

## Revision of the Chinese Version of the Feminist Identity Development Scale

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### Abstract

**Abstract:** [Objective] To revise the Feminist Identity Development Scale (FIDS) and examine its reliability and validity among Chinese female college students. [Method] A total of 1657 female college students were administered the Chinese version of FIDS, the Self-Esteem Scale (SES), and the Hostile Sexism subscale from the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI), followed by item analysis, reliability analysis, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and criterion validity testing. Results The revised Chinese version of FIDS contains 27 items, retaining 5 subscales: Passive Acceptance (5 items), Revelation (5 items), Embeddedness-Emanation (4 items), Synthesis (5 items), and Active Commitment (8 items), with a cumulative variance contribution rate of 56.18%. The results of confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the five-factor model fit well ( $\chi^2/df = 2.99$ , IFI = 0.92, CFI = 0.92, GFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.05). The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) of the Chinese version of FIDS ranged from 0.71 to 0.89, and the split-half reliability ranged from 0.75 to 0.90. [Conclusion] The revised Chinese version of FIDS demonstrates good reliability and validity among Chinese female college students and is an effective tool for measuring the level of feminist identity development.

### Full Text

## Revision of the Chinese Version of the Feminist Identity Development Scale

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### Abstract

**Objective:** To revise the Feminist Identity Development Scale (FIDS) and examine its reliability and validity among Chinese female college students. **Meth-**

**ods:** A total of 1,657 female college students completed the Chinese version of the FIDS, the Self-Esteem Scale (SES), and the Hostile Sexism subscale of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI). Item analysis, reliability analysis, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and criterion validity testing were subsequently conducted. **Results:** The revised Chinese version of the FIDS comprised 27 items retained across five subscales: Passive Acceptance (5 items), Revelation (5 items), Embeddedness-Emanation (4 items), Synthesis (5 items), and Active Commitment (8 items), with a cumulative variance contribution rate of 56.18%. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated good fit for the five-factor model ( $\chi^2/df=2.99$ , IFI=0.92, CFI=0.92, GFI=0.92, TLI=0.91, RMSEA=0.05). The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) ranged from 0.71 to 0.89, and split-half reliability ranged from 0.75 to 0.90. **Conclusion:** The revised Chinese version of the FIDS demonstrates good reliability and validity among Chinese female college students and serves as an effective instrument for measuring feminist identity development.

**Keywords:** feminist identity development; feminist identity; reliability; validity

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## Introduction

Feminism represents a belief in equal rights for men and women or an advocacy for women's rights equal to those of men. In recent years, feminist thought has continuously developed in China, becoming a prominent social topic. Within psychology, researchers have particularly focused on interpreting the emergence and development of feminism from the perspective of feminist identity.

Feminist identity refers to the adoption of feminist attitudes and self-identification with feminism. Numerous studies have shown that feminist identity not only helps women better detect and respond to sexual harassment and gender discrimination but also reduces the impact of discrimination on self-esteem and maintains higher self-esteem and lower depression levels after experiencing sexual trauma. Furthermore, women who identify with feminist values report less body dissatisfaction and fewer bulimic symptoms.

Regarding theoretical frameworks, Downing and Roush proposed the influential model of feminist identity development from a developmental perspective. This model connects individuals' attitudes and values toward feminism with their self-identity as women or feminists, attempting to explain the developmental process from passively accepting traditional gender roles to deeply identifying with feminism. The model consists of five stages: The first stage, Passive Acceptance (PA), involves women who are not fully aware of sexism or deny experiencing it. They accept traditional gender roles, view men as superior, and may even perceive this as advantageous. The second stage, Revelation (R), occurs when women, after experiencing or participating in consciousness-raising events, begin questioning their traditional self-concept and gender roles

while discovering negative aspects of men, leading to anger or guilt about gender discrimination against women. The third stage, Embeddedness-Emanation (EE), involves women strengthening their identification with a new identity, preferring to communicate with women and develop intimate emotional connections. Simultaneously, they interact cautiously with men through relativistic thinking. The fourth stage, Synthesis (S), involves women transcending traditional gender roles to develop an authentic, positive feminist identity that values women's positive contributions and integrates them into their self-concept. At this stage, women tend to evaluate men as individuals rather than generalizing about all men. The fifth stage, Active Commitment (AC), involves women further strengthening their feminist identity, believing that gender equality with distinct gender characteristics can be achieved, and committing to and working toward a world without sexism.

