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How an adolescent athlete's status and deviation from masculine norms is perceived by adult men: The impact of observers' masculine ideology

Brandon C. Martin

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How an adolescent athlete's status and deviation from masculine norms is perceived
by adult men: The impact of observers' masculine ideology

A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

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Abstract

Masculinity has been at the forefront of discussion surrounding social change in American popular culture. After consideration of the historical context of masculinity in the 20th century, development and sport were discussed. To evaluate the effects of adult men's masculinity ideology on their perceptions of gender nonconforming behavior (pink nail polish), an adolescent male athlete target was utilized. A 2 x 2 between-subjects design used sport (football and swimming), and status (a freshman and a senior) in vignettes which described an adolescent male athlete. Participants' unique attributes, such as degree of conformity to masculine norms, gender role conflict, and policing of masculinity (POM) attitudes were measured to see how these might exert differences in the perceptions of the target's deviation from traditional masculine behavior. A pilot study ($N = 81$) was first conducted to test for the validity of the manipulations, and a main study ($N = 213$) followed. Participants were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk, and ranged from 18 to 75 years old. The current study found support for these hypotheses and were discussed in relation to other research on masculinity, particularly as it pertains to changes in masculinity throughout the aging process. Both practical and theoretical implications for men and masculinity studies are discussed in light of modern perspectives on masculinity in 2021.

Keywords: Masculinity, sport, adolescence, adulthood, conformity to masculine norms, gender role conflict, policing of masculinity, social learning

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Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Tables	viii
Introduction	1
The Study of Masculinity	2
Review of Literature	6
Social Learning Theory and the Reinforcement of Masculinity	6
Policing of Masculinity	6
Masculinity and Development	9
Masculinity and Adolescence	10
Masculinity and Adulthood	14
Masculinity and Sport	19
Gender-typing Sports	20
Sport, Masculinity, and Adolescence	24
Sport, Masculinity, and Adulthood	26
The Current Study	28
Method	32
Participants	32
Pilot Study	32
Main Study	33
Design	34
Materials	34
Vignettes	34
Grade Point Average	35
Gender Nonconforming Behavior	36
Measures	36
Pilot Study	36
Main Study	37
The Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief	37

The Gender Role Conflict Scale-Short Form	37
Policing of Masculinity Scale	38
Demographics	39
Procedure	39
Results	40
Pilot Study	40
Perceived Masculinity of the Target as a Function of Sport, and Status	41
Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Team Captain and Father as a Function of Sport, and Status	42
Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Team Captain	42
Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Father	42
Sport	45
Fashion Accessories	45
Main Study	47
Perceived Masculinity of the Target, Conformity to Masculine Norms, Gender Role Conflict, and Policing of Masculinity Attitudes	47
Perceived Masculinity of the Target as a Function of Sport, and Status	50
Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Team Captain and Father as a Function of Sport, and Status	54
Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Team Captain	54
Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Father	56
Participant Age, Conformity to Masculine Norms, Gender Role Conflict, and Policing of Masculinity Attitudes	57
Miscellaneous Findings	59
Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Team Captain and Father as a Function of Participant Age, Conformity to Masculine Norms, Gender Role Conflict, and Policing of Masculinity Attitudes	59
Conformity to Masculine Norms (MRNI-VB)	60
Gender Role Conflict (GRCS-SF)	60
Policing of Masculinity Attitudes (POMS)	64

Perceived Masculinity of the Target as a Function of Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Team Captain and Father	66
Belief that the Target Should Take Their Nail Polish Off Before Practice, Perceived Femininity of the Target, and Participant Age, Conformity to Masculine Norms, Gender Role Conflict, and Policing of Masculinity Attitudes	67
Participant Ideological Affiliation, Age, Conformity to Masculine Norms, Gender Role Conflict, and Policing of Masculinity Attitudes	68
Discussion	69
Perceived Masculinity of the Target, Conformity to Masculine Norms, Gender Role Conflict, and Policing of Masculinity Attitudes	70
Perceived Masculinity of the Target as a Function of Sport, and Status	71
Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Team Captain as a Function of Sport, and Status	73
Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Father as a Function of Sport, and Status	75
Participant Age, Conformity to Masculine Norms, Gender Role Conflict, and Policing of Masculinity Attitudes	76
Policing of Masculinity Attitudes: Miscellaneous Findings	77
Limitations	79
Confounding Variables	83
Future Research	84
Additional Considerations	85
Conclusion	86
References	90
Appendix A: Time to talk! An adolescent athlete's conversations	104
Appendix B: Hey man, what do <i>you</i> think about nail polish?	109
Appendix C: Table 5: Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants in the Main Study	122

List of Tables

<i>Table</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. Thematic Structure and Percentage of Participants' Responses: Conversation with the Captain (Pilot)	43
2. Thematic Structure and Percentage of Participants' Responses: Conversation with the Father (Pilot)	44
3. Masculinity Scores of Sports	46
4. Femininity Scores of Fashion Accessories	46
5. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants in the Main Study	122
6. Correlations between Perceived Masculinity of the Target and Participants' MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, and POMS Scores	49
7. Two-Way Analysis of Covariance for Perceived Masculinity of the Target by Sport and Status with Age, MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, and POMS as Covariates	51
8. Correlations between Perceived Masculinity of the Target and Other Dependent Variables (PSS, PM-F, PM-C, NPO, PH-T, FNNP, ACC, and PF-T)	52
9. Two-Way Analysis of Covariance for Belief that the Target Should Take Their Nail Polish Off Before Practice by Sport and Status with Age, MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, and POMS as Covariates	53
10. Thematic Structure and Percentage of Participants' Responses: Conversation with the Captain (Main)	55
11. Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Captain by Status	55
12. Thematic Structure and Percentage of Participants' Responses: Conversation with the Father (Main)	56
13. Correlations between Participants' Age and MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, and POMS Scores	58
14. Correlations between Problem with Policing and Age, MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, and POMS Scores	59
15. Two-Way Analysis of Covariance for Conformity to Masculine Norms (MRNI-VB) by Perceived Topic of Conversation with Captain and Father with Age, GRCS-SF, and POMS as Covariates	61

16. Two-Way Analysis of Covariance for Restricted Emotionality (from the GRCS-SF) by Perceived Topic of Conversation with Captain and Father with Age, MRNI-VB, SPC, RABBM, CBWFR, and POMS as Covariates	62
17. Two-Way Analysis of Covariance for Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men (from the GRCS-SF) by Perceived Topic of Conversation with Captain and Father with Age, MRNI-VB, RE, SPC, CBWFR, and POMS as Covariates	63
18. Two-Way Analysis of Covariance for POMS-A (from the POMS) by Perceived Topic of Conversation with Captain and Father with Age, MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, POMS-T, and POMS-E as Covariates	65
19. Two-Way Analysis of Covariance for POMS-E (from the POMS) by Perceived Topic of Conversation with Captain and Father with Age, MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, POMS-T, and POMS-A as Covariates	66
20. Correlations between Belief that the Target Should Take Their Nail Polish Off Before Practice and Perceived Femininity of the Target and Participants' Age, MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, and POMS Scores	68
21. Correlations between Ideological Affiliation and Participants' Age, MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, and POMS Scores	69
22. Participant and Retention Rates of Batches 1-6 and Total	81

Introduction

As we approach the quarter-mark of the 21st century, masculinity has become a popular and important topic of discussion both within and outside of academia. Social movements such as #MeToo and the rise of gender fluidity has become mainstream and widespread in American, and international, culture. These shifts have been apparent in popular culture: magazines such as GQ (Cea, 2019), Men's Health (Dukoff, 2019), and Rolling Stone (Dickson, 2019) have published articles critiquing and discussing the modern revisions and action taken against masculinity as part of the zeitgeist. GQ has been at the forefront, publishing the New Masculinity issue in November 2019 as part of its "Change is Good" initiative, conceptualizing masculinity as a work in progress and working towards revising masculine expectations. The New Masculinity issue featured discussions with Pharrell Williams, a famous hip-hop/R&B artist, and Kevin Love, a famous professional basketball player, about gender nonconformity in fashion and advocacy for mental health for men (Welch, 2019). The issue also included a survey on The State of Masculinity Now, which included 1,005 American male-, female-, and gender nonbinary-identifying participants; most notably, 97% of participants claimed expectations for male behavior had changed within the past decade (The Editors of GQ, 2019). Vogue is another popular publication pushing the boundaries of traditional masculinity. The magazine featured Harry Styles, a Grammy-winning musician, in a dress on the cover of its December 2020 issue, which included an interview where Styles, like Pharrell Williams, discussed personal growth through gender-fluid fashion and accessorizing, being in touch with his feminine side, and representing a modern-take on masculinity (Bowles, 2020).

Discussions of the re-evaluation of masculinity are also occurring outside of the entertainment industry. Gillette, an American shaving brand, released a Super Bowl

advertisement in 2019 challenging the “Boys will be boys” narrative and their own famous slogan, “The best a man can get,” challenging misogyny, bullying, and harassment that has been historically ignored through the endorsement of toxic masculinity. The advertisement also pushed the call for societal change to hold men more accountable, as part of the #MeToo movement, and endorsed healthier aspects of masculinity, such as fatherhood, leadership, and resiliency (Gillette, 2021).

These social movements have not occurred without a fair share of pushback. For instance, a recent social media campaign calling to “bring back manly men” was popularized by Candace Owens, a conservative commentator, in response to Styles’ Vogue appearance (Owens, 2020). Likewise, in the aforementioned GQ survey, only 19% of men identified as feminists and 72% reported having raised their voice to settle an argument (The Editors of GQ, 2019); thus, traditional masculine values are still evident in American society.

The current study is an attempt to make sense of this seeming conundrum, namely what are the attributes within an adult man, such as his valuing of, and conformity to, traditional masculinity and how do these impact his evaluation of other men? The qualities of the target (such as a teen’s status or the sport he plays) may also impact how an adult observer will evaluate an adolescent’s deviations from masculinity. But first, we should further situate why the study of masculinity has become of social and scientific importance in 2021.

The Study of Masculinity

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the traditional patriarchal system of the United States society was being threatened by the expansion of women’s rights seen in increased education, employment, and age of marriage (Kimmel, 1987), creating the fear that boys were becoming feminized by women’s increasing social power (Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 1987). This

included the fear of feminization and oppression of masculinity in the educational system (specifically the lack of male educational role models), closer mother-son relationships as the nuclear family defined fathers as being gone often for work (Kimmel, 1987), and boys and men increasingly the target of calls for social change (Connell, 2008). As a result, the advocacy for conformity to masculine norms became an even greater priority in some quarters. In addition to the development of men's anti-suffrage organizations to fight against growing protest for women's right to vote (Kimmel, 1987), social movements were also implemented to attempt to retain and continue to reinforce patriarchal power. For example, the Boy Scouts of America was established in 1910 to separate boys from the feminization they were facing in the educational system and home life. The Boy Scouts was but one effort for boys to be taught traditional masculine values by men (Hantover, 1978; Messner, 1987). Authors of medical texts also attempted to stand against the rise of feminism, using scientific discourse to argue that women's increased political and sexual power would result in more lustful behavior and tarnish the angelic home carer image of women (Kimmel, 1987).

These efforts and concerns shaped Western, modern-day definitions of masculinity, summarized by Brannon (1976) in four rules: No sissy stuff, be the big wheel, be the sturdy oak, and give 'em hell. These rules were developed from the four major factors Brannon articulated that reflect adherence to masculinity; avoid any and all feminine expression or behavior, be the provider and strive for recognition and power, maintain stoicism and emotional restraint, and assert dominance and strength. Kessler et al. (1985) emphasized a similar gender regime prevalent in Australian schooling, where Brannon's (1976) rules of masculinity were supported in the differences found between masculinity and femininity in power, prestige, and division of labor. Brannon (1976) and Kessler et al. (1985)'s theories of masculinity ushered in renewed

empirical study of masculinity/ies in the coming decades and gender roles remain at the center-stage of psychological research.

More recently, Kilmartin (2010) argued that masculinity in the United States reinforces the country's patriarchal system, evident through the power and privilege in favor of white/Caucasian men and the continued disdain for feminism and homosexuality, in some circles. As the academic literature has continued to expand, definitions of masculinity have as well. While masculinity has been defined as multiple patterns of behaviors and values (masculinities) (Connell, 2008), the current study will focus specifically on traditional masculine ideology (TMI) and hegemonic masculinity in the realm of athletics in adolescence. Adolescence was chosen as a topic of inquiry because of increased expectations to conform to masculinity (Galambos et al., 1990; Kågesten et al., 2016) that is dictated through the "Boy Code" (Pollack, 1998) in the "Boy World" (Wiseman, 2013). The current study also included athletics because of its central role in Boy World. The sports arena is a place of historical and foundational demonstrations and reinforcements of traditional masculinity (Adams & Govender, 2008; Anderson, 2011; Brannon, 1976; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Drummond, 2008; Messner, 1987; Messner, 1992; Pleck et al., 1993). This sphere may be particularly powerful in the perceptions of an adolescent male, especially if he participates in a gender nonconforming behavior.

One of the earliest sociological definitions of masculinity was traditional masculine ideology (TMI), defined as a cultural construct that characterizes the societal standards for appropriate male behavior, such as stoicism, a lack of intimacy in close relationships, and dominance (Adams & Govender, 2008; Pleck et al., 1993). TMI is internalized because of its societal importance to maintain strict gender norms, making conformity a key factor in the

construct. A revised version of TMI came soon after in the form of hegemonic masculinity, which is defined as the standard of appropriate male behavior or patterns of practice that is dependent and shifts with cultural expectations in an effort to manage and maintain patriarchal power (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). While TMI maintains rigid gender norms over time, hegemonic masculinity is malleable, taking into account the present state of cultural expectations and converting demonstrations of masculinity into fitting, appropriate standards. Themes of dominance, control, and emotional restraint are still highlighted, as hegemonic masculinity always, at its center, involves the pursuit for social power (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity also takes into consideration geographic implications that influence expectations through culture, defined as existing at three levels: local (e.g., communities, families), regional (e.g., country), and global (e.g., world politics); any one of these levels can influence expectations for unique demonstrations of hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

While there is notable growing acceptance of feminine expression and flexibility in masculinity (Adams, 2011; Anderson, 2011; Kozloski, 2010), both hegemonic and TMI are certainly still a force in Western society, and are associated with certain physical, psychological, and emotional problems. Men with greater adherence to hegemonic and/or TMI have been associated with greater psychological distress (Exner-Cortens et al., 2021; Wong et al., 2017), diagnostic aversion, known as a reluctance and shame to receive a psychiatric diagnosis (Jampel et al., 2020), and greater negative perceptions of psychological help-seeking (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Peak & Gast, 2014; Ramaeker & Petrie, 2019). Relatedly, greater rejection of gay men (and younger age) has been found to predict stronger negative perceptions of seeking and participating in psychological help (Berger et al., 2005), and the stigmatization of help seeking

by other men (Ramaecker & Petrie, 2019). Greater masculine norm adherence has also been associated with sexism in male-female relationships and less consistent use of condoms and contraceptives (Pleck et al., 1993). Parenting has also been found to be affected by adherence to masculinity: fathers with stronger masculine norm adherence are less intimate with their children and have a greater chance of performing harsh discipline (Petts et al., 2018).

Review of Literature

Social Learning Theory and the Reinforcement of Masculinity

The mechanism by which masculine norms are reproduced is best explained by social learning theory (SLT). Originally conceptualized by Bandura (1971), SLT proposes that patterns of behavior are reproduced through observation of others' behavior, as well as the consequences of behavior. Behavior(s) that are positively reinforced are more likely to be retained and replicated. The expression of behaviors and actions in the social context are evaluated, and either 1) positively reinforced and rewarded by others, which further incentivizes these actions to be carried out more often, or 2) punished (seen as unsuccessful or unfavorable) and unlikely to be repeated.

Policing of Masculinity

One way that masculine role adherence is reinforced is through the police-work of peers and subsequent social reinforcement or punishment, a concept defined as “policing of masculinity.” More specifically, policing of masculinity (POM) is a form of reasserting gender norms or insulting a man's masculinity through methods such as misogynistic and homophobic slurs or derogatives (Adams & Govender, 2008; Connell, 2008; Kimmel, 2008; Martino, 2000; McCreary, 1994; Metcalfe, 2018; Oransky & Fisher, 2009; Pascoe, 2005; Phoenix et al., 2003;

Poteat, 2007; Poteat et al., 2007; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016, 2021; Renold, 2002). Heterosexual standards of the male gender role are reasserted in slurs such as “gay” and “f*g” to maintain the negative perspective of homosexuality in masculinity, described by Pascoe (2005) as one of the worst insults for a heterosexual, gender conforming male. Renold (2002) suggests that the use of homophobic and misogynistic language produces the “heterosexual coherence,” or the expectation of the consistent reinforcement of masculine expectations through policing. POM is most commonly utilized to re-establish expectations to conform to masculine norms surrounding characteristics such as stoicism, physical dominance, and sexual prowess (Connell, 2008; Kimmel, 2008; Martino, 2000; McCreary, 1994; Metcalfe, 2018; Reigeluth, 2016; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016, 2021); body, intellect, and disability insults have also been found to be aspects of POM (Adams & Govender, 2008). In addition, Reigeluth and Addis (2016, 2021) found that POM is used for the maintenance and elevation of social status among peers and for strengthening friendships.

Boys’ use of POM has been found to peak in high school (Pascoe, 2005; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016; Thorne, 1993; Way, 2011), but by the start of college, many adolescent males’ rigid adherence toward traditional masculinity lessens (Levant et al., 1992; Marcell et al., 2011; Reigeluth, 2016). Previous studies have found that societal pressure for men after adolescence to conform to masculine norms decreases (Calasanti, 2004; Hearn, 1995; Kilmartin, 2010; Rybarczyk, 1994; Spector-Mersel, 2006; Strough et al., 2007; Thompson et al., 2020), but research specifically examining how POM operates in adulthood is scarce; POM studies primarily focus on adolescent males (Connell, 2008; Martino, 2000; Metcalfe, 2018; Reigeluth, 2016; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016, 2021). Therefore, understanding how POM shifts after its high

school peak (Pascoe, 2005; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016; Thorne, 1993; Way, 2011), particularly in adulthood, is an understudied topic that will be investigated in the current study.

SLT (Bandura, 1971), with its concept of positive and negative reinforcement, and POM are valuable concepts for understanding how conformity to the masculine gender role may be greatly influenced by implied or stated expectations about “proper” masculine behavior within peer groups. Given the importance of conforming to masculinity to fit in with one’s peer groups (Jackson & Dempster, 2009, Kilmartin, 2010; Metcalfe, 2018; Renold, 2002), the use of POM to reinforce these values (Adams & Govender, 2008; Connell, 2008; Kimmel, 2008; Martino, 2000; McCreary, 1994; Metcalfe, 2018; Reigeluth, 2016; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016, 2021), and appropriate conforming behavior is determined by learned experiences in an environment. Thus, an environment that might consistently utilize and endorse homophobic and misogynistic slurs through POM will be self-perpetuating within the group. This might further increase the frequency of these actions to continue within and outside of the group. Members of the group are taught, through direct experience or observational learning, patterns of behavior that are positively reinforced and retained, or punished and avoided (Bandura, 1971).

The consequences and prevalence of POM can create a bind for adolescent men. While adolescent males report emotional distress from the verbal and physical forms of POM, admitting this would lead to further, more severe policing that could negatively impact friendships and social status. Instead, brushing off the experiences as minimal or even personally beneficial helps maintain perceived conformity to masculine norms of stoicism and emotional control (Oransky & Fisher, 2009). Not adhering to masculine norms is socially risky for adolescents. These risks, which include presenting or acting in a gender nonconforming behavior, make young men vulnerable to being accused by their peers of being homosexual.

They then become policed through homophobic slurs for not conforming to the group standards (Connell, 2008; Kimmel, 2008; McCreary, 1994; Pascoe, 2005; Phoenix et al., 2003; Poteat, 2007; Poteat et al., 2007; Reigeluth, 2016; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016, 2021; Renold, 2002). In addition to reinforcing (or punishing) patterns of behavior surrounding POM, SLT mechanisms would predict that unwillingness to be vulnerable is another example of patterns of behavior reinforced in the social context of an environment. The bind for adolescent men is experienced, witnessed, and reinforced; the recipient of POM says nothing to avoid further damage to his friendships and social status (Oransky & Fisher, 2009), which is then learned and perpetuated as the normal response.

Masculinity and Development

SLT helps explain the development of distinctive behaviors related to gender roles. In adolescence, the development of a personal identity and autonomy are important aspects of identifying one's self, some of which can be achieved through gender roles (Erikson, 1950, 1968). To avoid role confusion or an identity crisis during a stage when an adolescent is striving for intimacy, and avoid feeling isolated or not belonging, males may conform to traditional masculine behaviors to fit in with other peers (Jackson & Dempster, 2009; Oransky & Fisher, 2009; Rulison et al., 2013). In contrast, the developmental stages of later adulthood shift: middle adulthood (ages 40-65) is focused on making an impact for future generations or feeling unproductive and stagnant, while late adulthood (ages 65 and over) is focused on evaluating life and feeling integrity or despair (Erikson, 1950).

