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SEX PREFERENCES AND IDENTIFICATIONS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

by

Loa Thomson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Child Development

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To Carroll Lambert, my major professor, for her guidance and support; to my graduate committee members, Dorothy Lewis, Dr. Jay Skidmore, Dr. George Ellsworth, and Owen Cahoon, for their help and suggestions; to Dr. Don Carter, for his assistance and direction; to Valera Holman, for her cooperation as head teacher; to the children in this study, even though they remain unknown to the world; and to my family and friends, for their patience and encouragement, I give my thanks and appreciation for making this study possible.

Loa Thomson

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INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of normal sex-role behavior is one of the fundamental tasks which goes into developing a healthy personality. More needs to be understood about the processes involved in adopting proper sex-role behavior patterns. How does a little girl adopt the feminine role and learn to be a woman? How does a little boy adopt the masculine role and learn to be a man? From the studies in clinical psychology and psychiatry, it is evident that personality maladjustments and certain forms of emotional disorders appear to be related to difficulties in sex-role adjustment. This suggests a close correlation between childhood learning and development in sex-role behavior and adult personality disturbances.

Through observing young children in various nursery schools, and from actual supervision of a nursery school laboratory, the writer became aware of the differences in the children's acquisition of accepted sex-role behavior.

One observation concerned a four-year-old boy, who was the mother whenever housekeeping was dramatized. Even though many of the children would admonish him with, "Boys can't be mothers!", still he remained the mother. If another child was already the mother, this boy would settle for a sister or a grandmother, but never for a father, brother, or grandfather.

In another observation, a boy had worn summer sandals to the nursery school. "How come you're wearing girls' shoes?" another boy asked him, "You should have your mother get you some shoes like

mine." He was referring to his own black and white gym shoes.

When the movie "Mary Poppins" was in the community, the majority of the children in the laboratory were able to see it. The nursery school had access to the sound-track album from the movie, and the children enjoyed listening to, and acting out, the various movie scenes. One boy was thoroughly involved each time the record was played. He was "Bert"; and anything that had to do with "Bert," he was it. "I want to be Bert; you were Bert yesterday," pleaded one little girl. "You can't be Bert, 'cause he's a boy!" was the boy's retort.

Records to dance and listen to were popular in the nursery school. On one occasion, the children were all sitting on the rug listening to one of the records. Following the record, one boy said to a teacher, "Would you have all the boys get off the rug so the girls can dance?" His request was complied with. As soon as the rug was cleared, the girls (and the boy) all danced away into the world of creative music.

Informal observations of such behavior on the part of children seemed to indicate that boys were not allowed to be mothers or to wear sandals, nor were they allowed to be nurses when playing "doctor"; their sex-role behavior appeared to be more restricted than that of the girls. In further observations, the writer became aware of the greater lenience allowed the girls in their roles. Usually, no comment was made by the other children when they appeared in tennis shoes, shirts and slacks, or levis. No reproof was given to them when they were firemen, policemen, cowboys, train engineers, doctors, fathers, or grandfathers.

Children do become aware of appropriate or accepted sex-role behavior relatively early in their lives, as evidenced by the cited

examples and other observed experiences. Appropriate sex-role behavior is learned--learned from parents, siblings, peers, teachers, grandparents, and others in the child's environment. Because this concept is learned, and learned at different rates, children vary in their levels of understanding.

There is much power and meaning behind such statements as: "Act like a man," "Be a big girl now," "Boys don't cry," "Girls don't behave like that," "He is a sissy," "She is certainly a tomboy," "You're the man of the house now." These statements have explosive meaning, because in their understandings are included many expectations and acceptances for either a feminine or masculine role. Such statements thrust to a person's awareness what is appropriate for his actions, and this itself depends upon whether or not he is male or female.

Statement of the Problem

Various settings and procedures have been employed in studying the sex preferences and identifications of young children. Among these are sex preference scales, doll play procedures, human figure drawings, personality inventories, children's game choices, and toy preference tests.

The present study approached the problem through natural laboratory experiences, where the children's behavior and responses were relatively unaffected by the various different situations. Through this laboratory setting, the children remained free to choose as to whether or not they desired to enter into activities.

The study was concerned with the following objectives:

1. To obtain information about the sex-role preferences and

identifications of young children.

