

## Psychological Androgyny and Sex-Type among Sudanese Universities' Students

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### ABSTRACT

**Aim:** This study designed to investigate the sex type and androgynous individual among a sample of Sudanese students by applying Bem's sex role inventory (BSRI). This study carried out in Sudan's capital (Khartoum, Khartoum-North and Omdurman). Sex differences in terms of many aspects, femininity, masculinity or sex gender, sex role identity, and sex stereotype, the manner that each society shaped its individual. **Methods:** The investigator applied the Bem's sex role inventory on 240 sample of universities students selected systematic randomly from: Omdurman Islamic University, The Ahfad University for Women and the Arts College of Khartoum University. The investigator attempts to apply the Bem's sex role inventory on those selected sample from the three Universities. Male-female (M-F) scales were developed to measure masculine and femininity traits. Sandra Bem and others (1975) criticized those scales or tests. Then she developed another scale for measuring sex type individuals, androgynous individual has a wider range of capabilities. **Results:** The results showed the existence of androgynous person. Near the half of the Islamic university (45%), the Ahfad University for Women (28.8%), and more than half among Khartoum's students (66.7%) are androgynous. The majority of the females at Ahfad and Khartoum students are sex-type in feminine direction; hence, male students are not extremely sex-type. **Conclusion:** Bem sex role inventory can possess feminine and masculine traits equally, this person or individual known as androgynous. In this study, the existence of androgynous person is there. Near the half of the Islamic university (45%), the Ahfad University for women (28.8%), and more than half among Khartoum's students (66.7%) are androgynous. The majority of the females in Ahfad and Khartoum students are sex-type in feminine direction.

**Keywords:** *Androgynous, Sex Typed, University Students.*

Sex gender (male and female), sex type (feminine and masculine), those two terms are intensively studied by many researchers in various times and through different perspectives. The sex type person, that is feminine or masculine, is restricted in doing only those situations where the requirements are consistent with the person's own sex type characteristic (Bem, 1975). In her studies in New Genia, Margaret Mead concluded:

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“Many, if not all, of the personality traits which we have called masculine or feminine are as highly linked to sex as clothing, the manners, and the form of head-dress that a society at a given period assigns to either sex, the evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of social conditioning.” As the present investigator mentioned earlier, the Bem sex role inventory, which was developed in 1975 to measure androgyny the extent to which a person believes he or she possesses desirable attributes of both sexes. Her conclusion is that half of the students she tested at Stanford University are traditionally feminine or masculine. Fifteen percent (15%) are cross-sex typed. Their score higher on traits associated with the opposite sex, and (35%) androgynous. As the origin of androgyny on (BSRI), the investigator used the word androgyny as sociocultural rather than physical sexual. She is not suggesting a new sterile unisex, focuses rather on the interactive psychological characteristic of male rather than static biological ones. Many researchers investigated the origin of those biological, psychological, and cultural factors that differentiate or believed to differentiate between the two sexes. Here, three points of view that described the emergence and development of sex roles behavior and what meant by female or male behavior. The psychoanalytic view attributed sex role behavior to the process of identification. This process occurred at early years of life during the childhood psychosexual development (3-5 years old, the inner conflict concerning the relationship between child and his/her opposite sex parent). This relation is sexually colored. Identification process for this inner conflict resolution is a means by which children acquired complex, complete pattern of behavior, attitude, feelings, wishes, and standards of conduct, which constitute a sex role. At the beginning of early childhood, girls and boys identify with their mothers. Gradually, girls continuously identifying with their mother, while boys shifting their identification to their fathers.

Social learning views argued that, the sex role behavior like other behaviors learned or acquired through different mechanisms, i.e., reinforcement (punishment and reward), imitation, and observation to a model among other. Mothers and fathers or adults encourage and reinforce the child's sex type behavior, and they inhibit and punish the opposite sex behavior. Psychoanalytic theory emphasized the importance of inner feelings, (anxiety, conflict and fear), while the social learning emphasized the overt, observable behavior.

The cognitive theory bridged the gap between the two points of view. It emphasized the mental and inner awareness of sex role attitudes. The child observed the adult's behavior toward themselves and other children. The child noticed that adults treated girls and boys differently. Then children reinforced to behave in sex type manners, and they continuously behave as such. The University students in Sudan consider as an important figure in Societies in 1990s several numbers of universities established under the higher education revolution policy.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Sample*

The number of the subjects in this study are two hundred and forty (240) students. Hundred (100) from Omdurman Islamic University, eighty (80) subjects from Ahfad University for Women, and sixty (60) subjects from College of Arts in Khartoum University. The Islamic university students are males, the Ahfad University: students are females, while the Arts College students are both females and males (30 males and 30 females). The samples from Omdurman Islamic and Ahfad Universities are selected from second, third and fourth classes. The students' samples from Arts College selected from first, second, third, fourth and fifth classes. They are three colleges in the Islamic University. The sample selected as follows: the Arts College thirty-four (34) students.

