5-9-2006

Gender role development in early versus late adolescence

Andrea Buchma
Rowan University

GENDER ROLE DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY VERSUS LATE ADOLESCENCE

by
Andrea Buchma

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
April 21, 2006

Approved by _____
Advisor

Date Approved ____5- 9 -06_____

ABSTRACT

Andrea L. Buchma
GENDER ROLE DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY VERSUS LATE ADOLESCENCE
2005/2006
Dr. Roberta Dihoff
Master of Arts in School Psychology

Gender roles have been a subject that has been explored through the years. Previous research looked mainly on gender roles and childhood. In the present research, a different outlook of gender roles in adolescence was investigated. This research looked at a sample of 126 middle school and high school students. The students were each given a survey comprised of the Bem Sex Role Inventory and a simple gender recognition test. Test scores were compared with the variables of sex and age (early or late adolescent) through univariate analyses of variance, or ANOVA. The research found an association between gender recognition scores and sex, males having higher gender recognition then females. In addition, it was found that late adolescents scored higher in gender recognition then early adolescents. Lastly, the Bem Sex Role Inventory showed that males are more gender schematic (showing higher masculinity scores) while females were more gender aschematic (showing higher androgyny scores) despite age level.

Table of Contents

Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

Topic Interest/ Need

Gender is a topic that has endlessly been researched over the years. Being that gender is associated with current social and cultural factors, it is constantly changing and therefore ongoing research is essential. Gender roles are social prescriptions that guide individuals to how to be the male gender or female gender. Gender roles are so deeply ingrained in our culture it is questionable to strive for a future that doesn't include them. Therefore something that is so predominant in our daily lives must have an impact on how we act but also must have an impact on deeper aspects our day to day lives, such as our career choices, our hobby preferences, the way we dress, the way we interact and so on. Gender roles are important in our society, despite constantly changing, they must be studied and understood.

Purpose of the Study

This study will look at several different variables and how they relate to gender roles; both gender and age will be taken into account. Previous studies specifically looked at gender roles and children's perceptions. It has been proven time over, that gender roles exist and they are internalized at an extremely early age. What has been lesser studied

however, is the recognition/ perception of gender roles in later years and possibly more important, the adherence to these gender roles as new experiences expand traditional gender schemas. This study will look at (1) the common gender roles for early and late teenagers, (2) androgyny (gender schematic versus gender aschematic) and age, whether individuals have different scores at different developmental stages and (3) specific personal attributes and their gender role consistency according to age.

Hypothesis

In this study there are two different independent variables: (1) gender of the participant and (2) age level of the participant. The dependent variables are the scores two separate surveys: a simple gender role recognition test and the Bem Sex Role Inventory. This research will be looking for connections between the test scores and the variables. First and foremost, it is predicted that gender role knowledge on the gender role recognition test will stay relatively the same for both the age groups, in that gender roles are internalized as early as three years. It is also predicted that females will have a clear image of gender role expectations for both males and females. Males, however, generally will be clearest in male gender roles and lesser for female gender roles. The second portion of the research will look at androgyny. In previous research it has been found that males have a more rigid gender role expectations then women. Women's gender roles are less rigid but often unclear. It can be predicted that in both age categories males will have a lower androgyny score then females. The lower scores for males therefore predict more rigid gender role adherence. It is suspected that there will

2

be a difference in androgyny scores between the age groups. Students who are in the early adolescent age groups have only a limited experience in gender atypical roles and therefore their gender schemas will be more rigid. The older students with experience may have affected higher levels of androgyny.

Preliminary Theory and Background Research

Much of the early gender research was done from a very essentialist point of view. It was believed that there were masculine characteristics that men exhibited and then there were feminine characteristics that women exhibited. If a person did not exhibit these gender specific characteristics then they were perceived as abnormal. It wasn't until the 1970's with Bem's research on gender that these perspectives changed. Bem merged cognitive development as well as social learning theory into her "gender schema theory." Bem believed that individuals form schemas, which are cognitive structures that develop from prior learning that is used when filtering and interpreting new information. What we know about gender is processed through these schemas or gender schemas. A child encodes and organizes incoming gender information into the definition of male or female behavioral expectations of that current society. This accounts for why traditional gender schemas are hard to change because the schema simply filters out stereotype inconsistent information. Bem developed the idea of "androgyny" which looked at the idea that gender characteristics shouldn't be considered as polar opposites, one existing without the other, but instead suggesting that individuals might possess characteristics that are both masculine and feminine. Bem developed the "Bem Sex Role Inventory"

which is an instrument to measure gender role perceptions and androgyny. According to the BSRI, an individual who is androgynous, or gender aschematic, possesses high levels of both masculine and feminine traits. This person, therefore, is more adaptive in that they are not bound by behaviors associated with traditional masculine or feminine gender roles. These individuals feel comfortable engaging in both behavior types. On the other hand a person who scores higher on either masculine or feminine traits is said to be sex typed, or gender schematic and therefore more traditional and rigid in their thoughts, perceptions and evaluations according to their gender stereotypes.

Definitions and Terms

Schema- Cognitive structures that develop from prior learning that is used when filtering and interpreting new information

Sex- Characteristics of an individual that are rooted in biology.

Gender- How social and cultural factors shape out reality and out sense of identity.

Gender Roles- Socially and culturally defined prescriptions and beliefs about the behavior and emotions of men and women.

Androgyny- having both masculine and feminine characteristics.

Assumptions

A large assumption that will be made in the study is that participants from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds will respond similarly in regards to gender roles.

