

## Multicultural Coping: Chinese Canadian Adolescents, Male Gender Role Conflict, and Psychological Distress

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One hundred seventy-nine Chinese Canadian adolescents completed measures of male gender role conflict, culturally specific coping strategies, and psychological distress. Structural equation results demonstrate that Avoidance Coping and Engagement Coping mediated the relationship between all aspects of male gender role conflict, with the exception of Restricted Affectionate Behavior Between Men and psychological distress. Implications for counseling practice, further research, and the psychology of men are discussed.

*Keywords:* gender role conflict, Asian men, coping, psychological distress, multicultural

Despite a growing level of awareness about the importance of studying masculinity from a cross-cultural context (e.g., Brooks & Good, 2001a, 2001b), the extant literature on how men of color actually navigate their socialized gender role remains limited. In the case of men of Asian descent, for example, much of the early empirical work described their experiences with masculinity merely in direct comparison to those of Western men. From this difference perspective, men of Asian backgrounds were seen as more willing to engage in domestic tasks; their interpersonal style was more polite and obedient, and they were less prone to confrontation (Chua & Fujino, 1999). Using a more culturally responsive framework, however, Liu (2002) eloquently described how Asian men must strive to occupy a “middle ground . . . [in that] they may need to simultaneously accept and repudiate the White masculine norm in

search of alternative definitions of masculinity” (p. 108; see also Chin, 1998). For example, many Asian men perceive themselves as trapped between multiple gender role-related demands, one defined by the dominant (i.e., Western) culture and the other by their cultures of origin, leading them to live in two different gender worlds (e.g., Sue, 2001).

How do males of Asian descent living in a Western culture cope with the conflicting gender role messages proscribed on one hand by the Western culture and on the other hand by their Asian cultures? This question has not been adequately addressed in the published literature, either in terms of gender role issues or in terms of coping. Historically, coping has been construed from a person–environment fit paradigm, a model that defines coping as primarily self-determined cognitive or behavioral responses to stressors that arise from one’s surroundings. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) described how coping refers to an individual’s cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage the demands of an event they have appraised as stressful. Unfortunately, the extant literature emerging from the general coping research has given rise to an intrapersonal, agentic, and action-oriented view of coping that is, by itself, inadequate in accounting for coping strategies of persons from a collectivistic background, such as individuals of

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Asian descent (Phillips & Pearson, 1996; Shek & Cheung, 1990). Studies on Asian self-construal, for example, suggest a link between interdependent self-construal and collectivistic coping (Cross, 1995) as well as a link between the acculturation levels of Asians and their coping methods (Roysircar & Maestas, 2002). Kuo, Roysircar, and Newby-Clark (in press) determined that individuals of Asian descent often use culturally specific methods of coping, including engaging the assistance of others and approaching problems from a collective perspective in addition to a personal or individualistic perspective. Indeed, Kuo et al. found Asian collective-oriented coping strategies included appraisal of one's coping responses relative to one's cultural and familial norms and reference to the behaviors and perspectives of one's significant others. The extent to which participants' tendency to endorse individualistic versus collectivistic coping strategies were also found to be related to a number of key cultural variables, including self-construal, acculturation, and religious affiliations. In view of this evidence, it seems necessary to examine how immigrant boys from Asian cultures living in a Western culture cope with the potentially conflicting messages they receive about being a man. Specifically, there is a need to directly test how culturally specific coping strategies might mediate between these paradoxical gender role messages and any potentially negative consequences.

### Asian Males

Historically, men of Asian backgrounds have occupied a position of contradiction in that popular stereotypes of the early to mid 1900s portrayed Asian men as treacherous, dirty criminals intent on sexual dominance over Euro American women (Chua & Fujino, 1999) while simultaneously portraying them in ways counter to traditional masculinity, engaging in domestic tasks for employment, for example. These perceptions served to govern who benefited from the rapid economic expansion experienced in the post-World War II era, in effect keeping Asian men marginalized and preventing their economic success while also relying on them for cheap labor. The dominant perception of Asian men today is an outgrowth of this portrayal, in that it still serves to marginalize them

while relying on them to work, contribute to the economy, and raise their families with minimal demands on society. Chua and Fujino (1999) called it the image of a "model minority" (p. 395), because the dominant culture sees men of Asian backgrounds as being hardworking, economically responsible, and in charge of families who instill proper (i.e., dominant) values in their children.

Economic and cultural shifts resulting from both immigration and global acculturation have also resulted in many changes to traditional Asian families, further complicating the manner in which Asian men are perceived by Western cultures. Many men of Asian descent have lost their status (Sue, 2001), both in terms of their changing authority in the family based on exposure to Western values and in terms of economic power as their spouses now work outside the home and contribute to the financial health of the family. Many have responded by adopting the model minority image as a way of working toward recognition from the dominant culture. Unfortunately, this is a potential source of conflict, as from Asian perspectives adherence to the family name and success of the group rather than the individual are prized. These concepts are rejected by the dominant culture, however, and as such, many Asian men find themselves trapped between these opposite role demands.

### Asian Men and Gender Role Conflict

Early work in the psychology of men (e.g., Pleck, 1981, 1995) has demonstrated that many internalized aspects of traditional male gender role socialization can lead to negative outcomes for men. This line of research is, in general, associated with the construct of male gender role conflict (GRC; O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986), which is "a psychological state in which socialized gender roles have negative consequences on the person or others" (O'Neil, Good, & Homes, 1995, p. 155). It typically results from the competition between rigid, sexist, or overly restrictive male gender roles and incompatible situational demands. Four overall patterns of male GRC have been identified (O'Neil, Good, & Holmes, 1995), each giving voice to those specific aspects of the socialized male role deemed problematic for some men in certain situations (see

Brooks & Good, 2001a, 2001b; O'Neil, Good & Holmes, 1995, for reviews). First, Success, Power, and Competition (SPC) addresses men's focus on personal achievement and individual success. An example of this is the belief in Western culture belief that men should excel competitively as opposed to collaboratively. From this perspective, therefore, individuals who come from a collaborative culture and engage in behaviors consistent with that cultural heritage are potentially seen as failing to live up to the gender role ideal.

