DIFFERENTIAL SCORES OF FEMINISTS AND TRADITIONAL WOMEN
ON THE EGO STRENGTH (ES) SCALE OF THE MINNESOTA
MULTIPHASIC PERSONALITY INVENTORY (MMPI)

THESIS

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MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

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1. Experimental and Control Group Profiles
DIFFERENTIAL SCORES OF FEMINISTS AND TRADITIONAL WOMEN ON THE EGO STRENGTH (Eₕ) SCALE OF THE MINNESOTA MULTIPHASIC PERSONALITY INVENTORY (MMPI)

When Barron (1953) reported the development and cross-validation of the Ego Strength (Eₕ) scale of the MMPI, it was originally designed to predict improved outcome of clinical patients to psychotherapy. It was thought at first to measure the various aspects of effective personal functioning which usually bear the connotation of ego strength. Ego strength in this context means the ability to deal with environmental pressures, sufficient control to deal with others, gain their acceptance and create a good impression (Welsh and Dahlstrom, 1956). Furthermore, it identifies a person who can work within the cultural, social, and personal limits of ethics and self-respect. The fact that the Eₕ scale correlated highly with the K scale (a validation scale) suggested also that a fake-good test taking attitude could contribute to plus getting on the Eₕ scale (Gottesman, 1959). Thus, while the high correlation between the Eₕ scale and the K scale was suggestive of a possible defensive test taking attitude and an ability to recognize socially desirable descriptions of personality, both of these behaviors were also indicative of good contact with and test of reality—a decided improvement for those in psychotherapy. The Eₕ scale was furthermore correlated with most of the measures of psychopathology, i.e., hypochondriasis, depression, hysteria, psychopathy, paranoia, psychasthenia, and schizophrenia. What this suggested is that "the prediction scale
was picking up a general factor of psychopathology in the MMPI, reflective of degree of maladjustment, irrespective of differential diagnosis" (Welsh and Dahlstrom, 1956).

Welsh and Dahlstrom (1960) noted that men tended to score higher on the Es scale than women. Holmes (1957), however, contended that the male-female differences were in fact a result of the inclusion of eight specific items on the Es scale, five of which were also scored on the Mf (masculinity-feminity) scale. When these items, which appeared to measure cultural variation in sex role concepts, were excluded, the correlation between Es scores and response to therapy was significant for both males and females. Dahlstrom and Welsh noted further that college women tended to score higher on the Mf scale, indicating possibly more identification with the masculine sex role concepts of ambition and goal- or career-oriented behavior. The literature is replete with studies of observed differences between career-oriented (a masculine sex role concept) and non-career-oriented (feminine sex role) women (Faunce, 1970; Rand, 1968; Gysbers, Johnston and Gust, 1968; Surette, 1967; Wagmon, 1966; and Hoyt and Kennedy, 1958) in an attempt to determine some functional variables distinguishing these two groups of women. Specifically, the traits considered were those relating in general to achievement, dominance, endurance, and independence. All of these traits appeared indicative of good ego strength according to Dahlstrom and Welsh's definition, but are presently used more in relation to men than women. Chesler (1972) contended there was an implied difference in the definitions of ego strength for men and women. She furthermore contended that when the definition of ego
strength is applied to people in general, the particular qualities of ego strength are the same as the ones delineated for men, but that the qualities are somewhat watered down toward passivity and dependence when applied to women.

While career-oriented women did show personality differences from non-career-oriented women, Angrist (1970) pointed out that these differences are not necessarily personality maladjustments. In fact, Gurr's study of women executives and administrators (1957) gave added collaboration to Angrist's position that the characteristics associated with occupational success (a hopeful end result of career-oriented behavior) are individual qualities and not sex related. Career-oriented women furthermore redefine sex roles to include characteristics appropriate to both sexes (Rand, 1970). Social attitudes toward sex roles in career-oriented women appear clearly related to goal-orientation and a positive self-concept. Indeed, Frankel's study of goal-oriented women (1969) showed that the goal-oriented women had a higher level of self-confidence, sense of well-being, and sense of purpose than the non-goal-oriented women.

Since women in the Women's Rights Movement (Feminists) tend to be educated, career- or goal-oriented, and typically middle-class (Micossi, 1970), it was anticipated that these aspects would be reflected in an elevation on the \( E_5 \) scale of the MMPI. This anticipated elevation was felt to be functionally related not only to career- or goal-oriented behavior and intelligence, but to active participation on an autonomous basis in the Women's Rights Movement as well. Because of the different activities of various Feminist organization, i.e., women's studies
programs, consciousness-raising, investigations of inequities to women, confrontations with establishment hierarchies, and participation in career and other self-fulfilling activities, it was hypothesized that women who are active Feminists would score significantly higher on the Es scale than a similar group of active women who are not Feminists.

