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The feminine and masculine gender role stress – conclusions from Polish studies**

The concept of gender role stress is based on the assumption that some women and men might have problems adapting to the feminine and masculine gender roles imposed on them by society. 1515 people took part in the study to verify feminine and masculine gender role stress models in the Polish population. The studies show that the five-factor feminine and masculine stress models are justified. Men display higher stress connected with "physical inadequacy" than women, whereas women score higher on other subscales associated with feminine and masculine gender role stress. Gender role stress is more connected with femininity. Personality correlates of gender role stress were sought.

Introduction

At the core of the concept of gender role stress (GRS) lies the assumption that women and men adapt to the social roles consistent with feminine and masculine ideologies imposed on them by society. Gender ideologies are pervasive in societies, and socialized. Therefore, individuals are aware of cultural norms set by the society for a typical man or woman. Those prescribed characteristics might not always be adaptive -- as in male dominancy, or weakness amongst women -- but form a cultural gender role model, which we all wish to live up to (Prentice & Carranza, 2002; Rudman & Glick,2008). This is the idea that was first introduced by Bem (1981) in her gender role schema theory.

Gender role stress theory refers to the theses of Lazarus and Folkman (1984). Their theory combines the experience of psychological stress, a cognitive judgment of the situation, and a subjective judgment of one's own resources (emotional included), which enable us to cope with a difficult situation. Thus, gender role stress concept implies that we are aware of gender ideologies due to cultural influences that we learn to evaluate, situations which are strongly associated with gender schemata, and how a typical man or woman should react in these circumstances. As Copenhaver and Eisler (1996, pp.223-224) put it "(…) Gender ideology may influence one's appraisal of a situation as being either challenging or threatening. The belief that one has the ability or skill to deal with a threat will result in less perceived stress than the belief that one is not up to the task (…) if a person believes that gender should confer an ability that is perceived as lacking, the person will experience stress if he or she does not live up to the gender script".

Therefore, this theory does not focus on whether we encounter gender role ideologies generally (because, as Bem [1981] suggested, gender roles are socialized), but explores whether deviations from gender roles in psychological functioning are stressful for particular individuals. However, each of us has different life experiences, and thus will commit oneself to fulfilling certain expectations linked to gender roles to various degrees in particular situations. Gillespie and Eisler (1992) found that feminine gender role stress is positively associated with self-reported depression and daily hassles among women. Eisler (1995) reports that masculine gender role stress is associated with anxiety defined as both a state and a trait as well as being anger prone.

In congruence with the abovementioned results, gender role stress has been linked to other "stress constructs", but not to a general masculine-feminine dimension, which is a broader concept associated with a cultural gender schema that should facilitate social adaptation. Such conclusions corroborate the idea that gender role stress depicts a negative side of the gender role, whereas femininity/masculinity is comprised of more neutral attributes (Bekker & Mens-Verhulst, 2007) - which might sometimes be considered as

generally detrimental but allowed for a particular gender (as being a shy woman or a rebellious man) (Kuczyńska,1992; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Eisler (1995) concludes that gender role stress reflects "the appraisal of the stress-inducing aspects of masculinity" or femininity (cf. Gillespie & Eisler,1992). So, gender role orientation (masculinity, femininity) defines the individual global self-perception associated with characteristics regarded by society as typically feminine or masculine. That is why this construct is very useful and widely implemented in both social and personality studies. Gender role orientation dimensions (masculinity, femininity) and types (e.g. androgyny) reflect the way we perceive ourselves irrespective of specific social situations, and are associated with other aspects of self-image, such as sexual orientation. Kuczyńska (1992), in her studies of female-male type transsexuals, concluded that they perceive themselves as more masculine than non-transsexual women. Kaźmierczak, Zapaśnik, and Karasiewicz (2010) found that homosexual men are most frequently androgynous, whereas heterosexual men are equally frequently androgynous or masculine. All the above results suggest that gender role orientation reflects a comparatively stable tendency of perceiving oneself, like every other personality trait (see McCrae & Costa,2005). Since masculinity-femininity is a part of our self-concept, it leads to particular expectancies, behaviors, and attitudes. Therefore, Kuczyńska (2002) demonstrated that gender role orientation might affect our functioning in marriage either positively or negatively, which was also corroborated by Kaźmierczak (2008). Gender role stress is a construct that does not apply to general self-concept per se. So, in most research the associations between those two constructs are weak. Some researchers suggest that cross-sex-typed individuals will display more gender role stress, because their individual traits predispose them to behave counter-stereotypically. On the contrary, others believe that sex-typed persons, with better internalized gender schemata, might be more prone to gender role stress (Wolfram, Mohr, & Borchert,2009).

Eisler (1995) outlines some general theses of the MGRS model, which apply to FGRS as well. They are as follows: 1) women and men develop gender schemas, since they are rewarded for particular behaviors by the society, and they are punished for the others; 2) as a consequence, criteria for the social evaluation of each gender are internalized; 3) this process of self-evaluation influences the perception of social threats to ones gender schema and increases fears of not fulfilling social expectations, leading also to the selection of coping strategies; 4) individuals differ in their commitment to feminine or masculine social models; 5) the more rigid gender role attitudes are, the higher the risk of stress and health problems. We could say that people internalize pancultural stereotypes of psychological femininity and masculinity – "psychological characteristics

differentially associated with women and men across many cultural groups"(Williams, Satterwhite, & Best,1999, pp. 513), and are aware of social pressures to fit those psychological models.

