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Deciphering the Nexus Between Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence: A Psychometric Analysis

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between toxic masculinity ™ and emotional intelligence (EI) across gender groups, with the aim of clarifying whether rigid masculine norms undermine or align with emotional competencies. Using a sample of 151 participants, correlational and regression analyses were conducted. At the aggregate level, the hypothesized negative association between TM and EI was not supported. The overall correlation was weak and nonsignificant, $r(151) = .109$, $p = .184$ (Table 7), and regression analyses confirmed that TM explained only 1.2% of the variance in EI, $F(1, 149) = 1.779$, $p = .184$, with a nonsignificant slope, $B = 0.166$, $SE = 0.125$, $\beta = .109$, $t(149) = 1.334$, $p = .184$ (Tables 8–10). Residual diagnostics indicated substantial unexplained variance, with residuals ranging from –82.463 to 80.377 and a standard deviation of 34.547 (Table 11).

Subgroup analyses, however, revealed significant gender-based differences. Among men, TM was positively associated with EI, $r(65) = .303$, $p = .014$ (Table 12), suggesting that masculine traits such as assertiveness and emotional control may overlap with self-perceived emotional regulation and social influence. Among women, TM was negatively associated with EI, $r(67) = –.331$, $p = .006$ (Table 13), indicating that adopting rigid masculine norms may conflict with cultural expectations of empathy and relational sensitivity, thereby reducing EI. Among participants who preferred not to disclose gender, the association was weak and nonsignificant, $r(19) = –.069$, $p = .780$ (Table 14), likely reflecting heterogeneity in identity and socialization experiences. These findings confirm that gender moderates the TM–EI relationship, with opposing directions of association across groups. The results highlight the importance of considering gender role socialization and cultural context in understanding how masculinity norms intersect with emotional competencies (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Vandello & Bosson, 2013). While the overall relationship was nonsignificant, the subgroup analyses provide compelling evidence that the TM–EI nexus is contingent on gender identity. Future research should employ larger and more diverse samples, facet-level analyses of both TM and EI, and advanced modeling techniques such

as structural equation modeling (Kline, 2016). Applied implications include the need for gender-sensitive interventions: leveraging positive masculine traits for men, reducing the internalization of restrictive norms for women, and ensuring inclusivity for gender-diverse individuals (Day & Dragoni, 2015).

Introduction

In contemporary society, the constructs of masculinity and emotional intelligence (EI) have emerged as critical domains of psychological and sociocultural inquiry. *Toxic masculinity* refers to a cluster of maladaptive male characteristics—such as dominance, emotional suppression, aggression, and the devaluation of traits perceived as "feminine"—that constrain both intrapersonal and interpersonal growth (Horton, Schermerhorn, & Hanel, 2026). While masculinity itself is not inherently negative, its toxic manifestation reinforces behaviors that undermine psychological well-being and social adjustment.

The rise of gender equity movements and heightened awareness of mental health has intensified scholarly interest in how rigid masculine norms shape emotional expression, empathy, and relational functioning (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In contrast, emotional intelligence encompasses the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and others (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016). High EI has consistently been linked to positive outcomes, including resilience, adaptive coping, and healthier interpersonal relationships (Schutte et al., 2001). Conversely, individuals who internalize toxic masculine norms often exhibit diminished emotional awareness and resistance to vulnerability, which impedes the cultivation of emotional intelligence (Mahalik et al., 2003).

Examining the intersection of toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence is therefore essential for understanding the psychological and social forces that shape male identity in modern contexts. Emotional suppression, valorized under toxic masculine constructs, not only stunts emotional development but also contributes to heightened stress, interpersonal aggression, and mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, and dysregulated anger (Levant & Wong, 2017).

This study aims to investigate the relationship between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence through psychometric assessment and theoretical analysis. By exploring how internalized gender norms influence emotional competence and behavior, the research seeks to illuminate implications for education, clinical practice, and gender socialization. Ultimately, this understanding can inform the development of more holistic models of masculinity that promote emotional awareness, empathy, and psychological well-being.

Problem Statement:

Toxic masculinity, marked by dominance, aggression, and emotional suppression, undermines men's psychological well-being and social relationships. Emotional intelligence, by contrast, fosters empathy, resilience, and healthy adjustment. Yet, limited research has quantified how rigid masculine norms erode emotional competence. This gap highlights the need for psychometric analysis to clarify the negative impact of toxic masculinity on emotional intelligence, thereby informing culturally sensitive interventions in education, counseling, and gender socialization.

Research Questions

How is toxic masculinity related to emotional intelligence in individuals in today's society?

To what degree do persons who express more toxic masculinity show lower emotional intelligence?

In what ways do cultural and societal expectations of masculinity affect emotional expression and emotional regulation?

Which of the dimensions of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, empathy, emotional regulation, social skills, motivation) are most negatively impacted by toxic masculine characteristics?
Do there exist substantial differences in emotional intelligence scores among those with high and low conformity to toxic masculine norms?
What is the role of psychosocial factors like education, age, and exposure to emotional learning in mediating the link between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence?
Interventions or education programs that can be developed to minimize the adverse effects of toxic masculinity on emotional growth?

Significance of the Study

This study has significant relevance to psychology, gender studies, and mental health. By revealing the complex relationship between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence, it offers a basis for interventions to promote better emotional expression among men. The research can be applied by teachers, psychologists, counselors, and policymakers to establish programs that disrupt harmful gender norms and promote emotional growth. Additionally, at a time when emotional health is universally acknowledged as being integral to successful outcomes and coping, this research is adding to the widening debate regarding deconstructing masculinity so that emotional authenticity is accepted over concealment.

Research Objectives

To investigate the connection between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence.
To ascertain the manner in which toxic masculine attributes affect emotional awareness and regulation.
To determine psychometric association between masculine norms and emotional competence.
To recommend strategies that encourage emotionally intelligent expressions of masculinity.

Research Gap

Both toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence have been widely researched across the fields of psychology, gender studies, and sociology. There is, however, limited research on the intersection of these two constructs. Current research has mainly focused on toxic masculinity as it correlates to aggression, mental illness disorders, gender violence, and social dominance (Connell, 2005; Kupers, 2005). In the same way, emotional intelligence has been extensively researched to establish its role in fostering empathy, emotional management, and interpersonal competence (Goleman, 1995; Mayer et al., 2008). Yet, little empirical research has examined directly the impact of toxic masculine norms on the acquisition and operation of emotional intelligence.

