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Masculinity Contest Culture Reduces Organizational Citizenship Behaviors Through Decreased Organizational Identification

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Masculinity contest culture (MCC) encourages fierce competition and race for status at all costs. Across three experiments ($N_{\text{total}} = 554$), we investigated how MCC affects discretionary performance at work (i.e., organizational citizenship behaviors; OCBs). Compared to an alternative culture (i.e., feminine nurturing culture; FNC), participants in the MCC condition reported lower levels of OCBs toward the organization and its members. Further results showed that MCC diminished individuals' intentions to engage in discretionary performance through reduced organizational identification. We did not find a moderating effect of gender, suggesting that MCC thwarts discretionary performance and organizational identification for both women and men.

Public Significance Statement

We found that compared to a more collaborative and balanced alternative, masculinity contest culture results in less beneficial outcomes for organizations in a form of reduced levels of organizational citizenship behaviors.

Keywords: masculinity contest culture, organizational identification, organizational citizenship behavior

Many organizations encourage employees to work long hours, perform at their highest potential, compete for bonuses, or fight to secure their positions within the company (e.g., Giumetti et al., 2015). With the aim of improving performance and profits, such workplaces may jeopardize positive work cultures. Work becomes a competition where traditional masculine values, such as competitiveness and dominance, are promoted and propagated. To address this type of workplaces, Berdahl, Cooper, et al. (2018) coined the masculinity contest culture (MCC) construct referring to a set of organizational norms, practices, and values that reward an endless contest for power, strength, and status.

The cost of doing business this way is high. MCC is associated with increased levels of toxic leadership behaviors, bullying, harassment, burnout, turnover intentions, and reduced levels of psychological safety, organizational dedication, and job satisfaction (Glick et al., 2018; Matos et al., 2018; Rawski & Workman-Stark, 2018). Although masculinity norms usually favor men, only a small group of men benefit from such environments (Berdahl, Cooper, et al., 2018). In fact, research demonstrates that negative consequences of

masculinity workplace cultures are pertinent to both men and women (e.g., Alonso, 2018; Glick et al., 2018). Ironically, the culture aimed at increasing performance by focusing on competition does not yield the desired effect. MCC not only damages employees' well-being, but also hinders their performance (Glick et al., 2018).

Despite existing research on the attitudinal and behavioral consequences of MCC (e.g., Alonso, 2018; Glick et al., 2018; Kuchynka et al., 2018), researchers paid little attention to the mechanism that explains these relationships. Furthermore, while current research on MCC norms mostly focused on task performance finding a negative relationship with work performance and a positive relationship with toxic leadership (Glick et al., 2018), there is almost no empirical evidence whether and how it affects discretionary performance (e.g., prosocial behaviors in a form of organizational citizenship behavior [OCB], Organ, 1988). Drawing on the social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), we investigate how MCC influences individuals' identification with the organization, which in turn may have implications for discretionary performance toward the organization and its members.

Organizational identification is rooted in SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). According to SIT, individuals classify themselves based on membership to a particular social group, such as organizational membership (see Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019). Identification—"the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 21)—reflects individuals' readiness to define themselves as a member of a group. Individuals identify themselves with others based on similarity of characteristics they commonly possess (Oikkonen & Lipponen, 2006), and they generally strive for a positive social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Identifying with a particular group implies that a person accepts defining norms of that group (Ellemers et al., 2004).

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The datasets for all three studies are openly available at Koc (2021) through <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/QD9T4>.

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Work represents a substantial part of people's lives, and organizations become an important source of social identity for its members (Elsbach, 1999). Positive organizational characteristics, such as organizational support, trust, and ethical climate are important predictors of organizational identification (DeConinck, 2011; Edwards & Peccei, 2010). MCC represents the opposite of these positive organizational features. It promotes toxic behaviors such as dominating others or despising those who are physically or mentally weak (Berdahl, Cooper, et al., 2018). By definition, MCC promotes individual gains over collective sense of self (Glick et al., 2018). Showing emotions and disclosing vulnerability diverge from masculine norms. This culture comprises four dimensions: show no weakness (e.g., making efforts to look competent), strength and stamina (e.g., emphasizing physical strength and status), put work first (e.g., prioritizing work over other domains of life), and dog-eat-dog (e.g., fiercely competing with co-workers; Glick et al., 2018). Given the communicative role of culture (Scherer, 1997), MCC signals that competition is harsh, collegiality is absent, and unethical way of doing business is acceptable. We posit that such culture affects the degree to which individuals identify themselves with the organization. Consistent with the argument that individuals are motivated to seek a positive social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), we predict that MCC decreases organizational identification, as it does not align with the concept of a positive social identity.