**Method**

**Subjects.** Twenty-six Ss for the Feminist group were selected on the basis of active participation in the Women's Rights Movement. Participation was defined as either holding office or contributing at least one hour or more a week to activities of the group. The Ss were selected on the basis of meeting the above criteria from four different Feminist organizations in the Dallas, Texas, Metropolitan area. These groups were Dallas County Women's Political Caucus, National Organization for Women, Women's Equity Action League, and Women for Change. All of these organizations have been in operation in Dallas for over one year and have worked for and instituted changes for the benefit of women.

The 27 traditional women Ss were selected from the Richardson, Texas, Jayceettes, under the same criteria as the Feminist Ss. The Richardson Jayceettes are also in the Dallas Metropolitan area, and function as an auxiliary women's group to the Richardson Jaycees (Junior Chamber of Commerce men), both of whom actively participate in community concerns. It was felt that this particular group, which in spite of themselves being actively engaged in community service, fulfill their community service only as an adjunct to their husbands. It was further felt that in this sense they conformed well to the stereotyped, traditional sex role concept of women. This group, it was also felt
would be more like the Feminist Ss in terms of background and activism than the women in the normal population.

**Instrument.** The instrument used to gauge the differential responses of these two groups was the MMPI. Specifically, while the whole inventory was asked to be executed to avoid Ss' determining the intent of E, and all the scales were scored and submitted to statistical tests, the Es scale was further analyzed for specific variables which might have affected its outcome.

**Procedure.** Ss were told a neutral statement concerning E's intent, i.e., "I have a large number of personality profiles to score for a Psychology class. It is necessary for you to be as honest as possible in recording your responses, as 'faking' will be reflected in a validation scale. The results of the test are to be anonymous, so please do not put your name on the inventory." Ss were also asked to answer a small questionnaire regarding age, education, number of children, income (including husband's in order to determine the standard of living), and amount of active participation per week in the particular organization. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine differences between the two groups which might have contributed to the results. A two-tailed t test for independent means was used to determine significance.

**Results**

As hypothesized, the Experimental group of Feminists scored significantly higher on the Es scale of the MMPI than the Control group of traditional women \( (t = 3.65, p < 0.001) \). Furthermore, while the Experimental group scored much higher than the Control group, the Control group still scored significantly higher on the Es scale than the normal population.
of women (t = 3.49, p<.001), and at the same Means as the normal male population. Tests of significance were then completed between the two groups on the other clinical scales of the MMPI. The only significant differences that resulted were differences between the two groups on the D, Pt, and Si scales, as reflected in Table 1. Seven different variables were elicited as background on the two groups as a possible source of variation between the two groups. These variables were: age, marital status, number of years of schooling, income, number of hours worked in the particular organization, number of children, and number of children under school age. Employment was not considered an appropriate variable since only about one-fourth of the Feminists and one-sixth of the Traditional women were employed. Of the variables investigated, the only significant differences that arose were on age, income and years of schooling, as reflected in Table 1. When all of the above variables were correlated with the Es scale on both groups, the only significant correlations were between Es and years of schooling for the Control group (r = .38, p<.05), and Es and marital status for the Experimental group (r_b = .77, p<.001). Further correlations were then performed in order to determine any possible functional relationships between the Es scale and the other clinical scales.

It was found that the only scale that correlated positively with the Es scale for both groups was the K scale, which confirmed previous literature regarding the relationship between the Es and K scales. Several of the clinical scales, F, Hy, Pt, and Sc, correlated negatively with the Es scale for both the Experimental and Control groups. These scales have already been cited in the literature as correlating negatively
with the Es scale. Furthermore, the clinical scales, D, Pd, and Si, correlated negatively (p<.001, p<.01, and p<.001, respectively) with the Es scale for the Control group. These relationships are cited in Table 2. These findings corroborated previous validation of the Es scale, which "reflected degree of ego-dysfunction irrespective of differential diagnosis" (Welsh and Dahlstrom, 1953). However, besides the clinical scales, P, Hy, Pt, and Sc, only the Ma scale correlated negatively with the Es scale (r = -.59, p<.01) for the Experimental group. There was no significance whatsoever with any of the other scales, except those mentioned for the Experimental group or the Control group.

