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## Ascertaining the Relationship Between Traditional Masculinity Ideology and Personal Growth Initiative in College Students

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ASCERTAINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADITIONAL  
MASCULINITY IDEOLOGY AND PERSONAL GROWTH INITIATIVE IN  
COLLEGE STUDENTS

An Honors Thesis

Presented to

The Williams Honors College of The University of Akron

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Arts

Christopher J. Ha

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ASCERTAINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADITIONAL  
MASCULINITY IDEOLOGY AND PERSONAL GROWTH INITIATIVE IN  
COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Honors Thesis

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## ABSTRACT

The emerging psychological field of men and masculinities is credited with the development and validation of an array of instruments to assess masculinity-related constructs, with many emanating from the gender role strain paradigm (GRSP; Levant & Powell, 2017; Levant & Richmond, 2007, 2016; Pleck, 1981, 1995). However, there is little research that employs a positive psychology framework while considering the potential positive aspects of masculinity. The majority of literature utilizing these measures focus on the pathological effects of masculinity. The goal of this study was to explore the relationship between traditional masculinity ideology (TMI) and personal growth initiative (PGI) in a sample of college students, utilizing two instruments: the Male Role Norms Inventory–Short Form (MRNI-SF; Levant et al., 2013) and the Personal Growth Initiative Scale–II (PGIS-II; Robitschek et al., 2012). No significant relationship was found between the total scores of the two instruments. However, further bivariate and canonical correlation analysis indicated significant relationships between various subscales of the measures. These findings contribute meaningful data to a gap in the literature (Cole et al., 2021), while also giving a new direction for the next generation of masculinity-related measures (Thompson & Bennett, 2015; Wade, 2015).

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this honors project to my mother, Dr. Cynthia Krstic Ha, who nurtured my love of learning while teaching me that anything is possible. Thank you for your unconditional love and endless hours of proofreading! “Per Aspera ad Astra.”

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## CHAPTER I

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The great majority of literature on the psychology of men and masculinities focuses on the dysfunctions and pathological consequences of masculinity on men and boys (Giaccardi et al., 2016; Gilbert et al., 2018; Kaiser et al., 2020; Nielsen et al., 2015; Rosenberg et al., 2017; Sobiraj et al., 2015; Liang et al., 2019), while evaluating methods that may be used to overcome these barriers (Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010). However, there is little research that employs a positive psychology framework while considering the potential positive aspects of masculinity (Cole et. al, 2021; Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010; Wade, 2015).

In a recently published content analysis and call to action, Cole et al. (2021) review the significant need for research that examines this underrepresented topic in the scholarship of men and masculinities. Between the years 2000 and 2018, only 15% of journal articles published in *Psychology of Men and Masculinities* focused on positive topics (Cole et al., 2021). The purpose of this study was to contribute to the gap in the literature by exploring the relationship between traditional masculinity ideology (TMI; Levant & Powell, 2017; Levant & Richmond, 2007, 2016) and personal growth initiative (PGI; Robitschek, 1998; Robitschek et al., 2012).

## The Emerging Field of Men and Masculinities

The psychological field of men and masculinities is an emerging area producing research that is both innovative and captivating. A significant outcome of this field has been the development and validation of various psychological instruments to assess masculinity-related constructs by utilizing measures of traits, beliefs, conformity, and ideology (Thompson & Bennett, 2015; Thompson & Pleck 1995). A great portion of measures that are currently used emanate from the gender role strain paradigm theory (GRSP; Levant & Powell, 2017; Levant & Richmond, 2007, 2016; Pleck, 1981, 1995). The GRSP is a theoretical framework describing masculinity as a problematic construct that is influenced by the social norms of the male gender role. Men experience different styles of dysfunction strain as they attempt to fulfill these expectations (Levant & Powell, 2017; Pleck, 1981, 1995). However, a potential problem is uncovered as measures of TMI may not portray the positive aspects of traditional masculinity, since these measures are commonly developed to assess problematic aspects of masculinity (Wade, 2015).

