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Perceptions of the communications competencies of male and female managers.

Michelle Chapman

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**PERCEPTIONS OF THE
COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES
OF MALE AND FEMALE MANAGERS**

A Thesis

**Presented to the
Department of Communication
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
University of Nebraska at Omaha**

by

Michelle Chapman

November, 1991

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine if males and females differ in their perceptions of the communication competencies of women and men managers.

A total of 101 employees from a midwestern, Fortune 500 company participated in this study through completion of a questionnaire. 54 of the respondents were female and 47 were male.

Two questionnaires were used: one pertaining to women managers, and one pertaining to men managers. Each of the questionnaires had both male and female respondents.

A t-test was run to detect any significant differences. Results of the study showed several significant differences. On three of the 30 questions on the women manager survey there were significant differences. There were even a greater number of significant differences found on the male manager survey, totalling nine.

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INTRODUCTION

“What is the very first thing that you notice when you meet someone for the first time?” That question often evokes answers such as “his eyes” or “her smile”. Most likely, the only true answer, of course, is “gender”. Most people find it essential to determine immediately the gender of another person with whom they interact. (Nielsen, 1978)

A friend calls and says “Susie had her baby.” Your first question inevitably is “What did she have?” Your friend understands, of course, that your question is “Is it a boy or a girl?” For almost everything that happens to that baby from that point on will be affected by the answer to that question - the name it is given; the kinds of toys it will play with; the way it is handled, dressed, played with, and talked to; the nature of its relationships with other people; the way it will speak and be spoken to; the way it will be educated, evaluated, and entertained - all these and more will depend on whether it is male or female. And these differences will begin at the moment of birth. (Harriman, 1985)

Prior to the twentieth century, there was little study of how boys became men and girls became women. But parents’ active attempts at differential training of the two sexes indicate that, even then, people thought sexual identity to be a learned, not inherited, phenomenon. In fact, the only thing we can say with some certainty is that one is not born with a sexual identity. It develops in some way after birth. (LaTorre, 1979)

A basic premise following from this is that each of us could have developed the sexual identity of either sex. In other words, at birth we were undifferentiated and had the potential to develop either a masculine or feminine identity. But once the doctor magically says "You are a boy," the person will become, psychologically, a boy. The magic is not in the doctor's actual statement, but in the process that is set into motion once his pronouncement has been made.

The origins of these differences are rooted in the basic facts of biology and physiology as well as in the fundamentally different ways in which boys and girls are raised and socialized within our culture. (Loden, 1985)

The search for relatively permanent psychological differences between the sexes, so far at least, appears to be fruitless. Very few measurable differences in personality, psychological traits, or abilities between boys and girls exist. Yet significant and obvious sex role differences characterize adults. These are reflected in dress, demeanor and language. These "real" differences between the sexes seem to be more a function of socialization. (Nielsen, 1990)

This study is primarily concerned with a portion of these two main differences. Although some differences may be biologically innate, most of the differences discussed in this paper are socially construed.

These socialized differences begin at birth, and continue throughout our lives. Being masculine or feminine is a central aspect of some peoples self-concept. For example, within the American culture, men are supposed to be masculine, women are supposed to be feminine, and neither sex is supposed to be much like the other. Men are supposed to be tough,

...dominant, and fearless; women are supposed to be tender, sympathetic, and sensitive to the needs of others. (Adams and Yoder, 1985)

This study is concerned with providing information about sex-role and sex characteristic stereotyping and the effects on the perceptions of the communication competencies of managers. These are important areas of concern because of womens' changing role in society. It would be virtually impossible to find all research in this area, but hopefully this will add an important piece to the body of knowledge on the subject area.

Definition of Terms

Several of the terms used in this study have more than one meaning. The glossary presented in Table 1 may help the reader keep these terms understandable, at least within the confines of this paper.

Table 1: Glossary of Terms

Sex Role:	The psychological sex of the individual - masculine and/or feminine. (Heilbrun, Jr, 1981)
Sex Role Stereotype:	One's belief about the behaviors and functions characteristic of men and women in a given society. (Heilbrun, Jr, 1981)
Sex Role Behaviors:	Manifest behaviors of the individual corresponding to societal stereotypes for men and women or the correlates of these stereotypes. (Heilbrun, Jr, 1981)
Sex	Biological characteristics that are present to a large degree from the time of birth. (Bate, 1988)
Gender:	The expansion or elaboration of biological sex distinctions, which occurs through human communication from infancy on. (Bate, 1988)
Masculine/Feminine:	The labels people attach to gender-related behaviors. (Bate, 1988)

Table 2: Distinguishing between Sex and Gender by Bate, 1988

Sex	Gender
Biological given	Socially learned
Treated as permanent fact	Treated as behavioral ideal to achieve
Descriptive	Evaluative
"Female" and "male"	"Masculine" and "feminine"
Innate physical features	Prescribed interpersonal behaviors

CHAPTER I. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

SEX - STEREOTYPIC BEHAVIORS

Particularly with the rise of the women's movement in the 1970s, considerable practical and theoretical interest has emerged with regard to the acquisition of sex roles by children. Such interest has been marked by an attempt to analyze boy-girl differences that are not directly attributable to biological contrast but are more a heritage of the social environment of growing up. Thus, it is blue for boys, pink for girls, dolls or toy trucks, sewing versus model building, and eventually into adulthood being a waitress, nurse or secretary in contrast to being a laborer, doctor or businessman. (Williams, LaRose and Frost, 1981)

The study of stereotypes dates to Walter Lippmann's first use of the term (Lippmann, 1922). Sex-role stereotyping represents a relatively newer area of research with earlier studies concentrating on roles appropriate to females and males and the subsequent attribution of these characteristics prescribed culturally to each sex and across ethnic boundaries.

