

CULTURAL GENDER SCHEMES vs. EMOTIONAL PARAMETERS OF MEN AND WOMEN FUNCTIONING IN PROFESSIONAL ATHLETICS

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Abstract. The aim of presented work was the determination of influence of the “male” cultural patterns on the emotional parameters of athletes functioning. Groups of women (n=64) and men (n=78) fencers and judokas were examined. Their age amounted to \bar{x} ~18 and sport experience to \bar{x} ~6 years. In the sphere of psychological gender two groups of women and two of men were isolated: with high and low cultural “male” psychical pattern. The following questionnaire measurement techniques were adapted: Psychological Gender Inventory PGI determining the “male” gender profile; Self-esteem Questionnaire STAI as for the fear factor as a state (Fs) and as a trait (Ft) measurement; Personality Inventory as for the neuroticism recording (N); Temperamental Questionnaire FCZ-KT for the recording of perseveration and stress resistance. Despite of the stated relationship of the psychological gender and psychophysical emotional costs there are no grounds for assumption that the cultural gender matrix levels differences between women and men. Women with strongly developed “male” psychic model turn to be closer in behaviour to men with the opposite, weak psychological matrix. When women and men with similar psychological patterns are compared the emotional costs of women are higher. De facto, the relationship of emotional costs and psychological gender is present only in the sphere of the same biological sex. The lack of developed “male” psychic is undoubtedly connected with the increased emotional costs. On the other hand, having the “male” psychological model does not guarantee the emotional functioning of women on the same level which display men with related psychological matrix.

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Introduction

In the social studies of the last few decades the gender issue perception was de-placed from the inborn feature to the one acquired in the process of social creation. In the stream of considerations “to what extent are we consisting of both biology and social conventions” the theory of gender schemes is comprised delivering the essential justification for the thesis that the gender dimorphism is the cultural result as the effect of transformation of biological differences into the social ones [1,2].

According to the above theory, socialising processes through the compliance, identification and internalisation mechanisms form the psychical readiness to using behaviours culturally connected to the feminine and male pattern. In general, male psychic is represented by the instrumental behaviours aiming in the realisation of a certain goal (independence, need of rivalry) and the female psychic is presented as the expressive behaviours (social sensitivity, emotionality) [10]. Taking it into consideration, some psychologists claim that in spite of the fact that each person have both patterns inside the good adaptation and large effectiveness is the consequence of the identification with the male and not female model.

The power of socially consolidated gender schemes transfers itself into the real human nature and may be the more significant behavioural determinant than the biological sex. Such a property was empirically confirmed in the field of self-perception when the common believe in the lower self-esteem of women in comparison to men was refuted [5,6]. The highest results and the best self-evaluation presented subjects, regardless of the gender, with strongly build “male” pattern psychic [3,12].

While searching of the gender schemes effect on life, our study did not reveal the relationship of “male” psychic and the aggressive behaviour tendency which has the instrumental character and according to the social patterns is present in the picture of the man [4]. Obtained data suggested that the gender pattern does not manifest itself in the negative emotions perception but in revealing, suppressing and controlling of own aggression. People who had weakly developed “male” psychic model, despite of the sex, displayed higher consciousness of own aggression and lower need of its manifestation than persons with strong “male” psychic pattern. Moreover, the biggest potential for feeling and not showing negative emotions in social contacts presented women who were “shaped” according to pro-social behaviours and “female” psychic model.

The above empirical data incline searching for the answer if there exist and what are the real psychic consequences of created in the socialising process gender patterns. Presented outcomes suggest that sex schemes effects do not have to



directly transfer into the actual behaviours. Moreover, they can be varied and specific in different fields of human psychic functioning. Present research is focused on personal and temperamental structures responsible for the action efficiency and loaded with the emotional charge. If the attitude that the psychological gender carries a bigger influence than the biological one is advocated it may be expected then that the relatively higher "emotionality" of women, determined also in athletes, is not the correctness a priori [7,8]. On this ground the forecast could be produced that the psychophysical cost expressed by the stress resistance, neuroticism and tendency to strong reaction on fear in women with developed "male" physic pattern is similar to the cost bearing by men with the same psychic model and is lower than in women with weakly expanded "male" psychic pattern. Consequently, it is assumed that male and female emotional costs in the field of the identical gender pattern are similar. Yet, the question if the cultural matrixes effect diminishes the sexual differences remains unanswered. If the above issue was true the emotional costs of women with strongly developed "male" psychic pattern would be similar to costs bearing by men with the identical psychic model and significantly lower in relation to women and men with weakly developed manhood pattern.

The aim of this study is the search for differences both in the field of similar gender cultural matrixes and biological sex differences. Taking such a subject into consideration is justified by the fact that the sport rivalry stress as its immanent feature generates the emotional balance problems.

