

PSYCHOLOGICAL ANDROGYNY AND CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

A New Look with New Measures

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*Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Women in Psychology – March 1,
2019*

Gender Schema Theory: A Cognitive Account of Sex Typing

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Gender schema theory proposes that the phenomenon of sex typing derives, in part, from gender-based schematic processing, from a generalized readiness to process information on the basis of the sex-linked associations that constitute the gender schema. In particular, the theory proposes that sex typing results from the fact that the self-concept itself gets assimilated to the gender schema. Several studies are described which demonstrate that sex-typed individuals do, in fact, have a greater readiness to process information—including information about the self—in terms of the gender schema. It is speculated that such gender-based schematic processing derives, in part, from the society's ubiquitous insistence on the functional importance of the gender dichotomy. The political implications of gender schema theory are discussed, as is the relationship of the theory to the concept of androgyny.

Gender Identity: A Multidimensional Analysis With Implications for Psychosocial Adjustment

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This study examined the relations between components of gender identity and psychosocial adjustment. The aspects of gender identity assessed were (a) feelings of psychological compatibility with one's gender (i.e., feeling one is a typical member of one's sex and feeling content with one's biological sex), (b) feelings of pressure from parents, peers, and self for conformity to gender stereotypes, and (c) the sentiment that one's own sex is superior to the other (intergroup bias). Adjustment was assessed in terms of self-esteem and peer acceptance. Participants were 182 children in Grades 4 through 8. Felt gender compatibility (when operationalized as either self-perceived gender typicality or feelings of contentment with one's biological sex) was positively related to adjustment, whereas felt pressure and intergroup bias were negatively associated with adjustment. The results provide new insights into the role of gender identity in children's well-being, help identify sources of confusion in previous work, and suggest directions for future inquiry.

Gender Typicality Scale

Same-Gender Typicality

1. Some girls don't feel they're just like all the other girls their age BUT Other girls do feel they're just like all the other girls their age.

Very true
for me

Sort of true
for me

Sort of true
for me

Very true
for me

2. Some girls don't feel they fit in with other girls BUT Other girls do feel . . .

3. Some girls think they are a good example of being a girl BUT Other girls don't think . . .

4. Some girls don't feel that the things they like to do in their spare time are similar to what most girls like to do in their spare time BUT Other girls do feel . . .

5. Some girls feel that the kinds of things they're good at are similar to what most girls are good at BUT Other girls don't feel . . .

6. Some girls don't feel that their personality is similar to most girls' personalities BUT Other girls do feel . . .

Other-Gender Typicality Scale

- 1. Some boys have the same interests that girls have BUT Other boys *don't* have the same interests that girls have.

