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In Search of Positive Masculine Role Norms: Testing the Positive Psychology Positive Masculinity Paradigm

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Researchers using the positive psychology positive masculinity paradigm have advanced several aspects of masculinity that, in theory, represent socialized beliefs linked to healthy personal and relational outcomes in men. However, investigators have yet to explicitly test whether positive masculinity constructs capture broader societal messages dictating positive masculine thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (i.e., male role norms). The present exploratory study created an online survey informed by literature and informal focus groups/interviews to explore how 79 potential positive masculinity attributes were perceived as both positive and socially expected of men. Using Internet and community samples of men and women ($N = 1,077$), descriptive statistics and paired-sample t tests identified which attributes were rated as positive and statistically expected of men more than they were expected of women. Of the 79 items, all but 3 were strongly rated as positive, 32 were expected more of men, 36 were expected more of women, and 11 were gender neutral. Many definitions of positive masculinity in the extant literature correctly represented thoughts, feelings, and behaviors viewed as positive and socially expected of men, particularly male provider and protector roles. However, some attributes identified as both positive and masculine in the present study may represent moderate expressions of traditional masculinities. Findings were also consistent with gender role stereotypes feminizing relational variables, suggesting that some interpersonal characteristics labeled as positive masculinity in previous research may not represent gendered expectations of men in the broader culture. Implications for the future measurement of positive masculine role norms are discussed.

Keywords: positive masculinity, male role, expectations, norms

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The psychological study of men and masculinities has grown considerably over the decades to include a variety of cultural and characterological factors (Wong & Wester, 2016). However, the normative and masculine gender role strain paradigms (Levant & Richmond, 2016; O'Neil, 2015; Pleck, 1995) have predominated

in the field (Wong, Steinfeldt, Speight, & Hickman, 2010). Masculine gender role strain is a critical area of inquiry, considering that numerous studies have connected men's endorsement of rigid, sexist, and restrictive masculinity ideologies and behaviors to a variety of personal, relational, and societal problems (Levant & Richmond, 2016; Moore & Stuart, 2005; O'Neil, 2015). However, some investigators have pointed out that, if unhealthy-negative masculinities are root contributors to problems, then healthy-adaptive masculinities may be important protective factors that could be harnessed to reduce or prevent such negative outcomes (Kiselica, Benton-Wright, & Englar-Carlson, 2016). A small but growing number of researchers have called for studying men's issues using a positive psychology positive masculinity paradigm (PPPM; Englar-Carlson & Kiselica, 2013; Kiselica, 2011; Kiselica et al., 2016; Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010; Kiselica, Englar-Carlson, Horne, & Fisher, 2008). The PPPM paradigm, which draws broadly from positive psychology to address the adaptive and healthy aspects of men and boys, holds promise as a unique but complementary perspective to the normative and gender role strain paradigms (Isacco & Wade, 2017).

A core tenet of the PPPM paradigm is that positive masculinity is not simply the opposite of toxic masculinity but instead represents:

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beliefs and behaviors of boys and men that produce positive consequences for self and others . . . learned and internalized through a socialization process in which boys and men develop masculine ways of thinking and behaving that promote healthy development while also fostering a sense of duty to others. (Kiselica et al., 2016, p. 126)

Inherent in the PPPM paradigm, therefore, is the assertion that masculinity ideologies (i.e., personal expectations about how men should think, feel, and behave; Pleck, 1995) are influenced by positive masculine role norms (i.e., societal expectations for men and boys). However, researchers have yet to systematically test whether aspects of positive masculinity represent socialized messages about what is typically *expected* of men in the broader culture (i.e., male role norms). Accordingly, the present exploratory study sought to determine which attributes of positive masculinity were perceived as positive and socially expected of men.

Masculine Role Norms

Social norms provide a schema of what is expected of someone in any given situation (Cialdini & Trost, 1999). Gender role norms are socialized messages directed at both men and women pertaining to what is expected of individuals in society based on their sex (Levant & Richmond, 2016; Mahalik et al., 2003). For example, men tend to avoid engaging in thoughts, behaviors, or emotions that are socially constructed as feminine, and avoidance of femininity is a critical factor within the normative and gender role strain frameworks (Levant & Richmond, 2016; O'Neil, 2015). In addition to avoidance of femininity norms, researchers have identified numerous male role norms, including beliefs that men should be self-reliant, stoic, heterosexual, hypersexual, competitive, dominant, powerful, or aggressive (Levant & Richmond, 2016). Many of these masculine attributes fall under the broader category of traditional masculinity ideology (TMI, i.e., 1950s-era norms held by men and women dictating appropriate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors for men; Levant & Richmond, 2007).

Investigators have developed a variety of self-report measures to assess TMI and traditional male role norms (see Thompson & Bennett, 2015, for a critical review). Moreover, researchers have generally noted positive associations between endorsement of or conformity to traditional male role norms and a variety of mental health (Wong, Ho, Wang, & Miller, 2017) and relational health problems (Burn & Ward, 2005; Herrera, Owens, & Mallinckrodt, 2013). Traditional male role norms have also been associated with important societal problems such as sexism (Smiler, 2006), racism (Robinson & Schwartz, 2004), and gender-based violence (Moore & Stuart, 2005; O'Neil, 2015). Such problems may be exacerbated or maintained by the pressures men feel to perform or prove their traditional masculinity on a daily basis (Vandello & Bosson, 2013). In summary, investigators have well-documented the negative behavioral, cognitive, relational, and emotional effects of fulfilling (or desiring to fulfill) restrictive male roles perpetuated by men and women in society.