Opportunities to re-evaluate identity and productivity during these developmental stages poses an interesting interaction between SLT and masculinity; while expectations to conform to and emulate masculine values decreases with age (Calasanti, 2004; Gross & Blundo, 2005;

Hearn, 1995; Kilmartin, 2010; Rybarczyk, 1994; Spector-Mersel, 2006; Springer & Mouzon, 2018; Strough et al., 2007; Thompson et al., 2020), peer groups could be an influential factor as to what degree or purpose masculinity adherence serves (which will be discussed further later). Therefore, this suggests a distinction between adolescence and adulthood: while peer groups can influence conformity to masculine norms for both, greater expectations for adolescence to conform could suggest a greater effect in the context of SLT. These themes and findings will be further examined in the following subsections.

Masculinity and Adolescence

While masculine expectations are passed down to boys in the education system as early as kindergarten or earlier (Kilmartin, 2010; Nelson, 1985), expectations to conform significantly increase during middle school, or early adolescence (ages 10-14) (Kågesten et al., 2016); more specifically, adolescent boys' attitudes towards adherence to masculinity have been found to significantly intensify from sixth to eighth grade (Galambos et al., 1990). Along with the significant increase of self-awareness of self-image (Harter, 1990), another important aspect of adolescence is the development of a gender role identity, when a boy begins to learn his sense of self as masculine (Kilmartin, 2010). It is also here when the "Boy Code" is enforced for adolescent boys, setting the expectations to maintain traditionally masculine behaviors by restricting emotional expressivity entirely (Pollack, 1998). A lapse in appropriate conformity can have negative repercussions (or social punishments, in Bandura's (1971) SLT terminology), as the non-conforming boy might be teased, picked on, or lose social status (Pollack, 1998). With the "Boy Code" introduced and reinforced during the time of gender role identity development, there is an increased chance for adolescent boys to acquire traditional masculine behaviors;

however, this is dependent on the degree of conformity motivation that an individual has to these norms. (Such consequences will be discussed in further detail in the current study).

With the Boy Code set in place, conformity to gender norms becomes an integral part in the development of friendships (Rulison et al., 2013), peer groups (Jackson & Dempster, 2009), physical appearance (Adams & Govender, 2008; Metcalfe, 2018), and social status (Brechtwald & Prinstein, 2011; Rogers et al., 2021). In an effort to effectively conform, adolescent boys engage in constant self-monitoring to ensure a strong masculine image is maintained and presented to others; unfortunately, the engagement in this self-monitoring has been associated with lower levels of self-esteem and higher levels of anxiety (Oransky & Fisher, 2009). The Boy Code also establishes negative associations with femininity and homosexuality, as they are perceived to act as counter-identities that are socially unacceptable for many adolescent boys (McCreary, 1994; Oransky & Fisher, 2009). This can include, but is not limited to, physical appearance (Adams & Govender, 2008; Metcalfe, 2018), lack of physical stature, and a lack of skill in sport (Reigeluth & Addis, 2016, 2021; Renold, 2002).

There are significant negative implications to adherence to masculine norms for adolescent boys. A review from Rogers et al. (2021) found that greater conformity to masculine norms in adolescent boys (ages 11-18) ironically is associated with a decrease in close male friendships (Gupta et al., 2013) and escalates conflict in relationships through a lack of conflict-resolution skills (Rogers et al., 2020) with greater sexual, physical, and psychological conflict (Totten, 2003). Furthermore, greater conformity also restricts effective coping strategies and emotional expressivity, which decreases self-esteem (Oransky & Fisher, 2009) and increases alcohol and drug consumption and other risky behaviors (Iwamoto & Smiler, 2013); this is

especially important considering adolescent males' already-elevated risk-taking (Santor et al., 2000).

The development of friendships through masculine gender-role socialization is an important aspect of peer groups, as conforming to masculine behaviors is an integral part of acceptance and status in a group (Adams & Govender, 2008; Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011; Jackson & Dempster, 2009; Kilmartin, 2010; Metcalfe, 2018; Oransky & Fisher, 2009; Renold, 2002; Rogers et al., 2021; Rulison et al., 2013), yet ironically, also seems to be associated with instability in male-male friendship. Gender conforming during adolescence has been found to be associated with high peer status and seeking a favorable self-identity (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011). However, gender conforming has also been found to be used as a form of peer pressure, as greater adherence to peer pressure has been associated with an increase in alcohol and drug consumption, stealing, sexual activity, and a decrease in academic performance (Santor et al., 2000). Peer groups also present ample opportunities to police masculinity, often utilizing homophobic insults and other negative indications to communicate the expectation of presenting and conforming to the heterosexual standards of the male gender role (Connell, 2008; Kimmel, 2008; McCreary, 1994; Pascoe, 2005; Phoenix et al., 2003; Poteat, 2007; Poteat et al., 2007; Reigeluth, 2016; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016, 2021; Renold, 2002). Responding to such teasing or policing is a complicated situation as well for adolescent boys, as Oransky and Fisher (2009) found that social teasing was negatively associated with anxiety; Oransky and Fisher suggested that this could be the result of boys feeling pressured to not engage or react to such teasing, as resistance could result in further, more intense teasing. This situation is further escalated given the significance of relational aggression in peer groups, as Cillessen and Rose (2005) suggested

that this form of aggression was an effective display of social power as its ability to exclude others from groups influenced who was seen as popular and who was not.

Male-male friendships during adolescence have also been found to welcome, endorse, and increase aggression, as Rulison et al. (2013) found that sixth and seventh grade male students who were physically aggressive were viewed as more attractive for friendships. Furthermore, these physically aggressive students were prone to not only select friends who were similarly aggressive, but that their aggressive and antisocial behaviors increased over time. These behaviors have also been found to be performed deliberately to attempt to increase perceived popularity (Cillessen & Rose, 2005). Additionally, aggressive peer groups have been found to engage in more homophobic behavior (Poteat, 2007; Poteat et al., 2007). Similar effects have been found with adolescent boys outside of the United States; fifth and sixth grade boys in Chile (Dijkstra et al., 2011) and South Korea (Shin, 2017) also found support for attraction and influence of physical aggression and popularity between friends over time.

Appearance may be another important factor for gaining social status. Physical perfectionism has been associated with a higher degree of traditional masculine ideology conformity in high school adolescent boys, especially with expectations pertaining to self-grooming, hygiene, and proper physical appearance (Adams & Govender, 2008). While physical appearance is typically categorized as a feminine preoccupation (Adams & Govender, 2008), masculinity and perfectionism set a standard for self-presentation that must fit the gender norms to adhere to what is seen as appropriate by other gender conforming peers. Therefore, presenting oneself out of line with masculine expectations, such as wearing a gender nonconforming outfit or lacking proper hygiene, makes an adolescent boy vulnerable to receiving other boys' gender policing and derogatory, homophobic slurs (Connell, 2008; Kimmel, 2008; McCreary, 1994;

Pascoe, 2005; Phoenix et al., 2003; Poteat, 2007; Poteat et al., 2007; Reigeluth, 2016; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016, 2021; Renold, 2002). This could influence the effect on high school students found by Metcalfe (2018), where challenging gender norms through appearance was seen as too risky as this would go against the gender binary through stereotypical masculine and feminine expression; this was further supported by McCreary (1994), who found that males engaging in cross-gender behavior were often perceived to be homosexual. Nonetheless, there have been exceptions found for adolescent boys to not conform to masculine norms (Rogers et al., 2021); those who are perceived as athletic and good-looking have been found to be given greater allowance for flexibility with their masculinity than an adolescent boy who is seen as feminine (Thorne, 1993; Way, 2011).

It should be noted that gender nonconforming behavior for adolescent males and resistance to conformity of masculine norms has been found to positively influence social and psychological well-being through improved friendship quality, self-esteem, and lower levels of depression (Gupta et al., 2013; Way, 2011; Way et al., 2014). Furthermore, gender norms surrounding emotional expressivity, autonomy, and toughness are traits that can be seen as unnecessary by adolescent males, where resistance is found to be higher in middle school than in high school; this suggests expectations to conform to masculine norms are greater in older teens which has been supported by previous research (Levant et al., 1992; Marcell et al., 2011; Reigeluth, 2016) (to be discussed in further detail later).

Masculinity and Adulthood

The evaluation of masculinity throughout the aging process is an area of research that has not garnered a large amount of attention (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), including the developmental change from adolescence to adulthood (Marcell et al., 2011). Levant et al. (1992)

and Marcell et al. (2011) have suggested that conformity to traditional masculine norms is greater for male adolescents than young adult men in their twenties. Marcell et al. (2011) suggested that this change in attitudes occurs because of the cognitive-developmental process, a concept created by Kohlberg and Ullian (1974), that credits development as a driver in the increase of cognitive complexity and flexible perceptions of gender. Furthermore, Marcell et al. (2011) suggested that negative perceptions of, and conformity to, traditional masculinity continues to lessen throughout adulthood.

Definitions of masculinity continue to change throughout the lifespan and into adulthood. While adolescents and young adults define their masculinity through sexual prowess, power, and strength (Adams & Govender, 2008; Brannon, 1976; Drummond, 2008; Messner, 1987; Pleck et al., 1993), a shift occurs at middle adulthood (around the age of 40). Hearn (1995) suggested that masculinity shifts in middle age towards prioritizing financial and occupational power, where men can reap the benefits of patriarchal power. The transition to late adulthood is still marked by power and hierarchy in patriarchal society, but Hearn argued that this is only applicable to men who have accumulated the power and resources earlier throughout their early and middle adulthood. Therefore, masculinity is only beneficial for a certain population of older men, leaving those not as fortunate, wealthy, or powerful vulnerable to losing a positive masculine perception. Further assessing the masculine expectations of these older men, Thompson et al. (2020) found that expectations to recouple after widowerhood and to retain patriarchal authority decreased with age, while expectations to maintain sex and vitality increased with age. Here, a key distinction between Hearn (1995) and Thompson et al. (2020) is necessary: the decreased expectations for patriarchal authority with age (Thompson et al., 2020) does not mean that this changes its retainment or prevalence in the masculine identity of some older men (Hearn, 1995).

Furthermore, it could be suggested that the increased expectations for sex and vitality could act as compensation for some men's decreased patriarchal authority in an attempt to reaffirm their changing masculinity definition.

The current shifting expectations of masculine conformity and values makes things more complicated for contemporary older men. This is especially true for men who hold masculine norms fixed in their youth, such as physical capabilities and expectations, that cannot be maintained with age and require appropriate revision (Kilmartin, 2010; Rybarczyk, 1994). For example, youthful expectations were established in the introduction of Viagra for erectile dysfunction, that directly or indirectly promoted a performance standard regardless of age (Gross & Blundo, 2005). Attempting to work through these physical changes by continuing to utilize traditional masculine norms may result in depression and loneliness (Kilmartin, 2010). As a result, Kilmartin (2010) suggested that changes in gender conforming behavior occur as a product of social opportunities, such as having the free time to participate in traditionally feminine activities such as gardening, after retiring. This concept is supported by Hearn (1995) and Spector-Mersel (2006), who suggested that older persons may be perceived as dependent, static, and devoid of gender because of their physical incapacities and reduced social power; an inverse correlation exists between masculinity and aging. Thus, adherence to gender norms is not expected to the degree they were in earlier developmental stages; an older man may be categorized as old before a man. This sentiment is shared by Calasanti (2004), who suggested that hegemonic masculinity and its values surrounding physical control, independence, and power are negatively associated with older age, which results in older men being seen as "Other." Therefore, it could be speculated that older men are allowed greater flexibility in their masculinity.

This is further supported by Strough et al. (2007), who found that men in their seventies began to identify their personality as aligning more with androgyny (a combination of both masculine and feminine personality traits). Furthermore, androgyny was found to be significantly greater among older men compared to adolescent and young adult men, independent of historical time period (e.g., the elevation of androgyny in the 1970s).

To attempt to make up for the lack of research on masculinity in older age groups, Springer and Mouzon (2018) developed the Hegemonic Masculinity for Older Men Scale (HMOMS). Utilizing the HMOMS, Springer and Mouzon found that masculinity idealists, or older men who have greater adherence to masculine norms, spent significantly more time participating in masculine activities (i.e., hunting, fishing, home/car repairs) while masculinity moderates, or older men who are less adhering to masculine norms, spent significantly more time participating in feminine activities (i.e., attending plays, lectures, concerts, museums). Perhaps similar to Strough et al. (2007), Springer and Mouzon (2018) also found that increasing age was associated with greater participation in feminine activities (i.e., painting and drawing), and marriage was associated with an increase in gender-neutral activities. Considering the changes in masculine expectations throughout the aging process (Calasanti, 2004; Gross & Blundo, 2005; Hearn, 1995; Kilmartin, 2010; Rybarczyk, 1994; Spector-Mersel, 2006; Thompson et al., 2020), the emerging presence of androgyny could suggest an influence these expectations have on men's personalities and behaviors as they shift away from traditional masculine values (Springer & Mouzon, 2018; Strough et al., 2007). The current study aims to further understand this effect, which could potentially reveal a decrease in expectations surrounding conforming to peer groups and facing the threat of policing of masculinity.

With the increased potential to experience significant life changes, such as in career, health, and family status, and psychologically stressful events (e.g., the loss of parents or a job), masculine ideology for aging men is likely to change (Bennett, 2007; Kilmartin, 2010; Peak & Gast, 2014). For instance, the experience of widowhood for older men has been suggested to create conflict over traditional masculine values of social power, being the breadwinner, and sexual prowess over a significant other; furthermore, the experience of widowhood threatens emotional stoicism and restraint that can influence cognitive dissonance over one's masculinity (Bennett, 2007; Peak & Gast, 2014). While the possibility still remains that psychological help-seeking will be avoided to attempt to maintain a strong sense of masculinity in the face of a conflict (e.g., widowhood) (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Bennett, 2007; Berger et al., 2005; Exner-Cortens et al., 2021; Jampel et al., 2020; Peak & Gast, 2014; Pleck et al., 1993; Ramaecker & Petrie, 2019; Springer & Mouzon, 2011; Wong et al., 2017), older men have been found to allow themselves more flexibility in their masculine beliefs that influences a more positive and effective approach to health-related behaviors (e.g., psychological help-seeking) (Bennett, 2007; Peak & Gast, 2014; Springer & Mouzon, 2011). A similar effect has also been found in changes in career, as the transition to retirement has been found to positively influence older men's willingness to incorporate positive health-related behaviors as expectations surrounding health and occupational prowess decrease (Calasanti, 2004; Gross & Blundo, 2005; Hearn, 1995; Kilmartin, 2010; Rybarczyk, 1994; Spector-Mersel, 2006; Thompson et al., 2020).

However, this is not always the case. In conjunction with findings of greater adherence to traditional masculinity and negative perceptions of psychological help-seeking (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Berger et al., 2005; Peak & Gast, 2014; Ramaecker & Petrie, 2019), Springer and Mouzon (2011) found that this pattern of behavior also applies to later life. Older men (65 years

and older) with greater lifelong adherence to hegemonic masculinity were less likely to have obtained preventive health care within the past year, regardless of prior health and family background. In fact, Springer and Mouzon suggested that greater adherence combined with higher levels of socioeconomic status were dangerous to men's health, as these together found significantly lower rates of preventive health care. Therefore, it is conceivable that initial conformity to masculine norms may play as strong a role as the psychosocial and physical effects of aging in a man's health.

As discussed above, age and developmental stage, especially in the shift from adolescence (Adams & Govender, 2008; Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011; Jackson & Dempster, 2009; Kilmartin, 2010; Levant et al., 1992; Marcell et al., 2011; Metcalfe, 2018; Oranksy & Fisher, 2009; Pascoe, 2005; Reigeluth, 2016; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016; Renold, 2002; Rogers et al., 2021; Rulison et al., 2013; Thorne, 1993; Way, 2011) to adulthood (Calasanti, 2004; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Gross & Blundo, 2005; Hearn, 1995; Kilmartin, 2010; Marcell et al., 2011; Rybarczyk, 1994; Spector-Mersel, 2006; Strough et al., 2007; Thompson et al., 2020) often influences the degree of adherence to masculinity. In addition, individual differences in sport (namely the type of sport a boy or man engages in) may impact conformity to masculine norms, which will be discussed below.

Masculinity and Sport

Historically, sport has been a platform for men to showcase their masculinity (Anderson, 2011; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Drummond, 2008; Messner, 1987; Messner, 1992), reinforcing and actively engaging in traditional masculine values of power, dominance, and strength (Adams & Govender, 2008; Brannon, 1976; Drummond, 2008; Messner, 1987; Pleck et al., 1993). As Messner (1987) argued, sport became a platform for reinforcing masculine values

to counteract and separate itself from the feared feminization of men that fixated its stance as a key contributor in the definition of masculinity (Drummond, 2008; Messner, 1987; Messner, 1992).

Considering the platform in sports that can reinforce masculine values (Adams & Govender, 2008; Anderson, 2011; Brannon, 1976; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Drummond, 2008; Messner, 1987; Messner, 1992; Pleck et al., 1993), the influence of these values has been associated with the perceptions of gender-appropriate sports. Masculine sports predominantly feature characteristics such as physical contact or confrontation, face-to-face opposition, and strength and aggression. This is supported by Koivula (2001), who suggested that masculine sports can be characterized by 5 traits: 1) danger, risk, and violence; 2) team spirit; 3) speed; 4) strength and endurance; and 5) masculinity. On the other hand, masculine reinforcement is not seen in sports that are considered feminine, which features characteristics such as expressivity, grace, and aesthetics (Connell, 2008; Hardin & Greer, 2009). As suggested through their characteristics, men have historically participated more in traditionally masculine sports and women in traditionally feminine sports (Klomsten et al., 2005). Determining sport based on traditional gender norms then leads to gender-typing sports, or classifying sports based on perceived appropriate gender participation, as well as (I propose) greater or lesser reinforcement of masculine norms.

Gender-typing Sports

Categorizing sports into masculine, feminine, or neither-gendered (also known as gender-neutral) has been met with mixed success by researchers. Masculine sports have generally consisted of football, ice hockey, wrestling, and rugby; feminine sports have generally consisted of gymnastics, field hockey, volleyball, and softball; and gender-neutral sports have generally

consisted of soccer, swimming, and tennis (Hardin & Greer, 2009; Koivula, 2001; Sobal & Milgrim, 2019). Mixed results seem to occur when differentiating between masculine and gender-neutral categorizations. For instance, basketball has been categorized as a masculine (Hardin & Greer, 2009; Koivula, 2001) and gender-neutral (Sobal & Milgrim, 2019) sport, and soccer has also been categorized as both masculine (Koivula, 2001) and gender-neutral (Hardin & Greer, 2009; Sobal & Milgrim, 2019). This disparity in categorization could be influenced by findings suggesting that team sports are considered more masculine than individual sports (Anderson, 2011; Hardin & Greer, 2009) and that gender-neutral sports are rated more masculine than feminine (Chalabaev et al., 2013; Koivula, 2001; Plaza et al., 2017). This is further supported by Alley and Hicks (2005), who found that adolescent male athletes were rated more masculine when participating in karate, a masculine gender-typed sport, and that tennis (gender-neutral) was perceived as more masculine than feminine.

While masculine sports typically consist of the aforementioned physical contact, face-to-face opposition, and strength and aggression (Connell, 2008; Drummond, 2008; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Messner, 1987; Messner, 1992; Pleck et al., 1993; Sobal & Milgrim, 2019), Koivula (2001) argued that a sport does not necessarily have to possess all of these characteristics to be considered masculine; however, Koivula also argued that sports that possess more of these characteristics are considered more masculine overall. The subjective nature of what makes a sport masculine may also be influenced by historical and cultural context (Hardin & Greer, 2009). Therefore, this could add further support to research that has found that gender-neutral sports are sometimes characterized and categorized as masculine (Alley & Hicks, 2005; Chalabaev et al., 2013; Koivula, 2001; Plaza et al., 2017). The current study will further assess

the difference between gender-neutral and masculine sports in hopes of understanding components that influence the differentiation between these two gender-typing categories.

