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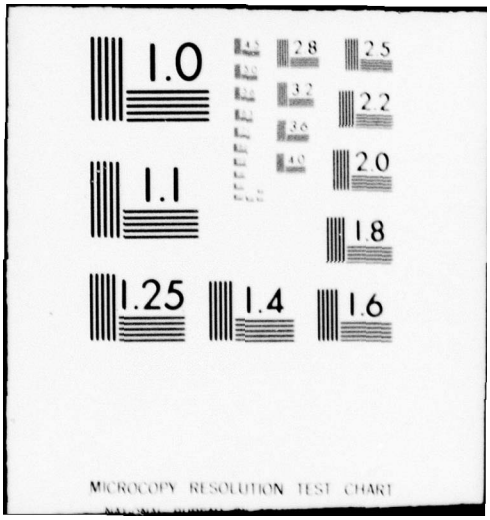
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# MASCULINITY, FEMININITY, AND ANDROGYNY: WHAT REALLY WORKS AT WORK?

by

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# MASCULINITY, FEMININITY, AND ANDROGYNY:

## What Really Works at Work?

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ONR Technical Report #2

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To investigate the relative adaptiveness of masculinity, femininity, and androgyny in the workplace, 63 Navy personnel detailers were asked to rate the success, adjustment, and attainment they predicted for six hypothetical Navy recruits, including feminine, masculine, and androgynous recruits of each sex. 449 other Navy personnel were asked, depending on their supervisory or nonsupervisory status, to indicate the extent to which they would like to supervise or work with each recruit.

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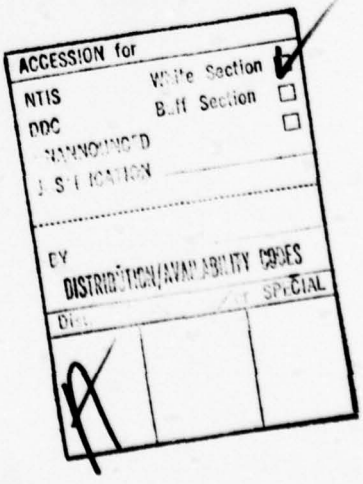
It was found that the masculine personality received significantly higher ratings than the feminine personality on the variables of success, attainment, and supervisory preference. However, when compared to the androgynous personality, the masculine personality received a significantly lower rating on coworker preference, and did not differ significantly on any of the other variables. The major sex difference was seen among nonsupervisors, who preferred male to female coworkers.

It is concluded that a strictly female personality is not adaptive in the workplace, but that the combination of selected masculine and feminine traits in the androgynous personality is slightly superior to the highly masculine personality.

## Preface

This study is the second in a series of investigations sponsored by the Office of Naval Research and designed to determine the validity of the Hinsdale-VIA Psychosocial Model of Defeat (HVPMD, Hinsdale, 1976). The HVPMD describes in behavioral terms how the stereotypic attitudes of peers and supervisors interact with women's motivational constructs (fear of success, achievement anxiety) to produce a "cycle of defeat." The net results of this cycle are the maintenance of traditional sex roles and stereotypes in work groups. Since the feminine sex role is believed to be of dubious value in the working world (e.g., Darley, 1976), the HVPMD in effect provides a framework for understanding how work group dynamics contribute to the achievement-related difficulties of women.

Prior to direct investigation of the model, it was necessary to conduct preliminary studies to determine if the basic assumptions of the HVPMD hold true for the workplace. Toward this end, the purpose of the first unit of research was to investigate the widely held assumption that stereotypes comprise a major barrier to career-oriented women (Hinsdale and Johnson, Note 1). The purpose of this second unit was to test the assumption that masculinity is synonymous with success in the working world, while femininity is, at best, innocuous.



Contents

# Masculinity, Femininity, and Androgyny: What Really Works at Work?

It isn't hard to tell from the newspaper want ads the kinds of qualities associated with power and prestige in the workforce. One sort of ad seeks the "independent, aggressive, and ambitious self-starter" and is accompanied by promises of money, power, and opportunities for advancement. A second kind seeks the "attractive, pleasant personality with a nice phone voice" and lures the prospective applicant with good benefits and nice working conditions.