It is important to differentiate *masculinity ideologies* from *masculinity beliefs*. Masculinity ideologies distinguish cultural differences of manhood standards in a social group or region, whereas masculinity beliefs represent the collection of norms that individuals adopt, thus creating a belief system. More recent measures hypothesized that masculinity ideology is individually constructed and stems from the endorsement and internalization by the individual (Pleck, 1995; Thompson & Bennett, 2015). In line with research by Thompson and Pleck (1995), this study focuses on measures that evaluate masculinity ideologies.

## Positive Psychology: A New Approach

The field of positive psychology shifts from psychology's traditional focus on pathology to an emphasis on strengths and behaviors posed by an individual, thus allowing them to shape their life and growth in a meaningful way (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Concerned with issues far beyond the basic biological motives of survival, researchers in this growing field pursue ways to improve quality of life and evaluate the positive aspects that make life worth living (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The positive psychology concept of personal growth initiative (PGI) captures the extent to which a person actively seeks out and engages in opportunities to grow (Robitschek, 1998). It can be understood as a set of cognitive and behavioral skills which a person intentionally develops and employs for the purpose of self-improvement in their lives (Robitschek et al., 2012). PGI establishes an overall aptitude to improve in various aspects of one's life. Recent literature in the third generation of masculinity measures (Wade, 2015) has sought to identify male strengths that represent positive aspects of traditional masculinity (Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010). This study sought to address this further by considering if TMI is related to active and intentional growth.

## Hypothesis Summary

*Hypothesis 1:* There will be a significant relationship between the total scores of the MRNI-SF and the PGIS-II.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODOLOGY

#### Participants and Procedure

The data were collected as part of a larger study on the development of an emerging adult masculinity ideology scale. Both studies were covered by the same institutional review board (IRB) application and approved by The University of Akron Office of Research Administration prior to data collection (see Appendix A).

A convenience sample of adults ages 18–30 consisted of 372 university students and provided usable data from a large, public, Midwestern, primarily White university. Participants were recruited via two methods. The first recruitment was online through the psychology department's human subjects' pool (Sona Systems; a requirement of all Introduction to Psychology courses). Upon signing up for the study, participants received a link to a secure and anonymous Qualtrics survey containing an informed consent form, the questionnaires (see Appendices B–D), and a debriefing (see Appendix E). Participants were able to complete the study at a time and place of their choosing. After their completion of the survey, they received Sona credit which served as either course or extra credit depending on their participating course(s).

The second recruitment method involved the use of emails to undergraduates at The University of Akron. The author sent out a request to colleagues in other departments to share information about the study with undergraduates. The information was also

forwarded to undergraduate listservs at the discretion of the administrative assistants who manage them. The administrative assistants were asked to only forward the honors project information if it was permitted by their program's listserv policies. The invitation email included a link to a secure Qualtrics survey containing an informed consent form, the questionnaires (see Appendices B–D), and a debriefing (see Appendix E).

Participants were able to complete the study at a time and place of their choosing.

Participants recruited through university email did not receive any payment for participating.

Half of the participants identified as cisgender women ( $n = 205$ , 55.1%), followed by cisgender men ( $n = 144$ , 38.7%), gender nonbinary ( $n = 13$ , 3.5%), other and prefer not to answer ( $n = 5$ , 1.3%, each), transgender men ( $n = 3$ , 0.8%), and transgender women ( $n = 2$ , 0.5%). Over four-fifths reported they were White/European American ( $n = 315$ , 85.2%), followed by Black/African American ( $n = 25$ , 6.7%), Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander ( $n = 21$ , 5.6%), Hispanic/Latino/a/x ( $n = 15$ , 4.0%), Middle Eastern/Arab American ( $n = 13$ , 3.5%), Biracial/Multiracial ( $n = 12$ , 3.2%), and American Indian/Alaska Native/Native American ( $n = 2$ , 0.5%). Age of participants ranged from 18–30 years old with a mean of 20.4 ( $SD = 2.2$ ).

### Instrumentation

The two psychological constructs that were measured are traditional masculinity ideology (TMI) and personal growth initiative (PGI). Two instruments were used for this study: the Male Role Norms Inventory–Short Form (MRNI-SF; Levant et al., 2013, 2016;

McDermott et al., 2017; see Appendix C) and the Personal Growth Initiative Scale–II (PGIS-II; Robitschek et al., 2012; see Appendix D).

