

Elles ont aussi offert de bonnes critiques au contenu mathématique. Ces femmes-là savaient ce qu'elles voulaient. Leur esprit critique et leur capacité de discriminer n'étaient pas défectueux du tout!

Ensuite est venu 'Mathématiques Démystifiées Phase III'. Là, six femmes se sont regroupées pour en savoir plus long sur les applications quotidiennes des mathématiques. Intérêts composés et éléments de démographie ont été étudiés. Les femmes ont appris à faire des calculs numériques avec aisance en se servant de la calculatrice et des tables

mathématiques.

Qu'est-il arrivé aux trente-quatre autres femmes de 'Mathématiques Démystifiées Phase I'? Plusieurs d'entre elles ont entamé des études en administration, en commerce, bref, des matières où l'on doit posséder des notions mathématiques et de plus, suivre quelques cours de maths.

Ainsi nous voyons notre cours comme un succès!

Lynda CHOQUETTE

## Mistress of Business Administration

MALE AND FEMALE CANDIDATES: ARE THERE PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES?

Pat Pfeifer and Stanley J. Shapiro

Photo by Laura Jones



### Maîtresse en Sciences de l'Administration

Cet article dénonce certains mythes tenaces au sujet des femmes qui osent s'aventurer dans le monde des affaires. Une étude des traits caractériels des candidats aux cours de sciences en administration montre que les femmes ont autant de capacités, sinon plus que les hommes pour occuper des postes-cadres.

Let's listen as Peter Personnel, a company vice-president, discusses his recruiting efforts on behalf of the Widget Co. Ltd, with that firm's president, Theodore Traditional.

#### Board Room

##### *Peter Personnel*

We've got a good group of potential management trainees this year. I've personally interviewed each and every one of them. They all got good grades at their respective business schools. They seem to be keen, outgoing, and definitely the type of people likely to do well with our firm. Take a minute and look through these résumés.

##### *Theodore Traditional*

(As he glances through the résumés) I see what you mean, Peter, they show real executive potential. Now wait a minute, Peter — What's this? THREE OF THEM ARE WOMEN!!! It's not just management or staff specialists we're looking for here — it's top management! We go to the best Master of Business Administration schools in the country, speak to hundreds of students, and you select three WOMEN!

##### *Peter Personnel*

Hey, wait a minute, Ted. Take a close look at their résumés — these girls were at the top of their class, all have previous work experience and their references are first-rate. They're just what we're looking for.

##### *Theodore Traditional*

But, Peter—just think of it—women entertaining customers? Women firing people who don't perform? Jealous wives at home when our boys travel with women? Are you looking for problems?

##### *Peter Personnel*

These are not just women—they're professionals first and foremost. They receive the same business education as the guys we recruit. Times are changing and we've got to adjust.

##### *Theodore Traditional*

But why us? I don't hear of too many other companies hiring women for responsible positions that could lead to top management.

##### *Peter Personnel*

Truth is, Ted, there didn't use to be too many female MBAs around. Traditionally, graduate business schools have attracted men, men who went on to senior positions in the business world. But today, women are more interested in business and in being trained for top positions.

##### *Theodore Traditional*

But women just don't seem as promising a group from the executive viewpoint. I know it's fashionable to be 'liberated' nowadays, but we still have to run an organization. Now, let's be factual. You know all the problems this would mean. Women are too emotional, they're always

late or quitting, they won't be accepted by customers or distributors. They are incapable of hard, fact-based decision-making—damn it, they're. . . they're WOMEN.

*Peter Personnel*

Wait a minute, Ted. Look who's getting too emotional now. Let's get our facts straight—close to one quarter of the students in MBA programs are women. They are being assimilated into the business community and are gradually moving to prominent positions. Now, remember, these females are not your ordinary office-clerk type—they're highly specialized and well trained. I don't see you challenging me about hiring men with similar backgrounds.

*Theodore Traditional*

But women just aren't the same, somehow! They don't seem to be suited for business. Their *personalities* are different. That's it! They may study the same subjects but they have different personalities!

