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Why Won't She Break Rules to Promote Service? Effects of Gender, Gender Identification, and Honesty

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1 **Why won't she break rules to promote service? Effects of gender, gender identification and**
2 **honesty**

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1. Introduction

With a total of 80 million tourists visiting the United States (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2019) and the hospitality industry employing 9 million people in 2018 (U.S. Travel Association, 2018), the hospitality industry presents a unique opportunity for employees and guests with diverse backgrounds to interact (Charles, 2018). Considered the intangibility and interactive nature of hospitality services (Hennig-Thurau, 2004; Teng & Barrows, 2009), it is difficult for hospitality employees to always follow policies, procedures, and guidelines when serving guests (Lai et al., 2014). Hospitality employees are expected to customize guests' experience (Lai et al., 2014) and improvise during service encounters (Secchi et al., 2019). Thus, prosocial rule-breaking to promote service (PSBS) – defined as employees' behaviors that violate organizational rules intending to provide superior service (Morrison, 2006) – can be common in the hospitality industry (Curtis, 2014).

In addition to the prosocial intentions, PSBS is different from deviant rule-breaking in terms of the type of rule-breaking involved (Ghosh & Shum, 2019). Instead of rules that threaten the organizational functions (e.g., safety rules, attendance policy), PSBS involves breaking service-related rules, such as standard operating procedures and service guidelines (Ghosh & Shum, 2019). PSBS can potentially acquire and retain valued guests (Dahling et al., 2012). However, employees engaging in PSBS can be penalized (Ghosh & Shum, 2019). As such, PSBS depends on employee's dispositional characteristics and personal values (Dahling et al., 2012; Morrison, 2006). The lack of examination of PSBS in the hospitality industry makes it difficult to predict who is more likely to engage in these potentially desirable rule-breaking behaviors (see Curtis, 2014 for an exception).

1 In particular, employee gender can be an important, **but yet overlooked**, determinant of
2 PSBS because of the gender diversity in the hospitality workplace and **gender's effect on one's**
3 **workplace rule-breaking tendency** (e.g., Anwar et al., 2011; Portillo & DeHart-Davis, 2009).
4 **Indeed, gender diversity is evidenced by a 51% vs 49% women-to-men distribution in the U.S.**
5 **frontline hospitality workforce (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018a).** Contrary to the
6 traditional thoughts that women have better service performance (Bharadwaja et al., 2018;
7 Fischer et al., 1997; Xu et al., 2020), some preliminary evidence showed that women may have a
8 lower level of PSBS (Curtis, 2014; Morrison, 2006). **To reconcile the contradiction**, we seek to
9 understand why female hospitality employees show fewer PSBS by examining the potential
10 boundary condition and the psychological mechanism on the relationship. **Such an examination**
11 **can help explain the gender difference in PSBS, allowing practitioners to better manage the**
12 **increasingly diverse workforce and provide unconventional service in an unpredictable**
13 **environment.**

14 **Moreover, the hospitality workplace is diverse in both biological gender and the extent to**
15 **which people identified with their gender.** As the LGBTQ community makes up 4.5% of the U.S.
16 population (Williams Institute, 2019), people are less likely to consider gender as a men/women
17 binary (Gender Spectrum, 2019). As a result, biological gender can be insufficient to understand
18 employee's behaviors (Drass, 1986). **To manage this increasingly genderless hospitality industry**
19 **(Human Rights Campaign, 2019)**, it is necessary to study the moderating role of gender
20 identification – defined as the extent to which an individual perceives gender to be central to
21 their definition of self-identity (Schmader, 2002) – on the relationship between employees'
22 (biological) gender and their service-related behaviors, such as PSBS.

1 To understand why female employees disengaging in PSBS, we examine the mediating
2 role of honesty – a key factor in hospitality career development (Brownell, 1994) and rule-
3 breaking (Lee et al., 2005). Honesty can be interesting not only because males and females have
4 differentiated development in honesty (Hogue et al., 2013; Grosch & Rau, 2017; Muehlheusser
5 et al., 2015), but also because the conflicting (i.e., prosocial and rule-breaking) natures of PSBS
6 requires ones' subjective determination of rights and wrongs. By examining honesty-PSBS
7 relationship, we highlight the needs to provide service-related training along with integrity
8 training to solve a potential problems: increasing honesty can have an unintended side-effect of
9 reducing employee's PSBS — desirable behaviors that improve service (cf. Lai et al., 2014).

10 In sum, we draw on the social identity theory and gender research to address the reason
11 why and the condition under which female hospitality employees engage in fewer PSBS. We
12 examine the research questions systematically with two studies. Study 1 tests the moderating role
13 of gender identification on the relationship between gender and PSBS. Study 2 extends Study 1's
14 findings by testing the mediating role of honesty. By doing so, we intend to contribute to gender
15 and PSBS research in three major ways. First, we add to existing studies that showed female
16 hospitality employees as better service providers (Bharadwaja et al., 2018; Dienhart & Gregoir,
17 1993; Fischer et al., 1997; Xu et al., 2020) by suggesting that the effect of gender on service
18 performance may depend on the nature of service behaviors. Even though female hospitality
19 employees have better rule-abounded service behaviors (Bharadwaja et al., 2018; Dienhart &
20 Gregoir, 1993), they may not be willing to break the rules to promote service (Curtis, 2014).
21 Second, by suggesting that gender effect is diminished by low gender identification, we are one
22 of the first studies in hospitality and management literature to explore the joint effect of both
23 biological and psychological gender (in terms of gender identification) on employee's service-

1 related behaviors. This is in line with the recent LGBTQ movement in society (Williams
2 Institute, 2019) and addressed the recent calls for the inclusion of measures related to gender
3 identity in a survey (Meerwijk & Sevelius, 2017). Third, we contribute to a recent study that
4 shows the effect of gender on PSBS (e.g., Curtis, 2014) by proposing the theoretical mechanism.
5 **By echoing gender research that shows the effect of gender on values (Hogue et al., 2013;
6 Grosch & Rau, 2017; Muehlheusser et al., 2015), we argue that females engage in fewer PSBS
7 due to a higher level of honesty. In short, this study provides important implications on how to
8 manage employees' service-related rule-breaking behaviors in the diverse hospitality workplace.**

