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N. Margaret Schwartz Moravec

August 2013

GENDER ROLE IDENTITY, GENDER ROLE CONFLICT, CONFORMITY TO ROLE
NORMS AND MEN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP-SEEKING

A Dissertation Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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An Abstract
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Abstract

Men typically seek less help than women in a variety of domains, including health concerns and psychological distress (see Courtenay, 2000, for a review). In order to understand this disparity, men's attitudes toward seeking psychological help have been examined in relation to men's gender role constructs. Men's conformity to traditional masculine gender role norms has been negatively associated with attitudes toward seeking psychological help (Good, Dell, & Mintz, 1989; Good et al., 2006). Men's gender role conflict, or the negative intrapersonal conflict that results when men rigidly adhere to traditional gender roles, has also been negatively associated with help-seeking attitudes (see O'Neil, 2005, for a review). However, the relation of men's gender role identity to gender role ideology and help-seeking attitudes has been largely ignored. The present study examined the relation of two dimensions of gender role identity: gender role exploration and gender role commitment (Marcia, 1966), to men's gender role conflict and psychological help-seeking attitudes.

Participants were 191 male college students, ranging in age from 18 to 58 years ($M=24$; $SD=6.26$). The sample was ethnically diverse, with 43.5% Caucasian/White participants, 20.4% Latino/Hispanic participants, 22% Asian American/Asian/Pacific Islander participants, 8.9% Black/African American participants, and 5.2% who identified as multiracial or "other." Most participants had never engaged in psychological treatment, per self-report (78%). Measures included a demographic questionnaire, the

Gender Role Conflict Scale (O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986), which assessed gender role conflict four domains (i.e., success, power and competition, restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and conflict between work and family), the Gender Role Exploration and Commitment Scale (Schwartz et al., 2012), which assessed gender role identity, the Inventory of Attitudes toward Seeking Mental Health Services (Mackenzie, Knox, Gekoski, & Macaulay, 2004), which measured attitudes toward psychological help-seeking, and Conformity to Masculine Norms-46 (Parent & Moradi, 2009), which measured conformity to traditional role norms.

The present study examined four research questions: (1) To what extent are gender role exploration and commitment scores related to levels of gender role conflict domains, when controlling for conformity to masculine role norms? (2) To what extent do gender role exploration and commitment moderate the relation between conformity to masculine role norms and gender role conflict domains? (3) What is the combined and unique contribution of gender role exploration, gender role commitment and four gender role conflict domains to attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help, when controlling for conformity to masculine role norms? (4) To what extent do gender role commitment and exploration moderate the relationship between the four gender role conflict domains and attitudes toward psychological help-seeking?

Results suggest that, after controlling for men's conformity to masculine role norms, gender role commitment was predictive of men's gender role conflict in the areas of success, power, and competition and conflict between work and family, and was a protective factor for restrictive emotionality. Gender role exploration was not a

significant predictor of gender role conflict, and neither gender role exploration nor commitment significantly moderated the relation of conformity to male role norms and gender role conflict. Results also indicated that conformity to masculine role norms was a better predictor of men's negative attitudes about therapy than gender role conflict, gender role exploration, or gender role commitment. When controlling for previous therapy experience and conformity to masculine role norms, neither gender role conflict, gender role exploration nor gender role commitment were significant predictors of men's help-seeking attitudes. Results also indicated that there was a weak interaction effect between gender role commitment and gender role conflict, when predicting men's attitudes toward help-seeking.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Decades of research indicate that psychological treatment can reduce the severity and duration of mental disorders. However, many people that need mental health care do not seek or receive it. Yet, the disparity between needed and actual treatment is not equitable. Men typically seek less help than women in a variety of domains, including health concerns, chemical and alcohol dependency, and psychological distress (see Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Courtenay, 2000 for reviews). This disparity is especially troubling, given the severity of problems that men tend to face (Courtenay 2000). These help-seeking trends are far-reaching and apply to men across ethnic, cultural, and sexual orientation groups (D'Arcy & Schmitz, 1979; Husaini, Moore, & Cain, 1994; Neighbors & Howard, 1987; Simonsen, Blazina, & Watkins, 2000).

Sex differences in help-seeking behavior have often been examined in a descriptive way (i.e., focusing solely on a participants' sex). Most early studies that identified sex differences in help-seeking did not examine possible mediators or moderators of this relationship, and as a result, researchers' conclusions regarding underlying reasons were often speculative and post-hoc in nature (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). Further, existing research related to the disparity in male and female help-seeking behaviors fails to account for the small percentage of men who do choose to seek help in various contexts. Thus, there are likely within-gender group differences in help-seeking behavior that are not accounted for by simply identifying sex differences. Such rigid, sex-based conclusions may serve to reinforce existing sex-stereotypes by reframing men's lack of help-seeking as independence, while reinforcing female stereotypes of

emotionality and codependence (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). Thus, Addis and Mahalik (2003) suggested that examining the relation of masculine ideology (i.e., men's views about behaviors and attitudes that are appropriate for each gender) to men's reluctance to seek help would help increase our understanding of the gender disparity in help-seeking.

Previous research has established a link between masculine ideology and past help-seeking behavior (Good, Dell, & Mintz, 1989). Likely due to the difficulty of studying actual help-seeking behaviors, the majority of research in this area has examined the relation between masculine ideology and men's attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help, or their projected intent to do so (e.g., Berger, Levant, McMillan, Kelleher, & Sellers, 2005). Individuals' rigid adherence to traditional gender role ideology has been consistently associated with negative attitudes toward help-seeking (see O'Neil, 2008, for a review; Pleck, 1984). Additionally, a large body of literature has accrued examining gender role conflict, or the negative intra-psychic effects of rigid adherence to restrictive masculinity ideology, in relation to attitudes toward professional help-seeking and other negative outcomes (O'Neil, 2008).

Gender role conflict theory falls within the social constructionist framework, which suggests that gender role ideologies are formed when individuals' active role decisions interact with passively internalized ideas regarding socially-appropriate gender role norms. Gender role identity refers to the process of exploring options regarding gender roles and making active or passive personal decisions (commitment) regarding these options. From the social constructionist framework, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that how men arrive at their conception of masculinity (via agentic exploration and commitment versus passive internalization of predominant views), and

the extent to which they have committed to their views, might affect the rigidity of their masculine ideals. In turn, this exploration of and commitment to gender role ideas may attenuate or amplify negative outcomes such as negative help-seeking attitudes.

Therefore, it seems important to examine the relation of men's reported levels of exploration and commitment regarding their gender role ideology (gender identity) to their gender role conflict and adherence to traditional masculine ideology.

Lack of exploration and commitment in identity development is related to some indicators of negative psychological health. Specifically, reduced or lack of exploration has been significantly linked to stress (Kidwell, Dunham, Bacho, Pastorino, & Portes, 1995), drug use (Jones, 1992), and depression (Marcia, 1993). However, it is unknown how men's gender role identity exploration and commitment may relate to men's attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help, an important factor in promoting men's psychological health.

In sum, research findings indicate that gender role conflict is associated with negative psychological help-seeking attitudes and traditional masculine ideology. The present study will extend previous research by (1) examining the role of gender role conformity, gender role exploration and gender role commitment to gender roles in relation to men's gender role conflict, and (2) examining the contribution of each of these variables in predicting men's attitudes toward seeking psychological help.

Chapter two provides a review of the relevant literature related to the relationships between gender role ideology, gender role conflict, and help-seeking attitudes, along with a discussion of exploration and commitment-based identity theory. Chapter two also provides definitions of relevant terminology and a discussion of gaps in the literature.

The chapter culminates with a presentation of the research questions that were addressed in this study, and a discussion of related hypotheses. Chapter three provides information regarding the methods and instruments used in the study. Next, the results of preliminary and primary analyses are discussed in chapter four. The paper culminates in a discussion and interpretation of these results, along with a discussion of the study's limitations and a consideration of the implications of the findings.

Chapter II

Literature Review

The present chapter provides a review of relevant literature regarding men's help-seeking behavior, identity research, gender role norm adherence, and gender role conflict. Previous research regarding the relationships among these constructs will be discussed; yet, no study was located that examined these four variables simultaneously. Therefore, research related to masculinity ideology and gender roles is reviewed first, followed by discussions of ego and gender role identity, and gender role conflict. Finally, the relation of gender role identity to help seeking behavior and to gender role conflict is examined. The last section of this chapter presents this study's research questions and related hypotheses.

Masculinity Ideology and Gender Roles

Gender roles refer to "behaviors, expectations, and role sets defined by society as masculine or feminine which are embodied in the behavior of the individual man or woman and culturally regarded as appropriate to males or females" (O'Neil, 1990, p. 23). Individuals' socialization regarding prevalent gender roles within a particular culture influences the ways in which men and women view themselves and the world. Early gender role research examined the concept of gender role orientation, which refers to a person's identification with socially defined masculine and/or feminine personality traits regardless of biological gender (Bem, 1975; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). Gender role orientation captures individual adherence to social prescriptions of expressive or instrumental traits and behaviors associated with traditional female and male roles, but does not capture a person's gender role ideology (Good, Borst, & Wallace, 1995), which

consists of attitudes or feelings of approval or disapproval regarding traditional and nontraditional gender roles (Huston, 1983; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). These attitudes are negotiated by individuals in the face of competing external messages and stimuli (Butler, 1990; Lorber, 1996), and may be changed and re-negotiated throughout life (Abrams, 2003). More importantly, investigations have demonstrated that gender role ideologies are conceptually distinct from gender role orientations (Levant & Richmond, 2007), and that gender role ideology is a better predictor of some psychological outcomes than gender role orientation (McCreary, Newcomb, & Sadava, 1999).

Gender role ideologies are usually classified as traditional or non-traditional. Traditional gender role ideologies typically entail a dichotomous, gendered division of labor that prescribes separate spheres of life (e.g., work and family) for men and women, and a gender hierarchy defined by male dominance (Thompson & Pleck, 1986). Those who hold a non-traditional (i.e., egalitarian) gender role ideology, however, may attempt to overlook gender in evaluating decisions regarding career, parenting, marriage, social roles, education, and division of labor (Beere, King, Beere, & King, 1984; Thornton, 1989).

