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# An Exploratory Investigation of the Effect of Racial and Masculine Identity on Focus: An Examination of White, Black, Mexicano, Latino, and Asian Men in Community Colleges

The relationship between masculine identity and men of color's focus/effort in community college is examined in this article. Using data from the Community College Survey of Men, the results confirm that conceptions of masculinity for men of color has differential effects on the extent to which students are intensely focused on academic matters. Based on the results of this study, implications for educational practice and future research on men of color in community colleges are discussed.

*Keywords:* minority men, masculinity, community college, male gender roles

Research on historically underrepresented and underserved men in community colleges has expanded during the past decade (Bush & Bush, 2010; Harris & Harper, 2008; Wood & Essien-Wood, 2012; Wood & Williams, 2013). The expansive trajectory of research has coincided with increased concern among practitioners about the success of men of color and low-income men in community colleges. For example, in a six-year time frame, only 26.9% and 26.6% of Black and Latino men will earn a certificate, degree, or transfer from the community college. In contrast, White and Asian men will succeed at 35.2% and 42.3%, respectively (BPS, 2009a). In response to these deleterious rates, practitioners have established programs, symposia, and initiatives designed to improve outcomes for men, particularly men of color. However, the efficacy of these efforts are questionable. As noted

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by Harper (2014) one of the greatest weaknesses of these efforts is that most interventions do not account for masculine identities. Harper also noted that most activities focused on men of color centered on providing spaces for community building and leadership development. However, “often missing were opportunities for [men of color] to critically reflect on themselves as men” by “paying sufficient attention to important (and sometimes conflict-laden) aspects of their masculinities” (p. 129). Harper connected the lack of attention to the gendered experiences of men of color to the underwhelming attention to masculinity in the published research on men of color. While works from several scholars have addressed men and masculinity in the context of college, few scholars (save Dancy, 2012; Dancy & Brown, 2012; Harris, Palmer & Struve, 2011; Harris & Harper, 2008; Martin & Harris, 2006) have been attentive to gender in the literature on men of color.

In light of this concern, this study sought to investigate the effects of masculinity on one marker of success for men in the community college. The focus on men (particularly men of color) is crucial, given that community colleges serve as their principal pathway into public postsecondary education (Bush & Bush, 2010). For instance, while 58% of Asian and 56.5% of White men begin their academic careers at community colleges, upwards of 70% of Black and Latino men do (BPS, 2009b). Bearing this context in mind, the purpose of this study was to examine the effects of masculine and racial identity on male students’ action control. Action control was operationalized as the directed focus or effort that men placed on academic matters. As such, action control is referred to interchangeably in this manuscript with the term “focus”. Prior research on student success for men of color has shown that “focus” is a core contributor to achievement for men of color. Specifically, Wood and Palmer (2014) conducted a qualitative study of 28 Black men in community colleges to examine factors that they believe affect their success in college. Overwhelmingly, “focus” was *the* most central construct that students attributed to affecting their success in college. Participants in their study associated “focus” with studying regularly, being attentive during class, attending class regularly, completing homework, turning in work on time, and enrolling in a higher course load. Wood and Palmer identified several factors that contributed to students being focused in college, they included limiting social interactions and engagements, viewing learning as fun, and involvement in clubs and organizations. However, while their study provided initial insight into the role of “focus” on student success, their descriptions of potential determinants of “focus” was limited. This study builds upon their work by articulating the role of masculine identity in fostering action control. The authors of this study believe this to be a salient contribution to the literature given the critical importance of “focus” on men of color’s success in college and the need to examine the construction of gender among men of color in community colleges.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars (e.g., Harris & Harper, 2008; Harris & Wood, 2013) have advocated for more inquiries that consider the effects of identities (e.g., racial/ethnic, gender, sexual orientation) on the experiences and outcomes of men of color in community colleges. Moreover, as noted earlier in this article, those who have examined student success for men of color in community colleges typically do not do so from a gendered perspective. When doing so, they fail to recognize that men are gendered

beings and the extent to which male gender role socialization is a contributing factor in patterns of underachievement for men, in general, and men of color, in particular. In this section of the article we discuss male gender role socialization and masculine performance among men of color in community colleges. Afterwards we present the conceptual framework that guided inquiry in this study.

