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# The Effects of Anonymity in Business Ethics Class Discussions Using Various Gender Compositions

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ABSTRACT

The gender makeup of the group and anonymity significantly impact small-group discussions. Business Ethics is one business course that frequently incorporates debate. Anonymity is the state in which meeting attendees are unidentified, thereby removing any physical cues, particularly in corporate ethics case group discussions. The gender composition of the group, on the other hand, is crucial to its level of attraction, as individuals tend to relate to others within the group who are similar to them and to be prejudiced against those who are different. This study investigated whether anonymity reduces attraction between groups with varying gender compositions. Participants were divided into six groups for the experiment. Three groups communicated offline and three that communicated via offline settings or online platform settings. In both settings, there were female-only, male-only, and mixed-gender groups. An actual gender-related case and four discussion questions were used to activate gender identification. Findings suggested that participants in female-only groups were significantly more willing to work together again in offline settings than those in female-only groups on online platforms. For men-only and mixed groups, there was no difference in their willingness to work together again between the offline and online platform settings.

SARI PATI

Komposisi gender dalam kelompok dan anonimitas memiliki dampak signifikan pada pembicaraan kelompok kecil. Etika Bisnis adalah salah satu mata kuliah bisnis yang sering kali menggabungkan perdebatan. Anonimitas adalah keadaan di mana peserta rapat tidak teridentifikasi, sehingga menghilangkan petunjuk fisik apa pun, terutama dalam diskusi kelompok kasus etika perusahaan. Komposisi gender dalam kelompok, di sisi lain, sangat penting bagi tingkat ketertarikannya karena anggota kelompok cenderung bergaul dengan orang-orang yang mirip dengan mereka dan berprasangka buruk terhadap mereka yang berbeda. Studi ini menyelidiki apakah anonimitas menurunkan tingkat ketertarikan antara kelompok dengan komposisi gender yang bervariasi. Peserta dibagi menjadi enam kelompok untuk percobaan. Ada tiga kelompok yang berkomunikasi dalam pengaturan kelas offline dan tiga kelompok yang berkomunikasi melalui komunikasi yang dimediasi komputer. Dalam kedua pengaturan tersebut, ada kelompok khusus perempuan, kelompok khusus laki-laki, dan kelompok campuran gender. Kasus terkait gender yang sebenarnya dan empat pertanyaan diskusi digunakan untuk mengaktifkan identifikasi gender. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa anggota kelompok yang hanya beranggotakan perempuan memiliki tingkat ketertarikan kelompok yang jauh lebih tinggi dalam pengaturan kelas luring dibandingkan dengan kelas daring, sementara tidak ada perbedaan yang signifikan dalam ketertarikan kelompok antara pengaturan luring dan daring pada kelompok yang hanya beranggotakan laki-laki dan kelompok campuran.

**INTRODUCTION**

In communication, anonymity is defined as an environment in which the audience cannot identify the source of the messages being disseminated (Marx, 2001; Curlew, 2019). Marx (2001) further suggested that anonymity could involve a single sender or multiple senders. The proliferation of social media apps and the growth of social media users have enabled users to conceal their identities and even mislead audiences.

Today's online platforms maximize their ability to facilitate anonymity across platforms, including social media, online forums, and even interpersonal communication tools such as WhatsApp messages. Online platforms create conditions in which participants often conceal their demographic information, particularly their nationality, social status, age group, race, or sex (Nadler, 2020).

Anonymity in online platforms also permeates interpersonal, group, and mass communication processes (Bae, 2016). Anonymous interpersonal communication takes the form of email marketing and social media messages. Anonymous group communication frequently appears in Zoom meetings. Lastly, anonymous information sources in media content have become ubiquitous in mass communication.

Some scholars suggested that anonymity increases disinhibited behavior (Clark-Gordon et al., 2019). One concept called Suler's (2004) Online platforms Disinhibition Effect refers to disinhibition as both (a) toxic, such as involving flaming or trolling, and (b) benign, where the effects are not harmful, such as sharing personal things about themselves. Particularly with toxic disinhibition, this variable might affect the degree of interpersonal attraction among group members in online platform settings.

In recent decades, online platform environments have experienced significant growth in processing capacity, communication infrastructure, and the number of applications (Carmi, 2024). This growth is particularly prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, online platforms enable high-speed processing, mitigating the detrimental effects of large group size, long distances, and time constraints in group communication. Anonymity among users on online platforms can sustain both strong and weak ties, providing information within groups and between strangers who are temporally and physically distant (Wellman et al., 1996; Nadler, 2020).