2. To study the young child's awareness of the differences in masculine and feminine roles.

Further definition of these objectives in the form of hypotheses was:

1. The girls in the study will choose more feminine activities than the boys.

2. The boys in the study will choose more masculine activities than the girls.

3. The girls in the study will choose more masculine activities than the boys choose feminine; boys will show a greater preference for the masculine role than the girls will for the feminine role.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Twenty children between the ages of three and five in the Utah State University summer school child development laboratory were selected for studying the problem of children's sex preferences and identifications. Of these twenty children, nine were girls, and eleven were boys.

The selection of the summer nursery school, rather than the regular academic year nursery school, provided a group of children with a variety of different backgrounds. Because these children represented six separate states from different sections of the United States, plus one foreign country, the backgrounds, child-rearing practices, cultural expectations, and patterns of living for these children were all varied. This provided a less culturally-biased sample with which to work.

Another favorable element in the selection of the summer nursery school was that the children were all unfamiliar with each other. The nursery school experience, therefore, was their first association with one another. This minimized the factor of previous peer influences and relationships determining the choices the children made.

Four activities, two masculine and two feminine in orientation, were selected to provide opportunities to study the sex preferences and identifications of young children. The two feminine activities were dressing up and playing in the doll corner; the two masculine activities were riding the transportation vehicles and woodworking.

Dressing up included such clothing items as shoes, hats, dresses, skirts and blouses, scarves, aprons, and purses. The doll house area consisted of the kitchen (a sink, refrigerator, stove, table and chairs, cupboard, cooking and eating utensils), and a bedroom arrangement (rocking chair, doll bed, doll carriage, doll dressing table, dolls and doll clothes). The transportation vehicles included a large jet transport, a five-car train, a cargo carrier, a wooden horse, and a crane. These vehicles were all large and sturdy enough to allow the children to ride on them. Woodworking consisted of hammers, nails, pounding log, and various sizes and shapes of wood.

The twenty children were invited by the head nursery school teacher to participate in each of the four activities. Every child received two invitations at different times to participate in the activity; four activities with two invitations to participate in each resulted in eight invitations per child.

Throughout the entire study, the same nursery school head teacher, who was a female, followed through on the invitations. This made the study more valid, because the employment of different teachers may have itself influenced the choices of the children. The writer of this study remained in the observation booth, where it was possible to observe the invitations to the activities and the responses of the children.

A companion study is being made, in which a male teacher is involved, to test the influence of this factor on children's choices.

To make the study stronger, the approach to the activity invitations was kept constant. Each invitation was expressed in the same way: "Would you like to . . . ?" The child's acceptance or rejection of each invitation was noted on a score sheet (see APPENDIX). An

acceptance denoted that the child had become involved in the activity, either right then or at a later time during the observation period that same day. A rejection showed that the child had either not become interested in the activity, or he had declined the invitation. An acceptance of the feminine activities was scored as feminine, and an acceptance of the masculine activities was scored as masculine. Conversely, a rejection of the feminine activities was scored as masculine, and a rejection of the masculine activities was scored as feminine. An acceptance was involvement; a rejection was turning down or ignoring the invitation.

By adding the separate feminine and masculine scores from the children's responses, it was possible to obtain a masculinity-femininity score for each child. Because of the eight invitations, the final masculinity-femininity scores ranged from complete masculine preference to complete feminine preference, with scores varying in between the two extremes.

The analysis of the data was concerned primarily with actual scores and percentages. Because of the somewhat limited sample, this approach to analyzing and discussing the results of the study proved to be the most profitable.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Angrilli (1960), Brown (1956), Brown (1957), and Hartley (1960) refer to the need of further studies concerning sex-role behavior. One of the fundamental aspects of the personality development of a child is the acquisition of normal sex-role behavior, which is most necessary for satisfactory social development and adjustment. There is need for a better understanding of the process by which a little boy adopts the masculine role and learns how to be a "man," and a little girl adopts the feminine role and learns how to be a "woman." This need is evident when it is realized that workers in clinical psychology and psychiatry are increasingly recognizing that difficulties in sex-role adjustment appear to be related to personality maladjustments and certain forms of emotional disorders. This suggests a direct link between adult personality disturbances and childhood learning and development in sex-role behavior.

Even though the number of related studies are few, the results of what studies have been done show the influence of many factors in the psychosexual development of children.