Implicit in these examples is a masculine model for success--a model which holds that a high level of masculinity is crucial to occupational achievement. Historically, because of the exaggerated valuation of masculine qualities in the workplace, this model has been considered the only viable alternative for career-oriented members of both sexes (Hennig, 1971; Loring and Wells, 1972; Schein, 1973, 1975). As a result, many women believe they must sacrifice their femininity to compete in what, psychologically, is still a man's world (Horner, 1970; Tangri, 1972; Hinsdale, Cook, and Johnson, Note 2).

To be sure, there are many correlates of traditional femininity which the aspiring career woman must leave behind. For instance, high femininity has been related to low self confidence (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974), low aspirations (Epstein and Bronzaft, 1974), achievement anxiety (Strassberg,

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1973), fear of success (Horner, 1970), and a willingness to attribute failure to personal inadequacies (Deaux and Emswiller, 1974). These characteristics are in direct opposition to qualities like self confidence and high self esteem, which consistently have shown positive relationships to leadership (Stogdill, 1974). Thus, it has been theorized that to the extent that a woman's self-image incorporates the feminine sex role, she is unlikely to succeed as a member of the workforce (Korman, 1970; Schein, 1972).

In short, the interest of many young women in rejecting femininity in favor of masculinity may in some ways be well founded. However, this is not to say that the total rejection of the feminine sex role and the singleminded pursuit of masculine traits and values are either necessary or adaptive. Though much less is known about strict identification with the male sex role, it is thought to limit personal development at least as much as strict identification with the female sex role (Jourard, 1971; Sawyer, 1970). It has been shown, for example, that high masculinity may result in a predisposition to violence, high anxiety and neuroticism, and low self acceptance (Mussen, 1962; Toby, 1966). For both sexes, high sex identification has been related to lower overall intelligence, creativity, and spatial ability (Maccoby, 1966).

On a larger scale, a number of social and political scientists have questioned the validity of the masculine model as a fundamental cornerstone for our work institutions. The more conservative critics of this model have pointed out that our growing technological sophistication has changed the very nature of work itself, placing less emphasis on such conventionally masculine traits as aggressiveness and dominance, and more on skills that promote harmonious relationships and group cooperation--skills traditionally

regarded as feminine (Maccoby, 1977; Spence and Helmreich, 1978). More severe critics have held the idealization of masculinity responsible for many of the crises in our society. They have contended, for example, that excessive aggressiveness is responsible for war, that excessive independence has produced widespread alienation, and that excessive rationality has created a system which values technological achievement more highly than human welfare (Chisolm, 1974; Darley, 1976; Polk, 1974; Zellman, 1976). They further have called for the humanization of the workplace through the introduction of traditionally feminine qualities such as compassion, patience, and supportiveness--a tempering of the corporate head with a corporate heart. From this perspective, women enter the workforce not with a glass half empty, but a glass half full.

On a theoretical level, the solution to the problems engendered by the masculine model appears to lie, for both women and men, in psychological androgyny--a concept which holds that masculinity and femininity not only are compatible, but necessary to a fully developed personality. An accumulating body of evidence indicates that androgyny is indeed more adaptive than the polarized dimensions of sterectypic masculinity and femininity. For both sexes, it has been tied to sex role adaptibility, or the ability to engage in situationally effective behavior without regard for its masculine or feminine connotations (Bem, 1975), as well as to increased self esteem, academic honors, and creativity (Spence and Helmreich, 1978; Weitz, 1972).

But more than being a romantic, idealized solution to the individual or collective problems of the working community, androgyny may be good business. Certain preliminary findings suggest that a number of traditionally feminine behaviors are useful in the workplace. For example, "providing consideration," "intimacy," and "peer support" each have been positively related to worker satisfaction (Petty and Lee, 1975; Roussell,

1974; Durning and Mumford, Note 3). It further has been demonstrated that in tasks requiring cooperation for success, females tend to outperform males by using accommodative rather than exploitative strategies (Bond and Vinacke; 1961). More general studies show that certain qualities most often ascribed to women also characterize the successful manager, such as being intuitive, helpful, and aware of the feelings of others, and having finely honed interpersonal skills and humanitarian values (Schein, 1975; Spence and Helmreich, 1978).

These studies raise some intriguing possibilities for the valuation of femininity in the workplace. However, probably the most substantive findings are provided by Stogdill (1974), who in reviewing studies of leadership and management conducted since 1906 concludes that, "followers tend to be better satisfied under a leader skilled in human relations rather than under one skilled in the group task" (p. 419). He goes on to demonstrate that people-oriented behaviors, as opposed to work-oriented behaviors, are consistently related to group cohesiveness and follower satisfaction. This is especially true for behaviors showing concern for followers' welfare and comfort. Although Stogdill does not describe these behaviors as specifically feminine, they are consistent with those expressive, affective, and nurturant behaviors which, according to an abundance of data, are more strongly descriptive of women than men (e.g., Bem, 1974; Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, and Rosenkrantz, 1972; Jenkin and Vroegh, 1969; Spence, Helmreich and Stapp, 1974).

