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## **Hypermasculine, Antifeminine: The Role of Masculine Identity in Relational Aggression Among Gay Men**

Daniel Locke Deason  
*University of Southern Mississippi*

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HYPERMASCULINE, ANTIFEMININE: THE ROLE OF MASCULINE IDENTITY  
IN RELATIONAL AGGRESSION AMONG GAY MEN

by

Daniel Locke Deason

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School  
and the Department of Psychology  
at The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

---

Dr. Eric R. Dahlen, Committee Chair  
Associate Professor, Psychology

---

Dr. Michael B. Madson, Committee Member  
Professor, Psychology

---

Dr. Bonnie C. Nicholson, Committee Member  
Associate Professor, Psychology

---

Dr. Richard S. Mohn, Committee Member  
Associate Professor, Educational Research and Administration

---

Dr. Karen S. Coats  
Dean of the Graduate School

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## ABSTRACT

### HYPERMASCULINE, ANTIFEMININE: THE ROLE OF MASCULINE IDENTITY IN RELATIONAL AGGRESSION AMONG GAY MEN

by Daniel Locke Deason

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Relational aggression is a form of aggression that targets a victim's relationships or sense of inclusion. Depression, social ostracism, anxiety, and poor psychological adjustment are some of the negative correlates that have been identified in child and adolescent victims of relational aggression. For older adolescents and emerging adults, similar negative correlates have been found. Despite the efforts to identify these correlates, little research has been conducted on relational aggression among minority groups. The present study addressed relational aggression among college-aged gay-identifying men through the lens of Exclusively Masculine Identity Theory (EMIT), which was developed to account for anti-gay attitudes among heterosexual men and women. Although the factor structure of Kelley and Robertson's measure of relational aggression in gay male relationships could not be confirmed in the present sample, the use of an alternative measure of relational aggression permitted us to test the study hypotheses. The present study found that participants with an exclusively masculine identity reported less perpetration of relational aggression, rather than more as was expected. Additionally, domains of masculine ideology appeared to be more relevant in predicting relational aggression/victimization than EMIT. Further, participants endorsed less anti-effeminacy attitudes than previous research would suggest. Similar to other

studies, there was a positive relationship between relational aggression perpetration and victimization.

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## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to my partner, Robby Byrd, for his continued support of me throughout my time in graduate school and through many long days and nights of completing this dissertation. I truly believe I would not have made it this far without him, and I can never truly express how much I value his love and encouragement. I would also like to dedicate this work to my parents. My father was incredibly influential in instilling in me a sense of pride in my work and, of course, giving me plenty of laughs along this journey. I want to thank my mother for introducing me to psychology through her own work and for always being an amazing role model for me both professionally and personally. I love you both very much.

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## CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

Aggression permeates almost every relationship human beings have with others. In relationships with classmates and co-workers (Chapell et al., 2004; Kaukiainen et al., 2001), friends (Gros, Stauffacher-Gros, & Simms, 2010), romantic partners (Goldstein, 2011) and family members (Follingstad, Coyne, & Gambone, 2005), aggression plays a significant and damaging role. The financial impact is staggering: approximately \$5.6 billion dollars is spent per year on health services related to aggression and violence (Corso, Mercy, Simon, Finkelstein, & Miller, 2007). Given the physical, emotional, psychological, and financial costs associated with aggression, it is imperative to continue to investigate it empirically.

Various definitions of aggression exist in the literature, though most involve descriptions of behavior that is intended to harm others (Archer & Coyne, 2005). The psychological literature on aggression has emphasized its overt forms (i.e., physical and verbal aggression); however, there is mounting evidence that relational aggression (i.e., behaviors such as gossiping, spreading rumors, and excluding others from group activities) can be equally harmful to victims (Coyne, Archer, & Eslea, 2006; Paquette & Underwood, 1999).

Relational aggression and victimization are under-researched constructs, with most empirical work focusing on adolescents and children (Werner & Crick, 2000). Social withdrawal, symptoms of anxiety and depression, and somatic complaints have been identified as correlates of relational aggression and victimization among adolescent populations (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004; Crick, Ostrov, & Werner, 2006; Ellis, Crooks, & Wolfe, 2009; Loukas, Paulos, & Robinson, 2005; Olafsen

& Viemerö, 2000; Prinstein, Boergers, & Vernberg, 2001; Sullivan, Farrell, & Kliewer, 2006). Other researchers have found that relational aggression may evolve over time to more overt forms of aggression, such as physical aggression (Leonard, Quigley, & Collins, 2002).

In emerging adults, relational aggression may serve to replace physical and other overt forms of aggression, as these become less socially acceptable in adulthood (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992). In young adults, adverse correlates of relational aggression and victimization include decreased levels of interpersonal functioning and psychological adjustment (Bailey & Ostrov, 2007; Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Dahlen, Czar, Prather, & Dyess, 2013; Storch, Bagner, Geffken, & Baumeister, 2004; Storch, Werner, & Storch, 2003). As emerging adulthood can be thought of as a time for individuals to gradually shift to living away from home to begin higher education or entry into the workplace, relational aggression can be especially impactful during this developmental stage of adulthood. Indeed, a form of aggression that specifically targets one's relationships, reputation, and status can have significant consequences during a phase of life where new friendships and romantic relationships are frequently formed.

While some research on relational aggression and victimization exists relating to international differences (French, Jansen, & Pidada, 2002; Russell, Hart, Robinson, & Olsen, 2003) and gender differences (e.g., Coyne, Archer, & Eslea, 2006; Marsee, Silverthorn, & Frick, 2005), little research has been devoted to sexual orientation (Kelley & Robertson, 2008). The present study sought to inform our understanding of relational aggression and victimization in gay men's peer relationships by examining relational

aggression through the lens of Exclusively Masculine Identity Theory. These variables and their relevance to relational aggression will be reviewed in the sections that follow.

### Relational Aggression and Victimization

*Relational aggression* refers to a form of aggressive behavior, distinct from overt aggression, that involves harming others through damaging their relationships, reputation, status, and/or feelings of belonging through intentional manipulation, either directly or indirectly (Crick, 1995, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Crick, Casas, & Ku, 1999; Ellis et al., 2009; Leff et al., 2010; Linder, Crick, & Collins, 2002; Werner & Crick, 1999).

Relational aggression is often considered to be a non-direct type of aggression and is at times used interchangeably with other non-direct forms of aggression, such as psychological aggression, social aggression, and indirect aggression. However, as Warren, Richardson, and McQuillin (2011) noted, the primary difference between relational aggression and other non-direct forms of aggression is that relational aggression can include more direct actions. For example, explicitly stating one's intention to stop being friends with the victim or threatening to spread rumors about the victim to obtain compliance could be considered direct forms of relational aggression (Crick, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Richardson & Green, 1997). Though not the focus of the present study, relational aggression has also been studied within the context of heterosexual romantic relationships – known as romantic relational aggression.

Relational aggression within a romantic relationship can include behaviors like flirting with another person in front of a significant other or giving a significant other “the silent treatment.” While these behaviors may be exhibited innocuously, relational aggression requires that these behaviors be engaged in with the intent to harm a target. Specifically,

relationally aggressive behavior targets a victim's relationships, social standing, reputation, and feelings of belongingness. Other forms of aggression that are similar, yet distinct from relational aggression include indirect aggression and social aggression.

*Psychological aggression* appears to be mostly studied within the context of romantic relationships, particularly with respect to intimate partner violence (IPV). Further, much like other forms of non-overt aggression, conceptualization is difficult due to interchangeably used definitions. Follingstad (2007) defined psychological aggression as "...verbal and mental methods designed to emotionally wound, coerce, control, intimidate, psychologically harm, and express anger" (pp. 443). Thus, psychological aggression may describe a variety of physical and verbal behaviors on a spectrum of severity, from yelling to threats or property damage (Mason et al., 2014). Psychological aggression includes some behaviors similar to relational aggression (e.g., threats), though its inclusion of physical behaviors distinctly differentiates itself from relational aggression.

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its inclusion of physical behaviors distinctly differentiates itself from relational aggression.

*Social aggression* encompasses similar behaviors as indirect and relational aggression, such as spreading rumors, damaging the victim's reputation, and manipulating the victim's relationships (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Galen & Underwood, 1997). Social aggression, unlike indirect aggression, includes direct and indirect forms of aggression, including exerting aggression through non-verbal communication (e.g., rolling one's eyes, giving "dirty" looks) (Cappella & Weinstein, 2006). Though relational aggression and social aggression both include overt and covert behavior, overt socially aggressive behavior constitutes more subtle behavior, such as eye rolling (Capella & Weinstein, 2006). Further, the context in which social aggression is perpetrated appears limited to the peer group, whereas relational aggression can be observed in multiple contexts, including romantic relationships (e.g., Goldstein, 2011), peer relationships, collegiate athletics (Storch et al., 2003), and the workplace (Zhu & Kou, 2014). Thus, relational aggression overlaps somewhat with other aggression-related constructs, though sets itself apart in its scope and manifestation in multiple contexts not addressed by other aggression constructs.

#### *Adverse Correlates of Relational Aggression*

When transitioning into adulthood, overt aggression becomes less socially acceptable (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992). Relational aggression may function as a more adaptive form of aggression in adults as relational aggression can be used in a less direct and more covert manner compared to overt aggression (Goldstein, Young, & Boyd, 2008). Further, consequences such as legal recourse, physical retaliation, and other

consequences associated with overt aggression can be largely avoided in utilizing relational aggression (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Linder, Crick, & Collins, 2002). Lastly, as noted above, previous research suggests that relational aggression can inflict a similar degree of harm on victims as overt physical aggression (Coyne et al., 2006; Paquette & Underwood, 1999).

Most of the research on relational aggression and victimization has been conducted using samples of school-age children and early adolescents. Therefore, much more is known about the adverse outcomes associated with relationally aggressive behavior among younger persons as compared to late adolescents and emerging adults. Ellis and colleagues (2009) found in a sample of 1,279 9<sup>th</sup> graders that relational aggression perpetration was associated with increased levels of depression, anxiety, and delinquent behavior. Relational aggression among adolescents has also been found to have significant relationships with substance use (Sullivan et al., 2006), difficulties in peer relationships (Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004), social anxiety (Loukas et al., 2005), loneliness, and depression (Prinstein, Boergers, & Vernberg, 2001). Additionally, researchers have discovered that adolescents who witness relationally aggressive behavior at school are more apt to consider their school unsafe, be more dissatisfied with their school environment, and bring a weapon to school (Goldstein et al., 2008). Thus, it appears that relational aggression is an especially relevant and damaging behavior among adolescent groups, especially with regard to their psychosocial development.

Far less research on relational aggression has been conducted among emerging adult populations. Given the myriad of adverse correlates of relational aggression

already identified in adolescent groups, examining relational aggression in an older sample is imperative.

Other researchers have attempted to illuminate constructs that function as predictors of relationally aggressive behavior and normative beliefs regarding relational aggression among emerging adults. Bailey and Ostrov (2007) conducted a study to differentiate between cognitive beliefs about aggressive behavior, including proactive and reactive relational aggression. The labels *reactive* and *proactive* relational aggression refer to the function of the aggressive behavior, rather than the form of the aggressive behavior (i.e., *relational* aggression). Reactive relational aggression can be thought of as impulsive, retaliatory, and anger-oriented aggressive response to a perceived threat. Proactive relational aggression functions as a calculated aggressive action that is more goal-oriented. Bailey and Ostrov (2007) surveyed 165 college students (83 women) with the objectives of examining gender differences in aggressive behavior, examining the relationship between impulsivity and various forms and functions of aggression, investigating the relationship between hostile attribution biases and aggression, and surveying emerging adults' normative beliefs about aggressive behavior.

The authors conducted a MANOVA to analyze gender differences and regression models to address their three other objectives. They observed gender differences primarily for proactive physical aggression, as men self-reported in engaging in this type of form and function of aggression significantly more than women. The same result was found for reactive physical aggression. Thus, no significant gender differences were observed for reactive or proactive relational aggression. No significant results were found relative to the authors' second objective; impulsivity was not found to be a

predictor for any of the aggression subtypes (proactive relational aggression, reactive relational aggression, proactive physical aggression, and reactive physical aggression) or gender. For objective 3, hostile attribution biases emerged as a predictor for only reactive relational aggression for women. Lastly, in analyzing objective 4, the authors discovered that gender, proactive relational aggression, and reactive physical aggression were predictors of normative beliefs of aggression.

Thus, within the context of relational aggression among emerging adults, the authors made some important discoveries. Firstly, the authors noted that both types of relational aggression were correlated with impulsivity. Though impulsivity-regulation deficits have been observed among relationally aggressive emerging adults previously (Werner & Crick, 1999), the authors' findings in the present study reinforce the importance of considering the role of impulsivity when studying relational aggression. The authors' findings regarding hostile attribution biases suggests that therapeutic interventions targeting these biases may lead to a decrease in aggressive behavior. Lastly, their findings suggest a positive relationship between proactive relational aggression and normative beliefs about relational aggression.

Normative beliefs regarding relational aggression among emerging adults also appear to affect how they respond when witnessing relationally aggressive behavior. You and Bellmore (2014) surveyed 228 undergraduate college students to examine how normative beliefs about relationally aggressive behavior and susceptibility to peer influence affected students' behavioral responses when witnessing peer relational aggression. The authors found that normative beliefs about relational aggression indeed influenced the witness role behavior (assisting, reinforcing, defending, or onlooking)

exhibited by participants. Specifically, individuals who harbored stronger beliefs about the acceptability of relational aggression were more likely to engage in assisting and reinforcing behaviors and less defending behaviors. You and Bellmore (2014) contended that this finding suggests that emerging adults who witness relationally aggressive behavior more frequently may be more accustomed or desensitized to the behavior, and will not recognize this aggression as being as harmful or negative. Participants with normative beliefs about the acceptability of aggression also engaged in more on-looking behaviors, suggesting they are more likely to stand-by rather than defend the victim.

From the studies presented thus far, it appears that relational aggression is a salient experience for emerging adults in college, and that men and women appear to agree on the types of aggression they perceive among their peers. In order to observe how relationally aggressive behavior impacts college students' likeability and popularity among peers, Lansu and Cillessen (2012) surveyed 235 students aged 18 to 25. Students were surveyed by classroom, comprising of an average of 13 students across 20 different classrooms. To assess popularity and preference, students were instructed to name classroom peers they liked the most, liked the least, were the most popular, and the least popular. Students were then instructed to name students according to a variety of behaviors, including behaviors deemed relationally aggressive (e.g., "who intimidates others verbally," "who excludes others," "who gossips about others."). In addition to finding that emerging adults discriminate between liked and popular peers, the authors found that relationally aggressive behavior was associated with low preference and high popularity ratings from peers. Thus, it appears that a person who engages in relationally aggressive behavior (e.g., ignoring, excluding, gossiping about others) is likely to be

disliked by others and simultaneously gain influence and status among peers. The authors noted that this is a similar relationship that has been observed in adolescent samples (e.g., Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004; Prinstein & Cillessen, 2003). The relationship of relational aggression with low preference and high popularity also appeared to be equally prevalent among men and women.

Thus, it appears that while relational aggression among emerging adults may make perpetrators more influential among their peer group, it simultaneously hurts their ability to be liked by others. Diminished likeability is not the only negative consequence of relational aggression – authors have uncovered additional negative correlates. For instance, Werner and Crick (1999) surveyed 225 college students in fraternities and sororities using peer-nomination to assess aggression and social adjustment. Participants specifically completed measures related to disordered eating patterns, life satisfaction, and personality pathology. The authors found that, for men, relational aggression was positively correlated with peer rejection and egocentricity. For women, relational aggression was positively correlated with several different negative outcomes, including: antisocial behavior, negative relationships, stimulus-seeking, egocentricity, peer rejection, affective instability, identity problems, affective depressive symptoms, bulimic symptoms, and self-harm behavior. After performing regressions, the authors found relational aggression contributed to the prediction of stimulus-seeking, egocentricity, affective instability, negative relationships, and self-harm. Overall, relational aggression was associated with higher levels of psychological maladjustment. Based on their results, perpetrators of relational aggression displayed higher levels of peer rejection, antisocial personality features, and lower levels of prosocial behavior.

More recent research has also documented negative correlates for college student perpetrators of relational aggression, such as anxiety, depression, stress, higher levels of trait anger, academic burnout, and alcohol misuse (Dahlen et al., 2013). In Prohaska's (2013) study with a sample of 270 college students, they investigated the relationship between relational aggression and disordered eating behavior, affective instability, and dysfunctional interpersonal behavior. Though they did not find a significant relationship between relational aggression and disordered eating, Prohaska (2012) found that relational aggression was a significant predictor of emotion dysregulation, depressive symptoms, interoceptive deficits, and interpersonal alienation.

Problematic alcohol consumption has also been found to have relationships with relationally aggressive behavior among college student. Grimaldi, Napper, and LaBrie (2014) examined the relationships between negative urgency (e.g., impulsive reactions to negative emotions), positive urgency (e.g., impulsive reactions to positive emotions), negative consequences of alcohol use, and relational aggression perpetration/victimization frequency. Specifically, the authors examined whether impulsivity (e.g., negative/positive urgency) moderated the relationship of relational aggression perpetration/victimization and negative alcohol-related consequences. Their findings were that negative urgency, not positive, moderated the relationship for relational aggression perpetrators. Other notable findings from their study were that 91.4% of students reported perpetrating relational aggression and 95.5% reported being victimized by relational aggression. Further, alcohol-related consequences were positively associated with relational aggression perpetration and victimization.

In Storch and colleagues' (2003) sample of 105 intercollegiate athletes, they surveyed participants using peer-nomination of relationally aggressive behavior, self-reported socioeconomic status, and subscales from the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI). They found that, for men and women, peer rejection was positively correlated with relational aggression. For women specifically, the authors found relational aggression and alcohol use were positively correlated and prosocial behavior negatively correlated with relational aggression.

Storch, Bagner, Geffken, and Baumeister (2004) also conducted a study to examine the association between overt and relational aggression and psychosocial adjustment in a sample of college students. The authors surveyed 303 undergraduate students (217 female) on their self-reported engagement of peer relational aggression, social anxiety, loneliness, and personality features. In addition to finding that men perpetrated more relational aggression than women, they found that depression, social anxiety, alcohol and drug problems, and loneliness were predicted by relational aggression. Additionally, men's use of relational aggression was predictive of alcohol use.

Qualitative research has also investigated the experiences of perpetrators and victims of relational aggression. Rivera-Maestre (2015) conducted interviews with 19 low-income African American and Latina women aged 18 to 21 (37% planned to enroll/were enrolled in college) on their relational, social, and overt aggression use. All participants were able to describe experiences relevant to relationally aggressive behavior, and 11 women (69%) reported relational aggression as a precursor to physical violence.



In addition to negative correlates of relational aggression, personality traits associated with relational aggression perpetration have also received attention in the literature. For example, Burton, Hafetz, and Henninger (2007) discovered relationships between relational aggression and domains from the Five Factor Model (or “Big Five”) of personality. After surveying a sample of 134 university students, the authors found that relational aggression was associated with higher neuroticism scores. Further, relational aggression was associated with lower conscientiousness scores and lower levels of emotional understanding and functioning. Of note, Verona, Sadeh, Case, Reed, & Bhattacharjee (2008) produced similar results, finding that relational aggression in men was not only related to neuroticism, but also emotional stability and lower levels of conscientiousness and agreeableness. Similarly, in a sample of 456 college students, Deason (2015) found that high extraversion and neuroticism scores and low levels of agreeableness predicted peer relational aggression.