Gender-typing of sports becomes even more critical to evaluate when considering its ties to underlying stereotypes in overall sport participation. In the United States in 2019, high school sport participation was male-dominated, with 4,534,758 (57.1%) boys and 3,402,733 (42.9%) girls participating (National Federation of State High School Associations [NFHS], 2019). This disparity in participation has been suggested by Chalabaev et al. (2013) to result from stereotypes in sports and a significant difference in media coverage; sports media for women's sports in the United States is only 5-8% of overall coverage, which has been argued to be detrimental to women participation influenced by the SLT (Bandura, 1971; Hardin & Greer, 2009). This potential influence has been supported by Colley et al. (2006), who found that 9-11 and 15-16 year olds reported their prototype of a generic athlete to be predominantly male, an effect found for both boys and girls. Thus, greater male representation and participation in athletics could be influenced by both sport's historical and cultural masculine values of face-to-face competition, dominance, and striving for recognition (Connell, 2008; Drummond, 2008; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Koivula, 2001; Messner, 1987; Messner, 1992; Pleck et al., 1993; Sobal & Milgrim, 2019), and disproportionate media coverage that could influence the effects of the SLT (Adams & Govender, 2008; Bandura, 1971; Brannon, 1976; Chalabaev et al., 2013; Colley et al., 2006; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Pleck et al., 1993).

As previously mentioned, American football is a sport that is predominantly characterized as a masculine sport (Alley & Hicks, 2005; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Koivula, 2001; Sobal & Milgrim, 2019). Particularly for college-aged individuals, football has been suggested to endorse masculinity through the perception that characteristics of the sport, such as aggression,

physical superiority, and brutality (Adams & Govender, 2008; Brannon, 1976; Connell, 2008; Drummond, 2008; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Koivula, 2001; Messner, 1987; Messner, 1992; Pleck et al., 1993; Sobal & Milgrim, 2019; Wiseman, 2013), are indicative of the natural, biological connection to primal instincts (Pettegrew, 1993). Historically, football has been highlighted as the United States' premier sport because of these characteristics that polarizes itself from the aforementioned feared feminization of society (Drummond, 2008; Messner, 1987; Messner, 1992). Because of the sport's physical characteristics and demands, the average National Football League (NFL) player measures six feet, two inches and 245 pounds (Gowton, 2016), emphasizing size and strength that is a key aspect of masculinity (Oates & Durham, 2004). This endorsement of assertiveness and violence has been found to be prevalent in other masculine sports, such as hockey (MacDonald, 2014; Weinstein et al., 1995), that also demand a large physical stature.

Football culture, like other masculine sports, also endorses values of emotional restraint and stoicism (Adams & Govender, 2008; Brannon, 1976; Connell, 2008; Drummond, 2008; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Messner, 1987; Messner, 1992; Pleck et al., 1993; Wiseman, 2013), and discourages the expression of extreme physical pain. Often, athletes are taught to finish the competition regardless of the status of their injury and put their body on the line, and are applauded for their display of grit, heart, and commitment to their team (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). The NFL in particular endorses players to exhibit physical resilience and emotional stoicism by routinely playing through concussions, broken bones, and torn ligaments, all with the rationale of avoiding missteps in preparation and strategy for game day (Pompei, 2017).

Football culture as it relates to masculinity stands in contrast to swimming, which has been chosen to represent the gender-neutral sport in the current study. Swimming presents a

unique opportunity to evaluate because participation can be considered as both a team and individual sport depending on the event and scoring system; swimming events consist of individual or relay races, and points earned by each swimmer are added to the team's total (Los Paseos Aquatic Club [LPAC], n.d.). Swimming's consistent categorization as gender-neutral across many studies (Hardin & Greer, 2009; Koivula, 2001; Sobal & Milgrim, 2019) is interesting given that other research that suggests team (Anderson, 2011; Hardin & Greer, 2009) and gender-neutral (Alley & Hicks, 2005; Chalabaev et al., 2013; Koivula, 2001; Plaza et al., 2017) sports are also perceived as more masculine. Thus, the dual engagement of the success of the individual swimmer and its team in competition makes swimming a gender-typed categorization that warrants more evaluation. The current study aims to accomplish this by including swimming as the gender-neutral sport to evaluate if differences between swimming and an unambiguously masculine (football) sport emerge (at least as far as the perceived masculinity of an adolescent male athlete who will be presented as wearing nail polish).

Sport, Masculinity, and Adolescence

The ability to demonstrate sport competence and prowess is an important aspect in many young men's identity, self-worth, and perceived masculinity (Metcalf, 2018). The effects of gender-typing in sports are prevalent in adolescent boys, which place emphasis on what is and is not appropriate in "Boy World." Coined by Wiseman (2013), this concept outlines the predominant areas of competence used by adolescent boys to judge another boy's status and sets the standards of masculinity for middle- and high-school boys; status is inferred through sport participation, physical appearance, intellect, and social skills (Adams & Govender, 2008; Metcalf, 2018). The sports that are seen as particularly masculine, and therefore appropriate for Boy World, include football, basketball, soccer, hockey, lacrosse, and water polo (Wiseman,

2013), which all include values of dominance, competitiveness, and opposition (Adams & Govender, 2008; Brannon, 1976; Connell, 2008; Drummond, 2008; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Koivula, 2001; Messner, 1987; Messner, 1992; Pleck et al., 1993; Sobal & Milgrim, 2019).

Sport participation in adolescence has been found to provide a rare opportunity and endorsement for boys' open emotional expression and the reinforcement of values such as resiliency and companionship through competition. Sport participation also provides positive experiences and connections for adolescents (Messner, 1987), and has been positively associated with health benefits and social support (Agata & Monyeki, 2018). However, traditional masculine expectations are still sometimes fixated upon and forced through instances of hazing, shame, and brutality (Pollack, 1998) that could turn boys away from participating in a critical part of adolescent masculinity (Wiseman, 2013). Masculine sports and/or male participation in sport has also been found to be an environment for the promotion of masculinity establishing discourse, where masculine rhetoric is re-established through verbalizing homophobic, sexually and physically violent, and misogynistic remarks (Adams et al., 2010; McCreary, 1994). Calling the sport a "man's game," motivating players by whether they have the "balls" (testicles) to play tough or not, and the "warrior attitude" are some examples of rhetoric that is common in sports (Adams et al., 2010).

The drive for greatness in sport has also been found to have some maladaptive consequences. Messner (1987) argued that success in sport requires the attainment of toxic traditional masculine traits, such as a high drive for competitiveness, homophobia, and low self-disclosure; these traits have been found to be highly influential to developing an obsession with winning, where an athlete begins to view their body as a machine to destroy the opponent and fears anything other than first place. This theme extends across age in sport, as college men who

participate in sports have been found to have greater gender role conflict and stronger adherence to masculine norms compared to nonathletes (Ramaecker & Petrie, 2019). Therefore, college men run the risk of developing toxic masculine traits as a result of sport participation that can transcend throughout their playing career.

Sport, Masculinity, and Adulthood

For many high school athletes, the end of adolescence means the end of their playing career. To put that into perspective, the appropriate “Boy World” sports of football, basketball, soccer, hockey, lacrosse, and water polo (Wiseman, 2013) had a reported 2,177,319 high school participants during the 2018-19 academic year. However, participation significantly decreased in college, with only 138,025 (6.3%) students carrying their playing careers to the next (collegiate) level; this includes only 2.6% who play at the Division I level (National Collegiate Athletic Association [NCAA], 2020).

The end of a playing career for an adult can be a tremendous change, considering the importance sport has on the lives of young adults and their definitions of masculinity (Messner, 1987); this can occur at the end of a high school, college, or professional career, ranging, typically, between 18-30 years old, with a mode of age 18. For those who placed a great emphasis on sport for their masculine identity, the absence of sport participation may be a threat to their masculinity. Intriguingly, Messner found that former athletes who viewed sport as their central identity in their younger playing age typically redefined themselves through breadwinning, another masculine trait where the man is socially expected to be the primary financial support of the family; as previously mentioned, this suggested shift to financial obligations is supported by Hearn (1995).

Older men in particular face challenges with sport and physical activity as they age. In addition to conflicts with masculinity as men age and lose the physical control, power, and independence they had at a younger age (Calasanti, 2004; Gross & Blundo, 2005; Hearn, 1995; Kilmartin, 2010; Rybarczyk, 1994; Spector-Mersel, 2006; Springer & Mouzon, 2018; Strough et al., 2007; Thompson et al., 2020), Drummond (2008) argued that older men feel intimidated when attempting to re-engage in physical activity or sport and find it difficult to feel motivated. A lack of continuity and body awareness also makes the effort one that Drummond found to have negative influences on older men's masculine identity. However, lifestyle activities such as walking, weight training, cycling, and hiking have been found to positively influence masculine identity for older men, as these activities can be worked flexibly into one's schedules to provide regularity and are not directly competitive; men tend to turn to this recreational perspective of sport around the age of 40 (Drummond, 2008; Messner, 1987). While competitiveness can still persist in these activities, it allows older men to socialize in sport.

As previously discussed, the expectations for masculine conformity have been suggested to decrease throughout the lifespan as physical capabilities and health decline (Calasanti, 2004; Gross & Blundo, 2005; Hearn, 1995; Kilmartin, 2010; Rybarczyk, 1994; Spector-Mersel, 2006; Springer & Mouzon, 2018; Strough et al., 2007; Thompson et al., 2020). Thus, it could be suggested that the same applies to the context of sport, as the end of adolescence marks a significant decrease in organized sport participation (NCAA, 2020) and definitions of masculinity shift toward the pursuit of financial and occupational success (Messner, 1987; Harris, 1995; Hearn, 1995).

The Current Study

The main purpose of the current study is to examine how attitudes and conformity to masculinity and POM influence perceptions of gender nonconforming behavior by an adolescent male athlete. Furthermore, expanding the academic literature on masculinity's influence in sport and status are essential parts of the current study to gain a better understanding for how conformity to masculine norms is expressed and policed in these contexts. Participants' experiences with POM will also be measured to further assess its social significance and how it comes to exist and thrive in the context of lifespan and sport.

Considering the social context of sport as a platform for masculinity (Anderson, 2011; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Drummond, 2008; Messner, 1987; Messner, 1992) that reinforces traditional masculinity traits (Adams & Govender, 2008; Brannon, 1976; Connell, 2008; Drummond, 2008; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Koivula, 2001; Messner, 1987; Messner, 1992; Pleck et al., 1993; Sobal & Milgrim, 2019), athletes having greater gender role conflict and adherence to masculine norms (Ramaeker & Petrie, 2019) seems a reasonable assumption. However, another one of the purposes of the current study is to expand upon this research to evaluate how personal conflict and adherence influences perceptions of an adolescent athlete participating in a gender nonconforming behavior. Therefore, it is hypothesized that there will be a negative correlation between perceived masculinity of the target and the participant's own conformity to masculine norms (H1), and gender role conflict (H2).

In addition, the evaluation of a gender nonconforming adolescent athlete presents an unique opportunity to assess how or if personal and interpersonal reinforcement of masculinity influences perceived masculinity of the target. While POM has been found to occur primarily during adolescence (Connell, 2008; Martino, 2000; Metcalfe, 2018; Reigeluth, 2016; Reigeluth

& Addis, 2016, 2021), including an evaluation of POM among older men will allow for an examination into how or if POM carries on throughout the aging process; this is of particular interest since the current study will be presenting the participants with a gender nonconforming behavior where homophobic slurs and policing are common responses (Connell, 2008; Kimmel, 2008; McCreary, 1994; Pascoe, 2005; Phoenix et al., 2003; Poteat, 2007; Poteat et al., 2007; Reigeluth, 2016; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016, 2021; Renold, 2002). Thus, it is hypothesized that there will also be a negative correlation between perceived masculinity of the target and the participants' own POM attitudes (H3). Other dependent variables, such as acceptability of men wearing nail polish, believing the target should take their nail polish off before playing, and believing the target was heterosexual will also be considered; correlations between the three scales will be conducted to evaluate for potential influences.

Utilizing a between-subjects design, sport (football (masculine) and swimming (gender-neutral)) and status (freshman junior varsity backup and senior varsity star) will also be utilized to evaluate the effects of sport-gender-typing and social status on the perception of an athlete engaging in a gender nonconforming behavior. Considering previous research on gender-typing sports (Alley & Hicks, 2005; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Koivula, 2001; Sobal & Milgrim, 2019), football and swimming will be utilized to evaluate if there are differences in perceptions of an adolescent athlete between these two differently gender-typed sports. It is hypothesized that there will be a main effect for sport on perceived masculinity of the target (H4). In addition, the rationale for the evaluation of status is that the current study anticipates there will be more allowance of gender nonconforming behavior for an adolescent male if he is perceived to be 1) older (senior vs. freshman), and 2) more skilled in their respective sport. Drawing from research that has suggested those seen as athletic are given more flexibility with their masculinity (Rogers

et al., 2021; Thorne, 1993; Way, 2011), level of performance (junior varsity backup and varsity star) and educational level (freshman and senior) will be assessed to evaluate if the effect on athleticism is supported. Therefore, it is hypothesized that there will be a main effect for status on perceived masculinity of the target (H5). Similar to H1 to H3, other dependent variables will also be considered.

In an effort to further evaluate the effects of sport and status on perceptions of gender nonconforming behavior, the current study will ask participants to speculate about the conversations of the target with the team captain and the target's father and assess these responses. The inclusion of topic of conversations is believed to present a unique opportunity to evaluate how these leadership roles are perceived to interact with the target, engaging in a gender nonconforming behavior, in the context of sport and status; e.g., why does the team captain want to talk to the target, what does the captain want to talk about, and does this differ as a function of whether the target is a freshman or senior and a football player or a swimmer? Thus, it is hypothesized that there will be a relationship between perceived topic of conversation with the team captain as a function of sport (H6), and status (H7). This effect will also be evaluated for perceived conversation with the target's father; e.g., in relation to the captain's response, how does the father react to the target's conversation with the team captain, and does this differ as a function of whether the target is a freshman or senior and a football player or a swimmer? Thus, it is hypothesized that there will be a relationship between perceived topic of conversation with the target's father as a function of sport (H8), and status (H9). This will also be evaluated in the context of participant conformity to masculine norms, gender role conflict, and policing of masculinity. It is of interest to consider idiosyncratic differences of the participants that may be a covariate, along with the aforementioned status and sport independent variables.

In addition to measuring how attitudes and conformity to masculinity and POM has on evaluations of gender nonconforming behavior, the current study also hopes to illuminate how these factors influence the evaluation and differentiation of gender-neutral and masculine sports. Gender-typing has been a concept discussed in the context of physical characteristics of sport, especially differentiating the characteristics of physicality of masculine sports and the aesthetic value of feminine sports (Alley & Hicks, 2005; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Koivula, 2001; Sobal & Milgrim, 2019). However, the labeling of gender-neutral sports has been found to be inconsistent, as the previous literature has suggested a tendency for these sports to be categorized as masculine (Alley & Hicks, 2005; Chalabaev et al., 2013; Koivula, 2001; Plaza et al., 2017). In addition to evaluating the perceptions of masculine and gender-neutral sports (Sobal & Milgrim, 2019) in the pilot study, the current study will also evaluate how conformity to masculine norms, gender role conflict, and POM attitudes influences perceptions of an adolescent male athlete by an effect of sport between football (masculine) and swimming (gender-neutral).

Considering the lack of research on masculinities in older age populations (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Marcell et al., 2011), along with research suggesting a decrease in masculine expectations and conformity with age (Calasanti, 2004; Gross & Blundo, 2005; Hearn, 1995; Kilmartin, 2010; Rybarczyk, 1994; Spector-Mersel, 2006; Springer & Mouzon, 2018; Strough et al., 2007; Thompson et al., 2020), the current study will also attempt to evaluate if this effect has any influence on conformity to masculine norms, gender role conflict, and policing of masculinity. Thus, it is hypothesized that there will be a negative correlation between participants' age and conformity to masculine norms (H10), gender role conflict (H11), and policing of masculinity (H12).

Before moving forward, it should be noted that gender nonconforming behavior as a representation or identity of transgendered individuals is a crucial, new area of inquiry; organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) work to impose and protect the rights of Title IX and the acceptance of those who identify as gender nonconforming and transgender (ACLU & GLSEN, 2017). However, for the purpose of the current study, gender nonconforming behavior will be focused on a heterosexual, cis-gender adolescent male target and how compliance or noncompliance with expectations for masculinity norms are perceived.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (mTurk) crowdsourcing surveying system. mTurk allows surveyors, called Requesters, to upload their surveys for Human Intelligence Tasks (HITs) to be completed by participants, called Workers. Workers are incentivized with a predetermined payment to participate, and are awarded a specified amount of payment through Amazon after successful completion. Qualifications can be placed on the survey to focus on collecting data from certain populations; the current study placed a qualification of residency in the United States.

Pilot Study

For the pilot study, the incentive was placed at \$0.50, equivalent to \$6.00/hr for the completion of a 5-minute study, significantly greater than the average mTurk compensation of \$3.13/hr (Hara et al., 2018). In addition to the qualification of residency in the United States, male-identified gender was also added. The pilot study was initially administered on mTurk

through Google Forms, but it was made apparent after the first batch that Google Forms does not collect IP addresses (the importance of this is explained further in the Discussion). To avoid further complications with this important duplicate and validity check, the remaining batches were uploaded on and administered through SurveyMonkey, a service that does collect IP addresses. An initial sample of 103 participants completed the pilot study; after reviewing IP addresses and the validity of responses (i.e., unrelated qualitative responses or less than 70% of responses completed), a total of 81 participants were retained for data analysis. The mean age was 38.25 years ($SD = 10.32$). The age of participants ranged from 18 to 69 years and was normally distributed, with skewness of .682 ($SE = .269$) and kurtosis of .195 ($SE = .532$).

Main Study

For the main study, the incentive was placed at \$0.75, equivalent to \$7.50/hr for the completion of a 10-minute study, again greater than the average mTurk compensation (Hara et al., 2018). For financial reasons, the qualification for male-identified gender was removed and included in the Informed Consent (see Appendix B) to only seek male-identifying participants. An initial sample of 735 participants completed the main study. In addition to reviewing IP addresses, participation in the pilot study, identified gender, validity of responses (i.e., unrelated qualitative responses or less than 70% of responses completed), and validity check answers, worker IDs was also assessed after the first batch; while IP addresses were collected to check for duplicate responses, mTurk does not assess which participants these addresses belong to, thus making duplicate checks for the first batch unavailable. After these omissions, there were a total of 213 participants with a mean age of 37.03 years ($SD = 10.84$). The age of participants ranged from 18 to 75 years and was non-normally distributed, with skewness of 1.06 ($SE = .169$) and kurtosis of .913 ($SE = .336$). The current sample represents 41 states, and has limited

race/ethnicity and sexual orientation diversity; participants predominantly identified as heterosexual (83.0%) and white (80.0%). The current sample was also disproportionately educated, with a majority of participants having completed a Bachelor's degree or further graduate work (68.3%). Mean ideological affiliation was 2.81 ($SD = 1.21$), suggesting a slightly moderate-to-liberal-leaning sample size. Table 5 in Appendix C includes full participant demographics, including sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, ideological affiliation, and education level.

It should be noted that participants in the pilot study were omitted from analyses for the main study if they had participated in both. This was done to avoid the possibility of duplicate participants who might be aware of the hypotheses and purpose of the study.

Design

Both studies employed a between-subjects design. The independent variables were sport (football and swimming) and status (freshman junior varsity backup and senior varsity star). The dependent variables included participants' ratings of perceived masculinity of all three actors in the vignette (the target, the team captain, and the target's father). For the main study, there were additional measures of participants' own: 1) conformity to masculine norms, 2) gender role conflict, and 3) POM attitudes (further discussed later).

Materials

Vignettes

To evaluate the effects of the independent variables, vignettes were developed to represent the 4 conditions: freshman/football, senior/football, freshman/swimming, and senior/swimming. The vignette describes Anthony, a high school athlete whose teammates recently noticed he was wearing pink sparkly nail polish to practice. His team captain first calls

over Anthony after practice to talk, and then Anthony and his father talk after the chat with the captain. In an effort to mask the gender nonconforming behavior, details about the target's hobbies and family were included (see Appendix A and/or B for the entire vignette).

Grade Point Average

A grade point average (GPA) of 2.8 (out of a 4.0 scale), or an average letter grade of B-, was chosen to represent the academic performance of the target of the vignettes. While a passing grade, this GPA was chosen to introduce another potential concern about the target (i.e., as a source of the speculated conversation between the athlete and captain, rather than the gender nonconforming behavior (i.e., painted nails)). In addition to the aforementioned finding relating to masculinity, physical appearance, and perfectionism (Adams and Govender, 2008; Metcalfe, 2018), perceiving a subpar GPA of the target will put into question whether academic weakness or nonconforming appearance will take priority in the eyes of the participant. Considering that academic success and effort has been found to be seen as a feminine quality, masculinity norms endorse an effortless approach to academics; the less you try, the cooler you are perceived by your peers. This philosophy pertaining to secondary education specifically allows for poor performance or failing in academics to be acceptable, since the effect is a result of a lack of effort rather than working hard which would be seen as feminine (Jackson & Dempster, 2009). However, while Harris (1995) found that academic success for boys is seen as feminine, the importance of financial and occupational success in masculinity makes the evaluation of GPA an area that could garner mixed results. It should also be noted that policing of masculinity was found to be higher in adolescent boys with B- to B+ grades as opposed to higher achieving A- to A+ grades (Reigeluth, 2016).