Only future research on this topic can see if there really are gender role differences across

ethnic and cultural backgrounds. In addition, it will be assumed that different religions

will respond similarly to the measures. Lastly, in the study sexual orientation will not be

looked at, being that the younger groups are early in their sexual identity discovery. Gay,

lesbian and bisexual people have a largely different experience to the world being a

sexual minority which could also be a factor in typical versus atypical gender role

adoption. Again, only future research considering this particular variable can prove if

this is a confounding variable in the present research.

Limitations

The first and foremost limitation of the study is the generalizability of the subject

pool. The subjects were predominately white Christians from a middle to upper class

socioeconomic area. Because of this limited population, it is unknown whether gender

roles differ in different economic, ethnic, or religious backgrounds. In addition, the

survey was self administered which also allows room for responder bias.

Summary/ Things to come

In the future of the research, a literary review of past research on gender roles will

be conducted. After gathering ample previous research, a sample of early and late

adolescents will be collected. They will be given the BEM sex role inventory (for sex

androgyny), a gender stereotypical object recognition task (cognition) and also asked

personal questions pertaining to gender roles (occupational aspirations, parent professions

etc.) Their scores on these two separate gender tests will be examined and compared with the age and sex variables.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Looking at the basic characteristics of males and females is no longer as simple as it was once perceived. In every individual, each possesses both sex and gender, two terms that are not necessarily the same idea. Sex refers to the traditional views that are rooted in biology which include the influence of genes and chromosomes that as a result lead to differentiated characteristics of males and females (Anselmi & Law, 1998). Gender, however, can not be defined or studied in such a clean cut manner. Gender refers to the different social and cultural factors that play a part in our beliefs and behaviors. These factors shape how the world is perceived and personal identities are formed. Therefore, looking through this perspective, forming a gender identity is different then one's assumed biological sex. Gender roles, going along the similar socio-cultural perspective, are prescriptions and beliefs about the behavior and emotions of men and women. (Anselmi & Law, 1998). Gender identity is a component of gender roles, and is the process in which children come to believe that they are either male or female. This includes both the biological and social constructs along with specific attitudes to both men and women. (Cahill & Adams, 1997). Some of the most influential work looking at gender was done by Bem in the 1970's. Bem believed that individuals form schemas, which are cognitive structures that develop from prior learning that is used when filtering and interpreting new information. What we know about gender is processed through these schemas or gender schemas. A child encodes and organizes

incoming gender information into the definition of male or female behavioral expectations of that current society. This accounts for why traditional gender schemas are hard to change because the schema simply filters out stereotype inconsistent information. (Anselmi & Law, 1998). Bem also saw that maleness and femaleness should not be seen as two separate entities but instead two opposite ends of a continuum. She thought that in order to be successful in current society, an individual had to possess both stereotypical traits of males and females. Bem developed the idea of "androgyny" which looked at the idea that gender characteristics shouldn't be considered as polar opposites, one existing without the other, but instead suggesting that individuals might possess characteristics that are both masculine and feminine. (Anselmi & Law, 1998). Bem developed the "Bem Sex Role Inventory" which is an instrument to measure gender role perceptions and androgyny. According to the BSRI, an individual who is androgynous, or gender aschematic, possesses high levels of both masculine and feminine traits. This person, therefore, is more adaptive in that they are not bound by behaviors associated with traditional masculine or feminine gender roles. (Holt & Ellis, 1998). These individuals feel comfortable engaging in both behavior types. On the other hand a person who scores higher on either masculine or feminine traits is said to be sex typed, or gender schematic and therefore more traditional and rigid in their thoughts, perceptions and evaluations according to their gender stereotypes.

Gender Role Development: Environmental Socialization Factors

Gender role development takes place throughout childhood and has been found to

be present as early as twenty four hours after birth. Parents create a gendered environment for their children through different activities, encouragements/ discouragements, opportunities and as role models. (Witt, 1997). Gender roles are learned in many facets of life and in the social environment. Many studies have found that parents are a major component to the gender role socialization. One study found that children's rooms are gendered in that boy's rooms contain more vehicles, sports equipment, educational and art materials, toy animals and machines. On the other hand girl's rooms contained more dolls, doll houses, and domestic toys. (Etaugh & Liss, 1992). They also found that during the holidays, that children were more likely to receive gender traditional toys then the gender nontraditional toys they asked for. The children who received gender traditional toys were also more likely to be assigned gender traditional chores such as maintenance chores for males and domestic chores for females. (Etaugh & Liss, 1992). Other research has suggested that there are also differences in parent contribution in the learning of gender roles. In one study, it was seen that fathers were more concerned than mothers about the adherence to traditional gender roles for children of both sexes. (Henshaw, Kelly & Gratton, 1992). Lastly, studies have found that maternal employment affects children's growing perceptions of gender and gender roles. Children who have a mother in the workplace from a very young age were reflected positively on the idea of mothers in the workplace even when young children are present. All in all, however, females in general expressed more liberal attitudes in terms of women working and their own future choices of home and work. Males with mothers in the workplace in generally advocated positively, however, there was more traditionalism then in the female subjects. (Willetts-Bloom & Nock, 1994). It has been

found that more traditional parents have more gender role traditional children. (O'Brian et. al, 2000).

