

Men's Tears: Football Players' Evaluations of Crying Behavior

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Guided by social constructionist and social norms perspectives on masculinity, this study examined male college football players' evaluations of crying behavior. Using an experimental design, 150 college football players were randomly assigned to four conditions in which they read different vignettes about Jack, a football player who cries after a football game. Participants who read vignettes of Jack tearing up (vs. sobbing) tended to report higher levels of perceived appropriateness, typicality, and conformity with regard to Jack's crying behavior. Participants who read vignettes of Jack sobbing after losing (vs. winning) a football game perceived his behavior to be more typical of football players. In addition, the findings are consistent with a model in which perceived appropriateness and typicality of Jack's crying behavior mediated the association between intensity of tears (tearing up vs. sobbing) and perceived conformity to Jack's crying behavior. Adherence to the masculine norm of emotional control, perceived appropriateness of Jack's crying behavior, and perceived conformity to Jack's crying behavior were significantly associated with participants' self-esteem. Further, a combination of low perceived appropriateness and high conformity to Jack's crying behavior was related to lower levels of self-esteem.

Keywords: emotion, crying, football, student-athletes, masculinity

After losing a 2009 college football game that knocked his team out of national championship consideration, Tim Tebow, University of Florida's Heisman Trophy candidate quarterback, was seen crying on the sidelines (Associated Press, 2009a). Soon thereafter, the phrase "Tim Tebow crying" was reported to be the hottest Google Internet search (Henderson, 2009). Media reactions to this incident were mixed, but most responses were negative. For instance, media outlets disparaged his emotional expression, even renaming him *Tim Tearbow* (Fowler, 2009).

As illustrated by the Tim Tebow incident, men's crying behavior tends to generate considerable reactions from others, possibly because crying is assumed to violate masculine norms regarding the importance of emotional control (Bekker & Vingerhoets, 2001; Wong & Rochlen,

2005). Indeed, studies in the U.S. (e.g., Lombardo, Cretser, & Roesch, 2001) as well as in other countries (e.g., Becht & Vingerhoets, 2002) have consistently found that women tend to cry more frequently and intensely than men. Nonetheless, research on evaluations of crying behavior has produced mixed findings, with some studies showing that men who cried were evaluated more positively than women who cried (e.g., Labott, Martin, Eason, & Berkey, 1991; Warner & Shields, 2007), other studies showing the reverse (Fischer, 2006; Lombardo, Cretser, Lombardo, & Mathis, 1983), and yet other studies finding no significant gender differences (e.g., Hendriks, Croon, & Vingerhoets, 2008). In attempting to make sense of these conflicting findings, Warner and Shields (2007) emphasized the need for researchers to analyze contextual influences on crying behavior, such as the precipitating situation and the social meaning associated with crying in a particular context.

Against this backdrop, we sought to contribute to the literature on masculinity and men's emotional behavior by examining male college football players' evaluations of crying behavior. We focused in particular on contextual influences on these evaluations as well as how these

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evaluations were related to college football players' self-esteem. The rationale for our study was supported by two theoretical paradigms: social constructionist perspectives and the social norms model. In the following sections, we describe how each of these paradigms informed the current study.

Social Constructionism

Social constructionist perspectives emphasize social factors that infuse masculinity experiences with meaning as well as the contextual and flexible nature of masculinity (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Kahn, 2009; Wong & Rochlen, 2008). Wong and Rochlen (2008) proposed that the contextual nature of masculinity can be analyzed at macro and micro levels. At the macro level, social constructionists assert that there are multiple forms of masculinity that vary across historical periods and social groups (e.g., White lower class masculinity and college football masculinity). Consequently, it is important for researchers to study specific forms of masculinity rather than assume that all forms of masculinity are equivalent (Smiler, 2004). In this regard, a recent content analysis found that only 1% of articles published in the *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* from 2000 to 2008 included a focus on sports (Wong, Steinfeldt, Speight, & Hickman, 2010). Hence, our current focus on college football masculinity may address a gap in the literature on diverse masculinities.

The culture of sports—and in particular, football—emphasizes aggression, competition, physical strength, and stoicism, qualities that are similar to the types of masculine norms that are most admired in U.S. society (Pringle & Markula, 2005). Accordingly, sports have been described as a crucial source of masculine socialization for men (Messner, 2002; Steinfeldt, Steinfeldt, England, & Speight, 2009). It would, therefore, be helpful to examine how male football players would evaluate the crying behavior of another football player, given that tears may represent a critical violation of masculine norms in football culture.

At the micro level, social constructionists investigate contextual influences on men's attitudes and behavior by studying the ways they actively construct masculinity in social situations (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Wong & Roch-

len, 2008). Instead of treating masculinity as trait-like attributes that exist within individuals, masculinity is viewed as actively performed by individuals in specific social contexts (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Smiler, 2004). From a social constructionist viewpoint, men might vary in their reactions to crying behavior depending on the precipitating situation. For example, in a qualitative study, Walton, Coyle, and Lyons (2004) found that English men constructed men as emotional beings within specific social contexts; a death, a soccer game, and a nightclub scenario were viewed as typical situations permitting the expressions of grief, joy, and anger, respectively.

