

Are You the Same People? Exploring Two-Step Gender Identity Question Options



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Introduction

- ▶ Sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data has been successfully collected in a survey context for well over a decade
- ▶ While these measures are not perfect and ongoing research seeks to improve them, the existing recommended questions have been shown to be reliable measures and have been incorporated into many federal surveys
- ▶ There have been increasing efforts to expand that collection beyond surveys
 - ▶ Executive order 14035, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce
 - ▶ Executive order 14075, Advancing Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Individuals
- ▶ While collecting SOGI data in a workforce setting along with other demographic data is important, it comes with challenges that are different from surveys and may need different questions



PFS Survey

Pride in federal service (PFS)

- ▶ PFS is a cross-government employee organization
- ▶ PFS includes over 900 federal employee members, across all cabinet level departments distributed broadly across the states, territories, and overseas postings
- ▶ Most PFS members have an LGBTQIA+ identity, some have LGBTQIA+ family members or are allies

Methods

- ▶ Convenience, opt-in sample gathered from anonymous respondents to a PFS list-serve invitation to participate
- ▶ Survey was not split panel, we included two versions of sexual orientation questions, and two versions of gender identity questions respondents were asked to answer and comment on preferences for questions
- ▶ We asked follow up questions about willingness to provide this information in a federal workforce data, willingness to allow others to answer questions, and impact of state level legislation on willingness to disclose information
- ▶ Collected some basic demographic categories. Did not collect any identifiable information



Gender Identity Questions

Question 1 A and B

- ▶ What is your current gender? (Check only one)
 - ▶ Female
 - ▶ Male
 - ▶ Transgender
 - ▶ I use a different term (open text write-in)
- ▶ What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate? (Check only one)
 - ▶ Female
 - ▶ Male

Question 2 A and B

- ▶ What is your current gender identity?
 - ▶ Female
 - ▶ Male
 - ▶ Non-Binary/third gender
 - ▶ I use a different term (open text write-in)
- ▶ Are you transgender or of transgender experience?
 - ▶ Yes
 - ▶ No



Methodological Concerns

Question 1 A and B

What is your current gender?

Female
Male
Transgender
I use a different term (write-in)

What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?

Female
Male

Question 2 A and B

What is your current gender identity?

Female
Male
Non-Binary/third gender
I use a different term (write-in)

Are you transgender or of transgender experience?

▶ Yes
▶ No

- Strengths of the current recommended two step question
- Methodological concerns about the recommended two-step question
- Methodological concerns about one step gender questions
- Updated two-step question

Sample Information

Sample

- ▶ 472 completed survey 1
- ▶ 101 identified as gender minority (21%)
- ▶ 256 completed survey 2
- ▶ 79 identified as gender minority (31%)

Limitations

- ▶ Both questions were presented one after the other
 - ▶ Context effects cannot be ruled out
 - ▶ Confusion of having 2 questions may have been an issue for some respondents
- ▶ Convenience sample of employees interested in LGBTQI+ issues in the federal space
 - ▶ May not be representative of all federal LGBTQI+ employees



Questions

- ▶ What were the differences in how gender minority respondents report between questions in the PFS survey?
- ▶ How did the addition of a nonbinary option impact the way people categorize themselves?
- ▶ Do respondents express a preference for one question?
- ▶ What was the main feedback respondents gave on the questions?
- ▶ How can these findings help inform decisions about collecting workforce data?

Gender Minority Identification Crosswalk (N101)

Question 1 A and B

What is your current gender?

Female

Male

Transgender

I use a different term
(write-in)

What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?

Female

Male

Question 2 A and B

What is your current gender identity?

Female

Male

Non-Binary/third gender

I use a different term
(write-in)

Are you transgender or of transgender experience?

