A Comparative Study on Toxic Masculinity among Adolescent and Adult Male Populations in Kerala

Keziya R. Chitteth

M.Sc. Forensic Psychology, Guest Lecturer (PG Department of Psychology) – Nirmala Arts and Science College, Mulanthuruthy, Email ID: keziyarchitteth@gmail.com

ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
	Toxic masculinity refers to the rigid and harmful expectations placed on men to embody dominance, emotional suppression, aggression, and physical strength, often leading to negative outcomes for both men and women. These socially constructed norms, which have their origins in historical, cultural, and media influences, continue to form male identities in contemporary culture. It is necessary to comprehend how these toxic standards operate across age groups in order to address their consequences on relationships, social behaviour, and mental health. This study of male adolescents (ages 13 to 24) and adults (ages 25 and up) in Kerala looks at the four primary components of toxic masculinity: physical appearance and form, emotional aspect, aggressive behaviour, and dominance with risk-taking. Purposive sampling was employed to survey 100 participants using the Male Body Attitudes Scale (MBAS) and the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI-30). The results demonstrated a significant correlation between aggressive behaviour and age, with adult males displaying higher levels of violence than teenagers. However, there were no appreciable differences in appearance, emotional repression, or dominance and risk-taking based on age. The findings indicate that while the prevalence of violence increases with age, many toxic masculine norms remain constant. This emphasizes how critical it is to

resist these social pressures in order to promote healthy gender norms and male well-being

INTRODUCTION

"We have set, an unfair and unachievable standard, and in trying to live up to it, many men are slowly killing themselves. We have to move far beyond our outdated ideas of masculinity and get past our very ideas about what being a man is. We have to start seeing men as innately so, with no need to prove who they are, to themselves or anyone else." -Kali Holloway

Throughout the past years, there has always been a consensus about how men are supposed to behave, how they must appear masculine physically, mentally and emotionally. Even though these believes are now being identified as toxic, until recently, people believed that this was how men were supposed to be and they were type casted as pre-eminent or predominant. These feeling of representing men as a more superior or dominant gender and the belief that they must attain this dominance through violence has led to the creation of a pestilential society. This pressure of dominance on the male population have brought into the limelight the term, "toxic masculinity". Thus, this study discusses about the toxic beliefs and expectations of society about men and how they are pressurized to full fill these expectations.

1.1 History

Women are often depicted as passive and men as active.' 'Women are expected to submit to authority and not to challenge it. Violence is often used to enforce this submission.. Thus, there existed a patriarchal society even from the biblical era in which men were considered superior to women.

There were typical representations of how males were expected to present themselves to society in the early Victorian era. The perilous expectations that still govern today were borne out of the shifting ideas of masculinity that emerged in the late nineteenth century. Victorian culture emphasised physical prowess in a variety of ways, including game worship and musculoskeletal Christianity. Men needed to be physically fit in order to battle and protect the British Empire. The poems by Rudyard Kipling encourage stoicism, which is a commonly held belief that boys don't weep and that males are frequently portrayed as logical and emotionless. (Hoekema, 1986)

Women were first accepted into the public sphere and engaged in wartime operations during World War II. Through their efforts as nurses, female military auxiliary, ambulance drivers, agricultural workers, and manufacturing employees, women assisted the war effort and the men serving their country in uniform. They were praised in addition for their unsung bravery in preserving the house, nevertheless. The tasks and social obligations that women had before the war altered as the war came to an end. Women who took on roles that had previously been performed by males were more likely to be allowed for deviating from gender norms than men who did the same. The return of men to the traditionally male occupations after war and the return of women to the household, forced men to return to the state in which the gender norms existed before the war. Society believed that men must assert this dominance through violence. (jobbins, 2017)

