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**PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF THE PERSONALITY  
CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL MANAGER: THE  
RELEVANCE OF THE CPI THE 16PF AND THE CONCEPT OF  
ANDROGYNY.**

A thesis completed in partial fulfilment for the requirements of the  
Degree of Master of Arts in Psychology.

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1994

## ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the perceptions surrounding managers in New Zealand. Traits from the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) and the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) were used to determine if managers perceived these traits differently for successful male and female managers. Subjects' gender role identity, and the perceived gender role identity of a successful manager were determined using the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Short Form). One hundred and forty three managers received one of three questionnaire versions. They rated either a successful manager, a successful female manager, or a successful male manager on the above traits. Results showed that successful male and female managers were perceived differently on six traits from the 16PF and CPI. Unexpectedly 41.5% of managers in the sample identified themselves on the BSRI as undifferentiated. Thirty five percent of respondents rated a successful manager as androgynous. These results are contrary to overseas research where managers predominantly rate successful managers as masculine. Only half the personality traits from the 16PF and CPI were actually considered important for managers. This supports research concerned with the use of general personality measures in selection.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Ross St George for his cheerful guidance and wisdom, not to mention his patience!

Thank you to Judy Brook and Ross Flett for their helpful suggestions.

Thanks also to Bridget for her humour and support, and Antonia for her proofreading assistance.

Thanks Mum.

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## OVERVIEW

Selecting the right person for a job can be a difficult process with many factors influencing the decision outcome. The managerial role with its wide-ranging variety of responsibilities, changing demands, and differing role requirements makes selecting the appropriate person even more difficult. Assessing the necessary skills, experience and knowledge of potential managerial applicants can be further complicated by stereotypes surrounding the characteristics, or socially defined characteristics of men and women, and by the differing perceptions of the characteristics viewed as necessary for managers.

Notwithstanding these potential problems, selection of the appropriate manager is an important activity necessary to the cost effectiveness of an organisation. However, it is often overlooked as a function requiring the investment of time, skill, and money. Because of this, factors other than the applicant's suitability for the job are considered, and therefore invalid selection is likely to occur. The use of personality inventories that measure a wide range of personality characteristics, not necessarily relevant to the job, also increases the likelihood of selecting the wrong person for the job. Such general inventories measure a variety of personality characteristics for a 'normal' (ie not clinical or abnormal) population. Although providing information about one's personality, much of the information gained is not directly related to the job being selected for. Therefore, a wealth of information is generated from a general inventory, that may or may not be predictive of successful performance on the job.

Gender stereotypes can affect decisions relating to equivalent males and females, especially in a situation which is ambiguous or lacks specific information. The use of general personality tests in job selection, merely adds more information that is not necessarily job related. When a large array of personality traits are assessed that are not all relevant to the position applied for, the importance placed on these traits may differ for male and female applicants. Gender stereotypes surrounding males and females, may cause bias to be manifested in a selection situation which uses non-job-relevant

information. Collinson, Knights, and Collinson (1990), report that a key and consistent finding in the literature on selection is that informality in selection is a major mechanism in sex discrimination.

Even within a formal selection process, a personality profile (or report generated from one) containing a large range of personality traits not all necessary for the job, can be weighted differently for male and female applicants. This is likely due to the selector's stereotypes surrounding males, females, and the position applied for. The influence of gender stereotypes and personality assessment in organisations are two important phenomena that can impact on the selection process and possibly lead to invalid decisions which cost the organisation in time, money, and skill base.

This thesis will bring together the issues of gender stereotypes, and personality testing to investigate the possible biases which could be expressed in the selection situation. Managers will be asked to rate characteristics from the California Psychological Inventory, (CPI) and the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) in terms of their importance for either a successful manager, a successful female manager, or a successful male manager. Traits from these inventories will be examined to determine whether or not they are rated differently for male or female managers. Additionally, the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) - Short Form, will be used to examine the gender identity of the managers in the sample, and to determine the managers' perception of the gender identity of a successful manager.