

Toxic Masculinity: Negative Attitudes Towards Gender-Based Professions

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Abstract

Masculinity is a male characteristic in men which is not externally innate but is shaped by the culture in which one lives. Due to societal stigma, men have to do manly jobs or professions to be seen as complete men. Excessive stigma against traditional masculinity also gives rise to toxic masculinity, which is a social norm that considers how men should behave based on existing standards of traditional masculinity. on local culture. This research aims to analyze the impact and solutions for negative attitudes towards gender-based professions. The method used in this research is a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with two adult male participants who work across gender. The research results show that the phenomenon of toxic masculinity has an impact on men who are victims of masculinity. However, this can be minimized for victims by developing personal abilities, focusing on goals and getting support from the closest environment

Keywords: Gender Roles, Patriarchal Culture, Toxic Masculinity



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INTRODUCTION

According to (Supriyadi & Prayoga, 2022) states that masculinity is a sexual quality that connects a man's virility. According to Kimmel and Aronson (Jarratt, 2024; Pérez, 2024; Soto-Sanfiel & Sánchez-Soriano, 2024). that masculinity is behavior, social roles and certain meanings associated with men at certain times. Meanwhile, according to Connell, masculinity

involves physical, character and cultural experiences carried out by men and women which are referred to as gender relations. states that masculinity is a male characteristic in men which is not externally innate but is shaped by the culture in which one lives. Then the concept of traditional masculinity emerged, namely that the concept of traditional masculinity has the values of power, independence, strength, action, fortitude, male solidarity, work and self-satisfaction (Blockett, Hutchings, Brown, & Patton Davis, 2024; Dennie, Macdonald, & Sutherland, 2024; Matic, 2024). Meanwhile, modern masculinity depicts men who are expressive, sensitive, caring and able to do household work, but each culture has different understandings of the concept of masculinity due to differences in cultural ideology and history that shape the concept of gender.

According to Connell (Clue, 2024; Hatendi, 2024; Schüßler, 2024) the emergence of the masculine is due to the absence of comparison with the concept of the feminine, which are two opposing understandings. Then there are two concepts that become the definition of masculinity, namely first, positivist about the true meaning of men based on psychology in the logic of a feminine or masculine scale and second, namely the definition or meaning from experts which is the core of the definition of masculine, such as masculine criteria, namely having aggression, taking risks, being responsible and having the energy of Zeus.

More assumptions or stigma towards traditional masculinity also give rise to toxic masculinity or unhealthy masculinity, which is a social norm that considers how men should behave based on traditional standards of masculinity found in local culture, which can affect men's mental health in expressing emotions (Beyer, 2024; Darvin, Gray, Baker, Wells, & Holden, 2024; Qiao, 2024). The term toxic masculinity was pioneered by a psychologist named Shepherd Bliss in 1990, according to him toxic masculinity is used to distinguish and separate positive and negative values from men and in his research there are negative impacts of masculinity which can damage men's lives (Nadira, Danadharta, & Ayoda, 2024). For example, sigma in society "men don't cry" because sad emotions shown in crying behavior indicate feminine traits that tend to be gentle, loving and motherly. Another sigma example is "men shouldn't be in the kitchen" (Arvan, 2024; Poucke, 2024; Twine, 2024). Therefore, this is a previous assumption that cooking work is only done by women, as in the Javanese repertoire, women's perfection is "*macak*" (dressing up), "*manak*" (giving birth/producing offspring) & "*masak*" (cooking), while men's perfection is "*griya*" (house), "*turangga*" (horse), "*wanita*" (woman), "*kukila*" (bird), and "*curiga*" (kris). Then toxic masculinity has a forming factor, namely the social norm which is the standard by which a man can be accepted as masculine or manly if he meets the social norm that men are patriarchal, which means that the role of leadership lies with men.

