
MASCULINITY/FEMININITY AS A GENDER CHARACTERISTIC IN THE PREDICTION OF VARIOUS PERSONALITY DEPENDENCES

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Submitted on 23 March 2024

Accepted on 22 May 2024

10.13165/SD-24-22-1-07

Abstract

This article examines the results of research on the relationship between the tendency towards various addictions and masculinity/femininity as gender characteristics of the individual. The sample includes 49 respondents aged 17–20, including 24 females and 25 males.

The strength and content of the propensity for various addictions was measured using the methodology developed by Lozovaja (2007). Masculinity/femininity, as a gender characteristic of an individual, was diagnosed according to the masculinity-femininity test (Bem, 2004). Special attention was paid to the specificity of Internet addiction, which was additionally measured using the method for screening diagnostics of computer addiction (Yuryeva & Bolbot, 2006) and the Internet addiction test (Young & De Abreu, 2010).

The results of the correlation analysis show that for the specified sample, the degree of expressiveness of the androgyny, masculinity and femininity of the individual is related to the strength and content of the tendency towards both specific and general addictions. It is proven that respondents' general tendency towards a number of addictions (alcohol, tobacco, narcotics, love) shows a significant negative correlation with femininity. At the same time,

sexual, food, religious, medicinal and healthy lifestyle addictions show significant positive correlations with femininity. Addiction to a healthy lifestyle is positively correlated with, while sexual addiction is negatively correlated with masculinity. The study proves that among the sample participants, the general tendency towards addictions has a significant correlation with the tendency towards computer addiction.

Keywords: gender; masculinity/femininity; sex; tendency towards addiction.

Introduction

In modern psychology, the trend of deconstructing the concept of gender is relevant. Today, the position of gender as a basic scientific category dominates, contrary to the concept of sex, which has become insufficient for explaining all aspects of identity. Modern researchers began to use the term *gender* because it became insufficient to talk only about biological features in modern society (Ivanova & Karch, 2020; Karpenko, 2011; Senenko, 2005; Lysenko, 2015; Herring, 2020; and others). Modern psychology focuses on deconstructing the consideration of male and female as fixed categories, and instead on understanding sex through gender – that is, as a socio-cultural construct (Karpenko, 2011; Tinin, 2023; Shlianchak et al., 2023; and others).

In the modern world, the gender role approach is receding, according to which, due to the biological component, the male function is defined as instrumental, while the female function is defined as expressive. The modern idea of what it means to be a woman or a man changes depending on the context. At this stage, within the framework of the social-constructivist paradigm, it is not enough to be limited to the framework of feminine and masculine as natural and unchanging. Instead, the concept of gender as such, which is formed as a result of long-term, constantly reproduced interactions between people, is more comprehensive (Oksamitna, 2004; Stepanova, 2017; Buganova, 2023).

The analysis of primary sources compels us to consider gender identity as a multi-component construct that combines the influence of current external socio-cultural conditions and factors with certain biological characteristics. The implementation of gender equality and the acceleration of the processes of the feminization of men and the masculinization of women throughout the world expand the field for the in-depth study of various aspects of gender psychology.

In modern psychology, the essence and nature of the concept of gender and the regularities of its formation have been studied in detail, and a typology of signs of masculinity/femininity has been developed (Govorun et al., 2013; Senenko, 2005; Lysenko, 2015; Zinchenko, 2016). At the same time, to date there are an insufficient number of studies in which the gender aspect of susceptibility to various addictions is presented. Articles analysing the gender role or age perspective of certain addictions prevail, mostly in the virtual space (Bogatyrchuk, 2020; Vasyuk, 2020; Vityuk & Nikyforuk, 2023).

All of the above makes it possible to formulate the **research problem** addressed in this

paper: on the basis of a constructivist approach, this study seeks the theoretical justification and empirical confirmation of the connection between the indicator of masculinity/femininity, as a gender characteristic of the individual, and the tendency towards certain general psychological dependencies.