One aspect of gender role ideology that has received attention in research is masculinity ideology. Specifically, masculinity ideology refers to the “beliefs about the importance of men adhering to culturally defined standards for male behavior” (Pleck, 1995, p. 19). Typically, the term masculinity ideology has been used to refer to the extent to which a man adheres to traditional views regarding what constitutes appropriate behavior for men in society (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Pleck, 1995). These expectations are socially transmitted, and can influence the ways in which individuals view themselves

and the world (Pleck, 1995). Research has recently examined gender role ideology in relation to ego identity.

Ego Identity and Gender Role Identity

In his pioneering study of ego development, Erikson defined ego identity as one's knowledge of the self (Lucas, 1997). According to Erikson (1968), identity is formed as individuals progress through a series of developmental stages, each involving specific identity-related tasks. Individuals move from one stage to another as a result of crises related to exploration within each stage's developmental tasks (Cohen, Chartrand, & Jowdy, 1995). Erikson viewed the concept of identity as a bipolar continuum, with identity synthesis (i.e., combining childhood identifications into a self-determined set of beliefs and behaviors) and identity confusion (i.e., an inability to synthesize past, present, and future parts of the self into a foundational set of ideals on which to base one's adult self) constituting the two poles. Within this framework, identity is a multi-faceted and complex concept, which may include moral, religious, philosophical, social, and career facets (Schwartz, 2001). Although Erikson presented provocative ideas, others have noted that his writings are often ambiguous and amorphous (Cote & Levine, 1987).

Marcia (1966) offered a refined conceptualization of Erikson's ego identity theory that is amenable to empirical research. Marcia conceptualized identity in terms of two underlying continuous constructs: commitment and exploration. Exploration is defined as "problem-solving behavior aimed at eliciting information about oneself or one's environment in order to make a decision about an important life choice" (Grotevant, 1987, p. 204). Commitment is defined as holding to a specified set of values and beliefs regarding life choices (Marcia, 1989). Therefore, as one cycles through periods of

exploration and commitment, one seeks out information regarding oneself and one's environment in specific domains (e.g., gender roles, career, religion), explores alternatives, and then makes and embraces a decision. Levels of exploration and commitment are paired to form Marcia's four theoretical identity statuses: achieved (high commitment, high exploration), moratorium (low commitment, high exploration), foreclosed (high commitment, low exploration) and diffused (low commitment, low exploration) (Marcia, 1966).

Researchers have developed paper-and-pencil, self-administered instruments to assess a wide variety of interpersonal (e.g., friendship, dating, sex roles and recreation) and ideological (e.g., occupation, politics, religion, philosophy) ego identity domains. These measures yield ego identity scores in specific domains (e.g., gender roles, religion) that can be combined to calculate a global ego identity score. However, research findings suggest that, although it is possible to obtain an overall level of identity achievement, individuals' degree of identity achievement can vary by domain (Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, & Geisinger, 1995; Schwartz, 2001). Therefore, it is important to examine identity status in relation to specific domains, such as gender role identity.

Gender role identity has been included as an important part of identity in previous identity measures (Balistreri et al., 1995; Grotevant, Thorbecke, & Meyer, 1982), but rarely has been assessed on its own. Marcia's identity development model provides a useful framework from which to conceptualize gender role identity in terms of exploration and commitment. Gender role exploration refers to the degree to which individuals have actively thought about alternatives regarding what it means to be a man or woman. Gender role commitment refers to the degree to which individuals have

actively or passively made or adhered to decisions regarding their gender role ideology (Schwartz, Schwartz Moravec, McDermott, Stinson, & Petho-Robertson, 2012).

Previous research has shown that participation in exploration and commitment related to other identity domains is associated with healthy psychological outcomes (see Schwartz, 2001, for a review). Thus, it is possible that individuals' engagement in exploration related to their gender role ideology may be a better predictor of psychological outcomes, such as gender role conflict and help-seeking behaviors, than gender role traditionality. If that is the case, individuals may avoid negative outcomes generally associated with traditional gender role adherence by engaging in healthy exploration of gender role ideologies prior to making a commitment to a particular gender role identity.

Gender Role Conflict

Gender role conflict is defined as “a psychological state in which socialized gender roles have negative consequences on the person or others” (O’Neil, Good, & Holmes, 1995; p. 166). Conformity to socialized masculine role norms has been linked to a variety of interpersonal and intrapersonal problems (see Pleck, 1995, for a review), and the rigidity of one’s beliefs has been identified as a key aspect in the development of maladaptive outcomes. Traditional gender role ideologies are often contradictory and inconsistent; thus, consistently conforming to traditional gender role beliefs is nearly impossible (Pleck, 1981). Internal conflict can result when an individual violates rigid, internalized gender role norms due to environmental demands or restrictions. According to O’Neil (2008), gender role conflict ensues when adherence to rigid or sexist gender roles results in devaluation or restriction of oneself or others, which in turn, causes

internal distress. Current understanding of gender role conflict is rooted in social constructionist theory, which suggests that men and boys both unconsciously adopt culturally transmitted gender role ideology and actively engage in determining how gender roles affect their own lives and the lives of others in their society (Courtenay, 2000). Thus, both active (agentic) and passive (accepting) components are present in men's development of gender role ideologies.

Gender role conflict is theoretically composed of four psychological domains salient to Western conceptions of manhood (O'Neil, 2008). These components are: (a) *success, power, and competition* (i.e., concern about personal achievement and having authority or dominance over others), (b) *restrictive emotionality* (i.e., experiencing fear related to expressing emotion to others, and/or having difficulty expressing emotions), (c) *restrictive affectionate behavior between men* (i.e., experiencing difficulty with expressing feelings for other men, and a concern about physical contact between men), and (d) *conflict between work and family relations* (i.e., having difficulty balancing different spheres of life, resulting in overwork and poor health). Underlying these components is a shared fear of femininity, which influences men's interactions across social settings (O'Neil, 2008). Evidence suggests that gender role conflict and a traditional gender role ideology, operationalized in this study as men's attitude-conformity to dominant masculine role norms, are related constructs (Berger, et al., 2005; Good et al., 2006; Levant, Rankin, Williams, Hasan, & Smalley, 2010). Specifically, conformity to male role norms has been positively associated to the gender role conflict domains of success, power, and competition, and restrictive emotionality (Good et al., 2006). Restrictive affectionate behavior between men has been associated with

conformity to some aspects of masculine role norms, including emotional control, power over women, and self-reliance (Good et al, 2006). In sum, gender role conflict domains relate to men's traditional gender role norm adherence in important ways. Research has also examined how these constructs relate to men's help-seeking attitudes.

Conformity to Masculine Norms, Gender Role Conflict and Help-Seeking Attitudes

Several studies have linked conformity to traditional male role norms with negative attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help (Berger et al., 2005; Good et al., 2006; Zeldow & Greenberg, 1979). For instance, conformity to masculine role norms emerged as a unique predictor of help-seeking attitudes when controlling for overall gender role conflict scores (Good et al., 2006). Similarly, in a canonical correlation study, traditional attitudes about masculinity and the gender role conflict domains of restrictive affectionate behavior between men and restrictive emotionality were negatively related to attitudes toward seeking psychological help (Good et al., 1989). Additionally, men with high restrictive emotionality scores reported less likelihood to seek help in the future and less past help-seeking behavior (Good et al., 1989). Consistent with these findings, men's positive help-seeking attitudes were positively correlated with egalitarian views of women in society (i.e., less traditional beliefs; Zeldow & Greenberg, 1979).

Researchers have also identified consistent linkages between gender role conflict domains and negative attitudes toward help-seeking (see O'Neil, 2008, for a review). While some studies have established significant correlations between overall gender role conflict scores and attitudes toward help-seeking (Blazina & Marks, 2001; Good et al., 2006; Wisch, Mahalik, Hayes, & Nutt, 1995), others have explored the relationship by

gender role conflict domain. In particular, restrictive affectionate behavior between men (Berger et al., 2005; Blazina & Marks, 2001; Good, et al., 1989; Good & Wood, 1995; Simonsen, et al., 2000) and restrictive emotionality (Blazina & Marks, 2001; Blazina & Watkins, 1996; Good et al., 1989; Good et al., 2006; Good & Wood, 1995; Robertson & Fitzgerald, 1992; Simonsen et al., 2000) have demonstrated the most consistent significant and negative relations with attitudes toward seeking psychological help. However, success, power and competition (Blazina & Marks, 2001; Good & Wood, 1995; Robertson & Fitzgerald, 1992) and conflict between work and family (Good & Wood, 1995) have also been significantly linked to help-seeking attitudes, although less consistently. In addition, some studies have failed to show any significant relationship between gender role conflict domains and psychological help-seeking attitudes (Lane & Addis, 2005; Mendoza & Cummings, 2001).

Researchers have engaged in much speculation regarding the underlying reasons for the consistent relationship between traditional masculinity ideologies and lower help-seeking among men. Some authors have posited that initiating the therapy process presents a barrier to men because the act of asking for help is seen as contrary to the traditional male role norms of emotional stoicism and self-reliance (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Robertson, 2001). Others have discussed various social psychological phenomenon which may impact help-seeking behaviors in context, such as the ego centrality of a particular problem, a man's broader social context, whether a problem is considered "normal" for other men to face, and the characteristics of the helper (e.g., gender) (see Addis & Mahalik, 2003, for a review). The process of traditional psychotherapy has also been criticized for catering to stereotypically feminine norms of

behavior, such as expressiveness, emotionality, and vulnerability, thus providing a poor fit for traditional males (Brooks & Silverstein, 2003; Rochlen, Whilde, & Hoyer, 2005). These hypotheses correspond with findings that the gender role conflict constructs of restrictive emotionality and restrictive affectionate behavior between men are consistently correlated with negative views of help-seeking (Berger et al., 2005; Blazina & Marks, 2001; Blazina & Watkins, 1996; Good et al., 1989; Good et al., 2006; Good & Wood, 1995; Robertson & Fitzgerald, 1992; Simonsen et al., 2000).

