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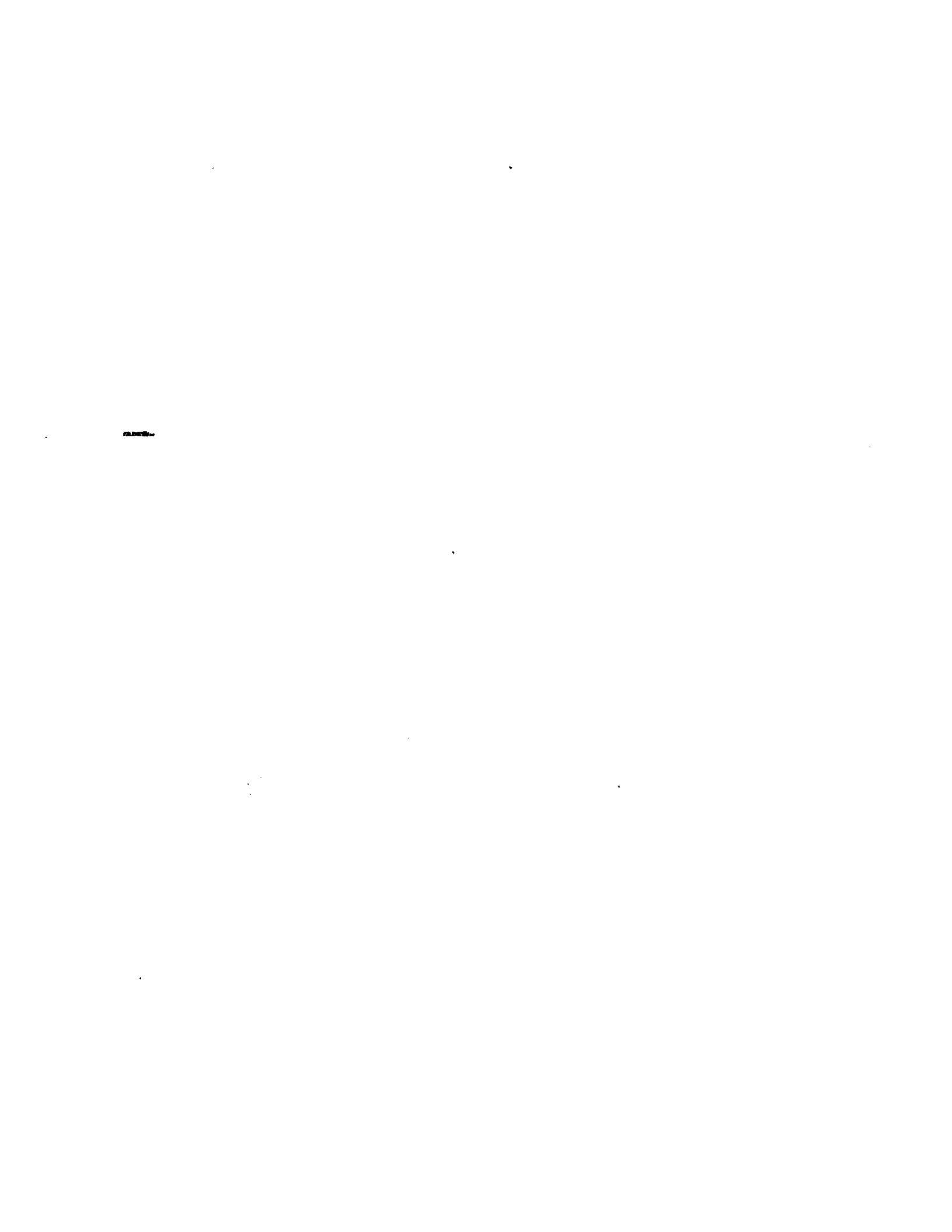
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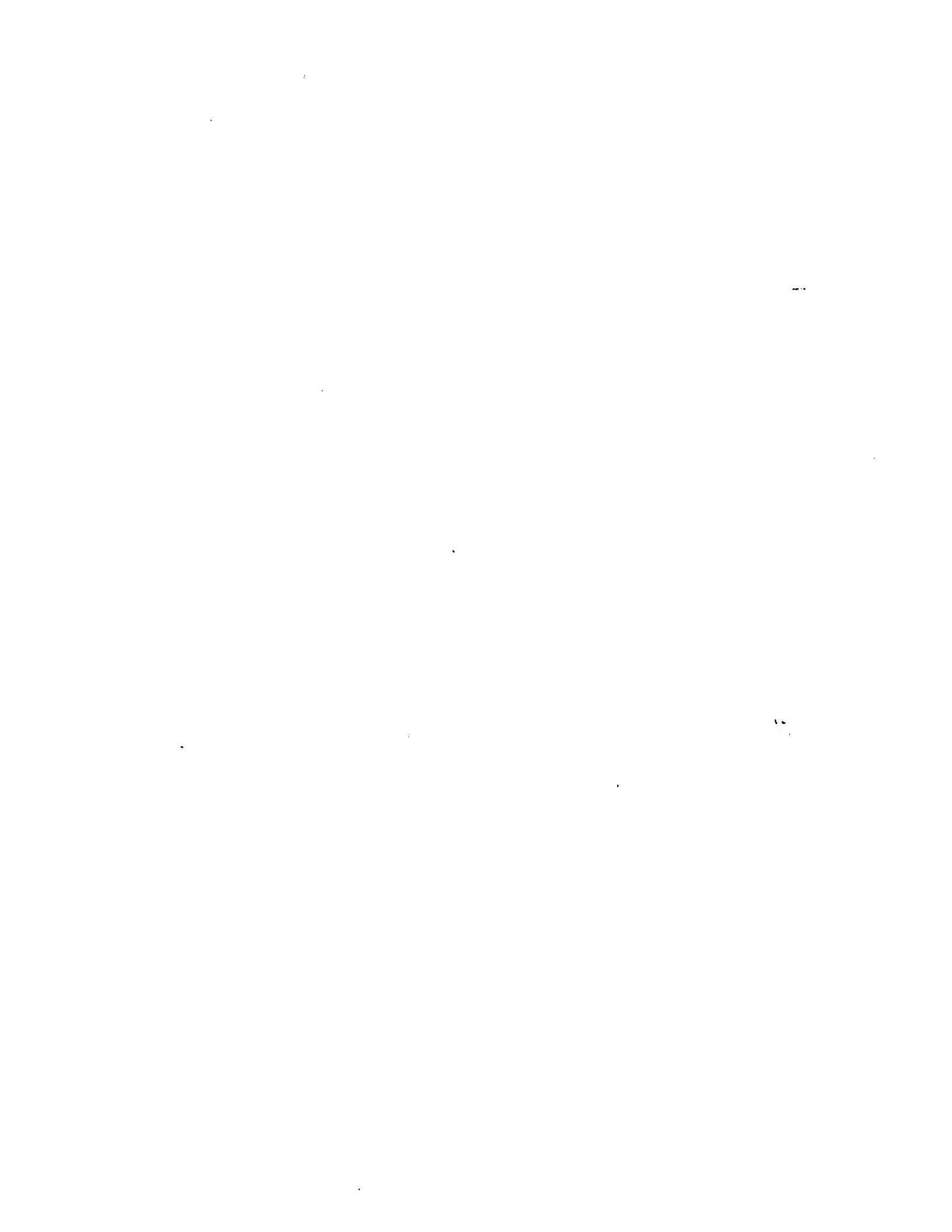
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**Role conflict, sex role orientation, perceived social support and  
stress in black female managers**

**Smith, Carlene Romans, Ph.D.**

**City University of New York, 1990**

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A

ROLE CONFLICT, SEX-ROLE ORIENTATION, PERCEIVED SOCIAL  
SUPPORT AND STRESS IN BLACK FEMALE MANAGERS

by

CARLENE ROMANS SMITH

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in  
Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City  
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1990

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

ROLE CONFLICT, SEX-ROLE ORIENTATION, PERCEIVED SOCIAL  
SUPPORT AND STRESS IN BLACK FEMALE MANAGERS

by

Carlene Romans Smith

Advisor: Professor Vera Paster

This study investigated the extent to which role conflict based upon sex-role stereotyping, sex-role orientation, and perceived social support are associated with stress-related symptoms in a sample of black women managers.

The specific objectives of the study were: to determine whether significant differences between subject sex-role orientation and perceptions of expected role within the work organization are associated with stress effects; to determine whether sex-role orientation is a factor associated with stress

reactions in subjects who experience role conflict; and to determine whether there is an interactive effect between perceived social support and sex role orientation that mediates stress reactions among subjects who experience role conflict.

The Bem Sex-Role Inventory, Somatization subscale of the Symptom Checklist-90-R, an adapted Maslaach Burn-Out Inventory, and the Perceived Social Support Scales (Family/ Friends), were used to operationally define study variables. A variety of statistical methods were performed on the data including multiple regression analyses.

The main findings were that: scores reflecting emotional exhaustion, an aspect of stress, is positively associated with role conflict scores; femininity scores are negatively related to scores reflecting emotional withdrawal from staff; androgyny and possibly also masculinity scores are associated with a personal sense of success and competence at work; and, perceived social support, though it is positively associated with a sense of personal accomplishment, is not a significant factor mediating stress resulting from sex-role stereotype based role conflict.

This study lends some support for the thesis that the organizational dynamics of which the black woman executive is a part can result in stress-related effects. In addition, sex-role orientation and perceived social support may be factors contributing to psychological adjustment.

## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents Alvin and Olga Romans who taught me to love and to achieve, my husband Charles who loved, supported and encouraged me and my daughter Whitney, who has challenged me in the most growth enhancing way. May God bless you all.

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## Chapter One

### Statement of the Problem

This study investigated the impact of the stress of organizational life on the mental health of black women who are in positions of authority. The study investigated the extent to which role conflict based upon sex-role stereotyping is associated with stress related symptoms. Specifically, the type of role conflict studied was the difference between subject sex role orientation and perceptions of expected role. In addition the possible mediating effect of perceived social support was assessed.

### Specific Objectives

To determine whether significant differences between subject sex role orientation and perceptions of expected role are associated with stress effects.

To determine whether sex role orientation is a factor associated with stress reactions among black female executives who experience role conflict.

To determine whether there is an interactive effect between perceived social support and sex role orientation that mediates stress reactions among black women executives who experience role conflict.

## Rationale

It has only been from the late 1960's that black men and women have had access to managerial levels in corporate America. There has been little psychological research on the impact on black men and women of reaching and functioning in executive positions. Davis and Watson (1982) interviewed 120 black and 40 white managers in their book Black Life in Corporate America:- Swimming in the Mainstream. Their book and other primarily nonpsychological sources discuss the stress under which black executives operate. Campbell's (1982) summary in the New York Times indicates that for some black managers "varying degrees of culture shock, alienation, isolation and loss of identity" as well as physical illness prevail.

The numbers of African-Americans holding executive positions remains small. As of 1982 approximately four per cent of all managers were black (Campbell, 1982). A 1986 survey of 400 Fortune 1,000 companies found less than 9% of all managers were "minorities" which included blacks, Asians and Hispanics. Black students made up approximately three to seven per cent of top MBA school graduating classes in 1987 (Leinstein, 1988).

Black female managers are a minority within two minorities. As Fuchs-Epstein [1973] points out there are black women who have achieved success within high status careers in management, medicine, law, etc. For these women the effect of the double minority status did not result primarily in negative consequences but formed a positive matrix for a meaningful career.

While this may be the case, the premise of this study is that the black woman leader is also a part of organizational dynamics which may result in stresses specific to her (Dumas, 1979). She may be vulnerable or resilient to these stressors due to her the interaction of person and environmental factors.

The fact that situational factors interact with individual characteristics, affecting both the individual's behavior and her inner world is not new. However, the improving occupational status of women requires research on how the professional situations in which women are increasingly represented interact with person variables to determine how these women think, feel and behave. This is all the more true for Black women who as a group, traditionally have been the most occupationally disadvantaged of all four reference groups (Allen & Britt, 1983) and thus must deal with dramatically conflicting forces and expectations.

In this society commonly held beliefs regarding the nature of men and women have been such that men have tended to be described in terms of instrumentality (competency, rationality and assertion) and women in terms of warmth and expressiveness, passivity and dependence (Deaux, 1976). Such stereotyped expectations have been extensively documented as a source of stress and a factor contributing to a variety of symptoms, both somatic and emotional (Franks & Rothblum, 1983).

