

Socio-Cultural Constructs of Masculinity and Gender- Based Violence: An Exploratory Study

Eeman Khurshid, M. Phil Scholar, Gender Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women University,
Rawalpindi Pakistan

Email: eemankhurshid3169@gmail.com

Shahla Tabassum (PhD), Head of Department, Gender Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women
University, Rawalpindi Pakistan

Email: shahlatabassum@fjwu.edu.pk

Humaira Zulfiqar (PhD), Lecturer, Department of Gender Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women
University, Rawalpindi Pakistan

Email: humairazulfiqar@fjwu.edu.pk

Abstract

This study examines how cultural constructs of masculinity contribute to gender-based violence (GBV) in the Pakistani context. Using a feminist social constructivist paradigm, it investigates how cultural norms and expectations influence masculine identities and behaviors, which perpetuate or reduce GBV. This study draws on interviews with 12 participants, including 6 males and 6 females respondents, aged 20 to 30, from diverse socioeconomic and regional backgrounds in Pakistan. The study employs thematic analysis of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with university students, identifying key themes such as dominance, emotional suppression, and societal expectations of aggression. According to the findings, society's endorsement of harmful values of

masculinity and control contributes to the ongoing GBV, while stifling the possibility of other forms of masculinity which are non-violent. This study is important, because it brings out cultural factors that contribute to gender-based violence in Pakistan, thus providing an insight on how societal characteristics breed toxic masculinities. With the aim of addressing such constructs, it seeks to promote gender equity and lessen gender violence. Further research also supplements development studies through emphasizing that cultural masculinity operates in wider societies and culture and this opens the way for strategies on GBV that are multidisciplinary in nature. This research shows how culture and violence are interlinked and calls for specific action to counter unhealthy masculine ideologies and practices and promote gender equality.

Keywords: Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Masculinity, Cultural Constructs, Feminist Social Constructivism, Culture, Toxic Masculinity

Introduction

GBV is a worldwide problem that has affected millions of people, irrespective of their age, ethnicity, and sex (Inter-agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises, 2010). The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that intimate partner violence is experienced by 1 in 3 women worldwide, often driven by rigid gender norms and expectations. Apart from being a violation of human rights, it has repercussions that go beyond the personal, family, and even societal scope. In this context, the construction of masculinity can be seen as potentially one of the risk factors for GBV. It still sustains attitudes and behaviors that have their origins in concepts of power and aggression which together builds and nurtures mindset where violence against women and other minority genders is upheld (Fleming et al., 2015).

In the context of Pakistan Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a significant issue. In Pakistan, these global patterns intersect with unique socio-cultural constructs of masculinity deeply rooted in patriarchal traditions and religious interpretations. According to the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 2017-18, 28% of women aged 15-49 reported experiencing physical violence, and 6% reported sexual violence. Spousal violence is particularly concerning, with 34% of ever-married women reporting physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Alarming, over half of these women do not seek help, primarily due to socio-cultural barriers, lack of support systems, and economic dependence.

In Punjab, GBV data from 2023 highlights a sharp rise in violence against women, with 10,201 cases reported under PPC 354 and PPC 509, a substantial increase from 2022. Rape remains a pressing issue, with 6,624 cases reported in the province, translating to a woman being raped

approximately every 45 minutes. Lahore emerged as a hotspot, with 1,464 cases of violence and 721 rape cases (Correspondent, 2024).

Historically and culturally, masculinity has always been defined solely by strength, power, control, and aggression (Malonda-Vidal et al., 2021). This has made men believe and at the same time given them the margin to use violence as one of the most prominent ways of asserting their authority in society. Societal pressures often drive men to adhere to traditional notions of cultural masculinity, which emphasize dominance and aggression. This, in turn, normalizes and perpetuates violence in various forms, reinforcing toxic behaviors among men (Makhanya, 2023).

