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Effects of “Feminine” and “Masculine” Labels on Judgements of Target Person’s Behavior and Characteristics

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EFFECTS OF "FEMININE" AND "MASCULINE" LABELS ON
JUDGMENTS OF TARGET PERSON'S BEHAVIOR AND CHARACTERISTICS

BY

JENNIFER L. FERNALD

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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Abstract

The effects of the labels "feminine" and "masculine" on judgements of target persons' behavior, personality characteristics stereotypically related to sex-roles, competency, and likability were investigated. Three-hundred-two undergraduate students responded to one of six descriptions of a fictitious applicant for the job of resident assistant which varied by label and gender of the target person. Results indicate that persons who were labeled masculine were judged to be more likely to make stereotypically masculine (i.e. instrumental) responses to crisis situations, and to generally possess higher levels of a constellation of personality characteristics typically associated with men than persons who were unlabeled, who in turn were rated higher on these two measures than persons who were labeled feminine, and that persons who were labeled feminine were generally judged to possess higher levels of a constellation of personality characteristics typically associated with women than persons who were unlabeled, who in turn were rated higher on this dimension than persons who were labeled masculine, and that persons who were labeled feminine were judged to be less competent than persons who were unlabeled or who were labeled masculine ($p < .05$). Some interactions of label with gender of target person and gender of participant were also found. Implications and directions for future research are discussed.

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Effects of "Feminine" and "Masculine" Labels on Judgments
of Target Persons' Behavior and Characteristics

The terms feminine and masculine have been used in the psychological literature to describe individuals, situations, styles of love, and even modes of scientific inquiry. Although frequently used, feminine and masculine are words whose meanings are vague, ill-defined and/or ambiguous. Yet the vagueness of these concepts has done little to deter their uncritical use by psychologists.

Perhaps most pervasive is the use of the words feminine and masculine to describe constellations of personality attributes believed to be associated with females and males respectively (Spence, 1984). These two labels continue to be used as trait descriptors despite ample evidence that acquisition of specific behavior is influenced by situational variables such as expected outcomes, social sanctions, attitudes, and opportunities for practice (Lott, 1988). As Lott (1982, 1988) has argued, using the adjectives feminine and masculine to describe learned behavior serves to reinforce the conceptual link between gender and personality traits. The continued labeling of certain human behaviors as feminine and certain others as masculine linguistically undermines the full appreciation of behavioral plasticity and human flexibility, while perpetuating sex role stereotyping.

Another common use of the labels feminine and masculine in the psychological literature is in personality

assessment. Much of this current usage is a direct result of the work in the area of androgyny. Androgyny, as originally proposed by Bem (1974), was conceptualized as a constellation of traits combining masculinity and femininity, with both viewed as independent dimensions of personality. It was proposed that either set of traits or both sets might be manifested by any individual regardless of sex. This advance over the previous assumption that masculinity and femininity are opposite ends of a single bipolar dimension was so appealing that by 1984 over 100 studies had been published attempting to relate various measures of androgyny with various measures of mental health (Bem, 1984).¹ Nevertheless, the concept of androgyny still rests firmly on the assumption that there are two distinct aspects of personality, with one indicative of masculinity, while the other is indicative of femininity. Thus, the suggestion remains that there is a constellation of traits of human attributes associated with being a woman and another associated with being a man, since femininity and masculinity certainly connote gender.

The two instruments most frequently used to assess androgyny are the Bem Sex Role Inventory ([BSRI], Bem, 1974), and the Personal Attributes Questionnaire ([PAQ], Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974); both of which examine self-endorsed items on masculinity (M) and femininity (F) scales. Factor analysis of the 60 items on the BSRI has revealed three meaningful factors: Assertiveness/

Instrumentality, Interpersonal Sensitivity, and Immaturity, with the items from the M scale loading on the first factor, and items from the F and neutral scales loading on the second and third factors (Pedhazur & Tetenbaum, 1979). The PAQ, likewise, has been said to measure instrumentality and sensitivity (cf. Lott, 1982). Spence (1984) has argued that there is no relationship between scores on the PAQ or BSRI and global measures of femininity and masculinity. She urges that the PAQ and the BSRI need to be interpreted cautiously and very specifically as measures of two specific trait clusters, expressiveness and instrumentality. Nevertheless, neither Spence nor Bem have formally renamed their scales and a man (or a woman) reporting sensitivity to others' feelings (for example) receives points for femininity, while a woman (or a man) reporting high self-directedness (for example) is awarded points for masculinity.

Despite the inappropriateness and inaccuracy of labeling human traits either masculine or feminine, psychologists continue to use these labels with little regard for the consequences. There is clear evidence across various samples that an individual's gender influences attitudes toward, and perceptions of the individual. In a study by Rubin, Provenzano, and Luria, (1974), for example, parents of daughters less than 24 hours old were significantly more likely to describe their babies as little, beautiful, pretty, and cute than parents

of male infants although the two groups of infants did not differ in birth length, weight, or Apgar scores, while other studies have found that girls are verbally stimulated more than boys (Cherry and Lewis, 1976), and that boys are handled more frequently and more roughly before age three months, and girls are handled more frequently after age six months (Lewis & Weinraub, 1979).

It has also been demonstrated that merely labeling persons as male or female effects the way they are perceived. In a classic study, Condry and Condry (1976) found that the behavior of infants was differentially interpreted as a function of perceived gender of the infant. Adult viewers who watched a film of an infant crying after the infant was repeatedly exposed to a Jack-in-the-Box attributed the crying to fear if they believed that the infant was a girl, and to annoyance if they believed the infant was a boy. In a similar experiment, Haugh, Hoffman and Cowan (1980) extended these findings to very young children. Three-year-olds and five-year-olds who watched similar films of either an infant identified as either female or male characterized the infant's behavior stereotypically based on gender label while no main effects were found for actual sex of the infant.

A series of studies employing this same paradigm have identified a variety of perceptions of, and behavioral responses to infants that are influenced by the assigned gender label. A recent review of this literature by Stern

and Karraker (1989) compared the findings of 23 infant gender-labeling studies and concluded that infant gender label was more likely to influence behavioral measures such as toy choice than rating scale measures, and that gender label is most likely to influence adults' perceptions of behavior that is ambiguous, perceptions of physical characteristics, and beliefs about which behaviors are appropriate for the infant. These effects were typically consistent with cultural sex-role stereotypes.

