Chancellor's Honors Program Projects

Supervised Undergraduate Student Research and Creative Work

Spring 5-2000

Men and Women in America: Are We Really from Two Different Planets? An Analysis of Personal Values and Situational Tendencies Between Genders

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Appendix D -   UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL

Name: _Annie Lane_

College: _Arts & Sciences_   Department: _Psychology_

Faculty Mentor: _Dr. William H. Calhoun_

PROJECT TITLE: "Men & Women: Are We really from two Different Planets?... An Analysis..."

I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

Signed: _WHCalhoun_   , Faculty Mentor

Date: _May 2, 2020_

Comments (Optional):

Excellent project.

Men and Women In America:

Are We Really from Two Different Planets?

An Analysis of Personal Values

and Situational Tendencies

Between Genders

William H. Calhoun, Ph.D; Faculty Mentor

Annie F. Lane

Abstract/Introduction

Many studies have been done pertaining to gender differences in an attempt to uncover who we are and how we can improve communication and relationships by realizing these differences. Traditionally, words associated with male personalities are power, achievement, and admiration; while words associated with female personalities include love, nurturing, communication, and beauty. But are these words accurately attached to their respective genders or are they merely inaccurate stereotypes that are broadening the gender gap that we are so desperately trying to close?

With the use of common instruments (i.e. surveys), the object of this study is to compare self-report surveys across genders and age groups both inside and outside of the university setting.

The sample of participants included 25 males (mean age = 25.7) and 25 females (mean age = 22.5). A statistical analysis of these surveys indicates results which may imply whether or not male/female gender stereotypes hold true in the present day.

Additional research may include applying the survey results to attitudes and behaviors in the workplace or parenting/familial settings.

Sex and Gender in 20th Century America: a Brief History

Twentieth century America has witnessed a broad overall shift in views and attitudes concerning sex and gender. The turn of the century experienced a nuclear and possibly archaic familial structure which, during the 1990s evolved into a different structure altogether. Nevertheless, there seems to be an indefinite amount of evolution still to come especially concerning the workplace, the political arena, and how we, as men and women, view ourselves and each other on a daily basis. The following is a brief overview of sex and gender throughout the 20th century.

At the turn of the century, women and men seemed to be on different levels at work and at home. The general views of the early 1900's were that women were associated with "warmth of home" and private living. On the other hand, men were immersed in an obviously cold, rigid persona. They were identified as independent and "self-made;" after all, an American culture hero was a sphere of life and labor. When it came to women and the workplace, usually domestic pursuits or menial labor in unsafe factories were the only available options (Falk 1998).

While work roles seemed to shape society in the early 1900s, at the heart of this era was the Victorian family pattern. It was nuclear; in other words, the father worked and the mother stayed at home to fullfill her nurturing role. Marriage was seen as truly being a lifelong bond, for divorce was nearly unheard of. Sexual intercourse and sensuality in general were heavily de-emphasized (Lorber, Farrell 1991). .

This "Victorian" way of life originated around 1840, spread quickly, and remained unchallenged throughout the roaring '20's. The general population continued in this spirit until the 1960's, but both World War I and World War II aided in the decline of popularity of this era. One such movement to emerge following WWI as a counteraction to the Victorian Era is referred to as the Progressive Era. The Progressives were liberal in nature and prided themselves on supporting the right of each and every human being to "seek meaning and direction for his own life in his own way." They actually formed a revolt of sorts against older societal values. They noticed a need for the evolution of the family unit from "institution to companionship." The Progressives defined this companionship family as "a unity of interacting personalities" (Falk 1998).

Regardless of movements such as the Progressive Era, the manner in which men and women viewed each other during this time period remained generally steadfast. Women were still generally seen by men and by themselves as more emotional than men, while men were viewed as both more rational and more practical than women.

Nevertheless, men and women of the 1950's were awakened by a dawn of subtle changes pertaining to sex and gender. There was the "baby boom" which occured through 1957, increasing the number of mothers in general. Simultaneously, women's life expectancy had increased from 55 to 71 years of age, meaning women were becoming healthier, stronger, and more capable (Lorber, Farrell 1991). The 1950's also saw the development of innumberable labor saving devices, such as kitchen appliances. This was relevent because, for the first time, women could complete chores in a short time that previously had taken all day to finish. This opened up a large window of time in which mothers with school-aged children could venture out into the workforce during the day. If this wasn't enough progression, more and more women were attending college, thus depriving the unskilled job market of their services.