9 **2. Literature Review**

10 **2.1 Prosocial Rule-breaking to Promote Service (PSBS)**

11 With an ever-growing service expectation and uniqueness in guests' requests, hospitality
12 employees **often need to** improvise and break rules to provide the best service (Lai et al., 2014;
13 Secchi et al., 2019). Labeled as prosocial rule-breaking to promote service (PSBS), PSBS
14 includes behaviors such as "provide extra service", "prioritize guests", and "waive service
15 charge" (Curtis, 2014; Ghosh & Shum, 2019). Although the research on PSBS is limited, Ghosh
16 and Shum (2019) showed that 25% of hospitality employees' rule-breaking are PSBS. **While
17 management appreciates PSBS for its ability to fulfill guests' demands, they penalize employees
18 for breaking rules** (Ghosh & Shum, 2019). Thus, the enactment of PSBS can vary from
19 employees to employees.

20 Despite several studies showing that personality, job characteristics, and situational
21 characteristics can be related to PSBS (e.g., Dahling et al., 2012; Morrison, 2006), much fewer
22 studies have hypothesized how dispositional social groups, such as gender, can affect employees'
23 engagement of PSBS. However, as a control variable, previous studies showed that women have

1 lower levels of PSBS (e.g., Morrison, 2006; Curtis 2014). Yet, it remains unknown why women
2 engage in fewer PSBS. To do so, we draw on social identity theory to examine the moderating
3 role of gender identification and the mediating role of honesty on the relationship between
4 gender and PSBS.

5 **2.2 Social Identity Theory and Gender**

6 Social identity theory suggests that people classify themselves and others into social
7 groups, such as race, gender, and occupation (Tajfel, 1974; see Hogg, 2016, for a recent review).
8 **The social group** provides a basis for their behaviors (Tajfel, 1974; Turner, 1999). People differ
9 in social identification – the importance of the social group to their self-definition (Abrams &
10 Hogg, 1990). The higher their social identification, the more **influential is the social group on**
11 **their behaviors** (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Hogg, 2016).

12 One social group commonly used to classify people in the hospitality workforce is gender
13 (e.g, Campos-Soria et al., 2011; Morgan & Pritchard, 2019). Because of the traditional social
14 role of home-providers versus homemakers, men and women are educated on differential values
15 (Eagly & Wood, 1999; Weisberg et al., 2011) **and are treated differently (Fischer et al., 1993;**
16 **Johnsen & McMahon, 2005). It results in changes in behaviors**, including service behaviors (e.g.,
17 Bharadwaja et al., 2018; Fischer et al., 1997).

18 **2.3 Gender and PSBS**

19 **According to social identity theory, social groups drive ones' behaviors (Tajfel, 1974).**
20 **Although the compassionate nature of women** (Weisberg et al., 2011) results in a perception that
21 women are better service providers (Bharadwaja et al., 2018; Dienhart & Gregoir, 1993; Fischer
22 et al., 1997; Xu et al., 2020), Eagly and Crowley's (1986) meta-analysis showed that **the gender**
23 **roles shape the types of helpings. Men's gender role fosters heroic helpings while women's**

1 gender role fosters nurturant helpings (Eagly & Crowley, 1986). Women are even less likely to
2 help others in a high-risk situation (Harris et al., 2006; Perryman et al., 2016).

3 Even with the recent feminist movement, gender stereotype persists (Eagly et al., 2019):
4 women face invisible barriers to advance their hospitality careers (Campos-Soria et al., 2011);
5 the false belief that women are, by nature, less intellectually and physically capable than men
6 results in discrimination against women in the workplace (Fischer et al., 1993; Johnsen &
7 McMahan, 2005). While any employee who engages in PSBS may risk facing penalties for
8 breaking the rules (Ghosh & Shum, 2019), women are more susceptible to severe punishments
9 for rule-breaking (Bowles & Gelfand, 2010; Stamarski & Hing, 2015). Since gender norms
10 expect women to follow rules strictly (Bowles & Gelfand, 2010; Eagly & Crowley, 1986;
11 Galinsky et al., 2008), women adhere to their social identity – they pay attention to procedure-
12 correctness (Reinhard et al., 2014) and are more likely to conform to organizational rules
13 (Portillo & DeHart-Davis, 2009). Thus, they are less likely to break rules (Galinsky et al., 2008),
14 including PSBS – a type of rule-breaking.

15 Men, however, occupy most of the hospitality executive positions (Campos-Soria et al.,
16 2011). They enjoy greater self-direction in their behaviors (Levant, 2011). Men are expected to
17 be independent (McKenzie et al., 2018) and outcome-oriented (Reinhard et al., 2014). Thus, men
18 may believe that as long as they are doing the right thing (e.g., help guests and provide better
19 service), the process (e.g., breaking the organizational rules) does not matter. Additionally, the
20 expectation for courageous and heroic actions motivates men to offer help to guests even if they
21 may be penalized (cf. Eagly & Crowley, 1986). In short, men are more likely to engage in PSBS
22 – a type of prosocial helping behavior. Supportively, Curtis (2014) and Morrison (2006) showed
23 that women show fewer PSBS than men. Formally,

1 **H1.** Compared to men, women have a lower level of PSBS.