Influences of adult gender-labeling as well as infant gender-labeling have also been empirically demonstrated. Murphy-Berman, Berman, and Smith (1981) had a sample of adult observers watch films of adult interactants in silhouette so that their gender could not be determined. Results of the study indicate that the gender label assigned to the target persons did not affect participants' assessment of specific behavior, but that it did influence general ratings of masculinity and femininity. Rosen (1977) found that observers will actually change their perceptions of people in response to gender relabelling. After learning the accepted gender of individuals whose chromosomal and anatomical sex were discrepant, participants significantly altered their descriptions of those individuals.

Sex or gender labelling not only influences the traits attributed to persons, but also affects perceptions of their competency. In a classic study, Goldberg (1968)

found that women rated the same prose passage more favorably when they thought it was written by a man than when they thought it was written by a woman. Using the same paradigm, Lipton and Hershaft (1984) tested the effect of assigned gender and status of target persons on their perceived competency. Participants in their study rated a painting more favorably when it was painted by a "man" or a "guy" than when it was painted by a "woman" or a "girl". Using the neutral label of "person" to refer to a woman, however, improved her perceived ability, while using "person" in reference to a man reduced his perceived ability. More recently Kitto (1989) found that female job applicants were more likely to be chosen for a low status job when she was referred to as a "girl" than if she was referred to as a "woman", and vice versa when the job was high status.

The effects of gender labeling objects and tasks as well as persons has also been found to have consequences for attitudes toward, and behavioral responses to the objects and tasks. Liebert, McCall, and Hanratty (1971) and Montemayor (1974) demonstrated that girls and boys chose toys for play significantly more often when they were told that the toys were preferred by members of their own gender than when they were told that they were preferred by members of the other gender. Bradbard and Endsley (1983) extended this finding to children's information-seeking and retention. Preschoolers who were told that certain objects

were for girls and certain others were for boys explored less frequently, asked fewer questions, and recalled the names of the objects less frequently when they were labeled for the other gender than when they were labeled for the same gender or for both. Although the earlier studies showed only an increased preference for gender appropriate toys and no effect for gender inappropriate toys, Hartup, Moore, and Sager (1978) demonstrated that by age eight, gender inappropriate toys are actually avoided.

Task performance has also been shown to be a function of gender label by Gold and Berger (1978) and Hargreaves, Bates and Foot (1985) who found that children perform better and look longer at a task when it is labeled as feminine or masculine for girls and boys, respectively. Sixth grade boys and girls given three tests purported to measure masculine, feminine, or neutral skills demonstrated higher attainment values, expectancies for success, and achievement behavior for the tests labeled congruent with their own gender (Stein, Pohly, & Muehler, 1971). Male participants in an experiment by Rosenfield and Stephan (1978) attributed success more internally and failure more externally than female participants on a task labeled masculine, while females made more internal attributions for success and more external attributions for failure than males when the task was labeled feminine.

There is well documented empirical evidence that identifying persons as either male or female has

differential consequences for perceptions of, and attitudes toward the labeled person; and that applying the labels feminine and masculine to objects and tasks influences people's perceptions of, and behaviors toward those objects and tasks. The present study was designed to investigate the effects of labeling persons masculine or feminine on judgments of their likelihood of making certain behavioral responses to crisis situations, and on perceptions of their characteristics, competency, and likability.

Male and female college students completed questionnaires assessing their perceptions of male and female target persons who were labeled either feminine or masculine, or who were not labeled. Specifically, it was hypothesized that:

- 1) An individual of either sex who is labeled masculine will be perceived as significantly more likely to make stereotypically masculine responses to crisis situations than an unlabeled individual, who in turn will be perceived as significantly more likely to make stereotypically masculine responses than an individual who is labeled feminine.
- 2) An individual of either sex labeled masculine will be rated significantly higher on the M scale of the BSRI than an unlabeled individual, who in turn will be rated significantly higher on the M scale than an individual labeled feminine while, an individual of either sex labeled feminine will be rated higher on the F scale of the BSRI

than an unlabeled individual, who in turn will be rated significantly higher on the F scale than an individual labeled masculine.

3) Persons who are labeled masculine will be perceived as significantly more competent than persons who are not labeled, who in turn will be perceived as significantly more competent than persons who are labeled feminine.

4) A man labeled masculine and a woman labeled feminine will be liked significantly more than an unlabeled man or woman, who in turn will be liked significantly more than a man labeled feminine and a woman labeled masculine, respectively.

Method

Participants

One-hundred-forty-eight female students and 69 male students in an introductory psychology class at the University of Rhode Island, and 46 female students and 39 male students in three undergraduate psychology classes at Roger Williams College, participated as one of several options to fulfill a course requirement, or for extra credit points. The difference in the numbers of male and female participants reflected a difference in sex distribution within the classes.

Design

The study consisted of a 2 (gender of participant) X 2 (gender of target person) X 3 (label) between subjects factorial design. Gender of target person and label were

manipulated by using the pronouns she or he, and the adjectives feminine, masculine, or neither adjective to describe the target person.

Procedure

Participants first read a description of the study in which they were told that the investigator was interested in determining the type of person who makes the best resident assistant (RA) for college dormitories. After signing an informed consent form (see Appendix A) each participant received a questionnaire packet which contained: an autobiographical and personality description of a target person described as a previous applicant for the job of RA whose name had been changed; a demographic questionnaire which asked for sex, age, year in college, and major of the respondent; the Situational Response Task (SRT); the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI); the Likability Scale; the Perceived Competency Scale; and the Burt Sex Role Stereotyping Scale (SRS). After reading one of six versions of the target person description, respondents completed the SRT, BSRI, Likability Scale, and Perceived Competency Scale about the target person, and the Burt SRS about their own beliefs. Participants were tested in groups ranging in size from 18 to 147.

Instruments and Materials

Target Person Description. Descriptions of the target person were identical except for gender and label. In each condition the target person, Chris Ford, was described as a

good student at the University of Rhode Island with an overall grade point average of 3.3, and as a journalism major whose hobbies include biking, competitive swimming, and reading. The target person's name, major, and hobbies were chosen for their gender neutrality. In addition, nine adjectives chosen from the neutral scale of the BSRI were used to describe Chris. They are: adaptable, conscientious, friendly, happy, helpful, reliable, sincere, tactful, and unsystematic (see Appendix B).

Situational Response Task (SRT). The SRT (shown in Appendix C) presents six hypothetical crisis situations an RA might encounter while performing her or his job followed by a list of three possible responses an RA might make. Respondents were instructed to choose the first response that they thought the target person would make to each particular situation.