► Yes

► No

Gender identity Q1	Question 1A	Question 1B	Gender Identity Q2	Question 2A	Question 2B
Transgender	Female	Male	Transgender	Female	Yes
	Male	Female		Male	Yes
	Transgender	Female, Male or missing		Nonbinary	Yes
I use a different term	I use a different term- Trans-Woman	Male	Nonbinary	I use a different term	Yes
	I use a different term- Trans Masc.	Female		Missing	Yes
	I use a different term- Transgender and nonbinary	Female, Male, missing			
			Nonbinary	Nonbinary	No Missing
	I use a different term- nonbinary	Male, female or missing	I use a different term	I use a different term	No Missing
	I use a different term- all others		I use a different term	I use a different term	

Gender Minority Identification Crosswalk (N101)

Question 1 A and B

What is your current gender?

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- I use a different term (write-in)

What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?

- Female
- Male

Question 2 A and B

What is your current gender identity?

- Female
- Male
- Non-Binary/third gender
- I use a different term (write-in)

Are you transgender or of transgender experience?

- ▶ Yes
- ▶ No

Gender Minorities (1A and 1B)

- Anyone selecting transgender or I use a different term
- Any mismatch between 1A and 1B

1A – Current Gender

- Female
- Male
- **Transgender**
- **Different Term**

1B – Sex Assigned at Birth

- Female
- Male

Gender Minorities (2A and 2B)

- Anyone selecting Non-Binary or I use a different term
- Anyone reporting yes, transgender

2A – Current Gender Identity

- Female
- Male
- **Non-Binary/3rd gender**
- **Different Term**

1B – Transgender

- **Yes**
- No



Comparing Questions 1 and 2

Question 1 A and B

What is your current gender?

Female

Male

Transgender

I use a different term (write-in)

What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?

Female

Male

Question 2 A and B

What is your current gender identity?

Female

Male

Non-Binary/third gender

I use a different term (write-in)

Are you transgender or of transgender experience?

▶ Yes

▶ No

N	Q1	Q2
Transgender	49	72
Use a different term	47	7
Nonbinary	-	22
Cisgender	5	0

Separating Out Transgender and Nonbinary Responses

Q1 A and B

Transgender alone	43
Transgender and nonbinary	6
Nonbinary alone	29
I use another term	18
Cisgender	5

Q2 A and B

Transgender alone	29
Transgender and Nonbinary	43
Nonbinary alone	22
I use another term	7

Cisgender Q1 Gender Minority Q2

Question 1 A and B

- ▶ What is your current gender?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Transgender
 - I use a different term (write-in)
- ▶ What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?
 - Female
 - Male

Question 2 A and B

- ▶ What is your current gender identity?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Non-Binary/third gender
 - I use a different term (write-in)
- ▶ Are you transgender or of transgender experience?
 - ▶ Yes
 - ▶ No

Q1 A	Q1 B	Q2 A	Q2 B
Female	Female	Nonbinary	No
Female	Female	Female	Yes
Female	Female	I use a different term (she/they)	No
Missing	Female	I use a different term (blank)	Yes
Male	Male	Nonbinary	No



Preferences

Question 1 A and B

- ▶ What is your current gender?

Female

Male

Transgender

I use a different term
(write-in)

- ▶ What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?

Female

Male

Question 2 A and B

- ▶ What is your current gender identity?

Female

Male

Non-Binary/third gender

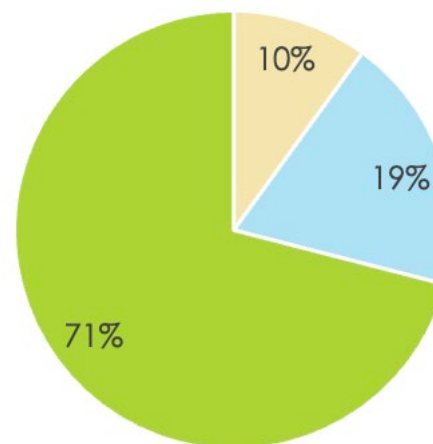
I use a different term (write-in)

- ▶ Are you transgender or of transgender experience?