The second GRC pattern, Restricted Emotionality (RE), is the degree to which the dominant culture teaches men to be cautious in the overt verbal expression of emotions and feelings. An example of this is the tendency of some men to avoid the public expression of emotion, despite the fact that their emotional experience is just as intense as that of women (e.g., Wester, Vogel, Pressly, & Heesacker, 2002). Men who endorse their culture of origin's preference for reservation or stoicism may experience distress when called upon by the dominant culture to behave differently. Third, Restricted Affectionate Behavior Between Men (RABBM) is how men are socialized to have difficulties expressing their affections for other men. An example of this is the tendency of some men to avoid verbally expressing their friendships for other men. Similar to the public expression of emotion, men who come from a culture that defines relationships between men differently than the dominant culture does, perhaps by endorsing the expression of affection, potentially face consequences for violating the expectations of the dominant culture. Finally, Conflict Between Work and Family Relations (CBWFR) is the degree to which men struggle with balancing work and family relations. Behaviorally, this can be seen in men's tendency to put their career ahead of their family (Heppner & Heppner, 2001).

Since the development of this construct, research conducted on various populations of men has demonstrated that greater levels of RE, RABBM, CBWFR, and SPC are positively correlated with increased (a) depression (Good & Mintz, 1990), (b) anxiety (Sharpe & Heppner, 1991), (c) sexual aggression (Levant & Brooks, 1997), (d) use of maladaptive psychological defenses (Mahalik, Cournoyer, DeFranc, Cherry, & Napolitano, 1998) as well as (d) relationship

difficulties (Fischer & Good, 1995; Mahalik, 1996) and (e) overall physiological distress (Shepard, 1994). Additionally, for some men, GRC correlates with decreased (a) self-esteem (Sharpe & Heppner, 1991), (b) marital satisfaction (Campbell & Snow, 1992), (c) likelihood of seeking psychological help (Good, Dell, & Mintz, 1989; Robertson & Fitzgerald, 1992); and (d) emotional expressiveness (O'Neil et al., 1986; Stillson, O'Neil, & Owen, 1991). Furthermore, empirical research confirming that the construct of GRC generalizes across cultures is now beginning to emerge (Liu, 2002; Simonsen, Blazina, & Watkins, 2000; Wade, 1996; Wester, Vogel, Wei, & McLain, in press).

It is our belief that the construct of GRC is applicable to the experiences of Asian men (e.g., Liu, Hernandez, & Iwamoto, 2005) because they have historically occupied a position of contradiction (e.g., Liu, 2002; Wester, in press). For example, at the same time the dominant culture glorifies male sexuality, and sees sexual conquest as the ultimate male achievement, it also asexualizes Asian men who are seen as weak and feminized because of the degree to which their culture of origin defines masculinity to include a less assertive style and more harmonious interpersonal styles (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999). Furthermore, although the dominant culture sees one hallmark of masculinity as economic success and achievement, here again Asian men receive a confusing message because individual rather than collective achievement is valued. Therein lies a paradox: If Asian men attempt to focus on one set of gender roles (i.e., Euro American) so as to be seen masculine by one culture, they probably frustrate the other set of gender roles (i.e., Asian) while societal racism hinders their ability to fully meet either set of roles. Hence, Asian men may frequently find themselves in situations in which they must violate one, fail to meet the other because of oppression, and experience subsequent discrepancy between both sets of gender roles as well as their own developing self-concept.

The results of emerging research confirm our contention that GRC may be an appropriate construct with which to understand the gender role experience of Asian men. Kim, O'Neil, and Owen (1996), using samples of Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Korean Americans determined that they did indeed experi-

ence GRC and that there was a relationship between the GRC patterns of SPC, RE, and these participants' level of acculturation. Of interest, they also demonstrated no differences between the groups (Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Korean Americans) with regard to their experiences of GRC. Liu (2002) used a sample of college-aged men of Asian backgrounds collected from both the East and West coasts of the United States to confirm that (a) GRC was an important variable in the lives of Asian men and (b) there were no differences among different Asian subgroups with regards to their experience of GRC. More recently, Liu, Hernandez, and Iwamoto (2005) demonstrated that for a sample of Asian American collegians, adherence to Asian cultural values predicted the GRC patterns of SPC, RE, and RABBM as well as subsequent psychological distress. What is needed at this point, however, is a more complex exploration of how men of Asian descents might manage their experienced GRC.

### Asian Men and Coping

Coping, as defined by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), represents "... constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (p.141). Since this seminal work, researchers in this area have often categorized coping in terms of problem-focused coping versus emotion-focused coping (Parker & Endler, 1996) with a focus primarily on individual actions, stress appraisals, and emotional responses. In contrast to this approach, which predominantly focuses on individualistic methods of coping, coping studies in which culturally specific techniques were explored have been found to be invaluable in exposing rich patterns. Accordingly, there has been a growing interest in culturally specific methods of coping, of which making coping decisions based on the collective need rather than on the individual perspective is an example, and the benefits from their use. Shek and Cheung (1990) found that "reliance on the self" and "seeking help from others" were two primary coping strategies of Chinese in Hong Kong. Additional work confirms that culturally distinct preferences for person (individualistic)- versus other (collectivistic)-directed coping strategies exist (Tweed,

White, & Lehman, 2004; Yeh, Chang, Arora, Kim, & Xin, 2003), especially among individuals of Asian descent. In effect, individuals from these backgrounds consider potentially stressful events in light of their impact on the collective rather than on the person and develop solutions from the same perspective. Recently, Kuo et al. (in press) studied both person-focused coping items reflective of individualistic coping, as well as other-directed and cultural value-based coping items reflective of collectivistic coping and demonstrated three distinct coping strategies employed by individuals of Chinese descent: Collective Coping, which refers to the consideration of group needs and solutions; Avoidance Coping, which refers to deciding that the best way to handle the situation is to accept it; and Engagement Coping, which refers to involving the larger, community support in addressing the individual.