Gender Nonconforming Behavior

Nail polish for an adolescent male was selected as the gender nonconforming behavior because of its relation to the heterosexual matrix, which suggests that a male is suspected to be gay if their appearance and behavior does not conform to a masculine representation (Butler, 1990); nail polish is considered a feminine trend (Edwards, 2010), therefore suggesting that a male wearing nail polish is breaking the heterosexual matrix. An adolescent male with pink, sparkly nail polish is at an elevated risk for perceived homophobia, as Edwards (2010) found that men were conscientious of this possibility and typically painted their nails black or blue to attempt to affirm their masculinity, considering the act girly and unmanly.

Measures

Pilot Study

The first 11 questions pertain specifically to the presented vignette, evaluating for perceived masculinity of the target, the target's father, and the team captain utilizing a 7-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree"). Furthermore, these questions also assess attitudes towards a male wearing nail polish (gender nonconforming behavior) and perceptions of possible reactions from the team captain and the target's father.

The next 10 questions assessed perceived masculinity of a list of 10 sports. These sports were masculine and gender-neutral gender-typed sports found by Sobal and Milgrim (2019) to help determine the appropriate masculine and gender-neutral sports to include for the main study. Eight questions assessing perceived masculinity of fashion accessories followed to evaluate feminine fashion accessories (e.g., wearing yoga pants, wearing dangly earrings) to help determine the appropriate gender nonconforming behavior to include for the main study. These questions were evaluated utilizing a 7-point Likert scale (1 = "feminine" to 7 = "masculine").

The pilot study concluded with a question asking for comments about personal experiences of boys in school who did not conform to traditional masculine norms and how they were perceived by their peers, and a demographic question asking for participant age. The full questionnaire for the pilot study can be found in Appendix A.

Main Study

The first 11 questions were identical to the pilot study. However, after participants answered these questions, the participant read two post scripts, and were asked their reaction to the revelation that: 1) the captain told the target he has been a great help to the varsity team, and 2) the target's father turned his attention to the target's painted nails. Participants rated these additional revelations on a similar 7-point Likert scale (1 = "not at all surprising" to 7 = "extremely surprising").

The Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief. The next five questions of the main survey consisted of the Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief (MRNI-VB), which evaluates how one adheres to masculine role norms (McDermott et al., 2019). The MRNI-VB utilizes a 7-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree") to measure responses pertaining to assertiveness, toughness, and dominance and power that are central themes of masculinity. Furthermore, the MRNI-VB items produced internal consistency coefficients of $\alpha = .82, .84, .78, \text{ and } .83$ in four samples (McDermott et al., 2019).

The Gender Role Conflict Scale-Short Form. The next 16 questions evaluated how adherence to masculine norms influences 1) restricted emotionality (RE); 2) success, power, and competition (SPC); 3) restrictive affectionate behavior between men (RABBM); and 4) conflicts between work and family relations (CBWFR) (Wester et al., 2012). These 16 items were measured on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 6 = "strongly agree").

Furthermore, SPC produced an internal consistency coefficient of $\alpha = .80$, RABBM produced an internal consistency coefficient of $\alpha = .78$, and RE and CBWFR produced internal consistency coefficients of $\alpha = .77$. After 10 items of the Gender Role Conflict Scale-Short Form (GRCS-SF), a validity check was inserted to ensure that participants were paying attention to questions and responding appropriately.

Policing of Masculinity Scale. The next 46 questions evaluated how often the participant has experienced policing of masculinity by his peer groups (Agent) and perpetuated by oneself to others (Target), in addition to the emotional response to being policed (Emotional Impact) through the Agent (POMS-A), Target (POMS-T), and Emotional Impact (POMS-E) Scales (Reigeluth & Addis, 2021). The POMS-A and POMS-T were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = “never” to 5 = “daily”) that each consisted of three subscales: Verbal Policing Epithets, Physical Policing Challenges, and Masculinity Deviations. The POMS-E was also measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = “never bothers me” to 5 “always bothers me”). POMS-A and POMS-E produced internal consistency coefficients of $\alpha = .89$, and POMS-T produced an internal consistency coefficient of $\alpha = .88$. Reliability scores were also assessed for the 3 subscales: Verbal Policing Epithets ($\alpha = .83-.87$), Physical Policing Challenges ($\alpha = .80-.83$), and Masculinity Deviations ($\alpha = .71-.77$). An additional question was also asked at the end of the Policing if Masculinity Scale (POMS), asking how much of a problem name calling and challenging was for guys in general on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = “not a problem” to 5 = “a major problem”). It should be noted that while the POMS is a scale normed for 14–19-year-old males, use of the POMS for an adult population with a greater range in age was approved by the first author (C. Reigeluth, personal communication, March 5, 2021).

Demographics. The final seven items of the main survey asked participants to report their identified gender (as an additional validity check in case of non-male-identifying participants), race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, ideological affiliation (1 = “very liberal” to 5 = “very conservative”) (Kiley & Keeter, 2015), highest completed education level, and current state of residency. The questionnaire in its entirety for the main study can be found in Appendix B.

Procedure

The study was reviewed and approved by the University of Maine, Farmington’s Institutional Review Board. After receiving approval, the pilot studies were administered on mTurk from March 11-15, 2021. The main studies were administered on mTurk from March 27-April 3, 2021.

From there, the pilot study was posted and open for responses on March 11, 2021 on mTurk with an initial goal of 100 participants (25 per condition). Participants were presented with an Informed Consent form before beginning the survey, where those who did not wish to participate or were not at least 18 years of age were asked to exit the survey. For participants who responded that they did wish to participate and were 18 years of age or older ($N = 103$), the vignette and corresponding questionnaire was presented to be completed. After completing the survey, participants were debriefed and thanked for their participation, and given a code to be used for validation on mTurk as a validity check to receive their HITs. Data were then downloaded as an Excel file and transferred to SPSS, where cleaning and analysis was performed.

After data cleaning and initial analyses of the pilot study, the main study was posted and open for responses on March 27, 2021 on mTurk with an initial goal of 400 participants (100 per

condition). Participants were presented with an Informed Consent form before beginning the survey, which was the same in addition to the inclusion of participation only being open to male-identifying participants. For participants who responded that they did wish to participate, were 18 years of age or older, and were male identifying ($N = 735$), the vignette and corresponding questionnaire was presented to be completed. The debriefing and code procedure were the same as the pilot study, and data were again downloaded as an Excel file and transferred to SPSS.

Results

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to verify that the sport, status, and deviation from masculinity stimuli envisioned for the main study were properly conceptualized. Participants rated a list of sports and fashion accessories on a masculinity scale (1 = “feminine” to 7 = “masculine”) (Sobal & Milgrim, 2019); participants also read a vignette (see Appendix A) and speculated on the topic of conversation between the target and the team captain and the target’s father.

One of the rationales for the pilot study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the descriptions for the status conditions (senior vs. freshman). To evaluate this, an independent-samples t-test was conducted and found that the senior was perceived as significantly better skilled at their sport ($M = 5.71$, $SD = 1.45$) than the freshman ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 1.35$), $t(79) = -2.58$, $p = .012$. This suggests that status was properly identified, considered, and evaluated to match the intent of the two conditions, giving confidence that the descriptions could be retained for the main study.

Perceived Masculinity of the Target as a Function of Sport, and Status

A 2 (sport and status) x 2 (football/swimming and freshman/senior), or two-way, ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effect of sport and status on perceived masculinity of the target (H4 and H5). It was hypothesized that there will be a main effect for sport (H4) and status (H5) on perceived masculinity of the target. There was a significant Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances revealed in analysis ($p = .030$), suggesting that the data was non-normative. Thus, two independent-samples t-tests were conducted to evaluate for perceived masculinity of the target. For sport (H4), there was no significant effect for perceived masculinity of the target, $t(77) = .989$, $p = .326$, despite football ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.56$) having higher masculinity scores for the target than swimming ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 1.60$). A similar effect was also found for status (H5), as there was also no significant effect for perceived masculinity of the target, $t(77) = -.572$, $p = .569$, despite the senior ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 1.68$) having higher masculinity scores for the target than the freshman ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.48$).

The absence of main effects for sport (H4) and status (H5) on perceived masculinity currently rejects the hypotheses, but is not abnormal. Research has suggested that gender-neutral sports are generally rated more masculine (Alley & Hicks, 2005; Chalavaev et al., 2013; Koivula, 2001; Plaza et al., 2017). This effect could have potentially influenced the perceived masculinity of the high school swimmer, given its gender-typed categorization of gender-neutral (Sobal & Milgrim, 2019). On the other hand, status (H5) is trickier to interpret in regard to previous research. Considering that those perceived as more athletic are permitted greater flexibility with conformity to masculine norms (Rogers et al., 2021; Thorne, 1993; Way, 2011) and that POM peaks in high school (Levant et al., 1992; Pascoe, 2005; Marcel et al., 2011; Reigeluth, 2016; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016; Thorne, 1993; Way, 2011), it was hypothesized that

there would be a statistically significant difference in perceived masculinity between a freshman junior varsity backup and a senior varsity star. While H4 and H5 were not supported in the pilot study, further analysis will be evaluated in the main study with a larger sample size.

Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Team Captain and Father as a Function of Sport, and Status

The vignette was utilized to evaluate how perceived topic of conversation with the team captain and the target's father might be influenced by sport and status. These qualitative responses were coded as follows.

Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Team Captain. Qualitative responses for perceived topic of discussion with the team captain were coded into three categories: POM mentions (e.g., comments or questions about the target's sexuality and appearance); other mentions (e.g., grades and performance); and Both POM and other (e.g., commenting about nail polish and performance in the same response). There were a total of 54 POM comments, 23 other comments, and 4 Both POM and other comments (see Table 1).

Chi-squares were evaluated for sport and status on perceived topic of conversation with the captain. It was hypothesized that there will be a relationship between perceived topic of conversation with the team captain as a function of sport (H6) and status (H7). There was no support for H6 and H7, as there was no relation found between perceived topic of conversation with the captain and sport (H6), $\chi^2(2, N = 81) = .031, p = .985$, and status (H7), $\chi^2(2, N = 81) = 2.15, p = .341$.

Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Father. Qualitative responses for perceived reaction by the target's father were coded into five categories: supportive (i.e., father was anticipated to be supportive and/or against what was said by the captain); unsupportive (i.e.,

Table 1

Thematic Structure and Percentage of Participants' Responses: Conversation with the Captain (Pilot)

Theme	Subtheme	% of Sample
POM	Nail polish Sexuality Appearance Not fitting in Not being accepted on the team	66.7 (N = 54)
Other	Grades/academics Sport Performance Life problems Video games	28.4 (N = 23)
Both POM and other	POM (e.g., nail polish) and other (e.g., performance) in the same response	4.9 (N = 4)

father was anticipated to be unsupportive and/or in support of what was said by the captain, questioning the target about their gender nonconforming behavior); neutral/equivocating (i.e., the anticipated reaction of the target's father was dependent on further context of the father, or lack of interest (doesn't care or would not do anything) that did not provide further context); miscellaneous (i.e., anticipated reaction was an internal emotional expression (surprised, shocked), or asking a question to add to the conversation without providing further context of reaction (what did the captain say?)), and ambiguous (i.e., no anticipated reaction or response given, or was unrelated to the scenario (very good)). For the perceived topic of conversation with the father, there were 37 supportive responses, 19 unsupportive responses, 12 neutral/equivocating responses, 11 miscellaneous responses, and 2 ambiguous responses (see Table 2).

Table 2

Thematic Structure and Percentage of Participants' Responses: Conversation with the Father (Pilot)

Theme	Subtheme	% of Sample
Supportive	Father was anticipated to be supportive Father was against what was said by the captain	45.7 ($N = 37$)
Unsupportive	Father was anticipated to be unsupportive Father was in support of what was said by the captain Questioning the target about their nail polish	23.5 ($N = 19$)
Neutral/equivocating	Anticipated reaction of the father was dependent on further context Father was anticipated to not care or would not do anything	14.8 ($N = 12$)
Miscellaneous	An internal emotional response that did not provide further context (surprised, shocked) Asking a question to add to the conversation without further context	13.6 ($N = 11$)
Ambiguous	No anticipated reaction/response given Response was unrelated to the scenario	2.5 ($N = 2$)

Similarly, it was hypothesized that there will be a relationship between perceived conversation with the target's father as a function of sport (H8) and status (H9). There was a significant relationship between sport and perceived topic of conversation with the father (H8), $\chi^2(2, N = 68) = 7.08, p = .029$, but status did not exert an impact on perceived topic of conversation with the father (H9), $\chi^2(2, N = 68) = 2.62, p = .270$. Therefore, only H8 was supported.

While we did not have any expectations or hypotheses, during data analysis we examined if perceived topic of conversation had any influence on perceived masculinity of the target. To

analyze the effects of perceived topic of conversation with the team captain and the target's father, a two-way ANOVA was conducted on perceived masculinity of the target. However, there were no effects found for perceived topic of conversation with the captain ($F(2, 57) = 2.49$, $p = .092$, $\eta^2 = .080$) and the father ($F(2, 57) = 1.46$, $p = .241$, $\eta^2 = .049$).

Sport

Sport was also included in the pilot study to evaluate perceived masculinity of the two sports proposed for the main study, football (masculine) and swimming (gender-neutral sports), which were presented along with Sobal and Milgram's (2019) previously gender-typed masculine and gender-neutral sports. As depicted in Table 3, football ($M = 6.25$, $SD = 1.16$) was rated the most masculine sport while swimming ($M = 3.77$, $SD = .965$) was rated the least masculine. Therefore, football and swimming will be retained for the sport conditions in the main study.

Fashion Accessories

In an effort to evaluate the perceptions of various gender nonconforming behaviors, pilot study participants also rated traditionally feminine fashion accessories. This served to 1) confirm the validity of the initially chosen gender nonconforming behavior, pink nail polish, and 2) evaluate other behaviors that could potentially be more effective for the main study. As depicted in Table 4, wearing a skirt ($M = 1.90$, $SD = 1.35$) was rated the most feminine fashion accessory while carrying a satchel ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.23$) was rated the least feminine. Wearing pink nail polish ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 1.39$), the initial choice for the gender nonconforming behavior, was rated the third-most feminine fashion accessory. However, pink nail polish will be retained as the gender nonconforming behavior in the main study for 3 reasons: 1) to avoid a ceiling effect and attempt to disguise the hypothesis of the current study that could occur with wearing a skirt ($M =$

Table 3
Masculinity Scores of Sports

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Football	6.25	1.16
Rugby	6.00	1.25
Wrestling	5.78	1.13
Ice hockey	5.76	1.31
Baseball	5.32	1.08
Basketball	5.04	1.29
Soccer	4.35	1.12
Track	4.28	.965
Tennis	3.84	1.04
Swimming	3.77	.965

Note: Scores for sports were assessed on a 1 “feminine” to 7 “masculine” Likert scale. Lower numbers indicate perceived femininity, and higher numbers indicate perceived masculinity.

Table 4
Femininity Scores of Fashion Accessories

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Wearing a skirt	1.90	1.35
Wearing dangly earrings	2.11	1.37
Wearing pink nail polish	2.16	1.39
Wearing yoga pants/leggings	2.25	1.41
Wearing eye liner	2.38	1.43
Wearing black nail polish	3.05	1.26
Wearing stud earrings	3.40	1.38
Carrying a satchel	3.53	1.23

Note: Scores for fashion accessories were assessed on a 1 “feminine” to 7 “masculine” Likert scale. Lower numbers indicate perceived femininity, and higher numbers indicate perceived masculinity.

1.90, $SD = 1.35$); 2) to relate to nail polish's current place in popular culture, as male celebrities have taken to wearing nail polish (Valenti, 2020); and 3) to further evaluate the perception of men wearing nail polish, as previously examined by Edwards (2010).

Main Study

Considering the retainment of all variables assessed in the pilot study, the main study was conducted as originally planned. To first assess for continued reliability of responses, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the status conditions (freshman junior varsity backup vs. senior varsity star) based on whether participants were able to differentiate the target's perceived skill at sport. A significant difference emerged: the senior was perceived as having greater skill at their sport ($M = 5.64$, $SD = 1.15$) than the freshman ($M = 5.08$, $SD = 1.09$), $t(210) = -3.65$, $p < .001$. This was in keeping with a similar significant difference in the pilot study.

Perceived Masculinity of the Target, Conformity to Masculine Norms, Gender Role Conflict, and Policing of Masculinity Attitudes

It was hypothesized that there would be a negative correlation between perceived masculinity of the target and the participants' own conformity to masculine norms (Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief) (H1), gender role conflict (Gender Role Conflict Scale-Short Form) (H2), and POM attitudes (Policing of Masculinity Scale) (H3). To assess for the potential effects of perceived masculinity of the target and conformity to masculine norms (H1), a Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was first conducted on the Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief (MRNI-VB) (McDermott et al., 2019). Prior to analysis, reliability was evaluated for the MRNI-VB items and produced a high internal consistency coefficient of $\alpha = .90$. The results did

not confirm H1, as there was no correlation found between perceived masculinity of the target and the MRNI-VB, $r(211) = .067, p = .334$.

To assess for a relationship between gender role conflict and perceived masculinity of the target (H2), a Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was conducted on the four scales of the Gender Role Conflict Scale-Short Form (GRCS-SF): restricted emotionality (RE); success, power, and competition (SPC); restrictive affectionate behavior between men (RABBM); and conflicts between work and family relations (CBWFR) (Wester et al., 2012). Prior to analysis, reliability was evaluated for the GRCS-SF scales and produced the following internal consistency coefficients: RE of $\alpha = .90$, CBWFR of $\alpha = .89$, RABBM of $\alpha = .88$, and SPC of $\alpha = .84$. The results did not confirm H2: no correlations emerged between perceived masculinity of the target and RE ($r(209) = -.071, p = .305$), SPC ($r(206) = .045, p = .519$), RABBM ($r(206) = -.033, p = .637$), and CBWFR ($r(208) = .083, p = .231$).

A Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was also conducted to evaluate the relationship between perceived masculinity of the target and POM attitudes (H3) utilizing the Policing of Masculinity Scale (POMS), which included the POM Target (POMS-T), POM Agent, (POMS-A), and POM Emotional Impact (POMS-E) scales (Reigeluth & Addis, 2021). Reliability was evaluated for the POMS scales and produced internal consistency coefficients of $\alpha = .97$ for POMS-T, POMS-A, and POMS-E. While there were correlations for all three scales between perceived masculinity of the target and 1) POMS-T, $r(203) = .330, p < .001$, 2) POMS-A, $r(207) = .315, p < .001$, and 3) POMS-E, $r(198) = .179, p < .001$ (see Table 6), these were all positive; this suggests that perceived masculinity of the target increased with greater POMS-T, POMS-A, and POMS-E. Therefore, these correlations yielded results opposite of H3, making the hypothesis not supported.

Table 6

Correlations between Perceived Masculinity of the Target and Participants' MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, and POMS Scores

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. PM-T	4.41	1.54									
2. MRNI-VB	19.05	8.16	.07								
3. RE	2.38	1.39	-.07	.33**							
4. SPC	2.73	1.21	.05	.60**	.39**						
5. RABBM	2.30	1.42	-.03	.70**	.56**	.48**					
6. CBWFR	2.31	1.29	.08	.31**	.61**	.39**	.45**				
7. POMS-T	29.01	15.21	.33**	.48**	.38**	.40**	.40**	.47**			
8. POMS-A	27.32	14.94	.32**	.50**	.33**	.37**	.38**	.45**	.95**		
9. POMS-E	32.01	16.42	.18*	.16*	.26**	.16*	.24**	.42**	.63**	.63**	

Note: *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. PM-T = Perceived masculinity of target, MRNI-VB = Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief, RE = Restricted emotionality, SPC = Success, power, and competition, RABBM = Restrictive affectionate behavior between men, CBWFR = Conflicts between work and family relations, POMS-T = POM Target Scale, POMS-A = POM Agent Scale, POMS-E = POM Emotional Impact Scale. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

It should be noted that positive correlations with perceived masculinity of the target also pertained to all three subscales (Masculinity Deviations, Verbal Policing, and Physical Policing) for each POMS scale. This was seen for POMS-T (Masculinity Deviations (POMS-T-M): $r(208) = .285, p < .001$; Verbal Policing (POMS-T-V): $r(209) = .314, p < .001$; and Physical Policing (POMS-T-P): $r(207) = .362, p < .001$), POMS-A (Masculinity Deviations (POMS-A-M): $r(209) = .287, p < .001$; Verbal Policing (POMS-A-V): $r(209) = .310, p < .001$; and Physical Policing (POMS-A-P): $r(211) = .314, p < .001$), and POMS-E (Masculinity Deviations (POMS-E-M): $r(204) = .160, p = .021$; Verbal Policing (POMS-E-V): $r(208) = .170, p = .014$; and Physical Policing (POMS-E-P): $r(207) = .201, p = .004$). This is further supported by other evaluations of the participants' POMS-T, POMS-A, and POMS-E scores related to perceived masculinity.

