

**THEY/THEM/THEIR: GENDER-NEUTRAL PRONOUNS ON
NAMETAGS AND CONSUMERS' MICROAGGRESSIONS TOWARDS
THEM**

by

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Dedication

A special feeling of gratitude and inspiration resides in me as I dedicate this thesis to some people. First, I want to dedicate it to “amma” my mother for providing me her unwavering support through thick and thin and countless hurdles. I also want to dedicate it to my father who has always tried to show me the right way and taught me to be kind.

Last but not least, this research is dedicated to my supervisor professor Hamed Aghakhani. His help with the littlest things and endless motivations gave me much of the courage to march through graduate school.

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ABSTRACT

This study draws on theories from psychology and sociology to examine how consumers will react to non-binary individuals in sales and service situations. Results from an online experiment show that consumers tend to evaluate the service offered by non-binary people as lower than their male counterparts. A lowered rating of service offered observed in this research may negatively impact inclusive businesses that tend to hire gender minority people. Further, in this research, managerial implications and future research directions are discussed.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

SDO – Social Dominance Orientation

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

With the emergence of a new era, an abundance of social changes is becoming prominent. Marketers, advertisers, and companies are constantly striving and attempting to keep up with such social tidings in a way that is profitable for the company and will prove to be beneficial in the long run (Kenney, 2020). One of these noticeable changes is the increasing adoption of the belief that gender exists on more than one spectrum and sometimes it does so at once (Savage, 2022). Keeping up with this notion, the belief in the non-binary state of gender has promptly led to the use of gender-neutral pronouns, or in other words, are not confined to the male and female spectrums only (Waters, 2021).

The concept of gender-neutrality has been gaining traction in recent times and is significantly more noticeable in the entertainment industry where more and more people continue identifying themselves as non-binary and adopt the use of they/them pronouns (Ahlgrim, 2021). The origin of non-binary pronouns can be traced back to the 1970s and even appeared in the supreme court case *General Electric vs. Gilbert* in 1976.

It is important to note that sex and gender are two entirely distinct matters, although they often get confused with each other. While sex is related to physical aspects, gender encompasses the non-physical aspects of being a man or woman (Lips, 2020). Primary sex characteristics, such as hormones, and secondary sex characteristics, such as facial hair or vocal range, are some factors that sometimes help laypeople make decisions regarding a person's sex (Reid, 2018). In this research, while there will be some discussions on sex as part of the literature search, the main focus is on gender identity rather than sex.

It is safe to assume that the current changes and increases in gender-neutral representation that are becoming more and more evident may very likely seep into promotional and market aspects soon. The literature in marketing and consumer behavior with a gender-neutral focus has been scanty. When it comes to the gender and sex minority spectrum, much of the literature has a focus on homosexual salesmen and heterosexual female shoppers. Research dating as far back as 1995 suggests that women show more interest in the products that gay men are promoting and prefer shopping with gay salesmen over heterosexual male or female salespeople (Peretz, 1995). In more recent times, Rosenbaum et al. (2017) have shown that straight female shoppers who are heavier and older often prefer taking suggestions or help from gay salesmen. The researchers clarify that an inclination towards competition and a fear of being negatively evaluated may explain this phenomenon. Rosenbaum et al. (2017) further add that in such a scenario, straight male shoppers may steer clear of or even feel discomfort while taking help from gay salesmen.

The ways in which gender and sexual identity-related aspects can influence sales tactics or performance have been studied by earlier researchers. Research also suggests that gender differences are very much present in sales scenarios and that male vs. female salespeople should be managed using different strategies (Fugate et al., 1988; Gable and Reed, 1987). Other research from Brown and Reingen (1987) suggests that shoppers feel the most comfortable when they are served and helped by salespeople that have the same gender identity as them. More recent research tried to take a deeper look at homosexual salesmen assisting straight female shoppers. For instance, straight female shoppers

reported being satisfied in the exchange and even preferred homosexual salesmen over straight female saleswomen (Rosenbaum et al., 2017; Rosenbaum et al., 2021).

To the knowledge of this author, no research, however, has yet focused on how interacting with salespeople who identify as non-binary in gender might affect consumer experience or attitude. Perhaps the reason might be that a large number of individuals still do not communicate their chosen gender pronouns directly and visibly (Tom, 2021). Another reason could also be that the discussions and acceptances regarding gender norms or beliefs that are considered out of the ordinary are typically more recent. Study shows that in 2021, the number of US adults who know individuals that prefer gender-neutral stood at 26%, a sharp rise from 18% in 2018 (Brown, 2022).

It is not unreasonable to predict that the addition and informing of preferred pronouns may become more prevalent in the near future. Professionals and members in many industries are now choosing to communicate their preferred pronouns through email signatures, social media, and even on business cards (Ciemenski, 2020). Employment giant LinkedIn enriches this by publishing an article that details how to include preferred pronouns in email signatures (Woods-Child, 2021). It is only reasonable to predict that this change is likely to become even more commonplace in the future.

The focus of this research is to explore how consumers react to a non-binary salesperson in a retail or service scenario. More specifically, this research explores any instances of microaggressions that consumers might display and also explore the consequences of these microaggressions. This thesis also investigates the impact of social dominance orientation (SDO) and political ideology as potential moderators on consumers' attitudes towards the non-binary salesperson. The remainder of this thesis is divided into three

chapters. In Chapter Two, the literature on gender, non-binary, and the use of pronouns is reviewed. Moreover, in this chapter, formal hypotheses of this research program are also framed. Chapter Three presents the research methodology, results, and discussion of an experiment that was conducted. Finally, in Chapter Four, contributions, limitations, and areas for future research, and managerial implications of this research are identified.

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter, the goal is to review the relevant literature and develop hypotheses for this research. In particular, I start reviewing the literature on gender, sex, and gender minority, followed by literature on microaggression and then potential factors that may impact levels of microaggression toward gender-minority people.

Understanding the patterns of microaggressions, as well as the reasoning behind them, may help reduce instances of these microaggressions. The findings of this paper can be extended to areas such as retailing, workforce behavior, strategic human resource management, and diversity, among others.

2.1 GENDER AND SEX

“...in mainstream society, living openly beyond the two-sexes/two-genders would still not appear to constitute a socially viable option” (Davidmann, 2010, p. 187).

The quotation is from an article that was written only 12 years ago and is already starting to be challenged. Based on an individual’s physical sex that is assigned at birth, people are usually categorized as male or female and are expected to follow societal norms, beliefs, and expectations accordingly. For example, a person who was assigned female at birth is expected to act in a traditionally feminine manner, choose attires that respond to traditional feminine stereotypes, and possess traditionally feminine characteristics (“What are gender roles and stereotypes”, n.d). This notion or belief of linking biological sex to gender, gender roles, and sexuality is being increasingly challenged and has recently become a topic of discussion (Steinmetz, 2017). Individuals continue to identify

in terms of gender and sexuality that are not bound to the traditional binary ways but are rather spread across a vast spectrum.

Before delving into the discussion regarding gender and non-binary individuals, it is important to make a distinction between gender and sex. Although the terms “sex” and “gender” are very often used interchangeably, they each mean distinctive things.

Usually, sex is assigned at birth and can be assigned depending on genitalia and whether a person has Y chromosomes (Ainsworth, 2018). Furthermore, primary sex characteristics, such as hormones, and secondary sex characteristics, such as facial hair or vocal range, are some factors that might help laypeople make decisions regarding a person’s sex (Reid, 2018). Another way to differentiate this is considering that while sex is related to physical aspects, gender encompasses the non-physical aspects of being a man or woman (Lips, 2020). These non-physical aspects further include cultural or societal expectations arising from gender roles. Planned Parenthood describes gender assigned at birth as being “based on the genitals you’re born with and the chromosomes you have” (“Sex and Gender Identity”, n.d). The discussion of gender having more than two forms has been fuelled by public figures, such as members of the entertainment industry, and their actions. While the notion and discussion of non-binary gender are not new, the movement has received more traction and support after popular figures have started identifying themselves. In the entertainment industry, many popular faces, such as musicians Sam Smith (Fitzpatrick, 2019) and Demi Lovato (Rock, 2021), and actor Ezra Miller (Gunz, 2018), among many others, have declared their non-binary beliefs. Researchers such as Herdt (1993) posit that the belief in the binary sex system originally comes from the Darwinian evolutionary belief that the goal of sexual behavior is to

ensure reproduction and carrying of bloodlines. Several authors have concluded that the belief that gender is a binary construct is significantly more prevalent in Western culture but is not a new concept in several cultures around the world. Indeed, research identifies that gender groups and identities that do not conform to the binary beliefs of gender exist in cultures across the world. Richards et al. (2017) supported this notion through the assessment of the *Femminielli* in the Neapolitan culture, the *Sworn Virgins* of the Albanian tribes, the *Hijras* in Indian culture, the *Kathoeyes*, and the *Waris*, to name a few. Matsuno and Budge (2017) identified other cultures in their research, such as the *Chuckchi* in Siberia, the *Bakla* in the Philippines, and the *Quariwarmi* in Peru which are all examples of the third gender in historic cultures.

2.2 GENDER MINORITY AND ITS CURRENT STATE IN THE LITERATURE

Non-binary individuals make up one of the several gender and sex minority groups around the world. Titman (2014) conducted a review of the literature in the UK and defined non-binary as “an umbrella term for any gender (or lack of gender) that would not be adequately represented by an either/or choice between ‘man’ or ‘woman’.”

Titman (2014) further noted that roughly 0.4% of the UK population reported the option “other” when provided with three options: “male,” “female,” and “others.” The umbrella term “non-binary” is used to identify a wide array of individuals who experience gender in many ways. In addition to being identified as an umbrella term, non-binary is also an established gender identity (Frohard-Dourlent et al., 2017).