#### Male Role Norms Inventory–Short Form (MRNI-SF)

The MRNI-SF (Levant et al., 2013, 2016; McDermott et al., 2017) is one of the most commonly used measures of masculinity ideology (Gerdes et al., 2017; Levant & Richmond, 2016; Whorley & Addis, 2006). This measure evaluates the perceived norms, rather than stereotypes, that make up TMI by examining a person’s endorsements on how men should think, feel, and behave (Levant & Richmond, 2016).

The MRNI-SF consists of seven domains that include: Avoidance of Femininity, Negativity toward Sexual Minorities, Self-Reliance through Mechanical Skills, Toughness, Dominance, Importance of Sex, and Restrictive Emotionality. Each domain is covered by three items for a total of 21 items, with responses made on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).

Higher scores indicate greater levels of endorsement of traditional masculinity ideology. The subscale scores are obtained by calculating the mean of items for that scale. These subscale scores were also used individually for supplemental analyses. Previous studies have shown that the MRNI-SF total and subscales scores demonstrate good evidence of reliability and validity (Levant et al., 2013; Levant et al., 2016).

#### Personal Growth Initiative Scale–II (PGIS-II)

The second instrument is the PGIS-II (Robitschek et al., 2012) and is the successor to the original Personal Growth Initiative Scale (PGIS; Robitschek, 1998). The PGIS-II is a 16-item multidimensional scale that includes cognitive and behavioral

factors to assess active and intentional growth through four domains: Readiness for Change (four items), Planfulness (five items), Using Resources (three items), and Intentional Behavior (four items). Responses to items are made on a 6-point Likert-type scale (0 = *disagree strongly*, 5 = *agree strongly*), with higher scores indicating greater levels of each factor. The subscale scores are obtained by computing the mean of the items for that subscale. The total score is then obtained by calculating the mean of the subscale scores. As with the MRNI-SF, the individual subscale scores of the PGIS-II were used for supplemental analyses. Previous studies have shown that the PGIS-II total and subscale scores demonstrate good evidence of reliability and validity (Robitschek et al., 2012; Weigold et al., 2013).



## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

The data underwent customary cleaning procedures prior to analyses. After the creation of an additional variable to identify the recruitment group, the two data sets were merged into one file. A case number variable was generated for each response. The following respondents were removed: those who did not agree to participate ( $n = 2$ , 0.4% of original data set), those who were not within the age range of 18–30 years ( $n = 12$ , 2.4% of original data set), those who stopped the survey immediately following the consent and preliminary age range question ( $n = 99$ , 20.0% of original data set), those who stopped the survey partway through ( $n = 10$ , 2.0% of original data set), and those who selected the same option for all items ( $n = 1$ , 0.2% of original data set). The highest percentage of missing responses on any single scale item was 0.03% ( $n = 1$ ).

All analyses were run using version 27 of the SPSS program. There was no significant correlation found between the total scores of the MRNI-SF and the PGIS-II,  $r(369) = .09$ ,  $p = .069$ . For further analysis, bivariate correlations were run between the individual subscale scores of the MRNI-SF and the PGIS-II. The following MRNI-SF subscales were significantly correlated with the PGIS-II subscale of Planfulness: Self-Reliance through Mechanical Skills,  $r(369) = .14$ ,  $p = .006$ , Importance of Sex  $r(369) = .13$ ,  $p = .011$ , and Avoidance of Femininity and Toughness,  $r(369) = .13$ ,  $p = .011$ , for

both. Additionally, Toughness was related to Readiness for Change,  $r(369) = .11, p = .037$ , and Importance of Sex was related to Using Resources  $r(369) = .12, p = .017$ .

A canonical correlation analysis that included the MRNI-SF subscales in one set and the PGIS-II subscales in the other revealed there was one significant root, Wilks'  $\lambda = .89, F(28, 1299.42) = 1.49, p = .048$ , 4.9% overlapping variance. Using .30 as a cutoff, lower levels of Importance of Sex ( $-.57$ ), Avoidance of Femininity ( $-.41$ ), and Self-Reliance through Mechanical Skills ( $-.35$ ) were related to lower levels of Using Resources ( $-.90$ ), Intentional Behavior ( $-.80$ ), Planfulness ( $-.77$ ), and Readiness for Change ( $-.67$ ).

