

ABSTRACT

Roles are considered restraining forces on the individual personality and sex roles similarly carry immense role pressures and role demands which contribute to the shaping of the personality.

Inasmuch as the female sex-role stereotype demands of women attributes which include being submissive, indecisive, emotional, considerate and gentle, the premise is that these sex-role injunctions must contribute to a stultification of the development of the self.

Using a modified version of an adjectival attributes scale and an ego strength scale this study attempts to describe female sex-role attributes (both as descriptions of behaviour for the "typical" woman and as subjective self-descriptions) and then to link the possession of ego strength to the rejection of the established stereotype, when this rejection implies either more feminine behaviour than the stereotype or more masculine behaviour than the stereotype.

The experiment was conducted amongst two groups of women who differ by occupational choice, one in a male-role related occupation, the other in a female-role related occupation, i.e. soldiers and household helpers.

Female sex-role attributes in Jamaica were found to be considerably dissimilar to those found in the North American situation, and contained far more "masculine" attributes. While this finding was consistent between groups, self descriptions of the two occupational groups proved to be

significantly different, women in a male-role related occupation displaying more "masculine" behaviour than women in a female-role related occupation.

Ego strength scores were significantly different between occupational groups and the possession of ego strength was significantly related to self behaviour in relation to the established stereotype, regardless of occupational grouping. In both instances high ego strength was found where more "masculine" attributes (than the perceived stereotype) were found. The possession of "feminine" attributes is related to low ego strength.