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# Gender Identity Development: A Study of Caregivers in a Preschool Setting

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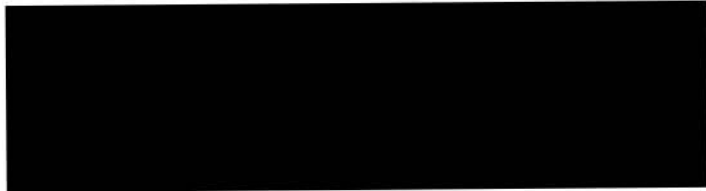
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Gender Identity Development:  A Study of

Caregivers in a Preschool Setting

(TITLE)

BY

Salisa Hortenstine Shook

## THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Gender Identity Development:    A Study of

Caregivers in a Preschool Setting

by

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M. A. Candidate

Eastern Illinois University, 1990

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This study observed the present conditions of attitudes toward gender roles, as communicated by caregivers in eight east central Illinois preschool settings.  Two research questions were formulated in order to categorize responses for the purpose of identifying prevailing gender role attitudes.  Those questions were: "How do caregivers in a preschool setting affect gender role stereotypes?"  and "What are key communication events that may create or perpetuate gender role stereotypes in the preschool setting?"  The data was obtained from personal interviews and the Bem Sex Role Inventory.  The results indicated caregivers in the preschool setting did not see gender roles and gender role stereotypes to be of major concern to children on the preschool level of development.  However, examples of gender role stereotyping was identified from interview responses.

(89 pages)

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Finally, in memory of Woodie. We should all have such a good natured outlook on life.

To all the people mentioned, I dedicate this thesis to you, and I love you all.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Gender identity concerns a special but extremely important part of the self image- how one sees oneself in terms of masculinity or femininity.  In American society, men are expected to be masculine, women are expected to be feminine, and neither sex is supposed to be much like the other.  A number of characteristics, such as assertiveness, strength, aggressiveness, and competitiveness, have been said to describe the male gender.  Very much different from those characteristics are those used in describing the female gender.  Such descriptors as compassionate, soft-spoken, affectionate, gentle, and yielding have been used to represent, even define, women.  The awareness 'I am male or I am female' is what Stroller (1968) calls the "core gender identity."  This identity is established in most children between the ages of eighteen months and three years.  The individual's concept of what is masculine or feminine, and hence his/her gender identity, will depend, to a large extent, on cultural factors.

According to Maccoby (Hall, 1987, p. 56), children learn gender roles by watching many people, and children pick and choose from the models they encounter.  Given the restructuring  of family roles in the past two decades, a

dual career family is becoming the norm and young children are spending much of their time with non-parental caregivers. It follows that gender roles, once the responsibility of parents, are now shared by caregivers who often spend some 40 hours a week with young children.

The motivation for this study was to attempt to identify the development of gender roles. Two research questions were formulated in order to categorize data collected in this study. Those questions are:

1. How do caregivers in a preschool setting affect gender role stereotypes?

2. What are key communication events that may create or perpetuate gender role stereotypes in the preschool setting?

This study used the word 'sex' to refer to identity development, given the popularity of the term in both past and present literature. However, some research does make a distinction, with 'sex' referring to biological characteristics present from birth (Bate, 1988), and 'gender' referring to socially learned, interpersonal behaviors (Pearson, 1985). The focus of the research presented is in the area of gender identity, primarily since the 1960s.

Review of Literature

According to Tripp (1977, p. 53), "The American ideal was to catch a man before you were too old, say twenty-two, and to take a deep breath, disappear into a suburban ranch house and not come up for air until your children (a boy for you and a girl for me) were safely married." Until the mid-1970s the sex role conceptions were quite clear and generally unquestioned. Traditionally, sex roles in our society were viewed as a biological division of male and female. There have been traditional perspectives on sex differences and sex roles rooted in five key propositions (Stewart, Cooper, & Friedley, 1986, p. 13).

A new perspective has developed in recent years, representing a shift from already established stereotypes, to a more "scientific" way of looking at sex roles (Pleck, 1977). This new perspective has evolved from studies in male/female similarities and differences, the development of sex-role identity, and the emergence of psychological androgyny.

The traditional perspective emphasizes social differences that are learned and biologically-based sex differences. Those key propositions include:

1. Women and men differ substantially on a wide

variety of personality traits, attitudes, and
interests.

2. These differences, to a large degree, are
biologically based.

3. A major part of these psychological differences
between the sexes results from a psychological
process called "sex identity development." In this
hypothetical process, males and females
psychologically need to develop the constellation
of "masculine" or "feminine" traits that society
defines as appropriate for their sex, in order to
have a "secure" sex identity. This process is
consistent with, but goes beyond, the psychological
sex differences which are directly biologically
based.

4. Developing sex identity is a risky affair. Many
individuals, particularly males, fail to develop
the psychological traits traditionally appropriate
for their sex, or develop traits thought
appropriate to the other sex. These individuals
have profound difficulties in their personality and
life adjustment, including homosexuality.

5. Psychological differences between the sexes, as
well as individuals' psychological need to develop

and maintain a normal sex identity, simultaneously
account for and justify the traditional division
by sex of work and family responsibilities.
(Pleck, pp. 183-184)

While Pleck (1977, p. 195) provided this traditional
perspective on sex differences and roles, he also provided
comparison with the new perspective. The new perspectives
on the psychology of sex roles are as follows:

1. There are some sex differences on some traits
   (certain intellectual skills and aggression), but
   there is considerable overlap between the sexes.

2. Psychological sex differences are biologically
   based in part, but are nonetheless highly trainable
   and influenced by environment.

3. There is a psychological need to have accurate
   self-classification of one's gender (i.e., male or
   female), but there is no psychological need to have
   sex-appropriate masculine or feminine traits; such
   traits are learned because of societal pressure,
   not innate psychological need.

4. (a) Failure to develop accurate
   self-classification occurs only in a small minority
   (1 to 2 percent).

   (b) Developing only sex-appropriate masculine or

feminine traits, leads to psychological handicaps.

5. Psychological sex differences and presumed need for sex identity do not account for women's and men's different social roles; sources of these differences in social roles lie elsewhere.

The identification and grouping of certain functions as "the woman's role" or the "man's role" are arbitrary and were the product of a different culture. Many couples and living groups today are assigning these functions, rather than accepting traditional sex-linked definitions and stereotypes (Bunker, 1977, p. 113).

It was believed with the coming of the industrialization in the nineteenth century that the female brain and internal organs would be injured by sustained intellectual effort (Borisoff & Merrill, 1985, pp. 6-7). It is well known that men alone are independent, analytical, ambitious, competitive, and aggressive. Women are cheerful, gentle, soft-spoken, tender, and always sensitive to the needs of others. Men are leaders. Women are followers. Men are breadwinners. Women are homemakers. All of the above statements are sex-role stereotypes (Pearson, 1985).

The research in the area of gender identity and sex-role stereotypes dates, at least, as far back as the

mid-nineteenth century. In those times scientists succumbed to prevailing biases. Proper Victorians felt it was in society's interest to show that women were designed for lesser tasks. Scientists argued that if women used their brains excessively, they would impair their fertility by draining off blood cells needed to support the menstrual cycle (Gelman, 1981).

Stereotyping refers to the process of assigning people, groups, events, or issues to a particular, conventional category (Pearson, 1985). Sex-role stereotyping is a result from an either/or dichotomy of sex roles. Sex roles are placed into rigid categories of appropriate "male" and "female" behavior. In a stereotype there is little or no room for sex roles to cross from one gender to the other.

According to Sandra Bem (1976), sex-role stereotyping is a restricting prison for the mental health of the human personality. Pearson (1985) states that stereotyping limits people from becoming complete beings. Persons who are "feminine" are allowed one set of behaviors, while persons who are "masculine" are allowed another set. A crossover of behaviors has traditionally been unacceptable.

From a different standpoint, sex roles and sex-stereotyping are often considered as prejudism by those for whom they have disadvantages, and as preferences by

those for whom they have advantages (Wesley & Wesley, 1977).
Stereotyping is a natural by-product of learning.
Psychologists often refer to stereotyping as
"generalization", a much less emotional term.

Somewhat unlike the the views of Bem (1976), Pearson
(1985), and Borisoff and Merrill (1985), Wesley and Wesley
(1977) view stereotypes and generalizations as positive
occurances. Prejudism and stereotypes can be linked to good
experiences and learning tools for eliminating undesirable
behaviors.