Social identification serves as a motivational source to engage in behaviors that are beneficial to the group members (Ellemers et al., 1999; Penner et al., 2005). Identification reflects individuals' commitment to the group (Doosje et al., 2002), and encourages prosocial behaviors (e.g., Levine et al., 2005; Simon et al., 2000). In an organizational context, the construct of OCB—discretionary behaviors that are not formally rewarded but that are crucial for organizational functioning (van Dick et al., 2006)—captures prosocial behaviors. Social identity, in general, and organizational identification (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004), in particular, relate to increased levels of discretionary behaviors (Riketta, 2005). A driving force for these discretionary behaviors is employees' desire to "help the organization" they identify with (Rioux & Penner, 2001; p. 1312). Hence, when people identify with their organization, they are more likely to engage in discretionary behaviors that benefit the organization (organizational citizenship behaviors-organizational [OCB-O]) and its members (organizational citizenship behaviors-individual [OCB-I]; Lee & Allen, 2002).

The Present Research

Although previous studies (e.g., Glick et al., 2018; Kuchynka et al., 2018; Matos et al., 2018; Rawski & Workman-Stark, 2018) are useful in identifying the nomological network of MCC, they do not allow conclusions about causality due to methodological limitations (i.e., cross-sectional surveys). Moreover, the mechanism that explains detrimental effects of MCC is unclear. Recent research suggests that MCC is related to pluralistic ignorance, and although employees often believe that their coworkers endorse MCC norms, they privately dislike and reject these norms (Munsch et al., 2018). Accordingly, drawing on SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), we propose that MCC affects desirable work-related outcomes by lowering levels of identification with the organization. In the current set of studies, we experimentally manipulated the organizational culture. We also examined the mediating role of organizational identity on

the relationship between organizational culture and OCB-O and OCB-I intentions.

Study 1

In Study 1, we examined the effects of MCC on organizational identification and OCB. We compared MCC to an alternative culture: feminine nurturing culture (FNC). FNC represented a workplace with the opposite qualities of MCC, such as valuing work-life balance, fostering collaboration, showing vulnerabilities, and admitting weaknesses.

Method

Participants

Because this is the first study to experimentally manipulate MCC, we did not have any previous effect size for power calculations. However, based on the correlation ($r = -.29$) between MCC and organizational dedication (as a proxy for organizational identification) from the original scale paper (Glick et al., 2018), we estimated that we needed at least 148 participants for this study (power = .95, $\alpha = .05$; Cohen's $d = 0.6$ converted from the correlation value of $-.29$; G*Power; Faul et al., 2009). The sample comprised of 191 first-year Psychology students from University of Groningen, the Netherlands. All studies received ethics approval from the Ethics Committee of Psychology. Due to a technical error in programming, we were unable to collect demographic information. Typically, an English-speaking sample from that student pool consists of 70% females, has a mean age of 20, and around 50% are German nationals.

Procedure and Design

We created two vignettes to manipulate organizational culture. In the MCC condition, we told participants that their work environment was tough and competitive. We also told them that they had to dominate others to be successful in their job and there was no room for errors. In the FNC condition, we told participants that their work environment was relaxed, friendly, and not competitive, they had to get well with others to be successful in their job, and making errors could be tolerated. Full details of the manipulation are available in Appendix. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of two conditions: MCC ($n = 96$) or FNC ($n = 95$).

Measures

Organizational Identification. We used the Single Item Identification Scale (Postmes et al., 2013) to measure the strength of identification with the organization described in the vignette: "I identify with this organization." Participants responded using a 7-point scale (1 = *completely disagree*, 7 = *completely agree*).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior. We used Lee and Allen's (2002) scale to measure OCB. The scale consists of two dimensions: discretionary behaviors directed at the organization (OCB-O; eight items) and discretionary behaviors directed at other individuals in the organization (OCB-I; eight items). Participants responded on a 7-point scale (1 = *never*, 7 = *always*) how much they would engage in certain behaviors. Sample items include: "In this organization, I would help

others who have been absent” (OCB-I) and “I would defend this organization when other employees criticize it” (OCB-O).

Manipulation Check. We checked the validity of our manipulation by measuring MCC. We used the short eight-item MCC scale asking participants to what extent the items represented the described work culture (Glick et al., 2018). A sample item: “In this organization, admitting you don’t know the answer looks weak.” Participants responded using a 5-point scale (1 = *completely disagree*, 5 = *completely agree*).

Results and Discussion

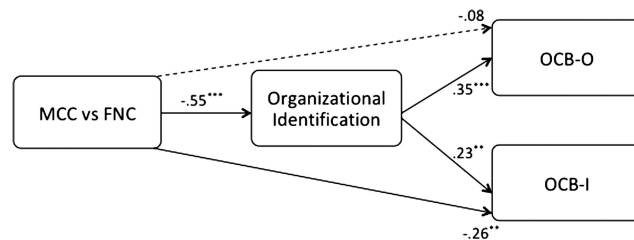
Reliabilities and correlations are reported in Table 1.

