

**THE INFLUENCE OF CONFORMITY TO MASCULINE NORMS ON
RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION: AN EXAMINATION OF
RUMINATION, EMOTIONAL INHIBITION, AND GENDER
DIFFERENCES**

by

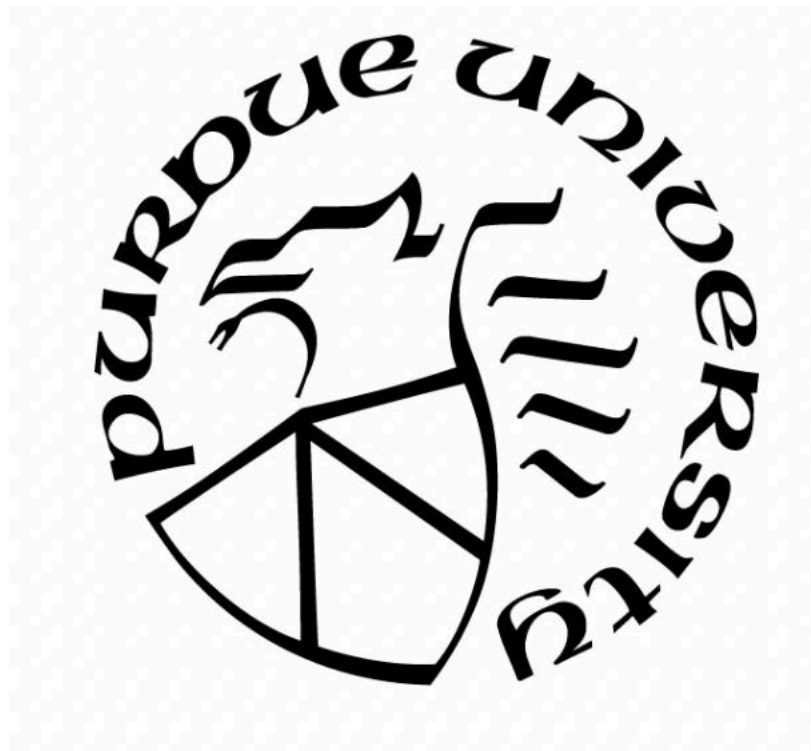
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- LIST OF TABLES 6
- CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION 8
 - Statement of the Problem..... 8
- CHAPTER 2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM..... 12
 - Hegemonic Masculinity 12
 - Gender Role Strain..... 13
 - Conformity to Masculine Norms 14
 - Conformity to Masculine Norms Hypotheses..... 14
 - Conformity to Masculine Norms Research Findings..... 16
 - Emotional Inhibition and Rumination 18
 - Relationship Satisfaction 20
 - Masculinity and Therapy 22
 - Gender Disparity in Couples Therapy 23
 - Hypotheses and Research Questions 26
- CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY 27
 - Participants..... 27
 - Procedure 27
 - Materials 28
 - Data Analysis 29
- CHAPTER 4. RESULTS 31
 - Description of Sample..... 31
 - Instrumentation 35

Data Screening and Model Analyses	36
Research Questions Analysis	40
Hypothesis One	40
Hypothesis Two	40
Hypothesis Three	41
Results Conclusion.....	41
CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION.....	43
Clinical Implications.....	47
Limitations	49
Conclusion	52
REFERENCES	54
APPENDIX A. CLEARANCE AND DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS.....	66
APPENDIX B. CONFORMITY TO MASCULINE NORMS INVENTORY (MALE PARTICIPANTS).....	70
APPENDIX C. CONFORMITY TO MASCULINE NORMS INVENTORY (FEMALE PARTICIPANTS).....	75
APPENDIX D. INHIBITION-RUMINATION SCALE (MALE PARTICIPANTS)S.....	80
APPENDIX E. INHIBITION-RUMINATION SCALE (FEMALE PARTICIPANTS).....	83
APPENDIX F. RELATIONSHIP ASSESSMENT SCALE.....	86

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Age of Participants	32
Table 2: Sex of Participants	32
Table 3: Race and Ethnicity of Participants.....	32
Table 4: Highest Level of School Completed.....	33
Table 5: Annual Household Income	33
Table 6: Relationship Status	33
Table 7: Sexual Orientation	34
Table 8: Length of Relationship with Current Partner (in years)	34
Table 9: Mental Health Services in the Past	34
Table 10: Descriptives of Scales.....	35
Table 11: Regression Analysis (First Analysis, Relationship Satisfaction as DV, Male Group).....	37
Table 12: Regression Analysis (First Analysis, Relationship Satisfaction as DV, Female Group).....	38
Table 13: Regression Analysis (Second Analysis, Emotional Inhibition/Rumination as DV, Male Group).....	39
Table 14: Regression Analysis (Second Analysis, Emotional Inhibition/Rumination as DV, Female Group)	40

ABSTRACT

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Title: The Influence of Conformity to Masculine Norms on Relationship Satisfaction: An Examination of Rumination, Emotional Inhibition, and Gender Differences.

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Previous research has connected masculine gender norms to having adverse effects on health and relationships. The present study examined conformity to masculine norms and relationship satisfaction with emotional inhibition/rumination as a mediator. Data were collected from adults who identified as men or women with a current, opposite sex partner via Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk). Male participants reported their own experiences. Female participants reported on their experience of their male partners' masculine norms and emotional inhibition/rumination, then reported their own relationship satisfaction. It was hypothesized that masculine norms would be a negative predictor of relationship satisfaction and that emotional inhibition/rumination would mediate this relationship. The results indicated that higher degrees of masculine norms significantly predicted lower relationship satisfaction among the male and female participants. Masculine norms also predicted higher levels of emotional inhibition/rumination in both groups. No mediation effect was observed with emotional inhibition/rumination. Clinical implications and potential directions for future research are discussed.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Masculinity has been in the forefront in news media because of sexual harassment accusations, school shootings, and political movements. The #MeToo movement has resulted in a surge of awareness around the sexual misconduct of men in power. According to Time Magazine, 122 high-profile men had been accused of sexual harassment or rape as of January 26, 2018 (Cooney, 2017). The majority of these men are politicians, athletes, CEOs, and others in positions of power. Men are also overrepresented in acts of violence. CNN reported that over 22 school shootings were reported in the first 20 weeks of 2018. Most, if not all, of these shootings have been committed by males (Ahmed & Walker, 2018; Valenti, 2018). In 2019, the men's shaving company, Gillette, released a controversial ad with the message that men should correct behavior that is violent, sexist, and diminishing of emotions (Kindelan, 2019). This negative pattern with masculinity has also been recognized by academia. The American Psychological Association recently updated their publication on best practices with boys and men, which advised clinicians to be aware of how gender socialization can negatively impact male clients (American Psychological Association, 2018). However, these discussions about masculinity are not entirely new.

The idea of conceptualizing masculinity began as a result of the Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation movements in the 1960s (Connell, 1993). By the 1990s, research had emerged regarding the high prevalence of male perpetrators of rape, domestic violence, and other negative behaviors (Connell, 2002). In this context, it is important to note that masculinity is a collection of social constructs that are derived from multiple societal factors that are distinct from identifying as a man (Levant, 2008). Traditional masculinity in Western cultures is associated

with a number of values and behaviors such as self-reliance and stoicism, but these are exclusive from identifying as a man because every individual's experience of masculinity is unique. For this reason, masculinity in most recent studies is not a singular concept, but a pluralistic concept that cannot be limited to a single definition, which is in part why the term 'masculinities' is sometimes used (Connell, 1993; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). However, research on the influences of masculinity remains important because collective social models of masculinity exist in spite of the individual experiences one may have (Connell, 2002; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

While masculinity is not inherently negative, there is still a need for an expansion of research on masculinity due to the vast number of negative correlates that have been reported in recent research. These include negative attitudes towards help seeking, excessive competition in the workplace, emotional restriction, and a number of other factors (Ely & Kimmel, 2018; O'Neil, 2012). Despite these findings, the question remains of what specific aspects of masculinity contribute to negative behaviors and beliefs. One possible explanation is honor ideology. Masculine honor ideology is the concept that violence is sometimes necessary to uphold one's reputation or manhood (Saucier et al., 2016). Initially, masculine honor was examined in the context of regional differences between men in the northern and southern United States (Nisbett, 1993). Generally, it was found that men in the south are more likely than men in the north to uphold honor ideology and thus react aggressively to perceived threats. Recently, masculine honor has been applied as a trait based on the context of individual difference rather than regional location. One's beliefs in masculine honor have been associated with positive views on war, violent security measures, and aggressive responses to romantic rejection (Saucier, Webster, McManus, Sonnentag, O'Dea, & Strain, 2018; Stratmoen, Greer, Martens, & Saucier,

2018). These findings are important because they provide possible connections to the aspects of masculinity that are tied to negative behaviors and values, which in turn, negatively impact interpersonal relationships.

While the negative correlates discussed above are important findings, masculinity also appears to have a negative impact on relationships. Some behaviors related to masculine ideology, such as aggression, have clear asocial qualities. However, the socialization of masculinity also negatively impacts romantic relationships. Men who hold traditional beliefs about women (women should be submissive, women should be in the kitchen) are less likely to be satisfied in their marriages and have difficulties with attachment (Blazina & Watkins, 2000; O'Neil, 2015). The results of some studies suggest that when men entered a caretaker role in the family or had to care for their partner due to illness, they felt that their masculinity was threatened (Ribeiro, Paúl, & Nogueira, 2007; Russell, 2007). In considering sexual orientation, Wade and Donis (2007) found that traditional masculine norms and a lack of relationships with other men were associated with romantic relationship difficulties for heterosexual and homosexual men. Another study, however, found that in gay men this association was observed, but did not have a large effect on relationship satisfaction overall (Wester, Pionke, & Vogel, 2005). Traditional masculinity appears to negatively affect romantic relationships in all men, but there appears to be more evidence for this in heterosexual relationships. This may be connected to the overall disdain for femininity that is aligned with traditional masculine beliefs (Brannon, 1976; Mahalik et al., 2003; O'Neil, 2015). Additionally, gay men and heterosexual women typically have emotionally open relationships. This is thought to be a consequence of heterosexual men using platonic interactions with women for sexual gains (Russell, DelPriore, Butterfield, & Hill, 2013).

In summary, there is evidence that masculine norms are not only associated with negative behavior, but also deficits in romantic relationships, specifically in opposite sex relationships.