In the view of Lomazzi (2023), GBV and masculinity have been intertwined throughout history as the foundation for the creation of social norms and the continuation of power and oppression. Despite the negative impacts of human rights violations resulting from GBV, little research has been done on it up to this point. GBV encompasses a variety of behaviors meant to harm or regulate others, affecting all social classes with women and girls as primary victims. This includes all forms of mistreatment such as domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking in persons, and harmful traditional practices like child marriage or female genital mutilation (World Bank Group 2023). The core problem is located at the intersection between prevailing discourses over manhood; that normalizes violence against women as well as other marginalized genders. Masculinity defines an array of anticipations, norms and actions associated with being male in a given community (Burn 2005). Such ideals usually devalue those traits seen as feminine or weak while highlighting aggressive ones like coercion power or domination. From a young age, people are socialized into these gender roles which affect their interactions with other people, especially in close relationships as well as how they see themselves (Khan, 2023).

This research article aims to establish a relationship between how masculinity is influenced by cultural forces and how it can either increase or diminish gender-based violence in Pakistan. This research adopts a qualitative research method to establish the relationship between cultural masculinity, power, and oppression in the perpetration of violence against women and non-binary people. In addition to that, it would aid in separating misandrist thoughts and counteracting the socialization process whereby violence has been normalized to become part of Pakistani culture for men. In addition, this study will enhance our understanding of the cultural influences characterizing Pakistan to identify the trends that facilitate the manifestation of gender-based violence in society. Addressing harmful stereotypes around gender, and embracing positive forms of masculinity could inform efforts at preventing violence from happening in the first place while making them more individualized and sensitive towards variations.

Methodology:

This research study adopted a qualitative research design through conducting semi-structured interviews with students from the selected public sector universities from Islamabad, Pakistan including Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad, International Islamic University Islamabad and National University of Modern Languages Islamabad. The interview guide was pre-tested with 6 participants to ensure validity and reliability. The interview guide was revised based on the feedback of pilot testing. This helped identify areas where the interview guide could be more concise and effective in getting desired information. After that, six males and six females respondents were selected who hailed from different socio-economic backgrounds and that allowed exploration of the variation in perceptions as emanating from the lived experiences of the respondents. A research tool in the form of an interview outline was employed to enable the

respondents to state their opinion about masculinity, its definitions in particular culture and its association with violence against women. These interviews were conducted in Urdu to alleviate the comfort of the respondents with the language and their audio-recorded consent was secured before the sessions. Data was analyzed using Braun and Clark's six-phase framework of thematic analysis. It involved categorization of data using codes that were developed and altered throughout the analysis process using Microsoft Excel for organization and categorization. The resulting themes were then related to the aims of the study in order to augment understanding of the relationship between masculinity and violence with illustrative quotes of participants for expanding the debate on gender relations and change in society.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the causes of gendered violence by exploring the culture of masculinity within the Pakistani.
2. Identify how cultural norms and expectations relate to masculine identities and behaviors, and how these contribute to either increasing or decreasing Gender-Based Violence (GBV).
3. Discuss the connections between masculinity and GBV, illustrating that by internalizing particular cultural masculine norms, GBV occurs.

Results and Discussion:

This study analyzed the cultural constructs of masculinity and their connection to gender-based violence (GBV) in Pakistan, using a feminist social constructivist framework to explore the societal norms and behaviors perpetuating toxic masculinities. It highlights how masculinity is culturally constructed, why it fosters aggression and dominance, and its potential consequences

for GBV. Feminist social constructivism suggests that gender systems and cultural norms, including masculinities, are established and reinforced through societal expectations, language, and practices.

The primary objective of this research was to identify the factors shaping masculine identities and their relationship to GBV. Specifically, the study analyzed

- (i) The cultural norms and practices that shape masculine behaviors.
- (ii) The implications of these norms on perpetuating or reducing GBV.
- (iii) The role of societal reinforcement, such as language, familial expectations, and peer influences, in sustaining or challenging toxic masculinity.