These strategies are particularly pertinent for defining the stress-coping experiences of immigrants and international students living in Western countries, given the possible conflict between the preferred coping strategies of their culture of origin and those of the dominant culture (e.g., Mercado, 2000). Hodges (2003), for example, compared Asian and Asian American participants and determined that there were indeed differences in the coping strategies used consistent with the Asian and Western cultural values. Further, Hodges noted that the use of culturally specific coping strategies predicted psychological distress and life satisfaction; in effect, the ability to utilize such strategies decreased psychological distress and increased life satisfaction. Hussain and Cochrane (2003) demonstrated a similar pattern: South Asian women living in a Western culture used culturally specific coping strategies and those strategies had positive implications for mental health services. More recently, Sheu and Sedlacek (2004) demonstrated that first-year Asian college students were more likely to use avoidant coping strategies to deal with mental health issues.

### GRC and Coping

Good, Heppner, DeBord, and Fischer (2004) pointed out that, "to date, the examination of potential third variable explanations for findings that masculine role conflicts are related to psy-

chological distress remains in its infancy” (p. 169). In fact, only a few published studies have directly explored the degree to which variables such as coping impact the demonstrated relationship between GRC and psychological distress. A study by McCreary and Sadava (1995), for example, determined that coping by avoidance mediated the relationship between masculine work stress and work satisfaction. In effect, coping by avoiding a problem produced a decrease in the psychological distress experienced by men and a subsequent increase in their work satisfaction, despite the long-term adverse consequences. Bergen (1997) then found that individuals with both high and low GRC scores individuals were likely to use emotion-focused as well as -focused coping strategies, but did not investigate the subsequent impact of that coping on any psychological outcome. Jones (1999), however, determined that emotion-focused coping strategies mediated the relationship between restricted emotionality and psychological distress. The findings of these three studies suggest that the ability to cope via problem solving, a hallmark of the socialized male gender role, might mediate any direct relationship between GRC and psychological distress. Indeed, such mediation seems especially pertinent when studying coping and GRC from a multicultural perspective (Wester et al., in press).

The purpose of this research, therefore, was to directly examine Good et al.’s (2004) suggestion that coping might mediate any direct relationship between GRC and psychological distress for, in this case, a Chinese Canadian adolescent sample. Baron and Kenny (1986) characterize mediation as a case in which a third variable functions as a “generative mechanism through which a focal independent variable [such as GRC] is able to influence the dependent variable of interest [such as psychological distress]” (p. 1173). Coping strategies clearly fit that description, and it is linked to previous research efforts (e.g., Good et al., 2004) by virtue of being a way in which individuals control their responses to situations as well as solve problems. Therefore, culturally specific coping strategies should play a role in the effect of GRC on the experience of psychological distress.

To test this hypothesis we examined a model in which a culturally specific coping strategy (Collective, Engagement, and Avoidance) me-

diated the relationship between GRC (SPC, RE, RABBM, and CBWFR) and psychological distress for a sample of Chinese Canadian adolescents (see Figure 1). We hypothesized, consistent with previous research, that the four GRC patterns would be positively related to psychological distress. In addition, we hypothesized that coping serves as a vehicle through which these aspects of the socialized male gender role affect psychological distress. Specifically, and consistent with GRC theory, we hypothesized that (a) RE and RABBM would be positively linked to Avoidance Coping and negatively linked to Engagement and Collective Coping; (b) SPC would be positively linked to Engagement Coping and negatively linked to Avoidance Coping and Collective Coping; (c) CBWFR would be positively linked to Collective Coping and negatively linked to Avoidance Coping and Engagement Coping; and (d) Avoidance Coping, in turn, would be positively linked to psychological distress whereas Engagement and Collective Coping would be negatively linked to psychological distress.

## Method

### *Participants*

One hundred seventy-nine male adolescents of Chinese descent, between the ages of 13 and 19, from the Greater Toronto area in Ontario, Canada, participated in the current study. Given the unique demographic characteristics of the population in this study, the data collection specifically targeted government-funded Chinese language schools in Toronto in which a high concentration of Chinese youth could be found. B. C. H. Kuo first contacted the schools’ directors or principals, explained the objectives of the research, and solicited their participation and assistance for the study. Six Chinese schools agreed to take part in the study.

The mean age of the sample was 16.61 ( $SD = 6.43$ ). The sample consisted of mostly foreign-born individuals, with 78% ( $n = 139$ ) born outside of Canada and 22% ( $n = 40$ ) born in Canada. Among the foreign-born adolescents, 93% immigrated to Canada at age 16 or younger, with 12.54 years ( $SD = 13.72$ ) as the mean age of arrival in Canada. With this subgroup, the average length of stay in Canada was 8 years and 1 month. In terms of family