Another potential contextual influence on men's evaluations of crying behavior is the intensity of tears shed. Warner and Shields (2007) found that men who were described in written vignettes as shedding a less intense form of tears were evaluated more positively than those with a more intense form of tears. In explaining this finding, the authors argued that the less intense form of tears is consistent with the notion of "manly emotion." Shields (2002) proposed that manly emotion involves the controlled expression of feelings that are deep and authentic and is generally considered acceptable in U.S. society. Manly emotion might be viewed by men as a permissible expression of emotion because it conveys a degree of self-control that remains consistent with the dominant White, heterosexual expression of masculinity (Shields, 2002; Warner & Shields, 2007).

Social Norms Model

In addition to social constructionist perspectives, our study was guided by the social norms model. Social norms are rules and standards that are understood by members of a social group as a result of interaction with others (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Applied to masculinity research, masculine norms are a type of social norms that guide and constrain masculine behavior (Mahalik et al., 2003). Norms can be categorized in at least two ways. First, norms can be described as descriptive (what is typically done in a social group), injunctive (what is approved or disapproved by others), cohesive (what is done by popular people), or personal (standards or expectations that arise from one's internalized values) (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Cialdini & Trost,

1998); for example, descriptive norms about appropriate emotional behavior for men are communicated when people perceive that most men do not cry in public. In contrast, injunctive norms are communicated when people observe that men who cry in public are ridiculed by others.

Although all the above four types of norms are rooted in socialization processes, descriptive, injunctive, and cohesive norms differ from personal norms. Specifically, the former cluster of norms are enforced through *perceptions* of others' attitudes, beliefs, and behavior (e.g., the perception that most football players do not cry when they lose a game), whereas personal norms are enforced through compliance with one's internal standards (Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Schwartz, 1977). Accordingly, we refer to descriptive, injunctive, and cohesive norms as "external norms" to distinguish them from personal norms.

A second approach to categorizing norms is the distinction between cultural/societal and situational norms (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990). Whereas cultural/societal norms tend to be transsituational (norms that apply across different situations and domains of one's life, e.g., a general belief that men should control their emotions), situational norms refer to norms that apply in specific situations (e.g., a belief that football players should not cry after losing a game). Hereafter, we refer to cultural/societal norms as "transsituational norms."

We propose that the distinction between external and personal norms and between transsituational and situational norms may have important implications for masculinity research. Several studies have shown that different types of norms differed in their relative influence on individuals' attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Buunk & Bakker, 1995; Cialdini et al., 1990; Hamilton & Mahalik, 2009). These studies attest to the importance of simultaneously examining the relative influence of different types of norms. Nevertheless, although a variety of social norms have been theorized to influence men's behavior (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Kahn, 2009; Mahalik et al., 2003), quantitative masculinity studies that rely on the social norms model have focused almost exclusively on the assessment of personal and transsituational masculine norms at the expense of external and situational masculine norms (for an exception,

see Hamilton & Mahalik, 2009). For instance, the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI; Mahalik et al., 2003), a measure of men's conformity to masculine norms, emphasizes transsituational masculine norms in U.S. society rather than masculine norms in specific situations. Moreover, it can be argued that the CMNI measures conformity to personal norms rather than external norms because the items in the inventory are statements about individuals' personal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (e.g., "I like to talk about my feelings") rather than their perceptions of others' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (e.g., "Most men believe it's inappropriate to talk about their feelings").

In the current study, we aimed to address the above gaps in the literature by analyzing the influence of transsituational personal norms, situational personal norms, and situational descriptive norms on football players' perceived conformity to crying behavior and self-esteem. The simultaneous investigation of different types of norms allowed us to identify their relative predictive power vis-à-vis one another. Among the external norms (i.e., descriptive, injunctive, and cohesive norms), we focused on descriptive norms because their potential influence on intended behavior has been clearly demonstrated through a number of studies (Buunk & Bakker, 1995; Ravis & Sheeran, 2003), including a study on men's health behavior (Hamilton & Mahalik, 2009). Hamilton and Mahalik (2009) found that perceptions of normative health behavior (as measured by the perceived typicality of other men's health risk behavior) accounted for the greatest amount of variance in gay men's health risk behavior, beyond the influence of conformity to masculine norms and minority stress. Descriptive norms might shape football players' perceived conformity to crying behavior by communicating social information about what is adaptive behavior in a particular situation (Cialdini, 2007). For instance, if football players perceive that it is typical for most football players to cry after losing a football game, they are more likely to perceive that they would also cry in a similar situation.

In light of the foregoing discussion on social constructionism and the social norm model, we propose a theoretical model integrating and applying both paradigms to men's emotional behavior. Consistent with social constructionist

perspectives (Addis & Mahalik, 2003), we posit that contextual factors influence men's perceptions of situational norms about emotions as well as men's perceived emotional behavior in a particular situation. Applying the social norms model (Cialdini & Trost, 1998), we theorize that men's perceived situational norms about emotions also shape men's emotional behavior and perceived emotional behavior. Integrating the social constructionism and social norms paradigms, we propose that contextual factors' impact on men's emotional behavior in a specific situation is mediated by their perceptions of the applicable situational norms. To illustrate, in the aftermath of losing a football game (contextual factor), a football player might perceive that most football players do not cry after losing a game (perceived situational descriptive norms); these perceptions, in turn, influence the player to resist crying.