Comparatively little research has investigated the adaptive aspects of masculine gender role socialization. Research and theory within the PPPM paradigm, however, focus on the positive psychology aspects of masculinities that support men's personal and relational health, as well as potentially reduce societal problems related to toxic masculinity (Kiselica et al., 2016). For example, emerging empirical evidence suggests that positive masculinity

may contribute to men's well-being and reduce the likelihood of engaging in traditionally problematic masculine thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Men with higher levels of positive masculine personality traits were less likely to engage in problematic drinking behaviors in college (Williams & Ricciardelli, 1999), endorsed more adaptive health behaviors (Levant & Wimer, 2014), and reported less internalizing mental health problems (Wupperman & Neumann, 2006). In a sample of Latino men, endorsement of a culturally defined, positive alternative to traditional machismo (i.e., *caballerismo*; Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracey, 2008) predicted greater well-being (Estrada & Arciniega, 2015). Moreover, positive male role models emphasizing the need to achieve academically, develop financial independence, avoid violence, and contribute to the community played a pivotal role in the recollected development of healthy versus unhealthy masculinities among African American male interviewees (Roberts-Douglass & Curtis-Boles, 2013). Emergent evidence also suggests that positive masculinity-informed interventions may help foster beneficial self and academic views among adolescent boys (O'Neil, Chalenger, Renzulli, Crapser, & Webster, 2013).

Positive Masculine Role Norms

Although research suggests that positive masculinity may facilitate more adaptive behaviors, the PPPM paradigm has received only a fraction of scientific study compared with its counterparts, the normative or gender role strain paradigms. One reason for the lack of research may be that investigators have no standardized definitions of positive masculinity. Whereas traditional masculinities have been extensively studied and scrutinized through self-report instruments measuring rigid masculine role norms, the PPPM paradigm does not have a cohesive and overarching framework for identifying positive masculine roles. Indeed, most studies of positive masculinity have relied on qualitative interviews or measures drawn from personality measures (e.g., the Personal Attributes Questionnaire; Helmreich, Spence, & Wilhelm, 1981). The latter approach has been criticized as being unrelated to gender role socialization (Good, Borst, & Wallace, 1994; Spence, 1991). However, given that the PPPM paradigm implies a socialization process in which men and boys, "contribute to others in reference to the cultural expectations around them" (Englar-Carlson & Kiselica, 2013, p. 402), positive masculine role norms should represent learned characteristics and behaviors that are both positive *and* expected of men in the broader culture.

To date, investigators have varied greatly in terms of which positive masculinity characteristics fit these two criteria. For instance, researchers have found that certain traditional masculine role norms (e.g., risk-taking, dominance, primacy of work, and pursuit of status) typically associated with negative mental health (Wong et al., 2017) are sometimes predictive of positive constructs such as courage, autonomy, endurance, and resilience (Hammer & Good, 2010). Such findings highlight the complexity of defining and measuring positive masculine role norms.

Drawing from observations of men, qualitative studies, and theoretical arguments, other researchers have proposed a wide range of positive masculinity attributes (i.e., behaviors and characteristics) that may represent positive masculine role norms. For example, positive masculine role norms may embody societal expectations that men solve problems for their loved ones, sacri-

face and provide for their families, stay calm in the face of adversity, display courage, power through obstacles (Kilmartin, 2010; Levant, 1995), and be fair, warm, and attentive fathers or role models (Kiselica et al., 2016). Positive masculine role norms may also represent men's sense of duty, responsibility, desire to protect others, perseverance, justice orientation, generativity, loyalty, or resilience (Englar-Carlson & Kiselica, 2013; O'Neil et al., 2013; Roberts-Douglass & Curtis-Boles, 2013). In a recent review of the PPPM paradigm, Kiselica and colleagues (2016) further outlined 11 potential domains of positive masculinity developed from theory and qualitative research: male self-reliance; the worker-provider tradition of men; men's respect for women; male courage, daring, and risk-taking; the group orientation of men and boys; male forms of service; men's use of humor; and male heroism. Thus, the PPPM paradigm defines positive masculinity as a variety of personal and relational attributes that, in theory, represent lessons transmitted through cultural expectations of men (Englar-Carlson & Kiselica, 2013).

In addition to the 11 defined domains of the PPPM paradigm, researchers have included other unique attributes. For example, O'Neil and Lujan (2009) created a Positive Masculinity Check-List (PMCL), a teaching aide consisting of 60 positive attributes of masculinity designed to help students and clients define the construct. The PMCL provided a somewhat contradictory definition of what constitutes positive masculinity than the definitions reflected among the 11 PPPM domains, because some aspects of positive masculinity (as defined by the PMCL) could also be thoughts, feelings, or behaviors typically expected of women (e.g., loving or compassionate). Likewise, other investigators have speculated that positive masculinity may represent culturally based themes of family centeredness, social responsibility, and emotional connection (Arciniega et al., 2008; Estrada & Arciniega, 2015), as well as generativity (i.e., being a good role model and mentor to one's children or other men, Englar-Carlson & Kiselica, 2013; Kiselica et al., 2016). Although such family-centered attributes are likely healthy and adaptive for men, given that the broader society feminizes positive relational characteristics (Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000), it is possible that themes of generativity or other interpersonal aspects of positive masculinity may not correspond with societal expectations of men. In addition, some researchers have defined positive masculinity in ways that may represent general healthy characteristics that may be unrelated to societal expectations and instead capture universal positive qualities expected of all individuals (e.g., general self-efficacy; Levant & Wimer, 2014).