Other personality characteristics have also been investigated with respect to relational aggression, most notably psychopathic personality traits. Given the strength of psychopathic personality traits’ ability to predict physical aggression (e.g., Helfritz & Stanford, 2006; Porter & Woodworth, 2006), psychopathic personality traits are becoming an increasingly relevant construct in the relational aggression literature.

In a sample of 220 undergraduate students, Schmeelk and colleagues (2008) conducted a study to psychopathic personality traits’ relationship with relational aggression and overt aggression. In contrast to other findings on gender differences with regard to relational aggression, the authors found that men scored significantly higher on their measure of relational aggression than women. Additionally, the authors found that

relational aggression was strongly correlated with Cluster B personality disorder traits compared to Cluster A or C. This finding remained steady even after controlling for overt aggression. Schmeelk, Sylvers, and Lilienfeld (2008) note that this finding suggests that relational aggression has a distinct relationship to Cluster B disorders compared to overt aggression. Specifically, relational aggression was correlated with secondary traits of psychopathy (e.g., impulsivity and antisocial behavior) in comparison to primary traits. Lastly, Schmeelk and colleagues (2008) discovered that gender did not moderate the personality disorder correlates associated with relational aggression in their study, except for sadistic personality disorder. They found the traits of this disorder were more highly correlated with both relational and overt aggression for men compared to women.

Along the same lines of Schmeelk and colleagues' (2008) research, Czar, Dahlen, Bullock, and Nicholson (2011) surveyed a sample of 291 undergraduate students on their self-reported relational aggression, physical aggression, and psychopathic personality traits. Through regression analyses, the authors discovered that relational aggression was predicted by psychopathic personality traits above and beyond the variance accounted for by physical aggression. That is, psychopathic personality traits appear to play a significant role in the prediction of relationally aggressive behavior. Further, they found that for both men and women, participants who reported higher levels of psychopathic traits were more likely to engage in relationally aggressive behavior in their peer and romantic relationships. Lastly, unlike previous research (e.g., Schmeelk et al., 2008), both primary psychopathic traits (e.g., lack of empathy, manipulation, superficial charm)

and secondary traits (impulsiveness and antisocial behavior) predicted relational aggression.

#### *Adverse Correlates of Relational Victimization*

Relational aggression researchers have also identified correlates of relational victimization, the experience of being the victim of relational aggression.

Unsurprisingly, like perpetrators, victims of relational aggression also experience a number of adverse consequences. Though some outcomes associated with relational victimization have been discovered for emerging adult and adult populations (to be discussed later), the majority of the work in relational victimization is with child and adolescent populations. For example, Olafsen and Viemero (2000) performed a study of bullies, victims, aggression, and coping strategies in fifth and sixth graders. Their findings were that girls victimized by indirect aggression were found to use destructive coping strategies (e.g., smoking, self-harm behavior) significantly more than girls who were victimized by overt aggression. The authors suggested that victims of more indirect forms of aggression may turn this aggression inward toward self-destructive behavior.

Further, psychological and behavioral maladjustment has also been observed in adolescents who have experienced relational victimization in their peer relationships. Ellis et al. (2008) surveyed a sample of 1,896 (974 girls) ninth-grade students on relational aggression and victimization in their peer and romantic relationships, delinquent behavior, and emotional adjustment. After running hierarchical multiple regressions, the authors found that peer relational victimization predicted increased levels of emotional maladjustment, including depression, anxiety, and loneliness. Additionally,

in a sample of 276 eight-graders, Sullivan et al. (2006) found that relational victimization was linked with drug use and physical aggression.

Far less research has been conducted with respect to relational victimization with late adolescent and emerging adult samples. There is evidence to suggest that negative correlates of relational victimization among child populations are similar to those of late adolescents and early adults. For example, researchers have found gateway drug use (Weiner et al., 2003) and higher levels of depressive symptoms and alcohol use (Schad, Szwedlo, Antonishak, Hare, & Allen, 2008) to be associated with relational victimization and social exclusion among older adolescents.

Significant negative correlates of relational victimization have also been observed in college students. Twenge, Catanese, and Baumeister (2002) conducted a series of experiments to examine negative correlates associated with perceived social exclusion – a behavior closely tied to relational aggression and a frequent outcome for those victimized by it. Among their undergraduate sample, the authors observed self-defeating behaviors, selection of non-healthy behaviors over healthy ones, and inhibited academic performance in students who reported being victimized by relational aggression.

Dahlen and colleagues (2013) examined relational aggression and victimization among college students in both their peer and romantic relationships. Further, the authors examined gender and race differences in relational aggression and victimization, as well as participants' perceived social support, loneliness, burnout, depression, anxiety, trait anger, and alcohol use. Participants were 307 college students (208 women) with a median age of 20 years. The authors conducted bivariate correlates of relational aggression and victimization with variables related to emotional and behavioral problems

to investigate correlates of relational aggression and relational victimization. Dahlen and colleagues (2013) found that college students who experienced relational victimization in their peer relationships experienced greater levels of depression, anxiety, and self-defeating behaviors. Additionally, students who experienced relational aggression within their romantic relationships experienced more alcohol-related personal problems as well as poor emotional and social support from peers.

Despite the small amount of research devoted to college students victimized by relational aggression, it appears that victims experience significant negative consequences. These previous findings solidify the necessity of continuing to identify and examine the negative correlates associated with relational aggression victimization. This is especially true during a developmental period of emerging adulthood when forming social and romantic relationships is critical to psychosocial and psychological development.

#### Cultural Differences in Relational Aggression and Victimization

Outside of gender, little is known about the manner in which other demographic or cultural factors may be relevant with regard to relational aggression and victimization. Some of this literature has focused specifically on differences in geographic samples within the United States, cultural influences on gender differences, as well as comparisons between U.S and international populations (Czar, 2013; French et al., 2002; Hart, Nelson, Robinson, Olsen, & McNeilly-Choque, 1998; Russell et al., 2003; Schafer, Werner, & Crick, 2002; Tomada & Schneider, 1997).

Some relational aggression research in young adults has observed that, though gender differences appear to exist in relational aggression use in children, these gender

differences largely fade when entering adulthood (Linder et al., 2002). Other researchers have reported findings suggesting that, among emerging adults, men engage in more relational aggression and/or report being victimized more frequently by relational aggression (Dahlen et al., 2013; Linder et al., 2002; Loudin, Loukas, & Robinson, 2003). Thus, it is difficult to conclusively report that gender differences exist in emerging adult relational aggression use.

Gender differences have also been investigated with regard to emerging adults' perceptions, beliefs, and motivations of relationally aggressive behavior. Nelson, Springer, Nelson, and Bean (2008) surveyed 134 undergraduate students (43.5% male) of traditional college age (i.e., 18-25) to assess normative beliefs regarding aggression among emerging adults. Participants completed a questionnaire regarding their beliefs about aggressive behavior relative to their college-aged peers. Specifically, the authors asked participants four questions in which they asked what a person of each gender did to be mean or hurtful to a person of the same and opposite gender, resulting in four dyads (male aggressor/male target, female aggressor/female target, male aggressor/female target, female aggressor/male target). Participants' open-ended responses were then transcribed into a word-processing program to allow anonymity for respondents. Additionally, raters were blind to participant gender. Raters were tasked with sorting responses into several categories of aggression that included direct and indirect relational aggression, passive aggression, non-verbal aggression (gestural and ignoring/avoiding), indirect and direct physical aggression, and verbal aggression. Raters were also provided with descriptions for each category as well as prototypical examples of aggressive

behavior associated with each category. The authors reported a high inter-rater reliability (.88) for the two trained undergraduate raters.

In analyses, the authors took into account the gender of participant/respondent, gender of aggressor, and the gender of the target. Nelson and colleagues (2008) found that both men and women generally agreed about the type of mean behaviors utilized by their male and female peers. The authors then conducted chi-square analyses to determine normative aggressive behavior for each dyad. For male-to-male aggression, the authors found that verbal aggression and direct physical aggression as the most prevalent forms of aggression. For male-to-female aggression, verbal aggression was the most cited behavior, with indirect relational aggression being the second most frequently cited. Thirdly, for female-to-female aggression, indirect relational aggression was reported significantly more than other forms of aggression. Lastly, female-to-male aggression was characterized most frequently by ignoring/avoiding non-verbal behavior and verbal aggression, with indirect relational aggression the next most cited.

Nelson and colleagues' (2008) results were notable in that participants did not generally attribute relationally aggressive behaviors to men despite other research findings of increased use of relational aggression among men and little to no sex differences among relational aggression use (e.g., Archer & Coyne, 2005; Linder et al., 2002). The authors noted that participants' responses in their study may be more influenced by relying on stereotypical gender behavior rather than actual witnessed events. For women, indirect relational aggression, direct relational aggression, ignoring/avoiding non-verbal aggression, and verbal aggression were the most cited forms of aggressive behavior. Further, Nelson and colleagues' (2008) results suggest that

the gender of the target plays a role in female perpetrated aggressive behavior, in that indirect relational aggression was cited significantly more often only for female targets. For female-to-male aggression, conversely, direct relational aggression was one of the most cited forms of aggressive behavior.

With regard to international differences in relational aggression, a number of studies have compared U.S. samples with samples from other countries. French et al. (2002) observed differences in relational aggression between a sample of Indonesian adolescents and a sample of American adolescents. Their sample was comprised of 60 fifth-grade and 60 eight-grade students living in Indonesia and a sample of 49 fifth-grade and 55 eight-grade students from the United States. Ages for fifth-grade children ranged from 9.75 and 11.75 ( $M = 10.52$ ) in the Indonesian sample and 10.58 and 11.92 ( $M = 11.35$ ) for American fifth-graders. For eight-grade children, ages ranged from 12.75 and 16.1 ( $M = 13.7$ ) for Indonesian students and 13.17 and 15.42 ( $M = 14.21$ ) for American students. Relational aggression was assessed with structured interviews. The authors asked participants to name two same-sex peers they most liked and two same-sex peers they most disliked. Using five standardized interview questions, they then asked participants to describe each of the named peers. These interviews were video taped, transcribed, and translated into English and Indonesian so that both English-speaking raters and Indonesian-speaking raters could code participant responses. The authors' coding system was developed using Crick and colleagues' (1999) categorization of physical, verbal, and relational aggression. Relational aggression was further divided into manipulation, social ostracism, and malicious rumors.



French and colleagues (2002) found that, in both cultures, relational aggression was a salient factor in participants' interpersonal relationships with peers. This is especially meaningful given that interviewers did not specifically ask about aggression or relational aggression during interviews with participants. Further, they found that girls endorsed all three subdivisions of relational aggression when compared to boys, a finding that is consistent with previous research on relational aggression in adolescent samples (e.g., Crick et al., 1999). French et al. (2002) pointed out that, even though they did not observe cultural differences in the use of relational aggression in their study, they did not assess for emotions associated with relational aggression perpetration/victimization, contexts, or frequencies of relational aggression use.

There is some evidence that the gender differences in relational aggression reported in many U.S. studies of children and early adolescents may be evident in other countries with Westernized cultures. Russell and colleagues (2003) examined links between temperament, parenting, and children's sociable and physical/relational aggression with peers in a U.S. and Australian sample. Their sample was comprised of 306 Australian parents with a preschool child (102 girls and 95 boys) who ranged in age from 48 to 68 months. Their American participants were 341 parents with a preschool child (131 boys and 93 girls) who ranged in age from 36 to 72 months old. Questionnaires were administered to parents to determine parenting style and child temperament, and aggression and sociable outcomes assessed through teacher report. The authors found that teachers reported greater frequencies of both physical and relational aggression for American children compared to Australian children. Further,

with respect to relational aggression specifically, girls were rated by teachers as perpetrating relational aggression more often than boys.

Despite the evidence of similar gender differences with regard to relational aggression in U.S. samples vs. Indonesian and Australian samples (French et al., 2002; Russel et al., 1997), gender differences in relational aggression have not always been found. For example, Tomada and Schneider (1997) conducted a similar study on relational aggression in a sample of Italian children. Their sample was comprised of 314 third and fourth grade students (167 boys, 147 girls) who ranged in age from 8 to 10 years old. To assess relational aggression use, the authors opted to use teacher and peer-nomination twice within the same school year. Using a scale developed by Crick and Grotpeter (1995) with items translated into Italian, students and teachers were administered items relating to overt aggression, relational aggression, and prosocial behavior. Similar to studies conducted on physical aggression in adolescents, the authors found that boys appeared to display significantly more overt aggression than girls. With regard to relational aggression, the authors observed no gender differences.

Additional evidence of the role of cultural influence on relational aggression perpetration can be found in research on relational aggression among differing geographic regions within the United States. Using a sample of college students from a mid-sized Southeastern and a Northeastern university, Czar (2013) surveyed students on their relational aggression use as well as their attitudes toward traditional gender role norms. Czar (2013) investigated geographic differences between the Northern and Southern United States concerning relational aggression use, finding that Southerners endorsed engaging in more peer and romantic relational aggression than Northerners.

Thus, previous research conducted on relational aggression has revealed that culture does appear to play a role in the study of relational aggression with respect to cultures both different (French et al., 2002) and similar (Russel et al., 1997) to the U.S., as well as between different cultural groups within the U.S. (Czar, 2013). Little to no research has investigated specific cultural variables such as race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, or socioeconomic status with respect to relational aggression (Czar, 2012). Thus, findings related to cultural differences with respect to relational aggression raise the question of potential differences that may emerge when comparing relational aggression and victimization between populations with differing sexual orientations.

Based on review of the relational aggression literature, it appears there is sufficient cause for concern regarding negative correlates associated with relationally aggressive behavior and victimization. Considering gay men's minority status, experiencing peer rejection and being ostracized from a group networks can be especially damaging. Indeed, Meyer (1995) argues that minority coping options are determined and accessed firstly at the community level. Previous research has discovered that being connected to the gay community can serve to buffer minority stress for gay men (Meyer, 1995). Thus, peer relational aggression perpetration and victimization could be especially damaging for gay men, as it may create greater difficulty coping with societal stigma and minority stress.

### Gay Men and Aggression

Aggression toward gay men by heterosexual men is well documented in the literature (Kilianski, 2003; Parrott, 2009; Parrott & Peterson, 2008; Sloan, Berke, & Zeichner, 2014; Vincent, Parrott, & Peterson, 2011); however, few published studies

have examined aggression within gay men's relationships, and almost all of them focus on romantic relationships. For example, recent literature has examined the role of aggression and intimate partner violence in gay romantic relationships (e.g., Oliffe et al., 2014). Intimate partner violence (IPV) appears to be prevalent in gay men's relationships. In a report comprised by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (2010), gay men are most impacted by IPV within the LGBT community, accounting for 31.5% of LGBT IPV. Recent research has also found that gay men are less likely than heterosexual women to seek help for or report experiencing IPV (Freedberg, 2006; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000; Oliffe et al., 2014). Gay men have also been found to have similar beliefs as heterosexual men in regards to emotional abuse not qualifying as IPV (Moore & Stuart, 2005; Torso-Alfonso & Rodriguez-Madera, 2004). Indeed, aggression research in gay men appears primarily centered on IPV within gay romantic relationships.

An emerging body of research has examined psychological aggression within gay male romantic relationships. Although psychological aggression differs from relational aggression it shares some similarities with relational aggression and is better related conceptually and behaviorally than either physical or sexual aggression. Specifically, psychological aggression in the context of romantic relationships is defined as behaviors perpetrated by "intimate adult partners which encompass the range of verbal and mental methods designed to emotionally wound, coerce, control, intimidate, psychologically harm, or express anger" (Follingstad, 2007). In Mason et al.'s review (2014) of the literature regarding PA in LGBT romantic relationships, the authors noticed several different prevalence rates reported over differing time frames, making comparisons difficult. The authors found lifetime PA perpetration prevalence ratings from 6% to

96.4% for gay and bisexual men, and PA victimization ranging from 12% to 100% (Mason et al., 2014). In 2013, 70.7% of gay and bisexual men reported perpetrating PA, and 78.4% reported experiencing PA within their romantic relationships (Matte & Lafontaine, 2011). Taken together, it appears that PA, and perhaps even relational aggression, is a salient experience for many gay and bisexual men in romantic relationships.

### Relational Aggression in Gay Men

Sexual orientation has not received sufficient attention in the literature on relational aggression and victimization. In fact, there appears to be only one published study at present that has examined peer relational aggression and victimization among gay males. In Kelley and Robertson's (2008) study, the authors set out to determine if internalized homophobia (e.g., the internalization of societal homo-negative attitudes) played a significant role in relational aggression and/or victimization in gay male peer relationships. The authors conducted an initial pilot study in which they interviewed gay male college students regarding their experiences of relational aggression with other gay men. Based on these interviews, the authors found that relational aggression appears to be a salient experience for young gay men. Participants' interviews were coded for statements that appeared to reflect negative attitudes toward being gay (e.g., internalized homophobia). Of the 15 participants they interviewed in the pilot study, ten conveyed uneasiness with expression of gay identity, seven endorsed negative beliefs regarding feminine gender expression, all participants expressed homonegative beliefs, and all participants expressed a preference for masculine gender expression. As a result of these interviews, the authors focused on potential differences regarding motivations for

perpetrating relational aggression among gay men as compared to heterosexual populations, contending that, for gay men, relational aggression is employed primarily to regulate gender expression, sexual behavior, and perceived gay aesthetics in others. This approach was strikingly similar to research on anti-gay aggression in heterosexual men, whose anti-gay aggression appears to be in part motivated by gender role enforcement (e.g., Parrott, 2009).

Following their qualitative pilot study, Kelley and Robertson (2008) quantitatively surveyed a sample of 100 gay male undergraduates regarding their experiences with relational aggression and relational victimization using a modified version of a common measure of relational aggression, Werner and Crick's (1999) Relational Aggression and Relational Aggression Victimization Scale. They also measured participants' levels of internalized homophobia using the Short Internalized Homonegativity Scale (SIHS; Currie et al., 2004). They found that relational aggression and victimization were common experiences for gay men. Further, gay men who self-reported more relational victimization scored higher on the SIHS, with higher scores indicating greater levels of internalized homophobia. Conversely, a significant relationship between internalized homophobia and relational aggression did not emerge. Men who self-reported greater levels of relational victimization tended to self-report engaging in more relationally aggressive behavior, which is consistent with research in heterosexual populations (Goldstein & Tisak, 2003).

Based on their results, Kelley and Robertson (2008) noted that while they identified new correlates for relational aggression in gay men, there remains a gap regarding predictors of relational aggression in gay men. Additionally, the authors found

that participants in their qualitative pilot study overwhelmingly reported positive evaluations of masculinity and negative evaluations of effeminate gender expression. Kelley and Robertson (2008) explained that their findings may suggest that gay men use relational aggression to police gender expression in other gay men. The authors did not find a significant relationship between internalized homophobia and relational aggression but did find a relationship between internalized homophobia and relational victimization. The authors suggested that future research should be devoted to determining predictors of relational aggression in gay male peer relationships.