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

The results did not support the primary hypothesis of a significant relationship between the two overall constructs of traditional masculinity ideology and personal growth initiative. Although further analyses found significant relationships between various subscales of both instruments, the bivariate correlations were not particularly strong. The relationship between Self-Reliance through Mechanical Skills and Planfulness was the strongest, and in an effort to further explore how TMI is most related to PGI, a canonical correlation analysis was used. The results demonstrated that there is only one significant root pattern of relations.

In root 1 of the canonical correlation, Importance of Sex was the driving factor. This root indicates that people who scored high on all factors of PGI also think that it is important for men to value sex, avoid femininity, and be self-reliant. Similarly, this root also indicates that people who scored lower on Importance of Sex, Avoidance of Femininity, and Self-Reliance through Mechanical Skills, also scored lower on all factors of PGI. The canonical correlation illustrates an interesting picture that although someone may score high on PGI, they may still employ strong personal TMI about how men should think, feel, and behave. Comparably, the results of the canonical correlation were consistent with that of the bivariate correlations between the subscales of the MRNI-SF and PGIS-II.

Nonetheless, these relationships were generally weak and the canonical correlation had low overlapping variance (4.9%). While this demonstrates that there is minimal relationship within our college sample, these relationships should be further investigated as TMI is a complex construct with multiple factors. Multidimensional scales are especially valuable as the individual subscales can be considered in addition to the total scores. The subscales often provide nuanced information that is not shown in the total scores, as seen in the various correlation results in this study. The significant relationship with Self-Reliance through Mechanical Skills and Planfulness indicates that people who think men should be self-reliant also score high on Planfulness. All things considered, the correlations are small and should be interpreted with caution.

#### Limitations and Future Directions

A notable limitation is that the sample was predominantly White with 85.2% ( $n = 315$ ) of respondents indicating they were White/European American. These results need to be considered in the context of college students who are theorized to be in the developmental stage of emerging adulthood, between the ages of 18–25 (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adults may employ different ideologies on how men should think, feel, and act. In addition, the data suggest that there may be a potential floor effect with the MRNI-SF (total scores;  $M = 2.55$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ). This could be due to the fact that participants asked to rate one's own personal masculinity ideology may be vulnerable to social desirability bias when a response is viewed as less suitable or not politically correct. Alternatively, this sample may simply ascribe less to TMI overall and future studies may benefit from

different student samples (e.g. private colleges). These factors should be considered when assessing the variability and relationship of the constructs.

Furthermore, the data analyzed in the study were collected in March and April of 2021, approximately one year into the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. The pandemic may impact active and intentional growth and these results may not be representative of the typical period of growth that college students usually experience (Bono et al., 2020). For our sample at The University of Akron (UA), the majority of all course seats offered during the spring 2021 semester were online (72.3% remote/online, 23.4% hybrid/in-person, and 4.3% dual-delivery; UA, 2021). Recent studies show that college students continue to struggle with the disruption of their typical education norms and view online instruction as an obstacle (Kahn et al., 2020). They in turn report a lack of motivation, challenges with cognitive engagement, and increased stress (Aguilera-Hermida, 2020; Aguilera-Hermida et al., 2021). Moreover, the college experience would normally provide students with a plethora of resources on and off campus. Aguilera-Hermida (2020) describes a significant pandemic-related challenge reported by college students is the lack of supporting resources available and accessible to them. This should be considered when evaluating PGI and its subscale factor of Using Resources.

### Conclusion

To the author's knowledge, this is the first study to examine the relationship between traditional masculinity ideology and personal growth initiative in college students, and provides insight on how traditional masculinity ideology may function alongside personal growth initiative. The results highlight the complex nature of

masculinity ideology with unique factors and relationship, and does not always operate as expected (Wade, 2015). Future researchers may want to consider employing a qualitative approach to address these challenges. In addition, the MRNI-SF used in this study is the short form of the 53-item MRNI-R (Levant et al., 2007) and the full form version should be considered in future research.