Because stereotypes first occur in the learning
process, their elimination is also a matter of learning. It
is up to the major caregivers (parents, teachers, etc.) to
determine how much or how little "feminine" and "masculine"
qualities are enforced.
There are a number of theories to suggest the establishment
of gender identity development.

Consistent with the traditional perspective, the
Biological Theory focuses on the actual biological
differences between men and women. Anatomical differences
are among the major distinctions between the sexes,
obvious from birth (Fremon, 1977, p. 3).

With growth, there is a variation in the maturation
rate between the sexes. The female's physical development

girl is biologically two years older than a boy. This acceleration in the rate of growth is maintained by the female to the age of 17.5 years.

Socially this can cause problems, because the lag in development may cause biological differences to become socially based differences as this developmental gap closes. Boys will tend to be behind girls in social development. The socialization process that enhances the development of sexual identity is inherently tied to the communication process.

Biologically, there are two other sex differences that occur: verbal ability and aggression. Females tend to be superior in verbal ability, perhaps because of the sex differences in the functioning of the brain. The other difference is that boys tend to be more aggressive. This is perhaps due to prenatal doses of androgen, influencing the development of the males' potential for aggression (Stewart, Cooper, & Friedley, 1986, p. 18).

According to Weitz (1977, p. 10), two broad areas are thought to have both strong biological roots and important consequences for sex role assignment and behavior: aggression and sexuality. Weitz, like Stewart, Cooper, and Friedley (1986) realizes the importance of aggression in sex role differentiation.

Almost all the sex-role behaviors can be seen as related to aggression in some way. The differences in achievement, personality, social role, and so forth, could be based on differing levels of aggressiveness between males and females. Determining the extent of such differences becomes a high priority in the study of role identity, given the possible biological origin of aggression.

Much like the previous discussion on aggression, Weitz (1977, p. 13) cites three biological sources as evidence for sex differences in human aggression. Those sources include brain mechanisms, hormones, and chromosomes. There is not enough proof to determine the absolute role of the brain in the establishment of gender identity development. The brain is such a complex mechanism, given the intricacies of its workings.

As discussed previously, males and females do differ in terms of their biological make-up. The male hormone, androgen, has been found to influence the development of the males' potential for aggression. The physical differences usually apparent between the sexes are a result of a biological determination, and as well, can be a basis for aggressive behavior. Therefore, the physical power a man might have that a woman does not, often can be used in an aggressive manner (Weitz, 1977, p. 11).

Numerous studies in the area of genetics have linked chromosome make-up to apparent aggressive behavior. As Weitz (1977, p. 19) reports, a number of cases of hyperaggressive males with an extra Y chromosome have been reported. Normally a male is characterized by an X and a Y sex chromosome. A female is characterized by XX. The Y chromosome is required for an individual to be male. The discovery that males with more than one Y chromosome appears to be characterized by hyperaggressiveness. Weitz (1977, p.20) states that much more genetic experimentation is required in order for us to draw conclusions. The aggression that appears in males with an extra Y chromosome may be a result of the chromosomal abnormality, or the extra chromosome itself, producing a predisposition to deviancy.

Another area of biological study, according to Weitz (1977), is that of sexuality. It is very difficult to separate the biological from the social meaning of sexuality. The differing reproductive roles of men and women cannot be dismissed as unimportant factors in the shaping of sex roles.

Female sexual identity extends far beyond the sexual act, whereas male sexuality is almost totally encompassed within it. Historically, an important inhibiting factor in female sexuality has been the real possibility of pregnancy

as a consequence of sexual activity.

Consideration of sexuality must take into account the nature of the family structure and the reproductive roles of the sexes. As mentioned earlier, it is difficult to disentangle the biological from the social meaning of sexuality.

No definite conclusions can be made concerning the biological role of gender identity development. Certainly biology has a base in this area of study. There are mixed opinions held by researchers and those in the field of science. Interestingly, according to Gelman (1981), hormones seem to be the key to the difference in males and females. They trigger the external sexual characteristics and actually "masculinize" and "feminize" the brain itself.

Contrary to this thinking, Maccoby (1974) contends that the possibilities for experimentation with humans are limited, leaning heavily on animal studies. These studies cannot possibly draw strong conclusions on sex role development because the intricacies of human development far outweigh that of the animal.

Psychological Theories

Another area for serious study is that of the Psychological Theories. Sex-role socialization is the process by which children aquire the values and behaviors

which are seen to be appropriate to their sex. There are
two major theories under the psychological process. The
social-learning theory claims that "girllike" and "boylike"
behaviors are shaped by significant others during the
preschool years. Knowledge develops as children model their
parents' behavior. The display of emotion will perhaps be
perceived differently whether that emotion is that of a boy
or girl.

Once these roles are learned, from parents or
guardians, they are reinforced by other children, and
appropriate and inappropriate sex-role behaviors are praised
and punished. Though the social-learning, or
psychoanalytic, approach is heavily grounded in biology, it
incorporates the interplay of family dynamics on personality
as well (Stoll, 1974, p. 83).

According to Weinreich (1978, p. 18), in principle,
children of both sexes are brought up as people. In
practice, gender is a highly significant factor in
their upbringing and there are differences in the
socialization of boys and girls. While there are sex
differences which have a biological base, many aspects
of sex roles do not derive directly from such differences.
Sex roles and their socialization reflect people's often
unfounded beliefs about what sex differences are or should
be.

Because socialization is the means by which culture, including notions of appropriate sex roles, is transmitted, the agents of socialization are primarily parents, teachers, peer-group members and the media. According to Weinreich (1978, p. 20-21), there are four processes by which socialization occurs. Those processes are as follows:

1. Skills, habits, and some types of behavior are learned as a consequence of reward and punishment.

2. Parents and others provide models for roles and behavior which children imitate.

3. The child identifies with one or both parents, a process which is more powerful than imitation, through which the child incorporates and internalizes the roles and values of the parent or other significant adult.

4. There is the part played by the growing individuals themselves. They actively seek to structure the world, to make sense and order of the environment.

Weinreich concludes by stating;

The categories available to the child for sorting out the environment play an important part in this process. Gender is obviously a primary category, so it is not surprising that children pick up a great deal of information about sex roles and stereotypes very

quickly (p. 21).

The cognitive-developmental theory claims that a child's concept of sex role develops in stages until five or six yearsof age. After that time the child recognizes sex roles as being stable, and will remain constant regardless of external changes. Unlike social-learning theory, cognitive developmental theory posits that constancy is attained at a specific point in sex-role development and the child's role becomes one of actively seeking sex-role reinforcement. To the cognitive developmental psychologists, an understanding of the child's conception of gender is the cornerstone of the growth of sex typing (Roopnarine & Mounts,1987, p. 16). Children's perceptions of behavior, and the differentiation of behaviors as their cognitive development becomes increasingly more complex, ties to gender identity.

Perhaps the leader in the study of cognitive developmental theory is Kohlberg. Kohlberg's theory (1966) is based on understanding of the constancy of one's own sex. Such an understanding occurs gradually, between two and seven years of age, and becomes irreversible during the concrete operational thought period.

Children can make discriminations about maleness and

femaleness based on physical characteristics; size, hairstyle, and other attributes. By classifying physical attributes that are appropriate for men and women, children are able to categorize individuals as boys or girls. The ability to categorize children as boys and girls appears at around three years of age.

Gender constancy is the cognitive understanding that one's gender is invariant. Following the attainment of gender constancy, a clear understanding of maleness and femaleness and the activities associated with them, children imitate the model that is appropriate for their own sex. Because we live in a very sex stereotyped world, boys will show a strong tendency to imitate the masculine behavior of their father, while girls have a tendency to imitate the feminine behaviors displayed by their mothers (Roopnarine & Mounts, 1987, p. 16).

Briefly, the social roles theory accepts that roles are a set of behavioral patterns that define the expected behavior for individuals in a given position or status. All roles have a complementary role associated with them. In other words, one must have a husband to be a wife.

Parsons (1964) suggests that males and females first develop their social roles through interaction in the

family. Traditionally, for girls the process of sex-role development is that of identifying with their mother. For boys, it is the rejection of mother's female role. This rejection is due to the realization that the male child cannot be like his mother because he is male, not female. Under a new perspective, more recent theories include the role of the father in developing sex roles in children (Stewart, Cooper, & Friedley, 1986, p. 22-23).