#### Anti-Effeminacy Attitudes, Masculinity, and Aggression in Gay Men

In previous research involving gay men, gender expression, and more specifically masculinity, is frequently discussed. There exist a considerable range of masculinities through both historical time and culture (Connell et al., 1992). Connell and colleagues (1992) argued that, to many people, identifying as gay is thought of as a negotiation of masculinity. The authors further posited that, based on this idea, anti-gay aggression may serve to define masculinity for perpetrators. However, some gay men report masculinity as an essential part of their identity (Connell et al., 1992). Although men who have sex with men are oppressed in a variety of contexts in present society, gay men may still access dominant-group characteristics such as masculinity (Connell et al., 1992). For instance, “closeted” gay men may enjoy the benefits of their masculine gender expression while maintaining invisibility regarding their sexual partner preferences. As Connell (1992) and colleagues noted, gay men face “structurally induced conflicts” about masculinity—specifically conflicts regarding their social status as men and their sexuality (p. 737).

It is important to observe the history of masculinity and anti-effeminacy within the gay community to better understand contemporary perspectives of these attitudes within gay culture. In observing the English language from 18<sup>th</sup>-century England to 20<sup>th</sup>-century America, words used for homosexual men suggest that society at large equates their same-sex attraction with feminine qualities (Chauncey, 1994; Edwards, 1994; Pronger, 1990). For example, Chauncey and colleagues (1994) noted that gay men in the 1920s identified as queer to set themselves apart from effeminate gay men. Interestingly, previous research suggests that, for some gay men, anti-effeminacy attitudes are prevalent both historically and contemporarily (Taywaditep, 2001). Taywaditep (2001) discussed a history of anti-effeminacy prejudice among gay men comprised of gay media and academic work. Dating from 1910, Chauncey (1994) wrote of middle-class gay men identifying themselves as “queer,” as this label did not indicate effeminacy and set themselves apart from effeminate gay men. Chauncey further noted evidence of anti-effeminacy attitudes from middle-class gay men from 1910 up to 1940. Taywaditep also cited French author Marc-Andre Raffalovich in his review, noting that as one of the first gay men to write academic papers on homosexuality, Raffalovich used labels such as “liars” and “criminals” in his descriptions of effeminate gay men (Mosse, 1996; Taywaditep, 2001).

Many gay men also take steps to eradicate behaviors and traits that may be deemed effeminate by society as they grow. Harry (1982, 1983) provided evidence to suggest that many gay men “defeminize” (p. 76) as they transition into adulthood as a result of pressure from hegemonic masculinity norms. Akin to this, Taywaditep (2001) provided a review of how gay culture transitioned into rejecting effeminacy and



embracing masculinity during the gay liberation movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In recent research on contemporary gay men, there is literature supporting gay men's positive appraisals of masculine characteristics and devaluation of traits deemed effeminate. Gay men rated masculinity as a desirable trait in themselves and their romantic partners and expressed a desire for their own behavior to be more masculine and less feminine (Sánchez & Vilain, 2012; Sánchez, Westefeld, Liu, & Vilain, 2010). Further, in research on gay men's dating and sex, several studies have demonstrated how gay men will frequently purport to have masculine traits and overtly communicate their desire for masculine romantic partners (Bailey, Kim, Hills & Linsenmeier, 1997; Bartholome, Tewksbury & Bruzzone, 2000; Phua, 2007). Previous research has demonstrated that gay men consider masculinity important regarding their self-appearance, self-behavior, their partner's appearance, and their partner's behavior (Sánchez, Greenberg, Liu, & Vilain, 2009). Additionally, users of popular gay romantic social media will list characteristically feminine traits as undesirable traits in romantic partners. Sánchez and Vilain (2012) assessed how gay men's actual ratings of femininity/masculinity compared to their ideal ratings of their effeminate/masculine gender expression. Their findings were that, in general, participants desired to be more masculine in their appearance and behavior and ideally less feminine in these same contexts.

Thus, gay men's positive appraisals and attitudes toward masculine traits and devaluation of traits deemed effeminate in both themselves, peers, and potential romantic partners appears well documented in the literature. Further, from a historical and

contemporary perspective, these negative attitudes toward effeminate gay men have been demonstrated in gay men's rejection of effeminate traits within themselves and an apparent hostility toward gay men with a non-masculine gender expression.

Unfortunately, there is presently a sparse amount of literature devoted to aggression perpetuated within gay peer relationships that examines the role of masculinity and gender expression.

### *Aggression and Masculinity*

As little research appears to exist documenting aggression between gay men in peer relationships, a review of the literature regarding aggression toward gay men perpetrated by heterosexual men may be useful. Indeed, in reviewing the aggression literature, it appears most aggression research concerning gay men in a peer context is generally focused on anti-gay attitudes and aggression in heterosexual male samples. There are multiple theories regarding heterosexual men's motivations regarding anti-gay aggression (Franklin, 2000; Parrott, 2008). In Parrott's (2009) review of these motivations, he noted that previous researchers have identified several, including: enforcing traditional gender norms (Hamner, 1992; Kite & Whitley, 1998), maintaining perceptions of one's heterosexuality and masculinity (Franklin, 2000; Kimmel & Ferber, 2000), thrill-seeking (Franklin, 1998, 2000), and gender-role stress (Franklin, 2000; Herek, 1986). Parrott (2009) further commented that, although several potential motivators have been identified empirically, aggression toward gay men is likely motivated by a combination of factors.

In Parrott's (2009) study of anti-gay aggression, he reviewed anti-gay aggression through the lens of gender role enforcement, noting that both theory and substantial

empirical evidence supports the conclusion that heterosexual men who exert anti-gay aggression for gender-role enforcement endorse hegemonic (or dominant, traditional) male gender role norms. Parrott (2009) tested his model of gender enforcement using three common beliefs associated with traditional male gender roles: anti-femininity, status, and toughness. Anti-femininity, not status or toughness, had a significant effect on anti-gay physical aggression. Thus, endorsement and adherence to hegemonic masculinity may serve as a significant predictor of anti-gay aggression as well as anti-feminine attitudes.

*Hegemonic masculinity* refers to socially normative ideology that men are at the top of the power hierarchy and that the disempowerment of women (and by this extension, femininity) are required to maintain this status (Connell & Messer-Schmidt, 2005; Mankowski & Maton, 2010). Thus, men are expected to adhere to socially prescribed gender roles that function to reject traits associated with femininity to strengthen men's ranking in the power hierarchy (Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss, & Tanaka, 1991). Smith and colleagues (2015) noted that while there are several different norms associated with hegemonic masculinity (e.g., restricting emotion, dominance, importance of sex), the overall goal of exhibiting normative masculine behavior and ideals is to further distance oneself from femininity.

For men who identify strongly with hegemonic masculinity, they may enact aggression toward other men who appear to be behaving beyond the bounds of traditional masculine gender norms. The notion that gender-role enforcement motivates anti-gay aggression toward gay men has been supported empirically as well. For example, Vincent et al. (2011) found that adherence to masculinity norms, specifically anti-

femininity attitudes, showed direct and indirect effects on aggression toward gay men. Other research has found similar results. Sloan et al. (2014) found that heterosexual men displayed the most aggression toward effeminate straight and gay male targets. Interestingly, the effeminate straight target received more aggression than the effeminate gay target, which the authors suggested may be due to gay men already being stereotyped as effeminate. Thus, the effeminate straight target might have represented a greater deviation from normative gender roles, thereby receiving more aggression to police their gender role. Other authors found that heterosexual college students primarily used covert aggressive behaviors that resemble relationally aggressive behaviors (e.g., rumor spreading, gossiping, telling anti-gay jokes) to aggress against gay men (Jewell & Morrison, 2010). Of Jewell and Morrison's college student sample, anti-gay students reported one of their primary motivators for their anti-gay aggression was to reinforce traditional male gender roles.

Thus, heterosexual men's assessment and attitudes toward their own gender role and the gender roles of other men appear to play significant roles in explaining anti-gay attitudes and aggression. It appears that one's own gender role and the target's perceived gender role adherence play a substantial role in anti-gay aggression. This seems apparent for men who appear to exhibit effeminate behavior or traits, and especially true for men who do so when they are expected to exhibit solely masculine traits (e.g., heterosexual men). These findings prompt the question of how gender roles may impact gay men's peer and romantic relationships when they are assumed and expected to be effeminate based on societal norms.

There is a substantial literature regarding how gay men frequently examine their own gender roles and the gender roles of others. For example, gay men engage in behaviors that boost their self-perception of their own masculinity (Duncan, 2007; Halkitis, Moeller, & DeRaleau, 2008; Mealey, 1997) and self-report negative appraisals toward gender atypical gay men (Skidmore, Linsenmeier, & Bailey, 2006).

Along with research suggesting that contemporary gay men value masculinity and reject effeminacy, Taywaditep (2001) proposed that these anti-effeminacy attitudes may be acceptable or even desirable in the contemporary gay community. The author suggested that perhaps anti-effeminacy attitudes mirror disdain for gay men who reinforce or strengthen stereotypes of gay men regarding their femininity. In Taywaditep's work (2001), he cited Edwards (1994), who noted that contemporary gay men appear to be divided into a dichotomy based on their gender expression. One of these groups is comprised of effeminate gay men who value their gender expression as taking a stand against patriarchy or simply as their personal style, and the other includes "masculinists" (p. 46) who seek to thwart the stereotype that gay men are generally effeminate in their gender presentation. Taywaditep's review also noted that this polarization may mirror sex typing from society at large, whereby "male" and "female" function as important categorical descriptors and labels of "masculine" and "feminine" may serve a similar function in the gay community. Thus, Taywaditep (2001) suggested such polarization may imply that masculine gay men may harbor stronger anti-effeminacy attitudes compared to effeminate gay men.

Being male, gay men can assume power in the social hierarchy; however, their actual or perceived femininity places them in a disadvantaged power position

(Taywaditep, 2001). Hegemonic masculinity theory proposes that, as a social structure, masculinity functions to aid in forming a societal power hierarchy (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1985). Thus, masculinity serves as a tool for those at the top of the power hierarchy to maintain their position over disadvantaged groups, such as women and gay men. Pleck (1989) noted that, based upon this theory, men create hierarchies within their own gender based on masculinity. Indeed, empirical research generally supports this notion. For example, in a study of heterosexual men's defensive reactions to masculinity threat, the authors found that after a challenge to participants' masculinity, they generally endorsed more negative attitudes toward effeminate gay men than masculine gay men (Glick, Gangl, Gibb, Klumpner, & Weinberg, 2007). In applying hegemonic masculinity theory to gay men, Taywaditep (2001) proposed that gay men would also create and enforce in a power hierarchy defined by masculinity. Through this enforcement, masculinity becomes a value-worthy trait, and effeminate gay men are subordinated. In this light, Taywaditep (2001) noted, anti-effeminacy attitudes in gay men reflect hegemonic masculinity occurring in society.

Along with hegemonic masculinity, consciousness of one's masculinity, too, may be an explanation for some gay men's apparent anti-effeminacy attitudes. Masculinity consciousness refers to a man's tendency to be preoccupied with his masculine presentation publicly (Taywaditep, 2001). Masculinity consciousness in gay men is thought to occur from defeminization, or the process by which some gay men repress their visible feminine traits as adolescents in order to avoid bullying and discrimination. Thus, gay men who engage in defeminization may be ashamed of their effeminacy in

childhood and adolescence, and harbor strongly negative appraisals of effeminacy in adulthood.

Thus, stereotypically masculine traits appear to be desirable and traits perceived as effeminate undesirable for some gay men for a variety of potential reasons, including: thwarting societal assumptions about gay men's gender expression, repression of effeminate traits through development, and using masculinity as a tool to maintain one's status in the societal power hierarchy. In accordance with this, it appears to make sense to examine relational aggression within gay peer relationships using a theoretical model that encompasses both the desirability of masculine traits and devaluation of traits perceived as effeminate.

#### Exclusively Masculine Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory, a theory of group dynamics, proposes that one attempts to achieve and maintain a positive self-image through depreciating an identified out-group and supporting one's in-group. Exclusively Masculine Identity Theory (EMIT; Kilianski, 2003) considered by some as an extension of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), purports that men attempt to achieve a masculine ideal self through endorsement of male gender role norms and masculine characteristics. According to Kilianski (2003), EMIT was created in an attempt to explain heterosexual men's aggression toward gay men and heterosexual women. The ideal self signifies a potential future self toward which one strives or a state of being that one aspires to obtain (Ogilvie, 1987). Features relating to the ideal self, regardless of their form or function, are generally considered desirable and positive by the individual. Further, EMIT proposes that an avoidance of traditionally feminine characteristics (thus forming an undesired self) accompanies a

masculinized ideal self. The undesired self represents a self that is comprised of behaviors and characteristics that are considered very negative. The undesired self symbolizes the person that one desires to avoid becoming (Ogilvie, 1987). Thus, a masculinized ideal self and a feminized undesired self form an exclusively masculine identity.

Previous research has provided evidence that anti-femininity often accompanies endorsement of masculine gender roles (Thompson, Pleck, & Ferrera, 1992). Thus, according to EMIT, two groups are created: (1) an in-group of those who behave in accordance with the rigid boundaries of the masculinized ideal self and (2) a denigrated out-group inhabited by members who behave in accordance with the “feminized” undesired self or violate the boundaries the behavioral “rules” established in accordance with the ideal self. Research has supported this notion that a target’s closeness to a perceiver’s ideal self and distance from the perceiver’s undesired self are related to positive interpersonal evaluations and attraction (Kilianski, 2003; LaPrelle, Hoyle, Insko, & Bernthal, 1990; LaPrelle, Insko, Cooksey, & Graetz, 1991). Thus, from the perspective of this model, aggression is likely exhibited toward men who express their gender in contrast to the exclusively masculine ideal self in order to maintain in-group status and maintain masculine identity (Hamner, 1992; Perry, 2001; Sloan et al., 2014).

A study conducted by Sloan and colleagues (2014) observed anti-gay aggression perpetrated by straight men through the lens of EMIT. In their study, heterosexual men viewed video clips of a confederate mentioning having a girlfriend (heterosexual condition) or a boyfriend (gay condition) and presenting with masculine verbal/non-verbal behaviors or feminine verbal/non-verbal behaviors. Interestingly, the authors



found that the effeminate heterosexual target received the most aggression, followed by the effeminate gay target, with the two masculine targets receiving significantly less aggression. Thus, their findings suggested that aggression was predicted primarily by gender expression (masculine/feminine) rather than sexual orientation.

As EMIT is a relatively new theory, it does not appear that it has yet been applied to an exclusively gay-identifying sample; however, based on theory and limited empirical data, the use of EMIT for gay men makes sense conceptually. As mentioned earlier, it has long been known that some gay men have anti-effeminacy attitudes. Further, recent literature has consistently found that gay men ideally wish they were more masculine and less feminine in their gender expression (Sánchez & Vilain, 2012; Sánchez et al., 2010), and are more apt to describe themselves as masculine and overtly state their disdain for effeminacy in their pursuit for mates (Sánchez et al., 2009). There are also gay men who perceive themselves as void of any effeminate characteristics and who strongly value traditional masculinity ideals (Harry, 1983; Hennen, 2005; Kurtz, 1999). Lastly, Sánchez and Vilain (2012) recently found that gay men frequently report masculinity as an important and desirable trait, both for their romantic partners and themselves.

Participants also consistently reported wishing they were more masculine and less feminine in their gender-presentation. Thus, it may be reasonable assume that gay men would select peers with whom they wish to interact along these same criteria. Indeed, Hennen's (2005) research on gay men who identify as *Bears*, have found Bear culture and ideology "recuperates gendered hierarchies central to the logic of hegemonic masculinity" (p. 27). Thus, it appears that EMIT is an appropriate theory to capture this

apparent idealization of masculinity and devaluation of effeminacy apparent in some gay men.

Endorsement of male role norms (i.e. masculine ideology) that relate to traditional traits associated with masculinity, like toughness and anti-femininity, are essential components of masculinity (Kilianski, 2003). Likewise, they are a component of the original EMIT model. Thus, in accordance with EMIT, the adoption of this belief system would be appropriate in tandem with an exclusively masculine identity. Kilianski (2003) notes that the congruency between one's belief system and sense of identity is consistent with other theories related to psychological balance (Heider, 1958) and cognitive consistency (Festinger, 1957).

Pleck (1995) notes three different types of gender role strain that account for men's distress when in conflict with traditional masculinity ideals: strain due to not meeting the standard of an internalized idea of masculinity, engaging in dysfunctional behavior that is prescribed by traditional masculinity norms (e.g., risky sexual behavior), and bullying, shaming, or other trauma experienced during childhood gender role socialization. The last type is especially relevant for gay men, given that researchers have found adults and peers exhibit negative behaviors and reactions toward gender atypical boys (Blakemore, 2003) and gay men report more experiences with bullying and abuse than heterosexual men (Corliss, Cochran, & Mays, 2002; Wyss, 2004). Research related to the effect of traditional masculinity norms on men suggests that men experience shame (Thompkins & Rando, 2003) and psychological distress (Good, Heppner, DeBord, & Fischer, 2004; Liu, Rochlen, & Mohr, 2005) when experiencing conflict with traditional masculine ideals. Further, these men report greater interpersonal

problems (Cohn & Zeichner, 2006; Liu & Iwamoto, 2007) compared to men who experience less gender-role conflict. Overall, it appears that conflict with traditional masculine norms is both distressing and psychologically harmful for men.

While a large body of literature exists on the effects of traditional masculinity norm conflict in men, little is devoted to its effects on gay men specifically (Sánchez et al., 2009). Of the existent research in gay male populations, researchers have found depression, anxiety (Simonsen, Blazina, & Watkins, 2000), and low self-esteem (Szymanski & Carr, 2008) in men experiencing more conflict with traditional masculinity norms. In a series of long interviews, Sanchez and colleagues found gay men repeatedly reporting that traditional masculine norms negatively affected participants' display of emotions and affection, self-worth, and ability to intimately connect with other gay men. Given the salience and desirability of a masculine gender expression for gay men discussed earlier, adherence to masculinity norms appears to be a very relevant construct in the EMIT model. Further, as previous research has identified several negative correlates including a diminished ability to express affection and form social connections, it is likewise relevant in the study of relational aggression. While masculinity ideology was used as a mediator in the original work conducted on EMIT, given the exploratory nature of the present study masculine ideology will be examined as a moderator. That is, we expect that adherence to masculine ideology may influence but not fully account for the relationship between masculine identity and relational aggression/victimization.

### The Present Study

Although surprisingly little is known about relational aggression and victimization in the context of gay male peer relationships, the work of Kelley and

Robertson (2008) suggests that it is a salient experience that warrants additional study. Their investigation of internalized homophobia as a possible contributor to relational aggression/victimization in this context did not support its utility in predicting the perpetration of relationally aggressive behaviors. Through a historical and contemporary analysis of gay men's anti-effeminacy attitudes and preoccupation of masculinity, it appears that these constructs may be more useful in understanding relational aggression in gay men's peer relationships. Making predictions about relational victimization, however, may be difficult. It may be intuitive to predict that, if masculinized gay men perpetrate more relational aggression, effeminate gay men would experience more relational victimization. Previous research on heterosexual populations, however, has consistently found that perpetrators of relational aggression generally report more frequent experiences of relational victimization (e.g., Werner & Crick, 2000). Indeed, the same held true for Robertson and Kelley's (2008) study on relational aggression in gay men. Thus, it made sense to predict that gay men who are more likely to engage in relational aggression are also more likely to experience relational victimization. Exclusively Masculine Identity Theory was designed in part to explain anti-gay attitudes and behaviors through observing a combination of a masculinized ideal self and an effeminate undesired self. Though it has yet been applied to a gay identifying sample, the model has been successfully used to explain anti-gay attitudes in heterosexual men. Thus, the present study aimed to apply this model to a gay male sample in order to observe how participants' ideal and undesired selves may impact their relational aggression and victimization in their relationships with gay male peers. As this was a

largely exploratory study, a number of research questions and relevant hypotheses were proposed:

R1: Will the structure of Kelley and Robertson's (2008) relational aggression measure for gay men be empirically confirmed in the present sample?

