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## GENDER AND STYLES OF COMMUNICATIVE BEHAVIOURS

### INTRODUCTION

The new concept in masculinity and femininity research began in 1974. The early 1970's view of gender role orientation held that masculinity and femininity were at opposite ends of the same continuum. S. L. Bem (1974) challenged this concept by suggesting that masculinity and femininity were actually separate continuums, allowing individuals to endorse both characteristics.

As mentioned above, gender schema theory of S. L. Bem (1974, 1981) represents a variation of the traditional bipolar model of masculinity-femininity. According to this theory sex-typed, gender-schematic men and women have developed a strong role identification that has led them to acquire and display the diverse traits, attitudes and behaviours expected of their gender according to their's society expectations. Moreover, gender serves as an organizing principle for sex-typed individuals that they use in processing information about themselves and the external world. Non-sex-typed men and women, described as gender aschematic, are relatively immune to the influences of gender stereotypes with respect to themselves and to others (Bem, 1974, 1981).

The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) was designed to estimate people's degree of sex-typing. Men and women at the middle of the bipolar distribution, those with approximately equal scores on the Masculinity and Femininity scales, are identified as non-sex-typed or gender aschematic. This category includes both **androgynous** individuals (high scores on both scales) and **undifferentiated** individuals (low scores on both scales) as well. Those with unequal scores, with imbalance displayed in the stereotypic direction (masculine men, feminine women), are identified as **sex-typed**

or **gender schematic**. Eventually, men and women with unequal scores in the counterstereotypic direction are identified as **cross-sex-typed** (masculine women, feminine men).

The distinction between sex and gender suggests a need for reexamining research effects of gender and styles of communicative behaviours, based on the approach of D. W. Merrill and R. Reid (1981). Their research found patterns of communicative behaviours that people use when they interact with others. They have stated that if people adjust to these behaviours in others, they can achieve better relationships. The two critical dimensions are used to understand styles of communicative behaviours. These are: assertiveness and responsiveness. Assertiveness is defined as the amount of effort people use to influence the actions and thoughts of others, and responsiveness is the amount of effort people use to control their emotions when relating to others (Merrill, Reid, 1981). These two dimensions of Social Style Matrix (SSM) define four profiles of communicative behaviours (see Fig. 1; Merrill, Reid, 1981).

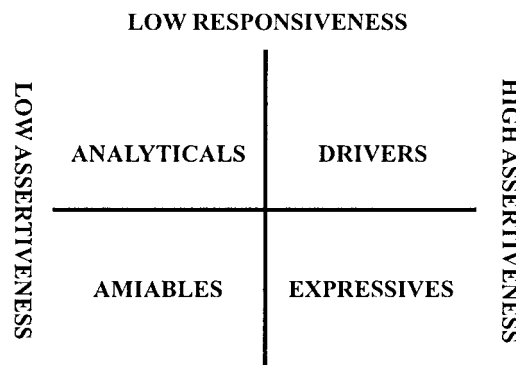


Fig. 1. Social Style Matrix (SSM) (Merrill, Reid, 1981)

Analyticals are low on assertiveness and responsiveness. They are seen as people who ask questions, gather facts, examine all sides of an issue, and then make a logical decision. They are usually orderly, serious, may be viewed as stuffy, impersonal and uncommunicative.

Drivers are high on assertiveness and low on responsiveness. These people are control specialists who are task-orientated, self-motivated and like the challenge of nonroutine work. Drivers are efficient, determined and decisive, but they may also be perceived as pushy, harsh and dominating.

Some favorable aspects of Expressives are their enthusiasm, dramatic flair and personable approach. They are high on assertiveness and respon-

siveness dimensions. Expressives thrive on interpersonal contact, are highly intuitive, and have a tendency to make a decision fairly quickly and work out the details later.

Amiables (high on responsiveness and low on assertiveness) are agreeable individuals and good listeners. They usually like to build long-term relationships. Amiables are supportive, dependable, and willing. They can also be undisciplined, conforming and emotional.