As the child enters school, teachers and peers become increasingly more important contributors in gender role formation. Teachers tend to give more negative sanctions to boys than to girls but also provide boys with more praise, response opportunities and work related contacts. (Etaugh & Liss, 1992). Also as children move through the school years, subjects become more gendered. This gendering of the subjects also leads to greater proficiency in gender typical subjects, such as increased male math/ science performance and decreased female math/ science performance in adolescence. (Archer & McDonald, 1991). Related to gendered subjects is the concept of gendered occupational preferences. Even in the present work world, old stereotypes of gender and occupation still persist. This gender stereotyping begins to solidify as early as the age of two or three and continues throughout the school years. One study found that even the most exceptional female students often didn't pick career options that reflect their intellectual abilities. (Lupaschuk & Yewchuk, 1998). Both teachers and peers discourage males for gender atypical behaviors whereas females were treated less negatively when behaving in gender atypical ways. Names such as "sissy" are negatively connotated and used to describe these gender atypical males where names such as "tomboy" which is not as negatively connotated, is used to describe these gender atypical females. (Henshaw, Kelly & Gratton, 1992). Despite some studies finding males receiving preferential treatment in educational settings, other studies have found that the elementary school contains a more feminine atmosphere that clashes with the traditional male behaviors and creates disruptiveness, aggression and non compliance. (Silvern &

Katz, 1986). In terms of peer groups, by elementary school girls and boys have their own distinct peer cultures made up of their own norms, values and styles. Popularity in peer groups is often represented in gendered ways; some male popularity factors included athletic ability, "coolness", toughness, and academic performance while some girl popularity factors included family background, physical appearance, social development and academic performance. (Adler, Kless, & Adler, 1992). One study found, there are many functions of the peer group that contributes to gender role development. Peers serve as a spring board to try out gendered behaviors. If the behavior is rewarded they will continue but if it is not the behavior will extinguish. A second function is the dynamics of a friend relationship serves as a starting point in learning the correct dynamics to assimilate into social society. Lastly, it was found that friends serve as the "looking glass self" in that we perceive ourselves according to how we think our peers do. (Witt, 2000).

Lastly, the media has a critical contribution to the development of gender roles. In one study it was found that males were better represented than females in characters, pictures and titles. Females were more likely to be shown with household artifacts and males with production artifacts. (Poarch & Monk-Turner, 2001). In the realm of television, it is suspected that children's previous gender schemas affect the television watching experience and therefore affecting the extent of gender atypical behaviors remembered post viewing. These schemas are directly related to past experiences and tend to be fairly conservative so that the existing schema is reserved as much as possible. On television there are drastically less female characters than males in both prime time and children's television shows and commercials. In addition, women were cast with

unidentifiable out of the home jobs and more likely to be playing the role of only the wife and mother. (Calvert& Huston, 1987).

Gender Role Development: Cognitive Factors

Some research has found very different outlets in the learning of gender roles outside of environmental and social factors. In Bem's early work on androgyny and gender roles, she believed that children didn't take a passive role in learning gender roles, but instead were constantly and actively interpreting new information into gender schemas. In the cognitive developmental perspective, biological and environmental factors are taken into account but a major component of gender role attitudes are developed by "the child's cognitive organization of the social world along sex role dimensions." At an early age the child begins to make simple cognitive judgments about gender and what is seen as appropriate for boys and girls. The child then learns to mold their own specific behaviors that are recognized as representative for their own gender. Ullian, D. (1984). Similarly, the constructivist model includes the seen and understood expectations of society but also incorporates the conceptualization of concrete cues that are seen as uniquely male or female and then the individual in turn creates similar behaviors. Ullian, D. (1984). In addition, males and females may be learning the context of gender roles separately as opposed to the social perspective of simultaneously. Male and female gender roles are very different and range in clarity, salience and value. The male role is often straightforward and clear cut where as the female role is inconsistent. There is little variation in the gendered expectations of males but in females

12

the message is sometimes mixed. Boys receive expectations to spend their time in traditional activities such as sports and increasing occupational status. They receive negative consequences and often times outside factors such as sexual orientation come into question. Girls on the other hand receive mixed messages in terms of gender role expectations. Adults encourage both female gender typical and atypical expectations females. (O'Brian et. al, 2000). One particular study found a difference between male and female acknowledgement of gender roles for one's own and the opposite gender. Males were less aware about female gender roles while females were knowledgeable in both male and female roles. This is believed to be the case because the male role is more valued in western society than the female role so males therefore have less motivation to explore outside their own specific gender roles. (O'Brian et. al, 2000).

Gender Role Rigidity

Much research has focused on the rigidity of gender roles or the extent to which opposite gender activities are avoided. Many studies have found that boys are more rigid in their stereotypes than girls are. (Archer, 1984). Females are more likely than males to engage in gender role reversal activities. In one study with three year olds, boys were more likely than girls to pick sex appropriate toys. Even in later life, it was found that college students are more disapproving of cross gender behaviors in males as opposed to females. This rigidity is suspected as a result of the previous mentioned factors of home, school and peer interactions through the lifespan. (Archer, 1984). In terms of gender schema theory, traditional schemas continue with only conservative changes to the initial

13

schema structure in that the schema simply filters out stereotypical inconsistent information. Most commonly a subtype of the original schema is formed. (Anselmi & Law, 1998).

Male versus Female Gender Role Development through the Lifespan

Gender roles grow and change through the lifespan as new experiences broaden and stretch existing traditional gender role schemas. Both genders have to "unlearn" to some extent at a later stage in life what they learned earlier in their development. For example, one study found that the earlier part of a males life is characterized by the rigid traditional male roles of occupation, achievement, and the avoidance of feminine activities. When men became fathers, however, they were forced into a more gentle, nurturing and caring role therefore forcing them to change their traditional gendered role. In addition, many men find their old gender roles to ill prepare them for their new roles as fathers. (Knox & Kupferer, 1971). It has been recorded in several previous studies that in childhood the female gender role is wider and the males is more narrow. As each gender enters adolescence, however, these characteristics change. The female role becomes more narrow to fit the culturally relevant value factors of the female gender such as attractiveness. The tolerance of tomboyish behaviors diminishes in girls. Boys on the other hand, are left to explore more widely other aspects of the male role. (Archer, 1984).

