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For Crying Out Loud—The Differences Persist into the '90s

William K. Lombardo, Gary A. Cretser,¹ and Scott C. Roesch
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

The relation of gender to crying was investigated over a 15-year interval. The 1996 sample was composed of 523 undergraduates (293 females and 230 males). Forty percent of the sample described themselves as Asian, 32% Anglo, 19% Hispanic, and 7% African American. There were extreme similarities between the 1981 and 1996 samples in terms of reported frequency and intensity of crying and the gender patterning of crying behavior across stimulus situations. In the later sample, gender role orientation (as measured by the BSRI) was found to be associated with crying. Neither ethnicity nor socioeconomic status was significantly related to any of the variables examined. It may be that crying has not been significantly affected by changing gender role expectations in the last 15 years.

KEY WORDS: emotion; crying; gender; androgyny.

In the last decade it has been commonly noted that there have been significant changes in gender role stereotypes, expectations, and behaviors. It is well documented that women have moved into the workplace and men have turned toward more involvement in fatherhood and family. For example, Tavis notes (1999, p. 3) "men's participation in household chores and childcare has been rising steadily, as shown both in community surveys and family studies (Barnett & Rivers, 1996; Coontz, 1997; Stacey, 1996)." Tavis was moved to ask recently (1999, p. 4), "why, in spite of incontrovertible evidence about the rapid changes in gender roles and behavior, do so many people like to think the sexes are opposite and unchanging?"

¹To whom correspondence should be addressed at Behavioral Sciences Department, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, 3801 West Temple Avenue, Pomona, California 91768; e-mail: gacretser@csupomona.edu.

Examples of cognitive changes related to gender are found in the areas of verbal and spatial abilities. Previous research found significant differences, with girls scoring higher on verbal skills and boys higher on spatial abilities. More recently, it has been reported that these differences are narrowing (Feingold, 1992). LaFrance and Banaji state (1992, p. 191) "there are indications that the restricted display of emotions by males has undergone some change, in particular, that it may occasionally be acceptable for males to express 'tender emotions.'" More specifically, in the area of crying behavior, Labott (1991, p. 397) suggests that "gender role expectations of emotional expression, especially crying, may have changed in recent years." She provides evidence that both attitudes and reactions toward crying behaviors have been modified.

Our interest is in investigating the extent to which the norms regarding crying behavior have changed in the last 15 years. We expected to find greater similarity in terms of crying between men and women in the later sample.

CRYING

Thoits (1990, p. 318) defines emotions as "(a) appraisals of a situational stimulus or context, (b) changes in physiological or bodily sensations, (c) the free or inhibited display of expressive gestures, and (d) a cultural label applied to specific constellations of one or more of the first three components." Crying is one result of an interaction of an individual with an emotional experience, which results in the production of tears, as well as other physiological and behavioral manifestations.

The term *crying* in the literature is usually defined by the self-reports of the participants and seems to refer to a variety of states from a teardrop, to weeping and sobbing, and even to outright bawling. *Cry* is the generic word that has emerged to describe these diverse reactions. The term is so general, it can refer to anything from the reaction to a speck of dirt in your eye to watching your child being run over by a truck. Crying is not associated with any one emotion exclusively, though sadness, anger, and frustration seem to be the ones most prominently involved. There is also crying for joy or pathos that is associated with the experience of positive emotions.

Whatever crying is and whatever crying means, most researchers seem to concur with Katz (2000, p. 175), who states that it is difficult to review the literature on crying "without getting the message that something important to the people involved is usually at stake." Katz further states that crying makes a personal statement that "I am moved to an unusual depth. What's going on now hits me where I live."

The profile of the where, when, and with whom crying occurs is very similar for males and females except that male expression is more constricted.

Lombardo, Cretser, Lombardo, and Mathis (1983) found males and females to be similarly affected in terms of situations likely to evoke crying. Lombardo et al., found that of the 20 situations investigated, the "death of someone close" was the most likely one to elicit crying whereas "after drinking a lot" was the least likely one to do so. It was also noted that the pattern of crying, that is, the rank ordering of potential crying situations, for males and females was highly correlated.

Researchers (Lombardo et al., 1983; Williams & Morris, 1996) also report that American, British, and Israeli men and women are more likely to cry when alone and least likely to cry with people they do not know well. Men in the Williams and Morris study were particularly unlikely to cry at work.