Most of the available research accounts for masculinity and emotional intelligence as distinct psychological constructs and thus ignores the possibility of a reverse relationship between traditional masculine ideologies and emotional abilities. In addition, most of the literature is situated within Western contexts, and little research has examined these dynamics in various cultural and socio-economic environments, where gender norms could differ greatly. This missing cultural diversity in the current literature restricts cross-cultural universality in findings regarding gender and emotion.

The second major limitation of previous research is the lack of psychometric investigation quantifying the link between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence. Although qualitative work has offered theoretical suggestions, empirical data based on standard instruments are lacking. This has created a gap in conceptual understanding of how particular masculine characteristics—

like emotional repression, dominance, or vulnerability aversion—are statistically connected with emotional awareness, regulation, and empathy.

Thus, this research aims to bridge this gap by empirically analyzing the link between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence using a psychometric approach. Through the use of psychological measurement instruments, this study hopes to present quantitative data that elucidates the degree to which toxic masculine beliefs predict decreased levels of emotional intelligence. Filling this gap will not only enrich the academic literature, but it will also facilitate the creation of specific interventions that foster emotionally healthy, respectful models of masculinity.

Hypotheses

H1: There will be a significant negative relationship between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence, such that higher levels of toxic masculinity will be associated with lower levels of emotional intelligence.

Reason: The theoretical framework suggests that toxic masculinity emphasizes emotional suppression, dominance, and rigidity (Kupers, 2005; Levant & Wong, 2017), which directly conflicts with the core components of emotional intelligence, including empathy, emotional awareness, and regulation (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). Prior research has consistently shown that rigid adherence to masculine norms undermines adaptive emotional competencies (Joseph & Newman, 2010). Therefore, it is expected that as toxic masculinity increases, emotional intelligence will decrease.

H2: Among male participants, toxic masculinity will be positively associated with emotional intelligence.

Reason: The male subsample showed a significant positive correlation ($r = .303$, $p < .05$). This suggests that for men, certain elements of toxic masculinity (e.g., assertiveness, control, confidence) may overlap with self-perceived emotional regulation and social influence, producing a modest positive link.

H3: Among female participants, toxic masculinity will be negatively associated with emotional intelligence.

Reason: The female subsample demonstrated a significant negative correlation ($r = –.331$, $p < .01$). For women, adopting rigid masculine norms may conflict with cultural expectations of emotional expressiveness and empathy, thereby reducing emotional intelligence scores.

H4: Among participants who preferred not to disclose gender, toxic masculinity will show no significant association with emotional intelligence.

Reason: The correlation in this group was weak and non-significant ($r = –.069$, $p = .780$). This may reflect heterogeneity in gender identity and socialization experiences, diluting any systematic relationship between the two constructs.

H5: Gender will moderate the relationship between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence.

Reason: The direction of association differs across groups—positive for men, negative for women, and null for those who did not disclose gender. This pattern suggests that gender identity and related socialization processes shape how toxic masculinity interacts with emotional competencies.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the present study sets the theoretical framework connecting toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence (EI). It pictures how internalized gender stereotypes, especially those of toxic masculinity, affect the acquisition and manifestation of emotional skills. This framework brings together ideas from social learning theory, gender role theory, and emotional intelligence theory to describe the relationship between these constructs.

1. Theoretical Underpinnings

a) Gender Role Theory (Bem, 1974)

Gender Role Theory assumes that people acquire gender-related behaviours, attitudes, and emotional expressions through socialisation. Such societies tend to reward conformity to classic masculine ideals—dominance, stoicism, and control of one's emotions—while prohibiting displays of sensitivity or empathy. Gradually, such conditioning could feed into toxic masculine habits, wherein suppressing emotions becomes a sign of "true manhood." Such internalisation limits the acquisition of emotional sensitivity and expression, which are essential elements of emotional intelligence.

a. Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977)

Social Learning Theory asserts that behavior is learned from observation, imitation, and reinforcement. Males who see male role models exhibiting aggression or emotional aloofness can learn to imitate these behaviors since they are perceived as acceptable by society. This pattern of learned behavior typically obstructs emotional communication and empathy—facets of emotional intelligence. Hence, toxic masculinity may be regarded as a learned behavior construct that disrupts the learning and application of emotionally intelligent reactions.

b. Emotional Intelligence Theory (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1997)

Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and use emotions effectively. It is intrapersonal (self-awareness, self-regulation) and interpersonal (empathy, social skills) in nature. People with high EI show emotions in adaptive ways, handle stress effectively, and have sound interpersonal relationships. Toxic masculine norms discourage openness and empathy, resulting in deficiencies in intrapersonal and interpersonal emotional competencies.

2. Conceptual Relationship Between the Variables

The conceptual model assumed a negative relationship between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence.

Independent Variable (IV): Toxic Masculinity

Dependent Variable (DV): Emotional Intelligence

Toxic masculinity manifests through behaviors and beliefs that prioritize dominance, control, and emotional restriction. These traits undermine one's capacity for emotional awareness and empathy—core elements of emotional intelligence. Men who internalize toxic masculine ideals are likely to demonstrate reduced ability to recognize and manage emotions, both in themselves and others. Consequently, high levels of toxic masculinity are expected to correspond with low levels of emotional intelligence.

3. Mediating and Moderating Factors

Some factors can mediate or moderate toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence relationships:

Cultural Norms: Social norms of masculinity can influence the expression and reception of emotions.

Socialization Practices: Family communication patterns, peer interaction, and early childhood practices influence learning about emotions.

Mental Health Awareness: Exposure to psychological education and therapy can decrease the harm caused by toxic masculine beliefs.

Age and Education: Education at higher levels and emotional maturity can increase self-awareness and decrease conformity to strict masculine norms.

4. Conceptual Model Diagram (Text Description)

TOXIC MASCULINITY ——————————► ↓ EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

| ↑

├── Guided by cultural standards └── Mediated by socialization, education, and mental health education

└── Strengthened by social learning

This theoretical model proposes toxic masculinity as a predictor that negatively impacts emotional intelligence, and multiple psychosocial factors that affect the strength of said relationship.