2 **2.4 Moderating Role of Gender Identification**

3 However, not everyone considers their gender as an important defining characteristic of
4 ones-self (Schmader, 2002). According to social identity theory, group characteristics can only
5 have an influence on people’s behaviors when they have high group identification (e.g., Tajfel,
6 1974; Turner, 1999). Men/ women with high gender identification are more likely to internalize
7 gender characteristics and conform to sex-role behaviors (Fischer & Arnold, 1994). Women with
8 high gender identification tend to believe that they are powerless and should conform to rules
9 and regulations. Even though PSBS can promote service and help guests, women with high
10 gender identification are less willing to enact PSBS because of its rule-breaking nature and the
11 possibility of punishment. However, men with high gender identification believe that they can
12 challenge rules if it yields better outcomes (Portillo & DeHart-Davis, 2009). They enact more
13 PSBS as it is a type of courageous helpings (cf. Eagly & Crowley, 1986).

14 Conversely, social identity theory suggests that when people are not identified with their
15 social group, they are more likely to distance themselves from group characteristics (Abrams &
16 Hogg, 1990; Hogg, 2016). Women with low gender identification are less feminine (e.g., Kaiser
17 & Spalding, 2015; Wilson & Liu, 2003). They are more independent and are less afraid of the
18 potential penalty for engaging in PSBS. **Men with low gender identification are less masculine
19 and can be more risk-averse (Pool et al., 2007). They follow rules and engage in fewer PSBS.** In
20 short, the relationship between gender and PSBS is weaker when gender identification is low.

21 Despite the lack of studies on gender identification in the hospitality industry, general
22 psychology researchers argue that gender identification can explain contradictory findings on the
23 influence of gender on behaviors (Drass, 1986). Gender identification moderates the effects of

1 gender on social dominance orientation (Wilson & Liu, 2003), emotional support seeking
2 (Ashton & Fuehrer, 1993), support for aggressive confrontation of sexism (Becker & Barreto,
3 2014), and pain tolerance (Pool et al., 2007). Heimer (1996) showed that women are less likely
4 to engage in delinquency than men only when they internalized their gender roles. Similarly,
5 girls only perform worst in math than boys when they have high gender identification
6 (Schmader, 2002). Therefore,

7 **H2.** Gender identification moderates the relationship between gender and PSBS such that
8 the gender difference in PSBS is weaker when gender identification is low.

9 **2.5 Gender and honesty**

10 The underlying reason behind H1 suggests that female engages in a lower level of PSBS
11 because of their general tendency to be truthful and conform rules. In other words, women have a
12 higher level of honesty, which refers to ones' tendency to be truthful and not to exploit others
13 even in risk-free conditions (Ashton & Lee, 2007). People with high honesty are high in fairness
14 and low in greed (Ashton & Lee, 2007; Ashton et al., 2006).

15 Erat and Gneezy (2012) suggested that women can be more honest than men because of
16 two reasons: "women have a higher cost of lying, but at the same time are more sensitive to
17 another person's payoffs" (p. 724). **First, society's false belief on women's incompetence leads
18 to discrimination and expectation for women to follow rules (Eagly & Chivala, 1986; Fischer et
19 al., 1993; Johnsen & McMahon, 2005). Women can get more penalties from dishonesty (Grosch
20 & Rau, 2017), increasing their honesty (Capraro, 2017). However, men occupy powerful
21 positions (Campos-Soria et al., 2012) and have strong identities of independence (Levant, 2011).
22 They have fewer consequences for dishonesty, reducing their honesty (Capraro, 2017).**

1 Second, women’s traditional family roles as caretakers require them to be unselfish and
2 take care of their families before themselves (Eagly & Wood, 1999; Eagly et al., 2019). The
3 communal characteristics of women made them value honesty, which is necessary to foster trust
4 and interpersonal relationships (Grosch & Rau, 2017). However, men’s traditional gender role as
5 home-providers leads them to believe that the outcomes are more important than the process
6 (Reinhard et al., 2014). This ego-centric characteristic leads them to be more open to the idea of
7 exploiting others and maximize personal gain at the cost of honesty. Supportively, women
8 exhibit greater propensities, to tell the truth, and exhibit more honest behavior than their male
9 counterparts (Capraro, 2017; Grosch & Rau, 2017; Hogue et al., 2013).

10 **H3.** Compared to men, women have a higher level of honesty.

11 As stated above, people only conform to gender characteristics when they see it as a
12 defining feature of themselves (e.g., Schmader, 2002). Since women with high gender
13 identification place higher importance on their interpersonal relationships and care about others
14 (e.g., Eagly et al., 2019), they value honesty – a trait that builds relationships (Thielmann &
15 Hilbig, 2014). On the other hand, men with high gender identification are more results-oriented
16 and independent (Levant, 2011). As they are less sensitive about others (Eagly & Wood, 1999),
17 they have a lower level of honesty.

18 However, low gender identification masks the effect of gender on honesty because
19 gender characteristics have a weaker effect on people’s value development (e.g., Wilson & Liu,
20 2003). Women with low gender identification can be masculine (e.g., Pool et al., 2007) – they
21 can be results-oriented, independent, and less concerned about interpersonal relationships. This
22 decreases their perceived importance of honesty. Men with low gender identification can think

1 and act like women (e.g., Pool et al., 2007). As they can be sensitive and can be detail-oriented,
2 they value honesty. Formally:

3 **H4.** Gender identification moderates the relationship between gender and honesty such
4 that gender differences in honesty are weaker when gender identification is low.

5 **2.6 A Moderated Mediation Relationship between Gender and PSBS**

6 People with high honesty follow the deontology principle – they judge their actions based
7 on rules (Djeriouat & Trémolière, 2014). Even though PSBS has a prosocial motive, it breaks
8 organizational rules (Morrison, 2006). Since honest people follow rules strictly to maintain their
9 morality, they consider any rule-breaking, including PSBS, wrong. This reduces their likelihood
10 to engage in PSBS. However, people who are low in honesty are egoistic (Ashton et al., 2006)
11 and follow utilitarianism as a moral guiding principle (Djeriouat & Trémolière, 2014). They
12 judge their actions by maximizing the outcomes of their actions (Djeriouat & Trémolière, 2014).
13 Even though PSBS breaks organizational rules, its prosocial motives allow employees to fulfill
14 their guests' needs (Curtis, 2014; Ghosh & Shum, 2019). Thus, people with low honesty may see
15 PSBS as a win-win for both guests and organizations. They consider PSBS – an action that
16 maximizes outcomes – “right” and engages in PSBS.