A stereotype is, to use the definition offered by Ashmore and Del Boca (1979), "a structured set of beliefs about the personal attributes of a group of people." Stereotypes about men and women represent one particular set of beliefs, wherein males and females are the identifiable groups in question.

One consistent finding in the research literature dealing with stereotypes is that children are aware of and engage in sex-stereotypic behaviors from early ages. (Sedney, 1987)

As every parent, teacher, and developmental psychologist knows, male and female children become "masculine" and "feminine," respectively, at a very early age. By the time they are 4 or 5 years old, for example, girls and boys have typically come to prefer activities defined by the culture as appropriate for their sex and also to prefer same-sex peers. (Bern, 1981) The following examples are presented as representative of findings in this area.

The most clearly documented sex difference in social behavior is the greater degree of aggression among boys. Although aggressive attacks are triggered by similar circumstances among boys and girls, the social play of males contains more frequent aggressive activity than the social play of females. Such differences occur in the early pre-school years as well as in the middle of childhood. (Kaplan and Sedney, 1980)

Infants, by the time they are 18 months old, have partially developed assertive behaviors, with sex differences already present. (Fagot and Hagan, 1985)

Within the second year of life, we begin to find gender differences in the two forms of attempts to assert control: girls talk more (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974) and boys become more physically assertive (Fagot and Hagan, 1985).

Gender differences have been consistently documented in the play of children. Boys show more assertive behavior than girls (Fagot, Hagan, Leinbach and Kronsberg, 1985). Boys engage in more vigorous activity, exhibiting more noise, shouting and physical contact (Fagot and Leinbach, 1983; Di Pietro, 1981), and boys show more aggressive behavior (Smith and Green, 1975). While boys emphasize physical interaction, girls engage in more verbal communication. (Di Pietro, 1981)

.....Clothes also mirror the ideals of little boy and little girl activity patterns: rugged jeans for boys, dresses or lace-trimmed coveralls for girls. (Bate, 1988)

To recapitulate a study done by Peterson and Bell (1970), males were found more aggressive, showed more gross motor activity and manipulated physical objects more. Females showed more imitation of models in a passive, non-aggressive situation, participated in more repetitive and modulated activities, and showed more continuity of play.

Throughout childhood and beyond, the predominant structure and pattern of same-sex play differs between males and females. "Boys" games require greater skill acquisition than do most "girl's" games, and they adhere far more to structure and regulation. These games are typically competitive; boys play games with rules. They play to win, whether their best friends are teammates or opponents.

Girls' play groups are usually smaller and more intimate than those of boys. Their games and peer relationships are generally based on assumptions of trust and mutuality rather than rules and individuality. Girls endeavor to preserve relationships, which they intuitively feel to be more salient than any rules of play (Bools and Swan, 1989).

Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) reviewed the research evidence related to 19 additional areas in which there are commonly believed to be psychological sex differences. The results of the studies generally support the following conclusions: girls have greater verbal ability than boys; males are superior to females in visual-spatial and mathematical abilities; and males are more physically and verbally aggressive than females.

By five years of age, children in our culture hold sex role stereotypes similar to those of adults (Nadelman, 1974). More recent evidence suggests that children develop notions about differences in toys, clothing, and even personality characteristics sometime between two and four years. (Weintaub, Clemens, Sockloff, Ethridge, Gracely and Myers, 1984).

PARENTAL SEX-TYPING

A second consistent finding in the research literature on sex-role development is that parents typically think about and behave differently with daughters than sons. Parents' efforts at sex-role socialization are apparent both in their attitudes and expectations about their children, and in their actual interactions with their children (Sedney, 1987).

The development of sexual identity begins at birth. Males and females are given different types of names and different colors of clothing and are treated differently. Even though many parents believe they treat their male and female children the same, studies have shown that mother's and father's actions and reactions toward their children depend on the sex of the child.

Almost immediately after birth, parents not only identify the sex of the child but also begin assigning sex-role expectations to their newborn. These expectations are manifest in the different descriptions parents give for boy and girl babies and are aptly illustrated in a study of parents whose children were only 24 hours old. (Rubin, Provenzano and Luria, 1974) For this study, the researchers had hospital personnel select a group of baby girls and baby boys who were matched, or comparable to each other, in their weight, size, skeletal frame and even muscle response. Parents were then asked to describe their own child, and comparisons were made between descriptions for the

sons versus daughters. The results show that parents of girls rated them as softer, smaller, finer featured, prettier and more attentive. In comparison, parents of boys were already rating their children as stronger, bolder, larger featured and better coordinated.

Another study came to the same conclusion: even when male and female babies are alike in weight, length and physiological conditions at birth, daughters are described as little, beautiful and delicate, while boys are described as firm, alert and strong. (Williams, 1977)

Several studies have confirmed the mother's differential treatment of male and female children. Some of the differences noted have been that the limbs are exercised and stretched more for male infants and that parents more often imitate the vocal babblings of female infants. These are both in line with social identity expectations. The male is supposed to rely more on his musculature and the female is supposed to be more adept at verbal skills. (LaTorre, 1979)

Even nursing of the infant is an area wherein differential treatment of the sexes occurs. Toward the infant male, the mother has a tendency to yield to his demands. When the little boy wants to be fed, he is fed. However, the female infant is fed when the mother wants to feed her. She more often has to yield to the mother's ideas of when and how much is best to eat. Again, this reflects sexual identify expectations: the male is eager, impatient, assertive and dominant, while the female is yielding, interdependent and reserved. (LaTorre, 1979)

Accordingly, parents tend to select different colors, clothing and decors to fit their expectations for sons and daughters (Rheinhold and Cook, 1975).

To accompany the softness and prettiness of baby girls, they tend to choose delicate fabrics, pastel colors and floral designs; for the perceived boldness of baby boys, they select primary colors, coarser fabrics, and bright animal motifs.