The present study aims to investigate how conformity to masculine norms is related to relationship satisfaction. With the addition of emotional inhibition and rumination as mediators, the present study could potentially demonstrate which factors in masculine socialization are related to relationship satisfaction. Comparing these variables between men and women may also demonstrate the gender conflict present in masculine norms and relationships. As society continues to question and redefine gender roles, it is important to consider what factors contributed to this questioning in the first place.

CHAPTER 2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Hegemonic Masculinity

It is important to clarify how masculinity manifests in the context of society. The term hegemonic masculinity is used to describe the presence of social dominance in masculinity. First, the various manifestations of masculinity do not have equal social standing (Connell, 2002). For example, the United States has historically maintained ideal of masculinity that is predominantly White and heterosexual, while the experiences of racial and sexual minority men have been overlooked. Hegemonic masculinity also applies hierarchy to gender in general and not only within masculinity as much of the socialization of masculinity in Western culture is based around power over women (Connell, 2002). Similar to the individual experiences of masculinity, power and privilege over women is a collective phenomenon that may vary on an individual basis (Connell, 2002). For instance, women with higher incomes than their male partners tend to be seen as less favorable, while male partners tend to be viewed positively regardless of income (Hettinger, Hutchinson, & Bosson, 2014). The privilege that masculinity has maintained in society is an explanation of why potentially harmful forms of masculinity have persisted over time (Mahalik, 2000). Again, this is indicative of the findings previously discussed with honor ideology. The degree to which a man personally subscribes to honor ideology may vary depending on his geographic location or personality characteristics, but the patriarchal standard of masculinity still persists (Connell, 2002; Nisbett, 1993; Saucier et al., 2018; Stratmoen et al., 2018). Other findings indicate that violent responses motivated by honor ideology are meant to defend a man's sense of self rather than condoning violence in general (O'Dea, Chalman, Castro Bueno, & Saucier, 2018). This points to the fact that negative behaviors associated with masculinity are a result of values and social pressures. The desire to maintain an image of honor

or power may be connected to a collective hegemony in the construct of masculinity rather than a direct need to dominate (Thompson & Bennett, 2017). However, honor ideology is one example of how the broader concept of hegemonic masculinity can manifest. Hegemonic masculinity describes systemic, societal hierarchies that contribute to a patriarchal standard. Gender role strain further explains masculinity as a social construct.

Gender Role Strain

The gender role strain paradigm (GRSP) started with postmodernist and feminist ideas as masculinity ideology (Thompson & Bennett, 2017). Masculinity ideology is a conglomeration of two concepts: ideology and masculinity. Ideology (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Mannheim, 1936) is based on the premise that society and culture influence reality even to the point of objective fact being relative to a given social context. The second concept considers masculinity a subset of gender as an institution. This means that gender is a set of beliefs or constructions and not biological differences (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1985; Gergen, 1985; West & Zimmerman, 2009). Previously, conventional masculinity and femininity were considered markers of health, deterministic, and oppositional to each other (Thompson & Bennett, 2017). In masculinity ideology, masculinity (and femininity) is not a singular, factual quality, but a socially based construct that is contextually relative (Thompson & Bennett, 2017).

The GRSP is primarily defined by 10 propositions, but only those relevant to the present study are discussed here (Levant & Powell, 2017). The first is that gender roles are defined by stereotypes and norms rather than verifiable facts. This reinforces the position that gender roles are socially constructed and not grounded in biological sex. The second and third are that gender roles are not consistent and that most individuals do not fit into the definitions of those roles, respectively. This speaks to the necessity to assess the potential harm of traditional gender roles

as constructs that can be challenged and reformed. This transitions into the next proposition that those who violate gender norms also experience adverse psychological effects in addition to social punishment. If certain aspects of gender socialization are directly related to psychological and social harm, then it becomes an issue relevant to health care professionals. Finally, individuals have a tendency to over-conform to gender roles as a result of perceived gender role violation. This is, when someone feels as if they do not fit into the gender norms they are expected to follow, they tend to exacerbate their attempts to conform to that standard. The implication here is that those who attempt to over compensate in their gender roles may be more likely to develop the harmful effects described in the earlier proposition. The current study aims to address this by focusing on conformity to masculine norms.

Conformity to Masculine Norms

Conformity to masculine norms is one of several models for the conceptualization of masculinity that was originally developed by Mahalik (2000). Conformity to masculine norms is a variation of masculine gender role strain that focuses on the degree to which men conform to social norms attributed with a conventional, Westernized conceptualization of masculinity (Mahalik et al., 2003). This model is generally based on social psychological observations of the influence that gender expectations have on individuals in society. The conformity to masculine norms model contains its own hypotheses that extend from the foundation of the gender role strain paradigm. The four hypotheses in this model are discussed below.

Conformity to Masculine Norms Hypotheses

Gender role expectations are shaped by societal and cultural influences, particularly by the groups with the most power. For example, in the United States, men have historically had more power than women, which means they theoretically have had more influence on gender

roles than women. Although male gender roles expectations are in regards to men, women can be negatively impacted by male gender norms due to having less power in society.

Those with power in society communicate gender norms in three ways. First are descriptive norms, which are values or behaviors that might usually be observable in a social context (a group of male friends playing golf as a medium for socializing). Second are injunctive norms, which are based on approval and disapproval (sports, cars, and business are the only acceptable topics of discussion in a group of men). Finally, there are cohesive norms, which are specifically perpetuated by those considered popular (football players are the most popular group at a high school, so male social status is based on norms among the football players). These together form overall conformity to the given gender norms.

The way people experience gender norms is based on a combination of individual and group factors. Individual factors are typically aspects of identity (age, personality, sexual orientation, etc.), while group factors generally have a direct link to society at large (cultural values, socioeconomic status, etc.). For instance, a male artist raised with the value that men can be emotional may not experience as much pressure to avoid crying compared to a construction worker who was taught that emotions are unmanly. Based on the concept of hegemonic masculinity, traditional male group factors may have a significant influence even if they are not congruent with an individual's experience.

The individual and group factors that influence the perception of gender norms affects the extent to which one conforms to those norms. Going back to the previous example, the artist may place value in emotions, but could still be impacted by the masculine norm of stoicism. The degree to which the artist conforms to that norm could impact how his beliefs and behaviors around emotions manifests.

As discussed previously through the GRSP, the conformity to masculine norms model assumes that there are positive and negative consequences for conformity and nonconformity. Men who conform gain the social benefit of following the established norms, but potentially face the relational and physical issues that were described previously. Those who do not conform have the benefit of not dealing with said problems. However, nonconformity may result in social rejection. Below is a discussion of the research supporting conformity to masculine norms.

Conformity to Masculine Norms Research Findings

Conformity to masculine norms has been associated with a number of negative thoughts and behaviors such as substance abuse, health risks, physical fighting, anger management issues, low self-esteem, sexism, and internalized homophobia (O'Neil, 2012). Conformity to masculine norms has also been explored in populations of men who are typically underrepresented in conventional understandings of Western masculinity. Rochelle examined the relationship between conformity to masculine norms with age and health behavior in Chinese men (2015). The results suggested that the playboy subscale was positively associated with substance use and the power over women subscale was negatively associated with preventative care. Another study compared straight men and gay men on their conformity to masculine norms scores. The results indicated that heterosexual and homosexual men were similar with the exception of three subscales: power over women, winning, and primacy of work (Alt, Lewis, Liu, Vilain, & Sanchez, 2014). Stay-at-home-fathers (SAHFs) were studied in regards to how conformity to masculine norms predicted various measures of well-being (Rochlen, McKelley, Suizzo, & Scaringi, 2008). The results indicated that SAHFs who scored lower on conformity to masculine norms had higher scores of overall life satisfaction.

Burn and Ward (2005) conducted a study to examine the relationship between conformity to masculine norms and relationship satisfaction. These variables were measured using the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI) and the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS). The participants in the study were 307 undergraduate students that were both male and female. Twenty-five participants were excluded after reporting that they had not been in a romantic relationship. Male participants took the CMNI based on their own experiences, while female participants were given an adapted version of the CMNI to reflect their most recent relationship with a male partner. In this study design, two researchers presented the students with a packet containing the questionnaires that were subsequently collected by the researchers. For both men and women, there was a general trend that conformity to masculine norms was negatively associated with relationship satisfaction. However, this relationship was reflected in 10 of the 11 CMNI subscales for women, while this was only observed in five subscales for men with four of those being “marginally significant” (p. 259). The Pursuit of Status subscale was the only one that was not found to be significant among female participants. The authors postulated that this may have been due to women valuing material gain from a male partner or that it was not an important relationship factor within their college-aged sample. Among male participants, the Playboy scale was the only one with a strong negative correlation with relationship satisfaction. The authors stated that this was most likely due to the Playboy subscale being contrary to the standards of monogamous relationships, but it was unclear if this correlation was related to men’s personal dissatisfaction or a reflection of their partners’ dissatisfaction. Finally, the results indicated that the correlation between conformity to masculine norms and relationship satisfaction was stronger for women reporting on male partners compared to men reporting on

their own experience. Specifically, the CMNI accounted for substantially more variability in women's relationship satisfaction than in men's relationship satisfaction.

The present study aimed to follow the study design of Burn and Ward with the incorporation of emotional inhibition/rumination as an additional variable. While several studies have demonstrated various associations with masculinity, there are few studies that have explored the presence of mediators and moderators in these associations. For example, the negative relationship between masculinity and help-seeking behavior may be better explained by self-stigma as a mediator (Levant, Stefanov, Rankin, Halter, Mellinger, & Williams, 2013). Examining emotional inhibition/rumination may provide additional insight into the impact conformity to masculinity has on relationship satisfaction.

Emotional Inhibition and Rumination

Rumination and emotional inhibition were originally conceptualized as a means to measure responses to stressors (Roger, 2016). Rumination is the process of repeatedly thinking about negative emotions, which is often some time before or after the actual onset of a given emotion. Rumination has been connected to the prolonged presence of cortisol following a stressor, lack of control with anger, and it has been shown to moderate the need for pain relief during labor (Nieland & Roger, 1993; Roger & Jamieson, 1988; Roger & Najarian, 1998). Emotional inhibition is the tendency to restrict the expression of feelings. Emotional inhibition has been connected to the delay of muscle tension recovery following a stressor and is correlated with one's number of health care visits (Kaiser, Hinton, Krohne, Stewart, & Burton, 1995; Pennebaker, 1995). Rumination and emotional inhibition together have "additive effects" on some variables and have been jointly connected to self-harm behavior (Borrill, Fox, Flynn, & Roger, 2009; Roger, de Scremin, Borrill, & Forbes, 2011). Emotional inhibition and rumination

have not yet been explored with gender and relationships, but other studies have made connections between masculinity and emotional constraint.

