

PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES ACCORDING TO GENDER¹

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Summary.—This study reports on the gender differences in the responses to 34 questions comprising the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, as recorded by 508 males and 873 females who constituted the American standardization group for the questionnaire. The mean difference on the resulting M-F scale is statistically significant, being 2.28 ± 0.30 for the British sample and 5.21 ± 0.26 for the American sample.

It is widely agreed that men and women differ in personality, although there is less agreement on the *reasons* for these differences (Hutt, 1972; Eysenck & Wilson, 1979; Merz, 1979; Archer & Lloyd, 1985; Feingold, 1994).

In terms of the major dimensions of personality (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985), women have always recorded higher scores than men on *neuroticism*, while men have always recorded higher scores than women on *psychoticism*. Included within these constructs are, of course, the various primary traits the correlations between which give rise to these higher-order factors, e.g., anxiety, guilt, tenseness, low self-esteem, depression, etc., in the case of Neuroticism, aggressiveness, impulsivity, coldness, lack of empathy, and tough-mindedness, in the case of Psychoticism. There is little evidence of gender differences in Extraversion.

METHOD AND RESULTS

The recent American standardization of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire—Revised (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1994) following the British standardization (Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985) enabled us to compare men's and women's responses. The American standardization group consisted of 508 men and 873 women, not by any means a truly random sample, but reasonably similar with respect to age and socioeconomic status to the British sample. We extracted from the norms the 34 questions showing the largest differences between men and women; Table 1 shows the results. (These are all questions on which differences exceeded 10 points.)

Fig. 1 shows the distributions of the scores, and Table 2 the means and standard deviations, alpha reliabilities, and mean item correlations. Also given in Table 2 are the same statistics for the English standardization sample. Fig. 2 shows the distribution for the scores of the English sample, while their item responses are given in Table 1.

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TABLE 1
ITEMS OF THE M-F SCALE, SCORED IN THE DIRECTION OF MASCULINITY WITH PROPORTIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN ANSWERING IN THE KEYED DIRECTION

Item No.	Item No. on EPQR	Item	Keyed Response	American, % (July, 1993)		British, % (March, 1994)		Source
				508 Men	873 Women	408 Men	494 Women	
1	1	Do you have many different hobbies?	Yes	79.5	69.3	57.4	62.3	E
2	3	Does your mood often go up and down?	No	43.3	32.0	42.2	30.0	N
3	4	Have you ever taken the praise for something you knew someone else had really done?	Yes	40.4	27.9	34.6	30.8	L
4	5	Do you take much notice of what people think?	No	27.6	15.8	32.1	26.5	P
5	6	Are you a talkative person?	No	43.9	32.5	51.0	34.2	E
6	8	Do you ever feel "just miserable" for no reason?	No	63.4	35.0	56.1	33.8	N
7	10	Were you ever greedy by helping yourself to more than your share of anything?	Yes	74.4	62.7	69.1	68.1	L
8	13	Do you often worry about things you should not have done or said?	No	26.8	16.6	29.4	19.0	N
9	19	Have you ever blamed someone for doing something you knew was really your fault?	Yes	49.6	38.6	33.6	37.0	L
10	22	Are your feelings easily hurt?	No	63.6	29.7	44.1	27.5	N
11	27	Have you ever taken anything (even a pin or a button) that belonged to someone else?	Yes	82.3	68.3	86.3	78.7	L
12	31	Are you often troubled by feelings of guilt?	No	59.4	48.5	60.0	51.2	N
13	35	Would you call yourself a nervous person?	No	75.0	61.4	72.3	66.0	N
14	37	Do you enjoy practical jokes that can sometimes really hurt people?	Yes	16.1	3.4	12.0	5.3	P
15	38	Are you a worrier?	No	55.1	31.2	51.2	36.0	N
16	43	Do you worry about awful things that might happen?	No	58.1	40.1	63.7	53.8	N
17	46	Would you call yourself tense or "highly strung"?	No	76.2	64.4	73.0	72.5	N
18	49	Do you sometimes boast a little?	Yes	77.6	66.0	71.8	70.0	L
19	65	Have you often felt listless and tired for no apparent reason?	No	40.6	30.5	44.9	37.0	N

(continued on next page)

Note.—Keyed response is the scored response.

