



MEASURING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MASCULINITY AND PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT: IMPLICATIONS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

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ABSTRACT

In this Research Paper, a sample of 100 participants' psychological resilience, conformance to masculine standards, and perceived social support were all examined. Data were collected using self-report measures, and correlations were examined to assess the associations between variables. The findings revealed a negligible negative correlation between perceived social support and conformity to masculine norms ($r = -0.009$, $p > 0.01$), indicating that social support was not significantly associated with adherence to traditional masculinity. However, a moderate positive correlation was observed between perceived social support and psychological resilience ($r = 0.462$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the importance of social support in fostering resilience. Additionally, a weak positive correlation was found between conformity to masculine norms and psychological resilience ($r = 0.265$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting a modest association between adherence to masculine norms and resilience.

KEYWORDS: *PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT, MASCULINITY, RESILIENCE*

INTRODUCTION

In psychology, the idea of masculinity has attracted a lot of attention. The impact of traditional ideas of masculinity, which are defined by qualities like toughness, stoicism, and self-sufficiency, on psychological health has drawn praise as well as criticism. While upholding traditional male norms may have benefits for society, it can also lead to psychological suffering and interpersonal difficulties, especially when people feel pressured to fit into rigid gender roles (Levant & Wong, 2017).

Perceived social support is a significant element determining the link between psychological health and masculinity. Better mental health outcomes have repeatedly been linked to social support, which is defined as the perceived availability of help, guidance, and emotional comfort within one's social network (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Thoits, 2011). Nevertheless, little research has been done on how much views of social support differ depending on one's masculine identity.

This study seeks to address relationship between perceived social support and masculinity in a diverse population, this study aims to close this gap. We specifically want to know if adhering to traditional masculine norms relates to lower levels of social support or, on the other hand, if unorthodox or egalitarian conceptions of masculinity are linked to higher emotional support levels. We will also examine the possible ramifications of these results for psychological resilience, which is the ability to overcome hardship and preserve mental health in the face of stress (Smith et al., 2008).

Additionally, the goal of this study is to investigate how these results can affect psychological resilience, or the capacity to overcome hardship and preserve mental health in the face of life's obstacles. In order to effectively manage stressors, setbacks, and traumas, people must possess psychological resilience, which is a critical component of mental health (Smith et al., 2008). We hope to shed light on variables that may either help or impede people's ability to deal with and overcome adversities in their life by clarifying the connection between psychological resilience, perceived social support, and masculinity.

Masculinity

Masculinity is defined as “A complex interaction of traits, actions, and tasks that are traditionally associated with boys and men” (Levant & Wong, 2017). As a reflection of society standards and expectations of what it means to be a man, masculinity has traditionally been defined by traits like strength, assertiveness, self-reliance, and emotional stoicism. It is imperative to acknowledge, nevertheless, that masculinity is a concept that is neither static nor monolithic; rather, it is a continuum with a variety of identities and manifestations that are influenced by individual, historical, and societal influences.

Many facets of masculinity have been recognized by academics, one of which is hegemonic masculinity, which stands for the prevailing cultural ideas that establish normative standards of masculinity and frequently prioritize characteristics like dominance, violence, and emotional restraint (Connell, 2005). Kimmel (2017) notes that alternative conceptions of masculinity, such as inclusive masculinity, challenge conventional stereotypes and urge men to embrace a wider range of qualities and behaviors, such as emotional openness, empathy, and vulnerability.

Recent years have seen an evolution in the study of masculinity, embracing a more inclusive and nuanced perspective that recognizes the diversity of men's identities and experiences. In order to better understand how gender identity affects people's views, attitudes, and behaviors as well as their experiences in interpersonal relationships and larger societal structures, scholars should examine the complexities of masculinity within various cultural, social, and historical contexts.

Perceived social support

Perceived social support is defined as “people's subjective evaluation of how readily they believe others to be there to help, tend to, and encourage them when they are in need” (Cohen & Wills, 1985). It includes all the different kinds of help that people believe are accessible from their social networks—friends, family, classmates, and neighbors—such as emotional, practical, and informational support.

Higher perceived social support levels have been repeatedly linked to improved mental health outcomes, such as decreased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Thoits, 2011). Perceived social support protects people against the detrimental impacts of stress and adversity by reducing the impact of life's obstacles and enhancing psychological health.

The strength of interpersonal ties, the accessibility of resources that offer support, and people's coping mechanisms and worldviews are some of the variables that impact how well people perceive social support. When faced with challenges and adversities, people who believe they have access to encouraging social networks are more likely to be resilient and capable of handling life's obstacles.

Resilience

Resilience is defined as the “dynamic process of responding effectively to hardship, trauma, major stressors, or threats to one's psychological well-being” (Smith et al., 2008). It entails the ability to keep psychological equilibrium, recover from setbacks, and carry on with productive work even in the face of difficult situations.