Perceived belief that the target was heterosexual/straight was also positively correlated with POMS-T ($r(203) = .247, p < .001$), POMS-A ($r(207) = .261, p < .001$), and POMS-E ($r(198) = .194, p = .006$).

Perceived Masculinity of the Target as a Function of Sport, and Status

To evaluate the effect of sport and status on perceived masculinity of the target (H4 and H5), a two-way ANCOVA was conducted to control for age, conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB), gender role conflict (GRCS-SF), and POM attitudes (POMS). It was hypothesized that there will be a main effect for sport (H4) and status (H5) on perceived masculinity of the target. With the covariates, there was no statistically significant interaction between sport and status, $F(1, 163) = .009, p = .923, \eta^2 < .001$. However, there was a main effect for perceived masculinity of the target and the POM Target Scale (POMS-T), $F(1, 163) = 8.39, p = .004, \eta^2 = .049$. Sport ($F(1, 163) = 3.61, p = .059, \eta^2 = .022$) and status ($F(1, 163) = 3.43, p = .066, \eta^2 = .021$) were both close to being significant, but nonetheless yield results that do not confirm H4 and H5 (see Table 7).

Perceived masculinity of the target was further evaluated outside of the designated hypotheses of the current study. A Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was conducted between perceived masculinity of the target (PM-T) and perceived skill at the target's sport (PSS), perceived masculinity of the target's father (PM-F), perceived masculinity of the team captain (PM-C), the belief that the target should take their nail polish off before practice (NPO), perceived heterosexuality of the target (PH-T), the belief that the participants' father would never allow them to wear nail polish (FNPNP), acceptability for men to wear nail polish (ACC), and perceived femininity of the target (PF-T). As seen in Table 8, there were positive correlations between perceived masculinity of the target and perceived skill at the target's sport (PSS)

Table 7

Two-Way Analysis of Covariance for Perceived Masculinity of the Target by Sport and Status with Age, MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, and POMS as Covariates

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Age	2.12	1	2.12	1.05	.307	.006
MRNI-VB	.434	1	.434	.216	.643	.001
RE	4.44	1	4.44	2.20	.140	.013
SPC	1.08	1	1.08	.536	.465	.003
RABBM	.675	1	.675	.335	.563	.002
CBWFR	.991	1	.991	.492	.484	.003
POMS-T	16.90	1	16.90	8.39	.004**	.049
POMS-A	3.44	1	3.44	1.71	.193	.010
POMS-E	.117	1	.117	.058	.810	.000
Sport	7.28	1	7.28	3.61	.059	.022
Status	6.91	1	6.91	3.43	.066	.021
Sport * Status	.019	1	.019	.009	.923	.000
Error	328.22	163	2.01			

Note: $R^2 = .143$, adj. $R^2 = .126$. MRNI-VB = Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief, RE = Restricted emotionality, SPC = Success, power, and competition, RABBM = Restrictive affectionate behavior between men, CBWFR = Conflicts between work and family relations, POMS-T = POM Target Scale, POMS-A = POM Agent Scale, POMS-E = POM Emotional Impact Scale. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

($r(210) = .301, p < .001$), perceived masculinity of the target's father (PM-F) ($r(209) = .391, p < .001$), perceived heterosexuality of the target (PH-T) ($r(211) = .588, p < .001$), and acceptability for men to wear nail polish (ACC) ($r(211) = .322, p < .001$); there was also a negative correlation for perceived femininity of the target (PF-T) ($r(209) = -.466, p < .001$).

Table 8

Correlations between Perceived Masculinity of the Target and Other Dependent Variables (PSS, PM-F, PM-C, NPO, PH-T, FNNP, ACC, and PF-T)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. PM-T	4.41	1.54									
2. PSS	5.32	1.15	.30**								
3. PM-F	4.98	1.27	.39**	.34**							
4. PM-C	5.55	1.24	-.01	.16*	.28**						
5. NPO	3.62	2.11	.05	-.01	.14*	.14*					
6. PH-T	4.01	1.40	.59**	.28**	.33**	-.06	-.04				
7. FNNP	4.65	2.00	-.09	-.05	.16*	.21**	.45**	-.09			
8. ACC	4.52	1.96	.32**	.20**	.07	-.04	-.55**	.26**	-.44**		
9. PF-T	4.40	1.55	-.46**	-.15*	-.13	.06	.27**	-.49**	.15*	-.19**	

Note: *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. PM-T = Perceived masculinity of the target, PSS = Perceived skill at target's sport, PM-F = Perceived masculinity of the target's father, PM-C = Perceived masculinity of the team captain, NPO = Belief that the target should take their nail polish off before practice, PH-T = Perceived heterosexuality of the target, FNNP = Belief that the participants' father would never allow them to wear nail polish, ACC = Acceptability for men to wear nail polish, PF-T = Perceived femininity of the target. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

While not a hypothesis, there was also an interest for the main study to evaluate how sport and status influenced other dependent variables, specifically 1) belief that the target should take their nail polish off before practice, 2) acceptability for men to wear nail polish, and 3) perceived femininity of the target. These were of interest to see how these findings could coincide or contradict perceived masculinity of the target with sport (H4) and status (H5). First, a two-way ANCOVA was conducted for belief that the target should take their nail polish off before practice, controlling for age, conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB), gender role conflict (GRCS-SF), and POM attitudes (POMS). While there was no statistically significant interaction between sport and status ($F(1, 163) = .773, p = .381, \eta^2 = .005$), there were main effects found for belief that the target should take their nail polish off before practice and age

($F(1, 163) = 6.95, p = .009, \eta^2 = .041$), conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB) ($F(1, 163) = 25.19, p < .001, \eta^2 = .143$), restrictive affectionate behavior between men (RABBM) ($F(1, 163) = 6.24, p = .013, \eta^2 = .037$), and status ($F(1, 163) = 15.84, p < .001, \eta^2 = .089$) (see Table 9).

Table 9

Two-Way Analysis of Covariance for Belief that the Target Should Take Their Nail Polish Off Before Practice by Sport and Status with Age, MNRI-VB, GRCS-SF, and POMS as Covariates

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Age	14.87	1	14.87	6.95	.009**	.041
MRNI-VB	53.94	1	53.94	25.19	.000**	.134
RE	.389	1	.389	.182	.671	.001
SPC	1.66	1	1.66	.777	.379	.005
RABBM	13.37	1	13.37	6.24	.013*	.037
CBWFR	.590	1	.590	.276	.600	.002
POMS-T	.035	1	.035	.016	.898	.000
POMS-A	.503	1	.503	.235	.629	.001
POMS-E	.019	1	.019	.009	.925	.000
Sport	.212	1	.212	.099	.753	.001
Status	33.92	1	33.92	15.84	.000**	.089
Sport * Status	1.66	1	1.66	.773	.381	.005
Error	349.02	163	2.14			

Note: $R^2 = .541$, adj. $R^2 = .507$. MRNI-VB = Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief, RE = Restricted emotionality, SPC = Success, power, and competition, RABBM = Restrictive affectionate behavior between men, CBWFR = Conflicts between work and family relations, POMS-T = POM Target Scale, POMS-A = POM Agent Scale, POMS-E = POM Emotional Impact Scale. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Controlling for the same covariates, a two-way ANCOVA was also conducted for acceptability for men to wear nail polish. Here, there was no statistically significant interaction between sport and status ($F(1, 163) = .754, p = .387, \eta^2 = .005$), but there were main effects

found for acceptability for men to wear nail polish and conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB) ($F(1, 163) = 7.68, p = .006, \eta^2 = .045$) and RABBM ($F(1, 163) = 18.39, p < .001, \eta^2 = .101$).

Lastly, a two-way ANCOVA was conducted for perceived femininity of the target while controlling for the same covariates as above. There was no statistically significant interaction between sport and status ($F(1, 162) = .019, p = .890, \eta^2 < .001$), and only one main effect for status ($F(1, 162) = 5.21, p = .024, \eta^2 = .031$).

Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Team Captain and Father as a Function of Sport, and Status

Similar to the pilot study, qualitative responses for perceived topics were coded for H6 to H9. Before evaluating H6 to H9, a chi-square was conducted to test for a relationship between perceived topic of conversation with the team captain and father. However, there was no relation found, $\chi^2(4, N = 145) = 7.89, p = .096$.

Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Team Captain. For the three categories of perceived topic of conversation with the captain, there were 159 POM mentions, a large majority compared to 42 other mentions and 11 Both POM and other mentions (see Table 10). There was also 1 Don't know mention (the participant responded as not knowing what the conversation would be about) that was not included in Table 8 but is part of the percentage of the sample. Furthermore, out of all 213 participants, nail polish was a theme of conversation directly mentioned in 151 (70.9%) of responses.

Chi-squares were conducted to evaluate the effect of sport and status on perceived topic of conversation with the team captain (H6 and H7). It was hypothesized that there will be a relationship between perceived topic of conversation with the team captain as a function of sport (H6) and status (H7). A chi-square was conducted to evaluate the relation between sport and

Table 10

Thematic Structure and Percentage of Participants' Responses: Conversation with the Captain (Main)

Theme	Subtheme	% of Sample
POM	Nail polish Sexuality Appearance Not fitting in Not being accepted on the team	74.6 ($N = 159$)
Other	Grades/academics Sport Performance Life problems Video games	19.7 ($N = 42$)
Both POM and other	POM (e.g., nail polish) and other (e.g., performance) in the same response	5.2 ($N = 11$)

Note: $N = 213$. There was 1 (<1%) response not included in the table that was Don't know. The % of Sample includes this response but was not included in further analysis.

perceived topic of conversation with the captain (H6), but no significance emerged: $\chi^2(2, N = 212) = 3.93, p = .140$. However, a chi-square for status and perceived topic of conversation with the captain (H7) yielded support for the hypothesis, as a significant relationship was found between these two variables, $\chi^2(2, N = 212) = 7.58, p = .023$ (see Table 11). This was different

Table 11

Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Captain by Status

Perceived Topic of Conversation	Status	
	Freshman	Senior
POM	92	67
Other	19	23
Both POM and Other	10	1

$\chi^2(2, N = 212) = 7.58, p = .023$

from the pilot study, which found no significant relations for H6 and H7, which could have been influenced by a smaller sample size.

Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Father. For the five categories of perceived topic of conversation with the father, there were 77 supportive responses, 53 miscellaneous responses, 35 neutral/equivocating responses, 34 unsupportive responses, and 14 ambiguous responses (see Table 12). For analysis, supportive, unsupportive, and neutral/equivocal

Table 12

Thematic Structure and Percentage of Participants' Responses: Conversation with the Father (Main)

Theme	Subtheme	% of Sample
Supportive	Father was anticipated to be supportive Father was against what was said by the captain	36.2 ($N = 77$)
Unsupportive	Father was anticipated to be unsupportive Father was in support of what was said by the captain Questioning the target about their nail polish	16.0 ($N = 34$)
Neutral/equivocating	Anticipated reaction of the father was dependent on further context Father was anticipated to not care or would not do anything	16.4 ($N = 35$)
Miscellaneous	An internal emotional response that did not provide further context (surprised, shocked) Asking a question to add to the conversation without further context	24.9 ($N = 53$)
Ambiguous	No anticipated reaction/response given Response was unrelated to the scenario	6.6 ($N = 14$)

responses will be evaluated, as miscellaneous and ambiguous could potentially raise validity concerns with analyses. Out of the three values to be obtained for future analyses, supportive

(52.7%) was a majority of the responses compared to neutral/equivocating (24.0%) and unsupportive (23.3%) responses.

Similarly, it was hypothesized that there will be a relationship between perceived topic of conversation with the target's father as a function of sport (H8) and status (H9). Chi-squares revealed no relationships between sport and perceived topic of conversation with the father, $\chi^2(2, N = 213) = .824, p = .662$, and between status and perceived topic of conversation with the father, $\chi^2(2, N = 146) = .822, p = .663$. Therefore, both H8 and H9 were not supported; curiously, this is different from H8 in the pilot study, which found a significant relation.

Participant Age, Conformity to Masculine Norms, Gender Role Conflict, and Policing of Masculinity Attitudes

Pearson's Correlation Coefficients were conducted to evaluate the effect of age on the three scales utilized. It was hypothesized that there will be a negative correlation between participants' age and conformity to masculine norms (H10), gender role conflict (H11), and POM attitudes (H12). The results did not yield support for H10, as there was no correlation between participants' age and conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB), $r(202) = -.027, p = .701$. The same lack of support was found for H11, as there were no correlations between participants' age and gender role conflict (GRCS-SF), which includes: restricted emotionality (RE), $r(204) = -.039, p = .580$; success, power, and competition (SPC), $r(202) = -.091, p = .197$; restrictive affectionate behavior between men (RABBM), $r(201) = .056, p = .426$; and conflicts between work and family relations (CBWFR), $r(203) = -.042, p = .546$. However, results yielded partial support for POM attitudes (H12), as there was a negative correlation found between participants' age and the POM Target Scale (POMS-T), $r(199) = -.184, p = .009$ (see Table 13).

Table 13*Correlations between Participants' Age and MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, and POMS Scores*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age	37.03	10.84									
2. MRNI-VB	19.05	8.16	-.03								
3. RE	2.38	1.39	-.04	.33**							
4. SPC	2.73	1.21	-.09	.60**	.39**						
5. RABBM	2.30	1.42	.06	.70**	.56**	.50**					
6. CBWFR	2.31	1.29	-.04	.31**	.61**	.39**	.45**				
7. POMS-T	29.01	15.21	-.18**	.48**	.38**	.40**	.40**	.47**			
8. POMS-A	27.32	14.94	-.12	.50**	.33**	.37**	.38**	.45**	.95**		
9. POMS-E	32.01	16.42	-.13	.16*	.26**	.16*	.24**	.42**	.63**	.63**	

Note: *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. MRNI-VB = Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief, RE = Restricted emotionality, SPC = Success, power, and competition, RABBM = Restrictive affectionate behavior between men, CBWFR = Conflicts between work and family relations, POMS-T = POM Target Scale, POMS-A = POM Agent Scale, POMS-E = POM Emotional Impact Scale. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Additionally, there were negative correlations with POMS subscales: between participants' age and Masculinity Deviations (for POMS-T ($r(204) = -.186, p = .007$) and the POM Emotional Impact Scale (POMS-E-M) ($r(201) = -.176, p = .012$), and Physical Policing (for POMS-T ($r(202) = -.199, p = .004$) and the POM Agent Scale (POMS-A) ($r(206) = -.145, p = .036$).

The last question of the POMS asks participants to rate how much of a problem policing is for guys through name calling and challenging. While the current study did not have any expectations or hypotheses, during data analysis it was examined if this perceived problem with policing question was influenced by participants' age, conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB), gender role conflict (GRCS-SF), and POM attitudes (POMS). To evaluate this, a Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was conducted and found positive correlations with CBWFR ($r(206) =$

.279, $p < .001$), POMS-T ($r(201) = .351, p < .001$), POMS-A ($r(205) = .287, p < .001$), and POMS-E ($r(201) = .507, p < .001$). Perceived problem with policing was also negatively correlated with participants' age ($r(204) = -.203, p = .003$) and MRNI-VB ($r(205) = -.147, p = .035$) (see Table 14).

Table 14

Correlations between Problem with Policing and Participants' Age, MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, and POMS Scores

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Problem	2.88	1.09										
2. Age	37.03	10.84	-.20**									
3. MRNI-VB	19.05	8.16	-.15*	-.03								
4. RE	2.38	1.39	.07	-.04	.33**							
5. SPC	2.73	1.21	-.01	-.09	.60**	.39**						
6. RABBM	2.30	1.42	-.06	.06	.70**	.56**	.50**					
7. CBWFR	2.31	1.29	.28**	-.04	.31**	.61**	.39**	.45**				
8. POMS-T	29.01	15.21	.35**	-.18**	.48**	.38**	.40**	.40**	.47**			
9. POMS-A	27.32	14.94	.29**	-.12	.50**	.33**	.37**	.38**	.45**	.95**		
10. POMS-E	32.01	16.42	.51**	-.13	.16*	.26**	.16*	.24**	.42**	.63**	.63**	

Note: *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. MRNI-VB = Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief, RE = Restricted emotionality, SPC = Success, power, and competition, RABBM = Restrictive affectionate behavior between men, CBWFR = Conflicts between work and family relations, POMS-T = POM Target Scale, POMS-A = POM Agent Scale, POMS-E = POM Emotional Impact Scale. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Miscellaneous Findings

Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Team Captain and Father as a Function of

Participant Age, Conformity to Masculine Norms, Gender Role Conflict, and Policing of

Masculinity Attitudes

While not a hypothesis, an interest arose about potential main effects between perceived topic of conversation with the captain and father, and age, conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB), gender role conflict (GRCS-SF), and POM attitudes. To evaluate these, multiple two-way ANOCAs were conducted, first starting with MRNI-VB.

Conformity to Masculine Norms (MRNI-VB). A two-way ANCOVA was conducted for the perceived topic of conversation with the team captain and father and MRNI-VB, controlling for participants' age, GRCS-SF, and POMS scores. With these variables controlled for, there was no statistically significant interaction between perceived topic of conversation with the captain and the father, $F(4, 106) = .871, p = .484, \eta^2 = .032$. However, there were main effects found for success, power, and competition (SPC) ($F(1, 106) = 18.62, p < .001, \eta^2 = .149$) and restrictive affectionate behavior between men (RABBM) ($F(1, 106) = 81.02, p < .001, \eta^2 = .433$) from the GRCS-SF, as well as for the POM Agent Scale (POMS-A) ($F(1, 106) = 8.89, p = .004, \eta^2 = .077$) and the POM Emotional Impact Scale (POMS-E) ($F(1, 106) = 5.90, p = .017, \eta^2 = .053$) (see Table 15).

Gender Role Conflict (GRCS-SF). Two-way ANCOVAs were also conducted to evaluate the effects perceived topic of conversation with the team captain and father on each of the GRCS-SF subscales. First, restrictive emotionality (RE) was evaluated while controlling for participants' age, conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB), SPC, RABBM, CBWFR, and the POM scales scores. With these covariates, there was no statistically significant interaction between perceived topic of conversation with the captain and father, $F(4, 106) = .370, p = .829, \eta^2 = .014$. However, there were main effects found for RABBM ($F(1, 106) = 19.45, p < .001, \eta^2 = .155$) and CBWFR ($F(1, 106) = 29.67, p < .001, \eta^2 = .219$) from the GRCS-SF (see Table 16).

Table 15

Two-Way Analysis of Covariance for Conformity to Masculine Norms (MRNI-VB) by Perceived Topic of Conversation with Captain and Father with Age, GRCS-SF, and POMS as Covariates

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Age	73.93	1	73.93	3.04	.084	.028
RE	48.10	1	48.10	1.98	.162	.018
SPC	452.79	1	452.79	18.62	.000**	.149
RABBM	1969.80	1	1969.80	81.02	.000**	.433
CBWFR	39.95	1	39.95	1.64	.203	.015
POMS-T	60.00	1	60.00	2.47	.119	.023
POMS-A	216.21	1	216.21	8.89	.004**	.077
POMS-E	143.46	1	143.46	5.90	.017*	.053
Captain	3.77	2	1.88	.077	.926	.001
Father	9.60	2	4.80	.197	.821	.004
Captain * Father	84.74	4	21.19	.871	.484	.032
Error	2577.22	106	24.31			

Note: $R^2 = .685$, adj. $R^2 = .637$. RE = Restricted emotionality, SPC = Success, power, and competition, RABBM = Restrictive affectionate behavior between men, CBWFR = Conflicts between work and family relations, POMS-T = POM Target Scale, POMS-A = POM Agent Scale, POMS-E = POM Emotional Impact Scale. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Success, power, and competition (SPC), another subscale of the GRCS-SF, was also conducted in a two-way ANCOVA for perceived topic of conversation with the team captain and the father. Participants' age, MRNI-VB, RE, RABBM, CBWFR, and the POM scales scores were all covariates. With these variables controlled, there was no statistically significant interaction between perceived topic of conversation with the captain and father, $F(4, 106) = .440$, $p = .780$, $\eta^2 = .016$. There was one main effect found, for MRNI-VB, $F(1, 106) = 18.62$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .149$.