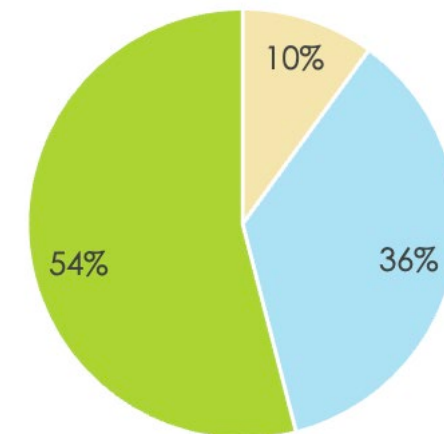
▶ Yes

▶ No

All respondents



Gender minority Respondents



■ Prefers Q 1
 ■ Prefers Q 2
 ■ No preference



Write in information

- ▶ **Some respondents selected no preference because they could not remember both options**
- ▶ **Issues with Q1 tended to reflect existing methodological concerns and focus on use of sex at birth, lack of mark all that apply, mixing sex and gender terms, and inclusion of transgender as a gender category**
- ▶ **Issues with Q2 were less frequent and tended to focus on use of sex terminology and confusion with the term transgender experience**

PSF 2024 survey

1. What is your current gender?

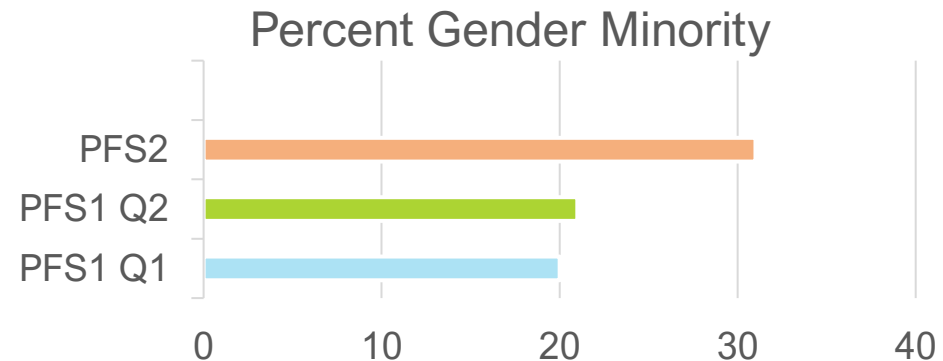
- ▶ Woman
- ▶ Man
- ▶ Nonbinary
- ▶ I use a different term (free text write-in)

2. Are you transgender?

or

- ▶ Do you consider yourself to be transgender, or have a trans history?

Gender Minorities	PFS1 Q1 N101	PFS1 Q2 N96	PFS2 N79
Transgender alone	45%	29%	18%
Transgender and Nonbinary	6%	42%	42%
Nonbinary alone	30%	22%	25%
All other terms	19%	7%	15%



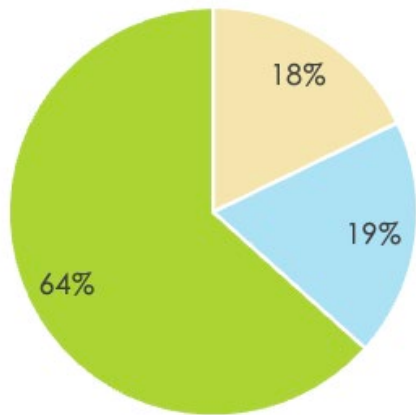
Write-ins survey 2

- ▶ Despite more opportunities to give open-ended feedback there were only about 15 comments about the question in survey 2 compared to over 200 in survey 1
- ▶ Suggestions similar to survey 1 included adding additional categories, mark all that apply
- ▶ New feedback for survey 2 regarding preference for sex questions