Based on this model, Bargad and Hyde developed the Feminist Identity Development Scale (FIDS), which has been widely used worldwide to measure feminist identity development, feminist values, gender equality, and perceived gender discrimination. The scale has been applied in numerous studies examining psychological stress, self-esteem, gender-blindness, and political efficacy.

However, several studies examining the scale's psychometric properties have revealed certain limitations. For instance, Moradi and Subich found low internal consistency coefficients for the Synthesis stage. Additionally, in Bargad and Hyde's original study, many items from the Synthesis stage loaded highly on the Active Commitment factor, leading some researchers to combine these two stages into a single subscale. Other researchers have analyzed a three-factor model of the FIDS, which only explained 27% of the total variance. These findings indicate considerable controversy regarding the FIDS's structural validity that requires further investigation.

Moreover, feminist identity represents a collective or social identity closely associated with sociocultural context. Moradi and Subich argued that the FIDS requires validation across different cultural backgrounds to improve measurement methods by enhancing cultural applicability. Given the current lack of indigenous tools for measuring feminist identity development in China, it is necessary to examine the scale's reliability and validity to provide a reliable instrument for domestic research.

## Methods

**Participants** **Sample 1** was used for item analysis and exploratory factor analysis. Participants were recruited through online posters, yielding 933 distributed questionnaires with 830 valid responses (89% valid response rate). The sample comprised 270 freshmen, 252 sophomores, 238 juniors, and 70 seniors, with ages ranging from 17 to 24 years ( $M = 19.54$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ).

**Sample 2** was used for confirmatory factor analysis and criterion validity testing. Similarly recruited through online posters, this sample included 933 dis-

tributed questionnaires with 827 valid responses (88% valid response rate). The sample comprised 268 freshmen, 273 sophomores, 214 juniors, and 72 seniors, with ages ranging from 16 to 25 years ( $M = 19.50$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ).

**Measures Feminist Identity Development Scale (FIDS).** This scale measures the degree of feminist identity development and feminist self-identification. Higher mean scores on a particular subscale indicate greater endorsement of that stage of feminist identity development. The original scale contains 39 items across five subscales: Passive Acceptance (11 items), Revelation (7 items), Embeddedness-Emanation (7 items), Synthesis (5 items), and Active Commitment (8 items). Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with all items positively scored.

The translation process involved multiple steps to ensure cultural appropriateness. Two psychology majors, one English major, and one Chinese language and literature major conducted multiple translations while preserving item meaning. A psychology doctoral student then back-translated and revised the items with reference to translations by an English instructor, incorporating characteristics of college students' psychological development. For example, the Passive Acceptance item "I don't think there is any need for an Equal Rights Amendment; women are doing well" was removed because China lacks such specific legislation, which might confuse respondents. Linguistic expressions were also adjusted, such as translating "fulfilled" in Item 2 as "圆满" (yuanman, meaning "complete" or "fulfilled"). Finally, 318 female college students were recruited online to evaluate the scale's readability and provide feedback, ensuring no ambiguous or ungrammatical sentences remained. This process resulted in a 38-item Chinese version of the FIDS.

**Self-Esteem Scale (SES).** Previous research has used the SES as a criterion measure, so this study employed it to examine criterion validity. The revised version by Shen Zili and Cai Taisheng contains 10 items rated on a 4-point scale from 1 (very uncharacteristic of me) to 4 (very characteristic of me), with higher scores indicating higher self-esteem. In this study, the scale's internal consistency coefficient was 0.85.

**Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI).** Developed by Glick and Fiske, the ASI was used with the authors' permission. The inventory comprises 22 items across two subscales: Hostile Sexism (HS) and Benevolent Sexism (BS). Given previous findings of significant correlations between hostile sexism and feminist identity, this study used the 11-item Hostile Sexism subscale as the criterion measure. Items are rated on a 6-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), with all items positively scored. Higher scores indicate greater hostile sexism. The scale's internal consistency coefficient was 0.84.

**Statistical Analysis** SPSS 25.0 was used to conduct item analysis, exploratory factor analysis, and reliability analysis on Sample 1 data. AMOS

24.0 was used to perform confirmatory factor analysis on Sample 2 data to examine model fit.

## Results

**Item Analysis** The Chinese version of the FIDS was developed based on Downing and Roush's feminist identity development model, with different subscales representing distinct developmental stages. Researchers use respondents' mean scores on each subscale to indicate their stage of feminist identity development. Because the total scale score confounds differences in psychological qualities across developmental stages and fails to reflect Downing and Roush's theoretical construction, previous research has not used total scores to measure feminist identity development levels, nor have item-total correlations served as primary criteria in FIDS validation studies. Therefore, this study did not employ item-total correlations for item analysis.

Instead, item analysis focused on the relationship between each item and its respective subscale. Using the top 27% and bottom 27% of each subscale's mean scores as high and low group cutoffs, independent samples t-tests were conducted for each item within its subscale. Results showed significant differences for all items within their respective subscales ( $P < 0.001$ ). Pearson correlation coefficients between item scores and their subscale means ranged from 0.45 to 0.81 (all  $P < 0.01$ ). Thus, all items demonstrated good discriminability, and all 38 items were retained.

**Exploratory Factor Analysis** Exploratory factor analysis yielded a KMO value of 0.90 and a Bartlett's test coefficient of 8191.85 ( $df = 351$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), indicating the data were suitable for factor analysis. Principal component analysis was used to extract common factors, with retention criteria requiring maximum factor loading  $> 0.35$  and a difference  $> 0.1$  between loadings on any two factors. Items 5 and 21 were deleted for maximum loadings below 0.35, and Item 14 was deleted for negative factor loading. Following the principle of deleting items when fewer than three measure a common factor, Items 6, 9, and 11 were removed. Additionally, when a common factor contained items from different dimensions, the construct with more items was retained while items not belonging to the original construct with the highest factor loading were deleted, leading to removal of Items 3, 8, 18, 19, and 20 for inconsistency with other items in their factors.

The final solution comprised five factors with 27 items retained, explaining 56.18% of total variance. Item-scale correlations ranged from 0.37 to 0.84. Factor loadings for each item are presented in Table 1.

**Confirmatory Factor Analysis** Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the 27 items. Referencing relevant studies, 10 alternative models were constructed to examine the scale's structural validity. Results are presented in Table 2. The five-factor model demonstrated good fit ( $\chi^2/df=2.99$ ,  $IFI=0.92$ ,

CFI=0.92, GFI=0.92, TLI=0.91, RMSEA=0.05) and was significantly superior to all alternative models. Thus, the Chinese version of the FIDS exhibits good structural validity and meets psychometric standards.

**Criterion Validity** Correlations between the Chinese version of the FIDS and criterion measures are presented in Table 3. Results showed that Passive Acceptance was significantly negatively correlated with self-esteem, while Embeddedness-Emanation, Synthesis, and Active Commitment were significantly positively correlated with self-esteem. Passive Acceptance was significantly positively correlated with hostile sexism, whereas Revelation, Embeddedness-Emanation, and Active Commitment were significantly negatively correlated with hostile sexism. These findings demonstrate satisfactory criterion validity for the Chinese version of the FIDS.

**Reliability** Internal consistency and split-half reliability were examined. As shown in Table 4, internal consistency coefficients for the Chinese version of the FIDS ranged from 0.71 to 0.89, and split-half reliability ranged from 0.75 to 0.90, indicating high reliability.