Whether a person is male or female biologically is dependent upon genetic and biological processes, but whether that person is male or female socially and psychologically (i.e., in terms of sex-role behavior) is in large measure dependent upon learning, environmental factors, and experiential development. (Brown, 1956, No. 14)

Changes in Traditional Sex Roles

Brown (1958) suggests that masculine and feminine roles by definition are changing--they are becoming broader, less sex-typed,

less rigidly defined, and more overlapping with each other. Even in the classrooms, boys are learning to cook and sew, and girls are learning to handle tools. More women are holding jobs outside the home, and husbands are sharing in the domestic tasks. Girls' clothing and hair styles are becoming more masculine, and boys' clothing is adopting more delicate features--more colorful designs, more feminine in character, etc. Brown (1958) questions if it is still possible to speak of the feminine and masculine role. Rather, reference must possibly now be made to the various roles. The two sex roles in our society are changing, but the change is not actually one of convergence. Girls show greater preference for boy play roles, yet they still retain their own distinctive play roles. This would suggest that the female role perception is expanding and the male role perception is contracting.

Rosenberg and Sutton-Smith (1960) tested children in grades four, five, and six for game preferences. The results suggest that in the year 1960 girls were more masculine in their game choices than they had been thirty years earlier. It may be that the traditional differences in sex-typed game choices are undergoing some changing; there seems to be broader definition of what is feminine and what is masculine.

According to Hartley (1960), many experts believe that current changes in sex-role mores are so confusing to children that it is interfering with their own sex identification. However, Vener and Weese (1965) suggest that male and female definitions may not be undergoing as radical a transformation as has been generally anticipated. This is supported by Hartley (1960) in her study to find out how the masculine and feminine roles actually appear to the children growing up in the world. The results of the study reflect that the

traditional picture of women's roles does not seem to have changed much, if at all, and no confusion is perceptible.

In response to those who are overly concerned about the effect of apparent recent sex-role changes, I would like to point out that from the child's point of view, there are no "changes"; he sees only the picture as it appears in his time, and this picture, . . . shows remarkably little change from traditional values. If the forms of sex-role activities have changed somewhat, from the child's point of view their functions have not. (Hartley, 1960, p. 91)

Sex-Role Adoption, Preference, and Identification

The concept, sex role, refers to those psychological characteristics and behavioral patterns that are typical of one sex in contrast to the other sex. The sex role of a person consists of the behavior that is socially defined and expected of that person because of his or her status as a male or female. (Brown, 1958, p. 232)

Lynn (1959) defines sex-role adoption as the actual adoption of characteristic behavior of one sex or the other, not simply the desire to adopt or identify with such behavior.

Sex-role preference defined by Brown (1957), Brown (1958) and Lynn (1959) refers to the desire or tendency to adopt the sex-role behavior of one sex in contrast to the other sex, or the perception that such behavior is more preferable or desirable.

Lynn (1959), Brown (1958), and Brown (1956) define sex-role identification as the basic process in which a child involuntarily, and later consciously, incorporates the thinking, feeling, and acting of a given sex.

Brown (1958) further explains that a child may identify with and prefer the sex role appropriate to his own sex; or he may identify with one sex role and prefer the other; or he may identify with and prefer the sex role of the opposite sex.

Methods of Studying Sex-Role Behavior

DeLucia (1963) discusses the various methods of studying the sex-role preferences and identification of young children.

1. Brown's "It Scale for Children." Brown (1956) developed this sex-preference scale. It consists of thirty-six picture cards depicting various objects, figures, and activities commonly associated with either masculine or feminine roles. The child chooses from alternatives which are presented to him. The "It" figure focuses the testing situation on "It" rather than on the child directly. In this way, the child projects his sex-role preferences to "It." The "It Scale for Children" is probably the most common method employed in studies of this nature.

2. Doll play procedures. The child's male or female role playing is observed in his doll play activity.

3. Human figure drawing. In the child's drawings and paintings, it is hypothesized that he prefers and identifies with the sex-role of the figure he portrays.

4. Personality inventories. These are tests and checklists employed when studying the personalities of older children.

5. Children's game choices. This method of study, although not discussed by DeLucia (1963), is also used in measuring the masculinity and femininity behaviors of older children. It was developed by Walker (1964), and is used in studying children who are in the third grade or older.