### **The Social Construction of Masculinity**

We conceptualize masculinity in this study from pro-feminist men's studies perspectives, specifically those that were articulated by Michael Kimmel and Michael Messner (2007) and R.W. Connell (1995). According to these scholars, masculinity is a socially constructed concept. Simply stated, men are socialized or taught, the meanings, values, and behaviors that are associated with masculinity. Moreover, men are rewarded for performing masculinity according to societal expectations, and punished for not doing so. For example, boys who are tough and aggressive in the contexts of sports or other physical activities are praised by peers, coaches, and other men in their lives. Consequently, boys who are emotional or engage in behaviors and activities that are socially coded as feminine (e.g., playing with girls, following the rules, and crying) are often teased, harassed, or bullied by male peers. Thus, the incentives and pressures for embracing societal expectations of performing masculinity can be profound. Once practiced and internalized, these behaviors become ingrained in the gender identities of boys and manifest throughout their adult lives. Parents, especially fathers, males peers, coaches, teachers, and other adult figures who play important roles in the lives of boys are among the primary agents of gender socialization for them, in that they communicate (sometimes unknowingly) and reinforce societal expectations of what it means to be a man and expect boys to behave accordingly.

### **Male Gender Role Conflict**

While most men accept societal expectations of masculinity, men's studies scholars contend that doing so does not come without consequences. Masculinity has been linked to a host of psychological, interpersonal, and health-related problems among men, including: homophobia, depression, substance abuse, and physical violence to name a few. James O'Neil's (1981) gender role conflict theory best captures the relationship between masculinity and its consequences. According to O'Neil, when men are unable to live up to societal expectations of what it means to be a man, they are likely to view themselves as less masculine and, as a result, experience anxiety and gender-related conflicts. Because expectations of masculinity are virtually unattainable, male gender role conflict (MGRC) is a common phenomenon that is experienced by most men. O'Neil also theorized that when gender-related conflict or anxiety ensues, men attempt to resolve it by behaving in hyper-masculine ways in an effort to prove to themselves and/or others that they are "real men." O'Neil proposed six patterns of MGRC to describe this phenomenon: (1) restrictive emotionality; (2) homophobia; (3) socialized power, control, and competition; (4) restrictive sexual and affectional behavior; (5) obsession with achievement and success; and (6) health care problems. According to O'Neil, men's fear of femininity or concern about being perceived as gay or unmanly by others is at the core of MGRC and its corresponding behavioral patterns.

MGRC has been an important concept in studies of masculinity and gender performance among college men and has been used to explain a host of negative behavioral trends that have been observed among men in college contexts. While most of this work has prioritized men at four-year institutions, recently scholars have also applied MGRC to the experiences of men in community colleges. For example, studies by Gardenhire-Crooks et al. (2010) and Wood and Essien-Wood (2012) both highlighted the ways in which men of color in community colleges are challenged by pressures to fulfill the masculine role of breadwinner and the effects it had on their engagement in academics. Participants in Gardenhire-Crooks et al.'s study reportedly prioritized work over school despite recognizing the deleterious effects on their academic achievement. Nevertheless, the participants did so because they viewed contributing to their families financially as a core component of their identities as men. Similarly, Wood and Essien-Wood found that African American men in their study embraced a capitalistic value system, which ultimately encouraged them to measure their self-worth and achievement by the extent to which they were able to obtain material wealth and possessions. Consequently, participants devalued the utility of a college degree, were overwhelmed by financial pressures, and were not fully engaged academically. Finally, Harris and Harper's (2008) discussion of masculinity among four racially diverse community college men also highlight the pressures that correspond with having a breadwinner orientation as well as other identity conflicts that can be explained by MGRC. For instance, a student who was profiled in the piece struggled with restricted emotionality and socialized power and control due, in part, to difficulties transitioning from working full-time to being a full-time student.