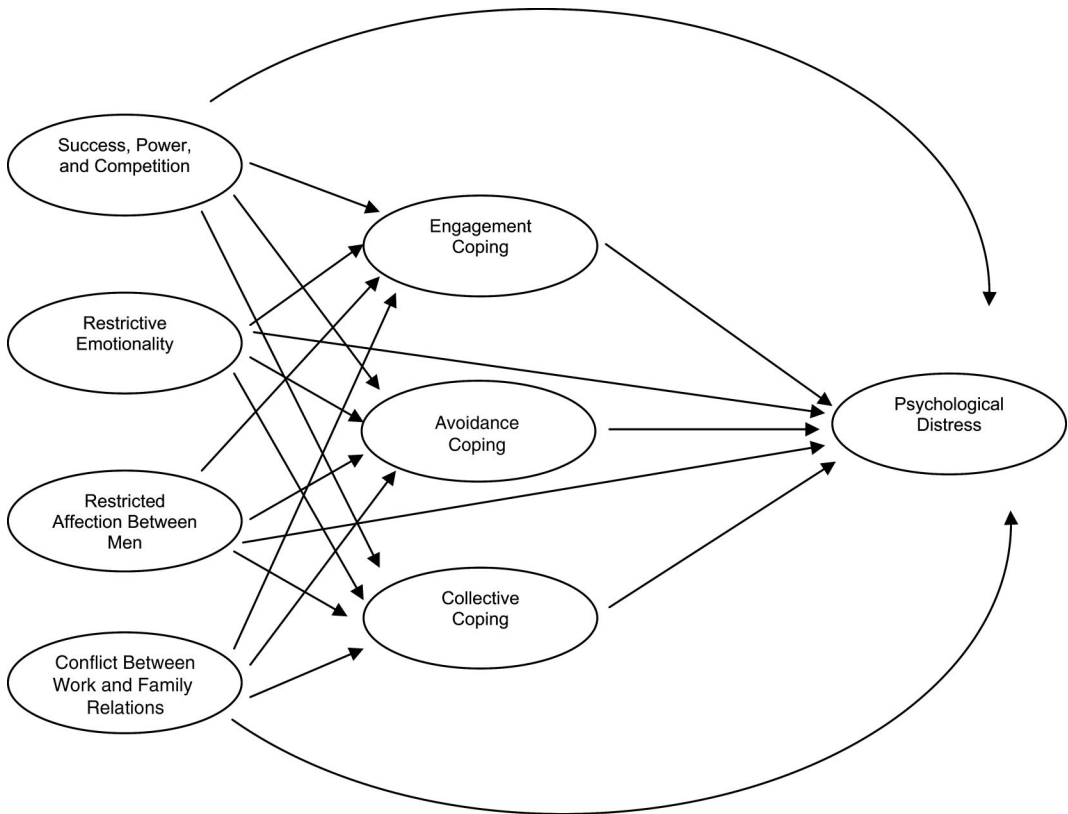


Figure 1. The hypothesized model.

socioeconomic status (SES), which was determined by self-report, 90% of the participants described their situation as either middle or higher SES. Sixty-seven percent of the participants' fathers, and 63% of the participants' mothers were reported to have university/college or graduate or professional education.

### Measures

**GRC.** We measured GRC using the Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS; O'Neil, et al., 1986), which is a measure of men's reactions to the tensions between traditionally socialized male gender roles and situational demands. It consists of 37 items divided into four subscales: SPC (13 items); RE (10 items); RABBM (8 items); and CBWFR (6 items). Sample items include, "Moving up the career ladder is important to me" (SPC), "I have difficulty telling others I care about them" (RE), "Hugging other

men is difficult for me" (RABBM), and "My needs to work or study keep me from my family and leisure more than I would like" (CBWFR). Respondents rate their agreement with each item on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 6 (*strongly disagree*). The scale is reverse scored, so that higher scores indicate greater degrees of conflict resulting from an overadherence to that specific aspect of the male role.

Principal components factor analysis, conducted during scale development on samples of Euro American men, indicates that the GRCS taps four factors, corresponding to the four subscales, which accounted for a combined 36% of the total variance (O'Neil et al., 1986, 1995). Validity of the GRCS has been established through positive correlations between scores on it and interpersonal rigidity (Mahalik, 1996), depression (Good & Mintz, 1990), and anxiety (Sharpe & Heppner, 1991). For the sample used

in this study, the RE subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of .82, the RABBM had a Cronbach's alpha of .79, the SPC subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of .86, and the CBWFR subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of .68. To create the observed indicators for the four latent variables of the GRC (i.e., RE, RABBM, SPC, and CBWFR), we followed the recommendation of Russell, Kahn, Spoth, and Altmaier (1998) and created three parcels for each of the four GRC subscales. The parcels were created by conducting an exploratory factor analysis using the maximum likelihood method and then successively assigning pairs of the highest and lowest items, based on the magnitude of the factor loadings, to each parcel to equalize the average loadings of each parcel on its respective factor.

*Coping.* We measured the coping strategies used by our participants with the Cross-Cultural Coping Scale (CCCS; Kuo, Roysircar, & Newby-Clark, in press). The CCCS incorporates both items reflective of individualistic coping as well as other-directed and cultural value-based coping items reflective of collectivistic coping. It consists of 20 items that make up three subscales: Collective Coping (CC; 8 items), Avoidance Coping (AC; 7 items), and Engagement Coping (EC; 5 items). Sample items include "I take the course of action that seems most acceptable to my Chinese values" (CC), "I just accept the fact that this happens and tell myself that I can't do much about it" (AC), and "I think about the situation carefully and think of options before I decide what to do" (EC). Respondents are asked to consider "being in a stressful situation" and then rank how accurate the statements are in describing their responses using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*very inaccurate*) to 6 (*very accurate*). Responses are summed, so that higher scores represent greater endorsement of said coping strategy.

The CCCS was developed across three separate studies with multicultural samples at various developmental stages, including Chinese Canadian adolescents, Asian Canadian and Caucasian Canadian university students, and culturally diverse international students in the United States. Kuo et al. (in press) reported the results of both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses demonstrating that the CCCS exhibits three factors corresponding to the three subscales, which account for 43% of the vari-

ance. Validity was established (Kuo et al., in press) through correlations between CCCS scores and measures of acculturation, self-construals, and religious affiliations, whereas across two data sets and four stress scenarios each subscale demonstrated adequate reliability as demonstrated by Cronbach's alpha (CC = .74, .78, .78, and .80; AC = .63, .74, .68, and .77; and EC = .59, .62, .63, and .65). For the sample used in this study, the Cronbach's alpha for CC was .73, for AC was .53, and for EC was .76. Furthermore, the test-retest reliability of the CCCS over a 4-week period for the two administrations was .88. To create the observed indicators for these three latent variables of the CCCS (i.e., CC, AC, and EC) we again followed the recommendation of Russell et al. (1998) and created three parcels for each of the CC subscales and two parcels for the EC and AC subscales.

*Psychological Distress.* We measured the psychological distress experienced by our participants using the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI; Derogatis, 1993), which is "essentially the brief form of the SCL-90-R [Symptom Checklist-90-Revised]" (Derogatis, 1993, p. 3) designed to reflect "current, point-in-time, psychological symptom status" (Derogatis, 1993, p.4). It consists of 53 items that make up nine subscales (Somatization, Obsessive-Compulsive Problems, Depression, Anxiety, Interpersonal Sensitivity, Hostility, Phobic Anxiety, Paranoid Ideation, and Psychoticism). The BSI provides respondents with a list of symptoms, such as "difficulty concentrating" and "feeling tense" and asks them to rate how often they have been bothered by those symptoms over the past week. Respondents use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*extremely*). Subscale-specific item responses are summed, so that higher scores indicate greater levels of psychological distress.

