UBC Social Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS) Sustainability Program

Student Research Report

The Influence of Mandates on Reception of Gender Inclusive Washrooms

Anna MacLennan, Kun (Kramer) Li, Wei (Lampo) Zeng, Lei (Robin) Wu, Ning (Story) Hu

University of British Columbia

PSYC 321

Wellbeing, Community

April 5, 2018

Abstract

What is an effective way to introduce UBC students to and elicit more positive attitudes, perceptions, and demand towards gender inclusive washrooms? Based on prior research on provincial norms and in-group biases, we hypothesize that mentioning an institutional (UBC) mandate will create more positive attitudes, perceptions, and demand towards gender-inclusive washrooms than a provincial (BC) mandate will. We had two conditions; in the first condition we described the mandate as being an institutional mandate, and in the second it was described as a provincial mandate. Participants were randomized into each condition. In the survey, we examined UBC students' perceptions and attitudes on two kinds of gender inclusive washrooms: single-stall washrooms and multi-stall washrooms. In the second part of the study, we asked our participants if they would like to have more gender inclusive washrooms, and if they did, which location they would want them to be built on. Our hypothesis was not supported; the survey responses show higher support from the provincial mandate group than the institutional mandate group. However, our hypothesis was supported by the mean number of map points indicated in each condition; the institutional mandate showed higher demand.

Keywords: Mandate, Gender-inclusive washrooms, provincial norms, general norms,

The Influence of Mandates on Reception of Gender Inclusive Washrooms

Introduction

Washrooms are a ubiquitous part of our daily lives and easy, comfortable access to them is often taken for granted by people who conform to cis-heteronormative. Gender/sex-binary washrooms can be exclusionary for trans, gender non-binary individuals and other people whose appearances may not conform to gender norms. Many vital social institutions do not include washrooms that accommodate gender identity or expression, with universities being a prime example. Universities are built upon a system that requires individuals to classify themselves into gender dichotomies by playing host to many gendered spaces, such as dormitories and washrooms. Policies are being updated to rectify this issue. In particular, the *BC Human Rights Code* was amended on July 26, 2016 to explicitly add gender identity or gender expression as grounds for protection and accommodation. This amendment was made to align the *BC Human Rights Code* with human rights legislation across Canada. On December 6, 2016, The University of British Columbia approved a change to the UBC Policy #3 on discrimination and harassment, to include "gender identity or expression." This provided UBC with an important opportunity to make reparations to communities that had been excluded in the past. UBC has created the Accessible Washrooms Working Group, which aims to raise awareness of washroom accessibility on campus and has begun to build gender-inclusive (GI) washrooms. One question that arises from these new efforts is how to best raise awareness on the issue of GI washrooms.

Goldstein, Cialdini, & Griskevicius (2008) were the first to classify descriptive norms into two types depending on the reference group: general norms and provincial norms. They presented hotel guests with either a provincial norm sign (the majority of guests staying in the same room reused towels), or a general norm sign (the majority of the guests staying in the hotel reused towels). They found that participants were more likely to reuse towels when presented with the provincial norm. Surprisingly, provincial norms were more influential than general norms even when the reference group in the general norm was manipulated to be socially closer to the participants (e.g. similar gender identity), than the groups in the provincial norms. A growing number of studies have supported Goldstein et al's (2008) findings, demonstrating that provincial norms are more effective at encouraging participants to engage in sustainable behaviours, such as energy conservation and recycling (Fornara, Carrus, Passafaro, & Bonnes, 2011; Schultz, Khazian, & Zaleski, 2008). In explaining the mechanisms behind these findings, some researchers have posited that spatial distance, a dimension of psychological distance, may be a closer reference group in provincial norms than general norms (Trope, Liberman, & Wakslak, 2007). Zhang & Wang (2009) also found spatial distance to be more influential than social distance when the two were tested together. Thus, it could be argued that spatial distance not only explains why provincial norms affect people's behaviours more, but also why physical environment is more important than social relationships between people and their reference groups.

In addition to provincial norms and spatial proximity, our study also draws on in-group biases. From a social identity approach, group norms have a significant impact on individuals who feel as though they belong within that group (White, Smith, Terry, Greenslade, & McKimmie, 2009). The process of psychologically belonging to a group causes beliefs,

behaviours, attitudes and perceptions to be drawn in line with the position that is advocated by the in-group (Terry, Hogg, & White, 2000). The impact of in-group norms on beliefs and attitudes varies as a function of the strength of identification with the group (White et al., 2009).