Given these findings, it is encouraging to note that both sexes aspire toward fairly uniform, androgynous ideals (Stricker, 1977). Our research suggests that these aspirations are expressed not only in general populations, but among working women and men as well (Hinsdale and Johnson, Note 1). Hypothetically, their realization depends on a mutual exchange

of feminine and masculine qualities and values between women and men.

However, there is evidence to suggest that to date this exchange has been far from mutual. Data on general populations indicate that while women are rapidly taking on roles at one time reserved exclusively for men, men are reluctant to add "women's work" to their responsibilities (Tavris, 1973; Poloma and Garland, 1971; Schein, 1973). For example, child care is still relegated to women when both spouses work, and the husband's career often is assigned greater importance (Good, Kirkland, and Grissom, Note 6). The net result for many women is "role overload" (Hall, 1972).

Within the workplace, a parallel trend is apparent. Although working women are increasingly acquiring the traits, motives and behaviors characteristic of successful men (Morrison and Sebald, 1974; Ruhe and Guerin, 1977; Hinsdale and Johnson, Note 1; Fitzpatrick and Cole, Note 4) we know of no studies to imply that working men are reciprocating.

One explanation for this trend may lie in the conspicuous absence of women in positions of power and authority--leaders who might serve as role models for younger generations of workers and who themselves have managed to retain some feminine characteristics (Hammond and Belote, 1974; Greenfield, 1972; Loring and Wells, 1972; Kahne, Note 5). A second, more likely explanation is that even though men and women may aspire to become androgynous in the best of all possible worlds, they perceive only masculinity as pragmatic and useful to them in their jobs and organizations--in the world known as real, the world of work.

For whatever reasons, it is evident that allegiance to the masculine model persists. And the acid test for whether or not androgyny is a suitable replacement for this model lies in the extent to which the workplace is able to accommodate, encourage, and reward traditionally feminine qualities--that is, the extent to which these qualities are adaptive for

individual workers of both sexes.

The purpose of this study was to determine if in fact the masculine model is the optimum normative framework for occupational achievement. In keeping with prior research, it was hypothesized that masculinity is more adaptive in the workforce than both femininity and androgyny in terms of predicted success, and adjustment, and attainment.

## Method

### Sample

Two groups of subjects were employed in the investigation. The first group included 63 Navy personnel detailers, of whom 60 were male. Since these detailers are directly engaged in the selection and assignment of Navy personnel, they were judged the population best qualified to assess the relative adaptiveness of different personality types in the Navy.

All of the personnel detailers (referred to as "the detailer sample") were enlisted personnel. Their paygrade ranged from E-1 to E-9, with E-7 as the mode. They had served in the Navy an average of 15.3 years. 100% had completed high school, 49% had some college, and 9.5% were college graduates.

The second, more diverse group of subjects ("the general sample") included 240 male and 209 female Navy enlisted persons ($n = 449$). Their paygrade ranged from E-1 to E-9, with E-5 as the mode, and their average time in service was 8.9 years. 83% had completed high school, 39% had some college, and 5% had earned a college degree. Together, they represented a wide range of technical, scientific, clerical, and labor job specialties. 243, or 54%, served in supervisory capacities.

### Instruments

Three hypothetical descriptions of masculine, feminine, and androgynous Navy enlisted recruits were employed in the study. Two versions of each description were developed, one portraying a male and the other a female.

Thus, a total of six personality profiles were devised to depict the masculine male, masculine female, feminine male, feminine female, androgynous male, and androgynous female.