When the mythopoetic men's movement first appeared in the 1980s, the phrase "toxic masculinity" entered common usage. Widespread social and intellectual interest in gender issues has been sparked by feminism. Books on manhood and masculinity that were sparked by feminist rhetoric and political upheaval seemed to be addressing a crisis of masculinity. In the 1990s, a brand-new literary genre geared at men emerged, frequently drawing inspiration from Mircea Eliade's work on initiation from the history of religion, Joseph Campbell's writings on mythology, and Carl Gustav Jung's theoretical notion of universal archetypes. American authors who work in the category include Robert Moore, Douglas Gillette, Sam Keen, and John Lee, although some have countered that these depend so heavily upon Bly's ideas, that they may be considered as simple elaborations of the paradigm expressed by Bly. (Tosh, 1993)

1.2 The Fare Share by Literature and Media

Television and the representation of the preconceived or predefined picture of what a "true man" is meant to look like are primarily to blame for the influence of toxic masculinity in the 21st century. Popular culture, including music, movies, books, and television shows, is a good example of this. Hegemonic masculinity clichés, such as the idea that men have inherent, acquired, and natural power, are challenged as new regulations are established. However, a fresh and modern interpretation of masculinity is gradually taking shape, mostly as a result of the growth of feminism.

In order to promote gender equality, feminism has become more popular than ever, questioning long-held beliefs about male virility. Beauty standards, which change based on fashion, reflect the society of the time, and some men are praised for embracing their femininity. This trend coincides with the rise of feminism, influencing the male standards enacted by the consumer society, freeing them from the alienating mechanisms of toxic masculinity. (Miranda, 2016)

The eradication of toxic masculinity in men and the empowerment of women go hand in hand. Males who adhere to toxic masculinity's created ideal are held to unattainable standards, making them harmful to both themselves and others. It results from the idea that men have a right to authority and entitlement while those who don't conform to stereotypical gender roles are weak and inferior. The term "toxic masculinity" has been used to characterise masculine behaviours that appears unpleasant or antisocial, such as being committed to their work, supporting their family, showing interest in male-dominated sports, and acting in conformity with societal norms. (Kummer, 2019)

1.3 Definition

Toxic masculinity refers to harmful masculine behaviors and ideals—such as dominance, emotional suppression, and rigid gender conformity—that negatively affect both men's mental health and societal gender equality. Rooted in historical notions of power and dominance, these norms are reinforced through cultural myths and social structures, but are gradually being challenged as societies move toward balance and inclusivity. (Sanday, 1982)

As society progresses, men and women face similar challenges, leading to an increasing convergence of their behaviours. The modern workplace and society at large are increasingly recognizing the similarities between men and women in terms of their emotional expression and sensitivity, which is a positive outcome of the ongoing movement towards gender equality.

These toxic standards set up by the society are characterized into different dimensions. They include:

• Appearance / physical form: these include the physical attributes, standard norms set up by the society for men. This represents a body image that the society defines as being masculine. They believe that men are supposed to look a certain way in order for them to appear 'manly'. The men are expected to be strong build, muscular and tall. They are also being pressurized to attain this body image. The existence of this stigmatized believes are measured and the pressure to appear so, is studied in this dimension. While most men may be OK with their weight on average, one recent study on body image issues and males has concentrated on muscularity (McCreary, 2012). According to Edwards et al. (2014), muscularity is the degree to which a person's muscles are developed and is a major cause of men's body dissatisfaction

• Dominancy and risk-taking: men are forced to appear dominant and superior to women. They, as said by society, must hold power over women both physically and mentally. They are expected to be the decision makers and hence are responsible for the consequences that come with it. Men are expected to

compulsorily have a job and become the earning members of the family. They are forced to be the breadwinners of the family, thus putting immense pressure on them.

• Violent behaviour: men, to ascertain their masculine character, show violent behaviour. Anti-social behaviour is adopted by such men. They aim to attain dominancy over women by showing this violent behaviour

• Emotional: It is believed that men who show their vulnerabilities or emotions overtly are cowardly and unmanly. Hence, men tend to suppress vulnerable emotions and feelings so as not to depict their so-called 'weak' attributes. In fear of being judged for expressing their emotionally vulnerable thoughts, men tend to hide them, thus promoting a toxic standard that men are not supposed to tarnish the perceived masculine status. Men, therefore, prefer emotional detachment rather than talking about these emotional thoughts. The study analyzes these feelings of emotional detachment in men.