Stereotyped expectations regarding black women are likewise present in our society. Both the social science literature and popular culture have suggested dual images of black women. They are alternately seen as maternal, passive with respect to self, active on the part of others or enduringly capable, assertive and powerful (Fleming, 1983). Black women aspiring to leadership positions in black and white organizations or who have achieved such status are plagued by both sides of this dual image according to Dumas (1979). Holloway (1979) discusses the need for hard data to support Dumas' contention. He advocates the study of the epidemiology of stress related illness among black women in leadership positions.

Thus, sex-role stereotyping is salient to women

workers in general and to black women in management positions in particular. Such stereotyping is the rationale for discriminatory practices that have resulted in the exclusion or lack of upward mobility of all women in the business world (Fitzgerald & Shulman, 1984; Spruell, 1985).

While traditionally there has been a high value placed on instrumental behavior within the business world, as in the larger society, more recently there has been criticism of instrumental behavior as the sole tool of the business leader. There has been advocacy of utilizing both instrumental and expressive aspects of self for effective leadership (Blanchard & Sargent, 1984). Until this becomes a new standard, however, it is likely that women, and men of course as well, who possess strong tendencies toward expressive behavior will find full expression of this aspect of self to be in conflict with corporate expectations and demands.

There is a large body of literature on role stress and its effects and precipitants. Cited effects include somatic complaints, anxiety, depression and irritation (Holt, 1982). Role stress from within a systems psychology approach is described as a build up of tensions between the conscious experience of work and the realities of the institution that are in

conflict within the individual (Klein, 1979).

Organizational consultants from within this perspective may employ organizational role analysis to assist the individual in making a bridge between his conscious experience of work and the realities of the institution.

Role conflict is a form of role stress. To the extent that aspects of self such as race, gender, age, etc. exert an influence on the individual's thinking and behavior that are dissimilar to those transmitted by the work organization, role conflict is present.

This study ascertained the extent to which black women executives' sex role orientation, an aspect of self, is dissimilar to their perceptions of expected role in the organizations within which they work. It also determined whether there were stress related outcomes. Additionally, the possible mediating effect on stress of the subjects' perception of social support from family and friends was assessed.

There has been extensive documentation of social support as an important factor mediating stress (Brownell & Shumaker, 1984; Tardy, 1985; Thoits, 1982). Kobasa (1982) discussed social support as a multidimensional notion and advocated distinguishing among the perceptions of various types of support

received from peers, family, and the work environment. Perceived social support (PSS) is the extent to which an individual believes that his/her needs for social support (which include but may not be limited to the provision of information, emotional support, feedback) are fulfilled (Procidano and Heller, 1983). Initial studies of the development of scales measuring perceived social support from family (PSS-Fa) and friends (PSS-Fr) suggest that both constructs PSS-Fa, PSS-Fr are inversely related to symptoms of distress and psychopathology. Kobasa (1982) in a study of executives and middle managers employed in a utility concern found that perceived social support facilitates health in this population.

In summary, the literature on blacks in management suggests that because of institutionalized racism, with its stereotyped notions about blacks, and, because of the relatively small number of blacks in managerial positions in corporations and private institutions, the organizational environment is a stressful one for blacks. Sex role stereotypes exist for women in general but present particular pressures for black women leaders. Those black women managers who, in addition, are not sextyped in a manner consistent with that prevailing in their organizations may experience

role conflict and job related stress.

This study empirically tested the above to determine if there are, in fact, tensions that exist between the black women executives' own sex role orientation and behaviors they perceived to be expected of them in the workplace. Then it was determined whether any significant differences found (role conflict) resulted in stress symptomatology in these women. Perceived social support was examined as a factor potentially mitigating the expression of stress symptomatology. And finally, it was determined whether the black women executive's sex role orientation had a bearing on the effectiveness of perceived social support as a mediator.

## Terminology

### role conflict

The extent to which there is incongruence between an individual's orientations, interests and values and her perceptions of the role requirements placed on the individual by the corporation/agency for which she works.

### expected role

The set of behaviors perceived by the manager as expected of her by others (subordinates and superiors) within the organization.

### sex role orientation

Refers to traits and behaviors which either men or women may exhibit that in the past have been stereotypically assigned to a particular gender. For the purposes of this study the criteria of the Bem Sex Role Inventory were used to define behaviors stereotyped as feminine or masculine.

### instrumentality

Broadly used within this study as the traits and behaviors which have been theorized as being reflective of masculinity (masculine sex-typing). These include an instrumental or task orientation, self-involvement and an independent stance in interpersonal

interactions.

expressiveness

Broadly used within this study as the traits and behaviors which have been theorized as being reflective of femininity (feminine sex-typing). This involves an emotive, relational stance in interpersonal interactions and a propensity toward caretaking and nurturance.

manager/executive

A person charged with the control or direction of an institution or functional divisions within an institution. The managers included in this study had titles within the organization that denoted managerial rank and had staffs reporting to them.

social support

In this study social support refers to a system of attachments (friends, family) and interactions (other resources) readily available to an individual that provide understanding and/or information, materials and services as part of a relational bond.

perceived social support

The extent to which an individual believes that his/her needs for social support which include but may not be limited to the provision of information, emotional support, feedback are fulfilled.

stress

Demands on the individual that tax or exceed personal resources (Lazarus, 1977).

role stress

A build up of tensions within the individual resultant from the conflict between the role identified with and the role the individual believes is expected of her and/or is required to be enacted in the workplace.

## Chapter Two

### Review of the Literature

Statistics on women in management substantiate claims of their underutilization (Davidson & Cooper 1984). Factors used to explain the low numbers of women in executive positions have included traits such as fear of success, a lack of leadership ability or skills (Rigler & Galligan, 1980) and low self confidence (White, DeSanctis & Crino, 1981). In their review of the literature on women in management, Rigler and Galligan conclude that psychologists have paid too little attention to situation determined variables that may account for women's lack of mobility. They view the emphasis on characteristics of persons as explanatory variables as leading to misguided and/or potentially harmful corrective measures. They advocate an approach which takes account of the interaction among employee characteristics, the nature of the job, the organizational structure, and the external environment.

In this section there follows an exposition of a theoretical approach which takes into account the above stated interactions among aspects of self, role, organizational demands, and societal influences.

Psychoanalytic and psychoanalytically  
informed models of leadership and organizational  
dynamics

This discussion of leadership will include pertinent psychoanalytic contributions to group relations theory, a theoretical and methodological approach to groups and institutions which derives from the Tavistock Institute in London and the A. K. Rice Institute in the United States.

The Tavistock approach emphasizes the examination of primitive object relations within the context of authority relationships. Authority within this perspective is a function of role. The role determines the exercise of leadership behaviors. Leadership is not viewed to be directly related to the personal characteristics of the leader.

Early Psychoanalytic Contributions

Freud (1922) discussed the nature and development of the relationship between members of a group and their leader. The followers take in or introject the aspects of the leader with which they identify. Melanie Klein (1946) identified the process called projective identification by which subordinates may

simultaneously put parts of themselves into the leader and identify with that projected part. Bion (1959) detailed how the process of projective identification is enacted in small groups.

The concept of projective identification is used by Bion to explain why the group is experienced by its members as having a mind of its own. The group mentality is no more than the collective split off or disowned parts of the members' personalities that are projected and reified as the "the group". The group as personified by its members is the repository of the collective fantasies of the members. Projective identification is also used to explain how a member or set of members may become inducted into a particular role that serves the group. The role induction serves a split-off aspect of the scapegoated member(s).

The work of Bion is an attempt to flesh out and augment Freud's psychoanalytic social psychology notions which emphasized the Oedipal roots of group behavior and pathology. Bion was a disciple of the Kleinian school of psychoanalytic theory thus his theory of group life emphasizes the pre-Oedipal aspects of group life. A brief review of some basic concepts advanced by Bion will help introduce the utilization of these notions to assess the functioning of social

organizations such as the corporation.

According to Bion group life fosters powerful regressive experiences. In consequence, the behavior of people in groups is more a function of these regressive forces than of interpersonal dynamics. The regressive forces operating in groups manifest themselves in the developmental patterns of early life (the paranoid-schizoid, depressive and Oedipal positions). In group situations normal individuals will utilize primitive defenses which they would not use under non-group circumstances. Resorting to these defenses in a group may detract from accomplishing the explicit task of the group.

Bion (1961) saw groups as operating in either of two ways: as a work group or as a basic assumption group. His concept of the work group is one which understands its purpose and can define its task. According to Rioch (1970), Bion's work group has a parallel with the Freudian concept of the ego in the rational and mature person. However in real life the work group is "very rare and perhaps non-existent in pure culture" (Rioch, 1970, p. 26). Bion's theory primarily has to do with why the group deviates from task-oriented behavior.

The basic assumption group operates as if certain primitive fantasies about the group were true. Bion deduced the basic assumption activities from the emotional state of groups (Rioch, 1970). According to Bion there are three distinct basic assumption groups: dependency, fight-flight and pairing.

The fantasy operating in the dependency group is that the leader is all powerful and omniscient. The rest of the membership are followers who without the leader would be exposed to potential annihilation. Therefore to follow the leader is to be saved. Work, independence, authority etc. are unnecessary and potentially threatening to the equilibrium of the group. The dependency group operates much like a theocracy. Heretics are viewed as a threat to survival.

The fight-flight group operates as if the members are together to mobilize for life threatening battle. They will either attack or flee if necessary. The leader is seen as the commander-in-chief. The leader is more important in the fight-flight group than in any other basic assumption group "because the call for action requires a leader" (Rioch, 1970, p. 26). The leader and the emotional state of the group tends to be paranoid.

The pairing group acts as if the members are present to witness the coupling of two members that will eventually bring forth a messiah. The unborn messiah is expected to save the group. The feeling state of the group is optimistic and joyful which defends against feelings of hatred, destruction and despair.

The three basic assumptions groups have the following characteristics in common: an inner fantasy orientation; impulsive, uncritical action based on the collective fantasy; poor judgement; and increased feeling orientation with a disinclination to assess group behavior in a rational, scientific fashion.

Basic assumption members:

...often are confused, have poor memories, are disoriented about time. They do not really learn or adapt through experience but actually resist change, although they very readily shift from one basic assumption to another....There is much vicarious living...through roles, so that a person becomes fixed in a role that the group needs for its own purposes and then get out of it. Basic assumption groups also constantly attempt to seduce their leaders away from the work function.

(Rioch 1970, p.28)

Bion's model has contributed to a psychoanalytically informed analysis of social systems.

### Organizational Dynamics

Projective identification is a building block of even the most complex social organization. Jacques (1955) shows how individuals use social institutions to reinforce internal defenses against anxiety and guilt. Also just as the organization is used by the members, individual members are often used to defend against psychotic anxieties.

Jacques speaks of "fantasy social relationships" that are fueled by projective identification with a common object (the institution or individual). In these fantasy social relationships "individuals may put their internal conflicts into persons in the external world, unconsciously follow the course of conflict by means of projective identification and re-internalize the course and outcome of the externally perceived conflict by means of introjection" (p.217).

Thus all effective organizational structures have the implicit purpose of managing anxiety. These

structures involve a task function and a defensive function (Gould, 1982).

Just as individuals develop characteristic modes of adaptation and defense, social systems, such as corporations, also develop defenses which are comprised of the collective individual defenses and are utilized to reduce anxiety (Menziess, 1975).

### Systems Psychology

In systems psychology, the organization is conceived as an open system that engages in continuing transactions with its environment (Miller & Rice 1967; Rice 1964). The organization selectively obtains from the environment diverse "outputs" that are direct or indirect products of its work. The primary work of the organization is described as the "throughput" of raw material that is imported, converted in some way and exported (Levinson & Astrachan 1974). This work is achieved through the interdependence of various "systems of activity" which utilize human and physical resources (Miller & Rice 1975).

Levinson and Astrachan (1974) in their depth analysis of a social service organization spoke of the problem of entry as fundamental and pervasive in individual and organizational life. For the individual

the problem is one of penetration. From the perspective of the organization, entry involves the problem of bringing in, or letting in members (employees). According to Klein (1978) a central systems psychology concept is that of boundaries or the region that separates the individual from the group/organization or the group/organization from the rest of the environment. Boundaries have time, spatial and geographic characteristics (Miller 1959).