6. DeLucia (1963) adds her own toy preference test, where pictures of sex-typed toys are presented to the child, and he makes the appropriate choices.

Supports of Studies

In Brown's (1957) study, girls scored higher in femininity than boys, and boys scored higher in masculinity than girls; however, younger girls tended to score very high in some masculine areas. Girls as compared to boys were more variable in their sex-role preferences. In general, 63 per cent of the boys showed exclusive or near-exclusive masculine preference, while 17 per cent of the girls showed exclusive or near-exclusive feminine preference. Four per cent of the boys showed near-exclusive feminine preference, while 40 per cent of the girls showed near-exclusive masculine preference. This finding shows that girls as a group do not show nearly the same degree of preference for their feminine role that boys show for their masculine role.

These findings are also supported by Lynn (1959), Hartup and Zook (1960), Fauls and Smith (1956), and Brown (1956). Girls do tend to choose more feminine activities than boys; boys tend to choose more masculine activities than girls; and boys show a comparatively greater preference for the masculine role than the girls show for the feminine role.

Cultural Expectations

Children are introduced into expected sex-role behavior very early in life. At birth, the infant boy is dressed in blue, and the infant girl is dressed in pink. However, it is more acceptable for girls to wear blue than it is for boys to wear pink. Green and pink are more "neutral," and are often the colors of gifts given to the expectant mothers before the actual sex of the child is known.

Pre-school children are aware that the world is divided into

two groups of people and that different behavior patterns are expected of the two groups. Also, in young children there are definite preferences for one or the other sex role. Early in the child's life, probably by the third year, preference for one sex role or the other begins to emerge. (Brown, 1958)

Rabban (1950) offers further evidence of this in his findings. Three-year-old children do not have a clear conception of themselves as boys or girls and do not make sex-appropriate choices. From age three, this awareness of sex-typed behavior develops. Hartup and Zook (1960) support this in their study by finding that four-year-old boys are more masculine than three-year-old boys, and four-year-old girls are more feminine than three-year-old girls. During the fourth and fifth years, clarification of sex-role develops rapidly. Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) add that by kindergarten age, boys are males and girls are females, and they both know how to act appropriately.

As the child learns the proper societal roles, parents contribute greatly in the ease and accuracy with which the patterns are developed. (Fauls and Smith, 1956) Johnson, Johnson, and Martin (1961) write that different disciplinary techniques and parental expectations have developed for boys as opposed to girls by the time children are three or four years old. Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) support this belief. At the kindergarten age, mothers feel that boys and girls should be treated differently because they are different. They show differentiation between the two sex roles, and they have different expectations for boys and girls.

In American and European culture, both boys and girls form their first identification with a female. This is acceptable for the girl,

for she will retain this identification throughout her life. However, for the boy, he must shift to the masculine identification early in life. (Sears, Maccoby, and Levin, 1957)

The girl is not allowed to give direct expression to feelings of aggression or sexuality; even though these feelings are strong, she must inhibit them. The boy, on the other hand, is expected to fight his own battles and solve his problems autonomously; he must inhibit passivity and dependence upon others. (Kagan and Moss, 1962)

One of the general findings of the studies was that girls do not show the same degree of preference for their feminine role that the boys show for their masculine role. There is a greater masculine role preference in both sexes. However, Lynn (1959) and Brown (1956) support the suggestion that the early closeness of the girl to the mother naturally gives her an initial advantage in developing proper sexual identification.

Various authors discuss the reasons why the masculine role is preferred by both sexes.

1. Anatomical difference. Girls experience greater difficulty in developing appropriate sexual identification than boys because of their envy of the genital organ possessed by the little boys. This is a Freudian belief and is supported by Lynn (1959) and Brown (1958).

2. Sociocultural advantages. Brown (1958) writes that more advantages and prestige is granted to the male; favoritism is shown to the masculine role. Hartley, Hardesty, and Gorfein (1962) add that cultural values in western society are male-oriented, and the activities culturally assigned to males have greater prestige than the activities of females. Because of this, male children are more prized and desired by adults than female children. The child's early

perceptions of adults' attitudes and partiality for the male sex helps explain why the young female early rejects her own sex role.

Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) found that girls in a way are punished for being female. They are treated less permissively than boys and more conformity is demanded of them. The boy receives more rewards from parents and peers for acting like a boy. He has more opportunities and is rewarded more often for behaving in a masculine way. Lynn (1959) found that this, however, does not hold true with the girls; she does not receive this reinforcement. The boy is rewarded simply for being born male, and the girl is punished simply for being born female. Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) also support this as being accurate.

Mussen and Rutherford (1963) write that the girl receives less support and assistance from the general social environment in establishing appropriate sex-role behavior than the boy does. This is because in the American culture, being male and acting like one is relatively highly valued; being female and behaving in feminine ways is relatively less rewarded and valued. The boy is motivated to acquire his own sex-role characteristics and is reinforced for acquiring them. The girl is not so strongly motivated or highly rewarded for developing the feminine characteristics.

McKee and Sherriffs (1957) provide further evidence for this by the finding that when asked, boys seldom if ever state that they wish they were girls, while girls frequently state that they wish they were boys. Also, masculine characteristics are rated as more desirable by children and adults of both sexes.

Girls are eventually made aware of the proper behavior for them. They realize that this does not permit them the freedom and prestige

that boys are granted, and they resent this. (Rabban, 1950)

3. Freedom. Girls are allowed more freedom than boys in sex-role learning. (Brown, 1958) Lynn (1959) adds that even though the girls are restricted in many ways more than boys, they are allowed more freedom in opposite sex-role adoption.

Lynn (1959) states that the boy's sex role is well spelled out for him, and he receives adequate reinforcement and rewards for adopting the masculine role and definite punishment for adopting the feminine one. Mussen and Rutherford (1963) agree that because the boy's violations of appropriate behavior are more likely to receive punishment, they will be extinguished. The cues for sex-appropriate masculine behavior are more distinct, easier to discriminate, and easier to learn than the appropriate feminine behavior--this makes it easier for the boy to acquire masculine behavior and interests relatively more simply than girls acquire feminine activities.

Rabban (1950) concluded that girls are less aware of sex-appropriate behavior than boys. But Brown (1958) believes that it is not actually being "more aware," but it is the lack of flexibility of boys in sex-role choices; boys do not have the same freedom of choice as girls.

The boy is expected to be masculine, and his adoption of the role is involuntary. (Sears, Maccoby, and Levin, 1957)

Brown (1957, p. 201) states that "in our culture, girls are allowed and often encouraged to participate in tasks and activities that are typical of boys."

Brown (1957), Brown (1958), and Mussen and Rutherford (1963) discuss the ideas of clothing, names, and activities as related to participation by boys and girls. Girls may wear shirts and trousers,

but boys are not allowed to wear skirts or dresses. Girls may be given masculine names, but few boys have feminine names. Girls may play with boys' toys and games, but boys are discouraged from playing girls' games and activities. A girl may be Roy Rogers, but it is not acceptable for a boy to be Dale Evans.

Female socialization does not require the distinctive "push" into instrumentality that male socialization does. The two roles of femininity and masculinity receive different kinds of reinforcement, and this is often reflected in our everyday speech. It is never said to a girl, "screw up your courage and act like a woman," and women's branches of the armed services never promise that their discipline will "make a woman out of you." To females, one simply says, "be a woman," and to males one says, "try to be a man." (Johnson, 1963)

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

To facilitate the presentation and discussion of the findings in this study, Table I and Table II were devised for reference and explanation. These two tables depict the boys' and girls' responses to the invitations to join in the masculine and feminine activities.

In discussing the general findings of the study, it must be pointed out that one boy showed a complete feminine role preference pattern. However, inasmuch as he was a real part of this study, his responses were also included in the scoring and percentages.

The various activities are first discussed separately, then their total picture as related to the hypotheses suggested at the beginning of the study are presented.

Separate Activity Discussion

Doll Corner

The doll corner consisted of the kitchen (a refrigerator, sink, stove, cupboard, table and chairs, cooking and eating utensils), and a bedroom arrangement (rocking chair, doll bed, doll carriage, doll dressing table, dolls and doll clothes). The child could play with any part or parts in the doll house area. No regulations were set up.