Despite these speculations, research geared toward understanding how sociocultural structures regarding gender role determination (i.e., gender role socialization) influence men's attitudes toward help-seeking is still nascent. Further, the extant literature regarding the association of gender role ideology to help-seeking attitudes has largely ignored the active and dynamic nature of gender role identity and the role of individuals as "active agents in constructing and reconstructing dominant norms of femininity and masculinity" (Courtenay, 2000, p. 6). Hence, research is needed to examine among men to what extent the two dimensions of gender role identity, gender role exploration and gender role commitment, are related to gender role conflict and help seeking attitudes.

Gender Role Identity and Gender Role Conflict

No published studies were located that examined the relation of ego identity to gender role conflict; however, three unpublished studies examined these relationships. Among Canadian college students, Chartier and Arnold (1985) found that overall ego identity achievement was negatively related to gender role conflict scores (as cited in O'Neil, 2008). Additionally, Arnold and Chartier (1984) found that overall identity

achievement weakened the negative relation of gender role conflict to relational intimacy in couples (as cited in O'Neil, 1995). Consistent with these findings, overall identity confusion positively predicted overall gender role conflict and restrictive emotionality among college students in the United States (Rounds, 1994).

While existing studies seem to indicate that a more resolved or achieved overall ego identity status is negatively related to gender role conflict, their findings may not generalize to the relation of gender role conflict to achieved identity in specific domains. Previous studies examined ego identity quite broadly, across multiple domains or without consideration of identity domains, in order to assign individuals an overall level of identity achievement. Yet, individuals may have an achieved identity in some identity domains, yet may not have an achieved status in other ideological areas (e.g., gender roles). Thus, results which purport to explain one's overall identity status may not reflect important variability across identity domains, such as gender role identity. Therefore, there is a need to examine the relationship of gender role conflict to identity using measures that specifically assess gender role identity.

The Present Study

In sum, previous research with men has established empirical links between (a) endorsement of traditional gender role ideology and gender role conflict, (b) traditional gender role ideology and negative help-seeking attitudes, and (c) gender role conflict and negative help-seeking attitudes. However, further research is needed to examine to what extent gender role identity moderates the relation of gender role conflict to psychological outcomes using measures that separately capture the exploration and commitment aspects of gender role identity and that are derived from a similar theoretical framework as

gender role conflict. Men's psychological health is an important area of growing research, which will benefit from the increased understanding of men's attitudes toward seeking psychological help.

In a comprehensive review of the research literature related to gender role conflict, O'Neil (2008) emphasized the importance of exploring moderators of the relationship between gender role conflict and outcome variables, such as help-seeking. Many of the previous studies that have examined gender role conflict have only examined correlations between gender role conflict and outcome variables, rather than multiple regression or moderator studies (see O'Neil, 2008). In order to understand more about these relationships and their underlying mechanisms, moderating variables need to be explored and understood (O'Neil, 2008).

The construct of gender role identity encompasses to what extent individuals have explored issues related to gender role identity and the extent to which they have committed to a set of gender role attitudes, regardless of the traditionality of their gender role ideology. The assessment of both agentic (exploration) and agentic or passive (commitment) methods is especially pertinent to gender role conflict, because gender role conflict is rooted in a theory that proposes that people engage in active and passive processes in forming their gender role ideologies (i.e., social constructionist theory). The gender role exploration and commitment identity model is the first proposed model that does not assume that the traditionality of gender roles is the underlying source of conflict and negative outcomes. Thus, this study represents a departure from previous research, in that it will examine, controlling for traditionality, the relation of exploration of and

commitment regarding gender role ideologies to two types of psychological outcomes: help seeking attitudes and four domains of gender role conflict.

In sum, the present study extends previous research by examining the relation of gender role exploration and commitment to men's gender role conflict and psychological help-seeking attitudes. Specifically, the study seeks to establish whether gender role exploration and gender role commitment moderate the relation of men's conformity regarding traditional gender roles to gender role conflict domains. Additionally, the study seeks to establish whether the relationships between gender role conflict domains and help-seeking attitudes are moderated by gender role exploration and gender role commitment. The next section describes the research questions examined in this study, and related hypotheses.

The first four research questions addressed in this study were: To what extent is endorsement of gender role exploration and gender role commitment related to each of the four gender role conflict domains: (a) success, power and competition, (b) restrictive emotionality, (c) restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and (d) conflict between work and family, controlling for conformity to masculine role norms? While a small number of previous studies found a negative relation between identity achievement and overall gender role conflict (Arnold & Chartier, 1984; Chartier & Arnold, 1985), neither of these studies examined the two dimensions of identity achievement (i.e., exploration and commitment) separately; thus, these findings may not be consistent with findings using measures which specifically assess exploration and commitment. Gender role exploration is a theoretical component of both gender role identity achievement (the stage in which an individual has explored and then committed to a particular set of identity

ideology) and gender role identity moratorium (the stage in which an individual may actively explore and withhold judgment about a particular aspect of his or her identity, thus experiencing low commitment). Because gender role conflict is understood to result from violating rigidly-held gender role beliefs, it follows that gender role conflict may be negatively associated with the identity constructs of moratorium and achievement, which both presume that one is exploring or has explored gender role ideologies and is not blindly adhering to gender role beliefs. Therefore, it is hypothesized that gender role exploration will correlate negatively with all domains of gender role conflict. However, gender role commitment is a theoretical component in both gender role identity foreclosure (the stage in which an individual rigidly adheres to beliefs which have not been thoughtfully considered or explored) and gender role identity achievement. Due to the presence or non-presence of gender role exploration in relation to commitment, these two identity statuses differ in how they might logically relate to gender role conflict, a salient component of which is rigidity. Thus, previous findings indicating significant negative relations between overall identity achievement and gender role conflict (Arnold & Chartier, 1984; Chartier & Arnold, 1985) seem intuitive in nature, yet it would be counterintuitive for identity foreclosure (high commitment, low exploration) to relate negatively to gender role conflict. Additionally, adhering to a rigid traditionality, which implies a high degree of commitment to one's beliefs, has been related to gender role conflict in previous studies (Berger, et al., 2005; Good et al., 2006; Levant, Rankin, Williams, Hasan, & Smalley, 2010). Similarly, it is hypothesized that in this study, gender role commitment will be positively related to traditional role norm adherence. Therefore, it is likely that the rigidity of belief that is associated with gender role conflict

(O'Neil, 2008) will be associated with higher amounts of gender role commitment, and it is predicted that gender role conflict will positively relate to gender role commitment.

The second set of four questions (5 through 8) examined to what extent gender role exploration and gender role commitment moderate (Baron & Kenney, 1986) the relationship of conformity to masculine role norms to each of the four domains of gender role conflict: (a) success, power and competition, (b) restrictive emotionality, (c) restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and (d) conflict between work and family, controlling for conformity to masculine role norms. Consistent with previous research (Berger, et al., 2005; Levant, et al., 2010), it is predicted that conformity to traditional role norms will correlate positively with gender role conflict scores, across domains. However, regardless of level of conformity to traditionally masculine roles, it is also expected that individuals are likely to benefit from exploring their gender role identity by experiencing reduced gender role conflict across domains. Thus, it is predicted that higher levels of gender role exploration will weaken the positive association between conformity to masculine role norms and all domains of gender role conflict. Additionally, it is conceivable that the expected positive relation of gender role traditionality to gender role conflict would be stronger for those who report higher levels of gender role commitment than for their peers with lower reported levels of gender role commitment. Individuals who have higher levels of gender role commitment to a traditional gender role ideology may have more rigid adherence to role norms and beliefs, and thus may experience increased gender role conflict compared to individuals who have lower levels of commitment to a traditional gender role ideology (O'Neil, 2008). It is therefore predicted that gender role commitment will strengthen the positive

relationship between conformity to masculine role norms and gender role conflict, for each of the four domains.

The ninth question addressed is: What is the combined and unique contribution of gender role exploration, gender role commitment and gender role conflict domains, to attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help, when controlling for conformity to masculine role norms? It is hypothesized that, consistent with previous research (Berger et al., 2005; Blazina & Marks, 2001; Blazina & Watkins, 1996; Good, et al., 1989; Good et al., 2006; Good & Wood, 1995; Robertson & Fitzgerald, 1992; Simonsen, et al., 2000), the gender role conflict domains of restrictive emotionality and restrictive affectionate behavior between men will negatively correlate with positive help-seeking attitudes. No previous research was found which examined the relation of any aspect of ego identity to attitudes toward seeking psychological help. Thus, in light of the expected relationship between gender role conflict and commitment to traditional gender roles in men, it is predicted that gender role commitment to a traditional gender role will positively correlate with negative help-seeking attitudes. It is possible that individuals who are more open to exploring gender role identity may be open to other types of self-exploration, like that which often occurs in psychological counseling. Thus, it is predicted that gender role exploration will correlate with more positive attitudes toward seeking psychological help.

Questions ten and eleven asked: To what extent do gender role commitment and gender role exploration, respectively, moderate the relationship of each of the four gender role conflict domains to attitudes toward psychological help-seeking? It seems likely that individuals who have explored their gender role identity may experience less negative

psychological outcomes related to gender role conflict than individuals who have not engaged in exploration. Thus, it is predicted that gender role exploration will weaken the negative association between each gender role conflict domain and attitudes toward seeking psychological help. Additionally, it seems likely that individuals who have gender role conflict and who are highly committed to their gender role identity may experience more negative effects from gender role conflict than their peers with lower levels of gender role identity commitment. Thus, it is predicted that commitment will strengthen the negative association between gender role conflict domains and attitudes toward seeking psychological help.

Chapter III

Methodology

Participants

Participants were recruited from undergraduate and graduate courses at a research university in a large metropolitan city in the southwestern region of the United States. The survey was advertised through course emails, flyers, and classroom visits, and was depicted as a survey examining mental health attitudes and gender roles. The sample for this study consisted of 191 men, who were offered course extra credit in exchange for participation. Participants completed a short (i.e., 30 minute) online survey. At the end of the survey they were routed to a separate webpage in which they entered their name and professor's name in order to receive course credit. This information was kept separate from participants' survey responses; thus, the study was anonymous. Instructors who agreed to promote this study as an extra credit option were provided a list of students within their class who had completed the survey and who chose to self-identify; the instructors did not have access to students' survey responses. The data used in this study were part of a larger data set.

