

# EFFECTS OF GENDER ROLE ON PERSONAL RESOURCES AND COPING WITH STRESS

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## Abstract

**Objectives:** This current study investigates the relationship between the endorsement of masculine and feminine gender role orientation in accordance with Bem's indices and both personal resources and coping with stress. **Materials and Methods:** The Bem Sex Role Inventory, the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations, the Satisfaction with Life Scale, the Life Orientation Scale-Revised, the General Self-Efficacy Scale and the Personal Competence Scale were completed by 308 employees of a city transport company (123 females and 185 males). **Results:** Results reveal that androgynous individuals, masculine women and masculine men, possess stronger psychological resources compared with undifferentiated and feminine individuals. Moreover, satisfaction with life, femininity, the sense of personal competence and optimism are significant predictors of coping (in descending order of influence). Masculinity is a significant positive predictor only in problem-oriented coping. **Conclusions:** These findings may have implications for the conservation of personal resources as well as for stress management interventions.

## Key words:

Gender role orientation, Life satisfaction, Dispositional optimism, Personal competence, Coping with stress

## INTRODUCTION

In the coping literature there is evidence that men are more likely to use problem-focused coping, whereas women are more likely to apply emotion-focused coping [1,2]. On the other hand, according to Lazarus [3], there are no stable sex differences in coping styles. Little research has been conducted on gender role orientation described by Bem and its influence on the choice of coping with stress and the possible mediating effects of personal resources defined as subjective, inner assets facilitating coping and adaptation processes. The present study was designed to fill up this gap. In 1974 Bem challenged the traditional bipolar model of Masculinity-Femininity by suggesting that individuals

simultaneously endorse both characteristics. According to this theory sex-typed, gender schematic women and men have developed a strong role identification that has guided them to develop and display the diverse traits and behaviours expected of their gender according to their society's expectations. Moreover, gender serves as an organizing principle for masculine men and feminine women that they use in processing information about themselves and the external world. Non-sex-typed women and men, described as gender aschematic, are relatively immune to the influences of gender stereotypes with respect to themselves and to others [4,5].

The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) was designed to estimate people's degree of sex-typing. Men and women

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at the middle of the bipolar distribution, those with approximately equal scores on the Masculinity and Femininity scales, are identified as non-sex-typed or gender aschematic. This category includes both androgynous individuals (high scores on both scales) and undifferentiated individuals (low scores on both scales). Those with unequal scores, with the imbalance displayed in the stereotypic direction (masculine men, feminine women), are identified as sex-typed or gender schematic. Eventually, men and women with unequal scores in the counter stereotypic direction are identified as cross-sex-typed (masculine women, feminine men).

In regard to coping with stress, the classification proposed by Endler and Parker [6] was applied. Originally, these authors developed the Multidimensional Coping Inventory (MCI), and after a series of factor analyses, Endler and Parker revised the technique and renamed it as the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS).

The CISS is comprised of three subscales assessing task-oriented coping, emotion-oriented coping, and avoidance-oriented coping. The last style is considered to form two dimensions: avoidance by distraction and avoidance by social diversion. Task-oriented coping is associated with problem resolution or amelioration, whereas emotion- and avoidance-oriented coping may exacerbate the problematic situation, by focusing on one's emotional state or by avoiding or attempting to escape such a situation.

Endler and Parker conceptualized coping in terms of a style rather than a strategy or a process. They defined coping as conscious reactions and behaviours that one is likely to utilize to reduce the impact of a difficult or stressful situation. If there is any agreement in the coping literature, it is primarily about the distinction between emotion-oriented and problem-oriented coping styles. This literature identifies problem-oriented coping as that which refers to a task-orientation, on the other hand, emotion-oriented coping as that which refers to a person-orientation. Avoidances styles may also include either a person-orientation

(e.g. social diversion), and a task-orientation (e.g. distraction) as well [6].