H1: The two-factor factor structure of Kelley and Robertson's (2008) measure will be confirmed.

R2: Will gay men, on average, attribute more masculine characteristics to their ideal selves?

H2: Gay men will assign more masculine traits to their ideal selves.

R3: Conversely, will gay men, on average, attribute more feminine characteristics to their undesirable selves?

H3: Gay men will assign more feminine traits to their undesirable selves.

R4: Will gay men with more masculine ideal selves report more relationally aggressive behaviors, even though some behaviors characterized as relationally aggressive may be reinforcing of social and/or personal homophobic perceptions of gay men (e.g., Kelley & Robertson, 2008)?

H4: Men who report an exclusively masculine identity (e.g., very masculine ideal self, very feminine undesired self) will report greater perpetration of relational aggression toward gay male peers.

R5: Consistent with research in heterosexual populations, will gay men who report perpetrating more relational aggression also report more relational victimization?

H5: Gay men who report perpetrating more relational aggression toward gay male peers will also report experiencing more relational victimization (consistent with Kelley & Robertson, 2008).

R6: Does Exclusively Masculine Identity Theory apply to gay-identifying men?

H6: Exclusively Masculine Identity Theory will display significant paths to relational aggression and relational victimization.

R7: Will adherence to masculine ideology moderate the relationship between exclusively masculine identity and relational aggression/relational aggression victimization?

H7: Adherence to masculinity ideology will moderate the relationship between an exclusively masculine identity and relational aggression/relational aggression victimization.

## CHAPTER II – METHOD

### Participants

The sample for this study was comprised of 200 gay men between the ages of 18 and 25 currently residing in the United States. Power analyses determined that 200 participants were an acceptable sample size for the analyses used in this study. Additionally, at least 200 participants is a generally accepted “rule of thumb” for confirmatory factor analysis (Kenny, 2014). As the present study was aimed at gay men, the sample was comprised entirely of men who identify as gay. The 18 to 25 age restriction was based on the traditional college age range most studies of relational aggression among emerging adults have used and the desire for the results of this study to be more easily comparable. At the same time, participation in the present study was restricted to individuals currently enrolled in college.

Following Internal Review Board (IRB) approval (Appendix D), participants were recruited from multiple sources, including the Department of Psychology’s web-based research system (Sona Systems Ltd.), a variety of social media platforms relevant to gay men (e.g., Facebook and Reddit groups for gay men), and campus Gay-Straight Alliance organizations and other relevant LGBTQ+ organizations at universities in the United States. Because the survey was administered online, it was possible to recruit potential participants electronically by sharing a link to the consent form and survey questions through Qualtrics.

## Instruments

### *Demographic Questionnaire.*

A brief demographic questionnaire was administered at the beginning of the survey (see Appendix A) to check if the participant qualified for the study's demographic requirements (i.e. Gay-identifying male). The following measures were administered along with the demographic questionnaire.

### *Relational Aggression Scale and Relational Victimization Scale*

Created originally by Werner and Crick (1999) in a peer-nomination format and later revised to be self-report by Loudin et al. (2003), the 14-item Relational Aggression Scale and Relational Victimization Scale will be used to measure relational aggression (7 items) and relational victimization (7 items). Participants are asked about their perpetration and experiences of relationally aggressive behavior with responses ranging from 1 (Not Very Likely) to 4 (Very Likely). Consistent with Kelley and Robertson's (2008) use of this measure with gay men, the directions and items were modified to inform the participant to respond to items with respect to their gay male peers. Loudin and colleagues (2003) reported an internal consistency of .69 for the 7-item relational aggression scale; however, additional psychometric information was not provided. Considering Kelley and Robertson (2008) did not report psychometric information for their modified version and the Loudin et al. (2003) version has little psychometric information available, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the factor structure of the measure.



### *Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure (SRASBM)*

Two subscales from the SRASBM developed by Morales & Crick (1998) were used to assess general/peer relational aggression (7 items) and general/peer relational victimization (4 items). Responses range from 0 (“not at all true”) to 7 (“very true”).

Among college student samples internal consistency has displayed an acceptable alpha coefficient range from .71 to .87 (Bailey & Ostrov, 2007; Czar et al., 2011; Dahlen et al., 2013; Linder et al., 2002). Comparing the SRASBM subscales to other theoretically relevant constructs as well as other measures of relational aggression has provided sufficient construct validity (Bagner et al., 2007; Czar et al., 2011; Linder et al., 2002; Ostrov & Houston, 2008). The SRASBM was primarily used in the present study to provide a validity check for Kelley and Robertson’s (2008) Relational Aggression and Relational Victimization scale that they adapted for use with gay men. As the psychometric properties for Kelley and Robertson’s measure are unknown, including a more psychometrically sound measure of relational aggression and victimization (e.g., the SRASBM) was advantageous for ensuring reliability of the results.

### *Gay Identity Questionnaire (GIQ)*

The GIQ (Brady & Busse, 1994) will be used to assess the degree to which a participant has progressed developmentally in their homosexual identity formation based on the Cass (1979) model. Cass’ model is referred to as Homosexual Identity Formation (HIF), and contains six developmental stages. These stages are: (1) Identity Confusion, (2) Identity Comparison, (3) Identity Tolerance, (4) Identity Acceptance, (5) Identity Pride, and (6) Identity Synthesis. The GIQ was developed from a list of 100 construct-related items that were narrowed down through inter-rater reliability among four

independent raters (Brady & Busse, 1994). Through two more pilot studies to assess item internal consistency, a final 45 item version was developed. The GIQ was then administered to 225 men who previously endorsed experiencing and/or engaging in same-sex thoughts, behavior, and feelings. Internal consistency findings were categorized by stage, with all stages except stage six (Identity Synthesis) having an alpha coefficient greater than .7. Interestingly, Brady and Busse (1994) also found that HIF stage was predictive of psychological well-being, with later stages predicting lower levels of anxiety, stress, and depression.

#### *Sex Stereotypically Index (SSI)*

To assess masculinity and femininity related to participants' ideal selves and undesired selves, 38 adjectives from the SSI (William & Best, 1990) were administered for participants to select from to describe their ideal and undesired self. The SSI in itself is a list of adjectives that were psychometrically tested to ensure equal ratings of likability between men and women. Thus, it does not provide measurement for a specific construct. In Kilianski's development of Exclusively Masculine Identity Theory, he selected 19 stereotypically feminine and 19 stereotypically masculine adjectives from a list of 300 adjectives ranked on their sex stereotypically index scores (Williams & Best, 1990). Based on the favorability index (FAV) created by Williams and Best (1990), 4 positively rated adjectives (e.g., logical, appreciative, patient), 4 negatively rated adjectives (e.g., complaining, loud, submissive), and 11 neutral adjectives (e.g., soft-hearted, daring, cautious) were selected for male and female gender categories. Statistical analysis confirmed that valence was equivalent within each category (i.e., that masculine negative adjectives were equally less favorable to feminine negative

adjectives, etc.). Used in conjunction with the ideal self and undesirable self constructs from Exclusively Masculine Identity Theory, an ideal-self masculinity index was computed by adding +1 for every masculine feature and -1 for every feminine feature assigned to the ideal self. Conversely, an undesired self-femininity index was computed by adding +1 for every feminine feature associated with the undesired self and a -1 for every masculine feature. Therefore, each index ranged from +19 (all feminine features and no masculine features associated with undesired self, all masculine features and no feminine features associated with ideal self) to -19 (all masculine features and no feminine features associated with undesired self, all feminine features and no masculine features associated with ideal self).

*Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 (CMNI-46)*

The original 94-item Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI) created by Mahalik, Locke, Ludlow, Diemer, Scott, Gottfried, and Freitas (2003) was created to measure the degree to which a man feels he is meeting societal expectations of masculinity. The shortened 46-item version created by Parent and Moradi (2009) retains 9 of the original 11 subscales: Emotional Control, Winning, Playboy, Violence, Self-reliance, Risk-taking, Power Over Women, Primacy of Work, and Disdain for Homosexuals. Disdain for Homosexuals will was removed from the present survey, given its questionable relevance to an all-gay sample (e.g., Alt, Lewis, Liu, et al., 2014). Each subscale was created to represent an aspect of hegemonic or traditional masculinity norms. For example, the Playboy subscale assesses the masculine norm that men should have multiple casual sexual partners and be emotionally distant from these partners. While not originally created for use with gay men, Alt, Lewis, Liu, Vilain, and Sanchez

(2014) recently surveyed a sample of gay men using a variety of masculinity-related measures in order to validate them within an exclusively gay male sample, including the CMNI-46. In comparing their results with that of the original creators who surveyed heterosexual men, Alt et al. (2014) found comparable Chronbach's alpha values of .86 in comparison with Parent and Moradi's (2009) report of .85. Factor loadings were relatively similar, with main differences occurring on items in the Winning, Power Over Women, and Primacy of Work subscales. Power Over Women and Primacy of Work were the only two subscales that resulted in lower alpha values than in Parent and Moradi's (2009) original work. In other research using the CMNI in exclusively gay populations, authors have found CMNI scores positively related to risky sexual behavior, substance use (Hamilton & Mahalik, 2009), and internalized homophobia (Kimmel & Mahalik, 2005). Thus, it appeared that the CMNI-46 was a relatively reliable and valid measure for use with an exclusively gay male sample.

#### Procedure

After reading a brief description of the study through whichever recruitment method was used (e.g., Sona, social media announcement, email), participants clicked on a URL taking them to the consent form (see Appendix B and Appendix C) and all instruments in Qualtrics. Those who read and electronically signed the consent form were entered into the study and directed to complete all measures online. It was estimated that it would take up to 30 minutes for participants to complete the study. Students at the University of Southern Mississippi who completed the study through Sona received research credit based on departmental policy. For participants who completed the study outside of Sona, one dollar (\$1) was donated for every valid survey completed

to The Trevor Project Inc., a 24-hour national suicide prevention and crisis intervention hotline for LGBT youth and young adults. To ensure that participants were actively attending to the survey, two directed items were included in the survey (e.g., “Answer this item Yes.” Participants who failed to complete either directed item as instructed did not receive incentives for participation, and their data was not be used in analyses. Following the demographic survey, instruments were administered in random order to prevent potential order effects.

### Statistical Analyses

#### *Stage 1: Data Clean-Up and Preliminary Analyses*

After downloading the electronic data file and converting it to an SPSS data file, raw data were examined for errors and missing data. All study variables were formed using SPSS syntax, and scale-level frequency distributions were examined to identify potential coding errors. Data from participants who failed either directed item were removed. Means, standard deviations, and alpha coefficients were computed for all study variables. Next, interrelationships among variables were examined through correlations.

#### *Stage 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

Prior to engaging in the primary analyses, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted on Kelley and Robertson’s (2008) modified version of the Relational Aggression and Relational Victimization Scale. Thus, the CFA was conducted in an effort to confirm the factor structure (“Relational Aggression” and “Relational Aggression Victimization”) of the Relational Aggression and Relational Victimization Scale. The fit of the model was determined using the chi-square fit statistic, the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the comparative fit index (CFI).

Following the CFA, scores on this measure were compared with the general/peer relational aggression and victimization scales of the SRASBM as a check on the concurrent validity of the measure. This helped to ensure that the modified Relational Aggression and Relational Victimization Scale is assessing the intended constructs.

### *Stage 3: Primary Analyses*

Statistical hypotheses H2, H3, H4, and H5 were tested with path analysis using M-Plus 7.11 (Muthen & Muthen, 2012). The model presented in Figure 1 was analyzed to determine if EMIT predicts relationally aggressive behavior. Similarly, the path model presented in Figure 2 was analyzed to determine if EMIT predicts relational victimization. An ideal-self masculinity index (noted as Ideal Self in model) was computed by adding +1 for every masculine feature and -1 for every feminine feature assigned to the ideal self. Conversely, an undesired self-femininity index (noted as Und. Self in model) was computed by adding +1 for every feminine feature associated with the undesired self and a -1 for every masculine feature. Therefore, each index had a possible range from +19 (all feminine features and no masculine features associated with undesired self, all masculine features and no feminine features associated with ideal self) to -19 (all masculine features and no feminine features associated with undesired self, all feminine features and no masculine features associated with ideal self). After running correlations to ensure the relatedness of the desired self index scores and undesired self index scores as prescribed by EMIT, these two indexes were then summed to form an Exclusively Masculine Identity (noted as EMI in model) scale score. Specifically, the EMI scale score functioned as the predictor with relational aggression and relational aggression victimization functioning as outcome variables. The model was analyzed

twice, with relational aggression serving as the primary outcome variable in one analysis and relational victimization taking its place for the second analysis.

The last hypothesis, H6, was tested using a moderation model to determine if adherence to masculinity ideology (noted as *Masc Ideo* in model) moderates the relationship between exclusively masculine identity and relational aggression and relational victimization in accordance with Exclusively Masculine Identity Theory. Endorsement of or adherence to hegemonic masculinity norms can be thought of as an “ought self,” as it represents how one *should* and *should not* behave. This model is represented in Figure 3. Thus, the EMI index score functioned as the predictor, adherence to masculinity ideology a moderator, and relational aggression and relational victimization serving as outcome variables in separate analyses. This analysis was repeated with relational victimization taking the place of relational aggression in the model (Figure 4).

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repeated with relational victimization taking the place of relational aggression in the model (Figure 4).



## CHAPTER III - RESULTS

### Data Clean Up and Preliminary Analyses

Collected data were downloaded from Qualtrics into SPSS. Of the 437 cases initially in the dataset, 94 were removed for containing nothing but missing data ( $N = 343$ ). Next, responses on the two directed response items included to assess whether participants were attending appropriately to the survey were examined. An additional 104 cases were removed from participants who failed one or both of these items ( $N = 239$ ). The data set was then examined for cases with excessive missing data on some variables. For each variable, the number of items with missing data was calculated. For participants with less than 25% of the items that formed a scale missing, missing data were replaced with estimated values using linear trend at point. Missing data were not replaced for participants who had missing data on more than 25% of the items that formed a scale, as this may have distorted the data. The 11 cases with more than 25% of data missing on a given scale were then removed ( $N = 228$ ). Finally, 28 participants who were located outside of the United States based on their IP address were removed from the sample ( $N = 200$ ), as the scope of the present study is on college students in the United States.

Internal consistency was calculated for all but one of the measures to determine whether they were assessing unitary constructs. Internal consistency was not calculated for the Gay Identity Questionnaire (GIQ), as this measure was designed to provide demographic information about participants' gay identity development rather than to form a meaningful scale. Means, standard deviations, and alpha coefficients for all variables are reported in Table 1. All measures except for the Relational Aggression

Scale (RAS) and the ideal self and undesirable self subscales of the Sex Stereotypically Index (SSI) had adequate alpha coefficients (i.e.,  $\alpha \geq .70$ ). The RAS was replaced by the peer/general relational aggression subscale of the SRASBM in subsequent analyses due to the RAS performing poorly during confirmatory factor analyses (to be discussed later). The subscales of the SSI displayed somewhat poor internal consistency, though in Kilianski's (2003) original work, he refrained from reporting the internal consistency of the measure, as they are simply a list of adjectives. The Conformity to Masculinity Norms Inventory (CMNI-46) achieved excellent reliability for the overall measure as well as across all subscales except for the "Power over Women" subscale. Notably, Alt and colleagues (2014) found a lower internal consistency on the Power over Women subscale in their sample of gay men compared to samples of heterosexual men. Taken together, Alt and colleagues' (2014) work along with the present findings, suggest that the Power over Women subscale may be less relevant in an exclusively gay identifying sample. A correlation matrix was created to facilitate examination of the interrelationships among variables (see Table 2).

Table 1

*Alphas, Means, and Standard Deviations for all Variables (N=200)*

Variables	$\alpha$	$M$	$SD$
RAS	.69	10.84	3.13
RVS	.87	13.62	4.81
Peer RA	.82	14.22	7.08

Table 1 (continued).

Variables	$\alpha$	$M$	$SD$
RA Vic	.81	12.38	6.22
RA Vic	.81	12.38	6.22
CMNI-46	.82	49.80	11.49
Ideal Self	.61	.03	3.88
Und. Self	.59	1.41	4.26
EMI	.67	1.44	6.41
Win	.86	8.93	3.63
EmCont	.92	8.10	4.36
Risk	.80	6.07	2.58
Violence	.87	8.11	4.11
Power	.63	1.04	1.37
Playboy	.78	5.27	2.76
Self Rel	.89	7.55	3.38
Work	.82	4.88	2.64

*Note.* RAS = Relational Aggression Scale; RVS = Relational Victimization Scale; Peer RA = Self-Report of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure, General/Peer Relational Aggression Subscale; RA Vic = Self-Report of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure, General/Peer Relational Aggression Victimization Subscale; CMNI-46 = Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Ideal Self = Ideal Self index score; Und. Self = Undesirable Self index score; EMI = Exclusively Masculine Identity index score; Win = Winning subscale of the CMNI-46; EmCont = Emotional Control subscale of the CMNI-46; Risk = Risk Taking subscale of the CMNI-46; Violence = Violence subscale of the CMNI-46; Power = Power over Women subscale of the CMNI-46; Playboy = Playboy subscale of the CMNI-46; Self Rel = Self-Reliance subscale of the CMNI-46; Work = Primacy of Work subscale of the CMNI-46.

Table 2

*Correlation Matrix*

	EMI	IdSel	UnSel	RAPeer	RAVic
IdSel	.75**				
UnSel	.81**	.24**			
RAPeer	-.09	-.08	-.04		
RAVic	-.02	-.06	.06	.56**	
RAVSP	.00	-.02	.04	.69**	.45**
RAVSV	-.10	-.11	-.03	.47**	.59**
GIQ	.08	.01	.08	-.12	-.16*
CMNI	-.27**	-.34**	-.08	.25**	.17*
Win	-.19**	-.29**	-.02	.35**	.19**
EmCont	-.16*	-.12	-.13	-.03	-.13
Risk	-.19*	-.24**	-.03	.12	.19**
Violence	-.16*	-.20**	-.04	.14	.16*
Power	-.13	-.22**	.03	.23**	.15*
Playboy	.03	-.08	.12	.07	.18*
SelRel	-.08	-.03	-.10	.12	.01
Work	-.08	-.13	-.02	-.02	.01

Table 2 (continued).

	RAVSP	RAVSV	GIQ	CMNI	Win
RAVSV	.59**				
GIQ	-.13	-.21**			
CMNI	.26**	.23**	-.14		
Win	.22**	.15*	.05	.57**	
EmCont	.03	.06	-.11	.56**	.13
Risk	.14*	.14	-.11	.34**	.03
Violence	.08	.09	-.13	.51**	.13
Power	.25**	.17*	-.19**	.38**	.28**
Playboy	.18*	.05	.19	.36**	.17**
SelRel	.10	.13	-.09	.48**	.11
Work	.07	.12	-.06	.32**	.21**

Table 2 (continued).

