

Masculinity Ideologies of Adult Pakistani Men and Women

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Abstract

Background. Masculinity related ideologies are rooted in most cultures and Pakistan is not different, however not much is known about these ideologies in recent times. This study investigated masculinity ideologies in adult men and women of Pakistan.

Method. In across-sectional design, a convenient sample of 268 men and 173 women ($N = 441$) was taken that ranged in age from 19 to 51 ($M = 29.21$, $SD = 5.44$) years. We used Masculinity Ideologies Scale (Imtiaz & Kamal, 2023) that measures four aspects of masculinity including male privilege and power, traditional roles and responsibilities, avoiding effeminacy, and restricted emotionality as subscales.

Results. Results revealed that men endorsed significantly greater traditional masculinity ideologies than women and particularly significantly more male privilege and power and restricted emotionality than women; however, no significant differences were found for traditional roles and responsibilities and avoiding effeminacy across genders.

Conclusion. We discuss masculinity in a cultural context where patriarchy prevails, where male masculinity is held as a symbol of authority.

Keywords. Gender differences, masculinity ideologies, Pakistani adults, patriarchy



Introduction

In various contexts, gender works as an important social category (Tahir et al., 2021); it works to evaluate others (Council of Europe, 2023) and guides development differentially as witnessed in a Pakistani culture (Ali et al., 2011). Gender is aligned with various possibilities, privileges, and power differentials, which are for some but not others (Council of Europe, 2023). This study focuses on differential ideologies about masculinity, which speculate about male gender role, seen from the lens of being a man or a woman.

Gender encapsulates many aspects of social perceptions, roles, and attitudes. Masculinity ideologies are internalizations men and women hold about culturally held ideals of masculinity (Pleck, 1995). Many a time, actions driven by a particular gender are taken as dysfunctional, for instance, when men display weak emotions. Social pressures strain them on occasions of going contrary to the culturally devised masculine script. Undergoing the socialization to learn about how men are expected to maneuver themselves, can be traumatic as well. This is how gender role strain paradigm serves to explain the three types of strain men experience in their gendered lives named as dysfunction, discrepancy, and trauma strain respectively (Levant, 1996; Pleck, 1995; Thompson & Bennet, 2017). The gender role strain paradigm (GRSP), a social constructionist view, was presented as an alternative to the gender role identity paradigm (GRIP). The GRIP adopted a trait based approach on masculinity, where possession of masculine characteristics was seen to be linked to one's biology and was considered highly desirable. However, within the GRSP the dominant position men hold and conforming to norms about masculinity is thought to be associated with the experience of strain (Pleck, 2017). Social constructionism denies the existence of biologically based single masculinity standard and argues that gender is based on many gender ideologies that are a function of social, psychological, political, and historical contexts (Thompson & Bennet, 2017). Grounded in a power structure, masculine ideology is based on how men are

socialized, behave, and live in a society (Levent, 1996; Pleck, 1995; Thompson & Bennet, 2017). This power structure is largely patriarchal world over, and Pakistani culture is no different; it reflects male domination in all affairs of social life (Tabassum, 2016). Existing research on gender issues in Pakistan has primarily focused on issues of women (Akram, & Yasmin, 2023; Hadi, 2017; Huda, & Kamal, 2022; Mujeeb, & Kamal, 2018; Zakar et al., 2016) and transgender individuals (Ahmed et al., 2014; Akhtar, & Bilour, 2020; Batool, et al., 2022; Bukhari, et al., 2016; Jami & Kamal, 2015; Raza & Jabeen, 2022) but issues surrounding men have been largely neglected (Ahmad, 2021). Gender issues centering on oppression of women include discrimination, violence, child marriages, and honor killings that relate to dominant social position of men (Tabassum, 2016). Building on this premise, issues of men need to be studied along with women. Turning the focus of research on men would help solve their own problems and in turn those being faced by women and children, who are affected negatively when men face problems (Levent, 1996). To do that masculinity ideology is a good area to start looking at gender based perceptions and possible problems they may cause directly affecting men and indirectly creating problem for women. This study explores about masculinity ideologies in adult men and women of Pakistan. We hypothesize that men will hold more traditional masculine ideologies on all four facets (male privilege and power, avoiding effeminacy, traditional roles and responsibilities, and restricted emotionality) than women.