### **The Intersection of Masculinity and Race/Ethnicity**

Given our focus on men of color in this study, it is important that we acknowledge the intersection of masculinity with other salient identity dimensions, notably race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, [dis]ability, socioeconomic status, and so forth. Considering that men of color are likely to experience prejudice and oppression because of their status as racial/ethnic minorities, attaining the masculine ideal is virtually impossible. For example, in comparison to their White counterparts, men of color are more likely to reside in low-income communities and attend under-resourced schools, which ultimately limit their access to universities, high-paying jobs, and other benefits. Among the key findings in Harris et al.'s (2011) study of masculinity among Black men at a private research university was that, at times, participants expressed homophobia and sexism in their performance of masculinity, which the authors attributed to their efforts to "maintain or reclaim some dignity and respect as men" while participating in an institutional context "in which they were marginalized and viewed as inferior" (p. 57). Similarly, in a phenomenological study of masculinity among Latino male community college students, Saenz, Bukoski, Lu, and Rodriguez (2013) found that Latino cultural norms that required men to exhibit pride, power, strength, and competition (described as "machismo") made them unwilling to seek help even when faced with the threat of failure.

While Harris et al. (2011) and Saenz et al.'s (2013) studies underscore the intersection of gender and race/ethnicity for Black and Latino men, respectively, Shek (2006) explored the intersection of these identity constructs for Asian American men. According to Shek, Asian American masculinity is socially constructed as

mee, effeminate, asexual, and non-threatening. Thus, Asian American men, much like gay men and other men of color, are subordinated in relation to White, dominant, and mainstream conceptualizations of masculinity. Within the context of higher education, the “model minority myth” has a substantial impact on the ways in which Asian American masculinity is conceptualized. Accordingly, Asian American men are assumed to have innate intellectual abilities that situate them in a position of academic superiority over other students. Stated simply, Asian Americans are often assumed to not experience challenges related to race/ethnicity and/or gender that threaten their collegiate success. Consequently, few proactive efforts are enacted within colleges and universities to identify needs and concerns for this population. Moreover, assumptions about the successful status of Asian Americans lead many to overlook the heterogeneity that characterizes the Asian American/Pacific Islander category and mask disparities that are experienced by Filipino, Southeast Asian (e.g., Hmong, Laotian, Cambodian, Vietnamese) and Pacific Islander men (Harris & Wood, 2014a).

As is evident throughout this discussion, negotiating the pressures of societal expectations of masculinity with what is expected of students to be successful in community college can be a challenge for men of color. While on one hand, schooling and academic learning is socially constructed as a feminine activity; on the other hand, popularity and status for men are earned through the accumulation of wealth, physicality, being tough, and being independent. Success in college is dependent, in part, on cultivating healthy interpersonal relationships, seeking help when needed for academic and other challenges, and proactively participating in class discussions and activities. Yet, these behaviors are often assumed to be contradictory to the messages about masculinity that are ingrained in men during the early stages of their gender socialization. As Harris and Harper (2008) noted: “When examined critically, the incongruence between the behaviors that are linked empirically to student development and success in college and those that constitute the performance of traditional masculinities are evident” (p. 29). This notion heightens the importance of this study, which sought to link masculine and racial identities to success outcomes for men of color.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Inquiry and sensemaking in this study were guided by the Socio-Ecological Outcomes (SEO) model (see Figure 1) proposed by Harris and Wood (2014b). The SEO model was developed based on the published literature and research on men of color in community colleges. The model accounts for the salient influences of student success for men of color capturing interactions between societal, environmental, intrapersonal, and campus ecological factors. While, fully unpacking the SEO model and interactions among its key constructs are beyond the scope of this article, below we offer a brief description.

