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Organizational norms and gender identity contexts shape when pronoun-sharing is perceived as disingenuous allyship: Evidence of a normative eclipsing effect

Izilda Pereira-Jorge *, Kimberly E. Chaney, Flora Blanchette, Alexandra Garr-Schultz

University of Connecticut, 406 Babbidge Road, Unit 1020, Storrs, CT 06269-1020, United States

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ABSTRACT

Pronoun-sharing is regarded as an inclusive practice targeted toward gender minorities. Though individual employees sharing pronouns results in the organization's higher-level management being perceived as more likely to engage in LGBT+ allyship, the impact of pronoun-sharing social norms on perceptions of individuals and companies remains unexplored. Across four experiments (N = 1365), we examined how perceived norms and employee gender identity impact when pronoun-sharing practices shift perceptions of both the target employee and the organization. When all cisgender employee team members shared pronouns, both cisgender (Studies 1, 3–4) and gender minority participants (Study 2) perceived an employee's pronoun-sharing as more externally motivated and the employee as less likely to display LGBT+ allyship compared to when pronoun-sharing was not the organizational norm. Further, we document a *normative eclipsing effect*, where lower-level employees who engage in pronoun-sharing norms (relative to sharing without a norm) are perceived as having management who are more likely to engage in LGBT+ allyship and are met with greater procedural fairness expectations (Study 2–3). Results suggest that normative pronoun-sharing may boost favorable perceptions of organizations but not individual employees. Yet, when evidence-based cues of inclusion are present, such as the presence of nonbinary employees (Study 3–4), both employees and management who engage in pronoun sharing are viewed as more likely to engage in LGBT+ allyship, regardless of the pronoun-sharing norm. These findings demonstrate the need to consider how context norms of identity-safety cues impact their utility to promote perceptions of allyship of individual actors and organizations.

1. Introduction

Anti-LGBT+ legislation is at an all-time high in the U.S., with over 200 proposed bills targeting transgender people and gender minorities[1] (American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), 2023; Human Rights Campaign, 2023). The presence of structural stigma is associated with poor health outcomes for marginalized group members (Hatzenbuehler, 2009; see minority stress model, Meyer, 2003) and may result in poor workplace performance (e.g., Leigh & Melwani, 2022). As institutional inequity heightens the likelihood that gender minorities experience identity-based devaluation at work, it is important to investigate the efficacy of organizational diversity structures aimed toward gender minorities.

Pronoun-sharing is a practice intended to validate and affirm people with diverse gender identities in academic settings (Boyland et al., 2018; Brown et al., 2020) and is associated with psychological wellbeing for gender minorities (Olson et al., 2016; Sevelius et al., 2020). Past qualitative work examining policies for pronoun sharing among LGBT+ youth and employees (Boyland et al., 2018; Brown et al., 2020; Mennicke & Cutler-Seeber, 2016) and quantitative work assessing pronoun-sharing among employees and managers suggest the importance of pronoun-sharing for LGBT+ identity-safety in a variety of settings (Johnson et al., 2021; Kodipady et al., 2023). Yet, such work is incomplete without examining how norms of organizational pronoun-sharing

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* Corresponding author at: 204 Park Hall, North Campus, University at Buffalo, Department of Psychology, Buffalo, NY 14260-1660, United States.
E-mail address: izildape@buffalo.edu (I. Pereira-Jorge).

[1] We use "gender minorities" as an expansive category that represents multiple identities outside traditional cisgender men and women, including those who identify as gender nonconforming, nonbinary, agender, etc.

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may impact perceptions of individuals who engage in pronoun-sharing. That is, past work finds that when organizational efforts to signal inclusion to marginalized groups are "low-cost" or "surface-level," such efforts are often perceived as less authentically motivated and more disingenuous (e.g., Derricks et al., 2024; Ponce de Leon et al., 2024; Thai & Nylund, 2024; Wilton et al., 2020). Hence, when a norm of organizational inclusion efforts is present, perceptions of disingenuous motives may be bolstered relative to when such efforts are not a norm (Chaney et al., 2025), mitigating the typical identity safety gained from these practices (Chaney et al., 2016; Wilton et al., 2020). In four experimental studies, the present research investigates how organizational norms of pronoun-sharing and the gender diversity of employee contexts impact both employee-level and organization-level perceptions.

1.1. Evidence and expression-based identity-safety cues at work

Identity-safety cues are features of one's environment (e.g., Pride poster), including accessible information (e.g., having LGBT+ coworkers) or organizational practices (e.g., LGBT+ mentoring programs) that signal that one's marginalized identity is welcomed and valued in that space (e.g., Davies et al., 2005; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; for review, see Kruk & Matsick, 2021). Organizations may utilize identity-safety cues to improve workplace experiences for marginalized employees (Mennicke & Cutler-Seeber, 2016). For example, organizations may engage in efforts such as sharing diversity statements or implementing gender-inclusive restrooms to promote belonging for marginalized employees (Chaney & Sanchez, 2018; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). Though the identity-safety cue literature often neglects identity-safety cues specifically targeting gender minorities (Kruk & Matsick, 2021), pronoun-sharing may promote feelings of support (Brown et al., 2020) and psychological wellbeing for gender minority individuals (Olson et al., 2016; Sevelius et al., 2020).

Identity-safety cues may be *evidence-based cues*, where facets of the organization demonstrate concrete and actionable commitments to embodying diverse practices (e.g., having racially diverse employees; Wilton et al., 2020; allocating resources to anti-racist actions, Ponce de Leon et al., 2024). *Expression-based cues*, on the other hand, are stated ideological values and commitments to diversity (e.g., pro-diversity messaging, Derricks et al., 2024; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; Wilton et al., 2020). Pronoun-sharing may function as either an evidence- or expression-based cue depending on the gender identity of a person sharing pronouns. For example, transgender managers who shared pronouns were evaluated as signaling greater inclusive norms and having lower reputation signaling (e.g., self-promoting or strategic presentation to gain favorable impressions) compared to cisgender managers, perhaps as their pronoun-sharing signaled the presence of a gender minority (i.e., evidence-based cue) rather than merely signaling an ideology (i.e., expression-based cue, Kodipady et al., 2023). Indeed, pronoun-sharing may be perceived as a more authentic and genuine identity-safety cue display when the individual sharing holds a gender minority identity, suggesting that the gender identity of those who are partaking in the pronoun-sharing is relevant for the efficacy of organizational identity-safety cue practices. Yet, this work focused only on perceptions of the individual sharing pronouns and did not examine if sharing pronouns promoted identity safety for others, such as expectations of procedural fairness at the organization more broadly (Kodipady et al., 2023). In contrast, research examining pronoun-sharing as an identity-safety cue focused only on cisgender people who shared their pronouns, a behavior that may be perceived as an expression-based cue, and did not consider the role of perceived motives for pronoun-sharing (Johnson et al., 2021).

1.2. Pronoun-sharing as eliciting anticipated allyship and organizational outcomes

Expectations of allyship actions and pro-diversity ideologies boost feelings of inclusion, belonging, and support for marginalized individuals in a setting where their identity may be underrepresented or has been historically devalued (e.g., proactive allyship, De Souza & Schmader, 2024), pinpointing allyship expectations as critical in the success of functioning identity-safety cues in the workplace. Our definition of anticipated allyship differs from research that examines the psychological processes that facilitate when individuals engage in an allyship behavior toward a marginalized outgroup (e.g., Craig et al., 2020; De Souza & Schmader, 2024; Radke et al., 2020; Selvanathan et al., 2020). Instead, we consider anticipated allyship as the *expectations* of behaviors or ideology that is supportive and affirming of marginalized groups' presence or success in that given environment (e.g., Collier-Spruel & Ryan, 2024; De Souza & Schmader, 2024; Derricks et al., 2024; Johnson et al., 2019; Moser & Branscombe, 2022). Such expectations of anticipated allyship have been examined primarily from members of marginalized groups who are the hypothetical receivers of allyship; In the current manuscript, we expand this work to consider expectations of allyship toward marginalized groups both from the perspective of individuals who do and do not hold the marginalized identity in question.

For example, anticipated allyship in workplaces can involve expectations of men supporting gender-equality initiatives (Moser & Branscombe, 2022), procedures in the workplace that are equitable to sexual and gender minorities (i.e., *procedural fairness*, Derricks et al., 2024; Johnson et al., 2021), or an individual caring about the success of marginalized students (Johnson et al., 2019).[2] Moreover, anticipated allyship and expectations of procedural fairness have been identified as markers of effective identity-safety cues in organizational settings (e.g., Chaney et al., 2018; Chaney & Sanchez, 2018; Derricks et al., 2024; Johnson et al., 2021, 2019) and positively impact retention and job satisfaction (e.g., Diekmann et al., 2007; Griffith & Hebl, 2002).

Pronoun-sharing among organization employees operates as an identity-safety cue for sexual and gender minorities by eliciting expectations of allyship (Johnson et al., 2021). When a cisgender woman shared her pronouns on an organizational website, transgender and gender non-conforming participants anticipated greater allyship from employees *and* managers at the organization, as well as greater procedural fairness for gender minorities at the organization, compared to when pronoun-sharing was absent on the employee's profile page (Johnson et al., 2021). Such research demonstrates empirically that adopting simple workplace practices, like pronoun-sharing, can be beneficial for gender minorities at work. Yet, does pronoun-sharing still function as an identity-safety cue when pronoun-sharing is perceived to be motivated by *mere norm adherence* rather than genuine allyship motivations? We seek to examine if individual employees who engage in pronoun-sharing are perceived as genuine allies to gender minorities, and if broader-level organization perceptions, such as manager allyship and procedural fairness, are impacted by normative pronoun-sharing practices enacted by lower-level employees.

1.3. The role of perceived motivations

Recent theoretical frameworks posit authentic motives for allyship, such as allyship actions being motivated from one's genuine and personal values, are a critical component for effective and inclusive allyship

[2] We acknowledge that research examining the psychological processes underlying allyship has typically focused on members of a socially advantaged outgroup seeking to advance equitable conditions on behalf of a marginalized group (e.g., De Souza & Schmader, 2024; Radke et al., 2020; Selvanathan et al., 2020). Some differentiate psychological processes underlying allyship from outgroup members and solidarity, with solidarity referring to allyship from members of other socially marginalized groups (e.g., Craig et al., 2020; De Souza & Schmader, 2024). In the current work, we assess anticipated allyship via expectations of allyship behaviors carried out by both marginalized and advantaged group members.

