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ATTITUDES TOWARD THE FEMININITY AND ACCEPTABILITY  
OF FEMALE SPORT PARTICIPATION

by

Patricia Mary Barnaba

An Abstract

of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science in the School  
of Health, Physical Education,  
and Recreation at  
Ithaca College

September 1983

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Veronica L. Eskridge

## ABSTRACT

College students' attitudes toward the femininity and acceptability of female sport participation were investigated. Subjects viewed 18 color slides depicting Metheny's (1965) concepts of striking and nonstriking sport movements (i.e., softball skills) as they related to her assumptions of "femininity" and "acceptability." The subjects were 120 undergraduate students enrolled in Ithaca College, Ithaca, New York, who were classified according to gender and athletic affiliation. These classifications yielded 20 female athletes, 20 male athletes, 20 female activity-oriented individuals, 20 male activity-oriented individuals, 20 female nonathletes, and 20 male nonathletes. Subjects were randomly assigned to each standard, i.e., femininity and acceptability. Since the testing instrument was especially designed for this investigation, test-retest reliability was calculated for the femininity standard ( $r = .95$ ) and the acceptability standard ( $r = .94$ ). Subjects' striking slide choices were classified into four categories: high, high-medium, low-medium, and low. These categories described subjects' attitudes toward women's softball behavior. Chi-square analyses were used to assess the relationship of attitudes toward women's softball behavior and the independent variables of sex, athletic status, and femininity/acceptability standards. Nine of the 16 hypotheses reached statistical significance. Differences were found in attitudes toward women's softball behavior within the femininity/acceptability standards only among the females with the female athletes accounting for the greatest statistical significance. Differences were found within femininity/acceptability standards among the athletes but not among the activity-oriented individuals and nonathletes. Differences were revealed between the sexes in attitudes toward women's softball behavior. The greatest

statistical differences between the sexes occurred with the activity-oriented individuals and the nonathletes. Significant differences between male and female attitudes toward women's softball behavior occurred in both femininity/acceptability standards. Further chi-square analyses revealed no significant relationship between attitudes toward women's softball behavior and the three divisions of athletic status. Metheny's (1965) theory of femininity in female sport participation was not upheld because college students considered so-called unfeminine sport movements to be acceptable athletic behavior for females. Females and athletes possessed the most liberal attitudes when choosing what is considered a more feminine or more acceptable athletic behavior for a female. Females and males held different attitudes regarding what is considered feminine and acceptable. Females exhibited more liberal attitudes, and males maintained traditional, conservative points of view. Lastly, it was concluded that the activity-oriented individuals, who possessed liberal attitudes toward the female athlete, were indeed a separate athletic dimension that has not been previously researched.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE FEMININITY AND ACCEPTABILITY  
OF FEMALE SPORT PARTICIPATION

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of the School of Health, Physical  
Education, and Recreation  
Ithaca College

---

In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science

---

by

Patricia Mary Barnaba

September 1983

ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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MASTER OF SCIENCE THESIS

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submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

Sport has been traditionally associated with masculinity. Consequently, the more a male demonstrates his athletic prowess, the more masculine he appears to society. In contrast, sport has not been perceived as an area that would enhance a female's gender association. Perceptions and attitudes toward women in sport have often been colored by the traditional concept of sex roles and femininity (Fisher, Genovese, Morris, & Morris, 1978). Subsequently, to be feminine means to be passive, weak, supportive, nurturant, narcissistic, emotional, futile, and dependent (Boslooper & Hayes, 1973; Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, & Vogel, 1970; de Beauvoir, 1952; Deutsch, 1944; Horney, 1967; Klein, 1971; Parsons & Bales, 1955; Roberts, 1976). Therefore, to take an active role in sport and compete detracts from society's image of femininity, a fact which has probably prevented many females from exploring and developing their athletic potential.

However, until adolescence, girls are not usually discouraged from developing their athletic abilities (Balazs, 1975; Bohan, 1973; Boslooper & Hayes, 1973; Cratty, 1967; Klein, 1971; Tyler, 1973). It is at this time that a girl learns that she had better become typically feminine, or she will not reap all the benefits of her femininity (e.g., peer and social acceptance). Therefore, she is faced with deciding whether or not playing athletic games will either enhance or limit her popularity. Many adolescent girls find this decision an easy one, and they enjoy athletic involvement through participation in those activities that may represent society's perceptions of femininity.

Traditionally, one example of such behavior has been that of the

cheerleader. Here, the female could be athletic but in a supportive sense to male participants. To stand on the sidelines and cheer for the male who is testing his masculinity in the sport arena has long been associated with stereotypic female behavior. Accordingly, all of her actions are totally dependent upon the male's interests and involvement. She is there because of him. This passive, supportive role is in complete accordance with what is considered feminine (de Beauvoir, 1952). However, the cheerleader not only typifies feminine behavior, but also is in itself an athletic experience. Many of the movements are, in themselves, physically demanding and require a definite talent not dissimilar to those of the gymnast.

Even through gymnastics a female can express her athletic needs but in a feminine-looking manner. She may perform very difficult and strenuous athletic movements; the needs of strength, flexibility, and power to execute these moves are disguised by the overall picture of grace, beauty, and femininity. Therefore, this sport involvement may be considered acceptable and not detrimental to the feminine image.

Nevertheless, many sports have been classified as acceptable or unacceptable for female participation by their adherence to what society considers feminine (Metheny, 1965). According to Metheny, sports that maintain the feminine image and would, therefore, be acceptable for female participation are characterized by one or more of the following criteria: (a) the body is projected in aesthetically pleasing patterns, (b) the resistance of a light object is overcome with a light implement, (c) the velocity and maneuverability of the body is increased by the use of some manufactured device, and (d) a spatial barrier with the opponent is used in face-to-face forms of

competition. Consequently, swimming, diving, skiing, figure skating, archery, golf, fencing, bowling, squash, badminton, tennis, and volleyball were all included in Metheny's acceptability concept.

Interestingly enough, Metheny classified gymnastics into the second category of activities that may be appropriate but not wholly appropriate to maintain the feminine image. Many track and field events were also classified in the second category due to a display of strength in controlling bodily movements as well as projecting the body through space over moderate distances for short periods of time.

Metheny termed activities as being totally unacceptable if they included the following characteristics: (a) resistance of an opponent is overcome by bodily contact, (b) resistance of a heavy object is overcome by direct application of bodily force, (c) the body is projected into or through space over long distances or for extended periods of time, and (d) cooperative face-to-face opposition occurs in situations in which some body contact may occur. Accordingly, unacceptable sport activities were boxing, judo, wrestling, weight-lifting, hammer throw, pole vault, longer foot races, and all team games except volleyball.

Due to society's concepts of femininity as well as the "intrusion" into the male domain of sport, female athletes have been faced with a degree of discrimination and oppression that probably surpasses that which women encounter in any other areas of American society. Female athletes have not been accepted fully because they have been perceived as a threat by both men and women (Sales, 1978; Scott, 1974).

In most instances, it has taken legal steps to provide girls and women with opportunities for sport participation. Legislation, such as Title IX, has been passed as a direct result of the women's move-

ment and has evoked a sensitivity and concern for the female athlete as well as recognizing the significance of her sport involvement (Greendorfer, 1978; Lewis, 1978). The women's movement has also altered society's restrictions on the roles to which women must adhere. Stereotypic sex roles and sex-role orientation have undergone an evolution as to the importance of developing cross sex-typed behavior for survival in our present society. Since more women than ever before are heads of households, the need for women to develop more typically "masculine" behaviors is apparent so that they can survive not only for themselves and their dependents, but also for society in general.

Feminists, today, believe that competitive sports bring about a sense of mastery and accomplishment that has a profound impact on the rest of their lives (Rohrbaugh, 1979). Now, more and more females are experiencing increased sport participation, which can contribute to their effectiveness, happiness, and success in life (Snyder & Spreitzer, 1976). Just as sport has helped to develop the competitive spirit and achievement motive in males, it, too, should enhance these behaviors in females.

Although society is beginning to realize the importance of athletic competition for females, restrictions are still placed on some female athletes. Girls who enjoy those traditional masculine-type sports still lend themselves to social disapproval. For example, the sport of baseball (softball), which involves many masculine-like movements as defined by Metheny (1965), has long been totally unacceptable for females. The reasons for this may be that the nature and associations made with the game have had such masculine overtones that any female participation has been regarded as an invasion of the male territory.



Society has not been kind to those females who decide to invade this "holy ground" and participate in the game. For example in 1972, a New Jersey 12-year old girl tried out for the boys' Little League team and was denied the right to play solely because she was female (Felshin, 1974a; Michener, 1976). Although Maria Pepe was a better player than many of the boys, she was still denied the right to play in Little League due to the boys-only policy in the national charter confirmed by the United States Congress.

The case was brought before the New Jersey Civil Rights Division, and, in 1973, a decision was made in favor of Miss Pepe based on sex discrimination. Since the Little League offered itself as a public accomodation, it fell under the provisions of New Jersey law. If girls are capable, they must be allowed to compete for a place on the team and play in that team's games. The Little League did not accept the decision, tried several appeals, and even threatened to suspend play rather than admit girls. Their efforts were all for naught because, in 1974, the United States Congress revised the Little League charter to permit girls to play and also amended the Little League's goals from instilling manhood to contributing to citizenship and sportsmanship (Felshin, 1974a; Michener, 1976).

Although legal ramifications have provided females the right to play baseball or softball, social restrictions have not altered due to the nature of the game. The majority of skills involved are seen as typically masculine (Metheny, 1965). Required skills are batting a ball, running the bases, throwing with speed and accuracy, catching those throws, sliding into base, tagging and being tagged, and engaging in various situations where body contact is unavoidable.

Metheny (1965) classified softball as an activity not at all appropriate for the retention of the feminine image, not only because it is a team sport but also because the skills require strength, speed, and face-to-face confrontations in which body contact may result.

Since the women's movement has done much to free females from various cultural shackles, it would seem that, today, whatever females choose to do athletically should be acceptable without any reservation. However, society does not change its attitudes all that quickly. The end is not yet a reality to where the female athlete is held in the same regard as her male counterpart.

Exactly to what extent society has adjusted its characteristic attitudes is still being ascertained. The extent to which college students' attitudes have changed since Metheny's (1965) interpretations of female sport involvement is the point of contention for this present study. Do one's peers still ostracize the female softball player and consider her involvement detrimental to her feminine image and social acceptance? Do present day students agree with Metheny's classifications of those totally unfeminine athletic skills?

Due to their own society-created image of femininity, males, more so than females, may consider those softball skills that appear more masculine as unacceptable for female participation. This may also be due to their reluctance to share this athletic experience with females since sport has been traditionally male. Athletic involvement may contribute to liberal attitudes toward female sport participation. The intensity of an individual's activity-orientation in sport should lead to favorable attitudes toward females performing those softball skills that appear masculine.

This present study will assess attitudes toward the femininity and acceptability of women's softball behavior in relation to sex and degree of sport involvement differences.

#### Scope of Problem

This study was designed to investigate Metheny's (1965) assertions concerning attitudes toward females' sport behavior. Also examined was Metheny's assumption that the words "femininity" and "acceptability" equally convey synonymous feelings and attitudes toward females' sport behavior. In order to ascertain attitudes towards female sport behavior, photographs were utilized to illustrate Metheny's concepts of striking and nonstriking sport movements as they related to her assumptions of "femininity" and "acceptability." Eighteen color slides that depicted a female performing striking and nonstriking softball skills were shown to subjects who were asked to classify the slides as either feminine or acceptable. Both male and female undergraduates ( $N = 120$ ) from Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York were tested to determine whether gender orientation affected an individual's attitudes. The subjects were further classified according to three athletic status groups: athletes ( $n = 40$ ), activity-oriented individuals ( $n = 40$ ), and nonathletes ( $n = 40$ ). These classifications were utilized to ascertain whether different attitudes existed among people with varying experiences in sport.

#### Statement of Problem

This study was designed to test several aspects of Metheny's (1965) theory of femininity in sport participation by women. The main aspect concerned the assertion that skills involving striking actions are less feminine than those involving nonstriking actions. The appropriateness of interchanging the terms "feminine" and "acceptable" was investigated. In addition, the effects of gender and athletic affiliation on attitudes

toward females' sport behavior were examined. A test of 18 color slides depicting a female performing striking and nonstriking skills associated with the sport of softball was used to assess subjects' attitudes. Each slide depicting a striking skill was paired with a slide depicting a nonstriking skill for the basis of subjects' choices as to which skill appeared more feminine or more acceptable.

#### Theoretical Hypotheses

Sport has long been associated with the masculine characteristics of strength and power. Metheny (1965) theorized that athletic movements of a striking nature detracted from the feminine image and are, therefore, considered socially unacceptable for female participation. Metheny interpreted the words "feminine" and "acceptable" to actually be synonymous in relation to women participating in sport. On that basis, it was hypothesized that athletic movements of a striking nature will be judged by subjects as both less feminine and less acceptable than those skills of a nonstriking nature.

Men have traditionally associated sport with their masculinity. Therefore, it was hypothesized that men will be more conservative and judge striking movements as both less feminine and less acceptable than nonstriking movements.

It might be argued that involvement in sport tends to minimize the importance of retaining one's feminine image because attention is directed more to the participation than to cultural "expectations." Athletic affiliation may also contribute to a more liberal attitude toward the female's participation in sports traditionally associated with males. Therefore, it was hypothesized that athletes will judge striking movements as both more feminine and more acceptable than the nonathletes.

### Assumptions of Study

The design of this study necessitated the following assumptions:

1. All subjects followed the directions they were given.
2. The test administrator's gender had no biasing effect on the subjects' responses.
3. Boredom and/or fatigue had no role in the response patterns.
4. The slides accurately conveyed the striking/nonstriking dichotomy.

### Definitions of Terms

The following are the stipulatively defined terms used in this study:

Acceptability. The cue word given to half the subjects to represent the concept or perception they were to use in the judgment of their paired slide choices.

Activity-oriented Individuals. Those males and females who indicated that they were involved in sports or an athletic-like activity at least three times a week but were not on an athletic team at the time of this investigation.

Athletes. Those individuals who indicated at the time of data collection that they had participated on an organized athletic team at any level during the 1977-78 academic year.

Femininity. The cue word given to half the subjects to represent the concept or perception they were to use in the judgment of their paired slide choices.

Nonathletes. Those individuals who indicated at the time of data collection that they had not participated on an organized athletic team at any level and were not involved in sports or athletic-like activity at least three times a week during the 1977-78 academic year.

Nonstriking Skills. Those depicted softball skills in which force application and power do not appear obvious (e.g., throwing, catching, and running).

Striking Skills. Those softball skills that depicted the use of force, the hitting of an object with an implement, and person-to-person confrontation including body contact (e.g., batting, tagging, and sliding into base).

#### Delimitations of Study

The delimitations set for this investigation were as follows:

1. Subjects were 120 volunteer participants from Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York during the 1978 spring and summer semesters.
2. Projected 35mm color slides were used for data collection and were the only means of assessing attitudes toward women's softball behavior.
3. Only those depicted striking and nonstriking skills from the sport of softball were utilized.