Derogatis (1993, pp. 17-29) summarized the extant literature using the BSI subscales and global indices in multiple settings and with multiple populations, both clinical and nonclinical, and concluded that the BSI exhibited a consistent factor structure, as well as adequate convergent, discriminant, construct, and predictive validity. Further, he reported 2-week test-retest reliability of the GSI to be .90. The nine BSI subscale scores were used as nine observed

Table 1  
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among 27 Observed Variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. SPC 1	20.61	4.51	.73	.64	.13	.17	.22	.34	.27	.32	.30	.33	.22	.11
2. SPC 2	15.48	3.80		.59	.22	.16	.20	.37	.35	.23	.18	.30	.10	-.05
3. SPC 3	15.66	3.58			.23	.23	.25	.20	.19	.32	.40	.43	.30	.14
4. RE 1	13.54	3.53				.67	.68	.41	.29	.32	.18	.28	-.01	-.01
5. RE 2	9.67	2.89					.66	.25	.21	.22	.29	.32	-.04	-.05
6. RE 3	10.10	2.79						.42	.29	.35	.28	.30	.05	-.04
7. RABBM 1	10.99	3.44							.76	.59	.19	.31	.12	-.00
8. RABBM 2	11.50	3.26								.45	.19	.28	.16	-.01
9. RABBM 3	7.49	2.37									.26	.24	.10	.05
10. CBWF 1	10.60	2.83										.55	.15	.15
11. CBWF 2	11.21	2.89											.21	.09
12. Engage 1	12.97	3.15												.60
13. Engage 2	8.08	2.02												
14. Avoid 1	9.38	2.71												
15. Avoid 2	8.82	2.75												
16. Collect 1	10.59	2.84												
17. Collect 2	11.15	3.03												
18. Collect 3	6.54	1.96												
19. Somat.	6.29	5.78												
20. OCD	9.81	5.02												
21. Inter.	5.12	3.89												
22. Dep.	7.77	5.71												
23. Anxiety	5.96	4.84												
24. Host.	6.49	4.55												
25. Phobic	4.02	3.89												
26. Para.	7.16	4.59												
27. Psych.	6.46	4.52												

Note. *N* = 179. SPC 1, 2, 3 = item parcels from the Success, Power, and Control subscale of the Gender Role Conflict Scale; RE 1, 2, 3 = item parcels from the Restrictive Emotionality subscale of the Gender Role Conflict Scale; RABBM 1, 2, 3 = item parcels from the Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men subscale of the Gender Role Conflict Scale; CBWFR 1, 2 = item parcels from the Conflict Between Work and Family Relations subscale of the Gender Role Conflict Scale; Engage 1, 2 = item parcels from the Engagement Coping subscale of the Cross-Cultural Coping Scale; Avoid 1, 2 = item parcels from the Avoidance Coping subscale of the Cross-Cultural Coping Scale; Collect 1,2,3 = item parcels from the Collective Coping subscale of the Cross-Cultural Coping Scale; Somat., OCD, Inter., Dep., Anxiety, Host., Phobic., Para., Psych. = the Somatization, Obsessive-Compulsive Problems, Interpersonal Sensitivity, Depression, Anxiety, Hostility, Phobic Anxiety, Paranoid Ideation, and Psychoticism subscales of the Brief Symptom Inventory. Correlations .15 or greater were significant at *p* < .05.

indicators of the psychological distress latent variable.

*Procedure*

All adolescent participants individually completed an informed consent/assent form. Those who were younger than 18 years of age were asked to have their parents or guardians sign a separate parental or guardian informed consent before the adolescents could take part in the study. The questionnaires were then administered in the classrooms either by the teachers or by the B. C. H. Kuo. Alternatively, participants could complete the questionnaires at home and

then return them by mail. Across all measures, no statistical differences were demonstrated between those questionnaires returned by mail and those completed in classrooms. Three hundred fifty-three questionnaires were given out, and 203 of them were completed, constituting a 58% return rate. Of these 203, 24 questionnaires had missing data. Before those respondents were deleted, they were compared with the remainder of the sample on our demographic variable to determine whether there was an explanation for the missing data. No statistical differences were demonstrated, and therefore the 24 questionnaires were deleted, leaving 179 questionnaires for data analyses.



14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
-.11	-.11	.21	.26	.25	-.15	.12	.01	.02	-.06	.08	-.17	.08	.00
-.08	-.08	.23	.21	.16	-.12	.08	.02	.01	-.03	.14	-.13	.17	-.04
-.04	-.09	.26	.27	.22	-.14	.16	.06	.08	-.04	.06	-.17	.13	.04
.26	.14	-.02	-.09	.06	.23	.39	.30	.31	.24	.28	.26	.39	.30
.28	.14	-.02	-.08	.01	.18	.40	.34	.33	.23	.27	.26	.28	.30
.23	.14	.05	-.08	.17	.22	.39	.32	.30	.23	.27	.19	.33	.29
.04	.02	.03	.10	.25	-.13	.00	.03	.07	-.02	.13	-.07	.12	-.02
.00	-.03	.03	.14	.20	-.16	-.07	-.05	-.04	-.08	.06	-.15	.05	-.12
.09	.06	.11	.06	.24	-.08	.05	.10	.09	-.06	.17	-.12	.11	.02
.11	.05	.17	.19	.16	.08	.31	.18	.20	.13	.18	-.01	.13	.10
-.03	-.06	.05	.12	.14	.02	.24	.12	.17	.01	.09	-.02	.11	.06
-.02	-.18	.18	.32	.20	-.51	-.26	-.34	-.33	-.50	-.41	-.50	-.35	-.37
.02	-.13	.24	.33	.20	-.33	-.22	-.28	-.30	-.35	-.38	-.34	-.37	-.28
	.38	-.01	-.04	.09	.10	.20	.19	.21	.13	.09	.18	.22	.26
		.09	-.00	.17	.20	.20	.20	.24	.22	.21	.40	.21	.28
			.60	.49	-.07	-.01	-.10	-.06	-.02	-.08	-.05	-.02	-.07
				.38	-.28	-.13	-.32	-.25	-.24	-.23	-.28	-.19	-.23
					-.13	-.01	-.15	-.09	-.10	-.09	-.16	-.10	-.07
						.57	.62	.63	.77	.63	.73	.57	.61
							.64	.67	.60	.62	.46	.57	.66
								.78	.73	.78	.61	.71	.75
									.77	.78	.64	.70	.83
										.74	.71	.66	.73
											.54	.68	.71
												.62	.62
													.66

Results

*Descriptive Statistics*

Means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations for the 27 observed variables are shown in Table 1. To examine whether the data met the normality assumptions underlying the maximum likelihood procedure we planned to use to test our hypothesized model, we conducted a multivariate normality test on the data. The result of the multivariate normality test indicated that the data were not normal,  $\chi^2(2, N = 179) = 353.25, p < .001$ . Therefore, we used scaled chi-square statistics, developed by Satorra

and Bentler (1988), to adjust for the impact of non-normality in subsequent analyses.