The regulation of the external boundary of the organization is essential for its survival and growth. Management's functions with respect to the boundary of the organization is to ensure that these boundaries are regulated in ways that foster the survival and continued growth of the organization (Levinson & Astrachan 1974). In any business enterprise recruiting is a boundary system component as it provides the human material to be used to fuel the various systems of activity which complete the work of the organization.

In systems psychology every individual is seen as an open system as well. According to Miller and Rice's hallmark work (1967), a major problem undermining the efficiency of any activity system is that workers bring with them more than the activities they are required to contribute within the workplace. An

individual may eventually experience satisfaction or deprivation in his work due to:

...the nature of the interpersonal and group relations directly involved in the activity system, and/or the harmonies or disharmonies of these relationships with other group members, and/or the nature of the task itself and of the activities involved in its performance (Miller and Rice 1975).

The concept of role is another important notion in systems psychology and is used in a social psychological sense as a set of behaviors and/or attitudes determined by both internal psychological and external social pressures (Klein, 1979).

Organizational consultants from this background can employ organizational role analysis (ORA) to assist the prospective client to make a bridge between his or her consciousness of the experience of work ("role-ideas") and the realities of the institution where (s)he would work. The objectives of ORA are:

to enable an individual to identify the basic role-ideas which can direct and regulate his behaviour for the performance of the task for

which he is employed;

to relate his basic role-idea to his other role-ideas;

to trace out the systems and groups which indicate the connections between his role-idea(s) and other members of the enterprise;

and to check what skill, beliefs, capacities and resources can be marshalled by the role-idea for task performance (Reed, 1976).

While group pressures and role-ideas affect all members of an organization, women in managerial positions are uniquely affected.

#### Women and Leadership

Bayes and Newton (1976) discussed several issues related to authority and sex roles from within a group relations perspective. They used case material illustratively to make the point that although in recent years there has been a rapid increase in the number of women in managerial positions, there remains inequities in terms of power, status and financial

remuneration. Bayes and Newton (1976) felt that when a woman does attain a leadership position, her staff may behave in ways that deny her authority and are destructive to the work task. This self and other instigated destructiveness is viewed to be a function of sexlinked stereotypes learned in childhood and reinforced in adulthood.

Neuman (1955) identified the anthropological evidence of a major archetype which is retained in the general culture:

currently, the essence of desirable femininity (culturally defined) emphasizes the Good Mother aspect... and avoidance of the Terrible or Great Mother, requiring that woman repress or suppress anger and aggressiveness. It seems important to culture to keep woman in a nurturing but otherwise powerless role: This role becomes established social fact perpetuated in the basic social structure and process of the nuclear family.  
(p. 148)

The group relations literature is especially helpful in providing a conceptual framework in which to study the effect of the professional life on such

demands on black women. This is because it looks at individuals not from the traditional clinical intrapsychic perspective but primarily in terms of ascribed social attributes and role functions.

Dumas (1979) detailed the dilemmas of black females in leadership from a group relations perspective. The underutilization of black women in leadership positions is attributed to self and others' conflicts based on stereotypes dating back to slavery. Specifically Dumas referred to the mythical image of the strong, powerful, castrating black matriarch as "one which has perpetuated and currently pervades organizations and pose a critical dilemma for black women that makes competition for and competent performance in leadership positions a very costly endeavour" (p. 5). Dumas discussed the efforts to recreate this image in today's ambitious black females who aspire to top level positions. Case examples were used by the researcher to document the stereotype. According to Dumas, resisting the stereotype leads to further growth as a leader.

It is important to note that Dumas' depiction of the dilemmas of black women in leadership positions is in keeping with more recent conceptualizations of the nature of the double impact of both race and gender.

Stewart and Smith (1983) point to the need to look at the often separate but frequently similar issues of black women and white women with a view that race and sex are contexts for each other. That is, they advocate a contextual interactive approach to research on black women's issues to reflect the fact that racism and sexism are not independent processes but processes that stand in dynamic relation to each other.

Despite Dumas' contentions, there are no psychological studies detailing how gender based stereotyping of black women relates to current management experiences. This study relates to that need, it provides information about the black woman leader's perception of organizational demands on her and her own sex role orientation.

In the next section, sex role orientation is discussed and therefollows a presentation of sex-typing as an issue for women in organizations. We will return to Dumas' research in light of this information and other pertinent issues specific to black women in organizational settings.

## Sex Roles: Masculinity, Femininity and Androgyny

Sex-role stereotypes about women and men and early research on sex differences (eg. Kagan, 1964; Mussen, 1969) assume the opposition of masculine and feminine characteristics. This has been referred to as a bipolar model (Bem, 1974).

Jung (1933) advanced the notion of maturity involving a blend of masculine and feminine characteristics. The assumption of basic male and female personality similarity with individuals differing on degrees of parallel sets of attributes has become common (Kimmel, 1984; Payne, 1987). This duality or androgyny model assumes that masculinity and femininity are independent dimensions and that individuals may be high or low on either dimension (Bem, 1974). Within this model individuals may be said to be masculine, feminine or androgynous (high number of both sets of attributes). Although gender related, these sets of characteristics (masculine, feminine and androgynous) are not necessarily gender determined. Sex-role orientation within this model thus refers to traits and behaviors which either men or women may exhibit that in the past have been stereotypically assigned to a particular gender.

The traits and behaviors which have been theorized as being reflective of masculinity (masculine sex-typing) are as follows: "instrumental" or task-oriented (Parsons & Bales, 1955); "agentic" or self-involved (Balkan, 1966); and independent as opposed to relational in interpersonal interactions (Chodorow, 1978). Femininity (feminine sex-typing) has been conceived of an "expressive" orientation (Parsons & Bales, 1955; Deaux, 1976), meaning "a blend of emotive, interpersonally oriented traits" (Spence, 1983 p. 44). The terms "communal" and "allocentric" have been also used to describe feminine sex typing.

A large number of studies have been done on sex-role orientation, particularly androgyny. The following are cited in Kimmel's (1984) review: Block (1973) found androgynous persons to be more mature in moral judgement than the other sextypes. Bem (1975) found androgynous individuals to have higher levels of both independence and nurturance when appropriate. Bem & Lenney (1976) reported the ability of androgynous individuals "to perform cross-sex behavior with little reluctance or discomfort " (Kimmel, 1984, p.161). The general consensus has been that since androgynous individuals have a broad range of behaviors at their disposal they have greater flexibility in response to a

wide variety of situations.

Two scales for measuring sex-role orientation are commonly used. They are The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974) and the Personal Attitudes Questionnaire (PAQ; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). Both of these scales reflect the androgyny model (Payne, 1987). These measures treat gender related personality characteristics as independent dimensions: there are separate scales for masculinity and femininity (Gill, Stockard, Johnson, & Williams, 1987). Individuals may score high on both femininity and masculinity and thus be androgynous. Individuals may also score high on either or low on both dimensions.

To develop these masculinity and femininity scales both Bem (1974) and Spence (1974, 1975) constructed inventories of sex-role characteristics stereotypically associated with males and females (Kimmel, 1984). In Bem's original study she used college students who were asked to examine a list of 400 personality traits. Subjects were told to evaluate each trait for its desirability for a man or woman in American society. Using T tests Bem narrowed the number of traits significantly desirable for a man or woman to twenty each (Gill et. al. 1987). Spence et. al. (1978) also utilized college students to provide a list of items

stereotypic of men and women. The researchers narrowed the list to 55 items (Gill et. al. 1987).

Both the BSRI and the PAQ scales have been criticized on theoretical and methodological grounds (Gaudreau, 1977; Pedhazur & Tetenbaum, 1979; Gill et. al. 1987; Payne, 1987). Gill et. al. (1987) cite the fact that "the linkage to theory about actual differences between the sexes in self-concept was developed only later by inspecting selected items" (p.378). These researchers argue that masculinity and femininity as measured by the BSRI and the PAQ are only "loosely" equated with "instrumental and expressive or agentic and communal personality traits" (p.378).

However, factor analytic studies of the revised short form of the BSRI by Bem (1981) and others indicate that the short form is a "purer measure" of instrumentality and expressiveness than the original (Payne, 1984). According to recent research, the short form of the BSRI produces similar correlations to those obtained with the PAQ (Lubinski, et. al., 1981, 1983; Payne & Futterman, 1983; Payne 1987).

Both Bem (1975) and Spence et. al. (1978) report strikingly similar proportions of androgynous self definition: 32 percent of men and 27 per cent of women (Kimmel, 1984). Many researchers have asked the

question: what effect does this particular self definition, androgyny, have on the mental health or well-being of the individual? Keeping in mind the potential for discrepancy due to the use of the flawed original BSRI, the following is a review of pertinent literature on sextyping and adjustment or stress.

Sex-Role Orientation and Psychological Well Being, Adjustment or Stress

There has been substantial interest in the last fifteen years in the relationship between sex-role orientation and psychological well-being (Payne, 1987). Three competing theoretical positions have emerged that are based upon the relative hypothesized contribution of masculinity and/or femininity to adjustment (Whitley, 1985).

Bem (1974) has argued that androgynous individuals are better adjusted than those who score high on masculinity or feminity scales (Payne, 1987). According to Lubinski, Tellegen, & Butcher, (1981, 1983), Bem's statements make her an advocate of an interactive position because of the implicit emphasis on interaction between instrumentality and expressiveness. According to this view, individuals

with high scores on both characteristics should have even higher levels of adjustment than would be expected by a simple additive combination (Payne, 1987, p.360).

Spence & Helmreich (1983) represent the additive position. They argued that the androgyny effect on well-being involves the sum of the effects of its masculine and feminine components (Lubinski et. al., 1981). Within this position "the relative importance of instrumentality and expressiveness depend on the particular facet of adjustment under study" (Payne, 1987, p.360).

A third position involves emphasizing the importance of instrumentality over expressiveness in promoting well being. According to Whitley (1984) a number of research findings have suggested that any relationship previously found between androgyny and well-being may primarily be attributable to the masculine component of androgyny (Kelly & Worrell, 1977; Jones, Chernovertz, & Hansson, 1978; Lockley & Colton, 1979, Taylor & Hall, 1982; Whitley, 1983).

Payne (1987) points out that research on sex-role orientation and adjustment has produced scattered research results due to flaws already mentioned in the construction of the original BSRI. According to Payne, the Femininity scale underestimates the importance of

expressiveness and artificially favors instrumentality. Payne (1987) argues that expressiveness may be more important for some components of adjustment than for others.

Payne (1987) investigated this issue by giving 184 evenly divided male and female college students the SBSRI, the Personal Attitudes Questionnaire, and a variety of self-report adjustment measures. The results were as follows. First, there was corroboration of the Lubinski et. al (1983) findings that the SBSRI and PAQ are very similar. Correlational analyses indicated that both dimensions on each measure had important correlates with adjustment factors. A very important finding in light of the current controversy was that hierarchical multiple regression revealed that instrumentality and expressiveness sometimes combined additively but "never interactively" (p.359). This finding supports the view that the relative effectiveness of instrumentality and expressiveness in influencing psychological well-being is dependent upon the constellation of factors comprising the adjustive demands of a situation. Thus an androgynous individual would be no more effective in dealing with a situation that required such behavior than someone equally high on masculinity.

## The Instrumentality versus Expressiveness Issue in Organizations

Over the past ten years growing attention has been paid to sex-role stereotyping as it pertains to management (Powell & Butterfield, 1984). More women than ever before are managers or administrators. In 1970 only 15% of managers were female, by 1981 that proportion rose to 27% of managers (Employment and Training Report of the President, 1982). Yet until relatively recently, however, most research on managers has utilized male samples (Stogdill, 1974).

Women's invisibility as leaders has been demonstrated in a recent experimental study. Porter, Linauer, and Jennings (1983) utilized a college sample of 448 subjects. Equal numbers of men and women were participants. Subjects were shown a photograph of a five-person group whereupon they rated each member of the stimulus group on leadership attributes. In addition they identified one of the five as "contributing most to the group". Eight different stimulus groups were used. Two of the groups included both "head-of-the-table" and gender based social cues, in effect pitting social custom against gender based stereotyping. The study was well designed and

controlled for a variety of potential confounding factors.