TABLE 1 (CONT'D)
 ITEMS OF THE M-F SCALE, SCORED IN THE DIRECTION OF MASCULINITY WITH PROPORTIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN ANSWERING IN THE KEYED DIRECTION

Item No.	Item No. on EPQR	Item	Keyed Response	American, % (July, 1993)		British, % (March, 1994)		Source
				508 Men	873 Women	408 Men	494 Women	
20	66	Have you ever cheated at a game?	Yes	79.5	61.5	59.8	61.4	L
21	67	Do you like doing things in which you have to act quickly?	Yes	72.6	51.3	58.1	58.1	E
22	69	Do you often make decisions on the spur of the moment?	Yes	68.5	55.4	54.9	60.1	E
23	71	Have you ever taken advantage of someone?	Yes	65.7	51.5	60.0	53.2	L
24	76	Have you ever wished that you were dead?	No	66.5	50.4	65.0	60.5	N
25	77	Would you dodge paying taxes if you were sure you could never be found out?	Yes	55.5	42.5	65.2	59.3	L
26	80	Do you worry too long after an embarrassing experience?	No	53.5	30.7	46.3	37.2	N
27	83	Do you suffer from "nerves"?	No	73.8	58.0	68.6	66.4	N
28	84	Do you often feel lonely?	No	66.5	53.7	68.1	70.4	N
29	87	Are you easily hurt when people find fault with you or the work you do?	No	58.7	27.5	44.1	26.7	N
30	91	Would you like other people to be afraid of you?	Yes	21.3	8.0	13.5	6.3	P
31	92	Are you sometimes bubbling over with energy and sometimes very sluggish?	No	26.2	14.8	35.0	19.8	N
32	94	Do other people think of you as being very lively?	No	39.4	26.8	52.2	40.7	E
33	103	Do people who drive carefully annoy you?	Yes	34.4	23.3	22.3	16.6	P
34	106	Do you sometimes like teasing animals?	Yes	34.4	18.3	21.1	14.2	P

Note.—Keyed response is the scored response.

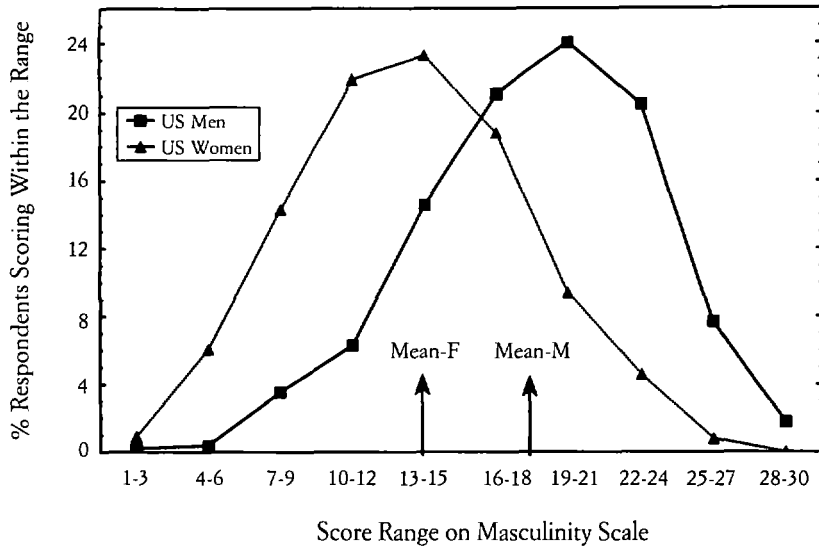


FIG. 1. Distribution of the M-F Scale for American men and women ($n_s=508$ and 873 , respectively)

Rather unexpectedly the American men have a higher mean score on the masculinity scale than those from Great Britain, and the American women a lower score, making the difference between male and female scores much higher for the American than the British sample ($p < .001$), being now less than $.5 SD$ (cf. Table 2). It is difficult to account for this difference. One possibility is that the two samples differ in age—the American men were 13 years younger than the British men and the American women 5

TABLE 2
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS, α , AND MEAN ITEM CORRELATIONS
BY COUNTRY AND GENDER FOR M-F SCALE

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	Mean Item <i>r</i>
British					
Men	408	17.19	4.7	0.69	0.22
Women	494	14.91	4.3	0.64	0.18
American					
Men	508	18.69	4.6	0.68	0.22
Women	873	13.48	4.7	0.70	0.23

years younger than the British women. Another possibility is that the British men and women differ on items on which the American men and women do not differ and which, therefore, are not included in the masculinity scale.