A theory that is often refuted by researchers, scientists and the like, is Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory. Freud's theory, much like the biological theory, recognizes the parental influences on a child, but attributes those influences to a biological base.

Freud's theory is often rejected because it is largely nonempirical, and quite sexist (Roopnarine & Mounts, 1987, p. 8-9). Freud perceives role development as "anatomy is destiny." His theory leans heavily on feminine development, and in his view, the girl's gender-related development, prior to her awareness of sex difference, is in all respects male and masculine (Fast, 1984).

Freud placed emphasis on what he referred to as "penis envy" as a motivation for women. Some have maintained that the concept is to be taken symbolically, rather than literally, as denoting women's envy of male power and

status. Therefore, what women envy is not the penis itself, but the prerogatives that go with having one (Tavris & Wade, 1984).

Freud did argue that the concepts of femininity and masculinity overlap. He stated that each individual displays a mixture of the character traits belonging to his own, and to the opposite sex. Researchers now call this androgyny and do in fact agree with this concept (Tavris & Wade, 1984).

Although research in the area of sex-role differentiation dates back to more than a century, serious study in the dichotomy of male/female gender identities is relatively recent. Biological sex before the 1960s was treated as only a feature, rather than a primary interest in the study of communication (Bryan & Wilke, 1942). There has been much scientific controversy as to the origins of sex-role differentiations. An example of this is at one extreme where those who argue that the established societal arrangements can be attributed to genetically determined differences in the psychological makeup of males and females (Tigar & Fox, 1971).

The other extreme is represented by those who claim that the origins of sex-role differentiations lie in a more limited set of innate differences between the sexes (D'Andrade,

1966).

In the 1960's, women, mostly white, middle-class, and politically liberal, became aware of "the problem that has no name." Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique (1963) sent a message to women that they lacked meaning and purpose in their lives. Friedan, and others, urged women to look at their need for identity and participation in the larger world outside their homes (Bate, 1988). In 1966 the National Organization for Women (NOW) was formed.

Many people believed that the dawning feminist movement threatened the survival of the race. Elizabeth Fee, of Johns Hopkins University, states, "Women were seen as crazy idealogues, going against nature. It was the duty of science to prove their inferiority" (Gelman, 1981).

Sandra Bem first introduced the concept of androgyny to signify a sex-role orientation in which positively valued aspects of both feminine and masculine characteriestics are incorporated (Kaplan, 1980; Pearson, 1985; Stewart, Cooper, & Friedley, 1986). Traditional models of gender differences presume the exclusiveness of male and female qualities. A more realistic view of human personality recognizes the possibility for psychological androgyny, shifting the focus away from bipolar sex-role designations (Greenblatt, Hasenauer, & Freimuth, 1980).

It is believed that Bem provided a useful alternative to the traditional model, in the form of the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) (Bem, 1976; Greenblatt, Hasenauer, & Freimuth, 1980; Kaplan, 1980; Stewart, Cooper, & Friedley, 1986). The BSRI allows one to categorize their gender identity according to four psychological sex types. According to those four types, an individual may be:

1.  Masculine- a high association with masculine and low association with feminine characteristics.
2.  Feminine- a high association with feminine and low association with masculine characteristics.
3.  Androgynous- high association with both masculine and feminine characteristics.
4.  Undifferentiated- low association with both characteristics.

Androgyny is proposed not just as an alternative to femininity and masculinity, but as an option that is more adaptable than the other two. According to Kaplan (1976), there are studies which do support the theory that the androgynous person is more healthy. Androgynous individuals can respond to a situation on the basis of what is appropriate for that situation, rather than on the basis of

what is expected for someone of their sex (Kaplan, 1980).

The focus of gender identity development, in the past, was on the biological aspects of human development (Mensh, 1972; Stockard & Johnson, 1980; Pearson, 1985). Since the mid-1970s, the focus has shifted to the environmental influences on a human being, even before birth. Prospective parents select gender appropriate names in anticipation of a boy or girl, already beginning the identification process (Stewart, Cooper, & Friedley, 1986, p. 11). Richard Lewontin, biologist at Harvard (Gelman, 1981), contends that a child's awareness of gender is more decisive than biology in shaping sexual differences. Lewontin states, "The real problem for determining what influences development in men and women is that they are called 'boys' and 'girls' from the day they are born."

In early studies of Money and the Hampsons (1957), their findings indicated that the way a child conceives of itself, with respect to gender, is determined by the gender role in which it is reared. It was the opinion of Money and the Hampsons that the establishment of gender identity occurs quite early in life.

Clearly a leader in the research of child development and the development of sex roles, Eleanor E. Maccoby, in the mid-1970s reviewed hundreds of studies concernig sex

differences and sexual stereotypes (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). Her data exploded many stereotypes held within the traditional perspective of gender identity. Maccoby's general finding was that children learn sex roles by watching others. In the early 1950s the notion that children pick and choose from the models they encounter would have been considered ridiculous by orthodox behaviorists (Hall, 1987).

A study performed in 1974 (Fagot, 1978) confirmed Maccoby and Jacklin's (1974) findings, also helping to dispel contradictions in the area of sex-role differentiation. The study found that two year old children showed sex differences in their behaviors and that their parents also showed differences in reactions that appeared sex determined. In a study of infants between the ages of six to twelve months it was found that throughout the second half of the first year girls are more socially oriented with their mothers than are boys (Gunnar & Donahue, 1980).

According to Pearson (1985), children between the ages of 3 and 5 years similarly sex type others. Between the ages of 5 to 7 years gender constancy (as discussed earlier), or the tendency to see oneself consistently as male or female, appears to develop in most people.

Inconsistent with this finding, Thompson (1975) states

that before the age of 4 years, children appear to be uncertain of their sex. In the same study, it is stated that by age 2, children exhibit some behavior preferences which appear to be affected by gender factors. The differences between these studies are perhaps due, in part, to a ten year gap in the age of the studies. Given the research previously presented, role models do appear to affect children's notions of sex roles, and their behavior is communicated accordingly.

An interesting concept for consideration in the study of gender identity development is that of the attribution process. According to Schneider, Hastorf, and Ellsworth (1979), attribution is the general process of determining the causes of behavior. In the study of gender identity and role development, there is, as well, a need to understand the process for determining the causes of behavior. As discussed in the previous pages of this text, that process is very complicated and far from being cut and dried.

Why are we the way we are? What makes us do the things we do? To what extent are we affected by our environment? The attribution process plays a significant role in our creation of a stable and sensible social world (Hastorf, Schneider, and Polefka, 1970, p. 89).

Our perception of others does not stop with the

observation of their behavior. We perceive other people as causal agents. As reported in <u>Person Perception</u> (1970, p. 89), Heider suggests that people are causal agents, or at least capable of being causal agents. In our perceptions we go beyond behavior and make causal inferences about why the behavior occurred. Also, people are held responsible for the effects of their behavior only on occasions when those effects were intentional.

<u>Person Perception</u> (1979, p. 42) researchers outline two basic kinds of attribution processes:

1. Reactive attributions- occur when we see the person's behavior as being a relatively nonconscious, often involuntary, response to some internal or external stimulus.

2. Purposive attributions- is behavior or action that is intended.

Purposive behavior is what Heider describes as the attribution process that individuals must take responsibility for. Given the complexity of social behavior, attribution processes become effective when we want to understand the behavior of others, to determined why it occurred, and to figure out what caused it (Schneider, Hastorf, & Ellsworth, 1979).

The behavior of men and women, not only in the societal

framework, but in response to one another, must be strongly considered when addressing the issue of gender identity development. As previously discussed, women in the 1960s decided to look beyond their own backyards to seek their own identity, perhaps exclusive from their husbands. Some women became bitter over the treatment they had received, even accepted, for so long, being in the shadows of their husbands/significant other's success.

The stereotype of gender roles can be attributed to a number of sources. As Borisoff and Merrill (1985, p. 5) states, throughout much of recorded history, women have been discouraged, and at times forbidden, to be assertive in exercising their power (often through speech). As stated, in the New Testament, St. Paul instructed men to "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness." He said, "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent." (I Timothy 2:9-15).

Perhaps because of its Biblical base, the concept of men in power positions and women in submissive positions was the law of the land until the women's revolution in the 1960 s. Again, the theory of attribution would seek to understand the behavior of those involved, both males and females.