How people generally appraise their ability to cope with difficult situations is affected by many variables, including personal resources. Shmotkin, Lomranz, Eyal and Zemach [7] distinguished two kinds of personal resources: a) socioeconomic, related to one's education, occupation, income etc., and b) psychological, related to subjective, inner assets and capabilities that are often applied to fundamental personality characteristics. The indicators of psychological resources included in this research are as follows:

1. A global assessment of a person's quality of life according to one's chosen criteria (how people are satisfied with their present state, the life satisfaction),
2. Dispositional optimism as a generalized expectancy for good versus bad outcomes in accordance with Scheier and Carver's indices [8]. They have proposed an expectancy-based theory of behavioural self-regulation which claims that expectations of successful consequences cause people to sustain their efforts even in the face of obstacles. In contrast, if people's expectancies are sufficiently unfavourable, they will tend to reduce their efforts and disengage themselves from attaining their goals, especially in the face of impediments [9].
3. General self-efficacy referring to global confidence in one's coping ability across a wide range of demanding or novel situations. It aims at a broad and stable sense of personal competence to deal effectively with stressful situations [10].
4. Personal competence as a "can do" cognition mirrors a sense of control over one's environment. According to Bandura [11], there are four major sources for influencing personal competence that vary in strength and importance. First is personal accomplishment or mastery, when a success is attributed internally and can be repeated. A second source is vicarious experience.

As far as a person similar to the individual successfully overcomes a difficult situation, social comparison can enhance self-efficacy beliefs. Third is a symbolic experience through verbal persuasion by others and the last source of influence is emotional arousal, experienced by a person in a threatening situation.

## OBJECTIVES

The present study aimed at testing the effects of gender role orientation on the choice of coping with stress and the possible mediating effects of psychological resources. Certain research findings have contended that gender related differences in coping could be an important consequence of gender linked socialization experiences, with most women socialized to deal with stressful situations differently than men. For example, Brems and Johnson [1], Carver, Scheier and Weintraub [12], found that men preferred more problem-focused coping, on the other hand women more often chose emotion-focused strategies such as venting and focusing on emotion, and seeking social support.

Other research has reported data inconsistent with the "socialization hypothesis". Folkman and Lazarus [13] did not observe gender differences in emotion-oriented coping. Furthermore, men declared more use of emotion-focused coping than women utilizing such strategies as denial [1]. In addition, several studies revealed more problem-oriented coping among women than men [14,15]. Results presented above were the basis for the formulation of the conclusion that coping strategies should not be assessed without considering the meaning and significance of the specific situation for men and for women. Thus, gender role orientation have seemed to become an important organizing principle in processing information and coping with stress.

Referring to gender identity and psychological resources, Bem [4,5] claimed that androgynous persons to compare with sex-typed individuals displayed greater sex role

flexibility, had higher self-esteem and functioned more effectively at home and at work. In more recent studies purporting to support Bem's assertions, androgyny has associated with more satisfaction with life [16], subjective feelings of well-being [17], high self-esteem [18], achievement motivation [19], and dispositional optimism [20].

Therefore, it has been assumed that:

1. Masculinity is positively associated with problem-oriented coping and negatively related to emotion-oriented coping.
2. Femininity is negatively associated with problem-oriented coping and positively related to emotion-oriented coping.
3. Androgynous individuals more often display problem-oriented coping.
4. Masculine women more often display problem-oriented coping and feminine women more often display emotion-oriented coping.
5. Masculine men more often display problem-oriented coping and feminine men more often display emotion-oriented coping.
6. Androgynous individuals are characterized by life satisfaction, dispositional optimism, self-efficacy and personal competence.
7. Masculine women and masculine men are characterized by life satisfaction, dispositional optimism, self-efficacy and personal competence.
8. Masculinity and femininity are predictors of problem-oriented coping.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Participants

The sample of 308 employees of the city transport company (123 females and 185 males) participated in the research. Females ranged in age from 24 to 58 years, with a mean age of 43.11 years. Males ranged in age from 26 to 59 years, with a mean age of 46.52 years. The average period

of employment on the job position amounted to 11 years (for women) and 19 years (for men). Most of participants (77.3%) were married (90.81% of men and 56.91% of women). A majority of women had a secondary (64.23%) and higher education (29.27%). As for men, a straight majority comprised persons with an occupational (60%) and secondary (24.32%) education.