Table 16

Two-Way Analysis of Covariance for Restricted Emotionality (from the GRCS-SF) by Perceived Topic of Conversation with Captain and Father with Age, MRNI-VB, SPC, RABBM, CBWFR, and POMS as Covariates

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Age	3.53	1	3.53	3.10	.081	.028
MRNI-VB	2.26	1	2.26	1.98	.162	.018
SPC	1.60	1	1.60	1.40	.239	.013
RABBM	22.18	1	22.18	19.45	.000**	.155
CBWFR	33.83	1	33.83	29.67	.000**	.219
POMS-T	.454	1	.454	.398	.530	.004
POMS-A	1.10	1	1.10	.960	.329	.009
POMS-E	3.62	1	3.62	3.17	.078	.029
Captain	3.01	2	1.51	1.32	.271	.024
Father	.376	2	.188	.165	.848	.003
Captain * Father	1.69	4	.422	.370	.829	.014
Error	120.86	106	1.14			

Note: $R^2 = .499$, adj. $R^2 = .423$. MRNI-VB = Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief, SPC = Success, power, and competition, RABBM = Restrictive affectionate behavior between men, CBWFR = Conflicts between work and family relations, POMS-T = POM Target Scale, POMS-A = POM Agent Scale, POMS-E = POM Emotional Impact Scale. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Restrictive affectionate behavior between men (RABBM) was another subscale of the GRCS-SF conducted in a two-way ANCOVA for perceived topic of conversation with the team captain and the father, controlling for participants' age, MRNI-VB, RE, SPC, CBWFR, and the POM scales scores. There was no statistically significant interaction between perceived conversation with the captain and father, $F(4, 106) = .923$, $p = .454$, $\eta^2 = .034$. Yet, there were main effects for participants' age ($F(1, 106) = 7.96$, $p = .006$, $\eta^2 = .070$), MRNI-VB ($F(1, 106) =$

81.02, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .433$), RE ($F(1, 106) = 19.45$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .155$), POMS-A ($F(1, 106) = 5.42$, $p = .022$, $\eta^2 = .049$), and POMS-E ($F(1, 106) = 6.41$, $p = .013$, $\eta^2 = .057$) found (see Table 17).

Table 17

Two-Way Analysis of Covariance for Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men (from the GRCS-SF) by Perceived Topic of Conversation with Captain and Father with Age, MRNI-VB, RE, SPC, CBWFR, and POMS as Covariates

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Age	6.08	1	6.08	7.96	.006**	.070
MRNI-VB	61.92	1	61.92	81.02	.000**	.433
RE	14.86	1	14.86	19.45	.000**	.155
SPC	.307	1	.307	.402	.528	.004
CBWFR	.024	1	.024	.032	.858	.000
POMS-T	2.14	1	2.14	2.80	.097	.026
POMS-A	4.14	1	4.14	5.42	.022*	.049
POMS-E	4.90	1	4.90	6.41	.013*	.057
Captain	.838	2	.419	.548	.580	.010
Father	.018	2	.009	.012	.988	.000
Captain * Father	2.82	4	.705	.923	.454	.034
Error	81.01	106	.764			

Note: $R^2 = .653$, adj. $R^2 = .601$. MRNI-VB = Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief, RE = Restrictive emotionality, SPC = Success, power, and competition, CBWFR = Conflicts between work and family relations, POMS-T = POM Target Scale, POMS-A = POM Agent Scale, POMS-E = POM Emotional Impact Scale. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

The last subscale of the GRCS-SF, conflicts between work and family relations (CBWFR), was also conducted in a two-way ANCOVA for perceived topic of conversation with the team captain and the father, controlling for participants' age, MRNI-VB, RE, SPC, RABBM, and the POM scales scores. There was no statistically significant interaction between perceived

conversation with the captain and father, $F(4, 106) = .293, p = .882, \eta^2 = .011$. There was one main effect found for RE ($F(1, 106) = 29.67, p < .001, \eta^2 = .219$), although POMS-E was notably almost significant ($F(1, 106) = 3.87, p = .052, \eta^2 = .035$).

Policing of Masculinity Attitudes (POMS). The POMS scales were also considered in two-way ANCOVAs. Perceived topic of conversation with the captain and father were evaluated with the POM Target Scale (POMS-T), controlling for participants' age, conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB), gender role conflict (GRCS-SF), POMS-A, and POMS-E scores. There was no statistically significant interaction between perceived topic of conversation with the captain and father, $F(4, 106) = .969, p = .428, \eta^2 = .035$. There were main effects found for participants' age ($F(1, 106) = 6.39, p = .013, \eta^2 = .057$) and POMS-A ($F(1, 106) = 332.21, p < .001, \eta^2 = .758$), with significance close for perceived topic of conversation with the captain ($F(2, 106) = 2.74, p = .069, \eta^2 = .049$).

The POM Agent Scale (POMS-A) was also conducted in a two-way ANCOVA for perceived topic of conversation with the captain and father while controlling for participants' age, MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, POMS-T, and POMS-E scores. Once again, there was no statistically significant interaction found between perceived topic of conversation with the captain and father, $F(4, 106) = .833, p = .507, \eta^2 = .030$. However, there were main effects between POMS-A and participants' age ($F(1, 106) = 7.77, p = .006, \eta^2 = .068$), MRNI-VB ($F(1, 106) = 8.89, p = .004, \eta^2 = .077$), restrictive affectionate behavior between men (RABBM) ($F(1, 106) = 5.42, p = .022, \eta^2 = .049$), POMS-T ($F(1, 106) = 332.21, p < .001, \eta^2 = .758$), POMS-E ($F(1, 106) = 6.75, p = .011, \eta^2 = .060$), and perceived topic of conversation with the captain ($F(2, 106) = 3.68, p = .028, \eta^2 = .065$) (see Table 18).

Table 18

Two-Way Analysis of Covariance for POMS-A (from the POMS) by Perceived Topic of Conversation with Captain and Father with Age, MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, POMS-T, and POMS-E as Covariates

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Age	180.54	1	180.54	7.77	.006**	.068
MRNI-VB	206.63	1	206.63	8.89	.004**	.077
RE	22.31	1	22.31	.960	.329	.009
SPC	16.94	1	16.94	.729	.395	.007
RABBM	125.94	1	125.94	5.42	.022*	.049
CBWFR	1.15	1	1.15	.049	.824	.000
POMS-T	7719.34	1	7719.34	332.21	.000**	.758
POMS-E	156.77	1	156.77	6.75	.011*	.060
Captain	171.18	2	85.59	3.68	.028*	.065
Father	5.92	2	2.96	.127	.881	.002
Captain * Father	77.43	4	19.36	.833	.507	.030
Error	2463.04	106	23.24			

Note: $R^2 = .866$, adj. $R^2 = .846$. MRNI-VB = Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief, RE = Restrictive emotionality, SPC = Success, power, and competition, RABBM = Restrictive affectionate behavior between men, CBWFR = Conflicts between work and family relations, POMS-T = POM Target Scale, POMS-E = POM Emotional Impact Scale. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

A two-way ANCOVA was also conducted for the POM Emotional Impact Scale (POMS-E) and perceived topic of conversation with the captain and father, while controlling for participants' age, MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, POMS-T, and POMS-A scores. There was no statistically significant interaction between perceived topic of conversation with the captain and father, $F(4, 106) = 1.02$, $p = .400$, $\eta^2 = .037$. Nonetheless, there were main effects found between POMS-E and participants' age ($F(1, 106) = 7.38$, $p = .008$, $\eta^2 = .065$), MRNI-VB ($F(1, 106) = 5.90$, $p = .017$, $\eta^2 = .053$), RABBM ($F(1, 106) = 6.41$, $p = .013$, $\eta^2 = .057$), and POMS-A ($F(1,$

106) = 6.75, $p = .011$, $\eta^2 = .060$); notably, conflicts between work and family relations (CBWFR) was not directly significant, but could be considered significant with rounding or consideration, $F(1, 106) = 3.87$, $p = .052$, $\eta^2 = .035$ (see Table 19).

Table 19

Two-Way Analysis of Covariance for POMS-E (from the POMS) by Perceived Topic of Conversation with Captain and Father with Age, MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, POMS-T, and POMS-A as Covariates

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Age	1225.65	1	1225.65	7.38	.008**	.065
MRNI-VB	979.37	1	979.37	5.90	.017*	.053
RE	526.91	1	526.91	3.17	.078	.029
SPC	104.54	1	104.54	.630	.429	.006
RABBM	1064.40	1	1064.40	6.41	.013*	.057
CBWFR	641.55	1	641.55	3.87	.052	.035
POMS-T	9.89	1	9.89	.060	.808	.001
POMS-A	1119.91	1	1119.91	6.75	.011*	.060
Captain	418.86	2	209.43	1.26	.287	.023
Father	472.98	2	236.49	1.43	.245	.026
Captain * Father	677.72	4	169.43	1.02	.400	.037
Error	17594.79	106	165.99			

Note: $R^2 = .431$, adj. $R^2 = .345$. MRNI-VB = Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief, RE = Restrictive emotionality, SPC = Success, power, and competition, RABBM = Restrictive affectionate behavior between men, CBWFR = Conflicts between work and family relations, POMS-T = POM Target Scale, POMS-A = POM Agent Scale. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Perceived Masculinity of the Target as a Function of Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Team Captain and Father

Another additional interest of the main study was to evaluate the potential effects between perceived topic of conversation with the captain and father, and perceived masculinity

of the target. To assess this, a two-way ANCOVA was conducted; age, conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB), gender role conflict (GRCS-SF), and POM attitudes (POMS) were controlled. With these variables as covariates, there was no statistically significant interaction between perceived topic of conversation with the captain and the father, $F(1, 105) = .552, p = .698, \eta^2 = .021$. However, there were main effects for RE ($F(1, 105) = 4.14, p = .044, \eta^2 = .038$) and POMS-T ($F(1, 105) = 4.42, p = .038, \eta^2 = .040$) found.

Belief that the Target Should Take Their Nail Polish Off Before Practice, Perceived Femininity of the Target, and Participant Age, Conformity to Masculine Norms, Gender Role Conflict, and Policing of Masculinity Attitudes

Further expanding upon findings relating to sport and status and the evaluation of 1) belief that the target should take their nail polish off before practice (see Table 9) and 2) perceived femininity of the target, it was another interest during data analysis for how these variables correlated with participants' age, conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB), gender role conflict (GRCS-SF), and POM attitudes (POMS). Pearson's Correlation Coefficients were first conducted for belief that the target should take their nail polish off before practice, and there were positive correlations found for MRNI-VB ($r(206) = .639, p < .001$), GRCS-SF, and POMS scores; participants' age could also be considered significant with a p -value of .051. Perceived femininity of the target was also assessed utilizing a Pearson's Correlation Coefficient and was positively correlated with MRNI-VB ($r(205) = .223, p = .001$) and GRCS-SF scores. Belief that the target should take their nail polish off before practice and perceived femininity of the target were also correlated with each other, $r(209) = .268, p < .001$ (see Table 20).

Table 20

Correlations between Belief that the Target Should Take Their Nail Polish Off Before Practice and Perceived Femininity of the Target and Participants' Age, MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, and POMS Scores

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. NPO	3.62	2.11											
2. PF-T	4.39	1.55	.27**										
3. Age	37.03	10.84	.14	-.11									
4. MRNI-VB	19.05	8.16	.64**	.22**	-.03								
5. RE	2.38	1.39	.29**	.20**	-.04	.33**							
6. SPC	2.73	1.21	.34**	.14*	-.09	.60**	.40**						
7. RABBM	2.30	1.42	.57**	.23**	.06	.70**	.56**	.50**					
8. CBWFR	2.31	1.29	.26**	.15*	-.04	.31**	.61**	.39**	.45**				
9. POMS-T	29.01	15.21	.39**	.11	-.18**	.48**	.38**	.40**	.40**	.47**			
10. POMS-A	27.32	14.94	.38**	.12	-.12	.50**	.33**	.37**	.38**	.45**	.95**		
11. POMS-E	32.01	16.42	.19**	.13	-.13	.16*	.26**	.16*	.27**	.42**	.63**	.63**	

Note: *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. NPO = Belief that the target should take their nail polish off before practice, PF-T = Perceived femininity of the target, MRNI-VB = Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief, RE = Restricted emotionality, SPC = Success, power, and competition, RABBM = Restrictive affectionate behavior between men, CBWFR = Conflicts between work and family relations, POMS-T = POM Target Scale, POMS-A = POM Agent Scale, POMS-E = POM Emotional Impact Scale. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Participant Ideological Affiliation, Age, Conformity to Masculine Norms, Gender Role

Conflict, and Policing of Masculinity Attitudes

Ideological affiliation (Kiley & Keeter, 2015) was additionally assessed to evaluate any effects on age, conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB), gender role conflict (GRCS-SF), and POM attitudes. Pearson's Correlation Coefficients were conducted and found significant correlations for the following: age ($r(206) = .237, p = .001$), MRNI-VB ($r(208) = .336, p < .001$), RE ($r(209) = .154, p = .025$), SPC ($r(206) = .196, p = .005$), and RABBM ($r(206) = .244, p < .001$); and a negative correlation with POMS-E ($r(198) = -.150, p = .034$) (see Table 21).

Table 21

Correlations between Ideological Affiliation and Participants' Age, MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, and POMS Scores

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Ideological affiliation	2.81	1.21										
2. Age	37.03	10.84	.24**									
3. MRNI-VB	19.05	8.16	.34**	-.03								
4. RE	2.38	1.39	.15*	-.04	.33**							
5. SPC	2.73	1.21	.20**	-.09	.60**	.39**						
6. RABBM	2.30	1.42	.24**	.06	.70**	.56**	.50**					
7. CBWFR	2.31	1.29	.02	-.04	.31**	.61**	.39**	.45**				
8. POMS-T	29.01	15.21	.04	-.18**	.48**	.38**	.40**	.40**	.47**			
9. POMS-A	27.32	14.94	.05	-.12	.50**	.33**	.37**	.38**	.45**	.95**		
10. POMS-E	32.01	16.42	-.15*	-.13	.16*	.26**	.16*	.24**	.42**	.63**	.63**	

Note: *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. MRNI-VB = Male Role Norms Inventory-Very Brief, RE = Restricted emotionality, SPC = Success, power, and competition, RABBM = Restrictive affectionate behavior between men, CBWFR = Conflicts between work and family relations, POMS-A = POM Agent Scale, POMS-E = POM Emotional Impact Scale. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Discussion

The hope of the current study was to evaluate how perceived masculinity of the target and perceived topic of conversations with the team captain and father would be influenced by

differing status and sport of the target in the presented vignette. Participant age, conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB), gender role conflict (GRCS-SF), and POM attitudes (POMS) were also measured to evaluate how these also influenced perceived masculinity of the target and perceived topic of conversations with the team captain and father, amongst other dependent variables (e.g., perceived femininity of the target, belief that the target should take their nail polish off before practice, etc.).

Perceived Masculinity of the Target, Conformity to Masculine Norms, Gender Role Conflict, and Policing of Masculinity Attitudes

The first three hypotheses predicted that perceived masculinity of the target would be negatively correlated with participants' own conformity to masculine norms (H1), gender role conflict (H2), and POM attitudes (H3). While conformity to masculine norms (H1) and gender role conflict (H2) were not found to be correlated with perceived masculinity of the target, significant correlations emerged with all three of the POM scales (POMS-T, POMS-A, and POMS-E) and perceived masculinity of the target (H3) (see Table 6). However, these were all positive correlations, implying that higher POMS scores influenced higher perceived masculinity scores of the target who engaged in a gender nonconforming behavior. This is not what was expected or hypothesized for the current study, and this finding deserves scrutiny.

These positive correlations could have been influenced by the target's participation in sport, supported by collegiate athletes demonstrating greater role conflict and adherence to masculine norms (Ramaeker & Petrie, 2019), the value of sport in "Boy World" for middle and high school boys (Wiseman, 2013), and sport's reinforcement of traditionally masculine values (Adams & Govender, 2008; Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Anderson, 2011; Brannon, 1976; Connell, 2008; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Drummond, 2008; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Messner,

1987; Messner, 1992; Pleck et al., 1993; Pompei, 2017; Wiseman, 2013). Thus, those scoring high on the POMS could have accounted for or favored the target's sport participation over their gender nonconforming behavior.

This finding may also be related to another finding of the current study: all three of the POM scales were positively correlated with perceived heterosexuality of the target. This positive correlation is also interesting because of research on POM suggesting that greater policing is associated with greater questioning of heterosexuality for a gender nonconforming individual as well as the use of homophobic derogatives (Connell, 2008; Kimmel, 2008; McCreary, 1994; Pascoe, 2005; Phoenix et al., 2003; Poteat, 2007; Poteat et al., 2007; Reigeluth, 2016; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016, 2021; Renold, 2002). However, while unexpected, this is similar to H3 and supports the hypothesis's positive correlation; therefore, H3 cannot be supported.

Perceived Masculinity of the Target as a Function of Sport, and Status

It was also hypothesized that there would be a main effect of sport (H4) and status (H5) on perceived masculinity of the target. Utilizing a two-way ANCOVA while controlling for potential influences, such as age, conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB), gender role conflict (GRCS-SF), and POM attitudes (POMS), both sport (H4) and status (H5) had no effect on perceived masculinity of the target (see Table 7). While effects for sport ($p = .059$) and status ($p = .066$) were close to significance for perceived masculinity of the target, the findings were similar to the pilot study and still cannot support the aforementioned hypotheses: for sport, perceived masculinity of the target was greater for football ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 1.41$) than swimming ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.61$); and for status, perceived masculinity of the target was greater for the senior ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 1.53$) than the freshman ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.49$). Because sport and status were close to our significance threshold of .05, we have to be somewhat tentative about

accepting the null hypothesis. A larger sample size might in fact reveal that sport and status are exerting an effect on perceived masculinity of the target.

With this in mind, while unequivocal support was not found for H4 and H5 directly, other findings provide an opportunity to understand other variables' impact on perceived masculinity of the target. A positive correlation between acceptability for men to wear nail polish suggests that greater perceived masculinity of the target was influenced by greater acceptance for gender nonconforming behavior. This is an interesting correlation to consider, and perceived masculinity will be further discussed alongside H6 and H7.

Further evaluating correlations with the three scales (MRNI-VB, GRCS-SF, and POMS) on perceived masculinity of the target during data analysis, an intriguing finding arose. Perceived masculinity of the target was positively correlated with all POM scales (POMS-T, POMS-A, and POMS-E), but was not correlated with the MRNI-VB nor GRCS-SF. On the other, perceived femininity of the target was positively correlated with MRNI-VB and GRCS-SF, but was not correlated with the POMS. While ratings of perceived femininity being greater for higher rates of conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB) and gender role conflict (GRCS-SF) makes sense given the presentation of a gender nonconforming behavior, the absence of a correlation with POM attitudes (POMS) is perplexing. However, given the positive correlation between the POM scales and perceived masculinity of the target suggesting that greater POM attitudes increased perceived masculinity, this further suggests that participants' POM worked in favor of their acceptance of a gender nonconforming target. In other words, this could suggest that those with greater POM attitudes were more likely to perceive masculinity based on sport participation over gender nonconforming behavior. This is potentially supported by the data presented in Table 7,

as POMS-T was found to have a main effect for perceived masculinity of the target as a covariate for sport and status.

This becomes even more perplexing when considering that a participant's belief that the target should take their nail polish off before practice was found to be positively correlated with all three scales, which includes the POM scales. This more intuitive finding suggests that greater conformity to masculine norms, gender role conflict, and POM attitudes increased the participants' belief that the target should take their nail polish off; this should be an indicator that POM does have a negative influence on perceived masculinity of the target, yet the positive correlation between the POMS and perceived masculinity of the target seems to say otherwise. Therefore, further evaluation of how these three scales correlate with and influence perceived masculinity of a gender nonconforming target should be considered to understand this unexpected effect.

Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Team Captain as a Function of Sport, and Status

Perceived topic of conversation with the team captain was hypothesized to be related to sport (H6) and status (H7). However, only status (H7) was shown to have a relationship with perceived topic of conversation with the team captain ($\chi^2(2, N = 212) = 7.58, p = .023$ (see Table 11)). This is different from the pilot study, where no effects of status or sport emerged; however, as mentioned earlier, the small sample size of the pilot study could be the reason no significant relationships emerged. This is especially interesting when considering that POM was a topic of conversation (as POM or Both POM and other) at a greater rate for the freshman (84.3%) than the senior (74.7%). Thus, this suggests that freshmen and/or players of lesser status/skill may be policed to a greater degree than seniors and/or players of greater status/skill.