#### Limitations of Study

The following were the limitations of this study:

1. Data were not collected on all combinations of slide pairings.
2. The data collection tool was a new tool. Thus, reliability and/or validity had not been previously established.
3. The results apply only to the sample used, which represented a cross-section of the undergraduate population at Ithaca College during the 1977-78 academic year.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study examined attitudes towards women's participation in various sport situations in regard to which striking and nonstriking softball skills are considered feminine and acceptable by college students. This chapter will review the literature found relevant to this investigation so that a basis will be provided for further reference and discussion. The review will be presented under the following headings: (a) psychosocial aspects of femininity, (b) femininity and sport involvement, and (c) appropriate feminine sport involvement.

#### Psychosocial Aspects of Femininity

##### Defining Femininity

The term "femininity" has been defined in numerous ways throughout the course of time, usually in juxtaposition to the term "masculinity" and rarely as unique and independent of any masculine influence. Traditionally, masculinity and femininity have been viewed as relatively enduring traits which generally serve to distinguish males from females in appearance, attitudes, and behaviors (Constantinople, 1973). However, modern trends of male-female roles, as well as fashion designs, have tended to bring traditional views of what is masculine and feminine closer together and have caused different interpretations among men and women as to what is masculine and feminine. Researchers have not come to a consensus about the meaning of masculinity and femininity (Vroegh, 1968). Therefore, femininity must be operationally defined for each specific purpose.

In the past, the feminine woman has always been concerned about her appearance, since her ability to attract a man was heavily dependent

upon it. As de Beauvoir stated in her book The Second Sex: "Woman knows that when she is looked at she is not considered apart from her appearance; she is judged, respected, desired, by and through her toilette" (p. 683). For centuries, this has been especially true, and women have always been taught that looks, not brains, are what counts if they want to attract a man, and thus, a home (Weisstein, 1971).

Not only has attractive clothing, cosmetics, jewelry, and a well-groomed appearance depicted a woman's femininity, but also her body composition has been a common determinant of a feminine appearance. In order to evaluate whether physical appearance contributes to concepts of masculinity and femininity, Darden (1972) assessed college students' perceptions of feminine and masculine body types. Male and female students were asked to rank 12 similar, but different, whole body outline drawings from their personal conceptualizations of masculinity and femininity. Between- and within-group comparisons both indicated that no differences existed between the sexes on the ranking of femininity. However, in ranking masculinity concepts, females differed significantly from males. The females' perceptions of masculinity were not as traditional as the males'. The females' rankings did not seem to perpetuate the old-rural ideal of manliness that the males' rankings did. Darden suggested that physical prowess is no longer the prerequisite for success in most vocations for men. His study suggested that females were more capable of recognizing that culture change in perceptions of masculinity. Whereas a woman, who is perceived as feminine, is viewed as the curvaceous, well-proportioned, weak-looking structure. This finding supported the concept of the traditional feminine image as appearing weak, docile, and futile. Any hint of strength diminishes



her femininity and her attractiveness (de Beauvoir, 1952; Roberts, 1976).

The theories of Freud and his followers have had a devastating effect on the feminine concept. Freudian theory has primarily a sexual orientation, with emphasis placed on the procreative aspects. Consequently, the woman's psyche has been defined in reproductive terms--passive, supportive, and seductive (Boslooper & Hayes, 1973). Femininity has also been a symbol for all those traits which, in our culture, obstruct social success--weakness, shyness, timidity, passivity, submissiveness, emotionality, the sense of being pushed aside and of being at a disadvantage, and the realization of actual futility (Klein, 1971). The qualities of social success in the American culture--assertiveness, competitiveness, and strength--have been identified with feminine women.

In most cultures and races, the behavioral stereotypes of the sexes such as feminine-passive and masculine-active have become the norm since most attribute this to the hormonal qualities of the sexes and to the anatomy (Deutsch, 1944). Simone de Beauvoir (1952) discussed this point when she claimed that passivity was, in fact, a woman's destiny imposed upon her by her teachers and by society. The woman has been taught to become the "other" and not the doer and to support her man and live for him.

Psychologists and sociologists alike have been continually defining and redefining feminine and masculine concepts. Parson's instrumental-expressive theory (Parsons & Bales, 1955) focused attention on the person's orientation in interacting within social systems. The traits and behaviors associated with femininity gather around an affective concern for the welfare of others (i.e., expressivity), whereas the traits

and behaviors associated with masculinity deal with accomplishing or solving problems (i.e., instrumentality). Bakan's (1966) agency and communion definitions of masculinity and femininity posed still another interpretation. The masculine concept was defined as the urge to master (i.e., agency). The feminine concept was defined as communion, a concern for the relationship between oneself and others. Both of these theories have traditional interpretations of femininity and masculinity; the male is the active agent, and the female is the passive one.

Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, & Vogel (1970) suggested that the general concept of femininity--submissiveness, dependence, and passivity--portrays the mature, healthy female. However, they then contended that this view is not held similar for the healthy adult, sex unspecified, who is supposedly more independent, active, and in control. Therefore, women have been bound by society. Different standards exist for women than for men. If women adopt those behaviors specified as desirable for healthy adults, they risk failure to be appropriately feminine; but, if they adopt the feminine behaviors, they are necessarily deficient in healthy adult behaviors. This has been referred to as the double-bind, a restrictive situation with which females must struggle.

#### Development of Sex Roles

Since an individual's gender role orientation as feminine or masculine does not have an instinctive basis, femininity and masculinity are by no means automatic consequences of being born a girl or boy. The individual's psychological differentiation as feminine or masculine develops through the many experiences of growing up (Hampson, 1965).

Gender role behavior or sex-typing begins very early and results from the imposition on the child of a number of training practices that

have the specific qualities of behavior (Sears, 1965). As soon as the individual is born, the infant is treated in whatever ways the culture prescribes as appropriate to that gender.

A study by Rubin, Provenzano, and Luria (1974) produced results suggesting gender stereotyping begins as soon as a child is born. Thirty pairs of new borns' parents, 15 with sons and 15 with daughters, were interviewed within the first 24 hours after their children's birth. Although the male and female infants did not differ in length or weight, daughters were significantly more likely than sons to be described as little, beautiful, pretty, cute, and resembling their mothers. Fathers made more extreme and stereotyped rating judgments of their newborns than did mothers.

Directly related to acquisition of gender identity is the individual's sex-role stereotyping of behavior and objects (Kohlberg, 1966). Developing this awareness of what is typically gender-related is an extensive process. First, the child learns to identify with appropriate sex-role behavior. This "identification" was Freud's term for a learning process through which children unconsciously pattern their own ego-ideal after that of the parent-model (Parsons & Croke, 1978). On the other hand, Chodorow (1974) asserted that feminine identification is especially based on the gradual learning of behavior and "exemplified by the person with whom she has most been involved. It is continuous with her early childhood identifications and attachments" (p. 51). Therefore, the most obvious role model for a little girl is her mother. Kohlberg (1966) also found that the father's masculinity and his expectations for femininity in the girl were later correlated with the girl's femininity.

The social learning process, as well as modeling, has also been

recognized as a way in which an individual develops appropriate gender-role expectation (Etaugh, Collins, & Gerson, 1975). Through observation and imitation, the child develops appropriate sex-role behavior which is reinforced mainly by parents and also by school teachers.

Vroegh (1968) conducted a study to determine the nature of femininity and masculinity in pre-school children as seen by their teachers. She found that the most masculine boys were seen as more extraverted, competent, and socially adjusted than the least masculine. The most feminine girls were seen as more socially adjusted, competent, and introverted than the least feminine.

Accordingly, by the time children reach the age of 6, they are able to distinguish male and female roles and identify themselves (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). Brown (1957) studied sex-role preferences among children from kindergarten to fifth grade. The results indicated that up to fifth grade boys showed more same-sex preferences than girls. Girls showed equal preference for both roles in kindergarten, masculine preferences in first through fourth grades, and then shifted to feminine preferences in fifth grade. The latter feminine preference was also realized in another study (Freeman, Schockett, & Freeman, 1975), in which results showed that fifth grade girls significantly preferred items associated with their own sex, whereas, fifth grade boys were ambiguous in their choices.

Preference for gender role and gender stereotyping may also be seen in play choices of children. Most boys play with toys and participate in games associated with their gender role (e.g., trucks, guns, competitive sports), whereas most girls play with dolls, jump rope, or take dancing lessons.

However, not all children adhere to those play norms. Some boys are not as competitive and aggressive as their peers, while some girls

are rather competitive and aggressive. Cross-sex behavior in play patterns is more likely accepted for girls, at least up to late childhood, than for boys since parents respond more negatively to such behavior in boys (Frieze, Parsons, Johnson, Ruble, & Zellman, 1978).

Intelligent children share more of the interests and activities normally characteristic of the opposite sex (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). Kagan and Moss (1962) found that the brighter girls were more likely to enjoy baseball and other boy's games, while brighter boys were more apt to engage in feminine activities. They also found that the higher the educational level of the family, especially the parents, the less likely the adherence to orthodox sex-role traits.

Cross-sex behavior and the acquisition of the nickname "tomboy" is not terribly detrimental until the girl reaches her adolescence. At that time she must give up those cross-sex behaviors and display her femininity, or else she may not attract a boyfriend. The adolescent growth spurt that boys experience develops their bodies to be bigger and stronger than girls. More emphasis is placed on testing their physical abilities through more competitive and aggressive behavior at this time.

However, girls are asked to give up those physically competitive pursuits and conform to stereotypic feminine behavior (Boslooper & Hayes, 1973). The feminine stereotype serves as a pattern of conduct to the growing girl, influencing her life plan, and contributes in shaping her character (Klein, 1971). The adolescent years involve a re-evaluation of self, an identity search (Bohan, 1973). As de Beauvoir stated when she explained why adolescence is so difficult for a young woman:

Up to this time she has been an autonomous individual; now she must renounce her sovereignty. Not only is she torn,

like her brothers, though more painfully, between the past and the future, but, in addition, a conflict breaks out between her original claim to be subject, active, free, and on the other hand, her erotic urges and the social pressure to accept herself as a passive object.

(p. 273)

The stereotype of femininity in our society underlies practical activities in the most various departments of social life, ranging from everyday conduct to problems of education and vocation (Klein, 1971). A hard lesson learned for some adolescent girls is that looks, not brains, are what counts. After all, a woman is defined by her ability to attract a man; any deviation may be a threat to her femininity. Weisstein (1971) bluntly stated that "little girls don't get the message that they're supposed to be stupid until high school" (p. 81). Success in school life inhibits their social growth. Intellectual striving is considered competitively aggressive; this is repressing aggressiveness (Stern, 1971).

A psychological barrier, which exists to prevent adolescent and adult females from achieving success, was termed by Horner as the fear of success (1970). She described the fear of success as an expectancy held by women that success in achievement situations will result in negative consequences, including social rejection and the sense of losing one's femininity. She suggested that this fear begins when a girl reaches puberty and develops interest in dating boys.

Prior to adolescence females, as well as males, have been encouraged to develop their need for achievement since success is a basic ingredient to the American culture (Atkinson & Feather, 1966). All children develop some sense of the achievement motive. The achievement motive has been

described as the striving to increase one's own capability in all activities in which a standard of excellence applies, and where the execution of such activities can succeed or fail (Heckhausen, 1967). In achievement situations there are primarily two tendencies, the motive to approach success and the motive to avoid failure. The attractiveness of success is greater the more difficult a task appears to an individual. Once success is achieved, the individual experiences a pride in accomplishment (Atkinson & Feather, 1966). The achievement motive is nurtured by an incentive of positive reinforcement (pride in accomplishment), which is increased when an individual accomplishes tasks of increasing difficulty (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1976).

Throughout early school years, young girls out-perform boys intellectually, and then, at adolescence, the advantage is significantly reversed, particularly in the traditionally "masculine" subjects of science and mathematics. Horner (1969) suggested that as girls grow older it becomes very evident that the brighter they are, and the more that they fulfill their potential, the more they restrict their choices or possibilities for marriage.

Since sex-role differences have been reflected in the American culture where achievement and success relate to the traditional male role but not the traditional female role (Mead, 1949; Veroff, Atkinson, & Wilcox, 1953), Horner found the achievement-oriented woman in the double bind. She not only worries about failure, but also about success and the possible detriments it may bring to her feminine image. Therefore, these women find that achievement situations cause anxiety for them. Horner (1969) conducted a study at the University of Michigan in which she tested both women and men using the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and a projective test in which subjects wrote stories about achieve-

ment-oriented men and women. Her projective test consisted of situational cues describing both a male and female medical student and was intended to measure a subject's fear of success. She found the females' stories of Anne (achievement-oriented female) to reflect strong fears of social rejection as a result of success, guilt and despair over success, plus strong denial of being female and successful. However, fewer than 10% of the males showed evidence of the motive to avoid success. Most of the males' stories about John (achievement-oriented male) expressed tremendous approval and delight in his success. Their stories possessed none of the hostility, bitterness, and ambivalence found with the females' stories about Anne. Perhaps this was due to the fact that most men are not threatened by competition and find that surpassing an opponent is a source of pride and enhanced masculinity (Horner, 1969).

Solomon (1975) replicated Horner's work but added another dimension. Male and female subjects responded to the cues of successful male and female medical students; whereas, Horner's subjects responded to the cue of their respective sex. She found results similar to Horner's with one difference; the majority of both males and females wrote "fear of success" stories for Anne, with significantly more male subjects than female falling into this category. Solomon interpreted this result as an illustration of hostility toward Anne's success when she asserted: "A male backlash seemed to be evidenced, indicating perhaps that many young men are somewhat opposed to what they regard as the attitude of women's liberation" (p. 34).

In our society, women and men are stereotyped as rigidly as any ethnic minority. While men are also adversely affected by this stereo-



typing, it is particularly unfortunate for women because the basic values in society are male, and the basic structures of society are set up to benefit men. Women have always been taught to be the "other" (de Beauvoir, 1952). Being the "other" and not the "doer," she remains exterior to the man's world and makes herself object rather than subject. Her independent successes would contradict her femininity. Margaret Mead (1949) emphasized this double standard of achievement when she stated:

The more successful a man is in his job, the more certain everyone is that he will make a desirable husband; the more successful a woman is, the more most people are afraid she may not be a successful wife. (p. 324)

Since sexual values are an integral feature of society, the woman who does not conform devaluates herself sexually and also socially (de Beauvoir, 1952). Therefore, a woman's positive self-concept would be facilitated by adhering to cultural sex-role expectations and stereotypes. In an attempt to differentiate between self-concepts and stereotypic concepts of femininity and masculinity as a function of social desirability, Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman, and Broverman (1968) studied college students' perceptions using the Sex Role Stereotype Questionnaire (SRSQ). Results indicated that both sexes agreed about differences between males and females; there were similar differences between self-concepts of the sexes, and both sexes valued stereotypic masculine behavior more than stereotypic feminine characteristics.

Similarly, Saltaformaggio (1980) found that masculine traits are viewed more positively in society. As a result, expression of masculine behavior is associated with an increased capacity for social reinforcement.