Of the nine girls in the study, seven of them (77 per cent) elected to participate in the activity at both invitations; the other two girls (22 per cent) accepted one invitation and declined the other. Of the eleven boys, five (45 per cent) chose to reject the

Table I. Boys responses to masculine and feminine activities

Activity	Choice	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11
Doll House	Feminine						1	1	2	2	1	2
	Masculine	2	2	2	2	2	1	1			1	
Dress Up	Feminine				1	1	1				2	2
	Masculine	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2		
Woodwork	Feminine							1				2
	Masculine	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	
Vehicles	Feminine											2
	Masculine	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
TOTAL	Feminine	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	8
	Masculine	8	8	8	7	7	6	6	6	6	5	0

Total Feminine Responses --- 21

Total Masculine Responses -- 67

Table II. Girls responses to masculine and feminine activities

Activity	Choice	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9
Doll House	Feminine	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
	Masculine								1	1
Dress Up	Feminine	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Masculine	1								
Woodwork	Feminine	2		1	1				1	
	Masculine		2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2
Vehicles	Feminine	1	1							
	Masculine	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
TOTAL	Feminine	6	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	3
	Masculine	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5

Total Feminine Responses --- 40

Total Masculine Responses -- 32

two invitations; three (27 per cent) accepted both the invitations; and three (27 per cent) accepted one and declined the other. Seventy-seven per cent of the girls as compared to 27 per cent of the boys participated in the activity on both invitations, suggesting that the boys felt less free in joining in feminine activities. When the boys did become involved in the doll house area, it was during meal time as the father, brother, or grandfather. Only once was it observed that a boy cooperated in the preparation of the meal. All the acceptances of the boys were in the kitchen area; none of them was associated with the bedroom arrangements.

Dress Up

Dressing up included such clothing items as shoes, hats, skirts, dresses, blouses, scarves, aprons, and purses. Any combinations in attire were permissible, as there were no specifications.

Of the nine girls, eight (89 per cent) accepted both invitations to join the activity; one (11 per cent) accepted one and declined the other. Of the eleven boys, six (55 per cent) rejected both the invitations; three (27 per cent) accepted one and declined the other; and two (18 per cent) accepted both. Eighty-nine per cent of the girls as compared to 18 per cent of the boys participated in the activity upon both invitations, again suggesting the less freedom felt by the boys in exploring feminine activities. The participating boys dressed in shoes, scarves, aprons, and purses; only one observation concerned a boy who dressed in a skirt and blouse.

Woodwork

Woodworking included hammers, nails, pounding log, and various sizes and shapes of wood. The child was allowed to work with any

or all of the materials he desired.

Of the eleven boys, nine (82 per cent) accepted both invitations to join the activity; one boy (9 per cent) accepted one and declined the other; and one (9 per cent) rejected both invitations. Of the nine girls, five (55 per cent) accepted both invitations; three (33 per cent) accepted one and rejected the other; one (11 per cent) declined both invitations. Eighty-two per cent of the boys as compared to 55 per cent of the girls participated in the activity upon both invitations, with all but one of the girls becoming involved at least once with the activity. This comparatively high percentage of girls suggests the more acceptance allowed the girls in involvement in masculine activities.

Transportation Vehicles

The transportation vehicles included a large jet transport, a five-car train, a cargo carrier, a wooden horse, and a crane. These vehicles were all large enough and sturdy enough to allow the children to ride on them.

Of the eleven boys, ten (91 per cent) accepted both invitations to join into the activity, and one (9 per cent) declined both. Of the nine girls, seven (77 per cent) accepted both invitations, and two (22 per cent) accepted one and declined the other. Ninety-one per cent of the boys as compared to 77 per cent of the girls participated in the activity upon both invitations, with all nine of the girls (100 per cent) becoming involved at one time or another in the activity. This high percentage among the girls suggests the greater acceptance and freedom allowed girls in their sex-role behavior.

Collective Findings

The girls in this study scored higher in femininity than the boys, with 24 per cent of the boys' responses being feminine and 56 per cent of the girls' responses being feminine. Conversely, the boys scored higher in masculinity than the girls, with 76 per cent of the boys' responses being masculine and 44 per cent of the girls' responses being masculine. A comparison of the boys' feminine responses (24 per cent) with the girls' masculine responses (44 per cent) showed that the girls scored higher in masculinity than the boys did in femininity.

Four of the girls in the study (44 per cent) exhibited no actual preference pattern, showing their willingness and security in becoming involved in both feminine and masculine activities. However, none of the boys followed this pattern; and with the exception of the one boy who exclusively preferred feminine activities, the boys all tended to choose activities appropriate for their own sex.