Williams and Morris (1996, p. 479), describe crying as "an emotional experience which occurs rather infrequently for most adults, although there are marked individual and gender differences." Findings dating back to one of the pioneers of crying research, Bindra (1972), have confirmed the folk truth that women cry more than men. In our earlier study (Lombardo et al., 1983), significant gender differences were found in crying behavior, with females crying more frequently and more intensely than males. This gender difference occurred consistently in 19 of the 20 social situations that were presented to the participants. There is some evidence for these gender differences being cross-cultural. Rosenblatt, Walsh, and Jackson (1976) reviewed ethnographic data for 60 societies. Women and men cried with the same frequency in 32 societies. However, in 28 societies women cried more frequently than men and there were no societies in which men cried more frequently than women. Also, Fischer and Manstead (2000) report that in societies with "individualistic" values, such as the United States, there are greater gender differences in the intensity and expression of emotion compared with societies emphasizing "collectivistic" values. From a review of the literature, one can safely conclude that women have been found to cry more frequently and with more intensity than do men.

THIS STUDY

This study utilizes self-reports on crying behavior. This research is, in part, a replication of an earlier study regarding the relationship of gender to crying behavior (see Lombardo et al., 1983).

The 1981 questionnaire was modified by adding a measure of gender role identification. Earlier studies had indicated an association between emotional expressiveness and gender role identification (LaFrance & Banaji, 1992). Our expectation was that gender role identification would be related

to crying. For example, previous research had suggested that those men adhering to a traditional gender role, as compared to nontraditional men, were less likely to cry when sad (Ross & Mirowsky, 1984).

Bem (1974) defined androgyny as the extent to which both stereotypically masculine and feminine traits are integrated into a single individual. She constructed the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), in order to operationalize her concept of psychological androgyny. Masculinity and femininity are viewed by Bem as independent traits. She regards it as possible and "implicitly even desirable for a single individual to possess both stereotypically masculine and feminine characteristics" (Biegler, 1985, p. 51). This study includes the BSRI to investigate the relationship of gender role identification to crying. Our hypothesis was that the BSRI would have a statistically significant relationship to crying. In other words, the expectation was that participants categorized as androgynous would cry more than those categorized as masculine and less than those categorized as feminine.

METHOD

The 1981 Sample

Lombardo et al. (1983) describe their earlier sample as follows:

Subjects were students in introductory psychology and sociology classes, a General Education requirement for a variety of majors and schools at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. . . . This resulted in completed questionnaires for 285 males and 307 females. The mean age of subjects was 22 years. Approximately 70% of the subjects indicated their race as Anglo, approximately 10% marked Chicano or Latin American, approximately 6% described themselves as Black, 6% as Oriental, and the remaining 8% chose "Other." Only 14% of the subjects were married" (pp. 988-989).

The 1996 Study

The earlier questionnaire on crying and the BSRI (see Appendix) were administered to a sample of 523 undergraduate students (293 females and 230 males) at a comprehensive public university in California. The sample ranged in age from 16 to 54 years with the majority of participants between 20 and 24 years of age. The sample consisted of 40.7% Asians (broadly defined), 31.9% Anglo, 18.9% Hispanics, and 7% African Americans (2.5% identified themselves as Other).

The questions concerning crying behavior were identical to items used in the 1981 investigation. The terms selected for postcrying affect and the phrases chosen for crying stimulus situations were based on a preliminary study.

The BSRI is composed of 60 adjectives selected to represent personality traits (20 feminine, 20 masculine and 20 gender neutral items). Participants rated themselves on a 7-point scale, indicating the extent to which each item described them. We employed the method suggested by Bem² for deriving an androgyny score for each individual (Bem, 1974). In addition, the four-category method (masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated) devised by Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1974) was employed as a second classificatory scheme for the BSRI.

RESULTS

The ethnicity of our sample shifted rather dramatically during this 15-year period with an increase in Asian participants by nearly 30% and a decrease in Anglo participants of 38%. There were no significant differences in crying found between ethnic groups in either the earlier or latter investigations. Also, there were no significant findings with respect to age, major, or socioeconomic status. Therefore, in this study these variables are not included in the analysis which follows.

Women Cry More Frequently Than Men Do

As shown in Table I (Part 1, Frequency), there was a significant difference between males and females in the frequency for reported crying, $\chi^2(4, N = 523) = 173.61, p < .0001$. Among the men in our sample, 64.8% indicated that they "almost never" cry. In the sample of women, 62.5% report that they cry "occasionally" and 18.4% cry "frequently."