Discussion

Both the Experimental and the Control groups were relatively normal in their group clinical profiles, except for the Experimental group, which scored more than one standard deviation above the Mean on the Es scale, as reflected in Figure 1. While neither group profile had significantly high peaks, there was a difference noted between them in terms of tendencies on the profiles. The Experimental group's highest profile peak was on Pd (T = 57), even though the correlation between the Es and Pd scales for the Experimental group was not significant. This finding seemed indicative of the fact that although the Experimental group had exceptionally high ego strength, as measured by the Es scale, this pattern did not seem functionally related to psychopathy, even though the tendency of the group was to answer in the right direction for a peak on Pd. The peak on Pd, however, was within one standard deviation from the Means, suggesting that it was possible the peak occurred by chance and was not actually indicative of real tendencies
toward psychopathy. However, since the Pd scale trend is more a possibility than the other scales, it can be inferred that some of the qualities of psychopathy, i.e., frankness, enthusiasm, assertiveness, tenseness, and striving may be operative in the group. It was further noted that the lowest scores on the clinical scales for the Experimental group was on D (T = 47) and Si (T = 43), which, as related before, held no significant correlation with the Es scale for this group. The overall, clinical picture of the typical Feminist, then, of those organizations sampled, resulted in the picture of a person who is frank, enthusiastic, assertive, somewhat tense and striving, outgoing, and not particularly depressed.

The Control group profile suggested a tendency toward manic activity (T = 60), even though the correlation between the Ma and Es scales for the Control group was not significant. This finding seemed indicative of the fact that although the Control group had significantly high ego strength, as measured by the Es scale, this pattern did not seem functionally related to manic activity, even though the tendency of the group was to answer in the right direction for a peak on Ma. Although it was also possible that this peak could have occurred by chance, it was still one standard deviation from the Means and implied a greater probability of Ma qualities, i.e., overactivity, emotional excitement, energy, and openness, as probably operative in the group. It was further noted that the lowest scores on the group profile were Hs (T = 52) and Mf (T = 46), neither of which held any significance with the Es scale for this group. Because the Hs and Mf scales were so close to the Means, it can not be said that these depressions are
indicative of less hypochondriasis or more feminine interests. The overall, clinical picture, then, of the typical, traditionally active women, of those sampled, resulted in the picture of a person who tended to be overactive, emotional, energetic, and open.

The resulting clinical profiles for both of the two groups revealed effectively functioning patterns of behavior. The Experimental group, however, appeared to be functioning at a high level of competence and self-confidence; and as a correlate of this higher level, was also less depressed, and less socially introverted than the Control group. What began to be apparent after correlations were performed between the $E$s scale and the specific variables, age, income, marital status, number of hours worked, number of years of schooling, and number of children, was that something different from the Control group was functioning to elevate the $E$s scale for the Experimental group. Since none of the above variables correlated positively with the $E$s scale except for number of years of schooling for the Control group, this was the only variable of those measured that seemed to have a possible functional relationship with the elevation on the $E$s scale. This variable, however, did not appear to be functionally related to the much higher elevation of $E$s for the Experimental group, only the Control group ($r = .38, p < .05$); even though there was a significant difference between the two on this variable ($t = 5.54, p < .001$). Since scores on the $E$s scale have correlated positively with standard measures of I. Q. in previous literature, with ego strength being indicative of a measure of intelligent behavior, it was not surprising that $E$s correlated positively for both groups with number of years of school. However,
the Experimental group's correlation of number of years of schooling with \( E_s \) did not result in significance. Furthermore, although marital status did not appear to be related to high scores on the \( E_s \) scale, nevertheless, a biserial correlation was performed for the Experimental group between the \( E_s \) scale and marital status. Of the Experimental group, 31 per cent were not married, being either single or divorced. No correlation of marital status and \( E_s \) was performed for the Control group since all were married to a Jaycee, and this was a necessary requirement in order to be a member of the Jayceettes. The results of the biserial correlation revealed an extraordinarily high correlation \( (r_b = .77, p<.001) \) between the \( E_s \) scale and marital status.

Possible interpretations of the results of this study began with how much alike, as far as the background data elicited, actually were the two groups. Out of the seven variables measured, only the variables of age, income, and number of years of schooling gave reliably significant differences. However, these differences, upon further examination, gave some insight into apparent versus real differences between the two groups. The difference of age was more likely the result of a greater variation in age of the Experimental group, who ranged in age from 24 to 45. The Control group's younger age, ranging from 22 to 33, seemed more likely the result of a ceiling of 40 years on membership in the Jaycees, with a similar relationship of age 40 and younger for the Jayceettes. The difference in income between the groups may have been the results of slightly more Feminists than Traditional women working and at a better salary (possibly because of more schooling), resulting in a higher income. The difference in number of years of schooling
while not that great (two years), seemed to be the effect of having a college degree (16 years of schooling).