The Present Study

In summary, investigators have posited several different positive masculinity attributes (i.e., characteristics and behaviors), yet questions remain as to whether such constructs represent underlying positive masculine role norms in the broader culture. Before researchers can dive into detailed measurement studies of the PPPM paradigm (i.e., factor analyses to identify groupings of potential positive masculine role norms), it is first necessary to further examine the basic assertion inherent in the PPPM paradigm that positive masculine role norms exist representing *positive* societal *expectations* for men. To date, however, researchers have yet to systematically analyze different potential positive masculine

role norms to determine if they are indeed viewed as positive and are expected of men in the broader society.

Such a basic, systematic test of the PPPM paradigm may have several benefits in terms of providing a foundation for future measurement studies. From a construct validity perspective (DeVellis, 2017), for instance, it could be misleading to label a construct as "positive masculinity" when it may not be widely considered positive or when it represents "positive femininity" (i.e., expected more of women in society) or a general strength/virtue expected of all individuals regardless of gender. Indeed, considering that many men try to avoid appearing feminine, if an operational definition of positive masculinity actually represented gendered norms that are expected more from women than from men, it could have noteworthy implications for the interpretation of findings. Developing specificity of the positive masculinity construct by identifying potential positive masculine norms could help inform the eventual measurement of positive masculinity ideology. Accordingly, the present exploratory study examined behaviors and characteristics congruent with theory-based definitions of positive masculinity and determined (a) the extent to which each was viewed as positive, (b) the degree to which individuals expected each attribute from women, and (c) the degree to which individuals expected each attribute from men. By analyzing these responses, the present study sought to identify a list of attributes rated as generally positive and statistically expected more of men than of women for future inquiry.

Method

Procedures and Participants

After institutional review board approval at the University of Michigan and the University of South Alabama data were collected via anonymous online surveys. Undergraduate and graduate college students were randomly invited through e-mail to participate in the study at the University of Michigan. Links to the survey were also advertised on the volunteer pages of Craigslist, as well as distributed through social media sites (i.e., Reddit and Facebook). Upon completion of the survey, participants were invited to participate in a raffle for one of four \$25 Visa gift cards.

Due to an inability to determine how many participants actually viewed the online recruitment materials, a true response rate is unavailable. However, of the 1,077 respondents, approximately 64% were students attending the University of Michigan, representing 23% of the target recruitment sample for that institution. The remaining sample was recruited through Craigslist (27%), social media sites (4%), or did not indicate their recruitment origin (5%). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 81 years, but the majority (66%) were emerging adults with ages between 18 and 25 years ($M = 26$, $SD = 11$). Further demographic information is presented in Table 1.

Instrument

Attribute list. To address the aims of the present study, we created a list of possible positive masculine role attributes based on three sources: informal, semistructured focus groups and interviews; reviewing the positive masculinity literature; and reviewing the positive psychology literature. Table S1 in the online supple-

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Full Sample

Characteristic	Percent of the sample
Gender	
Male	50.6
Female	41.7
Transgender	0.8
Other/not listed	0.9
No response	5.3
Prefer not to answer	0.6
Sexual orientation	
Heterosexual	73.6
Gay or lesbian	7.7
Bisexual	7.9
Other/not listed	3.8
No response	5.5
Prefer not to answer	1.5
Race	
White non-Hispanic	66
Asian/Asian-American	11
Black	5.6
Latino(a)	4.6
Multiracial	6.2
American Indian	0.3
Pacific Islander	0.3
No response	5.6
Prefer not to answer	0
Education level at time of study	
University or college equivalent	55.8
Associate's degree	5.5
High school only	27.8
Grade school only	0.6
Master's, doctoral, or professional degree	4.5
No response	5.5
Prefer not to answer	0.4

Note. $N = 1,077$.

mental materials lists the items used in the present list and their relevance to the PPPM theory/research, positive psychology, and focus groups/interview responses.

First, after institutional review board approval, two trained graduate research assistants aided the lead investigator in conducting three semistructured focus groups of undergraduate and graduate students following the example provided by Mahalik and colleagues (2003). One of the graduate students served as a recorder, taking notes of the conversations to reduce recall bias. All focus group/interviews started with a structured activity in which participants wrote down 10 characteristics or expectations related to their idea of what a good man should be and do. Follow-up questions were designed to facilitate conversations among group members about (a) the qualities of their positive male role models (e.g., "Think of a man in your life that you feel embodies some of these positive qualities . . . who is he and what makes him different or similar to other men?"), (b) how they define the construct of positive masculinity (e.g., "In what ways do you feel society's view of a good man is different from your own?"), and (c) the kinds of messages they have received from the broader society about how to be a good man (e.g., "Where did you learn how to be a good man . . . what kind of messages did you receive about what makes a good man?"). Each focus group was generated through existing student organizations and consisted of between four and six participants. Focus group participants were primarily male

(60%) but were approximately 50% Black and 50% White in total.¹ In addition, research team members interviewed nine individuals separately using the same questions as the focus groups (ages ranging from 22 to 84 years; 40% male; 60% White non-Hispanic). Notes from each group or interview were discussed in the team to identify an initial list of positive masculinity attributes through consensus (i.e., anonymous voting).