	EmCont	Risk	Violence	Power	Playboy	SelRel
Risk	-.11					
Violence	.06	.22**				
Power	.04	.20**	.22**			
Playboy	.00	.13	.10	.02		
SelRel	.37**	-.01	.06	.08	-.04	
Work	.11	.09	-.13	.02	.05	-.02

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ . EMI = Exclusively Masculine Identity scale; IdSel = Ideal Self index; UnSel = Undesirable Self index; RAPEer = Peer Relational Aggression subscale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure; RAVic = Peer Relational Aggression Victimization subscale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure; RAVSP = Relational Aggression Scale; RAVSV = Relational Victimization Scale; GIQ = Gay Identity Questionnaire; CMNI = Conformity to Masculinity Norms Inventory-46; Win = Winning subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; EmCont = Emotional Control subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Risk = Risk Taking subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Violence = Violence subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Power = Power over Women subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Playboy = Playboy subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; SelRel = Self-Reliance subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Work = Primacy of Work subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46.

Means and standard deviations were also computed for the ideal self, undesirable self, and exclusively masculine identity constructs. An ideal-self masculinity index was computed by adding +1 for every masculine feature and -1 for every feminine feature assigned to the ideal self. Conversely, an undesired self-femininity index was computed by adding +1 for every feminine feature associated with the undesired self and a -1 for every masculine feature. Therefore, each index can range from +19 (all feminine features and no masculine features associated with undesired self, all masculine features and no

feminine features associated with ideal self) to -19 (all masculine features and no feminine features associated with undesired self, all feminine features and no masculine features associated with ideal self). Positive ideal self scores represent a more masculinized ideal self (i.e., assigning more masculine traits to the ideal self). Conversely, positive undesirable self scores suggest more feminine traits being assigned to the undesirable self. The ideal self index and undesirable self index scores were then summed to compute an exclusively masculine identity index score, which may range from -38 (all feminine features on ideal self, all masculine features on undesirable self) to 38 (all masculine traits on ideal self, all feminine features on undesirable self). Thus, a positive EMI score suggests a more exclusively masculine identity. In the present sample, ideal self index scores ranged from -8 to 14, undesirable self index scores -9 to 14, and EMI index scores from -13 to 27. Means and standard deviations for these three indexes are displayed in Table 3. Kilianski (2003), reported similar scores in his study of 150 heterosexual identifying men. Kilianski found ideal self scores in his sample ranged from -8 to 11 ( $M = 2.28$ ,  $SD = 3.03$ ), undesirable self scores -18 to 11 ( $M = 1.31$ ,  $SD = 3.82$ ), and EMI scores ranging from -16 to 22 ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = 5.99$ ). Thus, while the ranges of the present all-gay sample had ranges that trended toward more masculine ideal selves, feminine undesirable selves, and more exclusively masculine identities, mean scores were relatively similar to Kilianski's (2003) heterosexual sample.

Table 3

*Means and Standard Deviations of Exclusively Masculine Identity, Ideal Self, and Undesirable Self*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
EMI	2.63	6.36
Ideal Self	.03	3.88
Undesirable Self	1.41	4.26

*Note.* EMI = Exclusively Masculine Identity; Ideal Self = Ideal Self index; Undesirable Self = Undesirable Self index.

The dependent variables were examined for normality. The peer relational aggression and peer relational aggression victimization scales from both the Relational Aggression Victimization Scale and Self-Report of Relational Aggression and Victimization Measure were positively skewed. All four of these dependent variables were transformed with a logarithmic transformation which successfully reduced skewness. Next, all continuous independent variables and items used in confirmatory factor analyses were examined for normality. Of the continuous independent variables, only the Power Over Women subscale from the Conformity to Masculinity Norms Inventory displayed significant skewness, which was subsequently corrected using logarithmic transformation.

The Gay Identity Questionnaire (GIQ; Brady & Busse, 1994) was also administered to participants in order to determine their present stage of Homosexual Identity Formation (Cass, 1979). Cass developed the Homosexual Identity Formation model to help explain the “coming out” process for Gay men. The model proposes six stages: (1) Identity Confusion, wherein a person’s first awareness of gay/lesbian thoughts



and attractions occur, potentially resulting in confusion or turmoil; (2) Identity Comparison, the person may hesitantly accept their identity as gay/lesbian and considers the external repercussions of this commitment; (3) Identity Tolerance, the individual acknowledges the likelihood of being gay/lesbian and will likely seek out other gay/lesbian people to avoid social isolation and gain support; (4) Identity Acceptance, wherein the individual attaches positive thoughts and reactions to their gay or lesbian identity and transitions from tolerance of their identity to acceptance; (5) Identity Pride, the individual may limit contact with heterosexuals and may become heavily involved in gay culture and view homosexuals and heterosexuals as an in-group versus out-group dichotomy; and (6) Identity Synthesis, wherein the individual integrates their gay or lesbian identity with other aspects of themselves, rather than as their entire identity.

From the present sample's GIQ results, 73.5% ( $n = 147$ ) were placed in stage 6, 5.5% ( $n = 11$ ) in stage 5, 15.5% ( $n = 31$ ) in stage 4, 1% ( $n = 2$ ) in stage 2, and zero participants in stage 1. Some participants' scores placed them in a transitional period between stages, with five participants scoring between stages 5 and 6, two participants between stages 3 and 4, and two participants between stages 2 and 3. Thus, an overwhelming majority of the sample were placed in stage 6 of the Cass (1979) model, suggesting they were at the final stage of homosexual identity formation.

### Primary Analyses

Considering that the RAS and RVS had no information about their psychometric properties in the literature, confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were conducted to confirm their suitability for use in subsequent path analyses. In order to address Hypothesis 1, a separate CFA was conducted for each measure to determine if items

loaded appropriately on one factor associated with each measure (e.g., relational aggression for the RAS, relational aggression victimization for the RVS).

More recent work (Jackson, Gillaspay, & Purc-Stephenson, 2009) has suggested that using multiple fit statistics to determine multiple aspects of model fit can be beneficial compared to using the Chi-square statistic, which can be influenced by sample size (Fan, Thompson, & Wang, 1999; Stevens, 1996). The maximum likelihood (MLM) fit function was used in both CFAs, and model fit was assessed using Root Mean Square of Approximation (RMSEA), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI). For the RMSEA statistic, ideal values would range from .06 to .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Brown & Cudek, 1993). Ideal values for TLI and CFI have generally been reported as .90 to .95 (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

The fit statistics and figures for the relational aggression scale (RAS) and relational victimization scale (RVS) are presented below (see Table 4 and Figures 1 and 2). Without modifying the measure, the RAS approached but did not meet adequate fit across the three fit indicators (CFI, TLI, and RMSEA). Modification indices were then reviewed for potential changes to the model to improve fit. After review, the error terms of item 80 (“How likely are you to intentionally ignore a gay male peer, until he agrees to do something you want him to do?”) and item 83 (“When angry or mad at a gay male peer how likely are you to give him the ‘silent treatment’?”) were correlated. These items appear to overlap conceptually (e.g., both suggest the intentional use of silence as retaliation) and would not damage the theoretical underpinnings of the measure by being correlated. None of the other possibilities suggested by the modification indices were consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of the measure. The CFA of the RAS was

conducted a second time, with observed improvement across all three model fit indicators (Table 4). Unfortunately, the RAS did not achieve statistically adequate fit. Thus, the peer relational aggression scale of the SRASBM was used in subsequent analyses in place of the RAS.

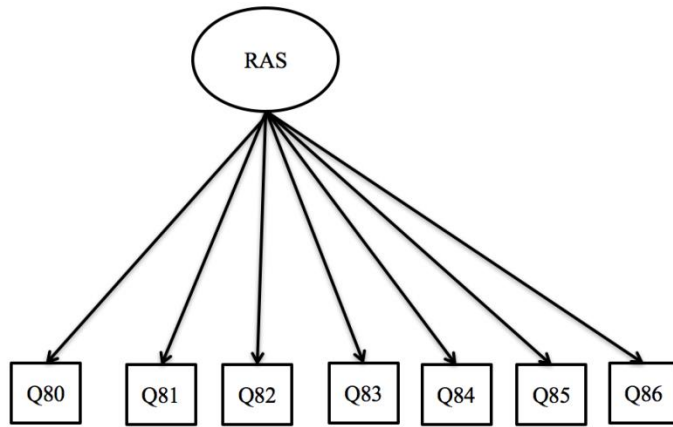
A similar procedure was conducted with the RVS. The initial CFA fit statistics approached but did not reach adequate fit. Fit indicators were again reviewed to consider theoretically justifiable changes to the model that could improve fit. The same items from the RAS were selected to correlate error terms to improve model fit for the RVS. As shown in Table 5, there was improvement of fit across most fit statistics. Also like the RAS, multiple modifications were suggested, though only the one change made was theoretically justifiable. Unfortunately, the RVS also did not achieve adequate statistical fit, so the peer victimization scale of the SRASBM was used in subsequent analyses in place of the RVS.

Table 4

*Confirmatory Factor Analyses Fit Statistics – Prior to Modification*

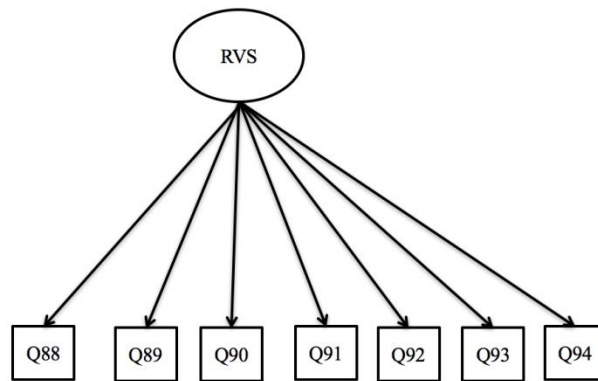
	Chi-Square	<i>df</i>	RMSEA	TLI	CFI
RAS	36.61	14	.09	.77	.85
RVS	102.76	14	.18	.77	.85

*Note.* RAS = Relational Aggression Scale; RVS = Relational Victimization Scale.



*Figure 1. Initial Measurement Model of Relational Aggression Scale*

Note. RAS = Relational Aggression Scale; Q80, Q81, Q82, Q83, Q84, Q85, Q86 = items that comprise Relational Aggression Scale.



*Figure 2. Initial Measurement Model for Relational Victimization Scale*

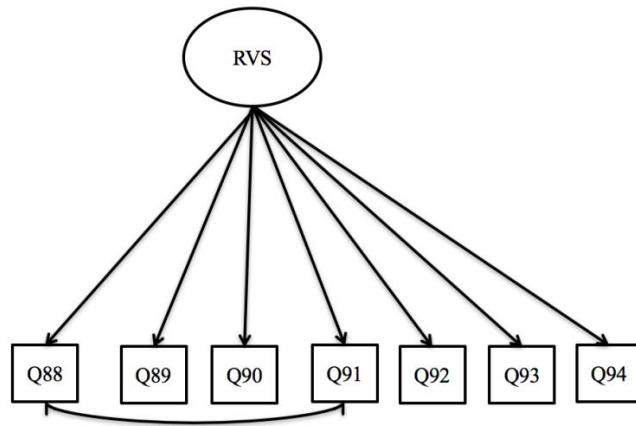
Note. RVS = Relational Victimization Scale; Q88, Q89, Q90, Q91, Q92, Q93, Q94 = items that comprise the Relational Victimization Scale.

Table 5

*Confirmatory Factor Analyses Fit Statistics – After Modification*

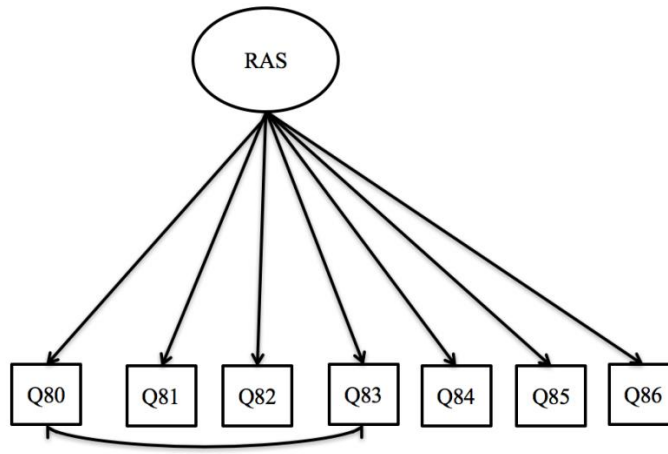
	Chi-Square	<i>df</i>	RMSEA	TLI	CFI
RAS	31.91	13	.09	.80	.88
RVS	77.36	13	.16	.82	.89

Note. RAS = Relational Aggression Scale; RVS = Relational Victimization Scale.



*Figure 3. Modified Measurement Model for Relational Victimization Scale*

Note. RVS = Relational Victimization Scale; Q88, Q89, Q90, Q91, Q92, Q93, Q94 = items that comprise the Relational Victimization Scale.

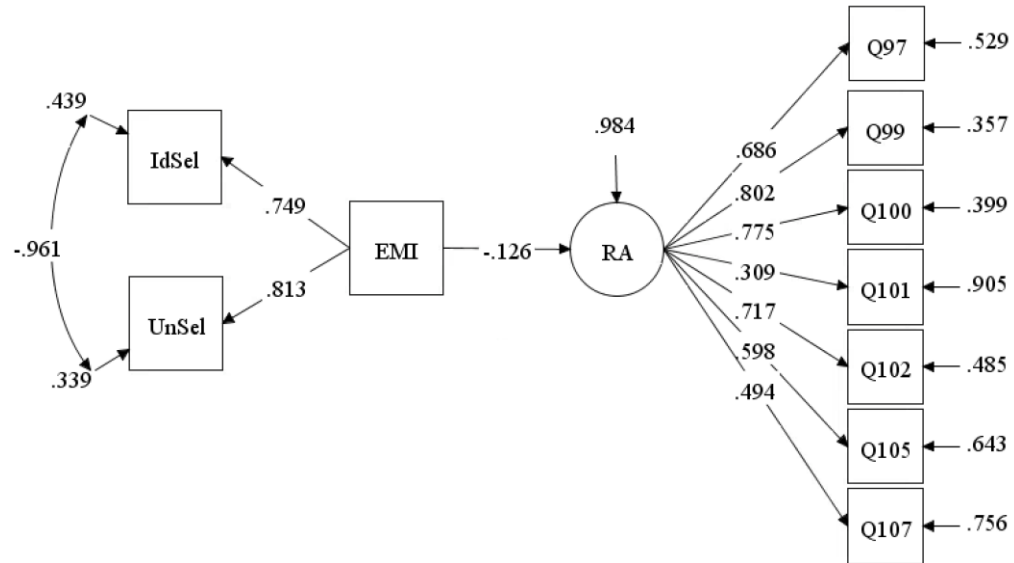


*Figure 4. Modified Measurement Model for Relational Aggression Scale*

Note. RAS = Relational Aggression Scale; Q80, Q81, Q82, Q83, Q84, Q85, Q86 = items that comprise Relational Aggression Scale.

Hypotheses two (H2), three (H3), and four (H4), were examined within the scope of the model presented below (Figure 5). As noted previously, an ideal-self index was computed by adding +1 for every masculine feature and -1 for every feminine feature assigned to the ideal self. Conversely, an undesired self-femininity index was computed by adding +1 for every feminine feature associated with the undesired self and a -1 for every masculine feature. Therefore, each index may range from +19 (all feminine

features and no masculine features associated with undesired self, all masculine features and no feminine features associated with ideal self) to -19 (all masculine features and no feminine features associated with undesired self, all feminine features and no masculine features associated with ideal self). Lastly, an exclusively masculine identity score was computed for each participant by summing the ideal and undesirable self indices.



**Figure 5. Model of the Relationship Between Exclusively Masculine Identity and Relational Aggression**

Note. IdSel = Ideal Self index; UnSel = Undesirable Self index; EMI = Exclusively Masculine Identity index; RA = Relational Aggression; Q97, Q99, Q100, Q101, Q102, Q105, Q107 = Items that form Peer Relational Aggression scale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure

H2 postulated that participants would assign more masculine traits to their ideal selves. In the model above, the path from EMI to the ideal self construct demonstrated a significant impact on the proposed model. Although the planned analyses specified that a path analysis would be used to address H2, it appeared that examining the sample mean provided a more direct way of testing this hypothesis because of the way the ideal self index is constructed. Ideal self index scores from the sample ( $M = .03$ ,  $SD = 3.88$ )

suggest that the sample barely selected more masculine adjectives for their ideal selves, as a score of zero would suggest participants selected an equal number of masculine and feminine adjectives for their ideal self (Kilianski, 2003). The range of scores for the ideal self index ranged from -8 to 14. A one-sample t-test comparing the sample mean against a hypothetical mean of 0 was not significant,  $t(199) = 0.11, p = .46$ . Thus, H2 was not supported.

H3 stated that participants would assign more feminine adjectives to their undesirable selves. In the above figure, the undesired self construct displayed a significant impact on EMI, even slightly greater than the ideal self. Much like H2, H3 appeared to be better addressed using a comparison of means. Indeed, the sample's undesirable self index  $M = 1.41, SD = 4.26$  suggest that the sample marginally selected more feminine adjectives for the undesirable self, which ranged from -9 to 14. A one-sample t-test comparing the sample mean against a hypothetical mean of 0 was significant,  $t(199) = 4.68, p < .001$ . Thus, H3 was supported.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) tested in the present study proposed that men with an exclusively masculine identity (i.e., attributed predominantly masculine adjectives to their ideal selves and feminine traits to their undesirable selves) would exhibit more relationally aggressive behavior (Table 6). As noted previously, given the mean of the ideal index was not significantly different than zero, participants did not attribute a significant amount of masculine traits to their ideal selves. Conversely, the undesirable self index was significantly different than zero, suggesting participants attributed feminine traits to their undesirable self. Further, exclusively masculine identity index scores (which are the summation of the ideal self index and undesirable self index) were

on average positive ( $M = 2.63$ ,  $SD = 6.36$ ), ranging from -13 to 27, and significantly greater than 0,  $t(199) = 5.85$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Table 6

*Path Estimates for Structural Equation Model: Paths from EMI to UNSEL, EMI to IDSEL, EMI to RA, and RA to items*

Path	Standard Estimate	P-Value
RA ON EMI	-.13	.04*
UNSEL ON EMI	.81**	< .01
IDSEL ON EMI	.75**	< .01
RA BY Q97	.69**	< .01
RA BY Q99	.80**	< .01
RA BY Q100	.78**	< .01
RA BY Q101	.31**	< .01
RA BY Q102	.72**	< .01
RA BY Q105	.60**	< .01
RA BY Q107	.49**	< .01

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ . RA = Peer Relational Aggression scale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure; EMI = Exclusively Masculine Identity index score; UNSEL = Undesirable Self; IDSEL = Ideal Self; Q97, Q99, Q100, Q101, Q102, Q105, Q107 = Items that form Peer Relational Aggression scale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure.

As noted in figure 5 above, the exclusively masculine identity index (EMI) did have a significant relationship with relational aggression. Thus, on average, EMI scores were predictive of the amount of relational aggression a participant self-reported using in their peer relationships. Interestingly, the relationship between EMI and RA was



negative. A negative relationship would suggest that the higher a participant's EMI index, the less that participant self-reported using relational aggression, though the negative relationship exhibited here is far from statistical significance. Conversely, participants with negative or lower EMI indices self-reported engaging in more relationally aggressive behavior. Thus, H4 was not supported, as EMI scores were inversely related to RA.