17 In short, we propose that honesty mediate the relationship between gender and PSBS.
18 Since females are more concerned about others and face a higher cost of dishonesty, males and
19 female have differentiated development in honesty (Hogue et al., 2013; Grosch & Rau, 2017;
20 Muehlheusser et al., 2015). Honesty, in turn, is related to PSBS because honesty changes the
21 perceived “rightness” of PSBS. Formally:

22 **H5.** Honesty mediates the relationship between gender and PSBS.

Table 1. Study 1 and Study 2 demographic characteristics

	Study 1		Study 2	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Age (in years)	M = 36.34 (SD = 11.90)		M = 22.46 (SD = 4.28)	
18–20	15	5%	68	28%
21–30	110	34%	170	69%
31–40	106	33%	4	2%
41–50	40	12%	3	1%
>51	53	17%	1	0%
Gender				
Male	148	46%	64	26%
Female	176	54%	182	74%
Race				
White	245	76%	80	33%
Black or African American	35	11%	12	5%
Asian	16	5%	111	45%
Latino or Hispanic	22	7%	49	20%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	1%	1	0%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1	0%	6	2%
Other	3	1%	5	2%
Industry experience (in months)	M = 126.87 (SD = 109.07)		M = 77.96 (SD = 202.81)	
less than or equal to 1 year	16	5%	39	16%
1–3 years	45	14%	48	20%
3–5 years	54	17%	47	19%
5–10 years	65	20%	86	35%
10–20 years	105	32%	20	8%
>20 years	39	12%	6	2%
Hospitality industry segment				
Restaurant/ Food and beverage	170	52%	108	44%
Hotel/ Lodging/Resort	84	26%	62	25%
Meeting and event management	23	7%	17	7%
Gaming/ Casino	11	3%	10	4%
Golf/ Park/Recreation	7	3%	9	4%
others	29	9%	40	16%

1

2 Table 1 shows the sample characteristics. Participants had an average age of 36.34 years

3 (*SD* = 11.90) and 54% of the participants were female. The majority of the participants (76%)

1 were white/ Caucasian. Participants worked in a variety of hospitality segments (restaurants,
2 hotel/ lodging, etc.) with an average industry experience of 126.87 months ($SD = 109.07$).

3 **3.2 Measures**

4 **3.2.1 Gender and gender identification.** We measured gender using a single item
5 “What is your gender?” (1 = male; 0 = female). Gender identification was measured on a four-
6 item scale reported in Schmader (2002). Sample items stated, “being a (gender) is an important
7 part of my self-image” ($\alpha = .76$). To ensure participants rated their gender identification with
8 their reported gender, (gender) in the gender identification items were replaced by the
9 participants’ reported gender (i.e., male or female).

10 **3.2.2 PSBS.** Participants reported the extent to which they engage in PSBS using the
11 five-item scale developed by Dahling et al. (2012). A sample item was “I break organizational
12 rules to provide better customer service.” ($\alpha = .88$).

13 **3.2.3 Control variables.** We included age, race, work experience, and hospitality
14 industry segments as covariates. Age was controlled because female hospitality employees tend
15 to be younger than male hospitality employees (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019), and age
16 was related to rule-breaking (Hollinger et al., 1992). Race (1 = white, 0 = others) was controlled
17 because there were the majority of female employees were white (U.S. Bureau of Labor
18 Statistics, 2019). Being a racial majority (i.e., white) changes ones’ power status (Ivanic et al.,
19 2011), which was related to rule conformity (Tyler & Blader, 2005). We controlled for work
20 experience because female hospitality employees had shorter average work experience (U.S.
21 Bureau of Labor, 2018b). **Finally, each hospitality industry segment has a different gender**
22 **distribution (Petrović et al., 2014) and industry norms on rules conformity (Deloitte, 2018).**
23 **Thus, we controlled for the hospitality industry segments using three dummy variables (i.e.,**

1 restaurant/ F&B, hotel/ lodging, gaming/ casino). Other hospitality industry segments, including
2 meeting and event management and golf/ park/recreation, were coded as 0 in the three dummy
3 variables.

4 **4. Study 1: Results**

5 Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and intervariable correlations of studied
6 variables. Gender was related with PSBS ($r = .20, p < .01$). Results from an independent-samples
7 t-test showed that female hospitality employees had a significant lower level of PSBS than males
8 (Male: $M = 2.91, SD = 1.05, n = 148$; female: $M = 2.50, SD = 1.01, n = 176$; $t_{(322)} = 3.61, p <$
9 $.01$), thus providing preliminary support for H1.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age (in years)	36.34	11.90									
2. Race (White vs. color)	0.76	0.43	.16**								
3. Job tenure (in months)	81.98	86.55	.38**	.01							
4. Restaurant (Yes vs. no)	0.52	0.50	.06	.02	.03						
5. Hotel (Yes vs. no)	0.26	0.44	-.07	-.01	-.08	-.62**					
6. Gaming (Yes vs. no)	0.03	0.18	-.03	.03	-.02	-.20**	-.11*				
7. Gender (Male vs. female)	0.46	0.50	-.01	-.16**	.05	-.13*	.15**	.03			
8. Gender identification	3.51	0.95	.10 [†]	-.03	-.04	.07	-.10 [†]	-.10 [†]	-.20**	(.76)	
9. PSBS	2.69	1.05	-.08	.01	.06	-.11 [†]	.06	-.02	.20**	-.12*	(.88)

N = 324 (listwise deletion) [†]*p* ≤ .1, **p* ≤ .05, ***p* ≤ .01 (two-tailed)

Table 3 shows the path analysis results, which were analyzed using Mplus 7.3. As shown in Model 1, gender was related to PSBS ($\beta = .41, p < .01$) after controlling for age, race, work experience, and hospitality industry segments. Compared with men, women had a lower level of PSBS, supporting H1.