## Discussion

This study revised the Feminist Identity Development Scale based on Chinese female college students. First, after translation, readability testing was conducted to revise ambiguous and ungrammatical sentences, ensuring translation accuracy and enhancing content validity. Second, item analysis revealed significant correlations between all items and their respective subscale means, indicating good discriminability. Furthermore, exploratory factor analysis retained 27 items across five subscales: Passive Acceptance (5 items), Revelation (5 items), Embeddedness-Emanation (4 items), Synthesis (5 items), and Active Commitment (8 items), maintaining high consistency with the original scale structure. In previous studies supporting the five-factor model, cumulative variance contribution rates were lower; for example, Gerstmann and Kramer's study explained only 40.40% of total variance. The current revision increased total variance explanation to 56.18%.

Several items were deleted due to cultural differences that might cause interpretive ambiguity. Wang Hong noted that Chinese and Western gender concepts differ: Western gender consciousness emphasizes binary opposition, where patriarchy creates inequality through division and opposition between sexes, while traditional Chinese Daoist gender concepts emphasize yin-yang harmony, viewing women not as completely opposed to men and prioritizing human perfection over gender differences. These divergent understandings of gender relations may lead to differential item interpretation. For example, Item 19 ( "I just feel I should be with like-minded women" ) may have been deleted because Chinese respondents, influenced by yin-yang harmony concepts, were less likely to endorse the gender opposition it expressed. Additionally, research indicates

that patriarchal oppression differs between cultures: Western societies exclude women entirely from the male world as the “second sex,” while Chinese society deprives women of the right to become complete persons. This may explain why Chinese respondents interpreted Item 8 ( “I don’ t clearly understand the meaning of ‘women are oppressed by patriarchy’ ” ) differently, resulting in low factor loading.

Confirmatory factor analysis supported the five-factor model over alternative models, consistent with the original scale and feminist identity development theory. Previous failures to support the five-factor model may relate to cultural context, sample characteristics, and sample size. Consistent with prior research, Passive Acceptance correlated negatively with other stages, while the positive correlation between Embeddedness-Emanation and Active Commitment aligned with findings from Fischer, Tokar, and Mergl and Gerstmann and Kramer. However, whereas previous studies found negative correlations between Synthesis and both Revelation and Embeddedness-Emanation, this study found positive correlations.

This discrepancy may stem from Synthesis’ s focus on attitudes toward men and individualized evaluation. Under Western gender binary frameworks, women in Revelation and Embeddedness-Emanation stages may hold more adversarial views of men, leading to negative correlations with Synthesis. In contrast, Chinese women in these stages, influenced by yin-yang harmony concepts, may not position men as opposites and might evaluate men individually, resulting in positive correlations with Synthesis.

Regarding criterion validity, Passive Acceptance was negatively correlated with self-esteem while Embeddedness-Emanation, Synthesis, and Active Commitment were positively correlated, confirming established relationships between feminist identity and self-esteem. Passive Acceptance was positively correlated with hostile sexism, whereas Revelation, Embeddedness-Emanation, and Active Commitment were negatively correlated. This aligns with previous research showing that hostile sexism may reduce feminist identity. For instance, Kunst, Bailey, and Prendergast found that women exhibited higher feminist identity and lower hostile sexism compared to men. Additionally, research on feminist identity stages and perceived gender discrimination found that Passive Acceptance correlated negatively with perceived discrimination, while Revelation, Embeddedness-Emanation, and Active Commitment correlated positively. Since discrimination represents behavioral manifestations of prejudice and is correlated with hostile sexism, women in Passive Acceptance who accept traditional gender roles and are unaware of sexism may exhibit higher hostile sexism, while women in later stages who question traditional roles and perceive discrimination more readily may show lower hostile sexism. The non-significant correlation between Embeddedness-Emanation and self-esteem is consistent with previous findings and warrants further investigation.

