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 sexualized gender roles have a negative consequence for themselves or others, occurring when rigid 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 stress, 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.

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 nature of these 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 to 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 norm assess the degree to which ones work is a restriction, devaluation or violation of others or the individual themselves.

Results

For sample one a multiple linear regression was performed to test the predictive value of the nine CMNI subscales to predict GRC scores. A significant relationship was found, F(9, 379) = 26.12, p < .001, R² = .48, suggesting that all nine subscales contribute significantly. This relationship was further tested using a backwards stepwise regression. After three iterations the final regression model was a significant predictor, F(7, 371) = 33.23, p < .001, R² = .56, with the same seven CMNI subscales contributing significantly. Finally bootstrap regressions revealed that only 7 CMNI subscales contributed significantly to the model with Risk Taking and Violence being excluded. F(9, 379) = 26.12, p< .001, R² = .56. The final predictive model is displayed in Table 2

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, was not included from both samples, 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 diversity.

• 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 the experiencing of 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.

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References


