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"Think Like a Man": How Sexual Cultural Scripting and Masculinity Influence Changes in Men's Use of Intimate Partner Violence

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to: (1) explore the relationship between sexual cultural scripting and traditional masculine norms on changes in intimate partner violence (IPV) perpetration, and (2) examine traditional masculine norms as an effect modifier among young heterosexual men. This study is a secondary data analysis of a prospective cohort study of 119 young heterosexual men who were followed for six months. The adjusted logistic regression results revealed that sexual cultural scripting norms was associated with an increased odds of emotional IPV perpetration and traditional masculine norms was associated with an increased odds of physical IPV perpetration in the past six months. There were no significant interaction effect between sexual cultural scripting and traditional masculine norms on IPV perpetration. These findings suggest that socially constructed norms and beliefs surrounding masculinity, femininity, and how women and men interact in sexual relationships are important constructs for understanding the etiology of young men's use of violence against a female partner. While primary IPV interventions targeting young men do address masculinity, sexual cultural scripting is an additional concept that should also be addressed.

Keywords

Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration; Masculinity; Sexual Scripts; Young Heterosexual Men; Domestic Violence

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Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a salient public health issue associated with significant negative mental, sexual, and reproductive health implications for women (Black et al., 2011). To date, more than one in three women (35.6%) have experienced at least one form of IPV (i.e., physical, emotional, sexual) in the United States (Black et al., 2011). Among these women who experience IPV, 69% were younger than 25 years of age at the time of the abuse (Black et al., 2011), suggesting that adolescence and young adulthood is critical window for primary and secondary IPV prevention interventions (Author Citation). This is important as the prevalence of IPV perpetration reported by young adult men can range from 11% to 50% (Johnson, Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2014; Waller et al., 2013).

From a community psychology perspective, moving beyond the individual-level to examine the implications of societal and cultural influences on the prevalence of IPV perpetration may be useful. In particular, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention developed and implemented a social-ecological framework to design prevention programs and interventions for violence (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002). This social-ecological framework addresses the complex interconnectedness between risk factors on four levels: individual (e.g., history of violence); relationship (e.g., influence of one's peers); community (e.g., social capital); and societal (e.g., sociocultural norms) (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002). There is an abundance of IPV interventions and programs focused on individual- and relationship-level risk factors, however, there remains a dearth of research on societal-level factors of IPV in the United States (Gressard, Swahn, & Tharp, 2015; Spivak et al., 2014). Research examining societal-level factors such as sexual cultural scripting norms and traditional masculine norms is crucial, as societal-level factors can construct an environment that legitimizes and supports the use of IPV and other forms of violence against women.

Sexual Cultural Scripting Theory and IPV Perpetration

Sexual scripting theory states that human sexual behavior is socially constructed (Simon & Gagnon, 1986; Wiederman, 2015). Thus, sexual cultural scripts are sexual roles embedded in one's culture, performed by interpersonal actors, and perpetuated through sociopolitical institutions such as media, government, and religion (Wiederman, 2015). Sexual cultural scripts can be gendered such that sexual scripts are socially constructed for both women and men (Byers, 1996; Dworkin & O'Sullivan, 2005; Mosher & Tomkins, 1988), therefore, sexual cultural scripts can be viewed as a potential societal-level predictor of young men's behaviors. For instance, men are portrayed as having “strong sexual needs, obsessed with sex, vigorously pursue dates”, while women are portrayed as “few sexual needs, seeing sex as a means of love or commitment, passive to protect perceived worth” (Byers, 1996). Another example of a sexual script refers to young men defining and reducing women to their body and body parts, and valuing them as objects of men's sexual desire and pleasure (Bartky, 1990). Sexual cultural scripts influence not only how young men act in sexual relationships with women but also young men's *expectations* of sexual relationships with women.

Young men's adherence to sexual cultural scripting may support pro-violent attitudes towards women and contribute to the incidence of IPV in the United States. Though this research is scarce, some studies have suggested that adherence to sexual cultural scripting may be related to violence perpetration (Flood & Pease, 2009). For instance, exposure to material that sexually victimizes women may increase men's acceptance of aggressive behavioral scripts, and desensitize them to sexual violence (Flood & Pease, 2009). Similarly, men who view and treat women as objects of their sexual desire may interact with women in a sexually aggressive way, leading to sexual violence perpetration (Gervais, DiLillo, & McChargue, 2014) and sexually aggressive attitudes (Rudman & Mescher, 2012). Further, a qualitative study found that young male IPV perpetrators desired to behave in similar ways to older male role models (e.g., brothers and uncles), including being accepting of abuse and objectifying women (Reed et al., 2008).

