

## Exploring Entitlement as a Moderator and Mediator of the Relationship Between Masculine Gender Role Conflict and Men's Body Esteem

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Extant literature has suggested that entitlement stemming from masculine gender role socialization may moderate and/or mediate the relationship between gender role conflict and intrapersonal variables. This study tested this assertion with 236 college men, with body esteem serving as the intrapersonal variable. Results revealed that both conceptualizations of entitlement (i.e., self-assertive and narcissistic) moderated the relationships between two components of gender role conflict (i.e., success/power/competition and work-family conflict) and body esteem, with self-assertive entitlement (i.e., a more adaptive form) buffering these relationships and narcissistic entitlement (i.e., a more maladaptive form) strengthening these relationships. Narcissistic entitlement also strengthened the relationship between restricted affection between men and body esteem. In addition, self-assertive entitlement mediated the relationships between (a) restricted emotionality and body esteem, and (b) work-family conflict and body esteem.

*Keywords:* gender role conflict, body image, entitlement, college men

As researchers have begun to recognize that body image disturbance is common among men, they have started to initiate much research in this area. They have found that, like women's, men's psychological well being is linked to their body esteem (Cafri, Strauss, & Thompson, 2002; McCreary & Sasse, 2000; Olivardia, Pope, Borowiecki, & Cohane, 2004). For instance, men's drive for muscularity and use of destructive muscle-building substances such as anabolic-androgenic steroids, testosterone precursors, beta-2 agonists, human growth hormone, insulin-like growth factor, stimulants, diuretics, and dietary supplements are connected to and reflect men's low body esteem (Bahrke, 2007; Vartanian, Giant, & Passino, 2001).

Over the last three decades, societal messages that equate masculinity with muscularity have become more prevalent (Leit, Gray, & Pope, 2001; Pope, Olivardia, Gruber, & Borowiecki,

1999). As a result, men may be internalizing such messages, becoming dissatisfied with their bodies, and desiring increased muscularity to appear masculine (Tylka, Bergeron, & Schwartz, 2005). It therefore has become increasingly important to detect risk factors associated with men's low body esteem. Because masculinity is associated with muscularity, men who internalize societal norms of masculinity may experience lower body esteem if they perceive themselves to be inconsistent with the mesomorphic ideal body type presented in the media.

Although some studies have suggested that masculinity is negatively related to body dissatisfaction (Sondhaus, Kurtz, & Strube, 2001; Wade & Cooper, 1999), these studies operationalized masculinity as a set of gender role traits (Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Rade, & Jaberg, 2001; Good, Wallace, & Borst, 1994). Subsequent research has questioned the validity of gender role trait instruments, suggesting that they measure the global personality dimension of instrumentality rather than internalized gender role socialization (Betz, 1995; Good et al., 1994). Gender role socialization specifically reflects social pressures to equate masculinity with characteristics like strength, power, and muscularity (O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, &

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Wrightsmann, 1986). Perhaps a more valid conceptualization of internalized gender role socialization is the gender role conflict paradigm, which has been found to be distinct from instrumental personality traits (O'Neil, Good, & Holmes, 1995). Gender role conflict is the intrapersonal or interpersonal conflict/tension created by adopting rigid traditional masculine roles and is considered to be a result of gender role socialization. Interestingly, although the connection between masculinity and muscularity has been clearly articulated (Leit et al., 2001), the association between the detrimental internalization of male socialization (i.e., gender role conflict) and men's body esteem has yet to be examined. Consequently, gender role conflict and the entitlement that may result from the internalization of such male socialization are promising variables to examine in relationship to men's body esteem.

### Gender Role Conflict

Gender role conflict occurs "when rigid, sexist or restrictive gender roles result in personal restriction, devaluation, or violation of others or self" (O'Neil et al., 1995, p. 166). It has four components: success, power, and competition; restricted emotionality; restricted affectionate behavior between men; and conflict between work and family relationships. Intrapersonal correlates of masculine gender role conflict include anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and inattention to health-related issues (Good, Robertson, Fitzgerald, Stevens, & Bartles, 1996; Mahalik, Locke, Theodore, Cournoyer, & Lloyd, 2001; Zamarripa, Wampold, & Gregory, 2003). Interpersonal correlates include hostility, limited capacity for intimacy, and abusive behavior (Fischer & Good, 1997; Rando, Rogers, & Brittan-Powell, 1998; Robinson & Schwartz, 2004; Schwartz, Waldo, & Daniels, 2005).

### The Relationships of Gender Role Conflict, Muscularity, and Body Esteem

A muscular body image is consistent with male gender role ideals, given that men often choose a muscular (i.e., mesomorphic) shape as their body preference and perceive that women desire muscular men (Jacobi & Cash, 1994; O'Dea & Abraham, 1999). In addition, there is

increased cultural pressure for men to obtain an unrealistically muscular body in order to be considered masculine (Leit et al., 2001). In turn, men who internalize these cultural messages and who perceive that their appearance is inconsistent with this muscular ideal may experience low body esteem. Olivardia (2000) found that men who endorsed more traditional masculine ideology desired increased muscularity and felt that obtaining this body shape would help them meet their internalized gender role standards of power and control. Consequently, we hypothesized that gender role conflict would be negatively related to body esteem.

As the next logical extension of research on gender role conflict, Good, Heppner, Debord, and Fischer (2004) and O'Neil (2002) suggested that researchers examine moderators and mediators of the relationship between gender role conflict and psychological health. Such examinations would advance theory, inform prevention and treatment of problems stemming from gender role conflict, and help address why some men internalize the effects of gender role socialization while other men externalize these conflicts in their relationships with others. Moderators address "when" or "for whom" a variable most strongly predicts or causes an outcome variable (i.e., altering the direction or strength between a predictor and an outcome), whereas mediators account for the relationship between at least two other variables (Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004).