The current study aims to determine the best way to inform UBC students about the new policy to build more gender-inclusive washrooms. This is important because the topic of gender-inclusive washrooms has been controversial in the past (Pilling, 2006). Because gender-inclusive washrooms are such an important issue in ensuring that gender-variant individuals are protected and accommodated, it is important that institutions develop ways to discuss the topic with the public that can engender positive attitudes and openness. We can draw on prior research on provincial norms and general norms, as well as in-group biases to develop a theory for how to inform students. In the current study we have two conditions. The first condition draws on provincial norms as well as high in-group belonging by presenting the mandate to build more GI washrooms as a UBC mandate. The second condition uses a general-norm and low in-group belonging by presenting the mandate to build more GI washrooms as a BC province mandate. Our hypothesis is that the institutional (UBC) mandate, being geographically closer to the students being surveyed, as well as engendering more in-group belonging, will show more positive attitudes, perceptions and demand for GI washrooms than the provincial (BC) mandate.

Methods

Participants. This study draws from a population of UBC students. We had 84 participants in total, but 3 of the participants did not follow the instructions and we discarded their data, which makes our final population 81 participants. The participants are randomly assigned to either the provincial condition (N = 39) or the institutional mandate condition (N = 42). We had 49 female, 28 male, one transgender and one non-binary participants; two of the participants were not willing to reveal their gender. We collected our data from the AMS Nest, UBC Life Building (Old Sub), Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, Walter C. Koerner Library, Forest Sciences Centre and Engineer Student Centre at random times on campus.

Measures. We used Google Form to generate the survey, and Google Maps to create the heat map. The results were analyzed by SPSS (IBM Statistical Product and Service Solutions). Our dependent variable was whether participants were assigned to the institutional condition or the provincial condition. The independent variables were the participants' responses to the survey questions and the number of locations that the participants placed on the Google Maps. We measured the mean differences of participants' Likert scale ratings from 1-7 on their desire to use multi-stall and single-stall GI washrooms, comfort to use multi-stall and single-stall GI washrooms and satisfaction with GI washrooms. We also have nominal and ordinal data on preferences for types of washroom, support for mandates to build more GI washrooms, and whether UBC should build more GI washrooms. The heat map was used to measure demand for GI washrooms and mean differences between conditions. We included a few open-ended questions to assess participants' attitudes, opinions and beliefs.

Procedure. The survey took around 5 minutes for participants to complete. There were two parts of the experiment. For the first part, the participants are asked to do an online survey,

and for the second part, participants added desired locations for GI washrooms on a Google Maps.The online survey had two versions and each version contained four sections. Version 1 contained the provincial mandate for gender-inclusive washrooms (BC Mandate group), and the other version contained the institutional mandate for gender-inclusive washrooms (UBC Mandate group). Participants all read a consent form and indicated their consent by continuing with the survey (section 1). Section 2 included a short paragraph about either the provincial or institutional mandates of gender-inclusive washroom and explanations of the difference between single-stall and multi-stall washrooms. Participants then completed the survey (session 3) on single/multi-stall gender inclusive washrooms. The last section was a demographic session, including questions about age, gender, sexual orientation, and whether they were UBC students or not. In the second part, we ask the participant to place a marker on the name of any building that they would want to have gender-inclusive washroom in. They could place as many marks as they wanted, and were also assured that they could put no markers if they did not desire any.

Results

In terms of intent to use multi-stall gender inclusive washrooms, students who read UBC mandate (M = 4.88, s = 1.86) are less likely to use gender inclusive washrooms compared to students who read BC Provincial mandate ($M = 4.90$, $s = 1.97$), $t(53) = 0.04$, $p > 0.05$). Moreover, students' intention to use a single-stall gender inclusive washroom was not statistically different between UBC mandate ($M = 5.20$, $s = 1.82$) and BC Provincial mandate ($M = 5.33$, $s = 1.52$), $t(37) = 0.25$, $p > 0.05$. Furthermore, 71.4% of participants in BC Provincial condition support UBC's effort to build more gender-inclusive washrooms while only 61.9% of the participants in the UBC condition did. With regard to the number of map points, UBC condition participants chose more locations than the provincial mandate group, with a mean of 4.72 versus the BC mean of 4.05. The range was very large from 0 to 31 in UBC mandate condition and 0 to 24 in BC provincial mandate condition. However, there is no statistical significance between two conditions, $t(79) = -0.59$, $p > 0.05$. For detailed Cohen's d value, see Table 1.

Discussion

We hypothesized that the institutional (UBC) mandate, being geographically closer to the students being surveyed, as well as engendering more in-group belonging, will show more positive attitudes, perceptions and demand for GI washrooms than the provincial (BC) mandate. Our results did not support our hypothesis. We found that the provincial mandate showed more positive ratings than the institutional mandate in all of the likert scale ratings and nominal data. However, our results did hold when we measured the demand for GI washrooms using the Google map data.