Sexual cultural scripting may *theoretically* legitimize men's IPV perpetration. Women are expected to counteract men's sexual pursuit to increase romantic interest (Byers, 1996). Men are expected to remove women's restrictions in order to fulfill their sexual needs, which legitimizes men's use of sexual coercion against women (Byers, 1996). Hence, men whose romantic and sexual advances are resisted may experience dissatisfaction, which could result in relationship conflict. This relationship conflict may manifest as physical (e.g., men pushing women) and emotional (e.g., men yelling or belittling women) forms of IPV, if the male partner strongly adheres to sexual cultural scripts. Young men who strongly adhere to sexual cultural scripting may use nonsexual forms (i.e., physical and emotional) of IPV; however, no studies have examined this association.

Traditional Masculine Norms as an Effect Modifier

An extensive body of research indicates that young men with a strong adherence to masculine norms may be more likely to perpetrate violence (Jenkins & Aubé, 2002; Mankowski & Maton, 2010; Moore & Stuart, 2005; Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002; Parrott & Zeichner, 2003; Reidy, Berke, Gentile, & Zeichner, 2015; Santana, Raj, Decker, La Marche, & Silverman, 2006; Smith, Parrott, Swartout, & Tharp, 2015). Traditional masculine norms describe how society views men's actions, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, including their roles and rights in society (Moore & Stuart, 2005). Several sociocultural and psychological theories such as feminist and general aggression postulate that socially constructed masculinity may explain men's use of violence (Kilmartin & McDermott, 2016). However, not every man who adheres strongly to these traditional masculine norms will use violence against female partners (Smith et al., 2015). These findings suggest that a nuanced approach is needed to understand the role of traditional masculine norms and men's use of IPV.

As an effect modifier, traditional masculine norms could provide additional insight into IPV perpetration by men. For example, Thomas and Levent (2012) found that playing violent videogames was associated with using violence for young men with high levels of traditional masculine norms compared to those with low levels. Building from this work, it is possible that a unique synergy may exist between sexual cultural scripting norms and traditional masculine norms. Specifically, young men who strongly adhere to both sexual cultural

scripting and traditional masculine norms may view women as subservient, and thus more likely perpetrate IPV against their female partners. To date, no study has investigated this potential synergy between sexual cultural scripting and traditional masculine norms on men's use of violence. Examining traditional masculine norms as a moderator on the effects of sexual cultural scripting norms on IPV perpetration could reveal important differences among groups of men with low and high adherence to traditional masculine norms.

Changes in Young Men's Use of IPV over Time

Based on previous work, sexual cultural scripting and traditional masculine norms may influence men's likelihood of perpetrating IPV, however, examining their probable effects on changes in men's IPV perpetration can be informative for prevention interventions and programs. An emerging body of research indicates that IPV perpetration increases with time for males (Walker & Lenore, 2009), and generally peaks later in adolescence and early young adulthood (Johnson, Giordano, Longmore, & Manning, 2014; Shortt et al., 2012). Young men's use of IPV tends to change with time, however, only a few studies have addressed potential factors influencing this change (Johnson, Giordano, Longmore, et al., 2014). One study found that individual- and relationship-level factors including substance use and relationship quality were risk factors for the change in men's use of IPV over time in the United States (Johnson, Giordano, Longmore, et al., 2014). Very few studies have examined societal-level factors influence on changes in men's IPV perpetration in the United States, despite the fact that some societal factors are based in fairly stable patriarchal systems (Szymanski, Moffitt, & Carr, 2010) and the evidence supporting the influence of societal-level factors on men's IPV perpetration in global settings (Dworkin, Treves-Kagan, & Lippman, 2013; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010; Morrell, Jewkes, & Lindegger, 2012).

The Present Study

Therefore, the goals of the present study were to: 1) examine the effects of sexual cultural scripting and traditional masculine norms on young men's perpetration of IPV over time, and 2) explore effect modification of traditional masculine norms on this association. We hypothesized that young men with higher scores of sexual cultural scripting norms (i.e., stronger adherence to these norms) and traditional masculine norms would be more likely to use physical and emotional IPV against a female partner. We also hypothesized that the effects of sexual cultural scripting norms on physical and emotional IPV perpetration would be stronger for young men with strong adherence to traditional masculine norms.

