The Asymmetry of Gender-Fluid Trends

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Marketers and consumers are rapidly embracing gender-fluid products that fundamentally challenge the conventional associations of masculinity and femininity. In theory, manifestations of gender fluidity in the marketplace respond to shifting gender norms toward more inclusivity. Accordingly, consumers believe that the representation of traditionally male and female styles in these trends should be even. In contrast with these balanced views, this research demonstrates that gender-fluid trends to date skew toward traditionally male styles and that the corresponding adoption of gender-fluid products is driven relatively more by female and nonbinary consumers. Using a multimethod approach (including trend analyses of over 100,000 baby names, deep learning on a dataset of 200,000 products, and a series of experiments), this research defines gender fluidity in marketing; distinguishes it from related constructs such as gender-bending, unisex, and androgyny; and reveals a skewness in gender-fluid trends to date. It further demonstrates that women's and nonbinary individuals' heightened awareness of male advantages in society and lower fear of negative evaluation drive their greater adoption of gender-fluid styles.

Keywords: gender fluidity, androcentrism, male advantage, fear of negative evaluation, multimethod

For centuries, men and women were expected to display their gender and associated societal roles through their dressing styles and consumption practices. For example, in parts of Europe and the United States in the nineteenth century, practical shirts and wide pants symbolized men's societal role as patriarchs and providers. By contrast, women's ornamental and often uncomfortable outfits symbolized their exclusion from the workforce and economic dependence on men (Crane 2000). Back then, the dominant perspective allowed no ambiguity or possibility of deviance from prescribed dress codes.

In the twentieth century, however, women progressively entered the workforce and began adopting more masculine-looking outfits. Simultaneously, men's dress code deviated from the standard masculine styles, becoming increasingly informal and influenced by leisure activities (Entwistle 2023). By the end of the century, previous notions of fixed identities and intolerance of gender ambiguity in dressing styles and consumption practices gradually diminished. Today, the dividing lines between genders have become blurrier than ever, with styles that do not fit conventional gender categories gaining popularity (Thomas 2021). Recently, *Vogue* argued that "The Future of Retail Is Genderless" (Yotka 2020) and labeled gender fluidity "Fashion's New Freedom" (Vogue 2022). Celebrities like Timothée Chalamet and Billie Eilish promote this shift by embracing gender-fluid appearances. Nowadays, almost 40% of consumers in the United States shop for fashion outside their gender identity (Fleck 2023). Seconding these trends, retailers and brands such as Nordstrom, Marc Jacobs, and Gucci have launched gender-fluid collections

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(Cohn 2020; Socha 2020), and gender-fluid designers like Harris Reed and gender-fluid brands like Telfar, The Phluid Project, and Wildfang have entered the market (Herh 2021).

In theory, gender fluidity in the marketplace disregards the normative associations between conventional masculine markers (e.g., herringbone vests) and men and conventional feminine markers (e.g., nail polish) and women (Thomas 2021). Notwithstanding this hypothetical dissociation from conventional gender norms, in all gender-fluid trends, it is possible to determine whether a specific gender-fluid taste or style has historically been associated more with women or men. For example, recent gender-fluid collections feature off-the-shoulder and backless halter tops for everyone, both of which were historically female fashion items. Similarly, the name "Taylor" is now considered gender-fluid in the United States; historically, however, it was a male name, and for decades, it was only given to baby boys. If we trace back to the initial associations of tastes and styles marketed as gender-fluid today, how balanced are the representations of conventionally male and female markers?

We begin this investigation by surveying lay consumers about their normative beliefs about gender fluidity in a pilot ($N = 1{,}205$, 49% female; web appendix A). According to this sample, a truly gender-fluid clothing collection should have a 50:50 ratio of traditionally female to male items (i.e., 48% womenswear to 52% menswear, on average). In contrast with these balanced preferences, however, we propose that actual manifestations of gender fluidity to date depart from this even distribution. We argue that, given the prevailing perceptions of male advantage in societies around the world (Bailey, LaFrance, and Dovidio 2019; Bem 1993), gender-fluid trends so far are heavily skewed toward traditionally male markers and the corresponding adoption of gender-fluid products is driven relatively more by female and nonbinary consumers.

This research contributes to the literature on gender in marketing (Coleman, Fischer, and Zayer 2021; Dobscha 2019; Peñaloza et al. 2023) and on privilege and fear of negative evaluation in psychology (Leary 1983; Pratto and Stewart 2012) by explaining how male advantage and fear of negative evaluation shape consumer behavior in gender-fluid trends. Combining large-scale datasets on names and clothing with a series of online experiments, we show that, due to the dominant position of men in most societies, the other groups (e.g., females) are not only less represented in gender-fluid tastes and styles but also more willing to emulate the more advantaged group (i.e., males) by adopting these markers. These findings suggest the persistence of male-centeredness even in a practice that ostensibly aims to reduce gender inequality and embrace inclusivity.

Moreover, this work provides the first formal definition of gender fluidity as it pertains to consumption and differentiates gender fluidity from similar but conceptually distinct gender-nonconforming constructs, such as gender-bending, unisex, and androgyny (Avery 2012; Dobscha 2019; Peñaloza et al. 2023). We also delineate the distinct adoption patterns of gender-fluid markers vis-à-vis these other forms of gender nonconformity.

In the next sections, we begin by establishing a formal definition of gender fluidity and discussing other forms of gender-nonconforming expression. We then elaborate on the asymmetry of gender-fluid trends and the roles of male advantage and fear of negative evaluation.

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

Gender Fluidity

The literature does not yet provide a formal definition of gender fluidity as it pertains to consumption. Given the recentness of gender fluidity as a market phenomenon, our starting point was an analysis of how designers, brands, and popular culture describe gender fluidity.

Method. We reviewed the first 50 links appearing from organic Google search results and leading to blogs, dictionaries, press articles, and reports for each of the keywords "gender-fluid fashion," "gender-fluid style," and "gender-fluid trend." We chose the keywords in line with our focus on gender fluidity as a form of gender expression, which is particularly relevant in the context of consumption, in which gender is primarily expressed through dressing styles (Paul 2023). As a result, we identified 102 unique links, consisting of 29 blogs (e.g., WebMD, Medium, Heuritech), one dictionary (Merriam Webster), 64 press articles (e.g., *The New York Times*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vogue*), and eight reports (e.g., MarketWatch, Trend Hunter, The Robin Report). We read every source carefully, focusing on how gender fluidity is defined. Whenever available, we also noted how gender fluidity differs from other forms of gender nonconformity. We used an inductive, bottom-up coding approach to broadly and exhaustively identify themes emerging from the data (Glaser 1978; Urquhart 2013).

Through this process, we identified 29 unique open codes, such as "suitable for all genders" and "beyond gender binaries." We then clustered these codes into six higher-level, selective codes, such as "inclusivity" and "challenging traditional gender binaries." In the last theoretical coding step, we related the selective codes to each other. We carefully considered each property for its relevance and specificity to gender fluidity. This step resulted in three primary conceptual properties associated with gender fluidity: a focus on inclusivity, an emphasis on gender expression, and the fundamental challenging of traditional gender binaries.

To identify properties unique to gender fluidity, we compared them with those of other gender-nonconforming categories based on our data and prior literature (Avery 2012; Bem and Lewis 1975; Lieven and Hildebrand 2016; van Tilburg

et al. 2015). This comparison was critical in distinguishing gender fluidity from these other constructs. The data from this coding process and other data in the article are available on Open Science Framework (OSF).

Results. We organized the results of our coding into a cohesive definition of gender fluidity. Specifically, we define gender fluidity in the realm of consumption as "an inclusive gender expression that—over time—fundamentally challenges the conventional associations between traditional markers of masculinity and masculinity and between traditional markers of femininity and femininity." By situating our definition in the context of consumption, we develop a conceptual understanding of gender fluidity that is both indigenous and organic to marketing (Nunes, Ordanini, and Giambastiani 2021).

First, we use the term *inclusive* because gender-fluid styles, products, collections, and brands are designed for "anyone, regardless of gender, size, or body type" (Detto 2023). Gender fluidity embodies a "something for everyone mentality" (Kohan 2023) and targets people of all gender identities: "Many people associate genderfluid fashion with a particular community [such as LGBTQIA+], but that's not the case. Genderfluid fashion is for everyone" (Claudio 2023). Further exemplifying inclusivity, gender-fluid brands such as One DNA continue to expand their sizing beyond the conventional range, offering styles up to 3XL (Claudio 2022).

Second, our definition focuses on gender fluidity as a form of *gender expression*, which needs to be distinguished from a gender-fluid identity. Whereas gender identity asks, "Do you identify as a woman, man, or another gender: essentially, how would you describe your gender identity?" gender expression asks, "How do you show your gender to other people through how you look or act, in other words, your gender expression?" (Katz-Wise 2020). People who identify as gender-fluid do not fit into strict female or male categories and prefer to be flexible about their genders over time (WebMD Editorial Contributor 2021). Although individuals who identify as gender-fluid may express their gender fluidly, individuals who identify as male or female may also incorporate gender-fluid styles in how they express themselves (Kohan 2023). Thus, a gender-fluid expression is not limited to those who identify as gender-fluid; instead, it applies to everyone, regardless of gender identity. Gender-fluid expressions maintain traces of their historical gendered associations but challenge the exclusivity of those associations. For example, when a girl is named "Blake," she does not lose her female identity. Instead, she adopts a marker historically associated with masculinity, questioning its exclusivity, effectively broadening its meaning, and signaling a rejection of gendered restrictions. Over time, through its increasing adoption by baby girls, the name "Blake" evolves to become a fluid identity marker, and consumers with this name send a fluid signal, even though this signal does not have to reflect their core gender identity.

Third, gender fluidity, at its core, fundamentally challenges conventional binary gender associations. We use the expression *fundamentally challenges* because gender fluidity "break[s] down traditional gender barriers and expectations" (Scull 2021). Gender fluidity challenges the societal conventions that create and maintain binary associations of tastes and styles. For example, gender fluidity disregards the association of pants and button-downs with men and of skirts and floral prints with women; "simply said: blue is no longer reserved for boys, and pink is not only for girls; anyone can wear any item and style it as they please with no distinctions based on binary norms" (Mollard 2022).

To fundamentally challenge binary associations, items traditionally associated with a specific gender must be consistently adopted by consumers who do not identify with that gender. For example, when male-identifying consumers increasingly embrace pearl necklaces, these items gain a more fluid connotation (Claudio 2022; Roberts 2020). Thus, gender fluidity reflects a change of traditionally gendered markers on the gender spectrum *over time*.

Importantly, we argue that gender fluidity, compared to other forms of gender nonconformity, represents a moderate deviation from traditional gender norms. This moderate deviation has facilitated the gradual transition of traditionally binary-gendered markers into gender-fluid ones. For example, nail polish has historically been associated with femininity, but the mainstream adoption of muted shades among male consumers illustrates how moderate deviations from traditional gender norms facilitate gender fluidity. Shades like natural and gray, now sold explicitly to men by brands such as Chanel (e.g., Boy de Chanel; van den Broeke 2020), offer a subtler shift compared to more extreme colors like bright pink or red, which may be met with resistance from many male consumers. Celebrities like Shawn Mendes (figure 1) and Harry Styles have contributed to this shift by normalizing nail polish as a form of creative expression for men (Valenti 2024), often opting for muted instead of more extreme colors.