Eisler and Skidmore (1987) conclude that masculine gender role stress occurs especially in such situations where the masculine sense of independence, power, dominance or control is threatened, or suppression of emotions is not possible. On the other hand, Gillespie and Eisler (1992) found that the risk of experiencing feminine gender role stress increases in interpersonal situations where there is a fear of being unable to relate positively to others.

Eisler and Skidmore (1987), and Gillespie and Eisler (1992) created models of gender role stress – a masculine (MGRS) and a feminine (FGRS). Each has five scales comprising particular situations that might cause stress due to a feeling of not meeting the standards set for feminine or masculine gender roles (cf. van Well et al., 2005). When it comes to MGRS there are five components of stress, associated with: feeling physically inadequate, expressing tender emotions, being subordinate to women, being intellectually inferior, and experiencing performance failure in work and sexual activities. Moore, Stuart, McNulty, Addis, Cordova and Temple (2008) confirmed the validity of MGRS construct with its domains in a clinical sample of men participating in violence intervention programs. The FGRS consists of five components of stress, associated with: developing unemotional relationships, being physically unattractive, being exposed to potential harm of violence, behaving assertively, and not being nurturant.

The above models will be tested in the empirical part of the article (Figure 1).

Research indicates that suffering from gender role stress may lead to specific health disorders. It engenders, amongst others, high-risk health habits such as smoking or high alcohol consumption in the case of masculine gender role stress (Eisler,1995), while feminine gender role stress has been correlated with eating disorders (cf. Bekker & Boselie, 2002; Martz, Handley & Eisler, 1995).

Studies presented in this article were conducted to verify feminine and masculine gender role stress models in the Polish population – in both female and male groups. Such analyses are necessary since, so far, only a small number of studies confirming feminine and masculine gender role stress models have been conducted outside the USA, a fact pointed out by van Well et al. (2005). Each of the two scales was translated from English to Polish, and back, courtesy of a group of Polish psychologists, (each having passed, at minimum, the Certificate of Proficiency in English). During the process of adapting the FGRS and MGRS scales, the group of translators and psychologists serving as competent judges suggested that all items should begin with the phrase "the situation (in which)…", which allowed the omission of difficulties in understanding the
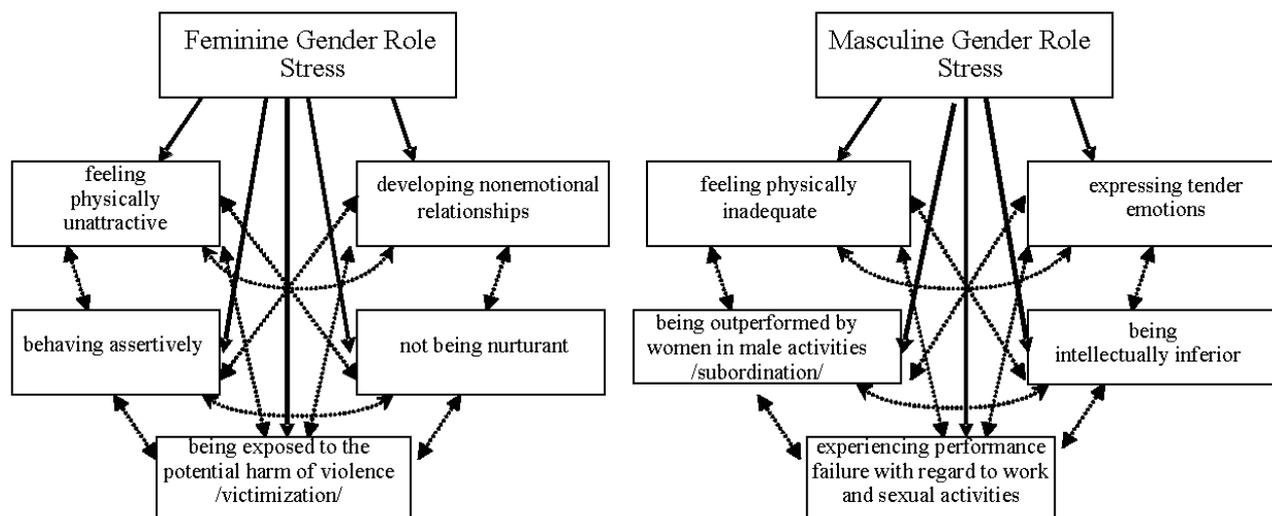
Figure 1. Proposed factor models of FGRS and MGRS.
Note. Source: own material.

sentences, and made them similar in the lexical form. The group of senior psychology students confirmed that this new form of sentences is easier to comprehend. It should be noted that in the process of adapting gender role stress scales attempts were made to increase the number of items. The qualitative survey was conducted in a heterogenic group of over 50 women and men who answered open-ended questions about stressful situations regarding family, professional, and social life. They provided examples of stressful situations which could be experienced by an average female or male in their everyday lives as a result of not conforming to gender schemata. Additional items were very similar in nature to those included in the original version of the scales (e.g. *Experiencing the loss of physical condition while getting older* [MGRS]; *Encountering opinions that a single woman at a party is always looking for sexual adventures* [FGRS]), which constitutes further evidence for the cross-cultural character of the GRS concept. For that reason, the original models were tested to examine the cross-cultural utility of the gender role stress construct.

