

Conformity to Masculine Norms and Career Futures of College Students

Jerome S. Rubrico¹; Raymond I. Pascual¹; Kunio T. Kashihara Jr¹; Lowel Urian¹

¹Department of Psychology, National University Philippines – Bulacan

¹lurian@nu-baliwag.edu.ph

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Abstract—The current study aims to identify the relationship between conformity to masculine norms and career futures among college students and to differentiate the variable in terms of the subject characteristics of the participants. The population chosen for the study are college students from selected campuses of National University Philippines. Results indicate that there is a very weak correlation between conformity to masculine norms and career futures. There is also a significant difference in the conformity to masculine norms of college students in terms of sex and college where they belong and there is no significant difference found in terms of career futures.

Keywords— Conformity to Masculine Norms, Career Futures, Gender Norms, Career Decision Making, College Students

I. INTRODUCTION

People all throughout the world have been subjected to gender expectations and standards for many years. Because of the sex they were born into, individuals are expected to behave in accordance with the conventions that define masculinity and femininity in most countries (Abinaya & Ilakkiya, 2022). Extremely restrictive standards may prevent people of a particular gender from acting in specific ways and this societal pressure supports adherence to tight socially manufactured gender norms.

Men are expected to live up to masculinity norms. Masculine beliefs determine how individuals will be rewarded or penalized based on their adherence to current masculine ideals from early childhood through adulthood (Levant & Powell, 2017). These expectations for males are shaped by these ideologies from an early age. Men are driven by this kind of mentality to simply adhere to society's image of masculinity, which sets great expectations for them. These presumptions give rise to the notion that men ought to be powerful and must always be able to meet the needs of their families which compel them to conform to the demands of masculine norms, in order to uphold their masculinity. Furthermore, according to Barry (2020), men's sense of worth rests on their adherence to male norms, which unfortunately has a lot of unfavourable consequences. Racial bias, sexism, low self-esteem, anxiety, stress, and depression, in particular, have been connected to the ongoing support of the idea of traditional masculinity standards and gender roles. However, in line with broader trends in the literature, researchers who are specifically interested in men's health have been promoting positive views of masculinity and strengths-based approaches in order to be more effective in real-world settings with men and to begin encouraging men to reimagine manhood in order to be healthier (Gerdes & Levant, 2017).

Evidently, an individual's positive outlook on the future, including their career, may be constrained by gender stereotypes (Bharti & Rangnekar, 2019). The idea of career futures is related to this and refers to an individual's propensity to engage in constructive career planning activities and having the ability to see the finest outcomes for their future professions (Chatterjee *et al.*, 2022). The likelihood of success in a person's chosen vocation in the future is a key factor for college students. There isn't much research about the predictors and elements that influence someone's future job, despite their significance. Additionally, societal standards have a significant impact on how an individual perceives the many opportunities that are available.

In conclusion, masculinity pushes males to fit in to prove their manhood (McVittie *et al.*, 2017). According to Masters and Barth (2022), compliance with masculine norms has an impact on how an individual perceives their career prospects and job duties. Because they went against society's gender standards, which influenced their conventional ideas about it, males were shown to be far less interested in the occupations that were dominated by the other gender. Additionally, Milner *et al.* (2018) contended that gender norm conformity, together with

conformity to masculine norms, and an individual's job destiny may be associated in a bidirectional way. This suggests that upbringing has a big impact on the choices people make about their future.

The evidence from earlier studies demonstrates a potential link between conformity to masculine norms and male college students' employment prospects. Males are frequently under pressure to fit in, which impacts their desire to accept job obligations that defy these norms. In order to better comprehend the significance of these societal norms, it is crucial to discuss and assess their effects. With this in mind, the researcher believes that there are gaps in the current literature about conformity to male standards and a person's job prospects, and it is crucial that these variables be examined for more comprehensively filling in these gaps. Hence, the current study aims to know the relationship between conformity to masculine norms and the career future of college students in the Philippines and if age, sex, year level, and immediate surrounding has an impact on students' conformity to masculine norms and career futures.

II. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study utilized the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making which assumes that people's career planning and decision-making are influenced by factors such as task approach skills, environmental conditions and events, and instrumental & associative learning experiences. Environmental conditions and events pertain to forces that are beyond any one individual's control while instrumental & associative learning experiences refer to the tendency of individuals to learn based on what they generally perceived around them and task approach skills pertain to the skills needed to choose and have a successful career path. Ultimately, it is also theorized that an individual's belief and perception about themselves and the world affects the process of future planning, including career planning (Krumboltz et al., 1976).

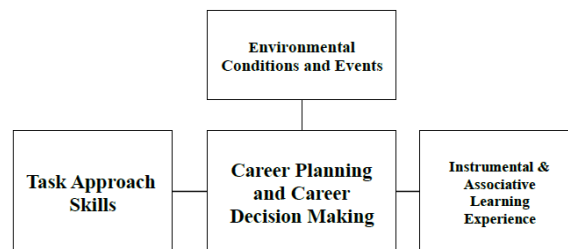


Fig 1. Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making

With the guidance of Krumboltz's Social Learning theory of career decision-making, it is conceptualized that environmental conditions, associative and instrumental learning experiences, as well as task approach skills are the factors influencing career planning and decision-making of individuals. Environmental conditions represent the career adaptability of individuals while instrumental and associative learning experiences that individuals experience is represented by their perceived knowledge in their preferred job market. Lastly, the task approach skills are represented by an individual's optimism in their career path. Task approach skills are what drive an individual to achieve what is best for their future career journey.

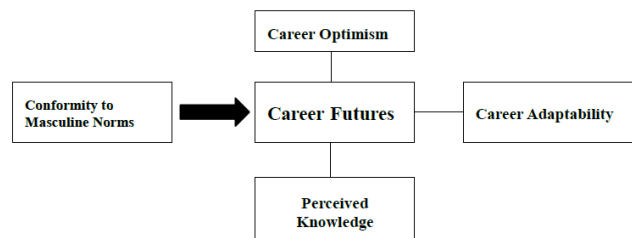


Fig 2. Conceptual Paradigm of the Study

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to know the relationship between conformity to masculine norms and the career future of college students. Specifically, the researchers want to answer the following:

1. What is the statistical description of the demographic profiles of the participants in terms of:
 - 1.1.1. Sex
 - 1.1.2. Age
 - 1.1.3. College/Department
 - 1.1.4. Year Level
 - 1.1.5. Campus of Origin
2. What are the interpretations of scores of the college students' Conformity to Masculine Norms based on the respondent's subject characteristics?
3. What are the interpretations of scores of the college students' Career futures based on the respondent's subject characteristics?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the Conformity to Masculine Norms and Career Futures scores?
5. Is there a significant difference between Conformity to Masculine Norms and Career Future scores among the subject characteristics (sex, age, college department, year level, campus of origin) of the participants?

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

In order to define and analyze the association between conformity to masculine norms and the career futures of undergraduate students at the National University Philippines, the study used a descriptive inferential approach. The researchers will also compare the differences in the participants' various characteristics in relation to the research variables.

B. Population and Respondent

The researchers used an equally allocated Quota sampling technique and a total of 350 college students from the seven National University Philippines Campuses with the age ranging from 18 – 24 is recruited to be part of the study.

C. Instrumentation

The Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI-30). The CMNI-30 is a scale developed to measure the adherence of an individual to several traditional masculine norms. The scale measures 10 factors consisting of emotional control, winning, playboy, violence, heterosexual self-presentation pursuit of status, primacy of work, power over women, self-reliance, and risk-taking. The validity of the scale was measured by correlating it to tests used to diagnose depression and anxiety and the results produced significant values. The scale's internal consistency was established accordingly and, considering all its factors produced an average alpha coefficient of .80 (Levant et al., 2020).