(Pietri et al., 2024). Further, evidence suggests that people may discern motives of an organization's efforts to promote inclusion. For example, even when organizations implement identity-safety cues (e.g., diversity statements; Derricks et al., 2024; Ponce de Leon et al., 2024; Wilton et al., 2020), individuals may interpret such actions depending on the inferred motivations of the organization enacting the identity-safety cue (e.g., Derricks et al., 2024; Thai & Nylund, 2024). For example, organizations who engaged in surface-level pro-diversity messaging (e.g., did not acknowledge racism in their organization) compared to pro-diversity messaging that acknowledged the harm of racism in their organization or made action plans to address racism in the organization (i.e., evidence-based safety-cues) elicited greater perceptions of the organization as externally motivated to be egalitarian (e.g., "Axil Consulting probably wants to appear nonprejudiced from others," Derricks et al., 2024, p. 6). Further, when organizations claim to value racial diversity (i.e., expression-based cue) but the employees are predominately White (i.e., evidence-based cue), Black and Latine individuals report greater perceptions of diversity dishonesty – a suspicion that the organization is motivated to inflate its commitment to diversity to maintain positive and progressive appearances (Wilton et al., 2020). As such, research has increasingly recognized that expression-based identity-safety cues are met with suspicion due to concerns about their underlying motivations (Chaney et al., 2025; Derricks et al., 2024; Ponce de Leon et al., 2024; Thai & Nylund, 2024; Wilton et al., 2020).

Perceptions of organizational identity-safety cues as internally motivated (i.e., by a genuine motivation to promote inclusion and belonging for marginalized group members) are critical in shaping marginalized group members' expectations of identity-safety in the organization. Of note, perceptions of organizations as internally motivated to be egalitarian mediated the effect of identity-safety cues on marginalized group members' expectations of organizational allyship (Ponce de Leon et al., 2024; Thai & Nylund, 2024). Further, perceived authenticity of organizations engaging in identity-safety cues predicted expectations of procedural fairness for marginalized groups at the organization (Ponce de Leon et al., 2024). Moreover, when identity-safety cues or claims of allyship are seen as less externally motivated, marginalized groups anticipate greater belonging in an organizational context (Chaney et al., 2025) and more authentic allyship (e.g., Chaney et al., 2023; Thai & Nylund, 2024). Hence, the current research posits that perceived motivations for an employee's pronoun-sharing behavior will serve as potential mediating mechanisms underlying expectations of allyship from that employee.

1.4. Ironic effects of normative organizational safety cues and the normative eclipsing effect

Inclusive norms within an organization, such as all employees engaging in pronoun-sharing, may have both positive and negative consequences. *Trans*-inclusive social justice arguments suggest that when cisgender people share pronouns it can help normalize pronoun-sharing and indicate that one's gender identity cannot simply be assumed (Wamsley, 2021). Moreover, sharing pronouns may minimize misgendering (Howansky et al., 2022). In line with these benefits of pronoun-sharing, some organizations have shifted to incorporate systems to easily indicate preferred pronouns and names (Smalley, 2022; Tamburin, 2015), affording avenues for incorporating pronoun-sharing as standard, normative inclusive procedures (Melendez & Crowley, 2022; Smith, 2023).

Making such inclusive practices a norm may also impact privileged group members. For example, privileged group members report more positive outgroup attitudes and inclusive behavior (e.g., rejection of racism and discrimination) when college campuses are perceived to have social norms valuing diversity (e.g., pro-diversity poster or video; Murrar et al., 2020). Indeed, making organizational identity-safety cues a social norm may initially reap such benefits for marginalized group members. However, normative identity-safety cues may also be perceived as externally motivated or disingenuous – performed to uphold a norm, as opposed to being authentically or internally motivated to uplift marginalized individuals. This may be especially pronounced for expression-based cues such as pronoun-sharing, which is a low-cost, low-effort behavior compared to more concrete, evidence-based cues (e.g., donating to organizations that support transgender youth, e.g., Thai & Nylund, 2024; Wilton et al., 2020).

Novel to identity-safety cue research, we contend that individuals may be wary of the normative presence of identity-safety cues in the workplace, in part due to inferences that such actions are externally motivated (i.e., motivated to act in line with a norm) rather than from an authentic place of concern for the wellbeing of marginalized people (i.e., internal motives; e.g., Chaney et al., 2025; Derricks et al., 2024; Ponce de Leon et al., 2024; Thai & Nyland, 2024; Wilton et al., 2020). We propose that broader organizational norms of pronoun-sharing will impact perceptions of an individual employee's motivations for sharing their pronouns, and in turn impact anticipated allyship from that employee.

Specifically, we posit that employees who engage in pronoun-sharing, an identity-safety cue to sexual and gender minorities (e.g., Johnson et al., 2021), will be perceived as more externally motivated and less internally motivated to share pronouns when pronoun-sharing is normative (compared to not) among their work team, resulting in less anticipated allyship from that employee. For example, cisgender people sharing pronouns when doing so is the norm at a workplace may be perceived as more externally motivated – that is, stemming from adherence to the norm or an attempt to boost their reputation – compared to when sharing pronouns is not the workplace norm (e.g., Kodipady et al., 2023; Plant & Devine, 1998). We propose such effects are most likely to occur when the person sharing pronouns is cisgender, as their pronoun sharing may be perceived as an expression-based cue. In contrast, a nonbinary person sharing their pronouns, or a cisgender person sharing their pronouns when doing so is not the workplace norm, may be perceived as more internally motivated – that is, motivated by their own genuine and personal values.

Identity-safety cue norms within an organization, however, may favor higher-level employees such as management because management is assumed to set organizational culture. A norm of pronoun-sharing may reflect positively on management and the broader organization in a way that is not observed among lower-level employees. As such, we reason that perceived norms of pronoun-sharing among employees, compared to the absence of such norms, will influence positive perceptions and evaluations of the organization more generally, such as greater anticipated procedural fairness and greater perceptions of executive and leader allyship to sexual and gender minorities (Johnson et al., 2021). That is, the presence of a normative safety cue behavior may elicit favorable perceptions of management who perceivers may infer have spearhead and support the identity-safety cue norm among their employees.

As such, we propose a *normative eclipsing effect*, where employees who engage with normative identity-safety cue practices such as pronoun-sharing will be evaluated as less engaged allies, due in part to perceptions of greater external motivations for engaging in the behavior than employees who engage in the identity-safety cue practice in the absence of a norm. Yet, we anticipated that norms of identity-safety cues in the organization will boost, rather than diminish, positive organization evaluations (i.e., greater procedural fairness, greater LGBT+ manager allyship). That is, a normative eclipsing effect would include organizational identity-safety cue norms mitigating positive perceptions of individual employees who are engaging in such behavior, while enhancing positive perceptions of the broader organization and its management.

1.5. The current work

As anti-transgender legislation is on the rise (ACLU, 2023; Human

Rights Campaign, 2023), organizations may incorporate trans-inclusive policies, such as pronoun-sharing to signal acceptance and inclusion of LGBT+ employees (GLSEN, 2023; Mennicke & Cutler-Seeber, 2016). Across four experimental studies ($N = 1365$), we extend upon previous work demonstrating that a single cisgender employee sharing pronouns signals expectations of allyship and procedural fairness from the organization (Johnson et al., 2021) by incorporating broader organizational norms of pronoun-sharing (Study 1–4). We also expand upon the efficacy of expression- versus evidence-based identity-safety cues (e.g., Derricks et al., 2024; Ponce de Leon et al., 2024; Wilton et al., 2020) by examining perceptions of cisgender and nonbinary target employees who engage in pronoun-sharing (Study 3–4). Moreover, we examine how perceived internal and external motives for an employee's pronoun-sharing may influence expectations of that employee's LGBT+ allyship to demonstrate that norms shape perceived motives of individuals' behaviors.

Across studies, we tested three key hypotheses. First, we hypothesized that if a cisgender employee did not share their pronouns, they would be perceived as less likely to display LGBT+ allyship compared to a cisgender employee who shared their pronouns, regardless of the organizational norms. Second, we hypothesized that cisgender employees who shared their pronouns at an organization where doing so was a norm, compared to where pronoun-sharing was not an organizational norm, would be perceived as more externally, and less internally, motivated to share their pronouns, resulting in a perception that they were less like to engage in LGBT+ allyship. Our third hypothesis was that when pronoun-sharing is a norm, managers at the organization would be perceived as more likely to display LGBT+ allyship and the organization would be perceived as a more procedurally fair place for LGBT+ workers compared to when pronoun-sharing was not a norm at the organization. As such, we propose a *normative eclipsing effect* in which individual employees who adhere to a norm of pronoun-sharing will be seen as less committed to LGBT+ allyship compared to employees who share their pronouns in the absence of a norm, while managers and the organization overall will be viewed as greater in LGBT+ allyship when pronoun-sharing is the organizational norm, compared to not. We test these effects with cisgender, heterosexual samples (Studies 1, 3–4) and a sample of gender minorities (Study 2).

Lastly, to examine boundary conditions, we examine how the gender identity of a pronoun sharer (Study 3–4) moderates the effect of pronoun-sharing norms on perceptions of motives for pronoun-sharing and allyship. We hypothesized that when a nonbinary person shares their pronouns, they will be seen as more internally (and less externally) motivated than a cisgender person, regardless of pronoun-sharing norms. This is due, in part, to representation of a gender minority engaging in the identity-safety cue practice (e.g., evidence-based identity-safety cue, Wilton et al., 2020), which may signal genuine motivations for that employee. Yet, we hypothesized that managers and the organization as a whole would be perceived more positively when a pronoun-sharing norm was in place, regardless of the gender identities of the sharing employee.

All materials and procedures are compliant with [Redacted]'s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Data and materials for all studies are publicly available (OSF link: https://osf.io/cmkjd/?view_only=4dcaf25bd03f4a5f83dfeccb54ed4ebc). Across studies, all conditions, exclusions, and outcomes are reported.

2. Study 1

Study 1 aimed to replicate and extend upon previous work examining perceptions and expectations of pronoun-sharing (Johnson et al., 2021; Kodipady et al., 2023). Using a cisgender team of employees, we investigated how a target cisgender employee and the organization are perceived when that cisgender employee does or does not share their pronouns. Study 1 also examines how individual and organizational perceptions are impacted when pronoun-sharing is a broader organizational norm or not among lower-level employees.

Past research has demonstrated that perceived motivations for organizations implementing safety cues factor into expectations of allyship and procedural fairness (Derricks et al., 2024; Ponce de Leon et al., 2024; Wilton et al., 2020). Indeed, past research has found that expectations of an organization's allyship were mediated by perceptions of how authentically, or internally motivated, the organization's commitments were perceived to be (Ponce de Leon et al., 2024). On the other hand, when organizations are perceived as engaging in "surface-level" or "low-cost" diversity efforts, people perceived the organizations as being externally motivated (Derricks et al., 2024). In past research, perceptions of organizations as more externally motivated in their commitment to DEI were most pronounced when the organizations claimed to value diversity (e.g., had diversity philosophies), but lacked concrete evidence that diversity was actively practiced among personnel (e.g., claimed to value racial diversity but had majority White employees, Wilton et al., 2020). As such, the present research posits perceived internal and external motives of employees engaging in pronoun-sharing (i.e., enacting identity-safety cues) would serve as mediating mechanisms that influence expectations of employee allyship.