One of the most notable elements of masculinity is the way men are socialized to handle emotions. This begins with the difference in how men and women are raised as children to express emotions. A study of parents' interactions with their children indicated that boys are more likely to be discouraged from expressing emotions in conversation compared to girls (Fuchs & Thelen, 1988). Some findings suggest that the lack of emotionality present in traditional masculinity is related to toughness and aggression. This socialization appears to continue for men into adulthood. An experimental study by Berke and colleagues revealed that men who felt their masculinity was being threatened have a higher pain tolerance than those who did not feel threatened. This finding provided empirical evidence that male socialization is associated with emotional restraint. These findings suggest that expression of pain in this case could be a threat to masculine identity (Berke, Reidy, Miller, & Zeichner, 2017). Bruch (2002) found that 'toughness' is a mediator in the relationship between shyness and emotional disclosure. Specifically, shy men who considered themselves tough were less likely to disclose their emotions than men who only identified as shy. This finding is significant because a quality associated with masculinity was related to lack of emotional disclosure even in relation to a characteristic not typically associated with masculinity. In addition to the ways men are socialized to emote, there is evidence to suggest that this socialization has negative consequences.

The results of several studies have suggested that there are consistent patterns between masculinity and low tolerance of emotions. Results of another study (Cohn, Jakupcak, Seibert, Hildebrandt, & Zeichner, 2010) suggest that male emotional dysregulation (specifically

impulsive emotional responses and lack of endurance for difficult emotional states) acts as a mediator in the relationship between emotional restriction and aggression. The authors indicated that emotional dysregulation in this sample was a product of “a lack of acceptance and inability to tolerate emotional experiences” (p. 53) that contributed to overall aggression. Male perpetrators of domestic violence and other violent crimes have been observed to view emotional disclosure as a threat. This is important to note as this population of men generally has more difficulty with interpersonal relationships (Dutton & Golant, 1995; Gilligan, 1996). Finally, a hierarchical regression indicated that men’s fear of emotions was a significant predictor for overt hostility alongside masculinity and proneness to shame (Jakupcak, Tull, & Roemer, 2005). Despite the substantial evidence associating masculinity and lack of emotionality, this relationship has been observed in the context of anger or hostility, but not in relation to everyday relationship with sexual partners.

Relationship Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction is essential to this discussion as it is a potential indicator of the influence that gender paradigms has on individuals and their relationships. Based on the GRSP, those who conform to masculine or feminine gender identities will expect to benefit in ways that include relationship satisfaction due to the social rewards associated with conformity. However, based on the findings discussed previously, strict gender role adherence is a detriment to relational health.

There is evidence to suggest that masculinity has an adverse affect on relationship quality with romantic partners. Although both men and women report that emotional disclosure contributes to relationship satisfaction, men are less likely to participate in this compared to women in romantic relationships (Dindia & Allen, 1992; Siavelis & Lamke, 1992). These

findings could be related to the evidence discussed previously that men typically experience an aversion to emotional expression and disclosure. The question then is whether the emotional involvement of men in their romantic relationships has a significant influence on overall satisfaction. Jensen, Rauer, and Volling (2013) examined the role that providing sensitive support plays in conflict and feelings of love in married couples. The results indicated that husbands' sensitive support contributed to greater love and less conflict in both partners, whereas this was not the case for wives' support, which was less variable within the sample. It could be inferred from this study that men who rigidly conform to the lack of emotionality present in traditional masculinity are not contributing to the overall health of their marriages in the way that emotionally attentive men do. This also provides evidence for a discrepancy in the contribution men and women make to relationship satisfaction. Not only are men less likely to emotionally engage, but when they do, it has a greater influence on the relationship at large than it does for women. It is unclear if these findings are related to a common variable, such as conformity to masculinity or aversion to emotions.

Masculinity has been examined in the context of relationship satisfaction from a number of perspectives. In general, men who rigidly align themselves with conventional gender roles tend to have the most dissatisfaction in their relationships. For instance, men with a traditional masculine ideology in heterosexual relationships place high importance on income disparity and report lower overall satisfaction with their relationships (Coughlin & Wade, 2012). These patterns also manifest cross-culturally. Lease and colleagues (2012) studied men from Turkey and Norway to compare the degree to which masculinity impacts their romantic and work relationships. The findings indicated that Norwegian men generally scored lower on traditional male roles compared to Turkish men (and men from the United States based on previous

research), but the negative relationship between male roles and relationship satisfaction was more significant. The authors observe that this is likely the result of conventional masculinity being less acceptable in Norway compared to Turkey, where conventional gender roles are more normative (Lease et al., 2012). These results imply that while there is an overall negative relationship between masculinity and relationship satisfaction, cultural context may have an impact on the strength of this association. Another study looked at the influence of machismo, a set of cultural values around masculinity, on relationship satisfaction in Hispanic veterans (Herrera, Owens, & Mallinckrodt, 2013). Machismo was positively correlated with more severe PTSD symptoms, higher overall distress, and lower relationship satisfaction. The authors also noted that machismo was particularly correlated with measures of emotional restriction. It is important to note here that masculine gender roles here were simultaneously related to both lower relationship satisfaction as well as emotional restriction. The implication is that these three variables could be interrelated.

Relationship satisfaction is essential to this discussion as it is a potential indicator for the influence that gender expectations have on individuals. This variable is also significant because romantic relationships are one of the most prominent examples of gender-based social interactions in society. Finally, relationship satisfaction has various implications for couples therapy as it can serve as a predictor for why couples seek therapy and what it means to resolve presenting problems in couples therapy.

Masculinity and Therapy

Although evidence suggests that men are vulnerable to emotional distress and relationship dissatisfaction, men are generally avoidant when in the context of mental health services in comparison to women (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Tucker, Hammer, Vogel, Bitman,

Wade, & Maier, 2013). This disparity has been attributed to stigma, a man's social network, and affiliation with male-dominated institutions (Angermeyer, Matschinger, & Riedel-Heller, 2001; Brooks, 2012; Tucker et al., 2013; Vogel, Wester, Hammer, & Downing-Matibag, 2014). Some of these factors are related to male socialization in clients, but clinicians must also take partial responsibility in making therapy accessible to their male clients. Male clients can be more open to therapy when their therapists are sensitive to the societal pressure they experience and do not assume that an individual man is opposed to the therapeutic process (Mahalik, Good, Tager, Levant, & Mackowiak, 2012; Reed, 2014). These concerns also extend to male clinicians in regards to their ability to develop adequate skills for emotional sensitivity and awareness of gender dynamics to be effective in their work (MacKinnon, Bhatia, Sunderani, Affleck, & Smith, 2011; Wester & Vogel, 2002). However, another set of challenges present themselves in the context of couples therapy for heterosexual relationships.

Gender Disparity in Couples Therapy

Masculine gender roles come into conflict with mental health services in general, but there are particular challenges that can manifest with heterosexual couples in couple's therapy. In a study of over 200 heterosexuals, gender stereotyped beliefs were related to negative attitudes towards couples therapy (Imholte, 2018). ChenFeng and Galick (2015) observed 19 couples and 17 therapists for the occurrence of gendered discourses in the therapy process. Three interconnected themes were observed: the reinforcement of male privilege, the accommodation of women, and the protection of men from shame. These themes were observed in both therapists and clients. Reinforcement of male privilege was primarily demonstrated through greater consideration given to the male client. Accommodation of women is the subtle assumption that the couple's problems might be resolved if the female partner is the focus of change. Protection

of men from shame involved minimizing the negative feelings or emotional responsibility of the male partner in the therapy process. These challenges are generally the result of men typically holding more power than women. Because this power differential exists on a societal level, it is often present to a degree regardless of a couple's intentions in the relationship (Knudson-Martin, 2015). The impact of masculinity on couples therapy is essential to acknowledge, as it is frequent context in which gender norms, emotional inhibition, rumination, and relationship satisfaction manifest. The present study aims to not only consider how these variables are related, but additionally consider how findings can inform clinical practice.

The gender disparity that can exist in couples therapy is unavoidable problem, but it is far from being an impossible to address. Data from 55 couples were analyzed to assess not only how gender impacts relationships, but also what clinicians can do to address these issues (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009; Risman & Johnson-Summerford, 1998). For most couples, lack of awareness is the most significant factor that contributes to gender roles becoming a problem in the relationship (Risman, 1998). Using previous data from 55 male-female couples, Knudson-Martin and Mahoney determined that the couples fell into three categories of gender role organization: postgender, gender legacy, and traditional (2009). Postgender couples, which made up 11 of the 55, are actively aware of how gender roles influence relationship and make a conscious effort to circumvent these expectations. In contrast to postgender couples, traditional couples actively chose to organize their dynamics to conform to conventional gender roles. Traditional couples made up the smallest group at 7 out of 55. The largest group were the gender legacy couples, which made up 37 of the 55. Gender legacy couples often believe in egalitarianism, but are not aware of how traditional gender roles influence their relationship. For example, a husband and wife may believe that fathers and mothers should equally tend to the

children, but the wife still does the majority of the childcare in practice. Knudson-Martin and Mahoney believe that in clinical practice, all types of couples can benefit from working through gender issues. The authors provide six recommendations for clinicians to address gender equality: develop awareness of gender expectations, work on conflict management, challenge entitlement related to gender, expecting change from both partners, develop skills around attending to one's partner, and to focus on equality as a long-term process (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009). Because conformity to masculine norms and emotional inhibition/rumination are potentially antithetical to enhancing equality, the present study will assess these variables as predictors of relationship satisfaction.

In summary, the way men have been socialized in Western society is linked to a number of unhealthy traits that generally revolve around aggression, the repression of emotions, and oppression of women. Past research has indicated that lower satisfaction in romantic relationships is a potential consequence of masculine socialization. Masculinity has been explored as a construct through the perspective of several theories. Conformity to masculine norms is specifically defined by the degree to which a man's beliefs conform to conventional, North American masculinity.