For each of the six hypothetical situations, the set of three response options presented is composed of one response that was prejudged by an independent sample of 70 introductory psychology students to be stereotypically more masculine, one that was prejudged as stereotypically more feminine, and one that was prejudged as neutral. The judges had been presented with 8 hypothetical situations, each of which was followed by 4 possible responses and asked to rate each response as either more masculine or more feminine according to the cultural stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. The responses retained for the

SRT as stereotypically masculine were so judged by at least two thirds of the respondents, with a range of 68% to 100% agreement, and a mean of 88%. The responses retained for the SRT as stereotypically feminine were also prejudged to be so by at least two thirds of the respondents, with a range of 82% to 92% agreement, and a mean of 90%. The responses retained as neutral were ones on which there was a close to even split on ratings of masculinity and femininity, that is, were judged as either more feminine or more masculine by only 51% to 64% of the judges, with a mean of 57% agreement. Only the three best discriminating responses were retained for each situation. Two of the original 8 hypothetical situations were dropped because clear agreement about a masculine response was not obtained.

In the present study, a choice of a stereotypically feminine response on the SRT was assigned a value of one, while stereotypically neutral and stereotypically masculine response choices were assigned values of two and three respectively, resulting in a possible total score of 6 to 18. To control for a possible order effect, F, M, and N responses appeared in a different order for each situation.

Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI). The BSRI is a 60 item personality inventory designed to assess degree of self-reported sex typing (Bem, 1974). The scale consists of 20 "masculine", 20 "feminine", and 20 "neutral" traits which were chosen for inclusion because they were judged by a

sample of 40 Stanford undergraduates to be significantly more desirable for a man, significantly more desirable for a woman, or equally desirable for both respectively ($p < .05$). In this study, participants completed the BSRI as it pertained to the target person, and were assigned both an F score and an M score based on the respective degree of endorsement of feminine and masculine items (see Appendix D).

Likability Scale. Respondents answered four questions on 7-point scales that ranged from not at all, or very unlikable (1) to very much, or very likable (7). These questions were: "How much would you like to get to know Chris Ford?", "How much would you like to have Chris Ford as a friend of yours?", "How much would you like to see Chris Ford regularly?", and "How likable a person do you think Chris Ford is?". The sum of respondents' scores on these four questions was taken as a measure of the target person's judged likability.

Perceived Competency Scale. Respondents answered four questions on 7-point scales that ranged from very incompetent, very unlikely, very poorly, or not at all (1), to very competent, very likely, very well, or very much (7). These questions were: "How competent do you think Chris Ford is for this kind of work?", "How likely do you think it is that Chris Ford would be a successful RA?", "How well do you think Chris would do the job?", and "How much would you support the hiring of Chris Ford?". The sum

of respondents' scores on these four questions was taken as a measure of the judged competency of the target person.

Sex Role Stereotyping Scale (SRS). The SRS is a 9 item scale developed by Burt (1980) to assess degree of adherence to stereotypical sex role beliefs (see Appendix E). The Cronbach's alpha reliability of this scale is .80. In this study, the participant's SRS score was measured as a potential covariate.

Results

In order to determine if the data were suitable as input for ANOVAs, the Hartley test of homogeneity of variance was performed for each of the five dependent measures. Results of these preliminary analyses indicated that the within-groups variances of the SRT scores, BSRI M scale scores, BSRI F scale scores, Competency scale scores, and Likability scale scores were not reliably different at the .01 level of significance, that is, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met in every case.

Because the school that the participants attended was not a theoretically significant variable, a one-way analysis of variance by university was performed on each of the dependent variables to determine whether the two samples could be combined. Results of these analyses indicated that the two samples were significantly different only in their ratings of target persons' competency, $F(1, 293) = 14.08, p < .001$, and likability, $F(1, 293) = 13.39, p < .001$. No reliable differences were found between the two

samples on the SRT, or the M or F scale of the BSRI at the .05 level. University, then, was included as a grouping variable only in the analyses involving competency and likability ratings, and the data were collapsed across university for the remaining analyses.

Judged Behavioral Responses

The judged responses of the target person (RA applicant) was measured by the SRT, which asked respondents to choose the first response they felt the target person would make to each of six hypothetical crisis situations. Stereotypically feminine, neutral, and masculine responses were scored 1, 2, and 3, respectively and total scores were used in the analyses.

As predicted, the label assigned to the target person influenced the judged likelihood of the target person performing certain behaviors rather than others in response to crisis situations. As shown in Table 1, a three-way ANOVA revealed significant main effect for label, $F(2, 289) = 15.84, p < .001$. A Tukey follow-up test conducted at the .05 level indicated that target persons who were labeled masculine received higher scores (i.e., were judged more likely to make stereotypically masculine responses) than unlabeled target persons or target persons who were labeled feminine. Unlabeled target persons were rated higher (i.e., were judged more likely to make stereotypically masculine responses) than target persons who were labeled feminine. Neither gender of respondent nor of target

Table 1

ANOVA Summary Table of SRT Scores

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
SexP	.64897	1	.64897	.17	ns.
SexTP	.57070	1	.57070	.15	ns.
Label	118.69252	2	59.34626	15.84	<.001
SexP SexTP	3.12608	1	3.12608	.83	ns.
SexP Label	11.19158	2	5.59579	1.49	ns.
SexTP Label	18.42478	2	9.21239	2.46	ns.
SexS SexTP Label	11.57524	2	5.78762	1.54	ns.
Error	1082.86005	289	3.74692		

person significantly influenced SRT scores.

Characteristics Attributed to Target Person

The judged characteristics of the target person were measured by the respondents' ratings of the target person on the M and F scales of the BSRI. Results of 2 (gender of participant) X 2 (gender of target person) X 3 (label) ANOVAs of M and F scale scores are shown in Tables 2 and 3, respectively.

As can be seen in Table 2, there was a significant main effect of label on M scale ratings of the target person in the predicted direction, $F(2, 287) = 37.5$, $p < .001$. A Tukey follow-up test indicated that target persons who were labeled masculine were rated higher on the M scale of the BSRI than target persons who were unlabeled or who were labeled feminine, and unlabeled target persons were rated higher than target persons who were labeled feminine.