1.4 Scope of the Study:

Media plays a major role in shaping and reinforcing toxic masculinity, normalizing harmful standards like anti-femininity, dominance, and violence. These norms contribute to academic struggles, health risks, emotional repression, and increased involvement of men in crime and violence, often learned from family and societal interaction. (Rivera, 2020)

Toxic masculinity harms both women, by reinforcing patriarchal violence, and men, by restricting emotional and social well-being through rigid stereotypes. Given Kerala's unique socio-demographic context and the lack of research on this issue, studying toxic masculinity here is both timely and essential.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Historical Accounts on Toxic Masculinity

Traditional masculinity becomes toxic when rigid standards are imposed on men, causing harm to both genders, and its roots trace back to patriarchal dominance and the oppression of women since biblical times. The Bible, particularly the Old Testament, is often cited as reinforcing these ideals by portraying women primarily as victims and excluding them from societal influence. (Hoekema, 1986)

In the Victorian era, masculinity was closely tied to strength, athleticism, and ideals like games-worship in schools and muscular Christianity, promoted by writers such as Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes. These cultural expectations of manliness laid the groundwork for the unrealistic physical and emotional

standards of masculinity that persist today, reflected in modern ideals like superhero figures. (Siddique, 2023)

Late Victorian masculinity emphasized physical fitness and stoicism to prepare men for defending the empire, as reflected in Kipling's *If…* (1895), and these ideals persist today in the expectation that men remain rational and unemotional. (Jobbins, 2017)

While masculine norms existed earlier, World War I intensified expectations that physically and emotionally dominant men should fight, reinforcing war as a male-dominated institution; though women have participated, men have historically been the main organizers of violence, with war fostering a culture of cruelty and aggression among them. (Slim, 2018)

World War I propaganda glorified combat as a masculine duty, but the brutal realities of trench warfare, injuries, and psychological trauma soon shattered these ideals. While soldiers were initially celebrated as heroes, the war ultimately forced society to confront the physical and mental toll of modern warfare, challenging traditional notions of manliness and heroism. (Herringer, 2018)

During World War II, women entered public and military spheres in large numbers, taking on roles from nursing to factory work, though their efforts were often framed as temporary contributions. While some women sought to keep these new opportunities after the war, male rejection of traditional roles—such as becoming conscientious objectors—was far less tolerated, as it directly challenged prevailing ideals of masculinity. (Grayzel, 2014)

The return of men to the traditionally male occupations, after war and the return of women to the household forced men to return to the state in which the gender norms existed before the war. They were now forced to work and become the breadwinners of the family thus asserting a dominance over women. Society in this era believed that the men must ascertain this dominance if not directly, then through violence.

2.2 Impact of Toxic Masculinity on Mental Health

Men often face strong stigma around mental health, with masculine norms discouraging help-seeking and contributing to underreporting of issues like depression, which affects an estimated 10–40% of men. Among university students, this is linked to poor coping strategies, low mental health literacy, and reluctance to seek professional support, a pattern connected to toxic masculinity as outlined in the 2018 APA Guidelines. (Harrington, 2021)

In a study conducted on a sample of adolescent boys, institutional expectations of masculinity were linked to heightened anxiety and emotional distress, largely due to looming societal consequences for deviating from traditional masculine norms (Haywood, 2012). Specific traditional masculine norms such as emotional detachment were also found to create barriers to seeking professional help for mental health issues in boys (J. P. Wisdom, 2007). Increased adherence to traditional masculine norms is associated with decreased mental well-being (e.g., higher depression and anxiety) and less help-seeking behaviors in adult men. (Harrington, 2021)

Research shows that adherence to traditional masculine norms predicts low health literacy, poor help-seeking, and higher risks of depression and suicide, with men under 45 especially vulnerable. The stigma around expressing emotions pushes many men toward harmful coping strategies like aggression, substance use, and risk-taking, highlighting the need for further cross-cultural research on masculinity's impact on mental health. (Maher, 2022)