2.1. Method

2.1.1. Participants

An a priori power analysis in G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) revealed a desired sample size of 303 participants to detect a small-medium effect ($d = 0.36$) with 80 % power for a 3-cell, between-subjects ANOVA. In case of exclusions, 325 participants who identified as cisgender, heterosexual, and White were recruited from Prolific in exchange for compensation. Twenty-nine participants were excluded from analyses for not identifying as a cisgender man or woman, not identifying as White, or failing two or more attention checks, leaving an analytic sample of 296. A sensitivity power analysis indicated that a sample size of 296 was adequately powered to detect a small-medium ($d = 0.36$) effect size with 80 % power. All participants identified as non-Hispanic White and heterosexual, with 52.7 % ($n = 156$) identifying as cisgender women and 47.3 % ($n = 140$) identifying as cisgender men. Participants identified as politically moderate ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 1.84$) on a 7-point Likert scale (*Strongly conservative-Strongly liberal*). The mean age of participants was 44.49 years ($SD = 14.91$). Data collection occurred during April 2023.

2.1.2. Procedures

Participants were invited to participate in an online survey about perceptions of coworkers. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions, where they read the online website materials of a work team at an ostensible organization, Uptown Consulting, LLC (e.g., Johnson et al., 2021). Materials were adapted from the online employee snapshot/profile used in Johnson et al. (2021) where all employees reported a one-sentence biography, their name, position, department, and email address. Employee profiles did not contain photographs but varied in terms of stereotypical names depicting gender and racial makeup of the team (e.g., Amber Pratcher, Jovan Davis, Michael Young). Five employee profiles were presented under the "Our Team" section of the organizational website for Uptown Consulting, LLC. All conditions portrayed the same five employee profiles but differed in whether employees disclosed their gender pronouns (i.e., she/her/hers, he/him/his) in their profile. In the *Norm - Shares* condition, all five employees, including the target employee Amber (she/her/hers), shared their gender pronouns. In the *No Norm – Shares* condition, only Amber shared her pronouns. In the *Norm – Violated* condition, all employees *except* Amber shared their pronouns. Note, when employees were sharing pronouns (Norm-Shares and Norm-Violated conditions), these pronouns were always along the gender binary (she/her/hers OR he/him/his). The work team included a mix of lower to middle level occupations of "Research Analyst," "Research Assistant," or "Executive consultant." For

full materials, see Supplement.

After reviewing this information, participants completed three manipulation check questions (e.g., "What is the name of the company?"). Participants who failed the third manipulation check question (n = 17, "Employees provided their name, position...what other information could employees provide?") were provided the condition materials again before completing the manipulation checks a second time. Next, participants in the Norm-Shares and No Norm-Shares conditions completed measures of internal and external motives for pronoun-sharing of the target employee.[3] Then, participants completed measures of the employee LGBT+ allyship scale, manager LGBT+ allyship scale, and procedural fairness, among other measures. For additional findings on measures not reported here (e.g., perceived reputation signaling, anticipated percentage of transgender and nonbinary managers), see Supplement. Participants then reported on demographic questions before being debriefed and compensated.

2.1.3. Measures

Perceived Internal and External Motives for Pronoun-Sharing. Amber Pratcher was always the critical target employee. Participants were asked on a 7-point Likert scale 1(*Very unlikely*)-7(*Very likely*) the extent to which "Amber Pratcher, the employee at Uptown Consulting, LLC whose profile is circled above…" shared pronouns (i.e., Norm-Shares and No Norm-Shares condition) or did not share pronouns (i.e., Norm-Violated condition) for various reasons. The scale included five items indicating external motivation to be inclusive (e.g., "she thinks other people would be angry with her if she wasn't inclusive", α = 85) and five items comprised perceived internal motivations to share pronouns (e.g., "it is important to her self-concept to be unprejudiced", α = 0.93). Higher values indicated greater internal or external motivation to be inclusive and share pronouns (Chaney et al., 2025; Major et al., 2013).

Anticipated Employee and Manager Allyship. Participants completed five items assessing perceptions that the target employee would display LGBT+ allyship behavior (e.g., "Amber Pratcher…acts to support the success of sexual & gender minorities", α = 0.96, Johnson et al., 2021). Additionally, participants completed five items to assess the likelihood that managers at Uptown Consulting express LGBT+ allyship (e.g., "People in leadership care about issues relevant to sexual and gender minorities", α = 0.95. All items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (*Very unlikely-Very likely*).

Procedural Fairness. Five items assessed the extent to which Uptown Consulting was perceived to be procedurally fair for gender and sexual minorities (Chaney et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2021: "Uptown Consulting, LLC. applies personnel procedures consistently across employees of all gender identities," α =0.90). Items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (*Strongly disagree-Strongly agree*).

3. Results

Analyses were conducted as one-way ANOVAs, except perceived motives for pronoun-sharing were assessed using independent samples *t*-tests. The independent samples *t*-test compared Norm-Shares and No Norm-Shares conditions only, since these conditions assessed motives for pronoun-sharing (as opposed to no pronoun-sharing, i.e., Norm-Violated condition). Significant main effects were examined with Tukey HSD post-hoc tests. See Table 1 for ANOVA results and descriptive statistics by condition.[4] Note that across studies, missing value analysis indicated that missing data was below 5 % and we did not replace missing data.

Table 1
ANOVA results, Study 1.

	Condition main effect			Norm-Shares	No Norm-Shares	Norm-Violated
Outcome	*F* (2, 293)	*p*	*d*	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)
Perceived Internal Motives	1.69	.092	0.25	4.59 (1.27)	4.91 (1.33)	–
Perceived External Motives	2.70	.008	0.38	4.26 (1.37)	3.72 (1.45)	–
Antic. Employee Allyship	57.00	<.001	1.25	4.93 (1.27)	5.38 (1.12)	3.61 (1.28)
Antic. Manager Allyship	7.18	<.001	0.44	4.95 (1.19)	4.32 (1.31)	4.82 (1.20)
Procedural Fairness	2.35	.097	0.26	5.31 (1.03)	5.07 (1.06)	5.35 (0.95)

Note. Perceived internal and external motives for pronoun-sharing were conducted as independent samples *t*-tests. For internal motives, $t(194)$, 95 % $CI_{meandiff}$[−0.68, 0.05]. For external motives, $t(194)$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[0.15, 0.94].

Further, we conduct a parallel mediation analysis to examine our hypothesis with perceived motives for pronoun-sharing as mediating perceptions of anticipated employee allyship from pronoun-sharing norm condition. While research on perceived internal and external motives has at times created a difference score, resulting in a singular variable of "suspicion of motives" (Kunstman et al., 2016,; Major et al., 2016), the present research opted to treat these variables as separate factors, and thus examined them in parallel (see also Burns & Granz, 2023).

3.1.1. Perceived internal and external motives for pronoun-sharing

Comparing the two conditions in which the target employee shared pronouns, there was no significant main effect of condition on perceived internal motivations for sharing pronouns. Participants perceived the target employee to have relatively moderate internal motivation for sharing pronouns when doing so was an organizational norm or not a norm.

There was a significant main effect of condition on perceived external motivations for sharing pronouns. Participants perceived the target employee as more externally motivated when pronoun-sharing was an organizational norm compared to not a norm.

3.1.2. Anticipated employee and manager allyship

Comparing all three conditions, there was a significant main effect of condition on anticipated likelihood of the target employee engaging in LGBT+ allyship (see Fig. 1). Participants anticipated the target employee was more likely to engage in LGBT+ allyship in the No Norm-Shares condition than in the Norm-Shares condition, $p = .030$, $d = 0.38$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[0.03, 0.86], and the Norm-Violated condition, $p < .001$, $d = 1.47$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[1.37, 2.18]. Further, participants anticipated less allyship from the target employee in the Norm-Violated condition compared to the Norm-Shares condition $p < .001$, $d = 1.04$, 95 % $CI_{meandiff}$[−1.74, −0.91].

There was also a significant effect of condition on expected LGBT+ allyship from management. Participants anticipated *greater* likelihood of management engaging in allyship from the Norm-Shares condition compared to the No Norm-Shares condition, $p = .001$, $d = 0.50$, 95 % $CI_{meandiff}$[0.21, 1.05], but not the Norm-Violated condition, $p = .747$, $d = 0.11$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[−0.29, 0.55]. Moreover, participants anticipated

[3] In the Norm-Violated condition, participants completed the same measure except they indicated perceived motives for *not* sharing pronouns. While this measure was included to keep methods parallel across participants, we do not analyze this measure.

[4] All additional findings for Studies 1–4 are reported in Supplement.

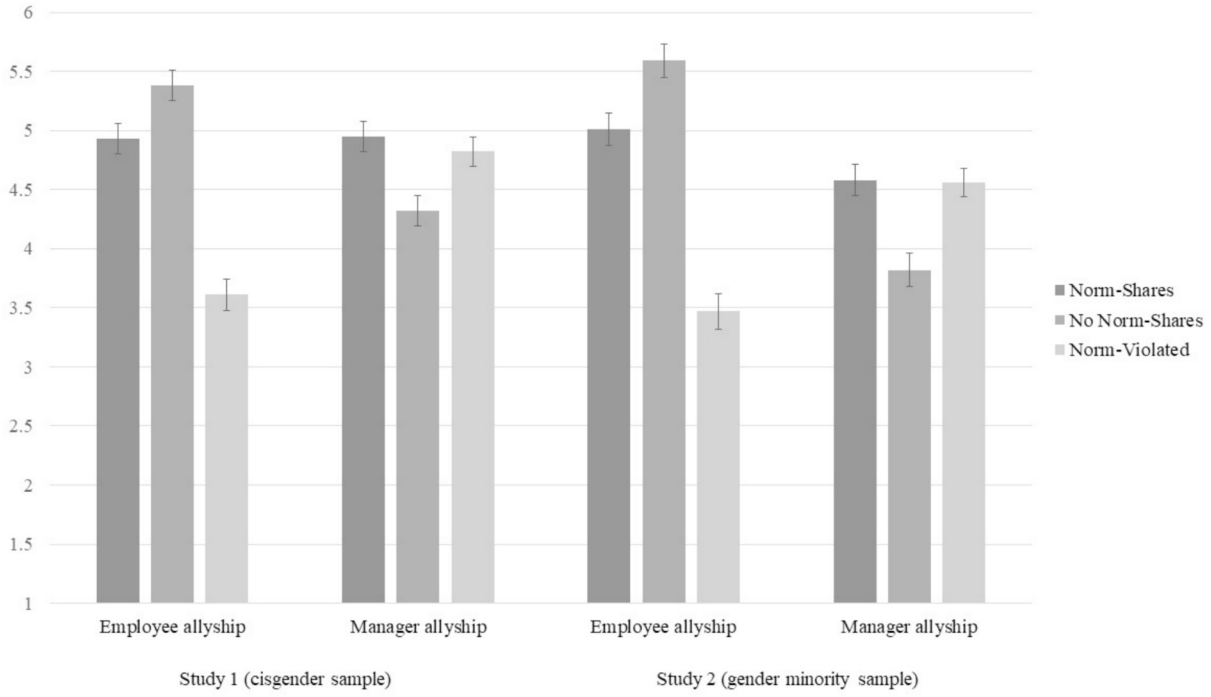

Fig. 1. *Study 1 & 2 anticipated employee and manager allyship.*
Note: Error bars denote standard error.

greater allyship from management in the Norm-Violated condition than the No Norm-Shares condition, $p = .012$, $d = 0.40$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[0.09, 0.91].