Next, the research team reviewed theoretical and empirical literature regarding positive masculinity published in the past 20 years using PsychInfo, PubMed, and Google Scholar. The team also reviewed positive psychology compendiums and handbooks (Lopez & Snyder, 2009; Peterson, & Seligman, 2004) to identify strengths and virtues that, through consensus in the team, could potentially represent positive masculinity domains captured or not captured by existing positive masculinity literature.² All attributes were then compiled and, through a final consensus process, the team developed a list of 80 attributes (i.e., characteristics and behaviors) that were (a) common in the focus groups or interviews, (b) similar to or verbatim theoretical or empirical definitions of positive masculinity, or (c) potentially representative of strengths or virtues that could be socially constructed as "masculine." The majority of attributes were represented across each source (see Table S1 in the online supplemental materials).

Finally, five experts in the field rated the extent to which all attributes represented potential positive masculine role norms. Based on expert feedback, we removed one item that had surfaced in a focus group but was heavily criticized by experts, "being a 'lone wolf.'" However, experts largely agreed that the remaining 79 items reflected positive masculinity defined on their survey as, "those thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and attributes socially constructed as masculine that are expected of men and which promote interpersonal and intrapersonal well-being and social good."³

Participants for the present study were instructed to rate the 79 attributes using three Likert-style response scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). A 7-point Likert scale was used to maximize variance while also maintaining a true midpoint (DeVellis, 2017). Thus, each item was rated three times by the same participants to assess the degree to which they agreed or disagreed that a particular attribute was (a) positive, (b) typically expected of men, and (c) typically expected of women. Because participants were instructed to rate each item three times, they were randomly assigned to one of 10 blocks of approximately eight attributes each (i.e., $8 \times 3 = 24$ ratings) to reduce response

¹ All gender and race information was based on facilitator observations and thus should be interpreted with caution with respect to focus group participants. However, all individual interviewees provided their demographic information.

² Initial items were informed by reviewing Lopez and Snyder's (2009) *Handbook of Positive Psychology*. Items were subsequently examined against other positive psychology resources (Peterson, & Seligman, 2004) to ensure convergence with existing strengths and virtues.

³ Our definition of positive masculinity for expert reviewers was a paraphrased version of the definition of positive masculinity provided by Kiselica et al. (2016). In addition, experts were individuals that fit one or more of the following criteria: (a) had more than 20 years of research experience in studying the effects of traditional or positive masculinity variables, (b) were the authors of prominent masculine norms instruments or had extensive scale development experience, or (c) were core theoreticians/leaders in positive masculinity.

fatigue. This procedure meant that each block contained the responses from 100 different participants, on average.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Before conducting our primary analyses, we examined responses for missing data, univariate outliers, and assumptions of normality. Of the 1,077 total participants, some (less than 0.03% of participants in each randomly assigned block) had missing data and were excluded from the repeated measures portion of the primary analysis. Univariate outliers for each item were not extreme and generally minimal in number, ranging from one to five participants per item per block. All positive ratings were moderately to severely negatively skewed, but most gendered expectations ratings evidenced no skew or slight negative skew.

Primary Analysis

We used a combination of descriptive (i.e., means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (i.e., paired-samples *t* tests) to examine (a) the extent to which each attribute was viewed as positive, (b) the degree to which individuals expected each attribute from women, and (c) the degree to which individuals expected each attribute from men.

Positive ratings. Of the 79 possible positive masculinity attributes all were rated above the scale midpoint, with means on the 7-point scale ranging from 4.30 to 6.70, and with nearly all responses evidencing minimal variance (see Table S2 in the online supplemental materials for all means and standard deviations of positive ratings). Most (96%) of the item means were 5 and above, indicating negative skew. However, participants were more variable in their ratings of three attributes: being spiritual, being religious, and being reverent to a higher power.

Expected of men or women ratings. Table 2 displays the means and standard deviations of the “expected of men” and “expected of women” ratings, respectively. Unlike the positive ratings, participants’ gendered expectations for each attribute were more variable, as evidenced by higher standard deviations. However, of the 79 attributes, all but three were generally expected of men or women (i.e., with means above the midpoint). Only three items (i.e., being strong physically, being physically tough, and being assertive) were rated below the midpoint for the “expected of women” rating scale.

Mean differences in gendered expectations. A series of paired-samples *t* tests were used to examine mean differences within participants’ ratings of each item as to whether they were statistically more expected of men (Table 3; 32 items), expected more of women (Table 4; 36 items), or were expected equally of men and women (Table 5; 11 items). Statistically significant mean differences favoring greater expectations for men ranged from 0.42 (being resourceful) to 3.36 (being strong physically). By contrast, statistically significant mean differences favoring greater expectations for women ranged from -0.28 (good role model) to -2.23 (being patient).

Discussion

Consistent with the socialization perspectives detailed in the PPPM paradigm, the present study sought to identify attributes that

may reflect underlying positive male role norms in that they were rated as positive *and* expected of men. Drawing on the extant literature, informal focus groups, and expert reviews, we identified 79 potential positive masculinity attributes, which were then examined to determine the extent to which each was (a) considered positive, (b) typically expected of men, and (c) typically expected of women. Several notable findings emerged from these exploratory analyses.