Correlations between gender stress models and femininity/masculinity as defined by Bem (1981) were also sought (the questionnaire based on the BSRI theses was chosen, since the Polish adaptation of PAQ [Personal Attributes Questionnaire; Spence, Helmreich, & Strapp, 1974] is not available). BRSI was used to show differences between GRS and the femininity-masculinity concept as mentioned in the introduction. What is more, a question concerning whether FGRS and MGRS scales are sex specific was raised. According to both the theoretical assumptions and the American studies, men should score higher than women in MGRS and display a lower level of FGRS (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987). However, Dutch studies (van Well et al., 2005) show that, whereas women score higher than men on FGRS subscales as well as on the general

index of the FGRS, the MGRS is not sex specific. That is, men score higher only on the "Physical Inadequacy" scale, whereas women experience more masculine stress in the areas related to "Intellectual Inferiority" and "Performance Failure".

Finally, additional research was conducted to determine whether gender role stress is correlated with psychological characteristics detrimental to social adjustment, i.e. personality disorders and a lack of social competencies. Such links would verify the abovementioned theses that gender role stress limits our effective functioning.

Method

Participants

The author's objective was to examine a subsection of Poles as demographically diverse as possible. A convenient sample of 1515 people took part in the study – 783 women (51.7% of the group) and 732 men (48.3% of the group) who differed in marital status, employment status, and educational level. The average age for women being 31.9 ($SD = 11.89$) and for men 31.6 ($SD = 11.43$) (for those who revealed their age). The youngest woman taking part in the study was 18 years old, the oldest 75. The men were aged between 17 and 76 years old.

Instruments

1. The Masculine Gender Role Stress (Eisler & Skidmore,1987; Eisler,1995) consists of 40 items, which make up five subscales: feeling physically inadequate (9 items); expressing tender emotions (7 items); being outperformed by women in male activities /subordination/ (9 items); being intellectually inferior (7 items); and experiencing performance failure with regard to work and sexual activities (8 items).

2. The Feminine Gender Role Stress (Gillespie & Eisler, 1992) consists of 39 items, making up five subscales: developing non-emotional relationships (10 items), feeling physically unattractive (8 items), being exposed to the potential harm of violence /victimization/ (6 items), behaving assertively (7 items), not being nurturant (8 items). Participants determined how stressful a given situation is for them on a six-point scale (from "0" – not stressful, to "5" – extremely stressful). The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alphas) were calculated, and compared with reliability indicators obtained from the Dutch studies (van Well et al., 2005).

MGRS: feeling physically inadequate (Cronbach's α = .73; .70 in Dutch studies); expressing tender emotions (Cronbach's α = .67; .69 in Dutch studies); being outperformed by women in male activities /subordination/ (Cronbach's α = .80; .80 in Dutch studies); being intellectually inferior (Cronbach's α = .72; .69 in Dutch studies); and experiencing performance failure with regard to work and sexual activities (Cronbach's α = .78; .76 in Dutch studies).

FGRS: developing non-emotional relationships (Cronbach's α = .82; .80 in Dutch studies), feeling physically unattractive (Cronbach's α = .85; .81 in Dutch studies), being exposed to the potential harm of violence /victimization/ (Cronbach's α = .79; .79 in Dutch studies), behaving assertively (Cronbach's α = .78; .81 in Dutch studies), not being nurturant (Cronbach's α = .81; .77 in Dutch studies).

3. The Psychological Sex Inventory (IPP) by Kuczyńska (1992) based on the well-known Bem measure BSRI (cf. Bem,1981) was implemented. The inventory is comprised of 35 adjectives (15 – femininity [in this study: Cronbach's α = .77], 15 – masculinity [in this study: Cronbach's α = .82] and 5 - neutral) to which an answer is required on a 5-point Likert scale; from "I am not like it at all" to "This is exactly what I am like".

Data Analysis

The factor structure of the two instruments was tested by confirmatory factor analyses (using Statistica 6.0). This form of analysis was chosen due to limitations of the exploration factor analysis pointed out by Konarski (2010), and associated with the arbitral criteria of factors' selection. It seems that as for the gender role stress concept we should focus on theoretical, and not statistical criteria of the model structure. Therefore, the deductive (Brzeziński,2005), also known as substantive (Konarski,2010) way of testing the research model is better in this case. Theoretical background for the model structure is formed by: both Eisler and Skidmore (1987) and Gillespie and Eisler (1992) theses (both teams conducted studies in USA); van Well's et al. (2005) conclusions from Dutch studies; and Tang and Lau's (1996) findings from Chinese research. Konarski indicates

that using the statistical criteria of factors' selection while omitting the theoretical basis of the model structure "raise the possibility of selecting a non-optimal number of factors" (pp.193). Konarski states that when we have the *a priori* knowledge about the model, or empirical evidence, we should employ confirmatory rather than exploratory factor analysis, with the latter making it difficult to find a proper model structure.