A great many researches using the BSRI have been conducted in recent years, many of them aimed at testing the implications of the bipolar sex-typing theory (Bem, 1975; Bem, Lenney, 1976; Gayton et al., 1983; Wiggins, Holzmueller, 1981). This study is also designed to examine the effects of the sex-typing theory of Bem and styles of communicative behaviours of D. W. Merrill and R. Reid. Empirical evidence (Lipińska-Grobelny, 2000) has shown the significant relationship between sex and styles of communicative behaviours among 188 sales representatives. Women were more responsive and preferred expressive and amiable styles, and men were more assertive and preferred driver and expressive styles (Lipińska-Grobelny, 2000).

On the basis of Bem's work and of D. W. Merrill and R. Reid's theory, several hypotheses were proposed.

- H<sub>1</sub>: Androgynous individuals would be more responsive than sex-typed and undifferentiated persons.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Feminine sex-typed individuals would be more responsive than masculine sex-typed ones.
- H<sub>3</sub>: Undifferentiated individuals would be the least emotionally responsive.

Androgyny has been defined as a willingness to engage in both instrumental (masculine) and expressive (feminine) interpersonal behaviours (Bem, Lenney, 1976), and androgynous persons have been reported to be more adaptable (Bem, 1975) and more flexible (Wiggins, Holzmueller, 1981). Further, androgynous individuals have higher self-esteem followed in order by masculine, feminine, and undifferentiated individuals (Bem, 1975). As a result, it can be argued that androgynous types would be more emotionally expressive (responsive) in more varied settings and relationships than sex-typed persons (feminine and masculine as well). Undifferentiated types, with lower self-esteem and less flexibility, would be expected to be the least emotionally expressive (responsive).

In connection to the other dimension of the Social Style Matrix – assertiveness, worth mentioning is the research of W. F. Gayton, G. Havu, J. B. Baird, and K. Ozman (1983). They examined the relationship between psychological androgyny and assertiveness in 178 female under-graduates. Androgynous individuals, in contrast to sex-typed individuals, reported

significantly less discomfort in situations demanding assertiveness. In view of these findings, it was predicted that:

H<sub>4</sub>: Androgynous types would perform well in situations where different variety of assertiveness is appropriate.

H<sub>5</sub>: Masculine sex-typed individuals would be more assertive than feminine sex-typed ones.

H<sub>6</sub>: Undifferentiated individuals would exhibit deficiencies in assertiveness.

Finally, the investigation of both sex and styles of communicative behaviours conducted by A. Lipińska-Grobelny (2000) confirmed the relationship between them. If the relationship mentioned above exists, it is likely to be mediated by a third variable, sex-role stereotyping, which stems from Bem's work on psychological androgyny.

H<sub>7</sub>: Gender roles from The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) are significantly related to styles of communicative behaviours from the Social Style Matrix (SSM) by D. W. Merrill and R. Reid.

It was predicted:

H<sub>7a</sub>: Androgynous persons would prefer expressive styles of communicative behaviours,

because the presence of masculine and feminine characteristics (e.g. having the potential for responding both instrumental and expressive, both forceful and emotional ways). On the contrary, undifferentiated individuals due to the relative absence of both forms of behaviours (low assertiveness and responsiveness) can prefer analytical styles.

H<sub>7b</sub>: Undifferentiated persons would prefer analytical styles of communicative behaviours.

Sex-typed and cross-sex-typed individuals with unequal scores on the Masculinity and Femininity scales were expected to prefer styles of communicative behaviours also based on unequal scores on Assertiveness and Responsiveness scales.

H<sub>7c</sub>: Sex-typed and cross-sex-typed individuals would prefer amiable or driver styles of communicative behaviours.

## METHOD

### Subjects

The sample of 145 individuals (121 females and 24 males) participated in the research. The subjects ranged in age from 20 to 28 years, with a mean age of 21.6 years.

## Measures

The degree of sex-typing was estimated by the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) in Polish adaptation and psychometric study by A. Kuczyńska (1992). The BSRI consists of 15 adjectives describing masculinity characteristics, 15 adjectives describing feminine personality characteristics, and 5 adjectives describing neutral characteristics, and it results in two separate scores, a masculine score and a feminine score. The BSRI is a paper-and-pencil self-report instrument that asks the respondent to indicate on a 5-point scale the degree to which each characteristic is "true of them". Kuder-Richardson's coefficient ranged from 0.78 (for the Masculinity scale) to 0.79 (for the Femininity scale).