In the context of names, according to data published by the Social Security Administration (SSA), the name Blake was initially only given to baby boys, making it a traditional marker of masculinity. However, since the 1960s, it has been increasingly given to baby girls, illustrating how a moderate deviation from gender norms can facilitate gender fluidity. The name's vowel ending, a feature also commonly found in female names, likely made this shift feel less extreme (Barry and Harper 2000), easing its adoption for girls. Additionally, the endorsement of the name by famous female celebrities like Blake Lindsley and Blake Lively likely reinforced its gradual shift toward a gender-fluid connotation over time.

FIGURE 1

GENDER-NONCONFORMING EXPRESSIONS

Images were retrieved in 2025 from the following links from left to right: https://bit.ly/491JyYx, https://bit.ly/4hexWUc, https://bit.ly/4atNALH, https://bit.ly/3Y4viJE

Gender-Bending

Gender fluidity is different from gender-bending and, in relation to clothing, cross-dressing. Gender-bending and cross-dressing refer to a sometimes-exaggerated imitation of members of the opposite sex through the adoption of styles and products targeted to them without challenging the fundamental binary gender association of those items (Avery 2012). That is, gender-bending maintains the dichotomization of gender and is about adopting products designed and marketed for the opposite sex (Mead 2021). Whereas gender-bending is a sporadic imitation of members of the opposite sex, gender fluidity is an enduring adoption of conventionally gendered items by members of all genders.

Gender-bending can precede markers becoming gender-fluid. For example, the name Blake appeared for the first time in 1883 when it was given to five male infants and no female infants. In 1951 and 1953, the name was only sporadically given to five and six female infants, respectively (indicating a case of intermittent gender-bending rather than gender fluidity, as per our definitions). Then, however, over time, the name kept consistently being adopted by baby girls, and its prominence for baby girls was only accelerated through the influence of female celebrities. However, what makes certain markers transition from gender-bending to gender-fluid, whereas others remain gender-bending?

Gender-bending consumption is perceived as a more extreme form of gender nonconformity than gender-fluid (table 1; web appendix E). Certain markers might inherently be too extreme to become gender-fluid and, therefore, likely remain gender-bending. For example, Scott Galloway, who identifies as male, sporadically wore a red dress specifically designed for women (figure 1). Galloway's dress choice exemplifies gender-bending because it involves a bold and exaggerated adoption of womenswear. In his own words, Galloway notes that dressing in drag likely evokes mixed emotions in observers: "After absorbing the above pic, you are disturbed … but compelled" (Galloway 2021). This sporadic and symbolic adoption of an extreme gender marker aligns with the definition of gender-bending as a temporary imitation of the opposite gender rather than an enduring reinterpretation of traditional gender associations.

In the context of names, according to data from the SSA, the name Jonas was originally given only to baby boys, making it a traditional marker of masculinity. Throughout the years, the name was never really given to female babies except for seven female babies in 1976, eight female babies in 1981–1982, and five female babies in 2004. These sporadic episodes exemplify gender-bending in this context; they did not fundamentally challenge the historical association between Jonas and masculinity. In contrast to the name Blake, which eventually became gender-fluid, the name Jonas ends with the letter *s*, which is a more extreme marker of masculinity and makes it harder for the name to be popularized among female babies (Barry and Harper 2000).

Unisex

Gender fluidity is different from unisex, also known as gender-neutral or genderless. Unisex's neutral aesthetic aligns with dominant social norms of simplicity and nonprovocation, rendering it more socially acceptable than

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCT CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	Gender fluidity	Gender-bending	Unisex	Androgyny
Relationship to gender binary	Actively challenges binary	Reinforces binary through imitation	Ignores binary markers altogether	Blends binary markers within a single appearance
Temporal element	Reflects enduring adoption over time	Sporadic and nonenduring	No focus on temporal shifts	Focus on simultaneous blending
Markers used	Traditionally male or female markers whose exclusivity is being challenged (e.g., pearl necklaces now designed for men)	Markers explicitly linked to the opposite gender (e.g., dresses designed for women worn by men)	Neutral markers (e.g., oversized hoodies)	Uses masculine and feminine markers together (e.g., an outfit that is half masculine suit and half feminine dress)
Extremity of markers	Moderate deviation from gender norms	Extreme deviation from gender norms	Moderate-to-low deviation from gender norms	Extreme deviation from gender norms

more extreme forms of gender nonconformity like gender-bending (table 1; web appendix E). Unisex does not consider the "body and form, fluidity, movement, [or] color" (Mead 2021) and typically offers smaller assortments of loose styles in categories not traditionally associated with any gender (Business of Fashion Team and McKinsey and Company 2022). Some designers have criticized unisex for being too "simplifying," failing to consider the nuances of gender (Mead 2021).

The key difference between gender-fluid and unisex markers lies in their origin. Gender-fluid items begin with a strong association to a specific gender but evolve as their adoption by other genders challenges that association. In contrast, unisex items are designed to be neutral from the outset, without a binary gender history. For example, oversized, color-neutral hoodies and sweatpants exemplify unisex, as they were not originally designed with one particular gender in mind (figure 1). In the context of names, according to data published by the SSA, Storm can be considered a unisex or gender-neutral name. Since its first year of registration (1946), the name has been given to both baby girls and baby boys, and the overall distribution of male and female babies with this name has been relatively even since then.

Androgyny

Last, gender fluidity can be distinguished from androgyny. The term androgyny is derived from the Greek words *andro* (meaning man) and *gyne* (meaning woman), and as its etymology suggests, it typically refers to individuals who simultaneously embody a combination of masculine and feminine traits (Bem and Lewis 1975; Cooke et al. 2022). The combination of both masculine and feminine characteristics can manifest in gender identity, gender expression, and/or biological sex. In terms of gender expression, some celebrities, like Tilda Swinton and David Bowie, have openly embraced androgynous looks and aesthetics, mixing both masculine and feminine markers to create an androgynous appearance. Another example is Michael Urie's look at the 2019 Met Gala, which conspicuously juxtaposed a feminine dress with a masculine suit in a side-by-side look (figure 1). Androgynous styles carry connotations of both masculinity and femininity, presented through juxtaposition within a single look. This deliberate juxtaposition creates a striking and unconventional appearance that deviates more sharply from traditional gender norms than gender-fluid styles (table 1; web appendix E). As a result, androgynous expressions often appear more unusual and are less likely to achieve the broad social acceptance afforded to gender-fluid markers.

Whereas androgyny involves an explicit, contrasting blend of masculine and feminine characteristics within a single appearance (Cooke et al. 2022; Lieven and Hildebrand 2016; van Tilburg et al. 2015), gender fluidity is characterized by a dynamic evolution in how traditional gender associations are understood and expressed over time. In the context of names, according to data published by the SSA, the name Michaelann is androgynous because there is a part that is clearly male (Michael is a male name by itself) and a part that is clearly female (Ann is a female name by itself). Of note, the name is traditionally female and has not been given to male babies. Thus, it does not challenge the traditional association between Michaelann and femininity and, therefore, is not gender-fluid. However, it is an androgynous name because it has both a female and a male component. Similar to Urie's Met Gala look, Michaelann is notably rare in the United States; it has been adopted by only 201 female babies between 1960 and 2013, underscoring its status as an unusual or extreme deviation in naming conventions.

In sum, the constructs of gender fluidity, unisex, gender-bending, and androgyny are distinct but closely related. Table 1 summarizes the constructs' key characteristics.

THE ASYMMETRY OF GENDER-FLUID TRENDS AND MALE ADVANTAGE

The Asymmetry of Gender-Fluid Trends

Social status, being respected and admired by others, is a fundamental human motive and carries a range of psychological and social benefits, incentivizing people to either protect or advance their status, depending on context and current status level (Anderson, Hildreth, and Howland 2015; Magee and Galinsky 2008). Whereas members of disadvantaged, low-status groups are more likely to want to advance their status, members of advantaged, high-status groups focus more on protecting their status (Hoff, Rucker, and Galinsky 2025). In an attempt to advance their status, members of disadvantaged groups tend to mimic and want to associate with the advantaged group more than vice versa (Han, Nunes, and Drèze 2010; Simmel 1957). These general social hierarchy dynamics apply to gender hierarchies.

Throughout history, the majority of societies have been androcentric (Amaral et al. 2019). Androcentrism positions men at the center of society, establishing men's bodies, thoughts, and experiences as the normative standard (Bailey et al. 2019; Bem 1993). This male centeredness has reinforced patriarchies, which place men at the top of the gender hierarchy (Bailey et al. 2019). For example, research shows that androcentric and patriarchic societies use male terms and representations to depict all people (Bailey, LaFrance, and Dovidio 2020). Similarly, in a consumption context, masculine brands are more likely to be perceived as cultural symbols than feminine brands in the United States (Amaral et al. 2019).

Given this prevalent male centeredness in most societies, we argue that masculinity continues to socially dominate femininity even in a cultural and marketplace practice that supposedly aims to *reduce* gender inequality. In other words, when examining current gender-fluid trends (e.g., baby names, fashion products), we expect to see traditionally male tastes and styles becoming gender-fluid more often than traditionally female ones. In the context of names, for example, male names are associated more with success and ambition in life than female names (Mehrabian 2001), thus giving an incentive to parents to adopt these names for their daughters. Therefore, we expect parents to more commonly give their daughters traditionally male names that over time develop a gender-fluid connotation than to give their sons traditionally female names that over time develop a gender-fluid connotation. Consequently, gender-fluid names end up skewing toward masculinity.

We further contend that these asymmetric patterns reinforce the adoption of tastes and styles that have eventually gained a gender-fluid connotation. That is, given the traditional dominance of the male gender, not only are historically disadvantaged groups (e.g., females) less represented in gender-fluid tastes and styles, but these groups are also more willing to emulate the historically advantaged group (i.e., males) by adopting these tastes and styles, ultimately reinforcing male centeredness. Indeed, women and nonbinary individuals may be incentivized to adopt gender-fluid markers as a way to challenge traditional gender binaries and assimilate with the dominating gender group (Peñaloza 1994).

By contrast, men who consume gender-fluid tastes and styles deviate from their dominant group. Advantaged groups are incentivized to stabilize their group's dominant position in the hierarchy (Knowles et al. 2014; Phillips and Lowery 2018, 2020). An effective way of doing so for men is to avoid anything considered feminine and affirm masculinity through consumption (Fugate and Phillips 2010). In line with these assertions, men prefer gender-congruent products more than women and tend to exhibit adverse reactions to the introduction of feminine products by masculine brands (Avery 2012; Neale, Robbie, and Martin 2016). Thus, we hypothesize that female and nonbinary consumers are more likely to adopt gender-fluid tastes and styles than male consumers.

Male Advantage Awareness and Fear of Negative Evaluation

Why are women and nonbinary individuals more open to gender fluidity? We predict that two parallel processes, namely their greater awareness of male privilege and lower fear of negative evaluation, mediate the effect of gender on the adoption of gender-fluid products. As members of the historically disadvantaged group, women and nonbinary individuals are more aware of the benefits that men's position in the gender hierarchy has conferred upon them (Pratto and Stewart 2012) and may use gender-fluid tastes and styles to assimilate with the dominating group. Men's lower awareness of their advantages is due to, at least in part, the normalization of their experiences as the societal standard in androcentric societies, and it serves to preserve the status quo of the current hierarchy and protect their advantaged status (Phillips and Lowery 2020; Pratto and Stewart 2012). As men may perceive their experiences as "normal" more than advantaged, deviance from this normality is perceived as risky (Vandello and Bosson 2013).

