



## The Development of a Sex Role Orientation Instrument in Nigeria

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**Abstract.** Much research on sex role orientation has been carried out in the developed nations of the world. This has generated varied instruments to measure sex role orientation, taking into cognisance a given societal culture, mores and values on sex roles. However, in Nigeria, research works on sex roles, especially, an acceptable instrument to measure sex role orientation in Nigeria is yet to be developed. The present instrument was designed to be gap filling in this area.

### 1. Introduction

In every society, different roles are assigned to male and females. And different characteristics are found to be acceptable on the male-female polar. At recent time, there has been the argument that the traditional perception of maleness and femaleness is in a state of flux. Thus, there has been varied attention on measuring this, especially in the developed nations of the world. Even in developing nations of the world, this has become a major focus of research. However, in Nigeria, much still needs to be done in this area.

### 2. The Concept of Gender Behavioural Flexibility

The first Masculinity (M) – Femininity (F) test was that of Terman and Miles (1936, cited in

Lenny, 1991). Prior to the early 1970s, test on sex roles were built upon the assumption that masculinity and femininity were polar opposites, having a necessary inverse relationship within the individual (Lenny, 1991), O’Leary, 1977). There were however questions as to the efficacy of such assumptions.

The first person to put forward an alternative conceptualization was Sandra Bem. She brought forward the concept of an androgynous individual as she called it: an individual who does not rely on gender as a cognitive organizing principle and whose personality therefore combined both masculine and feminine elements; a sort of blended personality (Bem, 1984).

The term androgyny is said to have been coined from the Greek word “andro” meaning male and “gyne” meaning female. Bem started her research on androgyny in 1971, and then came the development of the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1972, 1974). In 1973, Jeanne Block published an insightful article on androgyny in the American Psychologist based on her research (Block, 1973). In the same year, Constantinople presented a comprehensive critique of masculinity and femininity constructs and its tests. It was concluded that the existing tests on M - F were inadequate for various reasons.

First, Constantinople (1973) revealed that there was enough evidence for separate M - F suspensions to warrant questioning the bipolarity assumption and secondly, M - F it was believed, assumed multi-dimensional rather than uni-dimensional. Since then, sex role inventories purporting to measure psychological androgyny have been developed. Examples abound:

- Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) developed by Sandra Bem in 1972, 1974.
- The Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ) by Sponcon, Hermoich and Stapp (1974, 1975).
- The personality research form ANDRO scale, often referred to as PRF Andro, by Bernins, and Wetter (1978) cited in Lenny, 1991.
- The Adjective check list (ACL) M and F scales by Heilbrun, (1976).
- The M and F scales developed by Baucom (1976 cited in Lenny, 1991 and
- The Sex Role Behaviour scale (RBS) by Orlofsky (1977).

### 3. Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI)

Bem (1974) constructed the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) as a compromised of a masculinity scale, and a femininity scale, each of which contains 20 characteristics, selected on the basis of gender-typed social desirability. There were 20 regarded as “neutral filler”. Subjects indicated the extent to which each of the 60 items reflected them on a 7 point scale, ranging from “almost never or never true of me” to “always says true of me”.

BSRI is a self-administered 60 item questionnaire scale was intended to contain positive traits widely believed to be part of the culture’s masculinity and femininity. She therefore started by compiling a list of 200 personality traits that seemed positively valued and stereotypically masculine or feminine, and 200 others that seemed neither masculine nor feminine of these while half seemed varied. To start off, over 400 items were presented to two samples of Stanford University undergraduates and 20 females at one time and 30 males and 30

females at another time. In each , the subjects rated each trait in terms of its sex-typed social desirability , examples of items include - In American society, how desirable is it for a man to be assertive? and - how desirable is it for a woman to be assertive?

Bem was to later condense the BSRI 60 items to a shorter format made up Of 30 items. To be gender-typed, the individual has to be only those attributes that characterise one’s gender and reject those of the other gender.