The 1960's brought many issues including Civil Rights and the Vietnam War. Protesting became a popular and accepted manner in which to speak out about a variety of social issues. In lieu of the protests surrounding the Vietnam War, women took to the streets demanding Civil Rights such as equal pay for both women and men performing the same job. Throughout the 1970's, the trend of women infiltrating the work force continued while the birth rate fell.

A decade later, welcome change was continuing to occur. During the 1980's, both the Equal Pay Act and the Civil Rights Act were instilled, opening even more doors for women in the workplace. These acts were instrumental in prohibiting discrimination against women in employment; more than half of adult women were working outside of the home. What this particular decade was experiencing in retrospect was a far cry from the unwavering nuclear family structure that was so popular during the turn of the century and beyond.

By the 1990's, gender relations had changed drastically. Women had jobs in all occupations and it was most certainly not unheard of for the father to take on the "stay-at-home" role in the family unit. Nonetheless, women were still only making 71 cents to every dollar that the average male earned.

This particular overview pertains mainly to relatively tangible issues such as treatment in the workplace and familial structures. But what about politics? Why haven't we had a woman president? Why are males who prefer to take on the nurturing role in the family looked down upon? Until a society stops accepting the status quo and starts treating people equally, these questions and many more will continue to be raised. We need to become more aware that males and females, however different both physically and mentally, are in essence much more similar than we realize, admit, and accept. No one completely understands anyone, but a step in the right direction is a step toward accepting *and* appreciating both gender differences and gender similarities.

An Example of a Previous Psychological Experiment
Pertaining to Gender Differences

Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI)

Sandra Bem was a professor at Cornell University. During the '70's and '80's, she became interested in studying gender and decided to perform a series of experiments that measured androgeny. She created the Bem Sex Role Inventory or BSRI that set out to answer the question, "Are sex-typed people really restricted in their behavior and are androgenous people really more adaptable to a wider variety of skills/situations?"

Bem's procedure consisted of a series of five experiments given out to over 1500 undergraduates at Stanford University. Her strategy was to measure a number of behaviors that were stereotypically either masculine or feminine. For example, "masculine behaviors" such as independence and assertiveness were studies across genders, along with "feminine behaviors" such as the "extent to which a person was willing to be responsible for or helpful toward another living creature" (Leone, O'Neill 1983).

A series of predictions were compiled prior to completing the study. Bem foresaw that sex-typed people would perform better only when the particular task was traditionally "appropriate" for his/her sex. She also predicted that those participants who fell into the androgenous category would do well regardless of sex role stereotypes that were attached to that particular task.

Quantitative findings included percentages of those surveyed who fell into three categories: 50% of those surveyed adhered to "appropriate" sex roles; 15% surveyed were cross-sex-typed; and 35% of those surveyed were termed androgenous.

The BSRI also aided in Bem's qualitative findings, which were precursors to many other experiments concerning gender. She found that men did especially well at masculine tasks and especially poorly at more feminine tasks: they lacked the ability to express warmth, playfulness and concern. Bem found that females lacked the ability to express masculine characteristics; they weren't independent in judgement or assertive in their own preferences. Androgenous men and women did equally well on both behaviors (Leone, O'Neill 1983).

Key

<u>Part 1</u> Please choose 5 of the values listed below that are most important/significant to you. Rank in order of importance, 1 being the most important, 5 being the least important.

M power   F devotion

F relationships   F beauty

M success   F love

F trust   M achievement

M respect   M admiration

M acceptance   F communication

F spirituality   F nurturing

M encouragement   M efficiency

F community   M competency

M approval   F helping

<u>Part 2</u> Circle the choice that best describes you.

1) When you and a friend are eating lunch together at a restaurant, do you more often consider it an opportunity to:
   a) approach food in an efficient manner   b) spend quality time with a friend
       M   F

2) When your partner shares upset feelings with you, are you more likely to:
   a) feel obligated to find a perfect   b) feel obligated to offer advice and
       solution   M   constructive criticism
                                                  F

3) Which is more satisfying?
   a) having an interesting conversation with a friend   b) winning a race
       F   M

4) Does a high stress situation make you
   a) overwhelmed and emotional   b) increasingly focused
       F   M

5) When you encounter a personal struggle, do you prefer to
   a) deal with it alone   b) talk openly about it with others
       M   F