The dynamic character of resilience is important since people's reactions to adversity might differ depending on their circumstances and stage of life. According to research, adults may use a wider range of resources, such as social networks, coping mechanisms, and personal strengths, to develop resilience, but children and adolescents may mainly rely on protective factors and family support (Masten, 2014). Resilience is also a combination of abilities, attitudes, and behaviors that may be developed and reinforced over time by a variety of experiences and interventions rather than a fixed attribute.

Resilience has a substantial impact on people's mental health outcomes, such as reduced stress, anxiety, and depression levels as well as increased general wellbeing (Bonanno, 2004; Rutter, 2012). When faced with challenging circumstances, resilient people show adaptability, optimism, and problem-solving abilities. They possess the ability to proficiently handle stress, control their emotions, and uphold a feeling of direction and significance in their lives.

Methodology

Aim

The aim of this study is to investigate and understand the complex relationship among masculinity, perceived social support, and psychological resilience in males.

Hypothesis

1. There is a significant negative correlation between perceived social support and conformity to masculine norms.
2. There is a significant positive correlation between perceived social support and psychological resilience.
3. There is a significant positive correlation between conformity to masculine norms and psychological resilience.

Sample

In this study 100 males from India participated, with ages ranging from 18 to 35 years.

Tools used

- 1. The Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI)** Developed in 2003 by Mahalik, Burns, and Syzdek, the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI) evaluates adherence to traditional masculine norms in a variety of fields. Masculine standards impact behavior and mental health and include characteristics like emotional stoicism and dominance.
- 2. The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived social Support** was Developed by Zimet, Dahlem. Zie and Farley 1988. With response possibilities ranging from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree), it uses a Likert-type scale and has 12 items. A popular instrument for evaluating perceived social support in three domains—family, friends, and significant others—is the MSPSS.
- 3. The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)** was developed by Jonathan R.T. Davidson and Kathryn M. Connor in 2003. It uses a Likert-type scale with 25 items with response possibilities that range from 0 (not true at all) to 4 (true almost all the time). A popular instrument for evaluating resilience is the CD-RISC. Resilience is the capacity to overcome adversity and preserve psychological health in the face of stressors.

Analysis of result

The research used t-test analysis to understand the relationship between perceived support, masculine norms conformity, and resilience. Table 1 presents mean and standard deviation data, Meanwhile, Table 2 illustrates correlations among perceived support, masculine norms conformity, and resilience.

Table 1 showing mean and standard deviations scores for the variables perceived support, conformity, and resilience

	Perceived Support	Conformity	Resilience
N	108	108	108
Mean	4.74	30.46	65.81
Standard Deviation	1.19	6.39	15.40

Table 2 showing the correlation matrix for the variables perceived support, conformity, and resilience

	Perceived Support	Conformity	Resilience
Perceived Support	–		
Conformity	-0.009	–	
Resilience	0.462	0.265	–

$P < 0.01$

Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between perceived social support, conformity to masculine norms, and psychological resilience. The findings shed light on the intricate interplay between these variables and provide valuable insights into their implications for mental health and well-being.

Contrary to our initial expectations, the analysis revealed a negligible negative correlation between perceived social support and conformity to masculine norms ($r = -0.009$, $p > 0.01$). This suggests that perceived social support is not significantly associated with adherence to traditional masculine norms in our sample. These findings challenge previous research suggesting that individuals with strong social support networks may be less likely to conform to traditional gender roles (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Levant et al., 2016). However, it aligns with recent studies indicating that the relationship between social support and gender role conformity may be more complex and context-dependent (Reid et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2020).

Consistent with existing literature, our results demonstrated a moderate positive correlation between perceived social support and psychological resilience ($r = 0.462$, $p < 0.01$). This finding underscores the significant role of social support in fostering resilience among individuals facing adversity (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Masten & Obradović, 2006). Individuals who perceive higher levels of social support may have access to greater emotional, instrumental, and informational resources, which can buffer against stress and enhance their ability to cope effectively with challenges (Thoits, 2011). Moreover, social support networks provide opportunities for social connection, validation, and belongingness, which are fundamental for psychological well-being (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010).

Our findings also revealed a weak positive correlation between conformity to masculine norms and psychological resilience ($r = 0.265$, $p < 0.01$). While this relationship was weaker than the association between perceived social support and resilience, it suggests that adherence to traditional masculine norms may be modestly associated with higher levels of resilience. This finding is consistent with research indicating that certain masculine traits, such as self-reliance and emotional control, may contribute to resilience by promoting adaptive coping strategies and problem-solving skills (Levant et al., 2009; Wong et al., 2017). However, it's important to note The present study aims to evaluate the link between perceived social support, conformance to masculine norms, and psychological resilience. The findings shed light on the subtle interplay between these variables and provide useful insights into their implications for mental health and well-being.

