Black women, sex-roles and psychological well being...

M. Jean Peacock
BLACK WOMEN, SEX-ROLES AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State College
San Bernardino

by
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May 1979

Approved by:

2/9/80
Date
BLACK WOMEN, SEX-ROLES AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
Psychology

by
M. Jean Peacock
May 1979
ABSTRACT

The study measured the extent to which psychological well-being accompanied the sex-role orientation of 96 randomly selected Black college women. Based on recent literature, it was predicted that the masculine sex-role would emerge as the role most conducive to adjustment and well-being. A questionnaire was compiled which consisted of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory, Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Measure, and Taylor’s Manifest Anxiety Scale. The results indicated that there were no significant differences between androgynous, masculine and feminine women on the measure of self-esteem. However, a significant difference was obtained between feminine and androgynous women and between feminine and masculine women on the measure of manifest anxiety. The implications of the results were discussed relative to the Black matriarchal theory and recent literature regarding the sex-roles of Black women.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

An attempt to identify all those persons who were instrumental in the successful completion of this masters thesis would be too lengthy. However, I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without a special thank you to several significant individuals.

My advisor and committee chairperson, John Hatton, exemplified the epitome of patience, understanding, and encouragement. In addition, I give my complete appreciation to my advisors Dianne Irwin, Walter S. Hawkins and Lynda Warren for the extra hours they spent assisting me in the completion of my project, and to Anna Maddox who helped in obtaining subjects and administering questionnaires.

Last, but not least, thanks to my family, Reverend J. W. and Lillian Spellmon, Taft, Mary, Martha, Paul, Christian and Regina. Without your support and inspiration this would not have been possible.
BLACK WOMEN, SEX ROLES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

As changes occur in the roles of women in contemporary society, social scientists have become increasingly interested in the effects that sex-role standards have on behavior. The existence of sex-role stereotypes that reinforce sex-determined role standards (Ellis & Bentler, 1973) has been documented in the literature (Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman & Broverman, 1968; Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz & Vogel, 1970; McKee & Sherriffs, 1957). In addition, a number of personality variables (Bem, 1975; Spence, Helreich & Stapp, 1975) and demographic variables (Scanzoni, 1975) for various sex-role standards have been studied. Researchers have indicated that strict adherence to traditional sex-roles by individuals may be maladaptive (Horner, 1968; McCoby, 1966; Bem, 1974, 1975; Volgy, 1976), and the degree to which an individual internalizes a sex role stereotype seems to affect self-esteem (Spence, Helreich & Stapp, 1976), and emotional adjustment (Bem, 1976). The traditional role for which most women have been reinforced in the past is now viewed by many mental health professionals as being deficient in terms of standards for adult behavior (Broverman, et al. 1970). Other researchers have advocated the concept of androgyny as the ideal model for healthy sex-role behavior (Bem, 1974, 1975; Block, 1973; Kaplan, 1974). The androgynous individual is one who has a wide range of masculine
and feminine characteristics from which to draw in order to deal with problems. These individuals are supposedly more adaptable and/or flexible than the highly sex-typed person whose masculinity or femininity would limit his/her behavior in some situations. Jones, Chernovetz and Hansson (1978) have, on the other hand, found that flexibility and adjustment are associated more with masculinity rather than androgyne for both males and females.

The bulk of the research relating to women and sex-roles has used white college women as subjects. The paucity of literature on Black women suggests that they have been largely ignored in the study of women and sex-roles. Historically, Black women have been primarily associated with the masculine sex-role exemplified as the Black matriarch. After Moynihan (1965) lent credence to the matriarchal theory, Black women were viewed as being more dominant, domineering and powerful than than the Black male (Rainwater, 1966, 1970). However, Black researchers have questioned the validity of the Black matriarch concept while others have repudiated the concept as a myth (Staples, 1972; Nobles, 1975; Lewis, 1975; TenHouten, 1970).

In a study of lower and middle class Black and White complete families, TenHouten found that the Moynihan hypotheses did not hold. Lower class Black men were not powerless in either their conjugal or parental roles, and while Black women appeared to be more powerful in their parental roles, there were no indications
that the Black male was made ineffective as a result.