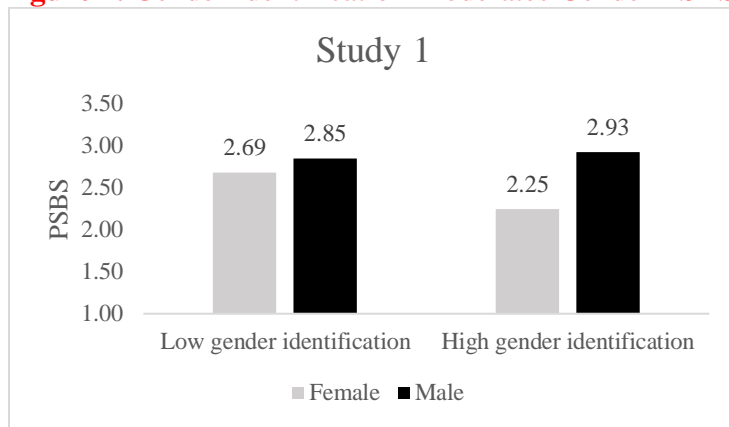
Table 3. Path Analysis (Study 1)

	Model 1: Main effect		Model 2: Moderation	
	PSBS		PSBS	
	Beta	SE	Beta	SE
Intercept	2.85**	0.24	3.77**	0.44
Age	-0.01*	0.01	-0.01*	0.01
Race	0.17	0.13	0.15	0.13
Work experience	0.00 [†]	0.00	0.00 [†]	0.00
Restaurant	-0.25	0.15	-0.28 [†]	0.15
Hotel	-0.11	0.17	-0.16	0.17
Gaming	-0.32	0.33	-0.32	0.33
Gender (0=female, 1=male)	0.41**	0.12	-0.59	0.45
Gender identification			-0.23*	0.10
Interaction			0.27*	0.12
Residual variance	1.02**	0.08	1.00**	0.08

$N = 324$ (listwise deletion), [†] $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; Interaction was the interaction term between gender and gender identification.

Model 2 tests H2, which proposes that gender identification moderates the relationship between gender and PSBS. The interaction term of gender and gender identification was positively associated with PSBS ($\beta = .27, p < .05$). Supporting H2, the interaction plot (Figure 1) showed that females had a lower level of PSBS than males. It also showed that the gender difference in PSBS was smaller when gender identification was low ($M - 1 SD$, simple gender effect = .17, *ns*) than when it was high ($M + 1 SD$, simple gender effect = .68, $p < .01$).

Figure 1. Gender Identification Moderates Gender-PSBS Relationship (Study 1)



Despite the usefulness of Study 1 in showing the relationship between gender, gender identification, and PSBS, it was limited in two ways. First, it did not examine a potential mediator in the gender–PSBS relationship. Second, the cross-sectional nature of data limits our ability to conclude casual relationships. Third, as millennials are more inclined to see gender as a continuous spectrum (Gender Spectrum, 2019), the effect of gender identification can be different in the younger population. To address the above issues and to increase the results generalizability, we replicated and extended the result in Study 2, which tested the full model.

5. Study 2: Method

5.1 Sample and Data Collection Procedure

To avoid common method bias and to provide stronger proof of causality, we invited 326 working hospitality undergraduate students in a university in the Southwest United States to participate in a two-wave time-lagged survey study. Only participants who (1) were 18 years old or above, and (2) were working in guest-contacting positions in the hospitality industry in the United States for a minimum of three months were eligible to participate in the survey in exchange for a 2% extra-credit point in a class.

After excluding missing data, we retained a sample of 246 (response rate = 75%). The third column of Table 1 shows the sample characteristics. Participants had an average age of

22.46 years ($SD = 4.28$) and 74% were female. Participants worked in varieties of the hospitality segments and had an average hospitality industry experience of 77.96 months ($SD = 202.81$).

5.2 Measures

Participants reported their demographic information, gender, gender identification, and honesty in the Time 1 survey. Two weeks later, they reported the level of PSBS. Honesty was measured on Lee and Ashton's (2004) 10-item honesty-humility subscale in the HEXACO scale. A sample item is "I would never accept a bribe, even if it were very large." ($\alpha = .67$; 1 = strong disagree to 5 = strongly agree). All other measures were identical to the one listed in Study 1. To minimize social desirability bias, we assured participants that participation was voluntary and that their responses were confidential (cf. Joinson, 1999). We also followed Olson's et al. (2007) recommendation and reminded participants that there was no right or wrong in the answer and asked them to answer the questions honestly.

5.3 Analytical Strategy

We analyzed the data using path analyses in Mplus 7.3 and included three models. Model 1 only includes the effect of gender on PSBS. Model 2 tested the mediating role of honesty. Model 3 specified the moderated mediation model. To account for potential alternative mechanisms, we included a direct moderation path by regressing gender, gender identification, and gender \times gender identification interaction on PSBS. As in Study 1, we controlled for age, race, work experience, and hospitality industry segment (restaurant, hotel, gaming, others). Considered 45% of this sample was Asian, we included an additional dummy control variable (Asian vs. non-Asian). Finally, since the indirect effect is not normally distributed, we used a parametric bootstrapping in R to estimate the mediating effect. It reconstructed the distribution

using 50'000 bootstrapping samples and estimated the 95% confidence interval (CI) of the indirect effect size.

6. Study 2: Results

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations in Study 2. Gender was related to honesty ($r = -.18, p < .01$), which was negatively related to PSBS ($r = -.27, p < .01$).

Independent-samples t-test results showed that female hospitality employees had a significant higher level of honesty (Male: $M = 3.20, SD = 0.61, n = 182$; female: $M = 3.46, SD = 0.62, n = 64; t_{(244)} = 2.87, p < .01$), and a lower level of PSBS than males (Male: $M = 2.85, SD = 1.05, n = 148$; female: $M = 2.43, SD = 0.97, n = 182; t_{(244)} = -2.85, p < .01$).

