

Assignment 4 women psy



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What do the meta-analytical findings suggest about how men and women compare on levels of aggression, verbal ability, math and spatial ability, and self-esteem? Are men and women more alike or different? What do you think of Bem's perspective about the gender difference debate?

There was a show in the seventies called "Battle of The Sexes" where men and women competed against each other for their rightful claim to the title of the "stronger sex". This show was one manifestation that feminists were struggling to step up their fight for equality with men in spite of the long-held stereotype that men fare better than women in most aspects.

Feminists were serious in proving their arguments. Meta-analytical researches were done. Such researches yielded a variety of results and explanations. In some experiments where subjects were informed that the tests they will take were either gender-fair or not, subjects would usually perform in accordance to their pre-conceived notions about the test. One example is Spencer's experiment on the differences in math abilities of males and females. College students of equivalent math backgrounds took math tests. Half were told that the math test showed gender differences in the past and half were told that the test has been shown to be gender fair. As expected, among those who believed that the test was gender fair, there were no gender differences in performance, however, with those who believed it showed gender differences, women under-performed compared to men. This may be explained that stereotypes about women faring less than men in mathematics may have affected their performance.

Such researches imply that stereotypes have the power to dictate how people may behave in certain situations. At the same time, it may be used as an excuse whenever people fail or succeed at one point or another, lessening

accountability on the person himself. In the case of the experiment discussed, women may use the stereotype that they are weaker in math whenever they encounter difficult math problems.

There are some theories that gender differences may spring from a biological reason, that males are differently wired from females, that they might have more hormones that may trigger aggressive tendencies and other stereotyped behaviors for males. Other theories attribute gender differences in social learning, that boys and girls behave the way they do because they have been trained as society expects them to- that girls are “sugar and spice and everything nice” and boys are otherwise.

Is it possible to have the best of both sexes in one person? Bern discusses the concept of Androgyny, or the fusion of male and female attributes in a person. Androgynous people exhibit competence in tasks stereotypically associated with males only and females only. For example, an androgynous person may be very good at cooking (typically expected of women) and technical troubleshooting (typically expected of men). Bern’s general prediction in her studies is that androgynous people should do better in a wider variety of situations because they are capable of being feminine or masculine when the situation calls for it. Masculine or feminine people, on the other hand, may do well when stereotyped behavior is required, but in situations demanding non-stereotyped behavior, they will do poorly. This may make Androgyny ideal since it implies that its flexibility to adapt to gender-specific situations may be the key to one’s success. However, it puts much pressure on the androgynous person to come up to such high expectations.

Much of the research emphasized the differences between men and women

more than their similarities. In the interest of harmony and reconciliation from the battle of the sexes, more studies should be done in seeking how men and women are alike as human beings, more than as members of opposite, or should we say opposing genders.