Due to above reasons the model proposed by the American researchers, and confirmed in Dutch studies was tested. Furthermore, the alternative model was examined, based on the conclusions from studies conducted on Chinese groups. In order to confirm the multidimensional structure of the gender role stress model, a one-dimensional structure of gender role stress was also explored.

Following conclusions from Olsson, Troye, and Howell (1999), the Maximum Likelihood estimation method (ML) was used, since, compared to GLS (Generalized Least Squares), it provides a better theoretic fit – that is it reflects more accurately the structure and parameter values of the true model which describes causal mechanisms of empirical observations. The superiority of the ML estimation method over the GLS and WLS (Weighted Least Squares) estimation methods was confirmed by Olsson, Foss, Troye and Howell (2000) as it is more stable and not sensitive to sample size, and kurtosis over other methods (for the data presented in this article: skewness <2, and kurtosis < 7, so it is assumed that the data are moderately non-normal, and ML provides robust parameter estimates; cf. Finney & DiStefano, 2006).

Since the employment of multiple fit indices is recommended (Simsek, Veiga, Lubatkin, & Dino, 2005), several fit indexes are used. Chi-square statistics will be displayed (to enable cross-cultural comparisons of model fit, cf. Van Well, Kolk & Arrindell,2005), although this statistic is known to be sensitive to sample size (cf. MacCullum, Browne & Sugawara,1996). Other recommended fit indexes used were: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (values below 0.10 or 0.08 are considered as indicators of a reasonable error of approximation; Browne & Cudeck,1993; Muncer & Campbell, 2004), with the 90% RMSEA confidence intervals (CI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (the criterion of model fit – CFI >= .95; Hu & Bentler,1999; highly recommended by Batinic, Wolff & Haupt,2008).

Procedure

Each participant received a set of questionnaires from a researcher (psychologists or students of psychology) to complete with the request that it be returned personally. Each research assistant (the data collector) was to collect the data from a small group of differently aged people of both sexes. Participation in the study was strictly voluntary. The study was anonymous, although each participant could be

Table 1
Pearson inter-correlations between MGRS and FGRS Subscales.

Subscales		1	2	3	4	5
MGRS subscales						
1.	PH	…..				
2.	EI	.59***	…..			
3.	SUB	.71***	.63***	…..		
4.	II	.66***	.66***	.75***	…..	
5.	PF	.64***	.48***	.50***	.53***	…..
Subscales		1	2	3	4	5
FGRS subscales						
1.	NE	…..				
2.	FPH	.63***	…..			
3.	V	.67***	.60***	…..		
4.	AS	.61***	.61***	.66***	…..	
5.	NURT	.72***	.58***	.66***	.61***	…..

Note. N = 1515. MGRS = Masculine Gender Role Stress, PH = feeling physically inadequate, EI = expressing tender emotions, SUB = being outperformed by women in male activities /subordination/, II = being intellectually inferior, and PF = experiencing performance failure with regard to work and sexual activities; FGRS = Feminine Gender Role Stress, NE = developing non-emotional relationships, FPH = feeling physically unattractive, V = being exposed to the potential harm of violence /victimization/, AS = behaving assertively, and NURT = not being nurturant. *** p<.001, two-tailed.

shown his/her results, if desired. All received the combined FGRS and MGRS questionnaire. A group of 339 people were also given the Psychological Sex Inventory, which is based on Bem's gender role schema theory.

Results

In order to validate the assumed model for Polish conditions, two confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) using a maximum likelihood estimation method were conducted using STATISTICA 6.0.

Factorial validity

Table 1 presents intercorrelations between FGRS and MGRS subscales.

The results of confirmatory factor analysis indicate that the assumed gender role stress factor structure is more accurate – conforming to empirical data – than the one-factor model, as well as the three-factor structure (Table 2).

Taking into consideration data from all participants, regardless of sex, mean values of the parameter estimates of FGRS general index equaled 0.55, and in the case of MGRS general index – 0.53 (Figure 2).

Construct validity – gender role stress and gender orientation

Additional analyses verified whether there exist any gender differences in experiencing feminine and masculine gender role stress. A t-test for independent groups was used.

Men obtained higher scores in "Physical Inadequacy" stress, while women scored higher in other subscales – these differences being especially noticeable in the case of the "Intellectual Inferiority" and "Performance Failure" subscales, which positively verifies the gender differences obtained in the Dutch studies. Additionally, women scored significantly higher in all subscales of FGRS as well as in the general FGRS scale (Table 3).

However, women experienced higher feminine gender role stress than masculine ($t(596) = 37.86$; $p<.001$; $d = 1.04$), whereas men scored higher in MGRS than in FGRS ($t(564) = 3.41$; $p<.01$; $d = .08$). This latter effect is, however, minimal.