Lastly, there is not yet a scale to specifically assess an emerging adult's masculinity ideology. This developmental stage is a unique period with many opportunities for active and intentional growth, and emerging adults may conceptualize TMI in a distinctive manner. Continued research is needed to contribute to the underrepresented topic of positive psychology in the field of men and masculinities (Cole et al., 2021), especially during the development of the next generation of masculinity-related measures (Thompson & Bennett, 2015; Wade, 2015).

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL



Office of Research Administration  
Akron, OH 44325-2102

#### NOTICE OF APPROVAL

Date: 2/18/2021  
To: Ginelle Wolfe, Christopher Ha, and Nathan Bitecofer  
From: Kathryn Watkins Associate Director and IRB Administrator  
IRB Number: 20210121  
Title: Initial development and validation of an emerging adult masculinity ideology scale

Approval Date: 2/18/2021

Thank you for submitting your Request for Exemption to the IRB for review. Your protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and qualifies for exemption from the federal regulations under the category below:

- ☐ **Exemption 1** – Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices.
- ☒ **Exemption 2** – Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior.
- ☐ **Exemption 3** – Research involving the use of benign behavioral interventions in conjunction with the collection of information from adult subjects through verbal or written responses (including data entry) or audiovisual recordings, and subjects have prospectively agreed to the intervention.
- ☐ **Exemption 4** – Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, biospecimens specimens, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens.
- ☐ **Exemption 5** – Research and demonstration projects conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine public programs or benefits.
- ☐ **Exemption 6** – Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies.
- ☐ **Exemption 7** – Research involving the use of a broad consent for the storage or maintenance of identifiable information and/or biospecimens for future research.
- ☐ **Exemption 8** – Research involving the use of a broad consent for the use of identifiable information and/or biospecimens for future research.

Annual continuation applications are not required for exempt projects. If you make changes to the study's design or procedures that increase the risk to subjects or include activities that do not fall within the approved exemption category, please contact the IRB to discuss whether or not a new application must be submitted. Any such changes or modifications must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

Please retain this letter for your files. This office will hold your exemption application for a period of three years from the approval date. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond this period, you will need to submit another Exemption Request. If the research is being conducted for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, the student must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

☒ Approved consent form/s enclosed

The University of Akron is an Equal Education and Employment Institution

**Consent Form for Experiment Participation**

**Title of Study:** Development of a Measure of Masculinity Ideology

**Introduction:** You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by Ginelle Wolfe, Nathan Bitecofer (graduate students), and Christopher Ha (undergraduate student) in the Department of Psychology at The University of Akron, and supervised by Dr. Ingrid Weigold (a faculty member in the Department of Psychology at The University of Akron).

**Purpose:** There are two purposes of this project: to gather data related to the development of a measure of emerging adult masculinity ideology, and to assess the relationship between masculinity ideology and personal growth initiative. We would like to get information from approximately 500 participants.

**Procedures:** If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer 116 questions about beliefs, feelings, and actions that you might have on a regular basis, as well as some demographics questions. This will take you about 20-25 minutes. Additionally, the system will record the amount of time you spend completing the study.

**Exclusion:** You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this research study.

**Risks and Discomforts:** No adverse events are expected beyond those encountered in daily life and no specific liability plan is offered.

**Benefits:** You will receive no direct benefit from your participation in this study, but your participation may help us to develop the measure of emerging adult masculinity ideology.

**Payments to Participants:** You will receive 2 Sona credits for completing the questionnaires.

**Right to refuse or withdraw:** Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You can quit at any time and you won't lose anything, although if you do not complete the study, you might not receive the Sona credit compensation.

**Confidential Data Collection:** At the end of the study, you will be asked to provide your name for the sole purpose of assigning Sona credits to the appropriate participants. To do this, you will be directed to a new screen, unconnected to your survey responses. Your name will not be downloaded with the questionnaires you complete. All data will be kept confidential and only the researchers will have access to the data. Participants will not be individually identified in any publication or presentation of the research results. Only aggregate data will be used.

**Confidentiality of records:** Your answers will be put in a computer file by number, without your name. The raw data will be kept for no less than 5 years and destroyed after that time in accordance with APA guidelines.