Homogeneity of variance assumption was violated for MCC scale: $F(1, 189) = 4.49, p = .035$. Therefore, we used Welch’s t -test to examine group differences: $t(182) = 13.64, p < .001$, Cohen’s $d = 1.97$. Participants in the MCC condition had a stronger endorsement of MCC values ($M = 3.66, SD = .89$) compared to those in the FNC condition ($M = 2.06, SD = .72$), suggesting that the manipulation was successful.

To test the effect of culture, we ran a t -test for organizational identification, and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) for OCB-I and OCB-O. Culture had a significant effect on organizational identification: $t(189) = 9.06, p < .001$, Cohen’s $d = 1.31$. Participants in the MCC condition had weaker identification ($M = 2.78, SD = 1.62$) than those in the FNC condition ($M = 4.83, SD = 1.50$). MANOVA results showed that culture had a significant effect on OCB: $F(2, 188) = 17.6, p < .001$, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.84, \eta_p^2 = .16$, and both univariate effects were significant: $F(1, 189) = 33.4, \eta_p^2 = .15, p < .001$ for OCB-I, and $F(1, 189) = 14.7, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$ for OCB-O. Participants in the MCC condition had lower OCB-I ($M = 3.54, SD = 1.20$) and OCB-O ($M = 3.76, SD = 1.32$) compared to those in the FNC condition for OCB-I ($M = 4.52, SD = 1.12$) and OCB-O ($M = 4.42, SD = 1.05$).

We ran a mediation analysis to test the effect of culture (MCC = 1, FNC = 0) on OCB-I and OCB-O via organizational identification (see Figure 1). We conducted the analysis using Mplus 8.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017) and maximum likelihood estimation with observed variables. MCC condition had negative direct effects on identification ($\beta = -.55, p < .001$) and OCB-I ($\beta = -.26, p = .001$), but no significant direct effect on OCB-O ($\beta = .08, p = .346$). Identification was related to higher OCB-I ($\beta = .23, p = .003$) and OCB-O ($\beta = .35, p < .001$). OCB-I and OCB-O correlated with each other, $r = .41, p < .001$. We examined bias-corrected confidence intervals bootstrapped with 5,000 resamples. Both indirect effects were

Figure 1
The Effect of Culture on Organizational Identification and OCB (Study 1)



significant: OCB-I ($\beta = -.13, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.23, -.04]$), and OCB-O ($\beta = -.19, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.24, -.09]$).

Overall, the results showed that MCC condition resulted in lower levels of organizational identification, OCB-I, and OCB-O as compared to an alternative culture, and organizational identification mediated the effect of culture on OCB-I and OCB-O.

Study 2

While Study 1 was an important step in testing the effects of MCC, it had some limitations: (a) absence of a neutral condition (Myers & Hansen, 2011), (b) student sample, and (c) use of a single-item measure of identification (Diamantopoulos et al., 2012). Hence, we sought to address these limitations in Study 2. Berdahl, Cooper, et al. (2018) theorized MCC as a gendered construct; thus, we also tested whether the outcomes of MCC were different across men and women.

Method

Participants

Based on the smallest effect size from Study 1 ($\eta_p^2 = .07$ for OCB-O), we estimated that we needed at least 158 participants for subsequent studies (power = .80, $\alpha = .05$; G*Power; Faul et al., 2009). The sample initially comprised 239 Amazon Mechanical Turk’s panel members. Participants were paid USD\$1. We excluded 40 participants who failed both attention checks, and one participant who was not from the U.S. For the remaining 198 participants, 120 were males, 68% Caucasian American, 83% in full-time employment, and the age range was 18–69 years ($M = 34.40, SD = 11.67$).

Procedure and Design

We used the two vignettes from Study 1 for MCC and FNC manipulation. We developed a third vignette to manipulate a neutral organizational culture (i.e., neutral condition). We aimed to balance MCC and FNC conditions in the neutral condition. The neutral condition depicted a work environment that was neither intense and tough nor relaxed and friendly. In this culture, there was no need to dominate others; however, they did not have to get on well with others either (see Appendix). Each participant randomly received one of three conditions: MCC ($n = 64$), FNC ($n = 69$), or neutral ($n = 66$).

Table 1
Correlation Coefficients and Reliabilities: Study 1

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|-------|
| 1. Masculinity contest culture | (.90) | | | |
| 2. Organizational identification | -.55*** | — | | |
| 3. OCB-I | -.42*** | .37*** | (.93) | |
| 4. OCB-O | -.30*** | .39*** | .50*** | (.92) |

$N = 191$. OCB-I = organizational citizenship behavior-individual; OCB-O = organizational citizenship behavior-organization. Cronbach’s alphas appear in parentheses on the diagonal.
*** $p < .001$.