The first four of these six instruments, describing the masculine and feminine personalities, consisted, respectively, of narrative composites of the 20 stereotypically masculine and 20 stereotypically feminine traits identified by Bem (1974), with two exceptions: "masculine" and "feminine" were eliminated to avoid biasing respondents' perceptions of the personalities. The last two instruments, portraying androgynous recruits, incorporated the 20 sex-typed traits on the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) identified in our earlier research as most strongly characteristic of the ideal Navy enlisted person (Hinsdale and Johnson, Note 1). According to Bem's (1974) findings, eleven of these traits are masculine and nine are feminine. All traits used in the profiles are shown in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

A sample personality profile--that for the masculine male-appears immediately below:

> Seaman George Johnson* has completed boot camp and is due for assignment. His superiors report that he is a strong and dominant personality and that he relates to others in a forceful and assertive manner. He further is aggressive, athletic, and competitive. Perhaps because of his strong ambitions, he acts as a leader.
>
> Seaman Johnson also is described as an individualistic, independent person who is both self reliant and self sufficient. When challenged, he is willing to take a stand and defend his own beliefs. He also is willing to take risks, and his analytical

approach to problems enables him to make decisions easily.

*Fictional

Each personality profile was preceded by seven questions requesting demographic information. Following the narrative profile were two questions asking respondents to rate, first, the degree of success the hypothetical recruit would experience in the Navy, and second, the degree of adjustment the recruit would make to Navy life. These items employed a 7-point scale ranging from "very low" (1) to "very high" (7). A third item asked respondents to predict the highest enlisted classification the recruit would attain in the Navy, ranging from E-1 through E-9.

The main body of each instrument concluded with a list of the individual traits contained in the corresponding profile. Each trait was accompanied by a 7-point scale asking respondents to rate the extent to which the trait would hinder, have no effect on, or help the recruit's career. On this scale 1 denoted "hinder a great deal," and 7, "help a great deal."

Both the detailer sample and the general sample (together referred to as "the combined samples") responded to the items described above. In addition, the general sample was asked to indicate, depending on their supervisory or nonsupervisory status, the extent to which they would like to supervise or work with the person described in the profile. This last item employed a 5-point scale on which 1 denoted "not at all" and 5 denoted "to a very great extent."

Procedure

Subjects were recruited by their individual commands according to their availability for participation in the study. Where there were sufficient numbers, subjects were convened in classroom settings and the profiles were administered collectively. Where there were insufficient

numbers or the subjects could not be spared from their work stations, the profiles were administered individually. This was the case for the entire sample of detailers.

Each subject was given one of the six instruments, which were randomly administered within sex and paygrade. The monitor first explained that the purpose of the session was to gather basic research data, requested subjects' cooperation, and guaranteed the confidentiality of responses. The monitor then asked the subjects to complete the demographic items and paraphrased and read aloud the following instructions:

> Below is a personality profile describing a Navy recruit. Please read the personality profile, and based on your experience in the Navy, answer the questions about this recruit which immediately follow the profile.

The monitor was present throughout the administration of the instruments to answer any questions. Although no time limit was specified, subjects normally completed the instruments in about ten minutes.

## Results

### Success, Adjustment, and Attainment

The data from the detailer sample were used to test the hypothesis that masculinity is more adaptive in the workforce than femininity and androgyny. However, in instances where the data from detailers showed relatively large mean differences which did not achieve significance, analyses were repeated on the data from the combined samples (n = 512) to corroborate or disconfirm findings from the smaller, highly specialized group of subjects (n = 63).

Prior to direct investigation of the study hypothesis, a two-way analysis of variance was conducted on the data from detailers to determine if there were overall differences among the masculine, feminine, and

androgynous personalities, or between male and female recruits. This analysis was performed once for each of three dependent variables: predicted success, adjustment, and classification attainment.

Significant differences were found across the three personality types--masculine, feminine, and androgynous--for all three dependent variables: $F$ (2, 57) = 12.17, $p < .01$ for success; $F$ (2, 57) = 5.06, $p < .01$ for adjustment; and $F$ (2,57) = 10.30, $p < .01$ for attainment. However, there were no significant differences on any of these variables between the profiles describing male and female recruits, nor was the interaction of the two factors significant.

To test the study hypothesis, $t$ tests were used to identify mean differences on the dependent variables first, between the masculine and feminine profiles, and second, between the masculine and androgynous profiles. In this manner, the masculine model was systematically compared to its alternatives: femininity and androgyny.

This analysis revealed that the masculine and feminine personalities differed on two of the dependent variables, including success, $t$ (41) = 3.74, $p < .01$, and attainment, $t$ (41) = 4.65, $p < .001$. As predicted, the mean scores in both cases favored the masculine profiles (see Table 2). However, when compared to the androgynous profiles, the masculine personalities scored slightly lower on two of the dependent variables: success and adjustment (see Table 2). Although these findings were not significant when only the data from detailers were considered, the data from the combined samples yielded similar mean differences which did achieve significance: $t$ (338) = 2.03, $p < .05$ for success, and $t$ (339) = 2.68, $p < .01$ for adjustment.