Entitlement may be a promising construct to examine as a mediator and a moderator of gender role conflict as well as for intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes. Entitlement is conceptualized as a logical extension of internalized gender role conflict (Hill & Fischer, 2001) that impacts men's perceptions of themselves and their self-worth. Further support for how entitlement may impact these variable associations is presented next.

### Entitlement

Entitlement has been defined as an individual's attitude about what he or she has the right to expect from others and has been conceptualized as having two forms (Nadkarni, Steil, Malone, & Sagrestano, 2005). The first form of entitlement is maladaptive and has been referred to as narcissistic entitlement/self promotion (NESP;

Nadkarni et al., 2005). Narcissistic entitlement is characterized by an exaggerated idea of one's own rights without regard for the rights of others, resulting in self-centered and demanding behavior. Narcissistic entitlement has been linked to endorsing unrealistic positive self evaluations (John & Robins, 1994) and externalizing negative feedback (e.g., blaming the evaluator or the evaluative techniques) but still experiencing negative emotion based on the feedback (Baumeister, Catanese, & Wallace, 2002; Kernis & Sun, 1994; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1998). In contrast, self reliance/self assurance (SRSA), the more adaptive form of entitlement, has been conceptualized as necessary to emotional well-being (Nadkarni et al., 2005). Self-assertive entitlement is characterized by a healthy sense of personal entitlement and the ability to assertively and confidently stand up for one's preferences. Historically, psychology has focused on narcissistic entitlement (Nadkarni et al., 2005). The inclusion of self-assertive entitlement expands the conceptualization of entitlement beyond pathology to the importance of a healthy assertion of needs and rights.

The specific aim of this study is to examine whether entitlement moderates and mediates the relationship between gender role conflict and body esteem in men. Below, we provide theoretical and empirical support for why entitlement may both moderate and mediate this relationship. Due to the fact that research suggests that it is possible for entitlement to serve as a moderator and mediator, both types of analyses were conducted.

#### *Entitlement as a Potential Moderator of the Gender Role Conflict-Body Esteem Relationship*

Many scholars (e.g., Brodsky, 1988; Nadkarni et al., 2005; Rimm, Snyder, Depue, Haanstad, & Armstrong, 1976) have argued and found that the appropriate assertion of one's rights helps increase psychological health and well-being. Thus, self-assertive entitlement may serve as an important protective factor and may interact with gender role conflict to influence men's body esteem. A healthy self-assertive sense of entitlement may give men confidence to be authentic. Thus, self-assertive entitlement can intensify their beliefs that the internalization of masculine gender roles (including cultural ideals of men's appearance) is not needed

to maintain a healthy self-concept. This process may then facilitate a positive perception of body esteem. Therefore, we hypothesized that self-assertive entitlement would moderate (by buffering) the relationship between gender role conflict and body esteem.

Because narcissistic entitlement is related to unrealistically positive evaluations and externalizing negative feedback (Baumeister et al., 2002; John & Robins, 1994; Kernis & Sun, 1994; Nadkarni et al., 2005), men with high levels of narcissistic entitlement who also value rigid and restrictive masculine gender roles may report higher body esteem. In other words, men with high levels of narcissistic entitlement who also attempt to meet rigid and restrictive masculine gender roles may also have overly positive perceptions of masculine traits such as body esteem and work to maintain a grandiose image. Thus, we proposed that narcissistic entitlement would moderate (by strengthening) the relationship between gender role conflict and body esteem.

#### *Entitlement as a Potential Mediator of the Gender Role Conflict-Body Esteem Relationship*

It has been suggested that masculine gender role conflict may directly lead to male expectations of entitlement and privilege (Marin & Russo, 1999), and entitlement then may directly lead to interpersonal and intrapersonal problems (Nadkarni et al., 2005). Lower levels of internalized masculine gender role conflict may help men feel more authentic (not living up to society's preferences for them, but their own preferences) and able to express their wants and needs in appropriate ways (i.e., self-assertive entitlement). Self-assertive entitlement, in turn, may lead to feelings of adequacy and security about the self and/or body (Marin & Russo, 1999). Thus, self-assertive entitlement may give men the belief that they are worthwhile and self-accepting, driving the relationship between lower levels of gender role conflict and higher levels of body esteem.

Conversely, higher levels of internalized masculine gender role conflict may lead men to think that they should be more powerful and dominate others (i.e., narcissistic entitlement). Narcissistic entitlement may then bolster their body image, albeit in a maladaptive way as men

believe that they are superior in appearance to other men. Narcissistic entitlement has been found to fully mediate the relationship between gender role conflict and the interpersonal variable of rape related attitudes and behaviors (Hill & Fischer, 2001). Consequently, narcissistic entitlement may mediate the relationship between gender role conflict and an intrapersonal variable such as body esteem. Based on this literature, we sought to examine whether entitlement (i.e., both self-assertive and narcissistic) mediates the relationship between gender role conflict and body esteem.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 236 undergraduate men ( $M$  age = 19.52 years,  $SD$  = 2.10, range = 18–42) from a mid-sized Southern university participated. In terms of ethnicity, 77% were Caucasian, 18% were African American, 2% were Hispanic/Latino, and 3% identified as “other.” A majority of the participants were single (85%). Fifty-four percent of the participants were first-year students, 28% were sophomores, 7% were juniors, 9% were seniors, and 2% were graduate students.