We attempted to study these possibilities by counting the total number of items showing differences of 10 points or more in the British sample. That number was 21, compared with the 34 items in the American sample producing such a difference; clearly there are not anything like as many differentiating items in the British sample as in the American sample. No British items which are *not* part of the M-F Scale as the keyed 'Yes-No' responses yielded score differences of 10 or more.

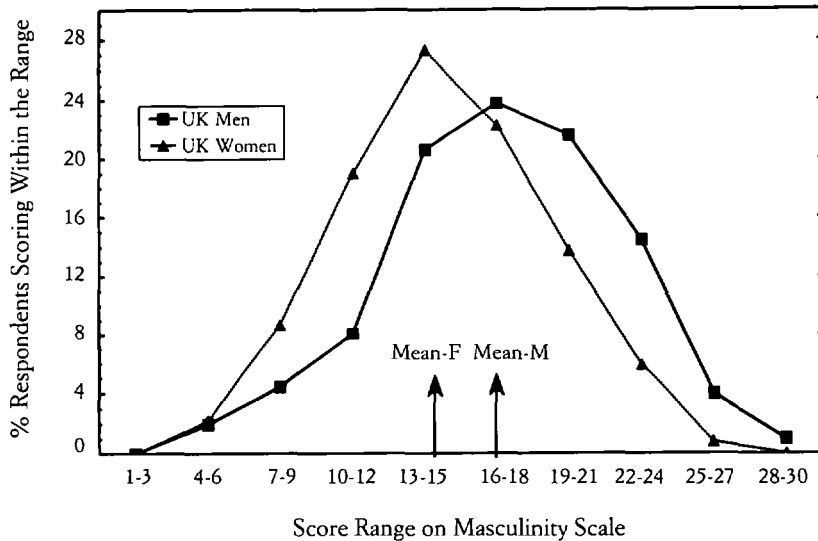


FIG. 2. Distribution of the M-F Scale for British men and women ($n_s=408$ and 494, respectively)

We then created a British sample equal in age distribution with the American sample by dropping randomly scores of superfluous men and women. This raised the number of differentiating items slightly (from 21 to 24) but still left the British sample roughly one-third below the American sample for number of differentiating items. This leaves only the nationality of the two samples as the likely causal agency for the observed differences. Only a replication of the study is likely to give an acceptable explanation of this puzzling observation.

It may be worth noting that the observed differences between men and women are unlikely to be due to response set, as the keyed Yes-No responses in the M-F scale are nearly equal (15 vs 19). What does the M-F scale measure psychologically? Five items come from the Psychoticism scale, 5 from the Extraversion scale, 16 from the Neuroticism scale, and 8 from

the Lie (Conformity) scale. Thus, predominantly women are more anxious and conforming and less independent and assertive. This agrees with previous generalizations (Eysenck & Wilson, 1979; Feingold, 1994). The scales from which the 34 items of the M-F scale were taken are indicated in Table 1.

TABLE 3
COMPARISONS OF MEAN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN ON M-F SCALE

Comparisons	$M_{\text{Diff.}}$	$SD_{\text{Diff.}}$	t_{calc}	df
American Men vs American Women	5.21	0.26	20.02	1379
British Men vs British Women	2.28	0.30	7.599	900
British Men vs American Men	-1.50	0.31	4.858	914
British Women vs American Women	1.43	0.25	5.709	1101.53*

*Because the variances were adjusted statistically differently from one another (F -ratio test), the heterogeneous "pooled" variance and the Welch-Satterthwaite solution for the degrees of freedom was used (which yields noninteger values).

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