According to a study done on prisoners, research on male victims' rights, psychiatric services, and support networks lags more than 20 years behind that of female victims. The fact that there are relatively few police records of male victims reporting their assaults is one explanation for this. The idea that males cannot be victims of sexual assault and that there are very few male victims of sexual assault is another factor contributing to this. (Rogers, 2006)

Gender identity problems are as likely to affect adult male victims as addictions, anxiety disorders, and psychiatric illnesses. They no longer understand what it is to be a man, which is the reason for this. (Edwards, 2012)

2.3 Impact of Media

Modern media often reinforces toxic masculinity through television and film, with shows like *The Sopranos*, *Breaking Bad*, and *Mad Men* glorifying problematic male ideals, while auteur theory continues to privilege male-dominated notions of "quality." Popular culture icons such as James Bond and Kabir Singh further normalize hegemonic masculinity, though newer films like *Call Me by Your Name* challenge these norms by presenting emotionally expressive men. Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* remake also reframes toxic masculinity as a learned behavior shaped by upbringing. With feminism and movements like #MeToo, evolving beauty standards have embraced figures like Harry Styles and Timothée Chalamet as symbols of redefined masculinity. Punjabi music videos exemplify the persistence of female devaluation, but digital spaces also provide opportunities for resistance and empowerment.

Similarly, feminist critiques of the *Twilight* series highlight its regressive gender portrayals, particularly Bella Swan's submissive characterization, despite its commercial appeal to women. (Albrecht, You wonder ever, 2020). (Sculos, 2017)

2.4 The Indian Scenario

In India films like Kabir Singh, Kuch Kuch hota hain, Badrinath Ki Dulhaniya promote depiction of male heroes who achieve what they desire through violence and dominancy. The most alarming fact is that the society especially young girls praise this kind of attitude and paints the picture of an ideal man in their mind who is tough, strong encouraging violent attitudes, suppressing emotions or distress. Whereas movies like Ki and Ka promote the idea of equality and destruction of the image of gender identity or predetermined gender roles. In the film, while Kia (Kareena) is the breadwinner, Kabir (Arjun) takes care of the daily household affairs. He makes a brave choice, just like Pankaj Tripathi did. When Tripathi was struggling in Mumbai to become an actor, his wife, a teacher would work while he would take care of the household chores along with giving auditions.

Parvathy B.M. in her research on Toxic masculinity, encroaching the boundaries of Female Body? A Critique of the Subversion of Gender Politics in Select Cinematic Texts states that "the attempts made by the contemporary movies such as Thappad (2020) directed by Anubhav Sinha and Chhapaak (2020) directed by Meghna Gulzar, to subvert and deconstruct the canonical versions of the hegemonic patriarchal traditions. Through the evolvement of Amrita (Taapsee Pannu) and Malti (Deepika Padukone) out of the confinements of patriarchy, the study demands the need of an evolution of the feminine selves, which indeed becomes a revolution in the human perceptions regarding gender as a mere social construct and not as an inherited, biological element." (Parvathy, 2021)

2.5 Influence of Social Media on Toxic Masculinity

Social media amplifies toxic masculinity by enabling hostile and anonymous interactions, with men adhering to such norms more likely to engage in negative online debates. Research shows these negative interactions are linked to higher levels of depression and mood disturbances among men. (Harris, 2021)

Furthermore, toxic masculinity may be seen in popular films and television series that are watched by men (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009). It was found in research of the presence of toxic masculinity in several teen television programmes that according to a study by 15, 36.8% of the show's viewers watched exhibited traits associated with toxic masculinity, including physical aggression in 17% of scenes, mockery of feminine behaviours in 0.7% of scenes, the repression of vulnerable emotions in 7% of

scenes, and intolerance of homosexuality in 0.9% of scenes. Additionally, it was claimed that characters that displayed physical hostility and avoided being feminine were seldom reprimanded or held responsible for their actions (Roberts, 2019)

2.6 Gender Schema Theory

Carol L. Martin, Charles F. Halverson, and Sandra L. Bem.