Of the initial 274 participants, 73 were excluded from the analysis due to random response patterns (e.g., responding with the same answer choice throughout the entire survey). In addition, ten extreme outliers were excluded from the data set (Meyers, Gamst, & Guarino, 2006). Thus, the final sample consisted of 191 male college students, who ranged in age from 18 to 58 years, with a mean age of 24 ($SD=6.26$). The sample was ethnically diverse, consisting of 43.5% Caucasian/White participants, 20.4% Latino/Hispanic participants, 22% Asian American/Asian/Pacific Islander participants,

8.9% Black/African American participants, and 5.2% who identified as multiracial or “other.” Most identified themselves as heterosexual (96.3%, N=184), while 2.6% identified as gay, and 1% identified as bisexual. Most participants had never engaged in psychological treatment, per self-report (78%).

Instruments

Demographics. Participants were asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire, indicating their age, year in school, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and major. Participants were also asked to answer two questions regarding past and current experience in therapy or psychological counseling, and one question regarding the number of therapy sessions they had had.

Gender Role Conflict Scale. The Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS; O’Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986) consists of 37 items regarding men’s perceptions of gender role behaviors in four domains: (a) *success, power and competition* (SPC), (b) *restrictive emotionality* (RE), (c) *restrictive affectionate behavior between men* (RABBM), and (d) *conflict between work and family relationships* (CBWFR). Participants respond on a six-point Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). These numerical responses may be averaged to yield an overall gender role conflict score, or may be evaluated by subscale. In this study, scores were averaged within each subscale, resulting in four separate domain scores. Higher scores represent a greater amount of gender role conflict. Test-retest scores have been found to be stable across a four-week period; reliability coefficients across the four factors ranged from .72 to .86 (O’Neil et al., 1986). Internal consistency coefficients on the GRCS range from .70 to .89 (Good et al., 1995; O’Neil et al., 1986). In this study, internal consistency

coefficients for success, power, and competition (.83), restrictive emotionality (.88), restrictive affectionate behavior between men (.88), and conflict between work and family (.80) were acceptable.

Gender Role Exploration and Commitment Scale. The Gender Role Exploration and Commitment Scale (GRECS; Schwartz et al., 2012) is a 23-item self-report measure of derived gender role identity status that measures independently the theoretical constructs of gender role exploration (e.g., “I have actively explored my options related to my gender role as a man/woman.”) and gender role commitment (e.g., “I have made a decision about my gender role in life.”). The scale contains 12 items which assess gender role exploration and 11 items which assess commitment, without regard to whether someone’s gender role ideology is traditional or nontraditional. Participants rated how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each item on a six-point Likert-type scale. Participants’ scores on exploration and commitment can be used as two continuous scores, or may be combined to create four identity statuses groups (i.e., Diffusion, Foreclosure, Moratorium, Achievement), patterned after Marcia’s theory and the EOMEIS-II. Continuous exploration and commitment scores were used in the present study. These were obtained by averaging participants’ scores to items within each subscale. The GRECS has demonstrated acceptable convergent and discriminant validity and adequate test-retest validity over a two-to-three week period (GE $r=.93$; GC $r=.86$) with college student samples (Schwartz et al., 2012). Internal consistency estimates for the GRECS subscales (Cronbach’s alphas) have ranged from .80 to .85 for Exploration, and .92 to .94 for Commitment with separate samples of college students

(Schwartz et al., 2012). The internal reliability coefficients for the GRECS Commitment and Exploration scales within this study were .93, and .89, respectively.

Inventory of Attitudes toward Seeking Mental Health Services. The Inventory of Attitudes toward Seeking Mental Health Services (IASMHS; Mackenzie, Knox, Gekoski, & Macaulay, 2004) is a revision and extension of Fischer and Turner's (1970) landmark scale, Attitudes toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help. The IASMHS consists of 24 items measuring three components of help-seeking attitudes: Psychological Openness (i.e., the extent that participants acknowledge the possibility of psychological problems and are open to seeking treatment), Help-Seeking Propensity (i.e., the extent to which participants are willing or feel an internal locus of control regarding help-seeking), and Indifference to Stigma (i.e., the extent to which participants are concerned about how others may judge psychological help-seeking). Participants rated their attitudes from 0 (Disagree) to 4 (Agree), with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes. The scale may be evaluated by subscale domains, or as an overall score. In the present study, overall attitudes toward seeking mental health services were used, represented by a single continuous score. Internal consistency ($\alpha=.86$) and three-week test-retest reliability ($r=.73$) of the IASMHS scores with college students are acceptable, and IASMHS scores were also significantly correlated with individuals' intentions to seek help (Mackenzie et al., 2004). In the present study, the coefficient of internal consistency was .81.

Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 (CMNI-46; Parent & Moradi, 2009). The CMNI-46 is a revised and shortened version of the original CMNI (Mahalik et al., 2003). The CMNI-46 assesses conformity to traditional masculine role norms

across nine domains: Winning, Emotional Control, Primacy of Work, Risk-Taking, Violence, Heterosexual Self-Presentation, Playboy, Self-Reliance, and Power over Women. Participants respond to 46 items on a Likert-type scale, ranging from 0 (Strongly Disagree) to 3 (Strongly Agree). One scale score, representing overall conformity to masculine role norms was used. Higher scores indicate more conformity to masculine role norms. Cronbach's alpha values for the subscales have been found to be in the acceptable range, from .78-.89 in an independent sample, and .85 for the CMNI-46 composite scale (Parent & Moradi, 2011). Convergent validity for the CMNI-46 was established by comparing the subscales to measures of masculinity, attitudes regarding marital roles, and male role norms (Parent & Moradi, 2011). In the present study, internal consistency was .85 for the overall scale.

Chapter IV

Results

Preliminary Analysis

The study was of correlational design. Before conducting the main analyses, participants' scores on continuous measures were examined for missing data. Of the 274 participants in the initial sample, none had missing data. However, 73 participants were excluded from the analysis due to random response patterns (e.g., responding with the same answer choice throughout the entire survey). The data were also examined for violations of normality and extreme outliers. These analyses indicated that on the GRECS Commitment scale, participants' scores had a high positive kurtosis (3.38) and large negative skew (-1.41), indicating that the mean was weighted toward higher levels of commitment, but that the center of the distribution contained an extreme peak. An examination of the outliers on this dimension identified ten cases which were extreme outliers and violated the assumptions of normality. These cases were excluded from the data set (Meyers, Gamst, & Guarino, 2006), resulting in a final sample size of N=191. A second analysis of the data indicated no remaining issues of skewness (-.31) or kurtosis (.33).

A preliminary analysis was conducted to examine the bivariate correlations of the variables included in the study (Table 1). Gender role exploration and gender role commitment were negatively correlated, which is consistent with previous findings and with theory that suggests that as individuals explore their gender role ideals, they may experience less rigidity, thus becoming less committed to their gender role views (Schwartz et al., 2012). As shown in Table 1, gender role exploration significantly

correlated with only one domain of gender role conflict: restrictive affectionate behavior between men. As predicted, this correlation was negative; thus, as gender role exploration increased, attitudes about restrictive affectionate behavior between men decreased. Although it was hypothesized that other gender role conflict domains would also be negatively related to gender role exploration, gender role exploration was not significantly related to success, power, and competition, restrictive emotionality, or conflict between work and family. Gender role commitment was positively associated with success, power and competition, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and conflict between work and family, as predicted. However, there was no significant relationship between gender role commitment and restrictive emotionality, contrary to the hypothesis. Conformity to masculine role norms was negatively related to gender role exploration (as gender role exploration increased, individuals reported less conformity to traditional role norms), and positively associated with gender role commitment (increased levels of commitment predicted increased conformity to role norms); these findings were consistent with the hypotheses stated. Conformity to masculine role norms was also positively associated with success, power and competition, restrictive emotionality, and restrictive affectionate behavior between men, consistent with previous findings (Good et al., 2006). However, conformity to role norms was not associated with conflict between work and family, also in agreement with previous findings (Good et al., 2006). Additionally, attitudes toward help-seeking were negatively associated with conformity to role norms, restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and success, power and competition. These negative associations are consistent with the stated hypotheses and many previous findings (Berger et al., 2005; Blazina & Marks,

2001; Blazina & Watkins, 1996; Good, et al., 1989; Good et al., 2006; Good & Wood, 1995; Robertson & Fitzgerald, 1992; Simonsen, et al., 2000; Zeldow & Greenberg, +1979).

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations between Predictor and Criterion Variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. GRECS-E	3.35	.93	--							
2. GRECS-C	4.89	.76	-.41**	--						
3. CMNI	1.46	.27	-.22**	.32**	--					
4. SPC	4.30	.71	-.08	.39**	.48**	--				
5. RE	3.38	1.01	-.10	-.05	.42**	.12	--			
6. RABBM	3.40	1.11	-.21**	.16*	.37**	.21**	.51**	--		
7. CBWF	4.02	.97	.02	.22**	.12	.30**	.11	-.11	--	
8. IAMHS	2.40	.53	.12	-.03	-.41**	-.16*	-.32**	-.23**	-.03	--

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

GRECS-E=Gender Role Exploration and Commitment Scale, Exploration; GRECS-C= Gender Role Exploration and Commitment Scale, Commitment; CMNI= Conformity to Masculine Role Norms; SPC= Gender Role Conflict Scale, Success Power and Competition; RE= Gender Role Conflict Scale, Restrictive Emotionality; RABBM= Gender Role Conflict Scale, Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men; CBWF=Gender Role Conflict Scale, Conflict Between Work and Family; IAMHS= Inventory of Attitudes toward Mental Health Services.

Because some of the correlations between the predictor variables were statistically significant, several indices of multicollinearity were examined and found to be acceptable: (1) none of the bivariate correlations were above .8 (Meyers, Gamst, & Guarino, 2006), (2) tolerance values were greater than .40 (Allison, 1999), (3) VIF values were less than 2.50 (Allison, 1999), (4) none of the condition index values are equal to or greater than 30 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), and (5) none of the variance proportions are greater than 50 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Thus, multicollinearity was not present in the data.