*Peter Personnel*

Well, Ted, I know you are a guy who likes to look at the facts. Let's take a minute to see what we mean by personality and what was learned from a recent study of the personality profiles of male and female MBA candidates.

The preceding discussion may never have taken place, but many male executives share some of Ted Traditional's views about women in management and, more specifically, about personality differences that make women less suited than men for management positions. Consequently, all people involved in hiring or teaching business students should be interested in the results of a recent comparative study of the personality traits of matched samples of male and female MBA candidates which suggests 'that just ain't so'.

#### WHAT IS PERSONALITY?

Although we all use the word 'personality' in everyday conversation, that term is an exceedingly difficult one to define. For present purposes, however, we can settle for a working definition. In discussing personality, psychologists tend to use terms describing a mix of individual traits. A 'trait', in turn, can be considered a particular and persistent feature of an individual's personality—a characteristic that can be measured and observed. Personality, then, usually refers to the total pattern of characteristic ways of feeling, of thinking, and of behaving that constitute each person's distinctive method of relating to the environment.

#### WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE PERSONALITY?

In any attempt to theorize about personality differences or similarities, it is necessary to discuss three factors generally recognized as jointly influencing personality profiles. These factors are *biological*, *psychological*, and *cultural*. Biologically, there are some obvious external and internal differences, as well as some not so obvious ones, that can influence personality. The unique experiences one has in 'growing up' subsequently manifest themselves along psychological dimensions that also help to provide each individual with a different personality. Finally, each of us is born into a specific socio-cultural milieu which will also help to mould personality.

The above-mentioned three factors are interrelated to such an extent that it is difficult to assess the specific influence each one has in helping to shape a given personality. An example of this complex relationship would be one of sex differences: sex is biological and in our society boys are raised in a very different fashion from girls. We might expect, then, that, on the average, the personality profile of males will differ from that of females. Whether such differences exist in the personality profiles of male and female MBA candidates has, to the best of our knowledge, never been investigated before.

#### THE CALIFORNIA PSYCHOLOGICAL INVENTORY TEST

The California Psychological Inventory Test (CPI)<sup>1</sup> is one of the tests most frequently used by psychologists to measure personality traits. An objective test incorporating some 480 true and false items, the CPI was designed to measure eighteen personality characteristics common in everyday, normal living. Unlike many other personality tests, it focuses on the positive and favourable aspects of personality rather than on measuring abnormalities. Table I indicates which traits are measured by the CPI. To determine whether personality differences do exist, the CPI was recently administered to matched samples of thirty male and female MBA candidates studying full time at either McGill or Concordia. The criteria for matching involved age (between 22 and 27), language (English mother tongue), birthplace (North America) and family income (less accurately measured but apparently between \$15,000 and \$20,000 a year).<sup>2</sup>

#### WHEN DOES A DIFFERENCE REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

In studies of this type, a standard statistical test (the student's t-test) is customarily used to measure the importance of any apparent differences in the average scores obtained by two or more groups along each of the eighteen dimensions. The test reveals 'significant' differences but only after we have indicated beforehand the standard of significance to be employed. For example, social scientists customarily want differences to be significant at the .05 or, better still, the .01 level. In other words, they would consider the observed difference to be 'significant' when there are only five chances out of a hundred (.05) or even one chance out of a hundred (.01) that the two groups in question were not 'truly different' along the dimension being mentioned.<sup>3</sup> Would that management would be that certain before making a decision or choosing between alternatives!

#### WHAT 'SIGNIFICANT' DIFFERENCES WERE DISCOVERED?

Both the average scores obtained by the matched sample of male and female MBA students along the eighteen dimensions studied and the results of applying a t-test to the difference in these scores are summarized in the four columns of Table I. The first conclusion one draws is that the similarities between the two groups are far more pronounced than the differences. At the .05 level, the two groups were 'significantly different' only in capacity for status (#2); socialization (#8); tolerance (#10); achievement via independence (#14); and femininity (#18). At the .01 level, the still more demanding measure of significance, the two groups are 'significantly different' only as far as socialization (#8) and femininity (#18) are concerned.