Additionally, main effects found for status and perceived femininity of the target, and belief that the target should take their nail polish off before practice (see Table 9), support the findings of H7 in that there is a significant difference in how the actions of the target are perceived as a function of their status. Not only is the freshman more likely to be perceived to receive policing by the team captain, but they are also seen as more feminine and more expected to take their nail polish off before engaging in their sport. While a lack of relationship between perceived topic of conversation with the team captain as a function of sport (H6) aligns with the lack of significance between perceived masculinity of the target and sport (H4), this is not the case for status. While status was found to not significantly influence perceived masculinity of the target (H5), it is interesting to consider the support found for H7 that suggests differences in policing conversations with the team captain emerge when the target is of lower status (a freshman) and skill (junior varsity backup). This potentially suggests that younger and/or less skilled athletes are particularly vulnerable to being criticized, policed, and negatively perceived while seniors or those with greater skill exhibiting the same behavior may face less social punishment for deviating from masculine norms. Furthermore, this adds support to research suggesting that adolescent boys with greater athleticism are allowed more flexibility in their masculinity (Rogers et al., 2021; Thorne, 1993; Way, 2011).

Intriguingly, and worthy of future investigation, is the lack of support found directly for perceived masculinity of the target and status (H5). However, perceived topic of conversation with the team captain as a function of status (H7) may act as a potential bridge to a similar suggestion, that there is a significant difference in allowance for deviation and policing as a function of status. With that being said, a better understanding of the influence of status on both

perceived masculinity and topic of conversation should be sought through further research before strongly endorsing the aforementioned suggestion.

It is interesting to note that Other comments (e.g., grade/academics, sport and performance, life problems) made up a rather small percentage (19.7%) of the total responses to what participants perceived to be the topic of conversation for the target with the team captain. Even when considering Both POM and other comments, the percentage only slightly increases to 25.4%, which is in stark contrast to the prevalence of perceived topic of conversation with the team captain being directly POM (e.g., nail polish, sexuality, appearance) (74.6%) (see Table 10). This low prevalence for Other comments seems to be in keeping with research that has suggested that masculinity allows for poorer performance in academics, given that performing well or exerting effort in academics is seen as feminine (Harris, 1995; Jackson & Dempster, 2009). With that being said, this finding warrants further research to evaluate the differences in POM and the variety of Other comments (academic and non-academic).

Perceived Topic of Conversation with the Father as a Function of Sport, and Status

The findings pertaining to perceived topic of conversation with the father as a function of sport (H8) and status (H9) are interesting in that they, like H6 and H7, revealed slightly different relationships, or a lack thereof. While H8 was found to be related in the pilot study, both H8 and H9 were not significantly related; however, as previously mentioned, this could have been influenced by the larger sample sizes between the pilot ($N = 81$) and main ($N = 213$) studies. Thus, the lack of relationships for sport (H8) and status (H9) suggests that these factors did not exert an effect on the perceived reaction of the father, even in the case of a younger adolescent athlete engaging in a gender nonconforming behavior. Furthermore, as indicated in Table 12, the father was perceived to be supportive in a majority (36.2%) of overall responses; when omitting

miscellaneous and ambiguous responses, supportive is perceived in an even greater majority (52.7%). Therefore, this suggests that participants typically anticipated the father to be a supportive resource for their son, regardless of sport or status. While this could be an example where perceived or anticipated action is easier said than done (reacting to a situation presented in a vignette as opposed to living and physically being in the situation), the consensus shared by participants seemed to be that the father would be accepting, embracing, and open to their son deviating from traditional masculine norms (at least in terms of the particular presentation's use of nail polish).

Participant Age, Conformity to Masculine Norms, Gender Role Conflict, and Policing of Masculinity Attitudes

The last three hypotheses of the current study tested the influence of participants' age on conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB) (H10), gender role conflict (GRCS-SF) (H11), and POM attitudes (POMS) (H12). Through Pearson's Correlation Coefficients (see Table 13), there was only partial support found for H12 (for continuity reasons, H10 and H11 will be skipped and discussed in detail in the Miscellaneous Findings subsection). Notably, participant age was negatively correlated with POMS-T. A negative correlation for POMS-T suggests that being the personal target of policing by one's peers decreases as age increases. As discussed in the Introduction, this change could be influenced by shifts in masculinity that occur over the course of adulthood as expectations to conform to masculine norms lessens as men get older and as physical capabilities lessen and gender-neutral and feminine activities become more commonplace (Calasanti, 2004; Gross & Blundo, 2005; Hearn, 1995; Kilmartin, 2010; Rybarczyk, 1994; Spector-Mersel, 2006; Springer & Mouzon, 2018; Strough et al., 2007; Thompson et al., 2020). Furthermore, negative correlations were found between participant age

and two other POM subscales, Masculinity Deviations and Physical Policing. Once again, participant age was negatively correlated with punishment for Masculinity Deviations (e.g., clothing style, physical appearance); this seems to be in keeping with Adams & Govender (2008) and Metcalfe (2018), who suggested that expectations to conform to masculine expectations in high school prioritize perfectionism and physical appearance within the confines of a gender binary standard. Participants' experiences of Physical Policing (e.g., challenge to rough-house or wrestle) was also negatively correlated with age, suggesting that physical demonstrations of masculine conformity decrease over time; this is perhaps indicative of the aforementioned weakening of physical capabilities throughout adulthood (Calasanti, 2004; Gross & Blundo, 2005; Hearn, 1995; Kilmartin, 2010; Rybarczyk, 1994; Spector-Mersel, 2006; Springer & Mouzon, 2018; Strough et al., 2007; Thompson et al., 2020). Thus, these findings further suggest that POM seems to lessen as men age.

Policing of Masculinity Attitudes: Miscellaneous Findings

In an effort to further evaluate participants' POM attitudes in relation to age, a Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was conducted for age, conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB), gender role conflict (GRCS-SF), and POM attitudes (POMS) with Reigeluth and Addis's (2021) POMS item "how much of a problem do you think [call(ing) their friends and other guys they hang out with names or challenge one another] is for guys in general." As indicated in Table 14, participant age and MRNI-VB were negatively correlated, and conflicts between work and family relations (CBWFR) (a subscale for the GRCS-SF) and all three POM scales were positively correlated. This not only suggests that POM is seen as less problematic by older men and those with greater conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB), but that those experiencing greater CBWFR and POM see POM as more problematic. Perhaps most notably, the positive

correlation with POMS-A, or being an agent or perpetrator of policing, suggests that those who instigate or re-establish masculine norms at a greater rate perceive POM to be problematic. However, considering Reigeluth and Addis's (2016, 2021) finding that POM can be used as a means of maintaining or elevating social status, being an agent of POM could potentially be influenced by personal gain and attempting to not lose social status. Main effects for age in perceived topic of conversation with the team captain and father (in two-way ANCOVAs) for restrictive affectionate behavior between men (RABBM) (a subscale for the GRCS-SF) (see Table 17) and all three POM scales (for POMS-A, see Table 18) are also intriguing and suggest that there are influences to be found for age, regardless of a lack of support for H10 and H11.

While not originally included in the data analysis, ideological affiliation was also found to be negatively correlated with how much of a problem policing is for guys, $r(209) = -.252, p < .001$. This suggests that those with greater moderate-to-conservative affiliation see POM as less problematic. Given that ideological affiliation was also positively correlated with age, MRNI-VB, and three out the four GRCS-SF subscales (see Table 21), this suggests that this affiliation has higher conformity to masculine norms and gender role conflict, and is greater in old age. Therefore, leaning-conservative ideological affiliation can have a significant impact on masculine values and conformity, a finding that should be further researched in the context of POM and masculinity as a whole.

The lack of support for age and conformity to masculine norms (H10) and gender role conflict (H11) in the current study is interesting, but might have different implications than initially hypothesized. One implication of these results is the development of androgyny in adulthood (Strough et al., 2007), where traditionally feminine behaviors are integrated alongside masculine behaviors, not in place of. This is important to consider because androgyny suggests

that conformity to masculine norms do not necessarily change, but coincide with the integration of feminine behaviors; therefore, conformity does not have to change with age for greater flexibility in behaviors to occur. And while masculine ideology is likely to change in adulthood (Bennett, 2007; Kilmartin, 2010; Peak & Gast, 2014) as social pressure to conform decreases (Calasanti, 2004; Hearn, 1995; Kilmartin, 2010; Rybarczyk, 1994; Spector-Mersel, 2006; Strough et al., 2007; Thompson et al., 2020), this is not necessarily indicative of what is maintained in an individual man's definition of masculinity. Therefore, conformity and gender role conflict could still occur as men continue to grapple with traditional masculine expectations, such as complications that arise with physical incapacities, i.e., sexual prowess (Adams & Govender, 2008; Brannon, 1976; Drummond, 2008; Gross & Blundo, 2005; Messner, 1987; Pleck et al., 1993).

On the topic of androgyny, it should be noted that this masculine-feminine trait integration was not found to be significantly integrated into men's identity until their 70s (Strough et al., 2007). However, Strough et al. found shifts occurring throughout adulthood towards androgyny that later culminated to a greater change in identity of masculine and feminine behaviors.

Limitations

Much of the previous research pertaining to masculinity has been conducted with White, middle-class males (Kilmartin, 2010; Reigeluth & Addis, 2021). While that might not be inherently a limitation, as traditional and hegemonic masculinity give social power and favor to these populations (Adams & Govender, 2008; Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Pleck et al., 1993; Reigeluth & Addis, 2021), a greater, more diverse representation of men in masculinity research is still necessary. Likewise, the current study falls subject to this limitation,

as a majority of participants were heterosexual (83.0%) and white (80.0%). The lack of racial/ethnic and sexual orientation diversity is a concern for the field of masculinity that needs to be properly addressed in order to understand masculinity that considers multicultural values and differences. POM research has also been limited to evaluations of adolescent males (Connell, 2008; Martino, 2000; Metcalfe, 2018; Reigeluth, 2016; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016, 2021), which is also seen in the lack of research on masculinity throughout adulthood (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Marcell et al., 2011). While the current (main) study worked towards broadening the scope of this masculinity research with the use of an older population ($M_{age} = 37.03$, $SD_{age} = 10.84$), there is still considerable work to be done to gain a better understanding of how POM and definitions of masculinity shift over time.

In an effort to make the main study more appealing to potential participants on mTurk, the title was altered from “Time to talk! An adolescent athlete’s conversations” (see Appendix A) to “Hey man, what do *you* think about nail polish?” (see Appendix B). However, in the process, the new title could have introduced a potential confounding variable. Mentioning nail polish in the title of the study could have intentionally or unintentionally influenced participants to respond to questions, particularly for the open-ended perceived topic of conversation with the team captain and father questions, in a biased manner. As a result, the interpretation of findings of the current study should take into account the potential effect this change in the main study’s title could have had on qualitative and quantitative responses.

Another limitation of the current study was the possibility of unreliability as a result of the poor retention rates in all four batches of the main study. With an overall retention rate of 29.0% ($N = 213$, out of 735 responses qualifying and completing for the current study), ranging from 26.3 to 30.5% throughout the four batches, it is fair to point out that better structured

qualifications and procedures could have taken place to avoid having to discard so many respondents. As indicated in Table 22, the initial release of the first batch (freshman/football) through mTurk garnered an 18.5% retention rate ($N = 22$, out of 119 responses), an especially low rate that was not expected. To attempt to counteract this, a question asking for the participants' mTurk worker ID was included and showed slight increases in retention rates. This proved helpful in an additional release of the first and second (senior/football) batches to attempt to even the sample sizes; however, a larger-than-expected retention rate for the second iteration of Batch 1 (or Batch 5, 39.8%) slightly increased totals for the freshman and football conditions.

Table 22
Participant and Retention Rates of Batches 1-6 and Total

Batch (condition)	N (out of total)	Retention rate (%)
1 (freshman/football)	22 (119)	18.5
5 (freshman/football)*	51 (128)	39.8
Total	73** (247)	29.6
2 (senior/football)*	39 (147)	26.5
6 (senior/football)*	7 (28)	25.0
Total	46 (175)	26.3
3 (freshman/swimming)*	48 (162)	29.6
4 (senior/swimming)*	46 (151)	30.5
Total	213 (735)	29.0

Note: * indicates the inclusion of the worker ID question. ** indicates where there was a noticeable difference in the number of participants ($N = 73$) compared to the other three conditions (N ranges from 46-48) that could be a potential issue for Levene's Test of Equality of Equal Variances; however, there was only one significant Levene's Test found (meaning equality of equal variances, or the null hypothesis of equal populations, was rejected), which was noted and in the pilot study. Therefore, potential issues that could occur with uneven sizes did not emerge.

These low retention rates could have been intentional or unintentional; errors with SurveyMonkey and/or mTurk could have caused these incomplete responses, or participants were purposefully entering and exiting the survey in hopes of still receiving compensation through HITs. Regardless, it is hoped that measures taken in the survey through the incorporation and review of worker ID, IP addresses, identified gender, and qualitative responses helped improve overall validity.

Another limitation and/or potential confounding variable of the current study is the absence of inter-rater reliability for the coding process of qualitative responses. Specifically addressing open-ended questions pertaining to perceived topic of conversation with the team captain and the father, coding was primarily conducted by the author with occasional collaboration and support provided by the faculty sponsor.

The lack of age groups in analysis is another notable limitation. While age was an important consideration as covariates and with correlations essential to hypotheses in the current study (H10, H11, and H12), the development of age groups would have allowed for greater analysis opportunities. Grouping could have been intriguing to evaluate how gender nonconforming behavior and conformity to masculine norms, gender role conflict, and POM attitudes potentially shift throughout the developmental phases (Erikson, 1950). This is another incorporation that should be considered for further research, in order to attempt to understand differences in groups that could occur.

As previously mentioned in the pilot study, a lack of effects for sport could have been influenced by research suggesting gender-neutral sports are perceived as more masculine (Alley & Hicks, 2005; Chalabaev et al., 2013; Koivula, 2001; Plaza et al., 2017). Swimming could have potentially been viewed as a team sport as well, which has been found to be perceived more

masculine than individual sports (Anderson, 2011; Hardin & Greer, 2009). This is a limitation because of swimming's unique position that allows for greater ambiguity; swimming could have been interpreted many different ways, such as being an individual or team sport. Considering this, it was a known risk but greater interest to include a sport such as swimming as the gender-neutral stimulus. While ambitious, this could have influenced the lack of effect for sport throughout the current study. However, the inclusion of such a sport raises further questions pertaining to gender-typing categorization, which can be further evaluated utilizing different sports and scenarios.

Confounding Variables

While there were significant results for the effect of status in the difference between a freshman and senior athlete, there is a potential confounding variable in the descriptions of the condition that should be addressed. The main reason for the inclusion of status was to evaluate for potential differences in acceptance of gender nonconformity, and perceptions of a target as a function of age/grade (social status). However, adding additional context to the vignettes for the target inadvertently added another function of player status; the freshman condition was also described as a backup junior varsity player, and the senior condition was also described as a star varsity player. While findings in the current study show that there were main effects for status on a number of variables, these findings could have been influenced by 1) the age/grade of the target, 2) the player status/level of the target, or 3) some combination of both. Considering research suggesting that athletic adolescents are allowed greater flexibility in their conformity to masculine norms (Rogers et al., 2021; Thorne, 1993; Way, 2011), it might be suggested that these main effects for status were primarily influenced by athletic prowess as opposed to

age/grade. Thus, this potential, unaccounted for effect of skill for the status condition should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings of the current study.

Future Research

Future research should be focused on further evaluating the effects of ideological affiliation (Kiley & Keeter, 2015) on a number of factors. While not a hypothesis for the current study, correlations found for ideological affiliation and conformity to masculine norms, aspects of gender role conflict and POM attitudes, and attitudes pertaining to men wearing nail polish are promising. Considering liberal, moderate, and conservative attitudes and how these relate to different social contexts could provide a better understanding for how masculinity is perpetuated by differing affiliations and its overarching influence on cultural norms and implications.

A topic that could also be evaluated in future research was the potential association between assessments of gender-neutral and masculine sports (see Table 3) and conformity to masculine norms, gender role conflict, and POM attitudes. While not hypothesized, this was believed to be a potential area where a greater understanding for the differentiation between these two gender-typed categories could be achieved, correlating life experiences to perceptions of sport. However, perceptions of gender-neutral and masculine sports and the three scales were assessed separately in the pilot and main study, respectively; thus, correlations cannot be made with the current state of the data. Future research should be conducted to culminate data that addresses both of these aspects together, in order to evaluate for potential effects that personal values and beliefs may have on the perception and differentiation of gender-typed sports.

Another consideration for future research should focus on incorporating the current study to include high school, adolescent male participants. While the current study's incorporation of adult participants aimed to evaluate the long-term effects and perceptions of masculinity, high

school participants would potentially be better at evaluating the effects of “Boy World” and POM, as previous research in these areas have focused on this population (Connell, 2008; Martino, 2000; Metcalfe, 2018; Reigeluth, 2016; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016, 2021; Wiseman, 2013). As these masculine expectations and policing peak in high school (Levant et al., 1992; Pascoe, 2005; Marcell et al., 2011; Reigeluth, 2016; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016; Thorne, 1993; Way, 2011; Wiseman, 2013), a closer evaluation of the perception of gender nonconforming behavior would be an intriguing and beneficial addition to the findings of the current study. Furthermore, this would also allow for a greater understanding of how, or if, conformity to masculine norms, gender role conflict, and POM attitudes shift during and after high school.

Additional Considerations

The significance of SLT (Bandura, 1971) in POM suggests that policing actions are conducted as a means of re-establishing what is perceived as right or wrong in masculine norms (Adams & Govender, 2008; Connell, 2008; Kimmel, 2008; Martino, 2000; McCreary, 1994; Metcalfe, 2018; Oransky & Fisher, 2009; Pascoe, 2005; Phoenix et al., 2003; Poteat, 2007; Poteat et al., 2007; Reigeluth, 2016; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016, 2021), known through SLT as positive reinforcement or punishment (Bandura, 1971). This has further implications as well in how being the perpetrator (agent) or target of policing can influence social status and inclusion in peer groups (Adams & Govender, 2008; Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011; Jackson & Dempster, 2009; Kilmartin, 2010; Metcalfe, 2018; Oransky & Fisher, 2009; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016, 2021; Renold, 2002; Rogers et al., 2021; Rulison et al., 2013). Research implying how greater adherence to masculine norms during adolescence can negatively impact personal health and well-being (Gupta et al., 2013; Iwamoto & Smiler, 2013; Oransky & Fisher, 2009; Rogers et al., 2020; Rogers et al., 2021; Santor et al., 2000; Totten, 2003) further adds to the importance of

working towards a systematic change in the way of how our society models gender conformity and masculinity to a more inclusive perspective.

The push towards gender fluidity, especially in the presence of fashion, is a continuing movement that continues to capture a mainstream audience; as recently as April 15, Kid Cudi, a famous hip-hop artist, performed on *Saturday Night Live* in a floral dress (Elan, 2021). While gender-neutral fashion statements by Kid Cudi and Styles (Bowles, 2020) have been important steps towards combating traditional masculine values, both instances have received criticism from the LGBTQ+ community for inappropriate appropriation, and there's a reasonable argument to be made. The social acceptance and embracement of Kid Cudi and Styles, both cis males, engaging in a gender nonconforming behavior is argued to be a double standard; accessorizing in gender-neutral fashion for cis men can be seen as wearing a costume, while transgender and gender nonconforming people have been historically dismissed, targeted, and harassed for the same actions (Ahlgrim, 2020; Elan, 2021). Thus, while gender-fluidity is an integral part of breaking the barriers of traditional masculinity, the choice for Kid Cudi (Elan, 2021) and selection of Harry Styles for the Vogue cover (Bowles, 2020) is put into understanding question, as the mainstream focus and movement shifts away from LGBTQ+ awareness and the representation of transgender and gender nonconforming people (Ahlgrim, 2020; Elan, 2021).

Conclusion

With the spotlight given to gender nonconformity in masculinity by popular culture's attention to influential people such as Harry Styles (Bowles, 2020) and Pharrell Williams (Welch, 2019), the conversation of challenges to traditional masculinity (and backlash) are alive

and well. Propelled by the #MeToo movement, traditional masculinity is being put under the microscope for good reason. While the publicity surrounding Styles and Williams are monumental in the push towards gender-fluidity and open emotional and physical expression for men, the current study examined how gender nonconformity was perceived by a cross-section of American men. While celebrity status may protect a man who engages in gender nonconformity, how does a high schooler fare? The same question was examined in relation to the context of sport, a predominantly masculine environment that has historically been a platform for reinforcing and showcasing traditional masculine values (Adams & Govender, 2008; Anderson, 2011; Brannon, 1976; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Drummond, 2008; Messner, 1987; Messner, 1992; Pleck et al., 1993). The evaluation of participants' own conformity to masculine norms (MRNI-VB), gender role conflict (GRCS-SF), and POM attitudes (POMS) were also included, in addition to age and ideological affiliation. Thus, an adolescent male athlete wearing pink nail polish was presented as the target to further investigate this question.