In another study, researchers examined the contents of the rooms of 48 boys and 48 girls of upper middle class families in a university town. The ages of the children ranged from one month to six years. The rooms of boys often had animal decorations, contained more vehicles, educational-arts materials, sport equipment, toy animals, machines, live animals and military toys. The girls' rooms were more likely to have a floral design with lace, fringe and ruffles. The children may have had some role in determining what was bought for them, but considering their ages, the differences in the content of boy's and girls' rooms are more likely reflected in the attitudes of their parents of what was appropriate for little girls and boys. (Nielsen, 1990)

Studies have reported that parents say they expect similar behavior from sons and daughters - that they expect them to be equally neat, helpful around the house, considerate, and able to control their anger as well as their crying. Yet, when asked, "in what ways do you think boys and girls are different," these same parents responded that the boys are naturally messier, noisier, and more aggressive, while the girls are neater, quieter, and more helpful and considerate. (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974) So from an early age, parents believe that female children display the characteristics appropriate for nurturant and supportive roles and that males display the characteristics for more assertive and dominant roles.

(Block, 1984) compared the mothers and fathers of boys with the mothers and fathers of girls across the several studies. Significant differences in socialization were found consistent with many other findings. The socialization practices for boys across the several age levels studied reflects a stress on achievement and competition, and insistence on control of feelings and expressions of affect, and a concern for conformity to rules. For girls, emphasis is placed on developing and maintaining close interpersonal relationships; they are encouraged to talk about their troubles and to reflect on life, and show affection physically, and are given comfort and reassurance.

By the time a child is six, the effects of this early bias in interaction with developing biological predispositions lead parents to describe their boys as rougher, noisier, more competitive, and more likely to do dangerous things. Girls are seen as being helpful, neat, clean, quiet, sensitive and more easily upset. Parents value both groups of qualities for both sexes, but think it quite unlikely that they could achieve neatness in their boys or competitiveness in their girls. They firmly believe that they are starting from different points with different beings. (Williams, 1977)

Another example of parents differential treatment of their children was found in a study done by Sears, Maccoby and Levlin (1957). They found that the mothers of kindergartners reported tolerating more aggression from sons than daughters, when it was directed toward parents and peers. The findings in this body of research lead us to expect parents (regardless of their gender) to view their newborn infants differentially - labeling daughters as weaker, softer, and therefore in greater need of nurturance, than sons.

.....These analyses suggest that boys, even at the pre-school level, are more pressed for achievement by their parents than are girls, from whom less is expected and from whom less is acceptable.

Through looking at past studies, we can see that the newborn child has a biological sex but no social gender. As the child grows older, society provides a string of prescriptions, or models of behavior appropriate to the one sex or the other. Certain agencies of socialization - notably the family, the media and the school - make these expectations and models concrete and provide the settings in which they are appropriated by the child.

One final example of how these gender differences begin is illustrated by an experience of four-year-old twins, Susie and Johnnie. One day they are both outside playing while Mommy is working in the kitchen. Pretty soon Susie comes running inside, crying. She's upset because the arm of her doll fell off. Mommy pulls Susie into her arms, caresses her and tells her "Go ahead and cry, honey . . . I understand how you feel . . . Now, let's put the dolly over on the counter and when Daddy comes home, he'll fix it."

A few minutes later Johnnie comes running inside. He's crying because the wheel of his fire truck fell off. Mommy pats him on the head and says, "Now, Johnnie, don't cry, don't cry. Why don't you sit down and see if you can figure out how to put the wheel back on that fire truck?"

The messages to Susie and Johnnie are diametrically opposed. In simpler language, the message to Susie is "Feel, don't think." The message to Johnnie is "Think, don't feel." (Mackenzie and Waldo, 1981)

No wonder that by the time men and women are adults, there can be such drastic gender differences. But do these differences continue? Probably.

To further increase awareness of the assumptions most people make about the sexes, one might think of common phrases in conversation: "that's just like a woman" or "just like a man," "the battle of the sexes," and even "the opposite sex." All these phrases portray the two sexes as thinking and talking differently. The last two phrases also imply that separation or opposition between women and men is basic to human life. (Bate, 1988)

WOMEN: UP WITH THE MEN?

The first part of this literature review has shown how male and female stereotypes are manifested and that they are indeed real. From the time we are born, these differences prevail. One can logically assume that our future professional aspirations and achievements transcribe from these differences. Before going any further, a look at some current statistics is appropriate. Based on the literature thus far, one would guess that all women are homemakers and men the sole breadwinners. You could conclude this just from the different socialization of the two. If we look a bit closer, we will find that this is not all true.

Traditionally, women in our society have been defined in terms of reproduction and nurturance: men in terms of protection and occupation. Women made an initial, but temporary, entrance into the labor force during World War I. After the war, women returned to their jobs as full-time homemakers, and men returned to their jobs and the role of "family breadwinner." During World War II, women returned to the labor force, but after the war, many of the women stayed. The number of women in the paying labor force has steadily increased since that time. We now live in a society where men and women work. We live in a society where the dual income

family is the rule rather than the exception. (Lont and Friedley, 1989) Thus, the conventional, white middle-class image of woman as wife, mother, and full time homemaker, and of man as sole breadwinner belies the fact of most contemporary lives. Women are no longer peripheral members of the work force. (Borisoff and Merrill, 1985) Census estimates indicate that while 19% of all women were in the labor force a century ago, 60% are today. Women now constitute 45% of the nation's workers, but were about a third that figure in 1890. (Goldin, 1990) Obviously then, all women have not chosen to be full-time homemakers. One would assume that since almost half of the nation's workers are female, they would diversify among half of the nation's jobs as well. However, statistics show us that most women aren't "up with the men." The following statistics help us put this in perspective.