Materials and Methods

Women (n=82) and men (n=113) practising fencing and judo took part in the pre-selective "Athens 2004" examinations. The age of subjects amounted from 17 to 21 years ($\bar{x} \sim 18$ years) and athletic experience from 4 to 8 years ($\bar{x} \sim 6$ years). According to the advocates of the thesis that the action effectiveness is a consequence of identification with the "male" psychic pattern the male behaviour intensity was taken as the subjects division criterion. As a result of such a partition 4 sub-groups were isolated: women with the strong "male" psychic matrix (n=28); women with the weak "male" psychic pattern (n=36); men with the strong "male" psychic model (n=54) and men with the weak "male" psychic matrix (n=24).

The questionnaire techniques were used in the experiment:

- Psychological Gender Inventory PGI (A. Kuczyńska) determining the gender profile as regards the "female" features intensity (75 points max) and "male" traits strength (75 points max) measured independently. The examined subject division



was arbitrary - group with high "male" index (55 points and more in the Male Scale test) and low "male" index (50 points and less in the Male Scale test).

- Self-esteem Questionnaire STAI (C.D. Spielberger et al.) as for the fear factor as a state (Fs) and as a trait (Ft) measurement.
- Personality Inventory (H.I. Eysenck) as for the neuroticism recording (N).
- Temperamental Questionnaire FCZ-KT (B. Zawadzki, J. Strelau) as for the recording of perseveration (higher result proves lower ability to the emotional tension relieve) and emotional balance (higher outcome stands for the lower resistance on stress) [11].

The statistical analysis of independent samples was performed with the use of the t test [9].

Results

The \bar{x} and SD variables of women with the high (HM) and low (LM) "male" psychic model are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Controlled variables	High masculinity n=28	Low masculinity n=36
Fear-stage	34.6±4	38.1±7*
Fear-trait	37.1±6	45.9±9***
Neuroticism	23.8±9	33.8±8***
Perseveration	12.8±4	15.8±4**
Emotional balance	9.5±4	13.6±3***

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Considering all the controlled variables women with higher "male" psychic model display reactions proving their better emotional balance than the opposite group of female contemporaries. These differences are significant. The above result indicates that the first group (HM) display the weakest tendency towards fear and neurotic reaction on more or less dangerous elements of reality as well as the bigger facility of the emotional tension release occurring in a consequence of such reactions than the latter group of women (WM).



Analogical differences are observed as considering the emotional balance (EMB) which as a relatively stable feature of the nervous system is treated as less changeable than the fear or neurotic tendency [11]. Women with strongly formed “male” psychic pattern turn to be far more emotionally balanced, less ebullient and with higher stress resistance what in consequence leads to the ability of efficient action despite the strong emotions than women with low “male” matrix development.

The \bar{x} and SD variables of men with the high (HM) and low (LM) “male” psychic pattern are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Controlled variables	High masculinity n=54	Low masculinity n=24
Fear-stage	31.9±5	37.7±8**
Fear-trait	35.1±6	39.9±7*
Neuroticism	20.9±9	28.1±12**
Perseveration	12.3±4	13.3±3*
Emotional balance	7.4±4	10.2±5**

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

The lack of differences between men with the weak and strong “male” pattern regard the perseverance only. It means that both groups display the ability to the emotional tension release in similar degree. As regards other emotional parameters similar to female groups differences were noted. Athletes with the strong “male” psychic model present smaller tendency to react with fear, anxiety and neuroticism on signals of the surroundings than athletes with weakly developed “male” psychic matrix. The first type of men seems to be more resistant to stress and perform better ability for efficient action during strong emotions than the latter group also in the field of emotional balance which is the variable less susceptible to modification.

On the other hand, while comparison of differences in homogenous groups it turned out that those differences were stronger and clearer in the group of women. It states that as regards the emotional costs women with weak and strong “male”



pattern vary among each other in higher degree than men with different cultural gender models do.

Consequently, the following issue arises: what are the differences between women and men in the range of the similar “male” psychic patterns? Table 3 presents average SD values and gender variety enforcement among subjects with the same sex patterns.

Table 3

Examined variables	High masculinity			Low masculinity		
	Women	Men		Women	Men	
Fear-stage	34.6±4	31.9±5	**	38.1±7	37.7±8	
Fear-trait	37.1±6	35.1±6		45.9±9	39.9±7	***
Neuroticism	23.8±9	20.9±9		33.8±8	28.1±12	**
Perseveration	12.8±4	12.3±4		15.8±4	13.3±3	**
Emotional balance	9.5±4	7.4±4	**	13.6±3	102.5±	***

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Generally, differences between men and women turn to be larger in group with weak “male” physical matrix. Women significantly stronger than men reacted with the neuroticism, lower stress resistance, perseverance and constant fear tendency in the group of weak masculinity behaviour pattern. The lack of differences considering this group was stated only in the situational fear reaction (Fear-stage). On the other hand, in group of athletes with strong “male” psychic model women displayed higher emotional costs as regards the situational fear and stress resistance. Other variables results were insignificant. The emotional costs of women in the range of one cultural gender pattern appear to be higher in comparison to men.