Career Futures Inventory (CFI). The CFI is a 25-item test designed to measure the positive career-planning attitudes of an individual. The scale is composed of 3 main factors, namely: career optimism, career reliability, and perceived knowledge. The instrument's internal consistency is at a .81 alpha coefficient while its validity was measured using convergent validity. The CFI was correlated with the Life Orientation Tests-Revised (LOT-R) and produced a .60 correlation value. The convergent validity of CFI was also established with the NEO-FFI scales and indicated that it correlated greatly with the Conscientiousness subscale with a coefficient value of .51 (Rottinghaus et al., 2012). Having these parametric values, it is evident that CFI has good reliability and validity, hence, it could be used for data gathering in this study

Both the CMNI-30 and the CFI were subjected to local reliability estimation to further support its use application to the current study. Shown in Table II are the results of the conducted estimation.

TABLE I
 THE STATISTICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

	Sum of Variance	Variance of total score	Cronbach's alpha
CMNI-30	52.71	188.05	.75
CFI	23.37	131.69	.86

Note. N=100, a=0.05

D. *Data Analysis*

To determine whether there is a significant relationship between adherence to the masculine standard and job prospects. In order to determine whether there is a significant difference in the levels of the study's constructs between male and female participants, an Independent Samples t-test was also used. Meanwhile, an ANOVA will be used to determine the mean differences between age, college program, year level, and the campus of origin.

V. **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Considering the demographic profile of the participants, there are 154 (44%) male students and 196 (56%) female students. 38 (10.86%) students are 18 years old, 142 (40.57%) are 19 years old, 87 (24.86%) are 20 years old, 46 (13.14%) are 21 years old, 25 (7.14%) are 22 years old, 9 (2.57%) are 23 years old, and only 3 (.86%) are 24 years old. There are also 97 (27.71%) students from Accountancy and Business Management, 41 (11.71%) students from Allied Health College, 105 (30%) students from the College of Arts and Sciences, and the remaining 107 (30.57%) students are from the College of Engineering and Technology. Furthermore, there are 220 (62.86%) first-year students, 78 (22.29%) second-year students, 34 (9.71%) third-year students, and 18 (5.14%) fourth-year students. Lastly, each campus has exactly 50 (14.29%) students as part of the current study's pool of participants.

TABLE III
 THE STATISTICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Demographic Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	154	44
	Female	196	56
	Total	350	100
Age	18 Years of Age	38	10.86
	19 Years of Age	142	40.57
	20 Years of Age	87	24.86
	21 Years of Age	46	13.14
	22 Years of Age	25	7.14
	23 Years of Age	9	2.57
	24 Years of Age	3	0.86
Total	350	100	
Colleges/ Department	Accountancy and Business Management	97	27.71
	Allied Health	41	11.71
	Arts and Sciences	105	30
	Engineering and Technology	107	30.57
	Total	350	100
Year Level	1st year	220	62.86
	2nd year	78	22.29
	3rd year	34	9.71
	4th year	18	5.14
	Total	350	100
Campus of Origin	National University Baliwag	50	14.29
	National University Dasmariñas	50	14.29
	National University Fairview	50	14.29
	National University Laguna	50	14.29
	National University Lipa	50	14.29
	National University Manila	50	14.29
	National University Mall of Asia	50	14.29
Total	350	100	

As shown in Table III, the overall mean for conformity to masculine norms is 3.08 which has an interpretation of moderately low adherence to masculine norms. This implies that male conformity among college students is low, yet a closer examination of the data reveals that males actually have the relatively highest mean score. This finding is corroborated by a study by Carter et al. (2019), which found that males

experience greater anxiety when defying gender norms because they may fear that doing so will lead to criticism of their masculinity and, as a result, put their reputation as men in jeopardy.

On the other hand, the overall mean score of career futures is 3.47 which fell within the range of moderate career futures. When categorizing based on the verbal interpretation ranges, the researchers have seen that career future scores vary slightly. Some demographic traits have fallen into high career futures, while most have fallen into moderate career futures. The assertion made by Soylu *et al.* (2021) that people begin to make important decisions for their careers during their college years can be used to corroborate these findings. According to the researchers' conclusions based on the aforementioned study and this study's findings, college students may start to improve their career planning, which may culminate in professional decision-making.