Operational Definitions

1. Toxic Masculinity

Toxic masculinity in this research denotes a set of socially constructed male attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs that emphasize dominance, aggression, emotional constraint, and rejection of things considered "feminine." It involves emotional constraint, individualism, competitiveness, and fear of vulnerability.

Measurement:

Toxic masculinity will be assessed with a standardized psychometric scale, e.g., the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI) or an equivalent validated scale. Responses of participants will be scored to determine the extent to which they subscribe to toxic masculine ideals. Scores are higher with increasing strength of adherence to toxic masculine norms.

Conceptual Basis:

The measure is based on the construct that borrows from Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) and Gender Role Theory (Bem, 1974) that describe the internalization of gender expectations by an individual through social reinforcement and role modelling.

2. Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Operational Definition:

In this research, emotional intelligence can be described as the capacity to perceive, understand, manage, and express emotions effectively in oneself and in others. It entails empathy, emotional awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and interpersonal abilities.

Measurement

Emotional intelligence will be measured with an established psychometric instrument, e.g., the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) or the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) of Schutte et al. (1998). Scores will be compared to assess participants' emotional awareness, regulation, and empathy levels. Higher scores indicate higher emotional competence.

Conceptual Basis

The theory is based on Salovey and Mayer's (1990) and later Goleman's (1995) Emotional Intelligence Theory expanded, which defines EI as a mix of emotional and social abilities that shape thought and action.

1. Relationship Between Variables

Operational Definition:

The correlational analysis will be used to investigate the relationship between toxic masculinity (independent variable) and emotional intelligence (dependent variable). It is predicted that greater toxic masculinity will be linked to lower emotional intelligence.

2. Key Terms

Gender Norms: Socially constructed norms about proper behaviours and emotional displays for men and women.

Emotional Suppression: Conscious or unconscious suppression of emotional expression, commonly linked with masculine ideals.

Empathy: The capacity to appreciate and feel the emotions of another individual, as a central aspect of emotional intelligence.

Dominance Orientation: A sense that one should exert control or mastery over others, typically associated with toxic masculinity.

Variables of the Study:

Independent Variable (IV):

Toxic Masculinity (endorsement of restrictive, dominance-oriented masculine norms; Kupers, 2005).

Dependent Variable (DV):

Emotional Intelligence (EI) (ability to perceive, regulate, and use emotions adaptively; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008).

Moderator Variable:

Gender (male, female, and potentially non-binary categories depending on sample).

Literature Review

1. Conceptualizing Toxic Masculinity and Hegemonic Masculinity:

Toxic masculinity is widely utilized to refer to culturally valued male norms that value emotional stoicism, dominance, aggression, and disdaining anything considered "feminine." Academic accounts tend to place toxic masculinity within the wider theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinity, which describes how specific forms of masculinity become socially dominant and normative within a specific historical and cultural context. Connell's scholarship and the resulting literature contend that hegemonic models of masculinity are sustained by cultural institutions, socialization, and interpersonal reinforcement, and that certain practices related to hegemonic masculinity are damaging to men and others (e.g., supporting emotional repression or aggression).

2. Defining and Measuring Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a general term referring to abilities and competencies that include perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions.

Two prevailing paradigms exist in the literature: ability models (e.g., Mayer & Salovey) conceptualizing EI as cognitive-emotional abilities measured by performance tasks (e.g., MSCEIT), and trait/self-report models (e.g., Schutte's SSEIT) measuring self-perceived emotional competence. Meta-analyses and reviews suggest that EI — whether assessed as ability or trait — is associated with well-being, problem-solving, interpersonal functioning, and leadership outcomes, but measurement method influences correlations observed (ability EI typically correlates less strongly with self-report and personality).

3. Measurement: Tools Applicable to This Study A number of valid measures are commonly used in empirical research touching on masculinity and emotional functioning.

4. Conformity to Masculine: Norms Inventory Created to assess conformity to a variety of masculine norms (e.g., control of emotions, independence, dominance). The CMNI (and its updated short forms) is frequently used to operationalize harmful elements of masculinity in quantitative studies. MSCEIT (Mayer–Salovey–Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test) and SSEIT (Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test): Representative ability-based and self-report EI measures respectively; each has its strengths and limitations (performance-based validity vs. Ease of administration and wider use of self-report). Selection of EI measure affects results and interpretation.

5. Empirical Links: Masculinity, Emotional Suppression, and Psychological Outcomes:

An increasing amount of quantitative and qualitative work shows that strong conformity to conventional masculine ideals — particularly ideals that esteem emotional repression and self-sufficiency — relates to adverse mental health results (e.g., increased depression, anxiety, anger issues) and worse help-seeking behavior. Research indicates that such norms as control of emotions are especially involved in constraining men's awareness and expression of emotion, which are the building blocks of emotional intelligence. Literatures on education and clinical literature explain how these normative restrictions may hamper emotional learning and interpersonal empathy. Studies Specifically Relating Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence Even though direct psychometric tests directly correlating scores for toxic masculinity and EI are less numerous than studies that consider each construct in isolation, a number of recent empirical publications and theses offer preliminary findings that higher adherence to limiting masculine norms generally corresponds with lower self-reported emotional ability (e.g., lower empathy, worse emotion regulation). Findings, though, differ by assessment method (self-report EI vs ability EI), sample (e.g., clinical vs student), and culture.

This heterogeneity indicates that the relationship is strong in theory but delicate to measure.

Cultural and Contextual Moderators: Cross-cultural and contextual studies highlight that masculine norms are not uniform. The content, enforcement, and outcome of masculine expectations vary across societies, age groups, socioeconomic classes, and subgroups. The impact of harmful masculine norms on EI is thus likely mediated by cultural norm acceptance of emotional expression, availability of role models expressing emotional competence, and organizational supports (e.g., education on mental health).

New developments of short forms and culturally adapted versions of masculine-norm scales exhibit sensitivity to measurement in the literature as an awareness of the requirement that measurement should be sensible across situations.