In addition to women's and nonbinary individuals' heightened awareness of men's societal advantages, we argue that their lower fear of negative evaluation for deviating from traditional gender norms helps explain their greater willingness to adopt gender-fluid products. Fear of negative evaluation, defined as individuals' apprehension about others' judgment, distress over negative evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and expectation of being judged unfavorably (Watson and Friend 1969), plays a key role in shaping gendered behaviors (Peñaloza 1994). In comparison to womanhood, manhood is experienced as

a precarious status that is confirmed primarily by others and thus requires public proof (Vandello and Bosson 2013). Consequently, men tend to face harsher penalties than women for deviating from traditional gender norms (Carter and McCloskey 1984). For example, attitudes toward homosexual men are more negative than toward homosexual women (Herek 2000), and boys are penalized more than girls for engaging in gender-incongruent play (Langlois and Downs 1980). Men tend to internalize these penalties (Vandello and Bosson 2013), which likely increases their fear of negative judgment when engaging in gender-fluid consumption.

However, how unique is the asymmetric adoption pattern to gender fluidity vis-à-vis other forms of gender nonconformity? We expect that the predicted asymmetry does not systematically extend to these other forms, which, in theory, should also help women assimilate more with men and men assimilate more with women vis-à-vis gender-conforming options. Research on coolness, uniqueness, and norm deviation suggests that moderate departures from convention are appealing, whereas extreme deviations can be socially penalized (Bellezza, Gino, and Keinan 2014; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001; Warren and Campbell 2014). Unisex markers, designed to be gender-neutral and conforming (table 1), should see a relatively equal adoption across genders, as they tend to evoke little fear of negative evaluation. In contrast, gender-bending and androgynous markers deviate so radically from norms, by overtly crossing or blending gender boundaries (table 1), that they should trigger relatively high fear in all consumers, preventing the systematic gender differences we expect for gender-fluid markers. Thus, only for gender-fluid markers, which challenge gender norms incrementally over time, fear of negative evaluation operates within a balanced range between conformity and deviation, in which it is low enough for women and nonbinary individuals but high enough for men to create systematic gender differences in adoption rates.

STUDY 1: ASYMMETRIC FLUIDITY IN BABY NAMES

Study 1 tests our hypothesis about the uneven fluidity of gender-fluid trends on a dataset of names spanning more than a century. The choice of names given to newborns is an important conspicuous decision that parents make, and it has been used in prior work to examine cultural evolution and fashion cycles (Berger et al. 2012; Lieberson 2000; Yoganarasimhan 2017). We downloaded all registered infant names in the United States, beginning in 1880, from the SSA. These data allow us to determine whether gender fluidity is growing and whether traditionally male or female names are driving this trend.

Method

For each year since 1880, the SSA has published a list of the top 1,000 registered names in that year and the number of male and female infants given that name, as indicated by Social Security card applications. We compiled all names from 1880 until 2022 and focused on names with gender that was unambiguous in their year of inception (i.e., only infants of one biological sex were given that specific name when the name appeared for the first time: $N = 101{,}874$). We then analyzed potential departures over time from the initial (or traditional) gender. Consistent with prior work suggesting that it takes two decades for a name to change its connotation (Lieberson 2000), we classified a name as gender-fluid if it was adopted by at least five infants[1] of the opposite sex for at least 20 consecutive years of registration.

We then counted the number of gender-fluid names each year. For example, the name Blake appeared for the first time in 1883 when it was given to five male infants and no female infants. In 1951 and 1953, the name was only sporadically given to five and six female infants, respectively (indicating a case of sporadic gender-bending). Then, in 1962, the name started being consistently given to female infants, and 20 years later, in 1981, the name changed its traditionally male connotation to a gender-fluid connotation. As an illustration, in 2022, the name was given to 1,441 female and 1,573 male infants. We categorized the name Blake as unambiguously male in 1883 and gender-fluid from 1981 onward. Similarly, the name Jamie appeared for the first time in 1884 when it was given to five female infants and no male infants. Then, from 1909 onwards, the name Jamie started being consistently given to male infants, and 20 years later, in 1928, the name changed its traditionally female connotation to a gender-fluid connotation. In 2022, the name Jamie was given to 394 female and 447 male babies. Using this procedure, we identified 2,507 unique gender-fluid names in total.

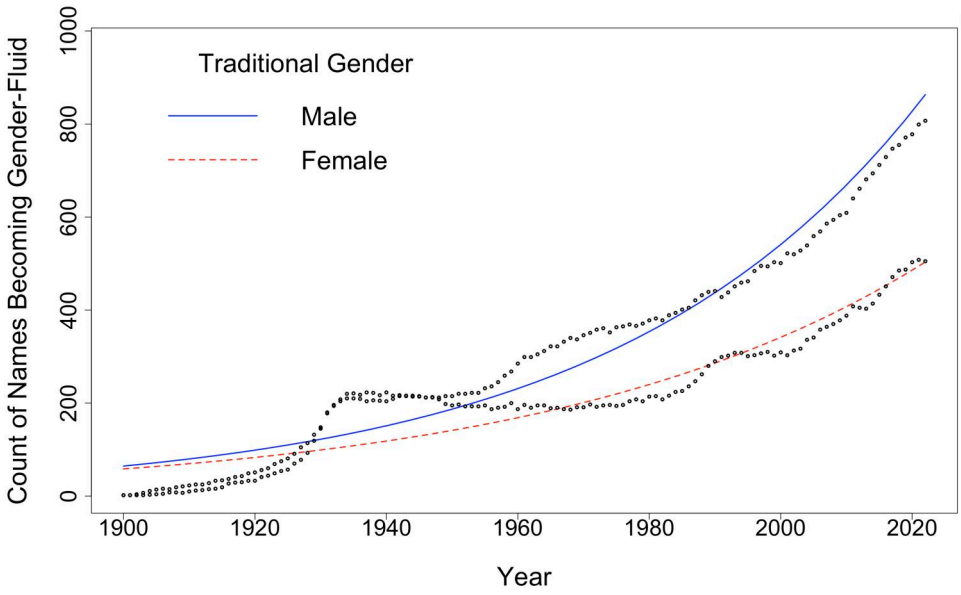
Results

Because the dependent variable is count data involving some overdispersion, we used quasi-Poisson regressions to analyze the data (glm function in R with the family equal to "quasipoisson" setting). All the following results hold when employing Poisson, linear, and negative binomial regressions. According to our classification, the first time any name could be considered gender-fluid was in 1900, so we began our analyses that year. As expected, in any given year between

1 We use a minimum cutoff of five because this is the minimum count reported by the SSA per sex per year. We report sensitivity analyses with cutoffs of 10 and 20 in web appendix B and show the results' robustness. The higher the cutoff, the stronger the results. Also, note that the vast majority of names is only given to a small number of babies, making these cutoffs meaningful. For example, in 2022, 45% of names were given to a maximum of 10 babies, and 65% were given to a maximum of 20 babies.

FIGURE 2

COUNT OF NAMES BECOMING GENDER-FLUID PER YEAR BY GENDER



NOTE.—Dots represent observed data, and lines represent predicted values from the quasi-Poisson regression.

1900 and 2022, the average count of traditionally male names being classified as gender-fluid ($M = 309.36$, SD = 215.75) was significantly higher than the average count of traditionally female names being classified as gender-fluid ($M = 207.24$, SD = 130.11; $b = 0.40$, standard error [SE] = 0.09, $t(244) = 4.59$, $p < .001$). We ran a quasi-Poisson regression on the count of gender-fluid names as the dependent variable with an interaction between traditional gender (coded as 0 for male and 1 for female) and year, with the main effects entered in step 1 and the interaction term added in step 2. In step 1, we found a significant main effect of traditional gender ($b = –0.40$, SE = 0.04, $t(243) = –11.05$, $p < .001$) and a significant main effect of year ($b = 0.02$, SE = 0.00, $t(243) = 34.46$, $p < .001$). In step 2, we found a significant interaction ($b = –0.004$, SE = 0.00, $t(242) = –3.21$, $p = .002$). As figure 2 shows, gender fluidity has been growing, but the slope is steeper for traditionally male names ($b = 0.021$, SE = 0.00, $t(121) = 33.47$, $p < .001$) than for traditionally female names ($b = 0.018$, SE = 0.00, $t(121) = 18.63$, $p < .001$).

Discussion

Study 1 examines gender fluidity in names that had a traditional binary association in their year of inception. We find that names are becoming increasingly gender-fluid overall. However, this trend shows a clear asymmetry, with more traditionally male names becoming gender-fluid than traditionally female names. In conclusion, these results support the predicted skewness of gender-fluid trends toward traditionally masculine tastes.

STUDY 2: ASYMMETRIC FLUIDITY IN CLOTHING

Study 2 generalizes study 1 to the clothing domain and examines the extent to which gendered collections are gender-fluid. In this study, we operationalize gender fluidity in fashion products by examining the error rates in algorithmic categorization between menswear and womenswear. This approach assumes that certain design elements confuse algorithms trained on traditional binary gender classifications, thereby serving as indicators of gender fluidity. If womenswear items are misclassified as menswear, the gender fluidity stems from a skewness toward traditional masculinity, and if menswear items are misclassified as womenswear, the gender fluidity stems from a skewness toward traditional femininity. Specifically, we analyze a large dataset (200,000 product images) of men's and women's clothing collections from Farfetch, a global online retailer. We train a convolutional neural network (CNN) with residual connections and test whether it is more likely to misclassify womenswear as menswear than vice versa. If our hypothesis is correct that female clothing tends to be more gender-fluid and incorporates more traditionally masculine markers than male clothing does with

traditionally feminine markers, we should find that a higher proportion of female products is mistakenly categorized as male than vice versa.

Data

We scraped all images ($N = 255{,}199$) from Farfetch's men's ($N = 103{,}355$) and women's ($N = 151{,}844$) clothing collections (e.g., pants, dresses, jumpsuits, shirts, shorts, skirts, knits, suits, jackets, coats) in December 2022. Farfetch is a global online fashion retail platform that sells products from more than 1,400 boutiques and brands around the world (e.g., AllSaints, Burberry, Ralph Lauren) and thus represents a wide range of designs and brands. Moreover, unlike most online retailers, Farfetch displays its images on the front side, with a single product centered on a homogeneous, clean white background. During training, this aspect ensured that the CNN learned to predict gender only from fashion-related features rather than external factors (e.g., facial features, pose, and hairstyle if a model were present). To further ensure that the CNN only learned attributes specific to clothing items, we manually reviewed the dataset and removed occasional images that included a model. Moreover, we removed images that were accessories rather than clothing items (e.g., towels, bags, hats), as well as images that were cropped and did not show the entire clothing item. This process resulted in 254,572 images ($N_{\text{menswear}} = 103{,}069$, $N_{\text{womenswear}} = 151{,}503$). Note that Farfetch has more images of womenswear than menswear. To ensure that our model learned the same amount of information for each category, we used a random subset of 100,000 womenswear and 100,000 menswear images in our analyses.

Model Selection

Following the work by Ferreira et al. (2018), which categorizes Farfetch's clothing items into categories (e.g., dresses), subcategories (e.g., cocktail and party dresses), and attributes (e.g., flared silhouette, sleeveless, V-neck, mid-length), we used ResNet-50 as a base model. ResNet-50 is a deep CNN consisting of 50 layers leveraging residual connections in its architecture (He et al. 2016). These residual connections allow the model to directly feed information from earlier layers to later layers, which can significantly improve model accuracy (He et al. 2016).