Men and Masculinity: A Moral Asymmetry

This section delves into the moral double standards that exist in Pakistani society concerning men and women, particularly in the context of behavior in public spaces. Masculinity is often associated with a freedom that allows men to act without facing societal judgment, while women face constant scrutiny (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This perceived moral asymmetry reflects deep-seated gender norms and societal expectations, shaping how masculinity and femininity are performed.

Male Participant 1 shared, “*We can sit anywhere we want, talk about anything we like, and be loud without restrictions. Individuals do not seek to confront us because of cultural expectations around being a man.*” Similarly, Male Participant 6 emphasized,

“*We are men, we don’t face such counters. We can be loud outside and sit or wear whatever we want. I usually wear shorts and feel at ease. People ignore us because it is normal and common for men to act this way.*”

However, Female Participant 4 explained, “*Unlike men, Women are assessed by their dresses, giggles, or behavior in public space.*” Female Participant 6 added, “*Societal norms still have more moralistic expectations on women and require women to regulate their behavior constantly.*” The female participants agreed that societal observation requires women to be careful since any perceived inappropriate actions will trigger questions related to their upbringing and family values.

But the male respondents are well aware of such disparity, and one shared, “*If girls acted just like men in public, they would be branded liberal or from weird backgrounds.*” This double standard lets men act out toxic or aggressive masculinity without facing repercussions, simultaneously to restrain the freedom of women.

This moral imbalance underscores how the social order justifies aggressive masculine behaviors while controlling and stigmatizing women's actions (Delgado-Herrera et al., 2024). Such asymmetry reinforces harmful gender stereotypes, which will continue to perpetuate inequities that allow toxic masculinity to thrive and limit women's freedoms. In achieving this goal, society must acknowledge such double standards and work to redefine norms to be more respectful of gender equality.

The Masculine Landscape of Work: Suppressing Career Choices of Men

Participants keenly stated the fact that cultural expectation plays a significant role in determining men's professional choices, often making them pursue careers regarded as masculine. Male 3 pointed out that “*Men often choose careers that will pay well to feed their families, even though it is not something that really goes by an individual's passion.*” He also added that “*Society puts a definitive line between 'masculine' and 'feminine' professions.*”

Male Participant 1 explained how, culturally, careers such as engineering, business, and law fit the masculine mold because they require attributes of strength, leadership, and technical capability. Female Participant 2 expanded on the idea that careers in such fields as law enforcement, the military, and other physically demanding careers are often resigned to males, reflecting the attitudes at the time where men were seen to possess more physical strength.

Male Participant 5 said that

“Professions that demand resilience, for instance, business and politics, are usually accepted as men's jobs. He argued that such jobs are related to qualities like resisting stress and having strength which conventionally were associated with men, and meanwhile, women would be regarded as "too dainty and fragile" for similar straining circumstances.”

Male Participant 6 revealed the same perspective by pointing out that jobs requiring strength, long-lasting travel or nighttime work, and that among them fall the police, military, and legal professions, are coded as fundamentally masculine territories.

On the other hand, Female Participant 1 added that careers that focus on being a caregiver and having a nurturing role are usually pushed to women, such as teaching and nursing. Similarly, Female Participant 6 stated that *“Outdoor and technical careers are construed as jobs that are most appropriate for men.”*

Male participant 4 shared his personal experience saying, *“Society decides careers that a man should pursue before birth.”* According to him, he was labeled into a career before he was even born; the parents expect boys to grow up and become engineers, even though he wanted to be a singer and likes mathematics. When he ultimately chose psychology, a profession considered

female-dominated, he faced criticism and backlash from his family and peers. He noted that even today, he occasionally encounters disapproval for his choice of major, reflecting the societal stigma attached to men pursuing roles outside traditional masculine norms.

This theme points out how social norms are limiting the options of men, by forcing them to be inclined to occupations that fit societal expectations of masculinity, and in the meantime devaluing or stigmatizing alternative options.