The authors found that the subjects considered a man seated at the head of the table of a mixed sex group to be the leader. However a woman occupying the same position tended not to be so designated. This finding was highly significant ( $p < .001$ ). The head-of-the-table cue apparently only applied in all-female groups. Subjects' sex, androgyny, or acceptance of feminist ideology had no bearing on the experimental outcomes. The authors contend that that the data supports the supposition that sex discrimination based on stereotyping exists despite conscious intentions to the contrary.

Fitzgerald and Shulman (1984) reviewed studies, books and articles from within the occupational and business literature. Their discussion outlines how many organizations subtly discourage active commitment to the development of women managers. They identified myths and assumptions about women as managers that serve to reinforce the present situation of unequal career advancement. Although much of their source material is dated, it would appear, considering Porter et. al that their argument remains current.

Wiley and Ekilson (1982) demonstrated that expectations regarding the power of male versus female managers are consistent with stereotypes of men and women. Women are likely to be perceived as having and are rewarded for exercising referent power. Referent power may be defined as authority based upon association with or delegation by superiors. The female manager's power is by virtue of her position as authorized by top male management. Male managers are likely to be perceived as exercising expert power. Expert power is based upon knowledge, skills and talents possessed by the manager. Referent power has been shown to be a less reliable way of controlling staff than expert power. It appears that organizations and individuals adhere to stereotypic views of men and women, even though their perceptions have been modified since the 1960's (Gold, 1978). Society still requires change toward greater acceptance of female leadership (White, DeSanctis & Crino, 1981).

Blanchard and Sargent (1984) discussed the need to reassess the sextyping of managers. They advocate that the effective manager is androgynous. For them this means that such a manager combines the traits associated with both sexes. Their discussion though logical, is also not supported by empirical data

concerning the relative effectiveness of the androgynous manager.

Powell and Butterfield (1984) studied the perceived characteristics of "good" versus "bad" managers. Using the Bem Sex Role Inventory they tested 1368 students in introductory management courses at two New England Universities. Each subject completed the BSRI for him/herself and for either a good or bad manager. Results indicated that over 90 per cent of the subjects described bad managers as undifferentiated in sex-role identity, that is, low on both masculine or feminine traits. Good managers were perceived by 75 per cent to possess masculine traits and to be more masculine than feminine overall. The subjects perceived the good manager to be more masculine and less feminine than themselves. Although the sample was 62 per cent male the results were not significantly different for male and female respondents. This study corroborates previous findings (Powell and Butterfield, 1979) indicating that good managers tend to be perceived as possessing masculine traits.

The review of the literature thus far has shown how there may be differences among a woman's role (manager), her actual sex type and the stereotypic projections of the environment. This study asked what

are the ramifications of these differences on black female managers? Following is a discussion of the organizational context for black women given the previous presentation.

### The Organizational Context for Black Women

Stereotyped expectations regarding black women are likewise present in our society. Both the social science literature and popular culture have suggested dual images of black women (Fleming, 1983; Dumas, 1979). They are seen as maternal, passive with respect to self, active on the part of others or enduringly capable, assertive and powerful (Fleming, 1983). Black women aspiring to leadership positions in black and white organizations seem to be plagued by either side of this dual image (Dumas, 1979).

The reality of these environmental mirrors of black women is documented by two unrelated studies. These studies investigate how racial stereotyping impacts upon two groups of black women: college students with professional aspirations and professionals in leadership positions.

Fleming (1983) sampled over 500 black females who

were divided by college level (freshman vs. seniors) and college environment (predominantly black vs. predominantly white). By means of a large battery of tests Fleming measured the student's perceptions of the college environment, social assertiveness, black ideology, test anxiety and fear of failure. She sought to determine the differential impact of the two types of college experiences.

The results were that black women who graduated from white colleges were more self-reliant and assertive than were their predominantly black college counterparts. The black college experience appeared to encourage higher academic gains which were undercut by social passivity. Fleming concluded that the predominantly black college environment tends to produce the nurturing, "helpless victim" of double negative status sets (black and female) type.

This research is important as the college years are formative for social identity and adult personality development (Levenson, 1982). According to Fleming (1983) stereotypic images of black women are a characteristic response to an identifiable set of social conditions. Since both patterns (socially assertive, self-reliant versus socially passive, nurturant) have inherent assets and liabilities,

Fleming feels that the most important question for black women is to find conditions that offer the development of both styles.

Dumas' (1979) non-empirical study used the data from discussions with over 500 black women in leadership positions. She found that these executives and administrators were beset by conflicting pressures and demands derived from the dual mythical image of black women, and their position and role within the formal organization. In the formal organization the black female leader, like any other leader, is required to be competent and task oriented. In the informal system, however, her willingness to put herself in service to those around her is paramount in the acceptance of her authority and the reduction of organizational anxiety.

Thus, regardless of how they see themselves, these leaders are often caught up in interpersonal, intergroup or community/organizational conflicts that have nothing to do with her particular position. The black female executive operating within the caregiver mode may work long hours in activities related to her symbolic role yet she tends not to receive the necessary support from others to reduce the time and energy drain because others do not view her as

requiring such support. The risk of burnout is great. When the leader does draw the line between the formal and informal demands placed upon her she risks being perceived as a "bad" mother. Dumas' claims that this symbolic alternate has particularly charged significance for black women leaders. Such a perception by subordinates often leads to revolt by them. The leader not infrequently is "killed off" in such circumstances by self-sabotage, sabotage by staff, firing by superiors, or resignation.

Dumas concludes that trying to resist acting out either set of stereotyped behaviors is the way to survive within the organization. Black women leaders, she says, must find ways to "balance the caring, nurturing, protective functions with those that are task-oriented" (p. 13).

Taken together these two studies suggest that racial and sex role stereotyping interact and impact upon black women leaders' behavior in a dynamic fashion. Regardless of her own orientation, the black woman executive is apt to be seen as either more masculine than her white counterpart (matriarch) or as a stereotypic earth mother.

This study was designed to investigate whether differences between these women's own sex role

orientation and the demands of her organization result in stress symptoms. Following is a review of current thinking about stress, particularly job related, role conflict induced stress.

### Role Conflict and Stress

Demands on the individual that tax or exceed personal resources are said to be stressful (Lazarus, 1977). According to Harris-Butler's review (1989), as a result of their perceptions, job related factors have been discovered as important stressors for working women professionals. This is especially true for women engaged in nontraditional occupations.

Jaqua (1987) studied the stress effects of traditional versus nontraditional occupations in working women. Using her own questionnaire, she canvassed 224 women employed as teachers or engineers. Student's t tests on unmatched samples revealed differences between the types of stress experienced by the two groups. Engineers were more likely to experience stress related to high visibility, being forced into stereotyped behaviors, lack of promotional opportunities, and lack of female role models.

Teachers scored significantly higher on conflict of home and work. In both occupations married women and women with children at home scored significantly higher on stress related to home and work conflicts than single women and those with no children at home. The results of the study suggest that:

women in non-traditional jobs perceive stressors related to their uniqueness in their work groups, and that working women who are married and/or have children living at home feel greater stress than their single, childless colleagues. (abstract)

At least one study (O'Neill & Zeichner, 1985) has documented the fact that professional and executive women are negatively impacted by job stress. They found that stress in the work environment is a significant predictor of physical and mental health outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, and physical symptoms.

A large body of empirical research has linked one work related factor, role stress, to a variety of negative outcomes for the individual and organization. These include: job satisfaction, distrust, anxiety,

tension, high turnover rates, absenteeism and physiological symptoms such as high blood pressure (Holt, 1982).

Role conflict is a form of role stress which has been conceptualized in a variety of ways. Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek. & Rosenthal (1964) described role conflict as a conflict between the demands of one's role and one's own needs and values. Katz and Kahn (1978) described role conflict as occurring when there are conflicts between "the expectations of the role set and those of the focal person for himself or herself" (p. 204).

This study used Miles' (1976) more comprehensive definition that person-role conflict is the perceived incongruence between role requirements placed upon the individual and his/her orientations, interests and values. This person-role conflict model may be viewed broadly as the the degree to which a person "matches the organizational role to be filled" (Latack, 1981, p. 91). This model is in keeping with the systems conceptualization of the term "role" discussed earlier as the set of behaviors and attitudes determined by both internal and external social pressures (Klein, 1979).

To the extent that aspects of self such as race,

gender, age, etc. exert an influence on the individual's thinking and behavior (i.e., provide an orientation) that is dissimilar to those transmitted by the organization, role conflict is present.

The job stress literature has shown that whenever there is such a mismatch there are a variety of associated stress symptoms. They include, depression, somatic complaints and anxiety (Caplan et al. 1974; French, Rogers & Cobb, 1974; Harrison, 1976).

The business literature has identified black executive life as being particularly stressful (Davis & Watson, 1982; Campbell, 1982). Only a handful of business studies have been done to determine the number of blacks in executive positions. A 1985 study done by Korn/Ferry International revealed that less than 1% of 1,362 top managers it surveyed were minorities (Leinstein, 1988). In 1986 Rutgers University Graduate School of Management and The Program to Increase Minorities in Business surveyed 400 Fortune 1,000 companies. The study found less than 9% of all managers were "minorities" which included blacks, Asians and Hispanics. Black students made up approximately three to seven per cent of top MBA school graduating classes in 1987 (Leinstein, 1988).

Pettigrew and Martin (1987) provide a social

psychological analysis of the problem of the non-inclusion of African-Americans within corporate America. They conclude that regardless of the stage of employment (recruitment, entry, evaluation for promotion) black inclusion has been made difficult. Racial stereotyping is cited as one of the three sources of the problem. The authors discuss how this "triple jeopardy" as a result of negative racial stereotyping, solo minority status, and/or token minority role (viewed within the organization as incompetent, hired due to affirmative action as opposed to merit) leads either to excessively high or excessively low expectations and evaluations. This inaccurate feedback and support situation is dangerous for the prospective or actual black professional as it can seriously undermine performance. Furthermore, Pettigrew and Martin (1987) cite research that indicates that most whites and some blacks seem not to fully internalize post Civil Rights era racial norms (e.g.: equal employment opportunity, equal treatment, etc.). They cite a number of social psychological studies that show that whites often perform microaggressions against or avoidance of black people without conscious awareness.

Finally, Mack and Berry (1983) in their study of

role conflicts interviewed and taped 28 black female corporate managers and supervisors. They identified twelve role problems associated with race and gender. Seven of the twelve were considered stressful. The three most frequent areas of role conflict selected involved presenting one's view point, exercising authority and talking to network members.

### Perceived Social Support

Since Cobb's (1977) hallmark review of the subject, social support has been recognized as an important factor contributing to psychological well-being as well as distress (Vaux & Harrison, 1985). However to this day the concept of social support is viewed as theoretically vague (Brownwell & Schumaker 1984; Procidano & Heller 1983 and Thoits 1982) and has eventuated in methodologically unsound research (Tardy, 1985). Vaux and Harrison (1985) speak for many in stating that over the years there has been a proliferation of "idiosyncratic measures (often post hoc) exhibiting dubious relevance to unclear concepts" (p. 245).

This situation has had unfortunate implications

for construct validity (Tardy, 1985). Yet, Brownell and Shumaker (1984), in their updated and extensive review of the literature, conclude that: "in spite of the conceptual confusion and methodological problems, the available evidence suggests that social support probably is an important factor in sustaining health and mitigating the impact of stress" (p. 5).

Many researchers have looked at the direct, indirect, and/or interactive effect of social support on physical and mental health (Brownell & Shumaker, 1985). Social support has been found to directly promote recovery from illness by facilitating appropriate health behaviors (Wallston, Alagna, DeVillis, & DeVillis, 1983). Cohen & Syme (1985) report that social support may be instrumental in bolstering one's resistance to disorder. Brownell and Schumaker (1985) in their review report that social support may have an indirect effect upon an individual's psychological well-being by decreasing the number and severity of stressful life events in his or her life.

According to Vaux and Harrison (1985) several promising approaches to the study of social support have emerged as important. On the basis of their review of the literature the authors posit that social

support is a meta-construct involving many theoretically sound components. Among the components supported by research are: social support networks, supportive interactions, and perceptions that social interactions are supportive. Others have agreed (Barrera, 1981; Heller & Swindle, 1983; Kobasa, 1982; and Thoits, 1982). Of special relevance as a potentially powerful contributor to psychological well-being is the perception of social support.

Perceived social support (PSS) is the extent to which an individual believes that his/her needs for social support, which include but may not be limited to the provision of information, emotional support and feedback, are fulfilled (Procidano & Heller, 1983). Initial studies of the development of scales measuring perceived social support from family and friends suggest that both constructs are inversely related to symptoms of distress and psychopathology.