A between-subjects multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine between-group differences on predictor and criterion measures related to previous experience with therapy and race/ethnicity, respectively. Results indicated significant multivariate effects for previous therapy experience, Wilks' Lambda=.896, $F(8, 182)=2.65$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta = .32$. However, tests of between-subjects effects revealed that the only significant univariate effect present was attitudes toward seeking psychological help [$F(1, 189)=16.12$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta = .28$]. Individuals who had previously been in therapy ($M=2.68$, $SD=.57$) had significantly more positive attitudes toward therapy than those who had never participated in therapy ($M=2.32$, $SD=.50$). Thus, the decision was made to control for previous therapy experience in further analyses examining men's attitudes toward psychological help-seeking within this study.

There were also significant multivariate effects across participant race/ethnicity, Wilks' Lambda=.73, $F(32, 662)= 1.83$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta = .27$. Although the covariance matrices were unequal across race/ethnicity categories (Box's $M=238.768$, $p < .01$), Wilks' Lambda still appeared interpretable because the inequality was not extreme, and a restrictive alpha-level (i.e., $p < .01$) was used to interpret the multivariate effect in order to reduce potential Type I error caused by this inequality. Univariate tests showed that there were significant differences between ethnicities for restrictive emotionality ($F(4, 186)=2.74$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta = .24$), restrictive affectionate behavior between men ($F(4, 186)=2.94$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta = .25$), and gender role commitment ($F(4, 186)=2.65$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta = .23$). Games-Howell post hoc tests, appropriate when heterogeneity of variance is present, did not yield any significant differences, despite the significant

omnibus test. For this reason, ethnicity was not controlled for in the analyses of the study's research questions.

Primary Analysis

In order to control for experiment-wise error across the six primary analyses, Bonferroni's correction was applied to the commonly-used p -values of .05, .01, and .001, resulting in adjusted p -values of .008, .002, and .0002.

Predictors of gender role conflict. In order to examine the first eight research questions, four hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. Research questions one through four examined the unique and combined contribution of gender role exploration and gender role commitment to each of the four gender role conflict domains (i.e., success, power and competition, restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and conflict between work and family), controlling for conformity to masculine role norms. Research questions five through eight examined to what extent gender role exploration and gender role commitment moderated the relation of conformity to masculine role norms to each of the four gender role conflict domains. Results of the first regression analysis, displayed in Table 2, show that conformity to masculine role norms, entered in the first step, was related to the gender role conflict domain of success, power and competition ($R^2 = .23$, $F(1, 189) = 56.081$, $p < .0002$). The change in R^2 from step 1 to step 2 was statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .08$, $p < .0002$) indicating that gender role exploration and gender role commitment contributed unique variance to the criterion above and beyond conformity to masculine role norms. However, examination of the beta coefficients show that only gender role commitment contributed unique variance to success, power, and competition ($\beta = .32$, $p < .0002$). The

change in R^2 from step 2 to step 3 was not statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .01, p = .187$) indicating that gender role exploration and gender role commitment did not moderate the relation of conformity to masculine role norms to the gender role conflict domain of success, power and competition. Results from step 3 indicate that while the three variables included in the model shared 32% of the variance, only conformity to masculine role norms and gender role commitment contributed unique variance to the gender role conflict domain of success, power and competition.

Table 2

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Gender Role Exploration and Gender Role Commitment, Predicting Success, Power, and Competition

Step/Predictor Measures	<u>Success, Power, and Competition</u>		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1		.23***	.23***
CMNI	.48***		
Step 2		.31***	.08***
CMNI	.41***		
Gender Role Exploration	.14		
Gender Role Commitment	.32***		
Step 3		.32***	.01
CMNI	.39***		
Gender Role Exploration	.17		
Gender Role Commitment	.35***		
Gender Role Exploration X CMNI	.07		
Gender Role Commitment X CMNI	.14		

*** $p < .0002$

CMNI=Conformity to Masculine Role Norms

Results of the second regression analysis, displayed in Table 3, indicate that conformity to masculine role norms, entered in the first step, was related to the gender role conflict domain of restrictive emotionality ($R^2 = .18$, $F(1, 189) = 40.54$, $p < .0002$).

Table 3

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Gender Role Exploration and Gender Role Commitment, Predicting Restrictive Emotionality

Step/Predictor Measures	<u>Restrictive Emotionality</u>		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1		.18***	.18***
CMNI	.42***		
Step 2		.22***	.05*
CMNI	.48***		
Gender Role Exploration	-.09		
Gender Role Commitment	-.24**		
Step 3		.22***	.00
CMNI	.47***		
Gender Role Exploration	-.08		
Gender Role Commitment	-.24*		
Gender Role Exploration X CMNI	.02		
Gender Role Commitment X CMNI	.04		

* $p < .008$, ** $p < .002$, *** $p < .0002$

CMNI=Conformity to Masculine Role Norms

The change in R^2 from step 1 to step 2 was statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .05$, $p < .008$), indicating that gender role exploration and gender role commitment contributed unique variance to the model, beyond that accounted for by conformity to masculine role norms. Examination of the beta-values showed that only gender role commitment contributed

unique variance to restrictive emotionality ($\beta = -.24, p < .002$). The change in R^2 from step 2 to step 3 was not statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .00, p = .91$), which indicated that gender role exploration and gender role commitment did not moderate the relation of conformity to masculine role norms to restrictive emotionality. While the results from the final step show that the three variables included in the model accounted for 22% of the variance, only conformity to masculine role norms and gender role commitment contributed unique variance to restrictive emotionality.

Results of the third regression analysis (Table 4) showed that conformity to masculine role norms, entered in the first step of the model, was related to the gender role conflict domain of restrictive affectionate behavior between men ($R^2 = .14, F(1, 189) = 30.46, p < .0002$). The change in R^2 from step 1 to step 2 was not statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .02, p = .14$), indicating that gender role exploration and gender role commitment did not contribute unique variance in predicting restrictive affectionate behavior between men, beyond that accounted for by conformity to masculine role norms. The change in R^2 from step 2 to step 3 was also not statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .02, p = .13$), indicating that gender role exploration and gender role commitment did not moderate the relation of conformity to masculine role norms and restrictive affectionate behavior between men. In sum, results reported in Table 4 indicated that only conformity to masculine role norms was related to restrictive affectionate behavior between men.

Results of the fourth regression analysis, shown in Table 5, show that conformity to masculine role norms, entered in the first step, did not significantly relate to the gender role conflict domain of conflict between work and family ($R^2 = .01, F(1, 189) = 2.70, p = .10$). However, the change in R^2 from step 1 to step 2 was statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 =$

Table 4

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Gender Role Exploration and Gender Role Commitment, Predicting Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men

Step/Predictor Measures	<u>Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men</u>		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1		.13***	.13***
CMNI	.37***		
Step 2		.16***	.02
CMNI	.35***		
Gender Role Exploration	-.14		
Gender Role Commitment	-.01		
Step 3		.18***	.02
CMNI	.32***		
Gender Role Exploration	-.12		
Gender Role Commitment	.00		
Gender Role Exploration X CMNI	-.06		
Gender Role Commitment X CMNI	.10		

*** $p < .0002$

CMNI=Conformity to Masculine Role Norms

.05, $p < .008$), indicating that gender role exploration and gender role commitment contributed unique variance to the model. Examination of the beta coefficients in step 2 show that only gender role commitment contributed unique variance to conflict between work and family ($\beta = .25$, $p < .008$). The change in R^2 from step 2 to step 3 was not statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $p = .90$), indicating that gender role exploration and gender role commitment did not moderate the relation of conformity to masculine role norms to conflict between work and family. Results from step 3 show that while the

variables included in the model accounted for 7% of the variance, only gender role commitment contributed unique variance to conflict between work and family.

Table 5

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Gender Role Exploration and Gender Role Commitment, Predicting Conflict Between Work and Family

Step/Predictor Measures	<u>Conflict Between Work and Family</u>		
	β	R ²	ΔR^2
Step 1		.01	.01
CMNI	.12		
Step 2		.07*	.05*
CMNI	.07		
Gender Role Exploration	.14		
Gender Role Commitment	.25*		
Step 3		.07	.00
CMNI	.07		
Gender Role Exploration	.14		
Gender Role Commitment	.25*		
Gender Role Exploration X CMNI	.04		
Gender Role Commitment X CMNI	.00		

* $p < .008$

CMNI=Conformity to Masculine Role Norms

Taken together, the results of these four regressions indicated that conformity to masculine role norms was a statistically significant and positive predictor of three of the four gender role conflict domains: (a) success, power, and competition, (b) restrictive emotionality, and (c) restrictive affectionate behavior between men, but not conflict between work and family. In addition, when controlling for conformity to masculine role norms, gender role commitment positively related to the gender role conflict domains of

success, power, and competition, and conflict between work and family. In contrast, after controlling for conformity to masculine role norms, gender role commitment was negatively related to restrictive emotionality. However, gender role exploration was not found to be a statistical predictor of any of the gender role conflict domains (i.e., success, power, and competition, restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, conflict between work and family). Additionally, gender role exploration and gender role commitment did not moderate the relation of conformity to masculine role norms to any of the gender role conflict domains.

Predictors of attitudes toward help-seeking. In order to examine research questions, nine, ten and eleven, two hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. Research question nine examined the combined and unique contribution of gender role exploration, gender role commitment and the four gender role conflict domains (i.e., success, power and competition, restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and conflict between work and family) to attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help, controlling for conformity to masculine role norms and previous therapy experience. Research question ten examined to what extent gender role exploration moderated the relation of the four gender role conflict domains to attitudes toward psychological help-seeking, controlling for conformity to masculine role norms and previous therapy experience. Research question eleven examined to what extent gender role gender role commitment moderated the relation of the four gender role conflict domains to attitudes toward psychological help-seeking, controlling for conformity to masculine role norms and previous therapy experience.