The core constructs of the SEO model are depicted in the seven rectangular boxes. The two boxes on the far left of the model are described as *background/defining and societal* factors. These factors are best understood as “input” variables in that they capture experiences that occur prior to men’s matriculation to community college but must be taken into account in educational programming, service delivery, and teaching. Some of these factors include students’ age, generational status, and experiences with racial/ethnic prejudice among others. For example, men of color who have negative educational experiences before matriculating to community col-

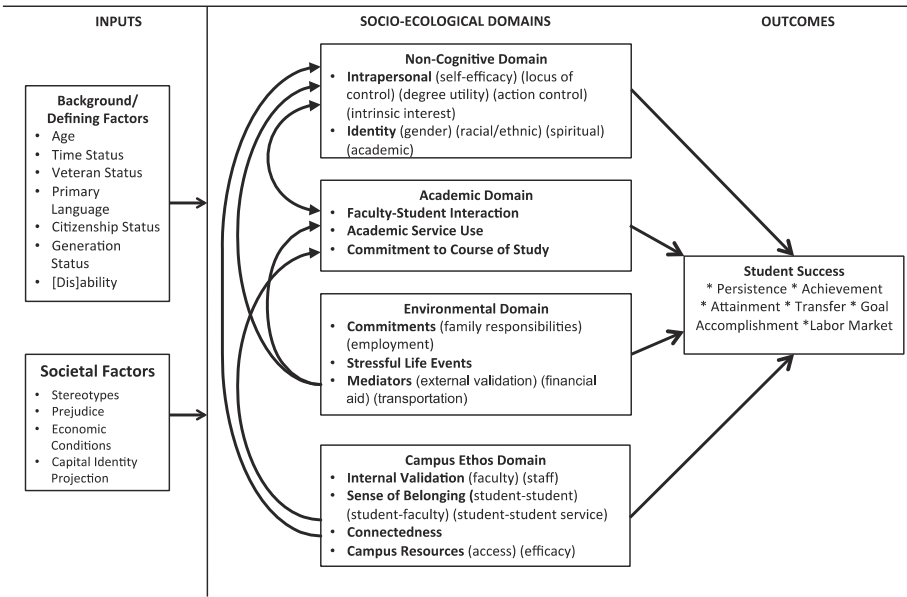


Figure 1. Socio-Ecological Outcomes Model. Used with permission from the Minority Male Community College Collaborative, San Diego State University, ©2012.

lege and attribute these experiences to their status as racial/ethnic minorities may be reluctant to engage White faculty and peers.

The four boxes situated at the center of the model represent the *socio-ecological domains* and are the core constructs of the model. These constructs capture variables and interactions between societal and environmental factors that have a salient influence on experiences and outcomes for men of color in community colleges. While each domain is depicted discretely, relationships among them are fluid and dynamic. The *non-cognitive* domain is comprised of both identity and intrapersonal factors that shape men of color’s self-concepts. The *academic domain* includes variables that are directly related to students’ academic experiences and outcomes, including: interactions with faculty, academic service usage, and the extent to which they are committed to their course of study. The *environmental domain* is comprised of variables and experiences that are situated outside of the immediate campus context, but have an impact on men of color’s engagement and success in community college. External commitments, such as jobs and family responsibilities, and unforeseen stressful life events (e.g., eviction, job loss, incarceration, health concerns) are examples of these environmental variables. Finally, the *campus ethos* domain includes the institutional structures, policies, practices, programs, and resources that are available to facilitate student success for men of color. The domain also accounts for the campus climate and interpersonal relationships within the campus that influence men of color’s sense of belonging and connectedness to the campus.

The SEO model suggests that interactions between “inputs” and the socio-ecological constructs of the model interact and ultimately shape student success out-

comes for men of color. This assumption is represented in the *outcomes* construct of the model. The SEO model served as the conceptual framework in this study. In addition, in this study we sought to explore a key assumption within the model's non-cognitive domain—that there is a relationship between identity (e.g., gender, racial/ethnic, spiritual) and intrapersonal (e.g., efficacy, locus of control, degree utility, action control, intrinsic interest) factors. Specifically, we examined the effects of masculine and racial/ethnic identity on action control. We hypothesize that there will be a positive effect for healthy conceptions of identity on action control. What follows is a discussion of the method that was employed in conducting this study and the results of our inquiry.