**Who to contact with questions:** If you have any questions about this study, you may call email Ginelle Wolfe at glw31@uakron.edu. This project has been reviewed and approved by The University of Akron Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the IRB at (330) 972-7666.

**Acceptance:** I have read the information provided and all of my questions have been answered. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. Checking "Yes" below will serve as my consent. I may print a copy of this consent statement for future reference.

☐ Yes (I agree to participate in this study, and I am at least 18 years old)  
☐ No (I do not agree to participate in this study)



**Office of Research Administration**

Akron, OH 44325-2102

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

Date: 3/31/2021

To: Ginelle Wolfe

From: Kathryn A Watkins, IRB Administrator

IRB Number: 20210121-C

Title: Initial development and validation of an emerging adult masculinity ideology scale

Thank you for submitting your Request for Change in Approved Protocol to the IRB for review. Your change represents minimal risk to subjects and has been approved.

Approval Category: Exemption 2

Approval Date: 3/25/2021

In addition, the following is/are approved:

- ☐ Research involving children
- ☐ Research involving prisoners
- ☐ Waiver of documentation of consent
- ☐ Waiver or alteration of consent

- Annual review of Expedited protocols is no longer required under the regulations; therefore, there is no expiration date on this approval.
- If additional changes are made to the protocol you must submit another Request for Change form for review and approval before the change is implemented.
- When the project is completed you must submit a Final Report to close the IRB file.
- If this research is being conducted for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, you must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.
- All forms are available on the ORA website at <http://www.uakron.edu/research/ora/compliance/irb/irbforms.dot>
- CITI Certification is valid for three years. It is your responsibility to update your certification as needed. The link to the CITI home log-in screen is: <https://www.citiprogram.org/>

☒ Approved consent form(s) attached

The University of Akron is an Equal Employment and Education Institution

**Consent Form for Experiment Participation**

**Title of Study:** Development of a Measure of Masculinity Ideology

**Introduction:** You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by Ginelle Wolfe, Nathan Bitecofer (graduate students), and Christopher Ha (undergraduate student) in the Department of Psychology at The University of Akron, and supervised by Dr. Ingrid Weigold (a faculty member in the Department of Psychology at The University of Akron).

**Purpose:** There are two purposes of this project: to gather data related to the development of a measure of emerging adult masculinity ideology, and to assess the relationship between masculinity ideology and personal growth initiative. We would like to get information from approximately 500 participants.

**Procedures:** If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer 116 questions about beliefs, feelings, and actions that you might have on a regular basis, as well as some demographics questions. This will take you about 15-20 minutes. Additionally, the system will record the amount of time you spend completing the study.

**Exclusion:** You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this research study.

**Risks and Discomforts:** No adverse events are expected beyond those encountered in daily life and no specific liability plan is offered.

**Benefits:** You will receive no direct benefit from your participation in this study, but your participation may help us to develop the measure of emerging adult masculinity ideology.

**Payments to Participants:** There will be no payment to participants.

**Right to refuse or withdraw:** Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You can quit at any time and you won't lose anything.

**Confidential Data Collection:** All data will be kept confidential and only the researchers will have access to the data. Participants will not be individually identified in any publication or presentation of the research results. Only aggregate data will be used.

**Confidentiality of records:** Your answers will be put in a computer file by number, without your name. The raw data will be kept for no less than 5 years and destroyed after that time in accordance with APA guidelines.

**Who to contact with questions:** If you have any questions about this study, you may call email Ginelle Wolfe at glw31@uakron.edu. This project has been reviewed and approved by The University of Akron Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the IRB at (330) 972-7666.

**Approved**  
**University of Akron Institutional Review Board**  
**Exempt 2**  
**03/25/2021**

**Acceptance:** I have read the information provided and all of my questions have been answered. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. Checking "Yes" below will serve as my consent. I may print a copy of this consent statement for future reference.