In this modern era, you often find men in jobs that are usually dominated by women in various fields, such as designers, Make Up Artists (MUA), chefs and other domestic jobs. These professions sometimes give rise to toxic masculinity which can damage men's lives where society expects that men have power and strength. In the results of an online survey by the New Men's Alliance and Pulih Foundation in 2018 in Jabodetabek, there were no problems with the division of roles, especially in domestic roles (Close, 2024; Deslippe, Middleton, Wu, Bergeron, & Cohen, 2024; Williams, Rock, & Lim, 2024). The number of male respondents was 397 with an age range of 15-40 years and the results showed that 97% of respondents were able to do domestic work. Therefore, sharing roles in domestic work is not a wrong job, but is a positive thing that needs to be passed on to the next generation.

Attitudes and changes towards toxic masculinity need to be addressed as an effort to improve mental health by changing the way of thinking about traditional masculinity to be able

to express emotions openly and eliminate unhealthy masculinity values, as well as showing support and empathy for men who experience bad conditions (Anidi, 2024; Kennedy-Kollar, 2024; Pearson, 2024; Prayitno, Norman, Annisya, Sulistyorini, & Fibrianto, 2024). There is not enough research on toxic masculinity in Indonesia. Toxic masculinity needs to be studied further, regarding the negative stigma in society regarding the majority of men regarding work that is usually done by women, as well as the impact felt on victims of toxic masculinity. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the impact and solutions for negative attitudes towards gender-based professions.

Gender Role Concept

According to Myers (1996; (Maysarah, 2019) states that gender roles are norms formed from various cultural variations and certain time periods of expected behavior for women and men. According to (Kachel, Bloch, Bosson, Lorenz, & Steffens, 2024; Mkwanzani & Nathane-Taulela, 2024; Webster, 2024) the negative consequences of gender roles for a person, which arise when the socialization of gender roles is rigid, masculine and limited, will result in self-limitation, devaluation and disturbance in men, called gender role conflict.

According to O'neil (2008; (Brahmana, 2020) states that there are factors that result in gender role conflict. Gender role conflict arises when a man perceives a difference between his idealized self-concept and his actual self-concept based on an understanding of masculinity. Furthermore, there are violations of the rules of masculinity roles in society and failure to fulfill gender role rules. As well as deviations from masculinity role norms that arise in gender role conflicts due to traumatic experiences such as being humiliated, restricted, even experiencing violence from other people or doing this to other people. Apart from that, gender role conflict arises when a man is faced with a transition period in his developmental tasks, such as marriage and having children.

Then, according to O'Neil (Luger, 2024; Maloney, Roberts, & Jones, 2024; Yakali, 2024) gender role conflict also results in failure to fulfill masculinity role rules in the form of self-devaluation. Self-devaluation is a deviation from gender role rules regarding masculinity in society which contains negative criticism of oneself and others. The impact of self-devaluation can harm oneself and even others, and can affect a person physically and psychologically, namely: loss of status, personal power, health, family, career and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, gender role conflict has an impact on marital conflict, violence against women, self-esteem, communication problems, substance abuse and can affect a person's mental health, such as the emergence of anxiety, emotional disorders, depression, and even homophobia.

Meanwhile, according to certain figures who discuss things that influence men in gender conflict, such as according to (Brahmana, 2020) states that violations of gender role norms and gender conflict are based on stereotypical gender roles due to ideal and self-concepts real distance

Attitude Change: Cognitive-Affective Consistency Theory

According to Carl Hovland (Pratama, 2016) states that the theory of attitude change is an attitude formed by a person and this attitude changes due to the interaction process, and a person's behavior and attitudes can be influenced by the formation & change of this attitude.

Rosenberg's cognitive-affective consistency theory is one theory of attitude change. This theory discusses a state of consistent attitude related to a person's affective components and cognitive components. If there is a change in one component, it can affect other components, and directly a person's attitude can change. Clarity in the direction of changes in attitudes and behavior will be appropriate if it is connected to the function of attitudes (Subandi & Yessica, 2023).

There are factors that influence changes in a person's behavior, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are in the form of selectivity where this choice is influenced by a person's internal interests or motives. This selective power aims to accept and process influences from the environment. Meanwhile, external factors include interactions with people in the environment (Lutfiana Ambarwati & Zuliastutik, 2022).

In the context of traditional masculinity in this attitude change theory, men are required by masculine norms in society which results in changes in men's attitudes to behave like men. This change in attitude changes their thinking patterns and shapes their behavior, even influencing their affective behavior. For example, men who work in carpentry are required to carry out tasks that require strength and show masculinity. They change their thought patterns as they must behave in order to be in sync with their work and control their feelings and emotions so as not to appear weak like women.