1. Methodological Issues in the Existing Literature Some methodological limitations are repeated across the literature Measurement mismatch: Self-report EI and self-report masculinity may create inflated shared-method variance when compared; sometimes ability EI measures are less highly correlated with personality-based constructs.
2. Cross-sectional designs: Evidence is often correlational and cross-sectional, which precludes causal conclusions regarding whether complying with toxic masculinity lowers EI, or else if low EI increases the likelihood of adhering to strict masculine norms. Sample limitations: Overrepresentation of Western, college-student samples limits generalizability; more diverse, cross-cultural and longitudinal studies are required.

Theoretical Integrations

Researchers started conjoining gender role theory and social learning frameworks with EI models to account for mechanisms: socialization and modeling inhibit boys from expressing affect; inhibited affect denies opportunities for emotion recognition and regulation practice, hindering EI development. The integrated account offers an explanatory mechanism for the proposed negative link between toxic masculinity and EI, and offers testable mediators (e.g., emotion socialization practices, help-seeking attitudes).

Methodology

1. Research Design

The research employs a quantitative, correlational design in exploring the correlation between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence among the adult participants. The design supports the statistical assessment of the strength of relationship between the two variables without manipulating any conditions. The research will use psychometric tools to collect numerical data that can be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

2. Research Approach

A deductive strategy will be employed, basing itself on the following theories of gender role socialization (Bem, 1974), social learning (Bandura, 1977), and emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Goleman, 1995). From these theoretical bases, the research predicts that those who adhere most firmly to damaging masculine ideals will evidence lower emotional intelligence.

3. Population and Sample

- Target Population

The target group includes adult men and women aged between 18 and 40 years in urban regions. Both sexes are selected to enable comparisons of how toxic masculinity presents itself and impacts emotional competence in people.

- Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling method will be employed to recruit participants who are of inclusion criteria (e.g., English-speaking adults and able to administer self-report questionnaires). This approach guarantees the presence of individuals pertinent to the constructs being studied.

- Sample Size

200 participants will be recruited. This sample size has been deemed sufficient for correlational analysis so as to guarantee statistical power and representativeness.

4. Research Instruments

- Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI)

The CMNI (Mahalik et al., 2003) is a standardized psychometric instrument developed to assess the extent to which people concur with socially mandated masculine norms. The scale evaluates factors including emotional control, self-reliance, dominance, and control over women. Higher scores reflect larger conformity to poisonous masculine standards.

Type: Self-report questionnaire

Items: 46 (short version)

Reliability: $\alpha = 0.85–0.90$ (high internal consistency)

- Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)

The Emotional Intelligence Scale (Schutte et al., 1998) will be employed to examine participants' levels of emotional intelligence. It measures four main dimensions: emotional awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and social competence.

Type: Self-report questionnaire

Items: 33

Reliability: $\alpha = 0.87$ (high internal reliability)

- Demographic Questionnaire

A brief demographic section will gather background information, such as age, gender, education level, and occupation, to examine potential moderating variables.

1. Data Collection Procedure

- Ethical approval will be obtained from the relevant institutional review board.
- Participants will be informed about the study's purpose, assured of confidentiality, and asked to provide informed consent.
- Data will be collected through online survey forms or paper-based questionnaires distributed in academic institutions and workplaces.
- Respondents will take approximately 15–20 minutes to complete the survey.
- Completed questionnaires will be reviewed for completeness before data entry and analysis.

2. Data Analysis

Gathered data will be coded and analyzed utilizing Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) or similar software application.

Descriptive Statistics:

Mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions for demographic variables.

Inferential Statistics:

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient ®: To determine the strength of association between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence.

Independent Samples t-Test: To ascertain levels of emotional intelligence for high and low masculinity groups.

Regression Analysis: To assess whether toxic masculinity is a predictor of emotional intelligence controlling for demographics.

A significance level of $p < 0.05$ will be employed to test the hypotheses.

3. Ethical Considerations

This research will follow the American Psychological Association's (APA, 2020) ethical principles for research with humans. The privacy, anonymity, and voluntary consent of participants will be maintained at every stage. Data will be utilized only for academic purposes, and the right to withdrawal without penalty will be exercised by participants at any point in time.

4. Reliability and Validity

Both instruments (CMNI and EIS) are empirically validated and commonly employed in psychological studies. For the purpose of ensuring data reliability:

Cronbach's alpha will be calculated to assess internal consistency.

A pilot study with 20 participants will be performed to validate clarity and reliability of items.

Construct validity will be ensured through the use of established scales with prior research support.

5. Limitations

Dependence on self-report data can lead to response bias.

Cross-sectional design limits causal interpretations.

The sample may not accurately be representative of all cultural or socio-economic groups.

Research Design

1. Type of Research Design

The quantitative, correlational research design is used in this study to investigate the correlation between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence in adults. The correlational design is used since it enables one to measure statistically the extent and direction of the association between two psychological variables without manipulating them.

The research is not attempting to prove causality but simply to determine if greater conformity to toxic masculine norms is linked with reduced emotional intelligence. Through the analysis of quantifiable data derived from standardized psychometric tests, the research will provide empirical evidence for and against the proposed link.

2. Rationale for the Research Design

A correlational design is used because both variables—toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence—are operational constructs that can be measured with reliable and valid self-report measures. Experimental gender norm or emotional manipulation would be ethically problematic; therefore, a correlational non-experimental design provides both scientific precision and ethical ease.

This design suits the investigation of multifaceted psychological and social variables for which direct control is not feasible. It enables the researcher to:

- Put relationships among constructs into numbers,
- Discover important patterns of association,
- Offer a basis for subsequent experimental or longitudinal investigation.

2. Nature of the Study

The study is cross-sectional, with data being collected at one point in time from the participants. This methodology allows for a snapshot of the coexistence between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence in a population. It is restrictive to causal inference but gives useful correlational information and is a precursor to any longitudinal studies.

3. Study Variables

Independent Variable (IV): Toxic Masculinity

Assessed via the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI), the emotional control, dominance, and self-reliance dimensions.

Dependent Variable (DV): Emotional Intelligence

Assessed via the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) of Schutte et al. (1998), measuring emotional awareness, empathy, and regulation.

A negative relationship between these variables is expected, as higher toxic masculinity levels are predicted to be related to lower scores for emotional intelligence.

4. Research Setting

The research will be carried out in educational settings and organizational environments in the context of an urban setting. This offers a heterogeneous participant group with varying ages, educational levels, and working backgrounds, thus ensuring greater generalizability of the results.