6) When do you feel most motivated and empowered?
   a) when you feel cherished   b) when you feel needed
       F   M

7) When you publicly "screw up," are you more interested in
   a) withdrawing from others   b) seeking reassurance from others
       M   F

8) In relationships, do you find that you have a tendency to pull away from the other person before you are able to get closer?
                    a) Yes   b) No
                       M   F

9) Which would you more strongly support?
                    a) the right to be free   b) the right to be upset
                       M   F

10) When you have upset your partner are you more prone to
             a) talking out the problem   b) arguing
                    F   M

Gender:
Age:
Occupation/Major:
Status (circle one):   Married   Single   Divorced Dating

Projected Survey Results

According to research, males and females have been previously stereotyped in ways that one may easily (and blindly) accept. The following briefly describes the projected values and attitudes between genders before scoring the results of the survey (see bibliography for sources of projected stereotypes).

Projected Male Values:

power, success, respect, acceptance, encouragement, approval, achievement, admiration, efficiency, competency

Projected Female Values

relationships, trust, spirituality, community, devotion, beauty, love, communication, nurturing, helping

Projected Attitudes (as a result of specific situations)

1) When eating lunch with a friend:
      -males consider it an opportunity to approach food in an efficient manner
      -females consider it an opportunity to spend quality time with a friend

2) When partner shares upset feelings with you:
      -males are more likely to feel obligated to find a perfect solution
      -females are more likely to feel obligated to offer advice and constructive criticism

3) Which is more satisfying?
      -males would respond with "winning a race"
      -females would respond with "having a conversation with a friend"

4) A high stress situation would:
      -lead a male to feel increasingly focused
      -lead a female to feel overwhelmed and emotional

5) When encountering a personal struggle:
      -males would prefer to deal with it alone
      -females would prefer to talk openly about it with others

6) When do males/females feel most empowered?
      -males would respond, "when I feel needed"
      -females would respond, "when I feel cherished"

7) When publicly "screwing up":
      -males are more interested in withdrawing from others

-females are more interested in seeking reassurance from others

8) In relationships, do you have a tendency to pull away from the person before being able to get closer?
    -males would say yes
    -females would say no

9) Which is more strongly supported?
    -males would respond, "the right to be free"
    -females would respond, "the right to be upset"

10) When upsetting one's partner:
    -males are more prone to arguing
    -females are more prone to talking out the problem

Survey Results: Males

Part I - Indicates percentage of those males surveyed that ranked each particular value as one of the top 5 values (out of 20) most important to them. Results are listed in order of greatest to least importance in terms of percentage.

1) Love	64%		11) Competency	20%
2) Trust	60%		12) Devotion	16%
3) Respect	52%		13) Acceptance	16%
4) Spirituality	48%		14) Beauty	12%
5) Communication	36%		15) Power	8%
6) Relationships	36%		16) Admiration	8%
7) Success	32%		17) Nurturing	8%
8) Helping	32%		18) Efficiency	8%
9) Achievement	28%		19) Encouragement	8%
10) Community	20%		20) Approval	4%

Survey Results: Males

Part II - Participants were given ten situations and asked to choose between two resulting behaviors according to which would best describe them.

1) 96% of males would consider situation to be an opportunity to spend quality time with a friend as opposed to 4% who consider situation to be an opportunity to "approach food in an efficient manner."

2) 72% of males would feel obligated to offer constructive criticism to an upset partner as opposed to 28% wo would search for a perfect solution.

3) 68% of males would feel more satisfied having an interesting conversation with a friend as opposed to 32% who would feel more satisfied with winning a race.

4) 84% of males feel that a high stress situation would lead them to feel increasing ly focused as opposed to 16% who would feel overwhelmed and emotional when faced with stress.

5) 64% of males prefer dealing with personal struggles alone as opposed to 36% who would prefer to talk openly with others.

6) 72% of males feel most motivated and empowered when they are needed as opposed to 28% who feel this way when they are cherished.

7) 76% of males when publicly "screwing up" seek reassurance from others, while 24% prefer to withdraw from others.

8) 64% of males DO NOT have a tendency to pull away from someone before they are able to get closer, while 36% DO have this tendency.

9) 84% of males would strongly support the right to be free as opposed to 16% who would strongly support the right to be upset.

10) 88% of males when upset with their partner are more prone to talking out the problem as opposed to 12% who are more prone to arguing.