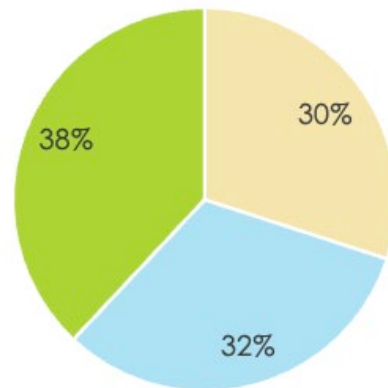
Preferences for transgender question wording

17

All respondents



Gender minority Respondents



- Are you Transgender?
- Do you consider yourself to be transgender or have a trans history?
- No preference

- ▶ Respondents who preferred “Are you transgender?” thought it was straightforward and clear or did not like the do you consider yourself wording or the other question.
- ▶ Respondents who preferred “ Do you consider yourself to be transgender or have a trans history? Thought it was more inclusive
- ▶ Both options work well, more testing may be needed



Implications for Gender Identity questions for workforce and beyond

Question 2 A and B survey 1

What is your current gender identity?

Female

Male

Nonbinary/third gender

I use a different term (write-in)

Are you transgender or of transgender experience?

Yes

No

Question A and B survey 2

What is your current gender?

Woman

Man

Non-Binary

I use a different term (write-in)

Are you transgender?

Yes

No

- While we tested this question in the context of workforce data collection, it may work well in other contexts
- The modified two-step question that includes a question about being transgender overcomes many of the shortcomings of the two-step question that uses sex at birth while retaining the ability of respondents to identify as both male and transgender or female and transgender.
- The addition of nonbinary and the ability to select both nonbinary and transgender allows the disaggregation of transgender, transgender and nonbinary, and nonbinary respondents. Some limited research is starting to find that there may be significant differences between these groups.
- The ability to disaggregate transgender, nonbinary and other gender minority terms is consistent with guidance from the Federal Evidence Agenda to be able to disaggregate wherever possible- even if public use data must be combined for release, disaggregation allows for analysis of differences in these groups and changes in reporting overtime
- The addition of nonbinary and the ability to select nonbinary and transgender also reduces write in responses which could be important for workforce demographics where write-ins are not the norm and for surveys with limited ability to code write ins

THANK YOU!

Questions?

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NON-CONFORMING
FLUID
TRANSMASC
GENDERFLUID
GENDERQUEER
SHE/THEY
NON-TRADITIONAL
NA
QUEER
FLUID
ASEXUAL
NON-CONFORMING
DEMI-SEXUAL
PANSEXUAL
HUMAN
QUEER
PAN-ROMANTIC



Write in difficulties

Some respondents selected no preference because they could not remember both options

- ▶ “I'm already confused, didn't know I needed to remember what options were for each answer.”
- ▶ “Regarding the questions above, I do not remember what the options were and it appears I can't go back, so I picked no preference.”
- ▶ “I don't recall the difference between the options (seemed really similar to me)and am not able to return to the previous page.”

Write-ins Q1:

Issues with Q1 tended to focus on use of sex at birth, lack of mark all that apply, mixing sex and gender terms, and inclusion of transgender as a gender category

- ▶ “I was wondering the purpose of the sex assigned at birth question. If it's not the same as the legal markers nor the gender identity, it seems like an unnecessary, invasive and dysphoria inducing question.”
- ▶ “The sex at birth question was inadequate and leaves out the Intersex population entirely.”
- ▶ “My first choice for gender questions is a "check all that apply" that lets me check both male and trans, but since that's not an option, it feels slightly less invasive to ask if I'm trans than to ask assigned sex/what's on my birth certificate. The birth certificate formulation also might be complicated for intersex folks and might end up not capturing folks with intersex conditions who do identify as trans.”
- ▶ *“Gender should be woman or man, not female or male; let's not conflate/confuse gender with sex*
- ▶ “Question 1: I would normally click male, as transgender is not my gender, it just describes my gender experience.”
- ▶ “Many transgender persons also consider themselves to be the gender they have transitioned into. Thus, a choice of male, female, transgender is not sufficient.”
- ▶ “Transgender, as a gender doesn't make sense to me. It's like an adjective on top of gender, not a gender itself.”
- ▶ “In the option 1 gender identity questions, it was unclear because "transgender" is an adjective used to describe someone's gender experience, not a gender in and of itself, so it can't be categorized with the other answer choices.”