Conclusion

Gender roles are complex and contain many different facets. It is undetermined what really creates gender roles except the idea that it is a combination of several different factors coming together. In early life the most influential people in a child's life are the parents and the most salient environment is the home so therefore, initially at the very least, parents serve as role models that lay the standards of future gendered beliefs. These standards are set with objects, beliefs and positive and negative sanctions of gender roles. As children get older, school and peers become increasingly more important to the gender role formation. In addition, the media presents traditional gender role beliefs and behaviors to children and teenagers on a daily basis. As children become more cognitively competent they learn to combine the outside environmental contributions from the past with new gender role information in cognitive processes that are both rigid and changing. Males and females experience gender roles very differently in that each individual gender has very different prescriptions of what it appropriate; males being more clearly defined and females being more flexible. As children enter adolescence and adulthood, however, these gender role beliefs are constantly changing as they approach different life transitions, experiences and social pressures. Perhaps, while being aware of what is traditionally acceptable for male and female gender roles, as one interprets new experiences characteristics of both male and female roles are adopted to better function in present society.

Chapter 3: Methods

Sample

For this research, the sample will be derived from a middle school for the early adolescent population and from a high school for the late adolescent population. The sample will consist of a total of one hundred and twenty- six participants. Sixty three students will be in the early adolescent group (seventh and eighth grades) and sixty-three will be in the late adolescent group (tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades). Of these one hundred and twenty six participants, seventy-two are male and fifty-four are female. The school district is located in central New Jersey. The district population is made up of a middle to upper economic background and the majority of students are Caucasian. Within the district there are four elementary schools that feed into the single middle school and then high school. In addition, a neighboring town sends students into the high school. There are roughly 1000 to 1200 students currently in the high school.

Survey

The survey is separated into three sections. The first section is the Bem Sex Role Inventory which is an instrument to measure gender role perceptions and androgyny. Androgyny is possessing characteristics that are both masculine and feminine. According to the BSRI, an individual who is androgynous, or gender aschematic, possesses high

levels of both masculine and feminine traits. This person, therefore, is more adaptive in that they are not bound by behaviors associated with traditional masculine or feminine gender roles. These individuals feel comfortable engaging in both behavior types. On the other hand a person who scores higher on either masculine or feminine traits is said to be sex typed, or gender schematic and therefore more traditional and rigid in their thoughts, perceptions and evaluations according to their gender stereotypes. The second section of the survey is a simple gender role recognition test in which students are asked to rate objects, actions, and metaphorical ideas as masculine, feminine or neutral. This test was constructed to rate the ability of the respondent to recognize commonly perceived gendered/ non-gendered items such as "doll house" , " gun" and "radio." Lastly, the final section consists of open ended questions pertaining to gendered perceptions on school, peers, activities, and home life. The questions include items such as "favorite subject" and "maternal employment."

There have been many studies on the reliability and the validity of the Bem Sex Role Inventory. Studies have particularly looked at the inventory and whether or not it is a valid measure of sex role perceptions as American society changes since the 1970's when the measure was first developed. Studies continue to find, however, that the test is still valid. One study found that all of the masculine and all but two of the feminine adjectives (loyal and childlike) were more desirable for a man than a woman. (Holt & Ellis, 1998). Reliability coefficients of internal consistency draw consistently high scores of .80 and frequently greater than .90. The reliability of the measure continues to be undisputed as the test grows older. (Choi, 2004).

Procedure

First and foremost, the students will complete an informed consent form in which they will be informed of the purpose of the experiment in investigating gender roles. The older adolescents then will be given the research survey during their sociology periods and the younger adolescents will be given the research survey during their lunch periods. The survey will take roughly twenty minutes to complete. After the survey is completed, the students will be debriefed and explained thoroughly the purposes and procedures of the experiment.

Each test is given a number to keep the student participant anonymous. The data from the tests will be recorded into a computer statistical database. The three sections of the test will be scored separately. For the first section, computing the androgyny scores will be done as follows: Of the sixty adjectives of the test, they will be separated into six columns according to masculine, feminine and neutral traits. The masculine traits include items 1, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 25, 29, 31, 35, 37, 41, 43, 47, 49, 53, 55, and 59. The feminine traits include items 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, 33, 36, 39, 42, 45, 48, 51, 54, 57, and 60. The groups are totaled into an individual masculine and an individual feminine score. Next the feminine scores are subtracted from the masculine scores to compute the Bem score. The Bem score is compared with the following androgyny scale:

Masculine	> +20
Nearly Masculine	+10 to +19
Androgynous	+9 to -9

Nearly Feminine   -10 to -19

Feminine   < -20

For the second section of the test, there are thirty different items that have in assorted

previous studies proven to be gendered masculine, feminine or neutral. A total score of

correctly recognized gender answers will be computated to form a gender role

recognition score. In the last section, frequencies of responses will be recorded.

Hypothesis

This research will be looking for an association between test scores and the

variables. The first portion of the research will look at androgyny. In previous research

it has been found that males have a more rigid gender role expectations then women.

Women's gender roles are less rigid but often unclear. It can be predicted that in both

age categories males will have a lower androgyny score then females. The lower scores

for males therefore predict more rigid gender role adherence. It is suspected that there

will be a difference in androgyny scores between the age groups. Students who are in the

early adolescent age groups have only a limited experience in gender atypical roles and

therefore their gender schemas will be more rigid. The older students with experience

may have affected higher levels of androgyny. Secondly, it is predicted that gender role

knowledge on the gender stereotypical object recognition test will stay relatively the

same for both the age groups, in that gender roles are internalized as early as three years.