Ninety percent of working women are in low paid, low skill jobs (Senker, 1982). Women's capture of management jobs has also suffered recently. In 1981, one in twelve managers were women, compared with one in ten in 1975. Focusing on senior positions, the proportion of women in the United States is generally agreed to be less than one per cent (Powell, 1980).

Bools and Swan, (1989) further explain this: Very few women get to the top. Very few women even have aspirations for the top. Not many expect ever to run a division of a major corporation. Fewer still expect to fill the CEO's position.

These statistics are even more startling: The August 1986 Fortune article reports these grim statistics from a Korn/Ferry international study: At Fortune 500 industrial and service companies, women account for only 2% of senior

executives - defined as vice-presidents and above, but excluding the president and chairman.

Business Week, October 23, 1987, reports in its special issue the Corporate Elite that only two of the CEOs of the Business Week 1,000 are women.

When you consider that women comprise more than 50 percent of the population, this figure is shocking. (Bools and Swan, 1989)

Despite the increasing numbers of women in business, women are definitely underrepresented in the most powerful management positions.

Sex role stereotypes have served to limit women's access to managerial positions and promotion within the managerial hierarchy in the United States. (Terbory, 1977). Schein (1973, 1975) reported that successful middle managers are perceived as possessing characteristics, attitudes, and "temperments" more commonly ascribed to men than to women.

While stereotypes serve some useful functions, stereotyping has a negative connotation, especially in the area of sex differences among people. Stereotyping men and women is harmful for many reasons. In Table 3, two lists of characteristics which are traditionally associated with women and men are provided. The problem with stereotyping women and men becomes apparent. Persons who are "feminine" are allowed one set of behaviors and persons who are "masculine" are allowed another set.

Table 3: Masculine and feminine scale items (Heibrun, 1976)

<u>Masculine Items</u>		<u>Feminine Items</u>	
Aggressive	Hard-headed	Appreciative	Jolly
Arrogant	Industrious	Considerate	Modest
Assertive	Ingenious	Contented	Praising
Autocratic	Inventive	Cooperative	Sensitive
Conceited	Masculine	Dependent	Sentimental
Confident	Opportunistic	Emotional	Sincere
Cynical	Outspoken	Excitable	Submissive
Deliberate	Self-confident	Fearful	Sympathetic
Dominant	Sharp-witted	Feminine	Talkative
Enterprising	Shrewd	Fickle	Timid
Forceful	Stern	Forgiving	Warm
Foresighted	Strong	Friendly	Worrying
Frank	Tough	Frivolous	
Handsome	Vindictive	Helpful	

The definitive work on sex-role stereotypes was done by Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson and Rosen-Krantz, (1972). These researchers measured the traits that were associated with masculinity and femininity, the degree to which men and women were perceived to hold those traits, and the value that was put on those traits. Two conclusions are self-evident. (See Table 4) First, the number of desirable traits associated with masculinity is more than double the number of desirable traits considered feminine. Second, the feminine traits considered desirable are not the ones that would be

considered important or valuable in most professions or occupations. Thus men are seen stereotypically as being aggressive, independent, unemotional, objective, dominant, active, competitive, logical, worldly, skilled in business, adventurous, self confident, and ambitious - all traits that are related to the concept of competence. Women on the other hand are seen stereotypically as being exactly the opposite of men on all of these dimensions.

TABLE 4

Male-Valued and Female-Valued Stereotypic Items
Competency Cluster: Masculine Pole is More Desirable

Feminine Pole	Masculine Pole
Not at all aggressive	Very aggressive
Not at all independent	Very independent
Very emotional	Not at all emotional
Very subjective	Not at all subjective
Very easily influenced	Not at all easily influenced
Very submissive	Very dominant
Dislikes math and science very much	Likes math and science very much
Very excitable in a minor crisis	Not at all excitable in a minor crisis
Very passive	Very active
Not at all competitive	Very competitive
Very illogical	Very logical
Very home oriented	Very worldly
Not at all skilled in business	Very skilled in business

Very sneaky	Very direct
Does not know the way of the world	Knows the way of the world
Feelings easily hurt	Feelings not easily hurt
Not at all adventurous	Very adventurous
Has difficulty making decisions	Can make decisions easily
Cries very easily	Never cries
Almost never acts as a leader	Almost always acts as a leader
Not at all self-confident	Very self-confident
Uncomfortable being aggressive	Not comfortable being aggressive
Not at all ambitious	Very ambitious
Unable to separate feelings from ideas	Easily able to separate feelings from ideas
Very dependent	Not at all dependent
Very conceited about appearance	Never conceited about appearance
Thinks women are always superior to men	Thinks men are always superior to women
Does not talk freely about sex to men	Talks freely about sex to men

Warmth-Expressiveness Cluster: Feminine Pole Is More Desirable

Feminine	Masculine
Doesn't use harsh language at all	Uses very harsh language
Very talkative	Not at all talkative
Very tactful	Very blunt

Very gentle	Very rough
Very aware of feelings of others	Not at all aware of feelings of others
Very religious	Not at all religious
Very interested in own appearance	Not at all interested in own appearance
Very neat in habits	Very sloppy in habits
Very quiet	Very loud
Very strong need for security	Very little need for security
Enjoys art and literature	Does not enjoy art and literature at all
Easily expresses tender feelings	Does not express tender feelings at all easily

Source: Inge Broverman, Susan Vogel, Donald Broverman, Frank Clarkson, and Paul Rosenkranz, "Sex-Role Stereotypes: A Current Appraisal," Journal of Social Issues 28 (1975):59-78.

Harriman, (1985) has also found that masculinity and femininity are seen as opposites of each other and masculine traits are more highly valued than feminine traits.