The **hypothesis** of this research is as follows: we assume that the most significant gender characteristics that determine the propensity for chemical and non-chemical dependence are the degree of masculinity/femininity of the individual.

The **object of research** is the question of the significance of the degree of the masculinity/femininity of an individual in their susceptibility to various types of chemical and non-chemical dependence.

The **subject of the study** is the relationship between masculinity/femininity and psychological addictions of varying strength and content (alcohol, television, love, gaming, sex, food, religion, work, medicine, computers, tobacco, a healthy lifestyle, drugs, and a general tendency towards addiction).

The **objectives of the study** are:

- 1) to analyse the literature on the problem of the phenomenon of masculinity/femininity as polar gender labels, and the quantifiable degree of expression of masculine/feminine personality traits of an individual in their susceptibility to various chemical and non-chemical addictions;
- 2) to determine the degree of expression of masculinity/femininity and the propensity for addiction in groups of respondents belonging to different sexes;
- 3) to establish the nature of the relationship between the indicator of masculinity/femininity and tendency towards addiction.

1. The theoretical and methodological principles of the research

In the theoretical part of our research, we analyse works related to the problem of the importance of the degree of expression of the masculinity/femininity of an individual for their development and their susceptibility to various addictions.

The analysis of the literature makes it possible to generalize the views of scientists on the phenomenon of masculinity/femininity as polar gender labels, including studies that investigate cases where gender does not coincide with biological sex (Weininger, 1992; Bendas, 2008; Alekseeva, 2005; and others).

Thus, Weininger (1992) considered masculinity as one pole of the characterological scale, at the other end of which is femininity. Thus, each individual, regardless of gender, only occupies an appropriate place on this scale, combining in themselves the features of masculinity and femininity in their own individual way.

Bendas (2008) wrote about androgyny as a personal characteristic that develops and has no connection with the deviation of gender role orientation, but also predicted a diverse arsenal and flexibility of the behaviour of its role.

Alekseeva (2005) analysed androgyny as something that harmoniously combines masculine and feminine features and positively affects the maturity of identity in general.

At the same time, the author singled out the adverse effect of developed femininity in the male part of their sample on general levels of aut sympathy, autonomy, and creativity, which is connected with the peculiarities of young men's perceptions of their own feminine traits in their youth (Alekseeva, 2005).

Malinauskienė (2023) wrote about the relationship between gender identity and the state of loneliness, and suggested that problems with gender identity can increase this negative emotional state due to dissatisfaction with one's body as it does not correspond to stereotypes of an ideal masculine or feminine body.

A review of the relevant literature allows us to explain and argue for the possibility of using masculinity/femininity indicator scales as gender characteristics of personality in our research.

As part of the general scientific methodology, we used the theory of social construction of gender, according to which gender constructs are perceived by the participants of daily interaction as something natural, a given. It is the constructivist analysis of gender that involves the latest interpretive research strategies. This makes it possible to reveal the process of construction of gender, in which science plays far from the smallest role (Bern, 2004). For us, the gender approach in psychology, which emphasizes the study of the social (rather than biological) aspects of gender and role differentiation by gender, is also at the forefront (Bern, 2004).

The next important task of the theoretical part of this research was the analysis of works related to the problem of the importance of the degree of expression of masculinity/femininity for the content and the level of an individual's tendency towards various addictions.

In modern psychology, there are numerous works investigating risk factors for the development of addiction, while, as a rule, sociocultural, age-related, interpersonal and personal factors are distinguished (Santangelo et al., 2022; Zheleznyakova, 2013; Chubina et al., 2022; etc.).

Since psychological addictions of differing strength and content are included in the subject of our research, it is methodologically justified to turn to the conceptual development of the concept of deviant behaviour as a form of social maladjustment, which manifests itself in the uncontrolled desire of a person to constantly come into contact with the object of addiction (Matelega & Azizov, 2015; Zmanovskaya, 2004; Egorov, 2020; etc.). We are interested in works that connect deviance with non-normative masculinity/femininity; that is, when unfair standards of masculinity/femininity constructed in society harm individuals with so-called gender ambivalent or non-traditional identification, and become risk factors for addiction (Harrington, 2020; Rotundi, 2020).

