Perceived Masculinity
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Introduction

Masculinity is a key determinant to how males are perceived within society. What makes some males seem more masculine than others when in reality almost all human characteristics are common to one another? This study compares differences in gender, sexuality, and race to see how masculinity is perceived and changes when more information is known about an individual. The researchers hypothesized (1) females, those whose sexuality was different than straight, and minority races would rate perceived masculinity higher and (2) variations in the visual and audio stimuli would produce different masculinity ratings.

Methods

Participants

- Participants in this study included a convenience sample of 207 college students (59.3% female; age range 18-42) recruited from Austin College (AC) and Utah Valley University (UVU) who voluntarily completed an online survey. Potential participants received an email inviting them to take a survey on masculinity and informing them they would be compensated with extra credit for one psychology class if allowed by instructor.

Procedure

- After acknowledging the informed consent document, participants completed the online survey. Participants first answered demographic questions, then proceeded to complete the Social Desirability Scale (SDS; Crowne & Marlow, 1960). A picture of a male labeled David Campbell was then randomly assigned through Survey Monkey and participants completed the Perceived Masculinity Scale (PMS). The PMS is a 6-item scale designed for the present study. Participants were then randomly assigned an audio description of a male labeled David Campbell and asked to complete the PMS again.

Analysis

- We conducted preliminary testing for demographic differences between the AC and UVU samples via MANOVA. The primary analysis was a 3 (picture type) x 3 (audio type) x 2 (repeated stimulus) mixed factorial ANOVA, with PMS rating as the dependent variable. All analyses were conducted using SPSS (v. 23; IBM, 2015).

Image 1 (Low)   Image 2 (Moderate)   Image 3 (High)

Results

SDS scores were not significantly related to PMS ratings, so SDS was not included in further analyses.

Hypothesis 1

- To determine which demographic variables had significant effects on the ratings and hence needed to be included in the final model, I conducted a MANOVA (see Table 1). No variables had significant effects on the ratings for either the picture or the audio.

Table 1 - *MANOVA for Perceived Masculinity Ratings by Demographic Variables*

Variable	Wilks's λ	F	df	p
Gender	.993	0.73	2, 206	.48
Sexual Orientation	.998	0.25	2, 206	.78
Race	.984	1.68	2, 206	.19
Ethnicity	.997	0.27	2, 206	.76
Classification	.995	0.17	2, 206	.99
Austin College Students	.982	1.93	2, 206	.14