5. Timeframe

The research will have a brief time frame that is cross-sectional in nature, and the data will be collected over the period of four to six weeks. Data analysis and interpretation will ensue as soon as the data collection is completed.

6. Research Paradigm

This research employs a positivist paradigm with its focus on objectivity, empirical quantification, and statistical analysis. It posits that social and psychological effects can be measured and that there are correlations between constructs which can be tested objectively using standardized measurement tools and statistical methods.

Sampling and Participants

1. Target Population

   The target population for the study includes adult respondents within the age bracket of 18 to 40 years who live in urban regions. Both genders will be sampled in order to obtain a comparative picture of how toxic masculinity exists in men and women and impacts emotional intelligence. The study targets students, working adults, and young people who are English literate and can comprehend the questionnaire items.

This age group is chosen since youth and middle-aged adults have a high chance of being impacted by contemporary cultural narratives of emotionality and manliness, which makes them the best to analyze the interaction between the two constructs.

2. Inclusion Criteria

- Participants need to satisfy the following criteria:
- Between 18 and 40 years of age.
- Able to read and comprehend English.
- Committed to giving informed consent and voluntary participation.
- Should not have any diagnosed psychological or cognitive impairments that would hamper the ability to finish the questionnaires.

3. Exclusion Criteria

- Participants will be excluded if they:

- Are less than 18 or more than 40 years old.
- Have inconsistent or incomplete questionnaire answers.
- Show clear response bias or social desirability trends when screening data.

4. Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling method will be utilized. The non-probability sampling technique enables the researcher to choose people intentionally based on the inclusion criteria and who are pertinent to the research aim.

Purposive sampling is suitable for this research since it guarantees that participants are individuals who can meaningfully contribute to grasping the relationship between emotional intelligence and toxic masculinity. The method also provides room for flexibility in reaching varied participants from various occupational and educational backgrounds.

5. Sample Size

The research will use 150 participants. This is a sufficiently large sample for correlational analysis and has adequate statistical power for detecting medium to large effect sizes at a 0.05 significance level (Cohen, 1988).

The pilot test will be done on 20 participants to confirm the reliability and intelligibility of the research instruments prior to their administration to the entire sample.

6. Sampling Procedure

1. Recruitment: Recruits will be approached via internet sites (e.g., university websites, email, and social sites) and mail-in questionnaires within schools and workplaces.

2. Informed Consent: All participants will have an information sheet explaining the aims of the study, confidentiality, and voluntariness. Consent will be requested before involvement.

3. Administration: Subjects will fill out the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI) and the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), and a brief demographic questionnaire.

4. Data Screening: Answers will be screened for completeness and accuracy prior to entry in the statistical software for analysis.

7. Ethical Considerations for Participants

Participation in the study will be strictly voluntary, and confidentiality maintained at all stages. Participants will be made aware that they can withdraw at any point without penalty. Personal identifiers will be stripped from the dataset to guarantee anonymity. Data will be stored securely and used only for academic purposes in accordance with the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020) ethical standards.

8. Demographic Profile

Demographic questionnaire will gather basic background data, such as:

Age

Gender

Educational Level

Occupation

Socioeconomic Background

This demographic information will be utilized to examine potential moderating variables that can affect the relationship between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence.

Measures

This section details the psychometrically standardized measures employed to assess the primary variables of the study — toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence — and the demographic data gathered in order to place the data in context. Both measures chosen are empirically supported, reliable, and commonly applied in psychological studies.

1. Toxic Masculinity

Instrument: Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI)

Toxic masculinity will be determined with the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI) of Mahalik et al. (2003). The CMNI is the most generally well-known instrument for assessing masculine role conformity and behaviours consistent with traditional notions of masculinity.

Description

The CMNI contains 94 items scored on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree. It assesses conformity to several different masculine norms including:

Emotional Control (bottling of emotional expression)

Dominance (need to dominate others)

Self-Reliance (self-reliance and shunning of assistance)

Winning and Success Orientation

Risk-Taking and Aggression

Disdain for Homosexuality

Primacy of Work

Scoring and Interpretation

Scores are added across subscales to yield a total masculinity conformity score.

Higher scores reflect higher commitment to toxic masculine ideals.

Lower scores reflect more fluid and egalitarian gender attitudes.

The CMNI has shown excellent psychometric properties with a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.76 to 0.90 across various populations (Mahalik et al., 2003).

2. Emotional Intelligence

Instrument: Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (SSREI)

Emotional intelligence will be assessed with the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (SSREI), first developed by Schutte et al. (1998) on the basis of Salovey and Mayer's (1990) theoretical model of emotional intelligence.

Description

The SSREI has 33 items, scored on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

It measures four key dimensions of emotional intelligence:

1. Emotional Awareness – awareness of one's own emotions.
2. Regulation of Emotions – control of emotions in self and others
3. Deployment of Emotions – leveraging emotions to support thinking and performance.
4. Empathy – sensitivity and relating to others' emotional experiences.

Sample Items

"I know when to talk about my personal issues with other people."

"I have difficulty interpreting the non-verbal cues of other people." (reverse-scored)

Scoring and Interpretation

Scores are obtained by summing response across all items (reverse-scoring where appropriate).

Higher scores indicate higher levels of emotional intelligence.

Lower scores are indicative of emotional awareness, regulation, and empathy difficulties.

The SSREI has repeatedly demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients between 0.84 and 0.90, and strong construct validity in various cultural samples.

Procedure

1. Overview

The procedure identifies the step-by-step procedure by which information for the current research will be gathered, processed, and examined. The study will adopt a quantitative, correlational, cross-sectional strategy aimed at investigating the correlation cross-sectional strategy aimed at investigating the correlation between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence among adult respondents. The research will be done according to ethical guidelines outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020).

2. Preparatory Phase

Prior to the actual main data collection, the researcher shall undertake the following preparatory procedures:

1. Ethical Approval: The proposal for the study and tools will be sent to the institutional ethics review body for approval. This is to ensure that the study complies with ethical and procedural requirements.
2. Pilot Testing: A pilot study involving 20 participants will be conducted to evaluate the clarity, reliability, and comprehension of the instruments — the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI) and the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (SSREI). Feedback from the pilot phase will guide necessary revisions before large-scale administration.
3. Preparation of Research Materials: Final prints of the questionnaires, informed consent forms, and demographic information sheets will be collated and formatted for online and hard copies.
4. Recruitment of Participants

The participants will be recruited through a purposive sampling method based on pre-designed inclusion criteria (18–40 years of age, English reading ability, and willingness to participate). The recruitment will be done through:

- University networks (emails, notice boards, student organizations)
- Workplace contacts and professional associations
- Social media sites like WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and Facebook research groups
- An invitation letter will clarify the purpose of the study, procedures, confidentiality guarantee, and voluntary participation.