Brown and Gary (1985) suggest that black women and white women may receive and perceive sources of support differently. Among themselves, married and unmarried black women are remarkably similar in their perceptions and sources of social support from family and friends. In their study of 91 married and 183 unmarried black women Brown and Gary (1985) found that a spouse is an

emotional source of support for only one-third of the married women sampled. Family members and extended kin were found to be major sources of support for black women, irrespective of marital status.

In a study of personality factors, perceived social support and stress effects, Kobasa (1982) found perceived social support to have a low positive correlation with hardiness. Hardier executives tended to perceive their environments as more positive.

### Summary

It has been the focal argument of this study that the organizational dynamics of which the black woman manager is a part is a potential stressor to which she may be vulnerable or resilient depending upon the interaction of person and environmental factors.

This study investigated the extent to which role conflict based upon race and sex-role stereotyping is associated with stress symptoms. The particularly stressful lives of black professional women has been documented in the literature. We have mentioned the potentially negative effects within the organizations in which black women are educated and work (Fleming,

1983; Dumas, 1979). We have also discussed the negative influences of gender role stereotyping within organizations (Wiley & Ekilson, 1982; Powell & Butterfield, 1984).

The void in the literature has been whether pressures based on race and gender lead to role conflict for black women executives and whether in turn, this conflict is associated with stress reactions.

### Hypotheses

Based on the preceding literature the following hypotheses were tested:

Among black female corporate managers:

1] Those who experience role conflict, as reflected by a discrepancy between perceptions of expected role and own sex role orientation, will experience a higher degree of stress symptomatology.

2] There will be a direct relationship among sex role orientation, amount of role conflict experienced and

level of internalized stress such that

a. Those who identify with traditional feminine role behaviors will experience more conflict between self-perceptions and expected role and a higher degree of stress symptomatology.

b. Those who identify with androgynous or masculine role behaviors will experience less conflict between self-perceptions and perceptions of expected role and less stress symptomatology.

3] There will be an interactive effect between perceived social support and sex-role orientation such that perceived social support will be more stress reducing for expressive (feminine sex-typed) individuals than for instrumental (masculine sex-typed) individuals.

## Chapter Three

This chapter will present the methods and procedures of the study.

### Sample

The primary research sample consisted of 40 black female adults ages 25-54. These women had achieved at least management status in a corporation or agency and had worked at least one year in management. This was to insure that all subjects had become familiar with the management role and had time to develop perceptions concerning its demands.

Subjects were included in the sample whose occupational title or role, as reported by the subject on the demographic questionnaire, was the same or similar to titles and descriptions of functions listed under the headings: manager, administrator, and/or executive documented in the U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Handbook (1989). Both public and private sector employees were utilized.

Subjects were recruited in person by the researcher at meetings and conferences of black professional organizations. In addition mailing lists of black women's organizations, a female executive

organization, and the black alumni organizations of two business schools were used. Subjects were also asked to refer the names of others who might be interested in participating in the study. The researcher then sent the referred individual a solicitation letter and packet containing a consent form, directions and test materials. An inspection of the postal seals indicated that the respondents were residing or living in most of the geographical regions of the United States. Multiple returns (at least two) were received from the states of New York, New Jersey, California, Florida, Tennessee and Illinois.

A total of three hundred questionnaires were mailed or handed out to targeted individuals. Forty-six (15.3%) were returned. Six surveys were deleted as inappropriate (grossly incomplete, white female, non-managerial staff position (2), entrepreneur). The forty remaining completed surveys were analyzed.

### Research Instrumentation

The following materials were used to test the research questions. The Bem Sex-Role Inventory was used to determine sex role orientation and perceptions of expected role. A difference between the two sets of subject perceptions (regarding self and workplace was

said to indicate that a role conflict exists for an individual. The Somatization subscale of the Symptom Checklist, and the Maslach Burnout Inventory were used to determine level and type of stress related symptoms present in the sample. The Perceived Social Support Family/Friends Scale was used to determine type and level of social support perceived by the subjects to be available to them. A questionnaire specifically developed for this study was used to gather demographic information.

#### The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI)

The BSRI has often been used to determine sex-role orientation and the extent of sex-role stereotyping. According to Lippa (1985) a computerized reference search completed in January 1984 yielded 432 research studies employing the BSRI. This scale was developed in 1974 to operationalize Bem's conceptualization of masculinity and femininity as two independent dimensions. Previous scales assessing masculinity and feminity tended to be based upon the traditional notion of a single bipolar dimension.

The short form version of the BSRI developed in 1978 was used in this study. This version has been found to be superior to the long form as discussed

below. Test administration is approximately ten minutes. The BSRI short form contains thirty items which correspond to personality characteristics. Ten characteristics are said to be feminine, ten are stereotypically masculine and ten are neutral providing a context for the masculinity and femininity scales. The subject is asked to indicate how well each of these characteristics fits him or her on a seven point scale. The scale scores range from one to seven corresponding to "never or almost never" (1) to "always or almost always true" (7). Because the BSRI treats masculinity and feminity as independent dimensions subjects may be differentiated as to whether they are low or high on either or both dimensions. That is, a subject may be determined to be masculine, feminine (high on one dimension, low on the other), androgynous (high on both dimensions), or undifferentiated (low on both dimensions). Bem (1981) recommends that researchers use a median split method of determining the four types. However, since the original sample on which the test is normed is comprised of predominantly white college subjects, the BSRI norms were not used to classify subjects in the present study. Bem (1981) notes in the manual that the decision to use medians based on the original normative population or a

particular research population is a matter of the individual researcher's judgement. The data collected in this study was analysed by means of a hierarchical multiple regression to make full use of the range of the scale and as advocated by Payne (1985).

The BSRI boasts good reliability and validity statistics (Gaudreau 1979, Bem 1981). Alpha coefficients were computed separately for males, females and the difference between the means to estimate the internal consistency of the BSRI-S (short form). The manual reports alphas ranging from .84 to .89. All three scores test-retest reliability indicated by product-moment correlations are high with score ranging generally from .85 to .91. The correlation between the two versions of the BSRI using masculinity, femininity and difference between the mean scores is .90. The short form is used in this study because as Payne (1985) points out in his review it is a "psychometrically superior, functionally purer index" of instrumental and expressive traits. He recommends that the short form be chosen over the original version. Bem developed the short form by means of a factor analytic study of the forty masculine and feminine items in the original version. According to Bem (1985) the short form represents an enhancement of

the original form given its heightened internal consistency. Bem and others view the refined measure as tapping "assertiveness-dominance or instrumentality" (masculine) and nurturance-interpersonal warmth or "expressiveness" (femininity) (Payne, 1985).

#### The Symptom Checklist (SCL 90-R)

The SCL 90-R is a self report symptom inventory that was originally designed to reflect the psychological patterns of medical and psychiatric patients (Derogatis, 1975). However, Payne (1987) reports that the SCL 90-R can be used to detect symptomatology among apparently normal people. The test has frequently been used to evaluate the effects of psychological stress (Derogatis, 1982).

Scores are obtained on nine subscales: Somatization, Obsessive-Compulsive, Interpersonal Sensitivity, Depression, Anxiety, Phobic Anxiety, Paranoid Ideation and Psychoticism. This study only utilized the Somatization subscale.

There are 20 items in the Somatization subscale. The instructions ask the subject to indicate for each symptom how much distress that problem or complaint has caused him/her during an indicated period of time (e.g.: one week, two weeks, one month, etc. prior to

the taking of the test). Subjects respond on a scale of 0 to 5 , indicating respectively, not at all, a little bit, moderately, quite a bit, and extremely. The subscale takes two to three minutes to answer. Norms are available for this subtest for an adult nonpatient population (Pauker, 1987).

According to Payne's (1987) review the SCL 90-R has a relatively high reliability given that fact that it is a brief inventory. Measures of internal consistency (alpha coefficients) range from .77 to .90 in a psychiatric population. Pauker (1987) reports that the few validity studies of the SCL 90-R indicate levels of concurrent, convergent, discriminant and construct validity to be comparable to other self report inventories.

#### The Maslach Burn-Out Inventory

Burnout is a term used to denote physical and emotional exhaustion from a job-related stress, resulting in negative work attitudes, a poor professional self-concept and a loss of concern for clients served (Dowd, 1985). The MBI is a research instrument designed to measure three aspects of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment. Although the MBI was

originally devised to assess burnout levels of professionals in human services or education, according to Bodden (1985), it is debatable whether burnout is either unique to human services or whether it is merely an alternate label for some veteran concepts. The reviewer offers a more conventional explanation: that from time to time any form of work (not just human service) can become a burden. This instrument has been identified as a potentially useful measurement tool for researchers interested in the effects of job related stress (Bodden, 1985; Dowd, 1985).

The MBI form used in this study contained 25 items and requires approximately 20 minutes to complete. Utilizing six and seven point Likert scales the MBI measures both the frequency and intensity of the feelings described about work. The Emotional Exhaustion subscale measures feelings of being emotionally burdened and exhausted by work. The Depersonalization subscale measures an unfeeling and impersonal response towards service recipients. The Personal Accomplishment subscale assesses one's feelings of competence and successful achievement in work. For the purposes of this study the term "recipients" was replaced by the term "subordinates" to more closely conform to subject role requirements and

the milieu of the workplace.

Factor analytic studies indicate valid distinctions among the three factors mentioned above. Reliability of the instrument has been demonstrated. Internal consistency reliability coefficients ranged from .71 to .90. Test-retest reliability (2-4 weeks apart) ranged from .53 to .82. A wide variety of convergent validity studies have been done on the instrument including comparison of scores on the instrument and ratings of outside observers; burnout score with other stress outcomes: alcohol and drug abuse, insomnia. Discriminant validity studies have been done indicating that burnout is not related to job satisfaction or distorted by social desirability (Dowd, 1985).

The Perceived Social Support Scales (PSS-Fa, PSS-Fr)

The Perceived Social Support Scales (Perceived Social Support from Family, PSS-Fa; Perceived Social Support from Friends, PSS-Fr) were designed to measure the extent to which an individual's needs for support, information, and feedback are experienced as fulfilled by friends and family (Procidano & Heller, 1983). The two scales are comprised of twenty items each. The subject is asked to circle "yes", "no" or "don't know"

to statements about feelings and experiences regarding their relationships with family members or friends (depending on which scale is given).

Three validation studies (n=222 each) were done by the researchers which indicate that the measures are internally consistent (Cronback of .88 & .90) and measure valid constructs. Both PSS-Fa and PSS-Fr are inversely related to symptoms of psychological distress and psychopathology. PSS-Fr is more closely related to social competence than PSS-Fa. Negative or positive mood states do not alter PSS-Fa. However PSS-Fr seems to be lowered by negative mood states.

### Procedure

Subjects received test materials through the mail or in person.

Subjects were directed to respond to the BSRI as they viewed themselves. They were then asked to fill out the demographic questionnaire, the Perceived Social Support Fa/Fr Scales, the Somatization subscale of the SCL 90-R, and the Maslach Burn-out Scale. Finally, subjects were asked to repeat the BSRI in terms of their view of organizational expectations of their behavior.

## Analysis

The following analyses were performed on the data:

Pearson product-moment correlations were used to determine the level of relationship between a) sex-role conflict and stress symptoms, b) sex-role orientation (masculinity, femininity and androgyny) and sex-role conflicts, and c) sex-role orientation and the various measures of stress (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment and somatization).

Multiple regressions were performed to predict sex-role conflict and stress symptoms from sex-role orientation. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were completed to test for the differential influence of social support from family and/or friends on stress symptoms as a function of sex-role orientation.

Analyses of variance, Pearson product-moment correlations and descriptive statistics were employed to assess demographic data.

## Chapter Four

A variety of analyses including Pearson product-moment correlations, ANOVA's, and hierarchical multiple regressions were employed to interpret the demographic questionnaire results and to test the study hypotheses.