Results of the fifth regression analysis, displayed in Table 6, show that previous therapy experience, entered in the first step, was positively related to men's favorable attitudes toward seeking psychological help ($R^2 = .08$, $F(1, 189) = 16.12$, $p < .0002$). The change in R^2 from step 1 to step 2 was statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .15$, $p < .0002$), indicating that conformity to masculine role norms ($\beta = -.39$, $p < .0002$) contributed unique variance (in a negative direction) to the men's attitudes toward seeking psychological help, above and beyond previous therapy experience. The change in R^2 from step 2 to step 3 was not statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .03$, $p = .19$), indicating that the gender role conflict domains of success, power, and competition, restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and conflict between work and family did not contribute unique variance to men's attitudes toward seeking psychological help. Gender role exploration, entered in the fourth step, also did not contribute unique variance to the model ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $p = .95$). The change in R^2 from step 4 to step 5 was statistically significant, ($\Delta R^2 = .07$, $p < .008$), indicating that as a set the interaction terms of the four gender role conflict domains by gender role exploration contributed unique variance to the criterion. Yet, an inspection of the beta coefficients in Table 6 shows that none of the interaction terms contributed a significant amount of variance to the model when examined independently. However, in order to understand the nature of the significance at this step of the model, the interaction between restrictive affectionate behavior between men and gender role exploration ($\beta = -.20$, $p = .03$) was examined, as this term accounted for the most variance among the four interactions examined at this step of the model.

The simple slope of the interaction between men's homophobia-related gender role conflict and gender role exploration was examined using "high" and "low" values on

Table 6

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Gender Role Conflict Domains and Gender Role Exploration, Predicting Attitudes toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help

Attitudes toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help			
Step/Predictor Measures	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1		.08***	.08***
Therapy Experience	.28***		
Step 2		.23***	.15***
Therapy Experience	.25***		
CMNI	-.39***		
Step 3		.25***	.03
Therapy Experience	.25***		
CMNI	-.31***		
SPC	-.01		
RE	-.17		
RABBM	-.02		
CBWF	.01		
Step 4		.25***	.00
Therapy Experience	.25***		
CMNI	-.31***		
SPC	-.01		
RE	-.17		
RABBM	-.02		
CBWF	.01		
Gender Role Exploration	.01		
Step 5		.32***	.07*
Therapy Experience	.23***		
CMNI	-.32***		
SPC	-.02		
RE	-.15		
RABBM	-.09		
CBWF	.00		
Gender Role Exploration	.05		
SPC X Gender Role Exploration	-.13		
RE X Gender Role Exploration	-.05		
RABBM X Gender Role Exploration	-.20		
CBWF X Gender Role Exploration	-.09		

* $p < .008$, *** $p < .0002$

CMNI = Conformity to Masculine Role Norms; SPC = Success, Power, and Competition; RE = Restrictive Emotionality; RABBM = Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men; CBWF = Conflict Between Work and Family

each construct corresponding to one standard deviation above and below the mean, as suggested by Aiken and West (1991). An examination of the simple slopes (see Figure 1; $t = -2.34, p = .02$) revealed that for men who reported higher levels of gender role

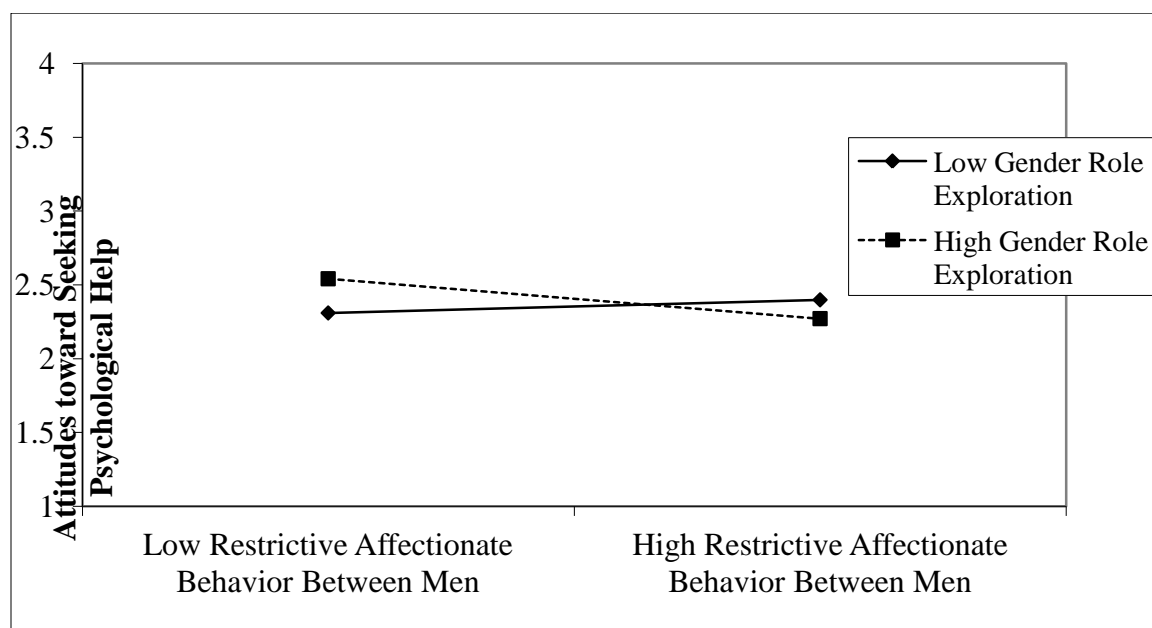


Figure 1. Plotting the interaction of gender role exploration in the relation of restrictive affectionate behavior between men to attitudes toward seeking psychological help.

exploration, the relation between restrictive beliefs about relationships with other men and attitudes about seeking therapy was not significant. Men with lower levels of gender role exploration reported a negative relation between restrictive affectionate behavior between men and attitudes toward seeking psychological help. However, there appears to be very little difference in the help-seeking attitudes of men who had more restrictive, homophobic attitudes, regardless of whether men reported exploring their gender role views. It should be noted that interpretation of the simple slopes should be interpreted

with caution, as this interaction term was not significant when using Bonferroni's correction.

Thus, results from this model indicated that the included variables accounted for 32% of the variance, although conformity to masculine role norms was the only variable shown to contribute unique and statistically significant variance to attitudes toward seeking psychological help.

Results of the sixth regression, as shown in Table 7, show values consistent with those described in the previous regression. Thus, the first three steps of the analysis replicated the regression reported in Table 6. The change in R^2 from step 3 to step 4 was not statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .01, p = .14$), which indicated that gender role commitment did not contribute a unique and significant amount of variance in predicting men's attitudes toward seeking psychological help in the model. The change in R^2 from step 4 to step 5 was also not statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .03, p = .18$), indicating that gender role commitment did not moderate the relation of gender role conflict domains to attitudes toward seeking psychological help. Results from step 4 indicated that while the variables included in the model shared 26% of the variance in the criterion, only previous therapy experience and men's conformity to masculine role norms contributed unique variance to attitudes toward psychological help-seeking.

Thus, the results of regressions five and six indicated that previous therapy experience positively related to favorable help-seeking attitudes, whereas conformity to masculine role norms was predictive less favorable attitudes. In addition, the interaction between gender role exploration and gender role conflict domains contributed statistically significant variance to the model, yet none of the interaction terms contributed

Table 7

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Gender Role Conflict Domains and Gender Role Commitment, Predicting Attitudes toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help

<u>Attitudes toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help</u>			
Step/Predictor Measures	β	R ²	ΔR^2
Step 1		.08***	.08***
Therapy Experience	.28***		
Step 2		.23***	.15***
Therapy Experience	.25***		
CMNI	-.39***		
Step 3		.25***	.03
Therapy Experience	.24***		
CMNI	-.31***		
SPC	-.01		
RE	-.17		
RABBM	-.02		
CBWF	.01		
Step 4		.26***	.01
Therapy Experience	.25***		
CMNI	-.34***		
SPC	-.03		
RE	-.13		
RABBM	-.04		
CBWF	-.01		
Gender Role Commitment	.11		
Step 5		.29***	.03
Therapy Experience	.24***		
CMNI	-.35***		
SPC	-.04		
RE	-.15		
RABBM	-.08		
CBWF	.01		
Gender Role Commitment	.12		
SPC X Gender Role Commitment	-.00		
RE X Gender Role Commitment	-.01		
RABBM X Gender Role Commitment	.18		
CBWF X Gender Role Commitment	.04		

*** $p < .0002$

CMNI = Conformity to Masculine Role Norms; SPC = Success, Power, and Competition; RE = Restrictive Emotionality; RABBM = Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men; CBWF = Conflict Between Work and Family

statistically significant unique variance, which suggest that it was a weak effect.

Furthermore, gender role commitment and gender role exploration did not significantly predict attitudes toward seeking psychological help. Gender role exploration also did not moderate the relation of men's gender role conflict to attitudes toward seeking psychological help.

Chapter V

Discussion

The purposes of the current study were (1) to examine the relation of conformity to masculine role norms, gender role exploration and gender role commitment to men's gender role conflict, and (2) to examine the contribution of each of these variables to men's attitudes toward seeking psychological help. The study expanded on previous research by unpacking the two dimensions of gender role identity, gender role exploration and gender role commitment, and examining their independent contribution to gender role conflict and to attitudes toward help-seeking among college men. This study also examined whether gender role identity variables moderated the relation of conformity to masculine role norms to gender role conflict domains, as well as whether gender role identity moderated the relation of gender role conflict to attitudes toward help-seeking. The hypotheses examined in the study were partially supported. The results of each of the hypothesized relationships will be discussed, followed by a discussion of this study's limitations. This chapter will conclude with the implications of this study in regard to future research and practice.

Predictors of Gender Role Conflict

The study examined eight research questions regarding the proposed relation between gender role exploration, gender role commitment, and each of the four gender role conflict domains (i.e., success, power, and competition, restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and conflict between work and family), respectively. The hypotheses and results for each of these questions will be discussed, along with interpretive findings.

Relation of gender role exploration and gender role commitment to gender role conflict domains. The study examined four research questions regarding the hypothesized relation of gender role exploration and gender role commitment to each of the four gender role conflict domains (i.e., success, power, and competition, restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and conflict between work and family). First, it was hypothesized that gender role exploration would negatively correlate with all gender role conflict domains (i.e., success, power, competition, restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and conflict between work and family), but that gender role commitment would have a positive relationship with gender role conflict domains.