Another potentially powerful predictor of an individual's likelihood of success in any situation is his or her self-expectations. That is, if a person believes that he or she is capable of performing competently, such confidence may well contribute to a positive performance. (Andrews, 1984)

There are good theoretical reasons to believe that gender-role socialization could lead females to have less confidence in their abilities than males. For example, because females are typically stereotyped as less competent than males, incorporation of gender-role stereotypes into one's self concept could lead girls to have less confidence in their general intellectual abilities than boys. (Parsons, Ruble, Hodges and Small, 1976).

Maccoby and Jacklin, (1974) point out that self-confidence is lower for women than for men.

Studies conducted over the past two decades have supported these conclusions. In one study, (Crandall, 1969) elementary school children were asked to estimate their future performance at a series of novel intellectual tasks. Eighth-grade students were asked to estimate their performance at a digit symbol matching task, college students estimated their grades and young adults estimated their performance at a recall task. In each case, females had lower pretask expectancies than did males.

O'Leary (1974) concludes that both the internal and external barriers inhibiting achievement-oriented behavior are more severe for women than for men, because of factors such as sex-role stereotypes that are "accepted" by the woman herself and by other group members. These sex-role stereotypes have traditionally excluded leadership behavior as accepted feminine behavior.

Female socialization practices encourage the development of personality traits and behaviors that are contrary to those needed to be a successful manager. (Hyland, Curtis, and Mason, 1985). The traditional

subordinate role of women in society has led women to value and develop greater sensitivity for the feelings of others (Snodgrass, 1985).

Wong, Kettlewell, and Sproule (1985) found that women who identified with the feminine sex role characterized by nurturance, warmth, and eagerness to soothe hurt feelings, had lower levels of career achievement and were less likely to have a career than women who identified with a masculine sex role.

Another study found that women who described themselves as assertive, independent, and possessing other "masculine" traits rated taking part in decision making a more important job characteristic than women who were less "masculine" in their self-descriptions. (Nordholm and Westbrook, 1982)

In summary, women, it seems, are acceptable management material if they are the same as men, unsuitable if they differ. Dissimilarity thus provides sufficient justification for excluding them from responsible organizational roles. (Marshall, 1984)

To further drive this point home, leadership research has shown consistently that in mixed-sex groups, men will emerge as group leaders more often than women. (Aries, 1976)

Small group communication research overwhelmingly supports this generalization that men are more likely than women to emerge as leaders. (Andrews, 1984)

Characterizations of males as task-oriented, dominant, and aggressive and complementary characterizations of women as submissive, relational-oriented, and supportive had led to the overall expectation that males will emerge as leaders of small groups more than females. (Tindall et al., 1978)

In an extensive review of the literature on male-female styles of leadership, Denmark (1977) found that females generally suffered from comparison with males in terms of perceived leadership effectiveness, largely because of prevailing sex-role stereotypes that label women as expressive, passive, and nurturant and men as active, dominant, and goal-oriented.

Research also shows that women have contributed to the perpetuation of the sex-role stereotype of female subordination. Some research findings of women in mixed groups indicate a reluctance of women to assume leadership roles. A study by Megargee (1969) showed that women who were high in dominance, were unwilling, for the most part, to take on the leadership role. When women high in dominance were paired with men who were low in dominance, only 20% took the leader's role over the low-dominance males.

Schein (1973, 1975) conducted two studies of perceived sex differences. Using a list of 92 adjectives she asked 300 middle-line male managers to choose the items that they thought described a successful manager, a man, or a woman. The results showed great similarity between masculine stereotypes and managerial stereotypes. Managers were seen to be more similar to men than to women on such characteristics as aggressive, self-reliant, objective, well-informed and direct. When Schein replicated her study, two years later on a population of women, she found that they were only slightly less likely than men managers to subscribe to these managerial stereotypes.

Are women "up with the men?" It certainly doesn't appear that way. One possible explanation for the findings in past studies could be related to the scales which were used to gather information. Many of the scales

...included characteristics more descriptive of men. Some of the scales today have taken this limitation into consideration and strive to balance the information on the scales. For example, some of the qualities and characteristics that women possess are included. This has allowed a whole new spectrum of knowledge in this area. The scale used in this study will be of that nature.

The importance of all of this is that sex roles and sex stereotypes have a significant effect on how we behave, on how we view ourselves, and on how our behavior is perceived by others. It's essential to understand the nature of masculine and feminine sex-roles and sex stereotypes in contemporary society, with the realization that we are not all the same.

Much of the research in this area has concluded that management is defined as a masculine endeavor. More specifically, it has concluded that males are perceived as more acceptable and capable in management.

Equality has been interpreted to mean that the exact same behavior based upon the same set of masculine standards must apply to all. The result is that women who succeed in management often do so by adapting to male norms. (Loden, 1985)

This may be changing. There is a small but growing body of literature that suggests that the managerial style of women may be different from that of men and more effective. Some of these studies are attempting to show that women managers can be effective if and when they use stereotypically feminine behavior.

Chernesky and Bombyk (1988) did a study to find out if women

managers implement their responsibilities in ways stereotypically viewed as feminine. The majority of the respondents thought that they brought qualities, values, or perspectives to their positions that were quite different than those of men. This study demonstrated that women do bring special attributes to their administrative positions, ones that men stereotypically don't possess.

Consistent with these findings, Judy Rosener (1990) concludes "The first female executives, because they were breaking new ground, adhered to many of the "rules of conduct" that spelled success for men. Now a second wave of women is making its way into top management, not by adopting the style and habits that have proved successful for men, but by drawing on the skills and attitudes they developed from their shared experience as women."

Research done by Desjardins follows this same direction. She found that "feminine" characteristics such as care and connection now appear to be playing a major role for men and women when it comes to leadership. (Desjardens, 1989)

Another author agrees: "A lot of women have natural management qualities. They're nurtured into looking after people, and management is about looking after people. And women learn to praise, too, and that's something you need to do as a manager-something that men find difficult." (Baines, 1988)

This newer body of literature seems to be recognizing the unique management styles that men and women can bring to an organization, instead of trying to prove that effective managers need to be exactly the same.

