Gender Identity and Academic Interests
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Introduction

Previous research explored differences between gender and academics, and found that men tend to excel in math and science, while women excel in reading and writing (Halpermn, 2004). A study by Marsh, Trautwein, Lüdtke, Köller, and Baumert (2005) also found that academic interests are associated with academic success. Social identities like gender influence decision making and behaviors, including academic decisions like choosing courses (Kessels, Heyder, Latsch, & Hannover, 2014). This led us to question the influence of gender identity on academic interest. We predicted that people who identify more with masculine traits will be interested in math and science over reading and writing.

Method

A convenience sample of volunteers (N = 55; 38 females; M_age = 19.89) read and signed a consent form and completed the measures below in counterbalanced order.

• **Academic Interest Inventory** – Participants rated their interest on a specific subject on a scale from 1 (none) to 5 (a lot). For example, “Chemistry,” which was categorized as a math/science.

• **Sub-scale of BEM Sex Role Inventory** – Participants rated their self identification with masculine personality traits on a scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always). For example, “Assertive” and “Analytical” were items categorized as masculine traits.

Results

**Figure 1** shows that masculinity did not significantly influence academic interest in math and science between males (M = 3.71, SD = 0.68) and females (M = 3.58, SD = 0.39). Although gender did not affect masculinity, men (M = 2.99, SD = 1.00) had a higher academic interest in math and science than women (M = 2.28, SD = 0.94). **Table 1** shows that masculinity did not effect the participants choice of major.

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Math/Science</th>
<th>English/Reading</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.51</td>
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</tbody>
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This study did not support our hypothesis and found no correlation between gender identity and academic interest; men and women had almost equal levels of masculinity. Although we did not find any significant results that support our hypothesis, we did find that men have a greater interest in math and science than women. Overall, masculinity did not influence math and science majors, English and reading majors, and other majors.

Conclusion

REFERENCES