Among non-binary individuals, some experience being a man and a woman at the same time and are termed “demi gender,” “intergender,” or “androgynous” (Matsuno & Budge,

2017). Additionally, some individuals move between gender roles and are termed “bi-gender,” “gender fluid,” or “pangender” (Richards et al., 2016). Genderqueer and non-binary are often overlapping terms and while they each mean different things, they all refer to individuals who conform to gender identity outside of male and female (Boskey, 2022). Bosky (2022) further explained that the relationship between the terms “genderqueer” and “non-binary” varies depending on individuals. The author further clarifies that while some individuals use them interchangeably, others use the term “genderqueer” specifically to refer to their sexual orientation.

Naturally, the increasing belief that gender exists outside the male and female realms has prompted the use of non-binary pronouns. These pronouns are ungendered and do not indicate either male or female characteristics (“Let’s talk about they/them pronouns”, 2021). It was only roughly six years ago when prominent institutions, such as Harvard University and the University of Vermont, facilitated the use of gender-neutral pronouns for students, which were also included in the database and distributed among professors to ensure proper pronoun usage (Poon, 2015). Gender-neutral pronouns include known words, such as they/them, and some more recent pronouns that are less known to many, such as “xe/xim,” “ze/zim,” and “sie/hir” (Norelle, 2020). The acceptable number of existing pronouns is reasonably long, and Richards and Barker (2013) pointed out that “ask etiquette” or inquiring about which pronouns to use before engaging in any conversation or exchange is most appropriate. It has also been noted that a person does not have to be transgender or gender nonconforming to use gender-neutral pronouns that demonstrate non-binary beliefs (Tobia, 2016).

A rather crucial factor among people who identify themselves as non-binary is physical reconstruction. Richards et al. (2016) suggested that only a minority of trans individuals are non-binary. They further identified that the need for physical intervention among people who identify themselves as non-binary is manifold—some desire complete physical intervention or want to eliminate any physical signs that they are male or female, while some do not desire any physical intervention and express their non-binary beliefs through various relevant choices. The literature suggests that physical characteristics and interventions vary depending on the individual, and it might be difficult to establish a pattern.

With the number of non-binary individuals increasing, research such as this can be extremely useful. However, measuring and tracking the growing number of non-binary individuals is more difficult than it seems. Richards et al. (2017) stated that the reason might be that the number of people who experience or feel gender in a non-binary way is much higher than the number of people who express themselves as non-binary through choices of apparel, appearance, pronouns, and other relevant matters. A very recent study in June 2021 by UCLA Law School shows that almost 1.2 million people in the USA identify as non-binary (Wilson & Myer, 2021).

Looking back at the academic literature, it is reasonable to conclude that research that focuses on discrimination towards trans individuals or gender non-conformity may also help us understand and relate the findings when it comes to non-binary individuals. For example, Miller and Grollman (2015) focused on gender non-conformity and explained that they used “trans” and “transgender” to refer to individuals whose gender identity and gender assigned at birth do not line up the way they might be expected. Several academic

fields have studied the discrimination that genderqueer individuals often face.

Researchers such as Dray et al. (2020) present the term “T+ community,” which includes non-binary individuals as well as several other groups. Other sources also mention that the “Q” in the term LGBTQ encompasses and refers to several different identities, including non-binary individuals (Grinberg, 2019). Thus, to understand the discrimination faced by non-binary individuals, this research will also examine literature that focuses on LGBTQ+ individuals as a whole and assess literature that solely considers non-binary individuals.

Truszczynski et al. (2020), in a paper on discrimination faced by non-binary individuals, studied non-binary people in conjunction with trans individuals. Their study focused on the daily discriminatory accounts faced by trans and non-binary (TNB) individuals and the coping mechanisms they employ. Part of a larger study that was conducted in three different stages, the paper utilized data from a time-contingent survey. The findings of their study show that most non-binary people face discrimination every day, which includes microaggression and verbal harassment, among others.

Academic research regarding LGBTQ discrimination is much more enriched compared to its marketing or consumer behavior counterparts. The inclusion of LGBTQ people in marketing research started some 30 years ago. It was only in the 1990s that brands started portraying homosexuals in advertisements (Oakenfull, 2004). In marketing research, LGBTQ representation in advertising has received significant attention, as a plethora of papers have focused on homosexual portrayals in advertisements and how that may affect issues such as ad and brand attitude (Hazzouri et al., 2019; Read et al., 2018). Northey et al. (2020) have worked on political ideology and how that may affect

the way advertisements containing LGBTQ imagery are perceived. In particular, it was discussed that male-to-male homosexual representation resulted in negative attitudes being formed about the product and brand among conservative consumers, while lesbian imagery and heterosexual imagery had comparative reactions.

Ginder and Byun (2015) presented an overview of gay and lesbian consumers in their research. The paper analyzed 38 articles over a span of 20 years to track any significant pattern and attempted to integrate several streams into one whole category. One of the streams identified was “consumer response to gay/lesbian targeted advertising,” and the authors noted that this is the most dominant stream so far. The literature overview shows that a link between tolerance toward homosexuality and attitude toward ads was prominent in earlier studies in the 1990s (Bhat et al., 1996, 1998). Bhat et al. (1998) further discussed that a negative attitude toward ads with homosexual portrayals does not mean that a negative attitude about the brand will be formed. In more recent times, similar findings were reported (Angelini & Bradley, 2010).

Recent research by Hazzouri et al. (2019) also considers tolerance. The authors focused their work on LGBTQ representation in advertisements and the role disgust plays in determining attitudes toward such advertisements. . Other authors, such as Pounders and Mabry-Flynn (2016), have conducted research from the viewpoint of stereotypes regarding gay and lesbian individuals. The findings show that a greater positive reaction was present when the products portrayed in the ad content were consistent with stereotypes regarding sexual orientation.

In advertising research, little to no work exists that focuses specifically on non-binary individuals or the way they are portrayed in advertisements. This is confirmed by Nölke (2017) who conducted a longitudinal study on ads that include LGBT portrayals. After analyzing 185 ads over the span of six years (2009–2015), the author shows that identities that fall on the queer spectrum have received much less focus and rare portrayals. The author further discussed that the heteronormative representation indicates that these LGBTQ ads are targeted at heterosexual consumers. This is a major gap that this paper will address. In the next section, this paper explores the concept of microaggressions in detail and discusses how non-binary people may face microaggressions.

2.3 MICROAGGRESSIONS

Microaggressions as a form of discrimination have been studied by several authors. The concept of microaggression was introduced in the 1970s, and this specific form of discrimination is said to be acts or exchanges that are subtle, might be verbal or non-verbal, and are usually suppressive (Pierce et al., 1977). More recently, microaggressions have been defined as “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 271). In their 2017 article, Sterzing et al. illustrated that by employing derogatory remarks and dismissals that are, in many cases, unintended, microaggressions help support the perception that certain social groups are “normal and superior,” and others are not. The inconspicuous, subtle, and indirect nature of the remarks made, gestures displayed, or actions taken often makes microaggressions difficult to tackle or discuss (Sue, 2010b).

Early microaggression research was mostly conducted on racial matters (Pierce et al., 1977; Sue et al., 2007), but later evolved to include more marginalized groups and identities. Microaggressions have been categorized into three types: microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations (Sue et al., 2010; Sue et al., 2007). Sue (2010) referred to microinsults as “negative metacommunication.” Munro et al. (2019) noted that microinsults communicate “insensitivity or rudeness” and are often the most common type of microaggression to which minority individuals are exposed. Sue et al. (2007) further clarified that a microassault includes verbal or non-verbal actions that might demean or hurt the victim. Kim et al. (2021) explained that a microassault is an overt form of microaggression and is often intentional, with little or no room for ambiguity. Microinvalidation is the third of this list and deals with the reality that minority people must face. Sue et al. (2007) illustrated this type as an act that might invalidate the realities or experiences of the victim. Kim et al. (2021, p. 131) clarified this using the example of Asian Americans who might hear that “Asian Americans can’t experience racism.”

The specific categorization that focuses on LGBTQ microaggression was developed in the 2010s (Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2013). In their literature review, Nadal et al. (2016) identified that not recognizing the preferred pronoun or using an incorrect one, even after being informed, is perhaps one of the most common forms of microaggression faced by a genderqueer person. In an earlier paper, Nadal and colleagues (2012) investigated interpersonal and systemic microaggression faced by trans individuals. The authors use the term *transgender* to describe individuals who do not conform to the gender assigned to them at birth. After analyzing two focus groups, the researchers present twelve forms

of microaggressions. Some of these include using an incorrect pronoun, displaying discomfort, displaying a preference for the gender binary, systematic microaggression, etc.

Later research by Testa et al. (2015) termed the phenomenon of not using the correct pronoun “non affirmation.” The authors explained that “non affirmation” refers to not receiving affirmation from others regarding one’s felt gender. This simply translates to others not using the pronoun that the individual prefers to be used while being addressed. Researchers who have focused on various minority groups, such as sexual minorities, gender minorities, and cisgender women, have found the common occurrence of endorsing heteronormative behavior and culture as one of the most common forms of microaggressions (Dean et al., 2016). Naturally, individuals who endorse and believe in heteronormativity or gender having only two binary options are likelier not to use pronouns that signify that gender identities and pronouns used to identify with them exist outside the binary options.

Healthcare research has also focused on the microaggressions that LGBTQ, LGBTQIA, and non-binary individuals often face while accessing healthcare or healthcare providers. A study by Dean et al. (2016) focused on heteronormative microaggression or instances of conveying to LGBTQIA people that their feelings or experiences regarding their gender are abnormal or negative. Dean et al. (2016) explained that heteronormative microaggressions project that the identities, experiences, and feelings of LGBTQIA people regarding gender identities are insulting, not normal, or shameful. Moreover, Munro et al. (2019) explored Canadian LGBTQ adolescents and the instances of microaggression they face in their everyday lives. After conducting a study on two focus

groups, the authors presented several patterns of microaggressions that adolescents face. Endorsement of gender norms or focusing on the gender binary was the first one, and the participants noted that teachers and administrators often partake in this act of microaggression. This pattern is consistent with the findings of Dean et al. (2016), who also reported heteronormative instances of microaggression.