This researcher views the hierarchy of men and women as

a phenomenon that places responsibility on both parties.
While in the past there was a clear definition of
traditional sex roles, liberation movements have given men
and women a new frame of reference and have moved them away
from the old dichotomy of masculine and feminine
requirements. Because of the new desire to understand the
behaviors of others, the concept of "unisex", as described
by Gould (1978, p. 244), allows for a liberation on the part
of both women and men. This new attitude will be perhaps
passed on to the next generation, breaking sex role
stereotypes that have been passed down through the
centuries.

In the past twenty-five years, with the emergence of
the women's liberation movement, attention has shifted
toward an analysis of the male role. According to Dubbert
(1979), from a male's point of view, "For every woman
rethinking her role...there is probably a male somewhere
rethinking his." Dubbert reports that men are pleased that
they, as well, are experiencing a liberation. Because of
the social revolution in the 1960s men were given the chance
to critically evaluate masculine roles and behavior patterns
that the masculine mystique had forced upon women.

While a number of men were cynical and expressed
outrage over the women's liberation (and still do), some men

were emotionally and intellectually prepared for the arguments produced by women.  Men, after all, had the responsibility of being the sole breadwinner of the family, often involving holding down jobs they found neither rewarding or stimulating.  Pleas were heard for male liberation, which called for "men to free themselves of the sex-role stereotypes that limit their ability to be human." (Dubbert, 1979, p. 284).

Men are still struggling with the new perspective on sex role development.  As stated by Gould (1978, p. 244),

"It is unfortunate that so many men feel threatened by the emergence of women.  They fear that when women achieve more independence and responsibility, man's role will be diminished.  In fact, his role will be expanded.  Released from the rigid constraints of stereotypical masculine behavior, man becomes freer to express himself fully.  If he has passive, intuitive, and sensitive areas in his personality, he need no longer suppress them as unmanly. These characteristics will be acceptable now, both to himself and to women, who in turn will be freer to express the active, assertive and dominating sides of their nature."

Gould describes the "unisex" trend, referring to the diminishing differences between male and female (p. 243).

He proposes that the trend reflects major changes in the socio-cultural roles of men and women. This comes to mind another term adopted in the 1970s by Sandra Bem. As discussed briefly, earlier in this review, androgyny refers to sex-role orientation in which positively valued aspects of both feminine and masculine characteristics are incorporated.

Industrialism and modern business operations do not call for brute strength, therefore a population of men has become more passive and conforming (Dubbert, 1979. p. 10). These were characteristics, that in the past, described the female gender. With androgyny, there is a blending of what has usually been regarded as male or female characteristics, values, or attitudes. As Bem (1977, p. 83) discusses, by definition, the androgynous individual is someone who is both independent and tender, both aggressive and gentle, both assertive and yielding, both masculine and feminine, depending on the situational appropriateness of these various behaviors.

Although the term unisex is often used in regard to sexual identity, Campbell (1977, p. 104) feels the term is not synonomous with the concept androgyny. Androgyny allows an individual to be able to establish whatever sexual identity is appropriate for him or her, and certain human

characteristics within a given context can be adopted.
Unisex seems to imply that everyone's sexual identity is the
same. For the purpose of this study, the term androgyny
becomes more appropriate.

Because of the cultural movement in the 1970s toward
androgynous behavior, role models have themselves moved
toward a more middle ground of traditional feminine and
masculine characteristics. In some cultures it is a slower
change than in others, but it is happening. As women
continue to leave their homes to enter the workplace, often
out of necessity, the roles of parents, guardians, and/or
significant caregivers move closer to androgyny. Sprague
and Sargent (1977, p. 153) state, "Today, women and men are
acknowledging their own special competencies and slowly
differentiating which role models they value....Both sexes
must be allowed to develop androgynous behavior free of sex-
role constraints".

The final concept to be addressed in this review is
the daddy track, the partner to the term mommy track, coined
by Felice Schwartz in 1989. While the fast track refers to
the climb to the top, by women in business, with no pause
for personal life, the mommy track is provided for the women
that are interested in working fewer overtime hours,
possibly even part-time, so they can spend time with their

children.  What has been ignored is the possibility and need

for a daddy track as well (McKee & Shook, 1990, p. 2).

In an article written by Kathleen Hill, in the Decatur

Herald & Review (1990, February 18), statistics from a

national survey conducted in 1988 by an executive recruiting

firm indicated 74% of men questioned would prefer the daddy

track to the fast track.

There are men that would prefer to put their family

before their careers.  Men are becoming aware that they are

missing something by not being home and involved with their

families.   McGowan (1990, p. 2),  states, "More fathers are

now present to, rather than absent from, their children

compared to a decade ago."  This would appear to suggest a

cultural change in the roles of parents.  While it is a slow

change, it seems to be happening.  McGowan is quite bothered

by the absence of the word father in our family culture.

The words mother and parents are used frequently to describe

family roles, but father is often (usually) omitted. When

caring for children, McGowan points out how the mother is

"caring for her child(ren)" while fathers "babysit" their

child(ren).

McGowen also explains how it could be argued that

it is more difficult for men to maintain a career and

family. Men are not as freely allowed parental leave from

work because our society views caring, nurturing fathers as
weak. Part of the reason for that is because, as McGowan
suggests, role models for fathers are largely absent.
Fathers can do more than just babysit their children, but it
requires the effort of change. The restructuring of gender
roles is a major part of that change.

Parents are exchanging traditional gender roles for a
new perspective of the roles of family members. As
discussed, fathers are assuming more of the responsibility
of caring for their children, and mothers are assuming
occupational roles.

Given this change, children are spending 40 or more
hours a week with a non-parental caregiver(s). A child in
the preschool age range develops his or her own
characteristics, particularly if the child is attending a
day care center/preschool and is cared for by persons, other
than the biological parents (Pearson, 1989, p. 209). The
most important new adults in the lives of preschool children
are their teachers (Pearson, 1989, p. 213).

Given the review of literature, the following
study provided insight into the present conditions of
attitudes toward sex roles in present day, as communicated
by caregivers in eight central Illinois preschool settings.
The review of literature was a helpful base for determining

the growth of the cultural change in gender identity development, while the study conducted was useful in examining the current attitudes of those influential individuals in caregiving positions. It is the purpose of this study to be able to draw conclusions about the perspectives of gender roles in 1990.

Caregivers in this study were given a self-rating instrument for completion, as well as participated in a personal interview. This provided information useful for determining the perspective on gender roles, and perhaps stereotypes held by caregivers in a preschool setting.

Chapter II

Methodology

Subjects

There were a total of 41 subjects, designated as
teachers and helpers, within eight preschool/day care
facilities in the east central Illinois area.  That area
included the cities of Mattoon and Charleston, and the town
of Sullivan.  The study was performed within the first three
months of the year 1990.  The study sought to identify
present attitudes of sex roles by the professionals in the
preschool/day care facilities.  Because child care has
traditionally been considered a female's role, the field is
still comprised of mainly women, and this study's
respondents were all female.

Sample

The preschools studied in this investigation were
chosen on the basis of accredited institutions within the
given geographic area, with the exclusion of in-home day
care.  Initially ten preschool/day care facilities were
notified, with only eight ultimately participating in the
study.  The other two felt the study would be too time
consuming and bothersome.

## Measurement

The two devices used to determine attitudes on sex roles and sex-role stereotypes were the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) and a follow-up personal interview.

The Bem Sex Role Inventory is composed of 60 adjectives that are stereotypical characteristics of female and male traits, and androgynous characteristics. Twenty of the items are masculine traits, twenty are feminine, and the remaining twenty are considered neutral, or androgynous. The particular inventory administered was modified to include the age of the respondents, and the years of service at that particular institution (see Appendix A).

The BSRI also has its subjects rate on a seven point scale, but the modified instrument reduced the scale to five points. A five-point scale simplified the process and appeared less confusing to the raters.

It should be noted that Bem (1974) computed test-retest reliability estimates which were as follows: Masculine, $r=.90$; Feminine, $r=.90$; and Androgynous, $r= .93$.

Validity of the BSRI has been supported through repeated experimentation. Various studies have shown that subjects' behaviors were consistent with their classification on the BSRI (Bem, 1974, 1976).

To insure anonymity, the respondents penciled their

first name only on the top of the computer sheet, used to record the responses, and were then assigned a code (see Appendix C) for the purpose of later linking them to their personal interview. The code was made up of alphabetical letters, designating the preschool, the position of teacher or helper, and individual respondent lettering.

The method used to collect self-images is referred to as a self-report. Self-report is one of the most widely used and accepted methods of psychological assessment (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974, p. 37). Data suggested that self-ratings of sex-related characteristics is an appropriate and confidential means for measurement.