Methods

Procedure

The current study is a secondary data analysis of a prospective cohort study examining the influence of social networks on the decision making of young heterosexual males aged 18-25. One hundred and nineteen young men were recruited using snowball-sampling methods in cites located in the northeast region of the United States between 2011 and 2013. Community outreach workers recruited participants from bars and barbershops, and provided study information to potential participants.

The study's inclusion criteria were: (a) male sex, (b) aged 18-25, (c) English-speaking, (d) identified as heterosexual, and (e) possession of a cell phone. The larger study followed young heterosexual males for six months. Data was collected for three time points: 1) baseline; 2) three months follow-up; and 3) six months follow-up. During the baseline interview, research staff obtained written informed consent. The attrition rate was 10.9%. For the baseline, three-month, and six-month interviews, each participant completed structured interviews using audio computer-assisted self- interviews (ACASI). At the end of the interviews, participants were compensated $35. The host institution's IRB approved all study procedures.

Participants

Table 1 is a summary of socio-demographics for the sample of 119 young heterosexual men. The average age for young heterosexual men was 20.9 years (SD=1.9 years). The racial and ethnic makeup for the young heterosexual men was: 81.5% Black, 20% Hispanic, and 1.7% White. Nearly half of the sample was employed (48.7%). More than half the sample was either a high school graduate (38.6%) or obtaining secondary education (42.8%).

Measures

IPV Perpetration—IPV perpetration was measured at all three time points (i.e., baseline, 3-month, and 6-month interview). Physical and emotional IPV perpetration were assessed using five items from the physical assault and psychological aggression subscales of the revised short form of the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS-2) (Straus, Hamby, & Warren, 2003), with modified wording for each time point. Participants were asked whether they engaged in four physically violent behaviors to determine if they used physical violence against an intimate partner (e.g., shoved, punched, hit, or physically hurt them) and three emotionally violent behaviors to determine emotional violence against an intimate partner (e.g., swear, call names, or insult). Participants were asked to respond to the violence perpetration questions as yes (1) or no (0). During the baseline interview, IPV perpetration questions were phrased as ***had ever*** used violence towards an intimate partner. During the subsequent interviews (i.e., three- and six-month), IPV perpetration questions were phrased as ***in the past three months***. Two summary, binary variables were created: 1) physical IPV perpetration (yes to any reported physical IPV perpetration at the three-month or six-month interview), and 2) emotional IPV perpetration (yes to any reported emotional IPV perpetration at the three-month or six-month interview).

Traditional Masculine Norms—Traditional masculine norms were measured at the baseline interview using a 26-item Masculine Role Norm Scale (MRNS) (Thompson Jr & Pleck, 1987). Participants were asked 11 items concerning status norms (i.e., success in his work has to be a man's central goal in this life), eight items on toughness (i.e., when a man is feeling a little pain he should try not to let it show very much), and seven items on anti-femininity (i.e., embarrassing for a man to have a job that is usually filled by a woman). Participants were asked respond to the items using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). A total score was created by summing the responses to all items, with higher scores indicating adherence to more traditional views of masculinity. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.80.

Sexual Cultural Scripting Norms—Sexual cultural scripting norms were measured at the three-month interview using a 19-item scale adapted from the Attitudes about Dating and Sexual Relationships Measure (Ward, 2002). Participants were asked seven items concerning the normality of men being sex-driven and unfaithful (e.g., men are mostly interested in women as potential sex partners and don't want to be “just friends” with a woman), five items on dating being a recreational sport (e.g., a man will be most successful in meeting or picking up women if he has a “rap” or uses flattering, sexy, or cute pick-up lines), and seven items on viewing women as only objects of sexual desire (i.e., there is nothing wrong with men being primarily interested in a woman's body). Participants responded to the items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). A total score was created by summing the responses to all items, with higher scores indicating stronger belief in norms on objectifying women's bodies and gendered sexuality. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.94. Given the integration of both gendered sexual roles in relationships and norms of the masculine/femininity dichotomy, this measure conceptually aligns well with sexual cultural scripting, and has been used in other studies to assess sexual scripts among young men (Casey et al., 2015; Ward, Vandenbosch, & Eggermont, 2015) and among racial and ethnically diverse samples (Ward et al., 2015).