Measures

We used the same scales for MCC (i.e., manipulation check) and OCB as in Study 1.

Organizational Identification. We used three items from the four-item identification scale (Doosje et al., 1995) to measure the strength of identification. A sample item: “I see myself as a member of this organization.” Participants responded using a 7-point scale (1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree).

Results and Discussion

Reliabilities and correlations are reported in Table 2.

Homogeneity of variance assumption for MCC scale was violated: $F(2, 195) = 23.10, p < .001$. Therefore, we used Welsch’s robust estimates to test group differences: $F(2, 127) = 37.5, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .26$. Games-Howell post hoc tests showed that participants in the MCC condition reported the highest MCC scores ($M = 4.13, SD = .63$), followed by those in the neutral condition ($M = 3.43, SD = .79$) and in the FNC condition ($M = 2.86, SD = 1.12$). All groups were significantly different from one another providing evidence of successful manipulation.

To test the effect of culture on the outcomes and the moderating role of gender, we ran a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for organizational identification, and a two-way MANOVA for OCB-I and OCB-O. ANOVA results showed that there was a significant main effect of culture, $F(2, 192) = 16.34, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .15$, but neither the main effect of gender was significant, $F(1, 192) = .324, p = .57, \eta_p^2 = .002$, nor was the interaction effect, $F(2, 192) = .145, p = .865, \eta_p^2 = .002$. Participants in the MCC condition had the weakest organizational identification ($M = 3.85, SD = 2.16$) compared to those in neutral ($M = 4.33, SD = 1.77$) and FNC ($M = 5.52, SD = .95$) conditions. Based on Bonferroni post hoc comparisons, MCC was significantly different from FNC ($M_{diff} = -1.67, SE = .30, p < .001$), but not from neutral condition ($M_{diff} = -0.48, SE = .30, p = .329$). FNC condition was significantly different from neutral condition ($M_{diff} = 1.18, SE = .30, p < .001$).

MANOVA results showed that there was a significant multivariate main effect of condition: $F(4, 382) = 8.50, p < .001$, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.84, \eta_p^2 = .08$. Neither the main effect of gender $F(2, 191) = .27, p = .762$, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.99, \eta_p^2 = .003$, nor the interaction effect was significant, $F(4, 382) = .42, p = .795$, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.99, \eta_p^2 = .004$. Both univariate effects were significant for the main effect of condition: $F(2, 192) = 11.17, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .10$ for OCB-I, and $F(2, 192) = 9.02, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .09$ for OCB-O. Participants in the MCC condition ($M = 3.69, SD = 1.95$) had lower OCB-I compared to those in neutral

($M = 3.92, SD = 1.74$) and FNC ($M = 4.92, SD = 1.03$) conditions. Based on Bonferroni post hoc comparisons, MCC was significantly different from FNC ($M_{diff} = -1.22, SE = .28, p < .001$), but not from neutral condition ($M_{diff} = -.23, SE = .28, p = 1.00$). FNC condition was significantly different from neutral condition ($M_{diff} = 0.99, SE = .27, p = .001$).

Participants in the neutral condition had the lowest OCB-O ($M = 3.82, SD = 1.69$), followed by those in MCC ($M = 4.24, SD = 1.36$) and FNC ($M = 4.88, SD = 1.14$) conditions. Based on Bonferroni post hoc comparisons, MCC was significantly different from FNC ($M_{diff} = -.64, SE = .25, p = .032$), but not from neutral condition ($M_{diff} = -.42, SE = .25, p = .28$). FNC condition was significantly different from neutral condition ($M_{diff} = 1.06, SE = .24, p < .001$).

To test the mediation model, we followed the same analytical procedure as in Study 1 (see Figure 2). We used MCC condition as the reference category and created two contrasts: MCC versus FNC without the neutral (i.e., MCC–FNC), and MCC versus neutral without the FNC (MCC–Neutral). MCC–FNC contrast had a negative direct effect on organizational identification ($\beta = -.43, p < .001$), but not on OCB-I ($\beta = -.04, p = .461$) or OCB-O ($\beta = .00, p = .906$). Identification related to higher OCB-I ($\beta = .76, p < .001$) and OCB-O ($\beta = .72, p < .001$). OCB-I and OCB-O correlated with each other, $r = .57, p < .001$. MCC–Neutral contrast did not significantly predict any variables except for OCB-O ($\beta = .20, p < .001$). Indirect effects from MCC–FNC contrast were significant: OCB-I ($\beta = -.33, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.42, -.23]$) and OCB-O ($\beta = -.31, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.39, -.22]$). Neither indirect effect from MCC–Neutral contrast was significant.