Table 5 shows the results of the path analyses. Model 1 shows that gender was related to PSBS ($\beta = 0.43, p < .01$), replicating the results from Study 1. Supporting H3, Model 2 shows that gender was related to honesty ($\beta = -0.27, p < .01$), after controlling for age, race, work experience, and hospitality industry segments. It suggests that compared with women, men had a lower level of honesty. Honesty was negatively related to PSBS ($\beta = -0.43, p < .01$). Supporting H5, honesty mediated the relationship between gender and PSBS (indirect effect = 0.12, 95% CI = [0.024, 0.209]). Together with a direct effect of gender on PSBS ($\beta = 0.31, p < .05$), gender had a total effect of .43 (95% CI = [.139, .716]) on PSBS. In short, women had a lower level of PSBS than men.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Age (in years)	22.46	4.27											
2. Race (White vs. color)	0.33	0.47	.02										
3. Race (Asian vs. non-asian)	0.45	0.50	-.08	-.54**									
4. Work experience (in months)	77.96	202.81	.03	-.06	.11 [†]								
5. Restaurant (Yes vs. no)	0.44	0.50	-.08	-.19**	.17**	.07							
6. Hotel (Yes vs. no)	0.25	0.44	.05	.06	-.15*	-.07	-.51**						
7. Gaming (Yes vs. no)	0.04	0.20	.32**	.12 [†]	-.06	.19**	-.18**	-.12 [†]					
8. Gender (Male vs. female)	0.26	0.44	.13*	-.04	.07	.12 [†]	-.13*	.04	.16*				
9. Gender identification	3.69	0.93	-.07	.11 [†]	-.09	.01	.09	-.22**	-.01	-.40**	(.79)		
10. Honesty	3.39	0.63	.13*	.04	-.14*	-.05	-.04	.11 [†]	-.01	-.18**	-.07	(.67)	
11. PSBS	2.54	1.01	-.01	-.03	-.04	.00	-.01	.03	.09	.18**	-.10	-.27**	(.89)

N = 246 (listwise deletion) [†]*p* ≤ .1, **p* ≤ .05, ***p* ≤ .01 (two-tailed)

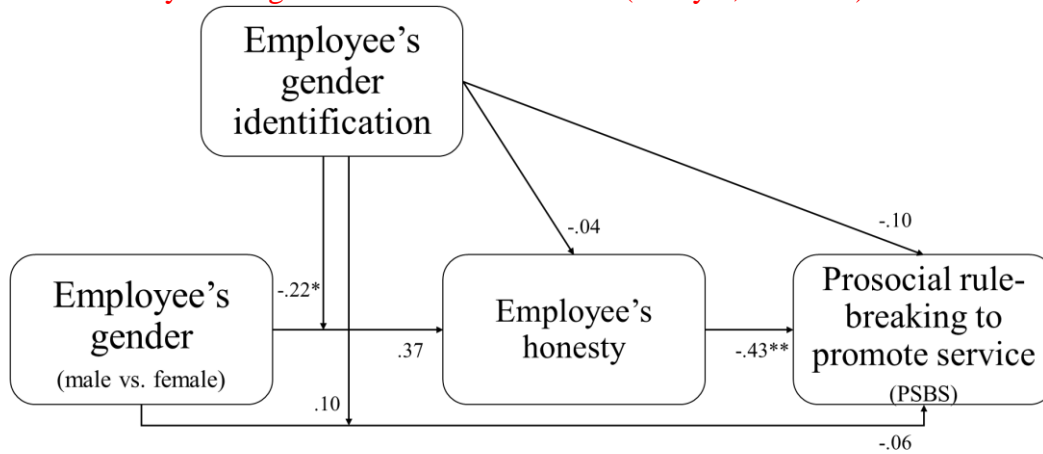
Table 5. Path analysis (Study 2)

	Model 1: Main effect		Model 2: Mediation effect of honesty				Model 3: Moderation effect of gender identification			
	PSBS		Honesty		PSBS		Honesty		PSBS	
	β	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>SE</i>
Intercept	2.88**	0.39	3.04**	0.24	4.18**	0.48	3.25**	0.32	4.62**	0.61
Age	-0.02	0.02	0.02*	0.01	-0.01	0.02	0.02*	0.01	-0.01	0.02
Race (White vs. non-White)	-0.17	0.16	-0.05	0.10	-0.19	0.16	-0.04	0.10	-0.17	0.16
Race (Asian vs. non-Asian)	-0.19	0.15	-0.15†	0.09	-0.26	0.15	-0.16†	0.09	-0.27†	0.15
Work experience	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Restaurant	0.13	0.16	0.02	0.10	0.13	0.15	-0.03	0.10	0.13	0.15
Hotel	0.14	0.18	0.14	0.11	0.20	0.17	0.07	0.11	0.17	0.17
Gaming	0.60†	0.36	-0.03	0.22	0.59†	0.35	0.03	0.22	0.56	0.35
Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	0.43**	0.15	-0.27**	0.09	0.31*	0.15	0.37	0.34	-0.06	0.54
Gender identification							-0.04	0.05	-0.10	0.09
Interaction							-0.22*	0.10	0.10	0.16
Honesty					-0.43**	0.10			-0.43**	0.10
Residual variance	0.96**	0.09	0.36**	0.03	0.90**	0.08	0.35**	0.03	0.89**	0.08

$N = 246$ (listwise deletion), † $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; Interaction was the interaction term between gender and gender identification.

1 Model 3 in Table 5 provides a test for the full model. To facilitate interpretation, we
 2 included a path diagram (Figure 2) to show the results of Model 3. It shows that gender and
 3 gender identification negatively interact to predict honesty ($\beta = -.22, p < .05$). Figure 3 shows the
 4 moderation pattern. It illustrates that women had a higher level of honesty than men. However,
 5 the gender difference in honesty was weaker when gender identification was low (simple effect =
 6 $-.25, p < .05$) than when it was high (simple effect = $-.67, p < .01$; effect size difference = $-.42, p$
 7 $< .05$). Thus, H4, which proposes that gender identification moderates the relationship between
 8 gender and honesty, was supported.