Granovetter (1973) coined the term weak ties to describe relationships formed and maintained with strangers who share common interests. Weak ties can be created through community websites that enable laypeople to access accurate information from diverse individuals dispersed across nations. This is evident in individuals who posted ethical questions on Quora or Reddit. Meanwhile, strong ties (relationships with individuals with whom we are familiar) can be maintained across geographical boundaries. For instance, business students in Banjarmasin, Indonesia, could ask their professor, who is attending a conference in Oslo, Norway, a thousand miles away, about questions on business ethics.

In education, most universities have adopted virtual learning environments (Cirucci, 2023). Cirucci (2023) suggested that students found Zoom more user-friendly for class participation than an offline classroom environment. Minority students, particularly women of color, noted that Zoom enabled them to avoid being judged on their physical appearance.

Although online platforms benefit students in group participation processes, (Wellman et al., 1996; Cirucci, 2023), How anonymity affects group attraction remains a subject of debate. For example, some scholars have argued that anonymity democratizes opinion and allows all members to have equal impact in advocating a position. This is particularly relevant when they have expertise in the topic being discussed (Dubrovsky et al., 1991; Bennet & Hatfield, (2018).). Other

scholars concluded that domineering behaviors by some group members observed in offline settings would persist in online environments. This is particularly prevalent when the communication is asynchronous, where individuals do not respond to the messages right away (Walther, 1992; Weisband, 1995; Bennet & Hatfield, 2018).

One group that could benefit from an online platform in classroom settings is a business ethics class. Business ethics can be defined as a discipline that develops ethical competencies of would-be managers (Martini, 2025). It has been recognized as a discipline that prepares business managers to make the right decisions in ethical dilemmas. By its nature, business ethics offers a wide array of answers to ethical questions, unlike business courses involving numbers, such as Finance or Accounting, where each question has a corresponding normative answer. Therefore, to test the effect of online platforms on group attraction, this study uses a business ethics class as a case study.

**1. Significance of the Problem**

In addition to the two group settings – offline and online platforms – the independent variable in this study was the group's gender composition. With the prevalence of online media, such as e-mails, in the 1990s, research has examined gender disparities in online settings. However, most of these studies examined how men and women use different language styles when communicating on online platforms, without accounting for gender in group decision-making (Flanagin et al., 2002; Maltz & Borker, 2018). Thus, experiments on anonymity in online platforms that use gender as a variable in small-group communication settings merit further investigation.

Among the earliest studies on the effects of gender in anonymous online settings, Sakai (2018) and Savicki et al. (1996) found that groups in online platforms with a higher percentage of women use language aimed at preventing and reducing tension. Savicki et al. (1996) found that online groups with a higher proportion of men tended to dominate conversations, use insults, and disseminate information without references (Herring, 1994, Maltz & Borker, 2018). This was further supported by Mendelberg and Karpowitz, who noted that gender composition and rules can elevate or demote women's status (2016).

Maltz and Borker (2018) found that women frequently exhibit social interdependent behaviors, such as saying "mm hmm" while listening, whereas men say "mm hmm" only when agreeing. The social interdependence factors also involve making more supportive statements, such as "I agree", or emotional statements that include emojis. In addition, women show higher emotion prediction accuracy than men (Thomson & Voyer, 2014). Yu and Deng (2022) indicated that, due to these interdependent factors, women perceive the virtual learning environment more positively than men. However, some scholars also noticed that in anonymous online settings, men contributed more when topics were politics or sports, and women controlled the discussion when the topics were about lifestyles or travels, more so than in offline settings (Bowman & Pace, 2022; Duyn et al., 2019; Postmes & Spears, 2022; Waseleski, 2006).

The composition of men and women in a group discussion is a topic that is continually investigated (Karim et al., 2018; Lodewijkx et al., 2005; Thomas et al., 2021). One study looked at groups with three different gender compositions: one men/three women, one women/three men, and two men/two women (Swan & Wyer, 2017). The findings from those studies were that men and women who were alone in mixed-sex groups had their identities become more salient.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effect of gender anonymity on group attraction in online platform settings. This study distinguished itself by addressing a controversial issue in a heterosexual marriage case rather than a hypothetical scenario. This study also compared the dynamics of offline classroom discussions with those of anonymous online platforms in a virtual learning environment. A scale measuring group attraction is provided at the end of the discussion to assess attraction in both settings.