Method

Sample

A convenient sample of 268 (58%) adult men and 173 women ($N = 441$) was recruited with a minimum educational level of matriculation (Grade 10). Participants were required to be living in Pakistan for past five years and not lived outside Pakistan for more than 10 years. Age of the participants ranged from 19 to 51 years ($M = 29.21$, $SD = 5.44$) years, see Table 1 for other demographic characteristics.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of Study Participants (N = 441)

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Age (Years)		
19-30	256	58.05
31-51	185	41.95
Education (Years)		
10-12	11	2.5
13-16	265	60.2
17-18	138	31.4
Above 18	26	5.9
Marital Status		
Single	223	50.6
Married	214	48.5
Divorced	2	0.5
Province		
Punjab	260	59
Sindh	63	14.3
Baluchistan	39	8.8
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	49	11.2
Gilgit-Baltistan	24	5.4a

Assessment Measures

Masculinity Ideologies Scale (MIS). Developed in Urdu language by Imtiaz and Kamal (2023). MIS measures masculinity ideologies in adult men and women with 31 items. Each item is measured on a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Total score of the scale is calculated by taking sum of scores on all the items, which ranges from 31-155. High scores indicate endorsement of traditional masculinity ideologies. It includes four subscales: Male Privilege and Power (MPP, Items: 5, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26), Traditional Roles and Responsibilities (TRR, Items: 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14), Avoiding Effeminacy (AE, Items: 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31) and Restrictive Emotionality (RE, items: 1, 2, and 3). This scale has been developed and validated by the authors of this study, where it was found to have pretty sound reliability. For overall MIS $\alpha = .84$; for MPP $\alpha = .89$, for TRR $\alpha = .86$, for AE $\alpha = .90$, & for RE $\alpha = .72$. This scale had

been validated for Pakistani population, where it was indicated to be a valid scale after adding three modification indices ($\chi = 817.74[425]$, SRMR = .07, CFI = .91, NFI = .91, IFI = .92, RMSEA = .05; Imtiaz & Kamal, 2023).

Procedure

Participants of the study were contacted at their educational institutions, work places, and home settings and briefed about the nature of study. They were then asked for their willingness to participate in the study with an understanding that their personal information and data would be kept anonymous and confidential; with a right to withdraw from the study anytime. We then gave participants a booklet; enclosing the consent form, a demographic sheet and MIS, and verbally instructed them how to complete them. They were told to ask us questions if there was something confusing in the scale or the demographic sheet. After completion participants were thanked for their cooperation and support and the data was further processed for analysis using SPSS, Version 23.

Results

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities, Skewness and Kurtosis for Masculine Ideologies Scale (N = 441)

Scale	<i>k</i>	α	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Range		Skewness	Kurtosis	<i>r_{pb}</i>
				Potential	Actual			
MIS	31	.85	101.46 (16.94)	31-155	48-145	-.12	.43	-.18**
MPP	13	.88	30.15 (11.12)	13-65	13-65	.97	1.01	-.16**
TRR	10	.87	41.85 (7.55)	10-50	10-50	-1.70	2.17	-.03
AE	5	.92	20.96 (5.57)	5-25	5-25	-1.71	1.97	.001
RE	3	.72	8.50 (3.43)	3-15	3-15	-.25	-.93	-.32**

Note. MI = Masculine ideologies; MP = Male privilege and Power; TRR = Traditional Roles and responsibilities; AE = Avoiding effeminacy; RE = Restricted emotionality. *k* = number of items; α = internal consistency, *r_{pb}* = Point biserial correlation with gender; 0 = male participant, 1 = female participant.

Table 2 illustrates the descriptive statistics, reliability, skewness, and kurtosis for MIS and its subscales. Point biserial correlations between gender and masculinity ideologies are also indicated. Results illustrate scale and subscales had moderate to high reliabilities as all values are above .70. All scores on the scale and subscales were within the potential score range; and the data was normally distributed for MIS and RE; data for R&R and AE subscales was extremely negatively skewed (over -1). Data for MP, R&R and AE subscales were moderately and for MIS and RE extremely platykurtic (< 3). Average MIS score (*M* = 101.46) was higher than median (*M* = 93.00) for the composite range of the scale; average MP score (*M* = 30.15) was lower than the

median (*M* = 39.00) for the composite range of this subscale; average R&R score (*M* = 41.85) was higher than the median (*M* = 30.00) for the composite range of this subscale; average AE score (*M* = 20.96) was higher than the median (*M* = 15.00) for the composite range of this subscale; average RE score (*M* = 8.50) was higher than the median (*M* = 9.00) for the composite range of this subscale. Higher mean values for MIS, R&R and AE suggest that participants predominantly had traditional masculinity ideologies than MP and RE average score. Correlation values are indicates that men scored significantly greater than women on overall masculinity ideologies, male privilege and power, and restricted emotionality.