Implementation Details. We implemented our proposed model using Keras with TensorFlow. We used an off-the-shelf CNN ResNet-50 pretrained on the ImageNet dataset.

Image Preprocessing. We resized the images to the ResNet-50 input dimension of 224×224 pixels. During the training phase, we applied random transformations (including flipping, cropping, and rotating) to the input images to perform data augmentation (see figure 3 for a visual depiction and web appendix C for more details). Augmenting the dataset is particularly effective in regularizing deep neural networks (i.e., preventing them from overfitting or memorizing the training data instead of learning attributes of the images that are generalizable to new, unseen data; Krizhevsky, Sutskever, and Hinton 2017).

CNN Architecture

Using random data splitting, we leveraged 60% of the two clothing datasets for training purposes, 10% for validation, and 30% for testing. During training, the model was fed images and learned parameters to optimally predict their corresponding labels: "menswear" or "womenswear." We then used the validation set to monitor the model's performance and prevent overfitting. Finally, we used the testing set to evaluate the model's performance on new data it had not seen before.

For the training process, we used transfer learning, allowing only the final 11 layers of the ResNet-50 to have their weights retrained (Ferreira et al. 2018). Moreover, we added two layers with 64 neurons[2] and 2 neurons and a final activation function to predict whether a clothing item is categorized as menswear or womenswear. We used a softmax activation function to transform the raw outputs of the neural network into a vector of probabilities, thereby making each value interpretable as the probability of membership for each class (Chollet 2021). We used Adam (Kingma and Ba 2015) for stochastic optimization of a binary cross-entropy loss function, which computes the difference between true labels and predicted labels in binary classification models (i.e., the cross-entropy loss). We trained the model for 20 epochs, corresponding to the number of complete passes through the training dataset. The model achieved peak validation accuracy after five epochs (validation accuracy of 0.9373), which we saved for our analysis. Figure 4 summarizes the model's higher-level architecture.

Results

For each product image, the CNN generated a vector containing the probabilities of that product being menswear and womenswear. The model's final prediction for that product (i.e., whether it was predicted to be menswear or womenswear) was determined by selecting the class with the higher probability. As figure 5 shows, within the test data, the number of womenswear items misclassified as menswear (dark gray cell; $N = 2{,}117$ or 7.06%) was higher than the number of menswear items misclassified as

2 We replicated the results using 128 neurons and 256 neurons in the second-to-last layer, which achieved very similar validation accuracies: 128 neurons achieved a maximum validation accuracy of 0.93675 at 10 epochs, and 256 neurons achieved a maximum validation accuracy of 0.93690 at 10 epochs.

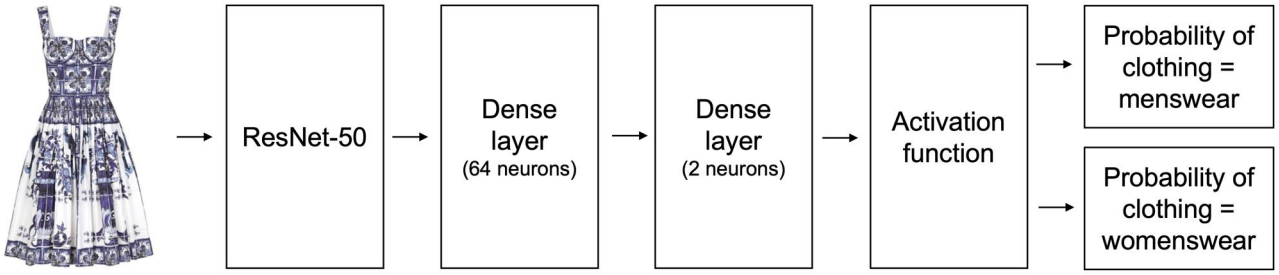
FIGURE 3

IMAGE AUGMENTATION

NOTE.—Product images underwent random transformations.

FIGURE 4

HIGHER-LEVEL ARCHITECTURE OF THE CONVOLUTIONAL NEURAL NETWORK MODEL



womenswear (light gray cell; $N = 1{,}580$ or 5.27% with $\chi^2(1) = 83.12, p < .001$).

Discussion

In study 2, we trained a CNN to analyze the menswear and womenswear collections of the global digital marketplace Farfetch. As predicted, we find that more women's clothing items are misclassified as menswear than vice versa. This finding indicates that the proportion of womenswear that incorporates gender-fluid styles skewing toward traditionally male styles is higher than that of menswear that incorporates gender-fluid styles skewing toward traditionally female styles. This finding further supports the general asymmetry toward male styles detected in study 1 in the context of clothing products.

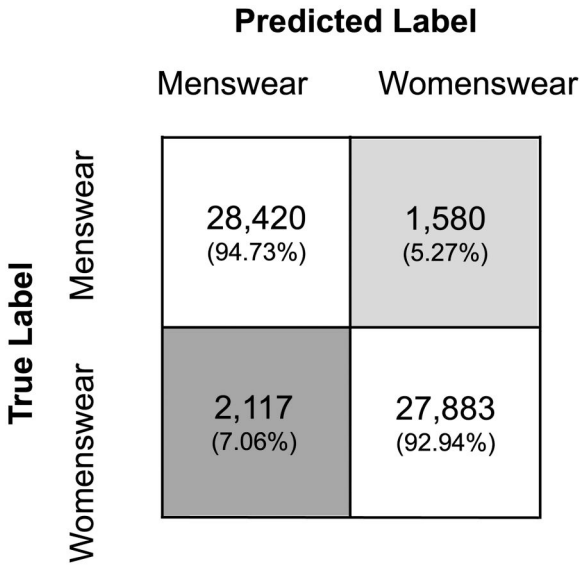
We confirm the CNN's classifications through a human validation study reported in web appendix D. This study demonstrates on a subset of 400 images that human ratings generally align with the CNN's classifications of gendered clothing items, even when the CNN made mistakes. This alignment suggests that the CNN is indeed classifying images based on gender-specific cues rather than other extraneous noise and variety alone. Nonetheless, an inherent limitation of using real-world data and mathematical operationalizations of gender fluidity is that they may not fully reflect consumers' perceptions of gender fluidity. Therefore, in the following experimental studies, we carefully pretest all gender-fluid items against gender-conforming, gender-bending, unisex, and androgynous items.

STUDY 3: DIFFERENTIATING GENDER FLUIDITY FROM GENDER-BENDING, UNISEX, AND ANDROGYNY

Study 1 found that traditionally male names are more often given to female infants than traditionally female names are to male infants, ultimately skewing gender-fluid names toward masculinity. In study 3a, we directly build

FIGURE 5

TEST CONFUSION MATRIX



NOTE.—The numbers in parentheses represent the percentage of instances within their respective row. For example, 94.73% in the top left cell indicates that 94.73% of products sold in menswear were correctly classified as menswear, whereas 5.27% (top right) were incorrectly classified as womenswear.

on these findings and examine this asymmetry more directly in the adoption patterns of gender-fluid names depending on the biological sex of the baby. Consistent with our theorizing, we predict that parents prefer gender-fluid names for their daughters more than for their sons. Importantly, according to our theorizing, we expect that this skewed preference does not systematically extend beyond gender-fluid names to other nonconforming categories, including gender-bending, unisex, and androgynous names. In study 3b, we replicate the findings from study 3a in the context of apparel.

Study 3a

Method. A total of 844 participants on Prolific Academic completed our study, guaranteeing enough power to detect small-to-medium effect sizes at 80% ($d = 0.40$) and 90% power ($d = 0.46$) in each gender-nonconforming condition. To ensure that the names would be relevant to respondents, we kept only participants who were US nationals and native English speakers ($N = 830$; 48.6% female, 1.2% nonbinary, 0.4% prefer not to say; $M_{age} = 41.4$ years).

We randomly assigned participants to one of eight conditions in a 2 (baby sex: male vs. female) × 4 (form of gender nonconformity: gender-fluid vs. gender-bending vs. unisex vs. androgynous) between-subjects design. Participants imagined expecting a baby boy or girl and contemplating names. All participants considered six pretested names (web appendix E) presented in random order. Three names were gender-conforming (i.e., unambiguously male names for the baby boy and unambiguously female names for the baby girl), and three were gender-nonconforming. The gender-nonconforming names were gender-fluid, gender-bending (female names for the baby boy and male names for the baby girl), unisex, or androgynous, depending on the condition. Figure 6 summarizes the experimental design with the three gender-conforming options listed first and the three gender-nonconforming options listed second (arrows indicate random order of names in the study).

Pretesting the names ensured that the selected names were *unambiguously* gender-conforming, gender-bending, gender-fluid, unisex, and androgynous, as per our definitions. Moreover, the selected male and female names did not differ in liking. We also selected names for the gender-nonconforming categories with similar liking (full details in web appendix E). Notably, consistent with our findings in study 1, we chose gender-fluid names with male origins (i.e., Leighton, Reagan, and Darcy).

Participants ranked the names by how likely they were to give the name to their baby: "Please rank the following options based on how likely you are to give the name to your little one (ie, your first choice should be on rank 1, followed by your second choice on rank 2, etc)." Last, we collected participants' gender, age, nationality, and native language.

Results. The dependent variable of interest was participants' preference for gender-nonconforming names. To ease results' interpretation, in the first step, we reverse-coded the rank numbers; that is, a name ranking first choice received a score of 6, a name ranking second choice received a score of 5, a name ranking third choice received a score of 4, and so on. In a second step, we summed these scores for the gender-nonconforming names to arrive at a preference score. The possible maximum score was 15 if the gender-nonconforming names were ranked first (score of 6), second (score of 5), and third choice (score of 4), and the possible minimum score was 6 if the gender-nonconforming names were ranked fourth (score of 3), fifth (score of 2), and sixth choice (score of 1). For example, consider a participant ranking gender-conforming names (Reuben, Julius, and Otto) and gender-fluid names (Leighton, Reagan, and Darcy) for their baby boy according to how likely they are to give any of these names to their son. If they ranked Leighton as first choice (score of 6), Reagan as fifth choice (score of 2), and Darcy as sixth choice (score of 1), they would receive a preference score of 9. A higher preference score indicates a stronger preference for gender-nonconforming names.

Because our goal was to examine whether the asymmetry can be attributed to gender-fluid names rather than any of the other types of gender-nonconforming names, we first ran a

FIGURE 6

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

NOTE.—Name options in the four baby boy conditions are listed in the top row, and name options in the four baby girl conditions are listed in the bottom row. In each box, three gender-conforming options are listed first and the three gender-nonconforming options are listed second. Arrows indicate random order of names in the study.

