This Week's Citation Classic™

The literature on females' achievement-related behavior was reviewed by examining the effects of sex role expectations, parental socialization practices, and related personal dispositions such as anxiety about failure and locus of control. The hypothesis that affiliation is a primary goal of females' achievement striving was challenged. [The *Social Sciences Citation Index*® (*SSCI*®) indicates that this paper has been cited in over 175 publications since 1973.]

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"The mid-1960s, when I finished graduate school, was an exciting time of national ferment about poverty, racism, and equal opportunity. One hypothesis proposed by educators and social critics of the time was that boys' academic motivation was impaired because they considered school a feminine environment. That notion seemed overly simple to me. Instead, I proposed that children learn to view some areas of school achievement as feminine and others as masculine, and that the motivation of both genders in particular domains of school achievement is affected by these sex role concepts.

"This line of reasoning led to a series of studies investigating the development of sex role concepts about achievement and the effects of such concepts on achievement behavior.[1,2] That work provided the scholarly roots of this *Citation Classic*™. But the social movements of the early 1970s played an equally important role in the final product. The women's movement brought an awareness of females' 'dis-advantage' in education and ultimate achievement. Social scientists also began to recognize that most psychological theories applied more accurately to men than to women, partly because the theories were formulated about men in the first place. That was certainly true of McClelland's[3] classic early work on achievement motivation which was confined almost entirely to males, partly because initial studies failed to confirm the theory for females.

"At Pennsylvania State University, a group of women graduate students organized a seminar on the psychology of women, and one of them, Peggy Bailey, worked closely with me. We wrote this review of the literature, attempting some theoretical formulations about female achievement orientations. One of the most controversial aspects of the paper is a challenge to the widespread belief that females' achievement efforts are motivated primarily by the need for affiliation or for social approval. We concluded instead that females' achievement efforts are often focused on different content domains than those of males; one of those content domains is social skill.

"This research has been widely cited because it was part of a major reorientation of personality theory by scholars interested in females. It was followed in the journal by Constantinople's[4] seminal challenge to the assumptions underlying previous measures of femininity and masculinity. The psychology of women as a field was born in that period. Research on sex-typing since that time bears the stamp of new ways of conceptualizing the processes involved."[5]

1. Stein A H. The effects of sex-role standards for achievement and sex-role preference on three determinants of achievement motivation. *Develop. Psychol.* 4:219-31, 1971. (Cited 35 times.)
2. Stein A H, Pohly S R & Mueller E. The influence of masculine, feminine, and neutral tasks on children's achievement behavior, expectancies of success, and attainment values. *Child Develop.* 42:195-207, 1971. (Cited 60 times.)
3. McClelland D C, Atkinson J W, Clark R A & Lowell E L. *The achievement motive.* New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953. 384 p. (Cited 900 times.)
4. Constantinople A. Masculinity-femininity: an exception to a famous dictum? *Psychol. Bull.* 80:389-407, 1973. (Cited 235 times.)
5. Huston A C. Sex typing. (Mussen P H & Hetherington E M, eds.) *Handbook of child psychology. Volume 4. Socialization, personality, and social development.* New York: Wiley, 1983. p. 387-467.