When means for MGRS and FGRS, separate for males and females, were compared with those from the studies by van Well et al. (2005), the Polish sample displayed a higher level of GRS, especially the masculine (females: $M_{MGRS - Dutch sample} = 1.84$; $SD = .54$; $M_{MGRS - Polish sample} = 2.4$; $SD = .65$; $d = .96$; females: $M_{FGRS - Dutch sample} = 2.92$; $SD = .62$; $M_{FGRS - Polish sample} = 3.16$; $SD = .68$; $d = .38$; males: $M_{MGRS - Dutch sample} = 1.81$; $SD = .63$; $M_{MGRS - Polish sample} = 2.26$; $SD = .85$; $d = .62$; females: $M_{FGRS - Dutch sample} = 2.19$; $SD = .70$; $M_{FGRS - Polish sample} = 2.25$; $SD = .81$; $d = .08$).

Two models of GRS were then correlated with femininity-masculinity. MGRS showed small significant correlations with IPP. Physical Inadequacy correlated positively with masculinity ($r = .14$; $p<0.05$), whereas Performance Failure correlated with femininity ($r = .25$; $p<.001$). FGRS subscales correlated positively with femininity: Non-emotional relationships: $r = .33$; $p<.001$, Physical unattractiveness: $r = .21$; $p<.001$; Victimization: $r = 33$; $p<.001$; Behaving assertively: $r = .16$; $p<0.01$; Not being nurturant: $r = .31$; $p<.001$. The general index of
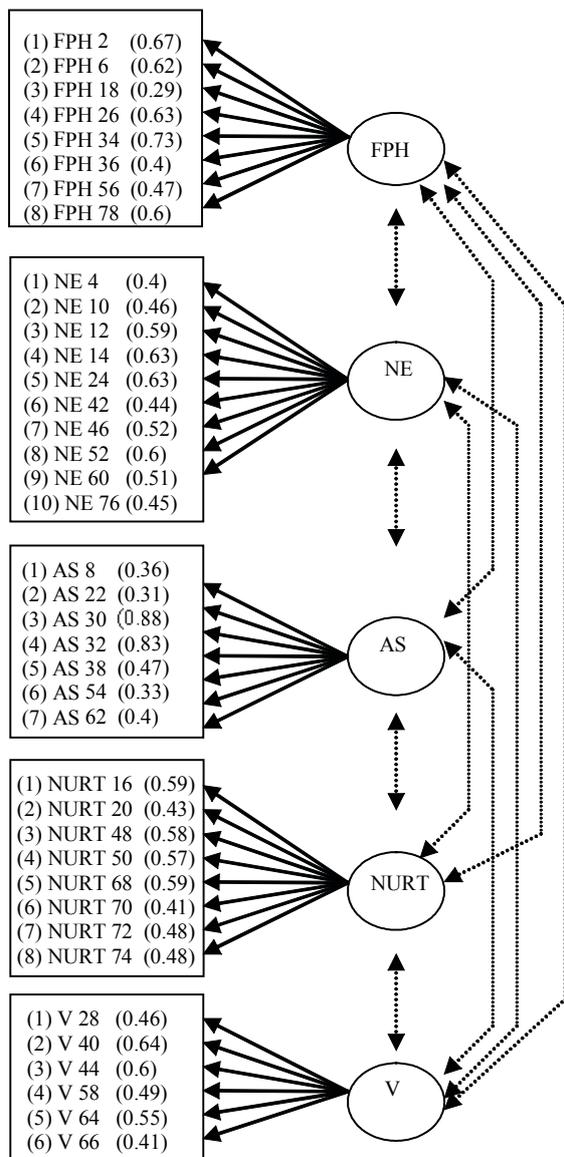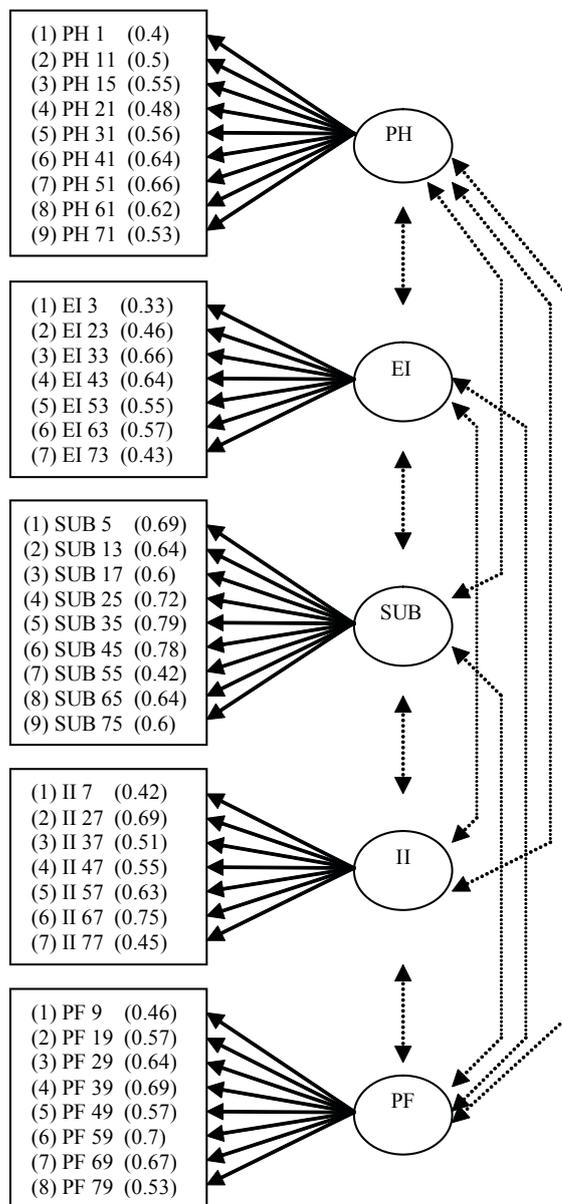
Figure 2. Factor structure and parameter estimations (p<.01) of FGRS for women and MGRS for men.