*Measurement Model for Testing Mediated Effects*

First, as suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to develop a measurement model, which provided an acceptable fit to the data. In effect, we used CFA to generate an adequate model using the indices we specified. Then we estimated the structural models (i.e., our hypothesized relationships among variables). The mea-

surement and structural models were estimated using the maximum likelihood method in LISREL (Version 8.54). Following Hu and Bentler's (1999) and Quintana and Maxwell's (1999) recommendations, we used three indices to assess the goodness of fit of the models: the comparative fit index (CFI; values of .95 or greater indicate that model adequately fits the data), the root-mean-square error approximation (RMSEA; values of  $\leq .06$  indicate that the model adequately fits the data), and the standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR; values of .08 or less indicate that the model adequately fits the data).

An initial test of the measurement model resulted in a good fit to the data,  $\chi^2(296, N = 179) = 587.86, p < .001$ , scaled  $\chi^2(296, N = 179) = 518.10, p < .001$ , CFI = .95, RMSEA = .06 (90% confidence interval [CI]: .056, .074), SRMR = .07. All of the loadings of the 27 measured variables on the latent variables were statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ; see Table 2). Therefore, all of the latent variables appear to have been adequately measured by their respective indicators. Moreover, in Table 3, two of GRC latent variables (i.e., Restrictive Emotionality and Conflict Between Work and

Table 2  
*Factor Loadings for the Measurement Model*

Measure and variable	Unstandardized factor loading	SE	Z	Standardized factor loading
Gender role conflict				
SPC Parcel 1	3.96	.25	15.98	.88***
SPC Parcel 2	3.08	.25	12.27	.81***
SPC Parcel 3	2.65	.22	12.24	.74***
Gender role conflict				
RE Parcel 1	2.94	.23	12.51	.83***
RE Parcel 2	2.29	.22	10.53	.79***
RE Parcel 3	2.33	.21	11.25	.83***
Gender Role Conflict				
RABBM Parcel 1	3.29	.19	17.51	.96***
RABBM Parcel 2	2.58	.20	12.71	.79***
RABBM Parcel 3	1.45	.17	8.63	.61***
Gender Role Conflict				
CBWFR Parcel 1	1.96	.24	8.02	.69***
CBWFR Parcel 2	2.30	.23	10.11	.80***
Cross-Cultural Coping				
Engagement Parcel 1	2.71	.25	11.05	.86***
Engagement Parcel 2	1.39	.19	7.18	.69***
Cross-Cultural Coping				
Avoidance Parcel 1	1.64	.29	5.66	.60***
Avoidance Parcel 2	1.71	.30	5.74	.62***
Cross-Cultural Coping				
Collective Parcel 1	2.15	.25	8.73	.76***
Collective Parcel 2	2.35	.23	10.38	.78***
Collective Parcel 3	1.12	.15	7.28	.57***
Symptom Inventory				
Somatization	4.42	.39	11.34	.77***
Obsessive-compulsive	3.68	.31	12.08	.73***
Interpersonal	3.36	.20	16.41	.86***
Depression	5.14	.29	17.98	.90***
Anxiety	4.21	.27	15.48	.87***
Hostility	3.84	.26	14.98	.84***
Phobic anxiety	2.88	.24	12.03	.74***
Paranoia	3.60	.24	14.75	.78***
Psychoticism	3.90	.23	16.86	.86***

*Note.*  $N = 179$ . SPC = Success, Power, and Conflict; RE = Restricted Emotionality; RABBM = Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men; CBWFR = Conflict Between Work and Family Relations.

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 3  
Correlations Among Latent Variables for the Measurement Model

Latent variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Success, power, and conflict	—	.29**	.41***	.51***	.24**	-.18	.39***	.01
2. Restrictive emotionality		—	.47***	.45***	-.02	.39**	-.03	.42***
3. Restricted affect between men			—	.38***	.12	.05	.16	.02
4. Conflict—work and family				—	.27**	.01	.23*	.18*
5. Engagement coping					—	-.18	.42***	-.54***
6. Avoidance coping						—	.07	.40***
7. Collective coping							—	-.24**
8. Psychological distress								—

Note. *N* = 179.  
\* *p* < .05. \*\* *p* < .01. \*\*\* *p* < .001.

Family Relations) and all three mediator latent variables (i.e., Engagement Coping, Avoidance Coping, and Collective Coping) were significantly associated with the dependent latent variable (i.e., psychological distress). Furthermore, several of the GRC subscales were related to the different coping styles (i.e., SPC was related to Engagement and Collective Coping, RE was related to Avoidance Coping, and CBWFR was related to Engagement and Collective Coping).

*Structural Model for Testing Mediated Effects*

Next, we empirically examined the hypothesized model depicted in Figure 1. The results of our hypothesized model showed a relatively good fit, scaled  $\chi^2(296, N = 179) = 518.10, p < .001, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .065 (90\% CI: .056, .074), SRMR = .070$ . All significant paths were in the predicted directions (see Figure 2). To examine whether the GRC aspects (SPC, RE, RABBM, and CBWFR) contributed to psychological distress only indirectly through coping strategy (Engagement, Avoidance, or Collective) we compared our hypothesized partially mediated model with a fully mediated model in which the direct paths from the four GRC styles to psychological distress constrained to zero. Said another way, we explored whether the relationship between GRC and psychological distress dropped to zero (i.e., fully mediated) or remained statistically significant (i.e., partially mediated) once the effect of coping styles was included in the equation. The cor-

rected scaled chi-square difference test (Satorra & Bentler, 2001) was used to compare these two nested models. The result of the fully mediated model indicated a reasonably good fit to the data, scaled  $\chi^2(300, N = 179) = 546.59, p < .001, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .068 (90\% CI: .059, .077), SRMR = .079$ . However, examination of the corrected scaled chi-square difference between the two models,  $\Delta\chi^2(4, N = 179) = 29.70, p < .001$ , indicated that the direct paths from RE and CBWFR (although not from SPC or RABBM) to psychological distress made a significant contribution to the model. As a result, our original model was selected as the best fit to the data (see Figure 2).