Many studies deal with gender differences in addiction. For example, Havryshchak (2018, p. 25) indicated that alcohol addiction of the first type (which starts at an early age) is characteristic only of men, and the author used the concept of Don Juanism to reflect on male types of sexual addiction. At the same time, when analysing oniomania

(shopaholism), more attention is paid to women and girls (p. 29).

Within the general scientific methodology, it is advisable to use the theory of social construction of gender, according to which gender constructs are perceived by the participants of daily interaction as something natural, given. Their analysis shows that persons of a certain gender are often characterized as having masculinization or feminization. A number of studies associate male addictions with so-called toxic masculinity, and we can find similar definitions of certain syndromes – hegemonic masculinity, or the syndrome of “masculinity that did not happen” (Bern, 2004; Harrington, 2020; Rotundi, 2020; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Weiss, 2016; etc.). We agree with the remarks of Rotundi (2020) that the main consequences of these syndromes include depression and suicidal tendencies, alcohol and drug abuse, violence against women and homosexuals, and other similar consequences.

The analysis of studies of the expression of feminine traits in persons with chemical and computer (gaming) addiction shows that in most cases, such addictions lead to the masculinization of psyche and appearance (Shaydukova, 2022; Alekseeva, 2005). It is appropriate to note the existence of a debate about whether to consider masculinity as a property of only male bodies and to consider female masculinity as a sign of deviation from the stereotypical norm, or as a healthy alternative to what we consider to be decorated conventional femininity (Halberstam, 1999; Smith, 1996; Berger et al., 1996).

Thus, the analysis of the literature compels us to consider the determination of dependent behaviour within the dispositional theoretical direction of the study of personality (Allport, 1998), which allows us to talk about gender schemes as components of dispositions.

The factors of addictive behaviour are explained according to the general understanding of personality dispositions, which are divided into cardinal, central and secondary.

Many people have a cardinal disposition. This generalized disposition affects behaviour so much that almost all human actions can be reduced to its influence. Central dispositions are blocks of individuality and trends in human behaviour that are easy to notice, whereas secondary dispositions are less noticeable, less stable, and less generalized traits (Allport, 1998).

2. Materials and methods

Data was collected in one stage. The collection process began in September 2023 and lasted until the end of January 2024. In total, 49 people aged 17–20 took part in the study, among whom 24 (49.0%) were women and 25 (51.0%) men. All respondents replied to an invitation that was announced at a student youth meeting. The testing was conducted face-to-face, and all subjects were university students in Odessa (Ukraine). To determine the degree of expressiveness of masculine/feminine traits, as well as to identify respondents' tendencies towards addiction, the following psychodiagnostic methods were selected for

each parameter:

- susceptibility to various addictions: “Methodology for Diagnosing Susceptibility to Various Types of Addiction” developed by Lozovaja (2007) (hereinafter – the addiction susceptibility methodology);
- masculinity, femininity, and the main index of gender identity: the masculinity-femininity test based on Bem (2004);
- specific manifestations of Internet addiction: the Young’s Internet addiction test (Young & De Abreu, 2010) and the method for screening diagnostics of computer addiction developed by Yuryeva and Bolbot (2006) (hereinafter – the computer addiction screening method).

During the study, Lozovaja’s (2007) addiction susceptibility methodology consisting of 70 questions was used, which allows the quantitative and qualitative assessment of an individual’s propensities to 13 types of addiction (alcohol, television, love, gaming, sex, food, religion, work, medicine, computers, tobacco, a healthy lifestyle, narcotics, and general tendency towards addiction). The results of the test are indicative and show a general tendency towards one or another addiction, without being a basis for establishing a particular diagnosis. The interpretation of the results takes place after summing up the scores for individual types of propensity for addiction with an orientation towards conventional norms, and reveals a low, medium or high degree of propensity for addiction. As noted by the creator of the methodology, it is a fairly reliable and valid tool that allows researchers to detect the level of susceptibility to various addictions. However, the author does not provide specific information.