Hypothesis 2

- The mixed factorial ANOVA met assumptions of sphericity, so no corrections were necessary. The results of the ANOVA are presented in Table 2.
- There was a significant effect for type of stimulus [$F(1,207) = 38.96$, $p < .001$] such that average ratings for the audio ($M = 22.43$, $SD = 3.12$) were higher than the average ratings for the picture ($M = 21.30$, $SD = 2.69$).
- There was a significant effect for the picture, [$F(2,207) = 3.02$, $p = .05$], such that the high masculinity picture was rating higher on average ($M = 22.03$, $SD = 2.69$) than the low masculinity picture ($M = 20.67$, $SD = 2.62$). The moderate masculinity picture ratings ($M = 21.37$, $SD = 2.64$) was not significantly different than the low ($p = .16$) or the high masculinity pictures ($p = .28$; see Figure 1).
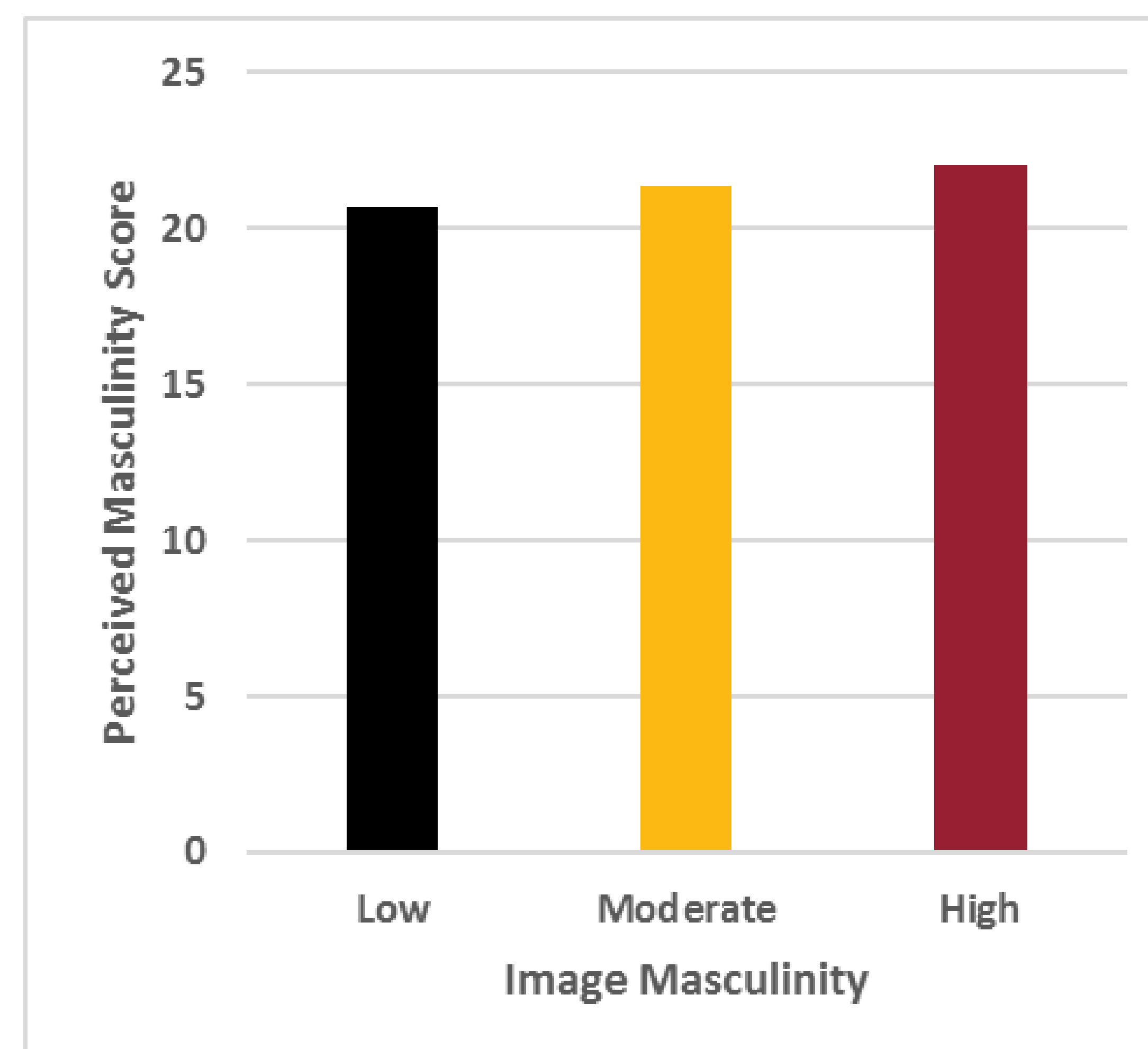

Figure 1. Perceived masculinity scores by image.

Results (cont.)

Table 2 - *Mixed Factorial ANOVA*

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	p
Within Groups Variables					
Stimulus Type	140.53	1	140.53	38.96	< .001
Stimulus Type x Image	5.72	2	2.86	0.79	.45
Stimulus Type x Audio	9.77	2	4.88	1.35	.26
Stimulus Type x Image x Audio	21.09	4	5.27	1.46	.22
Error(Within)	746.69	207	3.61		
Between Groups Variables					
Image	78.98	2	39.49	3.02	.05
Audio	18.30	2	9.15	0.70	.50
Image x Audio	48.29	4	12.07	0.92	.45
Error	2707.93	207	13.08		

Conclusions

Findings

- The first hypothesis was not supported. No demographic differences in ratings were significant.
- Hypothesis 2 was partially supported, in that masculinity ratings varied by the image presented, but not for the audio presented.
- These results can be used to gain a greater understanding of how perceived masculinity is believed to be and how it has changed. This can be influential to a variety of disciplines including social psychology and gender studies because having a simply understanding of masculinity can further support ideas of how people deal with acceptance within themselves and within others. This could be useful when observing how perceptions of gender has changed and how inclusivity has development over time.

Limitations

- Testing: Participants rated the image and audio using the same scale in short succession. Their responses to the image may have biased their responses to the audio.
- PMS: This scale was created for the present study and the validity is unknown. The scale did demonstrate adequate internal reliability ($\alpha = .72$).
- Stimuli: We did not pre-test the images or audio to ensure our manipulations had the intended effect.
- Convenience sampling: Limits the generalizability of this study.

Recommendations

- Future research would benefit from random sampling from a broader range of participants, using validated perceived masculinity scales, and pre-testing images and audio to ensure perceived differences match intended manipulations.
- Use of videos and/or live actors to determine the effects of body language and other non-verbal communication would also increase the specificity of our understanding of perceived masculinity.

References

Crowne, D. P., & Marlowe, D. (1960). A new scale of social desirability independent of psychopathology. *Journal of Consulting Psychology, 24*, 349-354. doi: 10.1037/h0047358.