3.1.3. Procedural fairness

There was no main effect of condition on expectations of procedural fairness at the organization. Participants anticipated relatively high levels of procedural fairness across conditions (see Table 1).

3.1.4. Mediations

A parallel mediation analysis was conducted examining if perceived target employee internal and external motivations for pronoun-sharing mediated the effect of organizational pronoun-sharing norm condition on outcomes related to the target (anticipated employee allyship). A mediation analysis was conducted in PROCESS version 4.2 (Hayes, 2017), employing 5000 bootstrap samples (see Fig. 2). While the indirect effect was not significant via perceived internal motivations, the indirect effect was significant via perceived external motivations for sharing pronouns, such that the target employee in the Norm-Shares condition was perceived as significantly higher in external motives than the employee in the No Norm-Shares condition, and in turn was expected to be less of an ally.

3.2. Discussion

In Study 1, when the target cisgender employee shared their pronouns, they were perceived as less likely to display LGBT+ allyship and more likely to have shared their pronouns due to external motives when pronoun-sharing was the organizational norm, compared to when there was no pronoun-sharing norm. In contrast, management was evaluated *more* favorably when pronoun-sharing was the norm compared to not. That is, supporting our normative-eclipsing effect, management at the organization was perceived as displaying greater LGBT+ allyship in the presence of a pronoun-sharing norm (both Norm-Shares and Norm-Violated conditions), compared to when no pronoun-sharing norm existed. It is critical to note that despite significant differences between norm and no-norm conditions, management and employees were still perceived as displaying moderate-high LGBT+ allyship. Such differences may emerge in part because employees are the ones engaging in the identity-safety cue practice, while the behavior of management is

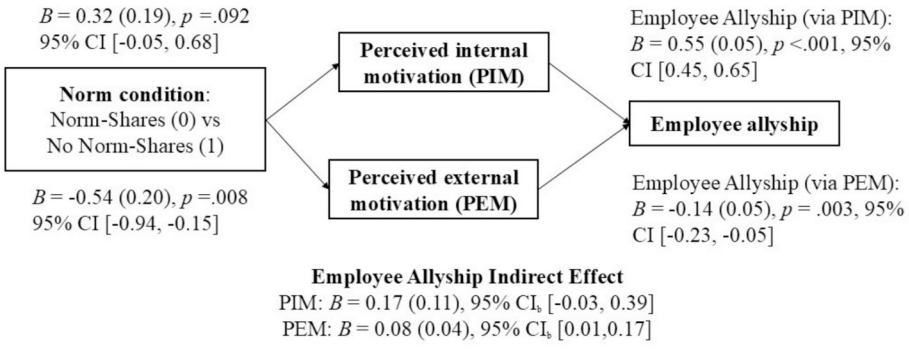

Fig. 2. *Study 1 mediation.*
Note. Standard errors presented in parentheses.

not specifically known, but perhaps inferred based on the culture that has been created among low-middle level employees. That is, management may be perceived as setting the inclusive norm practice, whereas Study 1 employees are perceived as merely adhering to an existing organizational norm. Contrary to hypotheses, only perceived external motivations for pronoun-sharing mediated the effect of condition on employee allyship expectations. Taken together, Study 1 demonstrates initial evidence for the normative eclipsing effect, where norms (compared to no norms) of identity-safety cue practices boost favorable perceptions of management; though employees who engage in the identity-safety cue practice are evaluated more favorably in the absence of a norm, compared to in the context of pronoun-sharing norms.

Further, when pronoun-sharing was the organizational norm but the target employee did not share their pronouns, they were perceived as less likely to engage in LGBT+ allyship compared to all other conditions, demonstrating some social backlash for violating this organizational norm when it does exist. Lastly, as there were no differences in anticipated procedural fairness across norm conditions, this may suggest any pronoun-sharing reflects favorably upon cisgender participants' expectations of the organization. Yet, such perceptions may differ among gender minorities.

4. Study 2

Study 2 aimed to replicate Study 1 findings with a sample of gender minorities to examine if norms similarly impact perceptions of pronoun-sharing within organizations for individuals the practice is meant to benefit (GLSEN, 2023; Mennicke & Cutler-Seeber, 2016).

4.1. Method

4.1.1. Participants

An a priori power analysis in G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) revealed a desired sample size of 303 to detect a small-medium effect ($d = 0.36$) with 80 % power for a 3-cell, between-subjects ANOVA. In case of exclusions, 382 participants were recruited from Prolific in exchange for compensation. Sixty-eight participants were excluded from analyses who did not identify as transgender/a gender/sex identity differing from their one assigned at birth or who failed two or more attention checks, leaving an analytic sample of 314. A sensitivity power analysis indicated that with a one-way ANOVA, at 80 % power, the sample was adequate to detect a small-medium effect size ($d = 0.35$).

Participants had the ability to select multiple gender identities (consistent with best practices, Suen et al., 2020). Participants primarily identified their gender as non-binary (43.0 %, $n = 135$), with 15.6 % identifying as genderqueer ($n = 49$) and 14.3 % as questioning/don't know ($n = 45$). Participants who indicated transgender status identified as gender non-conforming/nonbinary (23.6 %, $n = 74$), transgender men (11.1 %, $n = 35$), and transgender women (3.8 %, $n = 12$). The majority of participants identified as White (68.5 %, $n = 215$), followed by Hispanic or Latinx (10.5 %, $n = 33$), Black or African American (9.9 %, $n = 31$), Multiracial (7.6 %, $n = 24$), Southeast Asian (1.9 %, $n = 6$), East Asian (1.3 %, $n = 4$), and American Indian or Alaska Native (0.3 %, $n = 1$). Participants mainly identified as bisexual (29.3 %, $n = 92$), followed by straight or heterosexual (19.7 %, $n = 62$), queer (15.9 %, $n = 50$), 11.5 % as gay or lesbian ($n = 36$), pansexual (10.8 %, $n = 34$), asexual (7.3 %, $n = 23$), questioning/don't know (3.2 %, $n = 10$), or another identity (2.2 %, $n = 7$, e.g., demisexual). Participants identified as strongly liberal ($M = 2.07$, $SD = 1.42$) on a 7-point Likert scale (*Strongly liberal-Strongly conservative*). The mean age of participants was 30.47 years ($SD = 10.62$). Data collection occurred during May 2023.

Table 2
ANOVA results, Study 2.

	Condition effect			Norm-Shares	No Norm-Shares	Norm-Violated
Outcome	*F* (2,311)	*p*	*d*	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)
Perceived Internal Motives	5.44	<.001	1.25	4.62 (1.31)	5.56 (1.18)	–
Perceived External Motives	3.53	<.001	1.33	3.59 (1.25)	2.94 (1.39)	–
Antic. Employee Allyship	81.86	<.001	1.46	5.01 (1.11)	5.59 (1.08)	3.47 (1.50)
Antic. Manager Allyship	11.99	<.001	0.56	4.58 (1.38)	3.82 (1.29)	4.56 (1.19)
Procedural Fairness	3.54	.030	0.30	4.94 (0.91)	4.65 (1.05)	4.98 (0.95)

Note. For employee allyship, condition: $F(2,310)$. Perceived internal and external motives for pronoun-sharing were conducted as independent samples *t*-tests. For internal motives, $t(206)$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[−1.28, −0.60]. For external motives, $t(206)$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[0.29, 1.01].

4.1.2. Procedures

Procedures were identical to those of Study 1. Participants who had failed the manipulation check the first time ($n = 15$) were shown condition materials a second time. The measures of internal ($\alpha = 0.94$) and external ($\alpha = 0.83$) motivations, employee ($\alpha = 0.96$) and manager ($\alpha = 0.95$) allyship, and procedural fairness ($\alpha = 0.90$) were reliable.

4.2. Results

Analyses were conducted as one-way ANOVAs. Significant effects were examined with Tukey post-hoc tests; See Table 2 for ANOVA results and descriptive statistics by condition. As in Study 1, perceived internal and external motives were assessed for Norm-Shares and No Norm-Shares conditions and analyses are conducted as independent-samples *t*-tests.

4.2.1. Perceived internal and external motives for pronoun-sharing

There were significant effects of condition on perceived internal and external motivations for sharing pronouns. Participants perceived the target employee as less internally motivated, and more externally motivated, to share their pronouns when pronoun-sharing was an organizational norm compared to when pronoun-sharing was not a norm.

4.2.2. Anticipated employee and manager allyship

There was a main effect of condition on target employee allyship (see Fig. 1). Participants anticipated less allyship from the target employee in the Norm-Shares condition than the No Norm-Shares condition, $p = .003$, $d = 0.53$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[−0.98, −0.16], but greater likelihood of allyship compared to the Norm-Violated condition, $p < .001$, $d = 1.16$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[1.13, 1.95]. Participants anticipated less allyship in the Norm-Violated condition than in the No Norm-Shares condition, $p < .001$, $d = 1.62$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[−2.51, −1.71].

There was a main effect of condition on management allyship.

Participants anticipated greater allyship from management in the Norm-Shares condition than the No Norm-Shares condition, $p < .001$, $d = 0.57$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[0.34, 1.18], but not the Norm-Violated condition, $p = .987$, $d = 0.02$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[−0.39, 0.45]. Moreover, participants anticipated greater allyship from management in the Norm-Violated condition than the No Norm-Shares condition, $p < .001$, $d = 0.60$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[0.32, 1.15].

4.2.3. Procedural fairness

There was a main effect of condition on procedural fairness. Participants anticipated greater procedural fairness in the Norm-Violated condition than the No Norm-Shares condition, $p = .042$, $d = 0.33$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[0.01, 0.64], but not the Norm-Shares condition, $p = .966$, $d = 0.04$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[−0.29, 0.35]. There was no significant difference between the Norm-Shares and No Norm-Shares conditions, $p = .084$, $d = 0.29$, 95 %$CI_{meandiff}$[−0.03, 0.61].

4.2.4. Mediations

A parallel mediation analysis was conducted as in Study 1 (see Fig. 3). When the target employee shared their pronouns but no norm was present (No Norm-Shares condition), the target employee was seen as higher in internal motivations and lower in external motivations than the target employee who shared their pronouns when a norm was present (Norm-Shares condition). Perceived internal motivation was in turn related to greater perceptions of the target employee as an ally, and perceived external motivation was related to lower perceptions of that employee as an ally. The indirect effects of condition on perceived employee allyship were significant via both perceived internal and external motivations.

4.3. Discussion

As in the Study 1 cisgender-heterosexual sample, Study 2's gender minority participants perceived a lower-level cisgender employee who shared their pronouns in the context of a pronoun-sharing norm as more externally motivated and less internally motivated, and thus less likely to display LGBT+ allyship compared to when no such pronoun-sharing norm existed. Supporting our hypotheses, both perceived internal and external motives had mediated anticipated employee allyship from norm condition, extending upon findings of only external motives mediating allyship in Study 1.