Note. FGRS - N = 741; MGRS – N = 730. On the left side of the figures the number of items for each factor, specific item numbers, and parameter estimates are displayed. PH = feeling physically inadequate, EI = expressing tender emotions, SUB = being outperformed by women in male activities / subordination/, II = being intellectually inferior, and PF = experiencing performance failure with regard to work and sexual activities; FGRS = Feminine Gender Role Stress, NE = developing nonemotional relationships, FPH = feeling physically unattractive, V = being exposed to the potential harm of violence /victimization/, AS = behaving assertively, and NURT = not being nurturant.

MGRS correlated with femininity: $r = .15$; $p<.05$, whereas the general index of FGRS correlated with both femininity: $r = .34$; $p<.001$, and negatively with masculinity: $r = -.20$; $p<.01$. The correlation between femininity and FGRS was significantly stronger, as assessed by Fisher z-transformations ($z = 4.14$; $p<.001$) than that between MGRS and femininity.

Gender role stress and age differences

No significant correlations between GRS general scores and age were observed in the presented study. In the female group there were weak correlations between "Non-emotional relationships" and age (r (375) = .10; p<.05) , "Victimization" and age (r (394) = .13; p<.05), and "Not being nurturant" and age (r (384) = .18; p<.001). In the male group there was only one statistical tendency between "Performance Failure" and age (r (351) = .10; p<.10). Therefore, the older we get, the more gender role

Table 2
Model fit indexes for feminine and masculine gender role stress in male and female participants.

GRS scales	Chi-square	*df*	p level	RMSEA	*90%* CI	*CFI*
MGRS						
men						
five-factor model[1]	2319.181	730	<0.001	0.066	0.063 to 0.068	.913
three-factor model[2]	940.789	186	<0.001	0.077	0.072 to 0.082	.828
one-factor model	3134.865	741	<0.001	0.090	0.087 to 0.092	.899
women						
five-factor model[1]	2667.160	730	<0.001	0.077	0.074 to 0.079	.762
three-factor model[2]	1039.798	186	<0.001	0.084	0.079 to 0.088	.717
one-factor model	3123.903	741	<0.001	0.088	0.086 to 0.091	.693
FGRS						
men						
five-factor model[3]	2646.549	693	<0.001	.071	.068 to .073	.65
three-factor model[2]	1200.783	136	<0.001	.107	.102 to .113	.668
one-factor model	3161.951	702	<0.001	.088	.085 to .090	.632
women						
five-factor model[3]	2342.148	693	<0.001	.064	.061 to .066	.876
three-factor model[2]	1102.628	136	<0.001	.104	.099 to .109	.682
one-factor model	3160.978	702	<0.001	.083	.080 to .085	.861

Note. RMSEA = root mean squared error of approximation; CI = confidence interval; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; MGRS = Masculine Gender Role Stress; FGRS = Feminine Gender Role Stress.
1 Eisler and Skidmore (1987), van Well et al. (2005); 2 Tang and Lau (1996); 3 Gillespie and Eisler (1992), van Well et al. (2005).

Table 3
Sex differences in MGRS and FGRS subscales.

	females			males					
Scale	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*Cohen's d*
MGRS subscales									
PH	704	20.26	7.21	681	21.55	8.66	2.99**	1322.17	0.16
EI	750	15.73	5.69	693	14.99	6.4	2.3*	1388.25	-0.12
SUB	730	17.63	7.09	681	16.59	9.61	2.31*	1246.09	-0.13
II	758	14.55	5.67	708	12.45	6.56	6.53***	1400.77	-0.35
PF	751	27.57	6.36	692	25.82	7.97	4.59***	1320.3	-0.25
MGRS	646	95.99	26.05	607	90.34	33.96	3.29**	1135.31	-0.20
FGRS subscales									
NE	718	32.26	8.53	686	22.68	9.8	19.49***	1356.39	1.06
FPH	757	21.7	7.73	701	14.52	7.79	17.66***	1456	0.93
V	764	20.32	5.43	710	13.53	6.09	22.51***	1422.64	1.19
AS	752	19.77	6.17	706	15.28	6.64	13.34***	1429.57	0.71
NURT	746	29.07	6.44	689	22.04	7.51	18.97***	1360.24	1.03
FGRS	666	123.22	26.36	633	87.78	31.71	21.85***	1230.3	1.25