Insert Table 2 about here

Tukey's test for multiple comparisons (Ryan, 1959) was employed to determine the significance of the differences between the six individual profiles on the dependent variables. The results of this analysis are contained in Table 3. All differences are significant at the .05 level.

Insert Table 3 about here

As might be expected, the multiple comparisons in Table 3 show no significant differences between male and female recruits when personality type is held constant. However, when the sex of the recruits is held constant, a number of significant differences are evident among the three personality types. For male recruits, both masculinity and androgyny scored significantly higher than femininity on success and attainment. Similarly, for female recruits, both masculinity and androgyny were superior to femininity in terms of success, and masculinity was superior to femininity in terms of attainment. Finally, for female recruits only, androgyny scored more favorably than both masculinity and femininity on the dependent variable of adjustment.

Most Adaptive Traits

To identify the personality traits which most strongly contribute to career advancement, the mean scores for all traits, across profiles, were computed and rank ordered, using the data from detailers. Table 4 shows the 20 characteristics most likely to help career advancement. Thirteen of these traits are stereotypically masculine and seven are stereotypically feminine. Seventeen of them were among the 20 appearing in the androgynous personality profiles (see Table 1).

Insert Table 4 about here

Item-by-item $t$ tests were used to determine if any of the traits in the profiles were differentially adaptive for male and female recruits. The results showed that, among the nineteen feminine traits, "affectionate" and "soft-spoken" would help career advancement significantly more if the recruit was a female, $t$ (20) = 2.66, $p < .05$, and $t$ (20) = 2.21, $p < .05$. "Gullible" and "childlike" would hinder the male's career more than that of his female counterpart, $t$ (20) = 2.22, $p < .05$, and $t$ (20) = 2.47, $p < .05$. Among the masculine traits, "analytical" was found to help the career of the female recruit significantly more than that of the male, $t$ (19) = 2.40, $p < .05$. Thus, in spite of the general lack of differentiation between male and female recruits, more specific analyses indicate that sex has some effect on the adaptiveness of stereotypic personality traits.

Acceptance into the Workplace

The data from the general sample (n = 449) were used to investigate the degree to which masculine, feminine, and androgynous recruits would be accepted into the workplace by supervisors and peers. Analyses identical to those used on the detailer data were employed in this investigation. However, the two dependent variables were the extent to which supervisors would like to supervise each recruit and the extent to which nonsupervisors would like to work with each recruit.

The two-way analysis of variance revealed significant differences in both the extent to which supervisors prefer to supervise the three personality types, $F$ (2, 215) = 2.13, $p < .01$, and in the extent to which nonsupervisors prefer to work with the three personality types, $F$ (2, 163) = 7.15, $p < .01$.

A significant difference also was found in the extent to which nonsupervisors prefer working with males and females, $F$ (1, 158) = 3.90, $p < .05$, with males favored over females, $M$ = 3.94 vs. 3.25. No significant interactions were obtained.

The $t$ tests comparing masculinity separately to femininity and androgyny pinpointed the nature of the differences among the three personality types. The supervisory group was found to favor masculinity over femininity in their subordinates, $M$ = 3.77 vs. 3.45, $t$ (146) = 2.03, $p < .05$, but did not differentiate masculinity and androgyny. The nonsupervisory group, on the other hand, expressed a distinct preference for androgyny to masculinity in their co-workers, $M$ = 3.93 vs. 3.47, $t$ (110) = 2.45, $p < .05$, but did not distinguish between masculinity and femininity.

Tukey's test for multiple comparisons again was used on the data from the general sample to locate significant differences in the dependent variables among the six hypothetical personalities. The results are shown in Table 5. All differences are significant at the .05 level.

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Insert Table 5 about here

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As is apparent in Table 5, the multiple comparisons disclosed no significant differences among the six profiles in the data from the supervisory group, despite their general preference for masculinity over femininity. Nonsupervisors, however, indicated they would like to work with androgynous males and females to a significantly greater extent than feminine males and females, respectively. Although no sex of recruit effects are evident in Table 5 when personality type is held constant, all three female personalities received lower scores as co-workers than their male counterparts.