The same perceptions in acceptance of stereotypic roles were also indicated in the research by Laosa, Swartz, & Holtzman (1973). Through a series of studies that examined drawings of human figures by children, age was shown to be a determinant of sex-role preference. Beyond the age of 12, both sexes seemed to value the male role more and preferred to draw more male figures. However, in a more recent study (Tolor & Tolor, 1974), a changing pattern was seen with a greater percentage of females drawing figures of their own sex. Perhaps, more positive values are being assigned to the contemporary female role.

When comparing men's and women's perceptions for each other, findings indicate that men have less restrictive expectations than women think they do (Roberts, 1976). McKee and Sherriffs (1959) asked college students to describe themselves and to project how they thought the opposite sex should be. The men's "ideal female," as the women saw her, was a more sex-typed female than was actually reported by the men. Similarly, Steinman (1963) found that college females perceived their father's "ideal woman" to be more stereotypic and less liberated than she actually was. Steinman and Fox (1966) used the Fand Inventory of Feminine Values (FIFV) to assess sex differences in the concept of the ideal woman. Again, women were more rigid about the female role. Interestingly, male responses indicated their ideal woman to be less "other" oriented and more like the real selves described by the females.

More recently, O'Leary and Depner (1975) re-examined ideal stereotypes among male and female college students. While the differences in the male and female actual self-ratings and the females' ratings of ideal male tended to reflect the traditional cultural sex-role stereotypes, the males' ratings of ideal woman revealed an ideal "wonderwoman." She was

seen as more competent, competitive, successful, and adventurous than college females' ratings of their ideal male.

Gordon and Hall (1974) conducted a study with college-educated women to explore the relationships of types of role conflicts and methods of coping behavior to (a) the woman's self-image, (b) her image of the feminine woman, and (c) her perception of the male image of the feminine woman.

The best predictor of various types of conflicts experienced was the female's perception of the male's stereotype of femininity. It was also found that the female's happiness and satisfaction were determined by their self-images.

Hjelle and Butterfield (1974) examined differences in degrees of self-actualization in relation to attitudes toward women's rights and roles in society. Twenty liberal and 20 conservative college females, who were preselected on the basis of their scores on the Spence and Helmreich (1972) Attitudes Toward Women Scale, were compared in terms of measures relating to Shostrom's (1966) Personal Orientation Inventory (POI), a diagnostic instrument designed to assess self-actualization. The results revealed liberal women to be significantly more self-actualized than conservative women on 10 of the 12 POI scales.

The behaviors associated with being male and female are not only biologically based but are acquired through the cultural learning process reinforced by parents, teachers, and peers. The child is conditioned from birth to behave in the socially prescribed manner of one's appropriate gender association. Any cross-sex behavior is not considered detrimental by society until the child reaches adolescence. At that time, more emphasis is placed on the adherence to rigid sex-role standards in order to

enhance masculinity and femininity and, thus, attract a mate. Any deviation from stereotypic sex-role behavior may threaten the individual's social status and confuse one's self-concept. Females who pursue intellectual and physical competition risk losing their femininity and may experience social rejection.

#### Toward a Psychology of Androgyny

"If we can imagine women and men being encouraged to develop a full range of human qualities without the constraints of sex-role stereotypes, we can begin to envision a psychologically androgynous society" (McLure & McLure, 1977, p. 27). In an androgynous society, appropriate and inappropriate behavior would be based upon the situation and not upon one's gender. Hence, behavioral adherence to rigid sex roles would not be an issue. Androgyny would be a sex-role alternative (Millar, 1978).

According to Sandra Bem (1976), the possibility exists for people to be both masculine and feminine. She professed that limiting a person's ability to respond to life's situations in only the appropriate sex-role standard actually is destructive to human potential. As Bakan (1966) reported, the fundamental task of every organism is to temper agency with communion. Therefore, for fully functioning human effectiveness, both femininity and masculinity must each be tempered by the other. The two qualities must be integrated into a more balanced, more totally human androgynous personality. An androgynous personality would represent the best of femininity and masculinity and negate the dysfunctional behaviors of women and men that are extremes of sex stereotypes (Kaplan & Bean, 1976). Cross sex-typing (i.e., masculinity in girls and femininity in boys) has been correlated quite consistently with greater intellectual and athletic development (Kagan & Moss, 1962). Males and females who are

more sex-typed have been found to have lower overall intelligence, lower spatial ability, and lower creativity (Maccoby, 1966).

Bem (1974) designed the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (SRI) to distinguish androgynous individuals from those with more sex-typed self-concepts. The BSRI treats femininity and masculinity as positive, independent dimensions rather than as two ends of a single dimension. Using this instrument, it can be determined whether an individual possesses a feminine sex role (higher score of femininity dimension), a masculine sex role (higher score on the masculinity dimension), or an androgynous sex role (balance between femininity and masculinity).

A series of studies (Bem, 1975; Bem & Lenny, 1976; Bem, Martyna, & Watson, 1976) further reported the following conclusions: (a) sex-role stereotyping restricts the individual's ability to function, (b) cross-sex activities are problematic for sex-typed individuals, and (c) androgynous individuals seem to be more adaptable in situations involving either expressive or instrumental domains.

Bem (1976) also pointed out that the concept of psychological androgyny had helped her attain her goal to help free the human personality from the "restricting prison of sex-role stereotyping" and to begin to develop a mental health conception that is "free from culturally imposed definitions of femininity and masculinity" (p.49). She also suggested that, "if there is a moral to the concept of psychological androgyny, it is that behavior should have no gender" (p. 59).

Through androgyny, the situation and the individual personality determine whether a given trait will be exhibited at any given time. The androgynous society would be based on individual differences, personal preferences, and innate abilities, rather than sex-role stereotypes (McLure & McLure, 1977).

In summary, femininity has been continually defined and redefined over the course of time with no real consensus among social scientists. Feminine sex-roles and expectations are becoming less rigid. Women expect men's perceptions of the feminine stereotype to be more traditional and conservative than they actually are. Cross-sex behavior has been accredited to a higher level of intelligence. Achievement-oriented women have been devalued, but are becoming more accepted with present social changes for women, especially in previously traditional male areas of interest. The concept of psychological androgyny has been developed and supported as the transcendence progressing from rigid sex-roles to a more flexible concept of human sex-roles, independent of strong sexual reference.

#### Femininity and Sport Involvement

One of the major obstacles to narrowing the chasm between aspirations and opportunities of the female athlete is the feminine sex-role stereotype held by the general populace. Since psycho-social demands of the athletic experience are not generally compatible with the stereotypic feminine image, society has taught us that there is something abnormal or different about the woman who pursues athletics. Her very existence in the sports world all too often has been considered a de-traction from her femininity. After all, sport has always been associated with being masculine. Literature in psychology, especially sport psychology, gives much support to the view that sport and athletics are generally perceived as a male sex-typed activity (Cratty, 1967; Fisher, 1972; Kagan & Moss, 1962).

Throughout time, sport has become an extension of "man, the hunter and protector" serving as an expressive model for the male to prove his

maleness (i.e., strength, aggressiveness, and achievement). Athletic competence helps form the foundation of an adequate assumption of the male role (Fisher, 1972).

In a society where men and women can perform the same job functions, man has learned that sport is one area where there is no doubt about sexual differences and where his biology is not obsolete (Beisser, 1976). This has led the American male to be rather resistant to the inclusion of the female into his sport domain, his arena of manhood.

Sport standards are male, and the woman in sport is compared with men, not with other women (Hart, 1971). In fact, all desirable qualities for athletes to possess for success have been synonymous with what is commonly labeled masculine. All too often, we hear "she throws like a boy" or "she plays like a man."

The association of sport to maleness is so fixed in our society that if a male chooses not to participate in sport, he may have his masculinity threatened; in contrast, the female who chooses to participate in sport may have her femininity questioned (Boslooper & Hayes, 1973; Hart, 1971). Generally, females who decide to take the risk and compete are either secure in their role as a female so that participation is not a threat, or they simply do not care and have nothing to lose. It is those in the latter group who have produced the stereotype of the "girl jock" (Harris, 1971).

However, society is slightly more tolerant of the female athlete than of the "feminine" male. Comparatively, a male dancer and a female athlete may experience the same social stigma since both are invading the other gender's cultural territory. Hart (1976) emphasized this point when she stated: "Our society cuts the penis off the male who decides to be a

dancer and puts it on the female who participates in competitive athletics" (p. 165).

The social anomaly of women and sport provides ideas about femininity in terms of idealized norms which hold the female and her concerns as subservient to the importance of men. In a sexist social view, the very participation of women tends to downgrade an activity. Sexist arguments assume that women are not good enough to be worthy of the time and money being devoted to them in sport, and that women in sport are so adversely affected that they are no longer real women (Felshin, 1974a).

With all of the social "cards stacked against her," it would seem that a woman would totally disregard sport participation. However, sport could be a meaningful and significant experience in her life as well. The possible benefits of involvement in competitive athletics are not sex-linked. They are human values, and the female stands to gain as much from them as the male, and rightly so (Harris, 1975).

Developing that nonsex-linked value to sport is not an easy process for the female or society. From the time of birth, girls and boys are encouraged differently in their play patterns. By the age of 6, male and female roles are realized by children (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). They also learn at an early age that sport, as a role, is differentiated for the sexes and held primarily by males. Everything from children's books to the toys parents buy for their children attests to the perceived masculine orientation of sport (Duquin, 1978).

Caplan and Kinsbourne (1974) asked elementary school aged children to rank a list of desirable school behaviors and found that girls identified "to be nice" and "to be smart" as the most important roles. The boys identified "to be good in sports" and "to be a leader" as the most



important. Similarly, Stein, Pohly, and Mueller (1971) reported that children defined active sports as more masculine than feminine. It has also been determined that masculine games have more prestige value among children (Lynn, 1959; Rosenberg & Sutton-Smith, 1960). When children in grades four through six were asked what was the most important attribute for popularity, the boys indicated sports while the girls reported grades (Buchanan, Blankenbaker, & Cotten, 1976).

It appears that sex-typing in physical activity and sport begins early, and it is not surprising to find differences in sport participation on the basis of sex (Coakley, 1978; Lewko & Greendorfer, 1978). Teachers in California observed that playground play during recess varied distinctly between boys and girls. The boys organized a vigorous, competitive game of kickball while the girls engaged in jungle gym and other structured play (McLure & McLure, 1977).

Seagroe's investigations (1970) suggested that the school is the major factor in determining a child's play patterns beyond the age of 8, especially in discouraging individual play and encouraging competitive team play. The school seems to emphasize cooperative play more for girls and team play more for boys.

Despite the cultural sport orientation, the female sport participant begins sport early. Her involvement is first influenced by her family. Lewko and Greendorfer (1978) indicated that a sport-oriented family environment, in which parents actually participate in sport appears to be a significant factor in female sport involvement. Their results also delineated the father as the most relevant "significant other" in the sport socialization process, especially in his influence of typing sport activities as sex appropriate. Lewko and Greendorfer (1978) found that females

were affected more negatively than males through the father's influence and tended to develop perceptions of what is considered feminine in sport at any age.

Parental attitudes toward female sport participation were also investigated by Phillips (1980), who surveyed parents of both male and female youth sport participants of basketball, baseball, and swimming. Utilizing a 25-item Likert-type attitude scale, Phillips found that parents generally possessed favorable attitudes toward youth sport competition. More importantly, parents of male participants did not have different attitudes than parents of female participants. It was further revealed that neither the sex of the child nor the relationship of the parent to the child affected the attitudes of parents toward youth sport participation.

The family has also served as a strong positive influence for successful female sport participation. Balazs (1975) studied 24 Olympic female champions to determine what life events and what variables were psychological and social driving forces behind their outstanding achievement in sports. Her data revealed that parents were highly supportive of their daughters' involvement and possessed high expectations for their daughters. These women did not have "unfeminine" perceptions of their sport involvement.

As the female grows older, the most important influential factor in her sport involvement moves from family to her peers (Greendorfer, 1978). Their influence may have either a negative or positive effect on her participation. As an example, research suggests that males her age hold unfavorable perceptions of the femininity seen in female athletes (Fisher, Genovese, Morris & Morris, 1978; Sherriff, 1969). As a girl becomes more

proficient in sport, there is more at stake socially. Harris (1971) emphasized this point further when she said:

Traditionally, men have been unimpressed by women's athletic ability and have had little appreciation for the skill and beauty of movement women exhibit as they compete in sports. Even though society encourages exercise, the dedicated girl athlete faces many obstacles. Lack of understanding on the part of men is paramount; they do not understand why any girl would want to become an athlete and sacrifice time from the activities they feel girls should be involved in. (p. 3)

Genovese (1975) found that significant sex differences existed in perceptions of female athletes. Utilizing color slides of female athletes during competition, subjects rated those slides on a scale from 1 to 10, indicating their perceptions of the female depicted as the "ideal female." Even though differences occurred, both sexes were, at least, moderately accepting of the female athlete. However, it was speculated that as long as physical attractiveness is deemed a positive attribute for the ideal female, anything that detracts from this will be perceived by some as less desirable.

Brown (1965) used a semantic differential to assess perceptions of the feminine girl, the girl athlete, cheerleader, sexy girl, twirler, tennis player, swimmer, basketball player, track athlete, and girl with high grades. Responses by male and female college students revealed that stereotypes of these roles do exist and that significant differences occurred between the sexes. None of the sport roles were seen as consistent with perceptions of the "feminine girl." Tennis players and swimmers were the closest to the feminine image. However, the role of cheerleader surpassed all traditional athletic roles as that being closest

to the feminine image. These findings also support the idea that sport is masculine and to be feminine means to stand on the sidelines and support and cheer for the male.

Small (1973) studied female athletes' and nonathletes' role perceptions of themselves and of average women. She found that athletes and nonathletes did not differ in total perceptions of the feminine role for themselves. However, their opinions differed in total perceptions of the feminine role for the average woman.

These perceptions lead the female athlete into a cognizant difference between her athletic self and her social self. Since the female who chooses to participate is often stereotyped as masculine and aggressive and finds herself fighting the social battle of acceptance, a personal conflict and stress develops as it becomes necessary for her to convince others of her femininity (Hart, 1971). A dissonance develops in her self-concept as she has a competitive self for sport situations and a social self for those social situations. Her competitive self is active and potent (i.e., masculine), while her social self is more compatible with the accepted female stereotype.

Griffin (1973) studied the dissonance females experience with different degrees of active and potent female roles. Using a semantic differential, she studied the activity and potency of the woman's roles of housewife, girlfriend, mother, ideal woman, professor, and athlete. The athlete and professor were viewed as highly active and potent, while the highly evaluated roles were ideal woman, girlfriend, and mother. The ideal woman was assumed to be the ultimate preferred role for women, whereas the athlete was the least preferred. The athlete was perceived to be active and potent, which was inconsistent with accepted cultural

norms for women since activity and potency were perceived as more masculine. These findings suggest that in spite of ever increasing opportunities for women, a very real conflict exists for a woman who pursues a nonfeminine career.