A cognitive theory called the gender schema theory employs an information processing strategy to describe how gender development takes place. It is founded on a cognitive representation known as a schema, an organising framework that aids in the simplification and classification of incoming information. There are two different kinds of gender-related schemas: the general "superordinate" schema, which teaches kids how to divide things, traits, and qualities into simple male and female categories, and the more specific "own-sex" schema, which enables kids to recognise and learn in-depth information consistent with their own sex.

Information that doesn't fit the gender schema is ignored, while information that does is processed. Gender schemas influence the types of information that are observed, encoded, and recalled. Additionally, studies have shown that gender schemas might influence kids' preferences for toys and playmates. According to gender schema theory, children actively analyse information, and the gender schemas that shape their thinking also affect how they behave. The insight it offers regarding the upkeep and influence of gender ideas is the gender schema theory's key strength.

The majority of gender-related problems that adolescents encounter during adolescence are influenced by a confluence of cultural, interpersonal, cognitive-motivational, and biological variables. Much of the study on gender-related challenges that young people experience throughout adolescence is based on ethnic majority young people in Western countries, like many other psychological areas. Research on ethnic minorities in Western societies and on cultures from other regions of the world has been less extensive. It is essential to remember that cultural context plays a critical role in comprehending both the experiences of teenagers in general and gender-related issues in particular. Hence this leads to instilling in minds of children, how people belonging to each gender are supposed to behave and that if they are violating any of these norms they are inappropriate. (Carol Lynn Martin and Charles F. Halverson, 1981)

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aim:

The study aims to explain the existence of stigmas and stereotypical believes about how men are supposed to behave. The study aimed to focus on the physical, behavioural and emotional aspects of the men in the two age groups in Kerala

3.2 Objective

•   The study understands the influence of toxic masculinity among two different age groups of men in Kerala.

•   The study intends to compare the characteristics of toxic masculinity in two different age groups of men in Kerala.

The objective for the identification of the association between the aspects of toxic masculinity and age is to understand the influence of toxic masculinity in each age group.

3.3 Variables

The independent variable used in the study is age. The age variable is divided into two groups Adolescent male aged between 13-24 and adult male aged between 25 and above. The dependent variables used in the study are derived from the conformity to masculine scale and they are Appearance/ Physical form, Dominance and Risk-taking, Violent behaviour and Emotional aspect.

3.4 Research Question

Q1: Toxic masculinity with respect to the stigma based on appearance and physical form is more among adolescents.

Q2: Toxic masculinity with respect to the stigma on emotional aspect is more among adolescents.

Q3: Toxic masculinity with respect to the stigma of violent behavior is more among adults.

Q4: Toxic masculinity with respect to the stigma of dominancy and risk-taking is more among adults.

3.5 Research Design

The research is a psychology-based empirical study on the influence of age on toxic masculine standards. It focuses on various societal norms and standards of the physical and mental depiction of the 'ideal' male body. The study is exploratory in nature as there have been not much literature and study conducted on toxic masculinity the Indian scenario.

3.5.1 Universe

The universe of the study conducted was the city of Kochi, Kerala. The participants were the male population which was divided into two age groups that are 13 to 24 (adolescent male population) and 25 and above (adult male population).

3.5.2 Sampling Technique

- In order to collect the data, the male population was selected. The geographical area was restricted to the city of Kochi (Kerala, India)

- The study was conducted among adolescent boys, that is the male population in education (attending schools or colleges or otherwise) and adult men, who are in any field of work or study.

- The sample population was divided into two age groups that are, adolescent and young males from age group 13 to 24 and adult males of the population 25 and above.

- The method of purposive sampling (non-probability sampling) was used for data collection. Purposive sampling refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected because they have characteristics that you need in your sample. In other words, units are selected "on purpose" in purposive sampling.

3.5.3 Sample

The sample size collected was 100. Among the 100 samples collected 50 were from the age category 13 to 24 and the rest 50 were from the age category 25 and above (data was collected till age 40)

3.6 Tool Used in Data Collection and Analysis

The data required for the study is collected through the questionnaire method. The sample population is given a series of questions with respect to each factor associated with toxic masculine depictions and images, such as emotional aspect, physical factors, violent behaviour, dominancy and risk-taking. The desired data was collected from schools, colleges and workplaces in Kochi.

