Conformity to Masculine Norms as a Predictor of Gender Role Conflict

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Abstract

Gender Role Conflict (GRC) is defined as the state in which socialized gender roles have a negative consequence for themselves or others, occurring when ridged or restrictive gender roles result in a restriction, devaluation or violation of others or the individual themselves. GRS has been suggested to lead to a variety of negative outcomes including depression, anxiety, violence, suicide, poor physical health, academic failure and other negative outcomes among men (O'Neil, 2008). Previous research has not yet studied the relationship between specific masculine norms and the experiencing of GRC An understanding of what masculine norms are more likely to contribute to GRC may provide direction in designing and implementing interventions among men.

Introduction

Masculine Norms

Masculine gender norms are socially constructed themes that suggest what a "real man" must do or not do (Parent & Moradi, 2009). These norms have been conceptualized in several ways throughout the masculinity literature and violations of these norms risks a resulting loss of status related to manhood. The examination of the specific detailed norms has resulted in a suggested model of nine masculine norms and the development of an instrument to measure them. The norm of Winning, describes the social norms associated with competition and the need to win, Emotional Control describes the norms related the restriction and suppression of emotions. The norm of Risk-taking describes the need to engage in risky behaviors, while the norm of Violence describes the appropriateness for men to engage in physical conflict. The Playboy norm relates to the supposed desire of men for multiple short term or non-committed sexual relationships with minimal emotional attachment. The norm of Self-reliance describes the male aversion to asking for help or relying on others, while the Primacy of Work nom assess the degree to which ones work becomes a major focus of life. The Power Over Women norm is related to an individuals perceived control over women in social and personal relationships, while the Heterosexual Self-Presentation norm describes individual aversion towards being perceived of as gay

Gender Role Conflict

The conceptual model of Gender Role Conflict (GRC) depicts gender role socialization as an interaction of behavioral and environmental factors that promote a specific set of masculine norms centered on what O'Neil describes as the "masculine mystique" and a fear of femininity (O'Neil, 2008). As a result of men's socialization to these norms conflict is often experienced within social, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains. This conflict is thought to result in a variety of negative outcomes including depression, anxiety and strained relationship as a result of gender role stain as described by Pleck's gender role strain model. (O'Neil, 2008)

Masculine Norms and GRC

GRC broadly conceptualizes masculine socialization norms as "Masculine Ideology" or the beliefs about the importance men adhering to the culturally defined standards for male behavior, and the "Fear of femininity" or the strong negative emotions and associations with stereotypical female values and traits (O'Neil, 2008). There has yet to be an investigation into the role of more specific and clearly defined masculine norms in the experiencing of GRC by men

Methods

Hypothesis

It was thought that the norms of Emotional Control, Primacy of Work, Heterosexual Self-Presentation, Playboy and Winning would, in that order, contribute significantly to the predictive model. It was thought that Power Over Women, Self-reliance, Risk Taking, and Violence would not be significant predictors of GRC.

Participants

This study utilized a two separate samples of men, both of which completed the Gender Role Conflict Scale and the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46.The participants in sample one were male students, enrolled at a Midwestern University.. Participants were recruited through Introductory Psychology classes and social media. Participants in sample two were recruited by Qualtrics panels. Inclusion criteria were men aged 18-65 living in the United States. Participants were recruited through online recruitment in person recruitment, telephone, and online applications. Other demographic information is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographics

	Sample 1	Sample 2
N	366	315
Mean Age (SD)	20.24 (2.81)	47.38 (13.62)
Race		
Caucasian	83.6	79.0
Latino	4.6	2.0
African-American	4.4	12.0
Asian-American	4.4	3.0
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	94.5	87.0
Gay	2.7	7.0
Bi-Sexual	1.1	5.0
Other	1.4	1.0

Measures

The Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 (Parent & Moradi, 2009) is a 46 item, self-report measure assessing endorsement of behaviors, feelings, and thoughts representing masculine gender role norms (Mahalik & Rochlen, 2006). Items are scored using a four point Likert-Type scale ranging from 0 (*Strongly disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly agree*) with higher scores indicating higher conformity. In this study the CMNI-46 shows good internal reliability across subscales for both samples α=.89; Winning α = .85;.81, Risk Taking α = .81; .82, Violence α = .83; .84, Power Over Women α = .83; .83, Playboy α = .82; .80, Self-Reliance α = .87; .81, Heterosexual Self Presentation α = .90; .89, Primacy of Work α = .75; .76-, Emotional Control α = .91; .83.

The Gender Role Conflict Scale is a 37 item, self-report measure assessing the degree of experienced negative consequences related to socialized masculine gender roles or gender role conflict. Items measure psychological domains, personal experiences, and situational contexts (O'Neil, 2008). Items are scored using a six point Likert-Type scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly Agree*) with higher scores indicating patterned expression of gender role conflict and fear of femininity. GRCS shows strong internal reliability (a= .90: .94). Factor structure and reliability have been confirmed with diverse populations to be appropriate with diverse populations (O'Neil, 2008).