Reliability analysis showed higher internal consistency coefficients for all stages except Passive Acceptance compared to Moradi and Subich’ s study (Revela-



tion = 0.64, Embeddedness-Emanation = 0.76, Synthesis = 0.52, Active Commitment = 0.77), with satisfactory split-half reliability. This indicates that the revised Chinese version of the FIDS demonstrates good reliability among Chinese female college students.

Given that the revision was conducted with Chinese female college students, future research should validate and apply the scale across diverse populations. In summary, the revised Chinese version of the FIDS exhibits good reliability and validity, providing a reliable measurement tool for domestic research on feminist identity development.

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**Author Contributions:** Gong Zhe conceptualized the research and revised the final manuscript; Mao Jing collected and analyzed data and drafted the manuscript; Wang Xinyao assisted with data collection.

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## Appendix: Materials Used in the Study

### Feminist Identity Development Scale (FIDS)

**Stage 1: Passive Acceptance** 1. I don't think there is any need for an Equal Rights Amendment; women are doing well. 2. I think that most women will feel most fulfilled by being a wife and a mother. 3. One thing I especially like about being a woman is that men will offer me their seat on a crowded bus or open doors for me because I am a woman. 4. I've never really worried or thought about what it means to be a woman in this society. 5. If I were married to a man and my husband was offered a job in another state, it would be my obligation to move in support of his career. 6. I think that men and women had it better in the 1950s when married women were housewives and their husbands supported them. 7. I don't see much point in questioning the general expectation that men should be masculine and women should be feminine. 8. I don't clearly understand the meaning of "women are oppressed by patriarchy." 9. I think

it's lucky that women aren't expected to do some of the more dangerous jobs that men are expected to do, like construction work or firefighting. 10. Overall, I think men are more interesting than women. 11. I think that in cases of rape, sometimes it is the woman's fault.

**Stage 2: Revelation** 1. I used to think that there isn't a lot of sex discrimination, but now I know how much there really is. 2. It only recently occurred to me that I think it's unfair that men have the privileges they have in this society simply because they are men. 3. When you think about most of the problems in the world—the threat of nuclear war, pollution, discrimination—it seems to me that most of them are caused by men. 4. It makes me really upset to think about how women have been treated so unfairly in this society for so long. 5. Recently, I read something or had an experience that sparked a greater understanding of sexism. 6. I am angry that I've let men take advantage of me.

**Stage 3: Embeddedness-Emanation** 1. My social life is mainly with women these days, but there are a few men I wouldn't mind having a nonsexual friendship with. 2. I share most of my social time with a few close women friends who share my feminist values. 3. If I were to paint a picture or write a poem, it would probably be about women or women's issues. 4. Particularly now, I feel most comfortable with women who share my feminist point of view.

**Stage 4: Synthesis** 1. While I am concerned that women be treated fairly in life, I do not see men as the enemy. 2. I think some men will pay attention to and understand social issues related to women's rights. 3. Although many men are sexist, I have found that some men are supportive of women and feminism. 4. I evaluate men as individuals, not as a group of oppressors. 5. I know that some men identify with feminism more than some women do.

**Stage 5: Active Commitment** 1. I want to do something to improve women's status. 2. On some level, my motivation for almost every activity I engage in is my desire for an egalitarian world. 3. I have a lifelong commitment to working for social, economic, and political equality for women. 4. It is very satisfying to me to be able to use my talents and skills in my work in the women's movement. 5. I feel that I am a very powerful and effective spokesperson for the women's issues I am concerned with right now. 6. I am very committed to a cause that I believe contributes to a more fair and just world for all people. 7. I am willing to make certain sacrifices to effect change in this society in order to create a nonsexist, peaceful place where all people have equal opportunities.