Further, replicating the Study 1 normative eclipsing effect, Study 2 gender minority participants expected greater engagement in LGBT+ allyship from management at the organization and, novel to Study 2, greater procedural fairness at the organization, when a pronoun-sharing norm was present (both Norm-Shares and Norm-Violated conditions) compared to when no such norm existed. That is, organizations and managers were perceived more favorably when there was a pronoun-sharing norm among their employees compared to when pronoun-sharing was not the norm; In contrast, employees that were evidently engaging in the identity-safety cue practice were evaluated more favorably in the absence of a norm compared to its presence. Note, however, that in both Studies 1–2, all employees were presented as cisgender and thus pronoun-sharing was serving as an expression-based identity-safety cue, not an evidence-based identity-safety cue.

5. Study 3

Studies 1–2 examined the effect of pronoun-sharing norms among a cisgender employee team. Study 3 critically investigates how perceptions of pronoun-sharing may be impacted not only by organizational norms, but also by the gender identity of the target employee being evaluated. When a nonbinary employee shares their pronouns, the action is not merely an expression-based identity-safety cue, but also an evidence-based cue signaling gender diversity in the organization.

We hypothesized that target employee gender (cisgender or nonbinary) would not significantly moderate the effects of norm condition on outcomes. Rather, we anticipated that a nonbinary target employee would be perceived as having more internal and less external motives to share pronouns and would be perceived as higher in LGBT+ allyship compared to the cisgender target regardless of the presence or absence of a pronoun-sharing norm.[5] Notably, we continue to use the term LGBT+ allyship as both cisgender and nonbinary people can be allies to the broader LGBT+ community, even if they may be considered a member of the community.

Study 3 recruited White cisgender-heterosexual participants, as in Study 1, and removed the Norm-Violated condition utilized in Studies 1–2 to focus on perceptions of people who share pronouns in varying contexts, rather than if people do not share pronouns. As such, Study 3 manipulated the presence and absence of a pronoun-sharing norm and the gender identity of a target employee who shared their pronouns (preregistration link: https://osf.io/mfpvw/?view_only=a52a1ae499a14109bf2eac194ac3b306).

5.1. Method

5.1.1. Participants

An a priori power analysis for a 2 × 2 between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to determine the desired sample size with 80 % power to detect a small-medium effect ($d = 0.30$), revealing a desired sample size of 351. To account for exclusions, 408 participants were recruited from Prolific in exchange for compensation. However, 37 participants were excluded from analyses who did not identify as White, cisgender, and heterosexual ($n = 17$), or failed at two or more attention checks ($n = 20$), leaving an analytic sample of 371. A sensitivity power analysis indicated that the sample was sufficient to detect a small-medium effect size ($d = 0.30$) with 80 % power.

Participants identified as either cisgender women (51.5 %, $n = 191$) or cisgender men (48.5 %, $n = 180$). All participants identified as White and as straight/heterosexual. Participants also identified as politically moderate ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.89$) on a 7-point Likert scale (*Strongly liberal-Strongly conservative*). Participants' mean age was 45.20 years ($SD = 14.71$). Data collection occurred during June 2023.

5.1.2. Procedure

Study 3 was a 2(Organizational Pronoun-sharing Norm: Norm, No norm) x 2(Target employee gender: Nonbinary (they/them), Cisgender (she/her)) between-subjects design. The target employee either shared she/her pronouns and was presented as cisgender (as in Studies 1–2) or shared they/them pronouns to signal a nonbinary gender identity. Participants who failed the critical manipulation check the first time ($n = 28$) were presented the condition materials a second time, similar to Studies 1–2. As in Studies 1–2, participants completed measures of perceived internal ($\alpha = 0.91$) and external ($\alpha = 0.84$) motives for pronoun-sharing, expected target employee ($\alpha = 0.96$) and management ($\alpha = 0.95$) allyship, and procedural fairness ($\alpha = 0.92$).

5.2. Results

Analyses were conducted as 2(Target Employee Gender: Nonbinary, Cisgender) x 2 (Organizational Pronoun-sharing: Norm, No Norm) between-subjects ANOVAs. ANOVA results are presented in Table 3, descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4, and simple effects are presented in Table 5.

[5] Across Studies 3–4, we also measured perceived inclusive norm signaling motives for the target. Our hypotheses and findings for inclusive norm signaling largely mirrored perceived internal motives. As perceived inclusive norm signaling motives was highly related to perceived internal motives (e.g., Study 3 correlation: $r(370) = 0.63$, $p < .001$), the results for inclusive norm signaling are presented in the Supplement for brevity.

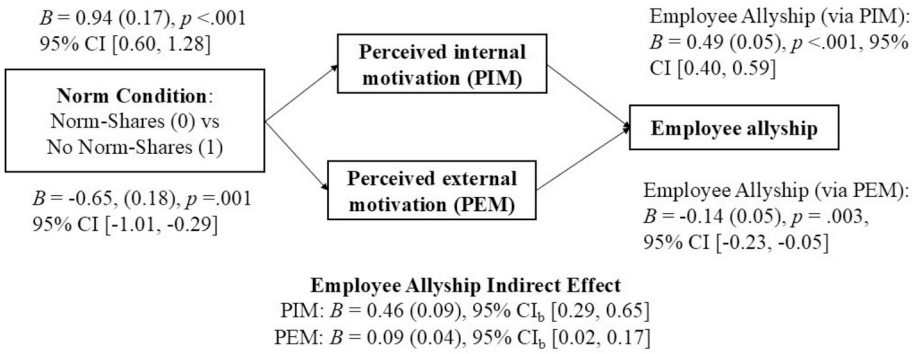

Fig. 3. *Study 2 mediation.*
Note. Standard errors presented in parentheses.

Table 3
ANOVA results, Study 3.

	Employee Gender Condition Main Effect			Organizational Norm Condition Main Effect			Interaction		
Outcome	*F*(1, 367)	*p*	*d*	*F*(1, 367)	*p*	*d*	*F*(1, 367)	*p*	*d*
Perceived Internal Motivation	6.16	.013	0.26	4.65	.032	0.23	3.58	.059	0.20
Perceived External Motivation	13.81	<.001	0.39	12.66	<.001	0.37	0.00	.992	0.00
Antic. Employee Allyship	42.63	<.001	0.68	8.60	.004	0.31	6.48	.011	0.26
Antic. Manager Allyship	2.47	.117	0.17	15.52	<.001	0.41	0.22	.637	0.06
Procedural Fairness	1.72	.191	0.14	4.56	.033	0.22	0.10	.751	0.00

Table 4
Study 3 Descriptive statistics.

	Employee Gender		Organizational Norm	
Outcome	Cisgender *(M, SD)*	Nonbinary *(M, SD)*	Norm *(M, SD)*	No Norm *(M, SD)*
Perceived Internal Motives	4.77 (1.38)	5.12 (1.34)	4.79 (1.27)	5.09(1.45)
Perceived External Motives	3.96 (1.41)	3.43 (1.41)	3.95 (1.36)	3.43(1.47)
Antic. Employee Allyship	4.98 (1.11)	5.80 (1.16)	5.21 (1.26)	5.58(1.33)
Antic. Manager Allyship	4.52 (1.36)	4.73 (1.29)	4.89 (1.25)	4.36(1.36)
Procedural Fairness	5.21 (1.08)	5.34 (1.01)	5.39 (0.92)	5.16 (1.15)

5.2.1. Perceived internal and external motives for pronoun-sharing

The ANOVAs on perceived employee internal and external motives revealed a main effects of target employee gender, a main effect of organizational norm, and no significant interactions. Participants perceived the cisgender target employee to have less internal, and more external, motivations for sharing pronouns than the nonbinary employee. The target employee was also perceived as having less internal, and more external, motivations for pronoun-sharing in the Norm condition than the No Norm condition.

5.2.2. Anticipated employee and manager allyship

The ANOVA on perceived employee allyship revealed a main effect of target employee gender, a main effect of organizational norm, and a significant interaction (see Fig. 4). Examining the interaction by target employee gender revealed a significant simple effect of organizational norm in the Cisgender employee condition, but not the Nonbinary employee condition (see Table 5). Participants expected greater allyship from the cisgender target employee when pronoun-sharing was not the organizational norm ($M = 5.32$, $SD = 1.42$) compared to when pronoun-sharing was the organizational norm ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.11$). However, regardless of organizational norm, participants anticipated high levels of LGBT+ allyship from the nonbinary target employee (Norm: $M = 5.78$, $SD = 1.14$; No Norm: $M = 5.83$, $SD = 1.18$).

Examining the significant interaction instead by organizational norm condition, there was a significant simple effect of employee gender in both the Norm and No Norm condition. In the context of a pronoun-sharing norm, cisgender employees were evaluated as less likely to display LGBT+ allyship ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.11$) compared to nonbinary employees ($M = 5.78$, $SD = 1.14$). In the absence of a pronoun-sharing norm, cisgender employees were still evaluated as less likely to display LGBT+ allyship ($M = 5.32$, $SD = 1.42$) compared to nonbinary employees ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 1.18$), though this effect was significantly smaller than in the Norm condition.

The ANOVA on perceived manager allyship revealed no main effect of target employee gender, a main effect of organizational norm, and no significant interaction. Participants anticipated managers were more likely to display LGBT+ allyship in the Norm condition compared to the No Norm condition.

Table 5
Study 3 Simple Effects.

	Simple Effects by Employee Gender Condition						Simple Effects by Organizational Norm					
	Cisgender			Nonbinary			Norm			No Norm		
Outcome	*F*	*p*	*d*	*F*	*p*	*d*	*F*	*p*	*d*	*F*	*p*	*d*
Antic. Employee allyship	14.80	<.001	0.40	0.08	.783	0.04	41.50	<.001	0.67	7.87	.005	0.29

Note. F(1, 367).

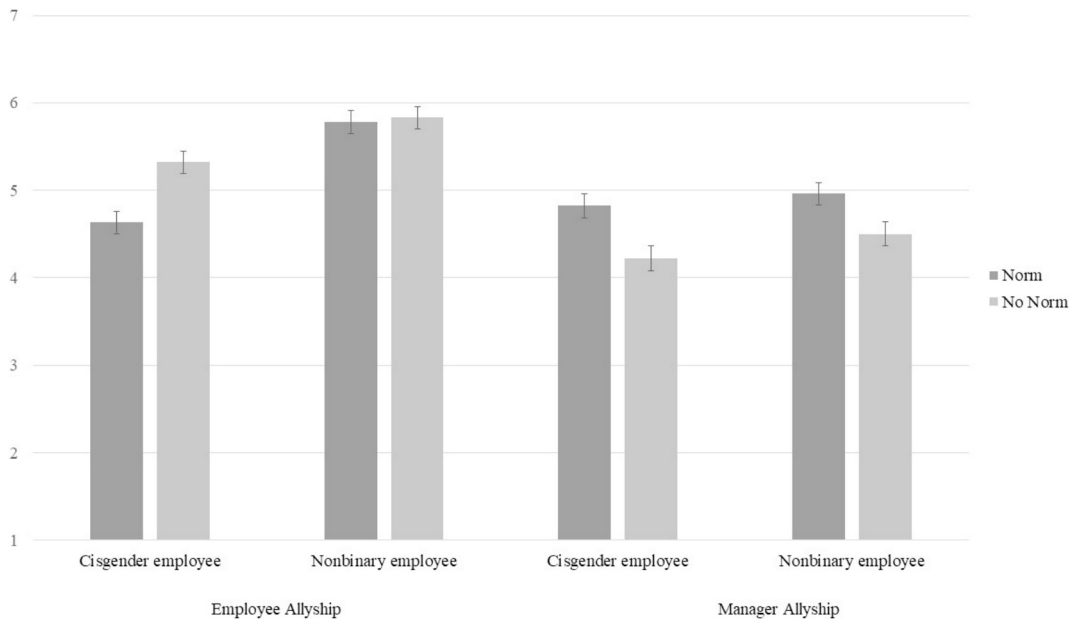

Fig. 4. *Study 3 anticipated employee and manager allyship by target employee gender and norm conditions.*
Note: Error bars denote standard error.