Gump (1975) sought to explore the validity of the stereotypical view of Black women as matriarchal. The subjects were 77 Black women attending Howard University and Morgan State College and 40 White women attending the University of Maryland. The revised Fand Inventory (1955) was used to measure two dimensions along which sex-roles may vary. Gump stated that the traditional dimension was composed of three factors which focus on the needs of husband and children as being primary. The non-traditional dimension consisted of four factors which reflected the achievement ethic. Gump added that women who endorsed the latter view would agree that a sense of worth is best derived from pursuing one's own interests and abilities. Gump concluded that Black women were more wife and mother oriented, more submissive and home centered than White women. It is important to note, however, that there were no significant mean differences between the Black women's endorsement of the two orientations.

Warren and Senour (1975) studied the relationship between ethnicity, masculinity and femininity. The sex-role orientation of White, Chicano and Black students at a California community college were examined. Utilizing the Bem Sex-role Inventory (1974), Warren and Senour found little support for ethnic sex-role identification. Black women were not significantly more masculine or feminine than White or Chicano women. However, Warren and Senour did find that
a higher percentage of Black than White or Chicano women were androgynous according to Bem's scoring criteria.

Taken together, the findings of Gump, and Warren & Senour suggest that Black women are not confined to one particular sex-role orientation as previous literature would indicate. It would appear that the roles of Black women have been changing and becoming more diversified. The next logical extension of the literature would be to determine the extent to which emotional adjustment or psychological well-being accompanies a particular sex-role orientation.

Psychological Well-Being and the Female Tradition Role

Psychological well-being has been defined in various ways in the mental health literature. Bradburn (1969) concluded that psychological well-being may be conceptualized as a person's position on two independent dimensions, one of positive affect and the other of negative affect. Thus, the degree to which an individual is high in psychological well-being is contingent upon the extent to which he/she has positive over negative affect.

Self-esteem and manifest anxiety have been consistently used as indices of psychological well-being (Rosenberg, 1965; Wylie, 1961; Coopersmith, 1967). Wylie reported that individuals who seek help for relief of psychological distress frequently suffer from feelings of unworthiness. They see themselves as helpless and unable to escape stressful events that provoke anxiety. Rosenberg (1965) found that persons with low self-esteem, a negative
evaluation of ones competencies, abilities and worth, reported more psychosomatic symptoms and were more likely to manifest physiological indicators of anxiety. Similarly, Coopersmith's findings (1967) support the Wylie and Rosenberg hypotheses. Coopersmith asked mothers to rate the extent to which their children experienced frequent emotional difficulties. The mother's conceptions of emotional difficulties were ascertained by having them respond to a 16 item inventory of psychosomatic symptoms. It was found that 60% of the low self-esteem group experienced frequent or serious problems as determined by their mothers' responses. The low self-esteem subjects were more anxious, more destructive and more prone to psychosomatic symptoms than the medium or high self-esteem groups.

Self-esteem and anxiety have also been significantly correlated with the female traditional role. Women who adhere to the traditional sex-role most often reflect characteristics which are considered feminine by society, such as, nurturance, submissiveness, and dependency (Rand, 1968). Furthermore, feminine sex-typed women tend to engage in behaviors that will not embarass or get them in trouble (Bem, 1975), and have been socialized to believe that the role of housewife is more important (Horton & Hunt, 1972). On the other hand, these same women may also admit that their behavioral characteristics are not always representative of the persons they would like to become (Deutch & Gilbert, 1976). Cosentino and
Heilbrun considered the possibility that females who are made anxious by their own aggressive impulses or aggression from without might not necessarily be anxious persons in general. College males and females were administered the 80 item Aggression Anxiety Questionnaire developed by Sears, the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale (1953) and the Gough Adjective Checklist (Gough & Heilbrun, 1960). High femininity-low femininity were defined according to individuals scores on the Male-Female (MF) scale empirically derived from Gough’s Adjective Checklist. It was determined that the females who identified with feminine or traditional role were significantly more manifestly anxious and more apt to respond with greater anxiety to aggression cues.