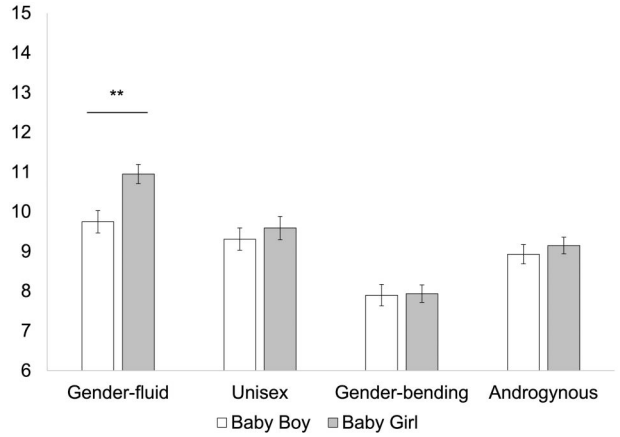
linear regression of baby sex (male = 0, female = 1) and gender fluidity (gender-fluid names = 1; gender-bending, unisex, and androgynous names = 0) on the preference score. In the first step, we entered the main effects and found both a significant effect of baby sex ($b = 0.43$, SE = 0.19, $t(827) = 2.33$, $p = .020$) and a significant effect of gender fluidity ($b = 1.54$, SE = 0.22, $t(827) = 7.15$, $p < .001$). In the second step, we entered the interaction term and, consistent with our expectations, found a significant interaction ($b = 1.02$, SE = 0.43, $t(826) = 2.38$, $p = .017$). As expected, this pattern indicates that gender-fluid names were unevenly adopted, whereas other categories of gender-nonconforming names were not, as detailed in the following contrasts.

Next, we compared the preference scores for each gender-nonconforming category (figure 7). For gender-fluid names, we found the expected asymmetric adoption pattern: Parents were more likely to give a gender-fluid name to their baby girl ($M = 10.95$, SD = 2.38) than to their baby boy ($M = 9.75$, SD = 2.82; $t(201) = 3.29$, $p = .001$, $d = 0.46$). For the unisex names, future parents were as likely to give a unisex name to their daughter ($M = 9.59$, SD = 2.98) as they were to give a unisex name to their son ($M = 9.31$, SD = 2.87; $t(204) = .69$, $p = .490$, $d = 0.10$).[3] For the gender-bending names, we found no difference by baby sex; future parents were as likely to give their daughter a male name ($M = 7.94$, SD = 2.29) as they were to give their son a female name ($M = 7.90$, SD = 2.75; $t(207) = 0.11$, $p = .915$, $d = 0.01$). Along the same lines, future parents were as likely to give their daughters androgynous names ($M = 9.15$, SD = 2.19) as they were to give their sons androgynous names ($M = 8.93$, SD = 2.48; $t(210) = 0.67$, $p = .500$, $d = 0.09$). The overall lower preference scores for gender-bending and androgynous names are consistent with the notion that these types of names may be too nonconforming to create meaningful differences by baby sex.

3 Participants were not more likely to give their sons a unisex name (Nakai, Kao, Lux) than a gender-fluid one. A post hoc analysis, reported in web appendix E, confirmed that the unisex names were the most unusual and slightly less conforming than the gender-fluid names. This pattern likely stems from the fact that names with no gendered origin are quite rare.

FIGURE 7

PREFERENCE SCORE BY GENDER-NONCONFORMING CATEGORY



NOTE.—**$p < .01$, error bars ± standard error.

Study 3 b

Method. Rather than choosing a name for their baby, participants in study 3b make product choices for themselves. The study focuses on different styles of tops: feminine, masculine, gender-fluid, androgynous, and unisex. For the gender-fluid product, we sourced a suit vest, which has been a cornerstone of masculine style since the 17th century (Terzi 2022). Over time, however, women have increasingly adopted this style as well, contributing to its gradual transition from a binary-gendered garment to one with fluid connotations. Recently, the style has been nominated by Vogue as *the* must-have wardrobe stable and is sold by various brands catering to women (e.g., J. Crew, Massimo Dutti, and The Frankie Shop; Jackson 2024).

Following our sample size from study 3a, a total of 803 participants from Prolific Academic completed our study. A total of 798 participants passed an attention check and were included in the analyses[4] (49.1% female, 1.1% nonbinary, 0.1% prefer not to say[5]; $M_{age} = 43.4$ years), guaranteeing enough power to detect small-to-medium effect sizes at 80% ($w = 0.20$) and 90% power ($w = 0.23$).

The study used a 2 (gender identity, measured: male vs. female and nonbinary) × 4 (form of gender nonconformity, manipulated: gender-fluid vs. gender-bending vs. unisex vs. androgynous) design. Participants began by indicating their gender and age. We then gauged preferences for gender-conforming versus nonconforming tops. Participants who self-identified as female viewed a pretested female and gender-nonconforming top, and those who self-identified as male viewed a pretested male and gender-nonconforming top. Participants who self-identified as nonbinary/third gender or preferred not to indicate their gender were randomly assigned to view either the male or female top as the gender-conforming option. Figure 8 summarizes the choice pairs by participants' gender identity and assigned gender nonconformity condition.

The tops were carefully pretested to score higher in their respective gender category (full report in web appendix E). The gender-bending and androgynous tops were perceived as less conforming than the gender-fluid top, which, in turn, was less conforming than unisex and gender-conforming options. In addition, the androgynous top was perceived as particularly unusual. Together, these results suggest that gender-bending and androgynous tops are generally less suitable and socially acceptable than gender-fluid ones. Participants imagined getting dressed for an event: "Imagine you are going to an event and are deciding what to wear," and chose between a gender-conforming top and a gender-fluid [gender-bending/androgynous/unisex] top. We also provided a one-sentence definition of the respective gender-nonconforming construct (e.g., "Unisex, also known as gender-neutral or genderless, refers to styles that are not specifically associated with a particular gender, thus veiling gender expressions"; for full instructions, refer to OSF).

At the end of the study, participants completed an attention check: "Please select 'strongly agree' for this question to show that you are reading the questions in this study carefully" (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

Results. The dependent variable of interest was participants' choice of the gender-nonconforming top. Because our goal was to examine whether the asymmetry can be attributed to gender-fluid tops more than any of the other types of gender-nonconforming tops, we first ran a binary logistic regression of participant gender (male = 0; female, nonbinary, and prefer not to answer = 1) and gender fluidity (gender-fluid top = 1; gender-bending, unisex, and androgynous top-= 0) on the choice of the gender-nonconforming product. In the first step, we entered the main effects and found a significant effect of participant gender ($b = 0.62$, SE = 0.20, $z = 3.04$, $p = .002$) and no significant effect of gender fluidity ($b = 0.25$, SE = 0.22, $z = 1.11$, $p = .265$). In the second step, we entered the interaction term and, consistent with our expectations, found a significant interaction ($b = 1.15$, SE = 0.49, $z = 2.35$, $p = .019$). As expected, this pattern indicates that gender-fluid tops are unevenly adopted more than other categories of gender nonconformity.

Next, we compared the choice for each gender-nonconforming condition. In the gender-fluid condition, women and nonbinary individuals were more than three times as likely to choose the gender-fluid top (27.6%) as male

4 The results do not change meaningfully when including those who failed the attention check.

5 When we report results for women and nonbinary individuals in the manuscript, we also include the few respondents who preferred not to reveal their gender.

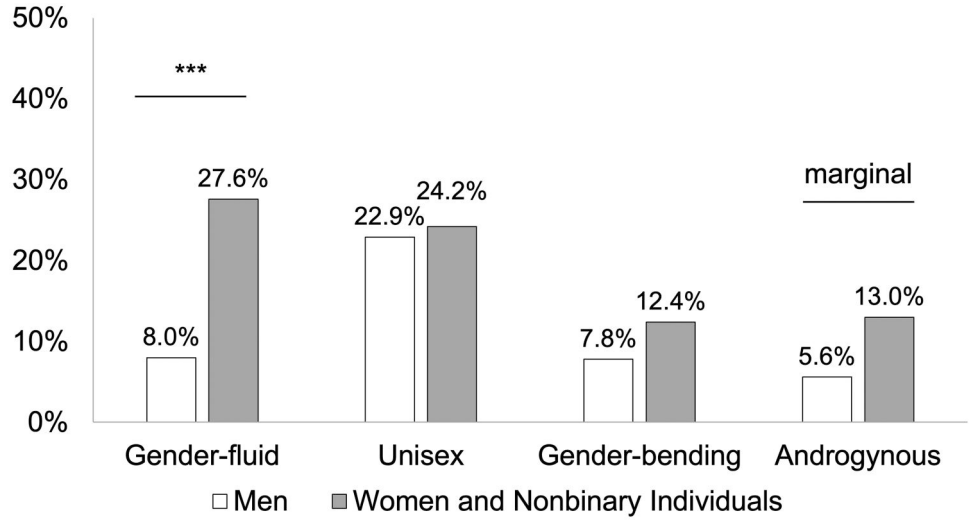
FIGURE 8

PRODUCT CHOICES

NOTE.—Participants saw one pair of tops, depending on their gender identification and condition. The two products were displayed in randomized order

FIGURE 9

CHOICE BY CONDITION AND PARTICIPANT GENDER



NOTE.—$^{***}p < .001$.

participants (8.0%; $\chi^2(1) = 13.00$, $p < .001$, $\varphi = 0.26$; figure 9). Women and nonbinary individuals were as likely to choose the unisex top (24.2%) as male participants (22.9%; $\chi^2(1) = 0.05$, $p = .816$, $\varphi = 0.02$). Similarly, in the gender-bending condition, women and nonbinary individuals were as likely to choose the gender-bending top (12.4%) as male participants (7.8%; $\chi^2(1) = 1.13$, $p = .288$, $\varphi = 0.08$). In the androgynous condition, women and nonbinary individuals were marginally more likely to choose the androgynous top (13.0%) than male participants (5.6%; $\chi^2(1) = 3.02$, $p = .082$, $\varphi = 0.12$).

Discussion

Study 3a demonstrates that parents prefer gender-fluid names for their daughters over their sons. Consistent with our theorizing, we find that the historically disadvantaged group is not only less represented in gender-fluid names (study 1) but also more likely to be given these names (study 3a). Importantly, study 3a distinguished gender-fluid names from gender-bending, unisex, and androgynous names. Although participants were more likely to give their daughters gender-fluid names than their sons, this pattern did not reliably extend to gender-bending, unisex, and androgynous names in our data.

Study 3b replicated these findings in the context of apparel; women and nonbinary individuals were more likely to wear a gender-fluid top than men. Unlike names, which typically remain with people for a lifetime, apparel carries lower stakes for consumers because it is worn temporarily and can be easily changed. Given the lower permanence and stakes associated with apparel, we expected noticeably smaller, though not necessarily absent, gender differences for gender-bending and androgynous items compared to gender-fluid items, which is what our data reflected.

STUDY 4: THE PROCESSES UNDERLYING THE ASYMMETRIC ADOPTION OF GENDER-FLUID PRODUCTS

Study 4 uses an incentive-compatible design to examine the processes underlying the asymmetric adoption of gender-fluid styles. We focus on gender-fluid pearl necklaces. Whereas study 3 focused on gender-fluid names and products that were once considered traditionally male, this study examines a gender-fluid product that was once traditionally female to demonstrate that the asymmetric adoption pattern holds for gender-fluid styles regardless of their binary origin. Men embracing pearl necklaces, a jewelry piece traditionally associated with femininity, has been a gender-fluid trend since 2016,[6] when Pharrell Williams boldly wore layered pearl chains on the Chanel runway. In 2020, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that the latest must-have accessory for men was a pearl necklace, with other celebrities like Harry Styles and A$AP Rocky publicly

6 We argued that it takes at least 20 years for a traditionally gendered name to attain a gender-fluid connotation given the long human lifespan (study 1). However, fashion items have a much shorter life cycle (Richardson and Kroeber 1940), so their connotation may change more quickly.

endorsing the trend (Gallagher 2020). Various news outlets have reported that this trend of men wearing pearls is here to stay (Danziger 2023; Jana 2021), and many brands and retailers now offer pearl necklaces for men (e.g., Supreme × Tiffany's, Mikimoto, Polite Worldwide). Nonetheless, pearl necklaces still have strong feminine associations, and indeed, all pretested necklaces skewed toward feminine over masculine connotations. We identified unambiguously gender-fluid, male, and female necklaces (that were not perceived as gender-bending, unisex, or androgynous) and ensured that the baseline female and male necklaces did not differ in perceived luxuriousness and liking (web appendix E).