The masculinity/femininity test employed in this study is a Ukrainian translation of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory questionnaire (Bem, 2004), which contains 60 statements (qualities) that are self-assessed for their presence or absence by the respondent. According to the specified methodology, the following traits were attributed to femininity: docility, cheerfulness, shyness, tenderness, love of flattery, devotion, femininity, the ability to sympathize, caring, understanding others, sympathy, the ability to comfort, speaking in a quiet voice, warmth (cordiality), gentleness, trustworthiness, childishness, avoiding cursing, love for children, and calmness. Masculine traits, according to the author’s interpretation, were as follows: self-belief, tendency to defend one’s views, independence, sportsmanship, assertiveness, strong personality, analytical ability, leadership, risk-taking, decision-making speed, relying only on oneself (self-sufficiency), authority, courage, having one’s own position, aggressiveness, tendency to lead, individualism, competitiveness, ambition. The results are interpreted after calculating the main *IS* index (the value of the index is calculated according to the formula $IS = (F - M) \times 2.322$, where *F* is the index of femininity and *M* is the index of masculinity). During the long period of scientific use of this method, numerous confirmations of its reliability and validity have been collected and published (Yaroshenko & Semigina, 2023). The authors of the Ukrainian translation of the questionnaire (Yaroshenko & Semigina, 2023, p. 206) refer to it as a tool for measuring gender stereotypes, indicating that its approbation in focus groups with social workers

confirmed the possibility of using adapted Ukrainian-language versions to identify gender stereotypes and indices of femininity and masculinity.

The computer addiction screening method created by Yuryeva and Bolbot (2006) allows for the quantitative and qualitative assessment of personal properties of addiction. The methodology contains 11 statements regarding manifestations of gaming addiction and violations of the adaptive functions of the respondent's body. The questionnaire measures: the emotional state of the individual at the computer or on the Internet; considerations regarding the realization of ideas and the anticipation of satisfaction; the amount of time spent at the computer and the material costs associated with it; volitional properties; sensations obtained during computer leisure activities; the perception of the associative nature of the pleasure received; the impact of computer addiction on social and household duties and social roles in everyday life; and the effect of the computer on psychophysical state, sleep and activity. The interpretation of the results takes place after the total sum of points is calculated; accordingly, the presence or absence of addiction (the first or second stage of addiction) is established. In general, this tool is a fairly simple and reliable method that orients the researcher towards the computer dependence of the subjects, which is confirmed by the data (Yurieva & Bolbot, 2006). In particular, the authors note that "the high objectivity of the final result, which is due to the adaptation of the answer options to the national socio-societal sphere of activity with the help of simple means, informs about the appropriateness of the proposed solution to the diagnostic problem" (p. 141).

The Internet addiction test (Young & De Abreu, 2010) consists of 20 questions. Interpretation of the results makes it possible to assess whether the respondent is a regular Internet user, they have excessive enthusiasm, or they are addicted. The author reports the satisfactory reliability and validity of the test. At the same time, we also took into account the conclusions of Stoliarenko and Horodokin (2023, p. 41), who indicated that the test has problems in connection with the change in the technical paradigm of using the Internet and socio-cultural changes. Therefore, after 25 years of using the test, the context has changed, and the test needs to be refined.

3. Research results

In total, 49 people aged 17–20 took part in the study, among whom 24 (49.0%) were women and 25 (51.0%) men.

The results showed that not all test scores were normally distributed, as the values of the Shapiro–Wilk W test were lower than the critical value, and therefore the confidence that they correspond to in the normal distribution law was lower than 5% ($p < 0.05$). As a result, it was decided to analyse them on the basis of non-parametric methods of mathematical statistics. In particular, the Spearman correlation coefficient was used for correlation analysis and the Man–Whitney U test was used to compare independent samples. Calculations were carried out using the IBM SPSS Statistics 21 and Microsoft Excel statistical packages.