## Discussion

### Masculinity vs. Femininity and Androgyny

The results of this investigation lend considerable support to the first portion of the study hypothesis--that masculinity is more adaptive than femininity in the workplace. According to Navy detailers, the highly masculine individual is likely to be more successful than the highly feminine individual, and eventually will attain an enlisted classification more than two levels above the feminine personality (see Table 2).

Adding to these findings are the data from supervisors, who find masculinity more desirable than femininity in their subordinates. Apparently, where supervisors are concerned, the usefulness of masculinity in fulfilling work group obligations outweighs whatever benefits femininity may have in enhancing work group cohesiveness.

Together these findings indicate that, to the extent that detailers and supervisors influence career development, the sex-typed individual would be well advised to identify with the role of the "achieving male" rather than that of the "nurturant female" (O'Leary, 1974). In this sense, the workplace is still a man's world. Only the absence of a significant difference on the dependent variable of adjustment suggests that the feminine individual can find a niche in the workplace--albeit a low status niche.

However, the data comparing masculinity to androgyny shed a different light altogether on femininity. The second portion of the study hypothesis--that masculinity is more adaptive than androgyny--simply was not upheld by the data; in fact, some evidence points to androgyny as having a slight edge over masculinity. Although detailers and supervisors did not

differentiate between the androgynous and masculine profiles, the combined samples predicted significantly greater adjustment and success for the androgynous personality, and nonsupervisors displayed a decided preference for androgynous co-workers. Thus, while femininity by itself appears to be an obvious liability, combined with masculinity, it is an obvious asset.

These findings cast some suspicion on the widespread belief among working women that they must sacrifice their femininity to advance their careers (Tangri, 1972; Hinsdale, Cook, and Johnson, Note 2). Instead, the selective addition of certain feminine traits to the masculine model seems to create an androgynous gestalt which, according to the subjects in this study, is greater than the sum of its masculine and feminine parts.

This is especially evident at the work group level where, besides valuing the masculine characteristics associated with competence, nonsupervisors also appreciate the feminine characteristics associated with warmth and expressiveness (Broverman et al., 1972). In keeping with Stogdill's (1974) conclusions, then, a supportive interpersonal climate does seem to be of some consequence to nonsupervisors. In view of this, the emphasis supervisors place on masculinity vs. femininity may be somewhat misguided.

Further support for the adaptiveness of androgyny is provided in Table 4, listing the 20 traits which detailers identified as most likely to help career advancement. With only three exceptions, the composite "fast-tracker" depicted in this table duplicates the androgynous profiles. Thus, even though detailers did not rate the androgynous profiles per se more highly than the masculine profiles on success, adjustment, or attainment, they very nearly recreated this personality when asked to specify the traits contributing to career achievement. Certainly, this suggests

that detailers agree with the combined samples in characterizing the androgynous individual as the most outstanding performer in the workplace. It may well be that the small sample of detailers (63) prevented comparisons of the androgynous and masculine personalities from achieving significance.

Of particular interest in Table 4 is that a larger proportion of the traits are stereotypically masculine than feminine (13 vs. 7). This is congruent with the general superiority of masculinity to femininity perceived by detailers and supervisors. It also agrees with previous research demonstrating the greater expedience of masculinity in achieving individual and organizational goals (Schein, 1973, 1975; Hinsdale and Johnson, Note 1). In short, an increasing body of evidence points to a middle ground between masculinity and androgyny occupied by the most successful members of both sexes. It may be that the "masculine androgyn"--regardless of sex--is in reality the fastest-tracker in the working world.

Sex Differences

While the general analyses employed in the present study failed to yield differences in the extent to which masculinity, femininity, and androgyny are differentially adaptive for male and female recruits, finer analyses provided some data worthy of discussion.

The most striking finding in this regard was that nonsupervisors favored male over female co-workers, despite the nearly equal sex composition of the nonsupervisory sample (98 males, 108 females). This points to an unfortunate continuation of sexism at the lowest level in the organizational hierarchy, in work groups. Since this is the context in which most women conduct their daily business, one might expect discrimination at this level to affect them regularly.

One further might expect the preferential attitude toward males ultimately to have severe long-range repercussions for women. In fact, the majority of working women view their sex as a handicap to their careers (Hinsdale, Cook, and Johnson, Note 2; Fitzpatrick and Cole, Note 4). It follows that the conspicuous absence of sex differences on the variables of success, adjustment, and attainment may have been more a function of wishful thinking than of reality.