Very true
for me

Sort of true
for me

Sort of true
for me

Very true
for me

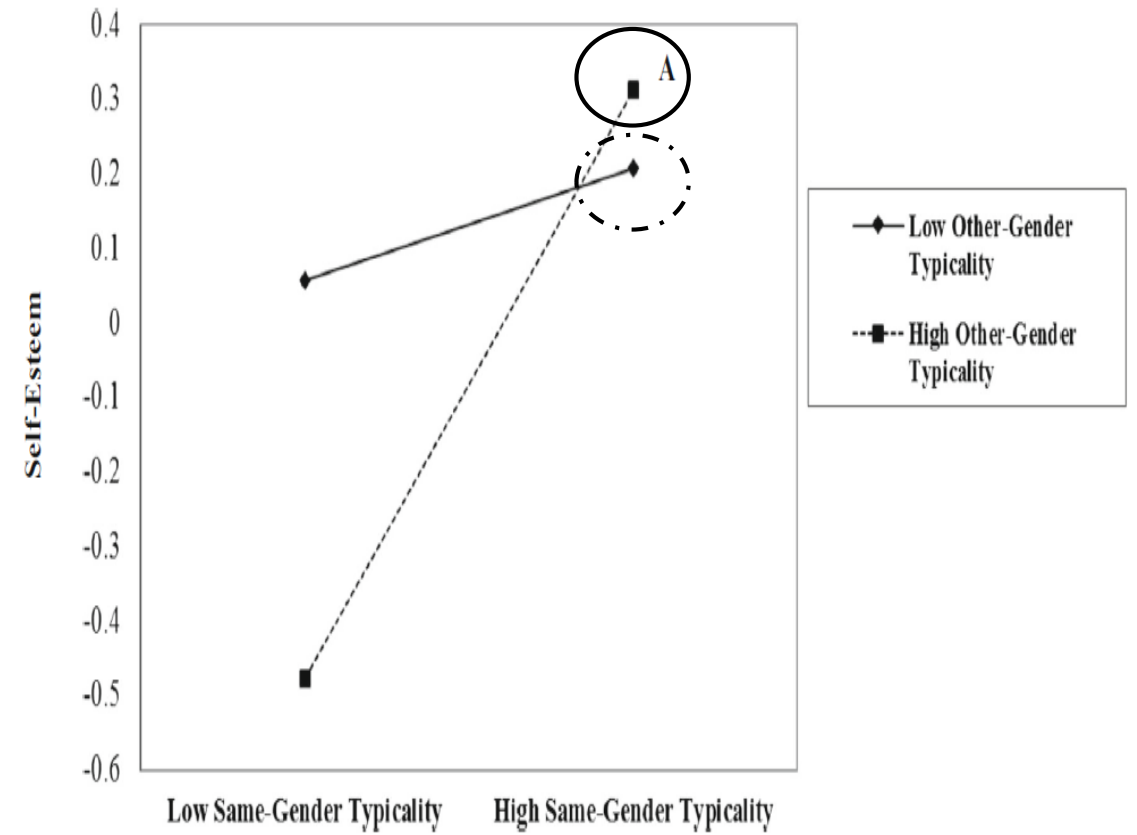
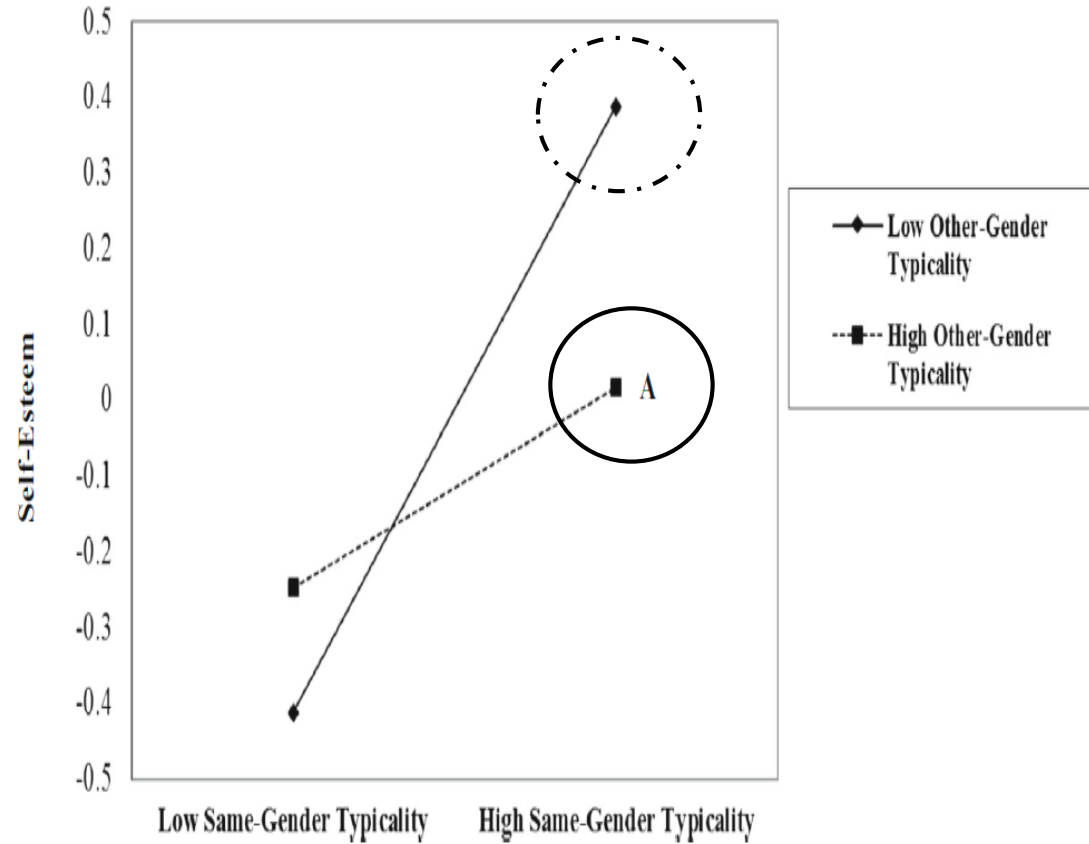
- 2. Some boys sometimes play with girls' toys and do girls' activities BUT Other boys almost never play with girls' toys and do girls' activities
- 3. Some boys feel they are very different from girls BUT Other boys *don't* feel they are very different from girls
- 4. Some boys have the same feelings that girls have BUT Other boys *don't* have the same feelings that girls have
- 5. Some boys feel that their personality is different from girls' personalities BUT Other boys feel that their personality is similar to girls' personalities
- 6. Some boys never talk or act like a girl BUT Other boys *do* sometimes talk or act like a girl