Table 1 shows data on distribution centres (X ; Me) and variability (σ) for the Internet addiction test in men and women with different levels of Internet addiction, alongside the results of their statistical comparison. Differences were considered significant if the value of the Mann–Whitney criterion was lower than the critical value ($U_{kr}(24; 25; 0.05) = 227$). No significant statistical differences between genders were found for regular and dependent users. For users with a mild degree of dependence (female), all values were zero. Meanwhile, $U = 168$ and $p < 0.001$ indicate a significant difference between men and women. Among men, $X = 22.84$, $\sigma = 26.3$, $Me = 0$, and $SE = 5.26$.

Table 1. Differences between men and women with different levels of Internet addiction

| Variable | Internet addiction test indicators | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|--------|-------|-------|----------|
| | p | Mann–Whitney U | Groups | X | Me | σ |
| Regular user | 0.136 | 227 | Women | 32.1 | 32.1 | 3.17 |
| | | | Men | 16.36 | 16.36 | 17.6 |
| Mild degree of dependence | <0.001 | 168 | Women | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.00 |
| | | | Men | 22.84 | 22.84 | 26.3 |
| Dependent user | 0.170 | 276 | Women | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.00 |
| | | | Men | 6.68 | 6.68 | 23.1 |

Analysing the data by sex, women in this sample do not exhibit even a mild degree of Internet addiction according to the Internet addiction test, but men have mild dependence at a much higher rate.

Table 2 shows data on the differences in the degree of computer addiction between men and women, as revealed by the computer addiction screening method.

T -test analysis of independent samples confirmed the differences between men and women for the zero risk variable: a statistically significant difference of $U = 160$ was found, where $p < 0.001$. Among women, the average values were $X = 8.13$ and $\sigma = 7.63$; in men, $X = 1.76$ and $\sigma = 4.13$, indicating different levels of zero risk between the sexes.

For the enthusiasm and propensity variables, no statistically significant differences were observed. This data shows that women are more resistant to computer addiction compared to men.

Table 2. Differences between men and women with degrees of computer addiction according to the computer addiction screening method

| Variable | Computer addiction screening method indicators | | | | | |
|------------|--|------------------|--------|------|------|----------|
| | p | Mann–Whitney U | Groups | X | Me | σ |
| Zero risk | <0.001 | 160 | Women | 8.13 | 15.0 | 7.63 |
| | | | Men | 1.76 | 0.00 | 4.13 |
| Propensity | 0.927 | 296 | Women | 6.96 | 0.0 | 10.08 |
| | | | Men | 8.36 | 0.00 | 9.69 |

| | | | | | | |
|------------|-------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|
| Enthusiasm | 0.071 | 230 | Women | 3.50 | 0.0 | 9.46 |
| | | | Men | 10.00 | 0.00 | 12.79 |

Table 3 shows the data on the expression of gender identity traits obtained according to masculinity-femininity test in men and women. When considering the differences between them, it becomes obvious that they achieve statistical significance only in the femininity category ($U = 202$; $p = 0.048$).

Table 3. Differences between men and women according to the results of the masculinity-femininity test

| Variable | Masculinity-femininity test indicators | | | | | |
|-------------|--|------------------|--------|---------|--------|----------|
| | p | Mann-Whitney U | Groups | X | Me | σ |
| Masculinity | 0.348 | 255 | Women | 15.1250 | 16.000 | 2.939 |
| | | | Men | 14.640 | 16.000 | 2.942 |
| Femininity | 0.048 | 202 | Women | 14.6667 | 15.000 | 3.435 |
| | | | Men | 12.880 | 11.000 | 2.833 |
| Main index | 0.483 | 265 | Women | -0.0919 | -0.232 | 0.575 |
| | | | Men | -0.204 | -0.581 | 0.571 |

No statistically significant differences were observed for the masculinity category.

