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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MASCULINITY AND SMOKING AMONG WORKING WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

The present study was aimed to explore the relationship of masculinity and smoking among working women. The instrument used to measure the masculinity and femininity of the participants was BSRI (BEM sex Role Inventory). The sample consisted to 50 females aged between 25 and 35. They were divided into two groups: Group I smoker women (n=25) and Group II nonsmoker women (n=25). To analyze the data, the t-test was applied. The results were drawn out from two different hypotheses. The first hypothesis was accepted which has shown that "there is a significant relationship between masculinity and smoking". The result of the second hypothesis indicates that there is no significant relationship of scores on femininity and smoking.

Keywords: Masculinity, Femininity, Smoking, Working women and Bem Sex role inventory

INTRODUCTION

Femininity and masculinity or one's *gender identity* represents the degree to which a person see oneself as masculine or feminine as agreed in society (Burke, Stets and Pirog-Good, 1988; Spence, 1985). Femininity and masculinity are rooted in the social (one's gender) rather than the biological (one's sex) perspective. The sociological perspective regarding gender identity

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includes all the meanings that are valid for gender identification and gender related behavior (Burke, 1980). A person with a more masculine identity should engage in behaviors which are considered as masculine like behaving in a dominant, competitive, and self-directed manner (Ashmore, Del Boca, & Wohlers, 1986). It is not the behaviors themselves that are important, but the meanings implied by those behaviors.

Masculinity is socialized into believing certain characteristics are fundamental in determining their manliness and masculinity. These characteristics range from not crying when they get hurt to being and playing violently. The socialization of masculinity in our society begins as early as the first stages of infancy. For instance boys are socialized into the belief that they should be 'tough' with the inescapable words, "little boys don't cry". Such parental messages are internalized by children about gender at an early age. A study found that 2½ years old children employ gender stereotypes in their discussions and activities (Witt, 1997). Thus it can be said that masculinity or femininity are learned through the process of socialization

The interest of the researchers regarding masculinity and femininity progressed tremendously, between 1981 and 1986 (Lenney, 1991). Masculinity and femininity are conceptualized as independent dimensions of an individual's gender schema (Bem, 1981). Masculinity symbolizes "an 'instrumental' orientation, a cognitive focus on getting the job done or the problem solved" (Bem et al., 1976). Femininity is thought to represent "an 'expressive' orientation, an affective concern for the welfare of others and the harmony of the group" (Bem et al., 1976). In a similar vein, Spence (1984) stated that masculinity relates to self-assertive instrumental traits, whereas femininity refers to interpersonal expressive traits. Likewise, Lewin (1984); Ashmore (1990); Blanchard-Fields, Suhrer-Roussel, and Hertzog (1994); and Hoffman et al. (2005) support that every female and male must be given the autonomy to figure out what femininity and masculinity means to them respectively.

Bem considers masculinity, femininity, and androgyny to be personality characteristics that are uniquely separate behavioral modalities, although many contend that masculinity and femininity are bipolar constructs, with androgyny falling at the midpoint and these are representation of psychological gender that could be developed in people of any sex (Bem, 1976).

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Cigarette smoking is considered by many people a vital source of ego strength (Maushner, 1973). It generates a range of pleasurable sensation, helps the smoker to cope with the anxiety, anger, stress and demands of life, comforts and advances the social dealings and is valuable aid to create a sense of identity. Greaves (1996) argues that the masculinity implied by smoking was a key part of the cultural symbolism challenged by women smokers during the 1920s in industrial countries'. When smoking first came into vogue, it was considered a man's activity, and unfeminine. Therefore it became a vehicle for women's rebellion and for asserting a new, more independent, self-image. Tobacco companies capitalized on this. Women were paid to dress up like feminists, smoke and march in the Easter parade of 1929. These women referred to their cigarettes as "torches of freedom." This was the beginning of an association between women smokers and freedom or liberation that has been cultivated and promoted by the tobacco industry (Kilbourne & Pollay, 1992). The tobacco industry moved on from its success by associating cigarette brands with masculinity to become mainly proficient at understanding, predicting and capitalizing on the feminist movement by seizing the symbols of feminism and equating women's liberation with smoking (Brandt, 1996). The tobacco industry has simultaneously promoted smoking as a symbol of masculinity for men and emancipation for women (Elliot, 2008).

A study Contextualizing smoking: masculinity, femininity and class differences in smoking in men and women in the west of Scotland found that men and women in the bank (and women in the university) who had high masculinity scores were significantly more likely to be smokers (Hunt et al., 2004).