Supporting data were reported by Gall (1969), who used an MF scale drawn from the Omnibus Personality Inventory in addition to the shortened form of the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale (Bendig, 1956). Males and females from the University of California, Berkeley were administered the questionnaires as part of a freshman orientation program. Gall found that females and feminine persons of both sexes were more likely to admit to a higher level of anxiety than their less feminine peers.

There is evidence that the traditional woman has internalized a negative valuation of her role. McKee and Sherriffs (1959) asked 100 women and 100 men to respond to Sarbin’s Adjective Check List in terms of the following categories: 1) adjectives which
described one as he/she would ideally like to be, 2) adjectives which described one as he/she actually was, 3) adjectives which described the ideal person of the opposite sex, 4) adjectives which described the beliefs of persons of the opposite sex. A significant number of women described the female stereotype in terms of the person they thought men would like them to be, and assigned a high percentage of unfavorable adjectives to that role. At the same time, the results implied that individual esteem and expressions of worth were related to the negative valuation of the role as exemplified by self-descriptions closely approximating the devalued stereotype.

Similar results were obtained by Rosenkrantz et al. (1968) who reported a significant number of sex-typed women responding in a manner which indicated negative valuation of individual worth and self-esteem. These findings were substantiated by Spence, Helreich and Stapp (1975) who found that women who were traditionally oriented (low masculine-high feminine) had a mean self-esteem score significantly lower than women who were categorized as being masculine oriented (high masculine-low feminine) or androgynous (high masculine-high feminine).

Androgyny and Psychological Well-Being

As previously discussed in the Introduction, the concept of androgyny in contemporary research has added a new dimension to
sex-role behavior. Sandra Bem (1974; 1975; Bem & Lenney, 1976; Bem, Martyna & Watson, 1976) has been the primary researcher in this area and her major findings can be summarized as follows.

1. Women who are androgynous in orientation are more independent and less conforming than feminine oriented women.

2. Androgynous women are more capable of performing cross sex-typed behaviors with little reluctance or discomfort as compared to feminine oriented women.

3. Androgynous women have high levels of masculine independence and feminine nurturance when the situation seems to call for it.

Several researchers have sought to determine to what extent androgyns are better adjusted. Spence et al. (1975) developed an index of four possible male and female valued role categories: low masculine-low feminine; low masculine-high feminine (traditional role); low feminine-high masculine (masculine role); high feminine-high masculine (androgyny). It was found that subjects who were classified as androgynous were highest in self-esteem followed by those who were high masculine-low feminine.

Supporting data were reported by Heilbrun (1976) who studied the aforementioned role categories as they related to psychological adjustment. Adjustment-maladjustment were determined by two criteria: 1) the scores obtained on a Role Consistency Measure (Block, 1961), and 2) the frequency of an individual student's utilization
of the psychological center. Heilbrun concluded that the androgynous person was better adjusted than his/her sex-type peers.

These studies suggest that psychological androgyny is more conductive to well-being and adjustment when compared to other sex-role orientations. However, a recent study by Jones, Chernovetz, and Hansson (1979) provides data in conflict with this conclusion. Jones, et al. tested 16 hypotheses across five areas of psychological functioning. Eight separate samples were composed of 1,404 general psychology students. Using the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (1974), the investigators classified the subjects as masculine males (MM), androgynous males (AM), feminine males (FM), masculine females (MF), androgynous females (AF), and feminine females (FF). In no case were androgynous males found to be significantly more flexible, adaptive or competent in comparison to masculine males. Masculine females were found to be significantly more extraverted in comparison to androgynous females; however, there were little to no significant differences between these two groups on all other measures. The authors concluded that the important issue in sex-role identification becomes not whether one has internalized traits appropriate to one's gender, but the extent to which one has assimilated masculine tendencies which are highly valued in contemporary society. Bem (1975) also found that the masculine woman functioned as effectively as the androgynous women, but no research has yet found feminine sex-typed women more
adaptive than either masculine or androgynous women.