Despite the gendered nature of MCC, Study 2 results showed that the effect of MCC on organizational outcomes did not differ between men and women. This is consistent with Berdahl, Cooper, et al. (2018) findings, suggesting that MCC thwarts desirable work outcomes for both men and women. It is strength of our experimental design to show more definitively that neither men nor women identify with MCC cultures, even though they are gendered in masculine ways that men may like more than women. This helps overcome potential endogeneity issues in previous experimental studies, according to which both male and female employees, who end up working in MCC organizations, may have other commonalities that cause them to have similar responses to these cultures.

Overall, Study 2 results replicated findings from Study 1. We found that compared to an alternative culture (i.e., FNC), MCC resulted in lower levels of organizational identity and decreased discretionary performance (i.e., OCB-O, OCB-I). Mediation analyses demonstrated significant negative indirect effects of MCC and FNC contrast on OCB-O and OCB-I via decreased organizational identity, whereby direct effects were no longer significant.

Although the MCC scores between MCC and neutral conditions were significantly different from each other, we did not find significant differences with respect to identification and the two types of OCB between these two conditions. A possible explanation might be that the neutral condition presented in Study 2 portrayed a workplace that was neither competitive and intense nor collaborative and relaxed. The neutral culture scenario explained what this workplace was lacking instead of describing its unique features. Moreover, the language used in the vignette might have been perceived as negative signaling a negligent culture instead of a neutral culture.

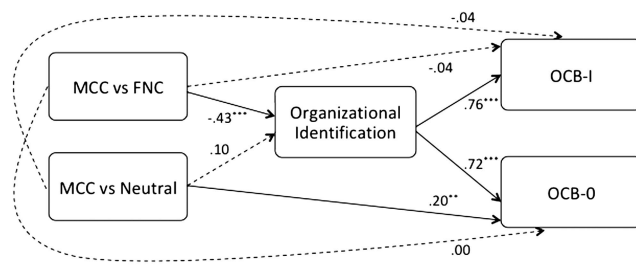
Table 2
Correlation Coefficients and Reliabilities: Study 2

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------------------------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| 1. Masculinity contest culture | (.91) | | | |
| 2. Organizational identification | -.12 | (.94) | | |
| 3. OCB-I | -.03 | .77*** | (.97) | |
| 4. OCB-O | .14 | .70*** | .79*** | (.95) |

N = 198. OCB-I = organizational citizenship behavior-individual; OCB-O = organizational citizenship behavior-organization. Cronbach’s alphas appear in parentheses on the diagonal.
*** $p < .001$.

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Figure 2
The Effect of Culture on Organizational Identification and OCB (Study 2)



Study 3

In order to truly capture a neutral culture, we modified the neutral condition by presenting a vignette that only described the physical aspect of the workplace.

Method

Participants

The sample initially comprised 188 U.S. Mechanical Turk participants who were paid USD\$1. We excluded 23 participants who failed the attention check. For the remaining 165 participants, 104 were females (and 58 males), 62% Caucasian American, 86% in full-time employment, and the age range was 22–73 years ($M = 34.10$, $SD = 10.40$).

Procedure and Design

We used vignettes from previous studies for MCC and FNC conditions. We developed a new vignette to manipulate a neutral organizational culture. To ensure that the culture is truly neutral, we included a description about the physical work environment (see Appendix). Each participant randomly received one of three conditions: MCC ($n = 57$), FNC ($n = 54$), or neutral ($n = 54$).

Measures

We used the same scales for MCC (i.e., manipulation check), identification, and OCB as in Study 2.

Results and Discussion

Reliabilities and correlations are reported in Table 3.

Table 3
Correlation Coefficients and Reliabilities: Study 3

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|-------|
| 1. Masculinity contest culture | (.91) | | | |
| 2. Organizational identification | -.22*** | (.94) | | |
| 3. OCB-I | -.20*** | .57*** | (.95) | |
| 4. OCB-O | -.09 | .58*** | .75*** | (.94) |

$N = 165$. OCB-I = organizational citizenship behavior-individual; OCB-O = organizational citizenship behavior-organization. Cronbach's alphas appear in parentheses on the diagonal.

*** $p < .001$.

Homogeneity of variance assumptions for MCC scale was violated: $F(2, 162) = 20.40$, $p < .001$. Welsch's robust estimates showed significant group differences: $F(2, 104) = 17.27$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .20$. Participants in the MCC condition had the highest MCC score ($M = 3.88$, $SD = .85$), followed by those in neutral ($M = 3.33$, $SD = .73$) and in FNC ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 1.24$) conditions. Based on Games–Howell post hoc comparisons, all groups were significantly different from one another providing evidence of successful manipulation.