It is also predicted that females will have a clear image of gender role expectations for

both males and females. Males, however, generally will be clearest in male gender roles

and lesser for female gender roles.

Design Analysis

This research study is a study that will look at the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. As mentioned previously, there are two different independent variables: (1) gender of the participant and (2) age level of the participant. The dependent variables are the scores on the Bem Sex Role Inventory and the gender recognition test. Since this is a multilevel research design, the statistical procedure known as an analysis of variance or ANOVA will be used. The ANOVA tests will compare the means on the dependent variables across the different levels of the independent variable (age and gender).

Summary

The data will be collected through surveys completed by two different age groups (early and late adolescent students) in a middle and high school. The surveys consist of three parts: an androgynous scale (Bem Sex Role Inventory), a gender recognition test and open ended questions on gender related topics. In the androgyny section, it can be predicted that in both age categories males will have a lower androgyny score then females. It is also suspected that there will be a difference in androgyny scores between the age groups. For the second section of the survey, the gender recognition test, it is

predicted that gender role knowledge on the gender stereotypical object recognition test will stay relatively the same for both the age groups. It is also predicted that females will have a clear image of gender role expectations for both males and females. The independent groups will be compared with the several dependent groups using ANOVA, analysis of variance.

Chapter 4: Results

Purpose

This study looked at several different variables and how they relate to gender roles. Previous studies have looked at gender roles in children and how they are internalized and affect specific life values and choices. Gender roles later in life is a less explored topic. This research strived to clarify gender role perceptions and adherences in early versus late adolescents. This study looked at (1) the common gender roles perceptions for early and late adolescents, (2) androgyny (gender schematic versus gender aschematic) and age, whether individuals have different scores at different developmental stages and (3) gender role consistency according to age.

Hypothesis

It was predicted previous to the research implementation that in regards to the Gender Role Recognition Test variable that (1) gender role recognition will stay consistent across the age groups. It was also predicted that (2) gender role recognition will be clearer in male versus in female subjects. In regards to the Bem Androgyny Test variable, it was predicted that (3) in both age categories, males will have a lower androgyny score then females. In addition, parallel with the cognitive developmental perspective, it was predicted that (4) there will be a difference in androgyny scores

22

between the age groups, the older group showing greater levels of androgyny as compared to the younger more traditional gender types.

Statistics

Descriptive statistics showed that males had a mean Bem Score of 21.9583 and a mean gender recognition score of 22.9444. Females showed a mean Bem score of -2.0926 and a gender recognition score of 21.6852. (see table 1). Descriptive statistics also showed that early adolescents had a mean gender recognition score of 21.6825 and late adolescents had a mean gender recognition score of 23.1270. (see table 2). Two univariate Analysis of Variance tests, or ANOVAs, were used to compare the means across the variables. ANOVA is designed to compare the means of the dependent variable across the levels of an experimental research design. In the first ANOVA computation, gender recognition test score and age, the F score was significant (d.f.= 1, F= 5.008, p=.027). With the gender recognition test and grade, the F score was also significant (d.f.= 1, F= 4.724, p= .032). In the second ANOVA computation, Bem Androgyny test score and gender, the F score was significant (d.f.= 1, F= 52.871, p= .000). In terms of the Bem Androgyny test score and age, the F score was not significant.
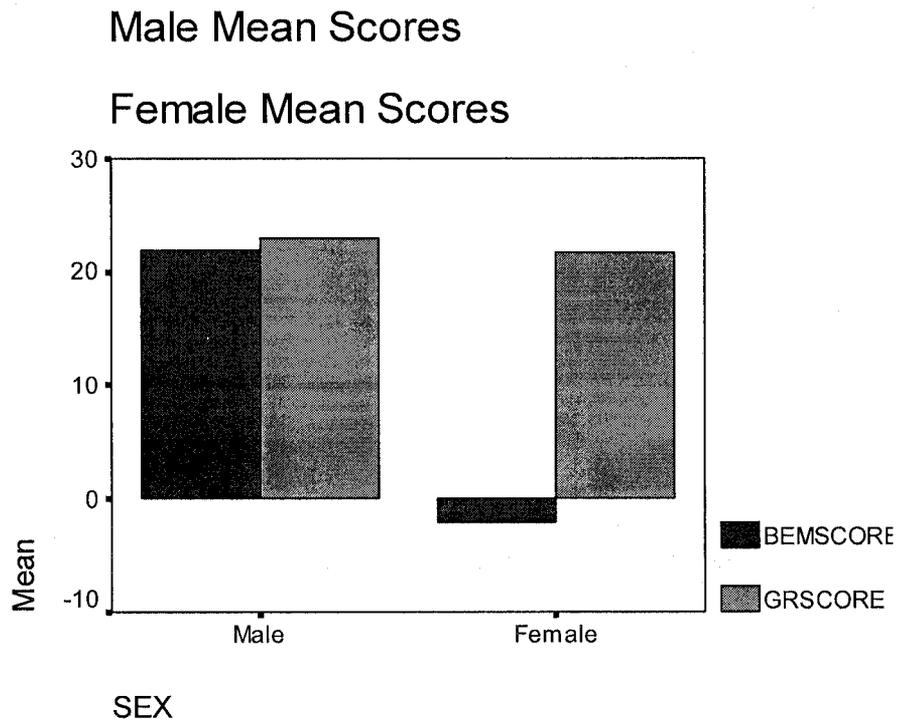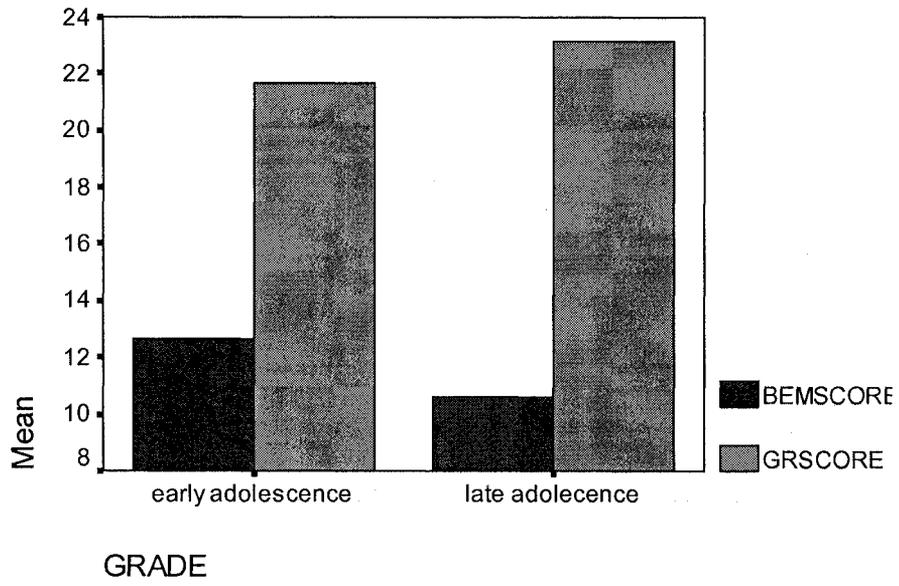
Table 4.1- Male versus Female Mean Scores