These hypotheses were partially supported. Results indicated that the bivariate relation between gender role exploration and restrictive affectionate behavior between men was significant; thus, as men's gender role exploration increased, men appeared to become less concerned about issues related to homophobia and expressing affection to other men. Surprisingly, an inspection of the bivariate correlations indicated that men's gender role exploration was not associated with other aspects of gender role conflict (i.e., success, power, and competition, restrictive emotionality, and conflict between work and family). These findings are not consistent with previous studies which suggested that an achieved overall identity status (theoretically composed of higher levels of exploration and commitment) was associated with reduced levels of gender role conflict (Arnold & Chartier, 1984; Chartier & Arnold, 1985). It is possible that these differences may be accounted for by the variations in scales used. In the current study, gender role identity was the only aspect of identity that was studied, whereas in previous studies measures of

overall ego identity (i.e., encompassing several domains) were used. Thus, it is possible that if one has an achieved identity across domains, one may experience reduced gender role conflict, rather than the expected reduction from simply having explored gender role identity. Additionally, identity achievement has been associated with other aspects of reduced internal conflict (Jones, 1992; Kidwell, Dunham, Bacho, Pastorino, & Portes, 1995; Marcia, 1993), and so it is possible that achieved individuals experience lower global levels of internal conflict, which effectively reduce gender role conflict levels, whereas the possible benefits of having explored within a much narrower domain- gender role ideology, does not produce noticeable change in internal conflict related to some aspects of gender role stress. Contrary to the hypothesis, gender role exploration did not account for additional, statistically significant variance when predicting any gender role conflict domain, after controlling for conformity to masculine role norms.

It was further predicted that commitment to one's gender roles would be associated with increased levels of gender role conflict, across domains (i.e., success, power, and competition, restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and conflict between work and family). This hypothesis was also partially supported. Bivariate correlations showed that in this sample, men's gender role commitment was positively associated with gender role conflict in the areas of success, power, and competition, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and conflict between work and family. Thus, as men endorsed greater amounts of gender role commitment, they also tended to report experiencing more gender role conflict in these areas. This is in contrast with previous findings which examined overall achieved identity (i.e., composed of high levels of both exploration and commitment) in relation to

men's gender role conflict domains (Arnold & Chartier, 1984; Chartier & Arnold, 1985). This suggests that there may be underlying distinctions between one's level of overall identity achievement, and one's levels of exploration and commitment within the domain of gender role identity. This positive association also suggests that as individuals become more committed to their gender role, they may begin experiencing negative outcomes stemming from rigid adherence to gender role beliefs, as initially suggested by Pleck (1981; 1995).

When controlling for conformity to masculine role norms in the regression model, gender role commitment emerged as a unique positive predictor of the gender role conflict domains of success, power, and competition and conflict between work and family. Thus, men who were more committed to their gender role beliefs were at increased risk of experiencing gender role conflict in the areas of success, power, and competition and conflict between work and family beyond the risk that would be expected given the established relation between men's conformity to masculine role norms and gender role conflict. Yet, contrary to the hypothesis, gender role commitment was negatively related to restrictive emotionality, when controlling for conformity to male role norms. It should be noted that the bivariate relation between these two variables was non-significant; thus, by controlling for conformity to traditional role norms, the relation became significantly negative. Thus, individuals who were more committed tended to have less fear of expressing emotions. Therefore, gender role commitment appears to relate to the domains of gender role conflict in disparate ways, perhaps reflecting the inherent differences of the gender role conflict domains.

Gender role exploration and gender role commitment as moderators of the relation of conformity to masculine role norms to gender role conflict domains. It

was hypothesized that, consistent with previous research (Berger, et al., 2005; Good et al., 2006; Levant, Rankin, Williams, Hasan, & Smalley, 2010), there would be a positive association between conformity to masculine role norms and gender role conflict, across domains, and that this association would be moderated by both gender role exploration and gender role commitment. Indeed, men's conformity to masculine role norms was positively associated with gender role conflict related to men's attitudes regarding success, power, and competition, expressing affection toward other men (i.e., restrictive affectionate behavior between men), and expressing emotions (i.e., restrictive emotionality). However, men's conformity to masculine role norms did not significantly predict men's role conflicts between work and home life (i.e., conflict between work and family).

Contrary to the hypothesis, gender role exploration did not moderate the relation of conformity to masculine role norms and gender role conflict, across domains. It is possible that the inverse relationship (i.e., the bivariate correlations) between traditional gender role conformity and gender role exploration played a role in the lack of significant moderation in the examined relationship. Perhaps because these constructs had an inverse association with one another within this sample (per an examination of the bivariate correlations), gender role exploration and conformity to masculine role norms accounted for similar variance in the overall regression model.

Regarding gender role commitment, men's commitment to their gender role ideals was a moderate bivariate predictor of conformity to traditional masculine role norms,

such that the more commitment individuals reported, the more traditional they tended to be. This finding may be problematic for gender role identity theory, in that this may suggest that the measure of men's gender role commitment tends to overlap with men's traditionality, rather than measuring pure commitment. However, it is also possible that those who have less adherence to traditional role norms tend to experience more moderate amounts of commitment. For instance, some have suggested that there are multiple styles of commitment, and that the type of commitment most closely associated with an achieved identity status is a flexible commitment, which leaves one open to exploring new alternatives (Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992). Gender role commitment did not moderate the relation between rigid traditional adherence to masculine role norms and any of the four gender role conflict domains, as expected.

Taken together, these findings suggest that men's gender role exploration may be related to men's gender role conflict related to restrictive affectionate behavior between men or homophobic beliefs, yet that men's conformity to masculine role norms is a better predictor of gender role conflict across domains. This finding suggests that men who are more traditional in their gender role may experience less healthy outcomes, even if they have explored their gender role beliefs. This is contrary to the postulate that increased exploration, regardless of levels of traditionality, would lead to healthier outcomes. This postulate suggested that by actively considering one's beliefs about his gender role, an individual would gain insight related to handling situations which conflict with gender role beliefs and would better navigate situations that held the potential to produce gender role conflict. Yet, this was not the case, as gender role exploration did not predict gender role conflict beyond traditionality. Thus, it appears that increased traditionality tends to

relate to gender role conflict, regardless of how thoughtful or exploratory one was when determining one's gender role. This supports Pleck's (1981) theory that adhering to traditional role norms is problematic, due to their contradictory, limiting, and inconsistent nature.

In addition, these findings suggest that gender role commitment appears to be a good predictor of some gender role conflict domains, even when controlling for variance accounted for by men's conformity to masculine role norms. Yet, gender role commitment appears to be related to reduced levels of restrictive emotionality and increased levels of success, power, and competition and conflict between work and family. Thus, while gender role commitment then appears to be an important variable of consideration when predicting gender role conflict, it does not result in a unified negative outcome. It may be that in different demand situations (i.e., contexts which require a behavior which violates rigid, traditional gender role adherence in a particular gender role conflict domain), being highly committed to one's gender role may be a protective factor, while in other situations, it may lead to increased gender role conflict. When considering the two domains in which gender role commitment posed as a risk factor, both success, power, and competition and conflict between work and family seem to have some conceptual similarities, in that they both assess intrapsychic conflict in areas related to one's attitudes about work or school, in connection to one's relationships with others (i.e., how one approaches or judges oneself and others at work, and how one balances work and family demands). It is possible, then, that being highly committed to one's gender role tends to create difficulties in how one views oneself and others, when at work

and at home, yet it provides increased comfort in expressing one's emotions to oneself or others.

This provides further support that men's conformity to traditional gender roles is an important factor in preventing negative gender role conflict in some areas (i.e., success, power, and competition, restrictive emotionality, and restrictive affectionate behavior between men). Yet, men's conformity to traditional role norms did not relate to men's conflict between work and family; therefore, in this area, men's gender role commitment is a higher priority area of concern. These mixed findings may suggest that other variables may be better or more salient predictors of men's gender role conflict. It should be noted that the variables included in the model only accounted for 32% (success, power, and competition), 18% (restrictive affectionate behavior between men), 22% (restrictive emotionality), and 7% (conflict between work and family) of the variance in gender role conflict domains, respectively. Thus, effect sizes ranged from small to medium (Cohen, 1988). Therefore, additional variables, such as men's contextual factors at work or home, may prove to be helpful in understanding predictors of men's gender role conflict, and future research should continue to explore this line of inquiry.

Predictors of Attitudes toward Seeking Psychological Help

The study examined two research questions regarding whether gender role exploration and gender role commitment moderated the proposed relation between men's attitudes toward seeking psychological help and the four gender role conflict domains (i.e., success, power, and competition, restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and conflict between work and family), respectively. The

hypotheses and results for each of these questions will be discussed, along with interpretive findings.

Relation of gender role conflict domains to attitudes toward seeking psychological help. It was hypothesized that higher levels of the four domains of gender role conflict would predict negative attitudes regarding seeking psychological help, when controlling for men's conformity to masculine role norms. While the gender role conflict domains of success, power, and competition, restrictive emotionality, and restrictive affectionate behavior between men were significant bivariate predictors of men's attitudes toward seeking psychological help, this hypothesis was not supported in the regression when controlling for men's conformity with masculine role norms. In other words, when men's rigid conformity to gender roles was accounted for, gender role conflict no longer significantly predicted help-seeking attitudes. This finding is consistent with previous research (e.g., Berger et al., 2005) which suggested that men's traditional gender role conformity was a better predictor of negative help-seeking attitudes than gender role conflict. These findings were seemingly contrary to gender role conflict theory which suggests that "the stigma of seeking help because of masculinity conflicts appears to be a universal problem for the samples assessed" (O'Neil, 2008, p. 396). Many previous studies which found correlations between men's gender role conflict variables did not control for men's conformity to traditional role norms; thus these findings provide support to some studies which suggest that men's conformity to traditional role norms is a better predictor of help-seeking attitudes than gender role conflict (e.g., Good et al., 2006). This may be due to the stigma surrounding seeking psychological help, within traditional male gender role norms, which eschews

participation in emotive therapy, rather than a link to gender role conflict. Yet, it is still important to consider that many aspects of gender role conflict (e.g., an unwillingness to talk about feelings) may be subsumed in the variance accounted for by conformity to male role norms.