5. Informed Consent Process

Before participation, each one will be given an Informed Consent Form that describes:

- The aim of the study
- The voluntariness of participation
- The right to withdraw at any point without penalty
- Guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality
- Contact information for questions or concerns
- The only participants who physically or electronically sign the consent form will go to the actual data gathering stage.

6. Data Collection Procedure

1. Administration Mode: The questionnaires are going to be administered in both digital (Google Forms) and traditional forms to maximize convenience and accessibility.

2. Questionnaire Packet: Participants will be provided with:

- A Demographic Information Sheet
- The CMNI (94 items) to assess toxic masculinity
- The SSREI (33 items) to assess emotional intelligence

3. Instructions: There will be clear instructions on how to answer the items on the Likert scales. Participants will also be asked to respond truthfully and independently without influence.

4. Time Duration: The overall time to complete the survey will take 20–30 minutes.

5. Data Collection Period: Data will be collected for a period of four to six weeks depending on participant response rates and availability.

6. Data Handling and Screening

Following collection:

- All answers will be coded and fed into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for statistical analysis.
- Inconsistent or incomplete answers will be eliminated.
- Normality, outliers, and response bias will be checked in the data before analysis.
- Identifiers like names or email addresses will be taken out to anonymize the data.

7. Ethical Concerns

Voluntary Participation: There will be no participant who is forced or rewarded to participate.

Confidentiality: All information will be kept in password-protected files and available only to the researcher.

Debriefing: Participants will be given a general description of the purpose of the study and provided access to the research summary after completion.

Data Protection: Data collected will be retained securely for scholarly purposes only and be destroyed upon analysis to ensure confidentiality.

8. Overview of Data Analysis

The gathered data will then be analyzed descriptively and inferentially to establish the relationship between toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence. Correlation coefficients (Pearson's r) and regression analysis will be employed to measure the direction and strength of association between the two constructs.

Statistical Analysis

Software - Main analyses will be carried out with SPSS (version 25).

G* Power (Computed via Fisher z method)

R = 0.10 (small) → N ≈ 783

R = 0.50 (large) → N ≈ 30

Results And Interpretations

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence (N = 151)

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD	Skewness	SE Skew	Kurtosis	SE Kurt
Toxic Masculinity	30	150	81.22	22.73	0.26	0.20	–0.49	0.39
Emotional Intelligence	83	249	170.65	34.75	–0.50	0.20	–0.22	0.39

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; SE = Standard Error.

Interpretation

The descriptive statistics provide an overview of the distributional properties of Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence (EI) within the sample of 151 participants. The mean score for toxic masculinity (M = 81.22, SD = 22.73) indicates a moderate endorsement of rigid masculine norms, with scores ranging widely from 30 to 150. The skewness value (.26) suggests a slight positive skew, though well within the conventional thresholds of ±1, indicating approximate normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). The kurtosis value (–0.49) reflects a relatively flatter distribution than the normal curve, suggesting some dispersion in participants' endorsement of toxic masculinity.

For emotional intelligence, the mean score (M = 170.65, SD = 34.75) suggests that participants, on average, reported moderately high levels of EI, with a broad range from 83 to 249. The skewness value (–0.50) indicates a slight negative skew, suggesting that more participants scored above the mean than below it. The kurtosis value (–0.22) is close to zero, indicating a distribution that approximates normality. Together, these indices suggest that EI scores are relatively symmetrically distributed, with no extreme deviations from normality.

The contrasting distributional patterns of toxic masculinity and EI are theoretically meaningful. Toxic masculinity, as a construct, reflects adherence to restrictive gender norms that emphasize dominance, aggression, and emotional suppression (Kupers, 2005). Emotional intelligence, by contrast, reflects the capacity to perceive, regulate, and utilize emotions adaptively (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). The descriptive results already hint at the potential inverse relationship hypothesized between these constructs: while toxic masculinity scores cluster around moderate levels with some variability, EI scores are generally higher, suggesting that participants may endorse emotional competencies more strongly than rigid masculine norms.

From a psychometric perspective, the acceptable skewness and kurtosis values for both variables support the assumption of approximate normality, justifying the use of parametric analyses such as Pearson correlations and regression models (Field, 2018). This strengthens the validity of subsequent inferential tests examining the nexus between toxic masculinity and EI.

Conceptually, these descriptive findings align with prior research suggesting that rigid adherence to masculine norms is often associated with emotional restriction and reduced interpersonal sensitivity (Levant & Wong, 2017). Conversely, higher EI is linked to adaptive functioning, empathy, and effective leadership (Joseph & Newman, 2010). The descriptive profile of this sample thus provides a foundation for testing the central hypothesis that toxic masculinity and EI are inversely related, with gender potentially moderating this relationship.

Table 2: One-Sample Statistics for Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence (N = 151)

Variable	N	M	SD	SE M
Toxic Masculinity	151	81.22	22.73	1.85
Emotional Intelligence	151	170.65	34.75	2.83

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; SE M = Standard Error of the Mean.

Interpretation

The one-sample statistics provide a concise summary of the central tendency and variability of Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence (EI) within the sample of 151 participants. The mean score for toxic masculinity (M = 81.22, SD = 22.73) suggests a moderate endorsement of rigid masculine norms, with a relatively narrow standard error (SE M = 1.85), indicating that the sample mean is a stable estimate of the population mean. In contrast, the mean score for emotional intelligence (M = 170.65, SD = 34.75) is considerably higher, with a slightly larger standard error (SE M = 2.83), reflecting greater variability in participants' emotional competencies.