Women Cry More Intensely Than Men Do

There was a significant difference between males and females in the intensity of reported crying, $\chi^2(3, N = 486) = 101.29, p < .0001$. The majority of the women in our sample (61.3%) were in the highest two response categories for intensity of crying: "real sobbing and bawling" and "slight sobbing and shaking" (see Table I, Part 2, Intensity). Among the men, the majority were in the two lowest categories of intensity: "red eye and a tear or two" and "feel like crying but no visible sign" (80.3%).

²Bem suggests taking those participants obtaining significantly higher masculinity scores compared with femininity scores and classifying them as masculine. Those participants that have significantly higher femininity scores compared with masculinity scores are characterized as feminine. Individuals for whom there is no significant difference between masculinity and femininity scores are classified as androgynous.

Table I. Self-Reported Frequency and Intensity of Crying 1996

	Males		Females	
	%	f	%	f
Part 1: Frequency ^a				
Very frequently	0	0	3.8	11
Frequently	1.7	4	18.4	54
Occasionally	26.5	61	62.5	183
Almost never	64.8	149	14.0	41
Never	7.0	16	1.4	4
TOTAL	100	230	100	293
Part 2: Intensity ^a				
Real sobbing and bawling	4.2	9	11.3	31
Slight sobbing and shaking	15.6	33	50.0	137
Red eye and a tear or two	56.2	119	35.4	97
Feel like crying, no visible sign	24.1	51	3.3	9
TOTAL	100	212	100	274

Note. The Ns for frequency and intensity of crying differ because of the fact that respondents who said they "Never" cry skipped the intensity question. Also, there were some respondents who chose "other" on the intensity question.

^aDifference between males and females is significant for both crying frequency and crying intensity $p < .0001$.

Crying Alone

In Table II, it can be seen that both genders reported they would be most likely to cry "alone" (72.1% of the males and 92.2% of the females). The vast majority of the females reported that they were likely to cry with

Table II. Crying Environment and Gender

With whom would you cry?	Definitely or probably would				Maybe				Definitely or probably would not			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f
With people you don't know well	7.8	18	17.7	52	13	30	32.3	95	79.1	182	50	147
With people you do know well	39.5	91	73.2	215	24.8	57	15.6	46	35.6	82	11.3	33
With a close male friend	27.8	64	76.9	226	22.6	52	12.6	32	49.5	114	10.6	31
With a close female friend	53	122	86.1	253	17	39	8.2	24	30	69	5.8	17
Alone	72.1	166	92.2	271	14.3	33	4.4	13	13.5	31	3.1	9
With immediate family	44.8	103	60.6	178	21.7	50	16.7	49	33.5	77	22.8	67

Note. The difference between males and females in each of the above crying situations is significant $p \leq .001$.

a "close female friend" (86.1%), or a "close male friend" (76.9%), with "people [they] know well" (73.2%), and with "immediate family" (60.6%). The only situation, other than being alone, where a majority of men said they probably or definitely would cry was with a close female friend (53%).

Postcrying Affect

The adjective that was chosen most often by both men and women to describe the way they feel after crying was "relieved" (56.5% of the women and 43% of the men). As can be seen in Table III, more women than men also reported feeling "weak" (23.1% compared with 9.6%) and "tired" (41.5% compared with 18.3%). Both of these comparisons resulted in statistically significant differences, $\chi^2(1, N = 510 \text{ \& } 495) = 73.19 \text{ \& } 97.23, p < .0001$.

No Differences in Crying Over 15-Year Period

Comparing the 1981 data with those of 1996, one finds striking similarities with almost identical percentages of men and women in each of the crying frequency and intensity categories. These findings are displayed in Table IV (Part 1, Frequency) where Chi square statistics calculated on the crying frequency and intensity tables by year (1981 and 1996), for men and women were not significant (χ^2 ranged from 0.32 to 3.15; $p > .05$). Almost three quarters of the males in both 1981 and 1996 (70.9 and 71.7%) report that they never or almost never cry. On the other hand, approximately two thirds of the females in each year (68.8 and 62.5%) report crying occasionally. In terms of crying intensity (Table IV, Part 2, Intensity), the majority of the men in both the 1981 and 1996 samples (61.1 and 51.7%, respectively) report that no more than red eyes and a tear or two characterizes their

Table III. Postcrying Affect

How do you feel after crying?	Males		Females	
	%	f	%	f
Relieved ^a	43.0	99	56.5	166
Weak ^a	9.6	22	23.1	68
Silly	9.6	22	10.2	30
Embarrassed	10.9	25	12.6	37
Tired ^a	18.3	42	41.5	122
Better able to carry on	29.1	62	32.0	94
Relaxed	26.5	61	23.1	68
Depressed	22.2	51	26.2	77
Uncontrolled	3.0	7	5.4	16

^aDifference between males and females is significant $p < .01$.