The differences between the two groups on the clinical scales gave some expected and unexpected results. It was expected that because of the nature of the goals of Feminist organizations, that if there were differences between the two groups, the Feminist group would tend toward confrontive actions, while the Traditional women would be less so and tend toward more passive actions. These expectations were borne out in terms of resulting statistical differences between the two groups and their group profile tendencies (See Table 1 and Figure 1). The unexpected result occurred in the near exact scores (difference of only one point) on the Mf scale. This similarity seemed indicative of the Feminist group, while espousing change in women's sex role concept, not completely eschewing typically feminine interests themselves. Thus, the media stereotype of a masculine women's liberationist does not concur with serious Feminists, as sampled by this study.

It did seem suggestive that the married status of most of the Feminists sampled (69 per cent married), along with a good standard of living (approximately $21,000 income), a reasonably young age (32 years), an average number of children (approximately two), a college degree, and little or no employment, has freed these women to be more goal-oriented in an autonomous and self-enhancing way than women who are merely active in a traditional sense. It is furthermore not surprising in light of the above, that these Feminists have less to be personally concerned and confrontive with than traditionally active women, and thus their significantly lowered scores on the D, Pt, and Si scales. Unfortunately,
only a few variables that seemed self-fulfilling and therefore reflective of good ego strength, were elicited from the two groups. Therefore, it is possible that some important variables were still unmeasured. It was still deemed pertinent, however, to note the differences in functionally related variables to \( Es \) for the two groups. Evidently, in terms of the variables measured, some amount of college work is functionally related to good ego strength for the traditionally active women; while being married is functionally related to good ego strength for the active Feminists. Unfortunately, there was no way to measure how much marital status affected ego strength for the traditionally active women, since they were all married. One interesting aspect of this picture was that there was no significant difference in Mean ego strength of the single or divorced women in the Feminist group from that of the Control group \((t = .34, p > .05)\). Perhaps, it could be said that activism in general, at least for the traditional women, serves to enhance their daily functioning, at least on par with that of active, single Feminists. Married women, though, who are active Feminists outdistance both traditionally active, married women, and active, single women. This rather interesting result appeared to partially confirm the previously stated idea that participation in the Women's Rights Movement, particularly for married women, is ego-satisfying, rewarding, and serves to enhance general adjustment. However, the results of the study do not confirm the idea that the amount of participation is functionally related to ego strength as measured by the \( Es \) scale, since number of hours worked held no significant correlation for either groups with the \( Es \) scale. The study did, nevertheless, reflect the difference
between the two groups in terms of ego strength and left the question of what does the effect of being a Feminist have on general ego strength, as measured by the \( Es \) scale.

The enlightenment this study has shed on differences between married and single women (which may still be an artifact of the untapped variable of employment) certainly demands more investigation of the MMPI scales for these two groups. Further research into differences between married and single women, both Feminists and non-Feminists, on the MMPI clinical scales and the \( Es \) scale certainly appears warranted.
TABLE 1
Mean Differences Between Feminists and Traditional Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Variable Difference</th>
<th>Experimental Means</th>
<th>Control Means</th>
<th>t values</th>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>31.96</td>
<td>28.52</td>
<td>3.25****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schooling</td>
<td>16 yrs.</td>
<td>14 yrs.</td>
<td>5.54****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>20,965</td>
<td>17,037</td>
<td>2.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Es scale</td>
<td>49.42</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>3.65****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D scale</td>
<td>18.23</td>
<td>21.59</td>
<td>2.59**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pt scale</td>
<td>24.65</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>2.32*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si scale</td>
<td>21.88</td>
<td>29.44</td>
<td>3.32***</td>
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* p < .05
** p < .02
*** p < .01
**** p < .001
TABLE 2

Significant Correlations of Es with Selected Clinical Scales and Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<th>Control Group</th>
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<tr>
<td>Schooling</td>
<td></td>
<td>.38*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>.77***</td>
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<tr>
<td>F scale</td>
<td>-.63**</td>
<td>-.70**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K scale</td>
<td>.57**</td>
<td>.45*</td>
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<tr>
<td>D scale</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.71***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hy scale</td>
<td>-.83***</td>
<td>-.41*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pd scale</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.55**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pt scale</td>
<td>-.39*</td>
<td>-.59**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sc scale</td>
<td>-.48*</td>
<td>-.45*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma scale</td>
<td>-.59*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si scale</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.54*</td>
</tr>
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* p<.05
** p<.01
*** p<.001
Figure 1

EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP PROFILES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T or Tc</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>Hs+5K</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Hs+4K</th>
<th>Fd+4K</th>
<th>Pa</th>
<th>Pt+1K</th>
<th>Sc+1K</th>
<th>Ma+1K</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>1K</th>
<th>2K</th>
<th>Si</th>
<th>T</th>
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<td>Female</td>
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EXPERIMENTAL

CONTROL
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