*Testing the Significant Levels of Indirect Effects*

Recently, MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets (2002) indicated that the method used by LISREL to calculate the standard error of the indirect effect tends to yield incorrect estimates. As a result, Shrout and Bolger (2002) suggested a bootstrap procedure. The bootstrap procedure offers an empirical method of determining statistical estimates, as standard error is the expected variability of an estimate if the estimation were repeated a large number of times (Efron & Tibshirani, 1993). Said another way, we need to determine whether our results were due to chance or due to the actual mediation effect of coping styles. Therefore, before we concluded for certain that



chological distress through Engagement Coping. In turn, RE also partially contributed to psychological distress through Avoidance Coping, whereas SPC contributed to psychological distress fully through Avoidance Coping. It is also important to note that 55% of the variance in psychological distress was explained by these factors.

## Discussion

The results of this study largely supported our hypothesis that the four GRC aspects would contribute to psychological distress indirectly through different coping strategies. Engagement Coping, for example, helped Chinese Canadian male adolescents to reduce their overall psychological distress related to GRC. In effect, the more participants relied on Engagement Coping the less they experience psychological distress associated with GRC. This observation substantiates the adaptive nature of coping that involves confronting stressors head-on (Cross, 1995; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) through direct action, planning, positive thinking, and relaxation. Similar coping strategies have been found to reduce the perceived stress of East Asian international students in their adjustment to life in the United States (Cross, 1995) and buffering against depression in Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong (Chan, 1995). The result also concurred with the findings of Good et al. (2004), who demonstrated the mediating effect of problem-solving strategies (direct coping) in minimizing the adverse psychological consequences of GRC.

A closer look at the paths among RE, Engagement Coping, and psychological distress in the model revealed critical relationships among these variables. First, Chinese Canadian adolescent boys who were constricted in their expression and experience of emotions were more likely to experience higher levels of psychological distress. However, although increased use of Engagement Coping was associated with decreased psychological distress associated with RE, the opposite was true when participants used Avoidance Coping; disengaging and diverting oneself from dealing with the stressor may be linked with the negative consequences generally associated with GRC. It seems that for these individuals, limited capacity in the experiencing and expressing of emotions has a col-

lateral effect on restricting their repertoire of alternative, adaptive coping options. In this regard, GRC has far-reaching implications for male adolescents' psychosocial adjustment; not only does it affect the individual interpersonally, but it is also related to their broader adaptive skills and stress responses in the face of problems.

In terms of SPC, consistent with our predictions, it related negatively to Avoidance Coping and positively to Collective Coping. Chinese Canadian male adolescents who placed great value in goal-orientation and achievement were less likely to resort to avoidant responses in dealing with stress. However, the relationship between SPC as well as Collective Coping is intriguing because of the divergent underlying qualities of the two constructs. Specifically, SPC as a predominantly individualistic tendency being positively related to Collective Coping suggested that SPC might have differential meaning in a Chinese context. There are two possible explanations for this finding. First, distinct from the Western position, the Chinese construal of personal success and achievement is established in a more relational and contextual basis. In fact, Kim, Atkinson, and Yang (1999) found family recognition through achievement to be a one of the six critical value domains for Asian Americans. As follows, for our participants, achieving work or educational successes ultimately might have the goal of bringing honor and pride to one's parents, family, and in-group members. Second, empirical data also support the concomitant (nonorthogonal) nature of independent and interdependent tendencies (Singelis, 1994), particular among bicultural individuals (Kuo & Gingrich, 2004; Yeh & Hwang, 2000). In this sense, our participants, who were bicultural (e.g., Asian Canadian) might have sought a balance between pursuing individual success (independence) as promoted by the dominant culture and appealing to the wisdom, resources, and assistance of important others (interdependence) as maintained by Asian values. Future researchers should consider exploring these possibilities.

It is also important to note that RABBM did not predict either coping strategies or psychological distress. This was surprising, given the centrality of RABBM in the extant GRC literature, as well as the degree to which, from an Chinese perspective, the overt expression of



emotions is considered somewhat disrespectful (e.g., Sue, 2001). Indeed, RE, the subscale which more directly measures such restriction, was the strongest predictor of Avoidance Coping, and it continued to predict psychological distress despite the partial mediation effect of Avoidance Coping. Therefore, although the global restriction of emotion might be associated with negative outcomes, perhaps there is something unique about the specific expression of affectionate emotions to another man. It may be the case that the culture of origin conferred upon our participants a greater degree of permission to express such feelings in such a context. Sue (2001), in discussing psychotherapy with Asian male clients, notes that their cultural structure is both patriarchal and hierarchical, in that males are given higher status as well as increased authority. It may be the case that our participants felt as if the expression of feelings between men would be in the form of overt acknowledgment of this structure and was therefore permissible. Further research exploring this question might be considered.

Finally, our participants who reported greater CBWFR also experienced adverse psychological distress. The distress might be a result of feeling torn between the demands of work and school and the obligations and expectations from one's family and in-group members. Conflicts of this nature may be particularly acute for Chinese Canadian adolescents because of the supreme value placed on respecting one's family and ensuring harmonious family relationships as reinforced by traditional Asian values (Kim et al., 1999). The relationship between CBWFR and psychological distress was mediated by Engagement Coping. Specifically, CBWFR demonstrated a positive relationship with Engagement Coping, and Engagement Coping then led to less overall distress, suggesting that adolescents who were caught between their roles at home and at work (or school) were more likely to adopt coping strategies that involve direct actions and independent efforts. Engagement Coping, in these terms, then seems to protect these participants against any psychological distress associated with GRC.