### Measures

The degree of sex-typing was estimated by the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI, 4) in Polish adaptation and the psychometric study by Kuczyńska [21]. The BSRI consists of 15 adjectives describing masculinity characteristics, 15 adjectives describing feminine personality characteristics, and 5 adjectives describing neutral characteristics. It results in two separate scores, a masculine score and a feminine score. The BSRI is a paper-and-pencil self-report instrument that asks the respondent to indicate on a 5-point scale the degree to which each characteristics is “true of them”. Kuder-Richardson’s coefficient ranged from 0.78 (for the Masculinity scale) to 0.79 (for the Femininity scale).

Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS) by Endler and Parker [6] is a self-report measure that asks respondents to indicate how much they engage in various coping activities during stressful situation using a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 — Not at all to 5 — Very much). The Polish adaptation of CISS has been shown to have good psychometric properties. Coefficient *Alpha* (N = 252) for four coping scales ranged from 0.73 (for Distraction) to 0.88 (for Emotion-Oriented coping) [22].

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin [23] was used to assess the global life satisfaction. The SWLS is comprised of statements with which respondents may agree or disagree. It was shown that the SWLS has desirable psychometric properties (Coefficient alpha equals: 0.81) [24].

The personality disposition of optimism versus pessimism was estimated by the Life Orientation Scale — Revised by Scheier, Carver and Bridges [25]. This is a 10-item self-report scale. Response choices range from 0 (I strongly disagree) to 4 (I strongly agree). Alpha reliability was 0.76. The German version of the General Self-Efficacy Scale was originally developed by Jerusalem and Schwarzer in 1979. This instrument contained 20 items. It was reduced in 1981 to 10 items and subsequently adapted to 28 languages, including Polish (the Polish adaptation by Juczynski [24]). The GSES is a paper-and-pencil self-report instrument that asks the respondents to indicate on a 4-point scale the degree to which each characteristic is “true of them”. Internal consistencies *Alpha* coefficient yielded 0.85.

The Personal Competence Scale is a 12-item self-report instrument that asks the respondent to indicate on a 4-point scale the frequency of one’s behaviours that can appear in two general types of situations. Internal consistencies *Alpha* coefficient amounted to 0.72 [26].

## RESULTS

### Gender role orientation and coping with stress

The Pearson product-moment correlations were computed to determine the degree of association between masculinity, femininity and coping. The results are presented in Table 1.

As anticipated, masculinity was positively, with a moderate effect size ( $r = 0.34$ ) associated with problem-oriented coping and negatively related to emotion-focused coping ( $r = -0.18$ ), (hypothesis 1 was confirmed). Besides, masculinity was correlated with social diversion ( $r = 0.15$ ). The last two correlation coefficients suggested rather weak relationships between masculinity and emotion-oriented coping or social diversion. Similarly, there were weak but significant relationships between femininity and social diversion ( $r = 0.19$ ) and

**Table 1.** Correlations between coping and masculinity, femininity (N = 308)

Coping	Masculinity	Femininity
Problem	0.34***	0.27***
Emotion	-0.18**	0.09
Distraction	0.02	-0.08
Social diversion	0.15**	0.19**

\*P < 0.05; \*\* P < 0.01; \*\*\*P < 0.001.

in contrast to the previous assumption — problem-oriented coping ( $r = 0.27$ ), (hypothesis 2 was not confirmed).