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El Sharea and Social Sciences College thirty-three (33) students. In Ahfad University there were three schools, the sample was systematic randomly selected, the Organization Management School, twenty-seven (27) students, School of Family Science twenty six (26) students. The Art College of Khartoum University thirty (30) males and thirty (30) females. The subjects' age ranged from eighteen up to thirty (18-30) years, the majority fall between twenty-three up to twenty-six (23-26) years with average age (24.5) years.

### *Instruments*

The Bem sex role inventory (BSRI) is a paper and pencil test, instrument that differentiate individuals from those with more sex type self-concept. It consists of sixty characteristics, twenty masculine personality traits, twenty feminine personality traits, and twenty neutral characteristics. When applying the BSRI a person is asked to indicate on a scale from one (1) "Never or almost never true" to seven (7) "Always or almost always true", how each characteristic describes her/him-self. In order to determine an individual androgyny score a student T-ratio for matched groups calculated for the differences between persons endorsement of masculine and feminine personality characteristics. If the obtained T-value is non-significance, that is between (-1) and (1), the individual is classified as androgynous. A significant positive T-value, (i.e., 20.025), according to Bem (1979) indicates feminine sex type score, a significant negative T-value, that is "2.025", indicates masculine sex type score. Bem considers a score between "1" and "2.025" to be near masculine.

### *Procedure*

The sample in this study has been taken systematic randomly from Omdurman Islamic University (1500 students), the Ahfad University College for Women (1000 students), and the Arts College of Khartoum University (800 students). They selected from the registered students' record. The test distributed by the investigator and sometimes, she used to clarify certain terms due to the translation procedure

## **RESULTS**

Chi-square used for frequency data. In this study, Chi-square used in sex and sex type variables, and residence and sex type variables. T-Test examine two groups assumed that the sampling distributions are normally distributed, homogeneity of the population. In this study it had been used in comparing Islamic and Khartoum universities, Islamic and Ahfad universities, and Khartoum and Ahfad universities. Multiple Regression, used with gender (male, female), as the independent variable and sex type as the dependent variable. The idea was to check for how much of the variation in sex type could attributed to gender.

*Table No.(1) Sex-by-Sex Type Cross Tabulation (Omdurman, Ahfad, Khartoum Universities)*

Groups		Sex type in feminine direction	Sex type in masculine direction	Androgynous	Near masculine	Undifferentiated
Islamic	No.	12	11	45	12	20
(male)	%	12	11	45	12	20
Ahfad	No.	32	03	23	20	02
(female)	%	40	03.8	28.3	25	02.5
Khartoum	No.	-	07	18	04	01
(male)	%	-	23.3	60	13.3	03.3
Khartoum	No.	18	02	02	07	01
(female)	%	60	06.7	06.7	23.3	03.3

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Table No. 1 above, shows that (45%) of the Islamic students are androgynous. (28.3%) from Ahfad University College for Women, and (66.7%) from Khartoum University are androgynous students.

This shows that the androgynous subjects are for the largest group except for the Ahfad University for women. (40%) of the female students in Ahfad University for Women are sex type in feminine direction, (11%) of the male students in Islamic University are sex type in masculine direction, (18%) of the female in Khartoum University are sex type in feminine direction, (7%) of the male students in Khartoum University are sex type in masculine direction. (25% of the Khartoum's students are sex type).

There were significance differences in Khartoum University, ( $\chi^2=34.40$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p<0.01$ )

**Table No. 2 Residence by Sex Type Cross Tabulation (Omdurman, Ahfad, Khartoum Universities)**

Groups	Residence		Sex type in feminine direction	Sex type in masculine direction	Androgynous	Near masculine	Undifferentiated
Islamic (male)	Urban	No.	6	3	15	3	5
		%	18.8	9.4	46	9.4	15.6
	Rural	No.	6	8	30	9	15
		%	8.8	11.8	44.1	13.2	22.1
Ahfad (female)	Urban	No.	26	3	19	17	1
		%	39.4	4.5	28.8	25.8	1.5
	Rural	No.	6	0	4	3	1
		%	42.9	0	28.6	25.4	7.1
Khartoum (mixed)	Urban	No.	11	3	6	8	1
		%	37.9	10.3	20.7	27.6	3.4
	Rural	No.	7	6	14	3	1
		%	22	19.4	45.2	9.7	3.2

Table No. 2 above, shows that there were no significant difference in all the three groups concerning the sex type with residence variables:

Omdurman ( $\chi^2=2.66$ ), Ahfad ( $\chi^2=2.22$ ), Khartoum ( $\chi^2=7.30$ )

**Table No. (3) Sex-by-Sex Type T-Test (Islamic & Khartoum) (Islamic & Ahfad), (Ahfad & Khartoum)**

Groups	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Value	Df	P
Islamic	3.15	1.29	2.85	59	0.01
Khartoum	2.50	1.20			
Islamic	3.15	1.29	2.69	59	0.01
Ahfad	2.48	1.37			
Khartoum	2.50	1.20	0.07	59	0.9
Ahfad	2.48	1.37			

Table No. 3 above, shows the sex and sex type across the three groups. It can be seen that there were high significant differences between Islamic and Khartoum universities, and Islamic with Ahfad university ( $T=2.85$ ,  $P<0.01$ ,  $T=2.29$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) respectively.