Munro et al. (2019) further reported a pattern regarding misuse or abuse of pronouns where participants elaborated that some people would intentionally focus on pronoun usage in ways that might seem exaggerated, while some would not use the desired one even after being corrected. In this form of microaggression, the use of heteronormative language subscribes to the belief and practice of gender having binary forms. Platt et al. (2013) used the example of using terms such as “husband” or “wife” instead of using “spouse” or “partner.”

Workplace microaggression is another matter that has been researched significantly. In their 2018 book, Fogarty and Zheng illustrate in detail the workplace discrimination that genderqueer and non-binary people must endure. Among the many instances of discrimination, microaggression is evident in the form of misgendering and refusal to address a person by their chosen pronoun, even after being corrected. Fogarty and Zheng further speculate that as non-binary individuals cannot be categorized as either male or female, it is likelier that they will generate more feelings of threat and face more severe discrimination.

While trans and non-binary individuals have different identities and experiences, research regarding trans discrimination may offer insights into discrimination that sex

and gender minority individuals might face. In earlier research, Connell (2009), as well as Connell and Schilt (2007), have shown that in a work setting, coworkers often attempt to assign male or female terminologies to a trans individual or put them into one of these two groups. Other researchers have also conducted significant research on discrimination against trans people in the workplace. Their findings showed that individuals who expressed their altered gender identity at work faced significant discrimination in the form of demotion, pressure to resign, being dismissed, etc. (Gagne' et al., 1997; Gagne' et al., 1998).

A more recent account of workplace discrimination toward individuals who express their non-conformity comes from Davidson (2016), who conducted their research from the viewpoint of gender equality and focused on the fact that non-binary and trans individuals do not occupy any known gender category the same way men or women do. Using data from the national transgender discrimination survey (NTDS), the paper builds on the question of how individuals who are often miscategorized or not categorized at all due to a lack of understanding may be treated in the workplace. Their findings suggest that non-binary individuals who are “out” are not at threat of being unemployed but face other discrimination, such as not receiving promotions or having proper access to authority. This finding adds to research on discrimination that shows that in workplaces across the US, trans people have twice the unemployment rate compared to cisgender people (Baboolall et al., 2021). The finding by Davidson (2016) is key to understanding the shift of discrimination from explicit measures such as demotion or pressure to resign toward more implicit ones such as not receiving promotions and being denied access to authority.

Newer research suggests that inherent prejudice motivates acts of domination that manifest into microaggressions to be carried out consciously (Kanter et al., 2017).

Williams (2021) explained that individual acts of microaggression are associated with higher aggressive tendencies that cannot be explained by negative effects.

Research further explains that it is practically impossible to steer clear of inheriting our ancestors' prejudices regarding gender, race, or sexual orientation (Dovidio et al., 2002; Sue, 2003). Often, these biases prevail consciously, subconsciously, or on the fringes of consciousness (Ponterotto et al., 2006; Sue, 2003).

Microaggressions have been studied in marketing and consumer behavior contexts, where the major focus is racial minorities, such as Asian Americans or African Americans. Several studies have focused on how young African Americans might be subject to microaggressions across various retail scenarios. This has been termed "shopping while black" (Schreer et al., 2009), and qualitative studies illuminate incidents such as experiencing rude behavior, being watched closely, shoplifting allegations, etc. (Williams, 2006; Smawley & Healy, 2010).

Based on the pattern established in the literature and because microaggression may be subtle, and unintentional, this paper predicts that individuals who identify as non-binary are likelier to face microaggressions in a service scenario. In particular, I expect the following:

H1: Consumers will engage in microaggressions by assigning lower ratings to a non-binary service provider as opposed to a male or female service provider.

I propose that this lower rating is a sign of microinsult, a form of microaggression, and will cause some downstream impacts to the non-binary service provider as well as the business that employed the salesperson. For instance, in industries such as food services, we may see that microaggression (in terms of a lower rating of the service provider) leads to lower financial gain from the service provider (e.g., receiving a lower tip) or even impacts the attitude toward the business that has employed the non-binary salesperson. Therefore, the following hypotheses were developed:

H2a: Consumers will engage in microaggressions by giving lower percentage of tip to the non-binary service provider as opposed to a male or female service provider.

H2b: Consumers will engage in microaggressions by assigning lower ratings to the service offered by a non-binary service provider as opposed to the service offered by a male or female service provider.

H2c: Consumers will engage in microaggressions by assigning lower ratings to the business that has hired a non-binary service provider as opposed to the business that has hired a male or female service provider.

2.4 SOCIAL DOMINANCE ORIENTATION

In healthcare, workplace, resource- assigning or resource-accessing areas, several forms of discrimination have been and continue to be investigated by researchers across academic fields. Many of these discriminatory acts have been explained using the theory of social dominance orientation, which falls under the personality approach towards explaining prevalent prejudice.

Social dominance orientation was first conceived in the 1990s' (Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, 1993a). Sidanius et al. (2012) illustrate the concept of SDO by explaining that it is the extent to which people possess anti-egalitarian beliefs and would support or maintain existing social orders. Further, it can be explained as an indicator of variation in displaying prejudice towards other groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). Sidanius and Pratto (2012) later enlist social dominance theory as one of the several models that can be used to explain the widely varying range of political and social ideologies or beliefs among individuals. They further clarify that although the models are different in several ways, some primary matters focusing on group-based hierarchy, a dispute over resources, and the use of ideological elements, etc. are common. Although this paper is not focusing on such matters, it aims to use social dominance orientation or SDO to show that when interacting with or imagining interacting with non-binary individuals, social dominance orientation will work as a key moderator that will cause consumers to display microaggression.

Williams (2021) explains that microaggressions in a racial setting are common due to inequality and social orders that members of an ingroup are willing to maintain at the expense of the outgroups. Though this is illustrated using the racial context, this can be

applied when it comes to other minority groups in gender, gender identity, religion, or ethnic context. Individuals with higher levels of SDO display prejudice or display discrimination against individuals who may be considered “low status” (Simmons & Umphress, 2015). SDO has also been proven to be correlated with a negative attitude toward sexual minorities (Hodson and Costello, 2007).

Social dominance orientation has been used to study a variety of consumer behavior issues. One of these papers comes from Hazzouri et al. (2019) who report that consumers with average and higher levels of SDO show a greater level of disgust when viewing advertisements that feature-same sex couples as opposed to opposite-sex couples.

It can be argued by many that the display of disgust itself is an act of microaggression. Indeed, several researchers have shown in one way or another that the display of disgust was evident in many instances of microaggression involving individuals who are transgender, bisexual, or just in general fall in the sexual minority spectrum. (Chang and Chung, 2015; Hill & Willoughby, 2005, p. 533; Nadal et al., 2016).

In their 2019 paper, Hazzouri et al. also explain that SDO is one of the probable reasons behind supporting discrimination. Further, Pratto et al. (2000) suggest that this phenomenon allows the individual psychological level to relate to existing social or political ideologies that may still protect the dominance of one or some few groups by putting some social groups through systemic discrimination. Across 6 sample groups, the authors carried out both cultural and cross-cultural analysis and show that the support and maintenance of discrimination strengthen the processes of boosting social hierarchy. This attempt to maintain the hierarchy and dominant standing could be an act of protecting one’s group from being “contaminated” as explained by Hodson et al. (2013).

In older research, Hodson and Costello (2007) show that individuals who have a higher belief in SDO tend to possess feelings of disgust towards minority groups.

After examining all the relevant literature, this research posits that in the context of retail and consumers' interaction with the salesperson, SDO will act as a moderator when customers engage in displaying microaggressions. In other words, SDO moderates the effects of micro-aggressive behavior towards the non-binary salesperson. In particular, H3 offers:

H3: SDO moderates the relationship between pronouns and attitude towards the service provider. In particular, it is expected, consumers with high SDO, offer negative attitude towards the non-binary service provider, as opposed to a male or female service provider. This difference should be eliminated for low SDO consumers.

2.5 POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

While SDO theoretically helps to find out individuals' political beliefs, it is also interesting to see how political ideology (spectrum from liberal to conservative) may also impact consumers' reactions towards non-binary people. Research has indicated time and again that political ideology indeed plays a significant role in influencing or predicting consumer attitudes in marketing or advertising situations (Kaikati et al., 2017). The beliefs and principles that create a person's worldview and rationalize their political position form that person's political ideology (Dawson, 2001). Simply put, a person's political ideology is a reflection of that person's opinions regarding the conduct a society should possess (Ball et al., 2019).

Research has already established that consumer attitude is a factor that political ideology can impact significantly (Kaikati et al., 2017). The reasons behind this are said to be because an individual's political and moral identity are often closely associated (Winterich et al., 2012). Moreover, an individual's political beliefs are greatly related to their behavior and belief regarding consumption (Crockett, 2004).

In general, political ideology is calculated from a range of liberal to conservative. Conservatism focuses on exactly what the term means- conservating or maintaining the status quo or making sure things stay just as they usually are (Conover & Feldman, 1981). While conservative individuals prefer traditionalism, liberals are somewhat the opposite and usually more supportive of matters that boost social change (Jost et al., 2008; Piurko et al., 2011). With a focus on impartiality and solidarity, liberalism attempts to boost change (Jost et al., 2009).

In recent times, there has been a surge in the number of individuals who are choosing to adopt gender or sexual identities that can be considered non-traditional. One of the factors that liberalism is supportive of is the choice to express unconventional gender identities. On the other hand, conservative beliefs focus on upholding traditional values and orders (Jost et al., 2009).