Most research on gender roles has primarily focused on how a gender construct relates to another variable, but not how those relationships are explained through mediators, moderators, or confounds. In exploring masculinity and relationship satisfaction, a possible related variable is emotional inhibition/rumination. Emotional inhibition/rumination is a construct that has been connected to measurements of stress and mental health, but has not been explored with gender roles. Although previous research on masculinity has been connected to lower relationship satisfaction, this association has not been explored with other variables, like emotional

inhibition/rumination. Because masculinity is sometimes defined as having an oppressive effect on women, it is important to consider the inclusion of women in the expansion of masculinity research. The present study aimed to examine emotional inhibition/rumination as a possible mediator in the relationship between conformity to masculine norms and relationship satisfaction.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

The following research questions and hypotheses were assessed in the present study:

RQ1: To what extent is conformity to masculine norms associated with relationship satisfaction in both men reporting on themselves and women reporting about their male partners?

H1: Conformity to masculine norms will have a negative association with relationship satisfaction in both men reporting on themselves and women reporting on male partners.

RQ2: How do emotional inhibition and/or rumination mediate the association between conformity to masculine norms and relationship satisfaction?

H2: Men's emotional inhibition and rumination will mediate the association between conformity to masculine norms and relationship satisfaction.

RQ3: Is the association between conformity to masculine norms and relationship satisfaction different for females reporting on male partners than males reporting on themselves?

H3: The association between conformity to masculine norms and relationship satisfaction will be more significant for women reporting on male partners than male partners reporting on themselves.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Participants

A power calculation suggests that at least 100 participants were required to have a medium effect (Cohen, 1992). Recruitment criteria for the study were for adults aged 18-65 years old who identified as a man or a woman who was currently in a relationship with someone of the opposite sex and who lived in the United States at the time of the study.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk) to complete a questionnaire including the necessary measures. Mturk is a website in which requesters (such as researchers) can recruit individuals for online tasks, like questionnaires, for a small monetary payment. Some findings indicate that the Mturk population is diverse, but differs from the general population in several ways. First the Mturk population has been found to be younger, more female, and more liberal than the general population (Shank, 2015). Mturk workers have also been found to have a higher prevalence of psychological symptoms such as depression and social anxiety (Arditte, Cek, Shaw, & Timpano, 2016). Despite the variations from the general populace, Mturk has been demonstrated to be a viable method of data collection through test-retest reliability and that the level of compensation did not impact the quality or quantity of the data collected (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). The questionnaire was developed through Qualtrics.

Materials

The Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI) is a measure developed by Mahalik et al. (2003). The measure contains 94 items that are measured using 4-point Likert scale questions (0 = *strongly disagree*, 1 = *disagree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *strongly agree*). The measure is made up of 11 subscales of masculinity and aims to assess the degree to which a man's thoughts and behavior conform to traditional masculine norms. The subscales are Winning (10 items), Emotional Control (11 items), Risk-Taking (10 items), Violence (8 items), Dominance (4 items), Playboy (12 items), Self-Reliance (6 items), Primacy of Work (8 items), Power over Women (9 items), Disdain for Homosexuals (10 items), and Pursuit of Status (6 items). Examples of items include, "My work is the most important part of my life" and "I tend to keep my feelings to myself" (see Appendix B). As Burn and Ward did in their study, the present study will adapt the CMNI for women to refer to a male partner (2005). For example, "His work is the most important part of his life" (see Appendix C). The CMNI is shown to have strong internal consistency for the overall scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$) and for each subscale (ranging from .72 to .91) (Mahalik et al., 2003). The scale has also been demonstrated to have good convergent validity with the Gender Role Conflict Scale and the Male Gender Role Stress Scale (Mahalik et al., 2003).

The Inhibition-Rumination Scale (I-RS; Roger et al., 2011) was adapted from Emotional Control Questionnaire (ECQ) and Emotional Control Questionnaire 2 (ECQ2). The I-RS has two components: emotional inhibition and rumination, which were discussed previously. The measure contains 39 items using a true-false question format. Examples include, "I get worked up just thinking about things that have upset me in the past" and "I seldom show how I feel about things" (see Appendix D). Similar to the CMNI, items were adapted for female participants to

report on their male partners: “When someone upsets him, he tries to hide his feelings” (see Appendix E). The I-RS has demonstrated adequate internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha ranged from .62 to .80 across items) and predictive validity with the Coping Styles Questionnaire, and Emotional Sensitivity Scale (Roger et al., 2011).

The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick, Dicke, & Hendrick, 1998) is a 7-item measure that assesses general relationship satisfaction using 5-point Likert scale questions. The questions cover how well the partner meets needs, how the relationship compares to others, regrets regarding the relationship, if one’s expectations have been met, love for the partner, and problems in the relationship. Items include, “to what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?” and “how good is your relationship compared to most?” (see Appendix F). Respondents are instructed to answer questions in regards to their most recent relationship, report if they are still in that relationship, and the length of that relationship in years and months. The RAS has demonstrated good internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha = .86) and convergent validity with the Dyadic Adjustment Scale and the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (Hendrick et al., 1998; Vaughn & Baier, 1999).

Data will also be gathered on participants’ demographic data via questionnaire. Demographic information will include age, gender, race/ethnicity, education level, relationship status, number of children, and sexual orientation (see Appendix A).

Data Analysis

Data screening, including descriptive statistics, was used to ensure all statistical assumptions have been met before the data were analyzed. A correlation coefficient was calculated for the I-RS and CMNI to assess for multicollinearity. Hypotheses 1-3 were addressed using regression analyses. Analyses were conducted with the CMNI as the independent variable,

relationship satisfaction as the dependent variable, and emotional inhibition/rumination as the mediator. To address H1, a regression analysis was conducted with the CMNI as the independent variable and relationship satisfaction as the dependent variable. H2 involved two parts. The first part involved a hierarchical regression analysis with the CMNI and RAS with age, income, and education as control variables. The second step was a hierarchical regression with the control variables as the independent variable with the addition of emotional inhibition/rumination as the mediator. For H3, CMN, gender, emotional inhibition/rumination, and the interaction between CMN and emotional inhibition was set as the independent variables, while relationship satisfaction remains as the dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Description of Sample

Two hundred and eighty-four participants initiated the survey. 82 participants were excluded for not meeting at least one of the survey inclusion criteria: living in the United States, reporting an age between 18 and 65, and being in an ongoing relationship with someone of the opposite sex. Another 12 participants were excluded due to incomplete survey responses. Finally, a total of 15 participants were excluded due to having missing answers for the RAS scale. The number of individuals included in the final analysis was 171. Participants provided information on their age, highest degree obtained, annual household income, sexual orientation, relationship status, length of current relationship in years, the number of children they have, and if they had worked with a mental health professional in the past. The age range of participants was 20 to 64 with a mean age of 33.46 ($SD = 9.31$). The sample was 68.4% male and 31.6% female; there were no transgender individuals in the final analysis. The racial distribution of the sample was 67.3% White or Caucasian, 14% Black or African American, 10.5% Hispanic or Latino/a, 5.3% Native American or American Indian, 4.7% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 1.8% selected “other.”

Table 1: Age of Participants

Age	Frequency (Males)	Percentage (Males)	Frequency (Females)	Percentage (Females)
20-29	53	45.3%	19	35.2%
30-39	45	38.5%	22	40.7%
40-49	14	11.9%	5	9.3%
50-59	3	2.6%	6	11.1%
60-69	2	1.7%	2	3.7%

Table 2: Sex of Participants

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	117	68.4%
Female	54	31.6%

Table 3: Race and Ethnicity of Participants

Race/ethnicity	Frequency (Males)	Percentage (Males)	Frequency (Females)	Percentage (Females)
White or Caucasian	74	63.2%	41	75.9%
Black or African American	20	17.1%	4	7.4%
Hispanic or Latino/a	14	12%	4	7.4%
Native American or American Indian	4	3.4%	5	9.3%
Asian or Pacific Islander	6	5.1%	2	3.7%
Other	2	1.7%	1	1.9%

Table 4: Highest Level of School Completed

Education level	Frequency (Males)	Percentage (Males)	Frequency (Females)	Percentage (Females)
Some high school, no diploma	1	.9%	1	1.9%
High school graduate or equivalent (GED)	22	18.8%	13	24.1%
Associate's degree	5	4.3%	3	5.6%
Bachelor's degree	67	57.3%	28	51.9%
Master's degree	22	18.8%	6	11.1%
Doctorate or professional degree	0	0%	1	1.9%
Other (trade school, etc.)	0	0%	2	3.7%

Table 5: Annual Household Income

Household income	Frequency (Males)	Percentage (Males)	Frequency (Females)	Percentage (Females)
Under \$10,000	0	0%	2	3.7%
\$10,000-\$19,000	13	10.3%	3	5.6%
\$20,000-\$29,000	12	10.3%	5	9.3%
\$30,000-\$39,000	18	15.4%	12	22.2%
\$40,000-\$49,000	18	15.4%	6	11.1%
\$50,000-\$74,999	29	24.8%	13	24.1%
\$75,000-\$99,999	15	12.8%	8	14.8%
\$100,000-\$150,000	6	5.1%	3	5.6%
Over \$150,000	6	5.1%	2	3.7%

Table 6: Relationship Status

Relationship status	Frequency (Males)	Percentage (Males)	Frequency (Females)	Percentage (Females)
Dating	37	31.6%	11	20.4%
Living with partner	23	19.7%	13	24.1%
Married	55	47%	29	53.7%
Separated	1	.9%	0	0%
Divorced	1	.9%	1	1.9%

Table 7: Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation	Frequency (Males)	Percentage (Males)	Frequency (Females)	Percentage (Females)
Heterosexual	93	79.5%	45	83.3%
Gay or Lesbian	6	5.1%	1	1.9%
Bisexual	13	11.1%	7	13%
Pansexual	3	2.6%	0	0%
Other	2	1.7%	0	0%
Missing	0	0%	1	1.9%

Table 8: Length of Relationship with Current Partner (in years)

Length of Relationship	Frequency (Males)	Percentage (Males)	Frequency (Females)	Percentage (Females)
Less than one year	7	6%	2	3.7%
1-5	56	47.8%	34	63%
6-10	32	27.4%	5	9.2%
11-20	12	10.3%	10	18.5%
21-48	10	8.5%	3	3.7%

Table 9: Mental Health Services in the Past

Mental health services	Frequency (Males)	Percentage (Males)	Frequency (Females)	Percentage (Females)
Yes	29	24.8%	16	29.6%
No	87	74.4%	38	70.4%
Prefer not to answer	1	.9%	0	0%

The individuals included in the final analysis had the following educational distribution as follows based on highest degree obtained: 1.2% some high school/no diploma, 20.5% high school diploma or GED, 4.7% Associate's degree, 55.6% Bachelor's degree, 16.4% Master's degree, .6% doctorate or professional degree, and 1.2% "other" (trade school, etc.). For relationship status, 28.1% reported there were currently dating, 21.1% were living with their partner, 49.1% were married, .6% were separated, and 1.2% were divorced. The length of relationship with current partner ranged from "less than one year" to 48 years. In terms of sexual

orientation, 80.7% identified as heterosexual, 4.1% homosexual, 11.7% bisexual, 1.8% pansexual, 1.2% “other,” and one individual opted out of the question. 26.3% reported seeking help from a mental health professional, 73.1% did not, and one participant did not answer the question.