In societies where conventionally women have not smoked, women now see and hear western movies, television and music that presents models of feminine freedom, of women satisfying their own desires, trying new experiences and prospering. Such attractive images are exploited by tobacco advertisements as well. In Pakistan, women use traditional forms of tobacco in all areas. The use of tobacco in Pakistan can be traced back to the early times even before its independence, when The British East India Trading and Dutch East Indies companies began selling tobacco to inhabitants of Indo-Pak Subcontinent in the 1600s. Thus motivating them to use or switch to cigarettes is not that difficult as they are already used to take tobacco in water pipes and bidis.

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In Pakistan, the boy to girl tobacco consumption ratio is 2:1 which used to be 7:1 just a decade ago (The Global Youth Tobacco Survey, 2004). According to the recent research of National Health Services of Pakistan, the trend of cigarette smoking is increasing day by day and 3.4% of the women population is taking it up in daily basis. 15 billion cigarettes are sold per day while one billion per minute. Unfortunately not more than 5% of the Pakistanis population knows about that tobacco smoking causes health hazards (The News, 2008).

The study aimed to increase the understanding of masculine traits in women and taking up of the smoking practice and also to explore the relationship of masculinity and smoking among working women. There has not been a similar focus on masculinity as a correlate of smoking behavior. The issue has gained attention as the roles of gender are changing and smoking is being portrayed as a feminine activity. The tobacco industry and media has made efforts to change the position of female smoking as 'fashionable, stylish and feminine'. Still the connection between smoking and illustration of maleness and masculinity remains in some tobacco advertising and in popular culture which indicates that there are trends of masculinity for taking up smoking activity.

The trend of cigarette smoking in Pakistan is increasing day by day as the population of Pakistani females is taking it up at daily basis. Therefore, only female participants were taken and they had more exposure to the societal practices as they were serving as employees in their respective organizations. The research would be supportive for the feminist studies of behavior, culture, language and emotions especially with reference to masculinity, which may seem non-feminist but opens new questions and area for study of gender.

METHOD

Participants

A purposive sample was taken comprising of working women (N=50), including equal number of smokers (n=25) and non smokers (n=25) with age ranging from 25years to 35 years. The sample was approached from different government, private and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of Islamabad. All the participants belonged to middle class as well as upper class.

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Measures

Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI)

The BEM Sex Role Inventory, developed by Sandra Lipsitz Bem (1974), was used to measure the masculinity and/or femininity of the participants using 20 items representing masculine traits, 20 items representing feminine traits, and 20 filler items which are considered neutral with respect to common stereotypes. Participants rank each item on how closely each item is related to them individually.

The rating scale ranges from 1 to 7, with a lower score indicating that the item was never or seldom true, and a higher score indicating the item was often or frequently true. The internal consistency of the scale ranges between .75 and .90. Test-retest reliabilities for the Femininity and Masculinity scales for the BSRI were .82 and .94 among females and .89 and .76 among males respectively.

Procedure

The participants were taken from Islamabad. Subjects were approached individually and BSRI was administered. The subject consent was taken for participation in the study. The participants were ensured confidentiality. The subjects were told the objectives of the study and then instruction were given to them. They were also directed to understand that there are no rights or wrong responses and it was their opinion that was the point of interest.

Pilot study was conducted to see the reliability of BSRI for the Pakistani working women. For the purpose, Cronbach Alpha was calculated for the 60 items of BSRI for the sample (N=20), which came out to be .83 for masculinity and .84 for femininity.

Alpha coefficient was calculated for the full scale 60 items of BSRI as well as for the subscales of masculinity and femininity. Alpha coefficient for the full scale was .84. For the subscale of masculinity Alpha coefficient was .93 and .88 for the subscale of femininity.

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RESULTS

Table 1
Reliability Analysis for Bem Sex Role inventory and its subscales (N=50)

Subscale	No. of Items	Coefficient Alpha
Masculinity	20	.93
Femininity	20	.88
BSRI	60	.84

Table 1 shows the reliability analysis of the subscale of BSRI along with number of items in each scale. Cronbach alpha for the subscale of masculinity, femininity and for complete BSRI was found to be reliable for the present population.

Table 2
Mean, SD and t-value of masculinity among smoking and non-smoking working women (N=50)

Scale	Masculinity				t	p
	Smoking Women (n=25)		Non-Smoking Women (n=25)			
	M	SD	M	SD		
Masculinity	6.00	0.85	4.7	0.72	5.8	.05

df=48

Table 2 shows Mean Standard Deviation and t-values of BSRI subscale of masculinity for both smoker and none smoker women .Result shows that there is a significant difference between the two groups. Significant difference appears between the mean scores on masculinity among smoker women and non-smoker women. Smoker women have high scores on masculinity; this supports our hypothesis that there is significant relationship between masculinity and smoking among working women.