Gender role exploration and gender role commitment as moderators of the relation of gender role conflict domains to attitudes toward seeking psychological help. It was hypothesized that gender role exploration would predict positive attitudes regarding seeking psychological help, whereas gender role commitment would be associated with more negative attitudes. However, neither of these hypotheses was supported. Surprisingly, there was not a significant relationship between either of these variables and men's help-seeking attitudes. Although it is not clear why there is no statistically significant association, the lack of significance is possibly attributable to the unique make up of this sample. For instance, although men in this sample tended to be highly committed to their gender role, the sample's overall level of conformity to masculine role norms was fairly moderate, and the group as a whole had moderately positive attitudes about seeking psychological help. Thus, although men's conformity predicted negative help-seeking attitudes in this sample, most individuals did not express high rates of conformity. People who are willing to engage in counseling may be more open to exploring their emotions and/or thoughts than those who are unwilling to participate in psychological treatment (e.g., Komiya, Good, & Sherrod, 2000), yet men in this sample who reported greater gender role exploration did not endorse increased positive attitudes toward seeking psychological help. Thus, the results of this study may

suggest that men's gender role exploration is tapping a latent construct which is qualitatively different than their general openness to other types of exploration.

Additionally, as previously discussed, the lack of significant findings related to gender role exploration and gender role commitment may suggest that men's gender role conformity is simply a variable of more importance in regard to men's attitudes toward seeking psychological help. Thus, the theory that men who had previously explored their gender role would experience more positive outcomes compared to those who had not (e.g., O'Neil & Carroll, 1988; Schwartz et al., 2012) should be revisited. Yet, it is also possible that men's adherence to traditional gender role norms may moderate the relation of gender role commitment to attitudes toward seeking psychological help, such that among men with higher levels of conformity, the relation of gender role commitment to attitudes toward seeking psychological help will be negative.

Men's exploration of gender roles significantly moderated the relation between gender role conflict and help-seeking attitudes. However, none of the interactions between gender role exploration and individual gender role conflict domains emerged as significant predictors of men's help-seeking attitudes. Thus, it appears that while the interactions cumulatively accounted for significant variance in men's attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help, no one interaction reached significance, possibly due to the highly restrictive significance criteria that were set (i.e., Bonferroni-corrected significance level set at a p -values of .008). In order to understand the nature of the moderation, the simple slopes of the interaction of restrictive affectionate behavior between men and gender role exploration were examined, as this relationship accounted for the most variance in this step of the model ($p=.03$). Although this relationship should

be interpreted with caution due to the non-significant nature of the association, men's exploration of their gender role views approached significance as a moderator of the relationship between restrictive attitudes about same-sex affection and help-seeking. More specifically, it appears that among those who reported less gender role conflict related to restrictive affectionate behavior between men, the relation of gender role exploration to negative views about seeking psychological help was weaker, than for those at higher levels of gender role conflict.

The finding that adherence to traditional masculine role norms is more strongly related to favorable help-seeking attitudes than is one's exploration of or commitment to a particular gender role idea, supports the proposal by Schwartz et al. (2012) that gender role exploration and gender role commitment differ from the construct of gender role traditionality. Further, gender role exploration and gender role commitment predicted men's traditionality in the expected ways, with those who had explored their gender role expressing less traditional views, and those expressing more commitment tending to have more traditional views.

Taken together, these results suggest that men's conformity to traditional role norms is a salient construct when examining men's negative attitudes toward psychological help-seeking. In addition, conformity to masculine role norms appears to be a better predictor of men's negative attitudes about therapy than gender role conflict, gender role exploration, or gender role commitment. Yet, it appears that encouraging men to explore their gender role views could possibly help them to have less rigidly traditional beliefs about what it means to be a man (per the negative bivariate relation of gender role exploration to conformity to masculine role norms), as well as promoting

adaptive attitudes about expressing affection in relationships with other men (per the negative bivariate relation of gender role exploration to restrictive affectionate behavior between men). Being able to express affection toward other men may assist males in establishing social support networks, which may be a protective factor in a population that is not prone to seek therapy at rates consistent with their level of distress (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Courtenay, 2000).

Implications

This study supports previous findings that men's gender role conflict is related to negative attitudes toward seeking psychological help, which in turn, likely prevent men from obtaining the assistance that they need in combating high rates of depression, suicide, and other psychological disorders. Thus, this study highlights an important need in the field to focus more attention on developing interventions which target and reduce men's gender role conflict, particularly related to their beliefs about success, relationships with other men, and suppressing emotions. In his comprehensive review of gender role conflict literature, O'Neil (2008) indicated that one weakness of the extant literature was the lack of studies examining moderators and mediators of gender role conflict and outcome variables. Most of the studies involving gender role conflict have relied on bivariate correlations, and lacked regressions or other more complex statistical models. Thus, this study represents an important movement in the literature to gain a better and more complex understanding of the role of moderating variables in gender role conflict outcomes. Yet, gender role exploration and gender role commitment did not moderate the relation of gender role conflict to attitudes toward seeking psychological help, despite some significant bivariate correlations. Further, many of these relationships changed in

nature or significance after controlling for conformity to traditional role norms. Thus, additional research examining known correlates of gender role conflict should be conducted in order to determine how traditionality and other factors affect the relationship of gender role conflict and known outcomes.

In addition, this study brought to light the relation between men's gender role identity and various aspects of gender role conflict. Specifically, men reporting increased gender role exploration tended to report experiencing less restrictive attitudes regarding expressing affection toward other men, and men who reported higher rates of commitment also tended to experience more difficulty related to several aspects of gender role conflict, according to bivariate correlations. Yet, when controlling for conformity to traditional role norms, gender role exploration is not related to gender role conflict. This suggests that, contrary to the theory of Schwartz et al. (2012), men's adherence to traditional role norms is related to negative gender role conflict outcomes, despite the means at which an individual arrived at their gender role attitudes. These findings support the need to continue efforts at creating interventions which reduce gender role conflict and rigid adherence to traditional gender roles. For instance, devising psychological interventions which encourage men to shift their gender role attitudes away from rigid traditional role norm adherence may result in male psychotherapy clients experiencing reduced gender role conflict. In turn, experiencing reduced gender role conflict may circumvent or reduce some of the negative effects previously associated with gender role conflict (e.g., depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, substance abuse; see O'Neil, 2008). Although gender role exploration was not a unique predictor of men's help-seeking attitudes, encouraging men to explore their gender role attitudes within the

context of therapy may still be a helpful intervention in support of reducing conformity to traditional role norms.

Gender role exploration and gender role commitment did not moderate the relation of gender role conflict to men's help-seeking attitudes. Thus, additional research is needed to continue to explore possible mediators or moderators between gender role conflict and men's negative attitudes toward seeking psychotherapy. Additional findings in this area can help researchers and clinicians better understand the underlying reasons for men's reservations about seeking psychological help, and can thus inform the creation of interventions or alternate therapy descriptions which are more amenable to traditional male role norms.

Finally, the finding that men who had participated in any amount of therapy reported more positive attitudes about seeking psychological help should be encouraging to those who work in therapeutic outreach and educational programs. Specifically, this finding may mean that if outreach counselors can help men engage in any type of therapy for even a short duration, they may be more likely in the future to seek assistance again, should they enter crisis or their symptoms persist.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. The sample was comprised largely of individuals who were receiving academic incentives for anonymous participation, likely accounting for the high rate of random response. Thus, responses may be less trustworthy even for those individuals who did not use random response patterns which were readily-apparent. Additionally, these results may not generalize to populations who are not college-aged. Also, due to sample size limitations, only the global scores for

attitudes toward professional help-seeking and conformity to masculine role norms were examined. In addition, the cross-sectional nature of this study did not allow researchers to understand how one's gender role traditionality may change over time in response or relation to one's exploration of gender role ideology. Further, although examining men's attitude toward seeking professional psychological help can provide helpful insight into men's motivation and willingness to pursue therapy, this may not correspond to men's actual response to distress and intervention-seeking behavior.

In addition, although generally-accepted practices were used to examine the nature of the interaction between men's restrictive attitudes about affection with other men and gender role exploration, this statistical approach relies on creating "high" and "low" values for each predictor, based on the constructs' mean and standard deviation (Aiken & West, 1991). These values are then graphed, in order to provide a visual illustration of how a particular variable may moderate the relation of a predictor to a criterion. However, this procedure may result in high and low values which are arbitrarily discrete, and which may not correspond to meaningful differences within each construct. In this case, the "high" (i.e., one standard deviation above the mean) and "low" values (i.e., one standard deviation below the mean) used to understand men's gender role exploration as it interacted with restrictive affectionate behavior between men and attitudes toward seeking psychological help do not represent necessarily-meaningful discrete levels of the construct. Thus, cautious interpretation of this interaction is again warranted.

Future research can begin addressing some of these limitations by using a larger, community sample of individuals who range across age cohorts. This would allow

researchers to determine whether there were differences in the interrelations between age cohorts in men's attitudes toward seeking therapy, their gender role traditionality, intrapsychic gender role conflict, and exploration of and commitment to their gender role. Such a sample would also allow researchers to examine the subscales of constructs used, which might provide helpful information in isolating which particular aspects of conformity are most related to other variables, and how each of the predictors related to specific aspects of men's attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help.

Additionally, quasi-experimental, in vivo research would provide researchers with pertinent information regarding how predictive men's attitudes toward seeking therapy are of their help-seeking behavior and related clinical outcomes, including the development of gender role conflict. Such studies would also allow clinicians to determine whether encouraging male clients to explore their gender role attitudes significantly impacts their attitudes about seeking future therapy, and levels of gender role conflict.

Gender role identity constructs (i.e., gender role exploration and gender role commitment) were significantly related to some important gender role outcomes, including aspects of gender role conflict and conformity to male role norms. Thus, it will be important for future research to continue exploring these constructs in relation to other psychological outcomes, in order to inform current understanding of men's gender role correlates.

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