The difference in mean levels between toxic masculinity and EI is theoretically meaningful. Toxic masculinity, conceptualized as adherence to restrictive and dominance-oriented masculine norms, is often associated with emotional suppression and reduced interpersonal sensitivity (Kupers, 2005; Levant & Wong, 2017). Emotional intelligence, by contrast, reflects the ability to perceive, regulate, and utilize emotions adaptively (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). The higher mean for EI relative to toxic masculinity suggests that, on average, participants in this sample reported stronger emotional competencies than rigid adherence to toxic masculine norms.

From a psychometric perspective, the relatively small standard errors indicate that both means are reliable estimates, supporting the validity of subsequent inferential analyses. The variability observed in both constructs (SD = 22.73 for toxic masculinity; SD = 34.75 for EI) also suggests sufficient dispersion to allow for meaningful correlational and regression analyses. This is important because restricted variance can attenuate observed relationships (Cohen, 1988).

Conceptually, these descriptive findings align with prior research demonstrating that toxic masculinity and EI represent competing orientations toward emotional life: one emphasizing suppression and dominance, the other emphasizing awareness and regulation (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Joseph & Newman, 2010). The descriptive profile of this sample thus provides a foundation for testing the central hypothesis that toxic masculinity is inversely related to EI, with gender and cultural context potentially moderating this relationship.

Table 3: One-Sample *t*-Test Results for Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence (N = 151)

Variable	t	df	*p* (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% CI of the Difference
Toxic Masculinity	43.92	150	< .001	81.22	[77.56, 84.87]
Emotional Intelligence	60.34	150	< .001	170.65	[165.06, 176.24]

Note. CI = Confidence Interval. Test value = 0.

Interpretation

The one-sample *t*-test results demonstrate that both Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence (EI) scores were significantly greater than zero, with extremely large *t*-values and highly significant *p*-values ($p < .001$). For toxic masculinity, the mean difference was 81.22, $t(150) = 43.92$, 95% CI [77.56, 84.87], indicating that participants reported moderate levels of endorsement of rigid masculine norms. For emotional intelligence, the mean difference was 170.65, $t(150) = 60.34$, 95% CI [165.06, 176.24], reflecting substantially higher levels of emotional competencies.

The statistical significance of both results is unsurprising given the test value of zero, but the magnitude of the *t*-values and the narrow confidence intervals provide important psychometric insights. The results confirm that both constructs are robustly present in the sample, with EI reported at a much higher mean level than toxic masculinity. This descriptive contrast is theoretically meaningful: toxic masculinity emphasizes emotional suppression, dominance, and toughness (Kupers, 2005; Levant & Wong, 2017), whereas EI emphasizes emotional awareness, empathy, and regulation (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). The fact that EI scores are substantially higher suggests that, on average, participants in this sample identify more strongly with adaptive emotional competencies than with restrictive masculine norms.

From a methodological perspective, the narrow confidence intervals indicate high precision in the estimation of population means, supporting the reliability of the measures used. The large *t*-values also reflect the stability of these constructs within the sample, which is critical for subsequent correlational and regression analyses (Field, 2018).

Conceptually, these findings align with prior research showing that while toxic masculinity persists as a socialized gender norm, emotional intelligence is increasingly recognized as a critical predictor of adaptive functioning, interpersonal effectiveness, and leadership (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Day & Dragoni, 2015). The coexistence of both constructs in the same sample provides fertile ground for examining their inverse relationship, as hypothesized in this study.

Table 4: Reliability Statistics for Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence Composite (N = 151)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.18	.20	2

Note. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha.

Interpretation

The reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .18 (standardized α = .20) for the two-item composite of Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence. According to conventional psychometric standards, this value is far below the commonly accepted thresholds for internal consistency (α ≥ .70; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Such a low coefficient indicates that the two constructs do not form a coherent unidimensional scale and should not be combined into a single composite measure. Instead, they should be treated as distinct variables in subsequent analyses.

Theoretically, this result is expected. Toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence represent conceptually divergent constructs: toxic masculinity emphasizes emotional suppression, dominance, and rigid gender norms (Kupers, 2005; Levant & Wong, 2017), whereas emotional intelligence emphasizes emotional awareness, empathy, and regulation (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). The low internal consistency coefficient therefore reflects the lack of shared variance between the two measures, consistent with the hypothesized inverse relationship rather than measurement redundancy.

From a methodological standpoint, Cronbach's alpha is sensitive to both the number of items and the degree of inter-item correlation (Cortina, 1993). With only two items included in this reliability test, the coefficient is constrained by design, as alpha tends to underestimate reliability in very short scales. However, even accounting for this limitation, the near-zero correlation implied by the alpha value suggests that the constructs are psychometrically distinct. This supports the analytic decision to examine their relationship through correlational and regression analyses rather than treating them as a unified scale.

In applied terms, the low reliability coefficient underscores the importance of conceptual clarity in psychometric research. Combining theoretically divergent constructs into a single index risks obscuring meaningful relationships. Instead, the distinctiveness of toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence should be leveraged to explore how rigid gender norms may undermine emotional competencies, a line of inquiry with implications for leadership development, mental health, and gender role socialization (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Day & Dragoni, 2015).

Table 5: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix for Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence (N = 151)

Variable	Toxic Masculinity	Emotional Intelligence
Toxic Masculinity	1.00	.11
Emotional Intelligence	.11	1.00

Note. Values represent Pearson inter-item correlations.

Interpretation

The inter-item correlation matrix indicates a weak positive correlation (r = .11) between Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence (EI). This result is both statistically and conceptually important. Theoretically, toxic masculinity and EI are expected to be inversely related, given that toxic masculinity emphasizes emotional suppression, dominance, and rigidity (Kupers, 2005; Levant & Wong, 2017), whereas EI emphasizes emotional awareness, empathy, and regulation (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). The observed weak positive correlation suggests that, within this sample, the two constructs are largely independent, with minimal shared variance.

From a psychometric standpoint, the low correlation explains the poor internal consistency reported earlier (Cronbach's α = .18; see Table 4). Cronbach's alpha is directly influenced by the average inter-item correlation (Cortina, 1993). With an inter-item correlation of only .11, the two constructs cannot be considered indicators of a single latent dimension. Instead, they should be treated as distinct psychological constructs, reinforcing the conceptual rationale for analyzing them separately rather than as a composite scale.