In the main study, participants first specify their gender identity and then choose between a gender-conforming and gender-fluid necklace. After an unrelated filler task, we measure participants' male advantage awareness and fear of negative evaluation. As hypothesized, we expect female and nonbinary consumers to be more likely to adopt gender-fluid styles than male consumers, which is driven by their heightened awareness of male advantage and lower fear of negative evaluation. We also address two potential alternative explanations for the uneven adoption of gender-fluid styles: need for uniqueness and variety seeking. That is, one might argue that women have a greater need for uniqueness and seek more variety in the styles they use for self-expression, which leads them to adopt gender-fluid products. This study was preregistered (https://aspredicted.org/stdr-vc4n.pdf).

Method

In total, 821 participants from Prolific Academic participated in our study, and 785 participants passed our preregistered attention check and were included in the analyses (49.2% female, 1.5% nonbinary or prefer not to say; M_{age} = 36.1 years). The study consisted of three tasks: a choice task, followed by an unrelated filler task to reduce demand effects, and finally, a scale-completion task. We began the study by collecting participants' gender and age. In the choice task, we gauged preference for chains and necklaces. Participants who self-identified as female viewed pretested female and gender-fluid necklaces, and those who self-identified as male viewed pretested male and gender-fluid necklaces. Those who self-identified as nonbinary/third gender or preferred not to specify their gender ($N = 12$) viewed either the female or male necklace (randomly assigned) and the gender-fluid necklace.[7] All participants read the following instructions, including our definition of gender fluidity:

> "Below is a product sold under the [women's] men's label and a product sold under the gender-fluid label. Gender fluidity is an inclusive gender expression that—over time—fundamentally challenges the conventional associations between traditional markers of masculinity and masculinity and between traditional markers of femininity and femininity."

Participants viewed the female [male] and gender-fluid products on the same page, presented vertically. On the next page, participants chose between the two products presented horizontally in randomized order (figure 10):

> "Below, we ask you to choose between the two products. You will be entered into a ***lottery*** for your chosen product. That is, there is a chance you will win the product you choose to wear. Which product do you prefer to wear?"

In the unrelated filler task, participants categorized products and rated one of them on several dimensions. In the scale completion task, we measured participants' awareness of male advantage in society with items displayed in randomized order (e.g., "Men are at an advantage because they hold most of the positions of power in society"; "Women are advantaged, and men are currently at a disadvantage" [reverse scored]; 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree; seven items, $\alpha = 0.89$; Case 2007). We also measured fear of negative evaluation with items displayed in randomized order (e.g., "I worry about what other people will think of me if I use a gender-fluid product"; "I am unconcerned even if I know people are forming an unfavorable impression of me for using a gender-fluid product" [reverse scored]; 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree, seven items, $\alpha = 0.87$; Leary 1983). In addition, we measured need for uniqueness (e.g., "I am more likely to buy a product if it is scarce," 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, five items, $\alpha = 0.84$; Lynn and Harris 1997) and variety-seeking tendency (e.g., "I am constantly seeking new ideas and experiences," 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree, five items, $\alpha = 0.81$; Olsen et al. 2016). All scales were presented in random order. Finally, participants could add an optional comment.

Results

Choice of Gender-Fluid Necklace. As preregistered, a chi-square test found that female and nonbinary participants were three times more likely to choose the gender-fluid necklace in the lottery (36.2%) than male participants (12.4%; $\chi^2(1) = 60.04$, $p < .001$, $\varphi = 0.28$).

Male Advantage Awareness. As expected, female and nonbinary participants reported greater awareness of male advantage ($M = 4.91$, SD = 1.41) than male participants ($M = 4.06$, SD = 1.39; $t(783) = 8.52$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.61$).

7 Excluding nonbinary individuals and comparing only female to male participants, as mentioned in the preregistration, does not change the results.

FIGURE 10

PRODUCT CHOICES

Fear of Negative Evaluation. Female and nonbinary participants reported lower fear of negative evaluation for using gender-fluid products ($M = 2.45$, SD = 1.35) than male participants ($M = 3.17$, SD = 1.41; $t(783) = 7.37$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.53$).

Mediation. A binary logistic regression revealed that male advantage awareness increased participants' likelihood of choosing the gender-fluid product ($b = 0.42$, SE = 0.06, $z = 6.56$, $p < .001$, odds ratio [OR] = 1.52, 95% confidence interval [CI] [1.343, 1.723]). Similarly, fear of negative evaluation decreased participants' likelihood of choosing the gender-fluid product ($b = –0.47$, SE = 0.07, $z = –6.80$, $p < .001$, OR = 0.63, 95% CI [0.546, 0.715]).

A parallel mediation analysis revealed the predicted significant indirect effects of male advantage awareness ($b = 0.21$, 95% CI [0.094, 0.357]) and fear of negative evaluation ($b = 0.23$, 95% CI [0.125, 0.366]), with a total indirect effect of $b = 0.44$, 95% CI [0.304, 0.614] (figure 11). In other words, female and nonbinary participants were more aware of male advantage and less fearful of negative evaluation than male participants, which led them to be more likely to choose the gender-fluid necklace. Detailed analyses by gender are reported in web appendix F.

Need for Uniqueness and Variety Seeking. Female and nonbinary participants did not indicate a greater need for uniqueness ($M = 3.19$, SD = 0.96) than male participants ($M = 3.21$, SD = 0.97; $t(783) = 0.36$, $p = 0.715$, $d = 0.03$). Female and nonbinary participants indicated lower variety seeking ($M = 4.20$, SD = 1.19) than male participants ($M = 4.38$, SD = 1.16; $t(783) = 2.13$, $p = .033$, $d = 0.15$). Neither need for uniqueness ($b = –0.02$, SE = 0.09, $z = –0.28$, $p = .779$) nor variety seeking ($b = –0.05$, SE = 0.07, $z = –0.74$, $p = .461$) predicted the choice of the gender-fluid product.

Discussion

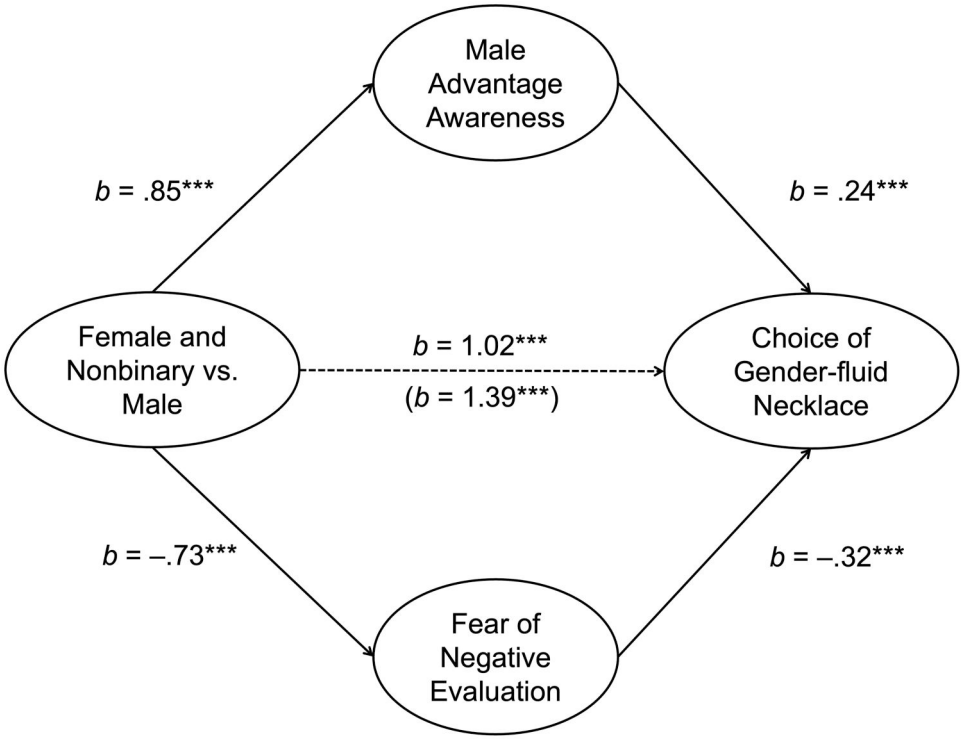
Using an incentive-compatible design, study 4 shows that female and nonbinary consumers are more likely to adopt gender-fluid products than male consumers because they are more aware of male advantages and less scared of being scrutinized for using gender-fluid products. In the next studies, we leverage these findings for marketing implications and manipulate fear of negative evaluation and gender group advantage.

STUDY 5: MANIPULATING FEAR OF NEGATIVE EVALUATION

Study 5 manipulates fear of negative evaluation, a key process identified through measurement in study 4. In study 5, we test whether a fashion event celebrating bold choices mitigates this fear and increases the likelihood of wearing gender-fluid styles. We predict that both men and women will be more likely to adopt gender-fluid fashion in such an environment but that the effect will be more pronounced for men, as their higher baseline fear should make them more reactive to such an intervention. This study's design is inspired by how male celebrities, such as Bad Bunny, Timothée Chalamet, and Harry Styles, confidently embrace gender-fluid fashion on red carpets and at high-profile fashion events.

FIGURE 11

MEDIATION THROUGH MALE ADVANTAGE AWARENESS AND FEAR OF NEGATIVE EVALUATION



NOTE.—$^{***}p < .001$, The total effect of participant gender on choice of the gender-fluid necklace was $b = 1.39$ (logistic regression without mediators). When male advantage awareness and fear of negative evaluation were included in the model, the direct effect of gender was reduced to $b = 1.02$.

Method

We recruited 605 participants from Prolific Academic who completed our study, and 601 who passed the attention check used in study 3b were included in the analyses (48.8% female,[8] 1.2% nonbinary, 0.2% prefer not to say; $M_{age} = 40.0$ years). Participants began by indicating their gender and age. They were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: *low* fear, *high* fear, or control. In the control condition, participants read, "Imagine you're going to a fashion event and deciding what to wear." In the *low* [*high*] fear condition, we added two sentences: "At the event, people who experiment with eclectic styles are celebrated [criticized]. People are judged positively [negatively] for forward-thinking, bold fashion choices." For this study, we used the pretested accessories and tops from studies 3b and 4.

Participants first chose between a gender-conforming and gender-fluid accessory, followed by a gender-conforming and gender-fluid top (figure 12). The procedure followed that of study 3b, with full details available in OSF. Participants were asked, "Which accessory do you prefer to wear to the fashion event?" and "Which top do you prefer to wear to the fashion event?" The gender-conforming and gender-fluid options were presented in randomized order.

Finally, we collected two manipulation check items: "To what extent do you feel judged negatively for wearing bold, fashion-forward fashion at the event? (1 = not at all to 7 = very much)," and "People who wear bold, fashion-forward fashion at the event are judged (1 = very negatively, 4 = completely neutral, 7 = very positively; reverse coded)" ($r = 0.42$).