Demographics—Participants reported socio-demographics at all three time points (i.e., baseline, 3-month, and 6-month interview). The following variables were used from the baseline interview: age, household income, race and ethnicity (i.e., Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Other), years of education (i.e., 9th grade or lower, 10th grade, 11th grade, High School or GED, Some College, Graduated College, Some graduate or professional school, and completed graduate or professional school), and employment status (i.e., not working, working part-time, working full-time). A binary variable was created for relationship status (i.e., in a current relationship at the three-month and/or six-month interview, not in a current relationship at the three-month and/or six-month interview).

Analytic Strategy

Descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, means, and standard deviations) were generated to determine sample demographics, baseline IPV perpetration, sexual cultural scripting norms, traditional masculine norms, and IPV perpetration using SPSS 21.0 (IBM SPSS Statistics, 2012). A bivariate correlation test between sexual cultural scripting and traditional masculine norms was performed to test potential multicollinearity issues.

Next, logistic regression models were conducted to examine sexual cultural scripting and traditional masculine norms as predictors of past-six month physical and emotional IPV perpetration, while controlling for demographic covariates and baseline IPV perpetration. Further, logistic regression models were also conducted to examine whether the interaction effect between sexual cultural scripting norms and traditional masculine norms predicted past-six month IPV perpetration. For these models, an interaction term between sexual cultural scripting norms and traditional masculine norms was entered. The continuous predictors (i.e., sexual cultural scripting norms, traditional masculine norms) were mean-

centered by subtracting the mean from each participant's score to reduce multicollinearity in the interaction model.

All multivariate logistic regression models were conducted using Mplus 7.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012). For every logistic regression model, the odds ratios were estimated using full information maximum likelihood. This method allowed missing data at the follow-up interviews to be estimated (Muthen and Muthen, 1998). Socio-demographic variables (i.e., education, relationship status) significantly related at a p-value less than or equal to 0.10 at the bivariate level or relevant according to current literature were included as covariates.

Results

Missing Data

Young men's reports of physical and emotional IPV perpetration were missing for 13 cases (10.9%). There were no statistically significant differences on demographic and primary study variables for those with and without missing data: age (M=20.5 years [SD=1.9] vs. M=20.9 years [SD=2.2]; t = -0.51; p=0.62); race (Black: 84.6% vs. 81.1%; Hispanic: 15.4% vs. 17.0%; White: 0% vs. 1.9%; $X^2(2)$ =0.28; p=0.87); baseline IPV perpetration (23.3% vs. 27.3%; $X^2(1)$ =0.09; p=0.77); employed (30.8% vs. 50.9%; $X^2(1)$ =1.89; p=0.17); and traditional masculine norms scores (M=111.0 [SD=32.6] vs. M=119.4[SD=17.0]; t =0.91; p=0.38).

Endorsement of Sexual Cultural Scripting Norms

Table 2 shows the 19 items used to assess sexual cultural scripting and the frequency of men in the sample who endorsed each statement. Men who stated moderately agree or agree to an item were coded as 1 (i.e., affirmative response) and all other responses were coded as 0 (i.e., disconfirming response). The two most commonly endorsed sexual cultural scripting norms were: 1) You don't need a relationship to have good sex; all you need are two people who are attracted to each other (41.2%); and 2) Men who are good with the ladies and who can get any woman into bed are cool (40.0%). The least commonly endorsed sexual cultural scripting norms were: 1) Something is wrong with a guy who turns down a chance to have sex (9.4%); and 2) There's nothing wrong with men whistling at shapely women (9.4%). The Dating is a game or recreational sport was the subscale with the majority of the items endorsed by nearly 20% of the sample.

Prevalence and Associations with IPV Perpetration among Young Men

The prevalence of physical and emotional violence towards an intimate partner in the past six months was 9.4% and 18.9%, respectively. Before conducting the logistic regression models, a correlations test between sexual cultural scripting norms and traditional masculine norms was conducted to address potential multicollinearity issues. The correlation between sexual cultural scripting and traditional masculine norms was not statistically significant (Pearson's r = .03, p > .05; not shown in tables). Crude and adjusted logistic regressions were performed to examine the effects of sexual cultural scripting and traditional masculine norms on changes in men's use of IPV (Table 3). Accounting for education, relationship status, and baseline IPV perpetration, sexual cultural scripting norms predicted emotional

IPV perpetration in the past six months (OR [95% CI] = 1.07 [1.01, 1.12], $p < .01$). Every one-unit increase in sexual cultural scripting norms was associated with a 7% increased odds of young men perpetrating emotional violence against a partner in the past six months. Results also revealed that traditional masculine norms predicted physical IPV perpetration (OR [95% CI] = 1.07 [1.02, 1.09], $p < .01$) in the past six months (Table 3). Every one-unit increase in traditional masculine norms related to a 7% increased odds of young men perpetrating physical violence against a partner in the past six months.