### Instruments

*Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS).* The GRCS (O’Neil et al., 1986) is a 37-item instrument designed to measure gender role conflict in men. Respondents report the degree to which they agree with statements about their thoughts and feelings concerning personal gender role attitudes, behaviors, and conflicts. Items are rated along a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 6 (*strongly disagree*). Factor analyses of the GRCS items have consistently yielded support for four factors (O’Neil et al., 1986; O’Neil et al., 1995); each factor is a subscale on the GRCS. Success, Power, and Competition (SPC) contains 13 items (e.g., “I evaluate other people’s value by their level of achievement and success”). Restrictive Emotionality (RE) contains 10 items (e.g., “I have difficulty expressing my emotional needs to my partner”). Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men (RABBM) contains 8 items (e.g., “Verbally expressing my love to another man is difficult for me”). Finally,

Conflict Between Work and Family Relations (CBWFR) contains 6 items (e.g., “I feel torn between my hectic work schedule and caring for my health”). Subscale scores are obtained by summing the respective subscale items. Higher subscale scores indicate higher gender role conflict. For college men, Cronbach’s alpha estimates for subscale scores have ranged from .79 to .93, and 4-week test-retest reliabilities have ranged from .72 to .86 (Good et al., 1995; O’Neil et al., 1986). In the present study, Cronbach’s alphas were .84 for SPC scores, .86 for RE scores, .80 for RABBM scores, and .83 for CBWFR scores. Positive correlations were demonstrated between the GRCS and other measures of men’s attitudes about masculinity (Good et al., 1995), supporting its construct validity.

*Body Esteem Scale (BES).* On the BES (Franzoi & Shields, 1984), respondents rate 35 body areas (e.g., chest, arms, nose) and body functions (e.g., physical coordination, agility) on a 5-point scale that ranges from 1 (*having strong negative feelings*) to 5 (*having strong positive feelings*). For men, a total score can be used, and also it can be divided into three subscales. Because high intercorrelations between BES subscales have been found for men (Franzoi & Shields, 1984; Franzoi & Herzog, 1986), only the overall BES score was used in the current study. Scores are summed; higher scores reflect greater body esteem. A Cronbach’s alpha of .94 has been found for overall BES scores among college men (Tylka et al., 2005). Evidence for its validity also has been garnered, as it was correlated significantly with self-esteem, ratings of perceived attractiveness and sexiness, and body consciousness for college men (Franzoi & Herzog, 1986). In the present study, Cronbach’s alpha was .95 for the overall BES score.

*Entitlement Attitudes Scale (EAS).* The EAS (Nadkarni et al., 2005) contains 17 items that are rated along a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). It consists of two subscales. First, Self Reliance/Self-Assurance (SRSA; 9 items; e.g., “It is easy for people to take advantage of me without my realizing it” [reverse scored]) is characterized by the ability to stand up for oneself, confidence, and belief in oneself. Second, Narcissistic Expectations/Self-Promotion (NESP; 8 items; e.g., “I insist upon getting my due”) reflects a self-centered and demanding attitude, as well as a primary focus on one’s own interests.

Scores are summed, with higher scores indicating greater entitlement. Nadkarni et al. (2005) found that these subscales yielded internally consistent scores (i.e., Cronbach’s alpha = .77 for SRSA scores and  $\alpha = .77$  for NESP scores). These authors also found construct validity support, as SRSA was associated with self-esteem and sense of agency, and NESP was not related to self-esteem and negatively associated with social desirability. In the present study, Cronbach’s alphas were .83 for SRSA scores and .76 for NESP scores.

*Procedure*

Men were recruited in their general psychology classes. They were given a packet that included the GRCS, EAS, and BES in counter-balanced order. After anonymity was assured and informed consent was obtained, men completed the questionnaires. Participants were debriefed regarding the purpose and content of the study immediately after completion. They did not receive course credit for participating.

**Results**

*Descriptive and Preliminary Analyses*

All 236 cases were analyzed, as no outliers were identified within the data set. Skewness and kurtosis for each measure was evaluated via significance tests and visual appearance of the

measure distributions. No substantial violations existed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996); therefore, no measures were transformed. Table 1 presents the correlations, means, and standard deviations the various scales and subscales. Both self-assertive and narcissistic entitlement were related to all gender role conflict variables in the expected direction; however, only self-assertive entitlement was related to body esteem. Only two gender role conflict factors (i.e., restricted emotionality and work-family conflict) were related to body esteem.

*Tests of Moderation*

*Hierarchical moderated regression (HMR).* We used HMR to examine whether entitlement moderated the relationship between gender role conflict factors and body esteem. This analysis is recognized as the best method to detect the presence or absence of moderating effects (Frazier et al., 2004). Moderators may or may not be related to the predictor or criterion, and the predictor may or may not be related to the criterion (Frazier et al., 2004). Thus, our findings that narcissistic entitlement, restricted affection between men, and success/power/competition were not related to body esteem did not preclude our conduction of tests of moderation.

We were interested in determining whether each form of entitlement moderated the relationships between each gender role conflict fac-

Table 1  
*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among the Study Measures (N = 236)*

Measures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Gender Role Conflict Measures</b>							
1. SPC	—						
2. RE	.36***	—					
3. RABBM	.37***	.54***	—				
4. CBWFR	.43***	.38***	.36***	—			
<b>Entitlement Measures</b>							
5. SRSA	-.20**	-.38***	-.23***	-.30***	—		
6. NESP	.36***	.22***	.30***	.23***	-.09	—	
<b>Body Esteem Measure</b>							
7. Overall Body Esteem Scale	.01	-.20**	.03	-.14*	.31***	.04	—
<i>M</i>	53.38	32.94	30.21	21.45	38.91	28.45	126.88
<i>SD</i>	10.38	9.68	9.51	6.92	7.64	6.34	21.46

*Note.* SPC = Success, Power, and Competition; RE = Restrictive Emotionality; RABBM = Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men; CBWFR = Conflict Between Work and Family Relations; SRSA = Self Reliance/Self-Assurance (i.e., self-assertive entitlement); NESP = Narcissistic Entitlement/Self-Promotion.  
\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

tor and overall body esteem. Due to multicollinearity, all predictors and all moderators were not entered into the same analysis, as potential interactions may be overlooked due to their conceptual overlap with predictors and other interactions on the criterion (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). For each HMR analysis, the predictor (a gender role conflict factor) and proposed moderator variable (an entitlement factor) were entered at Step 1 of the analysis. Next, at Step 2, the interaction term (e.g., restricted emotionality  $\times$  self-assertive entitlement for the first regression) was entered. Evidence for a moderator effect is noted at Step 2 by a statistically significant increment in  $R^2$  (i.e.,  $\Delta R^2$ ) and beta weight. However, statistical significance is only one measure of an interaction's contribution to the criterion

(McClelland & Judd, 1993). Commonly, interactions account for approximately 1–3% of the criterion variance (McClelland & Judd, 1993). Therefore,  $\Delta R^2$  values at or above .01 and statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) beta weights were considered to make unique contributions.