It is also important to note that adherence to social norms can have costs as well as benefits for men (Mahalik et al., 2003). Applied to the context of men's emotional behavior, Wong and Rochlen (2005) proposed that the extent to which men's emotional inexpressiveness result in positive or deleterious consequences depends on whether they experience conflicts associated with emotion-related values. Wong and Rochlen (p. 67) defined emotion-related values as including "an individual's perception of the importance of experiencing and expressing emotions, as well as how, when, and to whom these emotions are to be expressed or not expressed." One possible reason why conflicts associated with emotion-related values results in negative outcomes is that individuals experiencing conflict might engage in prolonged rumination regarding their emotional behavior (Mongrain & Vettese, 2003). For instance, a man who believes it is socially inappropriate to cry in pub-

lic, yet finds himself crying in public, might be frustrated with himself for not being able to control his tears. In line with these notions, several studies have shown that conflicts over emotional expressiveness were linked to negative outcomes such as less positivity in close relationships (Mongrain & Vettese, 2003) and lower levels of self-esteem (King & Emmons, 1990). Although not explicitly stated by Wong and Rochlen, the concept of emotion-related values bears some resemblance to one's perceptions of social norms regarding emotions. Accordingly, a man who perceives that norms discourage the expression of tears in a particular situation, but who nevertheless believes he would likely cry in that situation, might struggle with lower levels of self-esteem.

Hypotheses

In the current study, participants were randomly assigned to read one of four vignettes involving a college football player who cries after a football game. The four vignettes varied in terms of the precipitating situation (losing vs. winning a game) and the intensity of tears (tearing up vs. sobbing). Further, we operationalized the social norm constructs in our study in terms of (a) adherence to the masculine norm of emotional control, (b) perceived appropriateness of the vignette crying behavior, and (c) perceived typicality of the vignette crying behavior (see Table 1).

Our first set of hypotheses examined contextual influences on participants' evaluations of crying behavior. Because of the perceived association between crying and weakness in White, heterosexual masculine culture (cf., Lombardo et al., 2001), we expected that after controlling for adherence to the masculine norm of emotional control, participants in the

Table 1
Social Norm Constructs and Their Corresponding Variables and Measures Used in the Current Study

Construct	Variable	Measure
Transsituational personal norms	Adherence to the masculine norm of emotional control	Emotional Control Subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46
Situational personal norms	Perceived appropriateness of the vignette crying behavior	Evaluations of Emotional Behavior Questionnaire-Perceived Appropriateness
Situational descriptive norms	Perceived typicality of the vignette crying behavior	Evaluations of Emotional Behavior Questionnaire-Perceived Typicality

losing (vs. winning) vignette conditions would report higher levels of perceived typicality with regard to the crying behavior but also lower levels of perceived appropriateness and conformity with regard to the crying behavior. Further, following Warner and Shields (2007), we anticipated that after controlling for adherence to the masculine norm of emotional control, participants who read vignettes describing a less intense form of crying (tearing up vs. sobbing) would report higher levels of perceived appropriateness, typicality, and conformity with regard to the crying behavior.

Second, based on the foregoing theoretical model integrating social constructionist perspectives with the social norms model, we proposed a mediation model in which the precipitating situation and intensity of tears (contextual factors) influence participants' perceived appropriateness and typicality of the vignette crying behavior (perceptions of situational norms), which, in turn, influence participants' perceived conformity to the vignette crying behavior. Third, we examined predictors of football players' self-esteem. Previous studies have shown that men's emotional inexpressiveness was related to lower levels of well-being (e.g., Burns & Mahalik, 2008; Wong, Pituch, & Rochlen, 2006) and self-esteem (Schwartz, Waldo, & Daniel, 2005). Based on these findings, we predicted that football players who had a greater openness to emotional expression would report higher self-esteem; that is, lower levels of adherence to the masculine norm of emotional control as well as higher levels of perceived appropriateness, typicality, and conformity would be associated with higher levels of self-esteem. Guided by Wong and Rochlen's (2005) notion of conflicts associated with emotion-related values, we also expected that participants who perceived that situational norms discouraged the expression of tears, but who nevertheless believed they would likely cry would have low self-esteem. Specifically, combinations of low perceived appropriateness and high perceived conformity as well as low perceived typicality and high perceived conformity would be associated with low self-esteem.

Method

Participants and Procedures

This study was part of a larger project on college football players' experience with masculinity. This project consists of two relatively distinct research studies: the current study as well as an unpublished study examining football players' experience of gender role conflict across different domains of their lives. The second author contacted athletic administrators and coaches from two colleges who agreed to extend the voluntary participation opportunity to their players. One of the colleges plays football at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II level (hereafter known as "College A"), and the other plays football at the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) level (hereafter known as "College B"). Both levels are relatively comparable in competitive terms, based on the ability of institutions at both levels to provide a similar amount of athletic scholarships to student-athletes.