Testing Traditional Masculine Norms as an Effect Modifier

Results from a logistic regression revealed that the sexual cultural scripting norms × traditional masculine norms interaction term did not significantly predicted emotional (OR [95% CI] = 0.99 [0.99, 1.00], $p > .05$) or physical (OR [95% CI] = 0.99 [0.99, 1.00], $p > .05$) IPV perpetration (Table 3).

Discussion

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a prevalent health problem disproportionately affecting women (Black et al., 2011). More than three decades of research has indicated critical societal, community, interpersonal, and individual factors that impact the prevalence and incidence of IPV against women by men (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002). The current study builds upon this larger body of research as one of the first longitudinal studies exploring sexual cultural scripting norms and traditional masculine norms as predictors of physical and emotional IPV over time among young heterosexual men. Our findings illustrate that strong adherence to sexual cultural scripting norms contributes to changes in emotional IPV perpetration over time. Also, strong adherence to traditional masculine norms also significantly associated with changes in physical IPV perpetration over time. Interestingly, there was no significant interaction between sexual cultural scripting norms and traditional masculine norms on emotional or physical IPV perpetration. Nevertheless, these findings provide evidence for a focus on sexual cultural scripting norms and traditional masculine norms among primary IPV prevention programs and interventions targeting young heterosexual men. While we are unaware of evidence-based IPV prevention interventions targeting sexual cultural scripting norms, HIV/STI prevention interventions have challenged “traditional” sexual cultural scripts among women finding a reduction in unsafe sex (Dworkin, Beckford, & Ehrhardt, 2007) and IPV prevention interventions among young men and women that focused on gender norms found reductions in IPV perpetration (Foshee et al., 2005; Taylor & Woods, 2011). On individual- and relationship-levels, sexual cultural scripting norms may be a promising and changeable determinant to integrate into IPV prevention interventions. Still, sexual cultural scripting norms and traditional masculine norms are constructed by social institutions (Byers, 1996; Thompson & Pleck, 1995); yet, there is a clear opportunity to develop and implement structural interventions to reduce IPV against women by altering these norms. For instance, current structural interventions such as the Men Care campaigns have addressed the role of masculine and gender norms in violence perpetration against women through media campaigns (Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2014; Morrell et al., 2012). Producing and promoting more egalitarian attitudes surrounding the

masculine/feminine dichotomy and gendered sexual behaviors in relationships is important to impact of reduction of IPV against female partners.

Sexual cultural scripting norms emerged as an important predictor of changes in young men's use of IPV. Young heterosexual men with strong beliefs that heterosexual women and men should interact in sexual relationships according to a gendered cognitive schema which includes viewing women are primarily sexual objects for men's desire, male's high sex drive, and dating as a sport, were more likely to use emotional IPV against a female partner in the past six months. These findings are key for two distinct reasons. While sexual cultural scripting is associated with young men's use of sexual coercion and violence (Byers, 1996), the majority of this research excludes nonsexual forms of violence (i.e., physical and emotional) and changes in violence perpetration over time. For the current study, young heterosexual men were more likely to use physical and emotional violence against women as opposed to sexual violence. While sexual violence perpetration may have been underreported, it is possible that young heterosexual men with strong adherence to sexual cultural scripting norms expect passivity and acceptance of their sexual advances from their female intimate partners. If female intimate partners resisted their male partners' sexual advances, he may become upset or disappointed since sexual cultural scripts influence men's expectations of women's submissiveness in sexual relationships. Therefore, his harsh feelings may result in his use of emotional violence (e.g., swearing, calling names). This may be particularly true if young heterosexual men believe in the sexual script that males should have a high sex drive and dating is a game or battle of the sexes. Further, young heterosexual men who adhere to the sexual script that women are purely sexual objects, may try to exert power and control, which could manifest as emotional violence against their female partner. Sexual cultural scripting may not translate into individual or dyadic behaviors for every young heterosexual person (Masters, Casey, Wells, & Morrison, 2013), however, our findings suggest that sexual cultural scripting norms may influence whether young heterosexual men use violence against women.