### Demographic Questionnaire Results

The frequency distributions of the demographic variables reported in this section are contained in Appendix A. The sample ranged in age from 25 to 54, with a mean of 35.5 and s.d. of 6.2. The overwhelming majority of respondents had considerable job experience. Ninety-five per cent had more than three years and forty seven per cent indicated more than ten years experience. As expected, educational achievement was relatively high. Over ninety-two per cent of the sample had achieved at least some college education. Over forty-two per cent had achieved a masters degree or higher. With respect to marital status, 42.5 per cent were married, 30 per cent were never married, and 27.5 percent were separated or divorced. Irrespective of marital status, most respondents were either childless (42.5 per cent), or had two or fewer children (47.5 per cent). The median income range was 40-50

thousand dollars per year. Of the 22 respondents who elected to indicate job function, most (11) were working in marketing or accounting. Twenty-one women held managerial positions within the private sector. Nine others held administrative positions within the public sector.

Two significant relationships were found between demographic variables and the test scores. Perceived social support from family (PSS-Fa) increased with greater years of experience ( $r=.317, p<.05$ ). Conflict between a feminine sex role orientation and expected role within the organization (FCONF) was reduced as years of experience increased. ( $r=-.396, p<.05$ ). Also as income increased, there was less reported emotional exhaustion however this result was not significant ( $r=-.273, p<.1$ ).

A number of analyses of variance were done to test differences between the public and private sector employees on all the study measures. The only significant difference discovered was that femininity scores were lower for the public sector administrators than for the corporate managers (mean public= 47.5, mean private=54.2,  $F=5.164, p<.05$ ).

In order to test the hypotheses, conflict was

further operationally defined as follows: masculine role conflict refers to the absolute difference between the two Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) masculinity scores (perceptions of self and of organizational expectations that are congruent with stereotypically masculine behavior), feminine role conflict refers to the absolute difference between the two BSRI femininity scores (likewise perceptions of self and organizational expectations that reflect traditional femininity), and total role conflict, refers to the sum of the masculine and feminine conflict scores (i.e. the sum of the differences discussed above). Appendix B contains the frequency distributions of all the test measures.

Hypothesis 1 stated that among black female managers, those who experienced role conflict, as reflected by a discrepancy between perceptions of expected role and own sex role orientation, would experience a higher degree of stress symptomatology.

The relationships between sex-role conflict scores and stress scores are summarized by the Pearson's correlations in Table 1. This hypothesis was supported by a correlation between total conflict and emotional exhaustion ( $r=.33$ ,  $p<.05$ ). However this was the only relationship that achieved statistical significance.

**Table 1**

**Correlations Between Sex-Role Conflict Scores  
and Stress Symptoms**

SEX ROLE CONFLICT	STRESS SYMPTOM			
	EE	DP	PA	SOMATIC
MALE	.29	-.25	.01	.11
FEMALE	.21	.05	-.12	-.22
TOTAL	.33*	-.14	-.07	-.07

\*  $p < .05$

Note:  $df = 38$ .

**Key**

d.f. degrees of freedom  
 ee emotional exhaustion subscale scores  
 dp depersonalization subscale scores  
 pa personal accomplishment subscale scores  
 soma somatization subscale scores

Somatization and depersonalization are apparently unrelated to this type of role conflict. Furthermore, perceptions of personal accomplishment, which are usually suppressed during continuously stressful circumstances, were not diminished by this conflict.

Hypothesis 2 stated that there would be a direct relationship among sex role orientation, amount of role conflict experienced and level of internalized stress such that

a. Those managers who identified with traditional feminine role behaviors would experience more conflict between self-perceptions and expected role and a higher degree of stress symptomatology.

b. Those managers who identified with androgynous or masculine role behaviors would experience less conflict between self-perceptions and perceptions of expected role, and less stress symptomatology.

The relationships between sex-role orientation scores and sex-role conflict scores are summarized by the Pearson's correlations in Table 2. Three of the relationships are significant. Female conflict was found to be negatively related to the BSRI masculinity and androgyny scores. Thus the more masculine and androgynous subjects reported less feminine role

conflict. These findings are consistent with part b. of hypothesis two. However, none of the other relationships were significant. Thus, femininity was not related to role conflict as anticipated in part a of hypothesis two.

The relationship between sex-role orientation scores and stress symptom scores are summarized by the correlations in Table 3. A moderate negative relationship was found between femininity and depersonalization ( $r = -.32, p < .05$ ). Thus the more feminine subjects reported less depersonalization. This is opposite to the prediction of hypothesis two, part a. In addition, the androgynous score was found to be positively related to personal accomplishment ( $r = .36, p < .05$ ). This finding is consistent with part b. of hypothesis two as high personal accomplishment is an indicator of low burnout. None of the other relationships in Table 3 are significant. However, a strong trend ( $r = .31, p = .05$ ) toward relationship between masculinity and personal accomplishment, similar to that previously discussed regarding androgyny, is noteworthy as it is also consistent with part b of hypothesis two.

Tables 2 and 3 consider each orientation individually. Multiple regression techniques were also

Table 2

Correlations Between Sex-Role Orientations  
and Sex-Role Conflicts

SEX ROLE ORIENTATION	SEX ROLE CONFLICT		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
MASCULINE	-.01	-.43**	-.28
FEMININE	-.19	-.09	-.19
ANDROGENY	-.15	-.35*	-.32*

\* p < .05      \*\* p < .01

Note: df = 38.

**Table 3**

**Correlations Between Sex-Role Orientation  
and Stress Symptoms**

SEX-ROLE ORIENTATION	STRESS SYMPTOM			
	EE	DP	PA	SOMATIC
MASCULINE	-.19	-.04	.31	-.02
FEMININE	-.04	-.32*	.27	.09
ANDROGENY	-.14	-.22	.36*	.06

\*  $p < .05$

Note:  $df = 38$ .

Key

d.f. degrees of freedom  
 ee emotional exhaustion subscale scores  
 dp depersonalization subscale scores  
 pa personal accomplishment subscale scores  
 soma somatization subscale scores

employed to relate the full sex-role orientation information to each conflict score and each stress symptom as summarized in Table 4. Here, the result for female conflict was significant, reflecting the negative relationship between female role conflict and masculinity and androgyny reported above. No other conflict or symptom score was significantly related to the set of sex-role orientation scores.

Hypothesis three stated that there would be an interactive effect between perceived social support and sex-role orientation such that perceived social support would be more stress reducing for expressive (feminine sex-typed) individuals than for instrumental (masculine sex-typed) individuals.

This hypothesis was addressed with a series of hierarchical multiple regressions. In order to test for differential social support influence as a function of sex-role orientation, the model required must first enter (control for) the main effects of social support and sex role orientation, and then test for the interactive effects which represent the differential influence of social support. The results for family support are summarized in Table 5. In no case was the constellation of sex-role orientation scores seen to significantly interact with family social support in

Table 4

Summary of Multiple Regressions  
 Predicting Sex-Role Conflict and Stress Symptoms  
 from Sex-Role Orientation

	MULTIPLE R	MULTIPLE R SQUARED	F-RATIO (DF-3,36)
SEX-ROLE CONFLICT			
MALE	.28	.08	1.04
FEMALE	.47	.22	3.32*
TOTAL	.40	.16	2.29
STRESS SYMPTOM			
EE	.19	.04	.45
DP	.36	.13	1.84
PA	.41	.17	2.42
SOMATIC	.18	.03	.39

\*  $p < .05$

Key

d.f. degrees of freedom  
 ee emotional exhaustion subscale scores  
 dp depersonalization subscale scores  
 pa personal accomplishment subscale scores  
 soma somatization subscale scores

Table 5

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Tests for  
 Differential Family Social Support Influence on  
 Symptoms as a Function of Sex-Role Orientations  
 (Sex-Role by Family Support Interactions)

SYMPTOM	INCREASE IN R SQUARED	F (d.f.=3,32) FOR INCREASE	SEX ROLE ORIENTATION <sup>1</sup>		
			MASCULINE	FEMININE	ANDROG
EE	.052	.62	-.59	-.48	-.68
DP	.114	1.73	.11	-.71	-.73
PA	.122	1.95	.51	-2.40*	-1.98
SOMATIC	.010	.11	-.54	-.21	-.44

\* p < .05

1. t(d.f.=34)

Key

d.f. degrees of freedom  
 ee emotional exhaustion subscale scores  
 dp depersonalization subscale scores  
 pa personal accomplishment subscale scores  
 soma somatization subscale scores

the prediction of the stress score. Tests of the interactions of family support with the separate sex-role orientation scores for each stress symptom score yielded only one significant result. A reduced model to illustrate this finding was computed. It was found that the prediction of personal accomplishment yielded the following beta weights: femininity 1.53, family support, .90, and interaction -1.72. This suggests that while femininity or family support might be beneficial for personal accomplishment, both high femininity and family support together were not found to be beneficial. In other words, family social support was less beneficial for personal accomplishment scores in individuals with high femininity scores than for individuals with low femininity. This is the reverse of the prediction of hypothesis three. None of the other relationships were significant. Furthermore, as seen in Table 6, none of the findings of a similar analysis for social support from friends were significant.

Perceived social support is associated with less stress in this population (Table 7). Depersonalization and personal accomplishment may be predicted from level of perceived social support from friends ( $F=10.36$ ,

Table 6

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Tests for  
Differential Friend Social Support Influence on  
Symptoms as a Function of Sex-Role Orientations  
(Sex-Role by Friend Support Interactions)

SYMPTOM	INCREASE IN R SQUARED	$F_1$ (d.f.=3,32) FOR INCREASE	SEX ROLE ORIENTATION <sup>1</sup>		
			MASCULINE	FEMININE	ANDROG
EE	.040	.53	.85	-.85	-.48
DP	.115	1.97	.27	-1.04	-.99
PA	.136	2.29	-1.08	-1.37	-1.97
SOMATIC	.139	1.84	1.49	1.59	-.83

Note: None of the above values are statistically significant.

1.  $t(d.f.=34)$

Key

d.f. degrees of freedom  
ee emotional exhaustion subscale scores  
dp depersonalization subscale scores  
pa personal accomplishment subscale scores  
soma somatization subscale scores

Table 7

Correlations Between Perceived Social Support Scores  
and Stress Symptoms

PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT	STRESS SYMPTOMS			
	EE	DP	PA	SOMA
FAMILY	-.163	-.317	.318*	.112
FRIEND	-.219	-.463**	.364*	-.078

\*p <.05      \*\*p <.01

$p=.0026$ ;  $F=5.79$ ,  $p=.02$ ). PSS-Fr is negatively related to depersonalization ( $r=-.46$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and positively related to personal accomplishment ( $r= .36$ ). PSS-Fa is negatively associated with depersonalization and positively associated with personal accomplishment ( $r= -.32$ ,  $p<.05$ ;  $r=.32$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

Subject perceptions of the organizational environment were found to be associated with other study factors. Pearson product-moment correlations were computed which indicate three significant relationships. A perception of the organizational environment as requiring traditional feminine behavior was positively related to masculinity ( $r=.42$ ,  $p<.01$ ). A perception of the organization as requiring stereotypically masculine role behaviors is positively related to perceived social support from family ( $r=.33$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and, negatively related to emotional exhaustion ( $r=.40$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

Emotional exhaustion and somatization were found to be positively related ( $r=.45$ ,  $p<.005$ ). However intercorrelations among the other stress factors (somatization, depersonalization and personal accomplishment) were not significant.

## Summary of Findings

This study investigated the extent to which role conflict based upon sex-role stereotyping is associated with stress related symptoms and whether perceived social support is a mediator of stress in a sample of black women leaders. A number of analyses including, Pearson product-moment correlations, analyses of variance, and multiple regression analyses were utilized to interpret the demographics and test the study hypotheses.

Regarding the demographics, it was found that as years of job experience increased, perceived social support from family also increased. Discrepancies between feminine self perceptions (femininity) and perceived expected behavior at work, regarding traditionally feminine role behaviors, decreased with increasing years of experience. Finally, public and private sector employees differed significantly on femininity with the public sector leaders scoring lower on femininity.

With respect to the hypotheses, emotional exhaustion, an aspect of stress, was found to be associated with conflict between sex role orientation and perceptions of organizational expectations. This

result supported the first hypothesis.

In the opposite direction than anticipated, a moderate negative correlation was found between femininity and depersonalization, an aspect of stress. As this was the only significant relationship found with stress part a of the second hypothesis was not confirmed. Androgyny was found to be positively related to personal accomplishment which was in line with part b of hypothesis two.

Contrary to hypothesis three, no evidence was found for a positive mediating effect of perceived social support in the prediction of stress from sex-role orientation. In fact, the femininity X perceived social support from family interaction was found to reduce personal accomplishment.