\_\_\_ Yes (I agree to participate in this study, and I am at least 18 years old)

\_\_\_ No (I do not agree to participate in this study)



APPENDIX B  
DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are you between the ages of 18 and 30?
  - Yes
  - No
2. What is your age? (in years): \_\_\_\_\_
3. Please indicate your Gender (select all that apply):
  - Cisgender Man (my gender matches my sex assigned at birth)
  - Cisgender Woman (my gender matches my sex assigned at birth)
  - Transgender Man
  - Transgender Woman
  - Gender nonbinary
  - My gender is not listed (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Prefer not to answer
4. Please indicate the race or races with which you identify (select all that apply):
  - American Indian / Alaska Native / Native American
  - Asian/ Asian American/ Pacific Islander
  - Black / African American
  - Hispanic / Latino/a/x
  - Middle Eastern / Arab American
  - White/ European American
  - Biracial / Multiracial
  - My race is not listed (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Prefer Not to Answer
5. Relationship Status (please select one button):
  - Currently engaged/married or in a civil union or other legally recognized partnership
  - Currently partnered without legal recognition
  - Currently dating exclusively
  - Currently dating casually
  - Currently single
  - Divorced
  - Widowed

- My relationship status is not listed (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Prefer not to answer
6. How do you identify your sexual orientation? (please select one button):
- Straight/heterosexual
  - Gay
  - Bisexual
  - My sexual orientation is not listed (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Prefer not to answer
7. Education (please select one button that represents the highest level achieved):
- Some high school/ Completed high school/G.E.D.
  - Completed some college but no degree.
  - Currently enrolled in college.
  - Completed Associate's Degree.
  - Completed Bachelor's Degree (e.g., B.A., B.S.)
  - Completed Master's Degree (e.g., M.A, M.S., M.Ed., M.B.A., M.P.H., etc.)
  - Completed Specialist Degree (e.g., CAGS, Ed.S., Psy.S.)
  - Completed Doctorate (e.g., Ph.D., Psy.D., Ed.D, M.D., J.D., etc.)
  - My education level is not listed (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Prefer not to answer
8. Family/Household Income (please select one button that represents your current income):
- Under \$20,000
  - \$20,001-40,000
  - \$40,001-60,000
  - \$60,001-80,000
  - \$80,001-100,000
  - \$100,001-120,000
  - \$120,001-140,000
  - \$140,001-160,000
  - \$160,001-180,000
  - \$180,001-200,000
  - Prefer not to answer
9. Religious Identity (Select all that apply):
- Christian
  - Catholic

- Jewish
- Muslim
- Hindu
- Buddhist
- Pagan
- Agnostic
- Atheist
- Native/Indigenous spiritual/religious practices
- None
- Another spiritual tradition (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to answer

10. Year in School (select one):

- Freshman/First year
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- My year in school is not listed (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### MALE ROLE NORMS INVENTORY–SHORT FORM

(Levant et al., 2013)

Instructions: Please complete the questionnaire by circling the number which indicates your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Give only one answer for each statement.

Scale: 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Slightly Disagree*, 4 = *No Opinion*, 5 = *Slightly Agree*, 6 = *Agree*, 7 = *Strongly Agree*

Items:

1. Homosexuals should never marry.
2. The President of the US should always be a man.
3. Men should be the leader in any group.
4. Men should watch football games instead of soap operas.
5. All homosexual bars should be closed down.
6. Men should have home improvement skills.
7. Men should be able to fix most things around the house.
8. A man should prefer watching action movies to reading romantic novels.
9. Men should always like to have sex.
10. Boys should prefer to play with trucks rather than dolls.
11. A man should not turn down sex.
12. A man should always be the boss.
13. Homosexuals should never kiss in public.
14. A man should know how to repair his car if it should break down.
15. A man should never admit when others hurt his feelings.
16. Men should be detached in emotionally charged situations.
17. It is important for a man to take risks, even if he might get hurt.
18. A man should always be ready for sex.
19. When the going gets tough, men should get tough.
20. I think a young man should try to be physically tough, even if he's not big.
21. Men should not be too quick to tell others that they care about them.

Subscales and their items (numbers in parentheses are item numbers from the MRNI-SF as it is administered):

Avoidance of Femininity:

- (4) Men should watch football games instead of soap operas.
- (8) A man should prefer watching action movies to reading romantic novels.
- (10) Boys should prefer to play with trucks rather than dolls.