Consistent with previous research, traditional masculine norms were associated with young men's physical IPV perpetration (Jenkins & Aubé, 2002; Santana et al., 2006). Young heterosexual men who believe in gendered power dynamics may use physical violence against their female partners as a way to exert power and control. Moreover, some research found that young men who adhere to anti-femininity norms were less likely to engage in sexual communication with their female partners (Norton, Smith, Magriples, & Kershaw, 2016). Thus, it is possible that young men who adhere strongly to anti-femininity norms believe it's less “masculine” to talk to their female partners about sex, which may lead to physical violence if the female partner is not accepting of his sexual advances. Further, traditional masculine norms did not relate to emotional IPV perpetration. A potential explanation for this unique finding may relate to the operationalization of masculinity. The current study used the MRNS scale, which defines masculinity as “culturally based ideology scripting gender relations, attitudes, and beliefs” (Moore & Stuart, 2005; Thompson & Pleck, 1995), which is different than other approaches such as trait approach (Bem Sex-Role Inventory) (Bem, 1981); and gender role stress approach (Gender Role Conflict Scale) (Moore & Stuart, 2005; O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986). Our nonsignificant finding between traditional masculine norms and emotional IPV is consistent

with a few studies (Jakupcak, Lisak, & Roemer, 2002). Despite these findings, traditional masculine norms have an important role in understanding the etiology of physical IPV perpetration among young heterosexual men. Community psychologists who work with groups of men are uniquely positioned to better investigate how traditional masculine norms are socially constructed (Mankowski & Maton, 2010), and this investigation may be useful for group-based IPV prevention interventions targeting traditional masculine norms.

It is worth noting that the conditional effects of sexual cultural scripting and traditional masculine norms remained was associated with IPV perpetration, even though the interaction was not significant. This finding suggests that the effect of sexual cultural scripting on IPV perpetration does not vary with a young man's adherence level to traditional masculine norms. This provides some support that sexual cultural scripting and traditional masculine norms are independent predictors of men's IPV perpetration, and potentially useful determinants to target in IPV prevention interventions among young heterosexual men. While it may not be *necessary* for IPV prevention interventions to address both sexual cultural scripting and traditional masculine norms, interventions for young heterosexual men may have a greater impact on reducing *both* emotional and physical IPV perpetration if both risk factors are addressed, longitudinally.

This study aimed to understand the influence of sexual cultural scripting norms and traditional masculine norms on men's use of IPV, however, it is important to address how race and ethnicity may contextualize these findings. In particular, the majority of our sample identified as either African-American or Hispanic/Latino and men of color often negotiate their expression of masculinity daily because the “normative” form of masculinity is socially constructed for White, heterosexual, middle-class men (Griffith, Gunter, & Watkins, 2012). Nevertheless, there are cultural differences in how men express their traditional masculine norms across racial and ethnic groups (Levant, Majors, & Kelley, 1998). For example, *machismo* and *caballerismo* are male gender norms in Hispanic and Latino communities (Stephens, Eaton, & Boyd, 2016). Machismo states that masculinity is proven through sexuality (Glass & Owen, 2010) and is associated with aggression and toughness in intimate relationships (Stephens et al., 2016). Conversely, caballerismo characterizes masculinity as being proper, chivalrous, (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracey, 2008) and open in relationships (Estrada & Arciniega, 2015; Stephens et al., 2016). Similarly, *cool pose* and John Henryism are culturally-specific representations of masculinity for African-American men. The cool pose characterizes physical posturing, toughness, and a readiness to fight and violently defend and protect (Billson & Majors, 1992; Vincent et al., 2016; Wade & Rochlen, 2013). Conversely, John Henryism is a form of masculinity that exhibits a strong disposition to coping with structural inequalities such as racism (Vincent et al., 2016). Though beyond the scope of our study, young men's adherence to cultural-specific expressions of masculinity may influence their expression of sexual scripting and their use of violence. For example, men who adhere strongly to machismo and the cool pose may exhibit controlling behaviors over intimate partners (Stephens & Eaton, 2014; Stephens et al., 2016) value promiscuity over monogamy (Bowleg et al., 2011; Corneille, Tademy, Reid, Belgrave, & Nasim, 2008; Vincent et al., 2016). However, men who adhere to caballerismo may not use IPV against a female partner. While it is possible that specific cultural representations of masculinity may be protective against IPV perpetration, racial and ethnic

minority men are overlooked in scripting literature (Seal, Smith, Coley, Perry, & Gamez, 2008; Stephens et al., 2016). It would be useful for future studies to build upon our findings and use both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine if and how cultural representations of masculinity, sexual scripting, and IPV perpetration intersect among young heterosexual men.