## METHODS

Data employed in this study were derived from the Community College Survey of Men (CCSM). The CCSM is used by community colleges as an institutional needs assessment tool for examining factors that influence the success of historically underrepresented and underserved men, particularly men of color (Wood & Harris, 2013). Analyses presented herein focused on a sample of 1,415 men who attended a sample of urban community colleges in the dataset. The survey was distributed to a random sample of men attending colleges in the district. Respondents represented diverse backgrounds, their percentage breakdown in the sample was as follows: White 17.0%, Asian 11.7%, Black 14.2%, Mexicano<sup>1</sup> 25.5%, Latino (non-Mexicano) 23.4%, and Other 8.2%.<sup>2</sup>

Inclusive among the 30 questioning blocks in the CCSM are four scales that are designed to assess hegemonic masculinity factors that may influence outcomes in college for men. This study sought to uncover how these factors affect students' action control. Action control was a composite variable based on student's responses to four statements examining their perceived focus, effort, drive, and work-ethic in school ( $a = .91$ ). Five primary predictor variables were employed in this study, including: a) help-seeking behavior—assessing men's perceptions of whether seeking out help in academic contexts compromised their manhood ( $a = .69$ , three items); b) perceptions of school as an equal domain—reflecting men's perceptions of whether school is a place suitable for men, as opposed to be solely a feminine domain ( $a = .81$ , four items); c) competition ethos—indicating the extent to which men ascribe to a hyper-competitiveness ethos among men ( $a = .71$ , three items); and d) breadwinner orientation—reflecting students' perceptions that being a breadwinner is a role than can be shared and is not solely for men ( $a = .64$ , three items). For help-seeking, school as an equal domain, and breadwinner orientation, higher scores indicate healthier conceptions of masculinity. In contrast, higher scores for competitive ethos indicate less healthy conceptions of masculinity.

Data were analyzed using hierarchical multiple regression with separate models for each respective racial/ethnic group. Hierarchical multiple regression allows researchers to investigate the ordered effect of several independent variables on an outcome (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010). In this case, the researchers were interested in the additive effect of racial/ethnic and masculine identity above and beyond the

<sup>1</sup> Men of Mexican/Mexican American descent.

<sup>2</sup> The latter category was excluded from analyses as the data represented multiple racial/ethnic subgroups.



variance explained in the control variables. The control variables included respondents' age, total number of dependents, high school GPA, enrollment status (e.g., full-time or part-time), total number of stressful life events they experienced in the past two years, total credit hours, and hours worked per week off campus for pay. As a result, variables were entered in two blocks, the first block included the control variables and the second included the identity scales. To reduce the potential effect of multicollinearity on the models, all independent variables were standardized. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation; as such, all models were test at .01. The next section presents the results from this analysis.

## RESULTS

The first analysis examined the effect of the identity predictors on action control for White men. Model 1, which included only the control variables accounted for 3.9% of the variance in action control ( $R^2 = 6.8$ ,  $\text{adj}R^2 = 3.9\%$ ). The model did not indicate significant predictability of the outcome ( $F = 2.307$ ,  $df = 228$ ,  $p > .01$ ), nor did any of the control variables in the model. However, the addition of the identity variables in Model 2 resulted in a significant  $R^2$  improvement ( $F\Delta = 9.190$ ,  $p < .001$ ) which accounted for 18.9% of the variance in action control ( $R^2 = 23.2$ ,  $\text{adj}R^2 = 18.9\%$ ). Model 2 was significantly predictive of the outcome ( $F = 5.424$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Specifically, perceptions of help-seeking behavior were a determinant of action control ( $B = 1.293$ ,  $p < .001$ ). As such, men who had healthy conceptions of masculine help-seeking had significantly higher scores for their focus/effort in academic matters. For Asian American men, Models 1 and 2 followed a similar pattern as seen in models for White men. For instance, the initial model was not significantly predictive of action control ( $F = 1.585$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and accounted for only 2.5% of the variance in the outcomes ( $R^2 = 6.6$ ,  $\text{adj}R^2 = 2.5\%$ ). Moreover, the contribution of the identity variables in Model 1 led to a significant model improvement ( $F\Delta = 10.045$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and accounted for 24.4% of the variance in action control ( $R^2 = 29.9$ ,  $\text{adj}R^2 = 24.4\%$ ). As with Model 1 for White men, healthy conceptions of help-seeking was a significant determinant of the outcome of interest for Asian men ( $B = 1.452$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Other than the greater proportion of variance accounted for in Model 2 for Asian men, the models for these men and White men were noticeably similar.