Instrumentation

The scales used in this study were the CMNI (Mahalik et al., 2003), the I-RS (Roger et al., 2011), and the RAS (Hendrick et al., 1998). Males and females took different version of the CMNI and I-RS. The mean, standard deviation, and Cronbach’s alpha for the scales of each respective group can be found in Table 10. Fifteen participants (10 from male group, 5 from female group) had missing values from the RAS, so the regression analyses included 117 participants and 54 participants for males and females respectively.

Table 10: Descriptives of Scales

Scales	N	Possible Minimum	Possible Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Cronbach’s alpha
CMNI (males)	117	0	282	58	217	129.94	28.37	.915
I-RS (males)	117	0	39	0	39	18.24	8.11	.879
RAS (males)	117	1	5	2	5	3.97	.78	.794
CMNI (females)	54	0	282	62	207	130.47	32.89	.933
I-RS (females)	54	0	39	0	38	18.80	9.07	.911
RAS (females)	54	1	5	2	5	3.96	.87	.814

Note. CMNI = Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory; I-RS = Emotional Inhibition-Rumination Scale; RAS = Relationship Assessment Scale

Data Screening and Model Analyses

The data were screened using descriptive statistics to assess for usual patterns or out-of-bounds data. No unusual means, standard deviations, or patterns were found in the data. The data that were missing did not appear to have particular patterns. To assess for the linearity of the data and to check for homoscedasticity, a matrix scatter plot was run. Normality assumptions were not violated. The data also did not show significant skewness or kurtosis. Multicollinearity was assessed using Pearson bivariate correlations. No multicollinearity was observed. The independence of residuals for the regression analyses were tested using Durbin-Watson statistics, which ranged from 1.58 to 2.37.

For each sex, two multiple regression analyses were conducted. Each of these analyses were run with education, income, and age as control variables. The first analysis started with a model that only contained the three control variables as independent variables with relationship satisfaction as the dependent variable. The second model was conducted the same as the first, but with conformity to masculine norms as an additional independent variable. Finally, the third model included both conformity to masculine norms and emotional inhibition/rumination. For the first model testing males, and the model was significant, $F(3, 113) = 7.57, p < .01$. The R-squared value was .167 and the adjusted R-squared was .145, which indicates that 14.5% of the variance in relationship satisfaction was explained by the control variables chosen. Education and income were significantly associated with relationship satisfaction. As education level increased, relationship satisfaction decreased ($\beta = -.299, p = .001$). On the contrary, income had a positive relationship with relationship satisfaction. People with higher incomes had higher relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .273, p = .002$). The second model in the male group was also significant, $F(4, 112) = 8.80, p < .01$. R-squared = .239, adjusted R-squared = .212. Twenty-one

percent of the variance in relationship satisfaction is explained by the model. Education and income were significant as observed in the previous model, but conformity to masculine norms was also significant. The results indicated that as conformity to masculine norms increases, relationship satisfaction decreases ($\beta = -.277$, $p = .002$). The third model testing males was significant, $F(5, 111) = 7.31$, $p < .01$. The R-squared was .248 and the adjusted R-squared was .214, which means 21% of variance was accounted for by the independent variables. The third model demonstrated that emotional inhibition/rumination did not have a significant association with relationship satisfaction among the male participants.

Table 11: Regression Analysis (First Analysis, Relationship Satisfaction as DV, Male Group)

Model 1 (controls)	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.
Constant	3.84	.357		7.78	.000
Age	.012	.008	.126	1.45	.149
Education	-.234	.068	-.299	-3.46	.001*
Income	.112	.036	.273	3.13	.002*
Model 2					
Constant	4.80	.450		10.65	.000
Age	.006	.008	.066	.778	.438
Education	-.205	.065	-.262	-3.13	.002*
Income	.114	.034	.276	3.30	.001*
CMNI	-.008	.002	-.277	-3.25	.002*
Model 3					
Constant	4.91	.462		10.63	.000
Age	.004	.008	.045	.513	.609
Education	.091	.090	.133	1	.322
Income	.107	.035	.260	3.05	.003*
CMNI	-.007	.002	-.241	-2.65	.009*
I-RS	-.010	.009	-.105	-1.12	.266

* $p < .01$

Among the female participants, the first model with the control variables was not significant, $F(3, 50) = .755$, $p > .05$. The second model was significant, $F(4, 49) = 1.88$, $p < .05$. The R-squared was .133 and the adjusted R-squared was .062, which means 6% of the variance

in relationship satisfaction is explained by conformity to masculine norms. As conformity to masculine norms increased, relationship satisfaction decreased ($\beta = -.301, p = .029$). The third model was significant, $F(5, 48) = 1.96, p < .01$. The R-squared was .170 and the adjusted R-squared was .083, which means 8% of the variance in relationship satisfaction was accounted for by conformity to masculine norms. The third model further demonstrated that as conformity to masculine norms increased, relationship satisfaction decreased ($\beta = -.420, p = .009$).

Table 12: Regression Analysis (First Analysis, Relationship Satisfaction as DV, Female Group)

Model 1 (controls)	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.
Constant	3.19	.598		5.34	.000
Age	.000	.011	-.001	-.009	.993
Education	.123	.094	.180	1.30	.199
Income	.046	.057	.111	.797	.429
Model 2					
Constant	4.35	.772		5.63	.000
Age	-.001	.010	-.013	-.097	.923
Education	.101	.091	.148	1.10	.276
Income	.044	.055	.106	.797	.429
CMNI	-.008	.004	-.301	-2.25	.029*
Model 3					
Constant	4.42	.765		5.78	.000
Age	-.003	.010	-.040	-.301	.765
Education	.091	.090	.133	1	.322
Income	.048	.055	.117	.888	.379
CMNI	-.011	.004	-.420	-2.70	.009**
I-RS	.021	.015	.228	1.47	.149

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

For the second set of regression analyses, emotional inhibition/rumination was the dependent variable. The analysis for each group consisted of two models, one for the control variables and one with conformity to masculine norms as an independent variable. The first model of the male group was significant, $F(3, 123) = 5.38, p < .01$. The R-squared was .116 and the adjusted R-squared was .094, which means 9% of the variance in emotional

inhibition/rumination was accounted for by the controls. As age increased, emotional inhibition/rumination decreased ($\beta = -.275$, $p = .002$). The second model of the male group was significant, $F(4, 122) = 9.07$, $p < .01$. The R-squared value was .229 and the adjusted R-squared was .204, which indicates 20% of the variance in emotional inhibition/rumination was accounted for by the independent variables. As age and income increased, emotional inhibition/rumination decreased ($\beta = -.201$, $p = .017$; $\beta = -.164$, $p = .045$). As conformity to masculine norms increased, emotional inhibition/rumination increased ($\beta = .346$, $p = .000$).

Table 13: Regression Analysis (Second Analysis, Emotional Inhibition/Rumination as DV, Male Group)

Model 1 (controls)	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.
Constant	24.25	3.53		6.86	.000
Age	-.270	.084	-.275	-3.20	.002**
Education	.791	.701	.096	1.13	.261
Income	-.627	.350	-.155	-1.79	.075
Model 2					
Constant	11.47	4.48		2.56	.012
Age	-.197	.081	-.201	-2.43	.017*
Education	.513	.660	.063	.777	.439
Income	-.664	.328	-.164	-2.02	.045*
CMNI	.099	.023	.346	4.23	.000**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

The first model in the female group was not significant, $F(3, 55) = .238$, $p > .05$. The second model, conformity to masculine norms was significant, $F(4, 54) = 5.20$, $p < .01$. The R-squared was .278 and the adjusted R-squared was .224, which indicates that 22% of the variance in emotional inhibition/rumination was accounted for by conformity to masculine norms. As conformity to masculine norms increased, emotional inhibition/rumination increased ($\beta = .519$, $p = .000$).

Table 14: Regression Analysis (Second Analysis, Emotional Inhibition/Rumination as DV, Female Group)

Model 1 (controls)	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.
Constant	19.06	5.96		3.20	.002
Age	.074	.109	.091	.681	.499
Education	.067	.968	.009	.069	.945
Income	-.274	.585	-.063	-.468	.642
Model 2					
Constant	-1.84	6.96		-.264	.793
Age	.074	.094	.091	.790	.433
Education	.531	.842	.073	.630	.531
Income	-.201	.505	-.046	-.398	.692
CMNI	.143	.032	.519	4.45	*.000

*p < .01

Research Questions Analysis

Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one stated that the independent variable, conformity to masculine norms, would have a negative association with relationship satisfaction for both the male and female groups. This hypothesis was addressed using a regression analysis with age, education, and income as control variables. This hypothesis was found to be supported. Conformity to masculine norms was a significant negative predictor for relationship satisfaction for males reporting about themselves ($t = -3.25, p < .01$) and for females reporting about their male partners ($t = -2.25, p < .05$). For males, education level was positively related to relationship satisfaction, and income was negatively associated with relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two stated that the emotional inhibition/rumination variable would mediate the association between conformity to masculine norms and relationship satisfaction in both the male and female groups. This hypothesis was assessed through hierarchical regressions using the

same control variables as the previous analysis. This hypothesis was not supported in both the male and female groups. This was evident in that the conformity to masculine norms variable was unaffected by the presence of the proposed mediator (see Tables 13 and 14). However, conformity to masculine norms significantly predicted higher emotional inhibition/rumination. In the male group, age, income, and conformity to masculine norms were significant predictors, while conformity to masculine norms alone was a significant predictor in the female group.

Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three stated that the association between conformity to masculine norms and relationship satisfaction would be more significant for the female group than for the male group. The male and female groups had to be analyzed separately due to a change in the plan for data analysis. As a result, this hypothesis was not able to be addressed in the present study.