The second part of this study was a personal interview. The interview consisted of ten questions, all of which encouraged open ended discussion (see Appendix B). The interviews were audio tape recorded, for the purpose of later transcription. The questions asked in the interview were for the purpose of recognizing attitudes on gender roles and perhaps identifying sex-role stereotypes. The information from the interviews was later linked, according to the assigned codes, to the completed BSRIs for review of comparisons and contrasts.

Procedure

The Bem Sex Role Inventory was administered the week of

February 12-16, 1990. The instrument was provided the first half of that work week, and retrieved in the second half of the week. Initially, the researcher desired to deliver the BSRIs and, within the same hour, collect them. It became obvious that the preschool directors were not receptive to this plan.

Overall, the teachers and workers completed the survey during nap time, 1 o'clock p.m., and in their own space. They were discouraged from the beginning at making this a joint effort. A few respondents took their inventory home, completed it, and returned it the following day. Those instruments were collected within the same week of distribution, and at that time, interviews were scheduled for the following week (some of the interviews were conducted two weeks following the BSRI).

The interviews were conducted on a one on one basis at nap time (1 p.m.), in the preschool. Two of the preschools requested that the interview segment of the study be held over the telephone on teachers' and workers' own personal time. These two preschools were the largest institutions in the study and interviewing at the school itself would have been difficult for all concerned parties.

A sheet was devised to accompany the BSRI in requesting permission from the respondents to submit to a telephone

interview (see Appendix D). Out of eighteen respondents, ten respondents agreed to telephone interviewing, while eight respondents refused to be interviewed at home. Those ten who agreed to be interviewed provided their telephone numbers and their optimal interview time(s).

The data collected from the BSRI were scored according to the three-step method provided by Bem (Bem, 1977, p. 84). Those steps included:

1. Calculating masculinity and femininity scores for each individual.

2. Calculating medians for the masculinity and femininity scores based on the total sample.

3. Classifying individuals according to whether their masculinity and femininity scores were above or below each of the two medians identified (Bem, 1977).

In order to be able to identify those characteristics on the inventory as masculine, feminine, and androgynous, the placement of adjectives on the BSRI is as follows:

1. The first adjective and every third one thereafter is masculine.

2. The second adjective and every third one thereafter is feminine.

3. The third adjective and every third one thereafter is neutral.

Once the BSRIs were scored, the interviews were examined for the purpose of sorting results. All responses were categorized (see Table 1), and the content of those categories was compared, contrasted, and matched according to the assigned codes to the respondents scores on the BSRI.

The purpose of the two-step process in this study was to determine how the respondent would rate herself according to the personality characteristics on the BSRI, and the interviewing procedure was designed to gain the most relevant information from the respondent, with open-ended questioning. By conducting interviews, information was obtained concerning attitudes on prevailing gender roles and role stereotyping. Respondents provided information in the interview that simply could not be obtained through standard surveying.

The significance of the BSRI scores is that through the coding procedure, interviews were matched to the BSRI ratings to determine if the respondents' self-ratings coincided with their responses in the personal interview. A respondent, for example, may ultimately have given herself an androgynous rating on the BSRI, but in the interview segment revealed an identity incongruent with androgyny.

While the interview responses provided the most vital information, the BSRI scores added credence to the open-ended responses.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The motivation for this study was to provide insight into the present conditions of attitudes toward gender roles, as communicated by caregivers in eight central Illinois preschool settings. The personal interview segment of the study provided the greatest amount of information concerning gender role attitudes, while the results of the BSRI contributed to that information by providing self-report attitudes of personality characteristics.

The data analysis of the personal interview information showed that five categories emerged from the ten questions asked. If two or more questions were similar in content, often respondents answered those questions quite differently.

There were categories that emerged within each question, as well as categorization of the questions (see Table 1). The five categories were: gender dominated activities, verbalization of stereotypes, caregivers perpetuating gender stereotypes, group play, and career goals.

Gender Dominated Activities

When asked, "Are there any activities dominated by

either gender here at the preschool?", twenty-three
respondents indicated that there were no gender dominated
activities. Ten respondents indicated there are activities
dominated by one or the other gender. Dancing, coloring,
housekeeping, dramatic play and involvement with dolls were
reported as predominately girl's activities. The boy's
activities included playing with blocks, cars, trucks,
baseball, and overall aggressiveness and fighting in their
approach to play.

Verbalization of Stereotypes

When asked whether they noticed stereotypes being
verbalized among children, thirteen respondents indicated no
known stereotypes were shared among the children. Ten
positive responses were given, indicating older children
verbalize gender differences in terms of toys, such as boys
wanting Batman cars and ridiculing girls for wanting them
also. Two respondents indicated that boys appear to
stereotype more, and four indicated that older kids
recognize gender roles, as expressed at home, and tease
other children if they "step out of role." In dramatic
play, children tend to role play and insist on girls playing
"mommies" and boys playing "daddies." One respondent said
if boys try on clothes (women's) and earrings in the

dramatic play area, frequently the other children will laugh, boys and girls alike.

Three more categories did emerge concerning stereotypes being verbalized. Five "some" responses and three "not much" responses were provided, with no follow-up explanations of why. Two respondents indicated that the children in their classroom were "too young", being only 18 months to 2 years in age.

## Caregivers Perpetuating Gender Stereotypes

Respondents were asked how they would respond if a girl was playing with a truck and a boy wanted to play with it. A follow-up question reversed the scenario and made the situation a boy playing with a doll with a girl wanting to play with. The reply from all the respondents was that the child who had the toy first will keep the toy. The child wanting to take the toy away will have to learn to take their turn and to share. All of the preschools have developed the policy that whoever is playing with a toy first, keeps it. This is also the policy of the housekeeping, building toys, and all designated areas for the children to play in.

Another question addressing this issue was asked to determine if play areas are designated as "boy's" and

"girl's", and all respondents indicated that the only restrictions that apply to the areas are those of the number of children in each area at one time, regardless of their gender or any traditional stereotypes of appropriate toys for each gender.

Another question asked was what the teacher/helper would do if a boy wore a pink shirt to school and other boys, or all children, teased him. One teacher indicated she would simply ignore the teasing and hope it would not become a problem. Three responded by saying that teasing is the real issue, and they would teach the children about manners. Five respondents would tell the child he looks nice in pink, and twenty-four respondents would defend the color by stating that it is a nice color that can be worn by both boys and girls. Many of the respondents indicated that they would tell the child that their husband has a pink shirt, and nobody teases him.

The follow-up question asked how the teacher/helper would respond if a girl brought a Hot Wheels vehicle to school and children teased her that it was a boys toy. One teacher responded that she would ask the children why they think that is a boy's toy. Another teacher would remind the children about manners, and three indicated that they would tell the children it is a good way to learn about

transportation, regardless of being a boy or girl. Eight respondents said that they would tell the children that they can play with everything, boys and girls alike. Twenty respondents answered by stating that vehicles are for everyone, because both boys and girls grow up and learn to drive. One of those twenty respondents gave a follow-up remark that, "besides, toys are toys and what does it matter?"

Respondents were asked to define what a boy's toy and a girl's toy is. Seventeen respondents indicated that there is no designation between the two. The other sixteen respondents did in fact provide definitions for each. Those definitions ranged from trucks, blocks, GI Joes, Ninja Turtles, Legos, building and constructive toys, action toys, athletic toys, guns, and anything with wheels, to rough, durable, and hard toys as "boys' toys." Girls' toys were described as: kitchen sets, dolls, coloring books, Barbie, household items, dishes, dress-up toys, stuffed animals, play make-up and jewelry, and anything soft.

One of the respondents that indicated a difference in definition stated that she believes these preferences are learned through role models and the media (i.e. Saturday morning television). Another respondent stated she believes a certain degree of these preferences are learned, but a

large part of the preference for toys is inborn, driven by their gender. She stated, children would not play with the toys they play with if they did not like them, even if the toys were designated as gender appropriate.

## Group Play

One question asked, "If a girl insisted on playing in a group made up of boys that didn't want her to play, how would you handle it?" Eighteen respondents said they would encourage the boys to share the area with her. Eight indicated they would divert the girl's attention to another area, three said it would depend on the boys in the group, two said it depended on the area, whether there was enough room there for her, and one respondent indicated she would ignore the situation, and only get involved if the girl was getting pushed around. One respondent stated she would get the girl into the group by having her pretend she is making lunch for the guys.