In other words, women do indeed have a different natural style of management and are likely to function somewhat differently in leadership, yet effectively. (Loden, 1985)

The following is an outline of some of the key characteristics of this emerging style:

TABLE 5

FEMININE LEADERSHIP MODEL

OPERATING STYLE: Cooperative

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: Team

BASIC OBJECTIVE: Quality Output

PROBLEM-SOLVING STYLE: Intuitive/Rational

KEY CHARACTERISTICS: Lower Control, Empathetic, Collaborative, High Performance Standards

(Loden, 1985)

Therefore, when research compares male and female managers the findings are generally inconclusive. Just as many studies conclude that the managerial style of the two sexes are different as conclude that there are no significant differences.

SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

To summarize, women and men are characterized on the basis of their sex roles and by stereotyping. To a certain extent we must rely on stereotypes in order to communicate with others. At the same time, stereotypes are harmful. They limit the behavioral options of women and men, as they are based on myths, placing one sex in a superior position to the other.

The literature review has found that masculine and feminine stereotypes exist in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Stereotypes also continue into organizations, especially in relation to management and whether males or females are more competent.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

A 1985 study by Wheelless and Berryman-Fink shows that males and females differ in their perceptions of the communication competencies of women managers. This isn't surprising given the information in the literature review at the time of the study. In the concluding paragraph of their study, they provide suggestions for future research, they state: "this line of research needs to investigate attitudes toward men as managers and perceptions of their communication competencies in order to determine the managerial assets and liabilities that both sexes bring to the creation of an expanded flexible management style for the future."

It is the purpose of this study is to do just that. The two main research questions to be answered by this study are:

Question #1:

Do males and females differ in their perceptions of the communication competencies of women managers?

Question #2:

Do males and females differ in their perceptions of the communication competencies of men managers?

This area of study is a very debatable one, for it is going through a transition at the current time. Since the time of the Wheelless and Berryman-Fink study, new literature on women managers has come into existence. Given the contradictions in prior literature, there is no reason to would expect to find differences in the perceptions of the communication competencies of men and women managers.

CHAPTER II. METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

Employees from a midwestern, Fortune 500 company served as subjects in this research. This organization not only has a valued and stated policy of commitment to diversity in the workplace, but also has a cultural environment where people are valued regardless of gender. The employees were asked to participate in this study through the completion of a 35-item questionnaire (See Appendix A) during October, 1991. Employees were given the option of participating with complete anonymity assured.

Subjects for the present investigation were 101 adults, (54 female, 47 male). Of these 101 respondents, 28 males and 19 females completed the survey about the perceptions of male managers, and 22 males and 32 females completed the survey about the perceptions of women managers.

The subjects ages ranged from 23 to 52 years with the average age of the respondents being 32. 26 of the subjects were managers, while 75 were not.

The majority of participants completed bachelor's degrees. 73 of the 101 respondents had at least attained that level of education. The remaining 28 had completed either high school or a 2 year trade school education.

On the survey about the perceptions of women managers, 34 of the respondents reported having a male manager and 18 had a female manager. On the survey regarding the perceptions of men managers, 40 of the respondents had a male manager, while 7 had a female manager.

MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT

Perceived communication competencies of managers were measured using the Communication Competencies of Women Managers Scale (CCWMS). This scale was first developed by Berryman-Fink in 1982. The only change this study made was to evaluate men as well.

This measure was originally developed by asking 101 managers to respond to open-ended questions concerning two general areas. The first related to the communication skills that women possess relative to effective management. The second area was on the communication skills on which women managers should receive training to become more effective managers. Managers listed six communication skills of women managers and four areas for training needs of women managers. From these ten areas, Berryman-Fink created the 30-Likert-item CCWMS.

RELIABILITY

As noted in the original study, this measure is still in its infancy. However confirmatory factor analysis confirmed its use with high reliability (90). It not only showed high reliability but it also corresponded favorably with other conceptualizations of the construct of competency. Thus, the 30-item version of the Berryman-Fink (1982) CCWMS can be used as a valid and reliable measure of the perceived communication abilities of women in management. (Wheless and Fink, 1985).

Again, prior research has not tested to see if such abilities are also perceived relevant for male managers. The present study will.

CHAPTER III. RESULTS

Of the 268 questionnaires distributed for this study, 101 usable scales were obtained. This constitutes a 37.5% response rate which is an acceptable response rate to work with according to current researchers. There were 54 female and 47 male subjects. The responses for each of the 30 items were given a numerical value between 1 and 7 ("1" representing strongly disagree and "7" representing strongly agree.)

T-Tests on each question were used to determine the differences between male and female responses. The research questions are as follows...

Question #1

Do males and females differ in their perceptions of the communication competencies of women managers?

Question #2

Do males and females differ in their perceptions of the communication competencies of men managers?