In summary, the role for which many women have been reinforced is not presently the role most conducive to healthy psychological functioning. Bem (1975) advocated an absence of gender identification for fully functioning individuals, and it appears that the concept of androgyny may provide an option for men and women who seek a more individualistic adaptive mode of sex-role behavior. One study, however, has failed to provide complete support for this view and instead has indicated that the masculine role is more rewarding in a society where masculine traits are highly valued. Current findings and theorizing are based almost exclusively on white college students. Little is known about the extent to which Bem's model and/or empirical findings can be extended to Black women. Thus, the purpose of this research is to study the sex-role orientation of Black women and to determine the extent to which psychological well-being accompanies a particular sex-role orientation.

Because, as previously indicated, the stereotypical sex-role most often associated with Black women has been that of the masculine sex-role, it can be assumed that Black women are expected by the broader culture to exhibit traits consistent with the masculine sex-role orientation. Since the college environment exemplifies a situation that expects and rewards masculine traits, it is predicted that Black women high in those traits will be more
confident and happy due to a history of differential rewards within the college setting. The specific research hypotheses are:

1. Masculine sex-typed college women (high masculine-low feminine) will score significantly higher on self-esteem than feminine sex-typed and androgynous Black college women.

2. Masculine sex-typed Black college women (high masculine-low feminine) will score significantly higher on manifest anxiety than feminine sex-typed and androgynous Black college women.
METHOD

Subjects

The subject pool consisted of 168 Black females attending four colleges in the San Bernardino area. Subjects were randomly selected by approaching Black females, selected by the use of the table of random numbers, as they stood in registration lines at their college campuses. Without exception, each individual asked agreed to participate in the study. Data from 42 of these subjects, who responded in the low feminine-low masculine category, were not used. In addition, data from 13 subjects were discarded due to incomplete answers. In order to facilitate statistical analysis by obtaining an equal number of subjects in each group, a table of random numbers (Kirk, 1978) was used to discard data from 16 subjects endorsing the androgynous sex-role category and data from one subject endorsing the masculine sex-role category. The mean age of the 96 subjects was 22.5. A summary of descriptive characteristics appears in Table 1.

Materials

A questionnaire was compiled that consisted of the following scales:

Bem Sex-Role Inventory. The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (Bem, 1974) is a self-report scale designed to measure the extent to
which an individual identifies with masculine and/or feminine traits. The scale consists of characteristics that are to be rated on a seven point scale. Bem measured masculinity and femininity as two separate dimensions, and she defined androgyny as the balance between these. The androgyny construct was obtained by determining the "t" ratio for the difference between the feminine and masculine scores. Spence, Helmreich & Stapp (1974) observed that Bem's scoring procedure classified those individuals who scored low on the masculine scale and low on the feminine scale or high on both scales as androgynous. Spence et al. defined androgyny as a high degree of masculine traits and a high degree of feminine traits. Using a median split, Spence et al. developed four sex-role identify groups: femininity (low-masculinity-high femininity), masculinity (high masculinity-low femininity), androgyny (high masculinity-high femininity), and undifferentiated (low-masculinity-low femininity), and undifferentiated (low-masculinity-low femininity). Loxley (1976) compared these two scoring methods and found that the procedure outlined by Spence et al. was more adequate in determining a definition of androgyny than the Bem scale. Bem (1977) has concurred with Spence et al. that androgynous persons should be those who score high on both scales. For the purposes of this paper the Spence method was adopted.

Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale. Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (1965) is a 10 item Guttman scale which measures overall self-regard.
Table 1
Demographic Data Reported by Percentage of Subjects

Endorsing Sex-Role Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Androgyny n=32</th>
<th>Masculine n=32</th>
<th>Feminine n=32</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-22</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-28</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-34</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40+</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>68.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced/separated</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother Employment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/para-professional</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceased</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/disabled</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Subjects rate the 10 items on a Likert scale of 1-5. Self-esteem as measured by the scale measures overall self-regard. High self-esteem as reflected by this scale indicates that the individual feels she is a person of worth. She respects herself and does not consider herself better or worse than others. Construct validity is provided by Wylie (1974).

**Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale.** The short-form Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale is composed of 20 items (Bendig, 1956) constructed by selecting those items from the full scale that were most consistently valid in predicting clinical criteria of manifest anxiety. Taylor (1953) devised the Manifest Anxiety Scale (MAS) to measure levels of general anxiety. The correlation between the shortened scale and full scale is reported by Gall (1969) to be .93. Biological correlates of anxiety are muscle tension and an increased release of adrenalin (McConnell, 1974). Individuals who are manifestly anxious often report hand trembling, sweating, nervousness, heart pounding, and psychosomatic symptoms.

**Procedure**

The questionnaire was administered individually to subjects at their respective college campuses. Each subject was told that the experimenter was a graduate student conducting a study on women. Each was asked if she was willing to participate as a respondent. The subjects were instructed to read the directions for each questionnaire with the examiner as the test procedure was
explained. They were told that the sex-roles inventory consisted of characteristics that people could use to describe themselves. They were asked to respond to each word as it related to them, choosing response choices from the seven point scale. In most cases, it was necessary to spend additional time explaining the procedure for the sex-roles inventory, while each subject experienced little difficulty understanding the directions for the self-esteem or manifest anxiety scales. In addition to the three scales, each subject was asked to provide the following demographic information: age, ethnic group, marital status, class standing, mother's occupation. Each questionnaire required approximately 15 minutes to complete.

**Scoring**

Bem's Sex-Role Inventory was scored according to the procedure outlined by Spence et al. (1975). The following four categories were generated based on median scores:

1. high masculine-high feminine
2. low masculine-high feminine
3. high masculine-low feminine
4. low masculine-low feminine

The scores corresponding to those categories, with the exception of category four which was not used in this study, are presented in Table 2.

The Self-Esteem scale was scored according to the procedure
Table 2
Delineation of Sex-Role Categories by Median
Masculine and Feminine Scores Obtained on the
Bem Sex-Role Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex-Role</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Androgyny</td>
<td>M &gt; 101.0</td>
<td>F &gt; 104.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>M &gt; 101.0</td>
<td>F &lt; 103.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femininity</td>
<td>M &lt; 100.0</td>
<td>F &gt; 104.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
as outlined by Rosenberg (1965). For this study, the scale scores were computed so that scores approximating 0 indicated low self-esteem.

The Manifest Anxiety Scale was scored according to Bendig's scoring procedure (1956). The scale was designed so that scores approximating 20 were representative of manifest anxiety, and scores nearing 0 were indicative of little to no manifest anxiety. Three statements on this scale were inadvertently excluded on 75 questionnaires. Fifty complete questionnaires and 50 incomplete questionnaires were randomly selected using a table of random numbers (Kirk, 1978). A comparative analysis yielded results that proved no significant difference between the manifest anxiety scores on the two sets of questionnaires (p > .025).
RESULTS

The data were analyzed by computing two one-way analyses of variance (Kirk, 1968) on self-esteem and anxiety. Contrary to prediction, Table 3 shows no significant difference between means of self-esteem scores obtained by feminine, masculine, and androgynous women, $F(2, 93) = 1.18, p > .05.$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.075</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/A</td>
<td>104.09</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1.764</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most subjects in all three categories responded in the direction of "high-esteem," score five or six, as indicated by the measures of central tendencies in Table 4. As is shown, score distributions for the three groups are markedly skewed in the negative direction, with the feminine group deviating more than the androgynous or masculine groups from a normal distribution. A high
percentage of subjects in all three categories (71.8%, 68.7%, 65.6% respectively), obtained scores from 5-6.

Table 4
Summary of Descriptive Statistics by Sex-Role for Self-Esteem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex-role</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Androgyny</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>-.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>-.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femininity</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 illustrates the analysis of variance for the manifest anxiety scores. Results indicated a significant main effect for sex-role category, \( F(2, 93) = 6.20, p < .05 \).