Results

Manipulation Check. Participants in the *low* fear condition reported a lower fear of negative evaluation ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 1.26$) than those in the *high* fear ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 1.52$; $b = 2.57$, $SE = 0.13$, $t(598) = 19.31$, $p < .001$) and control conditions ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.20$; $b = 1.02$, $SE = 0.13$, $t(598) = 7.68$, $p < .001$). Participants in the control

8 The results hold when only comparing men to women.

FIGURE 12

PRODUCT CHOICES FOR THE FASHION EVENT

condition reported lower fear than those in the *high* fear condition ($b = 1.56$, SE = 0.13, $t(598) = 11.64$, $p < .001$).

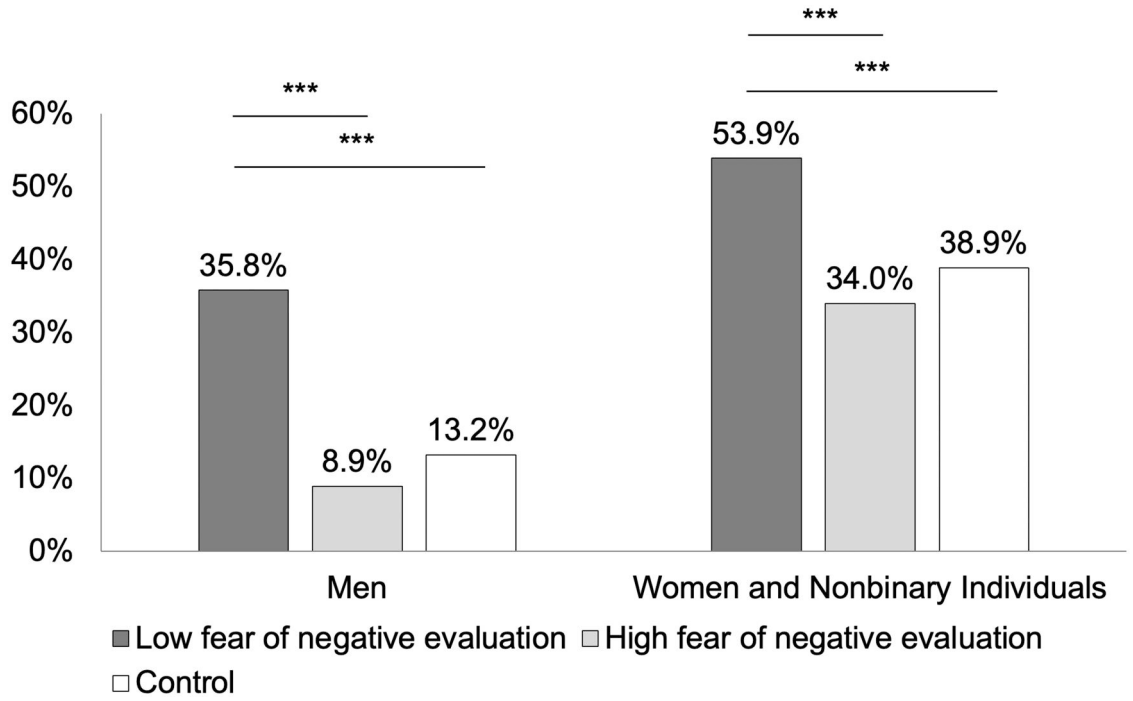
Product Choice. For the following analyses, we transformed the data into long format and ran a generalized linear mixed model, fit by maximum likelihood (GLMM; family setting = binomial for the repeated binary choice), controlling for the product type (top vs. accessory) as a fixed factor. We set the baseline to the *low* fear condition to see whether reducing participants' fear of negative evaluation would impact the choice of the gender-fluid product compared to their unprompted tendencies (control condition) and a state of *high* fear.

In the first step, we ran a GLMM with these settings, including the main effects of participants' gender (male = 1; female, nonbinary, and preferred not to say = 0) and condition (*low* fear vs. control vs. *high* fear), and controlling for product type. The model revealed a main effect of condition, in which participants in the *low* fear condition were more likely to choose the gender-fluid products than participants in the *high* fear condition ($b = –1.48$, SE = 0.23, $z = –6.32$, $p < .001$) and control condition ($b = –1.14$, SE = 0.22, $z = –5.18$, $p < .001$). The model also revealed a main effect of gender, in which men were less likely to choose gender-fluid products ($b = –1.49$, SE = 0.20, $z = –7.44$, $p < .001$). In the second step, we entered the interaction term of participants' gender and condition. The model revealed that the manipulation was relatively more effective for men than for women and nonbinary individuals when comparing the *low* fear to the *high* fear condition ($b = –1.02$, SE = 0.45, $z = –2.25$, $p = .025$). The manipulation was marginally more effective for men when comparing the *low* fear to the control condition ($b = –0.78$, SE = 0.42, $z = –1.85$, $p = .064$).

Men's Product Choice. A repeated-measures binomial logistic regression controlling for product type revealed that men in the *low* fear condition were four times more

FIGURE 13

CHOICE OF GENDER-FLUID PRODUCTS BY CONDITION AND GENDER



NOTE.—$^{***}p < .001$.

likely to choose gender-fluid products (35.8%) than those in the *high* fear condition (8.9%; $b = –2.83$, SE $= 0.63$, $z = –4.53$, $p < .001$) and nearly three times more likely than those in the control condition (13.2%; $b = –2.18$, SE $= 0.57$, $z = –3.84$, $p < .001$). There was no significant difference between the control and *high* fear conditions ($b = –0.65$, SE $= 0.53$, $z = –1.23$, $p = .218$).

Women's and Nonbinary Individuals' Product Choice. Women and nonbinary individuals in the *low* fear condition were almost 60% more likely to choose gender-fluid products (53.9%) than those in the *high* fear (34.0%; $b = –0.93$, SE $= 0.25$, $z = –3.76$, $p < .001$) and control conditions (38.9%; $b = –0.69$, SE $= 0.24$, $z = –2.85$, $p = .004$). There was no significant difference between the control and high fear conditions ($b = –0.24$, SE $= 0.24$, $z = –0.98$, $p = .326$). Figure 13 summarizes the results.

Discussion

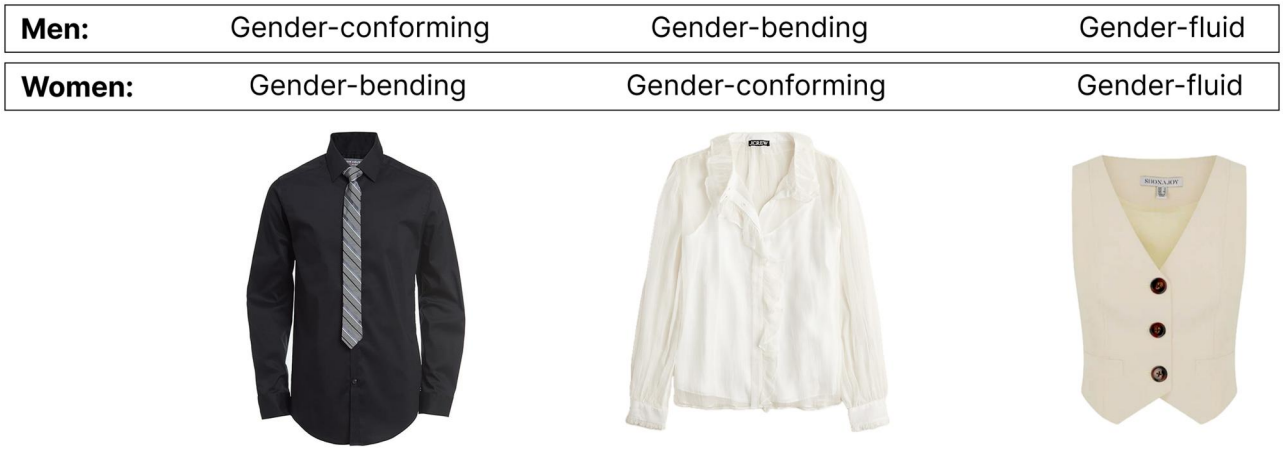
Study 5 manipulated individuals' fear of negative evaluation, one of the key mechanisms driving gender-fluid adoption. Lowering this fear increased both men's and women's adoption of gender-fluid products, though, consistent with our theorizing and study 4's findings, the intervention was more effective for men. Notably, the lack of difference between the control and high-fear conditions suggests that fear of negative evaluation is a baseline concern in fashion contexts and that lowering this fear, rather than raising it, shifts behavior. As a key takeaway, marketers should consider incorporating messaging that lowers this fear of negative evaluation in their marketing of gender-fluid products.

STUDY 6: MANIPULATING GENDER ADVANTAGE

Study 6 further examines the effects of gender hierarchy on the asymmetric adoption of gender-fluid products. We have argued that patriarchal structures create conditions for asymmetric adoption patterns, with historically disadvantaged groups (women and nonbinary individuals) being more likely to adopt gender-fluid products that challenge the existing hierarchy than the historically advantaged group. In study 6, we test this proposition by manipulating gender group advantage in the workplace. Specifically, we test whether the observed asymmetry is attenuated in workplace settings that advantage women. In this design, every participant can choose among the men's, women's, and

FIGURE 14

PRODUCT CHOICES



NOTE.—Figure shows the labels shown to men in the top row and to women in the bottom row. Participants who identified as nonbinary or preferred not to specify their gender were randomly assigned to see either.

gender-fluid tops from study 3b, making the choice sets more coherent among different gender groups and providing a more stringent test of our hypotheses.

Method

The study used a 2 (gender identity, measured: male vs. female and nonbinary) × 2 (advantage, manipulated: male advantage vs. female advantage) design. A total of 806 US participants from Prolific Academic completed our study, and 804 participants who passed the same attention check as in study 3b were included in the analyses (49.3% female, 1.7% nonbinary, $M_{age} = 41.6$ years). After specifying their gender identity and age, participants in the female [male] advantage condition read the following scenario:

> "Imagine you're starting a new job. As you prepare for your first day, you learn that the company is known for its **feminine [masculine] work culture**, where traits like empathy [assertiveness] and collaboration [competition] are valued and rewarded. As a result, **women [men] are often advantaged**. As you choose your outfit for the office, which top do you prefer to wear from the following options? Note, you can layer underneath it and style it however you like."

Participants then saw the gender-fluid, men's, and women's tops, presented horizontally in randomized order. The tops were labeled as gender-fluid, gender-conforming, and gender-bending (depending on participants' specified gender identity; see figure 14), and at the bottom of the page, participants could read the construct definitions. For the full description, see OSF.

At the end of the study, we included two manipulation check items: "To what extent does your workplace advantage men?" (reverse coded) and "To what extent does your workplace advantage women?" (1 = not at all to 7 = very much; $r = 0.63$).