Table 3

Differences in Perceptions about Masculinity in Men (n = 268) and Women (n = 173)

Scales	Men		Women		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>					
MIS	103.92	16.17	97.65	17.44	-3.86	.000	-9.47	-3.08	.37
MPP	31.57	10.60	7.14	11.56	-3.39	.001	-5.74	-1.53	.33
TRR	42.01	7.78	41.60	7.18	-.56	.578	-1.86	1.04	.05
AE	20.96	5.11	20.97	6.23	.11	.991	-1.11	1.12	.01
RE	9.38	3.13	7.14	3.43	-7.06	.000	-2.86	-1.61	.68

Note. MIS = Masculine ideologies; MPP = Male privilege and power; TRR = Traditional roles and responsibilities; AE = Avoiding effeminacy; RE = Restricted emotionality; *d* = Cohen's *d*

Men ($M = 103.92$, $SD = 16.17$) had significantly ($p < .000$, $d = .37$) more traditional masculinity ideologies than women ($M = 97.65$, $SD = 17.44$) see Table 3. The reason for this difference is largely based on facets of MPP or male privilege and power, and RE or restricted emotionality, because men ($M = 31.57$, $SD = 10.60$) had significantly ($p < .001$, $d = .33$) more traditional male privilege and power-oriented ideologies than women ($M = 27.94$, $SD = 11.57$); and men ($M = 9.38$, $SD = 3.13$) had also held significantly ($p < .000$, $d = .68$) more traditional ideologies about restricted emotionality than women ($M = 7.14$, $SD = 3.43$). Men and women did not differ significantly for TRR or traditional roles and responsibilities and AE or avoiding effeminacy (see Table 3).

Authors think the reason for no difference can be associated with skewness and kurtosis of data as our data were highly platykurtic and had a negative tail for these constructs. Weaker normality of the data can be one of the reasons that true differences remain concealed and suffered type-II error in testing hypotheses. However, in order to address the normality issues of present data, log transformations were applied to the data in order to confirm that issues pertaining to skewness of data might not have influenced the study findings. Method guided by Field (2017) was applied to perform log transformations of data at hand, after log transformations it became evident that t -test did not yield results any different from the untransformed data. This adds to the certainty of findings reported in Table 3.

Discussion

Adopting the notion of masculinity ideologies from the gender roles strain paradigm, this study was geared to explore the role of gender in molding masculinity ideologies among adult men and women of Pakistan. The hypothesis that men tend to portray more traditional masculinity ideologies than women, was partially supported. Male privilege and power or MPP and restricted emotionality or RE were significantly higher in men than women, which we believe was the reason for an overall increase in scores on masculinity

ideologies among men compared to women as depicted by both mean comparison and point biserial correlations (see table 2 and 3). These findings are in consonance with findings when gender differences were observed with US and Russian samples where men on the whole held more traditional masculinity ideologies than women (Levant et al., 2003). Masculinity ideologies about traditional roles and responsibilities or TRR and avoiding effeminacy or AE were not different between men and women. On the other hand, findings for no difference also highlight that traditional roles and responsibilities and avoiding effeminacy are well internalized aspects for both men and women.

Importantly, religions' role is predominant when it comes to traditional roles and responsibilities. Being front line responsibility taker, role of protector and provider as conceptualized in current research goes well with religion's commands (The Quran, n.d., 4:34) that can be considered an important reason for affirming to this particular ideology equally by men and women. Then avoidance of femininity as purported by literature (David & Brannon, 1976; Neilson et al., 2020; Thompson & Bennett, 2017) also stands firm in the minds of Pakistani men and women who believe that masculinity is about staying away from physical and behavioral attributes that are feminine in nature, as purported in current study. This is so because feminine aspects in men are thought to be a depiction of subordinate masculinity (Aurat Foundation, 2016) and men are harshly questioned on any such depictions (Haroon, 2021). The greatest evidence for avoiding effeminacy notion are its ties to one being intersex or Hijra on incidence of anything feminine in men that is well rooted in Pakistani culture (Channa & Tahir, 2020).