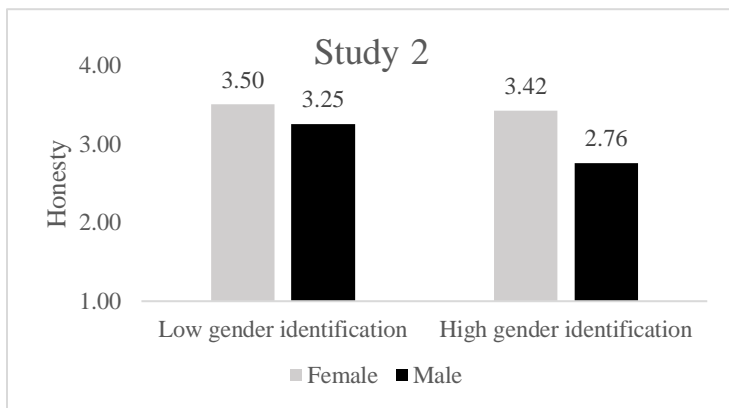
Figure 2. Path Analysis Diagram of Theoretical Model (Study 2, Model 3)



Age, race (white vs. non-white), race (Asian vs. non-Asian), work experience, restaurant, hotel, gaming were controlled in predicting honesty and PSBS

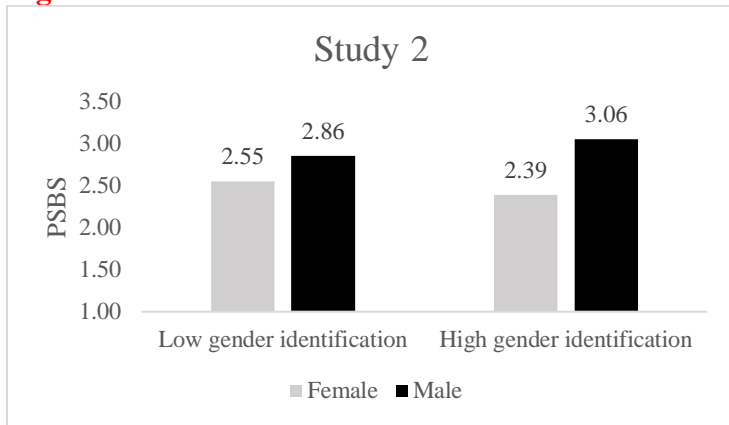
$N = 246$ (listwise deletion), $^{\dagger} p < .1$, $* p < .05$, $** p < .01$;

Figure 3. Gender Identification Moderates Gender-Honesty Relationship (Study 2)



1 Finally, bootstrapping results provided support to H6, which suggests that gender
2 identification moderates the gender – honesty – PSBS mediating relationship (**moderated**
3 **mediation effect = .10, 95% CI = [.001, .193]**). Figure 4 illustrates that females had a lower level
4 of PSBS than males, but the effect of gender on PSBS was weaker when gender identification
5 was low. Overall, the results provided support to the theoretical model.

Figure 4. Gender Identification Moderates Gender-PSBS Indirect Relationship (Study 2)



6 7. Discussion

7 This study examines the relationship between hospitality employee's gender and their
8 prosocial rule-breaking to promote service (PSBS). Across two survey studies, we showed that
9 female hospitality employees engage in fewer PSBS. However, the relationship between gender
10 and PSBS was weaker when gender identification was low. Additionally, in Study 2, we used a
11 time-lagged study to show that honesty mediates the relationship between gender and PSBS and
12 gender identification weakens the gender–honesty relationship as well as the gender–honesty–
13 PSBS indirect relationship. This study yields important theoretical and practical implications on
14 how to manage male and female hospitality employees' prosocial rule-breaking.

15 7.1 Theoretical Implications

16 This study makes three unique theoretical contributions. First, we add to the literature on
17 employee gender and service behaviors by showing that male and female hospitality employees

1 have different PSBS. Instead of arguing that the difference was caused by a biased perception by
2 guests/observers (Bharadwaja et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2020), we suggested that the difference was
3 caused by differential value development of men and women. It provided support to the actual,
4 instead of perception, differences in male and female hospitality employees' service behaviors
5 (Fischer et al., 1997). **Contrary to existing findings that suggest that women tend to exhibit
6 higher perceived service behaviors than their male counterparts (Bharadwaja et al., 2018; Fischer
7 et al., 1997; Xu et al., 2020), we showed that women engage in fewer PSBS – rule-breaking
8 behaviors to promote service performance such as breaking rules to recover from service
9 failures. Our study highlights that antecedents to various service behaviors, such as routine rule-
10 abounded and controversial rule-breaking service behaviors, can be different and deserve
11 additional research attention.**

12 **Second, our study relates to social identity theory and supports the importance of
13 examining gender identification. Social identity theory suggests that people differ in their
14 identification to social groups such that the social group only affects the person's behaviors when
15 the person is identified with the social group (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Tajfel, 1974; Turner,
16 1999). Supportively, our study showed that the effect of social groups on individual behaviors (in
17 this study, the gender difference in honesty and PSBS) depends on social identification (in this
18 study, gender identification). While social identity theory suggests that a high social
19 identification tends to yield positive outcomes, such as pride and performance (Hogg, 2016), we
20 found that there may be a potential dark side of high gender identification. Specifically, males
21 with high gender identification can be more dishonest; Although females with high gender
22 identification were more honest, it reduces their tendency to engage in desirable service
23 behaviors (i.e., PSBS, Dahling et al., 2012; Ghosh & Shum, 2019).**

1 The examination of gender identification is especially important given the increased
2 recognition of gender as a continuous spectrum (Gender Spectrum, 2019). By showing that low
3 gender identification can attenuate the relationship between gender and honesty, as well as that
4 between gender and PSBS, we acknowledge that biological gender is insufficient to explain
5 employees' behaviors. With the recent feminist movement, gender identification can be
6 weakened over time. The variability of gender identification may alter previous findings on
7 gender (e.g., Fischer et al., 1997). Accordingly, we answer recent calls to study gender beyond a
8 binary male/ female variable and provide a new perspective to study how low gender
9 identification mitigate gender effects.