The styles of communicative behaviours were measured by the Social Style Matrix (SSM) of Merrill and Reid in Polish adaptation (Olejniczak, 1996) and psychometric study by A. Lipińska-Grobelny (1999). The SSM consists of two 60-item scales – designated as Assertiveness and Responsiveness. The SSM is also a paper-and-pencil self-report instrument. Subjects are instructed to indicate on a 4-point scale how well each of the characteristics describes themselves. The higher score on the Responsiveness scale they receive, the higher level of responsiveness they have. On the Assertiveness scale, on the contrary to Responsiveness, higher score combines with lower level of assertiveness. Coefficient alpha ranged from 0.74 (for the Assertiveness scale) to 0.73 (for the Responsiveness scale).

## RESULTS

All the analyses were done using the STATISTICA 5.5. The oneway ANOVA was conducted for the inter-group comparison and the crosstab table with *chi*-square test was calculated where applicable.

The scores allocated to verify hypotheses  $H_1$  and  $H_3$  are presented in Tab. 1. Participants were classified as androgynous ( $N = 56$ ), sex-typed ( $N = 59$ ), cross-sex-typed ( $N = 19$ ), and undifferentiated ( $N = 11$ ) based on their results on the masculine and feminine dimensions of the BSRI. The oneway ANOVA indicates that the groups mentioned above differ significantly on their levels of responsiveness,  $F(3, 141) = 9.32, p = 0.000012$ . The RIR Tukey's test reveals that respondents classified as androgynous ( $x = 3.11$ ) or sex-typed ( $x = 2.95$ ) report significantly higher levels of responsiveness than do persons classified as cross-sex-typed ( $x = 2.80$ ) or undifferentiated ( $x = 2.53$ ). Additionally, persons classified as cross-sex-typed ( $x = 2.80$ ) also report higher levels of responsiveness than do undifferentiated persons ( $x = 2.53$ ), (see Tab. 1).

Table 1

Oneway ANOVA for Responsiveness and the degree of sex-typing

The degree of sex-typing	N = 145	Responsiveness			
		<i>x</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1 – Androgynous	56	3.11	0.34	9.32, <i>df</i> = 141	0.000012
2 – Sex-typed	59	2.95	0.38		
3 – Cross-sex-typed	19	2.80	0.42		
4 – Undifferentiated	11	2.53	0.39		
RIR Tukey test <i>p</i> < 0.05	1–3; 1–4; 2–4; 3–4				

To examine if feminine sex-typed individuals would be more responsive than masculine sex-typed ones (hypothesis  $H_2$ ), another oneway analysis of variance was calculated (see Tab. 2).

Table 2

Oneway ANOVA for female responsiveness, male responsiveness and the degree of sex-typing

The degree of sex-typing	Social Style Matrix							
	female responsiveness (N = 121)				male responsiveness (N = 24)			
	<i>x</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1 – Androgynous	3.12 (N = 42)	0.36	6.77, <i>df</i> = 117	0.00029	3.09 (N = 14)	0.31	3.94, <i>df</i> = 20	0.02
2 – Sex-typed	2.94 (N = 52)	0.39			2.97 (N = 7)	0.30		
3 – Cross-sex-typed	2.79 (N = 17)	0.43			2.87 (N = 2)	0.47		
4 – Undifferentiated	2.58 (N = 10)	0.38			2.00 (N = 1)	0		
RIR Tukey test <i>p</i> < 0.05	1–4				–			

The results of the oneway ANOVA demonstrate that both females and males (androgynous, sex-typed, cross-sex-typed and undifferentiated) differ significantly on their levels of responsiveness (women  $F(3, 117) = 6.77$ ,  $p = 0.00029$ , men  $F(3, 20) = 3.94$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ). The feminine sex-typed persons ( $x = 2.94$ ) and masculine sex-typed ones ( $x = 2.97$ ) are nearly comparable as far as their levels of responsiveness are concerned.