5.2.3. Procedural fairness

The ANOVA on anticipated procedural fairness revealed no main effect of target employee gender, a main effect of organizational norm, and no significant interaction. Participants anticipated more procedural fairness in the Norm condition than in the No Norm condition.

5.2.4. Mediations

As there were no significant interactions between organizational norm and target employee gender on the proposed mediators (internal and external motivation), the mediation analysis was conducted as in Studies 1–2 but controlling for target employee gender condition (see Fig. 5). This mediation differs from our exploratory pre-registered moderated mediation, which included target employee gender as a moderator on the *a* paths.[6] Replicating Study 2, the indirect effects of condition on employee allyship were significant via both perceived internal and external motivations.

5.3. Discussion

As in Studies 1–2 and in line with hypotheses, Study 3 demonstrated that an employee who shared their pronouns when doing so was the norm was perceived as more externally, and less internally, motivated to share their pronouns. Novel to Study 3, this effect of organizational norm occurred regardless of the target employee's gender identity, though a nonbinary employee was perceived as more internally and less externally motivated to share their pronouns than a cisgender employee. However, counter to hypotheses, the target employee's gender did moderate the effects of norm condition on anticipated employee LGBT+ allyship: The nonbinary target employee was perceived as high in allyship regardless of the organizational norm condition. In contrast, the cisgender employee was perceived as more likely to engage in LGBT+ allyship when pronoun sharing was not the organizational norm compared to when it was the norm. Or, put differently, regardless of whether a pronoun-sharing norm was present or absent, cisgender employees were perceived as less likely to engage in LGBT+ allyship compared to nonbinary employees. However, both cisgender and nonbinary employees were perceived as engaging in moderate-high LGBT+ allyship.

As in Study 2, broader institution-level perceptions (management allyship and procedural fairness) were impacted by pronoun-sharing norms, such that managers were perceived as more likely to engage in LGBT+ allyship and the organization was perceived as more procedurally fair when pronoun-sharing was an organizational norm compared to when pronoun-sharing was not a norm at the organization. Unexpectedly, there was no effect of target employee gender on these outcomes. That is, when there was a norm of expression-based identity-safety cues (here, pronoun-sharing) the presence of an evidence-based identity-safety cue (here, a nonbinary employee) did not result in greater anticipated identity-safety from management and the organization as a whole relative to the absence of an evidence-based identity-safety cue. Nevertheless, these findings replicate the normative eclipsing effect from Studies 1–2, such that a pronoun-sharing norm (compared to the absence of such a norm) boosted perceptions of the organization but did not similarly boost perceptions of motives or allyship among cisgender employees who shared their pronouns.

6. Study 4

Study 4 is a replication of Study 3, with a single modification to experimental materials. Studies 1–3 had employees of various occupations, where three out of the five positions included employees with titles of "Executive consultant" and "Hiring Manager." As these people may have been construed as managers or deemed high enough status to impact the broader organizational climate, we corrected for this potential confound in Study 4 by making all members of the employee team of similar lower rank, with the title of "Research Analyst." In doing so, no direct evidence of the higher rank managers' allyship or broader procedural fairness could be cued by their engagement in the pronoun-sharing norm (or lack of norm).

Based on Study 3 findings, we hypothesized that when there was a pronoun sharing norm, an employee sharing their pronouns would be

[6] This mediation analyses also differs from the exploratory mediation analyses we pre-registered with intentions to examining secondary outcomes of interest - anticipated name and pronoun-sharing at the organization. We opted instead to conduct exploratory mediation analyses with our primary outcomes of interest, employee allyship. We also reported outcomes of mediation analyses with other primary outcomes, such as manager allyship and procedural fairness in the Supplement.

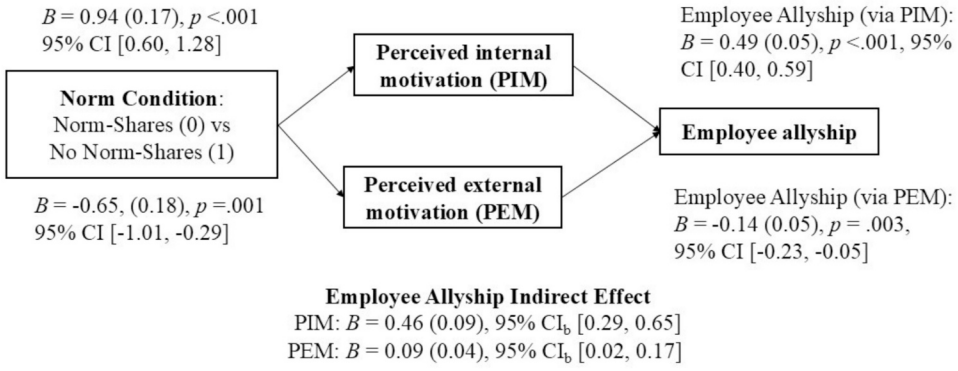

Fig. 5. *Study 3 mediation.*
Note. Standard errors presented in parentheses. Mediation analysis controlled for target employee gender condition.

perceived as having greater external and less internal motivations to share compared to when there was no pronoun sharing norm at the organization. We hypothesized cisgender employees would be perceived as having less internal motives and greater external motivations for pronoun-sharing, relative to nonbinary employees. Further, we hypothesized participants would anticipate less employee allyship from a cisgender employee when a pronoun-sharing norm was present, compared to absent. Nonbinary employees will be evaluated as high in employee allyship in both Norm and No Norm conditions. Yet, when pronoun-sharing is the norm at the organization, participants would anticipate greater manager allyship and greater procedural fairness compared to when pronoun-sharing is not the norm, regardless of target employee gender identity. Study 4 was pre-registered (preregistration link: https://osf.io/tpvmh/?view_only=84e9c79b0e38416bad2b55abe4c2bfaf).

6.1. Method

6.1.1. Participants

An a priori power analysis for a 2 × 2 between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to determine the desired sample size with 80 % power to detect a small-medium effect ($d = 0.30$), revealing a desired sample size of 351. To account for exclusions, 403 participants (which exceeds the pre-registered amount) were recruited from Prolific in exchange for compensation. However, 19 participants were excluded from analyses who did not identify as White ($n = 3$), cisgender ($n = 5$), and heterosexual ($n = 5$), and/or failed at two or more attention checks ($n = 6$), leaving an analytic sample of 384. A sensitivity power analysis indicated that the sample was sufficient to detect a small-medium effect size ($d = 0.32$) with 80 % power.

Participants identified as either cisgender women (66.4 %, $n = 255$) or cisgender men (33.6 %, $n = 129$). All participants identified as White and as straight/heterosexual. Participants also identified as politically moderate ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.75$) on a 7-point Likert scale (*Strongly liberal-Strongly conservative*). Participants' mean age was 42.52 years ($SD = 12.60$). Data collection occurred during August 2024.

6.1.2. Procedure

Study 4 was a 2(Organizational Pronoun-sharing Norm: Norm, No norm) x 2(Target employee gender: Nonbinary (they/them), Cisgender (she/her)) between-subjects design, replicating Study 3. As noted, the materials were adjusted slightly from Study 3 such that all depicted employees held the rank of "Research Analyst." Participants who failed the critical manipulation check the first time ($n = 30$) were presented with the condition materials a second time. As in Study 3, participants completed measures of perceived internal ($\alpha = 0.90$) and external ($\alpha = 0.84$) motives for pronoun-sharing, anticipated target employee ($\alpha = 0.94$) and management ($\alpha = 0.95$) allyship, and procedural fairness ($\alpha = 0.87$).

6.2. Results

Analyses were conducted as 2(Target Employee Gender: Nonbinary, Cisgender) x 2 (Organizational Pronoun-sharing Norm: Norm, No Norm) between-subjects ANOVAs. ANOVA results are presented in Table 6 and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 7.

6.2.1. Perceived internal and external motives for pronoun-sharing

The ANOVA on perceived employee internal motives revealed a main effect of target employee gender, a main effect of organizational norm, and a significant interaction. Examining the interaction by target employee gender revealed a significant simple effect of organizational norm in the Cisgender employee condition, but not the Nonbinary employee condition (See Tables 6, 8, 9). Participants perceived greater internal motives for the cisgender target employee when pronoun-sharing was not the organizational norm compared to when pronoun-sharing was the organizational norm. Yet, regardless of organizational norm, participants anticipated high internal motives for the nonbinary target employee.

Examining the interaction instead by organizational norm condition, there was a significant simple effect of the Norm condition, but not the No Norm condition. In the context of a pronoun-sharing norm, the target cisgender employee was evaluated as less internally motivated than the nonbinary employee. In the absence of a pronoun-sharing norm, the target cisgender and nonbinary employees were evaluated as similarly internally motivated.

The ANOVA on perceived employee external motives revealed a main effect of target employee gender, no main effect of organizational norm, and no significant interaction. Participants reported greater perceptions of external motives for pronoun-sharing for the cisgender employee compared to nonbinary target employee.

6.2.2. Anticipated employee and manager allyship

The ANOVA on perceived employee allyship revealed a main effect of target employee gender, a main effect of organizational norm, and a significant interaction (see Fig. 6). Examining the interaction by target employee gender revealed a significant simple effect of organizational norm in the Cisgender employee condition, but not the Nonbinary employee condition. Regardless of organizational norm, participants anticipated high levels of allyship from the nonbinary target employee. However, participants expected greater allyship from the cisgender target employee when pronoun-sharing was not the organizational norm compared to when pronoun-sharing was the organizational norm.

Examining the interaction instead by organizational norm condition

Table 6
ANOVA results, Study 4.