Another question was "If a boy told a girl to get something (a toy) for him, would you intercede?" Thirteen of those studied indicated they would watch to see if the kids would work it out on their own. Two said they would not intercede at all. Nine respondents said they would intercede to tell the boy to get it himself, four would

intercede to explain manners,and four would intercede to tell the boy to not boss others around. Two of the respondents said this scenario is common, but usually the girls are the ones to give orders to others. They indicated girls are very "bossy." All respondents said that usually if a child directs another child to do something for him/her, it is out of laziness, and not a gender issue.

Career Goals

The question was asked, "If you heard a little girl say, 'I can't do_____when I grow up because boys do that,' how would you respond?" Twenty-five of those studied responded that girls can do anything that boys do. One of those respondents also stated she would tell the girl she may have to work harder if it is a man's job. Three respondents would tell the girl that men and women share jobs; two would pretend to know someone that does, what has been known in the past, to be men's work; and two would show pictures of both men and women in the same career positions. One respondent said she would tell the girl that doing certain jobs depends on her physical ability.

Respondents were asked, "How would you answer if a child asked, "Why aren't there any boy (men) teachers at my school?" The first response from all respondents was,

"That's a hard one." Seventeen respondents answered that
they would tell the child that none had applied for the job.
Five would tell the child it is because that in the past,
that men did not work in those kinds of jobs, four would say
the job does not pay enough money to get men to do it, and
two said they would tell the child it is because of both low
wages and no man has applied. One preschool indicated that
they have had three men working on their staff at various
times. One respondent said she would tell the child she
does not know why men do not work there, one said kids are
apprehensive about men, one said men do not feel they would
fit in, one said women like to teach more, and one
respondent said she would tell the child that men teach
older children.

The final question of the interview asked if there are
any jobs or activities that a girl/woman should do that a
boy/man should not, and vice versa. Eighteen respondents
said that there is no difference and both genders are
capable of doing anything. Seven responded by saying that
it depends on physical ability, and six indicated that there
should be a role differentiation. Men should be involved in
contact sports, truck driving, ditch digging, police, fire
fighting, construction work, and ministry. One respondent
would prefer men not be cosmotologists. Women should be

mothers, nurses, preschool teachers, elementary teachers; and avoid extreme physical labor, being preachers, being President of the United States, and some contact sports. One respondent said gender should not be a factor, as long as the person can do the full job without help from the opposite gender. One respondent said she is not sure about men being nurses, otherwise, gender should not be a factor.

## BSRI Findings

Forty-one individuals were given the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) to determine how they perceived themselves according to sixty personality characteristics. The BSRI contains twenty masculine adjectives, twenty feminine adjectives, and twenty neutral adjectives. Only thirty three were tabulated and scored because eight respondents were not available for the follow up interveiw.

The present study determined classifications based on median scores developed from the participants responses. Those median scores were tabulated according to the coded preschools, as well as the overall median score for all participants (see Table 2). The individual tally per participant was reviewed and classifications were made (see Table 3) according to masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated ratings, as coined by Bem (1974). Of the

thirty three respondents, eight received a masculine rating, seven received a feminine rating, ten were androgynous, and eight were undifferentiated.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify the development of gender role identity in preschool age children by studying the caregivers in the preschool setting. Two research questions were formulated for the purpose of categorizing data collected in this study. Those questions were: How do caregivers in a preschool setting affect gender role stereotypes? and What are key communication events that may create or perpetuate gender role stereotypes in the preschool setting?

In this study the results indicated caregivers in the preschool setting did not see gender roles and gender role stereotypes to be of major concern to children on the preschool level of development. However, this may be an indication of unawareness of on the part of caregivers of prevailing gender role attitudes of children, or perhaps an example of social desirability.

The majority of the caregivers interviewed initially indicated there were no prevailing activities or areas of play that can be designated as gender dominated at the preschool. However, a number of those same respondents indicated in another question that there is a difference

between a girl's toy and a boy's toy. This contradiction
may indicate that, while no restrictions are put on the
children as to where, how, or what they are allowed to play
with, some caregivers still recognize traditional gender
typed play rules.

There appears to be no significance of the self-ratings
on the BSRI to the questions concerning gender dominated
activities. Those that indicated that there are activities
dominated by one or the other gender were a mixture of
feminine, masculine, androgynous, and undifferentiated
individuals.

Caregivers had mixed reactions on whether children
verbalize gender role stereotypes. Eighteen of the thirty-
three respondents indicated that children do gender type,
but felt it is a subconscious activity of children at this
level. This stereotyping can be attributed to parental
influence, according to the respondents.

According to responses provided by caregivers,
stereotypes are not perpetuated by workers in their
preschool settings. They reported that traditional
stereotyping of certain toys, clothing colors, and
activities do not apply. However, in response to the
question about the definitions of boys' toys and girls'
toys, nearly half of the respondents did provide their

definition of what each toy should be.  This is evidence of the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.

Concerning group play, the majority of respondents indicated children are allowed to form their own groups for play, regardless of their gender.  There are limits on group size, but children are encouraged to play together in all activity areas.  There was no evidence of gender role stereotypes in group play.

Children are discouraged from ordering, or bossing, one another around.  Caregivers indicated that, while children do have a tendency to order other children to get or do things for them, this is a matter of laziness and not a gender issue.

Thirty-one respondents said they would not allow this practice, but two said they would not intercede if it were to occur.  Interestingly, two respondents did say it is more common for girls than boys to order others to do something.  By indicating this differentiation, this becomes an example of gender role stereotyping.

In the category of career goals, caregivers responded that there are no careers that should be exclusively male or female.  All of the caregivers interviewed expressed the importance of teaching children, even at the preschool age, that boys and girls (men and women) do share jobs.  One

respondent did indicate that physical ability is a factor for effectively performing certain jobs and tasks.

However, in a question also related to career goals, respondents did express a need for gender differentiation. Although eighteen respondents did indicate there should be no differentiation, the remaining fifteen provided some guidelines for gender appropriate jobs and activities. This contradiction is evidence of gender role stereotyping.

Concerning male teachers on the preschool level, the responses were mixed, but a number of respondents did indicate that traditional stereotypes were a major factor. A number of the respondents said that they would tell a child, if asked, that men do not work at their school because; men do not apply for the job, low wages, men do not feel they fit in, and they teach older children. These responses can be interpreted as gender stereotypes.

Implications

The responses provided by the caregivers in the preschool settings did not appear to strongly perpetuate gender stereotypes. Although there were some stereotypical responses, many respondents did not display stereotypical attitudes. In fact, many of the questions were answered with the same response.

There are a number of reasons why the teachers and workers answered many of the questions with the same response. First, the Hawthorne Effect may have been a factor, since the respondents knew they were being interviewed for a research project. They perhaps answered the questions with what they felt were the appropriate responses, rather than their actual reactions. This may account for the contradictions in the categories concerning toys and career goals.

Second, the caregivers are trained for this position in the preschool and perhaps are aware, because of their training, that gender role stereotyping in the school is undesirable, especially given the large number of children in the school that come from dual career parents.

Third, the questions themselves may have evoked similar responses because of their simplistic nature. Although, contradicting this theory, two very similar questions were answered quite differently by some respondents. They appeared to not recognize the similarity of the questions.

Another factor for consideration is the limitation of the study itself. Three east central Illinois communities were studied, including only eight preschool settings. Given this rural, predominantly agricultural setting, the responses perhaps were similar because of the prevailing attitudes of the area.

The BSRI ratings appeared to have little or no significance when matched to the caregiver's personal interview responses. The majority of the questions were answered in the same manner, but those individuals' BSRI ratings were mixed. No significant pattern emerged, linking feminine or masculine personalities to gender stereotyping.

Future Research

Given the limitations of this study, future research in the area of gender identity development and prevailing gender stereotypes is imperative.

This study was limited to specifically three communities in east central Illinois. In order to draw conclusions based on gender roles and stereotypes, other geographic regions should be studied, including communities of varying populations. This would include large metropolitan areas, as well as rural communities. Educational and career opportunities, as well as general lifestyles, would perhaps provide insight for gender identity development.

Another interesting area of study could include caregivers in the preschool setting rating one another in terms of BSRI characteristics. How you see yourself is not always how others see you. In fact, it may be more

revealing to compare several respondents' reactions to one another. Those ratings may or may not confirm the self-ratings of caregivers. In any case, children are responding to their own perceptions of meaning, not the caregivers'.