To explore further the impact of gender role orientation on coping with stress, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was used. These analyses were made

separately for males and females. The scores allocated to verify hypotheses 3–5 are presented in Tables 2–4. Participants were classified as androgynous (N = 115), sex-typed (N = 66), cross-sex-typed (N = 48), and undifferentiated (N = 79) based on their results on the masculine and feminine dimensions of the BSRI.

The one-way ANOVA indicated that the groups mentioned above differed significantly on their levels of display of problem-oriented coping [ $F(3,304) = 10.9$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ], emotion-oriented coping [ $F(3,304) = 4.5$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ], and social diversion [ $F(3,304) = 2.93$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ]. Post-hoc comparisons using the RIR Tukey revealed that androgynous individuals more often displayed problem-oriented coping (M = 59.5) compared with sex-typed (M = 57.2), cross-sex-typed (M = 57.0) or undifferentiated individuals (M = 53.5), (hypothesis 3 was confirmed).

**Table 2.** Sex-typing and coping (N = 308)

Coping	Androgyny (N = 115)		Sex-typed (N = 66)		Cross-sex-typed (N = 48)		Undifferentiated (N = 79)		F(3,304)
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Problem	59.5	6.9	57.2	7.5	57.0	8.2	53.5	6.2	10.9***
Emotion	41.5	8.7	46.3	9.1	42.6	9.6	42.6	6.8	4.5**
Distraction	23.8	6.5	23.1	5.7	24.1	7.3	24.7	5.8	0.83
Social diversion	19.11	3.7	18.3	3.3	17.9	3.8	17.7	3.1	2.93*

\*P < 0.05; \*\* P < 0.01; \*\*\*P < 0.001.

M — mean.

SD — standard deviation.

**Table 3.** Sex-typing and coping (women, N = 123)

Coping	Androgyny (N = 46)		Feminine women (N = 54)		Masculine women (N = 9)		Undifferentiated (N = 14)		F(3,119)
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Problem	61.5	6.3	57.8	7.4	64.7	5.9	55.8	7.11	5.4***
Emotion	42.0	8.1	47.3	9.4	38.0	8.3	44.0	8.4	4.8**
Distraction	24.1	5.7	23.0	6.0	23.9	6.9	23.4	5.4	0.3
Social diversion	19.8	3.8	18.6	3.4	18.8	4.8	18.4	3.9	0.9

\*P < 0.05; \*\* P < 0.01; \*\*\*P < 0.001.

Abbreviations as in Table 2.

**Table 4.** Sex-typing and coping (men, N = 185)

Coping	Androgyny (N = 69)		Masculine men (N = 12)		Feminine men (N = 39)		Undifferentiated (N = 65)		F(3,181)
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Problem	58.1	7.1	54.4	7.8	55.3	7.6	53.1	5.9	6.2***
Emotion	41.1	9.2	41.6	6.7	43.6	9.6	42.3	6.4	0.8
Distraction	23.6	7.0	23.1	4.4	24.1	7.5	24.9	5.9	0.6
Social diversion	18.7	3.6	16.8	2.1	17.8	3.5	17.6	2.9	2.0

\*P < 0.05; \*\* P < 0.01; \*\*\*P < 0.001.2.1

Abbreviations as in Table 2.

The one-way ANOVA was also applied to estimate the effect of biological sex. Scores demonstrated that females (androgynous, sex-typed, cross-sex-typed and undifferentiated) differed significantly on their display of problem-oriented coping [ $F(3,119) = 5.4, P < 0.001$ ], and emotion-oriented coping [ $F(3,119) = 4.8, P < 0.01$ ]. Masculine women more often displayed problem-oriented coping ( $M = 64.7$ ) and feminine women more often displayed emotion-oriented coping ( $M = 47.3$ ), (hypothesis 4 was confirmed). The feminine sex-typed persons and masculine sex-typed ones were nearly comparable as far as their preferences of distraction and social diversion were concerned.