Our examination of mean differences in gendered expectations indicated that a slight majority of the 79 potential positive masculinity attributes were expected more of women than of men, and a small number were gender-neutral. Many of the attributes in the former category were drawn from the PMCL (e.g., honest, loyal, and having wisdom). Several were also connected to the concept of generative fathering or generativity without the explicit label of “father.”⁴ Generative fathering and generativity emphasize being a good role model, helping others, and being a mentor, particularly for one’s children or younger generations (Englar-Carlson & Kiselica, 2013; Kiselica et al., 2016). However, with the exception of “being a mentor” and “motivator for others,” which emerged as gender-neutral items, nearly all positive relational attributes (e.g., dependable, polite, fair, encouraging, and considerate) were expected more of women than of men.

The fact that social-relational variables were expected more of women in the present study is consistent with gendered expectations of social norms found in previous research (see Eagly et al., 2000, for a review). Thus, the present findings highlight a discrepancy between prevalent social norms and scholarly or lay-person definitions of positive masculinity. Such results indicate that some aspects of positive masculinity may not reflect broader male role norms (i.e., societal expectations of men). The present findings raise questions about how men learn to embody positive masculinity attributes that warrant further attention. Specifically, because our focus group and interview responses were largely consistent with the extant literature, which itself was generally derived from observations and interviews of men, further research is needed to identify why and how men develop positive masculinity in ways that do not conform to societal expectations for men.

Consistent with the dictates of the PPPM paradigm, however, several attributes emerged as both positive and statistically more expected of men than women, suggesting possible positive masculine role norms. These findings provide direct support for theoreticians’ assertions that positive masculinity is promoted through masculine gender role socialization (Englar-Carlson & Kiselica, 2013; Kiselica et al., 2016; Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010). However, an interesting pattern emerged. Specifically, although many of the characteristics detailed in the PPPM paradigm and related research were supported in the present study (e.g., male service, bravery, and the worker-provider traditions of men), most statistically significant attributes favored men in domains linked to traditionally negative aspects of masculinity, particularly from a masculine gender role strain perspective (e.g., men’s drive for

⁴ To avoid biasing the results regarding gendered expectations, masculine pronouns and descriptive information were not included among the list of potential positive masculinity attributes.

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations of Gendered Expectations Ratings

Possible positive masculinity attribute	Expected of men ratings	Expected of women ratings
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Accepting of others	5.02 (1.47)	6.18 (1.04)
Tolerant of others	5.07 (1.50)	6.25 (0.98)
Role model	5.65 (1.24)	5.93 (1.28)
Being a mentor	5.41 (1.40)	5.50 (1.48)
Good example for others	5.45 (1.46)	6.05 (1.24)
Respectful to others	5.21 (1.44)	6.15 (1.19)
Encourage others	4.91 (1.56)	6.11 (1.08)
Open-minded	4.74 (1.62)	5.87 (1.26)
Motivator for others	5.17 (1.33)	5.23 (1.42)
Make others feel better	4.08 (1.45)	6.30 (0.96)
Serving others	4.63 (1.53)	5.87 (1.22)
Helping others	4.99 (1.40)	6.14 (1.10)
Serving country or community	5.88 (1.15)	4.76 (1.51)
Patient	3.99 (1.57)	6.22 (1.05)
Polite	4.74 (1.47)	6.25 (0.92)
Charming	5.45 (1.13)	5.15 (1.34)
Having a good sense of humor	5.43 (1.27)	4.41 (1.44)
Relaxed and easy-going	4.88 (1.40)	4.81 (1.64)
Engaging and dynamic	5.23 (1.42)	5.29 (1.26)
Being a deep thinker	4.77 (1.43)	4.79 (1.45)
Considerate of others	4.23 (1.46)	6.36 (0.73)
Showing compassion	4.30 (1.43)	6.46 (0.70)
Showing that one cares through actions	4.72 (1.41)	6.07 (0.89)
Expressing love through actions	4.60 (1.62)	6.02 (1.08)
Having passion for one's work	5.60 (1.16)	5.32 (1.24)
Being successful in one's career or job	6.21 (1.20)	4.92 (1.32)
Being hardworking	6.24 (0.94)	5.79 (1.34)
Driven to succeed	6.24 (0.94)	5.79 (1.34)
Being ambitious	6.14 (1.22)	4.83 (1.59)
Being a leader	6.21 (1.13)	4.30 (1.78)
Being humble	3.91 (1.89)	6.00 (1.27)
Being loyal	5.14 (1.59)	6.30 (1.03)
Being faithful	4.76 (1.77)	6.24 (1.22)
Trustworthy	5.09 (1.67)	6.06 (1.13)
Honest	4.96 (1.50)	5.39 (1.51)
Having integrity	5.42 (1.29)	5.87 (1.03)
Being direct and straightforward	5.93 (0.98)	3.66 (1.72)
Telling it "like it is"	5.77 (1.07)	3.85 (1.76)
Being fair and just	4.97 (1.34)	5.60 (1.33)
Being unbiased	4.38 (1.56)	4.56 (1.59)
Admitting when one is wrong	3.93 (1.80)	4.83 (1.78)
Being able to learn from one's mistakes	4.83 (1.62)	5.56 (1.27)
Finding ways to achieve goals despite obstacles	6.11 (0.90)	5.25 (1.49)
Being resourceful	5.77 (1.18)	5.35 (1.45)
Being dependable	5.14 (1.58)	5.60 (1.34)
Being responsible	5.13 (1.47)	5.91 (1.22)
Having wisdom	4.53 (1.48)	5.11 (1.38)
Being a critical thinker	4.86 (1.43)	4.86 (1.53)
Having "street smarts"	5.47 (1.09)	3.94 (1.46)
Being independent	6.00 (1.12)	4.50 (1.57)
Being courageous	5.94 (0.96)	4.42 (1.47)
Being brave	6.15 (0.78)	4.50 (1.53)
Daring to take risks	5.57 (1.08)	3.87 (1.39)
Being adventurous	5.48 (1.07)	4.23 (1.45)
Doing the right thing, despite the consequences	4.55 (1.63)	5.50 (1.41)
Protecting others	6.12 (1.03)	4.66 (1.83)
Providing safety	6.13 (1.06)	4.30 (1.76)
Being strong emotionally	5.67 (1.47)	4.64 (1.81)
Having strong morals	4.74 (1.63)	5.98 (1.17)
Being strong physically	6.28 (0.91)	2.92 (1.34)
Using strength to protect loved ones	6.20 (1.05)	3.69 (1.73)
Being emotionally tough	5.82 (1.37)	3.70 (1.80)