An area that should not be ignored is parental influence on gender identity development. While this has been a major area of study in the past, it should continue to be of concern, given the changes in family roles in the past two decades. Interviewing, similar to that performed in this study, as well as BSRI ratings, would provide data that could be compared to and contrasted with the data collected in the present study.

Children could also be studied, and perhaps interviewed, in order to gain direct information about their attitudes concerning gender identity and perceived roles. The questions addressed in an interview would have to be simple and direct, i.e. Will you name some of your favorite colors you like to wear? Great care would need to be taken in order to not stereotypically influence the child(ren).

While the BSRI rating procedure has been found to be both a reliable and valid means to determine individual personality ratings, the scale could be modified to simplify results. The third adjective, signifying androgyny, could

be dropped in order for only masculine and feminine adjectives to be scored. This would clarify the scale, yet still allow ratings of masculinity, femininity, androgyny, and undifferentiation to emerge.

Perhaps the major factor for future research would be to study male responses to both interviews and BSRI scoring. This study was limited to females, only because no male caregivers were present in the eight settings included in this research project.

As indicated in this study, men rarely pursue careers in the area of child care. If male subjects were included in this study, or another study of similar form, the results may have been very different. It is important to consider the attitudes of both men and women to determine the status of gender roles and gender stereotypes being perpetuated in the children of our future.

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**TABLES**

Table 1

Categories of Interview Questions:

Gender Dominated Activities

Are there any activities dominated by either gender here at the preschool?

| No (23) | | Yes (10) |
|---------|---------|----------|
| PETA | BBTA | PETB |
| PETC | CCTB | PETD |
| BBTB | CCHD | BBTD |
| BBTC | CCTG | PWTC |
| PWTA | SPTF | LLTC |
| PWTB | SPTA | LLTB |
| PWTD | SPTC | SJTB |
| PWTE | SPTD | SPTB |
| PWTF | SPTE | SPHG |
| LLTA | LSTB | LSTA |
| LLTD | LSTC | |
| SJTA | | |

## Verbalization of Stereotypes

Do you notice stereotypes being verbalized among the children?

| Yes | No | Some | Not Much | Too young |
|-----|-----|------|----------|-----------|
| (10) | (13) | (5) | (3) | (2) |
| | | | | |
| PWTB | LLTA | SJTA | LSTC | CCTG |
| PWTC | LLTC | SJTB | LSTB | SPTF |
| PETB | LLTB | PETD | SPTB | |
| LSTA | LLTD | CCHD | | |
| SPTC | PWTA | BBTC | | |
| SPTD | PWTD | | | |
| SPTE | PWTE | | | |
| SPHG | PWTF | | | |
| BBTB | PETA | | | |
| BBTD | PETC | | | |
| | BBTA | | | |
| | CCTB | | | |
| | SPTA | | | |

Caregivers Perpetuating Gender Stereotypes

What would you do if a girl was playing with a truck and a
boy wanted to play with it?  A doll?  Play in kitchen area?
Building toys/activities?

Who was playing with toy first (share) (33)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| PETA | PETB | PETD |
| PETC | SJTA | SJTB |
| LLTA | LLTB | LLTC |
| LLTD | BBTA | CCTB |
| CCHD | CCTG | SPTF |
| BBTB | BBTC | BBTD |
| LSTC | LSTB | LSTA |
| SPTA | SPTB | SPTC |
| SPTD | SPTE | SPHG |
| PWTA | PWTB | PWTC |
| PWTD | PWTE | PWTF |

What would you do if a boy wore a pink shirt to school and other boys (or chidren) teased him?

| Defend color(24) | | Looks nice(5) | Manners(3) | Ignore(1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BBTB | PWTE | PETC | BBTD | PETB |
| BBTC | PWTF | PETD | CCHD | |
| LLTA | LSTC | BBTA | LSTB | |
| LLTB | LSTA | CCTB | | |
| LLTC | PETA | SPTF | | |
| LLTD | SJTA | | | |
| CCTG | SJTB | | | |
| PWTA | SPTA | | | |
| PWTB | SPTB | | | |
| PWTC | SPTC | | | |
| PWTD | SPTD | | | |
| SPTE | SPHG | | | |

What would you do if a girl brought a Hot Wheels to school and children teased her?

<u>Vehicles are for everyone</u>(20)  <u>Girls can play with everything</u>(8)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| LSTA | BBTB | BBTD |
| LSTC | PETC | PETD |
| PETA | LLTC | LLTB |
| SJTA | PWTA | LLTD |
| SJTB | PWTB | BBTA |
| SPTB | PWTC | CCTB |
| SPTC | SPTD | CCHD |
| PWTD | SPTE | SPTF |
| SPHG | PWTE | |
| PWTF | SPTA | |

<u>Learn about transportation</u>(3)     <u>Manners</u>(1)   <u>Ask why</u>(1)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| BBTC | LSTB | PETB |
| LLTA | | |
| CCTG | | |

How would you define a boy's toy?  A girl's toy?


No separate definition(17)                Separate definition(16)


| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| SJTA | SJTB | SPTD | SPTE |
| SPTA | SPTB | SPHG | PETD |
| SPTC | PETA | PETC | PETD |
| BBTA | CCTG | CCHD | CCTB |
| SPTF | BBTC | LSTA | BBTB |
| LLTA | LLTB | BBTD | LLTD |
| LLTC | PWTC | PWTE | PWTD |
| PWTA | LSTB | PWTB | PWTF |
| LSTC | | | |

Group Play

If a girl insisted on playing in a group made up of boys
that did not want her to play, how would you handle it?

Encourage to share area(18)    Divert attention to another area(8)


LLTB        BBTB                LLTA

LLTD        BBTC                PWTD

PWTA        BBTD                PWTE

PWTB        SJTB                PETC

PWTC        BBTA                SPTA

PETB        CCTB                SPHG

SPTC        LSTC                LSTB

SPTE        SPTD                SPTF

LSTA        SJTA


Depends on boys(3)             Depends on area(2)

LLTC                              PWTF

CCHD                              PETA

CCTG


Ignore(1)                      Have her make lunch(1)

SPTB                              PETD

If a boy told a girl to get something (a toy) for him, would you intercede?

| Watch to see if kids work it out(13) | | Tell him to get it himself(9) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| LLTA | SJTB | LLTC | SPTB |
| BBTB | SPTA | LLTD | PWTA |
| BBTC | SPTC | LSTB | PWTC |
| PETD | SPTE | BBTB | PWTD |
| PETC | SPHG | PETA | |
| PETB | PWTF | | |
| CCTB | | | |

| Explain manners(4) | Do not order others(2) |
|---|---|
| LLTB | LSTC |
| BBTA | CCTG |
| SPTD | |
| PWTE | |

| Intercede-girls are usually bossy(2) | Do not intercede(2) |
|---|---|
| LSTA | SJTA |
| CCHD | PWTB |

She may want you to get her something(1)

SPTF

## Career Goals

If you heard a little girl say, "I can't do _____because boys do that," how would you respond?

| Girls can do anything(25) | | | Men and women share jobs(3) |
|---|---|---|---|
| PETD* | PWTA | SPTC | PETB |
| PETA | PWTB | SPTD | CCTB |
| LLTA | PWTC | SPTE | CCHD |
| LLTB | PWTD | SPHG | |
| LLTD | PWTE | LSTA | |
| BBTD | PWTF | LSTC | |
| BBTB | SJTA | SPTB | |
| BBTA | SJTB | | |
| SPTF | SPTA | | |

| Pretend to know someone(2) | Show pictures of both(2) |
|---|---|
| PETC | LLTC |
| BBTC | CCTG |

### Depends on physical ability(1)

LSTB

* Indicates respondent felt a female may need to work harder if the job has traditionally been a man's job.

How would you answer if a child asked, "Why aren't there any boy (men) teachers at my school?"

| None has applied for the job(17) | | Because of past stereotypes (5) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| PWTC | LLTB | PWTF |
| PWTE | LLTC | PWTD |
| SPTA | BBTB | SPTC |
| CCTB | BBTC | SPTE |
| CCHD | BBTD | PETC |
| PETA | LSTA | |
| PETD | LSTC | |
| SJTB | LSTB | |
| LLTA | | |

| Not enough money for men with families(4) | Nobody applied and low wages(2) |
| --- | --- |
| PWTA | BBTA |
| SPTB | CCTG |
| SPHG | Do not know why(1) |
| SJTA | PWTB |

| Men do not feel they would fit in(1) | Kids are apprehensive about about men(1) |
| --- | --- |
| SPTF | LLTD |

| Women like to teach more(1) | Men teach older children (1) |
| --- | --- |
| PETB | SPTD |

Do you think there are any jobs/activities that a girl should do that a boy shouldn't?  Vice versa?