Masculine Role as Breadwinner: Earning Power and Respect

This theme examines the power dynamics in gender relations; it focuses more on the social mandate that situates males as the breadwinner. Traditionally, the male role as breadwinners has been related to ideas of respect, power, and identity (Manchester et al., 2018). As all respondents attest, the male's capacity to earn usually marks his value not only in personal relationships but also beyond them within the larger society. For Male Participant 1 quoted,

“Men face major pressure to raise enough money and support their families, since they are respected only if they bring home their earning. This assumption is further continued by the cultural myth that an “unearning man” is undesirable.”

Female Participant 2 added that men are socially expected to be breadwinners, and often, behaviors like lack of morals or even abusive conduct are tolerated if they are providing financially. This sentiment resonates in the view of Female Participant 5, who pointed out that when a man brings home money, even his success in a field considered "feminine" often goes unquestioned. Society tends to turn a blind eye to the field of work, focusing only on the financial success, which reflects

a double standard in societal expectations. The way people treat rich versus poor men further underscores this inequality. As Male Participant 5 stated,

“People’s opinions change when they see wealth, regardless of the man’s occupation.”

Female Participant 6 stated that

“In today’s society, money is everything. A man’s financial success is linked to his social approval, as men are admired and respected for their earnings, no matter the circumstances. However, this financial pressure can sometimes lead to crises of identity, as men often base their self-worth on their ability to provide.”

As Male Participant 6 shared, when his career interests didn’t align with high-earning potential, he was pushed toward a medical career instead, highlighting the tension between personal passion and economic necessity.

Masculine Dominance and Control: Dynamics of Interpersonal Relationships.

This theme delves into the notions of dominance and control in relationships, where men often feel the need to exert power over their partners. Dominance refers to male influence over decisions, action, and direction in relationships, while control refers to the regulation of their partner's behavior as well as autonomy (Johnson et al., 2012). Male Participant 1 said, *“Young boys are often influenced by figures who advocate for male domination, where men are supposed to be protectors and defenders.”*

Female Participant 2 associated this expectation with dominant mainstream masculine norms of aggression and strength for men, as they were likely to dominate and defend their territory. However, as Female Participant 5 pointed out, in most situations, males act aggressively when

their control is perceived to be challenged or when their needs are not met. This indicates how fragile the control can be; if insecurity or vulnerability is ascribed to them, then control, the much-valored norm, may be compromised.

In other families, as Male Participant 6 posited, full financial responsibility and also family decisions are believed to be solely men's issues, which explains why men are the head of the family. This belief, however leads to discrepancies in power relations, whereby women are excluded from decision making in regards to financial matters, which often deprives them of freedom of choices. This trend is also spotted in social setups, whereby, as Female Participant 1 observed, men do discourage their wives from establishing social relations outside the home. The imbalance of power in both financial and social spheres underscore the dominance men assert in intimate relationships.

Love, Care, and Affection: Masculine Emotional Suppression

The cultural regulation of men's emotional expression is a key theme here, focusing on how men are expected to suppress emotions like love, care, or vulnerability. In many cultures, including Pakistani society, emotional restraint is seen as a masculine virtue. Participants discussed the societal expectation for men to hide their emotions, as emotional expression is often perceived as weakness. Participating female number 1 stated that

“Men are generally advised not to display love or joy because such emotions are thought feminine and feeble.”

Female Participant 2 described that men are conditioned to bottle up their feelings, especially when they are in a vulnerable state and should ask for help. Instead, he is expected to face it alone. This

strengthened the view that he needs to be emotionally insensitive and aloof, further separated from his emotional needs. However, when talking about sentiments like anger or aggression, Male Participant 4 and Male Participant 5 believed that there are dominant social expectations that generally embrace that type of act as part of masculinity, but emotional openness is generally not appreciated.