	Employee Gender Condition Main Effect			Organizational Norm Condition Main Effect			Interaction		
Outcome	*F*(1, 380)	*p*	*d*	*F*(1, 380)	*p*	*d*	*F*(1, 380)	*p*	*d*
Perceived Internal Motivation	6.65	.010	0.26	5.66	.018	0.25	6.59	.011	0.26
Perceived External Motivation	23.38	<.001	0.50	0.12	.729	0.00	0.00	.961	0.00
Antic. Employee Allyship	47.66	<.001	0.71	4.73	.030	0.22	8.73	.003	0.30
Antic. Manager Allyship	2.30	.130	0.16	9.29	.002	0.31	4.76	.030	0.22
Procedural Fairness	14.39	<.001	0.39	2.09	.150	0.14	0.20	.652	0.06

Table 7
Study 4 descriptive statistics by condition.

	Employee Gender		Organizational Norm	
Outcome	Cisgender *(M, SD)*	Nonbinary *(M, SD)*	Norm *(M, SD)*	No Norm *(M, SD)*
Perceived Internal Motives	4.68(1.49)	5.05(1.37)	4.69(1.44)	5.03(1.42)
Perceived External Motives	4.01(1.42)	3.32(1.36)	3.69(1.48)	3.64(1.39)
Antic. Employee Allyship	4.99(1.22)	5.83(1.20)	5.28(1.30)	5.54(1.25)
Antic. Manager Allyship	4.63(1.26)	4.82(1.29)	4.92(1.28)	4.53(1.25)
Procedural Fairness	5.09(0.93)	5.43(0.88)	5.33(0.92)	5.20(0.91)

Table 8
Study 4 Simple Effects.

	Simple Effects of Organizational Norm by Employee Gender Condition						Simple Effects of Employee Gender by Organizational Norm Condition					
	Cisgender			Nonbinary			Norm			No Norm		
Outcome	*F*	*p*	*d*	*F*	*p*	*d*	*F*	*p*	*d*	*F*	*p*	*d*
Perceived Internal motives	12.23	<.001	0.36	0.02	.895	0.00	13.03	<.001	0.37	0.00	.993	0.00
Antic. Employee Allyship	13.15	<.001	0.37	0.30	.581	0.06	47.84	<.001	0.71	7.92	.005	0.29
Antic. Manager Allyship	0.38	.540	0.06	13.67	<.001	0.38	6.73	.010	0.26	0.22	.637	0.06

Note. F(1, 380).

revealed a significant simple effect of target employee gender in both the Norm and No Norm condition. Regardless of pronoun-sharing norm, the cisgender employee was evaluated as less likely to display LGBT+ allyship compared to the nonbinary employee, though this effect was significantly greater in the norm condition.

The ANOVA on perceived manager allyship revealed no main effect of target employee gender, a main effect of organizational norm, and a significant interaction. Examining the interaction by target employee gender revealed a significant simple effect of organizational norm in the Nonbinary employee condition, but not the Cisgender employee condition. Regardless of organizational norm, participants anticipated moderate manager allyship when the target employee was cisgender (See Table 8–9). However, when the target employee was nonbinary, participants anticipated greater likelihood of manager allyship when pronoun-sharing was the organizational norm compared to when pronoun-sharing was not the norm.

Examining the interaction instead by organizational norm condition, there was a significant simple effect of target employee gender in the Norm condition but not the No Norm condition. In the context of a pronoun-sharing norm, participants anticipated greater manger allyship when a nonbinary employee was present compared to a cisgender employee. That is, expectations of manager allyship were boosted by a normative expression-based cue and an evidence-based cue.

Table 9
Study 4 Descriptive Statistics for Interactions.

Outcome	Norm		No Norm	
	Cisgender *(M, SD)*	Nonbinary *(M, SD)*	Cisgender *(M, SD)*	Nonbinary *(M, SD)*
Perceived Internal Motives	4.32 (1.56)	5.06 (1.22)	5.03 (1.34)	5.04 (1.50)
Antic. Employee Allyship	4.68 (1.20)	5.88 (1.11)	5.30 (1.16)	5.78 (1.29)
Antic. Manager Allyship	4.68 (1.25)	5.16 (1.27)	4.57 (1.27)	4.48 (1.22)

6.2.3. *Procedural fairness*

The ANOVA on anticipated procedural fairness revealed a main effect of target employee gender, no main effect of organizational norm, and no significant interaction. Participants anticipated greater procedural fairness when the organization included the target nonbinary employee compared to the cisgender employee. Further, participants anticipated high procedural fairness in both the Norm and No Norm condition.

6.2.4. *Mediations*

As there was a significant target employee gender by organizational norm interaction for perceived internal motives, we proceeded with moderated parallel mediations. We examined the effect of organizational norm condition (Norm = 0, No Norm = 1) on anticipated employee allyship via perceived internal and external motivations.[7] Target employee gender identity (0 = Cisgender, 1 = Nonbinary) was included as a moderator on the *a* path using Hayes PROCESS Macro (5000 bootstraps, version 4.2, model 7, Hayes, 2018).

The interaction effect of norm condition and target employee gender condition was significant for perceived internal motives, $B = -0.74$, *SE*

[7] For mediation analyses examining manager allyship and procedural fairness, please see Supplement.

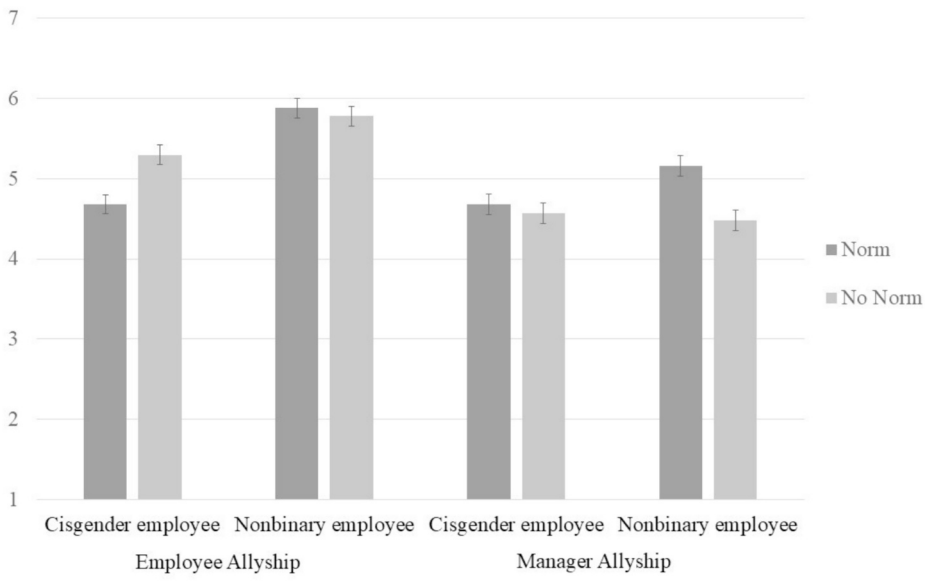

Fig. 6. *Study 4 employee and manager allyship by conditions.*
Note. Error bars denote standard error.

= 0.29, $p = .011$, 95 % CI_{boot} [−1.31, −0.17], but not perceived external motives, $B = 0.01$, $SE = 0.29$, $p = .961$, 95 % CI_{boot} [−0.55, 0.57]. Norm condition significantly predicted perceived internal motives in the cisgender target employee condition, $B = 0.71$, $SE = 0.20$, $p = .001$, 95 % CI_{boot} [0.32, 1.11], but not the nonbinary target employee condition, $B = -0.03$, $SE = 0.20$, $p = .895$, 95 % CI_{boot} [−0.43, 0.37]). In turn, perceived internal motives significantly predicted anticipated employee allyship, $B = 0.49$, $SE = 0.04$, $p < .001$, 95 % CI_{boot} [0.41, 0.56]. Perceived external motives also significantly predicted anticipated employee allyship, $B = -0.19$, $SE = 0.04$, $p < .001$, 95 % CI_{boot} [−0.61, −0.11].

The indirect effect of norm condition for cisgender employees was significant via perceived internal motives, $B = 0.35$, $SE = 0.11$, 95 % CI_{boot} [0.14, 0.56], not external motives, $B = 0.01$, $SE = 0.04$, 95 % CI_{boot} [−0.07, 0.09]. The indirect effect of norm condition on employee allyship in the nonbinary employee condition was not significant via perceived internal or external motives (internal: $B = -0.01$, $SE = 0.01$, 95 % CI_{boot} [−0.21, 0.17]; external: $B = 0.01$, $SE = 0.04$, 95 % CI_{boot} [−0.07, 0.08]).

6.3. Discussion

Study 4 generally replicated the normative eclipsing effect and extended Study 3 findings, even when all employees shared the same low-level position of "Research Analyst." While cisgender employees in the pronoun-sharing norm condition were perceived as less internally motivated to pronoun-share than cisgender employees in the absence of a norm, these effects did not emerge for the nonbinary employee. This pattern of interaction on internal motives was contrary to hypotheses and Study 3 findings. Further, unlike in Studies 1–3, there was no effect of pronoun-sharing norm on perceptions of an employee's external motivations, though the nonbinary employee was again perceived as less externally motivated than the cisgender employee. Only perceived internal motives mediated anticipated allyship for target cisgender employees, not nonbinary employees, partially supporting perceived motives as a mechanism for employee allyship expectations.

Consistent with allyship hypotheses, cisgender employees were perceived as less likely to engage in LGBT+ allyship in the presence of a pronoun-sharing norm, compared to the absence, while pronoun-sharing norm did not impact anticipated allyship from a nonbinary employee. However, both the cisgender and nonbinary employee were perceived as engaging in moderate-high LGBT+ allyship. Generally supporting the normative eclipsing hypothesis, managers were perceived as having greater likelihood of engaging in LGBT+ allyship when there was a pronoun-sharing norm compared to when there was not. However, contrary to Study 3 and to hypotheses, perceptions of manager allyship were dependent upon both pronoun-sharing norms and employee gender. Managers at the organization were expected to be greater LGBT+ allies when there was a pronoun-sharing norm among lower-level employees *and* when there was a nonbinary employee (i.e., both an expression-based and evidence-based identity-safety cue) compared to when the pronoun-sharing norm existed but employees were all cisgender.

Lastly, contrary to hypotheses, expectations of procedural fairness were not impacted by norms. Rather, having a nonbinary employee present signaled greater expectations of procedural fairness than a solely cisgender team. This may suggest that evidence-based cues like employee gender identity are more relevant for organizational-level perceptions than just norms. Procedural fairness expectations were still high in both the Norm and No Norm conditions, similar to Study 1 findings. Notably, these deviations from Study 3 may have been a result of our more rigorous manipulation of the pronoun-sharing norm among lower status employees in Study 4, suggesting that who engages in the normative behavior is critical in shaping perceived motives and expectations of the broader organizational culture.

7. General discussion

Past research has argued that pronoun-sharing in a workplace can signal identity-safety for marginalized groups (Johnson et al., 2021). Yet, perceptions of pronoun-sharing motives can vary from more genuine (i.e., internally motivated) to more performative (i.e., externally motivated; Kodipady et al., 2023). In the present research, we posited that norms of pronoun-sharing and the gender identity of the employees may impact perceived motives of pronoun-sharing, with implications for perceptions of both individual employees who share (or do not share) their pronouns and the organization more broadly.