The third model examined the predictive utility of identity on action control for Black men. As with prior sub-groups, Model 1 (inclusive of the control variables alone) accounted for a meager proportion of the variance in the outcome ( $R^2 = 5.6$ ,  $\text{adj}R^2 = 2.4\%$ ) and did not significantly predict action control ( $F = 1.728$ ,  $p > .01$ ). Model 2 produced a significantly improved model ( $F\Delta = 10.343$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which was significantly predictive of the outcome ( $F = 5.548$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Unlike previous models, help-seeking was not found to be a significant predictor of action control for Black men. Rather, healthy perceptions of school as a domain equally suited for men and women ( $B = .856$ ,  $p = .001$ ) was a determinant of action control.

As noted, models for Hispanic/Latino men were divided into two separate analyses for Mexicano and Latino (non-Mexicano) men. In line with previous models, the control variables accounted for little variance in action control for Mexicano ( $R^2 = 4.0$ ,  $\text{adj}R^2 = 2.1\%$ ) and Latino ( $R^2 = 5.6$ ,  $\text{adj}R^2 = 3.5\%$ ) men. However, while the initial model for Mexicano men was not significantly predictive of the outcome ( $F = 2.145$ ,  $p > .01$ ), the initial model for Latino men was ( $F = 2.679$ ,  $p = .01$ ). In particular, for Latino men, the total number of dependents that were financially supported

by the respondent was a positive predictor of their focus on school ( $B = .550, p < .01$ ). Possibly, such external commitments served to bolstered students' desire to achieve. Regardless, Model 2 illustrated significant improvement for both Mexicano ( $F\Delta = 21.456, p < .001$ ) and Latino men ( $F\Delta = 10.765, p < .001$ ).

For Mexicano men, the addition of the identity variables unveiled the effect of high school GPA on action control as this variable was found to be a positive predictor of the outcome ( $B = .496, p < .01$ ). Moreover, several identity factors were found to have a positive effect on action control. In line with Black men, positive perceptions of school as a domain equally suited for men and women ( $B = .601, p < .01$ ) was identified as a predictor of action control. Similar to White and Asian men, help-seeking was also identified as a positive predictor of the outcome ( $B = .803, p < .001$ ). However, departing from previous models, healthy conceptions of the role of men as breadwinners ( $B = .776, p < .001$ ) and ethnic identity ( $B = .509, p < .01$ ) were determinants of action control. Standardized beta coefficients illustrated that help-seeking behavior and breadwinner orientation followed by perceptions of school as an equal domain were the strongest predictors in the model. The model was significantly predictive of the outcome ( $F = 10.543, p < .001$ ) and accounted for 23.6% of the variance in action control ( $R^2 = 26.1, \text{adj}R^2 = 23.6\%$ ).