Female Participant 6 stated: *“There are double standards in display of emotions between men and women. While more often than not, anger or even actual aggression among men is tolerated, display of love or even sadness is often conceptualized as a sign of weakness and nonsensicalness. Women, on the other hand, are supposed to be emotional, and the tears of women are taken lightly as just dramatic.”* This dichotomy creates a sort of restrictive environment among women and men, with men expected to fulfill strict emotional boundaries that, in the long run, eventually influence their mental wellbeing.

The issues studied here reflect highly ingrained gender roles that shape masculine identities, personal relationships, and emotionalization in the modern world. While men are called to be in control and powerful in financial and social dimensions, they still face restrictions on their emotional expressions resulting in a dualistic framework of expectations that is bound to enable and restrict their experiences (Hentschel et al., 2019). Traditional masculinity, therefore, is strictly constricted and built upon societal pressure to fulfill the role of breadwinner, dominate in relationships, and suppress emotions.

Aggression as a Masculine Virtue: Socialization of Violence

Aggression is that kind of behavior which is hostile, destructive, hurts or dominates others. It can be expressed as physical, verbal, and emotional, and probably due to frustration, fear, anger, or a need to dominate. Female Participant 1 said,

“Most aggressive behaviors are of anger, dominance, or physical aggression.” She explained that it stems from societal or cultural pressures to appear tough, unresolved emotional issues, or a culture that normalizes violence. She recalled and stated that *“Her grandmother would teach her younger brother not to cry when teased by classmates but instead to resist and act aggressively. This, she noted, is how aggression is ingrained in men from childhood, encouraging them to express their anger through physical or verbal outbursts.”*

In Pakistan, aggression is commonly displayed by men through yelling, breaking things, and even physically abusing women. Domestic violence is widespread and often viewed as normal (Madhani et al., 2015). As Female Participant 2 shared, *“It is not uncommon for men to use physical violence against women for trivial reasons, and this behavior is often seen as a normal way for men to express frustration or anger.”* Male Participant 6 added that aggression is often seen as a way for men to assert dominance and control over a situation or to protect their ego. He further added that men are traditionally expected to embody traits associated with masculinity, such as strength, assertiveness, and aggression, which are culturally linked to male dominance.

Masculinity and Verbal Violence: Language of Disrespect

Verbal expression involves spoken or written language used to convey thoughts, feelings, or ideas. In the context of masculinity, men in our culture often use foul language and derogatory slang as

a normal part of their conversations. Male Participant 1 revealed that in conversations with close friends, words like “Mother fucker” and “sister fucker” are common, along with derogatory terms such as “khusray” (transgender) used to insult boys who cry or engage in behaviors considered effeminate. This language is normalized, and they do not feel bad or offended by it. Participant 5 Male shared that

“Using abusive language is a routine part of their conversations, and they do not take the literal meaning of these words.”

Female participants noted that this disrespectful language is often directed towards women, reflecting ingrained misogyny in the culture. Female Participant 2 shared that the derogatory terms used by men are disrespectful to women and can often be heard in public spaces, particularly when conflicts arise. Female Participant 6 shared that

“Men are loud and carefree when using such language, and society does not call them out for it. Instead, women are expected to ignore such incidents and maintain peace. This reinforces the culture of misogyny, which manifests through derogatory language and negative attitudes towards women.”

Proverbs and other cultural sayings also depict the prevalent disrespect towards women. Female Participant 2 observed that one of the common sayings in their culture is, *“Women lack brains and are weak.”* Female Participant 6 further observed that one other which was more commonly heard was: *“There is no blessing in a woman's earnings.”* Such sayings continue to perceive women as inferior and undervalue what they help accrue, particularly about monetary earnings (CADTM, 2018).