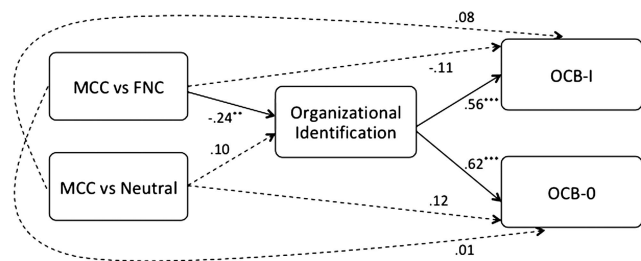
Homogeneity of variance was violated for the identification measure, $F(2, 162) = 12.78$, $p < .001$. Therefore, we used Welsch's robust estimates to test group differences: $F(2, 105) = 6.28$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$. Participants in the MCC condition had the lowest level of identification ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 1.88$) followed by those in neutral ($M = 5.20$, $SD = 1.10$) and in FNC ($M = 5.46$, $SD = 1.36$) conditions. Games–Howell post hoc tests showed that MCC was significantly different from both FNC ($M_{diff} = -1.09$, $SE = .31$, $p = .002$) and neutral ($M_{diff} = -.84$, $SE = .29$, $p = .014$) conditions. Neutral and FNC conditions were not significantly different from each other ($M_{diff} = -.25$, $SE = .24$, $p = .535$).

MANOVA results on OCB showed that there was a significant multivariate main effect of culture: $F(4, 318) = 2.93$, $p = .021$, Wilk's $\lambda = 0.93$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. The univariate effect was significant for OCB-I [$F(2, 160) = 5.02$, $p = .008$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$], but not for OCB-O [$F(2, 160) = 1.47$, $p = .232$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$]. Participants in the MCC condition ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.65$) had lower OCB-I compared to those in neutral ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 0.97$) and FNC ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.29$) conditions. Based on Bonferroni post hoc comparisons, MCC was significantly different from FNC ($M_{diff} = -0.81$, $SE = .26$, $p = .006$) but not from neutral condition ($M_{diff} = -0.32$, $SE = .26$, $p = .640$). FNC condition was not significantly different from neutral condition ($M_{diff} = 0.49$, $SE = .26$, $p = .190$). In terms of OCB-O scores, participants in the MCC condition had the lowest scores ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 1.58$), followed by those in neutral ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 1.15$) and FNC ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 1.35$) conditions. Based on Bonferroni post hoc comparisons, MCC was not significantly different from FNC ($M_{diff} = -0.41$, $SE = .256$, $p = .356$) nor from neutral condition ($M_{diff} = .04$, $SE = .26$, $p = 1.00$). FNC condition was not significantly different from neutral condition ($M_{diff} = 0.38$, $SE = .27$, $p = .488$).

To test the mediation model, we followed the same analytical procedure as in Study 2 (see Figure 3). MCC–FNC contrast had a negative direct effect on organizational identification ($\beta = -.24$, $p = .005$), but not on OCB-I ($\beta = -.11$, $p = .162$) or on OCB-O ($\beta = .01$, $p = .873$). Identification related to higher OCB-I ($\beta = .56$, $p < .001$) and higher OCB-O ($\beta = .62$, $p < .001$). OCB-I and OCB-O correlated with each other, $r = .64$, $p < .001$. MCC–Neutral contrast did not significantly predict any variables. Indirect effects from MCC–FNC contrast were significant: OCB-I ($\beta = -.13$, 95% CI $[-.23, -.04]$) and OCB-O ($\beta = -.15$, 95% CI $[-.25, -.04]$). Neither indirect effect from MCC–Neutral contrast was significant.

Despite changes in the neutral condition, Study 3 findings replicated the results of Study 2. The MCC and neutral conditions led to different MCC scores; however, their effects on organizational identification and OCB were not statistically different. In contrast, the difference between MCC and FNC conditions produced a negative indirect effect on the outcomes. Similar to Study 2, the MCC and FNC contrast was associated with

Figure 3
The Effect of Culture on Organizational Identification and OCB (Study 3)



decreased OCB-I and OCB-O via reduced levels of organizational identification.