Patriarchal Culture

According to Kamla Bhasin (1996; (Israpil, 2017) states that literally, the word patriarchy comes from the word Patriarch which means "father's authority". Initially, patriarchy was a large household ruled by the power of a particular male ruler, with subordinates consisting of men, women, children, servants and slaves. In its current meaning, patriarchy is a term for men's power in controlling women and there are various ways to make women dominated by men. According to Sylvia Walby (1990; (Usman J., 2022) states that patriarchy is a system of government in which the position of head of the family is held by men to control and regulate society. Within patriarchy itself there is a diversity of definitions which causes problems in developing the theory of patriarchy itself, so that in practice there are slight differences in the method.

In the context of patriarchal culture towards work, the concept of role in traditional sociology is that there are two different roles between men and women, namely where women play more of a socio-emotional role, while men take an active instrumental role (Jalil, A. & Aminah, 2020). The active role of men in this instrumental means that men are the holders of authority who control the search for economic resources and leadership in the family, while women are subordinate and under the control of men (Jalil, A. & Aminah, 2020). Therefore, patriarchal culture indirectly protects women's natural characteristics and improves the function of society in a form of natural evolution.

Therefore, the term patriarchy creates a stigma in society that men should have power and strength over women, one of which is in doing work. In society's stigma, men have to do manly jobs or professions to be seen as completely men, such as working in workshops, repairing roofs, lifting heavy objects and so on. This requires men to always be strong and try not to show their emotions, so as not to deviate from the masculine norms that exist in society.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with the phenomenological method. According to Creswell (Lindner & Vargas, 2024; Maloney, Jones, & Roberts, 2024; Msiza & Msibi, 2024) states that the phenomenological method is a qualitative methodology that requires analysis and description of the experience of a participant's phenomenon in everyday life. This research aims to analyze the impact and solutions of negative attitudes towards gender-based professions.

This research used two adult male participants with cross-gender professions with the initials NM and R. NM lives in the city of Surabaya, was born in 2000, works as an arts and culture teacher at one of Surabaya's public vocational schools, teaches dance and has a side

profession as a Make Up Artist. His last education was S1 majoring in Sendratasik at one of the state campuses in Surabaya (Parke, 2024; Stevens, 2024; Young, 2024). NM's daily activities include teaching at school, practicing dance activities, teaching at studios or arts communities.

Then, another participant with the initials R lives in the city of Surabaya, born in 1994, works in the field of domestic boarding house work in Surabaya. Last education was Madrasah Aliyah. Daily activities include sweeping and mopping the boarding house, washing the boarding house facilities, cooking and looking after the boarding house owner's children.

Data collection through semi-structured interviews with voice notes via WhatsApp. In order to ensure the validity of the data, in this research triangulation was carried out by verifying it with other data. All data collected was analyzed using qualitative coding analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Negative attitudes in gender-based professions are a form of gender role conflict. According to Myers (1996; (Maysarah, 2019) states that gender roles are norms formed from various cultural variations and certain time periods of expected behavior for women and men. Each culture has its own norms regarding the rules of behavior for both women and men. However, in this discussion the focus point is gender role conflict in men. The following are the results of interviews with participants regarding gender role conflicts:

"As for the stigma regarding cross-gender professions, in Indonesia there are generally still a lot of negative views, right sis... well, I myself have also experienced that... why do guys dance and so on? I've experienced that... guys for example... why do guys work as make-up artists and so on, especially what do dance schools want to become of this dance school....." (Interview NM.8/06/23)

Participant 1 has experienced stigma from society regarding gender roles in his profession. People around her think negatively about her hobby and profession as a dance teacher and make-up artist. In the surrounding environment, participant 1 was considered a hobby or profession which made it strange that a man could dance. Also, local people had doubts about the future employment of the Drama Arts, Dance and Music majors.