The questionnaires used for the data collection were the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI-30) Scale and the Male Body Attitude Scale.

3.6.1 Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI 30)

The Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI), developed by Mahalik et al. (2003), is a reliable tool for assessing how strongly men conform to traditional Western masculine norms and values. It measures behaviors, attitudes, and feelings across multiple domains such as emotional control, dominance, status-seeking, and risk-taking. A shortened version of the CMNI (Levant et al., 2020) was later created to provide a more concise assessment while still capturing key aspects of masculinity. In the study referenced, a condensed 30-item version focusing on three selected attributes was used to streamline the survey format.

Reliability and Validity

The Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI) has demonstrated strong reliability and adaptability across cultures, age groups, and biological sexes, with meta-analytic evidence showing that it remains a robust tool for assessing masculine norms despite slight variations in reliability over time, making it valuable for cross-cultural and longitudinal research on gender and masculinity. (Kivisalu, King, Phillips, & O'Toole, 2014)

3.6.2 Male Body Attitude Scale

The Male Body Attitudes Scale (MBAS; Tylka, Bergeron, & Schwartz, 2005) is a psychometrically sound tool designed to measure men's body image across three key domains: muscularity, low body fat, and height. It assesses satisfaction or dissatisfaction with specific body parts, overall body image, and concerns about appearance. Originally a 29-item questionnaire, 10 items were selected for the study based on relevant aspects and attributes.

Reliability and Validity

The MBAS showed strong construct validity and high internal consistency ($\alpha > .80$) across three studies with college-aged men, confirming it as a reliable and stable tool for assessing men's body image concerns in height, leanness, and muscularity. (Tylka, 2005)

3.7 Limitations

The universe of the study is limited. The study was conducted with limited geographical jurisdiction and hence the data collected cannot be generalized for a specific society. The sample size is also one other limitation as the data had to be collected in the stipulated time there were only 100 samples collected. This sample is not adequate enough to understand the gender trends that exist in society due to toxic

masculinity. There is a lack of literature review on toxic masculinity especially when considering India hence there is an insufficiency in reliable and dependable data and questionnaire schedules.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Frequency Table

Table 1: Age of Respondents

Age of Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
13-24	50	50
25 and above	50	50

Table 1 illustrates the age of the respondents. The results shows that 50% of the respondents belongs to the age group 13-24 years. Similarly, 50% of the respondents belong to the age group 25 years and above.

4.2 Mean

Table 2: Mean of Age of Respondents

Age of respondents	Frequency	Mean
13-24	50	18.88
25 and above	50	22.82

The data shows that respondents were equally distributed between the two age groups, with 50 participants in each category. The mean age of those in the 13–24 group was 18.88 years, indicating that most were in their late teens. Meanwhile, the mean age in the 25 and above group was 22.82 years, which appears slightly inconsistent with the category label and may suggest that the majority of respondents in this group were only slightly older than 25.

4.3 T-Test for Equality of Means

Table 3. Appearance And Physical Form

	T-test	Level Of Significance
Equal		0.306

Variances Assumed	
Equal Variances Not Assumed	0.306

Table illustrates the level of significance between the age of the respondents and appearance and physical form. The results shows that there is no variation in the stigma on appearance and physical form among adolescents and adults.

Table 4. Violent Behaviour

T-test	**Level of Significance**
Equal variances assumed	0.001
Equal variances not assumed	0.001

Table illustrates the level of significance between the age of the respondents and violent behaviour. The results shows that adults (Age group – 25 and above) (Mean=22.82) have more statistically significant violent behaviour than adolescents.

Table 5. Emotional Aspect

T-test	**Level of Significance**
Equal Variances assumed	0.798
Equal Variances not assumed	0.798

Table illustrates the level of significance between the age of the respondents and the emotional aspect. The results shows that there is no variations in the stigma on emotional aspect among adolescents and adults. In accordance with the study conducted it was found that the emotional aspect of an individual does not have direct association with the age of the individual.