In turn, the results of the one-way ANOVA showed that males (androgynous, sex-typed, cross-sex-typed and undifferentiated) differed significantly only on their levels of display of problem-oriented coping [ $F(3,181) = 6.2, P < 0.001$ ]. Androgynous men more often displayed problem-oriented coping ( $M = 58.1$ ) than masculine men as it was assumed ( $M = 54.4$ ). Feminine men more often displayed emotion-oriented coping ( $M = 43.6$ ), but this difference was not statistically significant [ $F(3,181) = 0.8, P > 0.05$ ], (hypothesis 5 was not confirmed).

#### Gender role orientation and psychological resources

An identical procedure was used to examine the influence of gender role orientation on psychological

resources. These analyses were also calculated separately for males and females and the results are presented in Tables 5–7.

The one-way ANOVA revealed that androgynous individuals, sex-typed individuals, cross-sex-typed individuals, and undifferentiated individuals differed significantly on their levels of life satisfaction [ $F(3,304) = 3.1, P < 0.05$ ], optimism [ $F(3,304) = 21.8, P < 0.001$ ], self-efficacy [ $F(3,304) = 7.1, P < 0.001$ ] and personal competence [ $F(3,304) = 3.8, P < 0.01$ ]. Post-hoc comparisons using the RIR Tukey indicated that androgynous individuals to compare with other gender types (especially with sex-typed persons) were characterized by the highest life satisfaction ( $M = 20.6$ ), dispositional optimism ( $M = 16.4$ ), self-efficacy ( $M = 32.3$ ) and personal competence ( $M = 38.6$ ), (hypothesis 6 was confirmed).

In contrast to the previous assumption, not masculine women but androgynous women scored higher than feminine and undifferentiated women on life satisfaction ( $M = 20.0$ ), dispositional optimism ( $M = 17.0$ ), self-efficacy ( $M = 32.2$ ), but lower on personal competence ( $M = 37.8$ ). That were just masculine women who reported the highest level of personal competence ( $M = 40.3$ ) and the degree of self-efficacy comparable with androgynous women ( $M = 32.1$ ) (see Table 6).

Considering the effect of gender role on psychological resources among men, the one-way ANOVA demonstrated

**Table 5.** Sex-typing and psychological resources (N = 308)

Resources	Androgyny (N = 115)		Sex-typed (N = 66)		Cross-sex-typed (N = 48)		Undifferentiated (N = 79)		F(3,304)
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Life satisfaction	20.6	5.6	18.4	5.1	18.9	5.3	19.0	5.1	3.1*
Optimism	16.4	3.8	14.8	3.9	15.7	3.2	14.9	2.9	21.8***
Self-efficacy	32.3	3.2	29.1	2.8	29.8	3.6	29.4	3.1	7.1***
Personal competence	38.6	4.5	36.5	4.3	37.4	4.1	35.9	3.3	3.8**

\*P < 0.05; \*\* P < 0.01; \*\*\*P < 0.001.

Abbreviations as in Table 2.

**Table 6.** Sex-typing and psychological resources (women, N = 123)

Resources	Androgyny (N = 46)		Feminine women (N = 54)		Masculine women (N = 9)		Undifferentiated (N = 14)		F(3,119)
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Life satisfaction	20.0	5.8	17.6	4.9	16.5	4.9	16.4	5.1	2.8*
Optimism	17.0	4.1	14.4	3.9	16.1	3.1	14.0	3.4	12.7***
Self-efficacy	32.2	2.8	28.7	2.9	32.1	2.5	29.6	4.0	2.8*
Personal competence	37.8	4.7	36.3	4.5	40.3	3.3	36.0	3.9	4.4**

\*P < 0.05; \*\* P < 0.01; \*\*\*P < 0.001.

Abbreviations as in Table 2.