**2. Gender as Social Identity**

Tajfel's (1971) social identity theory provided a framework for research on gender composition in groups. Tajfel (1971) suggested that group members associate with others who share physical characteristics, such as gender. This association refers to the term in-group. The higher the in-group association, the more likely the group members are to distance themselves from the out-group. In his experiment, Tajfel et al. (1971) found that identities can be created among individuals. An example is how football and basketball teams wear uniforms with bright, contrasting colors when they play against each other. When teams like the Phoenix Suns wear purple and orange, whereas opposing teams wear white, the audience experiences an in-group/out-group dynamic: wearing their team color signals belonging, and the other team's fashion signals the out-group.

Using Sherif's (1982) and Tajfel's (1971) description of gender as a social identity, we can assume that when gender is activated as a social identity, greater loyalty is expected within groups of men or women than within mixed-gender groups. Additionally, there will be out-group prejudice against people of other genders and in-group devotion among male or female members. People's perceived innate need to set themselves apart from others based on group memberships, and their readiness to forgo absolute gains to preserve relative superiority over members of other groups, are the causes of this (Harwood, 2020).

Previous research abundantly described how an individual develops their gender identity. According to Money and Ehrhardt (1972) and Polderman et al. (2018), a child's sex assignment or upbringing causes their gender identity to become set by the time they are two and a half years old. According to Berenbaum (2018) and Eaton and Von Bargen (1981), a child learns about gender in four steps: correctly identifying one's own and others' gender; grasping their gender identity; recognizing that gender identity is permanent; and coming to terms with the fact that they do not choose their gender identity. According to Spence (1985) and Polderman et al. (2018), gender identity in adulthood is an individual's basic sense of identity that is continually validated through participation in social activities, such as knitting among women or off-road driving with Jeeps among men.

Consequently, people also use gender, which has historically been portrayed as a biological and demographic category, to describe members of their group. The importance of gender identity is viewed as a personal construct since people interpret their experiences and surroundings differently depending on who they are. According to Tajfel (1971) and Hausser et al. (2020), belonging to the in-group is integral to an individual's identity, given the importance of social identity.

According to Maltz and Borker (2018) and Lakoff (1975), language patterns typical of men are more potent than those typical of women in terms of status distinctions. Declarative statements devoid of ambiguity or doubt are a hallmark of powerful language. This idea was bolstered by Geis (1993) and Krems et al. (2022), who proposed that men had a higher social status due to their perceived superior competence and authoritative behavior.

Additionally, men are more likely than women to discriminate against other group members depending on their gender (Rigg & Sparrow, 1997; Steelfisher et al., 2019). Compared with their remarks about female coworkers, men's remarks about male coworkers are more forceful and explicit. In contrast to men, women tend to be more delicate, varied, and ambiguous in their remarks regarding their coworkers, and their remarks are generally more moderate.

Conflict in work groups, however, has not always been found to be correlated with gender identity salience. Results on the impact of gender salience on group cohesion have been conflicting. While Pelled et al. (1999) and Lee et al. (2018) found no correlation between gender diversity and conflict, Jehn et al. (1999) identified a positive link between gender variety in groups and interpersonal conflict under specific parameters identified by Li and Chen (2018). This implies

that it is necessary to understand the circumstances under which a work group's gender composition leads to conflict.

**3. Gender Compositions as Independent Variable**

Rahim and Katz (2020) suggested that worker gender affects the conflict-management techniques frequently used in the workplace. The language use of mixed-gender, men-only, and women-only small groups in online platforms was previously studied by Savicki et al. (1996). Over three to four weeks, the groups discussed a hypothetical situation. Compared with mixed- or men-only groups, women-only groups engaged in greater self-disclosure. Compared with men-only groups, women-only groups were also more inclined to attempt to avoid or reduce conflict or stress.

However, there was an exception in offline settings with only one woman and all men. Pro-feminist sentiments would be more prevalent within this group than among men in any other gender composition. Compared to all-female groups, these pro-feminist sentiments are much more pronounced (Burian et al., 1998). According to Keck and Tang (2018), male participants felt more chivalrous when a single woman was present. Similarly, when it came to judgments of credibility about an instance of sexual harassment, Burian and Yanikco (1998) discovered an interaction effect between experimenter gender, gender composition, and gender. The woman would be seen as weak in this situation, and the men's strong pro-feminist views are a result of their desire to shield or defend her.