TABLE IIIII
 CONFORMITY TO MASCULINE NORMS AND CAREER FUTURES MEAN SCORE INTERPRETATION

Demographic Variables		Conformity to Masculine Norms	Median	Standard Deviation	Interpretation	Career Futures	Median	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Sex	Male	3.18	3.13	.43	Moderately Low	3.46	3.52	.55	Moderate
	Female	3.01	2.96	.40	Moderately Low	3.49	3.48	.47	Moderate
Age	18 Years of Age	3.02	3.03	.38	Moderately Low	3.48	3.04	.56	Moderate
	19 Years of Age	3.08	3.06	.43	Moderately Low	3.43	3.48	.51	Moderate
	20 Years of Age	3.09	3.1	.41	Moderately Low	3.50	3.52	.53	High
	21 Years of Age	3.13	3.06	.42	Moderately Low	3.66	3.50	.45	Moderate
	22 Years of Age	3.10	2.93	.47	Moderately Low	3.66	2.68	.46	High
	23 Years of Age	3.0	3.06	.42	Moderately Low	3.26	3.20	.30	Moderate
Colleges/ Department	24 Years of Age	2.98	3.00	.14	Moderately Low	3.71	3.64	.47	High
	Accountancy and Business Management	3.14	3.16	.39	Moderately Low	3.52	3.56	.47	High
	Allied Health	3.1	3.1	.38	Moderately Low	3.52	3.56	.44	High
	Arts and Sciences	2.96	2.93	.42	Moderately Low	3.44	3.44	.57	Moderate
Year Level	Engineering and Technology	3.15	3.10	.44	Moderately Low	3.43	3.40	.51	Moderate
	1st year	3.09	3.1	.43	Moderately Low	3.44	3.44	.53	Moderate
	2nd year	3.04	3.03	.51	Moderately Low	3.49	3.56	.48	Moderate
	3rd year	3.08	2.90	.45	Moderately Low	3.58	3.52	.46	High
Campus of Origin	4th year	3.08	3.08	.40	Moderately Low	3.51	3.52	.44	High
	National University Baliwag	3.12	3.13	.42	Moderately Low	3.46	3.50	.51	Moderate
	National University Dasmariñas	3.01	3.03	.32	Moderately Low	3.35	3.32	.46	Moderate

	National University Fairview	3.10	3.10	.46	Moderately Low	3.44	3.50	.55	Moderate
	National University Laguna	3.05	2.90	.43	Moderately Low	3.47	3.44	.49	Moderate
	National University Lipa	3.20	3.20	.40	Moderately Low	3.45	3.46	.49	Moderate
	National University Manila	3.10	3.03	.44	Moderately Low	3.50	3.56	.53	High
	National University Mall of Asia	3.00	2.98	.43	Moderately Low	3.61	3.56	.51	High
	Grand Mean	3.08			Moderately Low	3.47			Moderate

TABLE IVV
 PEARSON CORRELATION OF CMNI AND CFI

		Career Futures
Conformity to Masculine Norms	Pearson R	.05
	p-value	.36
<i>Note. N=350, a=0.05</i>		

With an r-value of .05, there is a very weak correlation between conformity to masculine norms and career futures. This indicates that an increase or decrease in conformity to masculine norms does not necessarily results in an increase or decrease in the career planning attitudes of an individual. As supported by the study of Krumboltz et al. (1976) exemplified in the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making, career future accounts for career planning attitude which is related to career decision making while Lacasse and Jackson (2020) further expounded that conformity to masculine norms does not necessarily predict faculty decision making.