Male Mean Scores

Female Mean Scores

Table 4.2- Early versus Late Adolescent Mean Scores

Early Adolescent Scores

Late Adolescent Scores

Chapter 5: Discussion

Statistical Significance and the Present Research

Through this research, variables that have not been explored thoroughly were examined. Previous research focused on younger children and gender role establishment. This present research took the previous knowledge and expanded it to early and late adolescents, looking at specific factors of sex and grade on outcome scores on a gender role recognition test and the Bem Androgyny Inventory. Several of the analyses showed significance. In the first test of the gender recognition score and age, the scores were significant, indicating that the mean scores were not equivalent.

In the first hypothesis, it was stated that gender role recognition will be clearer in male versus female subjects. In the present study, according to the means, early adolescents had lower gender role recognition scores then the later adolescents, suggesting in terms of recognition, older adolescents have clearer gender role perceptions then the early adolescents. This went against the previous hypothesis that gender role perceptions will stay relatively the same from the time of early to late adolescence. Earlier research had found that gender roles are internalized as early as preschool. These significant differing gender recognition scores suggest that perhaps traditional gender role perception and recognition is not a constant from childhood into adolescence, that through childhood experiences and adolescent change, traditional gender roles change or become less clear.

In the second hypothesis, it was stated that gender role recognition will be clearer in male versus female subjects. In the present study, the scores were significant. Males on average had higher gender role recognition scores then the females, suggesting that males more easily recognized common gender role perceptions then female subjects. This was consistent with our previous hypothesis that females will have less clear perceptions of traditional gender roles than males. These scores show how male gender roles are clear cut in their expectations. In females, however, there are often grey areas that are unclear in their traditional perceptions of what it is to be a female. This was different then some previous research, however, that stated that males are more clear on male gender roles then female gender roles. Females, on the other hand, are clearer on both male and female roles. The higher male recognition scores suggest that perhaps males are as aware of traditional female roles as they are with traditional male roles. In the tests for the Bem Score and sex, the scores were found to be highly significant.

For the third hypothesis, it was stated that in both age categories males will have a lower androgyny score than females. In the current study, on average in both early and late adolescent age groups, the males scored within the masculine range while the females on average had androgynous, or gender aschematic, scores. This is possibly the most interesting component of the research and is parallel with the previous hypothesis. As the previous gender recognition test scores showed, that males have a more rigid standard of what it is to be male. The Bem scores show, that these males not only recognize traditional gender roles, but also recognize and rate it within themselves. Females, on the other hand, showed androgynous scores, showing that along with their lower gender recognition score, how they perceive themselves has aspects of a traditional

male and female. These results show that males in general are more rigid in their definitions of traditional male and female gender role expectations. Females, on the other hand, are less rigid and are comfortable taking on roles of both masculine and feminine characteristics. In addition, these gender schematic and aschematic outlooks are consistent through the two test groups, of early and late adolescence, suggesting that androgyny, at least in adolescence is consistent even with new experiences of adolescence.

In the fourth and final hypothesis, it was predicted that there will be a difference in androgyny scores between age groups. In the test of Bem score and age, the scores were not significant. This went against the fourth hypothesis that as adolescents have new experiences, their traditional gender roles will change and move toward a more androgynous gender role outlook.

Statistical Non-Significance and the Present Research

There are several aspects of the current research that could have influenced the significant and non significant findings. First of all, the age groups of the early and late adolescence were relatively close in age (seventh and eighth grades versus eleventh and twelfth grades). Although adolescence is a period of great personal change, perhaps gender roles and androgyny is a more gradual process over time spanning from early childhood and on through adulthood. Second of all, the Bem Androgyny test was originally used with adults, not adolescents. The vocabulary of the original test was quite high, while late adolescents struggled less on several words, early adolescents found that

several words were above their current vocabulary levels. Perhaps if they were more clear on the vocabulary of the test, their Bem scores would have been different and made for a more significant result between the age groups. Lastly, in order to get a more overall picture of androgyny and adolescence, a larger sample size could have been used.