Survey Results: Females

Part I - Indicates percentage of those females surveyed that ranked each particular value as one of the top 5 values (out of 20) most important to them.
Results are listed in order of greatest to least importance in terms of percentage.

1) Love	80%		11) Nurturing	8%
2) Trust	80%		12) Community	8%
3) Respect	56%		13) Competency	8%
4) Communication	56%		14) Helping	8%
5) Achievement	48%		15) Encouragement	8%
6) Spirituality	48%		16) Power	4%
7) Relationships	48%		17) Devotion	4%
8) Success	32%		18) Beauty	4%
9) Acceptance	12%		19) Admiration	0%
10) Approval	8%		20) Efficiency	0%

Survey Results: Females

Part II - Participants were given ten situations and asked to choose between two resulting behaviors according to which would best describe them.

1) 100% of females would consider situation to be an opportunity to spend quality time with a friend as opposed to considering situation to be an opportunity to "approach food in an efficient manner."

2) 76% of females would feel obligated to offer constructive criticism to an upset partner as opposed to 24% who would search for a perfect solution.

3) 84% of females would feel more satisfied having an interesting conversation with a friend as opposed to 16% who would feel more satisfied with winning a race.

4) 60% of females feel that a high stress situation would lead them to feel overwhelmed and emotional as opposed to 40% who feel increasingly focused when faced with stress.

5) 72% of females would talk openly with others about a personal struggle, while 28% would rather deal with it alone.

6) 56% of females feel most motivated and empowered when they are cherished as opposed to 44% who feel this way when they are needed.

7) 72% of females when publicly "screwing up" seek reassurance from others, while 28% prefer to withdraw from others.

8) 72% of females DO NOT have a tendency to pull away from someone before they are able to get closer, while 28% DO have this tendency.

9) 96% of females would strongly support the right to be free as opposed to 4% who would strongly support the right to be upset.

10) 72% of females when upset with their partner are more prone to talking out the problem as opposed to 28% who are more prone to arguing.

Confounding Factors

Psychological studies have limitations that are sometimes called "confounding factors." These factors are basically an illustration of reasons that the study may be questionable or even insignificant. For this particular study, a few confounding factors come to mind:

-Sample size

-Regional biases

-Age group studied

-Ethnicity

-Length of Survey

Conclusions

-Generally, men and women place high importance on the same types of values.

-Values highly associated with gender stereotypes, such as nurturing and power, were largely ignored by those surveyed.

-Some values highly associated with gender stereotypes were regarded as important by the gender not typically associated with that particular value.

-When given a particular situation, females generally chose what may be expected by today's society, while males, in some situations, chose behaviors that were atypical of society's expectations.

Conclusions/Additional Research Suggestions

This particular study, however small, still managed to produce some interesting results. Part I of the survey revealed that generally, men and women place high importance on the same types of values. Love, trust, respect, communication, relationships, and spirituality were among those values that many or most of those surveyed ranked amongst their top five. On the other hand, values such as nurturing and power, both highly associated with gender stereotypes, were largely ignored by the participants. Helping, a traditionally female value was chosen as highly important by four times as many males as females.