Limitations

While these findings are important for understanding young men's use of violence against an intimate female partner, they should be interpreted in light of these limitations. First, inferences made from these analyses are strengthened by the prospective design of the cohort study, yet, the small sample size reduces our ability to detect small differences between groups or examine more complex models (i.e., moderated mediation). It is important for future studies to replicate these findings with a larger racially and ethnically diverse sample of young heterosexual men. Secondly, young heterosexual men in this study were recruited using snowball-sampling methods and this could be a source of self-selection bias. However, this sampling method allows us to understand health behaviors among hard-to-reach populations (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Third, there is a possibility that IPV perpetration was underreported in the study due to social desirability bias, as perpetrating violence against a partner can be viewed as a “bad” or “undesirable” behavior leading to lack of reporting among young heterosexual men. Next, for this study, IPV perpetration was measured as binary variable and frequency of IPV perpetration (e.g., continuous score) was not captured. Future studies should replicate these findings measuring the frequency of IPV perpetration as a dose-response relationship may exist between sexual cultural scripting norms, traditional masculine norms, and IPV perpetration. Finally, young heterosexual men were recruited in the northeast region of the US, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could explore how differences in cultural values, ideologies, and norms within specific communities and neighborhoods influence men's IPV perpetration.

Research Implications

Expanding current research on IPV perpetration among young heterosexual men, the present study is one of the first to use a prospective design to investigate the effect of sexual cultural scripting norms on young men's changes in IPV perpetration.

Findings from this work highlight the need for future research examining the influence of societal-level factors on young men's use of violence against their female partners. In particular, future research should take a more in-depth examination of the effects of sexual cultural scripting norms on the frequency of physical, emotional, and sexual IPV perpetration, which were not examined in the current study. Further, extant research indicates an interconnectedness between multiple types of violence among perpetrators (Hamby & Grych, 2013). Therefore, it may be useful for future research to examine sexual cultural scripting norms as a predictor of other forms of interpersonal violence perpetration such as community and family violence. The current study hypothesized that a potential synergy between sexual cultural scripting and traditional masculine norms, two socially constructed concepts, would exacerbate men's use of violence towards the female partner.

While these effects were not significant, an important avenue for future research would involving examining protective factors such as higher friendship quality and social support (Capaldi, Knoble, Shortt, & Kim, 2012), that may reduce the effect of sexual cultural scripts on IPV perpetration. Lastly, some research suggests that IPV perpetration dissipates with age (Kim, Laurent, Capaldi, & Feingold, 2008). Future research should examine whether the interaction between sexual cultural scripting norms and age predicts the longitudinal trajectory of young men's IPV perpetration over time (e.g., years). Distinguishing whether the association between sexual cultural scripting norms and IPV perpetration decreases or increases could be important for intervention development.

Practice Implications

Findings from the current study have important implications for understanding young men's IPV perpetration. First, it is critical to understand the nature and depth of perceptions and ingrained values of masculinity, and sexual cultural scripts as they relate to IPV perpetration by young heterosexual men. In particular, the significant associations between perceptions of traditional masculine norms, sexual cultural scripts, and IPV perpetration suggest a continued increased risk and safety concerns for young women, and possibly increased involvement in the criminal justice system. As a result, it is essential to target and challenge perceptions and normative beliefs of masculinity and how they are viewed and justified within intimate relationships between young men and women. These constructs need to be challenged in order to inform effective early prevention programs that target adolescents and young adults. Effective early prevention programs would benefit from an integrated comprehensive and ecological approach that aims to identify and recognize personal, cultural and societal beliefs around masculinity and sexual cultural scripts. Through an ecological framework, prevention and intervention research and programs can focus on understanding the impact and influence at the individual-level (e.g., recognizing cultural and societal beliefs of masculinity, and gender norms as they pertain to one's personal history), relationship-level (e.g., dyadic relationships, upbringing, familial norms), community-level (e.g., community norms around traditional masculine norms), and societal-level (e.g., policies perpetuating traditional masculine norms). Through this approach, young men will benefit from identifying and recognizing their own cultural or societal beliefs around “what it means to be a man” and what qualities and characteristics are important when establishing an intimate relationship. By examining notions of masculinity, as well as sexual scripts from the micro- and macro- level, we can begin to create awareness around unhealthy beliefs, provide education, and instill positive ideals and constructive values of affirmative relationships, healthy intimacy, communication and commitment.