"In the past... I've been treated like that with different 'iii... why are men like that... iii how come men sweep...cook...take care of children who have boarding houses, little girl...why do men dress up like that...' that's what I got once. Likewise, yesterday I found out that my front neighbor said to me, 'He's a boy, right? How come he's a girl....." (Interview R.6/06/23)

Participant 2 also received a negative stigma from the surrounding environment that it was natural for men not to take care of domestic work such as sweeping and cooking.

One of the causes of gender role conflict is the failure to fulfill masculinity norms in society. For example, in a household, a husband does domestic or housework that is usually done by women. A husband who does domestic work may have an excuse to lighten his wife's work in the household, as it is known that a woman's work in the household is quite heavy if it is done by a woman. The role of domestic work in the West is also called fatherhood or "fatherhood". According to Susan B. Murray (Rifai, Ahmadi, & Rengganis, 2022) states that work in childcare is feminine work that requires gender requirements, if a man or a father

takes care of his child, society considers this to be pathological behavior or a disease that It is suspicious that this stigma reflects traditional masculinity. Meanwhile, according to Ralph LaRose (Darwin, 1999) states that fatherhood is different from the stigma of traditional masculinity, but is a renewal of modern masculinity in the West or what is called evolutionary fatherhood, leading to a division of tasks in domestic work that balances father and mother. Therefore, today, there are still many thoughts that do not think about the positive things about work that involves gender roles. Today's society is still based on traditional masculinity norms which make domestic work carried out by men something that is not in line with it. The stigma of masculinity that exists in society, usually men who work in domestic work receive criticism from other men who adhere to traditional masculinity, therefore it will trigger the emergence of toxic masculinity.

Toxic masculinity requires men not to be gentle and show affection, men must show the expectations of the norms that exist in society towards idealized men. In society's view of traditional masculinity, men have a role of power and leadership which is called patriarchy. The result of this authoritarian attitude from patriarchy shows arbitrary treatment of women and groups governed by men, such as the family. In a study conducted by Fulu & E. Warner (Hasyim, 2017) stated that if men have beliefs about masculinity it will show that they have the ability to lead, be superior and dominate women who have the potential to commit violence and also boys. In adulthood, they will have the potential to commit violence if they become victims of violence or see acts of violence. Therefore, this toxic masculinity behavior leads to negative impacts in the form of sexual harassment and violence.

"I've had things said to me before, sis... I used to think... how come I'm different... and I used to take that person's words to my heart, sis, until I felt... felt what was being said... overthinking, worrying... not confident" (Interview NM.8/06/23)

Participant 1 has experienced self-doubt, overthinking, and anxiety over the opinions of those around him regarding masculinity norms in society.

"If I hadn't experienced anything... I would have felt like I was being looked down upon, since I was also in a madrassa, in an Islamic environment, eh... I would definitely look different... but yes, I don't feel like people think I'm a bit stupid... this is me" (Interview R.6/06/23)

Participant 2 stated that he had felt different in his environment, but according to him this did not have much of an impact on him.

The negative impact for men who deviate from masculinity norms is self-devaluation. According to O'neil (2008; (Brahmana, 2020) states that self-devaluation is a negative response towards other people or yourself if you deviate from the norms of masculinity that apply in society. This devaluation can result in unhealthy mental health or have a negative impact on psychological conditions and physical illness, both for yourself and others. This devaluation results in weakness and loss of potential, strength and freedom, for men the loss of family, career, kinship relationships and disruption of health. Therefore, in this research, empirically, this negative impact leads to emotional disorders, such as depression, anxiety, drug abuse, homophobia, as well as other impacts, namely the emergence of conflict in marriage, violence against women, self-esteem, intimacy problems, and communication problems.

As a result of this negative attitude towards gender-based professions, it has a negative impact on perpetrators who deviate from norms of masculinity and other people, especially women. The impact that occurs is not only physical pain, it can even disturb a person's psychology which will disrupt mental health. Therefore, victims need protection in the form of psychological support, health care, legal protection and social support.