Bird and McCullough (1977) utilized the semantic differential to distinguish athletes' and nonathletes' role perceptions of the ideal woman, mother, housewife, hostess, sister, working woman, and athlete on the dimensions of evaluation, potency, and activity. Results indicated that no significant differences existed between the two groups' perceptions of femininity. The role of ideal woman was perceived as the most highly evaluated; the female athlete was the most potent, and the mother was the highest on the activity factor. An interesting finding was that the female athlete was ranked second to the ideal woman on the evaluative dimension. The evaluative dimension was considered to be the most capable of assessing attitudes; therefore, the finding would indicate highly favorable attitudes toward female athletes in general. These results proved to be rather different when compared to those of Brown (1965) and Griffin (1973) and were perhaps considered to be a sign of changing times.

The female athlete is seen as aggressive, competitive, and strong. High sport interest seems to detract from the psychological femininity of the sportswoman when compared to the nonathletic female (Landers, 1970). Dissonance, therefore, exists between sport aggressiveness and feminine passivity; between assertiveness and submissiveness; between independence and dependence; between toughness and gentleness; between being mannish and being feminine; and between sport model and ideal self (Tyler, 1973).

Kane (1972) suggested that female athletes might be more anxious than male athletes due to the dissonance they feel between their dichotomy

of existence. This anxiety may be so severe that the woman may withdraw from the anxiety-producing sport situation (MacKenzie, 1974). Some girls may even resolve this dissonance between their sport self and social self by eliminating the social self. They may withdraw from social situations and any other situations that require the feminine role (Hart, 1972).

However, many athletic women do not want to eliminate the athletic self or the social self from their self-concept and have learned to compromise for the acceptance and coexistence of those two selves. To counteract the negative stereotype of the female athlete, an apologetic attitude may develop (Felshin, 1974a). Felshin explained this apologetic phenomenon as follows: "If a woman in sport is a social anomaly, then it is logical for women to develop an apologetic for their participation in sport" (p. 203). Basically, the apologetic theory suggests that the female athlete can appear feminine through dress and overall attractiveness. This has been emphasized through many examples: frilly tennis dresses, an exceeding amount of jewelry worn during competition, the flower suits of swimmers, and kilts worn by field hockey and lacrosse players. The apologetic theory also suggests that the female athlete is feminine as reflected in the overt convictions of sexual normality, her attractiveness, and her display of "lady-like" behavior. The final suggestion the apologetic theory makes is that the female athlete wants to be feminine and, therefore, values and assumes the prescribed feminine roles of wife and mother as more important than being an athlete.

Del Rey (1977) studied the apologetic theory through female athletes' views of the woman's role. Utilizing Spence and Helmreich's (1972) Attitude Toward Women Scale (AWS), she compared tennis players and swimmers to basketball and softball players in their views of the woman's role.

It was found that the tennis players did express a more liberal view of the woman's role because they experienced less dissonance. Thus, they were also less compelled to express apologetics. It was interesting to note that the tennis players were significantly different from all other athletes. This would seem understandable since playing tennis is viewed as acceptable today, and thus, would not create a conflict.

The existence of the phenomenon of apologetics in women's athletics should be limited in time. It should exist only as long as society continues to support the stereotypic view of acceptable feminine behavior which is actually in direct conflict with the necessary behavior for sport participation (Del Rey, 1977). Felshin (1974b) believed that, in time, women will be accepted in the athletic world as worthwhile contributors. She emphasized her hopes for a positive acceptance when she asserted: "Women must explore their options; they must be encouraged to try and be whatever they are impelled to seek for it is self that is sought, and no apology is required" (p. 40).

There is still another alternative the female athlete may choose; ignore the dissonance and fulfill both selves. This particular course realizes that those unfeminine traits only exist during the sport situation (Kennicke, 1972). Harris (1975) reported that during social situations, female athletes did not differ from nonathletes in their self-perceptions.

Many female athletes are sufficiently secure in their femininity and self-images and do not particularly experience the dissonance. Therefore, they participate in a socially defined unfeminine activity without suffering an identity crisis (Harris, 1972; Zoble, 1973). However, if the female athlete experiences role conflict, it will be reflected in a

negative self-concept.

Snyder, Kivlin, and Spreitzer (1975) conducted a study designed to determine comparisons between female psychological well-being and self-cathexis. Utilizing variations of psychological tests and body image tests, athletes and nonathletes were compared. Contrary to anticipation, the researchers found the female athletes to demonstrate more positive attitudes toward themselves and life, as well as having more positive body images. The results of both measures of self-identity did not support the notion of the negative relationship usually associated with female athletic involvement. It was also noted that mental health and psychological well-being were positively associated with the degree of athletic involvement. Higher skilled female athletes scored higher on those measures of self-identity.

Data from a study conducted in England by Hall (1977) showed that women athletes did not differ from other women in terms of how they perceived their feminine role. Using semantic differential scales to determine athletes' and nonathletes' perceptions of the feminine woman and the athletic woman, she found significantly less dissonance and more congruency with the two concepts among the athletes. The nonathletes considered the athletic woman to be much less feminine. Hall also revealed that the attitude of the athletes were more favorable toward the athletic woman than the attitudes of the nonathletes.

Results from those recent investigations (Hall, 1977; Snyder, Kivlin, & Spreitzer, 1975) support the assumption that if a female has security in her own self as a female person, she may take the risk of involvement in any avenue of pursuit that she wishes without being threatened. She is secure in her own sense of self.



Whatever the future holds for the acceptance of the female athlete cannot yet be seen. However, generally speaking, the world seems to be slowly altering its views on acceptable feminine and masculine behavior, not only in sport, but also in other aspects of life. Some theorists believe that acceptable sport behavior should be nonsex-linked (Harris, 1975; Oglesby, 1978). Oglesby (1978) suggested that sport should be identified with androgyny training and not masculinity or femininity training. Harris agreed when she commented: "Perhaps we should change the standard for appropriate behavior rather than continue to say that the behavioral demands of athletics are not feminine" (p. 33).

Sport has recently been reported to attract the highly sex-typed male and the androgynous female. Kildea (1980) utilized the Bem Sex-Role Inventory to determine the sex-role orientation of female athletes and nonathletes in a midwestern university. She found a higher percentage of androgynous and masculine-oriented traits among athletes than among nonathletes.

Duquin (1977) conducted a study involving both male and female college athletes. She found that the greatest percentage of college-aged female athletes and physical education majors were more androgynous than their male counterparts. In contrast, Millar (1978) reported that physical education as a college major neither attracted the androgynous female nor did it enhance the androgynous sex-role identity of a woman more than any other college major.

In an attempt to assess whether or not female athletes would display a more positive attitude toward physical activity, Duquin (1978) studied female high school athletes' sex neutral motivations (social affiliation, maintenance of health and fitness, catharsis, and aesthetic) and mascu-

line motivations (vertigo, ascetic, competition, and physical efficacy). She concluded that high school female athletes did not see their participation in sports as being in conflict with what they thought girls should do. She also emphasized that a more positive attitude toward female sport involvement is developing for all girls in general. Duquin stated:

This research tends to support the notion that the growth and increased status of girls' sport programs may help to facilitate androgynous development in adolescent females. Because sport participation is culturally viewed as a male sex-typed activity and is associated with such masculine attributes as competitiveness, aggressiveness, risk-taking, etc., females who participate in sport come to adopt those attributes (while not necessarily rejecting the feminine attributes they perceive in themselves) thus increasing their potential for an androgynous self-concept. (p. 375)

It should be emphasized that males and females experience the full complement of human qualities in athletic competition. When male and female athletes are rated on the same scales and compared to the same norms, their behaviors are more alike than different (Harris, 1975). This may suggest two things; either that sport behaviors are not sex-linked or that those people who have certain behavioral dispositions find athletic competition compatible to their needs.

Sport experience can enable us to revise and improve our constructs of sexuality, since both masculine and feminine qualities are evident in sport (e.g., independence/dependence and control/subordination in team sports) (Oglesby, 1978). In addition, the behavioral demands in sport have been generally the same for those who participate regardless of sex.

Let us not forget that all human beings may not enjoy competitive sports; some men do not and some women do. Therefore, the term "athlete" may prove to have no gender identity and may simply become a term to define human beings in a specific context (Harris, 1975). Perhaps the day is coming when a girl who enjoys athletics will not experience any of the negative attitudes and prejudices that her older sisters have known.

In summary, the female athlete has been seen as an intruder in man's sport world. As a result, she has been ostracized and termed "masculine" for her athletic participation. She has also been alienated from social acceptability due to societal attacks on her femininity.

As a result, the female athlete has experienced a dissonance between her sport self and her social self. She has learned to compromise and to compensate for this dichotomy of existence by doing one or more of the following: eliminating the sport self, eliminating the social self, or acquiring an apologetic attitude.

The women's movement has helped to begin to change societal attitudes toward female athletes, especially in femininity perceptions. Recent studies have indicated that less dissonance and more improved self-concepts are being appreciated by the female athlete. However, this recent trend has been extremely slow in evolving. Sport involvement has also been associated with the concept of psychological androgyny. Researchers have suggested sport training to be more associated with androgyny training and less with femininity and masculinity training.

#### Appropriate Feminine Sport Participation

Female athletic participation has often been viewed as inconsistent with femininity. The acceptance of women in the sports world has always had a direct relationship on how her participation would detract from or

enhance her feminine image (Boslooper & Hays, 1973). The expectations for the roles of "woman" and "athlete" have traditionally been dissonant (Harris, 1975; Hart, 1971). Therefore, if a woman chose to participate, what she chose to do athletically was categorized as feminine or masculine and, therefore, acceptable or unacceptable (Metheny, 1965). This choice may not only limit her participation to spare her femininity, but also may tend to impair possible opportunity to find a mate.

Metheny (1965) clearly defined not only what sports were deemed appropriate for college women, but also what kinds of athletic movements were considered feminine and, therefore, acceptable. Her analysis, derived from data obtained from college women, categorized sports and athletic movements into three general distinctions: not appropriate (unacceptable), may be appropriate, and wholly appropriate.

The forms of competition that appeared to be categorically unacceptable were characterized by one or more of the following descriptors: (a) the resistance of an opponent is overcome by bodily contact, (b) the resistance of a heavy object is overcome by direct application of bodily force, (c) the body is projected into or through space over long distances or for extended periods of time, and (d) co-operative face-to-face opposition occurs in situations in which some body contact may occur. The sport activities included in this unacceptable category were wrestling, judo, boxing, weight-lifting, hammer throw, pole vault, longer foot races, high hurdles, and all team games with the exception of volleyball.

The forms of competition that may be appropriate for women were categorized by one or more of the following descriptors: (a) the resistance of an object of moderate weight is overcome by direct application of bodily force, (b) the body is projected into or through space over mod-

erate distances or for relatively short periods of time, and (c) the display of strength in controlling bodily movements. Metheny categorized the following athletic events as may be appropriate for female participation: shot put, javelin throw, discus throw, shorter foot races, low hurdles, long jump, gymnastics, and free exercise.

The wholly appropriate and generally acceptable category was described as follows: (a) the resistance of a light object is overcome with a light implement, (b) the body is projected into or through space in aesthetically pleasing patterns, (c) the velocity and maneuverability of the body is increased by the use of some manufactured device, and (d) a spatial barrier with the opponent is used in face-to-face forms of competition. Swimming, diving, skiing, figure skating, golf, archery, bowling, fencing, squash, badminton, tennis, and volleyball were all included in this category by Metheny.

In summary, those sports that were acceptable for females involved projecting the body in aesthetically pleasing patterns, using force through a light implement, or overcoming the resistance of a light object with skill and manipulation. Those unacceptable sports involved body contact, application of force to a heavy object, and projecting the body through space over long distances. Acceptability was based on the way in which a woman uses her body through athletic movement and how that relationship affects her feminine image.

Metheny suggested that what is acceptable may lie in the different ways the male and female use their bodies in the sexual act. The male is the controller, using a direct application of bodily forces. Conversely, the female's role is seen as more passive and submissive. Those sports involving less force with or without use of an implement would be seen

as more conforming to how society sees feminine action and movement and would then be acceptable.

Metheny's theory was indicative of society's expectations of the female athlete at the time of her study. Results of studies by Harres (1968) and Sherriff (1969) lent support to Metheny's findings. Harres surveyed nearly 300 undergraduate students at the University of California, Santa Barbara, to determine their attitudes toward the desirability of athletic competition for girls and women. Using an attitude inventory consisting of 38 statements which were divided into four categories (mental-emotional, social-cultural, physical, and personality), Harres had subjects rank six sports according to their desirability. She found that participation by respondents in athletic competition tended to make their attitudes more favorable toward the desirability of athletic competition for girls and women. The subjects had favorable, though not highly favorable, attitudes toward the desirability of athletic competition for girls and women. The respondents also considered female participation in individual sports to be more desirable than participation in team sports.

Sherriff (1969) examined the status of urban and rural high school female athletes as viewed by selected peers and parents. The investigation was conducted through the use of an attitude inventory and a background questionnaire. She found that generally all respondents were undecided about female athletic competition, but that 95% thought females should have the opportunity to compete. Parents and females had more favorable attitudes, while all respondents thought athletic activity was more appropriate to males' physical make-up. The majority of respondents thought that undesirable qualities were brought out by intensely competi-

tive sports, while most of the female respondents indicated that they associated intensive competition with masculine mannerisms. When asked to rank preferred sports for female competition, respondents reported swimming, gymnastics, and tennis as most desirable by all. One interesting note was that softball was ranked as the least desirable sport by all except the fathers. As a matter of fact, softball was one of the fathers' choices for most desirable sports.

In both studies, respondents said they would associate with girls who competed in athletics. Furthermore, they indicated that sports competition was a desirable activity for women. Sherriff (1971) claimed that particular fact to be important especially in light of all the potential criticism and uncertainties female athletic competition fosters.

A more recent study by Hoferek (1980) revealed favorable attitudes toward female participation in the sport of basketball. Hoferek surveyed a sample of adults from Iowa, where women's basketball is very popular. The results concluded that participation in sports neither detracted from nor enhanced femininity. The data suggested that the traditional, rigid, sex-role stereotypes were transcended and may reflect a model for human behavior rather than the bipolar or androgynous models.

Sherriff's (1969) negative findings about softball led Garman (1969) to investigate attitudes toward softball players among female athletes, spectators, and the general public. She also obtained rankings of appropriateness for female competition. Results indicated that all groups had favorable attitudes toward female competition with players and spectators having more favorable attitudes than the general public. Individual sports were deemed more appropriate for female competition than were team sports. The sample identified the gymnast as the most

feminine and the softball player as the least feminine.

Snyder and Spreitzer (1973) found similar conclusions concerning individual and team sport participation by female athletes. They asked a sample in the Toledo, Ohio metropolitan area what sports would enhance and what would detract from the athlete's feminine image. The respondents favored swimming, tennis, and gymnastics as sports that would enhance the feminine image; whereas, the sports seen as the most destructive of the feminine image were track, basketball, and softball.

The more acceptable social preference for individual sport participation has been realized by athletes as well. Malumphy (1971) found that individual sport participants were more positive about the effect of participation on their feminine image than were team sport participants. Individual sport participants indicated that their participation in sport (tennis and golf) actually enhanced their femininity.