Note. MGRS = Masculine Gender Role Stress, PH = feeling physically inadequate, EI = expressing tender emotions, SUB = being outperformed by women in male activities /subordination/, II = being intellectually inferior, and PF = experiencing performance failure with regard to work and sexual activities; FGRS = Feminine Gender Role Stress, NE = developing non-emotional relationships, FPH = feeling physically unattractive, V = being exposed to the potential harm of violence /victimization/, AS = behaving assertively, and NURT = not being nurturant. *** p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05.

Table 4
Correlations between gender role stress and non-pathological syndromes of personality disorders.

IBZO-DSM-IV dimensions	Women		Men	
	MGRS[1]	FGRS[2]	MGRS[3]	FGRS[4]
1. Paranoid personality disorder	.22*	.08	.23 [a]	.11
2. Schizoid personality disorder	.18 [a]	-.04	.08	.01
3. Schizotypal personality disorder	.39***	.18 [a]	.05	.06
4. Antisocial personality disorder	.21*	-.10	.16	.00
5. Borderline personality disorder	.39***	.20*	.15	.12
6. Histrionic personality disorder	.29**	.24*	.19	.12
7. Narcissistic personality disorder	.28**	.21*	.05	-.03
8. Avoidant personality disorder	.31**	.21*	.26*	.25*
9. Dependent personality disorder	.42***	.33**	.18	.18
10. Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder	.18 [a]	.06	.02	.02

Note.
1 N varies between 99 and 105 for particular correlations
2 N varies between 98 and 102 for particular correlations
3 N varies between 61 and 65 for particular correlations
4 N varies between 64 and 67 for particular correlations
MGRS = Masculine Gender Role Stress, FGRS = Feminine Gender Role Stress.
*** $p<.001$; **$p<.01$; *$p<.05$; [a] $p<.10$, two-tailed.

stress we tend to experience, however those tendencies are very weak. These results confirm conclusions from earlier studies. In Kaźmierczak and Goodwin's (2010) study on 100 pregnant women there were no age differences in feminine gender role stress revealed.

Construct validity – gender role stress and its personality correlates

Additional analyses were carried out in order to explore the clinical value of the gender role stress construct. The group participating in the research consisted of 179 individuals, 110 women (mean age = 24 yrs.; SD = 7.02) and 69 men (mean age = 38 yrs.; SD = 11.33) (91 were students, 59 highly educated, 18 graduated from high school, and 7 completed vocational education; 46 individuals were married, 96 people worked, and 43 had children). IBZO-DSM-IV Inventory by Radochoński and Stanik (Stanik, 2006) was used to assess non-pathological syndromes of personality disorders as described by DSM-IV. In reference to sten norms as calculated by Stanik, mean scores obtained by female and male groups on IBZO-DSM-IV Inventory were average (sten scores of 4-6 on IBZO-DSM-IV Inventory).

Since the distribution of some syndromes measured by IBZO-DSM-IV Inventory diverged from the normal, Spearman's rho correlations were carried out. The results are presented in a table 4.

As Arrindell et al. (2003) state, high scores on both the FGRS and MGRS scales might contribute to "poor psychological functioning" (pp.265) regardless of sex, comparisons were conducted between people who obtained lower vs. higher scores on both GRS scales.

The results on both scales were dichotomized over the median and participants who scored above the median on both dimensions entered the "high GRS group" (N = 57) as opposed to those who scored below the median on the MGRS and FGRS scales ("low GRS group"; N = 53).

A t-test for independent groups was used and five significant differences between two groups were obtained with higher results on certain personality disorders displayed by the "high GRS group": Borderline personality disorder: $t(108) = 3.56$; $p<.01$; $d = .69$; Histrionic personality disorder: $t(108) = 4.49$; $p<.001$; $d = .81$; Narcissistic personality disorder: $t(108) = 2.21$; $p<.05$; $d = .40$; Avoidant personality disorder: $t(108) = 3.53$; $p<.01$; $d = .64$; Dependent personality disorder: $t(98.82) = 4.56$; $p<.001$; $d = .92$. The above analyses suggest that gender role stress might be associated with certain personality disorders, this seems to be the case particularly in the female group.