Hence, the question arises: whether women with the “male” psychic are closer to men with similar or different psychological attitude. The above gender differences described the group with strong “male” psychic matrix and considered two parameters. When we compare women with strong “male” psychic construction to men with the weakly developed one the lack of the significant differences as regards all the controlled variables appears. The relationship of the psychological gender and emotional costs may be effective only in the sphere of



one sex and costs of women with strong masculinity pattern seem to be closer to costs bearing by men with weak than strong “male” psychic model.

On the other hand, considering the situation of women with weak “male” psychic pattern the emotional costs tend to be higher not only in comparison to women and men with different gender matrix but also in relation to their male contemporaries presenting the same cultural gender type. As a consequence, the highest diversification in 4 examined groups were observed in women and men with differently constructed psychological gender models, what is presented in the diagram below:

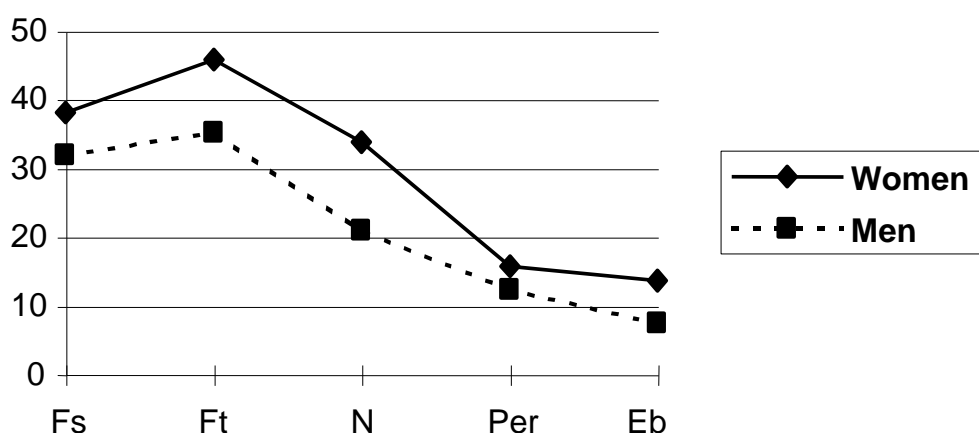


Fig. 1

The track of control variables in the group of women with weak “male” psychic matrix and in the group of men with the opposite psychic pattern

On a sphere of all controlled variables describing the emotional costs elicited by action differences turn to be significant at the level $p \leq 0.001$. This fact means that while the biological and psychical gender features are considered men with strongly developed “manhood” perception manage far more better during emotional situations, stress and tension from women with weak “male” psychic pattern.



Discussion

Summing up, the above data showing a logical dependencies row allow formulation of a few general regularities. Firstly, women with strong "male" psychic display reactions proving the significantly better emotional balance than women with the opposite psychical pattern. This consistency is related to the both changeable and less plastic personal traits. Omitting the lack of differences as regards emotional states remaining the above dependence characterises men of weak and strong "male" psychic matrix as well. However, as considering the emotional costs, women with different psychological models of gender vary far more between each other than compared men in similar situation.

Secondly, bigger differences in emotional costs between women and men are observed in the range of the weak "male" psychic pattern. The above regularity means that women with weak "male" psychic model differ much more from men with the same psychological matrix than women and men with the opposite psychological attitude. As a consequence, the biggest differences in the emotional costs occur among women with weak "male" psychic pattern and men with strong cultural gender model.

Thirdly, the emotional costs of women turn to be higher from their male contemporaries with the same cultural gender pattern. De facto, the relationship of emotional costs and psychological gender is valid only in the sphere of the same biological sex. The lack of developed "male" psychic is undoubtedly connected with the increased emotional costs. On the other hand, having the "male" psychological model does not guarantee the emotional functioning of women on the same level which display men with related psychological matrix.

Generally it can be assumed that, despite the indubitable relationship of psychological and psychophysical gender with the emotional cost, the basis for statement that the psychological sex pattern diminishes differences among men and women does not exist. Women with strongly developed "male" psychic model occur to be closer to men with the opposite psychic attitude. In the situation of rivalry, being a woman equipped with no psychological readiness to use the "male" behavioural matrix puts her in twice more difficult situation - harder towards different gender pattern contemporaries and man with similarly weak "male" psychological model.



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