Thus, within the framework of this sample, it can be argued that the following trend is present: the femininity indicator is still higher among women, albeit only slightly, although the difference from men is not significant. At the same time, traits of masculinity can be equally characteristic of both men and women.

Table 4 shows only statistically significant differences between men and women based on the results of the diagnostic method indicating propensity for various addictions (Lozovaja, 2007.). The data obtained shows the absence of significant differences in most types of addictions, with the exception of drug addiction. Here, a statistically significant difference was observed ($U = 199$, $p = 0.037$), with an average value of $X = 10.29$ and $\sigma = 3.68$ for women and $X = 7.88$ and $\sigma = 3.61$ for men.

Table 4. Statistically significant differences between men and women according to the results of the addiction susceptibility methodology test

| Variable | Addiction susceptibility methodology indicators | | | | | |
|----------|---|------------------|--------|-------|-------|----------|
| | p | Mann-Whitney U | Groups | X | Me | σ |
| Medicine | 0.037 | 199 | Women | 10.29 | 13.00 | 3.68 |
| | | | Men | 7.88 | 6.00 | 3.61 |

In order to establish the nature of the relationships between indicators of gender identity and addiction, Table 5 presents the correlations of values according to the masculinity-femininity test and the computer addiction screening method for three categories: zero risk, enthusiasm, and propensity.

For the masculinity variable, statistically significant correlations were obtained for zero risk, including the following positive correlations: $\rho = 0.294$, $df = 47$, $p = 0.040$. At the same time, a negative correlation was observed for enthusiasm: $\rho = -0.479$, $df = 47$, $p < 0.001$.

For the femininity variable, statistically significant positive correlations were obtained for Zero risk: $\rho = 0.454$, $df = 47$, $p = 0.001$. A negative correlation was observed for Propensity: $\rho = -0.326$, $df = 47$, $p = 0.022$.

These findings give reason to assume that there are connections between the indicators of gender identity and computer addiction, while the risk of developing Internet addiction is zero for both individuals with more pronounced masculinity and for those with a predominance of femininity in our sample.

Table 5. The correlations of values according to the masculinity-femininity test and the computer addiction screening method

| Masculinity-femininity test variables | | Computer addiction screening method variables | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---|------------|------------|
| | | Zero risk | Enthusiasm | Propensity |
| Masculinity | Spearman correlation | 0.294* | -0.479*** | 0.230 |
| Femininity | Spearman correlation | 0.454** | -0.064 | -0.326* |

Note: * - correlations are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$; ** - at $p < 0.01$.

Such data indicate that individuals with an expressed (undoubtedly defined) gender identity of a certain type – which we understand as the identification of one's own personality, the acceptance and approval in oneself of the features that society assigns to certain gender characteristics (male or female) – are less prone to the development of computer addiction.

Table 6. Correlations of values according to the masculinity-femininity test and the addiction susceptibility methodology test.

| Indicators | Masculinity | Femininity |
|------------|-------------|------------|
| Alcohol | | -0.484*** |
| Love | | -0.295* |
| Sex | -0.318* | 0.545*** |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-----------|
| Food | | 0.635*** |
| Religion | | 0.527*** |
| Medicine | | 0.693*** |
| Tobacco | | -0.296* |
| A healthy lifestyle | 0.290* | 0.378** |
| Drugs | | -0.576*** |
| General tendency towards addictions | | -0.299* |

Note: * – correlations are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$; ** – at $p < 0.01$; *** – at $p < 0.001$.

As presented in Table 6, femininity shows significant negative correlations with the general tendency towards addictions ($p < 0.05$), as well as with certain forms of addiction: alcohol ($p < 0.001$), tobacco ($p < 0.05$), narcotics ($p < 0.001$), and love ($p < 0.05$). We surmise that those with strong femininity have an emotionally stable foundation for healthy ways to deal with stress, so they do not seek escape from problems by resorting to these kinds of addictions. It is also possible that they are more capable of self-regulating and managing their lives and thus of realizing the negative consequences of addictive behaviour, which helps them avoid risky behaviours associated with various types of addiction.