Results Conclusion

In conclusion, statistical support was present for hypothesis one. In the male and female groups, conformity to masculine norms had a significant negative association with relationship satisfaction. This demonstrated that as conformity to masculine norms increases, relationship satisfaction decreases for both males and females. The control variables, income and education, were also significant predictors of relationship satisfaction in the male group. Income had a positive association, while education had a negative association. Statistical support was not found for hypothesis two and hypothesis three. For hypothesis two, emotional inhibition/rumination was not found to be a significant mediator of conformity to masculine norms and relationship satisfaction in either the male nor female group. Hypothesis three could not be addressed because the male scale items were different from the female items and had to be treated as separate variables. Although it was not found to be a mediator, emotional

inhibition/rumination was found to be a significant dependent variable in both groups. In the male group age, income, education, and conformity to masculine norms were significant predictors. Conformity to masculine norms alone was a significant predictor in the female group.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to further investigate the nature of the association between masculinity and relationship satisfaction by introducing emotional inhibition/rumination as a potential mediator. This study also aimed to address potential sex differences by collecting data from males reporting on their own experiences and females reporting on their experience of their male partner. Regression analyses were conducted to test the associations between these variables. Conformity to masculine norms was a significant predictor for both relationship satisfaction and emotional inhibition-rumination across both the male and female groups. Additionally, three control variables showed significance across the two regression analyses. This section further discusses the results, clinical implications, potential directions for future research, and the study's limitations.

Hypothesis one was supported in that higher conformity to masculine norms scores significantly predicted lower relationship satisfaction scores in both the male and female groups. This is particularly impressive for the female group as the sample size ($N = 54$) was expected to be too small to have a significant effect as it was estimated that roughly 100 participants would be the minimum necessary (Cohen, 1992). Conformity to masculine norms predicted lower relationship satisfaction in males reporting on their own experiences and in females reporting on their male partners. This supports previous research that demonstrates that males with traditional gender beliefs report lower relationship satisfaction and an overemphasis on monetary resources (Coughlin & Wade, 2012). The results from the female group in the present study may support previous findings that male emotional involvement in opposite sex relationships can influence the female partner's satisfaction (Jensen et al., 2013). The present study also replicates the observations in Burn and Ward's study that used similar conditions (2005). The findings in the

present study are also important to note in relation to the Burn and Ward (2005) study because findings remained consistent with a relatively more diverse sample. The Burn and Ward study was college-aged (mean age 20.2), mostly white (79%), and were majority first year college students (61.2%) (2005). In comparison, the present study had a mean age of 33, and ranged from 20 to 64. The racial distribution in the present study was primarily white, but more evenly distributed than the previous study (67% white). Finally, the sample in the present study included a wide range of education levels from high school to doctoral degree in comparison to the majority first year college sample in the previous study. This suggests that the association between masculine norms and relationship satisfaction may be constant across a range of demographic variables. In summary, the more males conform to masculine norms and the more females who perceive their male partners to conform to such norms, the lower the relationship satisfaction.

The second hypothesis was not supported as emotion inhibition/rumination had no observable mediation effect on the association between masculine norms and relationship satisfaction. In both groups, the association between conformity to masculine norms and relationship satisfaction remained when emotional inhibition/rumination was included as a control variable. This means that conformity to masculine norms predicted lower relationship satisfaction irrespective of emotional inhibition/rumination. Had emotional inhibition/rumination been a mediator, conformity to masculine norms would have ceased to have a significant association with relationship satisfaction. However, emotional inhibition/rumination was shown to be a significant dependent variable in both groups with conformity to masculine norms as a predictor. This means that when males reported higher levels of conformity to masculine norms, they were likely to also have higher scores on emotional inhibition/rumination. This was also

reflected in the female group, which means that females who reported higher conformity to masculine norms in their male partners were also likely to report higher emotional inhibition/rumination in their partners. These findings are consistent with past research that shows both males and females value emotional intimacy in romantic relationships, but males are less likely to engage in this emotional intimacy (Dindia & Allen, 1992; Siavelis & Lamke, 1992). However, the present study did not find significance between emotional inhibition/rumination and relationship satisfaction. But, based on the results of the present study, it is clear that masculinity is a significant predictor of lower relationship satisfaction and higher emotional inhibition/rumination. This supports previous research connecting masculine socialization with a lack of emotionality in childhood and in emotional expression (Berke et al., 2017; Bruch, 2002; Fuchs & Thelen, 1988). The findings of the present study are interesting because emotional inhibition and rumination have not previously been examined in gender role research. Previously, the I-RS has been connected to a number of variables, such as muscle tension following stress and anger management problems, that potentially relate to the findings in masculinity research (Kaiser et al., 1995; Pennebaker, 1995; Roger et al., 2011). The present study appears to have expanded conformity to masculine norms as a potential correlate of the I-RS.

Three control variables, income, education, and age were found to be significant predictors in the regression analyses that were conducted for the male participants. In the first regression analysis, higher levels of income predicted higher relationship satisfaction, while higher levels of education predicted lower relationship satisfaction. The association observed with income in the present study may coincide with previous research. A variety of studies have connected income with satisfaction in romantic relationships (Berry & Williams, 1987; Özdemir

& Demir, 2017). One study in particular found that lower income couples had greater fluctuations in relationship satisfaction compared to higher income couples (Jackson, Krull, Bradbury, & Karney, 2017). Burn and Ward observed that the Pursuit of Status subscale in the CMNI was the only subscale that did not have a negative association with relationship satisfaction among female participants and had no association among male participants. This evidence may suggest that the possession or pursuit of monetary resources does not negatively impact relationship satisfaction as measured by the RAS. Because the present study observed this association in males, it is possible that this reflects the conventional male role of breadwinner (Connell, 2002). That is, males who provide for their families may feel a greater sense of satisfaction in their romantic relationships. The association found between education and relationship satisfaction is less clear. It is possible that this is related to previous findings connecting higher education to stress (Robotham, 2008). However, much of this research does not provide clear explanations for why this is. Regardless, it is possible that this relationship is connected to why higher education levels predicted lower relationship satisfaction in the present study.

In the second regression analysis conducted on the male group, age was observed to be a significant negative predictor of emotional inhibition/rumination. This finding potentially supports Carstensen's Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (1992). Carstensen found that as adults age, they tend to limit their social circles to their most intimate relationships. It is possible that the relationship between age and emotional inhibition/rumination in the present study reflects Carstensen's findings. Income was also a negative predictor of emotional inhibition/rumination, but only when conformity to masculine norms was held constant as a control variable. Previous research has connected older age with less healthy behavior and lower social support in males,

but not with emotional variables (Rochelle, 2015). For income, this association might be similar to what was observed with income and relationship satisfaction. As previously explained, Coughlin and Wade discovered that men who conform to traditional gender roles place high importance on income disparity and report lower relationship satisfaction (2012). While these findings do not directly relate to the present study, it points to potential relationships that could be explored in future research.

The purpose of this study was to replicate previous findings in the association between conformity to masculine norms and relationship satisfaction, while assessing for emotional inhibition/rumination as a mediator. Although no evidence was found for a mediation effect, higher conformity to masculine norms was a significant predictor of lower relationship satisfaction and higher emotional inhibition/rumination across both groups. These results of the present study are valuable as they provided continued support that conventional masculinity can predict dissatisfaction in relationships.

Clinical Implications

The results of the present study support the idea that traditional masculine norms are in conflict with relational health, which can create issues in family therapy. These patterns have been observed to create issues in men being involved in mental health services (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Tucker et al., 2013). In the present study, this was exemplified with conformity to masculine norms predicting lower relationship satisfaction and higher emotional inhibition/rumination. These results were also interesting in that conformity to masculine norms was a significant predictor for both males reporting on their own experiences and females reporting on their experiences of their male partners. Conventionally, therapy with opposite sex couples has been stereotyped as an oppositional task: the female partner wants therapy and the

male partner is skeptical or indifferent. This colloquial wisdom has even been observed in the literature through findings that suggest gender stereotyped beliefs are related to negative attitudes toward couples therapy (Imholte, 2018). However, the present study and other research provide support for collaborative solutions.

In the context of couples therapy, the influence of gender roles is more nuanced than it may initially seem. As discussed previously, Knudson-Martin and Mahoney placed heterosexual couples into three categories of gender organization: traditional, gender legacy, and postgender (2009). According to findings of that study, the majority of couples fall into the gender legacy category, which means they believe in gender equality, but fall into traditional roles from a lack of awareness (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009). Although the sample from the present study was not sorted into these categories, the implications are important to note. If some men who conform to masculine norms are not doing so consciously, this is an excellent opportunity for family therapists. This means that therapists who encounter problems related to gender roles can focus on psychoeducation and collaboration to address gender roles rather than pathologizing the construct of gender (Risman, 1998). For example, if a heterosexual couple disagrees on household roles, a family therapist can point out the fact that gender can play a major role in how household tasks are carried out. If the couple recognizes the role of gender in their relationship, they can work with the therapist to challenge traditional gender roles in favor of what they want for their relationship (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009). Masculinity specifically can be addressed in therapy through the perspective of meaning-making. An example of this could be asking a male client “what does being the head of the house mean to you? How does this benefit you?” This approach can give clients an opportunity to question their gender roles without feeling that their beliefs are being overtly challenged. It is imperative that therapists avoid

attributing blame to clients when raising awareness of gender roles. Following awareness raising, therapists can then address gender role issues through conflict management, enhancing efficacy with the couple's relational skills, and confronting the purpose of gender roles (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009).

Limitations

The present study demonstrated significant predictors for conformity to masculine norms, relationship satisfaction, and emotional inhibition/rumination, but still had a number of limitations. One limitation was inherent in the use of online sampling. Online surveys run the risk of resulting in inaccurate data either through dishonest reports or misinterpretation of questions. It is important to note that while seeking participants online yielded a fairly diverse sample, it likely contributed to the majority of the sample being younger and more educated. This was somewhat expected based on the methodology of recruiting clients through Mturk (Shank, 2015). Second, there were significantly more males than females who responded to the survey. Because of this, the female group had fewer than the 100 participants expected to be necessary for statistical power (Cohen, 1992). The reason for this is unclear. With the current cultural climate of questioning masculinity in the United States, it is possible that males were curious about their place in the shifting gender narrative. Regardless of the cause, the interest that males took in the survey could be an indicator to an openness to learning about gender roles. It should be acknowledged that the present study focused on cisgender, opposite sex couples and that the results may not be generalizable to same-sex relationships, people outside of the gender binary, and non-monogamous relationships.