Table 5
Analysis of Variance Summary Table for Manifest Anxiety Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>220.15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>110.075</td>
<td>6.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/A</td>
<td>1,650.84</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>17.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows the distribution of manifest anxiety scores obtained by each group. The adorgyn and masculine groups are slightly
Table 6
Summary of Descriptive Statistics by Sex-Role for Manifest Anxiety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex-role</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Androgyny</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>+.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>2, 3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>+.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>9.81</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
skewed in a positive direction, while the feminine group approximates a normal distribution.

The Sheffe test for multiple comparisons (Kirk, 1968) was applied to the data. The results are given in Table 7. This test indicated a significant difference between the feminine and androgynous groups and between the feminine and masculine groups with feminine sex-typed subjects reporting significantly more manifest anxiety than masculine sex-typed and androgynous subjects.

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Table 7
Sheffe Multiple Comparison Test for Manifest Anxiety Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$X_1$</th>
<th>$X_2$</th>
<th>$X_3$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$X_1$</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>3.06*</td>
<td>3.34*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$X_2$</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$X_3$</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*CR$ _s$ .05, 2, 93 = 2.57

$X_1$ = femininity manifest anxiety score
$X_2$ = androgyny manifest anxiety score
$X_3$ = masculinity manifest anxiety score
To summarize, there was no significant difference between self-esteem scores for Black women endorsing the feminine, androgyny, or masculine sex-role. On the measure of manifest anxiety, however, Black women who comprised the feminine group scored significantly higher than those women who comprised the masculine and androgyny groups. However, there was no significant score difference between the masculine and androgyny groups.
DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of Jones, Chernovetz and Hansson (1978), it was predicted that Black college women who endorsed the masculine sex-role orientation would obtain higher self-esteem scores and lower manifest anxiety scores than those women who endorsed either the feminine or androgynous sex-role orientation. The college environment exemplifies a situation that rewards so called masculine traits such as strength, assertiveness and independence. Likewise, individuals high in these traits would be expected to feel more happy and confident due to a history of differential rewards within such an environment.

The manifest anxiety mean scores across all sex-role groups were in the predicted direction, however, statistically significant findings were obtained only between 1) the masculine and feminine groups and 2) the androgyny and feminine groups. The results indicate that feminine sex-typed Black women are more manifestly anxious than their masculine or androgynous peers. This finding is consistent with research on feminine sex-typed white women who also admit to higher levels of anxiety when compared to less feminine peers (Cosentino & Heilburn, 1964; Gall, 1969). Closer examination of the findings revealed that the lack of significance between the androgynous and masculine group in this study was consistent with conclusions of Bem (1975) regarding androgynous
individuals and, to a lesser extent, with conclusions of Jones et al. (1978). As previously stated, one could expect the masculine sex-typed woman to be more effective in an environment where masculine behaviors are required. On the other hand, Bem argued that androgynous persons would function just as effectively as the masculine or the feminine sex-typed person in those situations where the required behaviors were consistent with the characteristics of the sex-typed individual. The recent findings suggest that masculine and androgynous women cannot be differentiated on the basis of manifest anxiety, a finding which is congruent with the bulk of recent literature which has found masculine and androgynous women to be similar on a variety of indices.

There were no significant differences among groups on the measure of self-esteem. A majority of the subjects in all three categories scored in the direction of high-esteem. This finding is probably attributable to the fact that the Rosenberg scale consists of 10 items and the scores can range only from 6 to 0. Due to the limited number of items and the restricted score range, the scale is prone to a ceiling effect. In addition, the scale is worded in such a manner that leaves little doubt as to what the scale attempts to measure. It is possible, therefore, that many of the subjects responded in a manner which they perceived to be socially desirable. The ability of the subjects to discern the socially desirable responses is of interest in and of itself,
Additionally, the fact of being in college and approaching self-established goals could be a source of pride and esteem. For years college was not an option for most Blacks. With affirmative action, financial assistance and special services programs providing ways for minorities to enter and stay in college, many Black women and men have expanded their aspirations of who and what they desire to become.