Table IV. Self-Reported Frequency of Crying Comparing 1981 and 1996

	Males				Females			
	1981		1996		1981		1996	
	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f
Part 1: Frequency^a								
Frequently or very frequently	2.4	6	1.7	4	14.1	39	22.2	65
Occasionally	26.7	66	26.5	61	68.8	190	62.5	183
Never or almost never	70.9	175	71.7	165	17.0	47	15.4	45
Part 2: Intensity^a								
Real sobbing and bawling	2.8	7	3.9	9	13.0	36	10.5	31
Slight sobbing and shaking	13.8	34	14.3	33	53.3	147	46.6	137
Red eyes and a tear or two	61.1	151	51.7	119	27.9	77	33.0	97
Feel like crying, no visible sign	22.3	55	22.2	51	5.8	16	3.1	9

^aNo significant differences were found between 1981 and 1996 for either crying frequency or crying intensity.

normal crying. Women reported displaying a greater intensity of crying in both studies. They were more likely to describe their usual crying as slight sobbing and shaking.

More Women Cry Across Stimulus Situations

The men and women in our 1996 sample were also asked to indicate which of 20 different situations would make them cry. These results are presented in Table V. In 19 of the 20 stimulus situations, women reported being more likely to cry than men. In all but two of these situations ("strong religious feelings" and "after drinking a lot"), the differences were statistically significant, $p < .0001$ with $\chi^2(1)$ ranging from 23.52 to 63.35. In only one situation, after drinking a lot, did more men than women (3.5 vs. 2.4%) report crying.

Table V also compares the results of the 1996 study with the 1981 data. Note the similarities between the two samples. The only significant difference between the two studies was a 15% increase in male crying as a result of the "breakup of a romance."

Androgyny and Crying Frequency

Table VI (Part 1, Frequency) presents the sample cross-tabulated by BSRI category and frequency of crying. A significant relation was found, $\chi^2(8, N = 522) = 67.32, p < .0001$. A significantly higher percentage of individuals categorized as masculine (59.8%) and androgynous (35.5%) reported that they almost never cry compared with feminine individuals

Table V. Percentages of Males and Females Who Report Crying in the Following Situations in 1981 and 1996

Stimulus situation ^a	Males (%)		Females (%)	
	1981	1996	1981	1996
At weddings	3.2	3.5	29.2	30.6
Breakup of romance	35.1	50.9	70.1	73.5
Feeling of tenderness	17.9	12.6	43.8	26.5
Death of someone close	78.9	83.5	86.0	88.8
After drinking a lot	2.8	3.5	5.8	2.4
When someone yells at you	5.3	8.3	39.3	38.1
After experiencing something frightening	.4	1.7	19.8	17.3
When someone close to you is hurt	29.1	26.5	59.7	55.4
Feelings of loneliness	19.6	25.2	44.2	43.9
Self-pity	13.3	11.3	31.8	28.6
Fighting with someone you love	25.6	26.5	57.5	72.4
Feelings of anger	11.9	14.3	35.7	51.4
Strong religious feeling	10.5	9.1	13.0	11.2
Death of a pet	23.2	35.2	58.4	51.0
Empathy with someone in a sad movie, TV, book	33.7	37.4	79.9	80.3
When your feelings are hurt	15.8	18.7	50.0	58.8
Feeling of disappointment	9.1	11.3	27.3	33.3
After hurting someone's feelings	13.0	10.4	27.6	24.8
Feeling helpless	19.6	23.5	49.4	58.2

^aThere was a significant difference ($p < .0001$) between males and females on each of the stimulus situations with the exception of "After drinking a lot," and "Strong religious feeling."

(18.9%), $\chi^2(2, N = 191) = 26.76, p < .05$. Also, a significantly higher percentage of individuals categorized as feminine (58.5%) and androgynous (49.4%) reported that they cry occasionally compared with masculine (26.5%) individuals, $\chi^2(2, N = 242) = 41.49, p < .05$.