Survey packets were distributed to players from both colleges at team meetings outside practice time. Players took ~15 min to complete the surveys, and then they returned the completed surveys at these team meetings. There were 153 male football players who took part in this study. Incomplete data from 3 participants was omitted, resulting in a final sample of 150 participants (n for College A = 96; n for College B = 54). Participants' age ranged from 18 to 32 ($M = 19.67$; $SD = 1.75$) and included 44.7% freshman, 22.0% sophomore, 20.0% junior, and 13.3% senior student-athletes. Of these 147 players reported their racial/ethnic background (85.0% White, 10.2% African American/Black, 3.4% Multiracial, 1.4% Latino).

Participants were randomly assigned to four vignette conditions. The authors created the vignettes through consultation with college football coaches. In the first (lose/tearing up) condition, participants read the following vignette:

Jack is a senior college football player. His team has not won a conference championship in 5 years, and they are playing their rival team in a game that will decide who is the champion. Unfortunately, Jack's team loses to their rivals and the entire team is devastated. After the game, Jack is in the locker room with two of his best friends on the team. As he reflects on

the significance of the game, Jack feels sad and begins to tear up. With tears gathering in his eyes, Jack tells his teammates, "This game means a lot to me."

The second (lose/sobbing) vignette is identical in wording to the first except that instead of tearing up, Jack is sobbing. He is also described as having "tears flowing continuously down his cheeks." The third (win/tearing up) and fourth (win/sobbing) vignettes are identical to the first and second vignettes respectively except that instead of losing, Jack's team wins the game against their rival team and the entire team is overjoyed.

Measures

Evaluations of Emotional Behavior Questionnaire (EEBQ). This 15-item questionnaire was created by the authors to assess participants' evaluations of the crying behavior depicted in the four vignettes. Five items were constructed to assess each of the following: participants' perceived appropriateness, typicality, and conformity with regard to Jack's crying

behavior. Although each of the four vignettes was worded differently, the wording of the EEBQ was identical for all participants. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with promax rotation was used to examine the factor structure of the EEBQ by focusing on the scree plot and factor interpretability. We used the criterion of factor loadings $\geq [.35]$ for the inclusion of items and the exclusion of items that cross-load on two or more factors. One item loaded poorly on all three factors and was deleted. The data was reanalyzed using EFA and a three-factor solution was uncovered. All 14 items had factor loadings of at least .35 on only one factor (see Table 2 for the items for each factor). Explaining 55.97% of the variance, the first factor comprised of five items (two reverse worded) and was labeled "perceived conformity." This factor focused on perceived conformity to Jack's crying behavior. Comprising of five items (two reverse worded), the second factor accounted for 10.20% of the variance and was labeled "perceived typicality." The second factor focused on the perceived typicality of Jack's

Table 2

Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of the 14-Item Evaluations of Emotional Behavior Questionnaire

Item	Perceived conformity	Perceived typicality	Perceived appropriateness
Jack has a good reason to show emotion in this situation.			.48
Jack's display of emotion in this situation is common among football players.		.44	
I can easily think of other football players who would have displayed emotion the way Jack did in this situation.		.41	
Jack's expression of emotion was appropriate in this situation.			.35
Jack's show of emotion in this situation suggests that he is different from me. (R)	.72		
Jack's show of emotion in this situation suggests that he is different from most football players. (R)		.71	
If I were in Jack's situation, I am likely to express emotion the way he did.	.91		
In this situation, Jack's expression of emotion is typical of most football players.		.87	
Most football players would not have displayed emotion the way Jack did in this situation. (R)		.95	
I would not have shown my emotion the way Jack did in this situation. (R)	.84		
I can imagine myself expressing emotion the way Jack did in a similar situation.	.93		
I can identify with Jack because of his display of emotion in this situation.	.48		
Jack's display of emotion was wrong in this situation. (R)			.85
Jack's show of emotion in this situation was unhealthy. (R)			1.09

Note. (R) = item was reverse-scored.

crying behavior among football players. The third factor, labeled "perceived appropriateness," accounted for 6.86% of the variance and comprised of four items (two reverse worded). The third factor focused on the perceived appropriateness of Jack's crying behavior. All three factors were strongly related to one another (see Table 3). The coefficient alphas of the EEBQ's three subscales were as follows: perceived appropriateness: .81, perceived typicality: .96, and perceived conformity: .91.

Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-Emotional Control Subscale (CMNI-EC). The six-item CMNI-EC is one of nine subscales of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46 (CMNI-46; Parent & Moradi, 2009), the short form of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI; Mahalik et al., 2003). The CMNI-EC assesses men's tendency to control their emotion. A sample (reverse worded) item is, "I like to talk about my feelings." Respondents report the extent to which they agree with each item on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating greater levels of emotional control. Concurrent validity for the original version of the CMNI-EC was shown through a significant negative relationship with a measure of professional psychological help-seeking attitudes (Mahalik et al., 2003). In the present study, the coefficient alpha was .85.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) is a 10-item global measure of self-esteem. A sample item is, "I feel that I have a number of good qualities." Respondents indicate their level of agreement with items on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). High scores

indicate high levels of self-esteem. Evidence for concurrent validity has been demonstrated through a negative correlation with psychological distress (Liu & Iwanamoto, 2006). In the present study, the coefficient alpha was .85.

