

EXPLORING HOW INCLUSIVE NAME/PRONOUN POLICIES AND PRACTICES RELATE TO QUALITY OF INTERACTIONS

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We wish to acknowledge and honor the Indigenous communities native to this region, and recognize that Indiana University Bloomington is built on Indigenous homelands and resources. We recognize the miamiaki, Lenape, Bodewadmitk, and sawanwa people as past, present, and future caretakers of this land. We are dedicated to centering Indigenous voices & perspectives, improving community relationships, correcting the narrative, and making the IUB campus a more supportive and inclusive place for Native and Indigenous students, faculty & staff.

We encourage everyone to engage with contemporary communities, to learn the histories of this land, to look at who has and does not have access to its resources, and to examine your own place, abilities, and obligations within this process of reparative work that is necessary to promote a more equitable and socially just Indiana University Bloomington.

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WHAT WE KNOW

- **Trans students face unique challenges** that affect their academic success and overall well-being while in college
 - Hostile campus environments (Dugan et al., 2012)
 - Discriminatory institutional policies and practices (Nicolazzo & Marine, 2015; Seelman, 2014)
 - Microaggressions from faculty, staff, and other students (Seelman et al., 2017)
- **Trans-inclusive policies and practices can improve trans students' experiences in college** (Nicolazzo & Marine, 2015; Seelman, 2014)
- **Respecting a person's name/pronouns** can have **positive** outcomes for one's mental health and well-being (Flint et al., 2021)
- **Not respecting a person's name/pronouns** can have **negative** outcomes for one's mental health and well-being (Goldberg et al., 2019; Garvey & Rankin, 2015; Pryor, 2015)

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How do name/pronoun policies and practices relate to collegians' perceptions of the quality of interactions with other students, advisors, faculty, staff, and administrators on campus?

What relationship(s) exist overall?
What relationship(s) exist for transgender students specifically?

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Genderism

- "notion of the gender binary, where gender is classified into two distinct and dichotomous possibilities that are aligned with one's sex assigned at birth" (Kean, 2021, p. 211)

Symbolic Interactionism

- 1) Individuals assign meaning to "objects" around them (e.g., people)
- 2) These meanings inform their behavior and beliefs (Blumer, 1969)

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METHODS & ANALYSIS

- 2023 administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
 - We limited our sample to **2,073 students at 16 institutions who received an additional item set with questions about gender identity and expression**
- Measures:
 - **Gender Identity**
 - Transgender: 69 (3%)
 - Not transgender: 1,905 (92%)
 - Questioning: 27 (1%)
 - Preferred not to respond: 43 (3%)
 - **Name/Pronoun Policies and Practices**
 - Participants were asked to respond to questions related to their feelings on university name/pronoun policies and practices.
 - **Quality of Interactions**
 - Participants were asked to respond about the quality of their interactions with students, academic advisors, faculty, student services staff, and other administrative staff and offices.
- Analysis:
 - A series of **OLS regressions** with name/pronoun policies and practices as the primary independent variable and quality of interactions as the dependent variable
 - Ran twice, once with gender identity as a control and once filtered to include only transgender students

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NAME/PRONOUN POLICIES AND PRACTICES COUNTS

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	n	I don't know (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
I can easily update my chosen name in my student portal.	1,925	43	18	32	5	3
I can easily add or update my pronouns in my student portal.	1,916	40	20	35	4	3
Sharing pronouns is a common practice at my institution (on name tags, introductions, etc.).	1,920	20	26	42	9	3
Instructors and staff ask about and use students' gender pronouns correctly.	1,916	23	20	43	10	4

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RESULTS: QUALITY OF INTERACTIONS

Regression Coefficients (p < .001) for Quality of Interactions by Name/Pronoun Policies and Practices

Name/Pronouns	Student	Advisor	Faculty	Staff	Admin
I can easily update my chosen name in my student portal.	.101	.170	.174	.173	.192
I can easily add or update my pronouns in my student portal.	.103	.133	.169	.139	.160
Sharing pronouns is a common practice at my institution (on name tags, introductions, etc.).	.181	.149	.182	.166	.155
Instructors and staff ask about and use students' gender pronouns correctly.	.184	.198	.272	.248	.238

Note: We only present statistically significant coefficients here (p < .001). We standardized outcomes so that unstandardized B could be interpreted as an effect size. We controlled for gender identity in this model.

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RESULTS: TRANS STUDENTS' QUALITY OF INTERACTIONS

Regression Coefficients for Trans Students' Quality of Interactions by Name/Pronoun Policies and Practices

Name/Pronouns	Student	Advisor	Faculty	Staff	Admin
I can easily update my chosen name in my student portal.					
I can easily add or update my pronouns in my student portal.				.263*	
Sharing pronouns is a common practice at my institution (on name tags, introductions, etc.).		.261*		.241*	
Instructors and staff ask about and use students' gender pronouns correctly.		.311***			

Note: *p < .05, ***p < .001. We only present statistically significant coefficients here. We standardized outcomes so that unstandardized B could be interpreted as an effect size.

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DISCUSSION/SIGNIFICANCE

- **Implementing inclusive name/pronoun policies and practices can improve students' quality of interactions at all levels of campus life.**
 - For trans students in particular, inclusive name/pronoun policies and practices can improve quality of interactions with advisors and staff
- **Simply asking for name/pronouns may not necessarily lead to more positive interactions in all cases.**
 - There are still differences between trans students and the general sample
 - Jaekel and Catalano (2019): "asking for pronouns at the start of meetings and class sessions is a mere performance of inclusivity and not an actual strategy for inclusion" (p. 146)
 - Although these policies/practices may momentarily subvert problematic behaviors, they do not necessarily do enough to completely rewrite these behaviors because of the ways gendered socialization automatically applies cultural meanings to people (Blumer, 1969; Keon, 2021).
- **Inclusive name/pronoun policies and practices are the start of the conversation, not the end.**

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