Foster (1971) asked female softball and basketball players questions relating to feminine self-image and how they thought others viewed their femininity. Although most of the athletes (70%) rated themselves as feminine, they believed that others viewed them as masculine.

Similarly, Snyder, Kivlin, and Spreitzer (1975) conducted a study assessing the differences in self-concept between female gymnasts and basketball players. Their contention was that gymnasts, the more acceptable athletes; would have less conflict with the roles of being an athlete and of being a female than would the basketball players, the more unacceptable athletes. They found no significant differences between the two sport groups on measures of mental well-being and body image. They also found slight to moderate positive relationships between female sport participation and the two measures of self-identity used. The particular finding not only concurred with Malumphy (1971) and Foster (1971), but



added another dimension to the female athlete's self-perception of femininity.

Kennicke (1972) found that female athletes possessed "unfeminine" characteristics only during sport situations. Comparing high school female synchronized swimmers and dancers to team sport participants, she realized significant differences in the self-acceptance as athletes between the swimmer and dancer groups and the team sport athletes through comparisons of self-profiles. She attributed this difference to the premise that those dancers and swimmers did not really see themselves as athletes.

One generalization supported by the research has been an acceptance of the individual sport athlete, which concurs with Metheny's theory: The less force used, the less strength seen, and the avoidance of body contact will insure the maintenance of the feminine image and encourage acceptance of the female athlete. Team sports like softball in which more "masculine" skills are used were seen by those tested as less feminine than in gymnastics; a sport wherein the athlete's power and strength are disguised by her gracefulness. However, society fails to appreciate the fact that both sports require a great deal of power, speed, and strength. Why is just appearance used as the barometer of femininity in sport or any other activity? Sherriff (1971) suggested that if "all female athletes would remain softspoken, genteel, and demure on and off the field, this gap between the various sports would close" (p. 34).

A pair of studies conducted by Fisher et al. (1978) looked at perceptions of women in sport as held by rural and urban high school athletes and college athletes and nonathletes. Utilizing color slides that depicted various sportswomen in action, it was found that males and non-

athletes perceived the depicted female athletes as less ideal or acceptable than did females and athletes. It was also found that male and urban athletes perceived the female sportswoman as significantly less ideal than the females and rural athletes. In both studies, sex differences in perceptions were apparent, although both sexes showed favorable perceptions. In terms of Metheny's acceptability theory, those slides depicting more strength and force either alone or through the use of a moderate or heavy object were perceived as less acceptable, especially by the males. Those slides were shot put, hurdles, high jump, long jump, and running. A subjective analysis of the reasons given for those ratings indicated that both males and females used body types, facial expressions, and their impressions of those sports that best depicted the traditional male sports world to make their decisions. Therefore, if a female was seen grimacing, disheveled, and showing signs of physical strain, she was considered less ideal to the subjects and, therefore, less acceptable.

Boslooper and Hayes (1973) illustrated an interesting paradox in perceptions of physical strain by females when they asserted:

Woman's physical identity is locked in the bedroom, where hair may become disheveled and feminine bodies may strain to reach orgasm and still be called beautiful. But when a female long-distance runner crosses the finish line with tangled hair and a tense expression, men, and many women, are repelled. (p. 45)

Noakes (1979) conducted a study utilizing slides of photographs taken from Sports Illustrated and Women Sports magazines. Male and female adults viewed the slides depicting women in sports action and were asked how well each slide represented their perception of the ideal woman. The

results indicated that subjects who viewed the Women Sports slides had a more positive image of the female athlete than did the subjects who viewed the Sports Illustrated slides. This difference was attributed to the points of view of the magazines. Sports Illustrated displays a more masculine point of view, especially in the acceptance of the female athlete; whereas, Women Sports would naturally have a more favorable point of view toward the female athlete.

Increasing acceptance of the female athlete was suggested by Wittig's (1975) investigations. Intrigued by Horner's (1970) "fear of success" assertions, he utilized her testing instrument, but redesigned it to be pertinent to athletics. Male and female subjects read a female-in-sport cue as well as a male-in-sport cue to produce stories that would describe the athletes in either positive or negative overtones. The first study described the female athlete as a member of the men's intercollegiate tennis team. This situation produced negative descriptions from the male respondents only. However, 6 months later, the study was altered and both sport cues described only female athletes; one cue was of a member of the women's intercollegiate swim team and the other was a female on the men's tennis team. Favorable and accepting descriptions appeared from both male and female respondents this time for both cues. In comparison to the first study, male respondents had shifted significantly in their attitudes toward the female athlete. Wittig stated:

At this point, I am not certain what to conclude. Last fall, male subjects showed a generally derogatory response to Karen, which by the way, sometimes reached the level of bizarre denial. Six months later, the males respond identically to the females. Perhaps the "sensitization" I spoke of has

extended to the males and the stereotypes I mentioned are being erased at last. (pp. 185-186)

One very recent investigation proved contrary to the others and in some agreement with Wittig's work. Kingsley, Brown, and Siebert (1977) tested 120 female athletes and 120 female nonathletes from Arizona State University to assess their attitudes about the social acceptability of female softball players and dancers with high levels of aspiration. The subjects responded to biographical sketches of four stimulus persons: a college woman described as a high-success aspiration softball player, a low-success aspiration softball player, a high-success aspiration dancer, and a low-success aspiration dancer. On a 7-point scale ranging from "very much" to "not at all," subjects responded to the following four questions about the stimulus persons:

1. How much would you like to work with this person on a project or in an activity?
2. How much would you like to engage in social activities with this person?
3. How much could you relate to this person?
4. How much do you feel this person is similar to you?

(p. 730)

The results suggested that female athletes feel a strong sense of identity with other female athletes. The investigators pointed out that since most of the tested female athletes were individual sport participants, they probably related to both the softball player and the dancer. However, the athletes rated the softball players as much or more socially acceptable than the dancer. Moreover, the nonathletes did not rate the dancer as significantly more socially acceptable than the softball player. Therefore, there were no significant negative attitudes toward the team

sport participant. These results were contrary to Metheny's (1965) theory that team sports participation will result in less social acceptability than participation in the "feminine" sports. These results could also be indicative of the cultural changes or "sensitization" Wittig (1975) discussed.

The women's movement has been providing and giving impetus to all types of cultural changes for women. Social scientists believe that society can alter its behaviors toward women to become less stereotyped only if conscious efforts are made (Pearman, 1980; Rupnow, 1980). If recent studies are any indication of society's attitudes, the times seem to be changing for the female athlete as well. Society seems to be appreciating and accepting the female athlete more than before even though the old stereotypes linger (Rohrbaugh, 1979). Even in the Olympic arena, the female athlete is becoming more recognized through the inclusion of more female sport events. It seems that women are beginning to enter the sports arena today with more social acceptance and individual pride, and rightly so. For, as Hart (1971) stated:

The experiencing of one's body in sport must not be denied to anyone in the name of an earlier century's image of femininity--a binding, limiting, belittling image. This is the age of the woman in space, and she demands her female space and identity in sport. (p. 64)

In summary, according to Metheny, the less force used, the less strength seen, and the avoidance of body contact will insure the maintenance of the feminine image in athletics and encourage acceptance of the female athlete. Therefore, those sports seen as "feminine" would involve less force, etc. and would be appropriate for female participation. All team sports, except volleyball, were termed unfeminine and

unacceptable. Early research indicated female participation in individual sports as more feminine and acceptable than team sports. Some individual sport participants claimed that their participation even enhanced their femininity. However, recent investigations have found more congruence among all sport participants concerning feminine self-concepts and acceptance. These findings are contrary to Metheny's and could be indicative of the changing times for women, especially the female athlete.

In the past, traditional concepts of femininity have done much to alienate some females from sport participation. The female athlete has often been regarded as a social stigma. Her femininity has been threatened and associated with her involvement in sport, especially with the type of sport activity she chooses to enjoy.

Since feminine sex roles and expectations are becoming less rigid, women are beginning to experience more activities that have been traditionally thought of as masculine. Through the development of psychological androgyny, rigid sex roles have transcended to a more flexible concept of human sex roles, especially in sport. It seems that sport, as a vehicle for human experience, is becoming more accepting of the female athlete, regardless of the sport activity in which she has chosen to participate. However, the evolution of society's acceptance of the female athlete still remains to be seen.

## Chapter 3

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter outlines the techniques and procedures used by the experimenter. Since the testing instrument was especially designed for this investigation, a detailed description of the tool and its development is included. The experimental design, selection of subjects, and methods used to collect, score, and treat data are all described.

#### Testing Instrument

The testing instrument consisted of a series of 18 color slides each depicting a female performing softball task demands. The movements photographed were designed to illustrate varying levels of exhibited force within striking and nonstriking categories. The 35mm slides were paired according to all striking and nonstriking possibilities. Subjects were asked to view each pair. Half the subjects were to decide which slide depicted the more feminine, and half the subjects were to decide which slide depicted the more acceptable sport movement.

For the purpose of this investigation, the slides represented either striking or nonstriking categories with each having varying force levels. To control for any aesthetic or affiliative biases, the investigator chose movements performed in one sport only, by the same female, and photographed by the same photographer. The sport represented was softball, and a former Ithaca College varsity softball player was used to insure appropriate skill performance during the staged shooting session. She wore a softball uniform to further suggest the concept of sport participation.

The nine slides illustrating striking skills were represented by aspects of batting, body contact resulting from tagging attempts, and various sliding techniques. The nine slides picturing the nonstriking skills

included various aspects of throwing, catching, and running to base. The striking slides were then ranked on a high to low force scale with Slide 1 depicting the highest level of force of a striking nature and Slide 9 representing the lowest level. The nonstriking skills were similarly ranked (Appendix A). The ranking of the skills was established by a panel of faculty members ( $N = 10$ ) from the School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation at Ithaca College.

The slides were then arranged in pairs so that each pair could be projected simultaneously onto two screens for the test administration. Every slide from the striking group was paired with every slide from the nonstriking group, which resulted in 81 actual pairs and choices to be made. In order to avoid an ordering effect, a rotating order of the slides was presented. This was done by randomly choosing pairs of slides and reversing their order so that all striking slides did not always appear on the right screen. A standardized order of the 81 pairs was then recorded to insure a standardized sequence for every experimental group viewing (Appendix B). This design of the testing tool allowed each pair of slides to be shown to the subjects for the purpose of assessing their attitudes based upon a designated classification of "more feminine" or "more acceptable."

#### Experimental Design

The design yielded two distinct experimental groups; one group made choices using "femininity" as the cue word, and the other group used "acceptability" as the cue word. The frequencies of striking and nonstriking softball behaviors served as the dependent variable. The independent variables were sex and athletic status, with three levels of the latter. The association of each of the independent variables with the dependent variable was examined.



### Selection of Subjects

The sample for this study ( $N = 120$ ) was selected from a population of female and male undergraduate students at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York during the 1978 spring and summer semesters. The investigator randomly selected classes from the course catalog of the following departments and centers of the college: (a) Allied Health Professions; (b) Communications; (c) Health, Physical Education, and Recreation; (d) Humanities and Sciences; (e) Center for Individual and Interdisciplinary Studies; and (f) Music. Respective professors were then contacted, and arrangements were made for the investigator to visit those classes for the solicitation of volunteer subjects.

A questionnaire (Appendix C) was administered to members of each class to determine and to categorize each potential subject as either an athlete, an activity-oriented individual, or a nonathlete. The athletes (ATH) included those females and males who had participated on any athletic team at Ithaca College during the 1977-78 academic year. Individuals who were involved in sports or an athletic-like activity at least three times a week but were not on an athletic team during the current academic year were termed activity-oriented (ACT). The nonathletes (NON) were those females and males who had never participated on an organized athletic team and, at the time of the study, were not involved in any athletic activity three or more times a week. Further categorization was then made by sex.

These combinations of categories resulted in the following six groups: (a) female ATH, (b) female ACT, (c) female NON, (d) male ATH, (e) male ACT, (f) male NON. Each subject was then randomly assigned to femininity/acceptability standard groups insuring equal numbers of sex and

athletic status in each group. One group received the standard descriptor "acceptability," and the other received the standard descriptor "femininity."

#### Methods of Data Collection

Once the subjects were identified and categorized into groups, the investigator contacted the subjects to establish testing times and locations. A total of 32 administrations were needed to accommodate all subjects for testing. Each 30-minute administration included the following procedures: (a) the reading and signing of informed consent forms (Appendix D), (b) the reading of instructions (Appendix E), (c) the distribution of the answer sheets (Appendix F), (d) the viewing of the slides for the subjects' choices, and (e) the collection of the answer sheets.

The viewing of the paired slides was accomplished by simultaneously projecting the 18 35mm slides onto two screens in the testing classroom in the sequence seen in Appendix B. The instructions for all viewings were standardized, and an answer sheet was provided to correspond with the numbered sequence of slide pairings. The subjects in both standard groups were asked to look at each slide in each pairing and choose one as directed by the specific instructions for their group (Appendix E). One group was asked to determine which slide appeared more acceptable for female participation while the other group was asked to decide which skill in each pair appeared more feminine. The subjects were given approximately 15 seconds to view each pair and record their choice. Due to the testing method, large numbers of subjects could be tested simultaneously during each 30-minute session.

A test of reliability was conducted approximately 1 week after the initial testing session. Fifty percent of the subjects from each initial test were randomly selected and recontacted to determine retest times and

locations. All retests were administered at the same time of day and location as the initial testing session. The testing procedure for the retest was identical to the initial test with the exception of the reading and signing of the informed consent forms.

#### Scoring of Data

After the administration of the test, each subject's test was hand scored. Raw scores were established by tallying the number of striking choices made. These raw scores represented how many striking slides were chosen by the subjects. The possible scores ranged from as high as 81, which meant all striking slides were chosen, to as low as zero, which meant no striking slides were chosen. These raw scores were then used to classify subjects into categories based on the number of times they chose a striking slide as more feminine or more acceptable (Table 1).

#### Treatment of Data

Test-retest reliability of the testing instrument was assessed by Pearson product-moment correlation. Data were subjected to SPSS (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1970) chi-square analyses to assess the association between frequencies of striking/nonstriking slide choices and femininity/acceptability standards, in relation to sex and activity-orientation differences. All hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of probability.

#### Summary

This study was designed to test some aspects of Metheny's (1965) theory of the concepts of femininity and acceptability related to women's participation in sport. College students' attitudes were assessed through the use of a testing instrument especially designed for this study. Nine slides depicting softball skills of a striking nature were paired with

Table 1  
Scoring Categories of Subjects

Score	Preferred Choice Category
61-81 Striking Choices	High Striking Choices
41-60 Striking Choices	High-Medium Striking Choices
21-40 Striking Choices	Low-Medium Striking Choices
0-20 Striking Choices	Low Striking Choices

nine slides depicting softball skills of a nonstriking nature. Subjects then viewed the 81 actual slide pairings and decided which slide in each pair appeared more feminine or more acceptable.

The 120 volunteer subjects were enrolled at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York during the 1978 spring and summer semesters. The subjects were categorized by sex and athletic status. A retest was administered to half of the subjects to establish the reliability of the testing instrument. Tests were hand scored, and the data were then prepared for chi-square statistical analyses. All hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of probability.