It is important to recognize that the CMNI focuses on a Western, White conceptualization of masculinity that cannot be generalized to individuals who are non-White or have cultural

identities that differ from typical Western male standards. For example, Western masculinity tends to assume that emotional sensitivity and career achievement are mutual exclusive, which may not be the case in other definitions of masculinity.

Masculinity in Western culture is a collection of beliefs, values, and behaviors that are typically related to traits like stoicism, self-reliance, and power. Masculinity can be measured in a way that focuses on an individual experience, as it is done when measuring gender role stress, which asks ‘how does this impact you?’ Conversely, the focus of the present study was the extent to which one conforms to masculinity, which is focused on asking ‘what do you believe?’ There is a potential limitation here in that some information could be missed with the exclusion of one’s personal experience of gender roles. The use of the CMNI in the present study was focused on the overall sum of the inventory and did not access participants’ scores based on the 11 subscales. As discussed previously, these subscales cover various areas of masculine norms and can provide insight into the nature of how masculinity is related to other variables (Burn & Ward, 2005). Another potential limitation was in the use of the I-RS as a mediator. Because there is no prior research connecting the I-RS to masculinity or relationship satisfaction, it is possible that replicating the present study with a different measure could yield the mediation effect that was expected. Also, the I-RS has likely never been adapted to reflect the reporting of one’s partner in the way the CMNI was by Burn and Ward (2005). While the present study observed conformity to masculine norms as a negative predictor for relationship satisfaction, the motive behind these beliefs was not explored. That is, if a man, or a woman’s male partner, followed conventional masculine norms, it was unclear if it was a conscious choice or the product of unawareness.

Future Research

It is important that future research continues to explore potential factors that define masculinity as a construct. Because the construct of gender roles has several interpretations, there are a number of directions future studies can go in. Based on the results of the present study, it is clear that masculine norms are related to relationship satisfaction, so future research can further explore the nature of this association through mediators or moderators. For example, although emotional inhibition/rumination did not have a mediating effect in the present study, further investigation with different measures would be insightful. Further qualitative research could also provide useful insights into the nature of masculinity as there are a multitude of nuances that cannot be fully captured in quantitative data. A potential direction for qualitative work could be an exploration of how males perceive their masculinity in the context of romantic partnership. This could provide specific information about how masculinity is related to relationship satisfaction. Continued research into the association between masculinity and relationship satisfaction could provide essential information for how gender roles are addressed in psychotherapy. For instance, the effect of emotional skills training on the negative association between masculinity and relationship satisfaction could be examined.

The exploration and creation of measures is also an important direction for future research. The CMNI is one of several inventories for masculinity that specifically addresses the extent to which a man conforms to a conventional, North American form of masculinity. While this may be helpful as a baseline for measuring masculinity, few people actually align with many of the assumptions of conventional masculinity (Levant & Powell, 2017). To navigate this, future studies could investigate the use of scales that focus more on the individual experience of gender roles, like the construct of gender role strain (Thompson & Bennett, 2017). It is possible that

exploring the personal experience of gender roles rather than the content of what one believes could provide additional insight into how relational variables are related.

Finally, future research should continue to investigate how all genders and relationship types are impacted by the construct of masculinity. Although it makes sense to study males when researching masculinity, valuable information could be gained from the inclusion of females, transgender, and non-binary individuals. Same-sex male relationships might specifically shed light on the ways in which masculinity could impact relationship satisfaction. This is particularly important for the construct of masculinity because Western society is centered around patriarchal standards (Connell, 2002). In other words, patriarchy places social pressure on people regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation through oppression and unattainable standards. Examining the relational aspects of these sociological concepts would be invaluable for the field of psychotherapy.

Conclusion

The present study investigated the association between conformity to masculine norms and relationship satisfaction with emotional inhibition/rumination as a mediator with the consideration of gender differences. The results supported previous findings that as conformity to masculine norms increases, relationship satisfaction decreases. This was only observed in the male group reporting on themselves and not the female group reporting on current male partners. There was also no evidence that emotional inhibition/rumination mediated the association between conformity to masculine norms and relationship satisfaction. Future research should continue to explore possible mediators and moderators to access the nature of how masculinity impacts romantic relationships. Through further study, specific qualities of masculinity that lead to relational degradation can be better understood. As masculinity continues to be researched,

therapists can become more active participants in raising awareness about the impact of gender roles on relationships. Based on what is currently known about masculinity, therapists can have a positive impact by empowering clients to explore their own ideas of gender and how those ideas influence their relationships.

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APPENDIX A. CLEARANCE AND DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Do you live in the United States?

Yes

No

Please state your age.

What is your current relationship status?

Single

Dating

Living with partner

Married

Separated

Divorced

Are you currently in a relationship with the opposite sex?

Yes

No

Please describe the context of your relationship

- I am a male partnered with a female
- I am a female partnered with a male

Please specify your race

- White or Caucasian
 - Black or African American
 - Hispanic or Latino/a
 - Native American or American Indian
 - Asian or Pacific Islander
 - Other
-

What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- Some high school, no diploma
 - High school graduate or equivalent (GED)
 - Associate's degree
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree
 - Doctorate or professional degree
 - Other _____
-

What sex were you assigned at birth?

- Male
 - Female
 - Intersex
-

What is your sex currently?

- Male
 - Female
 - Intersex
-

What is your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual
 - Homosexual
 - Bisexual
 - Pansexual
 - Other
 - Prefer not to say
-

How long have you been with your current partner? (answers are in years)

Do you have children? If so, how many?

What is your current annual household income?

- Under \$10,000
 - \$10,000-\$19,000
 - \$20,000-\$29,000
 - \$30,000-\$39,000
 - \$40,000-\$49,000
 - \$50,000-\$74,999
 - \$75,000-\$99,999
 - \$100,000-\$150,000
 - Over \$150,000
 - Prefer not to answer
-

Have you received services from a mental health professional in the past?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

APPENDIX B. CONFORMITY TO MASCULINE NORMS INVENTORY (MALE PARTICIPANTS)

The following pages contain a series of statements about how people might think, feel or behave. The statements are designed to measure attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with both traditional and non-traditional masculine gender roles.

Thinking about your own actions, feelings and beliefs, please indicate how much you personally agree or disagree with each statement by selecting "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree", "Agree", "Strongly agree." There are no right or wrong responses to the statements. You should give the responses that most accurately describe your personal actions, feelings and beliefs. It is best if you respond with your first impression when answering (Mahalik et al., 2003).

1. It is best to keep your emotions hidden.
2. In general, I will do anything to win.
3. If there is going to be violence, I find a way to avoid it.
4. If I could, I would frequently change sexual partners.
5. It is important to me that people think I am heterosexual.
6. In general, I must get my way.
7. Trying to be important is the greatest waste of time.
8. I am often absorbed in my work.
9. I will only be satisfied when women are equal to men.
10. I hate asking for help.
11. Taking dangerous risks helps me to prove myself.
12. In general, I do not expend a lot of energy trying to win at things.
13. An emotional bond with a partner is the best part of sex.

14. I should take every opportunity to show my feelings.
15. I believe that violence is never justified.
16. Being thought of as gay is not a bad thing.
17. In general, I do not like risky situations.
18. I should be in charge.
19. Feelings are important to show.
20. I feel miserable when work occupies all my attention.
21. I feel best about my relationships with women when we are equals.
22. Winning is not my first priority.
23. I make sure that people think I am heterosexual.
24. I enjoy taking risks.
25. I am disgusted by any kind of violence.
26. I would hate to be important.
27. I love to explore my feelings with others.
28. If I could, I would date a lot of different people.
29. I ask for help when I need it.
30. My work is the most important part of my life.
31. Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing.
32. I never take chances.
33. I would only have sex if I was in a committed relationship.
34. I like fighting.
35. I treat women as equals.

36. I bring up my feelings when talking to others.
37. I would be furious if someone thought I was gay.
38. I only get romantically involved with one person.
39. I don't mind losing.
40. I take risks.
41. I never do things to be an important person.
42. It would not bother me at all if someone thought I was gay.
43. I never share my feelings.
44. Sometimes violent action is necessary.
45. Asking for help is a sign of failure.
46. In general, I control the women in my life.
47. I would feel good if I had many sexual partners.
48. It is important for me to win.
49. I don't like giving all my attention to work.
50. I feel uncomfortable when others see me as important.
51. It would be awful if people thought I was gay.
52. I like to talk about my feelings.
53. I never ask for help.
54. More often than not, losing does not bother me.
55. It is foolish to take risks.
56. Work is not the most important thing in my life.
57. Men and women should respect each other as equals.

58. Long term relationships are better than casual sexual encounters.
59. Having status is not very important to me.
60. I frequently put myself in risky situations.
61. Women should be subservient to men.
62. I am willing to get into a physical fight if necessary.
63. I like having gay friends.
64. I feel good when work is my first priority.
65. I tend to keep my feelings to myself.
66. Emotional involvement should be avoided when having sex.
67. Winning is not important to me.
68. Violence is almost never justified.
69. I am comfortable trying to get my way.
70. I am happiest when I'm risking danger.
71. Men should not have power over women.
72. It would be enjoyable to date more than one person at a time.
73. I would feel uncomfortable if someone thought I was gay.
74. I am not ashamed to ask for help.
75. The best feeling in the world comes from winning.
76. Work comes first.
77. I tend to share my feelings.
78. I like emotional involvement in a romantic relationship.
79. No matter what the situation I would never act violently.

80. If someone thought I was gay, I would not argue with them about it.
81. Things tend to be better when men are in charge.
82. I prefer to be safe and careful.
83. A person shouldn't get tied down to dating just one person.
84. I tend to invest my energy in things other than work.
85. It bothers me when I have to ask for help.
86. I love it when men are in charge of women.
87. It feels good to be important.
88. I hate it when people ask me to talk about my feelings.
89. I work hard to win.
90. I would only be satisfied with sex if there was an emotional bond.
91. I try to avoid being perceived as gay.
92. I hate any kind of risk.
93. I prefer to stay unemotional.
94. I make sure people do as I say.

APPENDIX C. CONFORMITY TO MASCULINE NORMS INVENTORY (FEMALE PARTICIPANTS)

The following pages contain a series of statements about how people might think, feel or behave. The statements are designed to measure attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with both traditional and non-traditional masculine gender roles.