Different methods are often used to determine androgyny. The most common is as follows:

- Androgyny is sometimes expressed as relatively high absolute M and F score.
- Androgyny expressed as relatively balanced M and F score or
- Androgyny as a combination of A and B above (Lenny, 1991).
- To determine the instrument’s reliability, Bem (1974) used the test retest method and the high reliability over a 4-week interval among 28 male and 28 female Stanford undergraduates

### 4. The Development of a Sex Role Orientation in Nigeria.

The most used sex role instrument in the world is the Bem Sex Role Instrument. It was used by a Nigerian, Famojuro (1986), on a group of Nigerians abroad. However, it must be noted that Bem used a set of American values to develop her instrument and she had at the back of her mind, American social and gender values in the development of the instruments.

The present writer believed that there ought to be a sex role instrument to take into cognisance, the Nigerian setting and values. This led to the Sex Role Orientation Instrument (SROI) development. The first step was the pilot study. Opinions were sampled as the behavioural traits and characteristics that are perceived to be most desirable for males and females within the Nigerian society. Selected twenty (ten males and ten males) adults within the metropolis were also interviewed. The individuals involved were mainly Civil Servants and Lecturers of University of Ilorin, Ilorin. Based on these opinions and facts, coupled with what the review

of pertinent literature had revealed, an eighty item questionnaire was constructed. This questionnaire was given to a randomly selected forty adults at the University of Ilorin. This was to further assess how desirable the generated items were to each within the Nigeria society.

The questionnaire required the respondents to indicate how desirable each trait on the questionnaire was to be respondent(s) sex in the Nigeria society. The questionnaire was on a same point scale; extremely desirable (7), most desirable (6), desirable (5), not more desirable, undesirable to both males and females (4), undesirable (3), most undesirable (2) and extreme undesirable.

The questionnaire were scored, while the factor loading Matrix was then applied on the responses to pull out the fifteen most weighted traits by the males and fifteen for the females were pulled to make up the thirty items on the sex role orientation instrument (SROI).

### 5. Reliability

Reliability can be perceived as the level of internal consistency or stability of a measuring instrument over a period of time, it is the extent of precision of measurement. Further, it is usually expressed as reliability coefficient which reflects the extent to which a test is free from error variance. The test retest method, was adopted for use. The interval for the retest was five weeks.

For the (SROI), the reliability coefficient was obtained using the Pearson product moment method of correlation which produced a coefficient of 0.80. This was significant at the 0.01 probability level. The investigator considered this to be high enough for use.

### 6. Validity

The construct validity is established when a psychological concept is tested out and the instrument measures this concept. The construct validity was established by varied procedures .

The concurrent validity was determined by using a parallel instrument, the Bem Sex Role

Inventory, and using the Pearson moment correlation, this was determined at 0.72. This was significant at the 0.05 probability level.

### 7. Scoring Scheme of the Instrument

To classify the respondents into either feminine or androgynous group (on the basis of sex orientation) self-description on the thirty items of the SROI were scored and calculated. The scoring procedure adopted was to score responses to the androgynous orientation items on a five-point Likert-type scale of 1 - 5, i.e from "highly untrue of me" to highly true to me" as it is on the instrument.

For the feminine orientation items, the same scoring procedure was adopted but in this instance, the scoring was reversed (i.e 5-1) for similar responses. Thereafter, high total scores on the fifteen items would indicate androgyny while low total scores would indicate femininity. Fifteen items i.e, items 3,4,7,10,11,13,15,17,22,24,25,27,28,29, and 30 on the SROI were treated as the feminine orientation items while the other fifteen items on the instrument were regarded as the androgynous orientation items

Thereafter, the total scores were calculated for each respondent. Those who had scores of 90 were regarded as "indeterminate" since the score represents an average of 3 (for undecided) on each of the thirty items. Those whose total scores fell below 90 were regarded as "feminine" and those who had total scores above 90 were regarded as "androgynous".

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