The research showed a very little negative connection ($r = -0.009$, $p > 0.01$) between perceived social support and compliance to masculine norms, which was contrary to what we initially expected. This shows that perceived social support is not significantly connected with adherence to traditional male norms in our group. These findings counter earlier studies suggesting that individuals with strong social support networks may be less inclined to comply to traditional gender roles (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Levant et al., 2016). However, it fits with previous studies demonstrating that the relationship between social support and gender role compliance may be more nuanced and context-dependent (Reid et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2020).

Consistent with current literature, our results indicated a moderate positive connection between perceived social support and psychological resilience ($r = 0.462$, $p < 0.01$). This study highlights the essential significance of social support in developing resilience among individuals encountering adversity (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Masten & Obradović, 2006). Individuals who experience higher amounts of social support may have access to larger emotional, instrumental, and informational resources, which can buffer against stress and boost their ability to cope well with problems (Thoits, 2011). Moreover, social support networks provide opportunities for social connection, validation, and belongingness, which are fundamental for psychological well-being (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010). Our data also demonstrated a weak positive connection between compliance to masculine standards and psychological resilience ($r = 0.265$, $p < 0.01$). While this relationship was less than the association between perceived social support and resilience, it shows that adherence to conventional masculine ideals may be moderately connected with higher levels of resilience.

This finding is consistent with research demonstrating that certain masculine features, such as self-reliance and emotional control, may help to resilience by encouraging adaptive coping methods and problem-solving skills (Levant et al., 2009; Wong et al., 2017). However, it's crucial to highlight that conforming to male standards can also have harmful implications on mental health, such as higher risk of psychological distress and lower help-seeking behaviors (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Parent & Moradi, 2009). Therefore, the relationship between masculinity and resilience requires more investigation to grasp its complicated mechanisms and ramifications.

Implications

The outcomes of this study have various implications for research and practice. Firstly, they highlight the significance of understanding the multidimensional character of gender identity and its connection with social support and resilience. Future study should continue to examine how gender norms influence individuals' experiences of social support and their ability to overcome adversity effectively. Additionally, interventions targeted at building resilience and mental health should examine the function of social support networks and address potential barriers to getting help among persons conforming to conventional male standards.

Furthermore, our results underline the necessity for culturally sensitive approaches to identifying and treating gender-related issues in varied communities. Gender norms vary between countries and can influence individuals' views of social support and resilience differently. Therefore, interventions should be adapted to individual cultural contexts and recognize the distinct problems and capabilities associated with diverse gender identities. This study contributes to our understanding of the complicated links between perceived social support, compliance to male standards, and psychological resilience. By understanding these relationships, we can better inform programs and policies aiming at boosting mental health and well-being across diverse communities.

Conclusion

This study aimed to evaluate the relationship between perceived social support, conformity to masculine standards, and psychological resilience, with the objective of contributing to our understanding of the complex interplay between these factors and their consequences for mental health and well-being. Through a comprehensive review of the literature and empirical investigation, this study has provided valuable insights into the dynamics of social support, masculinity, and resilience, highlighting both their interconnectedness and their unique contributions to individuals' psychological functioning.

The findings of this study offer some significant insights into the link between perceived social support, compliance to masculine standards, and psychological resilience. Firstly, the research found a minor negative connection between perceived social support and conformity to masculine standards, demonstrating that social support is not significantly connected with adherence to traditional masculinity. These findings challenge earlier beliefs about the importance of social support in establishing gender identity and underlines the need for a more nuanced understanding of the elements driving masculine norms adherence.

Secondly, a moderate positive association was discovered between perceived social support and psychological resilience, indicating that those who feel higher levels of social support are more likely to display more resilience in the face of adversity. This finding is consistent with prior studies emphasizing the protective effects of social support on mental health and highlights the need of building supportive connections to promote psychological well-being.

Finally, a slight positive connection was identified between conformity to masculine norms and psychological resilience, suggesting that adherence to conventional masculine norms may be moderately connected with better levels of resilience. While this relationship was less than the association between social support and resilience, it shows that certain features of masculinity, such as self-reliance and emotional control, may contribute to individuals' ability to cope effectively with stressors. However, it's vital to recognize that conforming to masculine standards can also have adverse impacts on mental health, demonstrating the complexity of the relationship between masculinity and resilience.

The findings of this study have various ramifications for theory and practice. Firstly, they underline the necessity of understanding the varied character of gender identity and its connection with social support and resilience. By addressing the different ways in which individuals feel and express gender, researchers and practitioners can develop more inclusive and successful interventions targeted at boosting mental health and well-being.

Secondly, the data show the role of social support in developing resilience among those confronting hardship. Interventions aiming at boosting social support networks and encouraging positive social connections may consequently play a vital role in building resilience and reducing the risk of mental health disorders. Furthermore, the findings suggest that interventions aimed to address gender-related issues should reflect the intricate interplay between masculinity and resilience. By fostering alternative forms of masculinity that value emotional expression, assistance-seeking, and interpersonal connection, practitioners can help individuals build healthier coping skills and lessen the detrimental influence of inflexible gender standards on mental health.

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