

## Youth Primer on Androgyny



### Introduction

Gender identity is a prevalent topic in public discourse. One of the most notably globally has been the transition of Olympic gold medallist and reality television star Kaitlyn Jenner, formerly known as Bruce Jenner.<sup>1</sup> Although there has been widespread lash back, gender fluidity and social constructs have gained prominence in shaping discourse on gender identity. Androgyny is described as “the quality or state of being neither specifically feminine or masculine: the combination of feminine and masculine characteristics: the quality or state of being androgynous.”<sup>2</sup> This brief allows for helping those who are still trying to learn about gender fluidity and diversity,<sup>3</sup> whilst further positioning Androgyny within public discourse.



<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey Lieberman (2015) Bruce Jenner's Transformation Illuminating gender identity [Bruce Jenner's Transformation | Psychology Today](#)

<sup>2</sup> *Androgyny*. (n.d.). Retrieved from Merriam-Webster: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/androgyny>

<sup>3</sup> Dumiso Gatsha (2019) Queer up and seek justice and protection for all in Botswana [Queer up and seek justice and protection for all in Botswana \(dailymaverick.co.za\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> S L Bem (1974) The measurement of psychological androgyny 'Journal of consulting and clinical psychology'

<sup>5</sup> S L Bem (1977) On the utility of alternative procedures for assessing psychological androgyny 'Journal of consulting and clinical psychology'; S L Bem (1985) Androgyny and Gender Schema Theory 'Psychology and gender'

<sup>6</sup> Mandy Meyer (2020) Olivia Oblanc Takes Over NYC – Inclusive, Gender-fluid, Sustainable [Olivia](#)

### Overview

There is an increase in lived experiences that do not meet social norms. These range from variant forms of expression, dress, behaviour, and personality.<sup>4</sup> Increased research and discourse as contributed to enabling more equality.<sup>5</sup> Androgyny is gender identity that combines feminine and masculine characteristics of individuals whom can be recognised as either.<sup>6</sup> It should not be conflated with those who identify as non-binary in spite of some androgynous people identifying as so.<sup>7</sup>

Formal work environments have neglected equitable participation of gender diverse individuals.<sup>8</sup> More inclusive and fluid policies are needed to counter harmful gender norms in the workplace.<sup>9</sup>

“Research on leadership has either ignored women or focused on sex differences. This paper illustrates how both strategies have been detrimental to women. An alternative conception based on sex-role orientation is presented and the research relating

[Oblanc Takes Over NYC - Inclusive, Gender-fluid, Sustainable \(wtvox.com\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> Ciara Beale (2020) 'Femboys', fads and anti-boy-band fashion: is gender fluid dressing still a distant dream? ['Femboys', fads and anti-boy-band fashion: is gender fluid dressing still a distant dream? - Cherwell](#); Ash Hardell, A. F. (2017, December 11). Being Nonbinary Vs. Androgyny - What's the difference? Retrieved from Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NsJUDFmauC>

<sup>8</sup> Mellisa McGrath (2021) The Evolution of Kristen Stewart: Reshaping Her Identity [The Evolution of Kristen Stewart: Reshaping Her Identity - Hollywood Insider](#)

<sup>9</sup> Kobarik, K. (1990). Androgyny and leadership style. Retrieved from Journal of Business Ethics: <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00380328>

androgyny to leadership style and managerial effectiveness is reviewed. It is proposed that adopting an androgynous management style may help women to overcome the negative effects of sex-stereotyping in the workplace.”<sup>10</sup>

The same should apply in learning environments. This is critical to safeguarding democracy for gender diverse individuals.<sup>11</sup> Pop culture, celebrity and other societal influences play a role in strengthening visibility and equality for gender diversity. There are decades old examples such as Asia Kate Dillon who plays as a non-binary character on a show, Hunter Schafer who plays a Transgender girl in another and musicians such as David Bowie and Miley Cyrus.<sup>12</sup>



## **Challenges**

There is limited and variant forms of information.<sup>13</sup>. Political and gender ideologies have aggravated complexities in the public discourse on gender diversity. Despite readily available information on the basics of sexual orientation and gender identity, many Batswana remain subjective based on their own experiences and knowledge.<sup>14</sup> This reflects a lack of will or interest in learning beyond gender roles and norms. It leaves the burden of eliminating ignorance and promoting equality to those who are affected, civil society and the government where willing. African morality has often been touted is one of the reasons for excluding or ostracising gender diverse people. This is also reflected in the lack of research beyond binaries within the region.<sup>15</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Androgyny as an integral part of gender identity. There is a need to increase data on lived experiences, possible injustices and areas of improvement in policy making in public, private and civil society sectors.

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<sup>10</sup> Kobarik, K. (1990). Androgyny and leadership style.

<sup>11</sup> Macgillivray, I. K. (2000, May 1). Educational Equity for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Queer/Questioning Students: The Demands of Democracy and Social Justice for America's Schools . Retrieved from SAGE Journals: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0013124500323003>; M Spilka (1990) Hemingway's Quarrel with Androgyny

<sup>12</sup> Various. (2020, May 12). List of Androgynous People. Retrieved from Wikipedia:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_androgynous\\_people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_androgynous_people)

<sup>13</sup> LJ Nicholson (2008) Identity before identity politics

<sup>14</sup> Identity politics still rife in Botswana (2020) [Identity politics still rife in Botswana | Sunday Standard](#)

<sup>15</sup> LM Alcoff, SP Mohanty (2006) Reconsidering identity politics; L Garnets, JH Pleck (1997) Sex role identity, androgyny, and sex role transcendence: A sex role strain analysis 'Psychology of women quarterly'