PERCEPTIONS OF THE COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES OF FEMALE

Questions	Mean Score Men	Mean Score Women	T-test score
Question 1	4.9091	5.5625	.065
Question 2	5.3636	5.7813	.192
Question 3	2.7727	2.5313	.501
Question 4	3.4545	2.5000	.029*
Question 5	5.0000	4.8438	.628
Question 6	4.3636	5.2813	.017*
Question 7	3.1818	2.9375	.482
Question 8	3.8182	3.3438	.276
Question 9	4.1818	5.5313	.003*
Question 10	4.0455	4.6563	.164
Question 11	2.6818	2.2188	.229
Question 12	2.7727	2.4688	.398
Question 13	4.7273	5.0000	.461
Question 14	4.8182	5.2500	.183
Question 15	3.0000	2.7188	.428
Question 16	3.0000	2.2813	.059
Question 17	3.8636	4.5000	.121
Question 18	4.4545	4.6563	.624
Question 19	3.4091	2.9063	.136
Question 20	2.8636	2.9063	.903
Question 21	4.6364	5.1250	.216
Question 22	4.9091	5.0625	.663
Question 23	2.9545	2.7813	.632
Question 24	3.5000	3.1875	.459
Question 25	5.3636	4.9063	.084
Question 26	4.9091	4.4688	.225
Question 27	3.7727	3.6563	.792
Question 28	3.2727	3.1563	.758
Question 29	5.7273	5.3438	.242
Question 30	4.7727	4.0625	.104

MANAGERS * Denotes significance at the .05 or under level

PERCEPTIONS OF THE COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES OF MALE

Questions	Mean Score Men	Mean Score Women	T-Test results
Question 1	4.8214	4.6316	.642
Question 2	4.6429	4.2105	.355
Question 3	2.7500	3.1579	.329
Question 4	3.3571	3.3158	.923
Question 5	4.5357	4.7895	.425
Question 6	3.7857	3.0000	.060
Question 7	2.9286	2.7368	.642
Question 8	3.0357	3.2105	.718
Question 9	4.1071	3.1053	.012*
Question 10	4.6429	4.3684	.484
Question 11	3.1071	3.8421	.100
Question 12	2.8214	3.6316	.028*
Question 13	4.2500	3.8947	.410
Question 14	3.9643	2.8947	.002*
Question 15	3.0357	3.8421	.055
Question 16	2.5000	3.3684	.048*
Question 17	4.5714	3.8947	.197
Question 18	4.2143	3.0000	.004*
Question 19	3.2500	4.4211	.002*
Question 20	2.6786	2.9474	.480
Question 21	5.7143	5.6842	.919
Question 22	5.7500	6.0000	.302
Question 23	2.7857	2.6842	.805
Question 24	2.6786	2.8421	.730
Question 25	5.1429	4.3684	.074
Question 26	5.7143	5.4211	.346
Question 27	4.3214	6.0526	.000*
Question 28	3.2143	3.6316	.349
Question 29	5.1786	5.4737	.453
Question 30	5.1429	3.6316	.010*

MANAGERS * Denotes significance at the .05 or under level

SURVEY ABOUT THE PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN MANAGERS

Based on the questionnaire about women managers, the following answers were statistically significant at the .05 level.

Question #4: Women managers generally lack nonverbal communication skills.

Question #6: Women managers generally are skilled in showing empathy/ sympathy to others.

Question #9: Women managers generally are skilled in showing concern and understanding for others.

SURVEY ABOUT THE PERCEPTIONS OF MEN MANAGERS

The survey about men managers showed over twice as many significant differences as the survey about women managers. The following were significant at the .05 level.

Question #9: Men managers are skilled in showing concern and understanding for others.

Question #12: Men managers generally have difficulty relating to others.

Question #14: Men managers generally possess sensitivity.

Question #16: Men managers generally lack honesty.

Question #18: Men managers generally treat others as equals.

Question #19: Men managers have difficulty putting others at ease.

Question #27: Men managers generally have attitudes of superiority.

Question #30: Men managers generally have no difficulty controlling their emotions.

CHAPTER IV. DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study show that men and women do not differ in all of their perceptions toward the communication competencies of women and men as managers. The female respondents reported more positive attitudes toward women as managers than did male respondents. On the flip-side, the men respondents reported more positive attitudes toward men managers.

In the Wheelless and Berryman-Fink study, differences between male and female subjects responses were determined by t-tests as well, but all were significant. This current study only found certain questions to be significant. This study also went one step further and studied the perceptions of the communication competencies of men managers.

It was surprising to find only three areas of significant differences on the women manager survey. Just six years ago this study found all 30 areas to be significant. Some of the more recent literature states that the traits that women can bring to an organization can be very beneficial. Perhaps men and women are realizing that, thus resulting in a breakdown of prior stereotyping. The men and women had similar feelings about women managers on 26 of the 30 questions. This results in 87% agreement about the communication competencies of women managers. On nearly all of the questions, men and women showed favorable responses for women managers. For example women managers generally possess sensitivity and women managers are generally good listeners to name a few. This conflicts with much of the older literature, which showed only men capable of being effective managers. This newer literature, finding feminine styles equally effective .

It was interesting to find men and women differing on 9 of the 30 questions on the men manager survey. Although this still results in 70% agreement, it represents twice as many differences as men and women have about women managers. On the questions that more traditionally describe feminine traits, the females and males had several significant differences.

Past research studies have concluded that the successful manager has characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors more commonly ascribed to men than to women. This study sheds a different light on this. It is quite clear that the female respondents think that women managers possess the positive characteristics described in the survey. The men's responses generally agreed with the female's responses.

Much of the literature review addressed stereotyping. The results of this study show that to be true as well. Past research has shown that from the time females are born, they begin to be socialized in the areas addressed in the survey. However, it appears as that people may be looking beyond the stereotypes.

There was only one question that was the same on both surveys that resulted in a significant difference. The question was #9.

Question #9: Women/men managers are generally skilled in showing concern and understanding for others. The males were neutral and the females agreed. However, on the men manager survey, the men were again neutral but the women slightly disagreed.

Some definite differences were found in how males and females felt about men managers versus how they felt about women managers. One question of particular interest was #22. This question is as follows: Women

managers generally have enough confidence in themselves. The men and women slightly agreed with this. However, on the men manager survey, both the men and women agreed, indicating that males and females may think that women are less confident than men. Again, this follows the findings in literature review .