Table 6. Dominancy And Risk Taking

T-test	Level of Significance
Equal variance assumed	0.085
Equal variance not assumed	0.087

Table illustrates the level of significance between the age of the respondents and the Dominancy and risk-taking. The results shows that there is no variations in the stigma on Dominancy and risk taking among adolescents and adults.

4.4 Discussion

Violent Behaviour

This study indicates that stigma surrounding violent behavior has a stronger impact on adult men than adolescents, with Indian research supporting the prevalence of domestic violence among adult males. Men raised in violent households are more likely to exert violence on their spouses compared to those from non-violent families, as violence is often used to assert dominance and reinforce socially defined masculinity. These behaviors, rooted in family and societal influences, align with gender schema theory, where toxic traits are observed, encoded, and reproduced. While differences in other aspects of toxic masculinity by age exist, the data shows they are not statistically significant.

Emotional Aspect

Toxic masculine norms, such as suppressing emotions and avoiding help-seeking, were found to persist across age groups without significant variation. While some studies suggest older adults have poorer emotional well-being, this study concludes there is no link between age and stigma around emotional expression, disproving the idea that it is more prevalent among adolescents.

Appearance and Physical Form

Research shows that body dissatisfaction is a widespread issue among men, with 68% to 95% of adult males in the U.S. unhappy with their muscle mass, body fat, or both. Teenage boys also report concerns, particularly regarding muscularity, reflecting how deeply these ideals are tied to toxic masculine norms. However, studies using measures like the Appearance Evaluation Scale and Body Areas Satisfaction Scale reveal that dissatisfaction does not vary significantly with age. The findings from this study confirm that there is no direct relationship between age and stigma on appearance or physical form. Thus, the research disproves the idea that such stigma is more prevalent among adolescents. (Galioto, 2013) (Quittkat, 2019)

Dominancy and Risk Taking

Toxic masculinity, tied to dominance, often drives men toward extreme behaviors like aggression, risky driving, gambling, and substance use, which are seen as ways to prove manhood. While adolescents engage in risk-taking due to heightened sensation-seeking around puberty, adults may do so for social acceptance, often influenced by peer pressure. However, this study found no significant age-based differences in risk-taking or dominant behaviors. Thus, it disproves the research question that these traits of toxic masculinity are more common among adults.

4.5 Major Findings

- The data analysed shows that there is statistically significant association between the stigma on violent behaviour and age. The stigma on violent behaviour is indicative that most of the men in the two age groups portray a sense of violence with connection to masculine norms that states that a sense of 'manliness' can only be attained through violence.,

- The data analysed shows that there is no significant association with the stigma on appearance and physical form and age. (p>0.05).

- The data analysed shows that there is no significant association with the stigma on emotional aspect and age. (p>0.05)

- The data analysed shows that there is no significant association with stigma on dominancy and risk taking and age. ($p > 0.05$).

4.6 Conclusion

Age is the variable used in this study to compare results of the two age groups. The opinion of individual on toxic masculinity and their personal experience and the influences need not vary different age groups. Adolescent boys may not be aware about the effects of such toxic beliefs but this is not the case with adult males. Even if exposure of young adult males are more in comparison to such toxic environment they may not be aware about the ill effects this toxic mindset can bring but in contrary adult males realize the impact of these toxic believes and hence might easily get affected by them. The study suggests that certain aspect of toxic masculinity that is the violent behaviour has association with toxic masculinity whereas there is no significant connection between other aspects of toxic masculinity and age namely, appearance and physical form, emotional aspect and dominancy and risk taking. Each of the attributes of the study is more or less connected to each other and can be the causative factor for the other.

The prejudiced and judgmental attitude of the society toward men is harmful to the society and also for the upcoming generation. "The definition of masculinity" should not be what the society defines instead it must be up to each and every man and this might be different for different men. It should never be forced upon them. Let men be who they are.

For this to be possible the society must be free of gender biasing and all genders must be considered one and the same. The existence of these toxic society, toxic environment and toxic believes paves a way for this research study. This social evil must be addressed in today's generation. The dimensions discussed help develop an understanding about the influence of each factor or elements of toxic masculinity in each individual.

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