Scale scores for each gender role conflict and entitlement factor were centered. Results from each analysis are presented in Table 2. For each significant interaction, we graphed the corresponding regression slopes. The regression slopes were obtained by using predicted values for body esteem calculated from representative groups 1 standard deviation ( $SD$ ) above the mean and 1  $SD$  below the mean on the gender role conflict factor and the entitlement factor.

Table 2  
*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Body Esteem From Gender Role Conflict, Entitlement, and Their Interactions (N = 236)*

Step	Predictor	Cumulative		Adjusted		Incremental <i>t</i> (235)
		$\beta$	$R^2$	$R^2$	$R^2$	
1	Success/Power/Competition (SPC)	.07	.102	.094	.102	1.09
	Self-Assertive Entitlement (SAE)	.32				5.07*
2	SPC $\times$ SAE	-.81	.117	.106	.015	-3.36*
1	Restricted Emotionality (RE)	-.10	.105	.098	.105	-1.48
	Self-Assertive Entitlement (SAE)	.28				4.09*
2	RE $\times$ SAE	-.43	.114	.103	.009	-1.51
1	Restricted Affection Between Men (RABM)	.10	.107	.099	.107	1.56
	Self-Assertive Entitlement (SAE)	.33				5.18*
2	RABM $\times$ SAE	-.31	.109	.098	.002	-.86
1	Work-Family Conflict (WFC)	-.06	.100	.093	.100	-.94
	Self-Assertive Entitlement (SAE)	.30				4.54*
2	WFC $\times$ SAE	-.87	.132	.120	.032	-2.86*
1	Success/Power/Competition (SPC) (SPC)	-.00	.002	-.007	.002	-.05
	Narcissistic Entitlement (NE)	.05				.64
2	SPC $\times$ NE	.93	.022	.009	.020	2.15*
1	Restricted Emotionality (RE)	-.22	.048	.039	.048	-3.31*
	Narcissistic Entitlement (NE)	.09				1.39
2	RE $\times$ NE	.42	.054	.041	.006	1.21
1	Restricted Affection Between Men (RABM)	.02	.002	-.006	.002	.30
	Narcissistic Entitlement (NE)	.38				.56
2	RABM $\times$ NE	.65	.017	.066	.015	1.82*
1	Work-Family Conflict (WFC)	-.16	.025	.017	.025	-2.33*
	Narcissistic Entitlement (NE)		.08			1.18
2	WFC $\times$ NE	.85	.048	.035	.023	2.33*

Note. \* $p < .05$ .

These predicted values were obtained via the procedure outlined by Frazier et al. (2004): the respective unstandardized regression coefficients for each centered variable were multiplied by its appropriate value (i.e., 1 *SD* or -1 *SD* of the predictor for the first term, 1 *SD* or -1 *SD* of the moderator for the second term, and the product of the standard deviations of the predictor and moderator for the interaction term), summing these products, and then adding the constant value.

First, we tested whether self-assertive entitlement moderated the relationship between each gender role conflict factor and self-esteem. As expected, self-assertive entitlement buffered the relationship between success/power/competition and body esteem,  $\beta = -.81$ ,  $t(235) = -3.36$ ,  $p < .05$ . The interaction accounted for 1.5% of the incremental variance in body esteem ( $\Delta R^2$  of Step 2 = .015). This interaction is illustrated in Figure 1. Contrary to hypotheses, self-assertive entitlement did not buffer the relationship between restricted emotionality and body esteem,  $\beta = -.43$ ,  $t(235) = -1.51$ , *ns*,  $\Delta R^2$  of Step 2 = .013, nor did it buffer the relationship between restricted affection between men and body esteem,  $\beta = -.31$ ,  $t(235) = -.86$ , *ns*,  $\Delta R^2$  of Step 2 = .002). Yet, it buffered the relationship between work-family conflict and body esteem,  $\beta = -.87$ ,  $t(235) = -2.86$ ,  $p < .01$ , accounting for 3.2% of the incremental variance in body esteem ( $\Delta R^2$  of Step 2 = .032). Figure 2 presents a graph of this interaction.

Second, narcissistic entitlement was examined as to whether it strengthened the relationships of each gender role conflict factor to body esteem. As predicted, narcissistic entitlement strengthened the relationship between success/power/competition and body esteem,  $\beta = .93$ ,  $t(235) = 2.15$ ,  $p < .05$ . The interaction accounted for 2.0% of the unique variance in body esteem ( $\Delta R^2$  of Step 2 = .020). This interaction is plotted in Figure 3. Narcissistic entitlement unexpectedly did not moderate the restricted emotionality-body esteem relationship,  $\beta = .42$ ,  $t(235) = 1.21$ , *ns*,  $\Delta R^2$  of Step 2 = .006. Consistent with hypotheses, narcissistic entitlement strengthened the relationship between restricted affection between men and body esteem,  $\beta = .65$ ,  $t(235) = 1.82$ ,  $p < .05$ ; this interaction accounted for 1.5% of the unique variance in body esteem ( $\Delta R^2$  of Step 2 = .015). We graphed this interaction, and it is presented in Figure 4. Also consistent with expectations, narcissistic entitlement strengthened the relationship between work-family conflict and body esteem,  $\beta = .85$ ,  $t(235) = 2.33$ ,  $p < .05$ ; this interaction accounted for 2.3% of the unique variance in body esteem ( $\Delta R^2$  of Step 2 = .023). Figure 5 presents a graph of this interaction.