## Chapter 4

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

The major objective of this study was to test some aspects of Metheny's (1965) theory of the concepts of femininity and acceptability of women's participation in sport. The subjects for this study were undergraduate students enrolled at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York during the 1978 spring and summer semesters.

The results of the statistical analysis of the data from this study are presented in this chapter. Since the testing instrument was especially developed for this investigation, results of its reliability are offered. Results of the chi-square analyses of the following variables are also presented: (a) femininity/acceptability standards, (b) sex, and (c) athletic status.

#### Test-retest Reliability

Test-retest reliability was assessed by randomly selecting 50% of the subjects initially tested and having them take a retest approximately 1 week after the initial test. All testing conditions were duplicated for the retest; that is, time of day, location, and testing group. This resulted in 30 retests for the femininity standard group and 30 retests for the acceptability standard group.

The raw scores were established as the number of striking slide choices made by the subjects. Raw scores for the initial tests and retests of the subjects were subjected to Pearson product-moment correlation. The correlation coefficients of .95 and .94 for the femininity and acceptability standard groups, respectively, were sufficient to indicate that the test was reliable.

### Results of the Chi-square analyses

In order to assess differences between attitudes toward women's softball behavior for the independent variables of femininity/acceptability standards, sex, and athletic status, several chi-square analyses were calculated. The results are reported for each individual hypothesis that was tested.

#### Hypotheses Concerning the Relationship Between Attitudes Toward Women's Softball Behavior and Femininity/Acceptability Standards

Null Hypothesis 1. Attitudes toward women's softball behavior are independent of femininity/acceptability standards.

The statistical results are presented in Table 2. A significant difference occurred between the femininity/acceptability standards  $\chi^2(3) = 8.75$ ,  $p < .05$ . Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. As the table indicates, a trend occurred in the femininity standard in that the higher the striking choice category, the lower the observed frequency. The acceptability standard appears more evenly distributed with the highest observed frequencies occurring in the high-medium to low-medium striking choices. Both standards show the lowest frequencies in the high striking choices category. It appears that the low striking choices accounted for the most obvious differences in frequency distribution between the two standards. However, post hoc analyses could not reveal exactly where the significant differences occurred.

Null Hypothesis 2. Male attitudes toward women's softball behavior are independent of femininity/acceptability standards.

The statistical results as shown in Table 3 indicate that no significant differences occurred for the males,  $\chi^2(3) = 2.128$ ,  $p > .05$ . The hypothesis was accepted. As shown, a trend occurred in that both standards

Table 2

Chi Square\* of Attitudes Toward Women's Softball  
Behavior by Femininity/Acceptability Standards

Striking Choice	Standard		
	Femininity	Acceptability	
High Striking Choices	2	8	10
High-Medium Striking Choices	11	19	30
Low-Medium Striking Choices	23	19	42
Low Striking Choices	24	14	38
	60	60	120

\* $p < .05$ .



Table 3

Chi Square of Males' Attitudes Toward Women's Softball  
Behavior by Femininity/Acceptability Standards

Striking Choice	Standard		
	Femininity	Acceptability	
High Striking Choices	2	5	7
High-Medium Striking Choices	4	5	9
Low-Medium Striking Choices	6	7	13
Low Striking Choices	18	13	31
	30	30	60

increased frequencies from high striking choices to low-medium striking choices. The greatest apparent frequency distribution difference was between low-medium and low striking choices.

Null Hypothesis 3. Female attitudes toward women's softball behavior are independent of femininity/acceptability standards.

The statistical results that appear in Table 4 indicate that significant differences occurred,  $\chi^2(3) = 9.77$ ,  $p < .05$ . Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. The trend seen is one of an inverted-U for both standards. However, the peaks differ. In the acceptability standard the high-medium striking choices category predominated, while the low-medium striking choices category was predominant in the femininity standard. Once again, further analyses could not reveal exactly where the significance occurred.

Null Hypothesis 4. Female athletes' attitudes toward women's softball behavior are independent of femininity/acceptability standards.

The statistical results presented in Table 5 indicate that significant differences occurred for female athletes within the femininity/acceptability standards,  $\chi^2(3) = 12.00$ ,  $p < .01$ . Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. The apparent trend that occurred between the standards shows a similarity in the decline of tallies found between the low-medium and low striking choices. Differences are found between the standards in low striking and high-medium striking choices.

Null Hypothesis 5. Activity-oriented females' attitudes toward women's softball behaviors are independent of femininity/acceptability standards.

The statistical results presented in Table 6 indicate that no significant differences occurred for the activity-oriented females between both

Table 4

Chi Square\* of Females' Attitudes Toward Women's Softball Behavior  
by Femininity/Acceptability

Striking Choice	Standard		
	Femininity	Acceptability	
High Striking Choices	0	3	3
High-Medium Striking Choices	7	14	21
Low-Medium Striking Choices	17	12	29
Low Striking Choices	6	1	7
	30	30	60

\* $p < .05$ .

Table 5

Chi Square\* of Female Athletes' Attitudes Toward Women's  
Softball Behavior by Femininity/Acceptability Standards

Striking Choice	Standard		
	Femininity	Acceptability	
High Striking Choices	0	1	1
High-Medium Striking Choices	0	6	6
Low-Medium Striking Choices	6	3	9
Low Striking Choices	4	0	4
	10	10	20

\*p < .01.

Table 6

Chi Square of Activity-Oriented Females' Attitudes Towards Women's  
Softball Behavior by Femininity/Acceptability Standards

Striking Choice	Standard		
	Femininity	Acceptability	
High Striking Choices	0	0	0
High-Medium Striking Choices	4	6	10
Low-Medium Striking Choices	5	4	9
Low Striking Choices	1	0	1
	10	10	20

standards,  $\chi^2(3) = 1.51$ ,  $p > .05$ . The hypothesis was then accepted. Both standards tended to have similar trends in that the frequency increased from high to high-medium or low-medium striking choices, and, then decreased in low striking choices.

Null Hypothesis 6. Female nonathletes' attitudes toward women's softball behavior are independent of femininity/acceptability standards.

The statistical results presented in Table 7 indicate that no significant differences occurred,  $\chi^2(3) = 2.29$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted. Both standards followed similar trends in that frequency increased from high striking to low-medium striking choices and, then, a decrease occurred in low striking choices.

Null Hypothesis 7. Athletes' attitudes toward women's softball behavior are independent of femininity/acceptability standards.

The statistical results are presented in Table 8. Significant differences for the athletes were found between the two standards,  $\chi^2(3) = 11.74$ ,  $p < .01$ . Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. Both standards evidenced different trends in frequency distributions. In the femininity standard low-medium and low striking choices categories predominated, whereas the high-medium striking choices category dominated the acceptability standard. Post hoc analyses revealed that the high striking choices category was responsible for the difference between the standards.

Null Hypothesis 8. Activity-oriented individuals' attitudes toward women's softball behavior are independent of femininity/acceptability standards.

The statistical results as seen in Table 9 indicate no significant differences occurred between the femininity/acceptability standards,

Table 7

Chi Square of Female Nonathletes' Attitudes Toward Women's  
Softball Behavior by Fémininity/Acceptability Standards

Striking Choice	Standard		
	Fémininity	Acceptability	
High Striking Choices	0	2	2
High-Medium Striking Choices	3	2	5
Low-Medium Striking Choices	6	5	11
Low Striking Choices	1	1	2
	10	10	20

Table 8

Chi Square\* of Athletes' Attitudes Toward Women's Softball  
 Behavior by Femininity/Acceptability Standards

Striking Choice	Standards		
	Femininity	Acceptability	
High Striking Choices	0	4	4
High-Medium Striking Choices	2	8	10
Low-Medium Striking Choices	9	5	14
Low Striking Choices	9	3	12
	20	20	40

\*p < .01.



Table 9

Chi Square of Activity-Oriented Individuals' Attitudes Toward Women's  
Softball Behavior by Femininity/Acceptability Standards

Striking Choice	Standard		
	Femininity	Acceptability	
High Striking Choices	0	1	1
High-Medium Striking Choices	6	8	14
Low-Medium Striking Choices	8	6	16
Low Striking Choices	6	5	11
	20	20	40

$\chi^2(3) = 1.66$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted. A similar trend occurred within both standards in that most frequencies were somewhat evenly distributed among three striking choice categories.

Null Hypothesis 9. Nonathletes' attitudes toward women's softball behavior are independent of femininity/acceptability standards.

The statistical results presented in Table 10 show no significant differences for the nonathletes between both standards,  $\chi^2(3) = 1.09$ ,  $p > .05$ . The hypothesis was then accepted. Both standards followed similar trends with the general tendency to increase frequencies as the striking choices moved from low to high. However, a slight difference was observed between the standards in the distribution of low-medium to low striking choices. In the femininity standard, tallies increased from low-medium to low striking choices, whereas, in the acceptability standard tallies decreased.

Hypotheses Concerning the Relationship Between Attitudes Toward Women's Softball Behavior and Sex

Null Hypothesis 10. Attitudes toward women's softball behavior are independent of sex.

The statistical results are presented in Table 11. The differences in attitudes between the sexes was found significant,  $\chi^2(3) = 27.65$ ,  $p > .001$ . Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. The trends of frequency distribution among the sexes appear very different with the only similarity occurring in the high striking choices category. The trend among the females showed an inverted-U effect with its peak occurring in low-medium striking choices, and a decline in tallies in low striking choices. The males revealed a slight gradual increase in the number of tallies up to the low-medium striking choices category and a substantial increase in tallies in

Table 10

## Chi Square of Nonathletes' Attitudes Toward Women's Softball

## Behavior by Femininity/Acceptability Standards

Striking Choice	Standard		
	Femininity	Acceptability	
High Striking Choices	2	3	5
High-Medium Striking Choices	3	3	6
Low-Medium Striking Choices	6	8	14
Low Striking Choices	9	6	15
	20	20	40

Table 11

Chi Square\* of Attitudes Toward Women's Softball  
Behavior by Sex

Standard			
Striking Choice	Male	Female	
High Striking Choices	7	3	10
High-Medium Striking Choices	9	21	30
Low-Medium Striking Choices	13	29	42
Low Striking Choices	31	7	38
	60	60	120

\*p < .001.

low striking choices. Post hoc analyses further investigated these differences and revealed that three out of the four categories of striking choices were responsible for the overall differences: high-medium striking choices,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.8$ ,  $p < .05$ ; low-medium striking choices,  $\chi^2(1) = 6.10$ ,  $p < .05$ ; and low striking choices,  $\chi^2(1) = 15.16$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Null Hypothesis 11. Athletes's attitudes toward women's softball behavior are independent of sex.

The statistical results appearing in Table 12 indicate that no significant differences occurred,  $\chi^2(3) = 3.88$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted. Similar trends occurred for both sexes as was seen in the analyses for Hypothesis 10. However, differences in frequency distribution were not evident.

Null Hypothesis 12. Activity-oriented individuals' attitudes toward women's softball behavior are independent of sex.

The statistical results are presented in Table 13. Significant differences among the activity-oriented individuals occurred between the sexes,  $\chi^2(3) = 12.08$ ,  $p < .01$ , and led to a rejection of the hypothesis. The trends in frequency distribution appear very different. The males' tallies showed a steady increase from high striking choices to low striking choices, where 50% of the frequencies occurred. The females' trend was that of an inverted-U with the peak occurring in high-medium striking choices category, where 50% of the frequencies occurred. Further analyses revealed that the differences between the sexes in the low striking choices category accounted for the statistical significance,  $\chi^2(1) = 7.36$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Null Hypothesis 13. Nonathletes' attitudes toward women's softball behavior are independent of sex.

The statistical results presented in Table 14 indicate that signifi-

Table 12

Chi Square of Athletes' Attitudes Toward Women's  
Softball Behavior by Sex

Striking Choices	Male	Female	
High Striking Choices	3	1	4
High-Medium Striking Choices	4	6	10
Low-Medium Striking Choices	5	9	14
Low Striking Choices	8	4	12
	20	20	40

Table 13

Chi Square\* of Activity-Oriented Individuals' Attitudes  
Toward Women's Softball Behavior by Sex

Striking Choices	Male	Female	
High Striking Choices	1	0	1
High-Medium Striking Choices	4	10	11
Low-Medium Striking Choices	5	9	14
Low Striking Choices	10	1	11
	20	20	40

\*p < .01..

Table 14  
 Chi Square\* of Nonathletes' Attitudes Toward  
 Women's Softball Behavior by Sex

Striking Choice	Male	Female	
High Striking Choices	3	5	8
High-Medium Striking Choices	1	5	6
Low-Medium Striking Choices	3	11	14
Low Striking Choices	13	2	15
	20	20	40

\*p < .001.



cant differences were found between male and female nonathletes,  $\chi^2(3) = 15.50$ ,  $p < .001$ . Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. The most apparent differences in frequency distribution between the sexes were seen in the low-medium striking choices category, where 15% of the males' tallies and 55% of the females' tallies were reported, and in the low striking choices category, where 65% of the males' tallies and 10% of the females' tallies were found. Sex differences were explained by the low-medium striking choices category,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.56$ ,  $p < .05$ , and the low striking choices category,  $\chi^2(1) = 8.06$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Null Hypothesis 14. Femininity attitudes toward women's softball behavior are independent of sex.

The statistical results are reported in Table 15. Significant differences occurred in femininity attitudes between the sexes,  $\chi^2(3) = 14.08$ ,  $p < .01$ , and led to a rejection of the hypothesis. For males the lowest number of tallies was recorded in the high striking choices category, with tallies increasing in each striking choice category with the low striking choices category accounting for 60% of the total tallies. The females' trend appeared as an inverted-U with the peak occurring in the low-medium striking choices category, where 57% of the tallies were found. Sex differences were explained by the low-medium striking choices category,  $\chi^2(1) = 5.26$ ,  $p < .05$ , and the low striking choices category,  $\chi^2(1) = 6.00$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Null Hypothesis 15. Acceptability attitudes toward women's softball behavior are independent of sex.

The statistical results presented in Table 16 indicate that significant differences were found in acceptability attitudes between the sexes,  $\chi^2(3) = 16.36$ ,  $p < .001$ . Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. Once again, the trends among the sexes appear very different. The males' dis-

Table 15  
 Chi Square\* of Femininity Attitudes Toward  
 Women's Softball Behavior by Sex

Striking Choice	Male	Female	
High Striking Choices	2	0	2
High-Medium Striking Choices	4	7	11
Low-Medium Striking Choices	6	17	23
Low Striking Choices	18	6	24
	30	30	60

\*p < .01.

Table 16

Chi Square\* of Acceptability Attitudes Toward  
Women's Softball Behavior by Sex

Striking Choice	Male	Female	
High Striking Choices	5	3	8
High-Medium Striking Choices	5	14	19
Low-Medium Striking Choices	7	12	19
Low Striking Choices	13	1	14
	30	30	60

\* $p < .001$ .

tribution of observed frequencies revealed a gradual increase from the high striking choices category to the low-medium striking choices category until reaching low striking choices, where the greatest concentration of the tallies (43%) occurred. The females' trend revealed an inverted-U effect with the peak in the high-medium striking choices category. Sex differences were explained by the high-medium striking choices category,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.26$ ,  $p < .05$ , and the low striking choices,  $\chi^2(1) = 10.24$ ,  $p < .05$ .