A similar model was examined for relational aggression victimization, to observe if participants' exclusively masculine identity index scores were related to their self-reported levels of relational aggression victimization (Table 7, Figure 6). EMI was not related to relational aggression victimization.

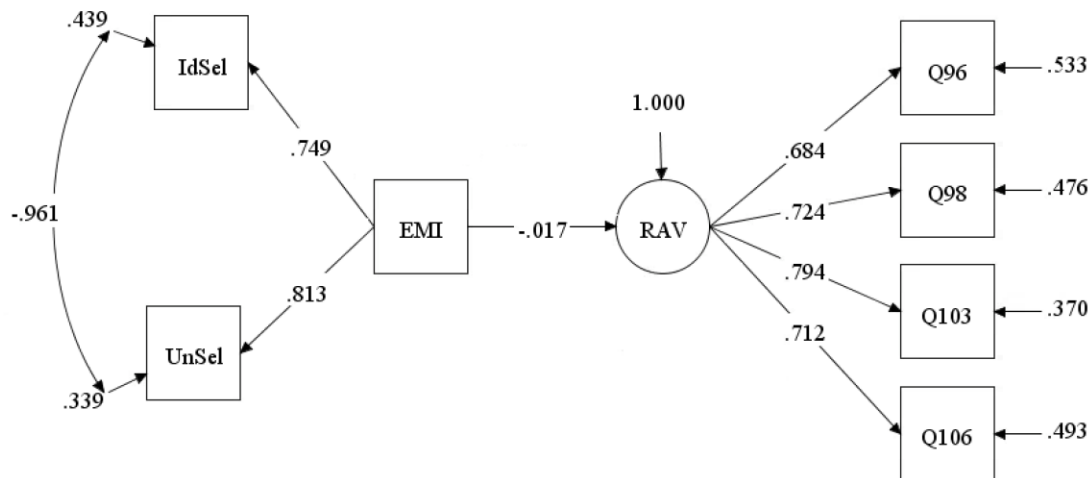
Table 7

*Path Estimates for Structural Equation Model: Paths from EMI to UNSEL, EMI to IDSEL, EMI to RAV, and RAV to items*

Path	Standard Estimate	P-Value
RAV ON EMI	-.02	.85
UNSEL ON EMI	.81**	< .01
IDSEL ON EMI	.75**	< .01
RAV BY Q96	.68**	< .01
RAV BY Q98	.72**	< .01
RAV BY Q103	.79**	< .01
RAV BY Q106	.71**	< .01

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ . RAV = Peer Relational Aggression Victimization scale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure; EMI = Exclusively Masculine Identity index score; UNSEL = Undesirable Self; IDSEL = Ideal Self; Q96,

Q98, Q103, Q106 = items that comprise Peer Relational Aggression Victimization scale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure.



*Figure 6. Model of the Relationship Between Exclusively Masculine Identity and Relational Aggression Victimization.*

Note. IdSel = Ideal Self index; UnSel = Undesirable Self index; EMI = Exclusively Masculine Identity index; RAV = Relational Aggression Victimization; Q96, Q98, Q103, Q106 = items that comprise Peer Relational Aggression Victimization scale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure.

It was also hypothesized that participants who reported higher levels of relational aggression would also report higher levels of relational aggression victimization (H5), a finding that has been consistent across several heterosexual samples (e.g., Werner & Crick, 2000) and in one gay male exclusive sample (Kelley & Robertson, 2008). Although the planned analyses originally presented suggested testing H5 through path analyses, it is difficult to compare two different dependent variables (i.e., relational aggression and relational aggression victimization) that are not in the same model. Looking at the two figures above, it is evident that participants reported experiencing both perpetrating and being victimized by relational aggression. Thus, relational aggression and victimization are evidently salient experiences for gay-identifying men in college. Bivariate correlations appeared to be a more direct way to address H5, and

would allow the direct examination of the relationship between both dependent variables. Bivariate correlations indicated that the same result as previous studies on relational aggression held accurate in the present study, with a correlation of  $r(198) = .67, p < .01$  between relational aggression and relational aggression victimization in the present sample. Thus, H5 was supported.

To examine the application of EMIT within the context of relational aggression and victimization in a gay male sample (H6), a model was used that replicates Kilianski's (2003) original EMIT model. The items that measured relational aggression and relational aggression victimization were also included to examine which items were most influential in the relationship for each dependent variable. The model used looks slightly different than the model originally used by Kilianski (2003), as the current model used a different measure of masculine ideology that has been used in a gay male exclusive sample previously. The results of the EMIT model with relational aggression as a dependent variable suggest that EMIT theory is not applicable to the current sample with respect to relational aggression (Table 8, Figure 7). Thus, H6 was not supported. Unexpectedly, masculine ideology, or the summed scores from the eight dimensions of masculine ideology, predicted of relational aggression, though the interaction of the exclusively masculine identity index score and masculine ideology did not. Further, it appears that the Playboy, Power Over Women, and Winning subscales accounted for significant amounts of variance related to masculine ideology.

Table 8

*Path Estimates for Masculine Ideology's Moderation of EMI and Relational Aggression*

Path	Standard Estimate	P-Value
RA ON EMI	-.03	.56
UNSEL ON EMI	.81**	< .01
IDSEL ON EMI	.75**	< .01
MASCID BY WORK	.20	.08
MASCID BY SELREL	.15	.31
MASCID BY PLAY	.29*	.04
MASCID BY POWER	.32*	.04
MASCID BY VIOL	.19	.29
MASCID BY RISK	.09	.59
MASCID BY EMCONT	.15	.16
MASCID BY WIN	.82*	.01
RA ON MASCID	.50*	.01
RA ON MASCIDxEMI	-.13	.10
RA BY Q97	.68**	< .01
RA BY Q99	.80**	< .01
RA BY Q100	.78**	< .01
RA BY Q101	.31**	< .01
RA BY Q102	.72**	< .01
RA BY Q105	.59**	.01

Table 8 (continued).

Path	Standard Estimate	P-Value
RA BY Q107	.51**	.01

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ . RA = Peer Relational Aggression subscale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure; EMI = Exclusively Masculine Identity index score; UNSEL = Undesirable Self Index; IDSEL = Ideal Self Index; MASCID = Total Score of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; WORK = Primacy of Work subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; SELREL = Self-Reliance subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; PLAY = Playboy subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; POWER = Power over Women subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Violence = Violence subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; RISK = Risk Taking subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; EMCONT = Emotional Control subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; WIN = Winning subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; MASCIDxEMI = Interaction effect of Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 total score; Q97, Q99, Q100, Q101, Q102, Q105, Q107 = items that comprise the Peer Relational Aggression subscale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure.

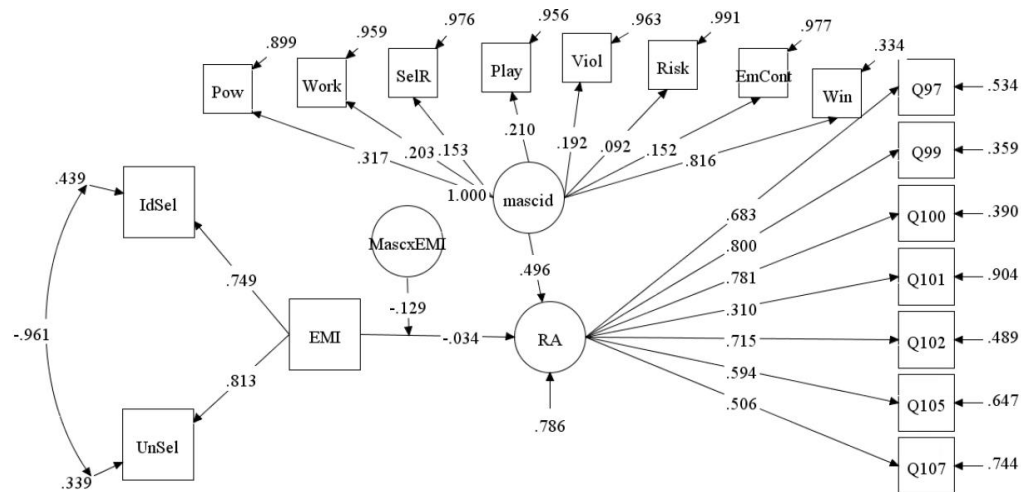


Figure 7. Model for Masculine Ideology's Moderation of the Relationship Between Exclusively Masculine Identity and Relational Aggression.

Note. IdSel = Ideal Self index; UnSel = Undesirable Self index; EMI = Exclusively Masculine Identity Index; RA = Relational Aggression; MascxEMI = Interaction Effect of Masculine Ideology; mascid = Total Score of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Work = Primacy of Work subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; SelR = Self-Reliance subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Play = Playboy subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Pow = Power over Women subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Viol = Violence subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Risk = Risk Taking subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; EmCont = Emotional Control subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Win = Winning subscale of the Conformity to

Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Q97, Q99, Q100, Q101, Q102, Q105, Q107 = items that comprise the Peer Relational Aggression subscale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure.

A similar model with relational aggression victimization as the dependent variable was examined to see if EMIT theory would be relevant for gay-identifying men with respect to peer relational aggression victimization (Table 9, Figure 8). Similar to the previous model, the following model represents the second half of H7 related to relational victimization. EMI did not emerge as a significant predictor of relational aggression victimization. Similar to the model with relational aggression, masculine ideology emerged as a predictor of relational aggression victimization with the Playboy, Power Over Women, Violence, and Winning dimensions accounting for the most variance.

Table 9

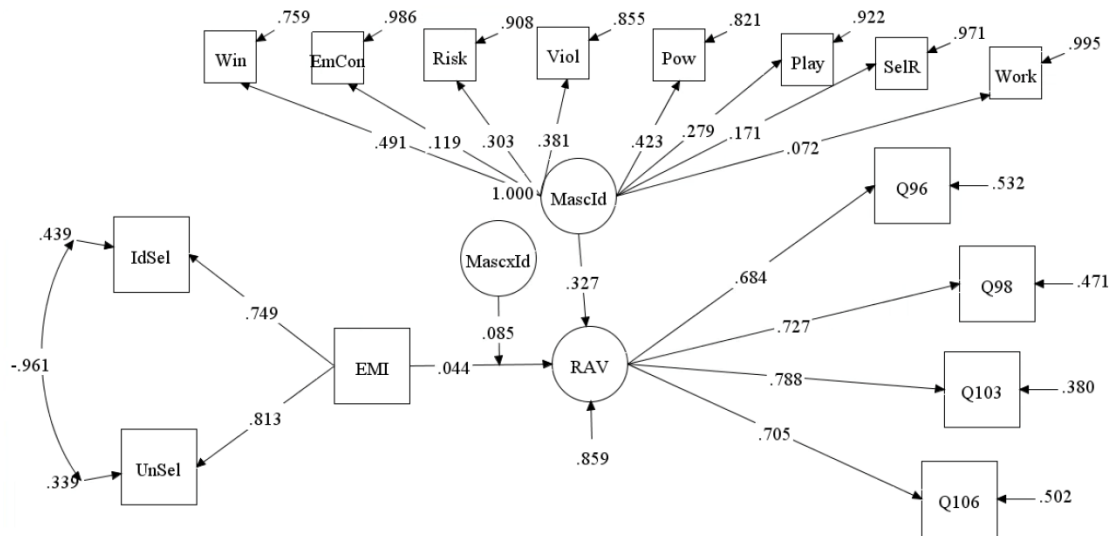
*Path Estimates for Masculine Ideology's Moderation of EMI and Relational Victimization*

Path	Standard Estimate	P-Value
RAV ON EMI	.04	.63
UNSEL ON EMI	.81**	< .01
IDSEL ON EMI	.75**	< .01
MASCID BY WORK	.07	.65
MASCID BY SELREL	.17	.39
MASCID BY PLAY	.28*	.02
MASCID BY POWER	.42**	< .01
MASCID BY VIOL	.38*	.02
MASCID BY RISK	.30	.14

Table 9 (continued).

Path	Standard Estimate	P-Value
MASCID BY EMCONT	.12	.60
MASCID BY WIN	.49*	.02
RAV ON MASCID	.33*	.04
RAV ON MASCIDxEMI	.09	.50
RAV BY Q96	.53**	< .01
RAV BY Q98	.82**	< .01
RAV BY Q103	.70**	< .01
RAV BY Q106	.66**	< .01

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ . RAV = Peer Relational Aggression Victimization subscale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure; EMI = Exclusively Masculine Identity index score; UNSEL = Undesirable Self Index; IDSEL = Ideal Self Index; MASCID = Total Score of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Work = Primacy of Work subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; SELREL = Self-Reliance subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; PLAY = Playboy subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; POWER = Power over Women subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Violence = Violence subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; RISK = Risk Taking subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; EMCONT = Emotional Control subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; WIN = Winning subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; MASCIDxEMI = Interaction effect between Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 total score and Exclusively Masculine Identity Index score; Q96, Q98, Q103, Q106 = items that comprise the Peer Relational Aggression Victimization subscale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure.



**Figure 8.** Model for Masculine Ideology's Moderation of the Relationship Between Exclusively Masculine Identity and Relational Aggression Victimization

Note. IdSel = Ideal Self index; UnSel = Undesirable Self index; EMI = Exclusively Masculine Identity Index; RAV = Relational Aggression Victimization; MascxId = Interaction Effect of Masculine Ideology; mascid = Total Score of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Work = Primacy of Work subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; SelR = Self-Reliance subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Play = Playboy subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Pow = Power over Women subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Viol = Violence subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Risk = Risk Taking subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; EmCon = Emotional Control subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Win = Winning subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Q96, Q98, Q103, Q106 = items that comprise the Peer Relational Aggression Victimization subscale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure.

## Secondary Analyses

The eight dimensions of masculine ideology were then used in a model as individual moderators. Formal hypotheses were not originally proposed for these models, as there was little previous research in this area and is an expansion of Kilianski's (2003) original model. It was evident that certain dimensions of masculine ideology (i.e., Winning, Violence, Power Over Women, and Playboy) were accounting for most of the variance when totaled into a single masculine ideology index. It is thus unclear if one of the dimensions by themselves moderates the relationship between



exclusively masculine identity and relational aggression/victimization. Therefore, all eight dimensions were separated into individual moderators and applied to the relational aggression/victimization models (Table 10, Figure 9).

Table 10

*Path Estimates for the Eight Dimensions of Masculinity Ideology's Moderation of Relational Aggression*

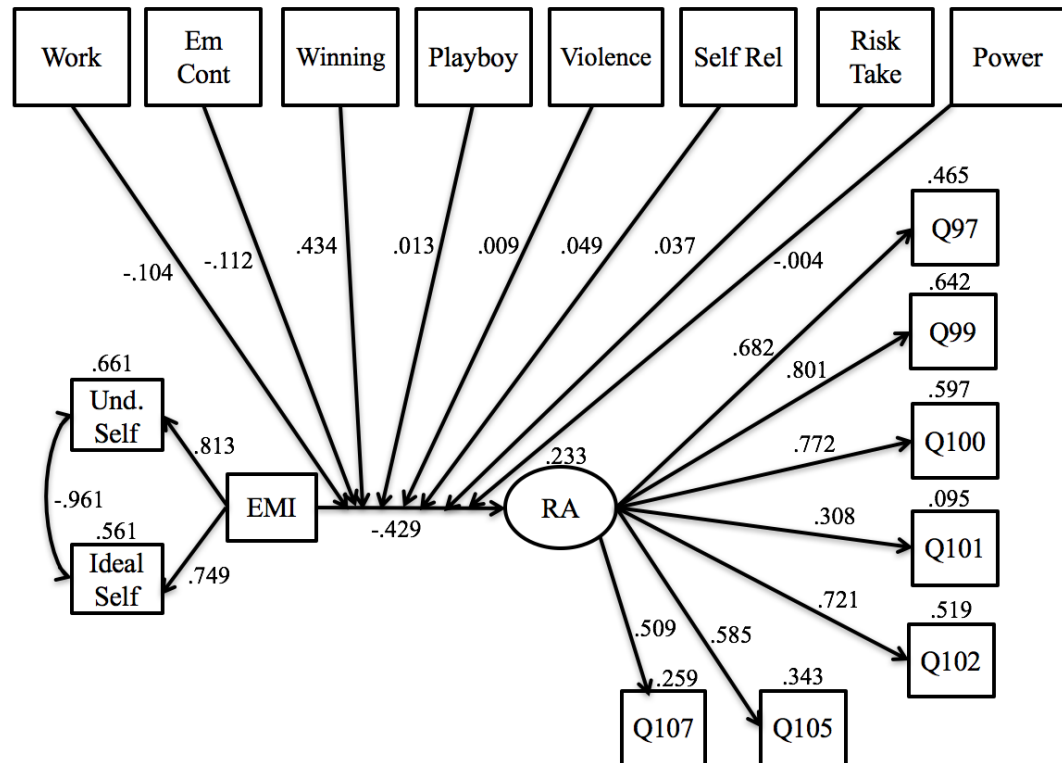
Path	Standard Estimate	P-Value
RA ON EMI	-.43	.10
UNSEL ON EMI	.81**	< .01
IDSEL ON EMI	.75**	< .01
RA ON WORK	-.10	.22
RA ON SELREL	.05	.57
RA ON PLAY	.01	.88
RA ON POWER	-.00	.96
RA ON VIOL	.01	.92
RA ON RISK	.04	.67
RA ON EMCONT	-.11	.16
RA ON WIN	.43**	< .01
RA ON WORxE	.07	.66
RA ON SELxE	.20	.18
RA ON PLAYxE	.02	.89
RA ON POWxE	-.12	.13

Table 10 (continued).

Path	Standard Estimate	P-Value
RA ON VIOLxE	.06	.65
RA ON RISKxE	.21	.14
RA ON EMCxE	.31*	.02
RA ON WINxE	-.38*	.04
RA BY Q97	.68**	< .01
RA BY Q99	.80**	< .01
RA BY Q100	.77**	< .01
RA BY Q101	.31**	< .01
RA BY Q102	.72**	< .01
RA BY Q105	.59**	< .01
RA BY Q107	.51**	< .01

Note. RA = Peer Relational Aggression subscale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure; EMI = Exclusively Masculine Identity index score; UNSEL = Undesirable Self Index; IDSEL = Ideal Self Index; MASCID = Total Score of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; WORK = Primacy of Work subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; SELREL = Self-Reliance subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; PLAY = Playboy subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; POWER = Power over Women subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; VIOL = Violence subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; RISK = Risk Taking subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; EMCONT = Emotional Control subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; WIN = Winning subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; WORxE = Interaction between Primacy of Work subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively Masculine Identity index; SELxE = Interaction between Self Reliance subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively Masculine Identity index; PLAYxE = Interaction between Playboy subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively Masculine Identity index; POWxE = Interaction between Power over Women subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively Masculine Identity index; VIOLxE = Interaction between Violence subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively Masculine Identity index; RISKxE = Interaction between Risk Taking subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively Masculine Identity index; EMCxE = Interaction between Emotional

Control subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively Masculine Identity index; WINxE = Interaction between Winning subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively Masculine Identity index; Q97, Q99, Q100, Q101, Q102, Q105, Q107 = items that comprise the Peer Relational Aggression subscale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure.