*Tests of Mediation*

In order to meet initial criteria for mediation (Frazier et al., 2004), the predictors (gender role

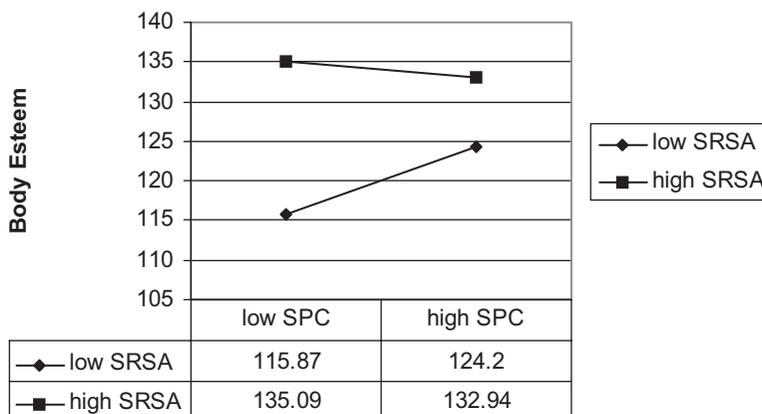


Figure 1. Plot of significant success, power, and competition by self reliance/self-assurance interaction in predicting body esteem. SPC = Success, Power, and Competition, SRSA = Self Reliance/Self-Assurance (i.e., self-assertive entitlement), low = predicted body esteem value for men 1 *SD* below the mean, high = predicted body esteem value for men 1 *SD* above the mean.

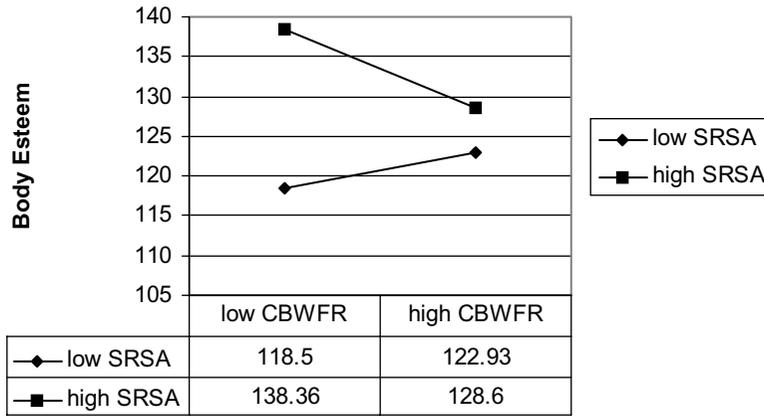


Figure 2. Plot of significant conflict between work and family relations by self reliance/self-assurance interaction in predicting body esteem. CBWFR = Conflict Between Work and Family Relations, SRSA = Self Reliance/Self-Assurance (i.e., self-assertive entitlement), low = predicted body esteem value for men 1 SD below the mean, high = predicted body esteem value for men 1 SD above the mean.

conflict variables), proposed mediators (entitlement variables), and the criterion (body esteem) must be related to one another. Only two gender role conflict factors (i.e., restricted emotionality and work-family conflict) and one entitlement factor (i.e., self-assertive entitlement) met these criteria. We, then, could not examine the remaining two gender role conflict factors and narcissistic entitlement within our test of mediation. Therefore, we examined whether self-

assertive entitlement mediated the relationships of restricted emotionality and work-family conflict to body esteem, as we hypothesized. We analyzed our model via latent variable structural equation modeling (SEM) using Mplus version 2.12 (Muthén & Muthén, 2001).

*Creation of measured/observed variables.* To generate three measured indicators for each latent variable, we followed the recommendation of Russell, Kahn, Spoth, and Altmaier (1998).

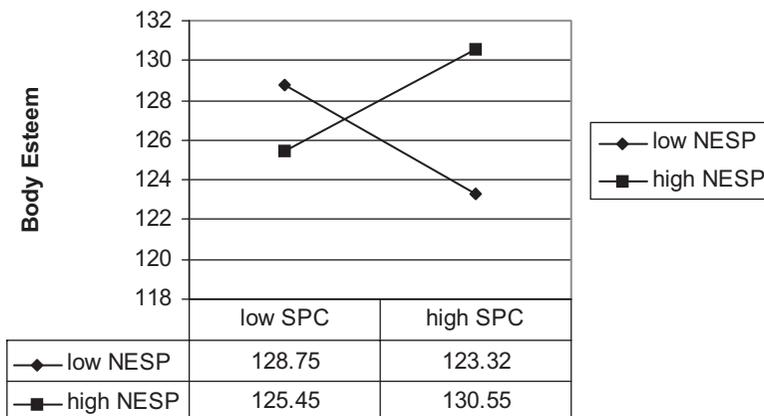


Figure 3. Plot of significant success, power, and competition by narcissistic expectations/self-promotion interaction in predicting body esteem. SPC = Success, Power, and Competition, NESP = Narcissistic Entitlement/Self-Promotion, low = predicted body esteem value for men 1 SD below the mean, high = predicted body esteem value for men 1 SD above the mean.