**Table 7.** Sex-typing and psychological resources (men, N = 185)

Resources	Androgyny (N = 69)		Masculine men (N = 12)		Feminine men (N = 39)		Undifferentiated (N = 65)		F(3,181)
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Life satisfaction	21.0	5.5	21.7	4.5	19.6	5.3	19.6	5.0	1.4
Optimism	15.9	3.5	16.7	3.3	15.6	3.3	15.1	2.8	13.1***
Self-efficacy	32.4	3.4	30.6	1.5	29.3	3.6	29.3	2.9	7.8***
Personal competence	39.0	4.3	37.5	3.5	36.7	4.0	35.9	3.2	1.2

\*P < 0.05; \*\* P < 0.01; \*\*\*P < 0.001.

Abbreviations as in Table 2.

that androgynous men were characterized by high level of self-efficacy (M = 32.4) and personal competence (M = 39.0), in turn masculine men scored higher than other types of gender on life satisfaction (M = 21.7) and optimism (M = 16.7), (hypothesis 7 was confirmed in part only).

### Gender role orientation, psychological resources and coping with stress

Stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the extent to which gender role and psychological resources contributed to styles of coping (see Tables 8–11).

**Table 8.** Gender role, psychological resources and problem-oriented coping — stepwise multiple regression (N = 308)

Problem-focused coping	Beta	B	Std. Error B	Part Correlations	t(302)
Personal competence	0.28	0.49	0.09	0.28	5.08***
Femininity	0.18	0.19	0.06	0.19	3.36***
Optimism	0.21	0.44	0.11	0.22	3.92***
Masculinity	0.16	0.14	0.05	0.16	2.84**
Life satisfaction	-0.13	-0.18	0.07	-0.15	-2.55*

R square = 0.29 F(5,302) = 24.23\*\*\*

Std. Error of Estimate = 6.32.

\*P < 0.05; \*\* P < 0.01; \*\*\*P < 0.001.

B — unstandardized coefficient.

Beta — standardized coefficient.

**Table 9.** Gender role, psychological resources and emotion-oriented coping — stepwise multiple regression (N = 308)

Emotion-focused coping	Beta	B	Std. Error B	Part Correlations	t(302)
Optimism	-0.20	-0.48	0.13	-0.20	-3.57***
Self-Efficacy	-0.18	-0.46	0.15	-0.18	-3.12**
Femininity	0.18	0.23	0.06	0.20	3.56***
Life satisfaction	-0.17	-0.27	0.08	-0.18	-3.17**
Personal competence	-0.17	-0.34	0.12	-0.16	-2.89**

R square = 0.25 F(5,302) = 20.21\*\*\*

Std. Error of Estimate = 7.55.

Abbreviations as in Table 8.

**Table 10.** Gender role, psychological resources and distraction (avoidance-oriented coping) — stepwise multiple regression (N = 308)

Distraction	Beta	B	Std. Error B	Part Correlations	t(303)
Personal competence	-0.21	-0.32	0.09	-0.20	-3.57***
Life satisfaction	0.12	0.14	0.07	0.12	2.03*
Masculinity	0.10	0.08	0.05	0.09	1.61
Femininity	-0.09	-0.08	0.06	-0.08	-1.54

R square = 0.06 F(4,303) = 4.58\*\*

Std. Error of Estimate = 6.16.

Abbreviations as in Table 8.

Personal competence, femininity, optimism, masculinity and life satisfaction accounted for 29% of the variance in problem-oriented coping [F(5,302) = 24.23, P < 0.001]. As it was assumed, femininity (0.19) and

masculinity (0.16) were predictors of task orientation, but the most important variables were personal competence (0.28) and optimism (0.22), (hypothesis 8 was confirmed).

**Table 11.** Gender role, psychological resources and social diversion (avoidance-oriented coping) — stepwise multiple regression (N = 308)

Social diversion	Beta	B	Std. Error B	Part Correlations	t(304)
Femininity	0.17	0.09	0.03	0.16	2.86**
Life satisfaction	0.15	0.09	0.04	0.15	2.67**
Masculinity	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.06	1.01

R square = 0.07  $F(3,304) = 7.34^{**}$

Std. Error of Estimate = 3.42.

