

THE EFFECT OF GENDER ROLES ON INDIVIDUAL DECISION-MAKING

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ABSTRACT

Gender roles are a set of behavioral norms that consistent with physical gender of individual who obtained through imitation and learning in the socialization process. Gender roles can vary with different social and cultural backgrounds. Individuals with different gender roles may have different psychological and social characters, for instance, Androgyny is one of gender roles that has been found it was more likely to keep a sort of harmonious relationship with social environment, and individual with androgyny showed a better adaptive capacity to social life. So this study attempts to explore differences among four gender roles of individuals, Undifferentiated, Androgyny, Masculine, and Feminine, in decision-making. We viewed gender as an independent variable based on Gender-role views instead of viewing it as physical sex, which different from previous decision-making researches. Results of this study would provide the reasons for the society to establish correct gender-role concept.

Given in previous researches showed that males tended to be risk than females, according to this, this study hypothesizes that people with Masculine were more inclined to seek the risk. In order to examine whether different gender roles are totally significant different on the preference of risk decision-making-----risk seeking or risk aversion, the revised 'Asia disease paradigm' was chosen as the risk decision task aimed to explore the risk preference of different gender roles under positive and negative frames. Similarly, from other studies results----- Androgyny individuals probably showed more fairness and cooperativeness, but Feminine showed their altruism more than other gender role groups. Hence, The Dictator Game (DG) and Ultimatum Game (UG) under the frames of gain and loss were used to examine whether there was a distinguished tendencies of fairness and altruism among four gender roles participants. UG was designed to be a supplemental task of DG to investigate whether there was a stable behavior even in a absence of absolute power. Finally, the 'Prisoner's Dilemma' task was used to measure cooperativeness in different gender roles.

All of decision-making tasks were carried out by paper and pencil test method and all subjects were college students in China. Meanwhile, the within-subjects designs on frame description and the between-group design on gender role were taken in the study. First, we used the Chinese revised version of college students' sex role inventory which was developed by Liu (2011) as measuring tool, sending 360 questionnaires out and taking 336 questionnaires back. The subjects covered from three universities, five campuses in Chengdu in China. Besides, these subjects were divided into four different gender role

types including Undifferentiated(147), Androgyny(92), Masculine(49), and Feminine(48). Then, we randomly selected 30 subjects from every gender role type respectively as decision-making experiment samples, a total of 120 subjects. The 120 participants had to complete two tasks combinations, the first combination included 'Asia disease paradigm', DG, UG and Prisoner's Dilemma tasks with positive frame, and after two weeks, they continued to finish the other one including four decision-making tasks with negative frame. The results showed as following: (1)The differentiation of students' gender roles today was significantly different in China. Undifferentiated group was the largest number, the Androgyny followed, and the number of single gender group was slightly less than that of the Androgyny. (2) Different gender roles had different behavioral tendencies in risk decision process. The Masculine tended to take risks, the Feminine was inclined to select conservative choice whatever the frame was. The Androgynous and Undifferentiated individuals preferred to choose uncertainty options in a positive frame, and behaved more riskily in negative frame. (3) There were also significant differences in performances of the Dictator Game, especially in the gain frame. The Masculine and Undifferentiated individuals were more likely to be self-interest, rather than show fairness and altruism. Conversely, regardless of the loss or gain frame, the Androgyny would show fair advocacy. (4) In the Ultimatum Game, compared with the Feminine and Undifferentiated groups, the Masculine and Androgyny were more inclined to put forward equal divisions. The group of Feminine preferred to raise offers that distribute more to others, showing altruism, while the Undifferentiated individuals preferred to distribute less than other three groups did. Meanwhile, in the loss frame, performances of the four groups were remarkably different. The Masculine and Undifferentiated groups tended to put forward self-interest proposals, while the Feminine and Androgynous were pay more attention to fairness. It was obviously shown that the Androgyny group tended to raise more equal offers in DG or UG. Furthermore, the Undifferentiated individuals displayed more stable decision behaviors who often liked to propose self-interest offers. (5) In the Prisoner's Dilemma task, four types of gender roles did not performed different statistically, most of them tended to betray instead of cooperating. that is Androgyny group did not show the fairness tendency obviously that was inconsistent with the previous researches in the field of gender roles in which Androgyny individuals preferred cooperation.

To sum up, in this research, it suggested that the gender role of the Feminine did not be affected by the frame descriptions, meaning that they could be inclined to do the conservative options. In the contrary, the Masculine would be more adventure regardless of frame. In addition, the results also showed that the Androgyny individuals who are more likely proposed equal distribution offers would be fairer than individuals with the role of Undifferentiated who would propose self-interest offers more times in the experiment. Finally, in the Prisoner's Dilemma task, there was no differences among the four gender roles, which means participants in different gender role's groups chose to take more rational option, choosing betrayal rather than cooperation.