Previous Research and the Present Research

Several aspects of the current research were parallel with previous research. The males and females in this current research study exemplified what Bem would define as gender schematic and gender aschematic. The males had Bem scores within the masculine range and were more gender schematic. These types of scores suggested that the males were more rigid and traditional and based their thoughts perceptions and evaluations more according to their gender stereotypes. The females, however, were more gender aschematic, in other words were more comfortable accepting roles that are both traditionally male and female. The females according to Bem are more flexible and adaptive in their gender perceptions. The Bem scores within the current research reflected outcomes shown within the cognitive developmental perspective, males being more masculine and females being more androgynous. Previous research found that gender roles are experienced differently in males and females. The male role is straightforward whereas the female role is inconsistent. Males have a clear sense of what is considered to be acceptable within the male gender role context. The positive and negative consequences for gendered and non gendered choices are consistent in males. Females, on the other hand, receive mixed messages on gender role expectations. Both

gender typical and atypical expectations are placed on females. In terms of the gender recognition scores, these mixed messages were shown in the scores where males scored higher gender recognition then females.

Future Research

Future research should look at the underlying reasons for the significant results. Previous research looked at several environmental factors such as family and peers to be precursors to learned gendered behaviors. Future research may look at the effect of gender traditional versus non traditional parenting. This could be done by administering a survey to not only the child but to the parents as well. Future research can also look at peer groups and the development of gender traditional and non traditional children, whether a more gender traditional peer group will influence a more gender traditional child. In future research, the sample can be expanded several ways. Instead of looking at early and late adolescence, perhaps the sample should include a childhood group or extend adolescence into early adulthood. This research showed that possibly that significance was not found because the two groups were actually similar in developmental standpoints. Future research can also look into gender roles and adults, a topic that has scarcely been researched in the past. Future research can also look at different cultural groups in that gender role percepts are different in more traditional cultures. Gender roles may differ drastically from one cultural group to another. Lastly, an interesting perspective may be religious affiliation and traditional gender role beliefs.

References

Adler, P.A., Kless, S.J., Adler, P. (1992). Socialization to gender roles: Popularity among elementary school boys and girls. *Sociology of Education*, 65, 169-187.

Anselmi, D.L. & Law, A.L. (1998). *Questions of gender: Perspectives and paradoxes.* Boston, McGraw Hill.

Archer, J. (1984). Gender roles as developmental pathways. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 23, 245-256.

Archer, J. & McDonald, M. (1991). Gender roles and school subjects in adolescent girls. *Educational Research*, 33(1), 55-65.

Cahill, B. & Adams, E. (1997). An exploratory study of early childhood teachers attitudes toward gender roles. *Sex Roles*, 36(7/8), 517-529.

Calvert, S.L. & Huston, A.C. (1987). Television and children's gender schemata. *New Directions for Child Development,* 28, 75-88.

Choi, N. (2004). A psychometric examination of the personal attributes questionnaire. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 144(3), 348-352.

Etaugh, C. & Liss, M. B. (1992). Home, school, and playroom: Training grounds for adult gender roles. *Sex Roles*, 26(3/4), 129-147.

Henshaw, A., Kelly, J., & Gratton, C. (1992). Skipping's for girls: children's perceptions of gender roles and gender preferences. *Educational Research*, 34(3), 229-236.

Holt, C.L. & Ellis, J.B. (1998). Assessing the current validity of the bem sex roleinventory. *Sex Roles*, 39(11/12), 929-941.

Knox, W.E. & Kupferer, H.J. (1971). A discontinuity in the socialization of males in the united states. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 17(3), 251-261.

Lupaschuk, D. & Yewchuk, C. (1998). Student perceptions of gender role: Implicationsfor counselors. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 20, 301-318.

O'Brian, M., Peyton, V., Rashmita, M., Ludmila, H., Jacobs, A., Yvonne, C., Aletha, H., & Roy, C. (2000). Gender role cognition in three year old boys and girls. *Sex Roles*, 42,(11/12), 1007-1024.

Poarch, R. & Monk-Turner, E. (2001). Gender roles in children's literature: A review of non-award winning "easy to read" books. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 16(1), 70-78.

Silvern, L.E. & Katz, P.A. (1986). Gender roles and adjustment in elementary school children: A multidimensional approach. *Sex Roles*, 14(3/4), 181-202.

Ullian, D. (1984). "Why girls are good": A constructivist view. *Rex Roles*, 11(3/4), 241-256.

Willetts-Bloom, M.C. & Nock, S.L. (1994). The influence of maternal employment on gender role attitudes of men and women. *Sex Roles*, 30(5/6), 371-389.

Witt, S. (1997). Parental influence on children's socialization to gender roles. *Adolescence*, 32(126), 253-230.

Witt, S. (2000). The influence of peers on children's socialization to gender roles. *Early Childhood Development and Care*, 162, 1-7.

Appendix A- Consent Forms

Consent Form: Gender Roles

I state that I wish to participate in a research study being conducted by Andrea Buchma of the School Psychology Department of Rowan University.

The purpose of the research is to look at gender roles in adolescents. I will be asked to complete a survey which consists of three parts that will roughly take fifteen minutes to complete. I understand that each survey will be labeled with an identifier number to keep my name and identity confidential.

I understand that I am free to ask questions and have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty.

Andrea Buchma
School Psychology Department of Rowan University
Buchma25@students.rowan.edu

Signature of the participant: _____
Date: _____

Debriefing Form: Gender Roles

You have just participated in a research study on gender roles and their development in early and late adolescence. Gender roles are socially and culturally defined prescriptions and beliefs about the behavior and emotion of men and women. This study will look at several variables such as (1) common gender roles for early and late adolescents (2) levels of masculine and feminine characteristics compared to age and (3) specific personal attributes and their gender role stability according to age.

If you have any further questions or concerns about the research, please contact the below address.