Thinking about your partner's actions, feelings and beliefs, please indicate how much you personally agree or disagree with each statement by selecting "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree", "Agree", "Strongly agree." There are no right or wrong responses to the statements. You should give the responses that most accurately describe your perception of your partner's personal actions, feelings and beliefs. It is best if you respond with your first impression when answering.

1. He believes it is best to keep your emotions hidden.
2. In general, he will do anything to win.
3. If he could, he would frequently change sexual partners.
4. If there is going to be violence, he will find a way to avoid it.
5. It is important to him that people think he is heterosexual.
6. In general, he must get his way.
7. He believes trying to be important is the greatest waste of time.
8. He is often absorbed in his work.
9. He will only be satisfied when women are equal to men.
10. He hates asking for help.
11. Taking dangerous risks helps him to prove himself.
12. In general, he does not expend a lot of energy trying to win at things.
13. He believes an emotional bond with a partner is the best part of sex.
14. He believes he should take every opportunity to show his feelings.
15. He believes that violence is never justified.

16. He believes being thought of as gay is not a bad thing.
17. In general, he does not like risky situations.
18. He believes he should be in charge.
19. He believes feelings are important to show.
20. He feels miserable when work occupies all his attention.
21. He feels best about his relationships with women when they are equals.
22. Winning is not his first priority.
23. He makes sure that people think he is heterosexual.
24. He enjoys taking risks.
25. He is disgusted by any kind of violence.
26. He would hate to be important.
27. He loves to explore his feelings with others.
28. If he could, he would date a lot of different people.
29. He asks for help when he needs it.
30. His work is the most important part of his life.
31. He believes winning isn't everything, it's the only thing.
32. He never takes chances.
33. He would only have sex if he was in a committed relationship.
34. He likes fighting.
35. He treats women as equals.
36. He brings up his feelings when talking to others.
37. He would be furious if someone thought he was gay.
38. He only gets romantically involved with one person.

39. He doesn't mind losing.
40. He takes risks.
41. He never does things to be an important person.
42. It would not bother him at all if someone thought he was gay.
43. He never shares his feelings.
44. He believes violent action is sometimes necessary.
45. He believes asking for help is a sign of failure.
46. In general, he controls the women in his life.
47. He would feel good if he had many sexual partners.
48. It is important for him to win.
49. He doesn't like giving all his attention to work.
50. He feels uncomfortable when others see him as important.
51. It would be awful for him if people thought he was gay.
52. He likes to talk about his feelings.
53. He never asks for help.
54. More often than not, losing does not bother him.
55. He believes it is foolish to take risks.
56. Work is not the most important thing in his life.
57. He believes men and women should respect each other as equals.
58. He believes long term relationships are better than casual sexual encounters.
59. Having status is not very important to him.
60. He frequently puts himself in risky situations.
61. He believes women should be subservient to men.

62. He is willing to get into a physical fight if necessary.
63. He likes having gay friends.
64. He feels good when work is his first priority.
65. He tends to keep his feelings to himself.
66. He believes emotional involvement should be avoided when having sex.
67. Winning is not important to him.
68. He believes violence is almost never justified.
69. He is comfortable trying to get his way.
70. He is happiest when he's risking danger.
71. He believes men should not have power over women.
72. He believes it would be enjoyable to date more than one person at a time.
73. He would feel uncomfortable if someone thought he was gay.
74. He is not ashamed to ask for help.
75. For him, the best feeling in the world comes from winning.
76. Work comes first for him.
77. He tends to share his feelings.
78. He likes emotional involvement in a romantic relationship.
79. No matter what the situation is, he would never act violently.
80. If someone thought he was gay, he would not argue with them about it.
81. He believes that things tend to be better when men are in charge.
82. He prefers to be safe and careful.
83. He believes a person shouldn't get tied down to dating just one person.
84. He tends to invest his energy in things other than work.

85. It bothers him when he has to ask for help.
86. He loves it when men are in charge of women.
87. He feels good being important.
88. He hates it when people ask him to talk about his feelings.
89. He works hard to win.
90. He would only be satisfied with sex if there was an emotional bond.
91. He tries to avoid being perceived as gay.
92. He hates any kind of risk.
93. He prefers to stay unemotional.
94. He makes sure people do as he says.

APPENDIX D. INHIBITION-RUMINATION SCALE (MALE PARTICIPANTS)

Please indicate how you feel about each item by selecting either 'true' or 'false.' If you feel that an item is neither entirely true nor false, please choose the alternative that is most like you. If you haven't been in the situation described, please say how you feel you would behave in that situation (Roger, de Scremin, Borril, & Forbes, 2011).

1. I remember things that upset me or make me angry for a long time afterwards.
2. I don't bear a grudge - when something is over, it's over, and I don't think about it again.
3. When someone upsets me, I try to hide my feelings.
4. Some people need somebody to confide in but I prefer to solve my own problems.
5. I get worked up just thinking about things that have upset me in the past.
6. I often find myself thinking over and over about things that make me angry.
7. Even when I feel upset about something I don't feel the need to talk to anyone about it.
8. People find it difficult to tell whether I'm excited about something or not.
9. I like to talk problems over to get them off my chest.
10. I feel vulnerable if I have to ask other people for help.
11. In the past I have found a problem easier to solve if I have talked it over with someone.
12. It is good to hear problems out loud.
13. If I receive bad news in front of others I usually try to hide how I feel.
14. It helps to discuss a problem even if it is impossible to reach a solution.
15. I seldom get preoccupied with worries about my future.
16. I have friends who I know would help me but I find it difficult to ask.
17. I seldom show how I feel about things.
18. If I see something that frightens or upsets me, it stays in my mind for a long time afterwards.

19. I think people show their feelings too easily.
20. My failures give me a persistent feeling of remorse.
21. When something upsets me I prefer to talk to someone about it than bottle it up.
22. For me, the future seems to be full of troubles and problems.
23. There are some situations in which I am unable to confide in anybody.
24. I often feel as if I'm just waiting for something bad to happen.
25. When I am reminded of my past failures, I feel as if they are happening all over again.
26. If I get angry or upset I usually say how I feel.
27. Sometimes I have to force myself to concentrate on something else to keep distressing thoughts about the future out of my mind.
28. Intrusive thoughts about problems I'm going to have to deal with make it difficult for me to keep my mind on a task.
29. I don't feel embarrassed about expressing my feelings.
30. I don't let a lot of unimportant things irritate me.
31. I wish I could banish from my mind the memories of past failures.
32. I am unable to trust anybody with my problems.
33. I am afraid that if I confide in someone they will tell my problems to others.
34. I never get so involved thinking about upsetting things that I am unable to feel positive about the future.
35. I am not afraid to ask somebody for help.
36. I worry less about what might happen than most people I know.
37. It takes me a comparatively short time to get over unpleasant events.
38. Sometimes I am unable to confide even in someone who is close to me.

39. Any reminder about upsetting things brings all the emotion flooding back.

**APPENDIX E. INHIBITION-RUMINATION SCALE
(FEMALE PARTICIPANTS)**

Please indicate how you perceive your partner by selecting either 'true' or 'false.' If you feel that an item is neither entirely true nor false, please choose the alternative that is most like your perception of your partner. If you aren't sure if your partner has been in the situation described, please say how you feel they would behave in that situation.

1. He remembers things that upset him or make him angry for a long time afterwards.
2. He doesn't bear a grudge - when something is over, it's over, and he doesn't think about it again.
3. When someone upsets him, he tries to hide his feelings.
4. Some people need somebody to confide in but he prefers to solve his own problems.
5. He gets worked up just thinking about things that have upset him in the past.
6. He often finds himself thinking over and over about things that make him angry.
7. Even when he feels upset about something he doesn't feel the need to talk to anyone about it.
8. People find it difficult to tell whether he's excited about something or not.
9. He likes to talk problems over to get them off his chest.
10. He feels vulnerable if he has to ask other people for help.
11. In the past he has found a problem easier to solve if he was able to talk it over with someone.
12. He believes it is good to hear problems out loud.
13. If he receives bad news in front of others he usually tries to hide how he feels.
14. He believes it helps to discuss a problem even if it is impossible to reach a solution.
15. He seldom gets preoccupied with worries about his future.
16. He has friends who he knows would help him, but he finds it difficult to ask.

17. He seldom shows how he feels about things.
18. If he sees something that frightens or upsets him, it stays in his mind for a long time afterwards.
19. He thinks people show their feelings too easily.
20. His failures give him a persistent feeling of remorse.
21. When something upsets him, he prefers to talk to someone about it than to bottle it up.
22. For him, the future seems to be full of troubles and problems.
23. There are some situations in which he is unable to confide in anybody.
24. He often feels as if he's just waiting for something bad to happen.
25. When he is reminded of his past failures, he feels as if they are happening all over again.
26. If he gets angry or upset he usually says how he feels.
27. Sometimes he has to force himself to concentrate on something else to keep distressing thoughts about the future out of his mind.
28. Intrusive thoughts about problems he's going to have to deal with make it difficult for him to keep his mind on a task.
29. He doesn't feel embarrassed about expressing his feelings.
30. He doesn't let a lot of unimportant things irritate him.
31. He wishes he could banish the memories of past failures from his mind.
32. He is unable to trust anybody with his problems.
33. He is afraid that if he confides in someone they will tell his problems to others.
34. He never gets so involved thinking about upsetting things that he is unable to feel positive about the future.
35. He is not afraid to ask somebody for help.

36. He worries less about what might happen than most people he knows.
37. It takes him a comparatively short time to get over unpleasant events.
38. Sometimes he is unable to confide even in someone who is close to him.
39. Any reminder about upsetting things brings all the emotion flooding back to him.

APPENDIX F. RELATIONSHIP ASSESSMENT SCALE

Please mark each answer according to what best fits for you (Hendrick, Dicke, & Hendrick, 1998).

How well does your partner meet your needs?

A	B	C	D	E
Poorly		Average		Extremely well

In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

A	B	C	D	E
Unsatisfied		Average		Extremely satisfied

How good is your relationship compared to most?

A	B	C	D	E
Poor		Average		Excellent

How often do you wish you hadn't gotten in this relationship?

A	B	C	D	E
Never		Average		Very often

To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations:

A	B	C	D	E
Hardly at all		Average		Completely

How much do you love your partner?

A	B	C	D	E
Not much		Average		Very much

How many problems are there in your relationship?

A	B	C	D	E
Very few		Average		Very many

Note: Items 4 and 7 are reverse scored. A=1, B=2, C=3, D=4, E=5. You add up the items and divide by 7 to get a mean score.