"..... this is for support from family and close friends, of course for my own family. In the beginning there was definitely a stigma, but after I proved it... I am persistent and now my family fully supports and fully supports my career... as do my friends. , my friends are also proud and happy that I am like this... I see." (NM Interview. 8/06/23)

"..... thank God, for now I am confident and I am confident about what I have, especially my profession as a dance teacher and make-up artist... it is a gift from God that was given to me and I must continue to be grateful for it and be proud of it. what I got... not necessarily other people are given a gift like this, that is, my job here is to be grateful and upgrade my skills... upgrade my talents so that they can be useful for myself and also for others..." (NM Interview. 8/06/23)

"..... Well, but to change that mindset, yes... with our achievements... by growing up and showing everyone that with this profession we can do it in the sense that we can... we can make our family proud... we can excel..." (NM Interview. 8/06/23)

Currently, Participant 1 can accept and be confident in his profession as a dance teacher. By starting to get help from the support of his family and friends, he was able to overcome feelings of anxiety and lack of self-confidence. This made him even more enthusiastic to prove that the path he chose was not wrong by showing the results of his achievements and upgrading his skills, especially in the fields of dance and make-up.

".... For now, I'll just respond normally... because I'm used to people talking like that. The important thing is that you can't control my life... in my opinion, if I were a man, whatever job I do as long as he is able to support his family, that's enough in my opinion..." (Interview R. 6/06/23)

"Support from family... because I am the last child... my family already understands me and supports me in work like this... the important thing is that I can support my family... not bother other people because of my work... well, as long as my work is halal, I can do it" (Interview R. 6/06/23)

"Why be embarrassed... I'm not ashamed of my job... I stay with my job to support my family... I don't care anymore what people want to say to me..." (Interview R. 6/06/23)

Participant 2 believes that society's stigma regarding his profession is no longer a burden for him to think about. However, he focused on his goal of providing for his family and his family also supported the profession he took up.

Based on the results of the interviews, both participants had experienced and received negative stigma from their environment, starting from their hobbies to the profession they chose. However, this assumption did not become an obstacle for participants. With the support of family and people around them, participants managed to believe in and continue to do work that some people consider to be a profession that violates masculinity norms. Participants continue to strive to be better than their path, by continuing to excel, renewing their abilities in their field of work and focusing on their intention to fulfill their family's needs.

In order to take preventive action, it is necessary to recognize the factors and causes that are at the root of negative attitudes towards gender roles. Negative attitudes in the form of the stigma of traditional masculinity are still inherent in society, so socialization is needed in the form of the importance of changes to modern masculinity which supports a person to be himself without being restrained by idealized rules. According to (Petersson & Plantin, 2019) modern masculinity describes men who are expressive, sensitive, caring and can do household work. Modern masculinity also supports someone to show and express their emotions without being restricted, such as "men don't cry, they have to be tough in any problem." This assumption creates distortions in a person's thinking, so it is necessary to change a person's thought pattern or mindset so that they understand and respect themselves more, and assume that this is not their own fault. If someone is affected by violence from masculinity or gender conflict, they need to be guided by a counselor to assist in the development of personal and social aspects. The assistance provided takes the form of providing responsive services, individual planning and developing system support for problems, especially the role of male gender.

There is also a need for peer education that invites victims and perpetrators of toxic masculinity to respect each other and work together in the problems they are experiencing. This peer education invites and influences groups of men to discuss the importance of positive masculinity and hopefully make changes to reduce toxic masculinity in society. An important movement regarding gender roles for men needs to exist in Indonesia, as it is known that in Indonesia there are not many studies that discuss masculinity, especially toxic masculinity. Organizations that have been formed in Indonesia that play a role in awareness of masculine and feminine gender roles are the Pulih Foundation and the New Men's Alliance.

CONCLUSION

The discussion above concerns the negative attitude of society in responding to gender-based professions, where society still adheres to a culture of patriarchy and traditional masculinity that idealizes the norms that exist in society, which expects how men should act and behave. As a result, it has an impact on men who become victims of masculinity. However, this can be minimized for victims by developing personal abilities, focusing on goals and getting support from the closest environment.

The author hopes that men who are victims of masculinity will express the problems they experience and not remain silent when they receive criticism from other people. It is also hoped that you immediately consult a counselor or psychologist so as not to cause serious emotional disturbances. The author also hopes that there will be more research that discusses toxic masculinity in Indonesia and how to properly deal with and prevent toxic masculinity.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest

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