The contrasting viewpoints and beliefs that liberal and conservative individuals possess can predict their diverging attitudes toward LGBTQ or gender minorities. Conservative beliefs are consistent predictors of unfavorable attitudes toward LGBTQ+ people (Mooijman & Stern 2016; Hoyt et al., 2019; Norton & Herek, 2013). Further, conservative individuals are also more likely to fulfill existing social norms than individuals who have liberal beliefs (Fernandes and Mandel, 2014).

It is not just an unfavorable attitude that gender or sexual minorities might face. Research has established that a person who is more right-wing and conservative, is also more likely to display prejudice towards non-binary individuals (Hodson & Busseri, 2012; Keiller, 2010). The motivations behind these acts are manifold but one of them can be conservative individuals' increased opposition toward change (Van der Toorn et al. 2017) or ambiguity arising from confusion regarding weakened gender differences.

Research has also shown that conservative ideology holders might perceive the notion that homosexual individuals are deviant and potentially damaging to traditional heterosexual norms and beliefs (Rios, 2013). Traditional heterosexual norms and beliefs support the notion that gender has two forms- male and female while often showing greater disdain towards gender groups such as non-binary or trans. Indeed, higher support for conservative ideology has been linked with a preference for binary gender beliefs (Norton & Herek, 2013).

This research predicts that political ideology will act as a categorical moderator that influences the effect non-binary salespeople have on generating consumer microaggressions. Research has established that conservative individuals are more likely to engage in discriminatory acts towards gender minorities who do not conform to existing gender beliefs. In this research, people who are conservative will not support the notion of a non-binary individual as it is not traditional.

H4: Political ideology moderates the relationship between pronouns and attitude towards the service provider. In particular, it is expected, conservative consumers offer negative attitude towards the non-binary service provider, as opposed to a

male or female service provider. This difference should be eliminated for liberal consumers.

While considering the effects of political ideology, it is important to note that there are certain situations in which people may try to control their public behavior and not disclose their true opinion. For instance, it is possible to find that conservative people try to dampen some of their visible microaggressions (such as lower tip to the salesperson in a restaurant context) as part of this control mechanism. This is a plausible explanation as research has shown that conservatives in general exhibit a greater sense of self-control (Clarkson et al., 2015).

In the next chapter, the results of a conducted experiment will be discussed. This experiment has been conducted to study the effect of pronouns on consumers' attitudes towards the non-binary person and further examines the downstream effects of pronouns. Moreover, in this experiment boundary conditions for these effects are investigated.

CHAPTER THREE: TEST OF HYPOTHESES

In this Chapter, an experiment is presented with the aim of testing if people report negative attitudes towards non-binary salespeople (H1), and whether these attitudes may have downstream effects on the service offered by the non-binary service provider and business (H2). Further, this experiment investigates if SDO and political ideology change the impact of pronouns on consumers' attitudes toward non-binary salespeople (H3 and H4).

In the first section, the research design that was employed is presented, followed by the procedure of the experiment in detail. Finally, the results and discussion of this study are presented. All statistical analyses in this research were conducted with 95 percent confidence ($\alpha=.05$).

3.1 PARTICIPANTS AND DESIGN

Three hundred and sixty-nine participants were recruited from Cloud Research in exchange for \$2 compensation to participate in this experiment with demographic information included in Table 1.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Demographic Information		
Number of Participants	369	
Age	Minimum	18
	Maximum	83
Gender Identity	Male	170
	Female	190
	Non-binary	5
	Transgender	3
	Not-disclosed	1
Language spoken the most at home	English	362
	Others	7

Moreover, to check whether there is a gender balance among the three conditions of this experiment, a chi-square test has been conducted. As shown in Table 2, although there is a slight difference in the size of each condition in this experiment, the results of the Chi-Square test do not show any significant difference among the conditions in terms of sample size and the gender of participants in each condition ($\chi^2 (2, 360) = 2.132, P = .344$).

TABLE 2: CROSS-TABULATION OF PARTICIPANTS' GENDER AND EXPERIMENTAL CONDITIONS

		Participants' gender	
		Male	Female
Experimental conditions	Non-binary	52	62
	Male	54	70
	Female	64	58

The participants were all residents of the United States of America. This study is a one-way experiment with three gender categories (non-binary, male, female) in a random between-participants design. This experiment aims to test consumers' attitudes toward service providers. As can be seen in Table 1, nine participants listed their gender as non-binary, transgender, or did not disclose their gender. To have clearer results, for this experiment, those nine participants were removed from the analysis and in this study, I only kept male and female participants in the sample size ($n = 360$).

3.2 PROCEDURE

Before starting the experiment, all participants had to read the consent form as part of the ethics application. Those who provided consent were directed to the main part of this experiment. Participants were asked to participate in an experiment where the main goal is to imagine themselves in a meal-ordering situation and to evaluate this meal-ordering

experience in a restaurant. They were randomly assigned to one of three pronoun conditions: non-binary, male, or female.

Participants were asked to read the following scenario and to imagine themselves as consumers in the restaurant in this scenario. The content of this scenario is consistent across three conditions with one exception where participants were informed about service provider pronouns based on the condition they were assigned to. All other aspects of this experiment were the same for all participants. In particular, participants were asked to imagine the following scenario:

Please read the following information carefully and do your best to imagine yourself in this scenario. Please try to respond as if this were an actual situation you are in. You need to spend at least 45 seconds on this page before going to the next page.

Imagine you are at a restaurant to enjoy a meal for your lunch. You walk in and are greeted by a person who will be your server for the meal. The server is an individual named Alex which is stated on the nametag along with the pronouns 'they/them/theirs' [*he/him/his, she/her/hers*]. You are then shown to your seat by Alex and do not have to wait much long to be seated.

After sitting down, you look around the restaurant and admire the overall atmosphere as well as the vibe. To get a better understanding of what to order, you decide to discuss some of your choices with the server. They (*he/she*) suggest(s) you two of the items that they [*he/she*] think(s) are among the best dishes the restaurant offers. After discussing the ingredients and asking for more information about those two items on the menu, you finally settle on the second suggestion offered by them [*him/her*]. They [*He/She*] bring(s) your food to you without much delay. Your meal is pleasant, up to the mark, and sufficiently satisfying for you. After you are finished eating, they [*he/she*] bring(s) your check and thank(s) you for dining at the restaurant and you see that the server wrote this note under the check "I hope you enjoyed your meal. Alex (they/them/theirs)[*he/him/his, she/her/hers*]"

A restaurant scenario was used in this experiment. This is because it offers flexibility in name tag usage as it is common for restaurant servers to introduce themselves to patrons when they arrive at their table. Furthermore, in a restaurant setting, there is usually an

opportunity for a short conversation between the consumer and the server. At the time of developing this research idea, there was a report that a non-binary restaurant employee was awarded \$30,000 following the fact that their employer refused to use a proper pronoun for them (Michaels, 2021) which made this study relevant to this media news. I also used the name “Alex” for the service provider as it is reportedly one of the most common gender-neutral names (Lai, 2017).

3.3 DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Attitude towards the service provider: This question was asked to assess participants’ ratings of the server across either a positive or a negative dimension. In this experiment, this is the main dependent variable that will be used to test the hypothesis.

A 7-point bipolar scale was used for this variable (e.g., bad/good, dislike/like, unfavorable/favorable, negative/positive) that was adapted from Parrett (2006). The lower number on this scale reflects a lower attitude towards the service provider. These four items were averaged to form a measure of attitude towards the service provider (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.967$).

Ratings of Service provided by the server: Further, this research aims to assess if there is any significant effect on the way participants rate the service provided by a server once they learn of their pronouns. Participants were presented with six questions, each of which asked how many ratings they would assign to the service provided by the server. This was measured on a 5-point Likert scale where the lowest score is “not satisfied at all” and the highest is “extremely satisfied”. In other words, a lower rating means less satisfaction with the service provided. Participants were asked to rate the service offered

by Alex in these six categories: friendliness, efficiency, helpfulness, timeliness, respectful, and professional. These questions are adapted from Ekinçi's (1998, 2001) where he investigates service quality in a hotel. The questions have been modified slightly to reflect the need for this experiment that is conducted in a restaurant scenario. These six items were averaged to form a measure of service offered by the service provider (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.961$).

Gratuity: Participants were asked to provide the percentage of tips they would like to give to the service provider. The percentage was used intentionally as it is a more common and accepted method in a restaurant setting and it does not require one to know the exact item pricing of the meal ordered at the restaurant. This was a way to reduce price sensitivity as a potential factor in this experiment.

Ratings of the Restaurant: This research also asked questions to examine any possible connection between the pronouns of the server and see if this may impact the general rating towards the restaurant establishment. Participants were asked to rate the restaurant on a scale of 1-5 based on five different categories: quality of food, quality of service, cleanliness of the restaurant, how comfortable they felt, and friendliness of staff, with the lower number corresponding to the lower rating of the restaurant. Questions for this variable were adopted from Ekinçi's 1998 and 2001 papers where he studies hotel service quality across a range of dimensions. I utilize items from the "tangible" section of his 1998 paper as well as "Physical quality: scale II" and "Staff behavior and attitude" from his 2001 paper. These five items were averaged to measure the service offered by the service provider (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.925$).

Social Dominance Orientation: The 16-item scale by Pratto et al. (1994) was used in this study to measure SDO. Due to time and resource limitations, this study measured SDO instead of manipulating it. That is why all the items in the 16-item scale were included to better capture measurements of SDO. Participants indicated their answers on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 was highly agree and 5 was highly disagree. (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.766$). The last 8 items of the scale were reverse-coded (It would be good if groups could be equal, group equality, etc.) and all the items were combined to form one variable so that conducting the analysis becomes easier. Detail statements for this variable are listed below:

Please choose the answer that best describes your opinion regarding the statement.

- Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
- In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups.
- It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others.
- To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups.
- If certain groups stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems.
- It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.
- Inferior groups should stay in their place.
- Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place.
- It would be good if groups could be equal (Reverse)
- Group equality should be our ideal. (Reverse)
- All groups should be given an equal chance in life. (Reverse)
- We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups. (Reverse)
- Increased social equality is good for society (Reverse)
- We would have fewer problems if we treated people more equally. (Reverse)
- We should strive to make incomes as equal as possible. (Reverse)
- No one group should dominate society. (Reverse)

Political Ideology: Research has indicated that political ideology plays a significant role in influencing or predicting consumer attitudes in marketing or advertising situations (Kaikati et al., 2017). In this experiment, participants were asked to rate how conservative or liberal they are on a scale of 1 to 9, where 1 is extremely liberal and 9 is extremely conservative.

3.4 MANIPULATION CHECK

To make sure the manipulation of pronouns worked, the following two questions were asked of participants:

- Try to answer from memory. What was the name of the server? Type your answer in the text box
- Try to answer from your memory. Beside the name of the server, what pronouns were written on the tag?

The result shows that 81.7% of participants in the they/them/theirs condition could correctly recall the pronoun of the server. For the he/him/his condition, the percentage was 92.9% while for the she/her/hers condition, the percentage was 79.36%. This shows that most of the participants in the they/them/their condition could recall the pronouns correctly and were aware of the non-binary preference the server had. In other words, the manipulation check was successful. More specifically, if the ratings for the server or service provided in the non-binary condition are lower than the male or female condition despite the pronoun recall rate being high, it can be said that this is a clear sign of engaging in microaggressions.

I further asked questions regarding the name of the server. More specifically, the participants were asked if they could remember the name of the server and to type it in a text box. Approximately 85% of the participants responded with the correct answer “Alex” or with slight variations of it such as “Alwx” or “Alrx” which indicate that these were most likely typing mistakes.

3.5 TEST OF HYPOTHESES

3.5.1 Main Effects of Pronouns on Attitude towards the Service Provider

To test the main hypothesis of this research and find if pronouns impact consumers' attitude towards the service provider, an ANOVA test with pronouns as IV and attitude towards the service provider as DV was performed. The result indicates a marginal effect of pronouns ($F(2, 356) = 2.72, P = .07$). To further investigate the difference between the three pronouns, post-hoc tests were conducted, as can be seen in Figure 1, the results show that consumers reported lower attitude towards the nonbinary server in comparison with the male server. Although this difference mathematically follows H1, this difference is not statistically significant ($M_{\text{Non-binary}} = 5.76$ vs $M_{\text{Male}} = 6.09, p = .13$). There is also no visible difference between non-binary and female ($M_{\text{Non-binary}} = 5.76$ vs $M_{\text{Female}} = 5.60, p = .47$). Results of this test however confirm that the traditional gender gap between males and females still exists ($M_{\text{Male}} = 6.08$ vs $M_{\text{Female}} = 5.62, p = .02$) It appears that female service providers are rated lower than their male and non-binary counterparts. To make sure results were not affected by participants' gender, I have also conducted a similar test with the gender of participants as the covariate and the results show no effect of participants' gender ($p > .23$), and therefore participants' gender will not be discussed in this research any further. Although these results don't support H1, the direction of results

supports that non-binary people might not be viewed as similar to the dominant gender: male service providers.

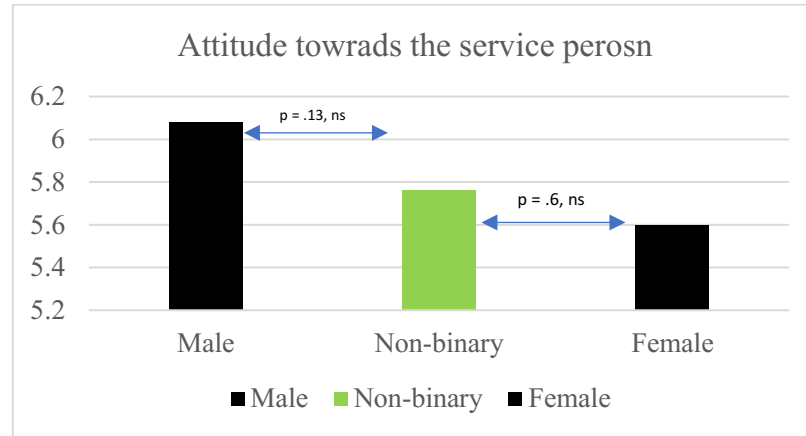


FIGURE 1: MAIN EFFECTS OF PRONOUNS ON ATTITUDE TOWARD SERVICE PROVIDER

Further, as discussed under the manipulation check, not all the participants recalled the correct pronouns of the server. Therefore, to control if the results explained in this section is not due to that limitation, I have also re-tested H1 with only those who could recall the pronouns. This reduced the sample size for this particular test from 360 to 303 and the results still not showing any difference between the three groups and as expected this change doesn't make the results significant ($P > .15$), therefore for the rest of this research, the whole sample size ($n=360$) will be considered.

3.5.2 Main Effects of Pronouns on Gratuity

To evaluate the downstream effects of pronouns, I have tested the effects of pronouns on gratuity, rating of service offered by the non-binary service provider, and the attitude towards the business that employed the non-binary service provider. The results show that pronouns have no direct effects on gratuity ($F(2, 357) = .493, p = .61$). I also used

log-transform for gratuity to reduce the skewness of the measurement for this variable, however, results don't show a significant effect either ($p = .78$). In other words, the results don't support H2a.

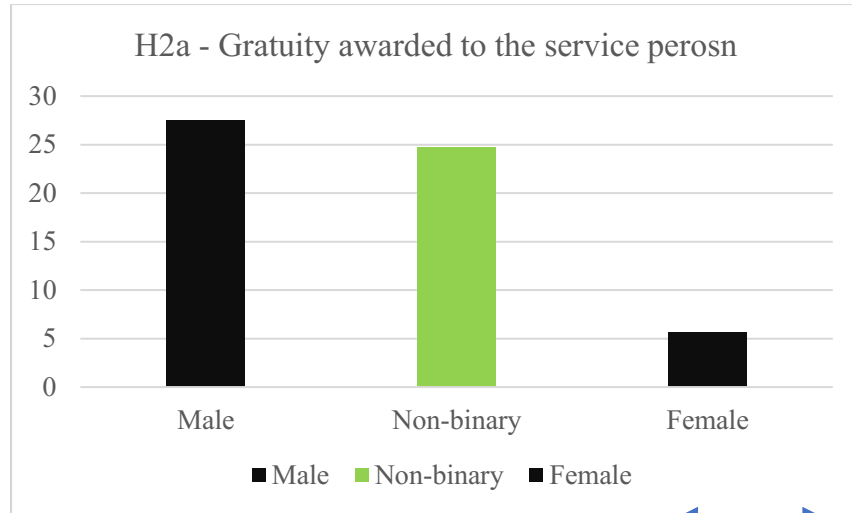


FIGURE 2: MAIN EFFECTS OF PRONOUNS ON GRATUITY

3.5.3 Main Effect of Pronouns on Rating of Service

Further results however show that the gender of the service provider impacts both rating of the service provided by the non-binary person ($F(2, 357) = 4.32, p = .01$), and the overall rating of the restaurant that employed the non-binary service provider ($F(2, 357) = 6.45, p = .01$). As expected, respondents rated the service offered by the non-binary person as lower than the one offered by the male service provider ($M_{\text{non-binary}} = 4.27$ vs. $M_{\text{male}} = 4.51, p = .04$), however, there is no significant difference in rating of the service offered by the non-binary service provider in comparison with the female service provider ($M_{\text{non-binary}} = 4.27$ vs. $M_{\text{female}} = 4.17, p = .43$) which is an indication that H2b is supported.

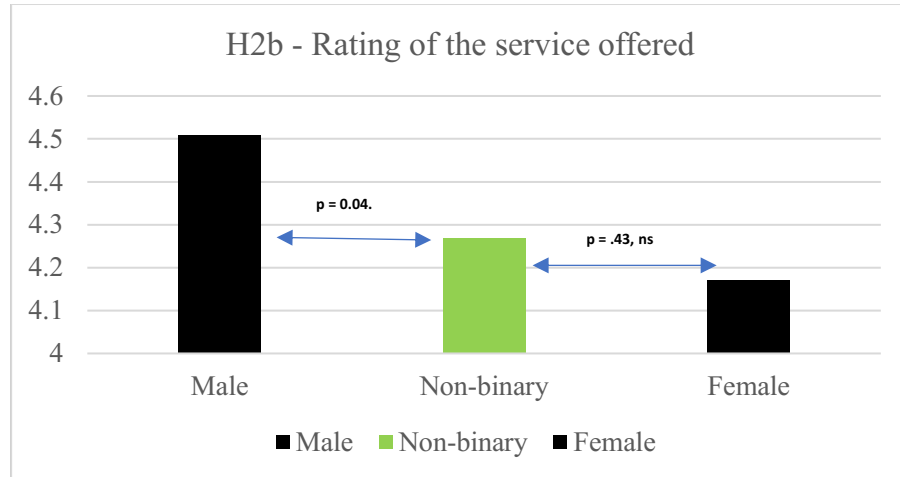


FIGURE 3: MAIN EFFECTS OF PRONOUNS ON RATINGS OF SERVICE

3.5.4 Main Effects of Pronouns on Rating of the Business

Similarly, results show that people rated the business that hired the non-binary person lower than the one that hired a male service provider ($F(2, 357) = 6.45, p = .01, M_{\text{non-binary}} = 4.25$ vs. $M_{\text{male}} = 4.49, p = .02$), however, there is no significant difference in rating of the business when it hired a non-binary person in comparison with the female service provider ($M_{\text{non-binary}} = 4.25$ vs. $M_{\text{female}} = 4.13, p = .28$). This result is shown in Figure 4. Similar to H2b, this analysis supports that the restaurant that has hired a non-binary service provider will be rated lower than the one that has hired a male service provider which is supportive evidence for H2c. Table 3 summarizes the overall effects so far discussed in the experiment.