While Part II of the survey showed that given a particular situation, females *generally chose what may be expected* by today's society, males, on the other hand displayed that in several situations, they weren't as "manly" as much of today's society may percieve (See highlights of results).
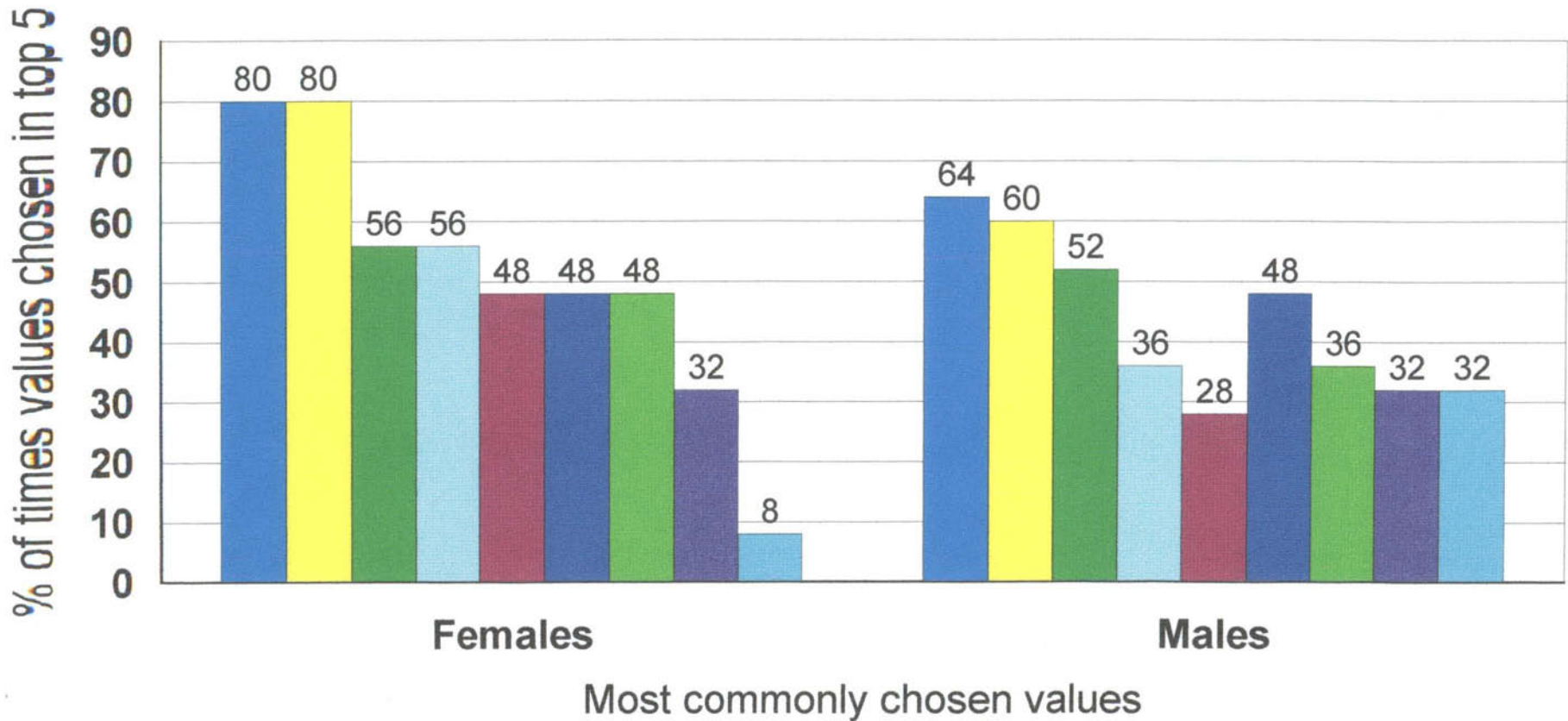
Additional research pertaining to this type of study could go in any number of directions. If the study were to be repeated for validity, one may choose to lengthen the survey, increase the sample size, and survey people in at least five different geographical regions. Any results similar to those uncovered in this particular survey, if highly publicized, may be useful in influencing workplace relations, familial structure, the political arena, etc.
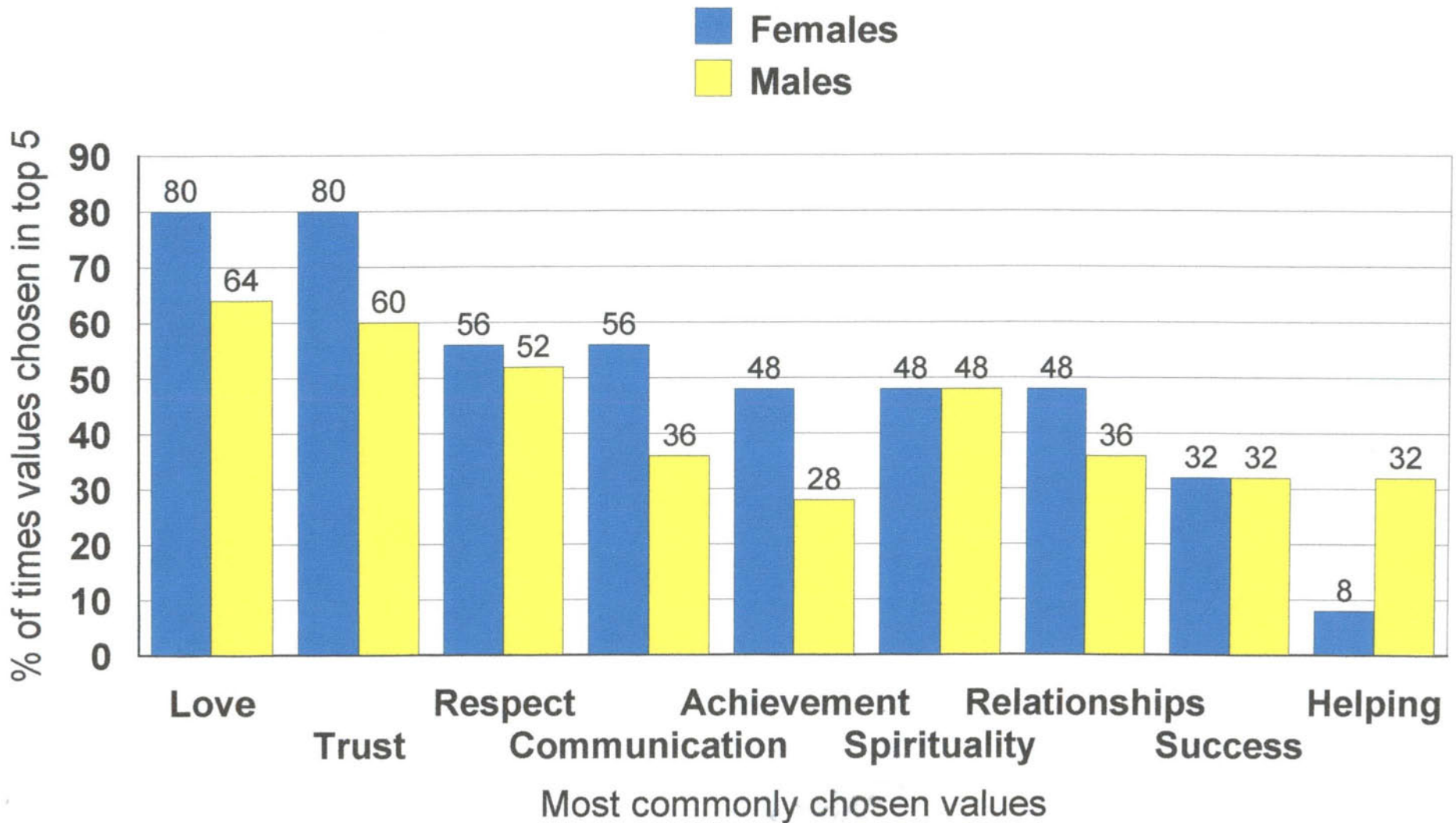
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*All sources used to derive survey items, structure, and compilation.