#### Hypothesis Concerning the Relationship Between Attitudes Toward Women's Softball Behavior and Athletic Status

Null Hypothesis 16. Attitudes toward women's softball behavior are independent of athletic status.

The statistical results are presented in Table 17. No significant differences were found among the three athletic status groups,  $\chi^2(3) = 6.48$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, the data failed to provide sufficient evidence for the rejection of the hypothesis. The trends in frequency distribution among the three athletic status groups appeared very similar. All groups revealed the least number of tallies in the high striking choices category, and increased tallies until the low-medium striking choices category, where all athletic groups evidenced the exact number of observed frequencies. The athletes and activity-oriented individuals experienced similar trends in that a decrease in tallies was found in the low striking choices category. However, the nonathletes reported their highest number of observed frequencies in the low striking choices category. The most apparent difference among all groups was seen in the high-medium choices category.

#### Summary

Test-retest reliability was calculated for femininity/acceptability

Table 17  
 Chi Square of Attitudes Toward Women's  
 Softball Behavior by Athletic Status

Striking Choice	Athlete	Activity-Oriented	Nonathlete	
High Striking Choices	4	1	5	10
High-Medium Striking Choices	10	14	6	30
Low-Medium Striking Choices	14	14	14	42
Low Striking Choices	12	11	15	38
	40	40	40	120

standard groups. The correlation coefficients of .95 and .94 for the femininity and acceptability standard groups, respectively, were sufficient to indicate that the test was reliable.

Chi-square analyses were used to assess the relationship of attitudes toward women's softball behavior to the independent variables of femininity/acceptability standards, sex, and athletic status. Significant differences were found in nine of the 16 hypotheses tested.

Differences were found in attitudes toward women's softball behavior within the femininity/acceptability standards. These differences occurred only among the females within those groups with the female athletes accounting for the greatest statistical significance.

An investigation of differences within femininity/acceptability standards among athletes, activity-oriented individuals, and nonathletes revealed a significant difference only for the athletes.

With regard to the independent variable of sex and its relationship to attitudes toward women's softball behavior, significant differences were revealed between the sexes. The greatest statistical differences between the sexes occurred with the activity-oriented individuals and the nonathletes. Further analyses revealed significant differences between male and female attitudes toward women's softball behavior in both femininity/acceptability standards.

No significant relationship was realized between attitudes toward women's softball behavior and the three divisions of athletic status: athletes, activity-oriented individuals, and nonathletes.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The emphasis of this chapter is upon the discussion of the results reported in Chapter 4. The discussion will be presented under the following headings: (a) reliability of the testing instrument, (b) hypotheses concerning the relationship between attitudes toward women's softball behavior and femininity/acceptability standards, (c) hypotheses concerning the relationship between attitudes toward women's softball behavior and sex, (d) hypothesis concerning the relationship between attitudes toward women's softball behavior and athletic status, and (e) summary.

#### Reliability of the Testing Instrument

Because the testing instrument was especially designed for this investigation, establishing its reliability was especially important to provide confidence in the data. Results of the test-retest correlations for the femininity and acceptability standard groups indicated a highly reliable tool for providing such confidence, evidenced by correlation coefficients of .95 and .94, respectively.

#### Hypotheses Concerning the Relationship Between Attitudes Toward Women's Softball Behavior and Femininity/Acceptability Standards

The chi-square analyses of attitudes toward women's softball behavior and femininity/acceptability standards indicated that significant differences existed when choosing a sport movement as either more feminine or more acceptable. The major observed difference was found in the acceptability standard, where most frequencies were found in the high-medium striking choice category. This indicated that when subjects viewed and compared a nonstriking softball skill to a striking softball skill, they

were more liberal in their choices of what is considered appropriate for female athletic participation. In other words, if a softball skill appeared unfeminine by one standard, it was not necessarily considered unacceptable by another standard. Therefore, a female playing softball may appear unfeminine, but will not necessarily be labeled a social anomaly by her peers. She may slide, hit, run with high speed and force, and tag and be tagged without too much social disapproval.

This result was similar to the findings of Kingsley, Brown, and Siebert (1977). Their subjects were asked to decide who was more socially acceptable, the softball player or the dancer. Their results found no significant differences between the two. In fact, the softball player was rated more socially acceptable by half of the sample, the female athletes.

These attitudes can probably be explained by the fact that, since Metheny's (1965) research, much has occurred to bring female sport enthusiasts "out of the closet." The impact of the women's movement as well as the advent of Title IX has helped to redefine what is considered appropriate athletic behavior for a female without her receiving negative feedback from her peers.

However, results of the femininity standard did basically agree with Metheny's (1965) concepts. When comparing a striking softball skill to a nonstriking softball skill, the nonstriking skill was usually selected as more feminine. Therefore, those striking skills involved in the sport of softball were seen as less feminine. Hence, a softball player, while competing, does not fulfill society's impressions of femininity. This result was also supported by Garman (1969) whose subjects compared team sport participants to individual sport participants. The softball player appeared least feminine while the gymnast was rated more feminine.



However, Hoferek's (1980) research did not concur with the femininity impressions of team sport participants that resulted in Garman's (1969) study. Hoferek's investigation of adults in Iowa indicated that female participation in sport neither detracted from nor enhanced the feminine image. It is likely that her results were due to the popularity of women's basketball in Iowa and, hence, female sport participation in a "masculine" sport was not viewed as "unfeminine" in that social context.

Further chi-square analyses (i.e., sex and female athletic status groups) of the hypotheses concerning the relationship between attitudes toward women's softball behavior and femininity/acceptability standards led to a better understanding of the differences. While the males applying both standards held very similar attitudes, the females did not. With approximately half of the male subjects in each standard classified as having low striking choices, the general male trend between groups did not really differ. High, high-medium, and low-medium striking choices categories revealed equally few tallies for both standards. On the other hand, more than half of the males in both standards chose those movements of a nonstriking nature to be more feminine and more acceptable for female participation. The males' choices agreed with Metheny's (1965) concepts.

However, the females' decisions were responsible for the significant differences between femininity/acceptability standards. More than half of the females in the femininity standard were found to have low-medium striking choices, whereas most of the males were classified as having low striking choices. This suggested that the females were more liberal in their reaction to striking softball skills.

The acceptability standard accounted for the greatest differences among the females. Here, the high-medium and low-medium striking choices

categories predominated. This indicated that the females chose striking skills more acceptable than nonstriking skills. This particular result was in contrast with Metheny's (1965) concepts and supported research by Duquin (1978) and Noakes (1979), who both reported that a more positive attitude toward female sport participation has recently developed among females.

Because this investigation was designed to explore attitudes among various dimensions of sport participation, further investigation was needed to assess how the females in all three athletic status groups fared in their choices. This investigation revealed that, in general, it was the female athletes (ATH) who yielded significant differences in what skills they chose as more feminine and more acceptable. The female activity-oriented individuals (ACT) and the female nonathletes (NON) did not report significant chi-square differences indicating an even distribution over both variables.

However, female choices should not be linked to those of the males, because, unlike the males, very few of the females were classified as having low striking choices. Instead, females were classified as having high-medium and low-medium striking choices in both standards which suggested a more liberal attitude in their choices.

The chi-square analysis of the female athletes (ATH) in the femininity standard revealed a majority of the frequencies in low-medium and low striking choices categories with six and four, respectively. The possible reason why the female ATH differed from the female ACT and NON in this standard may be the dissonance that exists between the sport self and the feminine and/or social self (Kane, 1972; Tyler (1973). Since cultural expectations of the feminine image are inconsistent with sport involve-

ment, females who choose to compete may experience role conflicts. The competitive self is active and potent (i.e., masculine), while the social self is passive (i.e., feminine). Therefore, the dissonance that develops not only affects the female's self-concept, but also reinforces her perceptions of femininity.

Because her athletic involvement is more intense, the female athlete experiences this dichotomy of existence to a greater extent. The attitude held by the female ATH in this study may also be confounded by the apologetic theory described by Felshin (1974a) and Del Rey (1977), which suggested that female athletes tend to possess a conservative attitude toward the feminine role in sport in order to maintain their feminine image and not diverge from the cultural norms concerning femininity.

The results of the female ATH in the femininity standard disagreed with Balazs (1975), whose research indicated that athletes did not possess "unfeminine" perceptions of sport involvement. The results among the female ATH in the present investigation also supported past research which suggested sport roles to be inconsistent with perceptions of femininity, especially the role of softball player (Brown, 1965; Garman, 1969; Kennicke, 1972; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1973).

The results in the acceptability standard among the female ATH differed somewhat from Metheny's (1965) concepts in that 60% of the subjects were tallied as having high-medium striking choices. This indicated that the female ATH chose more striking softball skills as acceptable athletic behavior for females.

In other words, most female ATH expressed approval for those unfeminine striking softball skills. Interestingly enough, no female ATH were tallied as having low striking choices. Therefore, the female ATH

viewed striking softball skills as appropriate for female participation. This finding agreed with past research concerning female athletes' attitudes regarding the social acceptability of team sport participation (Bird & McCullough, 1977; Del Rey, 1977; Duquin, 1978; Garman, 1969; Harres, 1968; Kingsley et al., 1977; Snyder, Kivlin, & Spreitzer, 1975; Tolor & Tolor, 1974). In other words, female athletes view team sport participation as socially acceptable; therefore disagreeing with Metheny's (1965) concepts.

No significant differences were revealed between the femininity and acceptability standards for female ACT and NON. Both of these athletic status groups indicated similar views in the femininity standard with most tallies in the low-medium striking choices category. The next highest number of tallies was found in the high-medium striking choices category. This was quite different than the female ATH who reported only 60% of their frequencies in this striking choice category.

When analyzing the acceptability standard, the low-medium striking choices category predominated for female NON, whereas the high-medium striking choices category predominated for female ACT. Oddly enough, two female NON actually chose striking softball skills as more acceptable than ACT.

The female ACT proved to be a unique group in that their results were similar to the female NON in the femininity standard and the female ATH in the acceptability standard. Because the female ACT involvement in sport was not as intense as the female ATH, it may be that the female ACT does not possess the implied dissonance between the sport self and the feminine and/or social self that the female ATH experienced. The female ACT conveyed a less restrictive view of femininity in sport, as evidenced

by the predominance of the high-medium striking choices category. However, the female ACT involvement lent itself to a more readily acceptable view of what was appropriate women's softball behavior.

When all ATH (male and female) in both standards compared striking and nonstriking softball skills, their choices were similar to those of the female ATH. Although the nonstriking skills were preferred over striking skills in the femininity standard, the nonstriking skills were not necessarily preferred in the acceptability standard. The ATH results revealed that a less feminine skill was not necessarily considered unacceptable. This result supported Harres' (1968) research in that participation in sport made athletes' attitudes more favorable toward the acceptance of the female athlete.

All athletes in the femininity standard maintained a conservative attitude with low-medium and low striking choices categories predominating. The acceptability standard conveyed more liberal attitudes as evidenced by eight tallies in the high-medium striking choices category and five in the low-medium striking choices category:

Both ACT and NON ratings between both standards resulted in no significant differences. Thus, one would assume that this result would support Metheny (1965) in that a nonstriking softball skill is both feminine and acceptable for female sport participation. However, further analyses of the ACT and NON ratings revealed the following: (a) in the ACT femininity standard tallies in high-medium, low-medium, and low striking choices categories were six, eight, and six, respectively; (b) in the ACT acceptability standard 95% of the tallies were categorized as high-medium, low-medium, and low striking choices with eight, six, and five tallies, respectively; (c) in the NON femininity standard 75% of the tallies were

categorized as low-medium and low striking choices with six and nine, respectively; and (d) in the NON acceptability standard the low-medium and low striking choices categories predominated with eight and six, respectively.

Through these findings, it appears that the NON supported Metheny's (1965) concepts to a greater degree than did the ACT, who suggested a slightly more liberal point of view. The ACT were less conservative than the ATH and NON in the femininity standard as evidenced by the results of the high-medium striking choices category. Here, the ACT tallied six, the ATH tallied two, and the NON tallied three. Therefore, the ACT were less restrictive in their choices of what striking softball skills appeared more feminine. When analyzing the acceptability standard, the ACT agreed with the ATH, especially in the high-medium striking choices category with each reporting eight tallies. However, their overall choices regarding what behavior was acceptable were similar to the ATH, but were slightly less frequent. However, it may be implied that their involvement in sport made them more tolerant of the striking softball skills than the NON since 73% of the NON tallies were found in the low-medium and low striking choices categories.

The current results suggest that the ACT group's results are particularly interesting. Because their sport involvement was identified to be less intense than the ATH, their choices in the femininity standard represented a less conservative point of view. Upon analyzing the acceptability standard, the ACT revealed results as the ATH and allow the conclusion that, although striking softball skills appeared unfeminine, they were deemed acceptable for female participation. This particular result was quite different for the NON. The ACT group proved to be an entity unto

itself and has been ignored in past research, which has traditionally concerned itself with the athlete and nonathlete. This investigation then suggests that another sport dimension actually exists with its own set of attitudes and perceptions.

#### Hypotheses Concerning the Relationship Between Attitudes

##### Toward Women's Softball Behavior and Sex

This discussion is concerned with comparing male and female striking choices categories with both standards combined. The results of femininity/acceptability standards will not be compared; instead they will be combined into the appropriate striking choices category. The emphasis, then, will be on whether or not nonstriking softball skills were preferred over striking softball skills, regardless of the standard group.

Males and females demonstrated significantly different responses when comparing striking softball skills to nonstriking softball skills. For males most (31) tallies occurred in the low striking choices category, with an additional 13 tallies in the low-medium striking choices category. This meant that 73% of the males preferred the nonstriking softball skills as more feminine and acceptable. Twelve percent of the males preferred the striking softball skills. Beyond a doubt, these results agreed with Metheny (1965). Most males maintained a conservative point of view when regarding the female's role in a sport that demonstrated typically masculine skills, as previously indicated in related research (Brown, 1965; Fisher, Genovese, Morris, & Morris, 1978; Foster, 1971; Kennicke, 1972).

For females a majority of tallies occurred in low-medium and high-medium striking choices categories with 29 and 21, respectively. When comparing nonstriking softball skills to striking softball skills, more females actually preferred the nonstriking softball skills, but a great number of females were actually less restrictive and chose more striking

softball skills. However, fewer females than males (three and seven, respectively) preferred the striking softball skills. These results did not wholeheartedly agree with Metheny (1965) as evidenced by the male choices, but instead demonstrated a change in attitude among females for their own participation in sport, as previous research has indicated (Duquin, 1978; Fisher et al., 1978; Tolor & Tolor, 1974).

These results led to an investigation as to whether or not athletic affiliation contributed to these differences. It was reported that male and female ATH had similar choices when comparing striking softball skills to nonstriking softball skills. Although 75% of the females' tallies were recorded in low-medium and high-medium striking choices categories (with nine and six, respectively), this difference was not significant. However, the males held more conservative attitudes toward women's softball behavior as evidenced by the fact that 65% of their tallies were found in low-medium and low striking choices categories with eight and five, respectively.