At the same time, they present with sexual ($p < 0.001$), food-based ($p < 0.001$), religious ($p < 0.001$), and medicinal ($p < 0.001$) addictions, along with addiction to a healthy lifestyle ($p < 0.05$). Since femininity is usually associated with openness to emotionally close interaction and the desire for comfort and pleasure, perhaps these individuals more easily resort to the exploration of their own sexuality, more often use food as a way to cope with stress, are inclined towards religious practices and perceiving their own spirituality, and are more concerned with their appearance. Therefore, they might be more vulnerable to the formation of addictions which are based on the emotional and social spheres and a healthy lifestyle.

Addiction to a healthy lifestyle is positively correlated with masculinity ($p < 0.05$), and sexual addiction is negatively correlated with masculinity ($p < 0.05$). As we can see, in these two aspects masculinity and femininity reflect similar trends in relation to health and opposing trends in relation to sexuality. It is not surprising that masculinity is associated with the desire to demonstrate physical strength, endurance and self-confidence, which can encourage the adoption of healthy habits and an attitude that sees health as being part of manhood. Therefore, individuals with pronounced masculinity, as well as those in whom femininity is most obvious, may be more prone to addiction to a healthy lifestyle. With regard to sexual addiction, the negative association may be explained by other aspects of masculinity, such as strength and the desire for a dominant sexual partnership, which may not underlie the development of sexual addiction.

Conclusions

In the theoretical part of this research, an analysis of works related to the problem of the significance of the degree of masculinity/femininity of an individual for their development and their propensity for various addictions was carried out. The analysis of the literature made it possible to generalize the views of scientists on the phenomenon of masculinity/femininity as polar gender labels, including studies that investigate cases where gender does not coincide with biological sex.

The results of the research address the gap in the number of works devoted to the study of the gender aspect and how it affects susceptibility to various addictions. Articles analysing the role of sex or age in a particular addiction can be clarified in cases where contradictory results occur.

In both South China (Shan et al., 2021) and India (Amin & Kaur, 2014), when studying the relationship between Internet addiction and gender, it was shown that men have significantly higher rates of Internet addiction compared to women. In contrast, another study (Chiu et al., 2013) conducted in Taiwan found that female college students scored higher related to Internet addiction than males.

It is urgent to understand that when researching the gender aspect of the problem of addiction, clarifications of results should be made which are not focused on gender, but on gender characteristics such as masculinity/femininity. Therefore, sex statistics alone are not enough to understand the full picture of the problem.

In a number of modern works, authors focus on the analysis of masculine or feminine personality traits, which solves the ethical issue of the incorrectness of comparing the results of men with the corresponding results of women. For example, it is indicated that individuals with pronounced masculine traits may be more prone to risky behaviour and have a higher tendency towards addictive behaviour in general (Bakhiet et al., 2023); or that they often lose the ability to control their Internet use, especially by immersing themselves in online games and online chats, because this activity can increase self-esteem as it provides an opportunity to communicate with people who have similar interests (Joiner et al. 2012; Baloglu et al., 2018). Individuals with more feminine traits are said to be more likely to maintain their social ties and communicate with people they value using a mobile phone (Chiu et al., 2013), and so on.

In the present study, within the framework of the sample, which was small but fairly representative in terms of solving the outlined tasks, the following main trends were revealed.

Firstly, feminine traits were more pronounced in women, while masculine traits were equally common in both sexes.

Secondly, women were not prone to Internet addiction, even in a mild degree of severity, while among men, mild addiction was observed more often on average, and some even exhibited noticeable severity. In addition, women were more resistant to the development of computer addiction compared to men, but showed greater vulnerability to the formation of drug addiction than the latter.

Thirdly, expressed masculinity and femininity are negatively correlated with the tendency towards computer addiction.