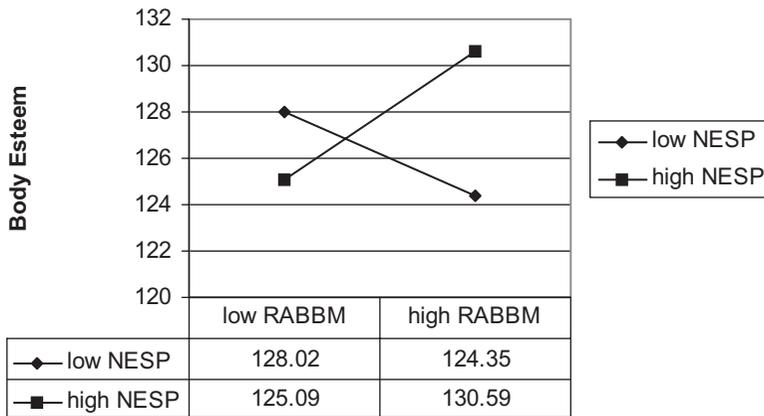


Figure 4. Plot of significant restrictive affectionate behavior between men by narcissistic expectations/self-promotion interaction in predicting body esteem. RABBM = Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men, NESP = Narcissistic Entitlement/Self-Promotion, low = predicted body esteem value for men 1 SD below the mean, high = predicted body esteem value for men 1 SD above the mean.

Specifically, for each scale or subscale, we created three parcels of items that would serve as indicators of its respective latent variable. First, for each measure, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis via SPSS version 14.0 using the maximum likelihood method of extraction and specified a single factor to be extracted. Next, we rank ordered items on the basis of the magnitude of the factor loadings. In order to equalize the average loadings of each parcel on its respec-

tive latent factor, we consecutively assigned items (from the highest to lowest factor loading) to each of the three parcels. Last, for each parcel, we created a total score by averaging the items within the parcel. Other researchers (e.g., Wei, Heppner, Russell, & Young, 2006) have used this method to generate parcels for estimation of their latent variables. We explored the skewness and kurtosis for each parcel; no significant deviations were noted and no transformations were performed.

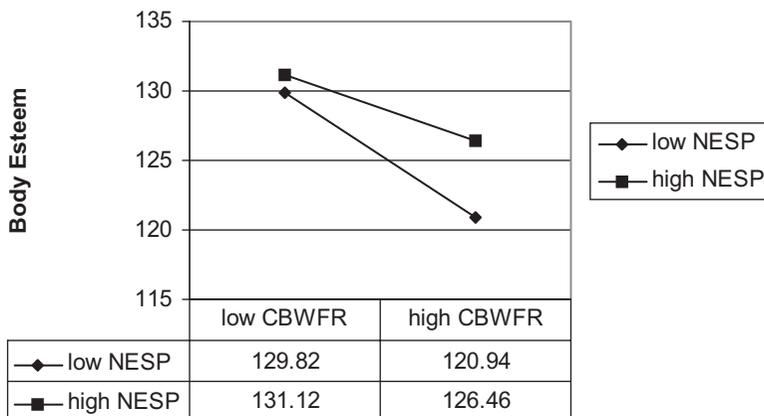


Figure 5. Plot of significant conflict between work and family relations by narcissistic expectations/self-promotion interaction in predicting body esteem. CBWFR = Conflict Between Work and Family Relations, NESP = Narcissistic Entitlement/Self-Promotion, low = predicted body esteem value for men 1 SD below the mean, high = predicted body esteem value for men 1 SD above the mean.

*Evaluation of the measurement model.* Prior to the evaluation of the structural model, we tested the measurement model for an acceptable fit to the data through confirmatory factor analysis; this analysis would help ensure that all latent factors were adequately operationalized. We specified Mplus to use ML estimation and the covariance matrix as input. Parcels served as indicators for their respective latent variable. Our findings indicated that the measurement model provided an excellent fit to the data (CFI = 1.00, TLI = .99, SRMR = .04, RMSEA = .02), as indicated by criteria for fit indices (Hu & Bentler, 1999). All parcels loaded significantly ( $p < .001$ ) on their respective latent factor (see Figure 6). These results indicated that all latent variables were adequately operationalized and justified our use of this model when testing the structural model.

*Evaluation of the structural model.* We then tested the structural model, specifying (a) the parcels to load on their respective latent variables and (b) the hypothesized paths between the latent variables to be estimated. Also, a bivariate relationship was estimated between

restricted emotionality and work-family conflict, as they are moderately related (O'Neil et al., 1986). In a partially mediated model, all possible direct and indirect paths were estimated. This model provided an excellent fit to the data (CFI = 1.00, TLI = .99, SRMR = .04, RMSEA = .02). All paths were significant ( $p \leq .05$ ) except the direct paths from the two gender role conflict variables to body esteem. We then deleted these two paths to obtain a more parsimonious model. When reanalyzed, this trimmed (i.e., fully mediated) model also provided an excellent fit to the data (CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.00, SRMR = .02, RMSEA = .04). Moreover, the partially mediated model did not provide a significantly better fit to the data than the fully mediated model,  $\chi^2_{\text{difference}}(2) = .13, ns$ , suggesting that the fully mediated model should be interpreted, as it is more parsimonious. This fully mediated model is presented in Figure 6. Self-assertive entitlement accounted for 19.1% of the variance in overall body esteem, and restricted emotionality and work-family conflict accounted for 25.9% of the variance in self-assertive entitlement.