Interestingly, male ATH chose both more high and low striking choices than their female counterparts. It appeared that the male ATH held the most diversified opinions as to what was considered an acceptable skill for female participation, but with more favorable attitudes toward nonstriking softball skills. This finding not only supported Metheny's (1965) concept that there is less acceptance of females performing striking skills but also agreed with the previous findings of Fisher et al., (1978). When their male subjects viewed slides depicting female athletes performing skills with more strength and force (i.e., striking skills), they reported unfavorable responses and were less accepting of these particular skills and/or sports.



Significant differences were evident between male and female ACT. Ten of the 20 male ACT tallies were recorded in the low striking choices category. The low-medium striking choices category realized the next highest number of tallies with five, followed by high-medium striking choices with four tallies. Only one subject preferred more striking softball skills as indicated in high striking choices. The male ACT results disagreed with the male ATH and Wittig's (1975) research, which indicated a changing male point of view in the acceptance of female sport participation. Instead, the male ACT supported Metheny's (1965) theory.

Half (10) of the female ACT tallies fell into the high-medium striking choices category with the low-medium striking choices category revealing nine tallies. Only one female's tallies fell into the low striking choices category. Male and female ACT appeared to have very different points of view. This result supported past research that suggested through more athletic involvement, females exhibit a more liberal attitude toward the female's role in athletics (Duquin, 1978; Garman, 1969; Hall, 1977; Harres, 1968; Tolor & Tolor, 1974).

Significant differences were also revealed between male and female NON. Most of the males' (13) tallies were categorized as low striking choices, which again supported the traditional, conservative male point of view (Brown, 1965; Fisher et al., 1978; Lewko & Greendorfer, 1978) and was in accordance with Metheny's (1965) assertion that less striking and less force in an athletic activity lends itself to more femininity.

The female NON were significantly more liberal in their choices as evidenced by 11 tallies being recorded in low-medium striking choices. This result also supported past conclusions that females are developing a more positive attitude toward female sport involvement (Duquin, 1978;

Kingsley et al., 1977; Tolor & Tolor, 1974).

Males and females in the femininity standard revealed significantly different attitudes toward women's softball behavior. Males' tallies were predominant in the low striking choices category, where females' tallies were predominant in the low-medium striking choices category. This, again, supported Metheny (1965) in that more force and striking detract from the feminine image, which also supported other related research (Fisher et al., 1978; Kennicke, 1972; Lewko & Greendorfer, 1978).

Females reported most frequencies in the low-medium striking choices category with 17. The high striking choices category revealed no subjects' choices, which indicated that females did not choose striking softball skills as more feminine. When deciding which appeared more feminine, striking softball skills or nonstriking softball skills, the females exhibited a more liberal attitude than the males. This result did not support Metheny's (1965) concepts or Snyder and Spreitzer's (1973) research, both of which indicated that participation in softball detracted from the feminine image.

Male and female attitudes toward women's softball behavior differed significantly in the acceptability standard. Again, the male trend demonstrated a more conservative point of view with 66% of the frequencies occurring in low and low-medium striking choices categories. Therefore, the males were less acceptant of a female performing those softball skills that appeared more masculine. This finding agreed with Metheny (1965) and disagreed somewhat with Steinman and Fox's (1966) research, which suggested males to be more liberal and more acceptant of the female's role in life. This particular result also differed with Harres' (1968) research which suggested that as the male matures his attitudes grow more favorable

toward female athletic competition.

Females made most of their choices in low-medium and high-medium striking choices with 12 and 14, respectively. The majority of females chose striking softball skills to be acceptable activities for female sport participation. Again this result supported the previous research regarding the changing female point of view that has evolved (Duquin, 1978; Kingsley et al., 1977; Tolor & Tolor, 1974).

#### Hypothesis Concerning the Relationship Between Attitudes

##### Toward Women's Softball Behavior and Athletic Status

Across all athletic status groups, no significant differences were revealed. In all athletic groups, the low and low-medium striking choices categories predominated. Analyzing the characteristics of each athletic group, the following is concluded: (a) the ATH demonstrated the most diversified choices, (b) the ACT appeared to make more liberal choices, and (c) the NON maintained a conservative point of view. Differences between these groups existed, but were not statistically significant. Perhaps this indicates that all people's attitudes are changing toward female sport involvement in regard to her femininity and social acceptance. This was also suggested in Kingsley et al.'s (1977) research, which reported NON perceptions of team and individual sport participants. In their investigation subjects did not rate dancers significantly more acceptable than softball players.

#### Summary

Test-retest reliability was calculated for the testing instrument especially designed for this investigation. The correlations provided a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the instrument.

When comparing striking to nonstriking softball skills, the femininity

standard differed significantly from the acceptability standard. Therefore, those softball skills seen as unfeminine were considered acceptable for female sport participation. This was in direct contrast with Metheny's (1965) theory, which designated unfeminine sport movements as also being unacceptable forms of athletic behavior for female participation.

However, all groups tested did not agree with that particular conclusion. It was evident from the results that females and ATH (especially female ATH) accounted for most of the significant differences. Males' and NON findings agreed with Metheny. No significant differences occurred among the ACT. Their responses were more liberal and more acceptant of what appeared as feminine and acceptable softball behavior for female participation. It was suggested that, because this sport group did participate somewhat in physical activity, but not with the intensity of the athletes, they were not affected by the strict cultural norms that still exist. The females in this group apparently did not experience the dissonance between the sport self and the feminine and/or social self that the female ATH may have experienced. They experienced positive attitudes toward female sport participation.

When comparing the relationship between sex and attitudes toward women's softball behavior, it was found that significant differences existed between male and female choices of striking and nonstriking softball skills. Significant differences occurred among all athletic groups except the ATH. Differences between males and females also occurred within each standard. It was suggested that the ATH, especially the female ATH, maintained traditional views on what appeared more feminine and acceptable due to the implied dissonance mentioned previously, as well as the apologetic attitude they may have experienced.

When comparing all three athletic status groups in relationship to attitudes toward women's softball behavior, no significant differences were found. Therefore, athletic involvement had no statistical bearing on subjects' decisions. Looking at each group separately, the ATH evidenced the most diversified choices; the ACT realized the most liberal choices; and the NON held the most conservative viewpoint. These differences did not reach statistical significance, but did point to a possible trend within each athletic group.

## Chapter 6

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This study examined Metheny's (1965) theory of what was considered feminine and acceptable athletic behavior for females. Female and male undergraduate students (N = 120) from Ithaca College viewed color slides depicting Metheny's concepts of striking and nonstriking sport movements as they related to her assumptions of femininity and acceptability. The subjects were classified according to their degree of athletic involvement and sex. Subjects were also randomly assigned to standards (femininity or acceptability) to assess whether striking or nonstriking softball skills were congruent with subjects' attitudes of feminine or acceptable athletic behavior for women.

When comparing a striking softball skill with a nonstriking softball skill, the femininity standard differed significantly from the acceptability standard through all chi-square analyses. The females and athletes (especially female athletes) in the two standards accounted for the significant differences. There were no significant differences between acceptability and femininity choices among males, activity-oriented individuals, and nonathletes.

When comparing the relationship between attitudes toward women's softball behavior and sex groups, chi-square analyses revealed significant differences between male and female choices of striking and nonstriking softball skills. Differences occurred between males and females among all athletic groups tested except the athletes. Differences also occurred between males and females within each standard group.

When comparing the three athletic status groups in relationship to attitudes toward women's softball behavior, statistical differences were

not realized. Each athletic group's choices evidenced distinctive characteristics. The athletes evidenced the most diversified choices; the activity-oriented individuals realized the most liberal choices; and the nonathletes held the most conservative choices.

#### Conclusions

The following conclusions are evident from the collected data in this investigation:

1. Metheny's (1965) theory was not upheld in this investigation, in that college students consider unfeminine sport movements (i.e., striking sport skills) to be acceptable athletic behavior for females.

2. Females and athletes possess the most liberal points of view when choosing what is considered a more feminine or more acceptable athletic behavior for a female.

3. The activity-oriented individual represents another dimension of sport involvement whose attitudes are unique and represent a liberal point of view toward the female athlete.

4. Females and males view female athletic behavior differently. Regarding what is considered feminine and acceptable, females exhibit the more liberal attitude whereas males maintain the traditional, conservative attitude.

#### Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed based upon the data collected and analyzed in this study:

1. Conduct the same study with different age and educational levels to determine how and at what age attitudes are developed and/or consolidated.

2. Conduct the same study, but re-examine the color slides to determine which particular softball skills are the more feminine and acceptable choices.

Appendix A

SLIDE RANKINGS

Striking

1. Sliding into baseperson (take out)
2. Diving into base
3. Tagging out sliding baserunner
4. Sliding into base (no tag)
5. Hitting with full swing
6. Tagging the baserunner on a run-down (catcher tags)
7. Baseperson tagging baserunner on a run-down
8. Maintaining base-contact to catch
9. Bunting

Nonstriking

10. Sprinting to base
11. Throwing from outfield
12. Throwing to base from infield
13. Pitching (fast pitch follow through)
14. Pitching (fast pitch wind-up)
15. Catching a fly ball
16. Jogging to base
17. Fielding a ground ball
18. Preparing to take the field



Appendix B

PAIRED TEST SEQUENCE OF SLIDES

1. 1-10	22. 6-13	43. 16-2	64. 8-10
2. 18-9	23. 10-3	44. 10-5	65. 6-17
3. 16-7	24. 8-15	45. 8-13	66. 12-1
4. 13-4	25. 9-16	46. 1-14	67. 13-2
5. 5-14	26. 1-17	47. 11-7	68. 16-5
6. 15-6	27. 5-12	48. 8-12	69. 15-4
7. 3-12	28. 4-10	49. 16-3	70. 14-3
8. 17-8	29. 5-11	50. 10-6	71. 11-9
9. 11-2	30. 6-12	51. 15-2	72. 18-7
10. 10-2	31. 18-3	52. 13-9	73. 9-10
11. 11-3	32. 14-8	53. 17-4	74. 2-12
12. 8-16	33. 1-16	54. 5-18	75. 11-1
13. 5-13	34. 15-9	55. 7-10	76. 13-3
14. 6-14	35. 17-2	56. 1-13	77. 14-4
15. 7-15	36. 13-7	57. 12-9	78. 5-15
16. 12-4	37. 17-3	58. 8-11	79. 16-6
17. 1-18	38. 11-6	59. 14-2	80. 8-18
18. 9-17	39. 7-12	60. 6-18	81. 17-7
19. 7-14	40. 4-18	61. 4-16	
20. 4-11	41. 9-14	62. 5-17	
21. 2-18	42. 1-15	63. 3-15	

Appendix C

PROSPECTIVE SUBJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Campus Address \_\_\_\_\_

Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Graduation \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge by checking either YES or NO.

1. Have you ever participated on any organized athletic team either in high school or college? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

2. Have you ever participated on an intercollegiate team this academic year (1977-78)? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If YES, which team? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you participate in any athletic activity at least three times a week? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If YES, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Would you be willing to participate in a study assessing attitudes toward women in sport by viewing color slides and taking no more than 1 hour of your time? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

5. If YES, please check the times below that you would be available.

If none of the times are convenient, please indicate another time.

Tuesday    \_\_\_ 2:00-2:45    \_\_\_ 3:00-3:45    \_\_\_ 7:00-7:45    \_\_\_ 8:00-8:45

Wednesday    \_\_\_ 3:00-3:45    \_\_\_ 7:00-7:45    \_\_\_ 8:00-8:45    \_\_\_ 9:00-9:45

Thursday    \_\_\_ 1:00-1:45    \_\_\_ 2:30-3:15    \_\_\_ 7:00-7:45    \_\_\_ 8:00-8:45

Friday    \_\_\_ 2:00-2:45    \_\_\_ 3:00-3:45    \_\_\_ 6:00-6:45    \_\_\_ 7:00-7:45

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This is a study concerning attitudes toward women participating in sport. The completion of this thesis will meet the partial requirements for a Master of Science degree in Physical Education at Ithaca college. It is important that you read the points below and sign in the space provided if you agree to participate in this study.

1. Your participation in this experiment is purely voluntary. If at any time you need to withdraw, please notify the investigator.
2. The test will consist of viewing 81 pairs of color slides and will take no longer than 30 minutes to administer.
3. There will be two test administrations. You will be needed for two 30-minute periods approximately 1 week apart.
4. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study.

If you understand the criteria and agree to participate in this study, please sign in the space provided.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Patricia M. Barnaba

---

Participant's Signature

---

Date

## Appendix E

### TEST INSTRUCTIONS

#### Acceptability Standard Instructions

The purpose of the test you are about to take is to measure attitudes toward women participating in sport. Eighteen color slides depicting different skills demonstrated in women's softball will be utilized to reveal your attitudes.

You will view 81 pairings of the 18 slides. After every pair you will be asked to choose one slide that is acceptable to you concerning your attitudes toward women participating in sport. You will then indicate your choice by circling the letter of the screen on your answer sheet. The letter "L" will indicate the left screen, and "R" will be the screen on the right.

Before you hand in your answer sheet, please indicate the best time for a retest period within approximately 1 week. If none of the listed times agree with your schedule, please indicate otherwise.

Thank you for giving me some of your valuable time and assistance in this project.

Appendix E (Continued)

Femininity Standard Instructions

The purpose of the test you are about to take is to measure attitudes toward women participating in sport. Eighteen color slides depicting different skills demonstrated in women's softball will be utilized to reveal your attitudes.

You will view 81 pairings of the 18 slides. After every pair you will be asked to choose one as more feminine on the basis of the skill pictured. You will then indicate your choice by circling the letter of the screen on your answer sheet. The letter "L" will indicate the left screen; and "R" will be the screen on the right.

Before you hand in your sheet, please indicate the best time for a retest period within approximately 1 week. If none of the listed times agree with your schedule, please indicate otherwise.

Thank you for giving me some of your valuable time and assistance in this project.

Appendix F  
ANSWER SHEET

				#
				_____
1. L R	22. L R	43. L R	64. L R	
2. L R	23. L R	44. L R	65. L R	
3. L R	24. L R	45. L R	66. L R	
4. L R	25. L R	46. L R	67. L R	
5. L R	26. L R	47. L R	68. L R	
6. L R	27. L R	48. L R	69. L R	
7. L R	28. L R	49. L R	70. L R	
8. L R	29. L R	50. L R	71. L R	
9. L R	30. L R	51. L R	72. L R	
10. L R	31. L R	52. L R	73. L R	
11. L R	32. L R	53. L R	74. L R	
12. L R	33. L R	54. L R	75. L R	
13. L R	34. L R	55. L R	76. L R	
14. L R	35. L R	56. L R	77. L R	
15. L R	36. L R	57. L R	78. L R	
16. L R	37. L R	58. L R	79. L R	
17. L R	38. L R	59. L R	80. L R	
18. L R	39. L R	60. L R	81. L R	
19. L R	40. L R	61. L R		
20. L R	41. L R	62. L R		
21. L R	42. L R	63. L R		

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