<u>No</u>(18)                                          <u>Yes</u>(6)

SPTA      PETA                              SPHG

SPTB      PETB                              SJTA

SPTD      BBTA                              PETD

SPTE      CCTG                              LSTC

LLTA      SPTF                              LSTB

LLTB      BBTC                              BBTB

LLTC      PWTE

LLTD      PWTC

SJTB      PWTB

<u>Depends on physical ability</u>(7)    <u>Not if the person can</u>
                                        <u>do the full job</u>(1)

SPTC      PWTD                              CCTB

PETC      PWTA

LSTA      PWTF

BBTD

<u>No, but not sure about men being nurses</u>

(1)

CCHD

Table 2

BSRI MEDIAN SCORES

| PRESCHOOL | MALE | FEMALE | ANDROGYNOUS |
|-----------|------|--------|-------------|
| BB | 3.375 | 3.95 | 3.325 |
| CC | 3.6166 | 3.9833 | 3.40 |
| LL | 3.9875 | 3.6125 | 3.5875 |
| LS | 3.50 | 3.7166 | 3.45 |
| PE | 3.6625 | 4.0825 | 3.3812 |
| PW | 3.0416 | 3.50 | 3.15 |
| SJ | 3.525 | 4.225 | 3.575 |
| SP | 3.7142 | 4.0642 | 3.3642 |
| | | | |
| MEDIAN SCORES | 3.5528 | 3.8917 | 3.4041 |

Table 3

## BSRI SELF-RATINGS

### RESULTS

| RESPONDENT'S CODE | RATING |
|---|---|
| BBTA | Androgynous |
| BBTB | Feminine |
| BBTC | Undifferentiated |
| BBTD | Feminine |
| CCTB | Androgynous |
| CCHD | Feminine |
| CCTG | Androgynous |
| LLTA | Male |
| LLTB | Androgynous |
| LLTC | Male |
| LLTD | Male |
| LSTA | Male |
| LSTB | Male |
| LSTC | Feminine |
| PETA | Androgynous |
| PETB | Undifferentiated |
| PETC | Androgynous |
| PETD | Feminine |
| PWTA | Male |
| PWTB | Undifferentiated |
| PWTC | Undifferentiated |
| PWTD | Undifferentiated |
| PWTE | Undifferentiated |
| PWTF | Undifferentiated |
| SJTA | Male |
| SJTB | Feminine |
| SPTA | Androgynous |
| SPTB | Feminine |
| SPTC | Androgynous |
| SPTD | Androgynous |
| SPTE | Undifferentiated |
| SPTF | Male |
| SPHG | Androgynous |

BSRI SELF-RATINGS

RESULTS

Those Respondents Not Interviewed

RESPONDENT'S CODE                                    RATING

        CCTC                                 Androgynous
        CCHE                                 Male
        CCHF                                 Androgynous
        SPTH                                 Androgynous
        SPTI                                 Undifferentiated
        SPTJ                                 Male
        SPTK                                 Male
        SPHL                                 Feminine

APPENDIXES

Appendix A

An Adaptation of:

BSRI

Sandra Lipsitz Bem

1. Which of the following categories best represents your age?

   A.   under 20 yrs.   B.   20-30 yrs.   C.   31-40 yrs.

          D.   41-50 yrs.       E.   over 50 yrs.

2. Which category best represents your length of service with this preschool/day care?

   A.   under 1 year   B.   1-3 years   C.   4-5 years

          D.   6-10 years       E.   over 10 years

In this inventory, you will be presented with sixty personality characteristics. You are to use those characteristics in order to describe yourself in the day care center. That is, you are to indicate, on a scale from 1 to 5, how true of you these characteristics are, at work. Please do not leave any characteristics unmarked.

Example: _____Sly

   Mark an A if it is never or almost never true that you are sly.

   Mark a B if it is sometimes but infrequently true that you are sly.

   Mark a C if it is occasionally true that you are sly.

   Mark a D if it is often true that you are sly.

Mark an E if it is always or almost always true that you are sly.

_____3.  Self-reliant

_____4.  Yielding

_____5.  Helpful

_____6.  Defends own beliefs

_____7.  Cheerful

_____8.  Moody

_____9.  Independent

_____10. Shy

_____11. Conscientious

_____12. Athletic

_____13. Affectionate

_____14. Theatrical

_____15. Assertive

_____16. Flatterable

_____17. Happy

_____18. Has strong personality

_____19. Loyal

_____20. Unpredictable

_____21. Forceful

_____22. Feminine

_____23. Reliable

_____24. Analytical

_____25. Sympathetic

_____26. Jealous

_____27. Has leadership
         ablilties

_____28. Sensitive to the needs
         of others

_____29. Truthful

_____30. Willing to take risks

_____31. Understanding

_____32. Secretive

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never or Almost Never True | Sometimes But Infrequently True | Occasionally True | Often True | Always or Almost Always true |

_____33. Makes decisions
        easily

_____34. Compassionate

_____35. Sincere

_____36. Self-sufficient

_____37. Eager to soothe
        hurt feelings

_____38. Conceited

_____39. Dominant

_____40. Soft spoken

_____41. Likable

_____42. Masculine

_____43. Warm

_____44. Solemn

_____45. Willing to take
        a stand

_____46. Tender

_____47. Friendly

_____48. Aggressive

_____49. Gullible

_____50. Inefficient

_____51. Acts as a leader

_____52. Childlike

_____53. Adaptable

_____54. Individualistic

_____55. Does not use harsh
        language

_____56. Unsystematic

_____57. Competitive

_____58. Loves Children

_____59. Tactful

_____60. Ambitious

_____61. Gentle

_____62. Conventional

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Appendix B

<u>INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</u>   There are no right/wrong answers

1.  Are there any activities at the preschool dominated by either gender?

2.  Do you notice stereotypes being verbalized among the children?

3.  What would you do if a girl was playing with a truck and a boy wanted to play with it?  A doll?  In the kitchen area?  With building toys/activities?

4.  What would you do if a boy wore a pink shirt to school and other boys/children teased him?

5.  If a girl insisted on playing in a group made up of boys that did not want her to play, how would you handle it?

6.  If a boy told (ordered) a girl to get something for him, would you intercede?

7.  If you heard a little girl say, "I can't do_____ because boys do that," how would you respond?

8.  How would you answer if a child asked, "Why aren't there any boy (men) teachers at my school?"

9.  Do you think there are any jobs/activities that a girl should do that a boy shouldn't?  Vice versa?

10. How would you define a boy's toy?   A girl's toy?

Appendix C

Assigned Codes

| PRESCHOOL CODES | RESPONDENT CODES |
|---|---|
| BB | BBTA |
| | BBTB |
| | BBTC |
| | BBTD |
| CC | CCTB |
| | CCTC |
| | CCHD |
| | CCHE |
| | CCHF |
| | CCTG |
| LL | LLTA |
| | LLTB |
| | LLTC |
| | LLTD |
| LS | LSTA |
| | LSTB |
| | LSTC |
| PE | PETA |
| | PETB |
| | PETC |
| | PETD |
| PW | PWTA |
| | PWTB |
| | PWTC |
| | PWTD |
| | PWTE |
| | PWTF |
| SJ | SJTA |
| | SJTB |
| SP | SPTA |
| | SPTB |
| | SPTC |
| | SPTD |
| | SPTE |
| | SPTF |
| | SPHG |
| | SPTH |
| | SPTI |
| | SPTJ |
| | SPTK |
| | SPHL |

Appendix D

SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

1.  Please pencil, your first name only, in the upper right hand corner of your computer sheet (example above), and place a T, if you are a teacher, and H, if you are a helper/worker, after your first name.

2.  Disregard the name space on the computer sheet itself.

3.  Your name will not be used in the reporting of these results due to confidentiality.

4.  Begin the survey at space #1 and complete through #62.


The second part of this study requires a short interview. Due to the time constraints at the preschool, please indicate below if you are willing to submit to a short telephone interview, and if so, when is the best time to reach you?


Yes_____        No_____        Best Time_____

                                            Phone #_____


This is a viable research project and your assistance is sincerely appreciated. Thank you for your time and effort.