Additional sex differences in the data suggested that some pressure exists to discourage extreme deviation from traditional sex roles in both males and females. For males, this was evident in the greater extent to which four feminine traits would hinder career advancement, including affectionate, $\underline{M}$ = 3.82 vs. 4.91, soft-spoken, $\underline{M}$ = 3.64 vs. 4.73, gullible, $\underline{M}$ = 1.36 vs. 2.64, and childlike, $\underline{M}$ = 1.36 vs. 2.64. For females, a comparable trend was apparent in Table 5, where the masculine female, though ranking second as a subordinate, ranked fifth of the six profiles as a co-worker. From this it can be surmised that the masculine female receives competing messages from her superiors and peers; whereas supervisory approval is forthcoming for high masculinity, peer disapproval also may be a consequence. This may account for the finding that for female recruits only, androgyny was superior to masculinity on the dependent variable of adjustment (see Table 3). When tempered with femininity, masculinity appears to be much better tolerated in females.

As a whole, the sex differences in this study lend credence to the notion that some small stronghold of sexism persists in the world of work. In its more covert forms, this bias expresses itself in a tendency to devalue cross-sex characteristics in women and men; at its worst, it is

evident in the devaluation of women as co-workers. Thus, although this study validates androgyny as a viable model in the working world, some very real barriers may exist to discourage its cultivation.

## Conclusions and Implications

In demonstrating the adaptiveness of androgyny in the working world, this study opens new perspectives for the potential value of traditionally feminine characteristics to both working women and working men. Since no comparative data are available, it is impossible to determine if this willingness of the workforce to accommodate and reward feminine qualities is something new--a response to the many calls for the humanization of the workplace--or if it always has been present, and simply gone unnamed in terms of masculinity and femininity.

In any case, the conclusion that androgyny is at least as adaptive as the masculine model for success clears the way for individuals of both sexes to pursue freedom from strict sex roles in an environment which is intimately tied to their well-being--the workplace. The predicted positive consequences of androgyny in terms of real power, status, acceptance, and financial rewards make it more than a political or theoretical desirability; it becomes a worthwhile goal for individual women and men.

However, beyond this general conclusion, the data contain some subtleties which cloud the entire picture; androgyny may be more adaptive in theory than in practice. This seems especially true for women, who must in effect perform a balancing act to guarantee that their own best interests are served: to advance their careers, they must display a certain measure of masculinity, but to please their peers they must avoid appearing too masculine. Since the expression of masculine traits is

particularly important early in a woman's career (Hennig, 1971; Schein, 1975), succumbing to this peer pressure could very well limit a woman's career at its very beginning.

Women also may walk a tightrope where femininity is concerned: to achieve an androgynous mix of attributes, they must retain certain aspects of their femininity, but to avoid being labelled feminine--the least adaptive personality type--they cannot retain their femininity altogether. Thus, while it is neither necessary nor entirely adaptive for career-oriented women to sacrifice their femininity, a strong caveat must accompany their attempts to retain it: you can't have it all. What women can have is, as Schein (1972) contends, the best of both worlds.

Of course, the same constraints may be said to apply to males, who also seem to experience some pressure to avoid cross-sex traits and who, to maximize their success, may need to display certain traditionally feminine qualities. But there is one highly consequential difference in the implications of this study for males and females. Given the uncompromised superiority of masculinity to femininity evident in the data, any pressure to remain within the confines of sex-appropriate behavior is bound to be much more harmful to working women than working men--as is an inability to transcend a strict sex role identification.

Further research is warranted to determine if, despite the long-range adaptiveness of androgyny, it goes unappreciated in actual work situations. Though the sex differences in this study were minimal, taken together they point to the possibility that cross-sex behavior--and by implication, androgyny--is neither realistic nor adaptive on a day-to-day basis. Since whatever prejudice exists is likely to result in discriminatory behavior (Triandis and Davis, 1973; Weitz, 1972), even the small biases shown in

this study may exert a powerful influence against the expression of androgyny.

It also is possible that masculinity and femininity are adaptive at different stages in an individual's career. Hennig (1971) points out that for women who rise to the top of the corporate ranks, the conflict between femininity and managerial priorities surfaces only after many years of career building; in the interim, femininity simply is suppressed. Similarly, both Maccoby (1977) and Sheehy (1976) have noted that men do not take on the characteristics of "generativity" until they reach the peaks of their careers--when they become willing to support, sponsor, and counsel their proteges. Again, additional research is necessary to determine at which stages in the careers of women and men androgyny really works at work.