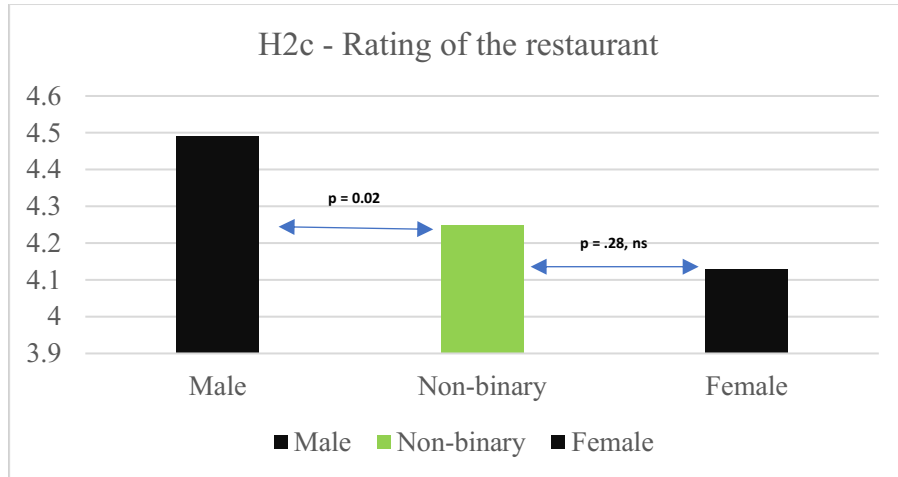


FIGURE 4: MAIN EFFECTS OF PRONOUNS ON RATINGS OF RESTAURANT

TABLE 3: MEANS VALUES OF GRATUITY, RATING OF THE SERVICE OFFERED, AND RATING OF THE RESTAURANT

DV	$M_{non-binary}$ (SD)	M_{male} (SD)	M_{female} (SD)
Attitude towards the service provider (H1)	5.76 (1.83)	6.09 (1.56)	5.6 (1.64) ^b
Gratuity (H2a)	24.73 (19.43)	27.53(23.68)	26.86 (22.57)
Rating of the service offered (H2b)	4.27 (.98)	4.51 (.79) ^a	4.17(.93) ^b
Rating of the restaurant (H2c)	4.25 (.90)	4.49 (.68) ^a	4.13 (.79) ^b

^a Significant mean difference between the male and non-binary conditions.

^b Significant mean difference between the male and female conditions.

These analyses partially confirm H2. In particular, results do not support whether non-binary service providers are given different gratuities (not supporting H2a), but results support that people rate services offered by non-binary service providers lower than the services offered by the male service provider (H2b) and similarly rate the restaurant that hired a non-binary person as lower than the one that hired a male service provider (H2c). Further, there is no evidence to show that there is a significant difference between non-binary and female service providers on how their service is rated and how the employer is evaluated.

There could be a few reasons to explain why the results don't support H2a. In particular, I asked participants to indicate tip percentage. However, they were not given any information about the total cost which may have made the tip amount appear more abstract. In addition, because people did not have to actually pay tips, they may have given generous amounts. As an example, many people gave tips over 50%, which is unusual for restaurants. Lastly, offering a tip on the dining experience is a strong norm in the US where the participants were recruited from. This may impact people's behavior as they may feel they are required to tip, regardless of who offers them the service.

3.5.5 Mediating Effect of Rating of Service Offered by the Service Provider

While not hypothesized, I fitted a mediation model with multi-categorical pronouns predicting the rating of the restaurant offered by the respondents, mediated by the rating of the service offered by the non-binary service provider (Hayes, 2018, Model 4).

Results of this test as shown in Figure 5 confirm that when comparing non-binary and male service providers, the indirect effects of pronouns on restaurant rating via the rating of the service offered (pronouns => rating of service => rating of the restaurant) is significant. In other words, compared to non-binary, the rating of service offered, increased the rating of the restaurant for the males ($b_{\text{male}} = .1707$, 95% CI [.0159, .3358]). Results don't support this mediation when non-binary and female service providers are compared together ($b_{\text{female}} = -.0679$, 95% CI [-.2400, .1143]).

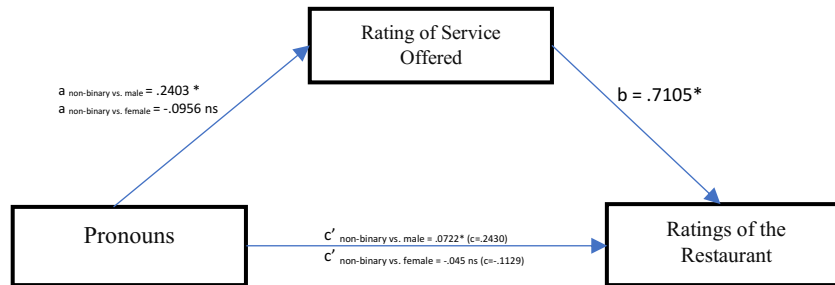


FIGURE 5: MEDIATION EFFECTS OF RATING OF SERVICE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRONOUNS AND RATING OF THE RESTAURANT

3.5.6 Moderating Effects of SDO

To test if SDO moderates the relationship between pronouns and attitude towards the service provider (H3), PROCESS model 1 was run to test this moderating hypothesis, and the interaction results do not support H3 ($F(2, 353) = .86, p = .42$). The results were not significant for non-binary vs. male interaction ($\beta = 0.0311, t = 0.1150, p = .9085$) or the non-binary vs female interaction ($\beta = -.2953, t = -1.0516, p = .2937$)

This hypothesis is not supported and there could be some underlying reasons. In this experiment, SDO was measured instead of manipulated. Perhaps priming one group with a high SDO and using a control group could have yielded better results. Another alternative explanation is that SDO experimentation should have been conducted separately instead of in the same survey, so we could minimize the potential bias in answering SDO questions. Similar tests also have been conducted to explore if SDO moderates the relationship between the pronoun and gratuity as well as the relationship between pronouns on rating of service offered by the service provider. Results confirm that SDO does not moderate the relationship between pronouns on gratuity ($F(2, 354) = .18, p > .8$). Similarly, SDO does not moderate the impact of pronouns on service offered by the service provider ($F(2, 354) = .25, p > .7$).

3.5.7 Moderating Effects of Political Ideology

A simple moderation test was conducted using PROCESS model 1 (Hayes, 2018) to test whether political ideology moderates the impact of pronouns on attitude towards the non-binary service provider (H4). Similar to H3, results here are also not supported in this experiment ($F(2, 353) = 2.00, p = .14$). The results were not significant for non-binary vs. male interaction ($\beta = .2475, t = -1.8512, p = .06$) or for the non-binary vs female interaction ($\beta = -.2114, t = -1.5258, p = .128$) There could be several reasons for the unexpected outcome. Participants were only asked one question regarding their beliefs- if they think they are liberal or if they think they are conservative. As many people may not want to disclose their political ideology, self-reporting for this type of question may introduce bias and error. Adding different types of the measure would help better to check the moderating effect of both SDO and political ideology. Further tests were conducted to explore if political ideology moderates the relationship between the pronoun on gratuity as well as the relationship between pronouns on rating of service offered by the service provider. Results confirm that political ideology does not moderate the relationship between pronouns on gratuity ($F(2, 354) = .69, p > .5$). Similarly, political ideology does not moderate the impact of pronouns on service offered by the service provider ($F(2, 354) = 1.75, p > .17$).

In conclusion, in this research, I proposed 4 hypotheses and tested the results of them. In particular, H1 measured the main effect of pronouns on attitude towards the non-binary service provider, and despite my prediction, results show no difference between the non-binary and binary genders. An alternative explanation on this may be the presence of social desirability bias. Participants may not want to directly show a sign of aggression

towards the non-binary service provider as they may want to present themselves in positive way, however when it comes to the rating of the service provided by the non-binary, then tend to show the signs of microaggressions. This is also aligned with the microinsult literature, where people are not trying to directly insult people, rather finding some cues to communicate the microaggression towards the gender minority people (Sue et al., 2007; Lester et al., 2016).

In H2, the goal was to explore the downstream effects of pronouns on gratuity, rating of service offered by the non-binary person, and eventually the effects of non-binary pronouns on business. Results show that although the use of pronouns doesn't impact the gratuity given to non-binary service providers, non-binary pronouns result in a lower rating of the service offered by the non-binary gender and also the overall rating of this business. Further analysis shows that the effects on the lower rating of a business is mediated by the rating of the service offered by the non-binary service provider.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 were looking at the moderating impact of SDO and political ideology, although previous research has shown some effects of SDO and political ideology, in this research results do not confirm that SDO and political ideology moderates the effects of pronouns on microaggressions. Tests were conducted to test if SDO moderates the relationship between pronouns on gratuity and impact of pronouns on service offered by the service provider. The result was not significant for either.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

4.1 GENERAL DISCUSSION

This paper examines microaggressions towards non-binary individuals in a consumer behavior situation and delves deeper into how factors such as social dominance orientation and political ideology might heighten or lower the effects of pronouns on consumers' reactions towards the service provider.

Findings from this research show that consumers are showing some negative attitudes towards a non-binary service provider, which is an indicator that they judge a service provider based on their gender, and this might be considered a display of microaggressions toward non-binary people. In general, participants rated the service offered by a male service provider higher than they did for the non-binary and female service providers which confirms that the gender gap between males and other genders still exists. Further, participants in the female and non-binary groups assigned very similar ratings for both groups. The pattern shows a clear male bias as well as the tendency to closely group female and non-binary service providers together. For decades, research has worked on the gender gap between males and females and more recently, many social enterprises, governments, and institutions have tried to narrow this gender gap. However, my research shows that this gender gap still exists and is not only relevant to female people, rather it encompasses other gender minorities such as non-binary individuals. Perhaps future research could examine this effect in detail and study the motivation behind grouping non-binary and female individuals together.

