

Ch 5 Self / Gender (184-201)

I. Defining Gender and Sex

Kay Deaux, "Commentary: Sorry, wrong number - A reply to Gentile's call."

- Sex = used when people are selected based on Male/Female demographic characteristics

- Gender = used when making judgements about maleness (masculinity) and femaleness (femininity)

Others suggest: Sex = biologically determined characteristics

Gender = socially influences characteristics

- can be problematic in that both suggest a causal relationship which is by no means clear

- what happens with a biologically influenced characteristic is altered by a social influence, is it gender or sex.

- Sex differences vs. Sex - Related Differences = must attempt to remove causal language from relationships that are not clearly causally related.

-Sex implies that there is a mutually exclusive dichotomy between being male and being female. However, there are individuals that don't fall clearly in one group or the other. What should they be considered, are their behaviors the result of sex or gender?

II. Concepts

Gender Identity (as early as age 2) - part of self-concept involving a person's identification as a male or female.

Gender Consistency (4-7) - understanding that one's sex does not change (for self and others)

Sex Typing - comprehension of the stereotypes associated with being male or female.

III. Gender Schema

Sandra L. Bem "Gender Schema Theory and its Implications for Child Development: Raising Gender-Aschematic Children in a Gender-Schematic Society"

A. Sex Typing

acquisition of "sex - appropriate" preferences, skills, personality attributes, behaviors, and self-concepts.

B. Previous Theories

1. Psychoanalytic Theory : Anatomy is Destiny (Freud)

-Sex Typing is result of

a) understanding differences in genital structure

b) development of penis envy (girls) and castration anxiety (males).

c) resolution of Oedipal/Electra complex

c1. males = identification with same sex parent (internalize the father)

c2. females = not resolved until symbolically possess father through heterosexual relationship

- Problems = Not testable, and data does not support it.

2. Social Learning Theory

-Sex Typing is result of Environmental Contingencies : Rewards and Punishments

- Sex-appropriate behavior is rewarded.

- Sex-inappropriate behavior is punished.
- Problems : children often construct and enforce novel gender rules that are not entirely incorrect.

3. Cognitive Developmental Theory :

Stage Model

1. Gender Identity : knowledge of ones own gender
I'm a boy, I'm a girl
 2. Gender Stability : Understanding that ones gender will remain the same throughout life.
 3. Gender Consistency: Understanding that ones gender can't be changed through alterations to appearance (e.g. boy in dress = boy not girl).
 4. Gender Constancy: Gender is an integral and fixed part of ourselves.
- Children are naturally motivated to construct knowledge about their world. Once the label is applied to themselves, children seek information about that label and behave consistently with the label.

- Problems : Why is gender such a special category of information that should be applied to self. Other classification systems would seem more useful

C. Gender Schema Theory

- Combines components of Social Learning Theory, Cognitive Developmental Theory, and Information Processing Theory to answer this question.

Sex Typing - The Result of Gender-Schematic Processing

- 1) The Schema = A mental representation of associated information that generates expectancies to guide the encoding, interpretation, storage, and retrieval of information.

- The schema is a generalization that allows the user to make inferences in the face of missing information. (Laundry).

- 2) The Gender Schema = associated information regarding the socially learned sex-appropriate behaviors, activities, and attributes. Depending on learning history, some individuals may be more Gender Schematic than others.

3)Gender Schematic Processing

- 3a. Child learns sociocultural definitions of maleness and femaleness; Anatomy, reproductive function, personality attributes, division of labor, and associated metaphorical aspects (angularity vs roundedness, mars vs venus).

- 3b. Child uses the network of sex-linked associations to evaluate and assimilate new information.

- 3c. Depending on learning history, some individuals may be more Gender Schematic than others.

Gender Schematic = readily process information with respect to relation to gender schema

Gender Aschematic = unlikely to process information with respect to gender schema, more likely to bring other schematic systems to bear on the data.

The BSRI

4) Empirical Support

Task : Given list of Male/Female names (half and half), animal names, verbs, and articles of clothing. Each group of words consisted of masculine, feminine, and neutral words.

Recall Test : Memory equal for schematic and aschematic individuals, but schematics organized their list with respect to masculine and feminine items. They used gender as a retrieval strategy.

5) What Determines which Categories become Schematic

5a. If the context makes the category the basis from which a large amount of social information is explained and described.

5b. If the context gives the category functional significance. E.g. institutions, norms, and taboos distinguish between the people, behaviors, and attributes based on the category.

D. Raising Aschematic Children

1) Strategies

1) Teach sex differences (genitalia & reproduction) while retarding the acquisition of the culturally defined correlates of sex. Actively censoring what children are exposed to.

1) eliminate sex stereotypes from own behavior

2) eliminate sex stereotypes with respect to toys and activities the child engages

3) expose the child to adults engaging in non-traditional activities/roles

4) censor books with gendered content.

5) From early age teach child anatomical and reproductive differences and that sex differences are only functional when considering these domain.

2) Providing Alternative Schemata with which to evaluate the world.

1) Individual Differences: Teach children that there is more variation within groups than between groups. (not all boys like baseball, not all girls dislike baseball)

2) Cultural Relativism : Teach child that different people believe different things and that it is common to find that people have contradictory beliefs.

3) Sexism Schema : provide the child with the socio-historical origins and consequences of sex- discrimination.