However, there is no significant differences between Ahfad and Khartoum universities.

**Table No.(4) Multiple Regression (Khartoum University)**

Variable	Multiple Regression	R	Df	F	P
Sex	0.39	0.15	1	10.54	0.01

Table No. 4 above, shows that: that being male or female account for “39%” of the variation in sex type (F=10.54, P<0.01).

## DISCUSSION

When applying Bem sex role inventory (BSRI), the investigator hypothesized that, Omdurman Islamic University (all male) are sex type in masculine direction, Ahfad (all female) are sex-type in feminine direction, while Khartoum’s mixed students are supposed to be androgynous. Concerning the androgynous and sex-type individuals, the result indicates: in Islamic and Khartoum universities, the androgynous students represent great proposition. (45%) of the Islamic students are androgynous (as shown in Table “1”), while (66.7%) are androgynous among the Khartoum University students, most of them are males (60%), and the females constitute (6.7%) only. This result partially confirmed that, (40%) of the Ahfad’s students are sex-type in feminine direction and this confirmed again. (28.8%) of the Ahfad’s students, are androgynous and (25%) are near masculine. Due to the traditional socialization processes, each individual encouraged to develop his/her own sex-type (male in masculine sex-type, female in feminine sex-type). The Ahfad College’s students confirmed, that female supposed to be sex-type in feminine direction. The Khartoum’s students most of them are androgynous as we expected. One can noticed that androgynous scores are great among the male students, while sex-type and near masculine are among the females. The masculine traits, such as independent, leadership, decision making, etc. in many societies are more desirable because they show adjusted personality, confidence, and responsible attitudes. Despite the importance of the female traits such as sympathy, tender, sensitive to the need of others. Nevertheless, the feminine traits reflect vulnerable and unreliably personality; these traditional differentiations between the two sexes. Modern perspectives toward these traits that we mentioned says that they found in one person. Male in most societies has the priority and great opportunities concerning many thing (social, economic, education, learning and works aspects). Furthermore, males are encouraged by different social systems to acquire and progress easily, for instance, in works, sports, politics, learning, and social activities. In general, there are great gaps between male and female on the chronological level at least. The great educational, political, religious, and economic movements working for filling these gaps, e.g. the educational movement, especially the expansion of women’s education, the opportunities for women to go outside home, and the impacts of women’s work participated in changing the attitudes towards femininity and masculinity. So the masculine and feminine traits move toward each other. As can see, most of the male students in Islamic and Khartoum universities are androgynous, that mean they are not sex-type, while the female students in Ahfad and Khartoum universities (25% and 23.3%) are near masculine respectively. This may be due to the experiences and the needs of educated female to acquired traits for survival, progressing, and competition. These traits labeled as masculine traits.

I think all the good traits are human or persons’ traits, which must acquire by any person irrespective to their sex race or religion. On the other hand, the male individual can acquire the traditional concepts about the feminine traits without feeling of inferiority, so, male can be sensitive to the need of others, affectionate, and eager to sooth-hurt feelings.

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In approaching each other, the masculine and feminine traits may be passed through near masculine or undifferentiated. For instance, in Islamic University (20%) are undifferentiated, and for Ahfad College (25%) are near masculine. In Khartoum University, there were significant differences between males and females in sex-type, which contradicted with our expectation. "60%" of the male students are androgynous and there is no cross-sex-type, while only (6.7%) of the female are androgynous. This may indicate that females are more conservative than males toward changing attitudes due to the ways of upbringing, that are used both in families and schools (educational settings). Female individuals are supposed to be feminine, yielding, shy, and conventional. Concerning the relationship between the three groups, there is no statistically significant difference between the sex-type and residence. For the urban and rural students, there is no investigation about how long they live in their urban or rural areas in Sudan are inter-related, people live in towns and still they have their roots in rural or villages, they are in contact continuously. In comparing each two groups, (Islamic with Ahfad; Islamic with Khartoum; and Ahfad with Khartoum), as can be seen in Table (3), there is a very significant difference between Islamic and Ahfad ( $T$ -value = 2.69,  $P < 0.01$ ). A high significant difference between Islamic and Khartoum universities ( $T$ -value = -2.85,  $P < 0.01$ ), while there is no significant difference between the Khartoum and Ahfad universities. We thought, the existence of the female in Ahfad and Khartoum universities might be responsible for these differences. Most of the males in both Islamic and Khartoum are androgynous, while the majority of the females in Ahfad and Khartoum are sex-type in feminine direction. The near masculine score for the female in Ahfad and Khartoum is approximately similar. When we used multiple regression for seeing how much sex type is attributed to sex gender, the significant difference appears in Khartoum University, because there are mixed students (males and females).

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### *Conflict of Interest*

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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