This effect was qualified somewhat by a significant interaction with gender of target person, $F(2, 287) = 3.24$, $p < .05$., as can be seen in Figure 1. Simple effects tests of label were significant both when target persons were female, $F(2, 287) = 13.75$, $p < .001$, and when target persons were male $F(2, 287) = 32.66$, $p < .001$. Tukey follow-up tests conducted at the .05 level indicated that female target persons who were labeled masculine were rated significantly higher on the M scale of the BSRI than female target persons who were either unlabeled or who were labeled

Table 2

ANOVA Summary Table of M Scale Ratings

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
SexP	1475.58862	1	1475.58862	13.38	<.001
SexTP	431.36810	1	431.36810	3.91	<.05
Label	8269.04600	2	4134.52300	37.50	<.001
SexP SexTP	19.14767	1	19.14767	.17	ns.
SexP Label	17.57144	2	8.78572	.08	ns.
SexTP Label	713.49066	2	356.74533	3.24	<.05
SexP SexTP Label	124.18646	2	62.09323	.56	ns.
Error	31642.57019	287	110.25286		

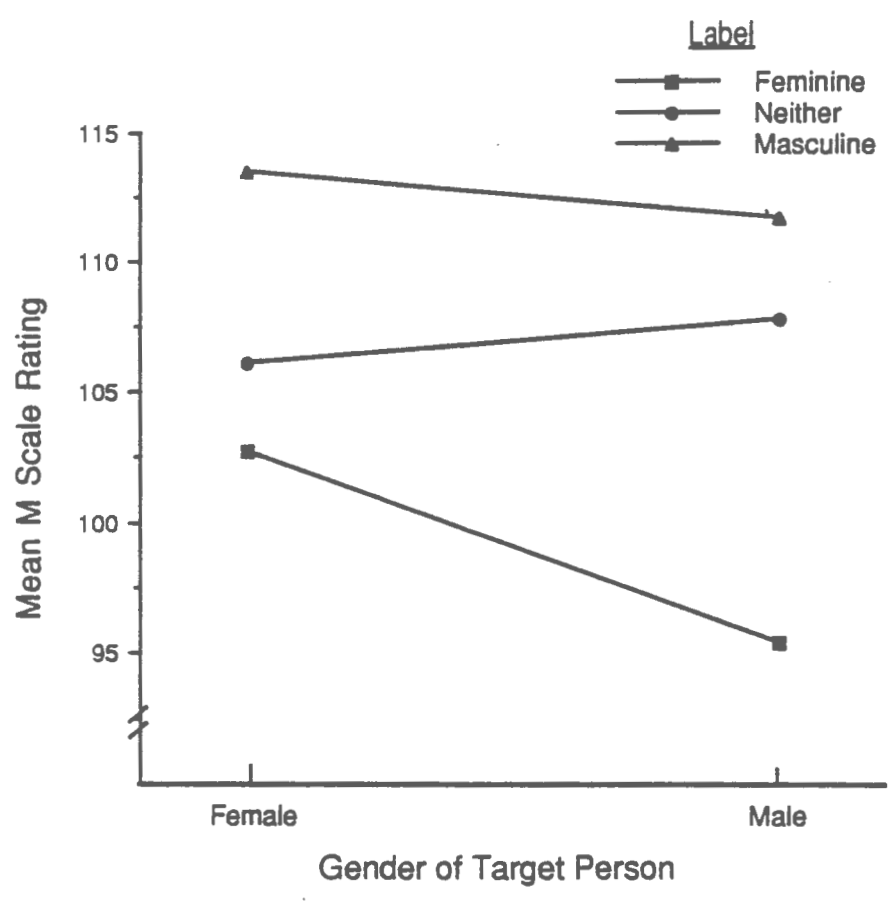
Table 3

ANOVA Summary Table of F Scale Ratings

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
SexP	51.40089	1	51.40089	.70	ns.
SexTP	162.10128	1	162.10128	2.20	ns.
Label	7667.48560	2	3833.74280	52.13	<.001
SexP SexTP	447.51149	1	447.51149	6.08	<.05
SexP Label	37.78177	2	18.89088	.26	ns.
SexTP Label	62.30993	2	31.15496	.42	ns.
SexP SexTP Label	728.16460	2	364.08230	4.95	<.01
Error	20813.98351	283	73.54764		

Figure Caption

Figure 1. Gender of target person X label interaction on M scale ratings of the BSRI.



feminine. Although unlabeled female target persons were not rated significantly higher on the M scale than female target persons who were labeled feminine, differences were in the predicted direction. Similarly, male target persons who were labeled masculine or who were not labeled were rated higher on the M scale than male target persons who were labeled feminine, and the difference between male target persons who were labeled masculine and who were unlabeled approached significance.

A main effect of gender of target person on M scale ratings was also found, $F(1, 287) = 3.91, p < .05$, but simple effects tests of the interaction with label revealed that this effect was significant only when the target person was labeled feminine, $F(1, 287) = 12.29, p < .001$. Male target persons who were labeled feminine were rated as even less masculine than female target persons who were labeled feminine, but no differences in M ratings were found between male and female target persons when they were unlabeled or when they were labeled masculine.

It was also found that across all conditions, female participants rated target persons higher on the M scale of the BSRI than male participants did, $F(1, 287) = 13.38, p < .001$.

The ANOVA of F scale scores shown in Table 3 indicate that, as predicted, there was a significant main effect of label, $F(2, 283) = 52.13, p < .001$. A Tukey follow-up test revealed that target persons who were labeled feminine were

rated significantly higher on the F scale of the BSRI than target persons who were unlabeled or than target persons who were labeled masculine, and unlabeled target persons received higher F scale ratings than target persons who were labeled masculine, $p < .05$.

A significant three-way interaction, $F(2, 283) = 4.95$, $p < .01$ qualifies this effect only slightly. Simple effects of label in the predicted direction were found for both female participants rating female and male target persons, [$F(2, 283) = 27.69$, $p < .001$, and $F(2, 283) = 8.81$, $p < .001$, respectively] and for male participants rating female and male target persons [$F(2, 283) = 4.37$, $p < .05$, and $F(2, 283) = 6.85$, $p < .001$, respectively]. Tukey follow-up tests conducted at the .05 level revealed that: female participants rated female target persons who were labeled feminine higher on the F scale than they rated female target persons who were unlabeled or who were labeled masculine, and they rated unlabeled female target persons higher than they rated female target persons who were labeled masculine; female participants rated male target persons who were labeled feminine higher on the F scale of the BSRI than they rated unlabeled male target persons or target persons who were labeled masculine, while unlabeled and masculine labeled target persons were not rated as significantly different by female participants; male participants rated female target persons who were labeled feminine higher on the F scale of the BSRI than female

target persons who were labeled masculine; and male participants rated male target persons who were labeled feminine higher on the F scale of the BSRI than they rated unlabeled male target persons or male target persons who were labeled masculine, and they rated male target persons who were unlabeled higher in femininity than male target persons who were labeled masculine. Although significant differences were not found between each level of label at every level of gender of participant and gender of target persons, Figures 2 and 3 show that the effect of label was in the predicted direction in every condition.

The interaction between gender of participant and gender of target person was significant, $F(1, 283) = 6.08$, $p < .05$, and can possibly be accounted for by the fact that female participants rated male target persons labeled masculine higher on the F scale of the BSRI than male participants rated male target persons labeled masculine. Neither gender of target person nor gender of participant were significant main effects.