7.1. Evidence of normative eclipsing effect: the role of evidence-based cues and lower-tier employee status

In both cisgender (Study1, Study 3–4) and gender minority (Study 2)

participant samples, a broader organizational norm of an inclusive behavior (here, pronoun-sharing) makes such behaviors appear disingenuous when enacted by lower-level employees whose very behavior signals the norm but reflects positively on broader perceptions of organizational climate and management. When a pronoun-sharing norm was present, managers were anticipated to display greater LGBT+ allyship (Studies 1–4) compared to when the norm was absent, though perceptions of procedural fairness for LGBT+ employees at the organization was inconsistently affected by the presence or absence of a pronoun sharing norm (Studies 2–3 only). This benefit to the broader organization from the actions of lower-level employees who adhere to the norm reflects a *normative eclipsing effect*. That is, when pronoun-sharing is the norm, lower-level employees who engage in norm-adhering behavior are viewed less favorably compared to when no such norm is in place (with regards to anticipated allyship), yet the broader organization is perceived more favorably (with regards to manager allyship and procedural fairness). It is important to note that employees were still viewed as moderate in employee allyship in the context of a norm, hence the normative eclipsing effect does not penalize lower-level employees, as much as it may signal norm adherence and less genuine motivation to uplift sexual and gender minorities in the workplace. Moreover, this normative eclipsing effect emerged regardless of the presence of lower- and middle-level employees enacting (or not) the norm (Studies 1–3) or a stricter norm manipulation that involved only low-level employees (Study 4).

Notably, the normative eclipsing effect was generally diminished when a nonbinary employee was present in the organization (i.e., an evidence-based identity-safety cue). Across Studies 3–4, cisgender employees were again perceived to be more likely to engage in LGBT+ allyship when pronoun-sharing was not a norm compared to when it was a norm; however, nonbinary employees were expected to be strong allies to the broader LGBT+ community regardless of the presence or absence of a pronoun-sharing norm. Though Study 3 found that managers and the organization received a boost from a pronoun-sharing norm, regardless of the presence of a nonbinary employee, this was not the case in Study 4. Rather, managers were only rated as more likely to engage in LGBT+ allyship in the pronoun-sharing norm condition, compared to the no norm condition, when a nonbinary employee was present. These findings suggest that manager allyship perceptions are enhanced when a gender minority employee (i.e., evidence-based identity-safety cue) is present within normative identity-safety cue practices, expanding on past research delineating the necessity of evidence-based cues (e.g., Wilton et al., 2020).

Finally, when a cisgender employee does not share pronouns when a norm to do so is present (i.e., norm violation), compared to sharing pronouns when a norm is in place, they are perceived as less likely to engage in LGBT+ allyship – though management allyship did not differ between these conditions (Studies 1–2). Together, these findings demonstrate that contextual norms of inclusive efforts, such as pronoun-sharing, and gender minority representation are critical in shaping perceptions of individual employees and broader organizations.

7.2. Perceived motives and consequences of normalized identity-safety cues

Notably, we hypothesized that employees who engaged in pronoun-sharing when it was the norm would be perceived as higher in external and lower in internal motives for pronoun-sharing compared to when no such norm was in place. These hypotheses were supported in Studies 2–3, where both external and internal motives were significantly affected by a pronoun-sharing norm and mediated the effect of condition on perceptions of employee allyship. However, only external motives in Study 1 and internal motives in Study 4 were impacted by the norm condition. These findings are consistent with prior organizational identity-safety cue research, which demonstrates the importance of perceived genuine, authentic motives on shaping allyship and procedural fairness expectations (Derricks et al., 2024; Ponce de Leon et al., 2024). Yet, we encourage future research to more carefully consider the role of perceived internal and external motives, including determining if individual differences (e.g., individual suspicion of motives; Major et al., 2013) may make some perceivers more attuned to internal and external motivations for behaviors. Though Studies 2 and 3 demonstrate that both perceived internal and external motives were relevant for employee-specific and organization-specific outcomes among gender minority and cisgender samples, future research should further examine the downstream consequences of perceptions of internal and external motivations of normalized trans-inclusive identity-safety cue practices among gender minority samples.

The present research indicates that one low-effort action to promote inclusion may not be perceived as genuine if this action can appear as mere norm adherence. That is, the effectiveness of creating norms of pronoun-sharing as an identity-safety cue for LGBT+ employees is limited by skepticism toward an individual employee who engages in the inclusive practices (e.g., employees perceived as less internally motivated to build an inclusive workplace, more perceived external motives). Yet, the present research only examined perceived motives with a target, a seemingly lower-level employee, engaging in pronoun-sharing in the context of a lower-middle tier employee team who also pronoun-shares or does not. Such behavior may still be viewed as externally motivated if the target employee is in a management position, and we thus encourage future research to examine this question.

Additional "high-cost" organizational diversity structures, such as healthcare policies that include gender affirming care, may bolster expectations of parity for transgender individuals at an organization that engages in pronoun-sharing practices (e.g., Ponce de Leon et al., 2024; Wilton et al., 2020). Similarly, organizations that acknowledge, as well as present actions plans to combat cisnormativity or heterosexism (e.g., Derricks et al., 2024), especially when such actions are at a "cost" to the company and consistently applied in the short and long term (e.g., Ponce de Leon et al., 2024; Thai & Nylund, 2024), may signal a genuine commitment to LGBT+ employees. Further, representation of nonbinary and transgender employees or management may also be an avenue to bolster an organization's perceived diversity commitments, beyond merely incorporating pronoun-sharing practices in a seemingly cisgender workplace, by demonstrating actual diversity among employees rather than just signaling inclusion can be critical (e.g., Wilton et al., 2020). Lastly, marginalized employees report differing needs from their organizations (e.g., the needs of Black women differ from that of Asian women; Wong et al., 2022). Hence, organizations would benefit from directly asking their employees about the support they would prefer and implementing those specific needs, as opposed to making assumptions about the support they would like.

7.3. Future directions

Critically, the present literature has presented pronoun-sharing as an identity-safety cue for LGBT+ people (Johnson et al., 2021). Yet, pronoun-sharing norms within organizations could incur some social backlash, as suggested by work examining organizational policies of using preferred names and pronouns (Eckes, 2022; McEntarfer & Iovannone, 2022; Shields et al., 2023). Indeed, some have argued that pronoun-sharing practices should not be mandatory or required of all personnel, as to not "out" individuals who are not comfortable revealing their gender identity at the organization (Brockbank et al., 2023; Mennicke & Cutler-Seeber, 2016; Poore-Pariseau, 2021). Note, however, that past experimental work continued to find identity-safety benefits for LGBT+ people when an organization had a mandate policy for pronoun-sharing (Johnson et al., 2021).

Some degree of social backlash is, unfortunately, to be expected when initially implementing diversity and inclusion efforts on the individual level (e.g., Dobbin & Kalev, 2018; Hill, 2009), but such practices can eventually become part of organizational standard procedures

and thus accepted with time (Melendez & Crowley, 2022; Smalley, 2022; Smith, 2023; Tamburin, 2015). For example, despite some lawmakers reacting with outrage toward the inclusion of gender-neutral pronoun indicators, universities are expanding their gender identity categories and encouraging professors and students to share pronouns (Tamburin, 2015). Such protocols are gradually becoming commonplace in higher education settings (Smalley, 2022; Smith, 2023), though we note that as the behaviors become more commonplace, their utility to serve as an identity-safety cue may diminish due to suspicion of motives. Nevertheless, given the current U.S. climate of anti-LGBT+ policies (ACLU, 2023; Human Rights Campaign, 2023), pronoun-sharing norms within an organization may continue to signal meaningful inclusion of the transgender and nonbinary community. Though our work suggests broader organizational inclusive norms impact perceived motivations for employees engaging in that inclusive practice, future work should examine if cisgender employees who engage in additional diversity and inclusion efforts (e.g., hosting an LGBT+ coffee hour) or acknowledge identity-related differences (e.g., Cipollina, 2022; Cipollina & Wang, 2024) may offset the effects of organizational norms.

This research primarily examined samples of White, cisgender heterosexual women and men (Study 1, Study 3–4). This sampling criteria was set due to research suggesting people of color may experience identity-safety from identity-safety cues targeting other marginalized groups, including transgender people (Chaney et al., 2016; Chaney & Sanchez, 2018). However, in doing so, we recognize that the present research is limited in generalizability and encourage future research to include more diverse samples that fully reflect U.S. and broader population demographics. Indeed, it may be of interest to discern if cisgender heterosexual people of color view pronoun-sharing as signaling genuine racial allyship, as would be posited by work on identity-safety cue transfers (Chaney & Sanchez, 2018), and if they are similarly sensitive to the effect of pronoun-sharing norms on perceived motives.

Further, the present research manipulated norms by having employees who either shared or did not share their pronouns. Such effects could thus merely be driven by salience of pronoun sharing, though we contend that the documented penalties for the norm-violating employees suggest these effects are indeed due to perceived norms (Study 1–2). Nevertheless, we encourage future research to consider alternative manipulations, such as a supposed internal survey by the organization revealing pronoun sharing rates on video conferencing or website profiles.

8. Conclusion

The current work explores how organizational implementation of identity-inclusive practices, such as pronoun-sharing, is impacted by perceived organizational norms and employee gender diversity. Four experimental studies demonstrate the *normative eclipsing effect*, where the broader organization and management are perceived as being procedurally fair and more likely to display LGBT+ allyship, at the expense of lower-level employees who are perceived as disingenuous allies (e.g., externally motivated) when engaging in a normative highly visible, low-effort identity-safety cue practice (e.g., pronoun-sharing). Our research demonstrates that the identity-safety cue literature is incomplete without examining how perceived norms around the identity-safety cue may impact meaningful inclusion expectations from marginalized individuals meant to benefit from the display. Though evidence suggests the normative eclipsing effect may be supplemented by providing concrete evidence of inclusion (e.g., gender minority representation, engaging in "high cost" allyship, Derricks et al., 2024; Ponce de Leon et al., 2024), further research is needed to examine the contexts in which identity-safety cues are effective or inadequate in signaling meaningful acceptance of marginalized groups.

Open practices

All data and materials are available and can be found at: https://osf.io/cmkjd/?view_only=4dcaf25bd03f4a5f83dfeccb54ed4ebc

Preregistration of Study 3: https://osf.io/mfpvw/?view_only=a52a1ae499a14109bf2eac194ac3b306

Preregistration of Study 4: https://osf.io/tpvmh/?view_only=84e9c79b0e38416bad2b55abe4c2bfaf

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Izilda Pereira-Jorge: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Kimberly E. Chaney:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Conceptualization. **Flora Blanchette:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft. **Alexandra Garr-Schultz:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft.

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Declaration of competing interest

The submitted article has not been published previously, is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, and its publication is approved by all authors and tacitly or explicitly by the responsible authorities where the work was carried out, and that, if accepted, it will not be published elsewhere in the same form, in English or in any other language, including electronically without the written consent of the copyright-holder.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2025.104782.

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