Table 3 and 4 contain scores to verify hypotheses:

H<sub>4</sub>: Androgynous types would perform well in situations where either variety of assertiveness is appropriate.

H<sub>5</sub>: Masculine sex-typed individuals would be more assertive than feminine sex-typed ones.

H<sub>6</sub>: Undifferentiated individuals would exhibit deficiencies in assertiveness.

The oneway ANOVA indicates that androgynous, sex-typed, cross-sex-typed, and undifferentiated persons differ significantly on their levels of assertiveness,  $F(3, 141) = 12.67$ ;  $p < 0.00001$ . The RIR Tukey's test reveals that androgynous ( $x = 2.49$ ) and cross-sex-typed persons ( $x = 2.43$ ) surpass foremost sex-typed ones ( $x = 2.83$ ). There is no significant difference in the level of assertiveness between undifferentiated individuals ( $x = 2.66$ ) and the three other sex role groups (see Tab. 3).

Table 3

Oneway ANOVA for Assertiveness and the degree of sex-typing

The degree of sex-typing	N = 145	Assertiveness			
		<i>x</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1 – Androgynous	56	2.49	0.27	12.67, <i>df</i> = 141	<0.00001
2 – Sex-typed	59	2.83	0.35		
3 – Cross-sex-typed	19	2.43	0.32		
4 – Undifferentiated	11	2.66	0.47		
RIR Tukey test $p < 0.05$	1–2; 2–3				

These analyses were made separately for males and females across assertiveness. For females the four sex role groups differ significantly on assertiveness,  $F(3, 117) = 12.56$ ;  $p < 0.0001$ . Next the lack of statistical significance is estimated for males and the four gender groups,  $F(3, 24) = 0.75$ ;  $p < 0.54$ . Masculine sex-typed individuals ( $x = 2.65$ ) are rated to be more assertive than feminine sex-typed ones ( $x = 2.85$ ) (see Tab. 4).

The relationship between The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) that classifies people according to gender roles and styles of communicative behaviours from the Social Style Matrix (SSM) by D. W. Merrill and R. Reid was examined via the crosstab table and chi-square test. These results support Hypotheses H<sub>7a</sub>–H<sub>7c</sub>.

Table 4

Oneway ANOVA for female assertiveness, male assertiveness and the degree of sex-typing

The degree of sex-typing	Social Style Matrix							
	female assertiveness (N = 121)				male assertiveness (N = 24)			
	x	s	F	p	x	s	F	p
1 – Androgynous	2.51 (N = 42)	0.26	12.56, df= 117	<0.0001	2.44 (N = 14)	0.29	0.75, df= 20	0.54
2 – Sex-typed	2.85 (N = 52)	0.33			2.65 (N = 7)	0.46		
3 – Cross-sex-typed	2.39 (N = 17)	0.33			2.67 (N = 2)	0		
4 – Undifferentiated	2.66 (N = 10)	0.49			2.67 (N = 1)	0		
RIR Tukey test $p < 0.05$	1–2; 2–3				–			

Table 5

The crosstab tables and test  $\chi^2$  for styles of communicative behaviours (SSM) and the degree of sex-typing (BSRI)

The degree of sex-typing	Styles of communicative behaviours								S		test $\chi^2$
	1 – expres-sives		2 – drivers		3 – amiables		4 – analyti-cals				
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1 – Androgynous	31	21.38	1	0.69	22	15.17	2	1.38	56	38.62	49.25 df= 9 $p < 0.0001$ V-Cramera= =0.34
2 – Sex-typed	8	5.52	2	1.38	45	31.03	4	2.76	59	40.69	
3 – Cross-sex-typed	8	5.52	2	1.38	6	4.14	3	2.07	19	13.10	
4 – Undifferentiated	0	0	3	2.07	5	3.45	3	2.07	11	7.59	
S	47	32.41	8	5.52	78	53.79	12	8.28	145	100	