Then, differences in masculinity ideologies were significant on male privilege and power domain, where men have portrayed more traditional ideologies. It is conceptualized in terms of lent liberty, food and finances related privileges, and power endowed to men over women especially within domains of sexuality and finances. Within the Pakistani culture men have been

the recipient of preferential treatment whether it is the arrival of a baby boy, their food, clothing, education, or for that matter the choice of marital partner (Khan & Reza, 1998). This specialized treatment is thought to confer men with power and thus contributes to gender differentials within the social spheres. This lent power thus gives way to gender discriminatory practices (Ali et al., 2022). Power and privilege based ideologies thus are less favored by women.

Research from Pakistan also indicates about firm internalization of patriarchy (Ali et al., 2022; Salam, 2022). The associated enigma is that these interpretations are mistakenly thought to be derived from religion. Because of existing power differentials many women in Pakistan does not know about their rights (Ali et al., 2022) that rationalizes traditional stance put up by women. Thus, the existing patriarchy is sustained by keeping up the polarities between both sexes, authority of men is being retained through a complex interplay of economic, political, social, and religious processes and structures in Pakistan (Tabassum, 2016). Likewise, it has been said that there is more room for flexibility in gender roles within gender egalitarian contexts but situation is much rigid in an opposite context (Tahir et al., 2021). The world of technology though has created awareness about rights and status of women, specially the wave of feminism that has challenged the existing patriarchy (Riaz, 2020). Since women seem to be more informed by virtue of internet and social media forums, thus they have endorsed less traditional ideologies in a domain where men supersedes them. On a positive side, men are also in process of learning about the gender inequality (Salam, 2022). Likewise, it is important to mention that holding such ideologies might not be the choice of men in educated circles but the socialization practices propel men to attain privileges and exercise power.

The explored gender differences have also been found to be significant for restricted emotionality where again men are seen to hold more traditional ideologies. Importantly, this gender difference has indicated to have a large sized effect. Restricted emotionality is

conceptualized in terms of keeping the vulnerable emotions undisclosed and refraining from mourning or crying publically. Here, it can be witnessed that men's internalizations of abiding by the cultural norms of not revealing their emotions, sticking to a popular command encountered during upbringing of a male child, that is, 'men don't cry' (Hussain et al., 2015; Robertson & Shepard, 2008). Adding to this, previous research has documented that incidence of powerless emotions more among women and men are seen to display powerful emotions (Fischer et al., 2004). Keeping this in perspective, women who themselves show weak emotions have endorsed restricted emotionality in men to a lesser extent. The idea behind such expectations is that men should portray themselves as strong to qualify for the performance of assigned roles and responsibilities. This expectation is not there from women who are thought to be inherently weak (Hussain et al., 2015).

Bringing in perspective the gender role strain paradigm, traditional masculinity depictions are expected from men and they are charged more strongly for not fulfilling the devised expectations as compared to women (Pleck as cited in Levant & Powell, 2017; Khan & Reza, 1998; Salam, 2022). In view of this theoretical model, the normative standards serve to put strain in the minds of men to tune themselves according to these said expectations. As, mentioned earlier, that even if men want to stay away from prescribed model of masculinity they can't because of actual or implied pressure of culturally rooted masculinity ideologies.

Conclusion and Implications

Study findings clue that in view of the strain put up by masculinity ideals of Pakistani culture, men hold more traditional ideologies about male privilege and power and restricted emotionality than women. Women being their partners in the social system have also endorsed traditional masculinity ideologies but less traditional for not being the actors themselves, and for that matter not the direct bearer of the strain. Therefore there is a need to create gender sensitization/awareness about the strain held by men so that socialization pattern can work to minimize the strain.

Education of actors themselves (men) is thus not sufficient rather different socialization agents including parents, teachers, books, and media have to join hands for collaborative efforts in the process.

Declaration

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interests.

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Ethical approval and consent to participate

Ethical protocols were strictly adhered while execution of this study and evaluation of ethical protocol was conducted by an institutional review committee. Consent form was thoroughly evaluated by research supervisor and data collection proceeded only for those participants who were willing to participate.

Availability of data and materials

Data that serves to support study findings is available with corresponding author and can be made available on request.

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