We found that the preferences for the specific type of gender-inclusive washrooms varied between both conditions. Both conditions reported single-stall (SS) washrooms as the preferred choice between multi-stall (MS) and SS washrooms. The provincial condition induced slightly more interest in MS washrooms than the other condition. Most of the participants in the provincial condition chose "Either" of the GI washrooms as their preferred option for GI washroom usage. Overall, the same amount of participants chose SS washroom or either as their

preferred choice for GI washroom usage. The provincial condition advocated more support for future GI washrooms construction while the institutional condition had more participants choose not to express any opinion toward GI washrooms. This may suggest that the institutional condition produced less interest in the topic. Generally, most of the participants chose to support future construction of GI washrooms while only a few rejected the idea. There were no differences between the conditions when we asked the participants whether UBC should build more GI washrooms, and overall students believed that UBC should build more GI washrooms.

A possible explanation for our results could be that participants were responding to the level of authority in our conditions instead of the spatial proximity or in-group belongingness. They may have deferred to the provincial mandate as having more authority than the institutional mandate. Prior literature has found that higher levels of authority cause more obedience from participants (Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Koslowsky, Schwarzwald, & Ashuri, 2001; Raven, Schwarzwald, & Koslowsky, 1998). Individuals are frequently rewarded for behaving in accordance with the opinions, beliefs and directives of authority figures (Cialdini & Trost, 1991), which could have led to our participants showing a more positive reaction to the provincial condition. It is also possible that participants actually felt a stronger in-group belongingness to the province, rather than the university; however, we did not measure participant belongingness and cannot comment on this relationship.

Our study had several limitations. Our sample size was not large enough for our study to have significant power, and generalizability is limited by the fact that we only gathered data from a student sample. We had significantly more female participants than male participants. Among the sampling locations we chose on campus, most of them were located in the central part of UBC, although we tried to overcome the problem by adding more samples in the south part of the campus post-presentation. This issue potentially made our heat map biased, as the locations in which we gathered data may have caused participants to be primed to report higher demand in those areas. Although we produced a protocol for how to approach the potential participants, it was noticed that not all researchers complied with the protocol. We noticed in the data that the researchers who did follow the protocol had participants that generally reported a higher number of locations than the researchers who did not follow the protocol. Sampling was done by convenience, and researchers did approach some friends which may have affected the results. The use of Google Maps was, in hindsight, a problematic way to collect data. There was a learning curve involved, and not all participants may have understood the instructions. They may have been discouraged from adding data points because of this. It came to our attention that different researchers may have been using different default starting points when presenting the map to participants. This may have affected our heat map data, and the default distance scale of the map (i.e. how zoomed in the map was initially) was not kept consistent. Some of the questions included in the both surveys did not use linear scale and limited our data analyses (i.e. Q14 only provided 3 options instead of a scale). See Appendix B. Although we initially proposed our study based on research into belongingness, we did not measure belongingness in the survey. This means we are unable to determine whether belongingness could have explained some of our results.

This study has several strengths and can add to existing literature. We took previously well-established theories used in consumer and environmental behaviour research and applied it to a newly emerging problem in order to produce directly applicable recommendations. The

introduction of GI washrooms is a new issue, and there is a gap in the literature related to this topic. Our study begins to bridge this gap. We allowed participants to freely answer questions about their opinions and suggestions, which produced valuable information about the public's opinions on GI washrooms that can be readily used by UBC in the future. A significant strength is that we visualized the demand of GI washrooms on campus for our clients by using a heat map that reflected the most popular locations on campus (see fig. 5).

There are several recommendations for future studies. In order for the results to have more power, a larger sample size and random sampling is required. To test the hypothesis that belongingness may have accounted for our inconsistent findings, a measure of belongingness could be added to the survey. Instead of using a digital map, a paper map with all of the locations labelled on it could be printed out for participants to pinpoint on the map in a tangible way, so the distance scale is the same and all of the locations are visible without the participants having to manipulate the map to search for them. Having a physical map would also decrease the amount of error caused by participants not understanding how to use Google maps. There were several questions on our survey that were asked using a nominal scale that could have been adapted to a linear scale. Future studies could amend this so that all data could be analyzed using inferential statistics.

Recommendations to Clients

Based on our results, it may be more beneficial for UBC to focus on increasing the number of gender-inclusive washrooms as being a provincial mandate, rather than being an institutional mandate. It may be that the authority of the province is stronger than the authority of the institution, which could influence students to be more supportive as they defer to greater authority (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). However, our results were not statistically significant, and they went against prior literature, suggesting more research is needed before we can truly recommend this to our clients.