The effects regarding the rating of the business as well as for ratings based on the service they received were significant. The results indicate that how consumers rate the service

they received is likely to affect the perceptions they form and the attitudes they display toward the business. This finding has managerial implications and perhaps future research can investigate ways to mitigate these effects in ways that are beneficial for all the parties involved.

In the results of this experiment, the outcome regarding negative attitude toward the service provider was not significant(H1) while the negative attitude toward the service(H2b) was significant. Participants did not display any tendency to negatively rate a non-binary service provider, but they did negatively rate the service provided by a non-binary service provider. This difference can be explained by social desirability bias.

In its simplest form, social desirability is the inclination of individuals to provide responses that may present them in a defensible or acceptable way instead of providing their genuine opinions or feelings (Grimm, 2010). Krumpal (2011) further clarifies that the core reactivity or sensitivity of social desirability pertains to the answer to a question and not the questions itself. This effect might arise from the urge to present the self in a positive way and often sacrifices accuracy and integrity (Holtgraves, 2004).

Participants might not have rated the non-binary service provider negatively because of social desirability bias. In the event where a consumer learns of a service provider or a sales associate's non-binary and does not approve of it, rating the service provider negatively will reflect this negative attitude. Especially if the situation was favorable and positive, or in other words, there was not much reason to negatively rate the service provider. In such an instance, consumers might resort to negatively rate the service provider instead to maintain self-image and social desirability.

4.2 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper tries to make theoretical contributions in several ways. First, it investigates microaggression towards non-binary individuals in a consumer behavior scenario. Research that specifically focuses on non-binary individuals receives somewhat less attention as many of the papers study LGBTQ individuals. However, sociology research that focuses on discrimination research has a rich collection of research on non-binary individuals. Consumer behavior on the other hand significantly lacks research regarding non-binary individuals. This research contributes to the literature by showing that using pronouns by service providers results in different attitudes towards the service provider and a lower rating of non-binary people. Further, this research shows that people more strongly present their attitude towards gender minority people when they are a) angry and b) hold either left or right political ideology. This research aims to fill that gap by investigating consumer attitudes toward non-binary people that might be assisting them in a sales or service scenario. Given the current cultural climate of the world where more and more people are subscribing to beliefs that defy traditional gender norms, this paper tries to investigate an issue that surely will be managerially relevant in the near future.

While SDO and political ideology were found to be insignificant moderators, anger is a factor that is worth investigating as a mediator that might affect these reactions. A multitude of studies spanning academic fields and decades have studied anger arising from microaggressions or discrimination. To the knowledge of this author, most of these papers focus on anger on the victim's side and often assess any further implications (Huynh, 2012; Lui & Quezada, 2019). Perhaps future research could study anger on the

perpetrator's part especially in a scenario such as this where consumers might have to interact with individuals whose beliefs they do not agree with.

4.3 Managerial Implications

The findings of this paper also have some managerial implications. Firstly, the finding implies that even if the overall experience is up to the mark, some consumers might hold a negative attitude towards a non-binary service provider that assists them. Results also confirm that a negative rating offered to a non-binary person will lead to a negative rating of a business that has hired a non-binary person. In other words, my research shows that inclusive businesses that tend to hire gender minority people may see wrong reactions from consumers. An interesting avenue regarding research would be to investigate ways to mitigate this effect and make sure all the parties involved can be benefitted.

4.4 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Just like most research papers, this one too has some limitations. Perhaps the biggest constraint is time and financial resources. This limitation led to the experiment being performed as a scenario-based one. A study that employs non-binary service providers could perhaps yield stronger results. This experiment will benefit from running a field study, where people can interact with different gender minority individuals. Another limitation of this research is the fact that we did not offer much information on the service provider, rather only a gender-neutral name was used for this experiment. In the real world, many non-binary people may be mistaken by consumers as female or male, and in those cases, there will be a mismatch between offered pronouns and consumers'

expectations. It would be interesting to explore how this may impact microaggression as a form of future research. Last, but not least, in this research microaggression was measured as a form of negative attitude, it is necessary to explore further to see if pronouns result in other forms of microaggressive actions by consumers.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Ethics Approval

Social Sciences & Humanities Research Ethics Board

Letter of Approval

February 09, 2022

Tasnim Nishat

Management\Rowe School of Business

Dear Tasnim,

REB #: 2021-5892

Project Title: Attitude towards Service Provider

Expiry Date: February 09, 2023

The Social Sciences & Humanities Research Ethics Board has reviewed your application for research involving humans and found the proposed research to be in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement on *Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*. This approval will be in effect for 12 months as indicated above. This approval is subject to the conditions listed below which constitute your on-going responsibilities with respect to the ethical conduct of this research.

Effective March 16, 2020: Notwithstanding this approval, any research conducted during the COVID-19 public health emergency must comply with federal and provincial public health advice as well as directives from Dalhousie University (and/or other facilities or jurisdictions where the research will occur) regarding preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Dr. Karen Foster, Chair

Post REB Approval: On-going Responsibilities of Researchers

After receiving ethical approval for the conduct of research involving humans, there are several ongoing responsibilities that researchers must meet to remain in compliance with University and Tri-Council policies.

1. Additional Research Ethics approval

Prior to conducting any research, researchers must ensure that all required research ethics approvals are secured (in addition to Dalhousie approval). This includes, but is not limited to, securing appropriate research ethics approvals from: other institutions with whom the PI is affiliated; the institutions of research team members; the institution at which participants may be recruited or from which data may be collected; organizations or groups (e.g. school boards, Indigenous communities, correctional services, long-term care facilities, service agencies and community groups) and from any other responsible review body or bodies at the research site.

2. Reporting adverse events

Any significant adverse events experienced by research participants must be reported **in writing** to Research Ethics **within 24 hours** of their occurrence. Examples of what might be considered “significant” include: a negative physical reaction by a participant (e.g. fainting, nausea, unexpected pain, allergic reaction), an emotional breakdown of a participant during an interview, report by a participant of some sort of negative repercussion from their participation (e.g. reaction of spouse or employer) or complaint by a participant with respect to their participation, report of neglect or abuse of a child or adult in need of protection, or a privacy breach. The above list is indicative but not all-inclusive. The written report must include details of the situation and actions taken (or proposed) by the researcher in response to the incident.

3. Seeking approval for changes to research

Prior to implementing any changes to your research plan, whether to the risk assessment, methods, analysis, study instruments or recruitment/consent material, researchers must submit them to the Research Ethics Board for review and approval. This is done by completing the amendment request process (described on the website) and submitting an updated ethics submission that includes and explains the proposed changes. Please note that reviews are not conducted in August.

4. Continuing ethical review - annual reports

Research involving humans is subject to continuing REB review and oversight. REB approvals are valid for up to 12 months at a time (per the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS) article 6.14). Prior to the REB approval expiry date, researchers may apply to extend REB approval by completing an Annual Report (available on the website). The report should be submitted 3 weeks in advance of the REB approval expiry date to allow time for REB review and to prevent a lapse of ethics approval for the research. Researchers should note that no research involving humans may be conducted in the

absence of a valid ethical approval and that allowing REB approval to lapse is a violation of the University Scholarly Misconduct Policy, inconsistent with the TCPS and may result in the suspension of research and research funding, as required by the funding agency.

5. Final review - final reports

When the researcher is confident that all research-related interventions or interactions with participants have been completed (for prospective research) and/or that all data acquisition is complete, there will be no further access to participant records or collection of biological materials (for secondary use of information research), a Final Report (available on the website) must be submitted to Research Ethics. After review and acknowledgement of the Final Report, the Research Ethics file will be closed.

6. Retaining records in a secure manner

Researchers must ensure that records and data associated with their research are managed consistent with their approved research plans both during and after the project. Research information must be confidentially and securely retained and/or disposed of in such a manner as to comply with confidentiality provisions specified in the protocol and consent forms. This may involve destruction of the records, or continued arrangements for secure storage.

It is the researcher's responsibility to keep a copy of the REB approval letters. This can be important to demonstrate that research was undertaken with Board approval. Please note that the University will securely store your REB project file for 5 years after the REB approval end date at which point the file records may be permanently destroyed.

7. Current contact information and university affiliation

The lead researchers must inform the Research Ethics office of any changes to contact information for the PI (and supervisor, if appropriate), especially the electronic mail address, for the duration of the REB approval. The PI must inform Research Ethics if there is a termination or interruption of his or her affiliation with Dalhousie University.

8. Legal Counsel

The Principal Investigator agrees to comply with all legislative and regulatory requirements that apply to the project. The Principal Investigator agrees to notify the University Legal Counsel office in the event that he or she receives a notice of non-compliance, complaint or other proceeding relating to such requirements.

9. Supervision of students

Faculty must ensure that students conducting research under their supervision are aware of their responsibilities as described above and have adequate support to conduct their research in a safe and ethical manner.

Appendix B : Survey

Tasnim Nishat, Restaurant Study

Informed Consent Form

Research Team:

Ms. Tasnim Nishat (MSc Student), Rowe School of Business, Dalhousie University

Dr. Hamed Aghakhani (Associate Professor), Rowe School of Business, Dalhousie University

Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by, Tasnim Nishat, a graduate student in the Rowe School of Business, Dalhousie University. The purpose of this research is to understand how consumers navigate service scenarios and evaluate the service provided by service assistants. Any adult (person aged 18 or over) residing in North America is eligible to participate in this study.

If you choose to participate in this research, you will be asked to answer some questions about a scenario in a restaurant as well as some related measures that will assess your attitude towards the offered services. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Your participation in this research is not mandatory and depends entirely on you. You are welcome to stop the survey at any time if you no longer wish to participate. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. In order to receive your compensation, you will have to proceed to the end of the questionnaire. If you decide to withdraw from the study prior to that time, please click through to reach the end. If you close the browser prior to reaching the end, you will not get compensated. In case you complete your survey, accept the debriefing, and you change your mind afterward, I will not be able to remove the information you provided as it will not be possible to know which response is yours. You are free to withdraw from any of the studies at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. In order to receive your compensation, you will have to proceed to the end of the questionnaire. If you decide to withdraw from the study prior to that time, please click through to reach the end. If you close the browser prior to reaching the end, you will not get compensated.