Judged Competency

A four-way ANOVA indicated that, as predicted, the judged competency of the target person was significantly influenced by label, $F(2, 276) = 6.05$, $p < .005$. A Tukey follow-up test revealed that target persons who were labeled feminine were judged as significantly less competent than unlabeled target persons or target persons who were labeled masculine, $p < .05$. It was also found that

Figure Caption

Figure 2. Effect of label and gender of target person on the F scale ratings of the target person by female participants.

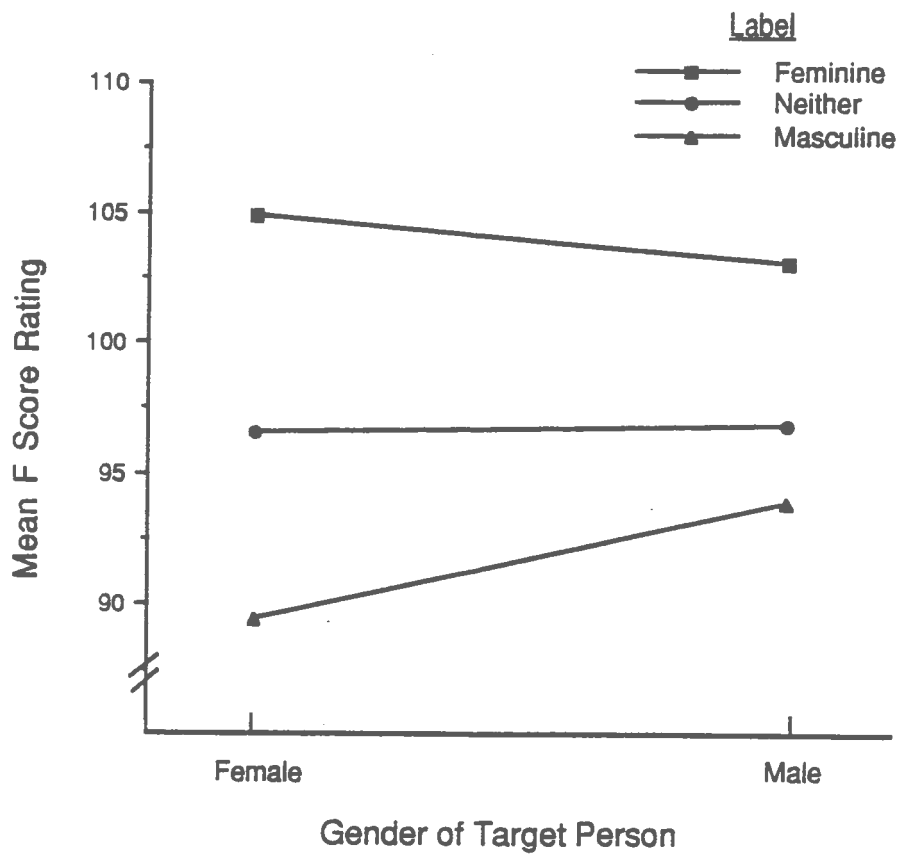
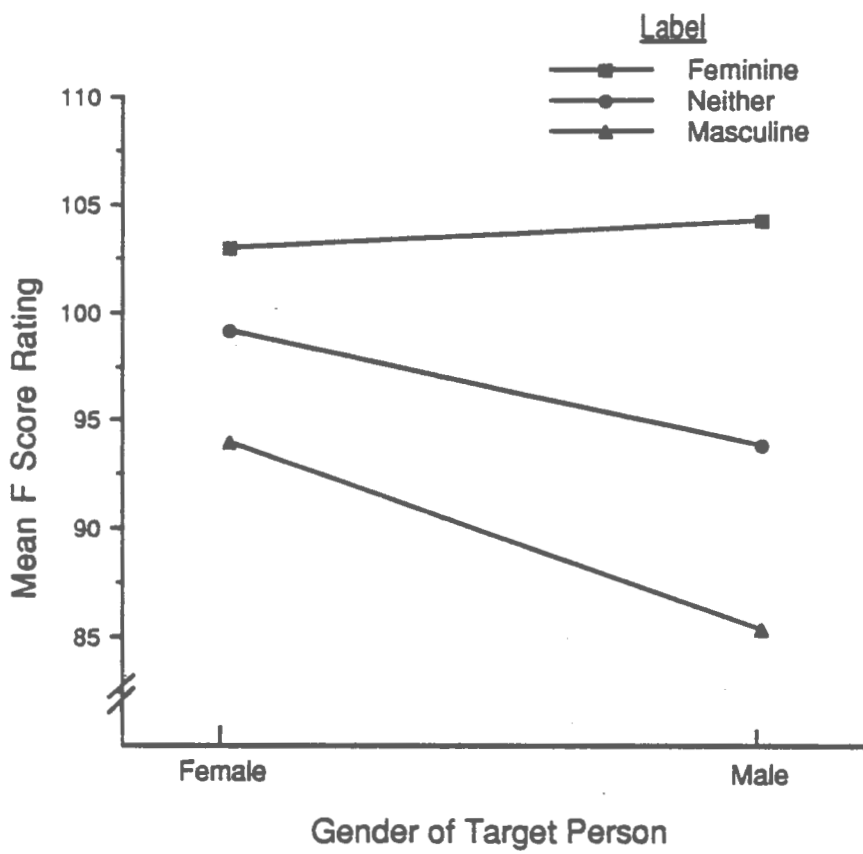


Figure Caption

Figure 3. Effect of label and gender of target person on F scale ratings of the target person by male participants.



female participants judged target persons as generally more competent than male participants judged them, $F(1, 276) = 13.48$, $p < .001$, and that URI students judged target persons as more competent than RWC students judged them, $F(1, 276) = 9.64$, $p < .005$. These data are shown in Table 4.

Judged Likability

A four-way ANOVA, as seen in Table 5, indicated that judged likability of target persons was influenced by university, $F(1, 276) = 7.26$, $p < .01$, with target persons being significantly more liked by URI students than they were by RWC students. Analysis of the significant interaction between university and gender of participant [$F(1, 276) = 4.52$, $p < .05$] revealed simple effects of university for both female and male target persons [$F(1, 276) = 12.36$, $p < .001$, and $F(1, 276) = 3.9$, $p < .05$, respectively]. The interaction can be accounted for by the fact that the difference in the target person likability ratings between the URI and RWC samples was even greater when the target person was female.

