

This Week's Citation Classic

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Pheterson G I,¹ Kiesler S B² & Goldberg P A.³ Evaluation of the performance of women as a function of their sex, achievement, and personal history. *J. Personal. Soc. Psychol.* 19:114-18, 1971.
[Univ. California, Riverside, CA;¹ Univ. Kansas, Lawrence, KS;² and Connecticut Coll., New London, CT³]

This study investigated the conditions under which women are prejudiced against women. Female entries in a painting contest were evaluated less favorably than identical male entries, but female winners equally to identical male winners. Women were therefore prejudiced against female attempts but not against female successes. [The *Social Sciences Citation Index*[®] (SSCI[®]) indicates that this paper has been cited in over 155 publications since 1971.]

Gail I. Pheterson
Institute of Clinical Psychology and
Personality
University of Utrecht
3512 JK Utrecht
The Netherlands

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"The above study was conducted while I was a senior undergraduate student at Connecticut College for Women. In retrospect, I imagine the research to reflect my emerging consciousness of prejudices against women in society at large as well as my concern about the effect of those prejudices on female self-evaluation. In addition, the research likely reflects a personal preoccupation with, and perhaps anxiety about, the future of a woman 'entry' such as myself. Apparently, my beginning consciousness and accompanying concern were shared by many, or so it seems from the interest in my article. It is ironic that this student research project which supported the hypothesis that entries encounter more prejudice than prizewinners should have earned me 'honors in psychology,' a sort of prize in itself.

"The research was conducted with amazingly little obstruction. In fact, all the data were collected late one evening by going from dormitory to dormitory with a slide projector and research

booklets. Students were buzzed in their rooms and asked to help with my senior research project by coming downstairs, looking at slides, and answering questions in a booklet, all of which would take less than 15 minutes. This was surely one case in which a peer relationship facilitated efficiency and cooperation between researcher and subject. The research design and data analysis required more time and contemplation than the data collection. As for the design, I am indebted to one of my professors, Phil Goldberg, for the model used in his earlier study on women's prejudice against women's journal articles.¹ The actual conduct of the study was accomplished in close cooperation with another professor, Sara Kiesler, whose expertise (and grant support) were invaluable. For me, the research was significant both as a first step in original scholarship and as a first fascination with female psychology.

"It can be argued that for research to contribute to liberation struggles, it must expose oppression, examine the effects of oppression, and eventually explore processes of change. This study started from the assumption of societal prejudice against women (one aspect of oppression) and proceeded to examine the effects of that prejudice on women. The research has been frequently cited both to further explore those effects and also to examine strategies of combating both institutionalized and internalized prejudice.

"It is now 14 years later. I am still involved in research related to analyzing and eliminating prejudice against women. My prime focus remains the social conditions affecting women's attitudes toward other women. Although I didn't perceive it in context at the time, my initial article was one of many snowballs propelling a broad range of attention to women's position in society. That attention brought about what continues to be the second wave of feminism in this century."

1. Goldberg P. Are women prejudiced against women? *Trans-action* 5:28-30, 1968.