Black Women and Sex-Roles

Historically, social scientists have referred to the Black matriarch as the concept which best typified the sex-role orientation of Black women. The matriarchal theory identified the female as the dominant figure within the family (Moynihan, 1965). In response to that notion, other researchers have suggested that the matriarchal theory was a myth (Staples, 1972; Nobles, 1975; Lewis, 1975; TenHouten, 1970) and that the Black female's strength and independence had been misinterpreted to mean dominance over the Black male (Staples, 1973). TenHouten's study (1970) showed that this was not the case and that Black men were not necessarily rendered powerless by the female's strength. Staples (1973) discussed the conditions in America which led to the emergence of the stereotypical Black female personality. For example, underemployment and unemployment of Black males had often caused the females to assume the role of provider as well as mother. The role of provider often necessitated the inculcation of traits which
enhanced the probability of success in a white work world. This view is consistent with the conclusions of Jones, et al. (1978) who reasoned that individuals high in assertiveness, strength, and masculinity would be successful in a society which valued those traits. Staples concluded that Black women, due to a changing environment, have actually practiced interchanging roles for many years.

It would appear that Black women are not as homogeneous in terms of sex-roles as the matriarchal theory suggests. The percentages of subjects endorsing the androgynous, masculine and feminine sex-roles were 42, 29, and 28, respectively. In a study previously cited, Warren and Senour (1975) found little support for ethnic sex-role stereotypes, and although Gump (1975) concluded that Black women were more traditionally oriented than White women, she found no significant difference between Black women's endorsement of the traditional role and their endorsement of the non-traditional role.

An important implication of Staples' (1973) hypotheses is that the most salient feature for Black women in terms of sex-roles is the flexible frame of reference which appears to have evolved in order to facilitate change. It is interesting to note that flexibility and adaptability constitute the central theme of the androgynous concept. As previously stated, 42% of the 113 original subjects in this study were classified as androgynous.
This finding is consistent with results reported by Warren and Senour who found that 48% of the Black females in their study were androgynous. Based on normative data (Bem, 1975), the expected number of androgynous subjects would have been approximately 33%. It appears plausible that a high percentage of Black women are androgynous in their sex-role orientation.

The data indicates that sex-typed Black women experience some changes in their sex-role orientations during their college years. Another possible interpretation of the data might be that sex-typed women eventually drop out of school. In the present study, 62% of the women in the feminine category were freshmen. A pattern emerged in which the number of subjects in the feminine category declined with each class level until there were only 3.1% feminine subjects who were seniors. It would have been interesting to note how many graduate students were feminine in orientation, but the number of subjects in this category was too small to make a definitive statement.

While demographic data were not subjected to statistical analyses, several patterns emerged which are noteworthy. Women who were classified as feminine were between the ages of 17 and 22. Most were single and stated that their mothers either did not work or were housewives. Compared to the masculine and androgynous women, fewer of their mothers were professional or para-professionals. Furthermore, the masculine group had the
lowest percentage of women who reported that they were married, and also the highest percentage of women who reported that their mothers were professionals or para-professionals.

There are obvious limitations to this study. The number of subjects endorsing each sex-role category is small and not representative of the majority of Black women in America. Future researchers should explore sex-role orientations of Black women who have not attended college and particularly those women who are housewives. The possibility of a developmental aspect to androgy- ny should also be explored. In addition, continuing research effort is needed to consider the possibility of differential sources of esteem for Black women.
APPENDIX

The following is a study which is being conducted by Jean Peacock, a graduate student in Psychology at Cal-State College, San Bernardino. The Questionnaire was designed to provide information regarding college women.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the following items. Please do not sign your name.