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Table 1
Sample Characteristics among Young Heterosexual Men

	% (N)
Age, *y*, M (SD)	20.6 (1.9)
Employed	
Yes	48.7 (58)
No	51.3 (61)
Education	
Less than High School	18.6 (22)
High School Graduate	38.6 (46)
More than High School	42.8 (51)
Race and Ethnicity	
Black	81.5 (97)
Hispanic	16.8 (20)
White	1.7 (2)
Relationship Status [a]	
In a relationship	53.8 (64)
Not in a relationship	34.4 (41)
Baseline IPV Perpetration	22.7 (27)
Physical IPV Perpetration [a]	9.4 (10)
Emotional IPV Perpetration [a]	18.9 (23)
Sexual Cultural Scripting Norms [a], *M* (*SD*)	49.94 (19.40)
Traditional Masculine Norms, *M* (*SD*)	118.51 (19.36)

[a] 10.9% is missing due to attrition.

[b] Column percentages, may not equal 100 due to rounding up.

M = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *y* = years

Table 2
Men's Adherence to Sexual Cultural Scripting Norms

	n (%)
Subscale: Men are sex-driven and have trouble being faithful.	
Men are mostly interested in women as potential sex partners and don't want to be just friends with a woman.	25 (29.4)
It's difficult for men to resist sexual urges and to remain monogamous.	22 (25.8)
It is natural for a man to want to admire or ogle women and to comment on their bodies, even if he has a girlfriend.	28 (32.9)
Something is wrong with a guy who turns down a chance to have sex.	8 (9.4)
Men who are good with the ladies and who can get any woman into bed are cool.	34 (40.0)
Men are always ready and willing for sex; they think about it all the time.	17 (20.0)
It is only natural for a man to make sexual advances to a woman he finds attractive.	23 (27.1)
Subscale: Dating is a game or recreational sport.	
Dating is basically a game, a battle of the sexes, where both males and females try to gain the upper hand and manipulate each other.	19 (22.3)
Sexual activity is desirable as early in a relationship as possible.	18 (21.2)
A good way to reward or punish someone is by giving or withholding sex.	15 (17.6)
You don't need a relationship to have good sex; all you need are two people who are attracted to each other.	35 (41.2)
A man will be most successful in meeting or picking up women if he has a rap or uses flattering, sexy, or cute pick-up lines.	16 (18.8)
Subscale: Women are sexual objects whose value is based on their physical appearance.	
An attractive woman should expect sexual advances and should learn how to handle them.	32 (37.6)
Women should be more concerned about their appearance than men.	22 (25.8)
Using her body and looks is the best way for a woman to attract a man.	23 (27.1)
Women should spend a lot of time trying to be pretty; no one wants to date a woman who has let herself go.	16 (18.8)
There's nothing wrong with men whistling at shapely women.	8 (9.4)
It bothers me when a man is interested in a woman only if she is pretty.	17 (20.0)
There is nothing wrong with men being primarily interested in a woman's body.	11 (12.9)

Note. Men who reported Moderately Agree or Agree with a statement, the statement was coded as 1 as affirmative and 0 as disconfirming. These proportions (frequencies) refer to those coded as affirmative.

Table 3

Results from Crude and Adjusted Logistic Regressions Predicting Past Six-Month IPV Perpetration

Predictors	Physical IPV			Emotional IPV		
	Crude OR (95% CI)	Adjusted OR (95% CI)	Interaction Model OR (95%CI)	Crude OR (95% CI)	Adjusted OR (95% CI)	Interaction Model OR (95%CI)
Sexual Cultural Scripting Norms	1.04 (0.98, 1.10)	1.03 (0.98, 1.07)	1.04 (0.98, 1.10)	**1.06** ** (1.03, 1.09)	**1.07** ** (1.01, 1.12)	**1.07** ** (1.02, 1.12)
Traditional Masculine Norms	**1.05** ** (1.02, 1.09)	**1.07** ** (1.02, 1.10)	**1.07** ** (1.03, 1.11)	1.02 (0.99, 1.04)	1.00 (0.97, 1.04)	1.01 (0.97, 1.04)
Sexual Cultural Scripting Norms × Traditional Masculine Norms			0.99 (0.99, 1.00)			0.99 (0.99, 1.00)

Note. Adjusted analyses controlled for education, relationship status, and baseline IPV perpetration. OR = odds ratio; CI = Confidence Interval. Bolded values are significant.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.