**4. In-Group Attraction**

However, the degree of group attraction is not significantly impacted by group anonymity. Short et al. (1976) introduced the social presence theory, which has since spurred research in this field. According to the hypothesis, anonymity should prevent intimacy and immediacy, thereby reducing group attraction. Beyond sex, similarities in age group or generation, race or ethnicity, and personality have been shown to promote attraction between individuals across time, according to Edwards et al. (2019). Anonymity on online platforms can obscure users' demographic information, reducing the likelihood of interpersonal attraction.

Altman and Taylor's social penetration theory posits that interpersonal attraction is higher among groups in more open environments (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Cemalcilar et al., 2018). Edwards et al. (2019) created models of interpersonal relationships that explain how liking results from disclosure. Their findings indicated a strong correlation between the extent of liking expressed and an individual's openness to communication, as reflected in body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice. In this case, offline settings should elicit greater group attraction than online platform settings by providing more verbal, nonverbal, and social cues from participants.

Additionally, Fonseca et al. (2018) explained that under certain circumstances, the attractiveness of a group depends on whether all members have their expectations met. Additionally, the individuals' cumulative attraction to one another within the group will closely match their cumulative desire to remain in the group. For example, if you like somebody within the group, and another pair also likes each other, then the desire of all the members to stay in the group will be high.

In 1998, Postmes and Spears coined the social identity deindividuation (SIDE) theory, which posits that greater conformity and group-based actions may result when people become more aware of their group identity rather than when they lose their sense of self. Although SIDE theory suggests that anonymity would increase conformity to group norms by lowering private self-awareness and self-regulation, which would push members to behave similarly (Postmes & Spears, 1998; Perfumi et al., 2019), it does not always predict that the anonymity created by online platforms will result in attraction among the group members.

According to earlier studies, anonymity has decreased group attraction (Kiesler et al., 1985; Kim et al., 2019) but

enhanced group attraction for groups with strong identity salience (Wang et al., 2018). Nadler (2020) suggested that a lack of social etiquette in online platforms leads participants to pay less attention to social cues. They also suggested that individuals evaluate one another more favorably in offline settings than on online platforms.

On the other hand, Kim et al. (2023) posited that anonymity could create a balance of power in anonymous group discussions. After reviewing 340 studies, they concluded that anonymity protects participants from bullying by online platforms. This phenomenon made online platform discussions particularly appealing to individuals with strong opinions on controversial issues.

The purpose of this study was to demonstrate that interpersonal ties remain the foundation of group attraction even when group salience is low. Situations that hinder the formation of ties, such as visual anonymity, can make people less courteous or tolerant, thereby hindering the development of relationships and interpersonal attraction within a group (Short et al., 1976). Because anonymity eliminates cues, it makes group interaction more impersonal and task-oriented, while also reducing attention to others and concern about receiving positive evaluations.

Therefore, the following hypotheses were posed:

H1: The level of group attraction in men-only groups on online platforms is lower compared to that in offline settings.

H2: The level of group attraction in women-only groups on online platforms is lower compared to that in offline settings.

H3: The level of group attraction in mixed-gender groups in online platforms is lower compared to that in offline settings.

## METHODS

### 1. Participants

Participants were business college graduates enrolled in a Business Communication course on Business Ethics during the particular week. The case under discussion is drawn from news in an American newspaper. There were 168 participants, consisting of 84 men and 84 women, aged 22 to 29 at the time of the experiment, with 84 students participating in offline settings and 84 in online platforms. Participants were divided into groups of 4, with mixed-gender groups balanced at 2 men and 2 women. Participants were divided into 14 men-only groups (7 offline and 7 online), 14 women-only groups (7 offline and 7 online), and 14 mixed-gender groups (7 offline and 7 online).

### 2. Procedures

Due to logistical limitations, the experiments were conducted in 16 sessions over two years. Before the study began, the subjects were divided into groups. This was done to prevent students from grouping with people who were close to them.

Before the group discussion in both offline and online settings, each participant received a case study and four discussion questions. While the online group conversations lasted 40-60 minutes, the offline settings group discussions lasted 10-15 minutes. This is because typing is about four times slower than speaking (Kiesler & Sproull, 1992). Lastly, participants completed a questionnaire to assess their level of attraction to the group.

### 3. Measurements

The group attraction scale developed by Evans and Jarvis (1986) and Maynard et al. (2018) was used to measure group

attraction in offline and online settings. The alpha coefficient for the group attraction scale ranged from .87 to .94 based on data obtained from the experiment. Factors within the scale included enthusiasm for contributing, adherence to group rules, attendance, and openness (Evans & Jarvis, 1986; Maynard et al., 2018).