The present results, however, failed to support the hypothesized relationship between Collective Coping and psychological distress, despite it being a culturally proscribed stress response (Shek & Cheung, 1990; Yeh, Chang,

Arora, Kim, & Xin, 2003). This finding is interesting as the presence of these interpersonally or group-based coping strategies has been found to be a component of Chinese Canadian adolescents' coping repertoire (Kuo et al., in press). In fact, it has been contended that this type of stress response is inherent in the Asian ways of being (Yeh et al., 2003; Yeh & Wang, 2000). Thus, we hypothesized that Collective Coping would be an indispensable option for Chinese adolescent boys dealing with GRC because these responses comply with Asian interdependence (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), and serve to reinforce in-group reliance and solidarity (Kuo et al., in press). We may not have found the expected results for two reasons. First, it is possible that previous researchers explored coping styles in isolation, whereas we did so simultaneously via structural equation modeling. Hence, individuals who rely on other, more maladaptive, coping styles may employ Collective Coping less often. Such an effect would be masked by the reliance of previous researchers on isolated measurement models.

Second, although Collective Coping may be important strategy for dealing with stress, it may not be as important for dealing with gender role-related demands. This idea may be particularly true for individuals living in a Western culture in which independent demands are being placed on them and reinforced. One way to examine this idea is to see whether Collective Coping styles differed, given the acculturation level of the individual. For instance, in a recent study including native and foreign born Asian and European American undergraduate students in Canada, Kuo and Gingrich (2004) found the utilization of collective coping more prevalent among participants who scored high on an interdependent self-construal measure. Thus, those individuals who have greater interdependent, as opposed to independent, self-construal may still be more likely to adopt a Collective Coping strategy in the face of GRCs. Future researchers should consider clarifying this finding to determine whether, indeed, Collective Coping is a viable construct to understand the degree to which individuals of Asian decent deal with specific stressors.

Future researchers should also consider clarifying our finding regarding SPC as it related to the Collective Coping behaviors of Chinese Canadian adolescents. Specifically, SPC from a

GRC perspective can be defined as stemming from an over-reliance on success through competition rather than collaborative efforts. Such a definition may not apply to individuals of collective background, despite evidence that GRC as a construct generalizes cross-culturally. Future researchers might consider developing a more collectively oriented version of SPC, one that focuses on situations in which demands on being collaborative and other-focused might turn out to be distressing to Asian men. Additionally, researchers need to clarify the impact of variables such as participants' intent to bring honor and pride to those close to them as well as balance between pursuing individual success and appealing to the resources of one's significant other.

### *Therapeutic/Counseling Implications*

The mediating role of coping between GRC and psychological stress has a number of therapeutic implications. Indeed, some have noted the far-reaching implications of working with multicultural clients' culture-specific coping styles in therapy. Coleman (1995) asserted that clients' coping strategies inform therapists of "the nature and etiology of the [clients'] presenting problem, the individuals' expectations of the counselor, the relationship, and the outcome of counseling" (p. 733). In working with Asian male adolescents, counselors should be aware of the full range of coping repertoire likely to be associated with an Asian worldview and values (Kim et al., 1999; Yeh & Wang, 2000). Indeed, the three types of coping examined in the present study have differential effects on Asian adolescent males' experience of distress related to the four patterns of GRC. In dealing with gender-related stress, it would benefit male clients of Asian background to explore and to subsequently develop coping strategies that are appropriate to meet the demands associated with various aspects of GRC. For instance, it would serve clients with high RE well to engage in coping involving individual action, effort, strategy, and planning (i.e., Engagement Coping) and to resist the lure of removing themselves from the stress-evoking situation (i.e., Avoidance Coping). For clients who struggle with SPC, RABBM, and CBWFR, a culturally informed approach for them may be to resist the

tendency to avoid the stressor and instead cope with it directly.

In considering the applicability of these results, special attention needs to be paid to the demonstrated maladaptive nature of Avoidance Coping, as its positive link with psychological distress is congruent with existing literature (Endler & Parker, 1990; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In effect, attempts to temporarily forget or conceal the problem or distract oneself from the stressor serves no value in mitigating gender-related conflicts that are typically of enduring nature. As such, the use of Avoidance Coping may exert a psychological toll on individuals in the long run, an effect first suggested by Chan (1995) in a study of Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong in which depressed youth used more Escape-Avoidance approaches including denial, withdrawal, and wishful thinking than nondepressed youth. Consequently, it is important for counseling psychologists to consider not only the short term impact of gender role-related conflicts but also the longer term consequences of how individuals cope with that distress.

### *Conclusion*

Our findings demonstrated that, for our sample of Chinese Canadian adolescents, the coping strategies of Engagement Coping and Avoidance Coping partially mediated the relationship between GRC and psychological distress. However, some limitations of this study must also be noted. First, our participants were adolescents. As this was one of the first studies examining the relationships among GRC, coping, and psychological distress, developmental differences may lead to differing mediation effects. Therefore, our findings may not hold for either younger or older Chinese Canadian men. Furthermore, a version of the GRCS for adolescents (Blazina, Pisecco, & O'Neil, 2005) was recently released, which might have provided different estimates; however, it was not available at the time of this project. Future researchers should, therefore, consider replicating our findings with Blazina et al.'s (2005) measure, as adolescents may interpret GRC items, such as those surrounding CBWFR, for example, differently from adults. Finally, we might have drawn different conclusions with a larger sample. Despite the fact that our model ran as predicted,

future researchers might want to replicate these results with larger samples of different age groups to confirm our findings with men of various Asian backgrounds. Indeed, the fact that our sample came from higher SES brackets should suggest that further research in this area is needed.

Despite the fact that our maximum likelihood method takes the possibility of imperfect reliabilities into account when we tested our hypothesized model, further research is needed to explore developing more reliable measures of GRC and coping with Asian samples. The role of social desirability should also be assessed in future research, as should the role of other demographic variables such as education and SES. Furthermore, despite the use of structural equation modeling, this research design was still correlational in nature and thus causal conclusions should not be drawn from our results. Future researchers should consider testing causal hypotheses. Finally, although there has been an increase of late in the empirical exploration of GRC as it affects men of color (e.g., Erwin & Lease, 2002; Lilly, 2000; Liu, 2002; Wade, 1996; Wester et al., in press), the majority of GRC research applies exclusively to Euro American and Caucasian participants. As such, future researchers should consider building on our findings to expand counselors' understanding of how men of color experience their gender role identity.

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