*Figure 9. Model of Domains of Masculine Ideology's Moderation of the Relationship Between Exclusively Masculine Identity and Relational Aggression.*

Note. Ideal Self = Ideal Self index; Und. Self = Undesirable Self index; EMI = Exclusively Masculine Identity Index; RA = Relational Aggression; Work = Primacy of Work subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Self Rel = Self-Reliance subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Playboy = Playboy subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Power = Power over Women subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Violence = Violence subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Risk Take = Risk Taking subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Em Cont = Emotional Control subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Winning = Winning subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Q97, Q99, Q100, Q101, Q102, Q105, Q107 = items that comprise the Peer Relational Aggression subscale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure.

For the relational aggression model, Winning emerged as the only significant predictor of relational aggression. The Winning and Emotional Control dimensions were found to be significant predictors of relational aggression when interacting with the EMI

index score, though the Winning interaction displayed a negative relationship with relational aggression.

For the victimization model (Table 11, Figure 10), none of the dimensions of masculine ideology or their interactions with EMI were found to be significant predictors of victimization.

Table 11

*Path Estimates for the Eight Dimensions of Masculinity Ideology's Moderation of Relational Victimization*

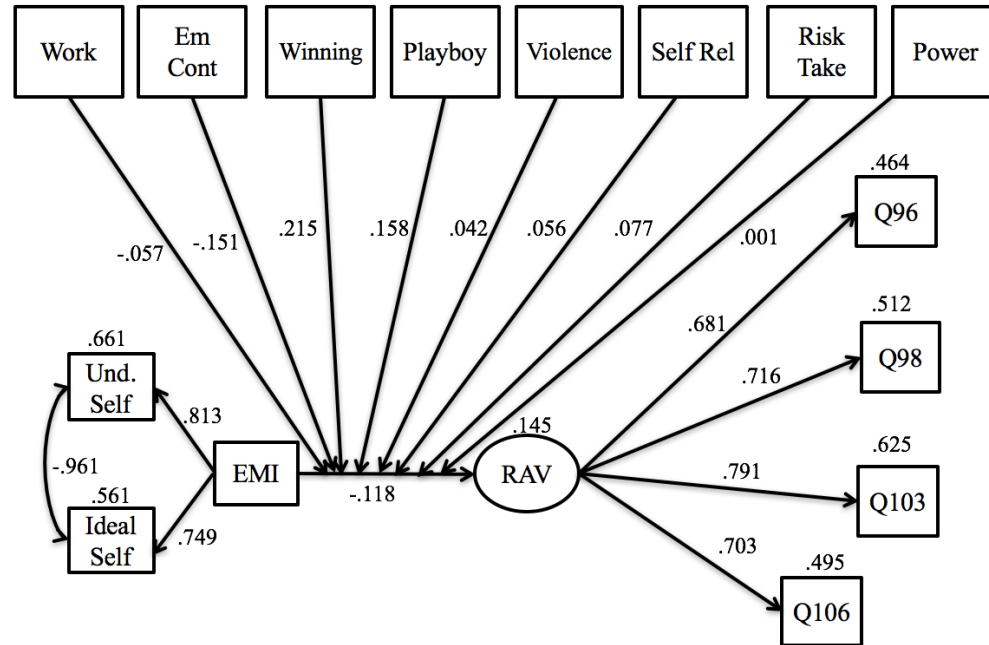
Path	Standard Estimate	P-Value
RAV ON EMI	-.12	.72
UNSEL ON EMI	.81**	< .01
IDSEL ON EMI	.75**	< .01
RAV ON WORK	-.06	.50
RAV ON SELREL	.06	.51
RAV ON PLAY	.16	.07
RAV ON POWER	.00	.99
RAV ON VIOL	.04	.63
RAV ON RISK	.08	.38
RAV ON EMCONT	-.15	.08
RAV ON WIN	.215	.07
RAV ON WORxE	.24	.21
RAV ON SELxE	.08	.71

Table 11 (continued).

Path	Standard Estimate	P-Value
RAV ON PLAYxE	-.12	.53
RAV ON POWxE	-.02	.78
RAV ON VIOLxE	.20	.31
RAV ON RISKxE	.13	.45
RAV ON EMCxE	-.20	.24
RAV ON WINxE	-.16	.54
RAV BY Q96	.68**	< .01
RAV BY Q98	.72**	< .01
RAV BY Q103	.79**	< .01
RAV BY Q106	.70**	< .01

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ . RAV = Peer Relational Aggression Victimization subscale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure; EMI = Exclusively Masculine Identity index score; UNSEL = Undesirable Self Index; IDSEL = Ideal Self Index; MASCID = Total Score of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; WORK = Primacy of Work subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; SELREL = Self-Reliance subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; PLAY = Playboy subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; POWER = Power over Women subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; VIOL = Violence subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; RISK = Risk Taking subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; EMCONT = Emotional Control subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; WIN = Winning subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; WORxE = Interaction between Primacy of Work subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively Masculine Identity index; SELxE = Interaction between Self Reliance subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively Masculine Identity index; PLAYxE = Interaction between Playboy subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively Masculine Identity index; POWxE = Interaction between Power over Women subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively Masculine Identity index; VIOLxE = Interaction between Violence subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively Masculine Identity index; RISKxE = Interaction between Risk Taking subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively Masculine Identity index; EMCxE = Interaction between Emotional Control subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively

Masculine Identity index; WINxE = Interaction between Winning subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 and Exclusively Masculine Identity index; Q96, Q98, Q103, Q106 = items that comprise the Peer Relational Aggression Victimization subscale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure.



*Figure 10.* Model of Domains of Masculinity Ideology's Moderation of the Relationship Between Exclusively Masculine Identity and Relational Aggression Victimization

Note. Ideal Self = Ideal Self index; Und. Self = Undesirable Self index; EMI = Exclusively Masculine Identity Index; RA = Relational Aggression; Work = Primacy of Work subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Self Rel = Self-Reliance subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Playboy = Playboy subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Power = Power over Women subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Violence = Violence subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Risk Take = Risk Taking subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Em Cont = Emotional Control subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Winning = Winning subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; Q96, Q98, Q103, Q106 = items that comprise the Peer Relational Aggression Victimization subscale of the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure.

## CHAPTER IV – DISCUSSION

The present study sought to advance the literature on relational aggression among emerging adults by examining relational aggression and victimization among college-aged gay-identifying men. Specifically, the role of masculine identity and normative masculine ideology in gay men's relational aggression and victimization were examined. Key findings, which will be discussed in detail below, include: (1) there was a relationship between relational aggression perpetration and relational aggression victimization so that gay men who reported higher levels of perpetration also reported experiencing more victimization; (2) gay men in the present sample endorsed fewer masculine and feminine traits as part of their ideal and undesirable selves, respectively, than was expected based on previous research and theory, raising questions about the relevance of exclusively masculine identity theory (EMIT) with respect to relational aggression; (3) the measure of relational aggression and victimization modified by Kelley and Robertson (2008) to focus on gay male peer relationships did not perform well in the present sample, requiring the use of an alternative measure of this construct that was not specific to gay male peer relationships; and (4) adherence to normative masculine ideology may be more relevant toward predicting relational aggression/victimization among gay men in comparison to EMIT.

### Ideal and Undesirable Selves

We expected that participants would attribute more masculine characteristics to their ideal selves (H2). Given the well-documented history of the idealization of masculinity among gay men in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was predicted that this trend would continue to hold true in the present. Contrary to what was hypothesized, participants in

the present study did not select significantly more masculine than feminine attributes in describing their ideal selves. This result was inconsistent with previous research on gay men and masculinity (Sánchez & Vilain, 2012), as well as Kilianski's (2003) original work with a heterosexual male sample. As Connell (1992) noted, masculinity changes across time and between different groups. Thus, the present study's results raise the possibility that the historical trend of idealization of masculinity among gay men may be changing. Of course, additional research will be needed to determine whether the present sample was an outlier in some important respects or whether the perceived value of masculine traits is in fact changing.

It was also predicted that gay men would attribute more feminine traits to their undesirable selves (H3). Based on Kilianski's (2003) original work, an exclusively masculine identity would be one that not only idealizes masculine identity, but also devalues or rejects femininity. While this hypothesis was confirmed in the present study, the effect size was much smaller than what was anticipated. It was expected that participants would overwhelmingly attribute feminine traits to their undesirable selves based on previous research suggesting that gay men desired to be less feminine in both their appearance and behavior (Sánchez & Vilain, 2012). In the present study, gay men did attribute more feminine traits to their undesirable selves but not to the degree expected. This was a departure not only from previous work by Sánchez and Vilain (2012) but also from Taywaditep's (2001) earlier finding that gay men explicitly value masculinity over femininity to the degree that anti-effeminacy attitudes may even be desirable. The present findings suggest that while participants attributed more feminine than masculine traits to their undesirable selves, they also ascribed several masculine



traits to this less desirable identity. Again, additional research will be needed to determine whether these findings might be sample-specific or could reflect a meaningful change in the manner in which gay men perceive masculine and feminine traits.

#### Exclusively Masculine Identity and Relational Aggression/Victimization

It was predicted that gay men who reported an exclusively masculine identity (i.e., masculinized ideal self, feminine undesirable self) would engage in significantly more relational aggression (H4). While exclusively masculine identity (EMI) did predict relational aggression, it was in the opposite direction from what was expected. That is, participants who attributed more masculine traits to their ideal selves and more feminine traits to their undesirable selves (which produces a higher EMI score) generally perpetrated *less* relational aggression. One potential explanation for this finding could be that if relational aggression is perceived as a feminine behavior, then a person who idealized masculinity and devalued femininity (i.e., a person with a high EMI score) would be less likely to engage in behavior perceived as feminine. There is some evidence among emerging adults to suggest that relational aggression is perceived as being associated with femininity (Nelson et al., 2008). These perceptions could originate in childhood when girls tend to engage in relational aggression more frequently than boys (Coyne et al., 2006; Marsee et al., 2005; Nelson, Robinson, & Hart, 2005), explaining why relationally aggressive behavior is often believed by children to be more characteristic of girls (Crick, Bigbee, & Howes, 1996). Indeed, as noted by Nelson and colleagues (2008), emerging adults tend to endorse normative beliefs that relational aggression is more often utilized by women, even though there is little evidence of consistent gender differences in relational aggression perpetration among emerging adults

(Bailey & Ostrov, 2007; Basow, Cahill, Phelan, Longshore, & McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 2007; Murray-Close, Ostrov, Nelson, Crick, & Coccaro, 2010). Looking at the literature, it is evident that emerging adults' perceptions of relational aggression often differs from what is reported in empirical studies of relational aggression. In the present study, it is possible that high EMI participants avoid engaging in aggressive behavior they perceive as feminine, and/or may be unwilling to admit doing so in a survey that asked questions related to masculinity.

Still, it is important to acknowledge that this finding was surprising given the wealth of literature exists documenting that gay men generally have: (1) idealized masculinity (Sánchez & Vilain, 2012; Sánchez et al., 2010); (2) devaluated femininity (Sánchez et al., 2009); and (3) used gender role enforcement as a tool of aggression (Parrott, 2009). Given this, EMIT seemed like an ideal theory to attempt to explain the use of relational aggression between gay men. Furthermore, this result was in sharp contrast to some previous literature, including Kilianski's (2003) original work in heterosexual men. For example, Skidmore and colleagues (2006) found that gay men self-reported negative opinions of other gay men who did not display a traditionally masculine gender presentation, which would likely be consistent of one who overtly idealized masculinity and devalued femininity. Further, Taywaditep (2001) theorized that gay men who were masculine in their gender presentation would tend to subordinate gay men who they appraised as effeminate in order to maintain their standing in a social power hierarchy. This argument is not necessarily negated by the results here, but it does suggest that relational aggression may not be the tool by which this subordination occurs, at least not in the present sample. Further, this result is also starkly different than

research on anti-gay attitudes and aggression exhibited in heterosexual men, with several studies supporting the notion that this aggression is fueled by gender role enforcement (Jewell & Morrison, 2010; Parrott, 2009; Sloan et al., 2014; Vincent et al., 2011).

### Normative Masculine Ideology

The present study also sought to determine if masculine ideology would impact the relationship between EMIT and relational aggression perpetration and victimization for gay male college students (H7). In other words, does the degree with which participants believed in ideals associated with hegemonic masculinity (i.e., having several sexual partners, refraining from displaying emotion at all times) affect the relationship between EMIT and relational aggression and victimization? The degree to which a person adheres to this normative ideology could be considered an “ought” self, or rules by which one ought to behave. The present findings suggested that, with all eight of the masculine ideology domains taken together, masculine ideology did not significantly affect this relationship. This held true for both relational aggression and relational victimization.

Interestingly, the eight domains of masculine ideology, when combined, appeared to be predictive of relational aggression and victimization. Further, some specific domains of masculine ideology emerged as predictors. For relational aggression, the Playboy (i.e., men should have sex with several partners), Power over Women (i.e., men should be in positions of power over women), and Winning (i.e., men should be driven to win) domains were predictive of participants’ use of relational aggression. This suggests that participants who endorse these particular parts of normative masculine ideology in attitude and/or behavior may be more likely to be relationally aggressive. For relational

victimization, the same domains emerged as significant predictors with the addition of the Violence domain (i.e., men should be open to physically fight or use violence). These results suggest that perhaps looking primarily at facets of masculine ideology (rather than EMIT) may be a better approach when investigating relational aggression and victimization among gay men.

Considering that some but not all of the eight domains were related to relational aggression and victimization, it made sense to see if they would function better as moderators when examined individually rather than combining all eight. When observed this way, the Emotional Control (i.e., men should not share their feelings with others) and Winning domains moderated the relationship between EMI and relational aggression. For relational victimization, none of the eight masculine ideology domains affected the relationship to a significant degree.

Overall, it appears that perhaps some singular domains of masculine ideology function as better predictors (and may even be more relevant) than EMIT with respect to relational aggression among gay men. Indeed, in the present study gay men rated their ideal as neither overtly masculine nor feminine and undesirable selves only marginally more feminine, unlike previous literature that found gay men endorsed having strong anti-effeminacy attitudes and idealization of masculinity (Duncan, 2007; Halkitis et al., 2008; Mealey, 1997; Sánchez & Vilain, 2012; Sánchez, Westefeld, Liu, & Vilain, 2010; Taywaditep, 2001). The Power over Women domain emerging as predictive of both relational aggression and victimization suggest that the domain may capture the “hyper-masculine/anti-feminine” attitudes that EMIT attempts to elicit.

## Assessing Relational Aggression and Victimization Among Gay Men

Given the lack of published measures developed to assess relational aggression and victimization among gay men, the present study sought to confirm the factor structure of Kelley and Robertson's (2008) measure of relational aggression and victimization for gay men through confirmatory factor analysis (H1). This was necessary given the lack of available psychometric information on this measure and the desire to use it in the present study. Unfortunately, the model could not be confirmed, and the Relational Aggression Scale (RAS), one of the two scales produced by this measure, was not sufficiently reliable in the present sample. This highlights a sizeable gap in the literature concerning the availability of psychometrically sound measures suitable for assessing peer relational aggression in gay men.

The present study also investigated whether participants who reported engaging in more relational aggression would also report being victimized more often by relational aggression (H5). In the present study, participants who were self-reportedly relationally aggressive indeed reported experiencing more relational victimization. This finding is consistent with previous literature on heterosexual populations (e.g., Werner & Crick, 2000), as well as in gay-male only samples (Kelley & Robertson, 2008). This finding is important with respect to comparing gay men's experiences of relational aggression with other relational aggression research on less specific populations. Additionally, this result offers the possibility that the relational aggression reported here may serve different functions for participants. That is, perhaps participants who report engaging in relational aggression are doing so in retaliation of perceived relational aggression from others, rather than engaging in relational aggression unprovoked. Future investigation into

motives of relational aggression use within the gay community would be beneficial in illuminating the apparent relationship between relational aggression use and victimization.

### Limitations and Future Directions

There are several limitations that should be considered in reviewing this study. First, Kelley and Robertson's (2008) modification of the Relational Aggression Scale (RAS) and Relational Victimization Scale (RVS) for use when evaluating gay male peer relationships did not appear to be statistically adequate in the present sample. Because of this, the Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure (SRASBM) had to be used to assess relational aggression and victimization. Although this measure is widely used in the study of these constructs, it was not developed for a gay male population and does not ask about relational aggression and victimization toward gay male peers but more generally. Thus, the results of this study should be considered within the context of gay college-aged men's experiences with relational aggression and victimization occurring in their entire peer group, including non-gay male peers. It is clear, however, that the results of the present study suggest that relational aggression and victimization is a salient experience for gay men.

Future research is likely to benefit from the development and validation of measures designed to assess relational aggression and victimization in gay male peer relationships. Investigation into relational aggression perpetration and victimization in gay men's peer relationships with other gay men may offer new insights into relationally aggressive perpetration and victimization in this population. It seems likely that due to the variety of opinions related to gay-identity that exist within society at-large, gay men

(and, likely, minorities in general) likely behave differently depending on whom they are interacting with. Additionally, behavior with in-group members likely differs compared to behavior with out-group members. With a gay male peer, there are likely to be peer relationship dynamics that are not existent with non-gay identifying peers, such as: mutual knowledge of gay identity, potential mate competition, and other dynamics that could contribute to marginalization among a marginalized population that are not yet discovered.

A second limitation worth considering is the use of exclusively online self-report data. Recruiting participants online likely improved the geographic diversity of the sample, though it could be argued that an element of selection bias exists with respect to gay men who would self-select into studies such as this one. Thus, results should not be assumed to be generalized to all gay identifying men currently in college. Further, as noted in the literature review, several studies related to children and adolescents are conducted in classrooms and other settings where in-vivo observation and peer-rating is possible (e.g., Lansu & Cillessen, 2012; French et al., 2002). Obviously, this would be incredibly difficult to replicate among college-aged males, especially of exclusively gay-identifying men. Further, considering the subtle nature of relational aggression, as well as its likely negative connotations, participants may have been unwilling to self-disclose their use of relationally aggressive behavior in their peer relationships. Some relational aggression researchers have argued, however, that using peer-ratings instead of self-report may be less accurate in assessing relationally aggressive behavior in young adults (Björkqvist et al., 1992; Green, Richardson, & Lago, 1996). For gay men specifically, Kelley and Robertson (2008) argued that gay men may be unwilling to disclose engaging

in relational aggression to refrain from fortifying homophobic perceptions or stereotypes about gay men.

A final limitation worth considering is the stage of homosexual identity development of the present sample. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of participants in this study identified themselves as in the final stage of homosexual identity formation according to the Cass (1979) model, suggesting they have synthesized their gay identity with other identities. This may be in part to gay men currently aged 18 to 25 moving through identity formation during a time rife with LGBT civil rights advancements, such as the legalization of same-sex marriage, and more LGBT visibility in popular culture. Stage of homosexual identity development is a frequently unassessed construct in studies sampling gay men, making comparisons difficult. This, in turn, likely impacts the generalizability of the present study's findings. It is certainly possible that a participant's identity development could play an important role with respect to relational aggression and attitudes related to masculinity and femininity. Ideally, a sample would be comprised of gay men that are distributed evenly across the various stages of identity development. Unfortunately, it is likely difficult to obtain gay men who are still in one of the first few stages of homosexual identity development according to the Cass (1979) model, as they may be less likely to self-select into a study about gay men. Given the aforementioned points, it may be beneficial to conduct additional research into identity development and attitudes related to masculinity and femininity in contemporary gay men.