GIRLS

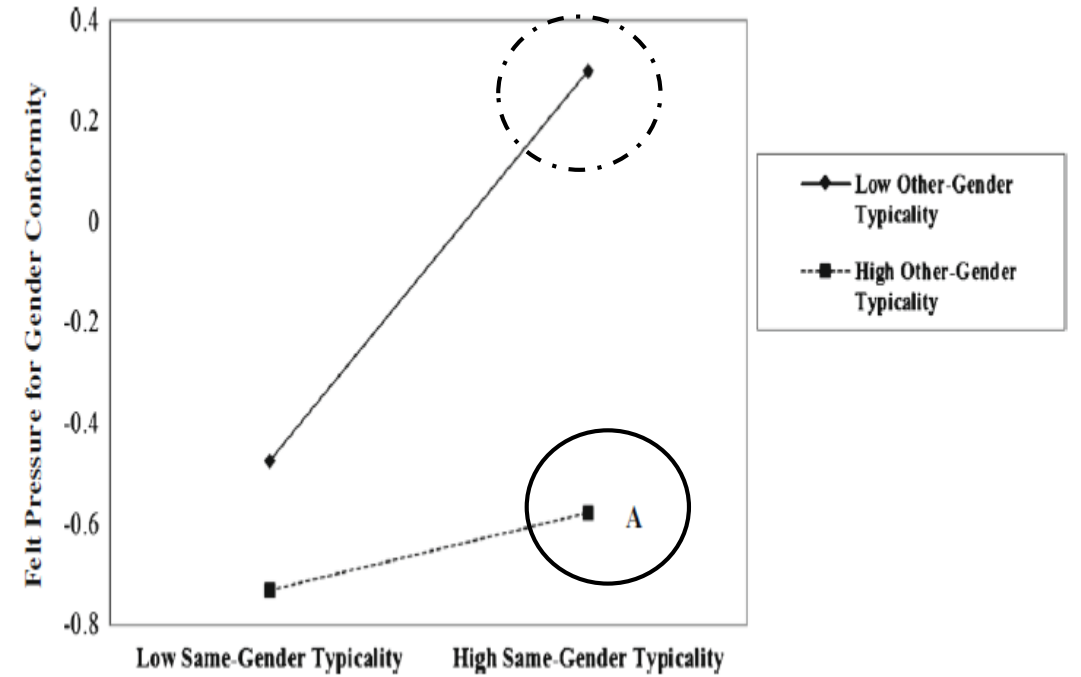
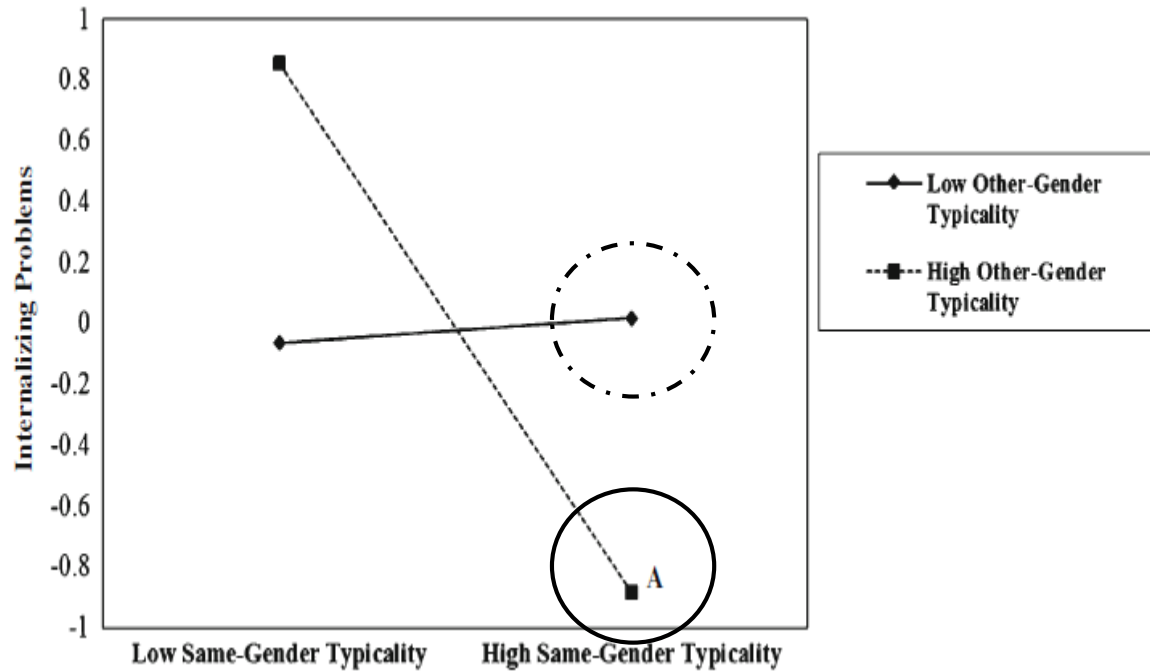
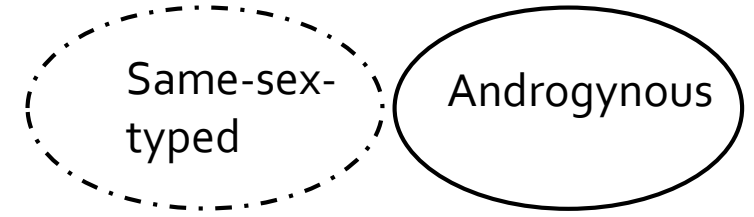
Same-sex-typed