Having both single-stall washrooms and multi-stall washrooms in the same building may better serve everyone's need since there are differing preferences for the type of GI washrooms. Although the majority of participants from both conditions support the idea of having more gender-inclusive washrooms, some people specify that they are more comfortable with using a single-stall washroom than entering a multi-stall washroom. We have some suggestions on how exactly these two kinds of gender-inclusive washrooms should be placed in a building. Firstly, UBC can have both single-stall and multi-stall washrooms built on every floor of a building; however, this may take up too much space of a floor. Therefore, another suggestion is that UBC can have single-stall washrooms and multi-stall washrooms on alternating floors. One last suggestion is that UBC can combine single-stall washrooms within multi-stall washrooms. By replacing some of stalls with an enclosed, single-stall washroom. In this way, a lot of space in a building can be saved for other uses. Overall, most of our participants indicate that convenience was the most important reason regarding which type of washroom they would use (i.e. whether or not gender inclusive washrooms were closer to them than gender binary washrooms). Finally, in order to best meet UBC students' need, we suggest that UBC bring up the three solutions we have mention or other solutions UBC can think of for UBC students to vote on.

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Tables

Table 1

Cohen's d effect sizes

	N = 42 Mean UBC	**N = 39** Mean BC Province	Mean Difference	Cohen's *d* Effect Size
Will use MS	4.82 (1.87)	4.96 (1.81)	-0.14	-0.08*
Will use SS	5.07 (1.83)	5.2 (1.54)	-0.13	-0.08*
Comfort using MS	5.24 (1.64)	5.65 (1.58)	-0.41	-0.26*
Comfort using SS	5.48 (1.36)	5.76 (1.2)	-0.28	-0.22*
Satisfaction with UBC's GI washrooms	4.89 (1.50)	5.23 (1.39)	-0.34	-0.24**

* Small effect size. **Medium effect size. Standard Deviations appear in parentheses below the means