Table VI. Frequency and Intensity of Crying and Androgyny

	Feminine ^a		Androgynous		Masculine ^b	
	%	f	%	f	%	f
Part 1: Frequency*						
Never	1.9	3	3.0	7	6.0	9
Almost never	18.9	30	35.5	82	59.8	79
Occasionally	58.5	93	49.4	114	26.5	35
Frequently	17.0	27	10.0	23	6.8	9
Very frequently	3.8	6	2.2	5	0	0
Part 2: Intensity*						
Real sobbing and bawling	9.2	14	9.5	20	5.7	7
Slight sobbing and shaking	42.8	65	34.8	73	20.5	25
Red eye and a tear or two	38.2	58	45.7	96	54.1	66
Feel like crying—no visible sign	9.9	15	10.0	21	19.7	24

^aThe categories of feminine and near feminine are combined.

^bThe categories of masculine and near masculine are combined.

* $p < .001$.

Androgyny and Crying Intensity

Table VI (Part 2, Intensity) presents the sample cross-tabulated by BSRI category and intensity of crying. A significant relation was found, $\chi^2(6, N = 484) = 22.30, p < .001$. A significantly higher percentage of individuals categorized as masculine (54.1%) reported the intensity of their crying was red eyes and a tear or two compared with feminine (38.2%) and androgynous (45.7%) individuals, $\chi^2(2, N = 220) = 11.33, p < .05$. Further, a significantly higher percentage of individuals classified as feminine (42.8%) and androgynous (34.8%) reported the intensity of their crying to be a slight sobbing and shaking as compared with masculine individuals (20.5), $\chi^2(2, N = 163) = 24.36, p < .05$.

Predicting Crying Frequency With Gender and the BSRI

A multivariate analysis was conducted using ordinal regression procedures (see McCullagh & Nelder, 1989; Long, 1993). In two regression equations, crying frequency and crying intensity served as the criterion variables, respectively. In both equations, gender and the dummy coded BSRI variable were used as the predictor variables.³ Two-way Gender \times BSRI interaction terms were also entered as predictor variables.

The regression equation predicting crying frequency accounted for a significant amount of variance, $\chi^2(15, N = 510) = 48.03, p < .0001$; Pseudo- $R^2 = .36$.⁴ Gender ($B = -0.978$) and the interaction terms (B s ranged from 0.456 to -1.319) were significant predictors of this outcome ($p < .05$). With respect to gender, females had higher crying frequency scores than males. To further examine the significant interaction, follow-up tests were conducted. An ordinal regression equation predicting crying frequency with the dummy coded BSRI categories was run separately for males and females. These follow-up tests revealed that for both males ($B = -0.878, p < .05$) and females ($B = -0.748, p < .05$), feminine and androgynous individuals experienced significantly higher crying frequency than individuals who were masculine. Follow-up tests were also conducted at each level of the BSRI. That is, an ordinal regression equation predicting crying frequency with the dummy coded gender variable was run separately for masculine, feminine, and androgynous individuals. For all three equations, males reported

³Ethnicity (entered as a series of dummy coded variable terms) was also entered into the equations, as were interaction terms involving ethnicity. No significant effects were found with respect to ethnicity. This variable was removed from further analysis.

⁴In ordinal regression, the χ^2 test for model fit is used as an indicator of the statistical significance of the final regression equation. In addition, the amount of variance accounted for is indicated by the Pseudo- R^2 statistic; the Nagelkerke estimation method of this statistic was used.

crying significantly less than females (B s ranged from -0.456 to -0.687 , $p < .05$).

Predicting Crying Intensity With Gender and the BSRI

The regression equation predicting crying intensity accounted for a significant amount of variance, $\chi^2(12, N = 473) = 29.85$, $p < .003$; Pseudo- $R^2 = .21$. Gender ($B = -1.032$) and the interaction terms (B s ranged from $.516$ to -1.123) were significant predictors of this outcome ($p < .05$). With respect to gender, females had higher crying intensity scores than males. As with the prediction of crying frequency, follow-up tests were conducted to identify which groups significantly differed for crying intensity. No significant differences were found for the BSRI in the male and female equations, respectively (p values for all regression coefficients were greater than $.05$). Follow-up tests predicting crying intensity with the dummy coded gender variable was run separately for masculine, feminine, and androgynous individuals. For all three equations, males reported crying significantly less intensely than females (B s ranged from -0.363 to -0.568 , $p < .05$).