However, we certainly cannot say that GRS is only associated with women's personality traits as earlier research on gender role stress conducted by Zbierska and Kreft (2008[1]) indicate. In their studies, in which 57 married couples took part, the Questionnaire of Social Competence (QSC) by Matczak (PTP, 2001) was used, which is comprised of three subscales: competence in interpersonal or intimate relations (IR), competence in social exposure (SE), and competence in situations requiring assertiveness (A). Pearsonian correlations revealed that among wives FGRS correlated significantly and negatively with the social exposure (SE) subscale (r = -.30; p<0.05). There were also two statistical tendencies: FGRS - assertiveness

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1. Studies conducted as a part of master theses under the direction of M. Kaźmierczak

(A) negative association: r = -.23; p<.10, and MGRS - social exposure (SE) association: r = -.24; p<0.10. In the husbands' group, MGRS correlated significantly and negatively with the intimate relations (IR) subscale: r = -.28; p<.05, and the assertiveness (A) subscale: r = -.30; p<0.05. FGRS was negatively associated with the assertiveness (A) subscale: r = -.36; p<0.01. It should be noted that in the same study IPP by Kuczyńska (1992) was used to measure femininity/masculinity of spouses. Both scales correlated positively with QSC dimensions (femininity – IR: r = .41, p<0.001; femininity – SE: r = .28, p<0.01; femininity – A: .19, p<0.05; masculinity – IR: r = .36, p<0.001; masculinity – SE: r = .61; p<0.001; masculinity – A: r = .65, p<0.001). Therefore, both femininity and masculinity might facilitate social adaptation. On the contrary, gender role stress reduces our effective functioning in interpersonal relations.

Discussion

The studies carried out on the Polish population show that five-factor feminine and masculine stress models are justified. What is more, all subscales manifest a satisfactory reliability. It seems that gender role stress (GRS) is generally more connected with femininity and more experienced by females themselves. However, correlations between femininity/masculinity and GRS are not high, thus confirming the validity of gender role stress scales – as it has been expected by various authors whose theses were described above (cf. Bekker & Mens-Verhulst, 2007; Wolfram et al.,2009). It seems the studies that include both: femininity/masculinity and gender role stress measures are required, as GRS might influence the associations between gender self-concept and social functioning -- as was concluded in the Wolfram et al. (2009) studies, as well as in Kaźmierczak and Goodwin's (2010) studies. In Poland, IPP by Kuczyńska (1992) should be used as it is the only Polish measure of gender self-concept that might allow for a better understanding of the GRS' construct validity.

As for the higher male stress indicators for women, van Well et al. (2005) link such results, obtained from their analyses, to femininity in Dutch culture, as femininity in a national culture is associated with an overlap between the gender roles of men and women. Boski (2006) believes that Polish culture can also be defined as feminine. On the other hand, others emphasize that Polish culture is difficult to define as unequivocally masculine or feminine (Kwiatkowska & Nowakowska,2006), which may go some way to explaining why the Polish sample seems to be more sensitive towards masculine gender role standards than the Dutch equivalent (van Well et al.,2005). Hence the results obtained may be connected with the socially promoted model of the perfect woman – a superwoman who should be able to perfectly combine family and professional life, while remaining a successful woman, both in her professional career and sex-life (Mandal,2007) -- which can be treated as a new prescriptive aspect (ideal image) of a feminine gender stereotype (Rudman & Glick, 2008). This can be true especially when one takes into account the great change in the political system (from socialism to capitalism) in Poland twenty years ago, followed by such attitudes as attaching a greater value to work success, financial stability and good education (CBOS,2006, retrieved: 2008). However, the results obtained provoke further questions -- such as whether women are generally more sensitive to social evaluation (cf. Roberts & Nolen-Hoeksema,1994) and whether the gender role concept is related more strongly to personal attributes (e.g. endorsing gender stereotypes in everyday life, neuroticism) than to sex itself.

Answering the second question it seems that not only women, but also people of certain personality profiles are more prone to gender role stress. The less social competencies we have, the more gender role stress we might experience. Therefore gender role stress is associated with some psychological deficiencies in social interaction competencies. This conclusion is confirmed by a positive correlation of gender role stress with personality disorders. Gender role stress was positively associated to the greatest extent with borderline, narcissistic, histrionic, avoidant, and dependant personality disorders. Stanik considers narcissistic and histrionic personality disorders as positively linked to social overexposure (demanding attention in social relations) whereas avoidant, dependant, and to some extent borderline personality disorders are linked to submissive behaviors in social relations (emotional oversensitivity, fear of abandonment). Therefore, gender role stress limits our ability to implement coping strategies in situations linked to gender schemata, and thus increases the risk of developing a dysfunctional behavioral style (Arrindell et al.,2003). However, the studies presented in this article do not allow for causal explanations. Therefore, we might only conclude that non-adaptive personality characteristics are associated with gender role stress.

Amongst the limitations of the study is its correlation paradigm – experiments should be conducted in order to analyze the link between gender role stress models and attitudes towards others. Additionally, more specific groups, such as members of particular professions or clinically distressed samples should be included in the studies, with other personality measures being taken into account in order to explore the validity of both gender role stress models in a more comprehensive fashion. Further research should especially be conducted in reference to the construct validity of masculine gender role stress. Following McCreary, Wong, Wiener, Carperter, Engle, and Nelson's (1996) earlier conclusions, there is a question whether it is a gender specific concept and how it influences

feminine and masculine behavioral styles or emotional reactions unique for each gender (cf. McCreary, Newcomb, & Sadava, 1998). Searching for alternative gender role stress models in various Polish samples (people of different family backgrounds, clinical and non-clinical samples) and using exploratory factor analyses might also be helpful in order to develop our knowledge about the construct itself.

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