TABLE V
 RESULTS OF THE INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST FOR SEX

	p-value	t-stats	t-critical	Df
Conformity to Masculine Norms	0.0001	3.74	1.65	348
Career Futures	0.35	0.36	1.65	348
<i>Note. N=350, a=0.05</i>				

Results of the t-test comparing sex show that there is a significant difference between males and females when it comes to adherence to masculine norms, with the latter exhibiting higher conformity to masculine norms compared to the former, as the p-value of the data analysis is .0001 which is less than .05 significance threshold set for this study. In terms of Career futures, there is no significant difference observed in terms of sex as the p-value of the t-test for the career future variable is .35.

As implied, men tend to adhere to masculine norms as these norms have been imprinted on their culture by the patriarchal society. Furthermore, it can be argued that men and women have different approaches when conforming to masculine norms as men have a higher probability to become anxious when it comes to breaching traditional masculinity norms compared to women (Carter et.al 2019). In terms of career futures, there is no significant difference observed in terms of sex, suggesting that males and females do not differ when it comes to their career planning attitudes. Hence, it can be inferred that both sexes have the same capability in coming up with career decisions when faced with career barriers.

TABLE VI
 RESULTS OF ANOVA FOR CONFORMITY TO MASCLINE NORMS AND SUBJECT VARIABLES

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	df	p-value
Age			
Between groups	.365	6	.922
Within Groups	63.65	343	
Total	64.01	349	
Year Level			
Between groups	.005	3	.999
Within Groups	64.00	346	
Total	64.01	349	

College/Department			
Between groups	2.50	3	.003
Within Groups	61.50	346	
Total	64.00	349	
Campus of Origin			
Between groups	1.33	3	.298
Within Groups	62.68	346	
Total	64.01	349	

Considering the levels of conformity to masculine norms of the students to their subject variables, results indicate that there is no significant difference in terms of age group, year level, and campus of origin but a significant difference is observed when the college where the students belong is taken into consideration. The values supporting these can be found in Table VI. This may suggest that as individuals age and proceed with their tertiary education, it does not mean that their conformity to masculine norms will fluctuate, and being from different campuses of the University may not have any effect on the conformity to masculine norms of the students. Furthermore, it can be inferred that adherence to masculine norms may differ in terms of the college or program to which the students belong, as confirmed by the claims of Berdahl et al. (2018) that masculinity may exist in different types of environments.

TABLE VII
 RESULTS OF ANOVA FOR CAREER FUTURES AND SUBJECT VARIABLES

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	df	p-value
Age			
Between groups	1.90	6	.315
Within Groups	91.60	343	
Total	93.50	349	
Year Level			
Between groups	.66	3	.486
Within Groups	92.83	346	
Total	93.49	349	
College/Department			
Between groups	.67	3	.479
Within Groups	92.82	346	
Total	93.49	349	
Campus of Origin			
Between groups	1.82	3	.341
Within Groups	91.67	346	
Total	93.49	349	

Lastly, results, as indicated in Table VII, show that there is no significant difference in the levels of career future in terms of age group, year level, campus of origin, and the college where the students belong. This indicates that age, year level, and being on different campuses may not produce any difference in their career planning attitude. As explained by Soylu et al. (2021), at the age of 18-19 years old, people begin on considering some factors for career transitions including their career planning attitudes. Also aligned with the result of the current study, David (2019) inferred that people in the Philippines tend to pursue careers without giving enough consideration which results in fewer genuine job offers and interviews and can later lead to faculty positive career planning attitudes and adaptability.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that there is a very weak correlation between conformity to masculine norms and the career futures of college students. Considering sex, there is no significant difference in terms of the participant's career future but there is a significant difference in terms of conformity to masculine norms with males having higher levels of conformity as compared to females. Furthermore, there is no significant difference in the levels of conformity to masculine norms and career futures among the participants' subject variables excluding on college where the students belong, which exhibited varying levels of conformity.

The study acknowledges its own limitations. Thus, recommendations for future studies include:

1. Separating the scores and measurement of the scales base on their sub-factors.

2. Acquiring a higher number of participants from different Universities across the country.
3. Testing conformity to masculine norms and career futures with other possible related variables.

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