10 Third, we explain why women are less likely to break rules to help guests by showing
11 that female hospitality employees are more honest than male hospitality employees, which in
12 turn is related to PSBS. We suggest that honesty can be a double-edged sword in the hospitality
13 industry: while it can improve one's interpersonal relationship and hospitality career
14 development (e.g., Brownell, 1994), it also reduces non-traditional service behavior that can be
15 appreciated by managers in the hospitality industry (Ghosh & Shum, 2019). Adhering to liberal
16 feminism theory (Fischer et al., 1993; Johnsen & McMahon, 2005), hospitality female
17 employees can be equally capable of breaking organizational policies to help their guests as their
18 male counterparts but social beliefs may stop them from engaging in PSBS. With the top-level
19 managerial positions in the hospitality industry dominated by men (Campos-Soria et al., 2011),
20 women can face more severe consequences than men for breaking rules, even for prosocial
21 intentions to help guests. Our study explains one potential reason of why women can be
22 disadvantaged in the workplace – even though they are more honest, their lack of PSBS may stop
23 them from getting the management recognition and rewards (e.g., tips).

1 **7.2 Practical Implications**

2 Our study yields implications on how to manage hospitality employees' rule-breaking in
3 an increasingly diverse workplace. Our research showed that female hospitality employees
4 engage in fewer PSBS because they are honest and avoid breaking rules. However, managers
5 appreciate employees' PSBS (Ghosh & Shum, 2019). In other words, female hospitality
6 employees may lose their chance to go above and beyond and provide extraordinary service to
7 guests. Female employees need to differentiate "hard-core" organizational rules that disturb
8 organizational functions (e.g., safety and attendance rules) and "recommended" service rules that
9 are intended to improve service performance (e.g., service guidelines/ procedures). While they
10 should maintain their integrity and not break "hard-core" rules, they can deviate from standard
11 service procedures and guidelines. By doing so, they can increase their PSBS without
12 undermining their honesty. It improves guests' experience as well as female employees'
13 opportunities for career advancement, ultimately creating a service culture with high integrity.

14 Organizations may consider building training courses based on case-studies that
15 differentiate deviant rule-breaking and PSBS (which has an honorable motive of improving guest
16 service). Given our findings showed that honesty can have an unintended side-effect of
17 decreasing PSBS, such service rules training should be provided as a part of integrity training.
18 While integrity training highlights the importance of adhering to "hard-core" social values and
19 organizational rules, service rule training encourages honest employees to go beyond their
20 comfort zone and deviate from "recommended" guidelines to delight guests. These training
21 courses should be made mandatory for all employees irrespective of their gender and gender
22 identification. That way, both male and female employees at any place of the gender-
23 identification-spectrum can promote the level of honesty without jeopardizing the service level.

1 Our findings also showed that low gender identification weakens gender effect on
2 honesty and PSBS. As the hospitality workplace is increasingly diverse in term of gender
3 identification (Human Rights Campaign, 2019), managers need to be aware that both males and
4 females can deviate from the gender role – women may not need “special protection” or be a
5 rule-follower; men can be honest and sensitive. They should replace gender segregation of jobs
6 with job assignments based on individual talents and job requirements. It ensures all men and
7 women can provide the highest level of service.

8 **7.3 Limitations and Future Research**

9 Although this research mitigates some concerns on common method bias and
10 generalizability by using a two-study approach, the research findings should be viewed in light
11 of its limitations. First, our sample was limited to frontline hospitality service employees.
12 However, not only the female representation decreases at a higher level of organization hierarchy
13 (Dashper, 2019), but also the women in those positions are more masculine (Kaiser & Spalding,
14 2015). As such, it may impact the generalizability of managerial PSBS. The effect of gender on
15 managerial PSBS might be weaker and more dependent on the moderating role of gender
16 identification. Moreover, our studies were geographically limited to the United States. As the US
17 has a high individualism culture, individuals’ dispositional characteristics and values, such as
18 gender and honesty, can have a stronger effect on PSBS. Third, despite the use of time-lagged
19 study in study 2, the relationships identified are correlated in nature and cannot infer causality.

20 To address the above-mentioned issues, we encourage future research to replicate our
21 research using a managerial sample in a more collectivist culture. We also call for future studies
22 to replicate our study using other research methods, including manipulating honesty and having
23 managers/ coworkers to rate employee's PSBS. Additionally, future studies can extend our

1 findings by incorporating leaders, organizational, and occupational factors. For example, since
2 frontline employee tends to learn from their managers (Dahling et al., 2012), we expect that the
3 effect of gender on PSBS might be weaker when employees are working under a servant leader,
4 who emphasizes on service and humility. Additionally, since PSBS can more important in
5 organizations that value service quality, it would be interesting to understand how service
6 orientation culture changes the effect of gender on PSBS. Future studies might compare the
7 relationships between gender, honesty, and PSBS in different hospitality industry segments and
8 understand how industry norms affect relationships.

9 **7.4 Conclusions**

10 In conclusion, we used two survey studies to understand the effect of employee's gender
11 on their PSBS. Drawing on social identity theory and gender research, we suggested that female
12 hospitality employees are less likely to break rules to promote service. However, the gender
13 effect was weaker when employees had low gender identification. We further showed that the
14 gender effect on PSBS is driven by the differential development of honesty for men and women.
15 Together, this study shed lights on how hospitality organization can manage its employees PSBS
16 – a service behavior that can be important to the **ever-changing and diverse** hospitality industry.

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