In general, 91 per cent of the boys showed exclusive or near-exclusive masculine preference, while 44 per cent of the girls showed exclusive or near-exclusive feminine preference. This finding suggests that boys show a comparatively greater preference for the masculine role than the girls show for the feminine role.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Developing acceptable sex-role behavior patterns is one of the fundamental tasks which goes into acquiring a healthy personality. Children vary in their understanding and development of proper sex-role identifications and preferences; yet, relatively early in their lives they become aware of appropriate or accepted sex-role behavior.

The objectives of this study were (1) to obtain information about the sex-role preferences and identification of young children, and (2) to study the young child's awareness of the differences in masculine and feminine roles.

From these objectives, three hypotheses were formed:

1. The girls in the study will choose more feminine activities than the boys.
2. The boys in the study will choose more masculine activities than the girls.
3. The girls in the study will choose more masculine activities than the boys choose feminine; the boys will show a greater preference for the masculine role than the girls will for the feminine role.

Twenty children between the ages of three and five were selected for study; eleven of them were boys, and nine were girls. Four activities, two feminine and two masculine in orientation, were selected for investigating the sex-role preferences and identifications of pre-school children. Every child received two invitations to join in each of the four masculine and feminine activities. As a result of their acceptances or rejections of these invitations, a masculinity-

femininity score was developed for each of the children. Two tables were developed which depicted the girls' and boys' responses to the masculine and feminine activities.

General Conclusions

In Brown's (1957) study, the girls scored higher in femininity than boys, and boys scored higher in masculinity than girls. Girls as compared to boys were more variable in their sex-role preferences. Similar results were found in studies by Lynn (1959), Hartup and Zook (1960), Fauls and Smith (1956), and Brown (1956).

The findings of the present study support the results of studies referred to in the preceding paragraph.

From this study, it is evidenced that young children are aware that the world is divided into two groups of people, and that different behavior patterns are expected of the two groups.

That girls have more latitude in the development of their sex-roles is felt as early as ages three and four.

It can be suggested that the early identification with the mother makes it easier for the girls to develop appropriate sex-role behavior than the boys.

Because of the small number of subjects involved in the study, no definite statements can be made as to any specific findings. However, the three proposed hypotheses were supported in the results of the project.

1. The girls chose more feminine activities than the boys.
2. The boys chose more masculine activities than the girls.
3. The girls chose more masculine activities than the boys chose feminine; the boys showed a greater preference for the masculine role

than the girls did for the feminine role.

It is an implication from this study that girls are experiencing the opportunity to grow to maturity in a situation more flexible in the area of sex-typing than are boys. This implies the possibility that girls are prepared by their developmental experiences for more spontaneity as women than is true for men whose reinforcements during the developing years have been such as to limit the responses available to them as men.

Suggestions for Further Studies

On the basis of the present study, it is the writer's opinion that similar studies could be carried out.

1. The present study was followed through under the directions of a female head teacher. Another study considering the effects of a male head teacher is presently in progress.

2. Further studies determining the influences of a male head teacher as compared to a female head teacher could be done.

3. An observational study much like the present one but including children's comments and reasons for rejections of the activities could give further insight into sex-role development.

4. A study of the same design and purpose carried out during the regular academic year to determine the influences of the immediate culture with the children having had much the same background would show the importance of cultural influences.

5. A related study considering the variables of parental attitudes, up-bringing practices, age of children, sex and ages of peers, sex and ages of siblings, occupation of parents, previous play associations of children, and others, would allow more insight

and understanding into the development of sex-role behavior.

6. A study of the same design and purpose carried out in different cultures and settings, such as in a Project Head Start Child Development Center, or in a private girls' school nursery school, and others, could be done.

7. The size of the sample in the study should be increased to see if the same results are found in the various-sized samples.

8. Studies could be carried out in both urban and rural settings, investigating the differences in sex-role learning.

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APPENDIX

SEX PREFERENCE AND IDENTIFICATION IN CHILDREN

Summer, 1965

Child's Name

Sex Present age years months.

Feminine Activities: Feminine Masculine

Doll House

Dress Up

(Feminine = acceptance; masculine = rejection)

Masculine Activities: Masculine Feminine

Woodwork, hammering

Transportation Vehicles

(Masculine = acceptance; feminine = rejection)

Masculine and feminine score, TOTAL:

Masculine--Feminine