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Table 3
Mean, SD and t-value of femininity among smoking and non-smoking working women (N=50)

<i>Scale</i>	Femininity				<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>Smoking Women</i>		<i>Non-Smoking Women</i>			
	<i>(n=25)</i>	<i>(n=25)</i>	<i>(n=25)</i>	<i>(n=25)</i>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Masculinity	58.72	17.67	68.16	19.96	5.8	.01

df=48

Table 3 tests the hypothesis that if females score high on femininity there is no significant relationship with smoking. The results of the table indicate that the results have significant difference. The mean score of the both groups show the greater difference, the difference between the two groups and the t-value, supports the hypothesis.

DISCUSSION

The present study was aimed to study the relationship between masculinity, femininity and smoking among working women. The first hypothesis of the present study was that there is a significant relationship between smoking and masculinity among working women. Results showed significant difference between masculinity of the two groups ($t=5.8$; $df=48$; $p<.05$) among smoker women and non-smoker working women. The present research indicates that women who smoke possess more masculine traits like being independent, self reliant, assertive and preoccupied with power. Perhaps the actual act of smoking is a derivative of this concern. The results are consistent with the study of Hunt et al. (2004) which revealed that high scores of masculinity are correlated with smoking behavior.

Certain connotations in Psychoanalytic theory could be speculatively applied to explaining the result obtained. Freud's penis envy concept (Fenichel, 1945) provides a particularly good framework. Thus one may reasonably view the act of cigarette smoking as having phallic connotations.

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Smoking behavior was until recently a man's activity, a taboo for women. Perhaps smoking cigarettes represents an attempt by the female to imitate certain masculine needs long sought after and envied from her childhood (Fisher, 1976). The high scores on masculinity in the present study are certainly congruent with such a notion. A study of full-time employees in two white collar organizations has reported an association between masculinity scores and smoking in both sexes (Emslie, Hunt & Macintyre, 2002).

When smoking first came into trend, it was considered a man's activity, and unfeminine. Therefore it became a vehicle for women's rebellion and for asserting a new, more independent, self-image. Zagona and Zurcher (1965) speculated that females associate smoking with independence. As the American female has become more emancipated from traditional double standard perhaps cigarette smoking has been among the emancipation of that. Bozetti (1972) observed that female smokers utilize smoking behavior "primarily to handle angry feelings...the cigarette facilitates the suppression of rage".

Second hypothesis of the study was formulated as that high score on femininity is negatively correlated with smoking. Female scores also reveal the significant difference between the femininity of the two groups ($t=-5.8$; $df = 48$; $p<.05$) among smoker women and non-smoker working women. It also proves that the women scoring high on femininity are not preoccupied with power and are nurturing, warm and have concern for the welfare of the others. In the study by Emslie, Hunt and Macintyre in 2002, smoking was not related to femininity scores which support the second hypothesis.

Since it's the era of revolution, the societal demands and requirements are rapidly changing with new advancements, technologies, human rights movements, education and awareness and the nontraditional behaviors with respect to sex, family, and gender roles have become progressively more widespread and more communally accepted.

The rate of female cigarette smoking is growing in western countries but yet not so much in Pakistan but still its usage is increasing day by day. Cigarette Smoking is considered to be a new tradition but the use of tobacco seems to flourish in Pakistan from a very long time in form of huqqa and niswar in different areas of Pakistan. The use of tobacco in Pakistan can be traced back to the early times even before its independence, when The British East India

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Trading and Dutch East Indies companies began selling tobacco to inhabitants of Indo-Pak Subcontinent in the 1600s.

This is a particularly important issue as with the changing roles of gender, smoking is flourishing as a feminine activity and blurring the actual subject of the increasing trends of masculinity in women, which is directing the increase in the behavior of smoking in women. The present study, therefore is making an attempt to grow evidence, for instance, the women who go for smoking practice have masculine traits or characteristics that are associated with men (e.g. self-reliant, defends own beliefs, independent, assertive, strong personality, leadership abilities, willing to take risks).

The research would be helpful for the feminist studies of behavior, culture, language and emotions especially with reference to masculinity, which may seem non-feminist but opens new questions and area for study of gender. It would be helpful in understanding through comparing the current practices in Pakistani Females with the other societies. It would be supportive to comprehend the sex role attributes of females of Pakistan.

In the light of Literature review and data presented by the study it is concluded that, "there is a strong relationship of masculinity and smoking among working women". There are some limitations of the study as well. First of all, the sample comprised of the limited age range i.e. from 25-35 years only. These results from such age group range cannot be generalized on to the other age groups of people. Secondly the sample was collected from Government institutions, private organizations and NGO's of Islamabad. The limited sample can not be generalized to the whole population. Thirdly, only educated working females were involved in this study. Uneducated and non-working were not included so the findings of the study would be used only for educated and working females.

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