Theme 8: The Glorification of Violence: Storytelling and Myths

There is always a problem when violence is perpetrated within the model of masculinity. Cultural tales, be it religious texts or historical accounts, often glorify aggressive male behavior during conflict, asserting that this behavior was necessary, or on occasion even virtuous. Male Participant 5 admits that these are cultural stories that they may go on perpetuating the cycle of violence; violence becomes a response to provocation or threats against one's social status or honor: A cultural saying by one of the participants, Male Participant 5, echoed, *"A husband can beat his wife and also sleep separately. A man should always keep his wife in control."* This shows how much society tolerates violence as a means of exerting control within households.

Student Female 2 told a personal anecdote in which she elaborated on how social norms make the man to show anger and hostility through bodily violence and not patience. She recalls how her grandmother taught her younger brother not to get angry but to reciprocate with aggression against aggression, indicating how violence becomes a way of solving conflicts. At one point, Student Female 5 said during the interview, *"Men are often taught to show anger by yelling, breaking things, and physically abusing women. This behavior is seen as acceptable in Pakistan, where domestic violence is prevalent and often justified as a normal way for men to express frustration."*

Female Participant 4 added that in their society, men are told that they are naturally prone to anger, and women should tolerate it. The expectation is that women should bear the brunt of male anger and violence, with the blame always placed on the woman for not managing the man's temper. The justification for male violence in these contexts is often framed as being for the woman's own good, for the sake of the children, or to maintain peace within the family (Childress et al., 2023).

This reinforces a patriarchal narrative that places the responsibility on women to endure violence for the sake of familial harmony.

Masculine Ideals and Violence: Role of Media

Media plays a significant role in shaping and reinforcing masculine ideals in contemporary society. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are often criticized for glorifying toxic masculinity, with male figures who promote disrespectful and harmful behavior towards women. Male Participant 1 shared that *“Such platforms often idealize men who mock women, reinforcing submissive gender roles and anti-feminist narratives.”* Male Participant 4 emphasized the media's influence in portraying men as powerful, aggressive, and even violent, creating a cultural expectation that masculinity is linked with physical dominance and aggression. This portrayal of men as violent heroes, seen in movies, TV shows, and video games, socializes aggressive behaviors as part of being masculine, perpetuating cycles of violence in social interactions (Huesmann, 2007).

Female Participant 3 highlighted that *“In Pakistani culture, media often showcases masculine role models like actors Ranbir Kapoor in Animal and Shahid Kapoor in Kabir Singh, who emphasize strength, dominance, and emotional restraint. These portrayals reinforce the belief that a “real man” must be tough, emotionally detached, and dominant.”* Furthermore, Male Participant 4 criticized social media figures, such as influencers and religious leaders, who promote traditional ideals like multiple marriages, often presented humorously, which further propagates outdated and harmful views about masculinity.

Female Participant 2 pointed out the dual nature of media, where it both glamorizes aggression, as seen in wrestling or violent films, while also providing spaces to raise awareness about issues such

as domestic violence. However, Male Participant 4 observed that the Pakistani drama industry rarely addresses the impact of violence, even though physical and domestic violence is commonly shown and normalized in these shows, particularly in family dynamics where slapping is portrayed as a means of restoring peace.

Pressure to Conform: Burden of Toxic Masculinity

Toxic masculinity is defined as socially constructed behaviors that perpetuate violence and inequality and creates immense pressure on men to conform to a rigid definition of manhood that prioritizes aggression, emotional suppression, and physical strength (Sheppard, 2023). Male Participant 1 shared and reflected on how societal norms dictate that men should embody traits like seriousness and toughness, which can have negative emotional consequences. Male Participant 4 expanded on this, explaining that the pressure to be the "strong silent type" can harm men's emotional well-being, making it difficult for them to express vulnerability or build healthy relationships. When we view emotions as something to be controlled, we can tend to withdraw, become angry, or even suffer from depression. Quote from Male Participant 2 states that *"It is common to mock and call boys who do not conform to such masculine ideals, girly."* He also stated that this is what happens in the family as boys are praised for being rough and strong while effeminate behaviors are ridiculed. Ideas put forward by Male Participant 5 put more emphasis on this societal tendency; he remembers how guys with feminine voices or mannerisms would be mocked and called "a third gender", especially in gatherings. Male Participant 3 remarked that *"There are men that the society considers men, but they do not fit into the appropriate box of masculinity and therefore they must work hard to be appreciated and accepted."*

