Introduction

LGBTQ community and transgender individuals suffer harassment due to their gender identity, orientation or expression. Individuals who do not conform to the binary approach to gender are twice as likely to suffer from physical violence (Lombardi et al., 2002).

Binary approach to gender poses uncomfortable challenges to students who suffer gender identity (Womak, 2010). E.g. absence of non-gendered facilities.

Transgendered individuals receive equality when able to use bathrooms for no particular biological sex (Elkind, 2014).

Transgender individuals avoid using the bathroom in social settings or when with friends (Herman, 2013).

Results

Two observers’ records of gender and companionship showed very high inter-rater agreement (κ = 1.00 p < .001) and statistically significant positive correlation, r(90) = .98, p < .001 for age.

The chi-square goodness of fit test for the observed ratio of males to females at each location matches the expected campus population of 2:3, 2(1, N = 92) = .68, p = .41 for traditional bathrooms, 2(1, N = 92) = 0, p = .1 for gender neutral bathrooms. A small effect size of gender on bathroom selection with Cramer’s V = .09. Participants used bathrooms equally. Too few nonconforming participants to determine a bathroom preference.

Statistically significant association between hesitation and type of bathroom, 2(1, N = 90) = 11.48, p = .001. Medium effect size for hesitation and type of bathroom with Cramer’s V = .4. Participants hesitated before entering the gender neutral bathroom.

No significant association between bathrooms and companionship, 2(1, N = 90) = 2.26, p = .13. Small effect size for type of bathroom and companionship with Cramer’s V = .16. Companions were brought to the traditional bathroom but not the gender neutral bathroom.

Discussion

Students are indifferent to the two bathrooms. Might symbolize high gender equality on campus.

Perceived hesitation was common upon entering the gender neutral bathroom.

Only participants with a companion enter the traditional bathroom.

The results from this study can be generalized to the campus and staff but not to the public.

Limitations included the inability to ask participants how they identified their gender.

Future research could examine students’ opinions of campus equality and gender neutral bathrooms.

Methods

Observations of gender neutral and traditional bathrooms on UW- Eau Claire campus in the Davies Center or Centennial.

To remain unobtrusive, the researchers appeared as if they were doing homework.

Independent observations for 15 minutes each trial at both bathrooms. Equated to 2 hours of observations.

Recorded gender, type of bathroom, hesitation of participants, and companionship.

Hypotheses

Students will use gender neutral and gendered bathrooms equally (no preference).

User will hesitate before entering a gender neutral bathroom but not a traditional bathroom.

Participants will enter the gender neutral bathroom alone, but bring companions to the traditional bathroom.

Hesitation and Type of Bathroom

Companionship and Type of Bathroom

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