## Chapter Five

### Discussion of Results

This chapter is designed to discuss the results and implications of the study and is organized as follows: a brief summary, discussion of the findings presented in Chapter Four, the limitations of the study, suggestions for further study, and conclusions.

This study investigated the extent to which role conflict based upon sex-role stereotyping is associated with stress related symptoms and whether perceived social support is a mediator of stress in a sample of black women leaders.

The specific objectives of the study were: to determine whether significant differences between subject sex role orientation and perceptions of expected role are associated with stress effects; to determine whether sex-role-orientation is a factor associated with stress reactions among black female executives who experience role conflict; and to determine whether there is an interactive effect between perceived social support and sex role orientation that mediates stress reactions among black

women executives who experience role conflict.

With respect to the first hypothesis, that those black female managers who experienced role conflict would also experience a higher degree of stress symptomatology, emotional exhaustion, an aspect of stress, was found to be associated with conflict between sex role orientation and perceptions of organizational expectations. The other stress-related symptoms measured (somatization, depersonalization, personal accomplishment) were not found to be significantly correlated with this role conflict.

Some authors view high achieving professional women as survivors who, despite facing a wide variety of stressors in the workplace, exhibit higher tolerance levels for stress and experience themselves as capable of coping with the pressures of their job (Lourie, 1981; Stoap, 1983). Consistent with this perspective, the findings of a more recent study suggests that this population includes a relatively high proportion of individuals who have excellent coping skills and strategies which they regularly employ (Harris-Butler, 1990). It may be that black female executives have become accustomed to experiencing stress and have developed mechanisms for coping with stressors that are

effective and specific to their situations (Wright, Berg, Creecy, 1987). Taking this perspective into account regarding the present study, it would appear that even though the black women managers may experience some discomfort associated with role conflict based on sex-role stereotyping, as evidenced by their ratings on emotional exhaustion, they do not experience the more deleterious aspects of job-related stress as reflected by their scores on the somatization, and personal accomplishment.

Another, possibly more parsimonious way of interpreting this finding directs attention not to the population from which the study sample is drawn but to the sample. It may be that the women who responded to this study, unlike their counterparts who did not, were those who were relatively comfortable in their functioning despite the conflicts and stressors inherent in their work environment. A subjective feeling of emotional exhaustion may be experienced by these women as the price of their relative comfort and high level of functioning.

The second hypothesis stated that there would be a direct relationship among sex role orientation, amount of role conflict experienced and level of internalized stress such that: a) those managers who identified with

traditional feminine role behaviors would experience more conflict between self-perceptions and expected role and a higher degree of stress symptomatology; and b) those managers who identified with androgynous or masculine role behaviors would experience less conflict between self-perceptions and perceptions of expected role, and less stress symptomatology.

The first part of the second hypothesis was not confirmed. In the opposite direction than anticipated, a negative correlation was found between femininity and depersonalization, an aspect of stress.

Depersonalization as assessed by the stress measure used in this study reflects an unfeeling and impersonal response towards subordinates and/or coworkers. It may be that this particular result of chronic stress in the workplace is mitigated by a value placed on satisfactory interpersonal relationships. Or, that a manager with a feminine self-perception would not readily identify with this behavior except under more severe stress conditions than experienced by this sample. Theoretically, masculine and androgynous managers place much less emphasis on the interpersonal aspects of life in the workplace than managers with a stereotypically feminine identification.

This finding, that femininity is not necessarily

associated with increased stress effects, may be understood in light of the current controversy regarding sex-role orientation and psychological adjustment. Although there has been much research and theory supportive of de-emphasizing traditional sex-roles and linking androgyny and masculinity to psychological well-being (Bem, 1974, 1975; Hinrichsen, Follansbee and Ganellen, 1981; Flagg, 1984, and Thomas, 1985), the above findings from this study support the traditional congruence model discussed by Whitley (1985). This model holds that psychological well-being will be fostered only when one's sex-role orientation is congruent with one's gender.

Yet, androgyny was found to be positively related to personal accomplishment which is supportive of the second part of this hypothesis. Recall, Blanchard and Sargent (1984) advocate that the effective manager is androgynous. This study provides empirical data concerning the relative effectiveness of the androgynous manager, supporting the position that the perceived effectiveness of the black female manager is associated with an androgynous self perception.

Taken together the findings regarding the second hypothesis support Payne's (1987) argument that expressiveness (femininity) may be more important for

some components of adjustment than for others. Within this position it is advocated that "the relative importance of instrumentality and expressiveness depend on the particular facet of adjustment under study" (Payne, 1987, p.360). The facet of adjustment under scrutiny here is the self report of stress-related perceptions and behavior. Stress effects are varied. Sex-role orientation is possibly a factor contributing to the way in which a stressor is perceived and/or to the extent of expression of a particular stress effect.

Hypothesis three was not supported as no evidence was found for a positive mediating effect of perceived social support in the prediction of stress from sex-role orientation. In fact, the femininity X perceived social support from family interaction was found to reduce personal accomplishment despite the fact that independently these two factors contribute somewhat to stress reduction.

Women who are highly feminine are congruent with the traditional role of kin keeper. This role often is one which can cause strain, particularly for those with other significant role-related responsibilities such as work and parenthood. It is consistent with sex-typing theory to assume that masculine and androgynous individuals are more likely to set boundaries and

limits that reduce the possibility of overload based on multiple role involvements. It is possible that a number of those managers in this study who identified with the stereotypically feminine attributes also experienced family overinvolvement or home versus work conflicts as a strain. Personal accomplishment as assessed by the stress measure used for this study refers to a feeling of success and competence in one's work. An individual who places a premium on her accomplishments with respect to family and the kin-keeping role may be somewhat less self-congratulatory in her report of her accomplishments at work than a counterpart who can more easily keep these important arenas separated.

Although perceived social support was not found to be significant as a mediator of stress resulting from sex-role stereotype based role conflict, it is a factor associated with less stress in identified managers who indicated they received such support. Both perceived social support from family (PSS-F) and perceived social support (PSS-Fr) are positively related to scores indicating personal accomplishment and negatively related to those indicating impersonal treatment of staff (depersonalization). PSS-Fa was also found to increase as years of job experience increased. These

relationships reflect moderate correlations that are statistically significant. Thus as the managers became more experienced in their functions, they apparently felt more competent and their personal resources were perceived also to be more substantive.

Another finding of this study is relevant to the above considerations of age, experience and subjective reports of increasing personal resources. The discrepancy between femininity and perceived expected behavior at work regarding traditional feminine role behaviors decreased with increasing years of experience. This suggests that the years go by the managers tend to conform to their perceptions of organizational demands. One might also speculate that those that experienced high degrees of role conflict or stress were weeded out of the sample either en route to their present positions as managers or by their willingness to participate in this study.

The private versus public sector differentiation was another significant factor among the demographic findings. Public and private sector employees differed on femininity with the public sector leaders scoring lower on femininity. This finding could be reflective of the nature of management jobs in the public sector. While many entry level public sector positions held by

women are highly traditional (eg. teacher, nurse, social worker, etc), the positions held at the upper limits of these fields tend to be non-traditional for women (e.g. educational superintendent, hospital administrator, personnel director).

The review of the literature reported in Chapter Two suggests that while the organizational context for African-Americans is stressful, the interaction of racial and sex-role stereotypes present particular pressures for black woman leaders. It was anticipated in this study that those black women managers not sextyped in a manner consistent with that prevailing in their organizations may experience role conflict and job related stress. Furthermore, this study attempted to provide information about the black woman leader's perception of social support available to her as a factor contributing to the mitigation of this stress.

One particular viewpoint stands out as a theoretical antecedent to this study. Dumas (1979) detailed the dilemmas of black females in leadership from a group relations perspective. She discussed the organizational life of black women managers and executives. Specifically Dumas referred to the mythical images of black women which she felt pervade organizations and makes functioning in those positions

extremely stressful. Dumas discussed the efforts to recreate the "Mammy" image in today's ambitious black females who aspire to top level positions. Because of the interaction of racial and sex-role stereotyping the non-task demands of the organization provide an induction to behave in ways that are counterproductive to her formal organizational role. According to Dumas, resisting the stereotype leads to further growth as a leader.

This study lends some support to the position that role conflict based on sex-role stereotyping is a strain producing factor in the lives of these women. Some emotional exhaustion is associated with the presence of this conflict. However, it is clear that the women in this sample appear to be effectively coping with the stress.

Organizational demands regarding sex-role stereotypical behavior are present in the enterprises where these women work. This study found that black women who scored higher on masculinity tended to perceive their organizations as expecting them to engage in feminine role behaviors. This finding lends some support to the thesis advanced by Dumas (1979) that while in the formal system the black female leader is required to be competent and task oriented,

in the informal system, however, her willingness to perform the caring, nurturing interpersonal (stereotypically feminine sex-type) activities is tied to her acceptance and to the reduction of organizational anxiety. Interestingly, a perception of the organization as requiring typically masculine role behaviors of the black woman manager is negatively related to emotional exhaustion.

The fact that this study did not find the extreme symptom picture suggested by the job stress literature may have been due to self-selection, which may have caused an underrepresentation of individuals who have been adversely affected by this type of role conflict.

Finally, the type of role conflict studied is only one of a variety of that blacks in management face that are not related to the formal organizational demands (Pettigrew & Martin, 1987). While this study did not directly explore the organizational assumptions that affect the black female manager's role it assumes that there are such organizational assumptions (Jacques, 1955; Bayes & Newton, 1976) to which these managers respond with stress-related symptoms. Further research is necessary to determine the extent to which racism and sexism influence these assumptions.

### Limitations of the Study

The validity of the findings may have been affected by the following factors:

The use of non-probability (purposive structural) sampling, instead of probability (random) sampling, to collect data may have biased the study;

The sample was comprised of managers or executives who volunteered to participate in the study. Thus the heterogeneity of the sample was compromised as differences were reduced. There is no way of knowing, and if so, in what ways this influenced study findings;

The response rate of approximately fifteen per cent, though acceptable for survey data, resulted in a relatively small sample of a total pool;

Since paper and pencil self-report measures were used the results reflect the limitations of such instruments furthermore, the stress measures used did not measure anxiety, depression, or other psychological indices that are also associated with constant stress. Caution should be exercised in making generalizations regarding this population and psychoneurotic aspects of stress.

## Suggestions for Further Research

The results of this study indicate that future investigation into the following areas would be useful.

1. Further investigation of the epidemiology of stress caused dysfunction among black women in leadership positions appears warranted. The replication of the study using psychoneurotic indices of stress may prove enlightening.

2. Comparison studies using samples including black men and white women might document the negative effects of the interaction of racial and sex-role stereotypes, if present, among these population.

3. A study to determine whether sex-role orientation interacts with any of the recently identified psycho-social factors contributing to job stress, particularly type A personality and obsessive cognitive style.

4. A study to determine the types of coping strategies employed by black women managers and executives.

## Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, considering its limitations, the following conclusions are considered tenable.

1. Role conflict based on sex-role stereotyping is associated with emotional exhaustion, a stress-induced condition, among black female managers and executives. This study lends some support to the thesis that there are potential role inductions operant in the organizations in which black women leaders work based on the dynamic interaction of racial and sex-role stereotypes (Dumas' 1979).

2. Sex-role orientation is a factor differentially contributing to psychological adjustment to job stress in black women managers. Femininity was found to be negatively related to treating staff in emotional withdrawal from the interpersonal aspects of work life. Androgyny and possibly also masculinity were found to be positively related to a personal sense of success and competence at work.

3. Perceived social support is not a significant mediator of stress resulting from sex-role stereotype based role conflict. However it is a factor that may contribute independently to psychological adjustment to

job stress in black women managers and warrants further study with this population.