In addition, pronounced femininity is negatively associated with the tendency towards addictions, especially with forms such as alcohol, tobacco, drugs and love. At the same time, a positive connection of femininity with the sexual, food-based, religious, and medicinal forms of addiction was observed, along with addiction to a healthy lifestyle.

Expressed masculinity was also positively correlated with addiction to a healthy lifestyle, but negatively correlated with sexual addiction.

Further research based on the constructivist gender approach to the relationship between the indicator of masculinity/femininity – as a gender characteristic of an individual and not gender more broadly – and the tendency towards specific and general psychological addictions could provide a clearer picture, both for preventive activities and for empirical analytical research at the individual level.

Ethics approval and informed consent

During the work, the ethical principles of pre-diagnostic research were followed in accordance with the psychologist's code of ethics. Informed consent was obtained from each participant.

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MASCULINITY/FEMININITY AS A GENDER CHARACTERISTIC IN THE PREDICTION OF VARIOUS PERSONALITY DEPENDENCES

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Summary

The present, in contrast to the recent past, is characterized by the increasing departure of humanity from stereotypes. This trend primarily concerns gender stereotypes, because in a progressive world the focus is increasingly not on gender, but on individual personality traits. For example, emotionality is stereotypically considered a characteristic female trait, while restraint is considered a male trait. However, there are many emotional men and reserved women. The vision of traditional canons of masculinity and femininity is gradually being transformed. A new view of one's own gender identity appears, which is not clearly perceived by one type of signs (whether masculine or feminine).

The situation related to the problem of addiction has also improved. Today, "women's" alcohol or tobacco addiction is recorded no less than "men's". Thus, to date, there is an insufficient number of modern studies that would present and analyse exactly the gender aspect of susceptibility to various addictions, namely, alcohol, television, love, gaming, sex, food, religion, work, drugs, computers, tobacco, a healthy lifestyle, narcotics, and others.

Articles analysing the gender role or age perspective of a certain addiction prevail, most often in the virtual space

All of the above explains why the gender role approach is receding into the background at present, yielding to the constructivist gender approach.

The purpose of our study is to theoretically substantiate and empirically confirm the possibility of a connection between the indicator of masculinity/femininity, as a gender characteristic of a person, and the tendency towards both specific and general psychological dependencies, based on a constructivist approach.

In total, 49 people aged 17–20 agreed to take part in the study. To reveal the degree of masculinity/femininity of the respondents, they were asked to fill out questionnaires enabling the self-assessment of the presence of certain traits according to the masculinity-femininity test (Bem, 2004).

In total, 9 men with pronounced femininity were found, alongside 14 women with pronounced masculinity. The other 26 respondents made up the androgynous group. These results can be explained by the age (from 17 to 20 years) and type of respondents: modern young people educated in the humanities to become teachers, lawyers, or psychologists.

The nature of the relationship between the indicators of gender identity and addiction, which was measured using the methodology developed by Lozovaja (2007), was clarified in the correlation analysis.

Both significant negative and positive correlations were found between masculinity and femininity and the tendency towards various addictions. A significant negative correlation with femininity was found in relation to the general tendency towards alcohol, tobacco, narcotics and love. At the same time, a positive significant correlation of femininity with sexual, food, religious, drug addiction and addiction to a healthy lifestyle was proven.

A positive significant correlation with masculinity was found with dependence on a healthy lifestyle, and a negative correlation with sexual dependence.

The general propensity for addictions has a significant correlation with the propensity for computer addiction, which was determined using the method for screening diagnostics of computer addiction (Yuryeva & Bolbot, 2006) and the Internet addiction test (Young & De Abreau, 2010).

Further research based on the constructivist gender approach to the relationship between the indicator of masculinity/femininity and the tendency towards both the specific and general psychological addictions of the individual can provide a clearer picture both for preventive activities and for empirical-analytical research at the level of the individual, not the broader gender category.

Keywords: *gender, sex, gender identity, masculinity, femininity, tendency towards addiction.*

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