Intensity of tears and precipitating situation. Intensity of tears and the precipitating situation were measured dichotomously. Participants in the tearing up and sobbing conditions were assigned scores of 0 and 1, respectively, for intensity of tears. With regard to the precipitating situation, participants in the losing and winning conditions were assigned score of 0 and 1, respectively.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

As a manipulation check, participants were asked in the survey to imagine how intense Jack's tears were (options were in order of increasing intensity: *no actual tears*, *moist eyes*, *visible tearing*, and *sobbing*). A Spearman Rho correlation revealed a significant relationship between the vignette conditions (tearing up vs. sobbing) and participants' perceptions of the intensity of Jack's tears, $r_s = .21$, $p = .011$. Consistent with the wording of the vignettes, participants who read the tearing up vignettes tended to view Jack's tears as less intense than did participants who read the sobbing vignettes.

The means, *SDs*, and intercorrelations of the main measures are found in Table 3. CMNI-EC was not significantly related to perceived appropriateness, typicality, and conformity. CMNI-EC was negatively associated with RSES, whereas perceived appropriateness was positively related to RSES. Perceived typicality and per-

Table 3
Means, *SDs*, and Intercorrelations Among Measures

	Appropriate	Typicality	Conformity	CMNI-EC	RSES	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Appropriate	—	.63**	.58**	-.11	.26**	5.98 (.93)
Typicality		—	.72**	-.08	.08	5.26 (1.13)
Conformity			—	-.11	-.02	4.91 (1.44)
CMNI-EC				—	-.31**	2.60 (.50)
RSES					—	3.35 (.43)

Note. Appropriate = perceived appropriateness of the vignette crying behavior; Typicality = perceived typicality of the vignette crying behavior; Conformity = perceived conformity to the vignette crying behavior; CMNI-EC = Emotional Control Subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46; RSES = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

** $p < .01$.

ceived conformity were not significantly related to RSES.

Because data was collected from two colleges, we conducted a series of ANOVAs to assess whether participants from both colleges differed significantly on the main measures. Compared with College B participants, College A participants reported significantly higher levels of perceived appropriateness, $F(1, 148) = 12.70, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .08$ (College A $M = 6.17$; College B $M = 5.63$); perceived typicality, $F(1, 148) = 4.49, p = .036, \eta_p^2 = .03$ (College A $M = 5.40$; College B $M = 5.00$), and higher RSES scores, $F(1, 148) = 8.84, p = .003, \eta_p^2 = .06$ (College A $M = 3.43$; College B $M = 3.21$). College A also reported marginally significantly higher levels of perceived conformity, $F(1, 148) = 3.19, p = .076, \eta_p^2 = .02$ (College A $M = 5.07$; College B $M = 4.63$). Participants from College A and College B did not differ significantly on CMNI-EC scores, $p = .323$. Given these findings, college (College A vs. B) was included as a covariate in the subsequently main analyses.

Main Analyses

One-tailed tests were used for our main analyses because our hypotheses were directional in nature. Our first set of hypotheses examined predictors of participants' evaluations of Jack's crying behavior in the vignettes. A MANCOVA was used to examine differences in perceived appropriateness, typicality, and conformity among the four conditions (college and CMNI-EC were entered as covariates; see Table 4). There was an overall main effect for the conditions, Wilks' $\lambda = .87, F(9, 346) = 2.34, p = .014, \eta_p^2 = .05$. Participants in the lose/tearing up condition perceived Jack's crying behavior as more appropriate compared with those in the lose/sobbing

($p = .026$) and win/sobbing conditions ($p = .041$). Participants in the win/tearing up condition reported higher levels of perceived appropriateness than those in the lose/sobbing ($p = .004$) and win/sobbing conditions ($p = .006$). There were also several significant differences in perceived typicality. Participants in the win/sobbing condition perceived Jack's behavior as less typical of football players compared with those in the lose/tearing up ($p = .001$), lose/sobbing ($p = .017$), and win/tearing up conditions ($p = .004$). Participants in the win/sobbing condition reported lower levels of perceived conformity to Jack's behavior compared with those in the lose/tearing up ($p = .011$) and win/tearing up conditions ($p = .010$). All other comparisons were not significant. In sum, these findings provide partial support for our first set of hypotheses. In general, participants who read vignettes about Jack tearing up tended to report higher levels of perceived appropriateness, typicality, and conformity than those who read vignettes about Jack sobbing. In contrast, the effect of the precipitating situation (losing vs. winning a game) was only evident in perceived typicality; that is, sobbing as a result of losing a game was perceived to be more typical as compared to winning a game.