Another interesting comparison between the men and women manager survey was **Question 26**: Women managers generally are able to command enough authority. The mens and womens responses were neutral on the women managers questionnaire. On the men manager questionnaire, the male and female respondents both slightly agreed. These responses seem to indicate that respondents feel that men have more authority.

Question #30 states: Women managers generally have no difficulty controlling their emotions. The men and women had mean scores of 4.7727 and 4.0625 on the questionnaire about women managers. The mean scores on the questionnaire about men managers were 5.1429 for males and 3.6316 for females, thus indicating a slight difference in perception.

The men and women both rated the women managers more positively than men on the questions that were more traditionally feminine. (See questions 6, 9, and 14) On the questions relating more to power, authority and attention, the males and females rated the men managers higher. (See questions 7, 21, 22, 26, and 27.)

It appears then, that attitudes toward female managers may be changing. The 1985 Berryman-Fink study on female managers only, found significant differences on all questions asked. This study found significant differences on only three.

The lack of significant previous research in the area examining the perceptions of the communication competence of men and women managers needs to be looked at.

The 1985 study by Wheelless and Berryman- Fink noted that their investigation used a measure of perceived communication competence of women managers that is still in its infancy. This current investigation studied both men and women managers in this light. Further investigation seems warranted.

Another recommendation is that this research be done comparing different types of companies. This would allow a closer look at cultural differences in organizations. For example, the results from a heirarchical company may be very different from one structured more horizontally.

Also, doing a study using male and female managers would allow responses from those who are actually in the position to promote men and women into management.

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Appendix A
INSTRUMENT USED IN THE STUDY

TO: ALL SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Please complete the following questionnaire and return to me through internal mail by **October 25 1991**.

Please use a **No. 2 lead pencil only**.

Mark only on the **answer sheet provided**.

All results will be strictly confidential. This is not a test and there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. This study is based on "**perceptions**". Please complete the following questionnaire regardless of whether you have a male or female manager.

Your participation in this research is greatly appreciated.

Michelle Chapman

Omaha

DIRECTIONS: The following 30 items are an attempt to assess the communication skills of women managers. The best answer to each statement is your personal opinion. The statements cover many different and opposing points of view. Using the numbers from 1 to 7 on the following rating scale, mark your personal opinion about each statement in the blank that immediately precedes it. Give your honest opinion, not how you think you ought to respond. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not skip any statements.

RATING SCALE

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

- _____ 1. Women managers generally are good listeners.
- _____ 2. Women managers generally have adequate writing skills.
- _____ 3. Women managers generally lack verbal communication skills.
- _____ 4. Women managers generally lack nonverbal communication skills.
- _____ 5. Women managers generally have pleasing voice qualities.
- _____ 6. Women managers generally are skilled in showing empathy/sympathy to others.
- _____ 7. Women managers generally have difficulty keeping listeners' attention.
- _____ 8. Women managers generally have difficulty giving feedback to others.
- _____ 9. Women managers generally are skilled in showing concern and understanding for others.
- _____ 10. Women managers generally are capable of receiving feedback from others.
- _____ 11. Women managers generally are disorganized.
- _____ 12. Women managers generally have difficulty relating to others.
- _____ 13. Women managers generally are open and receptive to others.
- _____ 14. Women managers generally possess sensitivity.
- _____ 15. Women managers generally lack sincerity.
- _____ 16. Women managers generally lack honesty.
- _____ 17. Women managers generally are flexible.
- _____ 18. Women managers generally treat others as equals.
- _____ 19. Women managers generally have difficulty putting others at ease.
- _____ 20. Women managers generally have difficulty being personable or friendly.
- _____ 21. Women managers generally have adequate assertiveness skills.
- _____ 22. Women Managers generally have enough confidence in themselves.
- _____ 23. Women managers generally have difficulty making public speeches or presentations.

- _____ 24. Women managers generally have difficulty dealing with males.
- _____ 25. Women managers generally possess adequate credibility.
- _____ 26. Women managers generally are able to command enough authority.
- _____ 27. Women managers generally have attitudes of superiority.
- _____ 28. Women managers generally talk too much.
- _____ 29. Women managers generally are professional in attitude and appearance.
- _____ 30. Women managers generally have no difficulty controlling their emotions.

Please indicate:

- _____ 31. Sex: (1) Male; (2) Female
- _____ 32. Age
- _____ 33. Status: (1) Manager; (2) Non-manager
- _____ 34. Education: (highest completed level) (1) high school; (2) 2 yr. trade school; (3) bachelor's; (4) masters; (5) doctorate
- _____ 35. Is your boss (1) Male (2) Female

DIRECTIONS: The following 30 items are an attempt to assess the communication skills of men managers. The best answer to each statement is your personal opinion. The statements cover many different and opposing points of view. Using the numbers from 1 to 7 on the following rating scale, mark your personal opinion about each statement in the blank that immediately precedes it. Give your honest opinion, not how you think you ought to respond. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not skip any statements.

RATING SCALE

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

- _____ 1. Men managers generally are good listeners.
- _____ 2. Men managers generally have adequate writing skills.
- _____ 3. Men managers generally lack verbal communication skills.
- _____ 4. Men managers generally lack nonverbal communication skills.
- _____ 5. Men managers generally have pleasing voice qualities.
- _____ 6. Men managers generally are skilled in showing empathy/sympathy to others.
- _____ 7. Men managers generally have difficulty keeping listeners' attention.
- _____ 8. Men managers generally have difficulty giving feedback to others.
- _____ 9. Men managers generally are skilled in showing concern and understanding for others.
- _____ 10. Men managers generally are capable of receiving feedback from others.
- _____ 11. Men managers generally are disorganized.
- _____ 12. Men managers generally have difficulty relating to others.
- _____ 13. Men managers generally are open and receptive to others.
- _____ 14. Men managers generally possess sensitivity.
- _____ 15. Men managers generally lack sincerity.
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