Discussion

Across three studies, we examined the effect of MCC on organizational identity and discretionary performance. Compared to an alternative culture (i.e., FNC), MCC led to lower levels of discretionary performance directed at the organization and its members via weakened organizational identification. However, we did not find the same effect for the comparison between MCC and neutral culture. The nonsignificant difference between the MCC and neutral culture with regard to the study outcomes might be rooted in the conceptual definition of organizational culture. Organizational culture represents shared perceptions, values, norms, and assumptions within an organization (Schneider et al., 2013). Therefore, suggesting a neutral culture condition where those features were simply nonexistent is likely to represent an absence of culture as opposed to a neutral culture. Moreover, a neutral culture may not represent ecological reality of workplaces. Similar experimental studies that used vignette method to manipulate organizational cultures only contrasted alternative cultures and avoided suggesting a neutral culture condition (e.g., Caldwell & Moberg, 2007; Hermkens et al., 2019) with the exception of comparing strengths of the same organizational culture type (e.g., Douglas et al., 2001).

We found that MCC had implications for organizational identification. Individuals have a basic need to belong, and developing identification with an organization satisfies this need (Wiesenfeld et al., 2001). By representing a fiercely competitive environment, masculinity contest culture threatens perceptions of belongingness. As a result, employees react by curtailing the extent to which they identify with the organization. We also found that organizational identification served as a mechanism in explaining the effects of culture on discretionary performance. This result is in line with other findings on the role of organizational identification. For example, Wu et al. (2016) found that lowered organizational identification mediated the relationship between ostracism (i.e., perceptions of being ignored or excluded) and discretionary performance. Organizational identification forms a basis for organizational behaviors above and beyond organizational attitudes (see Lee et al., 2015). In the light of these findings, lowered organizational identification caused by MCC may lead to changes in a broader range of behavioral outcomes than discretionary performance (e.g., health outcomes; Steffens et al., 2017).

Study Contributions and Implications

This study offers several theoretical insights. First, we tested organizational identification as a mediating mechanism between culture and discretionary performance. Although theories on culture in general, and organizational culture in particular, propose several mediating and moderating mechanisms (Schneider et al., 2013), research that examined organizational culture-performance relationships mostly tested the direct effects of culture (see Sackmann et al., 2011). Answering Schneider et al. (2013) call, this study demonstrated organizational identification as a mediator between organizational culture and discretionary performance.

Although Whetten and Foreman (2014) theorized that organizational identification could serve as a mediator between individuals' perceptions about an organization and performance outcomes, researchers rarely test identification as a mediating mechanism. Instead, identification is often treated as a moderator variable that alters the nature of the relationships between independent and dependent variables (e.g., Haslam et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2017). Our findings provide support for Whetten and Foreman's (2014) conceptualization of organizational identification. Organizational identification played a key role in explaining the effects of culture on discretionary performance. Participants had lower levels of identification in the MCC condition compared to an alternative culture, which in turn resulted in reduced discretionary performance. The current set of experiments extends the theory of MCC by suggesting a potential mechanism that links this culture to worsened organizational outcomes.

Previous studies showed that MCC relates to a range of negative outcomes (e.g., Glick et al., 2018; Matos et al., 2018). We extended those findings by demonstrating that MCC also hinders performance by reducing positive outcomes. The consequences of MCC include both psychological (i.e., identification) and behavioral (i.e., OCBs) outcomes. Hence, the current study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on the effects of MCC on reduced desirable organizational outcomes.

Finally, this study established a causal link between organizational culture and identity, as well as organizational culture and discretionary performance. Organizational culture research often relies on cross-sectional methods precluding conclusions about causal relationships (Sackmann, 2011). Previous studies on MCC (e.g., Glick et al., 2018; Matos et al., 2018) investigated a number of correlates. However, they were unable to conclude causal relationships due to the use of cross-sectional methods. By using an experimental design, we demonstrated the directionality of this relationship.

Limitations and Future Research

This research has several limitations. One limitation of this study is that we did not account for possible self-selection effects. Participants were randomly assigned into one of the three conditions (Myers & Hansen, 2011), and they reported their identification levels with a fictional organization. However, employees generally have an option to leave organizations if they do not identify with them. As a result, the strength of the same relationships could be different in natural work environments. Hence, we suggest future studies replicate this model in real-life organizational settings before

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making conclusions about the prevalence and strength of these relationships.

Another limitation of these experiments was using vignettes for manipulation. Although vignette studies are very common in social and organizational psychology research (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010), their effectiveness is highly dependent on participants' engagement and cognitive efforts. Being cognizant of potential limitations of this methodology, we followed best practices to increase participants' immersion (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014); however, we suggest future studies utilize different methods to manipulate the organizational culture.

Lastly, we measured the self-reported, hypothetical discretionary performance. Previous studies showed that the self- and other-reported behaviors are moderately correlated (Carpenter et al., 2014). Hence, we suggest future studies test the outcomes of MCC using data collected from other sources, such as supervisors, coworkers, or organizational records.

Is FNC a Viable Alternative?