The judged likability of the target person was also influenced by the gender of the participant, $F(1, 276) = 9.24$, $p < .005$, with target persons being rated as more likable by female participants than by male participants. The main effect of gender of participant was understandable only after interpretation of the gender of participant by gender of target person interaction [$F(1, 276) = 9.26$, $p < .005$], as shown in Figure 4. Simple effects tests of

Table 4

ANOVA Summary Table of Judged Likability Ratings

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
University	131.36468	1	131.36468	9.64	<.005
SexP	183.78975	1	183.78975	13.48	<.001
SexTP	12.14185	1	12.14185	.89	ns.
Label	165.02989	2	82.51495	6.05	<.005
Univ SexP	1.85479	1	1.85479	.14	ns.
Univ SexTP	.05802	1	.05802	.00	ns.
SexP SexTP	.00794	1	.00794	.00	ns.
Univ Label	40.03642	2	20.01821	1.47	ns.
SexP Label	4.06126	2	2.03063	.15	ns.
SexTP Label	42.67279	2	21.33640	1.57	ns.
Univ SexP SexTP	.30730	1	.30730	.02	ns.
Univ SexP Label	2.54695	2	1.27347	.09	ns.
Univ SexTP Label	9.70224	2	4.85112	.36	ns.
SexP SexTP Label	23.28639	2	11.64319	.85	ns.
Univ SexP SexTP Label	8.94265	2	4.47132	.33	ns.
Error	3762.52516	276	13.63234		

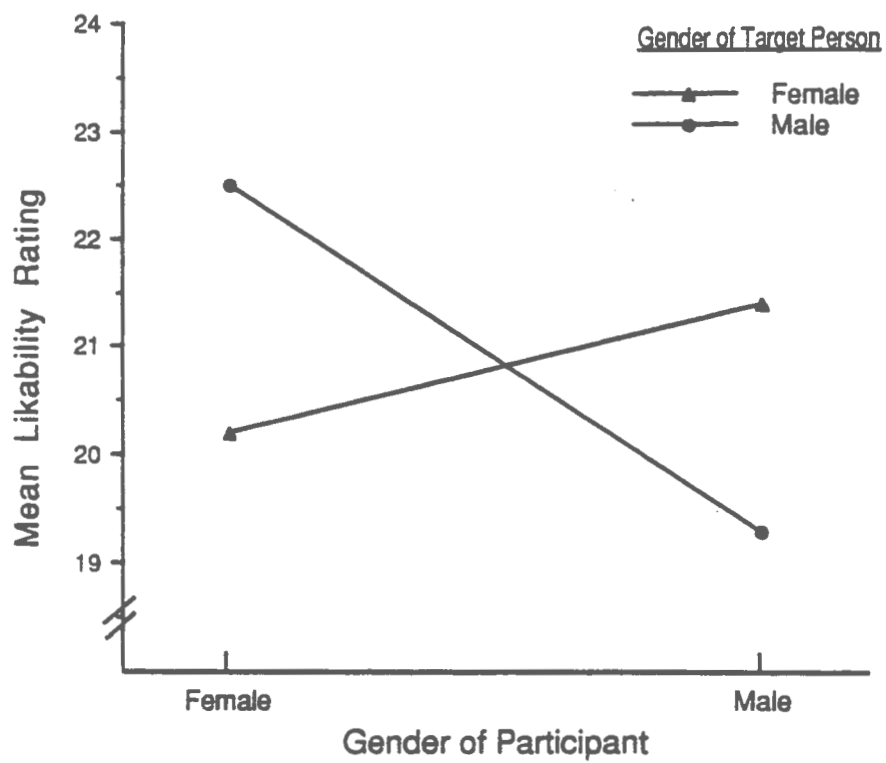
Table 5

ANOVA Summary Table of Judged Likability Ratings

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
University	117.63647	1	117.63647	7.26	<.01
SexP	149.71984	1	149.71984	9.24	<.005
SexTP	16.57601	1	16.57601	1.02	ns.
Label	26.59611	2	13.29806	.82	ns.
Univ SexP	22.34101	1	22.34101	1.38	ns.
Univ SexTP	73.18692	1	73.18692	4.52	<.05
SexP SexTP	150.03657	1	150.03657	9.26	<.005
Univ Label	13.30253	2	6.65126	.41	ns.
SexP Label	94.23494	2	47.11747	2.91	ns.
SexTP Label	78.13154	2	39.06577	2.41	ns.
Univ SexP SexTP	3.71496	1	3.71496	.23	ns.
Univ SexP Label	89.01856	2	44.50928	2.75	ns.
Univ SexTP Label	2.77371	2	1.38686	.09	ns.
SexP SexTP Label	37.79747	2	18.89874	1.17	ns.
Univ SexP SexTP Label	26.30561	2	13.15281	.81	ns.
Error	4472.18487	276	16.20357		

Figure Caption

Figure 4. Effect of gender of participant and gender of target person on likability ratings.



gender of target persons revealed that female participants liked male target persons significantly more than they liked female target persons, $F(1, 276) = 15.48, p < .001$, while male participants liked female target persons significantly more than they liked male target persons, $F(1, 276) = 7.7, p < .01$.

Sex Role Beliefs as a Covariate

Participants' adherence to sex role stereotypes was measured by the Burt SRS scale, and was considered in this study as a covariate to assess the differential effects of label, gender of target person, and gender of participant on each of the dependent measures after adjusting for the effects of sex role beliefs. ANCOVAs with dimensions identical to the previously conducted ANOVAs were performed on each of the five DVs. Results of these analyses revealed a pattern of results similar to those revealed by the ANOVAs. The same main effects and interactions were found to be significant when ANCOVAs were performed as when ANOVAs were performed on SRT scores, BSRI F scale ratings, and competency ratings. A three-way ANCOVA of BSRI M scale ratings revealed the same results as the ANOVA of M scale ratings with the exception that no effect was found for gender of target person, and a four-way ANCOVA of competency ratings indicated a significant three-way interaction between university, gender of participant, and label, $F(2, 271) = 3.37, p < .05$. Simple effects tests indicated that after the effect of sex role beliefs was

partialled out of the error term, unlabeled target persons were liked significantly more by the women in the URI sample than they were by the women in the RWC sample, $F(1, 271) = 10.35$, $p < .01$, and that target persons who were labeled feminine were liked significantly more by the men in the URI sample than they were by the men in the RWC sample, $F(1, 271) = 4.62$, $p < .05$.

Discussion

This study tested the hypotheses that judgments of a person's likelihood to behave in certain ways, personality characteristics, competency, and likability are influenced by the trait labels of feminine and masculine. Results indicate that these labels or descriptors strongly affect all of these judgments except likability.