For Latino men, the addition of the identity variables eliminated the effect of providing for dependents on action control. Three identity variables illustrated a significant effect on the outcome. Specifically, positive perceptions of breadwinning ( $B = .658, p = .001$ ) and help-seeking ( $B = .984, p < .001$ ) were determinants of action control. Given that the scale for competitive ethos was inverse, a healthy perception of competitive ethos was identified as a positive predictor of action control ( $B = -.585, p < .01$ ). As noted previously, this variable assesses men's perceptions of whether they ascribe to a competitive ethos among men where competition supersedes their own goals and standards. More simply, the scale assesses hyper-competitiveness. As such, hyper-competitiveness is not a positive determinant of their focus/effort in college.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study set out to identify the effect of masculine dispositions on male community college students' action control. The models examined illustrated that, for different racial/ethnic populations, the effects of identity on the outcome were varied. However, across the models, healthy conceptions of help-seeking behavior were identified as a positive determinant of action control for White, Asian, Mexicano, and Latino men. Thus, the more men are willing to seek out help without perceiving such actions as making them weak or feminine, the more likely they were to be focused in college. Beyond this, two additional (more minor) commonalities were identified in this study. Healthy perceptions of the role of men as breadwinners identified as a positive predictor of action control for both Mexicano and Latino men. Given this, men who perceive that providing for their families is not solely their responsibility, but a shared responsibility were more likely to report higher levels of action control. Moreover, for Mexicano and Black men, the effect of perceptions of school as a domain that is equally suited for men and women was found to be a positive contributor to action control. As a result, when men perceived that school is not solely a domain suited for women, but for men as well, they were more focused on their collegiate studies.

The results of this are largely consistent with hypothesized relationships based on the SEO model (Harris & Wood, 2014b) and were also in sync with published research on college men, the social construction of masculinity, and male gender role conflict. For instance, O'Neil's (1981) concept of MGRC confirms that negative psychosocial outcomes ensue from the pressures men face to perform masculinity according to socially constructed expectations. Studies of men of color in community colleges (e.g., Gardenhire-Crooks et al., 2010; Harris, 2008; Saenz et al., 2013; Wood & Essien-Wood, 2012) identified negative student success outcomes that can be attributed to MGRC, including a poor self-concept, a refusal to seek help and utilize campus services, and challenges transitioning into the college environment. Possibly, the most insightful finding from this study were the variations in the effects of masculine and racial identities on action control. While some commonalities across groups were evident, the unifying theme was one of heterogeneity.

Given the findings of this study, it seems reasonable for community colleges to support men of color, particularly those who are transitioning into college, in overcoming the effects of MGRC. Perhaps support can be built into first-year experiences and student success courses that are offered at many community colleges. Course readings, guest speakers, assignments, and other learning opportunities that expose men of color to the effects of socially constructed masculinity and MGRC may illuminate some of the pressures they face as men. Also, given the differential effects of masculinity on men from different racial/ethnic groups, that were highlighted in studies by Harris et al. (2011), Saenz et al. (2013), Shek (2006), and reflected in the findings of this study, it would be worthwhile to incorporate discussions of the intersection of race/ethnicity and masculinity into these experiences.

Colleges may also consider building capacity among faculty, student services staff, and other professionals who work with students to recognize the effects of masculinity on students' experiences and success. For example, faculty may be especially interested in findings from this study that demonstrate how having a healthy and more positive concept of masculinity can lead to higher levels of focus/effort, which may potentially improve student success for men of color. Professional development efforts that are undertaken by most community colleges provide a perfect opportunity to introduce concepts and research findings to faculty and staff. Counseling and academic advising staff may find it useful to get some measure or indication of men of color's dispositions toward masculinity. For example, administering O'Neil's MGRC scale (see O'Neil, 1981) during orientation or other matriculation activities can help counselors and advisors determine how best to support men vis-à-vis masculinity. Colleges that utilize the CCSM as a needs assessment tool will also gain important insights about how the campus ethos affects masculinity for men of color.

Findings from this study raise important implications for future research on men of color in community colleges. While this study focused on the effects of masculinity, race/ethnicity, and other identity dimensions on students' focus/effort, it would be worthwhile to examine the impact of identity on other important indicators of student success, including sense of belonging, academic service usage, and connectedness to name a few. In addition, this study relied exclusively on quantitative data. Gaining qualitative insights about how masculinity and race/ethnicity affect students' focus/effort will certainly result in more, and perhaps richer, insights. Finally, data for this study were collected from men who attended urban community colleges. It would be useful to examine (and perhaps compare) data from men enrolled at suburban and rural community colleges.

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