Masculinity, Femininity, and Crying Behavior

An ordinal regression equation was run predicting crying frequency and crying intensity with the masculinity and femininity scales of the BSRI (entered as continuous variables). Gender was controlled for in these analyses. The regression equation predicting crying frequency accounted for a significant amount of variance, $\chi^2(3, N = 230) = 23.36$, $p < .01$; Pseudo- $R^2 = .13$. Both masculinity ($B = -0.40$) and femininity ($B = 0.49$) were significant predictors of crying frequency ($p < .05$). The regression equation predicting crying intensity did not account for a significant amount of variance, $\chi^2(2, N = 213) = 3.36$, $p > .01$; Pseudo- $R^2 = .06$. Neither masculinity ($B = -0.20$) nor femininity ($B = 0.25$) were significant predictors of crying intensity ($p > .05$).

Crying Frequency/Intensity Based on Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp's BSRI Classification

Using the Spence et al. (1974) classification system for the BSRI,⁵ a significant relation was found with crying frequency; $\chi^2(12, N = 540) =$

⁵In this classification, androgynous individuals are those found to be high in masculinity and femininity. Those classified as undifferentiated are low in masculinity and femininity. We wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this alternative classification scheme.

58.16, $p < .001$. In the occasionally cry category, there were more feminine (62.1%), androgynous (56.3%), and undifferentiated (51.3%) individuals than were masculine individuals (26.2%). A majority of masculine individuals reported that they almost never cry (58.3%). With respect to crying intensity, a significant relation was found with the BSRI, $\chi^2(9, N = 501) = 34.16, p < .001$. In the slight sobbing and shaking category, there were more feminine (49.1%), androgynous (33.8%), and undifferentiated (33.8%) individuals than masculine individuals (18.9%). There were no significant differences between androgynous and undifferentiated individuals for crying frequency and intensity ($p > .05$).

DISCUSSION

More than 8 out of 10 members of the 1981 and 1996 samples shared the perception that women cry more often. The popular stereotype of women crying more frequently and intensely than men was strongly upheld. Women appear to continue to cry more frequently and intensely than do men. Indeed, the most striking finding was the extreme similarity between the two samples in terms of reported frequency and intensity of crying, as well as the gender patterning of crying behavior across stimulus situations. Males and females viewed similar interpersonal and stimulus situations as conducive to crying and used the same adjectives to describe their postcrying affect. These findings suggest that the "expression norms" or "display rules" that differentiate the gender role socialization of women and men, in terms of crying, have not changed significantly in a decade and a half.

These findings neither support the inferences drawn by LaFrance and Banaji (1992), nor those of Labott et al. (1991) from their work. As cited above, LaFrance and Banaji conclude that it is becoming more acceptable for males to express tender emotions. It may be, however, that the expression of tender emotions, other than crying has in fact become more acceptable. It is also conceivable that, while acceptance has increased for the expression of tender emotions—including crying—on the part of males, most males still feel constrained in exhibiting this form of emotion expression.

Labott et al. (1991) found that in a laboratory setting with 74 subjects, male confederates were "liked" more than were females when they cried. Although no comparable findings for an earlier period are cited, the authors conclude that this indicates a change in "gender role expectations of emotional expression" (p. 397). We would submit, however, that liking for males criers is not tantamount to an expression norm sanctioning crying on the part of males.

Gender Differences in Crying

The data reported here on crying support the almost ubiquitous finding that females are more emotionally expressive than are males (see for example, Vingerhoets & Scheirs, 2000). In self-reports of emotional expressiveness, women, as compared to men, report greater frequency, intensity, and duration of all emotions except anger (Balswick, 1988; Larson & Pleck, 1999). Larson and Pleck conclude from their review of the literature that it is a consistent finding that adult females report expressing emotions more intensely than do males. Clearly, the majority of research on crying supports these conclusions.

A distinction should be made, however, between differences in emotional expressiveness and differences in emotional arousal as measured by physiological indicators. Larsen and Pleck (1999, p. 39) state that the evidence is against the thesis that males are constitutionally less emotional than females. When emotionality is measured by physiological indicators, Larson and Pleck conclude "Nearly all of this research either finds that men and women do not differ in physiological reactivity or that men are more reactive than women."

Using a time-sampling method, Larson and Pleck found men to be as emotional as women. They focused on immediate reports of emotion as experienced during daily living. Participants were asked to rate their current state of arousal with regard to a number of emotions. It is not surprising to see similarities between these findings and those of physiological researchers on emotional arousal as they both purport to measure inner-emotional experience rather than emotional expression. Therefore, with reference to crying, males and females may be experiencing the same amount of emotional arousal, but females cry more often, intensely, and longer than males.