Figures

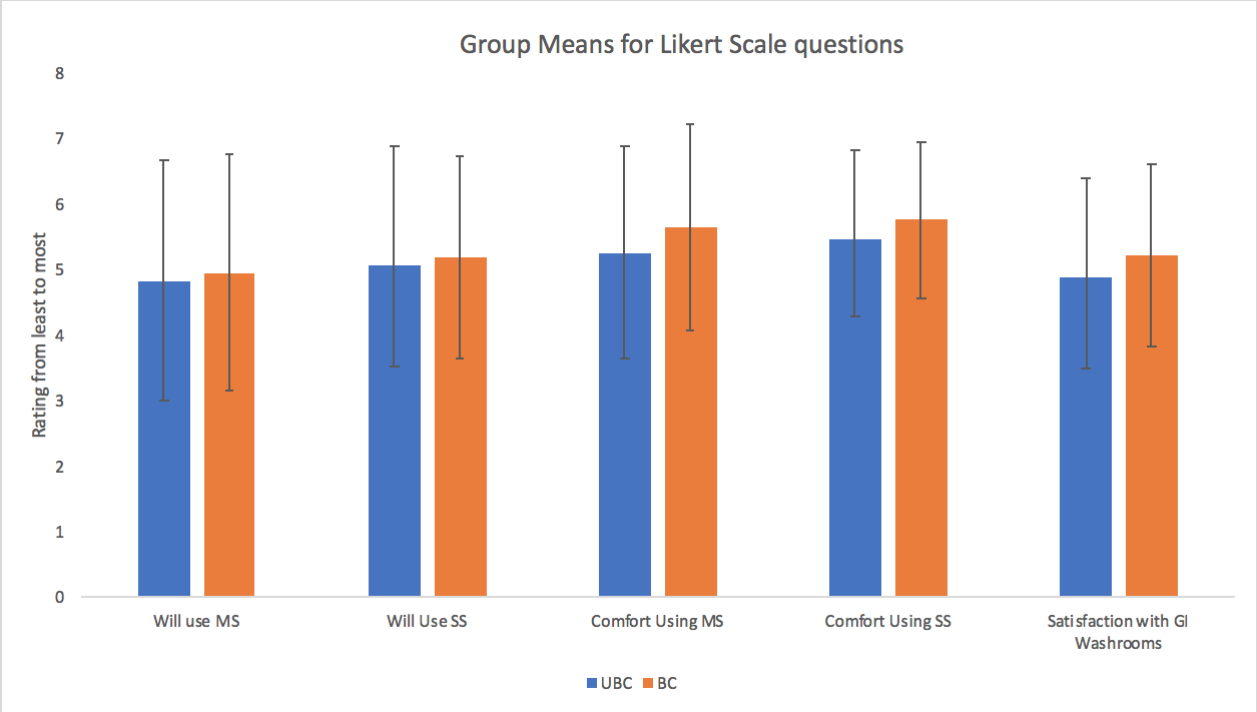

Figure 1. Group means for Likert scale questions

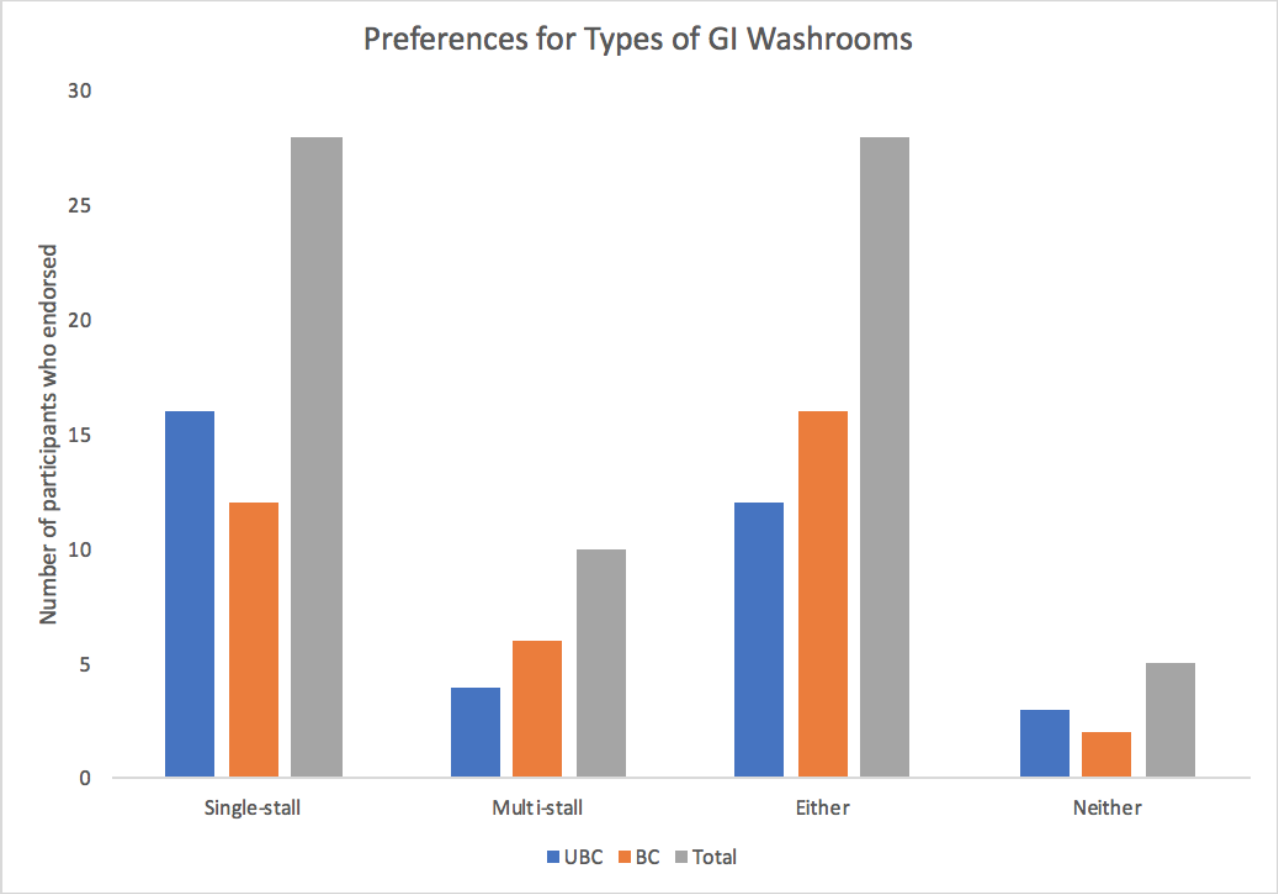

Fig 2. Preferences for types of GI washrooms

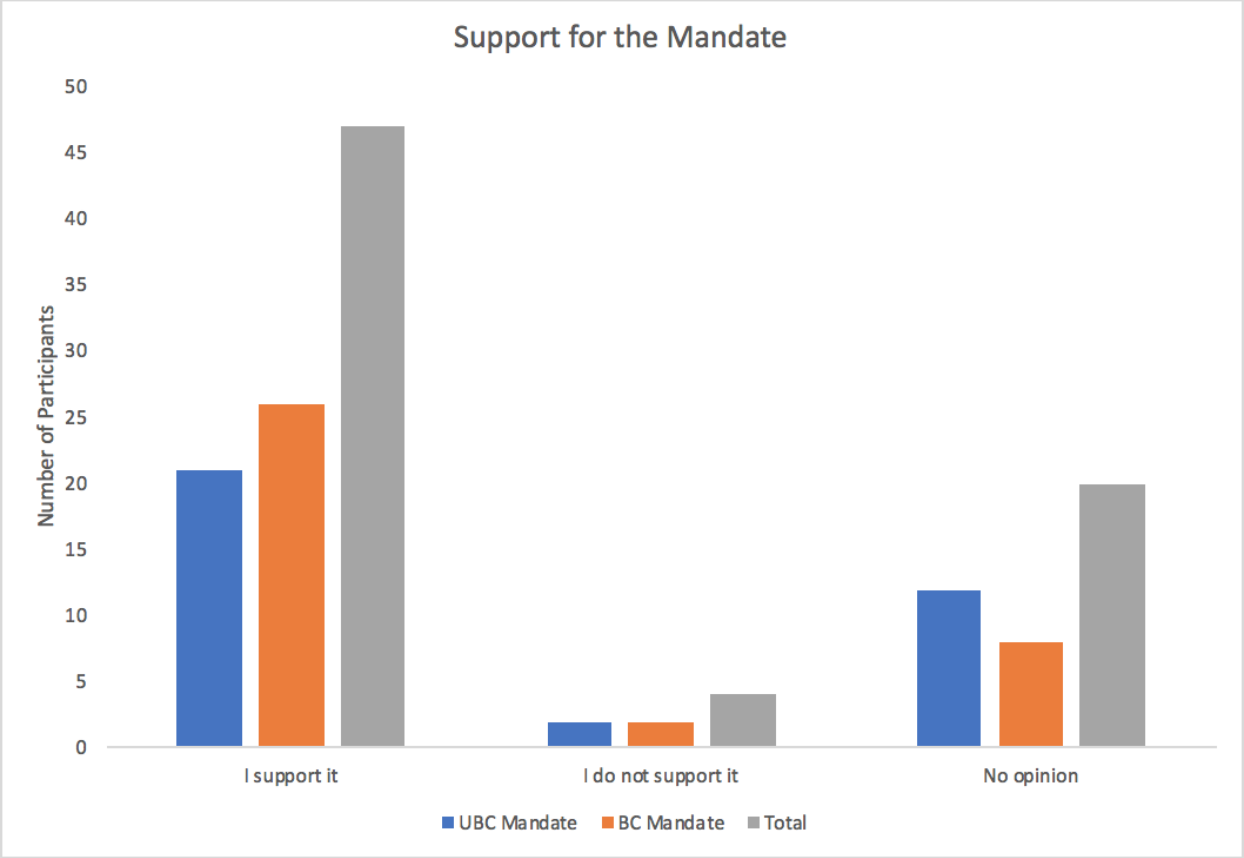

Fig 3. Support for building more GI washrooms

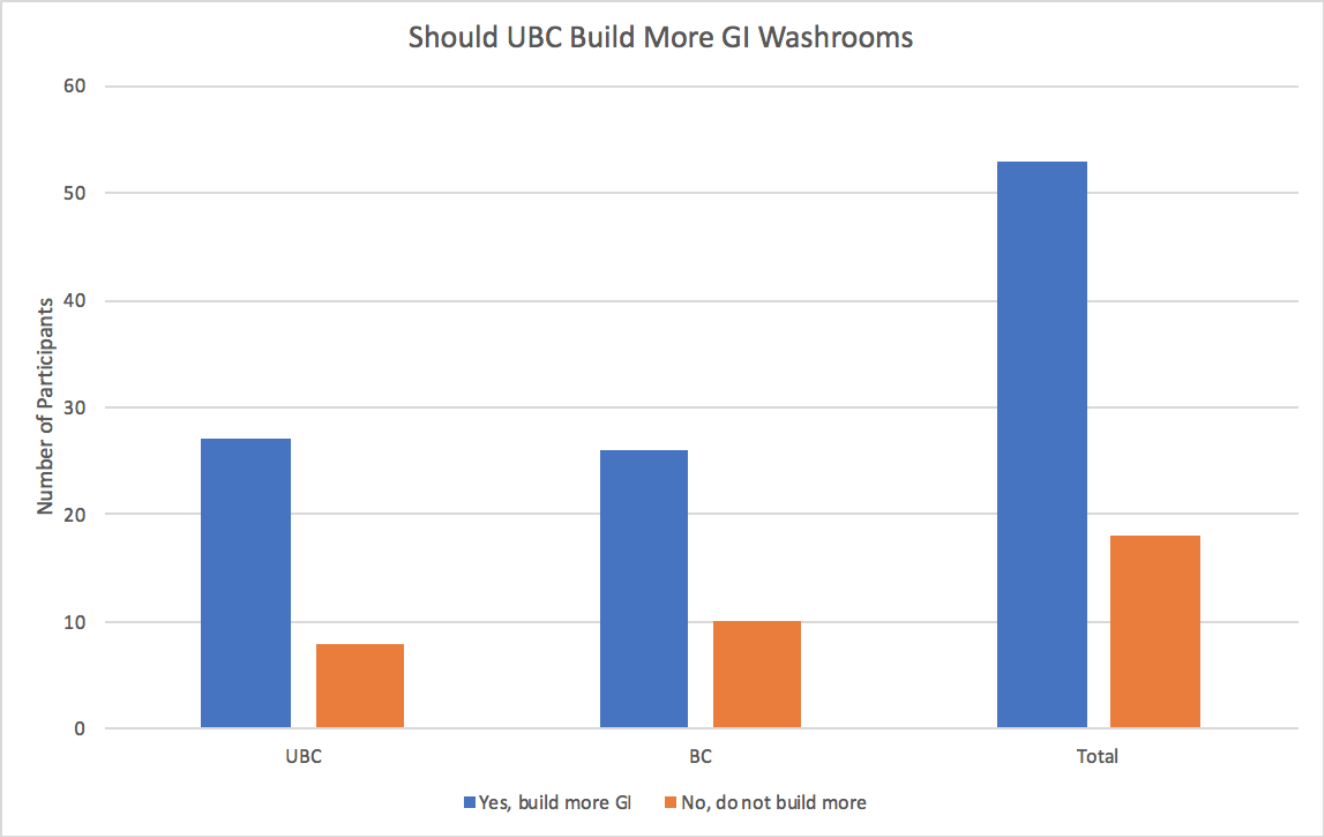

Fig 4. Should UBC build more GI washrooms?

Fig. 5. Heat map of locations in campus that have the highest demand for GI washrooms

Appendices

Appendix A. Experimental manipulations

The following is our manipulation for the provincial mandate:

The British Columbia government has responsibility for, and is committed to, providing its students, staff and faculty with an environment dedicated to excellence, equity and mutual respect; one that is free of discrimination and harassment; and one in which the ability to freely work, live, examine, question, teach, learn, comment and criticize is protected. Therefore, UBC's Equity and Inclusion office and Access and Diversity office are working together to provide students with access to gender inclusive washrooms under the Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