Results

College Sample

For sample one a multiple linear regression was performed to test the predictive value of the nine CMNI subscales to predict GRCS scores. A significant relationship was found, $F(9, 379)= 26.12, p < .001)$, $R^2 = .38$, with seven of the nine subscales contributing significantly. This relationship was further tested using a backwards stepwise regression. After three iterations the final regression model was a significant predictor, $F(7, 301)= 33.23, p< .001)$, $R^2= .38$ with the same seven CNMI subscales contributing significantly. Finally bootstrapped regressions revealed that only 7 CNMI subscales contributed significantly to the model with Risk Taking and Violence subscales being excluded, $F(9, 379)= 26.12, p<.001)$, $R^2= .38$. The final predictive model is displayed in Table 2

Table 2
Bootstrap Analysis of Multivariate Regression Sample One

Predictor	Criterion	β	SE	95% Confidence Lower	95% Confidence Upper
Hetrosexual Self Presentation**	GRCS Total	0.265	0.247	0.861	1.821
Emotional Control**	GRCS Total	0.258	0.279	1.075	2.181
Primacy of work**	GRCS Total	0.135	0.443	0.527	2.266
Self-Reliance**	GRCS Total	0.133	0.369	0.351	1.803
Winning**	GRCS Total	0.128	0.319	0.213	1.478
Power over Women*	GRCS Total	0.105	0.480	0.108	2.002
Playboy*	GRCS Total	0.095	0.364	0.068	1.493
Violence	GRCS Total	-0.043	0.316	-0.928	0.310
Risk-Taking	GRCS Total	-0.042	0.445	-1.297	0.430

Note. *p< .05; **p< .01. If the 95% confidence interval does not contain zero, then the effects are considered significant (see Mallinckrodt, Abraham, Wei, & Russell, 2006).

Community Sample

For sample two a significant relationship was also found using a multiple linear regression, $F(9, 305)= 25.93, p < .001)$, $R^2 = .433$, with six of the nine subscales contributing significantly. This relationship was further tested using a backwards stepwise regression. After two iterations the final regression model was a significant predictor $(F(8, 306)= 28.93, p< .001)$, $R^2= .431$ with seven CNMI subscales contributing significantly. Finally bootstrapped regressions suggested that only six CNMI subscales contributed significantly to the regression model with Risk Taking, Violence, and playboy subscales being excluded, $(F(9, 305)= 25.93, p<.001)$, $R^2= .433$. These results are displayed in Table 3

Table 3
Bootstrap Analysis of Multivariate Regression Sample Two

Predictor	Criterion	β	SE	95% Confidence Lower	95% Confidence Upper
Primacy of Work**	GRCS Total	0.274	0.595	2.420	4.743
Emotional Control**	GRCS Total	0.234	0.453	1.402	3.187
Power over Women*	GRCS Total	0.166	0.667	0.678	3.328
Self-Reliance*	GRCS Total	0.16	0.490	0.802	2.722
Winning*	GRCS Total	0.154	0.502	0.485	2.470
Hetrosexual Self Presentation*	GRCS Total	0.127	0.340	0.195	1.530
Playboy	GRCS Total	0.084	0.533	-0.104	2.014
Violence	GRCS Total	-0.081	0.367	-1.373	0.061
Risk-Taking	GRCS Total	0.06	0.598	-0.543	1.808

Note. *p< .05; **p< .01. If the 95% confidence interval does not contain zero, then the effects are considered significant (see Mallinckrodt, Abraham, Wei, & Russell, 2006).

Discussion

This is the first examination of GRC where the conformity to masculine norms was used to predict the experiencing of GRC. The results of this study fill a gap in the literature describing the relationship between specific masculine norms and GRC (O'Neil.., 2016).

The predictive models obtained from both the college sample and the community sample were highly consistent with the a priori predicted model. Only Power Over Women, present in the predictive model obtained from both samples, was not included in the a priori predicted model. These findings suggests that the model of masculine norms measured by the CMNI-46 has predictive value for the experiencing of GRC in both males in college and males similar to our sample.

There were differences in the degree to which specific masculine norms contributed to the models.
- Heterosexual Self-Presentation displayed the largest effect on the experiencing of GRC for college aged males. This norm was the least significant contributor for the community sample,
- Primacy of Work had the largest effect on the experiencing of GRC for our community sample of males. This norm was the third largest contributor in the college sample.
- The expectation of Emotional Control displayed the second largest effect on the experiencing of GRC by men in both samples.
- The Playboy norm was the least significant predictor of GRC for the college sample, and was not statistically significant for the community sample of men.

Limitations
- The current sample is predominately White males, thus generalizability of these results are limited with respect to race/ethnicity.
- As self-report data was used, there is potential for social desirability effects.

Future Research

Future research should focus on describing the relationship between specific masculine norms and the experiencing of GRC, paying special attention to the contextual factors that may play a moderating or mediating role in the relationship.

Conclusion and Implications

These results suggest that specific masculine norms have a larger effect on men experiencing GRC. It appears that these norms and GRC are contextually sensitive, suggesting that the effect of specific norms may change throughout the lifespan. It also appears that the restriction of and perceived need to control emotion is equally problematic for men in both samples, and may be an area targeted for interventions aimed at reducing GRC in men

With questions please contact Dr, Brian P. Cole at bricole@ku.edu

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