Although we tried to contrast MCC against a neutral culture, we found the main differences between MCC and FNC. This may raise the question whether FNC delivers a feasible alternative or whether it has its own problems with task performance or other organizational outcomes. According to Berdahl, Glick, et al. (2018), tackling MCC requires stronger focus on organizations' mission to establish core organizational values and goals for the good of everyone. As mentioned by Berdahl, Glick, et al. (2018), such concrete approaches to change organizational culture were found to be useful in improving the safety of workers in the oil industry. According to Ely and Meyerson's (2010) case study results, leaders of an energy company established safety behaviors by its workers as values and goals, and discouraged showing typical masculine behaviors which are known to undermine safety. For instance, workers were rewarded for behaviors that are aligned with FNC values such as taking breaks, communication and cooperating with others, looking after each other, and not putting themselves in dangerous situations. Readers should note that advocating for FNC values resulted in positive outcomes even in a very masculine work setting. Accordingly, organizations should aim to foster cultures where workers are specifically told that MCC values are not supported, and FNC values are accepted and valued. This may also explain why we did not find significant differences between MCC and our neutral condition in Study 2, because the neutral organizational culture did not have any concrete goals or values (e.g., either compatible with MCC or FNC), but it presented a rather ambiguous work culture. Therefore, organizations should include FNC values and promote them in their mission.

Conclusion

By experimentally manipulating organizational culture, we demonstrated the directionality of relationships, thus extending previous research on the correlates of MCC. We found that MCC undermines individuals' organizational identification and lowers their intentions to engage in discretionary performance directed at the organization and its members, whereas FNC can be a viable alternative setting up desirable organizational values and norms. We suggest future studies examine the role of social identity in explaining a broader

range of MCC outcomes and test the viability of FNC as an alternative.

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(Appendix follows)

Appendix

Masculinity Contest Culture Condition

Imagine yourself as a mid-level manager of a firm. Your work environment is tough because you have to dominate others to be successful in your job. The competition is harsh, and there is no room to make errors because stakes are high. In order to keep up with the demands of your job, a true professional has to follow these unspoken rules:

1. Work always comes first for a true professional: No matter what happens in your personal life, if you want to be successful in this job, you have to put your work above and beyond everything.
2. A true professional never show weakness: When you show weakness even only once, it is almost impossible to regain respect in this work environment. Be a tough guy and never show your soft side at work.
3. A true professional has strength and stamina: The world of work is demanding and you have to have the physical strength to work for long hours. At the end of the day, people don't respect those who doesn't have endurance.
4. In the world of work, dog-eat-dog to survive: In this world, you either win or lose. This is a cut-throat environment and you have to walk over others to keep your chair.

Feminine Nurturing Culture Condition

Imagine yourself as a mid-level manager of a firm. Your work environment is relaxed and friendly because you have to get well with others to be successful in your job. There is no competition in your workplace, and even making errors are tolerated because it is not the end of everything. In order to keep up with the demands of your job, a true professional has to follow these unspoken rules:

1. A true professional knows how to balance work and life: If you want to be successful in this job, you have to draw a line between your work and personal life. People only respect others with clear boundaries.
2. To be a true professional means to be a real person: Do not be afraid to show your vulnerabilities. People are smart. They do not find you sincere, if you hide your real emotions from them.
3. It is okay to feel sick and tired sometimes: The world of work is demanding and it drains energy from people. It is okay to admit that you feel tired. It is a sign of your hard work.
4. In the world of work, you need the help of others to survive: This is not a zero-sum game. When you cooperate with others, everybody grows.

Neutral Condition (Study 2)

Imagine yourself as a mid-level manager of a firm. Your work environment is neither tough nor relaxed and friendly. There is no need to dominate others, but you don't have to get on well with them either. The best word that describes your workplace is "neutral." In order to keep up with the demands of your job, a true professional has to follow these unspoken rules:

1. Don't make work-life balance or overwork a big deal: People at your organization neither care about your work-life balance nor appreciate when you overwork. It is not perceived as an important matter in the real life after all.
2. Sincerity is good but it is overrated: Do not try hard to show or hide your vulnerabilities. People are quite consumed with how they are perceived by others. They do not even notice whether you are sincere or not.
3. Your strength and stamina is only your business: Some days you are sick and some days you are not. Your health is your own resource and no one at your work pays attention to whether you are energetic or not.
4. In the world of work, you do your own work: Cooperation and competition is quite overrated. In real life, you do your own thing most of the time. There is no need to cooperate or compete with others to survive.

Neutral Condition (Study 3)

Imagine yourself as a mid-level manager of a firm. You recently moved into a new building and you want to judge the character of your work environment based on its physical appearance. Here are the defining characteristics of your office.

1. Your office is in a two-storey building within a large industrial complex.
2. This is a new building with big windows.
3. Each person has an individual desk, a chair, and a drawer.
4. The walls are painted in beige color.

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