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

Possible positive masculinity attribute	Expected of men ratings	Expected of women ratings
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Being physically tough	6.05 (1.09)	3.12 (1.31)
Having good hygiene	4.81 (1.48)	6.41 (0.91)
Staying physically fit	5.77 (1.20)	5.31 (1.21)
Providing for one's loved ones	6.00 (1.11)	5.01 (1.57)
Sacrificing for others	4.74 (1.48)	5.94 (1.06)
Having good health habits	4.75 (1.37)	6.04 (0.94)
Being athletic	5.76 (1.22)	3.96 (1.35)
Being disciplined	5.10 (1.41)	5.13 (1.43)
Having self-control	4.81 (1.68)	4.98 (1.71)
Being confident	5.98 (0.89)	4.46 (1.62)
Being assertive	6.10 (0.91)	3.41 (1.61)
Having pride in one's accomplishments	5.74 (1.16)	4.58 (1.54)
Having emotional stability	5.54 (1.55)	3.70 (1.79)
Being a hero	5.56 (1.19)	3.53 (1.45)

Note. Items were rated on a 7-point scale, with higher scores indicating greater agreement that the item was typically expected of men or women, respectively.

success, risk-taking, and stoicism). Thus, our results may shed new light on previous findings that conformity to certain traditional masculine roles, which are generally associated with negative intrapersonal variables (Wong & Wester, 2016), sometimes evi-

dence relationships with positive constructs (Hammer & Good, 2010).

It is important to note that we used wording choices that were designed to be healthy and positive in nature. Therefore, the

Table 3
Mean Differences, Standard Deviations of the Differences, and Paired-Sample T-Test Statistics Between Gendered Expectations for Items That Were Expected More of Men Than of Women

Possible positive masculinity attribute	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	[95% CI]	<i>p</i>
Serving country or community	1.11 (1.84)	6.20	104	[0.76, 1.47]	.000
Having a good sense of humor	1.02 (1.73)	6.03	104	[0.68, 1.35]	.000
Being successful in one's career or job	1.29 (1.74)	7.43	99	[0.95, 1.63]	.000
Being hardworking	0.46 (1.49)	3.11	102	[0.17, 0.75]	.002
Driven to succeed	1.24 (1.90)	6.65	102	[0.87, 1.61]	.000
Being ambitious	1.30 (1.83)	7.20	101	[0.94, 1.66]	.000
Being a leader	1.91 (2.11)	9.11	100	[0.62, 1.26]	.000
Being direct and straightforward	2.27 (1.73)	13.13	99	[1.93, 2.61]	.000
Telling it "like it is"	1.92 (1.98)	9.63	98	[1.52, 2.31]	.000
Finding ways to achieve goals despite obstacles	0.86 (1.71)	5.02	99	[0.52, 1.20]	.000
Being resourceful	0.42 (1.80)	2.33	99	[0.06, 0.78]	.022
Having "street smarts"	1.54 (1.63)	9.19	94	[1.20, 1.87]	.000
Being independent	1.50 (2.00)	7.50	100	[1.10, 1.89]	.000
Being courageous	1.52 (1.78)	8.71	102	[1.18, 1.87]	.000
Being brave	1.65 (1.69)	9.91	102	[1.32, 1.98]	.000
Daring to take risks	1.70 (1.84)	9.37	102	[1.34, 2.06]	.000
Being adventurous	1.25 (1.83)	6.91	101	[0.89, 1.61]	.000
Protecting others	1.46 (1.92)	7.69	101	[1.08, 1.84]	.000
Providing safety	1.83 (2.13)	8.70	102	[1.41, 2.24]	.000
Being strong emotionally	1.03 (2.63)	3.97	102	[0.52, 1.54]	.000
Being strong physically	3.36 (1.68)	20.05	100	[3.02, 3.69]	.000
Using strength to protect loved ones	2.51 (2.12)	11.87	99	[2.09, 2.93]	.000
Being emotionally tough	2.13 (2.44)	8.82	101	[1.65, 2.61]	.000
Being physically tough	2.93 (1.89)	15.63	101	[2.56, 3.30]	.000
Staying physically fit	0.47 (1.49)	3.13	100	[0.17, 0.76]	.002
Providing for one's loved ones	0.99 (2.04)	4.87	100	[0.59, 1.39]	.000
Being athletic	1.80 (1.50)	12.05	100	[1.51, 2.10]	.000
Being confident	1.52 (1.61)	9.35	98	[1.19, 1.84]	.000
Being assertive	2.69 (1.90)	14.04	98	[2.31, 3.07]	.000
Having pride in one's accomplishments	1.16 (1.66)	6.97	98	[0.83, 1.49]	.000
Having emotional stability	1.84 (2.31)	7.93	98	[1.38, 2.30]	.000
Being a hero	2.03 (1.75)	11.45	96	[1.68, 2.38]	.000

Note. CI = confidence interval lower and upper bounds.