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Table 1

BSRI Traits Used in Personality Profiles

| Masculine | Feminine | Androgynous |
|---|---|---|
| Self reliant | Yielding | Loyal |
| Defends own beliefs | Cheerful | Has leadership abilities |
| Independent | Shy | Self reliant |
| Athletic | Affectionate | Defends own beliefs |
| Assertive | Flatterable | Ambitious |
| Strong personality | Loyal | Understanding |
| Forceful | Sympathetic | Self sufficient |
| Analytical | Sensitive to the needs of others | Cheerful |
| Has leadership abilities | Understanding | Sensitive to the needs of others |
| Willing to take risks | Compassionate | Makes decisions easily |
| Makes decisions easily | Eager to soothe hurt feelings | Willing to take a stand |
| Self sufficient | Soft spoken | Independent |
| Dominant | Warm | Competitive |
| Willing to take a stand | Tender | Compassionate |
| Aggressive | Gullible | Warm |
| Acts as a leader | Childlike | Gentle |
| Individualistic | Does not use harsh language | Loves children |
| Competitive | Loves children | Sympathetic |
| Ambitious | Gentle | Analytical |

Table 2

Predicted Success, Adjustment, and Attainment of Feminine, Masculine, and Androgynous Personalities

| Dependent Variable | Feminine Personality | Masculine Personality | Androgynous Personality |
|---|---|---|---|
| Success | 4.36 | 5.52 | 5.85 |
| Adjustment | 4.14 | 4.67 | 5.30 |
| Attainment | 5.23 | 7.29 | 6.90 |

Note--The variables "success" and "adjustment" employed a seven point scale ranging from very low (1) to very high (7). "Attainment" employed a nine point scale covering all the enlisted classifications, E-1--E-9.

Table 3

Predicted Success, Adjustment, and Attainment of

Six Hypothetical Recruits

| Success | M | Significant Differences | Adjustment | M | Significant Differences | Attainment | M | Significant Differences |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Androgynous male (AM) | 5.90 | > FF&FM | Androgynous female | 5.60 | > MF,FF&FM | Androgynous male | 7.60 | > FM&FF |
| Androgynous female (AF) | 5.80 | > FF&FM | Androgynous male | 5.00 | | Masculine male | 7.45 | > FM&FF |
| Masculine female (MF) | 5.60 | > FF&FM | Masculine male | 4.73 | | Masculine female | 7.10 | > FM&FF |
| Masculine male (MM) | 4.45 | > FM | Masculine female | 4.60 | | Androgynous female | 6.20 | |
| Feminine female (FF) | 4.64 | | Feminine female | 4.55 | | Feminine male | 5.27 | |
| Feminine male (FM) | 4.09 | | Feminine male | 3.73 | | Feminine female | 5.18 | |

Table 4

Traits Most Strongly Contributing to Career Advancement

| Trait | M | Sex Type |
|---|---|---|
| Has leadership abilities | 6.51 | M |
| Ambitious | 6.47 | M |
| Cheerful | 6.35 | F |
| Loyal | 6.27 | F |
| Competitive | 6.23 | M |
| Makes decisions easily | 6.07 | M |
| Acts as a leader | 6.05 | M |
| Analytical | 6.03 | M |
| Self-sufficient | 6.00 | M |
| Self-reliant | 5.91 | M |
| Understanding | 5.90 | F |
| Sensitive to needs of others | 5.78 | F |
| Strong personality | 5.41 | M |
| Compassionate | 5.33 | F |
| Aggressive | 5.14 | M |
| Willing to take a stand | 5.10 | M |
| Assertive | 5.09 | M |
| Sympathetic | 5.08 | F |
| Independent | 5.05 | M |
| Warm | 4.86 | F |

Table 5

Desirability of Six Hypothetical Recruits as Subordinates and Coworkers

| Preferred Subordinate Personality | M | Preferred Coworker Personality | M | Significant Differences |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Androgynous female (AF) | 4.03 | Androgynous male | 4.03 | > FM, MF&FF |
| Masculine female (MF) | 4.00 | Androgynous female | 3.79 | > FF |
| Androgynous male (AM) | 3.97 | Masculine male | 3.68 | > FF |
| Masculine male (MM) | 3.53 | Feminine male | 3.33 | |
| Feminine male (FM) | 3.46 | Masculine female | 3.30 | |
| Feminine female (FF) | 3.45 | Feminine female | 3.04 | |

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