% of Female Vs. Male top 5 Response Values

Legend:
- Love
- Trust
- Respect
- Communication
- Achievement
- Spirituality
- Relationships
- Success
- Helping

Y-axis: % of times values chosen in top 5

Females: 80, 80, 56, 56, 48, 48, 48, 32, 8

Males: 64, 60, 52, 36, 28, 48, 36, 32, 32

X-axis: Most commonly chosen values

Highlights/Findings of Part I Results

Part I

1) The values that both males and females chose as one of their top five most important were similar.
   In order of frequency, the first being the highest:
   > Males-Love, Trust, Respect, Spirituality, Communication, Relationships, Success, Helping
   > Females-Love, Trust, Respect, Communication, Achievement, Spirituality, Relationships, Success

2) Across the 20 provided value choices, males' top five picks were more evenly distributed than those chosen by females.

3) Survey results depicted findings contrary to presents stereotypes pertaining to achievement and success. Nearly twice as many females chose achievement as important (48%) as opposed to only 28% of males who chose this. Success was chosen by 32% of both males and females.

4) While helping did not rank highly between either males or females, four times as many males found this behavior highly important (32%) as did females (8%).

5) While power has traditionally been associated with males, only 8% chose this as one of their top five values; on the other hand, only half as many females chose it (4%).

6) Nurturing has traditionally been a value closely associated with females. Although, this survey shows an equal amount of both women and men considered this value highly important. Interestingly though, in both populations, only 8% reported nurturing as being highly important.

Highlights of Part II Results

1) -88% of males are more prone to talking out problem
   -12% of males are more prone to arguing

2) -76% of males seek reassurance from others after an embarrassment
   -24% of males withdraw from others

3) -68% of males would be more satisfied having an interesting conversation with a friend
   -32% of males would be more satisfied with winning a race

* for females, no profound findings were uncovered on part II of the survey.