In our second set of hypotheses, we predicted that perceived appropriateness and typicality would mediate the relationships between the precipitating situation (losing vs. winning) and intensity of tears (tearing up vs. sobbing) on the one hand and perceived conformity on the other hand. Intensity of tears was related to perceived conformity, $r = -.21, p = .012$. However, there was no mediation effect between the precipitating situation and perceived conformity because both were not significantly related to each other ($r = -.06, p = .497$; Mathieu & Taylor, 2006). Hence, we focused only on in-

Table 4
Estimated Marginal Means and SDs for Perceived Appropriateness, Typicality, and Conformity Across the Four Vignette Conditions

Conditions	Perceived appropriateness M (SD)	Perceived typicality M (SD)	Perceived conformity M (SD)
Lose/tearing up ($n = 39$)	6.12 (.14)	5.54 (.17)	5.19 (.23)
Lose/sobbing ($n = 38$)	5.73 (.14)	5.28 (.18)	4.77 (.23)
Win/tearing up ($n = 37$)	6.29 (.14)	5.43 (.18)	5.22 (.23)
Win/sobbing ($n = 36$)	5.77 (.15)	4.74 (.18)	4.43 (.24)

vestigating mediators between intensity of tears and perceived conformity.

Although the Baron and Kenny (1986) and Sobel (1982) tests are commonly used for testing mediation, they have been criticized for being based on the assumption that the indirect effect conforms to a normal distribution as well as for low statistical power (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002). To test our hypothesized indirect effects, we used bootstrapping, a nonparametric procedure that does not assume the sampling distribution of the indirect effect is normal (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

Using an SPSS macro that can test for multiple mediation effects within the same model (Preacher & Hayes, 2008), 10,000 bootstrap samples were produced by randomly sampling with replacements from the original data, resulting in 10,000 estimates of the indirect path coefficients (covariates were college and CMNI-EC). The findings of this mediation analysis are depicted in Figure 1. Within the mediation model, the two covariates, college ($p = .784$) and CMNI-EC ($p = .466$), were both not significantly associated with perceived conformity. The mean estimate of the mediation effect from intensity of tears to perceived appropriateness to perceived conformity was $-.15$, $SE = .08$, bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals (CI) = $-.35$, $-.04$. The mean estimate of the mediation effect from intensity of tears to perceived typicality to perceived conformity was $-.35$, $SE = .15$, bias-corrected 95% CI = $-.66$, $-.08$. Both mediation effects were significant, given that their 95% CI did not include zero.

Following Frazier, Tix, and Barron's (2004) recommendation, we tested an alternative, the-

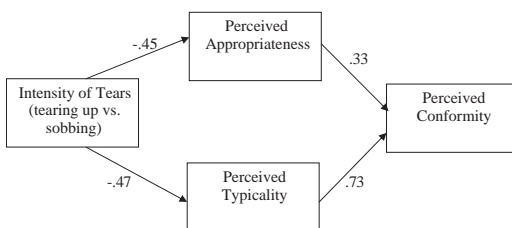


Figure 1. Mediation model depicting the relationships among intensity of tears, perceived appropriateness, perceived typicality, and perceived conformity. The Emotional Control Subscale of the CMNI-46 and college (College A vs. College B) were entered as covariates in the model. All paths were significant at $p < .01$.

oretically plausible mediation model in which perceived conformity and perceived typicality mediates the link between intensity of tears and perceived appropriateness. In other words, participants' perception that Jack's crying behavior was typical and that they would conform to Jack's crying behavior might lead them to conclude that Jack's behavior was appropriate. The mediation effect from intensity of tears to perceived conformity to perceived appropriateness was significant (mean estimate of effect = $-.10$, $SE = .06$, bias-corrected 95% CI = $-.25$, $-.02$), as was the mediation effect from intensity of tears to perceived typicality to perceived appropriateness (mean estimate of effect = $-.15$, $SE = .07$, bias-corrected 95% CI = $-.32$, $-.04$). Hence, we could not rule out the alternative mediation hypothesis. Rather, we concluded that our findings are consistent with our hypothesized model in which perceived appropriateness and perceived typicality mediate the association between intensity of tears and perceived conformity.

In our third set of hypotheses, we examined predictors of participants' RSES scores using a hierarchical multiple regression (see Table 5). The outcome variable was RSES. At Step 1, college, CMNI-EC, perceived appropriateness, perceived typicality, and perceived conformity were added to the regression model. The overall model was significant, $R^2 = .22$, $F(5, 144) = 7.94$, $p < .001$. In support of our hypotheses, CMNI-EC was negatively related to RSES, and perceived appropriateness was positively related to RSES. However, contrary to hypothesis, perceived conformity was negatively related to RSES. Perceived typicality was not significantly related to RSES.