Write-ins Q2:

Issues with Q2 tended to focus on use of sex terminology and confusion with the term transgender experience

- ▶ “ ‘Male’ and ‘female’ are terms typically associated with sex, not gender. Therefore, for any of the gender identity questions, I would not recommend including "male" and "female" as responses (I'd recommend replacing these with ‘man’ and ‘woman’)”
- ▶ “ ‘Transgender or transgender experience’ needs a bit of explanation. What is ‘transgender experience’?”
- ▶ “As a transgender person, questions surrounding the ‘transgender experience’ don't resonate with me. I typically don't care for such wording. A possible alternative may be: ‘Are you transgender?’ or ‘Do you identify as transgender?’ Just my 2 cents!”

For both question sets and for SO questions, some respondents asked for additional categories

- ▶ “My sexual orientation is not as well known, so I was not surprised that mine was not listed. I think the gender identity though should incorporate more identities.”
- ▶ “Enough people use ‘queer’ as an identity that it should be a listed option, especially for sexuality but also for gender.”



Write-ins survey 2 issues

Suggestions similar to survey 1 included adding additional categories, mark all that apply

- ▶ *“Definitely wish there were more inclusive options than the few listed”*
- ▶ *“I think for statistical purposes, adding in transgender male/female for gender would be nice, especially if non-binary is an option. Or simply adding "cis" before male or female, and having an additional male/female option.”*
- ▶ *“As long as you allow other, and maybe allow multiple choice, I think it’s okay enough !”*

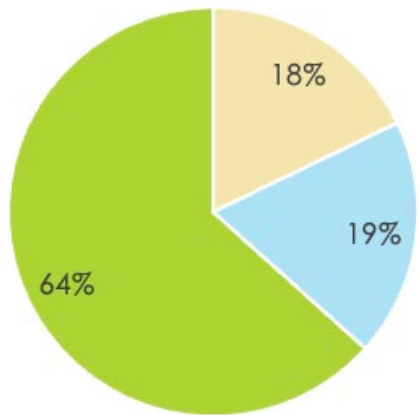
New feedback for survey 2 regarding preference for sex questions

- ▶ *“...I am gender-apathetic or anti-gender, yet feel a strong tie to my sex”*
- ▶ *“I recommend differentiating between sex and gender identity and having a question for both.”*

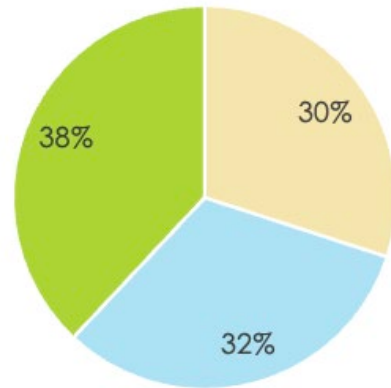


Preferences for transgender question wording with quotes

All respondents



Gender minority Respondents



- Are you Transgender?
- Do you consider yourself to be transgender or have a trans history?
- No preference

- ▶ Respondents who preferred “Are you transgender?” thought it was straightforward and clear or did not like the do you consider yourself wording or the other question.

“It is concise and easy to understand. It leaves room for the respondent to answer however they interpret the question, whether that's currently trans/transgender, having trans history, etc.”

“The more straight-forward the better. “Do you consider yourself...” feel conditional in a way that undermines the legitimacy of the question/answer.”

- ▶ Respondents who preferred “ Do you consider yourself to be transgender or have a trans history? Thought it was more inclusive

“Sounds closer to how I understand my transness versus how others may perceive me

- ▶ Both of these options work well, more testing may be needed



Sexual Orientation Questions

Question 1

- ▶ Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself? (Check only one)
 - ▶ Lesbian or gay
 - ▶ Straight, that is not lesbian or gay
 - ▶ Bisexual
 - ▶ I use a different term (open text write-in)

Question 2

- ▶ Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself? (Check only one)
 - ▶ Straight
 - ▶ Lesbian or gay
 - ▶ Bisexual
 - ▶ I use a different term (open text write-in)



Question 1

Question 1 A and B

What is your current gender?