Your responses to the survey will be anonymous. This means that there are no questions in the survey that ask for identifying details such as your name or email address or any other identifiable information. All responses will be saved on a secure Dalhousie server. Only me (graduate student Tasnim Nishat) and my supervisor (Hamed Aghakhani) will have access to the survey results.

I will describe and share general findings of this research in my graduate thesis defense. I or my supervisor will keep the anonymous survey information indefinitely as it may be used in future research and used for publication later on.

The risks associated with this study are no greater than those you encounter in your everyday life. There will be no direct benefit to you in participating in this research. Indirectly, you might find out some things about yourself and how you view as well as act in social scenarios.

Questions or Concerns

In case you have any questions about the research, feel free to reach out to Tasnim Nishat at tasnimn@dal.ca. If you have any ethical concerns about your participation in this research, you may contact Research Ethics, Dalhousie University at (902) 494-3423, or email ethics@dal.ca.

By clicking on the "NEXT" button below, it indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and / or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence.

Q Please answer the following question.

This is important! Read carefully, please. In this study, we are interested in mental stimulation. Please check a word that best describes how you are currently feeling. To show that you have read the instructions, please ignore the question below about how you are feeling and instead check only the "Sunday" option as your answer. Thank you very much.

- Interested
- Hostile
- Distracted
- Nervous
- Enthusiastic
- Determined
- Excited
- Proud
- Upset
- Irritable
- Strong
- Sunday
- Alerted
- Active
- Guilty
- Ashamed
- Afraid

Non-Binary

Please read the following text carefully and do your best to imagine yourself in this scenario. Please try to respond as if this were an actual situation you are in. You need to spend at least 45 seconds on this page before going to the next page.

Imagine you are at a restaurant to enjoy a meal for your lunch. You walk in and are greeted by the person who will be your server for the meal. The server is an individual named Alex which is stated on the nametag along with the pronouns 'they/them/theirs'. You are then shown to your seat by Alex and do not have to wait much long to be seated.

After sitting down, you look around the restaurant and admire the overall atmosphere as well as the vibe. To get a better understanding of what to order, you decide to discuss some of your choices with the server. They suggest you two of the items that they think are among the best dishes the restaurant offers. After discussing the ingredients and asking for more information about those two items on the menu, you finally settle on the second suggestion offered by them.

They bring your food to you without much delay. Your meal is pleasant, up to the mark, and sufficiently satisfying for you. After you are finished eating, they bring you your check and thank you for dining at the restaurant and you see that the server wrote this note under the check "I hope you enjoyed your meal. Alex (they/them/theirs)."

Female

Please read the following text carefully and do your best to imagine yourself in this scenario. Please try to respond as if this were an actual situation you are in. You need to spend at least 45 seconds on this page before going to the next page.

Imagine yourself at a restaurant to enjoy a meal for your lunch. You walk in and are greeted by the person who will be your server for the meal. The server is an individual named Alex which is stated on the nametag along with the pronouns 'she/her/hers'. You are then shown to your seat by Alex and do not have to wait much long to be seated.

After sitting down, you look around the restaurant and admire the overall atmosphere as well as the vibe. To get a better understanding of what to order, you decide to discuss some of your choices with the server. She suggests you two of the items that she thinks are among the best dishes the restaurant offers. After discussing the ingredients and asking for more information about those two items on the menu, you finally settle on the second suggestion offered by her.

She brings your food to you without much delay. Your meal is pleasant, up to the mark, and sufficiently satisfying for you. After you are finished eating, she brings you your check and thanks you for dining at

the restaurant and you see that the server wrote this note under the check "I hope you enjoyed your meal. Alex (she/her/hers)."

Male

Please read the following text carefully and do your best to imagine yourself in this scenario. Please try to respond as if this were an actual situation you are in. You need to

spend at least 45 seconds on this page before going to the next page.

Imagine you are at a restaurant to enjoy a meal for your lunch. You walk in and are greeted by the person who will be your server for the meal. The server is an individual named Alex which is stated on the nametag along with the pronouns 'he/him/his'. You are then shown to your seat by Alex and do not have to wait much long to be seated.

After sitting down, you look around the restaurant and admire the overall atmosphere as well as the vibe. To get a better understanding of what to order, you decide to discuss some of your choices with the server. He suggests you two of the items that he thinks are among the best dishes the restaurant offers. After discussing the ingredients and asking for more information about those two items on the menu, you finally settle on the second suggestion offered by him.

He brings your food to you without much delay. Your meal is pleasant, up to the mark, and sufficiently satisfying for you. After you are finished eating, he brings you your check and thanks you for dining at the restaurant and you see that the server wrote this note under the check "I hope you enjoyed your meal. Alex (he/him/his)."

In general, how would you rate Alex based on the following items?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Good
Dislike	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Like
Unfavorable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Favorable
Negative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Positive

In such a scenario, how much tip (as a percentage of the total food cost - starting at 0% and ending at 100%) would you consider leaving for Alex? Please make sure you only enter a number between 0 to 100 as a percentage of tip you would offer based on you total check/bill price.

How much would you rate the service provider by Alex in each dimension?

	Not Satisfied at all (1)	A little Satisfied (2)	Somewhat satisfied (3)	Moderately satisfied (4)	Extremely satisfied (5)
Friendliness (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Efficiency (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helpfulness (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Timeliness (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Respectful (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How many star(s) would you give to this restaurant on the following items (from 1:lowest level to 5:highest level)?

	1-star (1)	2-star (2)	3-star (3)	4-star (4)	5-star (5)
Quality of food (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of service (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cleanliness of restaurant (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How comfortable you felt (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friendliness of employees (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please describe your interaction with Alex here and describe your own imagination from this experience. We are interested in learning how you can imagine the details and how good you are in writing a story based on this very short scenario. It is expected that you spend at least around a minute on this task and write your own imagination.

Try to answer from memory. What was the name of the server? Type your answer in the text box

Try to answer from your memory. Beside the name of the server, what pronouns were written on the tag?

They/them/theirs (4)

He/him/his (5)

She/her/hers (6)

Besides male and female, is there any other gender you can name? Write as many as you can think of.

Are you familiar with non-binary gender pronouns like they/them to identify to a single individual?

Not familiar at all (9)

Slightly familiar (10)

Moderately familiar (11)

Very familiar (12)

Extremely familiar (13)

Are you aware of individual(s) who use non-binary gender pronouns?

No (1)

Yes (2)

Do you personally know an individual who uses non-binary gender pronouns?

No (1)

Yes (2)

Please go through the statements below. Please choose the answer that best describes your feeling right now.

	Highly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Highly agree (5)
I feel positive (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel happy (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel mad right now (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like irritated right now (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like swearing right now (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like yelling right now (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel hostile (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel annoyed (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please locate yourself on the following scale of political orientation"; 1 = "extremely liberal," and 9 = "extremely conservative"

- extremely liberal (10)
- liberal (11)
- slightly liberal (12)
- moderate/middle of the road (13)
- slightly conservative (14)
- conservative (15)
- extremely conservative (16)

Please go through the statements below and choose the answer that best describes your opinion regarding the statement.

	Highly agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Somewhat disagree (4)	Highly disagree (6)
Overall, my gender has a lot to do with how I feel about myself. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My gender is important to my sense of what kind of person I am (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud of my gender (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometime think if I could have a different gender (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please go through the statements below. Please choose the answer that best describes your opinion regarding the statement.

	Highly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Highly agree (5)
Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If certain groups stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inferior groups should stay in their place. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It would be good if groups could be equal. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Group equality should be our ideal. (10)

All groups should be given an equal chance in life. (11)

We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups. (12)

Increased social equality is good for society (13)

We would have fewer problems if we treated people more equally. (14)

We should strive to make incomes as equal as possible. (15)

No one group should dominate in society. (16)

Please rate your tipping behavior when you are offered a service at any restaurant:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I usually pay tip when I go to a restaurant (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I usually pay a standard percentage of tip when I eat at a restaurant (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think it is necessary to pay tip to Service Provider (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I only pay tip when I receive an outstanding service (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
choose the second option from left (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe 15% is a high amount of tip when I dine in a restaurant (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I pay higher tip when the food tastes good (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I pay higher tip of when there server understands me. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please answer the questions below to the best of your knowledge. The information being collected will solely be used for the purpose of analysis and will be kept confidential.

Age (1) _____

Country of residence (4) _____

Please list the language you speak the most at home:

My current gender identity is

- Man (1)
- Woman (2)
- Non-binary (3)
- Transgender (4)
- None of the above, I prefer to identify as (5)
-

Dear participant, thank you for taking part in this study on opinions regarding non-binary service provider. Please take a moment to read through the contents of this page to learn about some necessary information about this study. To ensure that proper responses are generated, it was necessary that I provide you some information that is not correct. As you are now finished with the study, I can disclose the withheld information to you as well as why withholding it was important.

This study is on reactions that non-binary individuals may face in a case where they are providing service. I wanted to test if people engage in microaggressions (such as giving lower tip percentage) when they interact with non-binary individuals. In this experiment, participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions, where the gender of restaurant service provider "Alex" was either man, woman, or non-binary. The goal of this research is to understand how people reacts to the service provider when they learn about the gender and pronoun of this person. A deception was necessary to ensure that social desirability bias or any other cognitive bias may not cloud the judgement and thus response of the participants. In other words, knowing the actual purpose of the study could have caused some participants to provide responses that were bias induced rather than honest. When you were asked to rate the service provided by the server, how much would you tip the server, and describe your interaction with the server, I was measuring if you were engaging in microaggressions.

If you need any further information about this research, please do not hesitate to contact the principal investigator at Tasnimn@dal.ca or the Dalhousie Research Ethics Board.