Being described as masculine or feminine or neither influenced the judgement of which intervention strategies a person would be likely to employ in a variety of college dormitory crisis situations. A masculine labeled person was perceived as being more likely to respond in stereotypically masculine ways, and a feminine labeled person was perceived as more likely to respond in stereotypically feminine ways, while an unlabeled person was perceived as more likely to respond in ways that were more gender neutral. The responses that had been prejudged by an independent sample to be more stereotypically masculine tended to be responses that were immediate, direct, and independent, for example attempting to put a

fire out with a fire extinguisher, and stepping in and breaking up a fight, while the responses that had been prejudged to be more stereotypically feminine tended to be nurturant or to require help from persons with more authority, for example, helping a student with class work, and calling security. These results are particularly interesting and important because the label effects on judged behavior were independent of both target person's gender and gender of the person doing the judging. Thus, describing persons as feminine or masculine influences others' expectations about the labeled person's likelihood to employ particular crisis intervention strategies, and these expectations are consistent with cultural sex-role stereotyping.

Not surprisingly, labeling a person either feminine or masculine also influenced the judgments of the labeled person's other characteristics as measured by the BSRI. Persons labeled masculine were generally rated higher on M scale attributes and lower on F scale attributes than persons who were labeled feminine, and persons labeled feminine were rated higher on F scale attributes and lower on M scale attributes than persons labeled masculine. It could be argued that the influence of the labels feminine and masculine on the ratings of attributes making up the F and M scales of the BSRI is simply the result of the demand characteristics of the label. However the fact that the M and F scales of the BSRI are each composed of 19 adjectives

in addition to masculine or feminine seems to indicate that the labels feminine and masculine activate stereotypes of femininity and masculinity, from which a whole set of personality characteristics are inferred. Given the results of Pedhazur and Tetenbaum's factor analysis of the BSRI which found that items from the M scale load on a dimension best labeled Assertiveness / Instrumentality, and that items from the F scale load on two factors best labeled Interpersonal Sensitivity and Immaturity, labeling a person masculine implies that he or she will behave in a more instrumental and assertive manner, while labeling a person feminine implies that he or she will behave in a manner that is more sensitive to others and more immature. The present data indicate that this is the case, and also that a masculine label leads to the expectation of more mature behavior while a feminine label leads to the expectation of less instrumental behavior.

Target persons were also judged as less competent when they were labeled feminine than when they were unlabeled or when they were labeled masculine. This was true regardless of whether the judged person was a woman or a man. This is not surprising given the empirical identification of the femininity stereotype with immaturity as well as interpersonal sensitivity. A woman is thus in the precarious position of conforming to sex-role stereotypes and being viewed as incompetent, or having to violate sex-role norms in order to be perceived as competent. This is

similar to the "double-bind" identified by Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, and Vogel (1970), who found that a different set of criteria are used by mental health professionals for a "mature, healthy, socially competent" adult woman than for a healthy adult man or a healthy adult person.

Men and RWC students made lower ratings of competency than women and URI students did, suggesting that different frames of reference are used for such judgments, and that these are related to gender and school. Further research is needed to clarify these relationships.

Likability was the only outcome measure in this study on which label did not have an impact. Men found women to be more likable than men, and women found men to be more likable than women. Since all of the respondents were undergraduate college students it seems likely that heterosexual expectancies for dating and/or "homophobia" contributed most heavily to the target persons likability. The reasons that RWC students found the target person less likable than URI students did are unclear, but may be due to differing experiences with RAs.

It was specifically hypothesized in this study that gender of participant would not reliably influence any of the outcome measures. This, however, was not borne out by the data. In addition to the influence of participants' gender on likability, masculinity, and femininity, competency ratings were also influenced by the gender of

the participant. Across all other conditions men made lower ratings of masculinity and of competency than women did. Because masculinity and competency, which is stereotypically associated with masculinity, are both highly valued in our culture, and associated with men, men may feel that they have more to gain by being conservative in their ratings of masculinity and competency. It was also found that women rated masculine labeled men higher in femininity than men rated them. This seems to indicate that women are more likely to perceive "masculine" men as possessing a constellation of attributes stereotypically associated with femininity than men are. This is consistent with evidence that shows women to adhere less to sex-role stereotypes than men do (Burt, 1980).

Analyzing these data with the effects of sex role beliefs partialled out changed the significance of only two effects. The significance of the gender of target person effect indicated by an ANOVA, and its lack of significance when examined using an ANCOVA represent only a small difference in probability levels, with the former just reaching significance, and the latter just missing significance, [$p=.0489$, and $p=.0554$, respectively]. Similarly a university by gender by label interaction reached a probability of .0360 when an ANCOVA was performed, and a probability of .0659 when an ANOVA was performed. Because there were only two differences in significance decisions, and because even those were small,

these difference are probably best regarded as artifacts. The failure of the covariate to add power to the analyses suggests a lack of systematic relationship between SRS scores and any of the dependent variables. Degree of adherence to sex role stereotypes did not reliably predict any of the outcome measures, suggesting that individual differences in beliefs about sex roles are overshadowed by the cultural significance of the labels feminine and masculine.

Based on these results, it can be concluded that labeling persons masculine or feminine has a powerful mediating effect on judgments of the labeled persons' competency and other general personality characteristics as well as on expectations for the labeled person's behavior in crisis situations. It is likely that these judgments and expectations have serious consequences for the labeled person. Future research in this area should focus on the nature of these consequences beyond paper and pencil judgments and on the way in which expectancies influence the actual behavior toward the labeled persons and of the labeled persons. Further research is also needed to assess the influence of masculine and feminine as trait descriptors in other types of samples and situations.

This study provides empirical support for the theoretical position that learned behavior must be dissociated from the constructs of masculinity and femininity. While the concept of androgyny may be

superficially appealing, it is important to keep in mind that androgyny is built on the constructs of femininity and masculinity, terms which are here shown to carry powerful connotations strongly associated with stereotypical sex-role beliefs. Education aimed at undermining the assumptions of sexism need to go beyond promoting a greater availability of "feminine" and "masculine" behaviors and characteristics to both women and men, to the elimination of masculinity and femininity as psychological constructs. As long as behaviors and characteristics are associated with masculinity or femininity, a false dualism is supported which ultimately reinforces differential roles, status, and power for women and men.

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Footnote

¹Reviews of this literature conclude that for both men and women the best predictor of mental health as measured by global measures of adjustment is psychological masculinity (Taylor & Hall, 1982; Whitely, 1985; Long, 1986).

Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

I have been asked to take part in a research project described below. The researcher will explain the project to me in detail. I should feel free to ask questions. If I have more questions later, Jennifer Fernald, the person mainly responsible for this study, (401) 272-5152, will discuss them with me.