In the context of sport, status was based on a freshman junior varsity backup or a senior varsity star. The findings of the current study suggest that policing of masculinity (POM) attitudes influenced perceptions of the adolescent athlete target that favored deviation from masculine norms for the senior varsity star. So, when looking at Styles and Williams in comparison to the common man or one of lesser social status, the current study can suggest significant differences in how the celebrity, or the senior varsity star, is perceived and accepted in comparison to the individual further down the social rankings, in this case the freshman junior varsity backup.

Sport was also assessed, but there were no significant differences found between masculine (football) and gender-neutral (swimming) gender-typed sports. The difference(s)

between masculine and gender-neutral sports might not be as definitive as previously hypothesized, which could potentially be attributed to the subjective nature of masculinity in sport (Hardin & Greer, 2009) that has been suggested to be prevalent in the perceptions of gender-neutral sports, as they have been found to be perceived as more masculine (Alley & Hicks, 2005; Chalabaev et al., 2013; Koivula, 2001; Plaza et al., 2017). The lack of difference found between the two for the adolescent male athlete (target) might represent a differentiation between the sport and the athlete. Perhaps sport's opportunity for adolescents to be emotionally expressive (Messner, 1987) makes the comparison of perceived masculinity of an adolescent athlete by sport unwarranted and unnecessary, especially in the realm of masculine vs. gender-neutral sport. Therefore, at least in the difference between gender-neutral and masculine sport, there may be greater acceptance to gender nonconformity for athletes than previously predicted. Like status, however, the trajectory of gender-fluidity will need to be continuously examined in the context of gender-typed sports.

The findings of the current study should also take into consideration the use of nail polish (Edwards, 2010), which was only the third-most feminine fashion accessory in the pilot study (see Table 4). Considering its current stance, it could be reasonable to assume that the growing prominence of gender nonconformity and gender-fluidity in fashion (Bowles, 2020; Welch, 2019) will begin to normalize not only men wearing nail polish, but also potentially dresses and/or skirts. If there were significant effects found in the current study on perceived masculinity and acceptability of men wearing nail polish, then the rapid freedom to express without the confines of traditional masculinity could suggest polarizing perceptions of those who engage in gender-fluid fashion and accessorizing. The question then becomes how gender nonconformity will continue to change on a macro (general expression, popular culture as a whole) and micro

(i.e., wearing nail polish, wearing a skirt) scale, and perceived either in the context of celebrity vs. the common man (examining the effects in an athletic or age context), or in different social contexts. Future researchers should keep a keen eye on shifts in popular culture to further understand the implications for gender-fluidity and nonconformity, and how that influences the perceptions of men in regards to definitions of masculinity.

These popular culture considerations should also be paired with other related changes in the country. The United States has experienced a greater tolerance to homosexuality in recent history, suggesting that acceptance for inclusivity and gender and sexual minorities is on the rise (Kozloski, 2010); this effect has also been found in the context of sports (Adams, 2011; Anderson, 2011). Given the malleable nature of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), negative perceptions of homosexuality as part of TMI (Adams & Govender, 2008; Pleck et al., 1993) could continue to lessen and become more accepting as a part of masculinity definitions. In a world where Styles (Bowles, 2020) and Williams (Welch, 2019) are pushing the boundaries of gender conformity in masculinity, there will most likely always be the Candace Owens-esque character calling for the restoration of the manly men (Owens, 2020); this stance is nothing new, as the fear of losing masculinity and social power for men has been a voiced concern throughout the social changes of the 20th century (Connell, 1995; Hantover, 1978; Kimmel, 1987; Messner, 1987). But, given the recent attention in popular culture in the discussion of working towards more progressive and inclusive versions of masculinity (Bowles, 2020; Cea, 2019; Dickson, 2019; Dukoff, 2019; Gillette, 2021; The Editors of GQ, 2019; Welch, 2019), the definitions and values of traditional masculinity as we know it may soon be remnants of the past.

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Appendix A

Time to talk! An adolescent athlete's conversations

This study invites you to answer questions about a high school athlete. Please try to use the entire scale when answering questions, meaning some of your answers may likely be at the lower and higher ends of the scale. Please be open and honest in your responses.

Thank you for your participation!

Please read the Informed Consent before beginning the study.

I understand that this study is anonymous and confidential and will ask me about my opinions on a story pertaining to a high school athlete. The study will take 5 minutes to complete. I understand I can discontinue at any time without penalty by exiting the survey, and may skip questions if I prefer not to answer. If I have any questions about my rights as a subject or the manner in which this research is conducted, I can contact the principal investigator, Brandon Martin, at the University of Maine, Farmington (brandon.c.martin@maine.edu) or the Chair of the UMF IRB, Donna Karno, Ph.D. (donna.karno@maine.edu).

Please select below before continuing to the study.

Yes, I consent to participate and am 18 years of age or older.

No, I do not wish to participate and/or am not at least 18 years of age.

Please read the following story and respond to the corresponding questions.

Anthony is a high school (freshman who is the backup on the junior varsity (football/swimming) team/senior who is the star on the varsity (football/swimming) team). He has two brothers and a dog at home, and he has a 2.8 GPA. Anthony likes to play video games as well as being outdoors with friends. His teammates recently noticed that he was wearing pink, sparkly nail polish. One day after (football/swimming) practice as Anthony gets ready to leave the locker room, the captain of the varsity (football/swimming) team calls him over to talk to him.

What do you think the captain of the team talked to Anthony about? [text box to respond; evaluating qualitative responses]

After Anthony's talk with the captain, he heads out of the locker room to the parking lot where his dad is to pick him up. "How was practice?" Anthony's dad asks as he steps into the car. Anthony tells his dad about the talk with the captain. How do you think Anthony's dad would respond? [text box to respond; evaluating qualitative responses]

Please respond to the following questions pertaining to the story.

Anthony is good at sports.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

Anthony's father is masculine.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

The captain of the varsity team is masculine.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

Anthony is masculine.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

If Anthony wants to paint his nails, he should take it off before he plays.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

Anthony is heterosexual (straight).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

My father would never let me paint my nails.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

I believe it's acceptable for a man to wear nail polish.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

Anthony is feminine.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

Sports

Please read the instructions below before answering any questions.

Please review the following list of sports and rate how you perceive the sport, from 1 (feminine) to 7 (masculine).

Baseball

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine			Gender-neutral		Masculine	

Basketball

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine			Gender-neutral		Masculine	

Football

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine			Gender-neutral		Masculine	

Ice hockey

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine			Gender-neutral		Masculine	

Rugby

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine			Gender-neutral		Masculine	

Running track

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine			Gender-neutral		Masculine	

Soccer

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine			Gender-neutral		Masculine	

Swimming

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine	Gender-neutral				Masculine	

Tennis

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine	Gender-neutral				Masculine	

Wrestling

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine	Gender-neutral				Masculine	

Fashion accessories

Please read the instructions below before answering any questions.

Please review the following list of fashion accessories and rate how you perceive the fashion accessory, from 1 (feminine) to 7 (masculine).

Wearing stud earrings

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine	Gender-neutral				Masculine	

Wearing black nail polish

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine	Gender-neutral				Masculine	

Carrying a satchel

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine	Gender-neutral				Masculine	

Wearing yoga pants/leggings

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine	Gender-neutral				Masculine	

Eye liner

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine			Gender-neutral			Masculine

Wearing pink nail polish

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine			Gender-neutral			Masculine

Wearing a skirt

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine			Gender-neutral			Masculine

Wearing dangly earrings

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine			Gender-neutral			Masculine

Please read the following instructions below before answering any questions.

When you think back to when you were in school, can you think of any boy(s) who didn't conform to traditional masculine norms? What did they do, and how did your peers respond?
[textbox response, to evaluate qualitative data]

What is your age? [textbox response]

Thank you

Thank you for participating in this study. Your responses will help us understand an aspect of men's friendships that we are studying: gender stereotypes in friendship and school relationships. We're especially interested in how men support and/or critique each other, and how some men may be bothered (or not) when another person strays from society's gender roles. The survey code is (110998/111197/102998/090700).

Appendix B

Hey man, what do *you* think about nail polish?

This study invites you to answer questions about a high school athlete. Please try to use the entire scale when answering questions, meaning some of your answers may likely be at the lower and higher ends of the scale. Please be open and honest in your responses.

Thank you for your participation!

Please read the Informed Consent before beginning the study.

I understand that this study is open to male and male-identifying participants, is anonymous and confidential, and will ask me about my opinions on a story pertaining to a high school athlete. The study will take 10 minutes to complete. I understand that I will be asked to report my worker ID, which will not be shared with anyone outside of the principal investigator. I understand I can discontinue at any time without penalty by exiting the survey, and may skip questions if I prefer not to answer. If I have any questions about my rights as a subject or the manner in which this research is conducted, I can contact the principal investigator, Brandon Martin, at the University of Maine, Farmington (brandon.c.martin@maine.edu) or the Chair of the UMF IRB, Donna Karno, Ph.D. (donna.karno@maine.edu).

Please select below before continuing to the study.

Yes, I consent to participate and am 18
years of age or older.

No, I do not wish to participate and/or am not at
least 18 years of age.

Please enter your worker ID. [textbox]

Please read the following story and respond to the corresponding questions.

Anthony is a high school (freshman who is the backup on the junior varsity (football/swimming) team/senior who is the star on the varsity (football/swimming) team). He has two brothers and a dog at home, and he has a 2.8 GPA. Anthony likes to play video games as well as being outdoors with friends. His teammates recently noticed that he was wearing pink, sparkly nail polish. One day after (football/swimming) practice as Anthony gets ready to leave the locker room, the captain of the varsity (football/swimming) team calls him over to talk to him.

What do you think the captain of the team talked to Anthony about? [text box to respond; evaluating qualitative responses]

After Anthony's talk with the captain, he heads out of the locker room to the parking lot where his dad is to pick him up. "How was practice?" Anthony's dad asks as he steps into the car. Anthony tells his dad about the talk with the captain. How do you think Anthony's dad would respond? [text box to respond; evaluating qualitative responses]

Please respond to the following questions pertaining to the story.

Please review the following questions and rate your responses from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Anthony is good at sports.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

Anthony's father is masculine.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

The captain of the varsity team is masculine.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

Anthony is masculine.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

If Anthony wants to paint his nails, he should take it off before he plays.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

Anthony is heterosexual (straight).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

My father would never let me paint my nails.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

I believe it's acceptable for a man to wear nail polish.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

Anthony is feminine.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

Please answer the following questions regarding the story above.

Please review the following questions and rate your responses from 1 (not at all surprising) to 7 (extremely surprising).

After pulling Anthony aside to talk, the captain tells him he's been a great help to the varsity team during practices and the team is thankful to have players like him. How surprising is this to you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all surprising			Extremely surprising			

When Anthony told his dad about what the captain told him, his dad quickly turned his attention to Anthony's painted nails. How surprising is this to you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all surprising			Extremely surprising			

Please review each question and answer to the best of your ability.

Please review the following questions and rate your responses from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Men should watch football games instead of soap operas.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

Boys should prefer to play with trucks rather than dolls.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

A man should always be the boss.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

I think a young man should try to be physically tough, even if he's not big.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

Men should not be too quick to tell others that they care about them.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			

Please review each question and answer based on your agreeableness with the statement.

Please review the following questions and rate your responses from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

Talking (about my feelings) during my sexual relations is difficult for me.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

I have difficulty expressing my emotional needs to my partner.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

I have difficulty expressing my tender feelings.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

I do not like to show my emotions to other people.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

Winning is a measure of my value and personal wealth.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

I strive to be more successful than others.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

Being smarter or physically stronger than other men is important to me.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

I like to feel superior to other people.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

Affection with other men makes me tense.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

Men who touch other men make me uncomfortable.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

Please select the number 23.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree		23	Strongly agree		

Hugging other men is difficult for me.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

Being very personal with other men makes me feel uncomfortable.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

Finding time to relax is difficult for me.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

My needs to work or study keep me from my family or leisure more than I would like.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

My work or school often disrupts other parts of my life (home, health, leisure, etc).

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

Overwork and stress, caused by a need to achieve on the job or in school, affects/hurts my life.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		

Please read the Directions below before answering questions for each section.

DIRECTIONS: For each question below, please think about guys you hang out with (including friends, teammates, and/or coworkers). Answer each question by rating how often each of the things below has happened to you in the past month whether in-person and/or through phone or internet communication (using the scale of Never to Daily).

How often in the past month did boys you hang out with give you a hard time or tease you about...

	Never	Rarely	A few times a month	A few times a week	Daily
your clothing style	1	2	3	4	5
your physical appearance or body type	1	2	3	4	5
performing well at work	1	2	3	4	5
not “hooking up” or not being sexually active enough	1	2	3	4	5
not being good at sports	1	2	3	4	5

How often in the past month did guys you hang out with call you a name or say something to you like...

	Never	Rarely	A few times a month	A few times a week	Daily
girl, bitch, pussy, or something similar	1	2	3	4	5
gay, homo, that's so gay, or something similar	1	2	3	4	5
fag or something similar	1	2	3	4	5
man-up, wimp, suck it up, or something similar	1	2	3	4	5
bros over hoes, whipped, or something similar	1	2	3	4	5

How often in the past month did guys you hang out with...

	Never	Rarely	A few times a month	A few times a week	Daily
challenge you to rough-house or wrestle with them	1	2	3	4	5
challenge you to prove your strength, such as through push-ups, arm wrestling, or something similar	1	2	3	4	5
challenge or dare you to do something that might be risky or dangerous	1	2	3	4	5
challenge you to prove your toughness by doing something that could be painful	1	2	3	4	5
hurt you physically, such as giving you a "dead arm" or doing something else that hurts	1	2	3	4	5

Please read the Directions below before answering questions for each section.

DIRECTIONS: For each question below, please think about guys you hang out with (including friends, teammates, and/or coworkers). Answer each question by rating how often you did each of the things below in the past month whether in-person and/or through phone or internet communication (using the scale of Never to Daily).

How often in the past month did you give guys you hang out with a hard time or tease someone about...

	Never	Rarely	A few times a month	A few times a week	Daily
their clothing style	1	2	3	4	5
their physical appearance or body type	1	2	3	4	5
performing well at work	1	2	3	4	5
not “hooking up” or not being sexually active enough	1	2	3	4	5
not being good at sports	1	2	3	4	5

How often in the past month did you call guys you hang out with a name or say something like...

	Never	Rarely	A few times a month	A few times a week	Daily
girl, bitch, pussy, or something similar	1	2	3	4	5
gay, homo, that’s so gay, or something simliar	1	2	3	4	5
fag or something similar	1	2	3	4	5
man-up, wimp, suck it up, or something similar	1	2	3	4	5
bros over hoes, whipped, or something similar	1	2	3	4	5

How often in the past month did you do the following to guys you hang out with...

	Never	Rarely	A few times a month	A few times a week	Daily
challenge another guy to rough-house or wrestle with you	1	2	3	4	5

challenge another guy to prove his strength, such as through push-ups, arm wrestling, or something similar	1	2	3	4	5
challenge or dare another guy to do something that might be risky or dangerous	1	2	3	4	5
challenge another guy to prove his toughness by doing something that could be painful	1	2	3	4	5
hurt another guy physically, such as giving him a “dead arm” or doing something else that hurts	1	2	3	4	5

Please read the Directions below before answering questions for each section.

DIRECTIONS: In thinking about the different ways that guys you hang out with (including friends, teammates, and/or coworkers) have called you names or challenged you, how much have these behaviors bothered you in general? Please rate by rating how much these behaviors have bothered you below (using the scale provided of Never to Always).

How much does it bother you when guys you hang out with give you a hard time or tease you about...

	Never bothers me	Rarely bothers me	Some- times bothers me	Often bothers me	Always bothers me
your clothing style	1	2	3	4	5
your physical appearance or body type	1	2	3	4	5
performing well at work	1	2	3	4	5
not “hooking up” or not being sexually active enough	1	2	3	4	5
not being good at sports	1	2	3	4	5

How much does it bother you when guys you hang out with call you a name or say something to you like...

	Never bothers me	Rarely bothers me	Some- times bothers me	Often bothers me	Always bothers me
girl, bitch, pussy, or something similar	1	2	3	4	5
gay, homo, that's so gay, or something similar	1	2	3	4	5
fag or something similar	1	2	3	4	5
man-up, wimp, suck it up, or something similar	1	2	3	4	5
bros over hoes, whipped, or something similar	1	2	3	4	5

How much does it bother you when guys you hang out with...

	Never bothers me	Rarely bothers me	Some- times bothers me	Often bothers me	Always bothers me
challenge you to rough-house or wrestle with them	1	2	3	4	5
challenge you to prove your strength, such as through push-ups, arm wrestling, or something similar	1	2	3	4	5
challenge or dare you to do something that might be risky or dangerous	1	2	3	4	5
challenge you to prove your toughness by doing something that could be painful	1	2	3	4	5

hurt you physically such as giving you a “dead arm” or doing something else that hurts

1

2

3

4

5

In thinking about these different ways that guys can call their friends and other guys they hang out with names or challenge one another, how much of a PROBLEM do you think this is for guys in general? Please rate by selecting how much of a problem you think it is for guys in general below:

1

2

3

4

5

Not a problem

Hardly a problem

Sort of a problem

A problem

A major problem

An update!

It turns out the captain of the varsity team was debating between choosing Anthony or another athlete as the assistant for the summer (swimming/football) camp for 1st-3rd graders. How likely do you think it is for the captain to choose Anthony?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Not at all likely

Extremely likely

Please answer the following demographic questions.

Which of the following best describes how you identify?

Male

Female

Non-binary

Prefer not to
answerOther (please
specify)

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

Asexual

Bisexual

Gay or
lesbian

Heterosexual/straight

Pansexual

Unsure

Prefer not to
answer

Please describe your ethnicity and race (select all that apply).

White/Caucasian

Black or
African
American

Asian

Latino/Latina/Latinx

Pacific
Islander/Native
HawaiianNative
American/Alaskan
NativePrefer
not to
answerPrefer
to self-
describe

What is your age? [textbox?]

What is your highest level of education completed?

Some high school	High school/GED	Some college or Associate's	Bachelor's	Some post graduate (e.g., MA, MS, JD, PhD)	Post graduate
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How would you best describe your ideological self-identification?

Very liberal	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Very conservative
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Which state/territory do you currently live in? [dropdown]

Alabama
Alaska
American Samoa
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Guam
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina

North Dakota
Northern Mariana Islands
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Puerto Rico
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virgin Islands
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

Thank you

Thank you for participating in this study. Your responses will help us understand an aspect of men's friendships that we are studying: gender stereotypes in friendship and school relationships. We're especially interested in how men support and/or critique each other, and how some men may be bothered (or not) when another person strays from society's gender roles. The survey code is (110998/111197/102998/090700).

Appendix C

Table 5
Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants in the Main Study

Variable	F/F		S/F		F/S		S/S		Full sample	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Sexual orientation										
Asexual	3	4.1	1	2.2	2	4.2	0	0	6	2.8
Bisexual	8	11.0	2	4.4	2	4.2	3	6.5	15	7.1
Gay or lesbian	5	6.8	2	4.4	3	6.3	4	8.7	14	6.6
Heterosexual/straight	56	76.7	40	88.9	41	85.4	39	84.8	176	83.0
Pansexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unsure	1	1.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.5
Race/ethnicity										
White/Caucasian	57	79.2	35	76.1	40	83.3	27	56.3	159	80.0
Black or African American	5	7.0	8	17.4	6	12.5	9	18.8	28	14.0
Asian	5	7.0	1	2.2	0	0	8	16.7	14	7.0
Latino/Latina/Latinx	2	2.8	1	2.2	0	0	4	8.3	7	3.5
Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Native American/Alaskan Native	1	1.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.0
Two or more	2	2.8	1	2.2	2	4.2	0	0	5	2.5
Ideological affiliation										
Very liberal	10	13.7	3	6.5	11	22.9	6	13.0	30	14.1
Liberal	21	28.8	14	30.4	13	27.1	20	43.5	68	31.9
Moderate	17	23.3	13	28.3	12	25.0	7	15.2	49	23.0
Conservative	19	26.0	11	24.0	6	12.5	8	17.4	44	20.7
Very conservative	6	8.2	5	10.9	6	12.5	5	10.9	22	10.3

Highest educational level

Some high school	0	0	0	0	1	2.1	1	2.2	2	0.9
High school/GED	3	4.2	2	4.3	2	4.3	4	8.7	11	5.2
Some college or associate's	15	20.8	9	19.6	18	38.3	12	26.1	54	25.6
Bachelor's	31	43.1	24	52.2	20	42.6	22	47.8	97	46.0
Some post graduate	13	18.1	4	8.7	4	8.5	3	6.5	24	11.4
Post graduate	10	13.9	7	15.2	2	4.3	4	8.7	23	10.9

Note: $N = 213$. F/F = freshman/football, S/F = senior/football, F/S = freshman/swimming, S/S = senior/swimming.