Table 4
Mean Differences, Standard Deviations of the Differences, and Paired-Sample T-Test Statistics Between Gendered Expectations for Items That Were Expected More of Women Than of Men

Possible positive masculinity attribute	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	[95% CI]	<i>p</i>
Accepting of others	-1.16 (1.45)	-7.83	95	[-1.45, -0.86]	.000
Tolerant of others	-1.18 (1.46)	-7.91	95	[-1.47, -0.88]	.000
Role model	-0.28 (1.33)	-2.08	95	[-0.55, -0.01]	.041
Good example for others	-0.60 (1.55)	-5.91	94	[-0.92, -0.28]	.000
Respectful to others	-0.94 (1.61)	-5.67	94	[-1.53, -0.87]	.000
Encourage others	-1.20 (1.61)	-7.27	94	[-1.53, -0.87]	.000
Open-minded	-1.13 (1.69)	-6.48	93	[-1.47, -0.78]	.000
Make others feel better	-2.22 (1.70)	-13.32	103	[-2.55, -1.89]	.000
Serving others	-1.23 (1.94)	-6.48	103	[-1.61, -0.85]	.000
Helping others	-1.15 (1.66)	-7.13	104	[-1.47, -0.83]	.000
Patient	-2.23 (1.89)	-12.06	103	[-2.60, -1.86]	.000
Polite	-1.51 (1.75)	-8.79	102	[-1.86, -1.17]	.000
Considerate of others	-2.13 (1.65)	-12.91	99	[-2.46, -1.80]	.000
Showing compassion	-2.16 (1.54)	-14.07	99	[-2.46, -1.86]	.000
Showing that one cares through actions	-1.35 (1.52)	-8.88	99	[-1.65, -1.05]	.000
Expressing love through actions	-1.42 (1.99)	-7.14	98	[-1.82, -1.03]	.000
Being humble	-2.09 (2.31)	-9.14	101	[-2.54, -1.63]	.000
Being loyal	-1.17 (1.78)	-6.63	102	[-1.51, -0.82]	.000
Being faithful	-1.49 (1.99)	-7.58	102	[-1.87, -1.10]	.000
Trustworthy	-0.97 (1.84)	-5.34	101	[-1.33, -0.61]	.000
Honest	-0.43 (1.86)	-2.33	98	[-0.80, -0.06]	.022
Having integrity	-0.45 (1.53)	-2.93	99	[-0.75, -0.15]	.004
Being fair and just	-0.63 (1.68)	-3.75	99	[-0.96, -0.30]	.000
Admitting when one is wrong	-0.90 (2.42)	-3.72	99	[-1.38, -0.42]	.000
Being able to learn from one's mistakes	-0.73 (1.61)	-4.50	98	[-1.05, -0.41]	.000
Being dependable	-0.46 (2.12)	-2.13	94	[-0.89, -0.03]	.036
Being responsible	-0.79 (1.83)	-4.17	93	[-1.16, -0.41]	.000
Having wisdom	-0.58 (1.57)	-3.60	94	[-0.90, -0.26]	.001
Doing the right thing, despite the consequences	-0.94 (1.93)	-4.95	102	[-1.32, -0.56]	.000
Having strong morals	-1.24 (1.93)	-6.43	100	[-1.62, -0.86]	.000
Having good hygiene	-1.59 (1.51)	-10.60	100	[-1.89, -1.30]	.000
Sacrificing for others	-1.20 (1.74)	-6.93	100	[-1.54, -0.85]	.000
Having good health habits	-1.29 (1.53)	-8.53	101	[-1.60, -0.99]	.000

Note. CI = confidence interval lower and upper bounds.

present results raise the intriguing possibility that some facets of positive masculinity may represent moderate expressions of TMI that most individuals view as being positive. Such a possibility is consistent with assertions that the effects of masculinity depend on the way in which roles are enacted more than their content

(Kiselica et al., 2016). For example, most people believed that being successful in one's career or job were positive qualities in the present study, but current instruments capturing normative male roles tend to focus on rigid, extreme, or restrictive fulfillment of such norms. Even though the norm may be viewed as positive,

Table 5
Mean Differences, Standard Deviations of the Differences, and Paired-Sample T-Test Statistics Between Gendered Expectations for Items That Were Gender-Neutral

Possible positive masculinity attribute	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	[95% CI]	<i>p</i>
Being a mentor	-0.09 (1.73)	-0.53	95	[-.44, .26]	.597
Motivator for others	-0.06 (1.95)	-0.30	104	[-.43, .32]	.765
Charming	0.30 (1.56)	1.94	104	[-.01, .60]	.056
Relaxed and easy-going	0.07 (1.89)	0.37	99	[-.30, .44]	.711
Engaging and dynamic	-0.05 (1.83)	-0.28	97	[-.42, .32]	.783
Being a deep thinker	-0.02 (1.77)	-0.11	98	[-.37, .33]	.910
Having passion for one's work	0.28 (1.51)	1.85	99	[-.02, .58]	.067
Being unbiased	-0.18 (1.95)	-0.93	99	[-.57, .21]	.357
Being a critical thinker	0.0 (1.62)	0.00	94	[-.33, .33]	1.00
Being disciplined	-0.03 (1.90)	-0.16	98	[-.41, .35]	.874
Having self-control	-0.17 (2.19)	-0.78	98	[-.61, .26]	.436