I have been asked to take part in a study to determine what types of people would make the best resident assistants (RAs). If I decide to take part in this study I will read a description of a fictitious person who has applied for the job of resident assistant (RA). I will then read about six hypothetical situations an RA might encounter, and I will choose the response that I think the person I have read about would be most likely to make. I will also fill out a short personality inventory about that person.

By participating I may learn something about survey research in psychology.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may decide to quit at any time. Questions are not of a personal nature and my responses are completely anonymous. This consent form will be collected separately from the other materials and my name cannot be connected in any way to the answers I give.

If I am not satisfied with the way this study is performed, I may discuss my complaints with Jennifer Fernald, or with Bernice Lott, 4248, anonymously if I choose.

If I would like the results of this study they will be mailed to me if I include my address.

I have read the Consent Form. My signature on this form means that I understand the information and I agree to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Mailing Address

Appendix B

Chris Ford is a first semester senior at the University of Rhode Island who was born, raised, and attended public high school in Warwick Rhode Island. Chris was editor of the high school newspaper and is currently majoring in journalism with a minor in marketing at the University of Rhode Island. (She or He) is a good student with an overall GPA of 3.3 and is conscientious about school work. For relaxation Chris enjoys biking, competitive swimming, reading, and is an avid Rams basketball fan.

People who know Chris best at college consider (him or her) to be friendly. (He or she) is also typically viewed as unsystematic but very reliable. Chris has been described as a helpful person who is sincere, tactful and (feminine or masculine). In general, Chris is adaptable to new situations and generally feels and acts like a happy person.

Appendix C

Each of the following are hypothetical situations that RAs may encounter while performing their job. Below each situation is a list of possible responses an RA might make. Read each situation and all of the responses carefully, then make a check mark next to the letter of the response that you think that the person you have just read about would be most likely to perform first. Remember that you are choosing the response that you think that the person described on the previous page would make, and NOT the response that you would make. Choose only one response for each situation, and make sure that you have completed all of the items.

1) A student on the dormitory floor has started a fire from a malfunction in their hot plate. Someone has pulled the fire alarm and students are leaving the building.

Would the applicant-

- F A) Call the head RA in the building?
- M B) Attempt to put out the fire with a fire extinguisher?
- N C) Monitor students leaving the building?

2) A student has fallen down the stairs and cut their leg.

Would the applicant-

- N A) Call an ambulance?
- F B) Clean the cut with disinfectant?
- M C) Drive the student to the emergency room?

3) A student is failing a particular class required for their major and is concerned about it. Would the applicant-

(appendix C continues)

F A) Help the student with class work?

 N B) Talk to the student about changing majors?

 M C) Ask another student taking the class to help?

4) Someone from off-campus has wandered into the building and is hanging around for no apparent reason. Would the applicant-

 M A) Ask the person to leave?

 N B) Ignore the person?

 F C) Call security?

5) The RA suspects that someone on the floor is smoking pot in their room. Would the applicant-

 N A) Write a report about the student's behavior?

 M B) Confront the student about it?

 F C) Ask the head RA to talk to the student?

6) There is a fist fight between two students on the floor. Would the applicant-

 M A) Step in and break it up?

 F B) Call security?

 N C) Verbally demand that the students stop?

* F, M, and N indicate the responses prejudged as feminine, masculine, and neutral respectively.

Appendix D

Bem Sex-role Inventory

Below are 60 descriptive words or phrases. For each word or phrase decide how well you think it applies to the person you have just read about and circle the appropriate response. Again, keep in mind that you are deciding how well it applies to the person you have read about and NOT how well it applies to you.

1) Self-reliant

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

2) Yielding

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

3) Helpful

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

4) Defends own beliefs

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

5) Cheerful

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

(appendix D continues)

6) Moody

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

7) Independent

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

8) Shy

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

9) Conscientious

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

10) Athletic

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

11) Affectionate

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

12) Theatrical

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

(appendix D continues)

13) Assertive

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

14) Flatterable

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

15) Happy

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

16) Strong personality

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

17) Loyal

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

18) Unpredictable

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

19) Forceful

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

(appendix D continues)

20) Feminine

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

21) Reliable

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

22) Analytical

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

23) Sympathetic

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

24) Jealous

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

25) Has leadership abilities

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

26) Sensitive to the needs of others

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

(appendix D continues)

27) Truthful

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

28) Willing to take risks

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

29) Understanding

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

30) Secritive

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

31) Makes decisions easily

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

32) Compassionate

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

33) Sincere

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

(appendix D continues)

34) Self-sufficient

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

35) Eager to soothe hurt feelings

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

36) Conceited

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

37) Dominant

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

38) Soft spoken

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

39) Likable

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

40) Masculine

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

(appendix D continues)

41) Warm

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

42) Solemn

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

43) Willing to take a stand

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

44) Tender

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

45) Friendly

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

46) Aggressive

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

47) Gullible

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

(appendix D continues)

48) Inefficient

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

49) Acts as a leader

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

50) Childlike

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

51) Adaptable

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

52) Individualistic

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

53) Does not use harsh language

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

54) Unsystematic

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

(appendix D continues)

55) Competitive

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

56) Loves children

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

57) Tactful

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

58) Ambitious

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

59) Gentle

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

60) Conventional

1	2	3	4	5
very true	somewhat true	neither true nor false	somewhat false	very false

Appendix E

Please indicate for the following nine questions the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements by circling the appropriate response.

1. A woman should be a virgin when she marries.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	agree some	neither	disagree some	disagree	strongly disagree

2. It is acceptable for the woman to pay for the date.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	agree some	neither	disagree some	disagree	strongly disagree

3. There is nothing wrong with a woman going to a bar alone.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	agree some	neither	disagree some	disagree	strongly disagree

4. A wife should never contradict her husband in public.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	agree some	neither	disagree some	disagree	strongly disagree

5. A man should fight when the woman he is with is insulted by another man.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	agree some	neither	disagree some	disagree	strongly disagree

6. It is better for a woman to use her feminine charm to get what she wants rather than ask for it outright.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	agree some	neither	disagree some	disagree	strongly disagree

7. It is acceptable for a woman to have a career, but marriage and family should come first.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	agree some	neither	disagree some	disagree	strongly disagree

(appendix E continues)

8. There is something wrong with a woman who doesn't want to marry and raise a family.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	agree	neither	disagree	disagree	strongly disagree
		some		some		

9. It looks worse for a woman to be drunk than for a man to be drunk.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	agree	neither	disagree	disagree	strongly disagree
		some		some		

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