Goffman (1959) was one of the first to describe the phenomena of impression management. He was indirectly stating that we have more control over where, when, and with whom we express our emotions than is commonly believed. Goffman held that there are norms governing emotional expression that extend even to the feigning of emotions. Hochschild (1979) and Ekman, Friesen, and Ellsworth (1972) asserted that emotional expression in nonverbal behavior is significantly controlled by display norms that dictate which private feelings are to be exposed to whom and under what conditions. As crying is an expression of emotion, gender-specific emotion norms or "display rules" would seem to explain differences in male and female socialization regarding crying.

Further, situational norms apply to crying behavior as we have seen. Most people are likely to cry alone, least likely to cry around someone that they don't know well, and men are highly unlikely to cry at work. Clearly,

there is a complex set of social norms surrounding the crying act and the expression of emotion in general. Females are given greater freedom of expression, and males apparently suppress their crying behaviors. Norma follows different cultural expectations with her tears than does Norm with his. Thoits (1989) extends this idea and asserts that these feeling and expression rules become one part of an emotion culture into which the individual is shaped and socialized. Crying seems to fit this model very nicely.

Crying as Emotion Work

Emotion work is referred to by Hochschild (1979, p. 561) as "the act of trying to change in degree or quality an emotion or feeling." She makes the case that expression norms for women, more often than those for men, require women to express emotions they do not feel. This occurs in a variety of situations, including at work and at home (Hochschild, 1983, 1990).

Hochschild (1990) posits that emotion work may take the form of cognitive, bodily, and expressive strategies. The suppression of emotional expression or feeling can also be considered emotion work and the suppression of crying often includes elements of all of these strategies. One might argue, therefore, that when it comes to crying, expression norms for men, more often than those for women, hold expectations for them to engage in this form of emotion work.

As previously cited, the literature does not support a biological explanation for gender differences in emotionality. It seems arguable that men and women may actually experience emotions in a similar way (as suggested by Larson & Pleck, 1999) but manage them in different ways. Although a structural explanation for gender differences in emotion may hold some promise, it is not supported by our data, in that the gender differences observed are consistent across stimulus and interpersonal situations.

Although there are a number of factors that influence gender differences in emotional expressiveness, we would emphasize the impact of socialization and agree with Brody (1997, p. 382) that "socialization history may be another proxy for gender." Although socialization was not measured directly in the earlier or present studies, we view our findings concerning the relatively low frequency and intensity of crying on the part of men as consistent with "socialization-for-inhibition theory" (Williams & Morris, 1996, p. 482). Additional research supports this hypothesis, including a study that found that young boys anticipate negative reactions for being emotionally expressive (Fuchs & Thelen, 1988) and several investigators who found female infants to be no more emotionally expressive than male infants (Brody, 1999).

Androgyny and Gender

A person's position on the BSRI can be considered an indication of the extent to which she or he has been successfully socialized into a traditional female, male, or androgynous role. As expected, both women and men who described themselves with more stereotypically masculine traits indicated a lower frequency and intensity of crying behavior than those who described themselves with more stereotypically feminine traits. Those classified as androgynous reported levels of crying frequency and intensity between the masculine and feminine categories'. These findings were consistent with our predictions.

LIMITATIONS

This study utilizes self-reports on crying behavior. As LaFrance and Banaji note (1992, p. 181): "The vast majority of studies of gender and emotion use direct self-report measures." Williams and Morris (1996, p. 479) conclude, "there is satisfactory evidence of the reliability and validity of self-reports on crying behaviour." The "satisfactory evidence" they refer to is based upon the work of Hastrup, Payne, and Yanuskiewicz (1988), Kraemer and Hastrup (1986), and Labott and Martin (1987). Further, laboratory studies, in which actual crying is measured, report large gender differences indicating that self-report measures do not seriously underreport male crying (Frey & Langseth, 1985; Labott & Martin, 1988).

Also, Scherer, Wallbott, and Summerfield (1986) defend the use of anonymous questionnaires for researching the expression of emotions. They argue that researchers commonly use self-report data in investigating a variety of psychological phenomena. Scherer et al. see no more reason to question the validity of self-reports of emotional experience than the use of self-reports in researching other attitudes or behaviors.

Although it is possible that the consistent gender differences obtained from our two samples might be partially explained by the fact that they both are drawn from college populations, it is difficult to generalize in this area. For example, Ross and Mirowsky (1984) found that education produced counteracting effects in terms of crying as an expression of sadness. Men with more education were less traditional in their gender role orientation and, therefore, more likely to cry. Nevertheless, men with more education were less likely to be sad and, therefore, less likely to cry. Speculation on the impact of the "college" variable on the expression of emotion, in particular crying, will have to await more controlled studies, which make comparisons across populations.