The inspection of Tab. 5 reveals that gender roles are significantly related to styles of communicative behaviours (test  $\chi^2 = 49.25$ ;  $df = 9$ ;  $p < 0.0001$ ; V-Cramera = 0.34). Participants were classified as either expressives (N = 47), drivers (N = 8), amiables (N = 78) and analyticals (N = 12) based on their results on the responsiveness and assertiveness dimensions of the SSM. The classification according to the degree of sex-typing was already described. Androgynous persons prefer foremost expressive (N = 31),



then amiable ( $N = 22$ ) styles of communicative behaviours. Sex-typed individuals prefer amiable styles ( $N = 45$ ). Due to fewer number of cross-sex-typed ( $N = 19$ ) and undifferentiated individuals ( $N = 11$ ) in the research, it was calculated that cross-sex-typed persons prefer both expressive ( $N = 8$ ) and amiable ( $N = 6$ ) styles of communicative behaviours. Undifferentiated individuals favour styles of amiables ( $N = 5$ ), drivers ( $N = 3$ ) or analyticals ( $N = 3$ ) (see Tab. 5).

## DISCUSSION

In this research seven main hypotheses were stated. The majority of them were confirmed. The results support the assumption that androgynous persons are more responsive than sex-typed and undifferentiated ones ( $p = 0.000012$ ) and perform well in situations where assertiveness is demanded ( $p < 0.00001$ ), the least responsive individuals are undifferentiated ones. These data are congruent with studies that androgynous persons engage in both instrumental (masculine) and expressive (feminine) interpersonal behaviours (Bem, Lenney, 1976). Moreover, androgynous persons have been reported to be more assertive (Currant et al., 1979; Gayton et al., 1983), more adaptable (Bem, 1975), and more flexible (Wiggins, Holzmueller, 1981) in contrast to undifferentiated types with lower self-esteem and less flexibility. Despite the previous findings stating that feminine sex-typed individuals should be more responsive than masculine sex-typed ones (Bem, 1975; Bem, Lenney, 1976), these results reveal that the levels of responsiveness in both the groups are comparable. Nevertheless masculine sex-typed individuals appear to be more assertive than feminine sex-typed ones. Contrary to expectations, undifferentiated persons do not exhibit deficiencies in assertiveness. In these research as the least assertive persons are sex-typed ones. This may be the consequence of discrepancy between the number of undifferentiated participants ( $N = 11$ ) and the number of sex-typed ones ( $N = 59$ ).

The hypothesis that gender roles are significantly related to styles of communicative behaviours is also supported by these data ( $p < 0.0001$ ). Androgynous persons, because of the presence of masculine and feminine characteristics, prefer foremost expressive (high on assertiveness and responsiveness dimensions), then amiable styles of communicative behaviours. Sex-typed individuals prefer amiable styles (the hypothesis partially confirmed). Then cross-sex-typed persons favour both expressive and amiable styles of communicative behaviours and undifferentiated individuals favour styles of amiables, drivers or analyticals.

In summary, the conception of sex-role orientation as a multidimensional construct adds some complexity to the discussion of responsiveness, assertiveness and styles of communicative behaviours. The latter may be a characteristic of androgynous individuals, feminine or masculine sex-typed persons as well as those with neither (i.e., undifferentiated) or reverse sex-role orientations. Although the effects of sex and styles of communication are present and predictable, the effects of gender are not so consistently present as predicted. Researches, in a more diverse group of subjects, with more males participating, should examine the confirmed dependencies. Such findings may prove useful in analyzing diverse behavioral processes, not only styles of communicative behaviours.

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AGNIESZKA LIPIŃSKA-GROBELNY

### **PLEĆ PSYCHOLOGICZNA A STYLE ZACHOWAŃ KOMUNIKACYJNYCH**

Celem badań jest analiza związku między płcią psychologiczną określaną Inwentarzem Płci Psychologicznej (IPP) Kuczyńskiej a stylami zachowań komunikacyjnych z Macierzy Stylów Społecznych Merrilla i Reida. W badaniu uczestniczyło 145 osób (121 kobiet i 24 mężczyzn) w wieku 20–28 lat. Wyniki badań potwierdzają istnienie związku statystycznie istotnego między płcią psychologiczną a stylami zachowań komunikacyjnych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** płeć psychologiczna, style zachowań komunikacyjnych, Inwentarz do Oceny Płci Psychologicznej, Macierz Stylów Społecznych.