Thank you for your cooperation and participation.

Andrea Buchma
School Psychology Department of Rowan University
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, NJ 08028
Buchma25@students.rowan.edu

Appendix B- Survey

Part A

Please answer the questions as the term best fits YOU according to the following scale:

1= Never true
2= Usually not true
3= Sometimes but infrequently true
4= Occasionally true
5= Often true
6= Usually true
7= Always true

1. Acts as a leader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Adaptable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Affectionate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Conceited	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Aggressive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Cheerful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Ambitious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Conscientious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Childlike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Conventional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Analytical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Compassionate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Assertive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Does not use harsh language	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1= Never true
2= Usually not true
3= Sometimes but infrequently true
4= Occasionally true
5= Often true
6= Usually true
7= Always true

16. Happy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Athletic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Eager to soothe hurt feelings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Competitive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Feminine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Inefficient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Defends own beliefs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Flatterable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Dominant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. Jealous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Gentle	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. Likable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. Forceful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. Gullible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. Has leadership abilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. Moody	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. Loves children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1= Never true
2= Usually not true
3= Sometimes but infrequently true
4= Occasionally true
5= Often true
6= Usually true
7= Always true

35. Independent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. Loyal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. Individualistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. Secretive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. Sensitive to the needs of others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. Sincere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41. Makes decisions easily	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42. Shy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43. Masculine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44. Solemn	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45. Soft Spoken	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46. Tactful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47. Self Reliant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48. Sympathetic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49. Self- sufficient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50. Theatrical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
51. Tender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
52. Truthful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
53. Strong personality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1= Never true
2= Usually not true
3= Sometimes but infrequently true
4= Occasionally true
5= Often true
6= Usually true
7= Always true

54. Understanding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
55. Willing to take a stand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
56. Unpredictable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
57. Warm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
58. Unsystematic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
59. Willing to take risks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
60. Yielding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part B

Label each given word or phrase as MASCULINE, FEMININE, OR NEUTRAL

Car	M	F	N
Doll house	M	F	N
Book	M	F	N
Gun	M	F	N
Wood tools	M	F	N
Listening to music	M	F	N
Baby doll	M	F	N

Wood tools	M	F	N
Radio	M	F	N
Beauty kit	M	F	N
Sports equipment	M	F	N
Pink	M	F	N
Watching television	M	F	N
Blue	M	F	N
Climbing trees	M	F	N
Dancing	M	F	N
Secretary	M	F	N
Exercise	M	F	N
Librarian	M	F	N
Truck driver	M	F	N
Farmer	M	F	N
Coloring book	M	F	N
Yellow	M	F	N
Doctor	M	F	N
Cooking	M	F	N
Golfing	M	F	N
Hunting	M	F	N
Nurse	M	F	N
Shopping	M	F	N
Driving	M	F	N

Part C

Sex: Female   Male

Age: _____   Grade: _____

Please list your favorite subject: _____

Please list your LEAST favorite subject: _____

What are your future career goals?   _____

_____

Where do you see yourself in ten years?   _____

_____

_____

Please list three of your closest friends: _____

_____

Please list three activities that you like to do in your leisure time: _____

_____

_____

Please list and describe chores done at home: _____

_____

Is your mother employed?   Yes   No

If yes, what is her occupation? Please describe: _____

_____

How old were you when she began working?   _____

Tables and Charts

Table 4.1- Male versus Female Mean Scores
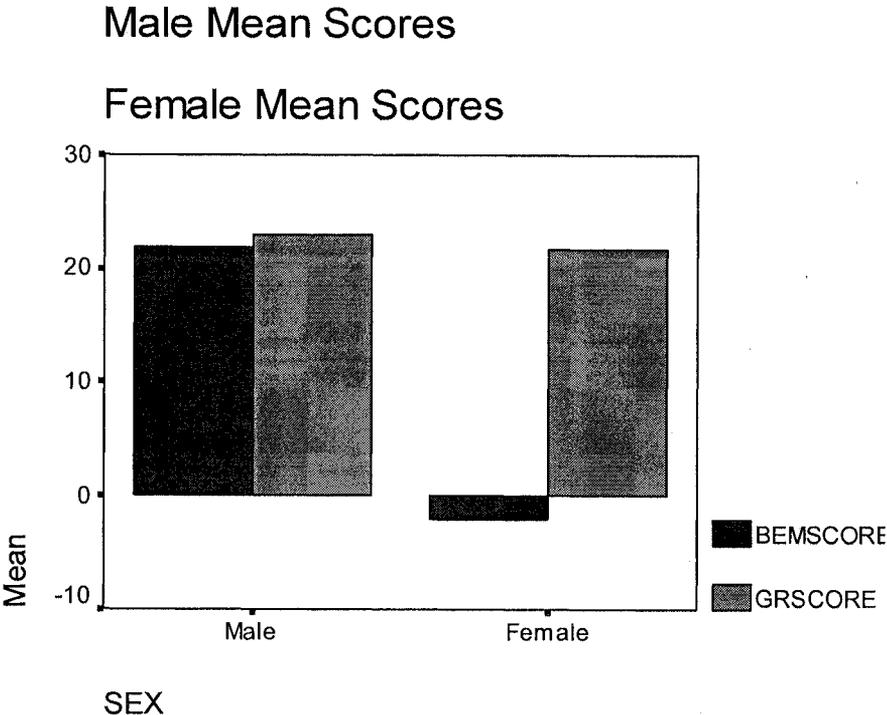
Male Mean Scores

Female Mean Scores

BEMSCORE

GRSCORE

SEX

Table 4.2- Early versus Late Adolescence Mean Scores

Early Adolescent Scores

Late Adolescent Scores

GRADE