Negativity toward Sexual Minorities:

- (1) Homosexuals should never marry.
- (5) All homosexual bars should be closed down.
- (13) Homosexuals should never kiss in public.

Self-Reliance through Mechanical Skills:

- (6) Men should have home improvement skills.
- (7) Men should be able to fix most things around the house.
- (14) A man should know how to repair his car if it should break down.

Toughness:

- (17) It is important for a man to take risks, even if he might get hurt.
- (19) When the going gets tough, men should get tough.
- (20) I think a young man should try to be physically tough, even if he's not big.

Dominance:

- (2) The President of the US should always be a man.
- (3) Men should be the leader in any group.
- (12) A man should always be the boss

Importance of Sex:

- (9) Men should always like to have sex.
- (11) A man should not turn down sex.
- (18) A man should always be ready for sex.

Restrictive Emotionality:

- (15) A man should never admit when others hurt his feelings.
- (16) Men should be detached in emotionally charged situations.
- (21) Men should not be too quick to tell others that they care about them.

## APPENDIX D

### PERSONAL GROWTH INITIATIVE SCALE-II

(Robitschek et al., 2012)

Instructions: For each statement, please mark how much you agree or disagree with that statement. Use the following scale:

Scale: 0 = *Disagree Strongly*, 1 = *Disagree Somewhat*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Disagree a Little*, 4 = *Agree Somewhat*, 5 = *Agree Strongly*

Items:

1. I set realistic goals for what I want to change about myself.
2. I can tell when I am ready to make specific changes in myself.
3. I know how to make a realistic plan in order to change myself.
4. I take every opportunity to grow as it comes up.
5. When I try to change myself, I make a realistic plan for my personal growth.
6. I ask for help when I try to change myself.
7. I actively work to improve myself.
8. I figure out what I need to change about myself.
9. I am constantly trying to grow as a person.
10. I know how to set realistic goals to make changes in myself.
11. I know when I need to make a specific change in myself.
12. I use resources when I try to grow.
13. I know steps I can take to make intentional changes in myself.
14. I actively seek out help when I try to change myself.
15. I look for opportunities to grow as a person.
16. I know when it's time to change specific things about myself.

Subscales and their items (numbers in parentheses are item numbers from the PGIS-II as it is administered):

Readiness for Change:

- (2) I can tell when I am ready to make specific changes in myself.
- (8) I figure out what I need to change about myself.
- (11) I know when I need to make a specific change in myself.
- (16) I know when it's time to change specific things about myself.

Planfulness:

- (1) I set realistic goals for what I want to change about myself.
- (3) I know how to make a realistic plan in order to change myself.
- (5) When I try to change myself, I make a realistic plan for my personal growth.
- (10) I know how to set realistic goals to make changes in myself.
- (13) I know steps I can take to make intentional changes in myself.

Using Resources:

- (6) I ask for help when I try to change myself.
- (12) I use resources when I try to grow.
- (14) I actively seek out help when I try to change myself.

Intentional Behavior:

- (4) I take every opportunity to grow as it comes up.
- (7) I actively work to improve myself.
- (9) I am constantly trying to grow as a person.
- (15) I look for opportunities to grow as a person.

WARNING. This work is protected by copyright and is intended for free use in research, educational, and clinical purposes. This work may not be used for commercial purposes.

APPENDIX E  
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

This study was designed to develop a greater understanding of the way emerging adults think about masculinity ideology as well as personal growth initiative. This study will help to develop a scale that captures how emerging adults believe men should think, feel, and act.

People have varying levels of personal growth and masculinity ideology. If you are feeling you are struggling with any of these issues or others, please see the information below for resources.

Listed below is contact information for counseling and mental health services available to students like yourself on The University of Akron's campus.

Counseling & Testing Center  
Simmons Hall 306  
330-972-7082  
<https://www.uakron.edu/counseling/>

Psychology Department Counseling Clinic  
College of Arts and Sciences 342  
330-972-6714  
<https://www.uakron.edu/psychology/clinic/>

Clinic for Individual and Family Counseling  
C.P. and Cornelia Chima Family Center  
330-972-6822  
<https://www.uakron.edu/cifc/index.dot>

Thank you for your participation in this study!