,001 to 125,000

125,001 to 175,000

Over 175,000

In what currency is your salary measured?

USD (US Dollars)

CAD (Canadian Dollars)

Indian Rupees

British Pounds

Euros

Something Else (Please Specify)

For the next section, answer using a scale from 1 to 9 where 1 is never true and 9 is always true

To what degree are these descriptions true about you?

Affectionate

Aggressive

Assertive

Compassionate

Defends own beliefs

Dominant

Eager to soothe hurt feelings

Forceful

For this question, please select a score of 7

Gentle

Has leadership abilities

Independent

Loves Children

Sensitive to the needs of others

Strong personality

Sympathetic

Tender

Understanding

Willing to take a position

Willing to take risks

Thank you for your time and your interest in our survey.

For those aged 13-24 with a transgender or non-binary issue you can reach out to the Trevor Project at 866-488-7386. You can also reach a counselor online at thetrevorproject.org

If you are in crisis, you can call the following numbers: 1-800-273-8255 (LGBTQ) or 877-565- 8860 (Transgender).

Appendix B: Industry Categories

Things that Happen Electronically (ELEC)

Business or Financial Operations, Real Estate, Insurance
Computer or Mathematical
Architecture or Engineering
Office and Administrative Support

Helping Others (HELP)

Life, Physical or Social Science (Biologist, Chemist, Astronomer, etc.)
Healthcare or Medical Technician (Doctor, Nurse, Radiologist, etc.)
Healthcare Support (CNA, Orderly, Occupational or Physical Therapist, Dental or Medical Assistant)
Protective Services (Police, Fireman, Correctional Officer, Animal Control, Detective, Security Guard)
Community, Social Service, Non-profit
Public Administration, Law, or Government
Education, Instruction, or Library

Making Things (MAKE)

Art, Design, Entertainment, Sports, Music, or Media Food Preparation and Service
Farming, Fishing, Hunting, or Forestry Construction or Mining
Installation, Repair, and Maintenance Production or Manufacturing

Moving Things (MOVE)

Sales, Wholesale Trade, or Retail Trade
Transportation, Logistics, Moving, Tourism
Utilities, Sanitation, or Telecommunications

Other (for any items that do not fit into the categories above)

Appendix C: Variable Table by Survey Question

Survey Question	Measurement
I have close interpersonal relationships at work.	5-point Likert Scale where 1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree.
At my current employer, I have been denied a project, a role, or a promotion because of transgender status, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.	9-point Likert Scale where 1=Never True and 9=Always True.
Where you work, rate the following statements	7-point Likert Scale where 1=Never True and 7=Always True.
On average, how supportive are your co-workers with people that are non-binary?	Very supportive Supportive Neither supportive nor unsupportive Unsupportive Very unsupportive Not applicable as there are no non-binary customers or employees where I work.
In what currency is your salary measured?	Currency is a proxy for region where the respondent lives.
When it comes to social policy, do you consider your workplace liberal, moderate, or conservative?	strong liberal, leaning liberal, moderate, leaning conservative, conservative, strong conservative
What is the gender of your immediate supervisor?	Male Female Neither of the above adequately describe the gender of my supervisor. I am self-employed or an entrepreneur. I don't report to anyone at work.

Appendix D: Demographics

Variable	Measurement
Company Size	Small (1-99 employees) Medium (100-999 employees) Large (1,000 or more employees)
Age	18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55 and over
Race	White Black Native American Asian Hispanic Multiracial Other Race that better describes you
Role at Work	Individual Contributor Mid-level Manager (manages other people) Director or above
Compensation	Under 13,000 13,001 to 25,000 25,001 to 75,000 75,001 to 125,000 125,001 to 175,000 Over 175,000
LGBTQ Community Member or Not	As reported by respondent.
Industry Type	Electronic, Health and Human Services, Manufacturing, Logistics, Other (as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Appendix E: Gender Identity Pronouns Chart

Nominative	Accusative	Possessive Adj.	Possessive Pron.	Reflexive
Ae	Aer		Aers	Aerself
co	co	co	cos	coself
E	Em		Eirs	Eirself
en	en	ens	ens	enself
ey	em	eir	eirs	emself
fae	faer	faer	faers	faerself
he	him	his	his	himself
per	per	per	pers	perself
she	her	her	hers	herself
sie	hir	hir	hirs	hirself
they	them	their	theirs	themselves
ve	vis	ver	ver	verself
Ve	Ver		Vis	Verself
xe	xe	xir	xirs	xirself
Xe	Xem		Xyrs	Xemself
xie	hire	hir	hirs	hirself
yo	yo	yos	yos	yoself
ze	zir	zir	zirs	zirself
zie	zie	zir	zirs	zirslelf

The table above shows combined results from multiple sources (LGBTQIA Resource Center, 2021; Kermode, 2017; Knutson et al., 2019; Medical News Today, 2021).

Appendix F: Model 1 Summary

R	R Square	Adj. R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
.587 ^a	0.345	0.318	2.1839	0.345	12.797	29	706	0.000	1.970

a. Predictors: (Constant), ICorNOT, INDGRP=MAKE, HETorLBGTQ=LGBTQ, RACE=Asian, RACE=Hispanic, RACE=Native American, RACE=Other, MGRGEN=NB, MGRGEN=NMGR, RACE=Multiracial, WorkSocPolitOrdinal, AGE=35-44, RACE=Black, HigherPsychSafe_HIGH, SIZE=L, Region_AUSNZ, INDGRP=OTHER, WorkRelationshipsOrdinal, INDGRP=MOVE, AGE=55 and over, NB_SupportMerged_Ordinal, MGRGEN=Female, DeniedOppty, AGE=18-24, Region_GBIND, AGE=45-54, SIZE=M, INDGRP=ELEC, CompensationOrdinal

b. Dependent Variable: Pronoun Use At Work

Appendix G: Model 2 Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
					F Change	df1	df2		
.580 ^a	0.337	0.328	2.1679	0.337	36.797	10	725	0.000	1.959

a. Predictors: (Constant), AGE=55 and over, WorkRelationshipsOrdinal, SIZE=L, HigherPsychSafe_HIGH, AGE=18-24, NB_SupportMerged_Ordinal, AGE=45-54, DeniedOppty, SIZE=M, AGE=35-44

b. Dependent Variable: Pronoun Use At Work

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