The present study uncovered several areas that could be beneficial as future research endeavors. Namely, being that this study is only the second study conducted on



gay men's experiences of relational aggression, additional research is necessary to further investigate relational aggression among sexual identity minorities. Previous research has uncovered differences in the use of relational aggression between different geographical regions of the United States, countries, and ethnicities (Czar, 2013; French et al., 2002; Russell et al., 2003), but little has been done focusing on sexual identity minorities. Thus, it is imperative to investigate potential differences, similarities, and the experiences of among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) individuals. Furthermore, given the psychometric investigation into Kelley and Robertson's (2008) measure, a specific measure for gay men's perpetration and victimization of relational aggression is still necessary.

It may also be beneficial to attempt to study relational aggression among gay male populations using more context specific measurement techniques. That is, based on Kelley and Robertson's (2008) qualitative pilot study, they argued that relational aggression among gay men may be highly context specific. The present study, much like several others devoted to relational aggression, was not context specific and asked broadly about general peer relationship interactions. Kelley and Robertson (2008) noticed a trend where many of their participants noted experiencing relational aggression primarily in settings where there may be more competition for relationship and sexual partners (e.g., night clubs, parties, and Internet forums). Therefore, it may be beneficial to attempt to observe relational aggression within the gay community in spaces where mate competition may be more prominent. To that end, using romantic relational aggression measures along with measures of peer relational aggression may serve to capture the mate competition dynamic. Further, additional qualitative work would be

beneficial toward discovering themes and potential motivations behind gay men's use of relational aggression.

The finding from the present study that appears to be most at odds with previous literature is of participants' lack of endorsement of masculine traits for their ideal selves and feminine traits for their undesirable selves. There are several potential reasons for the present sample's lack of explicit preference for identifying feminine traits to their undesirable selves and masculine traits to their desirable selves as was expected. It is indeed possible that contemporary gay men perceive and have differing attitudes about masculinity and femininity compared to gay men who were born in middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (e.g., the 1960s, 70s, and 80s). For example, gay men grew up these time periods may have lived through or had more personal connections with the Gay liberation movement, the AIDS epidemic, or other gay centric socio-political events. In Taywaditep's (2001) lengthy but dated review of the history of masculinity and femininity in gay male culture, he noted that idealization of masculinity (and with it, anti-effemininity) attitudes rose rapidly in the 1970s following the liberation movement in part to thwart the effeminate stereotype attached to gay men by society. Indeed, as Taywaditep argued (2001), this cultural shift is well documented across other literary works and has been labeled as the "Gay Machismo," the "Butch Shift," (Humphries, 1985), and the "cult of gay masculinists" (Edwards, 1994). While there appears to be sufficient evidence of this cultural shift in attitudes, it is unclear if these attitudes persist today among college aged gay men. The present study, although merely one data point, raises the intriguing possibility that these attitudes may be changing.

Anderson (2009) addressed attitudes toward masculinity and femininity among both gay and straight identifying college-aged men by applying Inclusive Masculinity Theory (IMT). IMT posits the existence of a new more inclusive form of masculinity wherein heterosexual men are more willing to display both physical and emotional proximity to other men and effeminacy in gay men is valued rather than shunned. The present findings appear to be consistent with Anderson's (2009) work, suggesting the possible emergence of a new masculinity for college-aged men in which femininity is integrated into an inclusive form of masculinity.

Another possible explanation for the difference between this study's findings related to anti-effeminacy attitudes and that of previous work in this area is related to measurement. Whereas some previous studies that have asked gay men about their attitudes about masculinity and femininity have used dichotomous scales (e.g., Sánchez et al., 2010), the present study allowed participants to self-select traits that were not explicitly labeled as feminine or masculine. That is, by forcing a decision between masculinity and femininity, the possibility for wanting to be *both* masculine and more feminine is not permissible. Further, by asking participants to assign un-labeled masculine and feminine traits to themselves as the present study did is far less face valid and less exposed to priming affects compared to measures that ask how feminine a participant would ideally like to be or not be.

In summation, the present study provided new and additional evidence that 1) relational aggression is a salient experience for gay men, 2) gay men who perpetrate relational aggression are also more often victimized by it, 3) contemporary college-aged gay men may not endorse the same attitudes of anti-effeminacy and idealization of

masculinity as suggested in some prior research, and 4) adherence to masculine ideology may be a better lens from which to study relational aggression within the gay community in comparison to EMIT.

## APPENDIX A – Study Questionnaires

### Participant Demographic Questionnaire

The following questions will be used to gather information about participants in this study. Please answer the questions accordingly.

Gender: \_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_ Other

Age: \_\_\_\_

Race/Ethnicity:

\_\_\_\_ African American/Black

\_\_\_\_ Caucasian/White

\_\_\_\_ Hispanic/Latino

\_\_\_\_ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

\_\_\_\_ American Indian/Alaska Native

\_\_\_\_ Asian

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify)

Are you currently enrolled in college?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

College Status:

\_\_\_\_ Freshman

\_\_\_\_ Sophomore

\_\_\_\_ Junior

\_\_\_\_ Senior

Do you consider yourself to be

\_\_\_\_Heterosexual or Straight

\_\_\_\_Gay

\_\_\_\_Bisexual

\_\_\_\_Other (specify)

In the past, who have you had sex with?

\_\_\_\_Men only

\_\_\_\_Men and Women

\_\_\_\_I have not had sex

People are different in their attraction to other people. Which best describes your feelings? Are you:

\_\_\_\_Only attracted to females

\_\_\_\_Mostly attracted to females

\_\_\_\_Equally attracted to females and males

\_\_\_\_Mostly attracted to males

\_\_\_\_Only attracted to males

Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory—46

**DIRECTIONS:** The following pages contain a series of statements about how men might think, feel, or behave. The statements are designed to measure attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with both traditional and non-traditional masculine gender roles. Thinking about your own actions, feelings and beliefs, please indicate how much you personally agree or disagree with each statement by selecting “Strongly Disagree,” “Disagree,” “Agree,” or “Strongly Agree” for each statement. There are no

right or wrong responses to the statements. You should give responses that most accurately describe your personal actions, feelings and beliefs. It is best if you respond with your first impression when answering.

(1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree

In general, I will do anything to win.

1      2      3      4

If I could, I would frequently change sexual partners.

1      2      3      4

I hate asking for help.

1      2      3      4

I believe that violence is never justified.

1      2      3      4

In general, I do not like risky situations.

1      2      3      4

Winning is not my first priority.

1      2      3      4

I enjoy taking risks.

1      2      3      4

I am disgusted by any kind of violence.

1      2      3      4

I ask for help when I need it.

1      2      3      4

My work is the most important part of my life.

1      2      3      4

I would only have sex if I were in a committed relationship.

1      2      3      4

I bring up my feelings when talking to others.

1      2      3      4

I don't mind losing.

1      2      3      4

I take risks.

1      2      3      4

I never share my feelings.

1      2      3      4

Sometimes violent action is necessary.

1      2      3      4

In general, I control the women in my life.

1      2      3      4

I would feel good if I had many sexual partners.

1      2      3      4

It is important for me to win.

1      2      3      4

I don't like giving all my attention to work.

1      2      3      4

I like to talk about my feelings.

1      2      3      4



I never ask for help.

1      2      3      4

More often than not, losing does not bother me.

1      2      3      4

I frequently put myself in risky situations.

1      2      3      4

Women should be subservient to men.

1      2      3      4

I am willing to get into a physical fight if necessary.

1      2      3      4

I feel good when work is my first priority.

1      2      3      4

I tend to keep my feelings to myself.

1      2      3      4

Winning is not important to me.

1      2      3      4

Violence is almost never justified.

1      2      3      4

I am happiest when I'm risking danger.

1      2      3      4

It would be enjoyable to date more than one person at a time.

1      2      3      4

I am not ashamed to ask for help.

1      2      3      4

Work comes first.

1      2      3      4

I tend to share my feelings.

1      2      3      4

No matter what the situation I would never act violently.

1      2      3      4

Things tend to be better when men are in charge.

1      2      3      4

It bothers me when I have to ask for help.

1      2      3      4

I love it when men are in charge of women.

1      2      3      4

I hate it when people ask me to talk about my feelings.

1      2      3      4

Sex Stereotypically Index

DIRECTIONS: Think of yourself as your IDEAL self, the person you WANT to be.

Are you \_\_\_\_\_? (respond "Yes" or "No to **each item**)

Logical?                      Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Appreciative?                Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Coarse?                        Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Complaining?                Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Outspoken?	Yes ___ No ___
Emotional?	Yes ___ No ___
Adventurous?	Yes ___ No ___
Forgiving?	Yes ___ No ___
Ambitious?	Yes ___ No ___
Patient?	Yes ___ No ___
Loud?	Yes ___ No ___
Fussy?	Yes ___ No ___
Dominant?	Yes ___ No ___
Mild?	Yes ___ No ___
Determined?	Yes ___ No ___
Sympathetic?	Yes ___ No ___
Hard-hearted?	Yes ___ No ___
Submissive?	Yes ___ No ___
Daring?	Yes ___ No ___
Excitable?	Yes ___ No ___
Unemotional?	Yes ___ No ___
High-strung?	Yes ___ No ___
Forceful?	Yes ___ No ___
Soft-hearted?	Yes ___ No ___
Masculine?	Yes ___ No ___
Feminine?	Yes ___ No ___
Aggressive?	Yes ___ No ___

Self-denying? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Headstrong? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Cautious? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Opinionated? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Changeable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Opportunistic? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Impulsive? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Tough? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Dependent? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

DIRECTIONS: Think of yourself as the person you **DO NOT** want to be.

Are you \_\_\_\_? (respond “Yes” or “No” to **each item**)

Logical? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Appreciative? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Coarse? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Complaining? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Outspoken? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Emotional? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Adventurous? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Forgiving? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Ambitious? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Patient? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Loud? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Fussy? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Dominant?	Yes ___ No ___
Mild?	Yes ___ No ___
Determined?	Yes ___ No ___
Sympathetic?	Yes ___ No ___
Hard-hearted?	Yes ___ No ___
Submissive?	Yes ___ No ___
Daring?	Yes ___ No ___
Excitable?	Yes ___ No ___
Unemotional?	Yes ___ No ___
High-strung?	Yes ___ No ___
Forceful?	Yes ___ No ___
Soft-hearted?	Yes ___ No ___
Masculine?	Yes ___ No ___
Feminine?	Yes ___ No ___
Aggressive?	Yes ___ No ___
Self-denying?	Yes ___ No ___
Headstrong?	Yes ___ No ___
Cautious?	Yes ___ No ___
Opinionated?	Yes ___ No ___
Changeable?	Yes ___ No ___
Opportunistic?	Yes ___ No ___
Impulsive?	Yes ___ No ___
Tough?	Yes ___ No ___

Dependent? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

*Relational Aggression Scale*

**Instructions: Think about your interpersonal relationships and your interactions with your gay male peers. A gay male peer can be a gay man who is a good friend, a classmate, an acquaintance or a current or former dating partner. A gay male peer can be a gay man that you like or dislike. In your interactions with your gay male peers, how likely are you to do the following?**

1 (Not Very Likely) 2 (Somewhat Unlikely) 3 (Somewhat Likely) 4 (Very Likely)

1. When angry or mad at a gay male peer how likely are you to give him the “silent treatment?”

1      2      3      4

2. When angry or mad at a gay male peer how likely are you to try to damage his reputation by passing on negative information?

1      2      3      4

3. When angry or mad at a gay male peer how likely are you to try to retaliate by excluding him from group activities?

1      2      3      4

4. How likely are you to intentionally ignore a gay male peer, until he agrees to do something you want him to do?

1      2      3      4

5. How likely are you to make it clear to a gay male peer that you will think less of him unless he does what you want him to do?

1      2      3      4

6. How likely are you to threaten to share private information with others in order to get a gay male peer to comply with you wishes?

1      2      3      4

7. When angry or mad at a gay male peer, how likely are you to try to steal that person's dating partner to get back at him?

1      2      3      4

*Relational Victimization Scale*

**Instructions: In your interactions with your gay male peers, how likely are they to do the following:**

1 (Not Very Likely) 2 (Somewhat Unlikely) 3 (Somewhat Likely) 4 (Very Likely)

1. When angry or mad at you how likely is a gay male peer to give you the "silent treatment?"

1      2      3      4

2. When angry or mad at you how likely is a gay male peer to try to damage your reputation by passing on negative information?

1      2      3      4

3. When angry or mad at you how likely is a gay male peer to try to retaliate by excluding you from group activities?

1      2      3      4

4. How likely is it that a gay male peer would intentionally ignore you, until you agree to do something he wants you to do?

1      2      3      4

5. How likely is it that a gay male peer would make it clear to you that he will think less of you unless you do something he wants you to do?

1      2      3      4

6. How likely is it that a gay male peer would threaten to share private information with others in order to get you to comply with his wishes?

1      2      3      4

7. When angry or mad at you, how likely is a gay male peer to try to steal your dating partner to get back at you?

1      2      3      4

#### Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure

Directions: This questionnaire is designed to measure qualities of adult social interaction and close relationships. Please read each statement and indicate how true each is for you, **now**, and during the **last year**, using the scale below. Write the appropriate number in the blank provided.

NOT AT ALL TRUE                      SOMETIMES TRUE                      VERY TRUE

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

I have a friend who ignores me or gives me the “cold shoulder” when s/he is angry with me.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

When I am not invited to do something with a group of people, I will exclude people from future activities.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7



A friend of mine has gone “behind my back” and shared private information about me with other people.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

When I have been angry at, or jealous of someone, I have tried to damage that person’s reputation by gossiping about him/her or by passing on negative information about him/her to other people.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

When someone does something that makes me angry, I try to embarrass that person or make them look stupid in front of his/her friends.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

When I have been mad at a friend, I have flirted with his/her romantic partner.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

When I am mad at a person, I try to make sure s/he is excluded from group activities (going to the movies or to a bar).

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

I have a friend who excludes me from doing things with her/him and her/his friends when s/he is mad at me.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

I have spread rumors about a person just to be mean.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

When a friend of mine has been mad at me, other people have “taken sides” with her/him and been mad at me too.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

I have intentionally ignored a person until they gave me my way about something.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

APPENDIX B – Consent Form (SONA Participants)

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

AUTHORIZATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT

Consent is hereby given to participate in the study titled: Gay Men, Masculinity, and Aggression

Description of Study: The purpose of this study is to assess how gender roles relate to forms of socially aggressive behavior in gay-identifying men. Participants will be asked to complete online questionnaires about their perceptions of their gender role and forms of social aggression in which they have participated or experienced. The study will take no more than 30 minutes to complete and will be worth 0.5 research credits for University of Southern Mississippi (USM) students.

Benefits: Although participants will receive no direct benefit from participation in this study, the information provided will enable researchers to better understand gay men's perceptions and experiences of their gender roles and socially aggressive behavior.

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study. If you feel that completing these questionnaires has resulted in emotional distress, please stop and notify the researcher (Daniel Deason at xxxx.xxxx@eagles.usm.edu). If you should decide at a later date that you would like to discuss your concerns, please contact the research supervisor, Dr. Eric Dahlen (xxxx.xxxx@usm.edu).

Confidentiality: These questionnaires are intended to be anonymous, and your name is requested on this page only for the purpose of assigning research credit. The information you provide will be kept confidential, and your name will not be associated

with your responses. Records related to this study will be stored on secure computer devices and only involved researchers will have access to these records. If significant new information relating to this study becomes known which may relate to your willingness to continue to take part in this study, you will be given this information.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may exit the study at any time or skip any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering. For USM students, your decision whether to participate in the study or not will not affect your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Mississippi.

Participant's Assurance: Whereas no assurance can be made concerning results that may be obtained (since results from investigational studies cannot be predicted) the researcher will take every precaution consistent with the best scientific practice. Participation in this project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. Questions concerning the research should be directed to Daniel Deason (xxxx.xxxx@eagles.usm.edu). This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) xxx-xxxx. A copy of this form will be given to the participant.

Consent to Participate: I consent to participate in this study, and in agreeing to do so, I understand that:

I must be at least 18 years of age;

I am being asked to complete a set of questionnaires which will take no more than 60 minutes and for which I will receive 1 research credit; and

All information I provide will be used for research purposes and be kept confidential.

I have read and understand the information stated, am at least 18 years of age, and I willingly sign this consent form. A copy can be printed from my browser window.

---

Signature of the Research Participant Date

APPENDIX C – Consent Form (Non-SONA Participants)

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI AUTHORIZATION TO  
PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT

Consent is hereby given to participate in the study titled: Gay Men, Masculinity, and Aggression

Description of Study: The purpose of this study is to assess how gender roles relate to forms of socially aggressive behavior in gay-identifying men. Participants will be asked to complete online questionnaires about their perceptions of their gender role and forms of social aggression in which they have participated or experienced. The study will take no more than 30 minutes to complete.

Benefits: Although participants will receive no direct benefit from participation in this study, the information provided will enable researchers to better understand gay men's perceptions and experiences of their gender roles and socially aggressive behavior. Additionally, one dollar (\$1) will be donated to The Trevor Project Inc. (a 24-hour national suicide prevention and crisis intervention hotline for LGBT youth and young adults) for each valid survey completed.

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study. If you feel that completing these questionnaires has resulted in emotional distress, please stop and notify the researcher (Daniel Deason at xxxx.xxxx@eagles.usm.edu). If you should decide at a later date that you would like to discuss your concerns, please contact the research supervisor, Dr. Eric Dahlen (xxxx.xxxx@usm.edu).

Confidentiality: These questionnaires are intended to be anonymous, and your name is requested on this page only for the purpose of assigning research credit. The

information you provide will be kept confidential, and your name will not be associated with your responses. Records related to this study will be stored on secure computer devices and only involved researchers will have access to these records. If significant new information relating to this study becomes known which may relate to your willingness to continue to take part in this study, you will be given this information.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:** Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may exit the study at any time or skip any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering.

**Participant's Assurance:** Whereas no assurance can be made concerning results that may be obtained (since results from investigational studies cannot be predicted) the researcher will take every precaution consistent with the best scientific practice. Participation in this project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. Questions concerning the research should be directed to Daniel Deason (xxxx.xxxx@eagles.usm.edu). This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) xxx-xxxx. A copy of this form will be given to the participant.

**Consent to Participate:** I consent to participate in this study, and in agreeing to do so, I understand that:

I must be at least 18 years of age;

I am being asked to complete a set of questionnaires which will take no more than 60 minutes and for which I will receive 1 research credit; and

All information I provide will be used for research purposes and be kept confidential.

I have read and understand the information stated, am at least 18 years of age, and I willingly sign this consent form. A copy can be printed from my browser window.

---

Signature of the Research Participant      Date



## APPENDIX D – IRB Approval Letter



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

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### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | [www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board](http://www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board)

### NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.  
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 16011903

PROJECT TITLE: The Role of Masculine Identity in Relational Aggression Among Gay Men

PROJECT TYPE: New Project

RESEARCHER(S): Daniel Deason

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology

DEPARTMENT: Psychology

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 02/18/2016 to 02/17/2017

**Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.**

**Institutional Review Board**

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