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Badges and Blush: Gender Expression in Policework

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Badges and Blush: Gender Expression in Policework

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Department of Psychology

Honors Research Project

Submitted to

*The Williams Honors College
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4/27/23
Date



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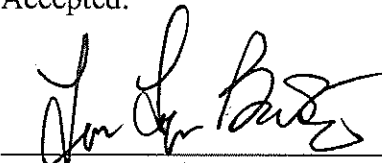


Honors Project Reader (signed)

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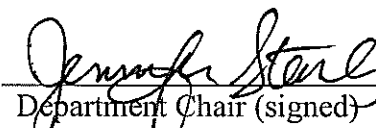
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Badges and Blush: Gender Expression in Policework

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The University of Akron

Background

Policework is historically a masculine profession. In fact, women were not allowed to join the force (with very few exceptions) until 1910. Now that women are allowed to be officers, they face a wage gap, discrimination by their coworkers, and the femininity / competency bind.

Previous studies have found

- There is a higher commitment to the job and to others associated with androgyny in the profession of teaching (Moses et al 2016)
- The ideal police officer is male-coded and favors masculine traits. Female police officers face sexism from their male coworkers in the workplace and combat this using a combination of masculine and feminine strategies (Murray 2021)
- Promotions for officers are based partially on standard tests, which favor masculine traits in policing, like strength, intelligence, capability of physical violence, respectfulness of laws, and honorability (Aiello 2012)
- Gender conforming women were significantly less hireable than gender conforming men. Gender non-conforming women were preferred over gender non-conforming men and gender conforming men were preferred over gender non-conforming men. Finally, gender conforming women were less hireable than gender conforming men in the profession of junior lawyer (Frens 2019)

Participants & Materials

Participants: 60 UA undergraduate students (20M, 40F)

Hirability Scale: 6 questions on the hirability of an applicant including performance, comparison to other applicants, competency, likelihood overqualification, letter grade, and likelihood of promotion.

Genderism and Transphobia Scale: 32 questions used to assess prejudice against men with diverse gender expressions and behaviors

Male Role Norms Inventory: 21 questions assessing participant's opinions the role of men in society

Hypotheses

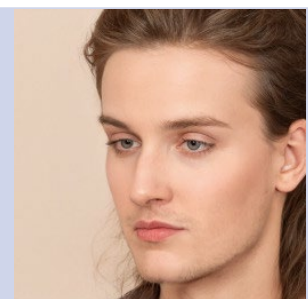
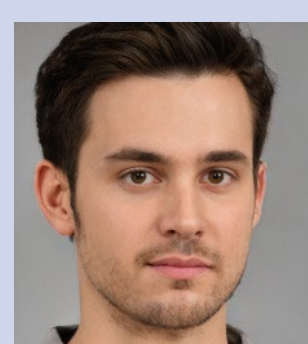

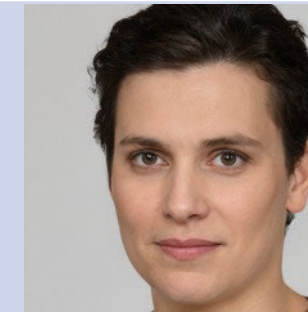
1. Gender conformity and biological sex will interact to impact the hirability of job applicants to be a police officer.
 - a. Masculine looking people will be more hireable than feminine looking people
 - b. Men will be more hireable than women.
 - c. Masculine men will be the most hireable across the four groups
2. Gender conformity and biological sex will not impact the hirability of job applicants to be a teacher.

Procedures

Undergraduate students at UA were recruited through SONA, a site that gives students extra credit for their psychology courses in return for participation in psychological studies.

First, they signed a consent form. Then the students were randomly assigned to the Policework condition or the Teaching (control) condition. They were then randomly assigned again to the feminine female, feminine male, masculine female, or masculine male resume.

The students completed a hirability scale based on the resume, followed by the Genderism and Transphobia scale to measure potential biases they might have toward non-gender conforming people. Finally, the Male Role Norms Inventory measured their opinions on masculinity. The participants also took distractor tests (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Neuroticism and Extraversion Scale) to deter them from guessing the true purpose of the study.

Resume Picture	Gender Expression and Biological Sex	Profession	Total Responses	Average Hirability	SD
	Feminine Man	Policing	6	33.8	4.75
		Teaching	9	29.4	4.30
	Masculine Man	Policing	6	32.2	5.27
		Teaching	8	33.1	6.92
	Feminine Woman	Policing	2	31.5	3.54
		Teaching	12	32.6	4.64
	Masculine Woman	Policing	9	28.8	7
		Teaching	7	32.6	6.40

Discussion

Hypothesis 1: The results do not currently support the hypotheses, with the low number of participants.

Hypothesis 2: There was only a 3.7 difference in hirability of the teaching condition, compared to a difference of 5 in the policing condition. This is a very small difference but may suggest that teaching is more gender neutral than policework.

Limitations: Participants were all undergraduate students taking psychology courses. 20% of the participants disclosed that they were bisexual, which could indicate open-mindedness to gender expression. Further, only 23 of the 60 participants were randomly put in the policing condition. The number of participants is 1/3 size of the participants needed to find any significance. However, we are still collecting data.