The summary table also reveals that in all the differences judged to be statistically significant, as well as along most other dimensions, the female respondents obtained *higher scores* than their male counterparts! This is an interesting result when one remembers that the higher the score along each dimension, the more positive the characteristics associated with that trait. For example, a statistically significant difference in favour of the female respondents in socialization (#8) suggests that these potential female executives are appreciably more serious, honest, industrious, conscientious, responsible, etc., than their male counterparts. These female MBA candidates also obtained femininity scores significantly higher than that of their male counterparts (a not too surprising and perhaps reassuring result) but also femininity scores that were considerably above that of the female college-student norm. Feminine qualities are thus possessed in full measure by these prospective executives. That these female MBA candidates obtained higher scores along most other dimensions of the CPI than do female college students generally suggests an element of effective self-selection among women applying to MBA programs.

TABLE I — Results  
MBA STUDENTS  
MALE (30 STUDENTS)  
FEMALES (30 STUDENTS)

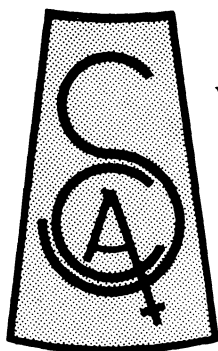
Personality "TRAITS"	MEAN		.05 = (95%)	.01 = (99%)
	Males	Females		
1. Dominance	31.80	31.40	Significant difference	
2. Capacity for Status	19.76	21.80		
3. Sociability	27.03	26.60		
4. Social Presence	39.43	41.03		
5. Self-Acceptance	23.80	23.83		
6. Sense of Well-being	35.57	36.23	Significant difference	Significant difference
7. Responsibility	27.63	29.13		
8. Socialization	35.63	38.97		
9. Self-Control	25.37	26.63	Significant difference	
10. Tolerance	21.13	23.33		
11. Good Impression	15.73	16.70	Significant difference	
12. Communality	24.87	25.07		
13. Ach. via Conformance	27.37	27.90		
14. Ach. via Independence	20.30	22.00	Significant difference	
15. Intellectual Efficiency	38.93	40.97		
16. Psychological-Mindedness	12.53	12.20		
17. Flexibility	10.67	12.03		
18. Femininity	15.37	20.80	Significant difference (5 Traits)	Significant difference (2 Traits)

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The study discussed above was conducted with relatively small samples at one point in time. Its repetition at other institutions and the use of other measurement instruments to see if consistent results are found are obviously in order. Nevertheless, and until contrary findings are reported, one must conclude that there are only minor differences in the personality traits exhibited by male and female MBA candidates. Indeed, the results suggest that female candidates may differ only in having a considerably greater amount of certain desirable attributes! We are not suggesting, of course, that female MBA candidates should automatically be considered as possessing more executive potential than their male counterparts. All that we ask is that corporate executives,

because of their own social conditioning, not expect males to have a monopoly on the traits required for top management. As for the belief that women have different personalities that disqualify them for responsible executive positions, let's just dismiss that myth as an 'old husband's tale'.

- 1 Readers interested in a more technical description of this psychological test are referred to the CPI brochure, held in most university libraries.
- 2 Copies of the original thesis can be obtained by writing Dean Stanley J. Shapiro, Faculty of Management, 1001 Sherbrooke St West, Montreal, Quebec, H3A 1G5.
- 3 Readers are referred to any introductory statistics text for an explanation of the student's t-test.



**NETWORK OF SASKATCHEWAN WOMEN** is published bi-monthly by the Saskatchewan Action Committee, Status of Women to provide communications between the members of

the society, and to provide the general public with an awareness of the group's activities and philosophy. Subscription includes membership.

Fees per year, from date of acceptance: Individual, \$2, Institution, \$10. Letters and articles welcome. Send to Editor, Ruth Griffiths, 17-24 St. E., Prince Albert, Sask. S6V 1R3.

# Northern Woman Journal

Published 6 times a year

Available from 316 Bay Street, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B 1S1