As stated by Male Participant 4, toxic masculinity not only drains men emotionally and socially, but it also contains societal perspective that there is a need for all men to be emotionally hardened, aggressive and physically superior, even when such qualities are impossible to attain and beneficial to their psychological and emotional wellness. Female Participant 3 networked Weaved concerns *“This stress often causes mental problems, breakdown of relationships, and aggression as a means of control.”* Male Participant 3 described how, to be considered ‘normal’, boys are expected to hide certain emotions such as sadness, fear, etc. which causes them to feel very lonely and stressed. Male Participant 6 also commented that *“These obsessive engagements with unrealistic masculine standards destroy the health outcomes and psychological maturation of males.”*

Reshaping Masculinity: Role of Education and Awareness

Education and awareness play a significant role in the reconstruction of masculine ideals towards healthier and more expansive horizons. Male Participant 1 stated that *“while QAU he was exposed to gender equality and feminism and it changed his perceptions of masculinity.”* He further explained that This change came about as a result of study sessions, book reviews and discussions regarding gender justice.” Male Participant 4 continued that *“Education made him part of the gender parity for men and women and that is how now he take outings with his sisters as everyone deserves the same opportunities regardless of the sex.”*

Female Participant 2 noted with emphasis that even her brother or the boys around her have started to be receptive to the gender issues discourse that she has experienced a transition to progressive that is more inclusive. Female Participant 4 acknowledged that *“Education and awareness is sufficient to encourage a better understanding of masculinity, and that indeed a lot of young men today will be able to disagree with the restrictive definitions of masculinity.”* Male Participant 1

went on to explain how social networks, most especially Facebook, have helped himself and many other people shift their notions of what it means to be a man from the old ideals of aggression and stoicism to an understanding of manhood that celebrates emotional health, nurturing relations, and gender balance as essential aspects of proper

Every single person present, inclusive of women participants, was of the opinion that there is a role of education and raising consciousness that helps young boys to join the struggle in the fight for gender equality and that in the end changing masculinity from being toxic and emotionally suppressed to more open and positive ways (Van Laar et al., 2024).

Conclusion

The current research on the cultural construct of masculinity and aggressiveness against women provides insights into the dominating traditional masculinities, clannism, and media, which are majorly responsible for violence and discrimination. Feminist social constructionism has also acknowledged the importance of factors under institutions and society, which foster rather than eradicate the belief that masculinity must be associated with values of aggression, dominance, and suppression of one's feelings. The results confirm these stereotypes are prevalent as media especially movies, and social media, portray aggressive men as ideal and process aggression as a positive and inherent aspect of men.

The study also illustrates how the pressure to fulfill s dominant masculine identity and the acceptance of the same can also be detrimental to the mental health and interpersonal associations among men. The overweighting effects of toxic masculinity, in addition to hindering people to express themselves emotionally, also encourage violent acts and masculine toxic traits in both private and public relationship settings.

The main focus that adds this specific piece of research's significance is assess how it is possible to bring a change on the existing gender dynamics and views through education and awareness. The study underscores the importance of developing spaces that promote emotional literacy, equality between the genders, and a range of masculine identities that go beyond the harmful notions of masculinity in enabling the healthy opposition of masculinities. These concerns can be addressed within the educational context and through the media and traditional values can be shifted in favor of more positive approaches resulting in a better and fair society.

This study is limited by a small sample size with a focus on only university students of Islamabad, which might not fully capture the experiences of other age groups and rural population. Future research could address this gap by incorporating a large age diverse sample. Finally, the research emphasizes on the importance of constant discussions and measures, both on the individual level and community level.

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