## Appendices

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Frequency Distribution and Percentages

INDUSTRY

Value	# Cases	%	Cum%	%	Cum%
1 RETAIL	3	7.50	7.50	7.69	7.69
2 FINANCIAL	7	17.50	25.00	17.95	25.64
4 INDUST GOODS	3	7.50	32.50	7.69	33.33
5 ADVERT-PUBLISH	4	10.00	42.50	10.26	43.59
9 TRANSPORT	1	2.50	45.00	2.56	46.15
10 UTILITY	3	7.50	52.50	7.69	53.85
11 OTHER	18	45.00	97.50	46.15	100.00
Missing	1	2.50			

## Frequency Distribution and Percentages

### FUNCTION

Value	# Cases	%	Cum%	%	Cum%
1 ACCOUNTING	4	10.00	10.00	18.18	18.18
2 ENGINEERING	3	7.50	17.50	13.64	31.82
3 FINANCE	1	2.50	20.00	4.55	36.36
4 RESEARCH	1	2.50	22.50	4.55	40.91
6 MARKETING	7	17.50	40.00	31.82	72.73
7 OFFICE MANAGE	3	7.50	47.50	13.64	86.36
8 PERSONNEL	1	2.50	50.00	4.55	90.91
9 PRODUCTION	1	2.50	52.50	4.55	95.45
10 PR	1	2.50	55.00	4.55	100.00
Missing	18	45.00			

Frequency Distribution and Percentages

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Value	# Cases	%	Cum%	%	Cum%
1 LESS THAN 3	2	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
2 3 TO 5	5	12.50	17.50	12.50	17.50
3 5 TO 10	14	35.00	52.50	35.00	52.50
4 OVER 10	19	47.50	100.00	47.50	100.00

## Frequency Distribution and Percentages

### ..... INCOME

Value	# Cases	%	Cum%	%	Cum%
1 UNDER 30	5	12.50	12.50	12.82	12.82
2 30-40	12	30.00	42.50	30.77	43.59
3 40-50	8	20.00	62.50	20.51	64.10
4 50-60	7	17.50	80.00	17.95	82.05
5 60-70	5	12.50	92.50	12.82	94.87
7 80-90	1	2.50	95.00	2.56	97.44
8 OVER 90	1	2.50	97.50	2.56	100.00
Missing	1	2.50			

## Frequency Distribution and Percentages

.....  
AGE

Value	# Cases	%	Cum%	%	Cum%
24.0000	1	2.50	2.50	2.70	2.70
27.0000	3	7.50	10.00	8.11	10.81
28.0000	1	2.50	12.50	2.70	13.51
29.0000	2	5.00	17.50	5.41	18.92
30.0000	3	7.50	25.00	8.11	27.03
31.0000	2	5.00	30.00	5.41	32.43
33.0000	2	5.00	35.00	5.41	37.84
34.0000	1	2.50	37.50	2.70	40.54
35.0000	4	10.00	47.50	10.81	51.35
36.0000	1	2.50	50.00	2.70	54.05
37.0000	2	5.00	55.00	5.41	59.46
38.0000	2	5.00	60.00	5.41	64.86
39.0000	4	10.00	70.00	10.81	75.68
40.0000	2	5.00	75.00	5.41	81.08
41.0000	1	2.50	77.50	2.70	83.78
42.0000	3	7.50	85.00	8.11	91.89
43.0000	1	2.50	87.50	2.70	94.59
44.0000	1	2.50	90.00	2.70	97.30
54.0000	1	2.50	92.50	2.70	100.00
Missing	3	7.50			

## EDUCATION

Value	# Cases	X	CumX	X	CumX
2 HIGH SCHOOL	2	5.00	5.00	5.13	5.13
3 SOME COLLEGE	3	7.50	12.50	7.69	12.82
4 BA	17	42.50	55.00	43.59	56.41
5 MA	15	37.50	92.50	38.46	94.87
6 PHD	2	5.00	97.50	5.13	100.00
Missing	1	2.50			

## Frequency Distribution and Percentages

### MARITAL STATUS

Value	# Cases	%	Cum%	%	Cum%
1 SINGLE	12	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00
2 MARRIED	17	42.50	72.50	42.50	72.50
3 SEPARATED	2	5.00	77.50	5.00	77.50
4 DIVORCED	9	22.50	100.00	22.50	100.00

Frequency Distribution and Percentages

CHILDREN

Value	# Cases	%	Cum%	%	Cum%
.0000	17	42.50	42.50	43.59	43.59
1.0000	11	27.50	70.00	28.21	71.79
2.0000	8	20.00	90.00	20.51	92.31
3.0000	2	5.00	95.00	5.13	97.44
4.0000	1	2.50	97.50	2.56	100.00
Missing	1	2.50			

## Appendix B

### Frequency Distributions of Test Scores

## Frequency Distributions Of Test Scores

### Bem Sex-Role Inventory

	Self		Organization	
	MASC	FEM	MASC	FEM
Mean	55.68	52.73	53.75	49.20
S.D.	8.07	8.16	12.25	11.14
N	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00

## Frequency Distributions Of Test Scores

### Perceived Social Support

	Family	Friends
Mean	16.43	17.10
S.D.	4.35	3.63
N	40.00	40.00

## Frequency Distributions Of Test Scores

### Stress Measures

	SOMA	EE	DP	PA
Mean	32.95	22.40	4.88	32.86
S.D.	10.87	12.58	4.08	8.42
N	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00

## Appendix C

### Correlational Statistics

**Correlations Between Sex-Role Conflict Scores and  
Sex-Role Orientation**

Correlations:	MC	FC	TC
MA	-.0148 ( 40) P= .928	-.4312 ( 40) P= .005	-.2797 ( 40) P= .080
FE	-.1897 ( 40) P= .241	-.0899 ( 40) P= .581	-.1865 ( 40) P= .249
AN	-.1526 ( 40) P= .347	-.3501 ( 40) P= .027	-.3237 ( 40) P= .042

**Key**

d.f.	degrees of freedom
ee	emotional exhaustion subscale scores
dp	depersonalization subscale scores
pa	personal accomplishment subscale scores
soma	somatization subscale scores

**Correlations Between Sex-Role Conflict Scores and  
Stress Symptom Scores**

Correlations:	EE	DP	PA	SOMA
MC	.2905 ( 40) P= .069	-.2468 ( 40) P= .125	.0104 ( 40) P= .949	.1065 ( 40) P= .513
FC	.2136 ( 40) P= .186	.0453 ( 40) P= .781	-.1180 ( 40) P= .468	-.2238 ( 40) P= .165
TC	.3330 ( 40) P= .036	-.1412 ( 40) P= .385	-.0666 ( 40) P= .683	-.0668 ( 40) P= .682

**Key**

d.f.	degrees of freedom
ee	emotional exhaustion subscale scores
dp	depersonalization subscale scores
pa	personal accomplishment subscale scores
soma	somatization subscale scores

**Correlations Between Sex-Role Orientation and  
Stress Symptom Scores**

Correlations:	EE	DP	PA	SOMA
MA	-.1857 ( 40) P= .251	-.0433 ( 40) P= .791	.3070 ( 40) P= .054	-.0207 ( 40) P= .899
FE	-.0356 ( 40) P= .827	-.3152 ( 40) P= .048	.2693 ( 40) P= .093	.0918 ( 40) P= .573
AN	-.1377 ( 40) P= .397	-.2172 ( 40) P= .178	.3571 ( 40) P= .024	.0606 ( 40) P= .710

**Key**

d.f.	degrees of freedom
ee	emotional exhaustion subscale scores
dp	depersonalization subscale scores
pa	personal accomplishment subscale scores
soma	somatization subscale scores

**Appendix D**

**Research Materials**

Appendix

Dear Manager;

I am a doctoral student in Clinical Psychology at the Graduate School of the City University of New York. I am doing my dissertation research on Black women who are corporate managers. I would appreciate your participation in this endeavor. Feedback regarding the lives of Black women managers is crucial to improved vocational and personal counseling that will help peers and others who hope to follow in your footsteps. Furthermore, the documentation and discussion of issues pertaining to the lives of Black Americans who have achieved professional status is important for continued progress.

Your assistance would involve completing some questionnaires which would take up approximately a half hour of your time. The questionnaires will be anonymous. Only group results will be reported.

If you would be interested in participating in the study, please indicate so below so that I may mail you the pertinent materials.

Sincerely,

Carlene Romans Smith

-----  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix

Dear Manager;

I am a doctoral student in Clinical Psychology at the Graduate School of the City University of New York. I am doing my dissertation research on Black women who are corporate managers. I would appreciate your participation in this endeavor. Feedback regarding the lives of Black women managers is crucial to improved vocational and personal counseling that will help peers and others who hope to follow in your footsteps. Furthermore, the documentation and discussion of issues pertaining to the lives of African Americans who have achieved professional status is important for continued progress.

Your assistance would involve completing some questionnaires which would take up approximately a half hour of your time. Each questionnaire has instructions included. Please answer all questions. Answer as best as you can. Try not to deliberate at length on any one question.

The questionnaires will be anonymous. Do not put your name on any page. Rather, decide upon a code involving a letter of the alphabet plus a two-digit number (a21, for example) and WRITE THAT CODE ON EACH AND EVERY PAGE COMPLETED. Only group results will be reported. If, however, you desire to know how your responses relate to the group's experience, fill out the Knowledge of Results Form and return it with your questionnaires.

Please complete and return the questionnaires as soon as possible. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carlene Romans Smith

Appendix  
Code \_\_\_\_\_

1. Job title \_\_\_\_\_
2. Function/Area of expertise:  
Accounting \_\_\_\_\_ Engineering, R & D \_\_\_\_\_  
Finance \_\_\_\_\_ Research \_\_\_\_\_  
Labor Relations \_\_\_\_\_ Marketing \_\_\_\_\_  
Office management \_\_\_\_\_ Personnel \_\_\_\_\_  
Production \_\_\_\_\_ Public Relations \_\_\_\_\_
3. Current income range:   under \$30,000 \_\_\_\_\_   \$30,000-40,000 \_\_\_\_\_  
                                  \$40,000-50,000 \_\_\_\_\_   \$50,000-60,000 \_\_\_\_\_  
                                  \$60,000-70,000 \_\_\_\_\_   \$70,000-80,000 \_\_\_\_\_  
                                  \$80,000-90,000 \_\_\_\_\_   over \$90,000 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Type of industry: (underline)  
Retail trade                                   Financial institutions  
  
Manufacturing-                               Manufacturing-  
consumer goods                               industrial goods  
  
Advertising, media,                           Construction  
publishing                                    mining, oil  
  
Defense, space                               Service trades  
  
Transportation                               Public utility  
  
Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. Years of business experience: less than 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 to 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
  5 to 10 \_\_\_\_\_ over 10 \_\_\_\_\_
6. Highest academic degree obtained: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Marital status: single \_\_\_\_\_ married \_\_\_\_\_ separated \_\_\_\_\_  
  divorced \_\_\_\_\_
8. Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_
9. Number of children \_\_\_\_\_ Ages of children \_\_\_\_\_
10. Spouse's occupation \_\_\_\_\_
11. Spouse's highest academic degree obtained \_\_\_\_\_

Code \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you have family members that live ...?  
In the same city                      In another state  
In a nearby city                      Outside of the United States  
In the same state                      No immediate family
13. How often do you talk to a family member who does not live with you?  
Nearly everyday                      At least once a month  
At least once week                      A few times a year  
A few times a month                      Rarely if ever
14. Do you have friends that you would feel free to talk with about your problems. Do(es) she/he or they live ...?  
In the same city                      In another state  
In a nearby city                      Outside of the United States  
In the same state                      No close friends
15. How often do you talk to a friend?  
Nearly everyday                      At least once a month  
At least once week                      A few times a year  
A few times a month                      Rarely if ever

-----  
Complete this section only if you would like to be interviewed at length regarding the subject of Black women managers in business.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix

Code \_\_\_\_\_

On the next page, you will find listed a number of personality characteristics. Use these characteristics to describe yourself, that is, indicate, on a scale from 1 to 7, how true each of these characteristics are of you. Please do not leave any characteristic unmarked.

Example: sly

Write a 1 if it is never or almost never true that you are sly.  
Write a 2 if it is usually not true that you are sly.  
Write a 3 if it is sometimes but infrequently true that you are sly.  
Write a 4 if it is occasionally true that you are sly.  
Write a 5 if it is often true that you are sly.  
Write a 6 if it is usually true that you are sly.  
Write a 7 if it is always or almost always true that you are sly.

Record your numbered response in the box to the right of each characteristic.

**PLEASE NOTE**

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**Research Material**

**Appendix D**

**118-124**

**University Microfilms International**

Appendix

Code \_\_\_\_\_

On the next page, you will find listed a number of personality characteristics. Use these characteristics to describe the type of manager that you are expected to be in your organization. Fill out the attached sheet as if you were that manager, keeping in mind the expectations of your subordinates, superiors and peers. Please do not leave any characteristic unmarked.

Record the numbered response in the box to the right of each characteristic.

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