Abbreviations as in Table 8.

Optimism, femininity, self-efficacy, life satisfaction and personal competence accounted for 25% of the variance in emotion-oriented coping [ $F(5,302) = 20.21$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ]. Furthermore, personal competence and life satisfaction were significant predictor variables of distraction accounting for only 6% of the variance in the mentioned style [ $F(4,303) = 4.58$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ]. In turn, femininity and life satisfaction accounted for only 7% of the variance in social diversion [ $F(3,304) = 7.34$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ].

All of presented models were significant, but not well fit especially in case of predicting distraction and social diversion. The most popular predictor variables of coping were:

- life satisfaction (social diversion and distraction were associated with high level of life satisfaction in contrast to problem- and emotion-oriented coping),
- femininity (problem-, emotion-oriented coping and social diversion were associated with high level of femininity),
- personal competence (positively associated with problem-oriented coping in contrast to emotion-oriented coping or distraction),
- optimism (positively associated with problem-oriented coping in contrast to emotion-oriented coping).

In addition, masculinity was a significant positive predictor variable only in problem-oriented coping, and self-efficacy was a significant negative predictor variable of emotion-oriented coping.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the present research was to examine gender role differences in the coping patterns and psychological resources of women and men. Although coping styles and strategies have been the focus of considerable studies during the last few years, nevertheless most of them concentrated on biological ways of differentiating between human beings. Gender role and sex role are two terms applied by scientists somewhat interchangeably [27], but in this text the concept of gender role has been used to refer to the specific ways in which a particular society expects about people's behaviours, thoughts and feelings.

The hypotheses that were described above were confirmed in five cases. Masculinity was positively associated with problem-oriented coping and negatively related to emotion-oriented coping. In turn, femininity was also positively correlated with problem-focused coping. This kind of findings supported rather the "role constraint" hypothesis than the "socialization" hypothesis, that masculine and feminine individuals differ in their social roles, which expose them to different kinds of situations and stressors. When the stressors are identical, masculine and feminine persons are anticipated to cope in the same manner [14,28].

The confirmation of the "role constraint" hypothesis can also be found in the second and the third deduction that androgynous persons, especially androgynous men and masculine women more often displayed problem-oriented

coping. Why? Because androgynous persons endorse both warm and forceful self-characteristics, so they would perform well in situations where a variety of assertiveness is appropriate [4,5]. Moreover, masculinity whenever displayed by males or females, has been correlated positively with problem-focused coping and active behavioural coping strategies [29].

Moreover, androgynous individuals represented the strongest psychological resources such as life satisfaction, dispositional optimism, self-efficacy and personal competence that could be the source of preference of problem-focused coping. On the other hand, the task-oriented coping negatively relates to anxiety, depression and psychological distress [30].

Masculine women were also characterized by high level of self-efficacy and personal competence compared with feminine and undifferentiated women, but the lower level of life satisfaction and optimism. One explanation may be that accomplishments of masculine women are likely to enhance their self-esteem, but they can also pay high psychological costs or feel overwhelmed by a number of obligations.

Eventually, significant indicators of coping (in descending order of influence) were satisfaction with life, femininity, the sense of personal competence and optimism. In addition, masculinity was a significant positive predictor only in problem-oriented coping.

Summarizing, data reviewed in this study suggests that understanding one's gender role orientation can assist in understanding many of our perceptions and behaviours. Some people compared with others will rely more on gender role as a primary interpretive lens to evaluate reality. The disparity between sex role and gender role may be taken as evidence that not only biology but also culture determines differences in coping and the role of psychological resources. Therefore, it can be concluded that coping styles or strategies should not be assessed without considering the meaning and significance of the

specific situation for masculine and feminine individuals. Furthermore, investigating the contribution of masculinity, femininity and the selected psychological resources may serve as the essential key to better understanding of the stress dynamics.

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