And the manipulation for the institutional mandate:

The University of British Columbia has responsibility for, and is committed to, providing its students, staff and faculty with an environment dedicated to excellence, equity and mutual respect; one that is free of discrimination and harassment; and one in which the ability to freely work, live, examine, question, teach, learn, comment and criticize is protected. Therefore, UBC's Equity and Inclusion office and Access and Diversity office are working together to provide students with access to gender inclusive washrooms under the Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

Appendix B. Survey questions

1. Do you know about the multi--stall gender -inclusive washroom in the new Life Building (The Old Sub)? *

Mark only one square.

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

2. Have you used the gender -inclusive washroom in the new Life Building, or other single--stall washrooms on campus? *

Mark only one square.

- ❑ Yes, I've used the multi--stall- gender -inclusive washroom in the old sub, but not others
- ❑ Yes, I've used single--stall- gender -inclusive washrooms on campus, but not the other I've used both.
- ❑ I've used neither.

3. If you haven't used the multi--stall gender--inclusive washroom on campus, will you use it? (Skip this question if you have used one)

Mark only one square. (1 to 7 a likert scale)

1. Definitely Will to 7. Definitely Won't

4. Why or why not?

_____

_____

5. If you haven't used a single--stall -gender -inclusive washroom on campus, will you use it? (Skip this question if you have used one.)

Mark only one square. (1 to 7 a likert scale)

1. Definitely Will to 7. Definitely Won't

6. Why or why not?

_____

7. How comfortable did you feel when using the multi--stall gender- inclusive washroom? (Skip this if you haven't used it.)

Mark only one square. (1 to 7 a likert scale)

1. Definitely Will to 7. Definitely Won't

8. What is (are) your reason(s) for your answer in the previous question?

Tick all that apply.

- ❑ Safety
- ❑ Convenience
- ❑ Hygiene
- ❑ Inclusivity
- ❑ Concerns about sharing space with different sex/gender
- ❑ Other:

9. How comfortable did you feel when using a single--stall gender- inclusive washroom? (if you haven't, skip this question.)