Note. CI = confidence interval lower and upper bounds.

it might still lead to problematic outcomes when rigidly followed. Indeed, the deleterious effects of rigidly following norms that men should be successful and powerful have been well-documented in several studies (O'Neil, 2015). However, the association between men's success, power, and competition norms and negative mental health variables was weaker when items were changed to be less rigid and more aspirational in at least one previous investigation (Zamarripa, Wampold, & Gregory, 2003). Therefore, the present results suggest that some aspects of positive masculinity may reflect positive male role norms (i.e., expectations of men) that are embedded in traditional aspects of masculinity but represent more moderate expressions of those gendered qualities.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study has a few limitations worthy of note. Although the age range for the sample extended from 18 to 81 years, the majority of participants were emerging adult-aged. It could be valuable for future explorations of positive masculinity to extend the sample to include greater diversity, both in terms of cultural background and developmental life stage. This was also a limitation to our focus groups and interviews, as only three racial groups were represented, and most participants were also emerging adult-aged. In addition, the focus groups lacked audio recordings, had limited interrater reliability, and only used a semistructured form of data analysis. Another inherent limitation was that our survey was created specifically for this study and therefore is not well established as reliable and valid, though it did exhibit evidence of content validity (i.e., expert agreement). This is a difficult limitation to address, as there are few measures that attempt to capture positive masculinity available and none (to these researchers' knowledge) that meets the unique needs of this study. Thus, it is important to note that the present survey was created specifically for the idiosyncratic nature of the our research questions. Any use of the instrument for purposes other than replicating the present findings is not advised.

Our attribute list was also not exhaustive, and we did not take context into account. It is highly possible that all masculine and feminine gender role norms have qualitatively different meanings across different contexts (Addis, Mansfield, & Syzdek, 2010), and our measure lacked the precision to capture those nuanced meanings. For example, men may be more likely to be expected to "help others" change a tire, move furniture, or fix a computer problem compared with their female counterparts, even though the general positive concept of "helping others" was expected more of women in the present study. Thus, examining the gender identity of participants and their lived experiences of gender role expectations could be an important context to consider for future quantitative or qualitative research. Likewise, because we did not address the actual consequences of positive masculinity in the present study, it is important to remember that items were judged as positive by participants, but the actual context of how specific attributes impact well-being needs further attention. Adding context to questions could allow for greater differentiation between genders across ratings, and therefore allow for greater discrimination in what positive masculinity actually represents. Finally, future research is needed to examine endorsement of a variety of positive masculine role norms to determine how they correlate or cluster

together into overarching factors of positive masculinity ideology, something that was not possible in the present study.

Implications

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the present results may inform future theory and research within the PPPM paradigm, particularly attempts to measure the broader cultural messages men may receive related to positive masculinity. Specifically, the present study identified several possible positive attributes that may constitute positive male role norms for future inquiry or measurement (Table 2). However, if many of the social and relational aspects of positive masculinity (in the broad sense) represent positive feminine role norms, as illustrated in the present study (Table 3), then this raises future measurement concerns worth addressing in the scale development process.

Specifically, men affirming the social and relational aspects of positive masculinity, which may have been feminized by the broader culture, in their personal gender role ideologies could have a different intrapersonal and interpersonal profile than men who embody what is societally expected of them. Put another way, men who "go with the tide" in their gender expressions may have a different world view than men who go "against the tide," and artificially combining these men under an operational definition of "positive masculinity" ignores potentially meaningful differences in gender role ideology. Future efforts to measure the normative aspects of positive masculine role norms, therefore, should pilot-test items for content and face validity to ensure that they are socially constructed as masculine rather than feminine or gender-neutral. In addition, investigators may consider adjusting the wording of current normative masculinity instruments (e.g., The Male Role Norms Inventory–Short Form; Levant, Hall, & Rankin, 2013) to include less rigid or healthier expressions of traditional masculinity, though future research will be needed to determine if scores on such modified items are indeed related to positive outcomes.

Conclusion

Researchers are only beginning to scratch the surface of the PPPM paradigm, and the identification of positive masculine role norms is an important first step. Indeed, the psychology of men was fundamentally changed by the first empirical efforts to identify and measure male role norms. These initial, basic-research efforts, such as the ones that inspired the present study, eventually led to the development of the instruments that have formed the backbone of the gender role strain paradigm and the study of problematic masculinity ideology (Thompson & Bennett, 2015). The PPPM paradigm holds promise as a next step in the evolution of the psychological study of men and masculinities, but researchers have yet to systematically identify and study positive male role norms, relying instead on qualitatively derived definitions. The present study demonstrated that positive masculine roles norms (i.e., attributes and behaviors that are widely viewed as positive and generally expected of men) can be identified, but some of what has been defined as positive masculinity may reflect broader norms that are socially constructed as feminine, and other aspects of positive masculinity may represent moderate, positive expressions of traditional masculinities. Thus, future efforts will need to be undertaken with methodical precision to capture men's adher-

ence to normative beliefs and behaviors that promote healthy, positive experiences. The present findings provide an initial starting point for such inquiry.

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