The scale was utilized for long-term groups in the prior study, nevertheless. Initially, the scale examined the extent of interpersonal attraction associated with groups at the beginning, middle, and end of their development. Furthermore, the scale has been used only for non-anonymous group-attraction measurements. As a result, it would be improper to use the same scale for this study exactly as it is. The scale was modified to accommodate the synchronous and anonymous nature of the group discussions in this experiment.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Confirming the Validity of the Scales

The modified Group Attraction Scale had an alpha of 0.922, with the following eigenvalues:

**Table 1.** Eigenvalues of the Component Matrix for the Group Attraction Scale Using One Factor

| | **Factor 1** |
|---|---|
| A1: I want to remain a member of this group | .82 |
| A2: I like my group | .88 |
| A3: I look forward to coming to the group | .79 |
| A4: I do not care what happens in this group* | -.48 |
| A5: I feel involved in what is happening in my group | .74 |
| A6: If I could drop out of the group now, I would* | -.86 |
| A7: I wish it were possible to move to another group at this time* | -.77 |
| A8: I am dissatisfied with the group* | -.89 |
| A9: If it were possible to move to another group at this time, I would* | -.73 |
| A10: I feel included in the group | .73 |
| A11: Despite individual differences, a feeling of unity exists in my group | .75 |
| A12: Compared to the groups I know of, I feel my group is better than most | .67 |
| A13: I do not feel a part of the group's activities* | -.56 |
| A14: I feel it would make a difference to the group if I were not here | .08 |
| A15: I feel distant from the group | -.74 |
| A16: It makes a difference to me how this group turns out | .41 |

| | |
|---|---|
| A17: I feel my absence would not matter to the group* | -.63 |

* - denotes reverse coding

**2. Level of Group Attraction**

Hypothesis 1 proposed that the level of group attraction in men-only groups on online platforms is lower compared to that in offline settings. Using a t-test, the mean difference in group attraction was greater on online platforms than in offline settings (see Table 3). However, the result was not statistically significant.

Next, Hypothesis 2 proposed that the level of group attraction in women-only groups on online platforms is lower than in offline settings. This hypothesis was supported (see Table 3). Using a t-test, the difference in level of group attraction was statistically significant ($t[48] = 2.79$, $p < .01$).

Finally, Hypothesis 3, the level of group attraction in mixed-gender groups on online platforms is lower compared to that in offline settings, was not supported.

**Table 2. Level of Group Attraction across Different Group Compositions**

| Gender Composition | Offline settings | | | Online platforms | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | n | M | SD | n |
| Men-only groups | 32.04 | 7.00 | 24 | 36.33 | 11.84 | 24 |
| Women-only groups | 37.84** | 12.11 | 24 | 29.20** | 9.50 | 24 |
| Mixed-gender groups | 31.75 | 12.45 | 24 | 35.05 | 9.59 | 24 |

**denotes significant results at p <.01

Regarding the lack of significant differences in the level of group attraction of male-only and mixed-gender groups in offline settings and online platforms, one explanation may be taken from (Walther, 1995) Moreover, Raghuram et al. (2018) social information processing theory, which posits that when presented with a channel lacking richer cues, such as intonation and appearance, participants in online platform meetings will rely on the available textual cues to communicate. People have had to become accustomed to discussing a range of topics anonymously as a result of the recent pandemic and the rise in social media use. To further increase social presence among meeting participants, participants could also employ self-disclosure, questions, verifications, and emoticons. As a result, meeting attendees can create impressions, learn about others, and build relationships through text-only communication.

Regarding the significant difference between women-only and mixed-gender groups, decades of studies provide empirical evidence that women disclose to more individuals than men in offline settings but not in online platform settings (Rimé et al., 2019). Okdie (2011) also suggested that participants who self-disclose on online platforms may not be affected by anonymity. The cultural element also plays an important role in this. For instance, Western cultures are more trusting of self-disclosers, whereas Eastern cultures are more wary of them.

One limitation is the accuracy of the time given for online platforms and offline group discussions. The 4:1 ratio of typing to speaking time was based on a 1992 study (Kessler & Sproul, 1992). A new study on how long it takes to express something on online platforms that one can easily express offline should also be conducted, especially in this day and age, when students frequently use instant messaging to collaborate on assignments. Applications such as Zoom,

WhatsApp, and WeChat have supplanted in-person meetings since the COVID-19 pandemic. These applications serve our habit of seeking instant gratification in the present day, where users can send texts and emojis and engage in interactive video calls. (Tang & Bradshaw, 2020). In conclusion, given the advent of digital communication technologies, some earlier studies of online platforms may no longer be relevant.

**MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION**

For female groups that exhibit greater in-person attraction than on online platforms, educational institutions and corporate organizations must modify their communication strategies to enhance group attraction in digital environments. Discussion leaders should maximize the use of emoticons and emotive language, promote videoconferencing to enable richer nonverbal exchanges, and foster more dynamic and participatory debates on online platforms. In the meantime, organizations can use digital platforms for communication by investing in advanced communication tools that facilitate text-based interactions while promoting interpersonal relationships and team cohesion; male-only and mixed-gender groups do not exhibit significant differences in group attraction between offline settings and online platforms.

Additionally, managers must understand gender-based communication preferences and develop hybrid meeting models that allow staff members to select offline or online settings based on the demands of the conversation and the topic. To improve employees' capacity to establish connections, sustain engagement, and strategically use textual signals to enhance social presence and teamwork, training in digital communication is also essential (Kozanoglu & Abedin, 2021). Discussion leaders in businesses, such as managers or supervisors, should allocate sufficient time for virtual meetings and use structured discussion formats to improve efficiency, as text-based conversations typically take longer than face-to-face interactions.

Finally, as people become more accustomed to anonymity and self-disclosure in conversations on online platforms, businesses can use digital collaboration tools such as Zoom Meetings, Microsoft Teams, Slack, and internal social media platforms to promote communication, knowledge exchange, and virtual team building. It may be necessary to reevaluate conventional notions of offline settings and online platforms in light of the rapid changes in access to and use of digital communication channels. To keep corporate communication inclusive, efficient, and flexible amid technological change, conversation leaders should regularly assess their communication strategies and develop best practices better suited to the digital age.

**CONCLUSION**

This study presents several key highlights. First, female-only groups exhibit a higher level of group attraction in offline settings compared to online platforms due to their reliance on non-verbal cues, eye contact, intonation, and social cues, such as smell or gestures, which cannot be fully replicated in online platforms. Second, because individuals are more likely to adopt techniques such as self-disclosure and emoticons to adapt to text-based communication, male-only and mixed-gender groups do not exhibit appreciable variation in group attraction between offline settings and online platforms (Tang & Bradshaw, 2020). Third, the fact that online platform message dissemination was reported to be four times longer than offline conversations has been moderated. However, this may reflect improvements in typing speed and greater familiarity with digital communication, such as instant messaging apps. Lastly, to remain up to date with evolving societal trends and technological breakthroughs, classrooms and firms need to assess their communication strategies continually.

This study was limited by its duration. This experiment was made possible by the social distancing policy, which allowed classrooms to meet both offline and online. The experiment spanned two years, nine months, and four days.

At the same time, there were many logistical restrictions. Multiple classrooms of students could not be accommodated at once. This prolonged the experiment. Furthermore, the participants had few incentives available. Participants were also only categorized by their assigned sex at birth rather than their gender identification when it came to social identity. This suggested that gender was less a social identity and more a bodily indicator. Gender as a social identity should ideally be measured through both offline and synchronous, anonymous group discussions.

Future research could explore how online platforms integrate emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality, and examine whether these advancements reduce the gap in group attraction between offline settings and anonymous interactions on online platforms. Further studies could investigate the impact of multimedia-based digital communication platforms on gender-based communication preferences and assess whether cultural factors play a significant role in shaping these preferences.

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APPENDIX A

**Business Ethic Case Study**




Sandra Day O'Connor's husband developed a relationship with a fellow Alzheimer's patient after moving into an assisted living center. The retired Supreme Court justice is just glad that he is comfortable, her son told a TV station.

Sandra Day O'Connor cited her husband's illness and her need to care for him as reasons for her retirement in 2005.

The retired justice isn't jealous of his relationship with the woman. Their son said it has dramatically changed his father's outlook on his time at the Huger Mercy Living Center.

The focus of the broadcast report was Alzheimer's patients who forget their spouses and form new relationships. It quoted experts as saying that the situation is not unusual.

Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman on the Supreme Court, cited her husband's illness and her need to take care of him when she retired in 2005. His neurological disease was diagnosed 17 years ago.

"Mom was thrilled that Dad was relaxed and happy and comfortable living here and wasn't complaining," their son said.

Their son said, "48 hours after moving into that new cottage, he was a teenager in love. He was happy."

APPENDIX B

Group Discussion Questions for the Case Study

1. Should she divorce her husband?
2. Should she still take care of her husband?
3. Should she approve of her husband's new relationship?