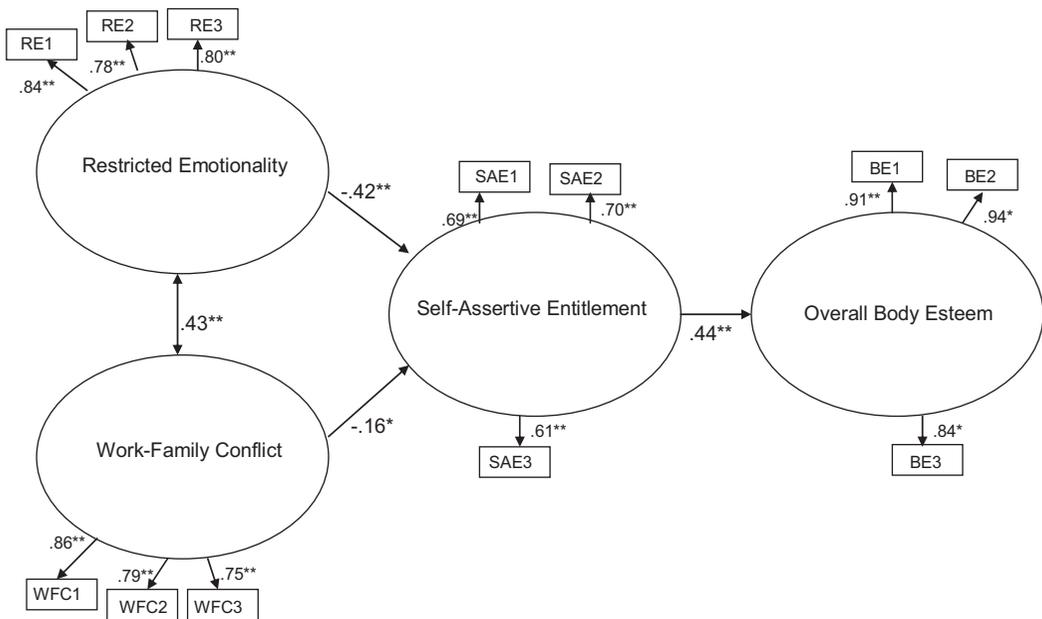


Figure 6. Parcel loadings for the measurement model and path coefficients for the trimmed structural model analyzed via latent variable structural equation modeling. Standard errors were .00, .08, and .08 for the Restricted Emotionality indicators; .00, .08, and .07 for the Work-Family Conflict indicators; .00, .09, and .08 for the Self-Assertive Entitlement indicators; and .00, .05, and .05 for the Body Esteem indicators. \* $p < .05$ .

*Examination of indirect effects/mediation.* To conduct a more rigorous test of mediation, we calculated the indirect effects. Specifically, we multiplied indirect standardized path coefficients (between the gender role conflict factor and self-assertive entitlement, and between self-assertive entitlement and body esteem) to obtain the indirect effects and used Sobel's formula to determine whether these indirect effects were significantly different from zero (Frazier et al., 2004). Through self-assertive entitlement (a) restricted emotionality had a significant indirect link of .19 ( $z = 3.95, p < .001$ ) to body esteem and (b) work-family conflict had a significant indirect link of .07 ( $z = 2.63, p < .01$ ) to body esteem. Thus, self-assertive entitlement fully mediated the links of restricted emotionality to body esteem and work-family conflict to body esteem, supporting our hypothesis.

## Discussion

This study was the first to examine the relationships between gender role conflict, men's body esteem, and entitlement. Our findings added incrementally to the empirical literature in two main ways. First, self-assertive and narcissistic entitlement moderated several gender role conflict factors' relationships to body esteem. Second, we found that self-assertive entitlement fully mediated the relationships between two gender role conflict factors (i.e., restricted emotionality and work-family conflict) and body esteem. It appears that entitlement is an important third variable in the relationship between men's gender role conflict and body attitudes. These results further highlight the detrimental effects of internalizing gender role socialization for men.

Specifically, self-assertive entitlement buffered the relationship between success/power/competition and body esteem. Exploring this interaction suggests that men with low success/power/competition and a high level of self-assertive entitlement reported the highest levels of body esteem. Conversely, men with low levels of success/power/competition and low levels of self-assertive entitlement reported the lowest levels of body esteem. Similarly, self-assertive entitlement buffered the relationship between work-family conflict and body esteem. From an exploration of this interaction, men with low work-family conflict and high self-assertive entitlement reported the highest level of body esteem. In contrast, men

with low work-family conflict and low levels of self-assertive entitlement reported the lowest level of body esteem. Positive evaluation of self appears to be a component of self-assertive entitlement, as previous researchers have found self-assertive entitlement to be positively related to self-esteem (Nadkarni et al., 2005). The current study reveals that this positive evaluation of self experienced by those with high levels of self-assertive entitlement may generalize to body esteem as well, particularly for men low in success/power/competition and work-family conflict.

Difficulty balancing work and family is connected to struggling with external relationships (O'Neil et al., 1986). Men with low levels of work-family conflict may be more impacted by self-assertive entitlement in regard to their body esteem, as they have more energy to focus on internal factors such as appearance. On the other hand, it is not typical for traditional-age college men to report high levels of work-family conflict (Cournoyer & Mahalik, 1995), but it is common that men in this age group report body composition and shape concerns (Ridgeway & Tylka, 2005). Given the prevalence of young adult men in our sample, work-family conflict may then be negatively associated with body esteem regardless of their level of self-assertive entitlement. The negative bivariate relationship between work-family conflict and body esteem supports this assertion.

In contrast to self-assertive entitlement, narcissistic entitlement strengthened the relationship between success/power/competition and body esteem, the relationship between restricted affection between men and body esteem, and the relationship between work-family conflict and body esteem. The interaction graphs illustrated that men with high levels of either success/power/competition or restricted affection between men and high levels of narcissistic entitlement reported the highest body esteem. Conversely, men with high levels of either success/power/competition or restricted affection between men and low levels of narcissistic entitlement reported the lowest body esteem. Also, men with high work-family conflict and high narcissistic entitlement reported higher body esteem than men with high work-family conflict and low narcissistic entitlement.

A feature of narcissistic entitlement is self-promotion and unrealistically positive self evaluations (John & Robins, 1994; Nadkarni et al.,

2005), which may take the form of men trying to convince others and themselves that they are attractive, leading to higher reported body esteem. Men who adhere to rigid and restrictive gender role behavior with respect to success/power/competition, restricted affection between men, and work-family conflict, and have narcissistic entitlement may hold favorable body attitudes to be consistent with their ideological view of themselves as men. This may be a self-protective mechanism, as narcissistic traits have been conceptualized to serve as a defense against underlying feelings of inadequacy and shame (Tenzer, 1987). Because previous research has linked success/power/competition and restricted affection between men to interpersonal difficulties (Rando et al., 1998; Schwartz et al., 2005), it may be that those with narcissistic entitlement externalize their gender role conflict in these areas toward trying to convince others of their worth and attractiveness.