Mark only one oval. (1 to 7 a likert scale)

1. Definitely Will to 7. Definitely Won't

10. What is (are) your reason(s) for your answer for the previous question?

Tick all that apply.

- ❑ Safety
- ❑ Convenience
- ❑ Hygiene
- ❑ Inclusivity
- ❑ Reserved for people with handicap
- ❑ Concerns about sharing space with different sex/gender
- ❑ Other:

11. Overall, how satisfied are you with the gender-inclusive washrooms on campus? (Skip this question if you haven't used any.)

Mark only one oval. (1 to 7 a likert scale)

1. Definitely Will to 7. Definitely Won't

12. Some gender -inclusive washrooms are single-s tall, and some others, like the one in the new Life Building, are multi- stall. Which one do you prefer to use?

Mark only one square.

- ❑ Single--stall washrooms
- ❑ Multi--stall washrooms

- ❑ Either
- ❑ Neither

13. If you think that you won't use a gender- inclusive washroom at all, what is (are) your reason(s)? (Skip this question if you will use one.)

_____

_____

14. How do you feel about UBC's effort to build more gender- inclusive washrooms?

Mark only one square.

- ❑ I support it.
- ❑ I do not support it.
- ❑ No opinion.

15. Would you like more gender- inclusive washrooms on campus?

Mark only one square.

- ❑ Yes.
- ❑ No.

16. Do you have any other comment, question or concern about the multi--stall- gender- inclusive washroom or/and single--stall- gender- inclusive washrooms?

_____

_____

Demographic Information

17. What is your age? *

_____

_____

18. What is your gender?

Mark only one square.

- ❑ Man
- ❑ Woman
- ❑ Trans
- ❑ I prefer not to provide an answer.
- ❑ Other:

19. What is your sexual orientation?

Mark only one square.

- ❑ Heterosexual/straight only
- ❑ Heterosexual/straight mostly
- ❑ Heterosexual/straight somewhat more
- ❑ Bisexual
- ❑ Gay/lesbian somewhat more
- ❑ Gay/lesbian mostly
- ❑ Gay/lesbian only
- ❑ Other:

20. Are you a student of UBC?

Mark only one square.

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Other:

Appendix C. Protocol used to recruit participants and run the experiment.

Preparation:

- Set up at a table
- Open survey and google maps and have them ready. Put them into full screen to minimize any distractions for the participants
- On the google maps, make sure that you are zoomed in on the UBC campus, that all of the layers are unchecked so you cannot see already placed markers, and that you have created a new layer with the appropriate participant ID https://drive.google.com/open?id=19tdn33-Gq55V88Y1Ps3ef9ZHIE09O0lX&usp=sharing

- Make sure that for every participant you are alternating version 1 and 2 of the study
  Version 1:
  https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeJVCLKUMlCex58fua1YI6fomEChoUKJ4ygZEcDOWEfWV0bNg/viewform
  Version 2:
  https://docs.google.com/forms/d/132u11rCqZUCiGCyGmp_nfYLOfJ1-PVfKoc7jCYU9I4Y/edit

- Make sure laptop is charged

When asking a participant to participate:

Ask people walking past and sitting down

"Hello, can I have a minute of your time?" If they say yes, you can continue…

"I am working on a group project for PSYC 321, environmental psychology. We have a five-minute survey about UBC washrooms followed by a short map task. We would really appreciate it if you had the time to fill it out. If you don't have time that's ok."

If they say no: thank them for their time.

If they say yes:

Make sure the correct survey (version 1 or 2) is open.

Thank them and then give them your laptop and offer them a place to sit if they are not already seated. "The first page is the consent form. Please make sure to read the page right after the consent form and when you are done I will put in the participant ID for you to continue. Once you are done the survey let me know, and I will show you the map task."

Move a little way away so that you cannot see the computer screen, but so that the participant can still find you when they are done.

When the participant informs you they are done the survey, switch tabs to the google maps. Make sure that all of the layers are unchecked and you cannot see any markers on the map before handing it back to the participant.

"You will now complete a map task. Please place a marker by clicking on the name of any building that you would want to have a gender inclusive washroom in and then select 'add to map'. You may pick as many locations as you want and it is ok to put no markers as well. You may zoom in and out as much as you would like in order to find the buildings you want."

Then show them how to place a marker and add it.

Ask them if they have any questions before letting them begin. Stand apart from them as they do this.

When they indicate they are done, thank them for their time and ask them if they have any final questions. Answer any questions they may have and then let them go.