Androgynous

BOYS



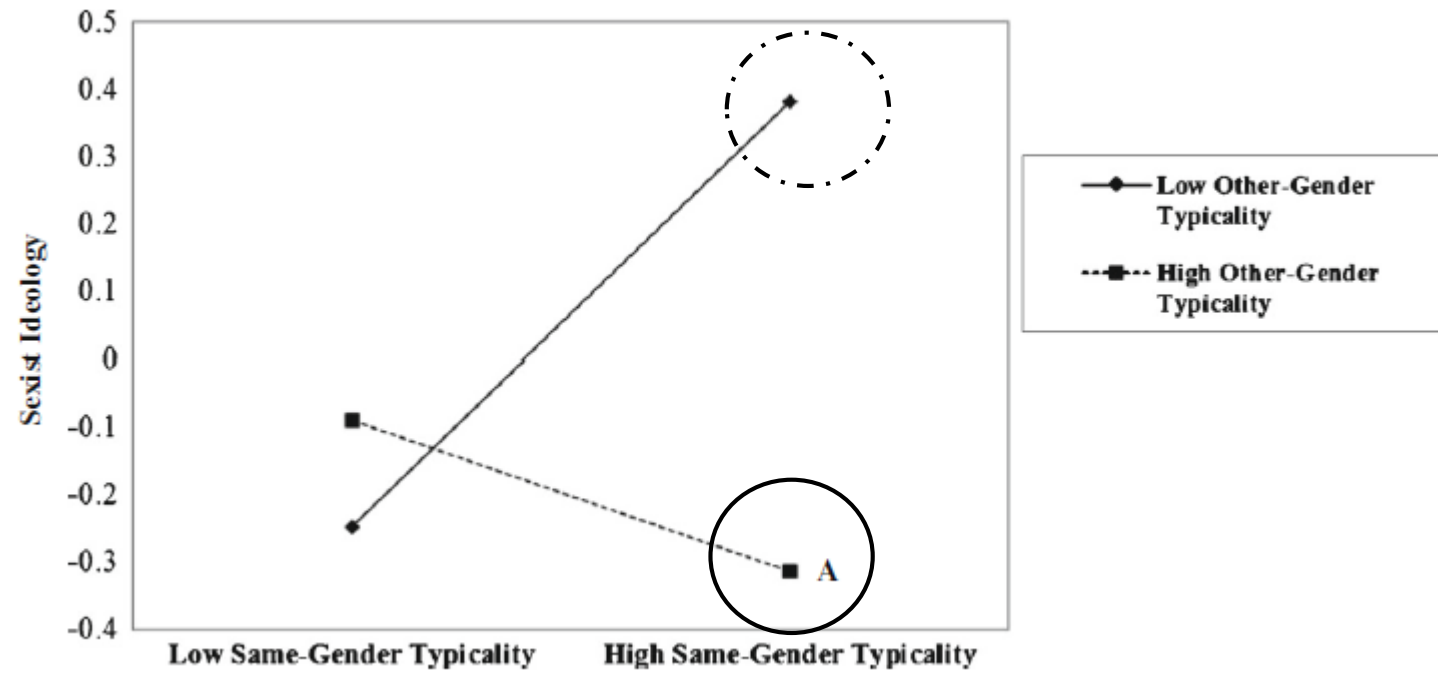
ENTIRE SAMPLE



BOYS ONLY

Same-sex-typed

Androgynous



Yay, Sandra Bem!!!

- Androgynous children
 - Not always the best-positioned group
 - Never associated with negative outcome
- Same-sex-typed children
 - Fine in terms of adjustment
 - More gender polarizing cognition than androgynous kids
- Undifferentiated and Cross-sex-typed?
 - Lack gender polarizing cognition
 - But...

Undifferentiated/Cross-Sex-Typed