The only gender role conflict not shown to interact with any form of entitlement in the prediction of body esteem was restricted emotionality. Our bivariate correlations revealed that restricted emotionality was negatively related to body esteem. Previous studies have found that restricted emotionality is the strongest contributor to psychological distress (Good et al., 1995) and the strongest predictor of depression and anxiety (O'Neil, 2002) of the four gender role conflict factors. It may be, then, that men's restriction of emotions more directly influences several indices of well-being in a negative direction, including body esteem.

It is interesting to note that the relationship between restricted emotionality and body esteem was not moderated by either form of entitlement but was fully mediated by self-assertive entitlement. We also found that self-assertive entitlement fully mediated the relationship between work-family conflict and body esteem. This finding is notable, as it suggests that self-assertive entitlement accounts for the negative relationships found between restricted emotionality and body esteem and work-family conflict and body esteem. Specifically, low levels of restricted emotionality and work-family conflict may help men feel more authentic (not living up to society's preferences for them, but their own preferences), which encourages them to express their wants and needs in appropriate ways (i.e., self-assertive entitlement), and then this healthy entitlement encourages their

feelings of adequacy and security about their body (Marin & Russo, 1999). Furthermore, work-family conflict and restricted emotionality have consistently been linked to self-esteem in previous research (O'Neil, 2002). Thus, because body esteem is a component of self-esteem (Franzoi & Shields, 1984), a lack of self-assertive entitlement may direct individuals to internalize the negative affects of gender role conflict in these areas to their body esteem.

### *Limitations*

Limitations of the present study need to be recognized. First, this study utilized a correlational design that prohibits causal conclusions. Second, the population consisted of mainly White male undergraduates from a midsized Southern university, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Third, self-report measures were used, which could represent socially desirable and subjective responses that may not be accurate representations of men's actual levels of the constructs investigated. Fourth, participants were recruited from their general psychology classes during regular class times. Even though it was emphasized that participation was voluntary and no extra credit or reward would be given, men may have felt pressure to participate, which could have affected their responses. Finally, we did not control for men's body shape, which may have uniquely impacted their levels of body esteem. Men who are lean and muscular may have higher body esteem because their body conforms to the cultural-ideal mesomorphic body shape presented in the media (Tylka et al., 2005). This cultural ideal image reminds men that their attractiveness is dependent on the extent to which they appear similar to this image. Future research may consider the influences of body mass when exploring the relationships between gender role conflict, entitlement, and body esteem.

### *Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice*

The present study's findings contribute to theory development and refinement for three extant bodies of literature: men's gender role

conflict, entitlement, and body esteem. These three theoretical domains have been kept relatively separate, as only one study has explored the relationship between gender role conflict and entitlement (Hill & Fischer, 2001). The present study is the first to explore the relationship between gender role conflict and men's body esteem, the relationship between entitlement and men's body esteem, and how gender role conflict combines and interacts with entitlement to predict men's body esteem. Thus, the results of this study advance each of the three theoretical domains and suggest that these domains should be integrated within future research, as they can inform one another and advance research and practice with men.

Future research could investigate whether entitlement moderates or mediates the relationship between gender role conflict and other intrapersonal problems, such as depression and anxiety, or interpersonal problems, such as prejudicial attitudes and abusive or discriminatory behaviors. Like gender role conflict, narcissistic entitlement has been conceptualized as stemming from masculine gender role socialization (Nadkarni et al., 2005). Investigations such as this could help psychologists understand the connection between gender role socialization and psychological well-being for men and the effects this socialization has on others.

Additionally, researchers could investigate whether the present study's results are bounded by the constraints of the age and cultural groups sampled. It may be that the constructs examined are developmental or generational. For instance, older men may have a higher level of body esteem because of their decreased focus on appearance due to growing older or because they are not exposed to the pressures for muscularity that younger men face (Leit et al., 2001). Previous research has found that gender role conflict differs by age group (Cournoyer & Mahalik, 1995). A longitudinal or cross-sectional research design could be used to study the relationships between gender role conflict, entitlement, and men's body esteem. In addition, the constructs examined may be culturally determined. Previous research has suggested that body image and gender roles may differ between cultural groups (Hebl, King, & Lin, 2004; Lazur & Majors, 1995); therefore, an examination of these associations with men of color seems worthy of attention.

Treating and preventing negative body esteem in men is still a relatively new area of clinical practice, and its relationship to gender role socialization and masculine ideology remains unclear. The present study's findings can inform this effort, as they suggest that clinicians need to explore their male clients' levels of gender role conflict and entitlement when body esteem emerges as a presenting concern. Helping clients become more appropriately self-assertive could help men increase their body esteem, especially for those who have low levels of restricted emotionality, success/power/competition, and/or work-family conflict.

Overall, our findings suggest that entitlement is an important variable to consider when exploring the relationship between gender role conflict and men's body esteem. Men with high gender role conflict who lack entitlement have the lowest body esteem. Self-assertive entitlement may give men confidence to be authentic and strengthen their beliefs that the internalization of male gender roles (such as the mesomorphic ideal) is not needed to be considered masculine, which may protect their body esteem. Men with high narcissistic entitlement may inflate their body esteem to maintain a grandiose self-image, a key feature of narcissistic entitlement. Last, self-assertive entitlement seems to account for the relationship between men's gender role conflict (i.e., restricted emotionality and work-family conflict) and body esteem, whereas narcissistic entitlement is not directly associated with their body esteem.

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