

Are Gender Traits and Ideology Associated with Stress and Burnout among Midlife Women?

Natalie Sabik, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION

- Women experience greater burnout as compared to men (Pines et al, 2011), especially at midlife when work and caregiving expectations are high
- Uncontrolled chronic stress can lead to burnout
- Traditional gender roles or traits may contribute to stress and burnout for women as these may increase the burden of emotional and household labor

METHODS

- Data collected from 301 women ages 40 to 65 in the United States and United Kingdom via an online survey in 2018
- Correlation and multiple regression analyses examined associations between gender ideology (passive acceptance of traditional gender roles), gender traits (Bem Sex Role Inventory), stress (Perceived Stress Scale), and burnout (Copenhagen Burnout Inventory)
- PROCESS (Hayes, 2012) examined stress as a mediator of gender traits-burnout association

Gender trait	Example Items
Femininity	Affectionate, warm, compassionate
Social Masculinity (-)	Dominant, aggressive, assertive
Personal Masculinity (+)	Independent, defends beliefs, takes a stand

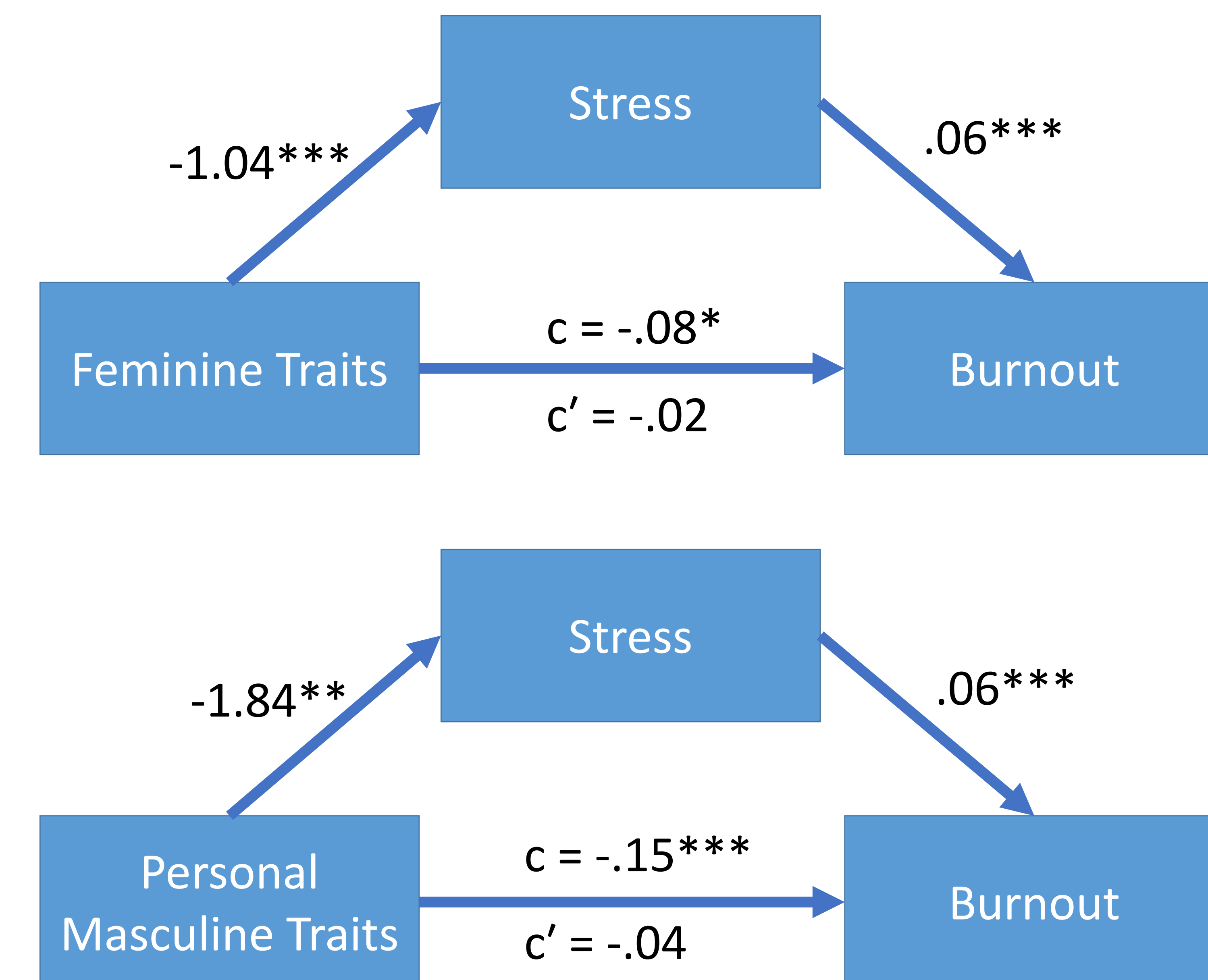
CONCLUSION

- **Positive** aspects of personal gender traits, both masculine and feminine, were associated with **both lower stress and lower burnout**
- **Traditional gender ideology or feminine traits were not a risk factor for higher stress or burnout for midlife women**
- Stress mediated the association between positive gender traits and burnout
- Burnout characterized by depersonalization, disconnection, lack of engagement; positive feminine and masculine traits protect against these outcomes
- Investigating mental load, proportion of domestic work, and gendered relations may be more fruitful for understanding gendered imbalance in stress and burnout

RESULTS

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Passive Acceptance	--					
2. Femininity	-.04	--				
3. Personal Masculinity	-.12*	.45***	--			
4. Social Masculinity	-.07	.08	.57***	--		
5. Stress	.01	-.19**	-.30***	-.09	--	
6. Work Related Burnout	-.01	-.23***	-.15*	-.01	.45***	--
7. Personal Burnout	.02	-.17**	-.22***	.00	.57***	.75***

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.



- Note: c = direct effect, c' = effect with stress included in the model
- For feminine traits, $R^2 = .456$, indirect effect = $-.07$ (CI: $-.110, -.016$)
- For masculine traits, $R^2 = .255$, indirect effect = $-.11$ (CI: $-.164, -.067$)