Results

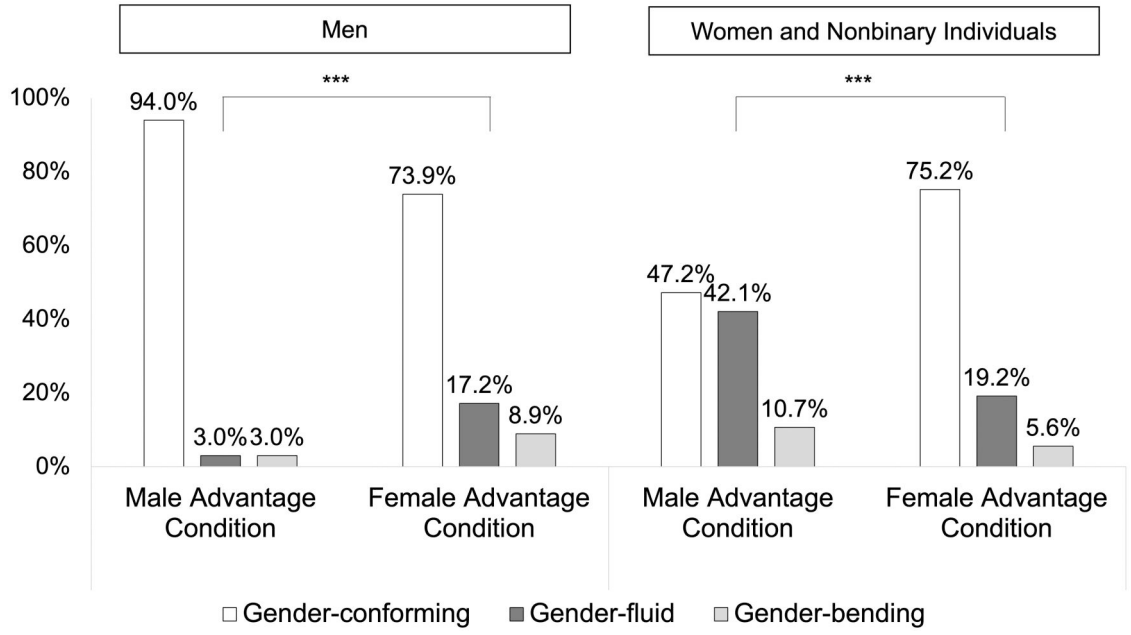
Manipulation Check. The manipulation check confirmed the effectiveness of our manipulation; participants rated their workplace higher on advantaging women in the female advantage condition ($M = 5.22$, SD = 1.50) than in the male advantage condition ($M = 2.77$, SD = 1.40; $t(802) = 24.02$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.70$).

Gender-Fluid Choice. We first ran a binary logistic regression of participants' gender (male = 0, female and nonbinary = 1[9]) and advantage condition (male advantage = 0, female advantage = 1) on the choice of the gender-fluid product. In the first step, we entered the two main effects and found a significant effect of gender ($b = 1.39$, SE = 0.20, $z = 6.92$, $p < .001$) and a marginally significant effect of condition ($b = –0.31$, SE = 0.18, $z = –1.71$, $p = .088$). In the second step, we entered the interaction term and found the expected significant interaction ($b = –3.03$, SE = 0.51, $z = –5.95$, $p < .001$). Male participants were almost *six times* more likely to choose the gender-fluid option in a workplace that favored women (17.2%) than in a workplace that favored men (3.0%; $\chi^2(1) = 22.31$, $p < .001$, $\varphi = 0.24$). Conversely, female and nonbinary participants were *twice* as likely to

9 The results hold when comparing only men to women.

FIGURE 15

CHOICE OF TOPS BY GENDER AND ADVANTAGE CONDITION



NOTE.—$^{***}p < .001$; figure highlights findings for gender-fluid choices.

choose the gender-fluid option in a workplace that favored men (42.1%) than in a workplace that favored women (19.2%; $\chi^2(1) = 25.40$, $p < .001$, $\varphi = 0.25$). In the context highlighting male advantage, the asymmetric adoption patterns observed in the more naturalistic setting in study 3b replicated and increased in magnitude; women and nonbinary individuals were 14 times more likely to wear the gender-fluid top than men ($\chi^2(1) = 88.26$, $p < .001$, $\varphi = .47$). Notably, in a context that favors women, the observed asymmetric adoption pattern for gender-fluid products was fully attenuated; men were as likely (17.2%) as women and nonbinary individuals (19.2%) to use the gender-fluid product ($\chi^2(1) = 0.29$, $p = .592$, $\varphi = 0.03$; figure 15). For space reasons, additional results are reported in web appendix G.

Discussion

Study 6 manipulated which gender group is advantaged in the workplace. As predicted, workplaces that reward feminine traits encourage men to adopt gender-fluid products, attenuating the asymmetries observed in our other studies. Marketers can leverage this finding by highlighting female advantages when targeting men and male advantages when targeting women and nonbinary consumers. In relative terms, men's behavior shifted more dramatically in response to the reversal of the traditional hierarchy, suggesting that their lower baseline awareness of privilege makes them more responsive to such cues. In contrast, women and nonbinary individuals, already more attuned to male advantages, were less sensitive to these contextual shifts.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Although gender-fluid products have gained momentum in the marketplace in response to calls for greater inclusivity (Thomas 2021), we analyze data on over 100,000 names and 200,000 clothing products to reveal imbalances toward conventionally male markers in gender-fluid names and gendered clothing products. A series of online experiments demonstrates that women and nonbinary individuals are more willing to emulate men by adopting these markers. This asymmetric adoption does not systematically extend to other forms of gender-nonconforming expressions and is primarily driven by women's and nonbinary individuals' heightened awareness of male advantages in society and lower fear of negative evaluation. Building on these findings, two studies manipulate fear of negative evaluation and gender group advantage to demonstrate conditions under which the asymmetry can be attenuated.

Theoretical Contributions

This work responds to recent calls to study the fuller spectra of gender phenomena (Dobscha 2019; Peñaloza

et al. 2023) by establishing a clear definition of gender fluidity as it pertains to marketing and consumption and by differentiating gender fluidity from gender-bending, unisex, and androgyny (Avery 2012; Bem and Lewis 1975; Lieven and Hildebrand 2016; van Tilburg et al. 2015). We integrate the literature on gender in marketing and sociology (Coleman et al. 2021; Dobscha 2019; Peñaloza et al. 2023) and privilege and fear of negative evaluation in psychology (Knowles et al. 2014; Leary 1983). Specifically, we explore how male advantage, along with the dominated group's heightened awareness of this advantage and reduced fear of negative evaluation, shapes consumer behavior in gender-fluid trends.

We show that, due to the traditional privileging of the male gender in most societies, the historically disadvantaged groups (e.g., females) are not only less represented in gender-fluid tastes and styles but also more willing to emulate the more historically advantaged group (i.e., males) by adopting these markers. As an ironic consequence, by moving toward the male gender through their adoption of gender-fluid tastes and styles, women and nonbinary individuals inadvertently reinforce the male centeredness prevalent in societies around the world. By the same token, men's relative reluctance to adopt gender-fluid styles also reinforces male centeredness. These findings suggest the persistence of male centeredness even in a marketplace practice that supposedly aims to *reduce* gender inequality.

We demonstrate that reducing consumers' fear of negative evaluation and highlighting the advantages of women in certain settings make men more likely to adopt gender-fluid products, attenuating the prevalent asymmetry. Last, this work expands the traditional toolkit of consumer behavior research by applying a residual CNN on a dataset of 200,000 products.

Future Research and Practical Implications

Several important possibilities for future research arise from our findings. First, examining how gender fluidity will further evolve would be a fruitful direction. With the public endorsement of gender fluidity by popular celebrities and iconic brands just beginning, gender fluidity will likely become even more widespread in the future. However, how will the asymmetry evolve? Work in progress on how political ideology shapes consumer response to historically underrepresented identities in marketing communications suggests that conservatives may react less favorably to gender-fluid products than liberals (Haltman et al. 2025). Similarly, one of our preliminary tests revealed a positive correlation between liberalism and male advantage awareness. These preliminary findings suggest that whether the asymmetry increases or decreases over time will likely depend on the political climate.

Second, future research could explore whether our findings extend to more geographic and cultural contexts. In an interview with the founders of the gender-fluid clothing brand TWIN (https://www.twin.nyc), we learned that large urban areas provide more opportunities for gender-fluid brands due to population density and diverse cultural perspectives compared to more sparsely populated rural areas. Besides urbanization, our findings in study 6 suggest that the asymmetry might be mitigated or even reversed in more matrilineal and gynocentric societies, such as the Khasi in India.

Third, researchers could explore how our results intersect with domains of identity, such as social class and ethnicity. For example, building on research suggesting that high-status individuals have more autonomy (Bellezza 2023; Bellezza et al. 2014), future studies could examine whether high-status consumers are more prone to adopt gender fluidity than low-status consumers. Similarly, researchers could draw from work on the interactions between racial and gender stereotypes and examine whether our findings are amplified among Black people, who tend to be more associated with masculinity than White and Asian people (Galinsky, Hall, and Cuddy 2013).

Fourth, whereas our work focuses primarily on names and fashion, as these are core domains of gender expression (Entwistle 2023), future research could explore the adoption and representation of gender fluidity in other domains, such as food and beverages, automotive, beauty, technology, entertainment, and health care. Understanding how different industries incorporate gender fluidity into product design, marketing communication, and brand positioning would provide an even more comprehensive understanding of its impact on consumer behavior.

Moreover, future research could further explore how consumers who express themselves gender-fluidly are perceived. Initial findings from an exploratory study suggest that, in line with our key results, male consumers who use gender-fluid products are perceived as less cool than female and nonbinary consumers engaging in the same type of consumption. Future work could explore boundary conditions and process evidence for these preliminary results.

Finally, our work has an important takeaway for marketers. Given that the current asymmetry of gender fluidity in the marketplace counters consumers' normative beliefs (i.e., the extent to which traditionally male and female styles *should* be represented), marketers might face potential backlash and criticism in the future if this asymmetry comes to light. To turn this risk into a market opportunity, marketers could work to ensure a more even inclusion of different styles in their gender-fluid products, collections, and brands. Our studies 5 and 6 demonstrate effective alternatives to skewing gender-fluid products and collections toward traditionally male styles: Marketers can encourage consumers not to care about what others think of them, and they can highlight female advantages to incentivize men to adopt gender-fluid products. Additionally, the founders of

the gender-fluid brand TWIN shared that they often choose male-identifying models to showcase their gender-fluid products. They explained that presenting these items on male models helps male consumers envision themselves using such products, aligning with the implications of our research. In conclusion, this work sheds light on how gender fluidity is expressed in the marketplace and how these dynamics shape engagement.

DATA COLLECTION STATEMENT

Data for the pilot study were collected on Amazon Mechanical Turk (via CloudResearch) in winter 2021/2022 and analyzed by the first and second authors. The archival data for study 1 were collected in the summer of 2023 from the SSA and analyzed by the first and second authors. The data for study 2 were collected in winter 2022 from Farfetch.com through a web scraping service hired on Fiverr. The research assistant—who supervised the data collection, led the development of the CNN, and conducted the data analysis for study 2—was recruited at Columbia Business School. The data for study 3a were collected in the winter of 2023/2024 on Prolific Academic and analyzed by the first and second authors. The data for studies 3b, 4, 5, and 6 were collected in the spring of 2025 on Prolific Academic and analyzed by the first and second authors. The data for study 3a's pretests were collected on Prolific Academic in winter 2023/2024 and in summer 2025 and were analyzed by the first and second authors. The data for study 4's pretests were collected on Prolific Academic in spring 2024 and in summer 2025 and were analyzed by the first and second authors. The data for the human-validation study were collected on Prolific Academic in fall 2024 and were analyzed by the first and second authors. The data for study 3b's pretest were collected on Prolific Academic in spring 2025 and were analyzed by the first and second authors. The Google search data for defining gender fluidity were collected in the summer of 2023 and analyzed by the first and second authors. The code and data of all the experimental studies in the article are available at https://osf.io/zkx27/.

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