At Step 2, the addition of perceived conformity \times appropriateness and perceived conformity \times typicality interaction terms contributed significantly to the overall model, $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $\Delta F(2, 142) = 2.39$, $p = .048$. The perceived conformity \times appropriateness interaction term, but not the perceived conformity \times typicality interaction term, was significant. We used an SPSS macro (Hayes & Matthes, 2009) to probe the significant perceived conformity \times appropriateness interaction. At 1 SD below the mean of perceived appropriateness, a higher level of perceived conformity was related to a lower level of RSES, $B = -.22$, $SE = .07$, $p = .001$. In contrast, at 1 SD above the mean of perceived appropriateness, perceived conformity was not

Table 5
Multiple Regression Model Predicting Self-Esteem

Step	Measure	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Step 1	College	-.14	.07	-.16*
	CMNI-EC	-.12	.03	-.29**
	Perceived appropriateness	.14	.04	.33**
	Perceived typicality	.01	.05	.01
	Perceived conformity	-.12	.05	-.28**+
Step 2	College	-.12	.07	-.14*
	CMNI-EC	-.13	.03	-.30**
	Perceived appropriateness	.17	.05	.39**
	Perceived typicality	.02	.05	.05
	Perceived conformity	-.15	.05	-.34**+
	Perceived conformity \times perceived typicality	.09	.05	.18*
	Perceived conformity \times perceived appropriateness	-.01	.04	-.01

Note. College = College A versus College B; CMNI-EC = Emotional Control Subscale of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$; +contrary to hypothesis.

related to RSES, $B = -.06$, $SE = .05$, $p = .240$. These findings suggest that a combination of low perceived appropriateness and high perceived conformity was associated with low self-esteem.

Discussion

Guided by social constructionist and social norms perspectives on masculinity (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Wong & Rochlen, 2008), our main goal for this study was to investigate male college football players' evaluations of crying behavior. Participants responded to vignettes involving Jack, a football player who cries after a football game. Consistent with our first set of hypotheses, participants in the tearing up (vs. sobbing) conditions tended to view Jack's crying behavior as relatively more appropriate and typical of football players and were more likely to conform to Jack's crying behavior. These findings dovetail with the results of Warner and Shields (2007) and support Shields' (2002) notion of manly emotion as a relatively acceptable emotional style in U.S. society.

In contrast, support for the influence of the precipitation situation (losing vs. winning a game) was somewhat mixed. Sobbing as a result of losing a game was perceived to be more typical as compared to winning a game. However, the precipitating situation did not appear to have an influence on perceived appropriateness and conformity. In addition, participants' adherence to the masculine norm of emotional

control was not significantly related to perceived appropriateness, typicality, and conformity with regard to Jack's crying behavior.

Second, our mediation hypotheses also received partial support. Our mediation hypothesis involving the precipitation situation was not supported. However, our findings were consistent with a mediation model in which exposure to the vignette conditions involving a less intense form of tears (tearing up vs. sobbing) was associated with higher levels of perceived appropriateness and typicality of Jack's crying behavior, which were in turn, associated with higher levels of perceived conformity to Jack's crying behavior. These findings attest to the potential mediating role of situational norms (i.e., perceived appropriateness and typicality) in linking contextual influences with men's perceived emotional behavior.

Our third set of hypotheses involved predictors of participants' self-esteem. Consistent with our hypotheses and with previous research (e.g., Burns & Mahalik, 2008), our multiple regression model revealed that participants with lower levels of adherence to the masculine norm of emotional control and who perceived Jack's crying behavior as appropriate reported higher levels of self-esteem. Surprisingly, participants who perceived they would conform to Jack's emotional behavior if they were in his situation reported lower levels of self-esteem. The contrasting influences of perceived appropriateness and perceived conformity on participants' self-

esteem is intriguing. It appears that an acceptance of crying behavior had a positive association with self-esteem only if it involved an approval of others' crying behavior rather than one's personal crying behavior. Perhaps football players perceived that they risked ridicule from others for appearing weak if they cried after a football game. Nonetheless, the significant negative association between perceived conformity and self-esteem in our multiple regression analyses should be interrupted cautiously, given that this association was not significant at the bivariate level. Our interaction hypothesis for perceived appropriateness and conformity, but not for perceived typicality and conformity, was supported. Congruent with Wong and Rochlen's (2005) notion of conflict associated with emotion-related values, a combination of low perceived appropriateness and high perceived conformity to Jack's crying behavior was associated with lower levels of self-esteem.

Several strengths in this study are noteworthy. First, in a 10-year review of masculinity research, Whorley and Addis (2006) noted that masculinity research was dominated by correlational research designs and that experimental research was rarely utilized. Our study addresses this methodological gap by using an experimental design to test our first set of hypotheses. By randomly assigning participants to four different vignette conditions, we were able to draw causal inferences about how participants in these conditions differed in perceived appropriateness, typicality, and conformity.

Second, our assessment of situational norms and descriptive norms is a potentially unique contribution to the literature on masculine norms. Our findings suggest that it is critical to examine different types of norms because they may be associated with different constructs. For example, the precipitating situation (losing vs. winning a game) influenced perceptions of situational descriptive norms (perceived typicality of Jack's crying behavior), but not situational personal norms (perceived appropriateness of Jack's crying behavior). In contrast, situational personal norms (perceived appropriateness), but not situational descriptive norms (perceived typicality), were associated with participants' self-esteem. Thus far, research on masculine norms has focused largely on transsituational

personal masculine norms, rather than on situational norms and external norms (i.e., norms that are explicitly based on perceptions of others' attitudes or behavior). We encourage researchers to broaden the scope of future masculinity research to examine the relative influences of a variety of norms (i.e., personal vs. external, transsituational vs. situational) on men's attitudes and behaviors.