### Chinese Version of the Feminist Identity Development Scale

**Stage 1: Passive Acceptance** 1. I think that for most women, becoming a wife and mother is enough to make them feel completely fulfilled in life. 2. I really enjoy that when men and women argue, men always apologize first regardless of who is right, simply because I am a woman. 3. I've never really worried or thought about what it means to be a woman in this society. 4. If I married a man and he found a job in another city, I think it would be natural to

move for his career. 5. I don't want to have equal status with men. 6. I think men and women were better off in traditional Chinese families when married women were housewives and supported by their husbands. 7. I don't think the concept that "men should be masculine and women should be feminine" needs much questioning. 8. I don't clearly understand the meaning of the statement "women are oppressed by patriarchy." 9. I think it's fortunate that women aren't expected to do high-risk jobs like construction or firefighting, while men are expected to do these jobs. 10. Overall, I think men are more interesting than women. 11. I think that in cases/events of rape, sometimes it is the woman's fault.

**Stage 2: Revelation** 12. I used to think there wasn't much sex discrimination, but now I realize how serious it is. 13. Only recently did I suddenly understand how unfair it is that men have privileges in society simply because they are men. 14. When you think about most world problems—the threat of nuclear war, pollution, discrimination—it seems to me that most of them are caused by men. 15. Thinking about how women have been treated unfairly in this society for so long makes me extremely sad. 16. Recently, I read something or had an experience that sparked a greater understanding of sexism. 17. When I see how most men treat women, I feel very angry. 18. Thinking about how I might have been used/deceived/taken advantage of by men makes me feel angry.

**Stage 3: Embeddedness-Emanation** 19. I just feel I should be with like-minded women. 20. Being a member of the group of women is important to me. 21. My daily life is mainly with women, but I wouldn't mind having pure friendship relationships with a few men. 22. I spend most of my social time with a few female friends who share feminist values. 23. Especially now, I feel that the women around me give me strength. 24. If I were to paint a picture or write a poem, it would probably be about women or women's issues. 25. Especially now, I feel most comfortable with women who share my feminist views.

**Stage 4: Synthesis** 26. Although I worry about whether women are treated fairly in life, I don't see men as the enemy. 27. I think some men will pay attention to and understand social issues related to women's rights. 28. Although many men are sexist, I have found that some men support women and feminism. 29. In evaluating men, I treat them as individuals, not as a group of oppressors. 30. I know that some men identify with feminism more than some women do.

**Stage 5: Active Commitment** 31. I want to do something to improve women's status. 32. To some extent, the motivation for almost every activity I participate in is my desire for an equal world. 33. I am committed to working for social, economic, and political equality for women throughout my life. 34. Being able to use my talents and skills in the women's movement makes me feel very satisfied. 35. Equal opportunities for men and women in all aspects is an issue I value greatly. 36. I feel I am a strong and powerful voice speaking out for women's issues I care about right now. 37. I will be committed to a cause that I believe contributes to building a more fair and just world for all

people. 38. I am willing to make some sacrifices to change this society in order to create a nonsexist, peaceful place where all people have equal opportunities.

*Note: Items 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 14, 18, 19, 20, and 21 were deleted in the revision.*

### **Ambivalent Sexism Inventory**

*No reverse-scored items, suitable for translation into languages other than English*

Below is a series of statements about men and women and their relationships in contemporary society. Please use the following scale to indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Slightly Disagree
- 4 = Slightly Agree
- 5 = Agree
- 6 = Strongly Agree

**Hostile Sexism Subscale** 1. Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men under the guise of asking for “equality.” 2. Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as sexist. 3. Women are too easily offended. 4. Feminists are seeking for women to have more power than men. 5. Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them. 6. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men. 7. Women exaggerate problems they have at work. 8. Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash. 9. When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against. 10. Many women appear to be teasing men sexually and then reject men’s further courtship. 11. Feminists are making completely unreasonable demands of men.

**Self-Esteem Scale** 1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others. 2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities. 3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. 4. I am able to do things as well as most other people. 5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of. 6. I take a positive attitude toward myself. 7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself. 8. I feel that I will not be respected more in the future. 9. I certainly feel useless at times. 10. At times I think I am no good at all.

*Note: Items 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10 are reverse-scored.*

*Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.*

*Source: ChinaXiv –Machine translation. Verify with original.*