Female
Male
Transgender
I use a different term (write-in)

What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?

Female
Male

Question 2 A and B

What is your current gender identity?

Female
Male
Non-Binary/third gender
I use a different term (write-in)

Are you transgender or of transgender experience?

► Yes
► No

N	Q1 A	Q1B
Transgender 49		
	Male	Female
	Female	Male
	Transgender	Female
	Transgender	Male
	Wrote in Trans Woman	Male
	Wrote in Trans Masc	Female
	Wrote in Transgender and Non-binary	Female
	Wrote in Transgender and Non-Binary	Male
Use a different term 47		
	I use a different term- Wrote in Non-Binary	
	I use a different term-Blank/ Other term	
Cis-gender 5		
	Female	Female
	Blank	Female
	Male	Male

Question 2

Question 1 A and B

- ▶ What is your current gender?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Transgender
 - I use a different term (write-in)
- ▶ What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?
 - Female
 - Male

Question 2 A and B

- ▶ What is your current gender identity?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Non-Binary/third gender
 - I use a different term (write-in)
- ▶ Are you transgender or of transgender experience?
 - ▶ Yes
 - ▶ No

N	Q2 A	Q2 B
Transgender 72		
	Female	Yes
	Male	Yes
	Nonbinary	Yes
	I use a different term	Yes
	Missing	Yes
Another gender minority 39		
	Nonbinary	Missing
	I use a different term	Missing
	Nonbinary	No
	I use a different term	No

Transgender

Question 1 A and B

Question 2 A and B

What is your current gender?

Female
Male
Transgender
I use a different term (write-in)

What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?

Female
Male

What is your current gender identity?

Female
Male
Non-Binary/third gender
I use a different term (write-in)

Are you transgender or of transgender experience?

► Yes
► No

Q1 A	Q1B	Q2 A	Q2 B
Transgender	Female	Male	Yes
Transgender	Female	Nonbinary	Yes
Transgender	Female	I use a different term	Yes
Transgender	Female	Missing	Yes
Transgender	Male	Female	Yes
Transgender	Male	Nonbinary	Yes
Female	Male	Female	Yes
Male	Female	Male	Yes
I use a different term (Transgender and Nonbinary)	3 Female 1 Male	Nonbinary	Yes
I use a different term (Transgender and Nonbinary)	Female	I use a different term (Transgender and Nonbinary)	Yes
I use a different term (Trans Masc)	Female	Nonbinary	Yes
I use a different term (Trans Woman)	Male	I use a different term (Trans Woman)	Yes

I use a different term

Question 1 A and B

- ▶ What is your current gender?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Transgender
 - I use a different term (write-in)
- ▶ What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?
 - Female
 - Male

Question 2 A and B

- ▶ What is your current gender identity?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Non-Binary/third gender
 - I use a different term (write-in)
- ▶ Are you transgender or of transgender experience?
 - ▶ Yes
 - ▶ No

Q1 A	Write in	Q2A	Write in	Q2B
I use a different term	Nonbinary	Nonbinary	N/A	Yes
I use a different term	Nonbinary	Nonbinary	N/A	No
I use a different term	All other terms	Nonbinary	N/A	Yes
I use a different term	All other terms	Nonbinary	N/A	No
I use a different term	All other terms	I use a different term	All other terms	Yes
I use a different term	All other terms	I use a different term	All other terms	No
I use a different term	Nonbinary	I use a different term	All other terms	Missing
I use a different term	Nonbinary (plus other terms)	I use a different term	Nonbinary (plus other terms)	Missing
I use a different term	All other terms	Nonbinary	N/A	Missing