Ethnic Group_________ Marital Status_________ Age_______

Class Standing: Freshman___ Sophomore___ Junior___ Senior___
Graduate___

Are you a parent? Yes___ No___ Number of children_______

Father's occupation_________________________________

Mother's occupation_________________________________

RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS AS THEY APPLY TO YOU.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
2. At times I think I am no good at all.
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

30
1
2
3
strongly agree
agree
disagree
strongly disagree

6. I certainly feel useless at times.
   1 2 3 4

7. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
   1 2 3 4

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
   1 2 3 4

9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
   1 2 3 4

10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
    1 2 3 4

On the following page, you will be shown a large number of personality characteristics. We would like you to use those characteristics in order to describe yourself. That is, we would like you to indicate, on a scale from 1 to 7, how true of you these various characteristics are. Please do not leave any characteristic unmarked.

Example: sly

Mark a 1 if it is never or almost never true that you are sly
Mark a 2 if it is usually not true that you are sly,
Mark a 3 if it is sometimes but infrequently true that you are sly,
Mark a 4 if it is occasionally true that you are sly.
Mark a 5 if it is often true that you are sly.
Mark a 6 if it is usually true that you are sly.
Mark a 7 if it is always or almost always true that you are sly,

Thus, if you feel it is sometimes but infrequently true that you are "sly", never or almost never true that you are "malicious", always or almost always true that you are "irresponsible", and often true that you are "carefree", then you would rate these characteristics as follows;

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sly</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malicious</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irresponsible</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carefree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DESCRIBE YOURSELF

1 if it is never or almost never true
2 if it is usually not true
3 if it is sometimes but infrequently true
4 if it is occasionally true
5 if it is often true
6 if it is usually true
7 if it is always or almost always true

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self reliant</th>
<th>Reliable</th>
<th>Warm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yelling</td>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Solemn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>Sympathetic</td>
<td>Willing to take a stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defends own belief</td>
<td>Jealous</td>
<td>Tender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheerful</td>
<td>Has Leadership abilities</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moody</td>
<td>Sensitive to the needs of others</td>
<td>Aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Truthful</td>
<td>Gullible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shy</td>
<td>Willing to take risks</td>
<td>Inefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientious</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Acts as a leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic</td>
<td>Secretive</td>
<td>Childlike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affectionate</td>
<td>Makes decisions easily</td>
<td>Adaptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatrical</td>
<td>Compassionate</td>
<td>Individualistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td>Sincere</td>
<td>Does not use harsh language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flatterable</td>
<td>Self-sufficient</td>
<td>Unsystematic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Eager to soothe hurt feelings</td>
<td>Competitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong personality</td>
<td>Conceived</td>
<td>Loves children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tactful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpredictable</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ambitious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forceful</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gentle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conventional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soft spoken</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Likable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS EITHER TRUE OR FALSE.
1. I am often sick to my stomach.
2. I am about as nervous as other people.
3. I work under a great deal of strain.
4. I blush as often as others.
5. I have diarrhea ("the runs") once a month or more.
6. I worry quite a bit over possible troubles.
7. When embarrassed, I often break out in a sweat which is very annoying.
8. I do not often notice my heart pounding and I am seldom short of breath.
9. Often my bowels don't move for several days at a time.
10. At times I lose sleep over worry.
11. My sleep is restless and disturbed.
12. I often dream about things I don't like to tell other people.
13. My feelings are hurt easier than most people.
14. I often find myself worrying about something.
15. I wish I could be as happy as others.
16. I feel anxious about something or someone almost all of the time.
17. At times I am so restless that I cannot sit in a chair for very long.
18. I have often felt that I faced so many difficulties I could not overcome them.
19. At times I have been worried beyond reason about something that really did not matter.
20. I do not have as many fears as my friends.
21. I am more self-conscious than most people.
22. I am the kind of person who takes things hard.
23. I am a very nervous person.
24. Life is often a strain for me.

25. I am not at all confident of myself.

26. At times I feel that I am going to crack up.

27. I don't like to face a difficulty or make an important decision.

28. I am confident of myself.

Thank you for your time.
REFERENCES


Heilbrun, A. B. Conformity to masculinity-femininity stereotypes and ego identity in adolescents. Psychological Reports, 1964, 14, 351-357.