SUMMARY

This study was a replication of a 1981 study on self-reported crying. There was no evidence that expressive gender norms regarding crying behavior have undergone significant changes since the first study. The results of the two studies were remarkably similar in terms of the relation between gender and frequency, intensity, and situations eliciting crying. The personality variable of gender role orientation was found to be associated with crying. This finding adds to the construct validity of the BSRI, in that gender role orientation has predictive utility in accounting for gender differences in crying.

APPENDIX: CRYING SURVEY

We are conducting research on people's attitude toward crying as it relates to other personality and behavioral characteristics. We would appreciate your participation in our survey that is made up of four parts. Please feel free to answer each question honestly and openly. Although we will be unable to use incomplete questionnaires, please feel free to stop if you feel uncomfortable answering any items. All information provided is anonymous and will remain confidential.

PART I

1. If you felt like crying, is it likely that you would cry in the following circumstances:

	<i>Definitely Would Not</i>			<i>Definitely Would Cry</i>	
	1	2	3	4	5
A. Would you cry in front of people you did not know well?	()	()	()	()	()
B. Would you cry in front of people you know well?	()	()	()	()	()
C. Would you cry in front of a close male friend?	()	()	()	()	()
D. Would you cry in front of a close female friend?	()	()	()	()	()
E. Would you cry if you were alone?	()	()	()	()	()
F. Would you cry in front of your immediate family?	()	()	()	()	()

2. In what types of situations would you feel most uncomfortable if you were seen crying?

() work () school () public places () home () other(s):
(Please specify) _____

3. How often do you cry? (check one)
☐ never ☐ almost never ☐ occasionally ☐ frequently
☐ very frequently
- *IF YOU CHECKED NEVER, PLEASE SKIP QUESTIONS 4, 5, AND 6. PLEASE CONTINUE WITH QUESTION 7.
4. Please check one of the following which best describes the usual intensity of your crying:
☐ real sobbing and bawling ☐ red eyes and a tear or two
☐ slight sobbing and shaking ☐ feeling of crying but no visible outward sign ☐ other(s): (Please specify) _____
5. Check one or more of the adjectives below which best describe how you feel after crying:
☐ relieved ☐ weak ☐ silly ☐ embarrassed ☐ tired
☐ better able to carry on ☐ relaxed ☐ depressed ☐ uncontrolled ☐ other(s): (Please specify) _____
6. Check the following situations which would be likely to make you cry:
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> at weddings | <input type="checkbox"/> fighting with someone you love |
| <input type="checkbox"/> breakup of a romance | <input type="checkbox"/> feelings of anger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> feeling of tenderness | <input type="checkbox"/> strong religious feeling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> death of someone close | <input type="checkbox"/> death of a pet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> after drinking a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> empathy with someone in a sad movie, TV program or book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> when someone yells at you | <input type="checkbox"/> when your feelings are hurt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> after experiencing something frightening | <input type="checkbox"/> feeling disappointed when something important does not turn out as you had hoped |
| <input type="checkbox"/> when someone close to you is hurt | <input type="checkbox"/> in sympathy with a friend who is crying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> feelings of loneliness | <input type="checkbox"/> after having hurt someone else's feelings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> self-pity | <input type="checkbox"/> feeling helpless about an unpleasant life situation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other(s): (Please specify) _____ | |
7. Do you feel there are *currently* any differences between males and females in terms of how often they cry? Check one:
☐ no differences ☐ men cry more
☐ women cry more ☐ other(s): (Please specify) _____
8. Check the situations where you think crying is most acceptable:
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> at weddings | <input type="checkbox"/> fighting with someone you love |
| <input type="checkbox"/> feelings of anger | <input type="checkbox"/> breakup of a romance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> feelings of tenderness | <input type="checkbox"/> strong religious feeling |

- | | |
|---|--|
| () death of someone close | () death of a pet |
| () after drinking a lot | () when someone yells at you |
| () when your feelings
are hurt | () empathy with someone in a sad
movie, TV program, or book |
| () after experiencing
something frightening | () feeling disappointment when
something important does not
turn out as you had hoped |
| () when someone close to
you is hurt | () in sympathy with a friend who
is crying |
| () feelings of loneliness | () after having hurt someone else's
feelings |
| () self-pity | () feeling helpless about an
unpleasant life situation |
| () other(s): (Please specify) _____ | |

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