Third, our findings on the effects of the precipitating situation and intensity of tears on football players' evaluations of crying behavior provide support for a social constructionist viewpoint that emphasizes contextual influences on masculinity (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). In contrast, adherence to the masculine norm of emotional control was not significantly associated with perceived appropriateness, typicality, and conformity with regard to Jack's crying behavior. Perhaps these findings suggest that transsituational masculine norms (e.g., adherence to masculine norms as measured by the CMNI and CMNI-46) may be poor predictors of men's attitudes and behavior in *specific situations*, but better predictors of *transsituational* measures of men's attitudes, behavior, and well-being (e.g., Burns & Mahalik, 2008).

Social constructionist perspectives present several possible avenues for future research on men's emotional behavior. For instance, to examine how men would respond emotionally to a particular situation, researchers should not simply rely on transsituational measures of masculinity (e.g., the CMNI) as predictors, but should also investigate the influence of contextual factors (e.g., type of situation and who else is present in the situation). Further, to examine men's active construction of masculinity from a social constructionist viewpoint (Wong & Rochlen, 2008), researchers can investigate the extent to which men are willing to label various types of emotional behavior (tearing up vs. sobbing) as "masculine."

Limitations

Despite these strengths, our findings should be interpreted with caution in light of several limitations. Our reliance on hypothetical scenarios precludes the generalizability of our findings to football players' actual crying behavior. In addition, our vignettes described Jack as crying

in the presence of two friends; we did not examine if perceptions of Jack's behavior would differ depending on whether Jack cried alone or in the presence of others. Another limitation of our study was that we only examined one type of external norms, that is, perceived descriptive norms (operationalized as "perceived typicality"). Future research should address the influence of perceived injunctive and cohesive norms on men's emotional behavior.

Further, the high correlations among the three EEBQ subscales raise questions about whether these subscales simply measure the same variable. Nevertheless, our findings provide preliminary support for the notion that the EEBQ subscales measure distinct variables because these subscales were significantly associated with different variables. For example, exposure to the losing (vs. winning) vignettes resulted in higher perceived typicality, but not higher perceived appropriateness and conformity. Also, perceived appropriateness and perceived conformity were related to self-esteem in opposite directions in our multiple regression analyses, whereas perceived typicality was not related to self-esteem.

A final limitation relates to the composition of our sample. The proportion of non-White participants was too small for us to conduct any meaningful analysis on racial/ethnic differences in the evaluations of crying behavior. In addition, although the teams from College A and College B are relatively comparable in competitive terms, College A participants reported higher levels of perceived appropriateness, typicality, and conformity than College B participants. We are not aware of any characteristics in the two football teams and colleges that might account for these differences. Nonetheless, these differences point to the diversity in emotion norms that may exist among football teams. Moreover, we only recruited participants from two colleges. Our findings might have been different if we had included players at the NCAA Division I FBS (Football Bowl Series) level, the highest level of college football competition. Because of the increased amount of media attention, financial resources, and public scrutiny associated with Division I FBS, football players at this level of competition might experience greater pressure to conform to masculine norms. Our hope is that future studies

will study football players from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds and teams.

Practical Implications

The results of this study have the potential to inform the work of mental health professionals who come into contact with male student-athletes. An understanding of the contextual nature of masculinity can lend greater insight into the range of acceptable emotional expression among men in this context. Past researchers (e.g., Messner, 2002; Rubin, 1983) have purported that sport allows men to build relationships without having to risk emotional involvement in the process. However, our findings indicate that the perceived appropriateness, typicality, and conformity with regard to crying behavior varied depending on several contextual factors. Thus, by identifying parameters of emotional acceptability in the context of sport (e.g., tearing up is a more acceptable form of emotional behavior than sobbing), clinicians can help male student-athletes extrapolate their comfort with emotional expression to other social situations off the field.

Additionally, our findings may have practical implications for coaches and athletic administrators who work most directly with male student-athletes. Sport has the potential to be an influential institution of masculinity socialization for young men (Messner, 2002), and coaches in particular wield great influence over the psychosocial development of their players (Steinfeldt et al., in press). Hence, coaches can help male student-athletes develop healthy expressions of masculinity. For example, Rex Ryan, the head coach of the New York Jets, was recently at the center of media attention for crying while he was addressing his football team. Coach Ryan directly confronted criticisms of his emotional expression by saying, "I'm man enough to be me;" importantly, Ryan's players conveyed support for his emotional display (para 7, Associated Press, 2009b). Guided by a social norms perspective (Cialdini & Trost, 1998), we suggest that coaches can help alter male student-athletes' perceptions of emotion norms by modeling the appropriate expression of emotion and by creating a training climate that accommodates a range of emotional expression.

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