

## ***This Week's Citation Classic***

Bem S L. The measurement of psychological androgyny.

J. Consult. Clin. Psychol. 42:155-62, 1974.

[Department of Psychology, Stanford University, Stanford, CA]

**A new masculinity-femininity scale is introduced that treats masculinity and femininity as two independent dimensions, thereby making it possible to characterize individuals not only as masculine or feminine, but also as 'androgynous'—that is, as having both masculine and feminine attributes. [The Social Sciences Citation Index® (SSCI®) indicates that this paper has been cited over 525 times since 1974.]**

Sandra Lipsitz Bem  
Department of Psychology  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, NY 14853

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"I decided in the early 1970s to try to combine my personal, political, and scholarly interests by doing psychological research in the service of my feminist convictions. By that time, the women's liberation movement had made a whole generation of young Americans aware of the many ways that we, both men and women, had become locked into our respective sex roles. As women, we had become aware that we were afraid to express our anger, to assert our preferences, to trust our own judgment, to take control of situations. As men, we had become aware that we were afraid to cry, to touch one another, to own up to our fears and weaknesses.

"But there were very little data within psychology to give legitimacy to these experiential truths. Accordingly, I took for myself the feminist goal of trying to gather the relevant data, of trying to demonstrate empirically that traditional sex roles do restrict behavior in important human ways. More specifically, I began to do empirical research on the concept of psychological androgyny (from the Greek andro, male, and gyne, female), a concept that had not yet been

conceptualized within the psychological literature.

"My research—which was done while I was on the faculty at Stanford University—was predicated on two basic assumptions: (a) that masculinity and femininity represent complementary domains of positive attributes and behaviors, and that it is therefore possible, in principle, for an individual to be both masculine and feminine, both instrumental and expressive, both agentic and communal; and (b) that for fully effective and healthy human functioning, masculinity and femininity must each be tempered by the other, and the two must be integrated into a more balanced, a more fully human, a truly androgynous personality.

"Before my empirical research on androgyny could be initiated, however, it was first necessary to develop a new type of masculinity-femininity scale, one that would not treat masculinity and femininity as opposite ends of a single dimension as most previous scales had done. The article that is honored here as a Citation Classic constituted the publication of that new scale, known as the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI). In my view, this article has been cited as frequently as it has because so many other psychologists were also motivated by the women's liberation movement to take a feminist perspective in their research. For these psychologists, this first article in a series of articles on sex typing and androgyny<sup>1</sup> provided not only a provocative new concept, but a new methodology as well. (And there is nothing quite so effective as a new methodology for stimulating empirical research.)

"For my research on psychological androgyny—which included the development of the BSRI – I was awarded the 1976 Distinguished Scientific Award for an Early Career Contribution to Psychology from the American Psychological Association, the 1977 Distinguished Publication Award from the Association for Women in Psychology, and the 1980 Young Scholar Award from the American Association of University Women."

1. Bem S L. Gender schema theory: a cognitive account of sex typing. Psychol. Rev. 88:354-64, 1981.