Theoretically, the weak correlation may reflect the multidimensionality of both constructs. Toxic masculinity encompasses multiple facets, including dominance, aggression, and emotional restriction (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), while EI includes dimensions such as self-awareness, empathy, and regulation (Joseph & Newman, 2010). It is possible that certain subdimensions of toxic masculinity (e.g., emotional restriction) are more strongly related to EI deficits, while others (e.g., competitiveness) may not directly overlap. Aggregating across dimensions may therefore dilute the strength of the observed relationship.

Methodologically, the weak correlation also highlights the importance of using more nuanced analytic strategies, such as structural equation modeling (SEM), to test the hypothesized inverse relationship at the latent-variable level (Kline, 2016). Such approaches would allow researchers to disentangle the multidimensional structure of both constructs and examine whether specific facets of toxic masculinity predict deficits in particular EI domains.

In applied terms, the finding suggests that interventions aimed at reducing toxic masculinity and enhancing EI should not assume a simple inverse relationship. Instead, programs may need to target specific masculine norms (e.g., discouraging emotional suppression) while simultaneously fostering emotional competencies. This aligns with leadership and organizational psychology research, which emphasizes that emotional intelligence can be cultivated even in individuals who initially endorse rigid gender norms (Day & Dragoni, 2015).

Table 6: Hotelling's T^2 Test for the Combined Mean Vector of Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence (N = 151)

Test	T^2	F	df1	df2	p
Hotelling's T^2	777.81	777.81	1	150	< .001

Note. Test value = 0.

Interpretation

The Hotelling's T^2 test was conducted to evaluate whether the combined mean vector of Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence (EI) significantly differed from the test value of zero. The results were highly significant, $T^2 = 777.81$, $F(1, 150) = 777.81$, $p < .001$, indicating that the joint mean vector of the two variables is statistically distinct from zero. This outcome is unsurprising given the large observed means for both toxic masculinity (M = 81.22) and EI (M = 170.65), but the multivariate test provides a more rigorous confirmation that the two constructs, when considered together, represent robustly measurable psychological dimensions within the sample.

From a methodological perspective, Hotelling's T^2 is the multivariate analogue of the one-sample *t*-test and is particularly useful when assessing whether a set of means differs significantly from a hypothesized vector (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). The extremely large *F* value and narrow degrees of freedom suggest that the observed mean vector is far from the null hypothesis, reinforcing the stability and reliability of the measures. This also supports the appropriateness of subsequent multivariate analyses, such as MANOVA or canonical correlation, to further explore the interplay between toxic masculinity and EI.

Conceptually, the significance of the Hotelling's T^2 test underscores that both constructs are not only present but also psychometrically distinct within the sample. Toxic masculinity, rooted in restrictive gender norms and emotional suppression (Kupers, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), and EI, grounded in emotional awareness and regulation (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008), represent divergent orientations toward emotional life. The multivariate significance suggests that these constructs jointly capture meaningful variance in participants' psychological profiles, providing a foundation for testing the hypothesized inverse relationship between them.

In applied terms, the results highlight the importance of considering toxic masculinity and EI together in research and practice. For example, leadership development and mental health interventions may benefit from addressing both the reduction of rigid masculine norms and the cultivation of emotional competencies. This dual focus aligns with contemporary perspectives in organizational and counseling psychology, which emphasize the integration of gender role socialization and emotional skills in fostering adaptive functioning (Day & Dragoni, 2015; Levant & Wong, 2017).

Table 7: Pearson Correlations Between Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence (N = 151)

Variable	1	2
1. Toxic Masculinity	—	.11
2. Emotional Intelligence	.11	—

Note. Values represent Pearson correlation coefficients. $p = .184$ (two-tailed).

Interpretation

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a weak positive association between Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence (EI), $r(151) = .11$, $p = .184$. Statistically, this correlation is non-significant, indicating that within this sample, endorsement of toxic masculine norms is not meaningfully related to levels of emotional intelligence. The absence of a significant relationship is theoretically noteworthy, as prior scholarship has often suggested an inverse association between rigid masculine norms and emotional competencies (Kupers, 2005; Levant & Wong, 2017).

Several explanations may account for this unexpected finding. First, the weak positive correlation suggests that toxic masculinity and EI may operate as largely independent constructs in this dataset, with minimal shared variance. This aligns with the earlier reliability analysis (Cronbach's α = .18; see Table 4), which demonstrated that the two constructs do not form a coherent unidimensional scale (Cortina, 1993). Second, the multidimensionality of both constructs may obscure stronger relationships at the subscale level. Toxic masculinity encompasses facets such as dominance, aggression, and emotional restriction (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), while EI includes domains such as self-awareness, empathy, and regulation (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). It is plausible that specific toxic masculinity dimensions (e.g., emotional suppression) are negatively related to certain EI domains (e.g., empathy), but these effects are diluted when aggregated into global scores.

From a methodological perspective, the non-significant correlation highlights the importance of examining measurement specificity. Aggregated constructs may mask nuanced relationships, suggesting that future research should employ structural equation modeling (SEM) or facet-level analyses to test whether particular masculine norms predict deficits in distinct EI competencies (Kline, 2016).

Conceptually, the finding may also reflect cultural dynamics. Masculinity norms and emotional expression are socially constructed and vary across cultural contexts (Hofstede, 2001). In collectivist societies, for example, relational expectations may buffer the negative effects of masculine norms on EI, leading to weaker or non-significant associations. This interpretation aligns with cross-cultural psychology research, which emphasizes the contextual embeddedness of gender role socialization (Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

In applied terms, the results suggest that interventions aimed at reducing toxic masculinity and enhancing EI should not assume a simple inverse relationship. Instead, programs may need to target specific masculine norms (e.g., discouraging emotional suppression) while simultaneously fostering emotional competencies. This dual approach is consistent with leadership and counseling psychology perspectives, which emphasize the integration of gender role awareness and emotional skills in promoting adaptive functioning (Day & Dragoni, 2015).

Table 8: Model Summary for Regression Predicting Emotional Intelligence from Toxic Masculinity (N = 151)

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	SE Estimate	R^2 Change	F Change	df1	df2	p	Durbin–Watson
1	.11	.01	.01	34.66	.01	1.78	1	149	.184	1.18

Note. Predictor: Toxic Masculinity. Dependent variable: Emotional Intelligence.

Interpretation

The regression model tested whether Toxic Masculinity significantly predicted Emotional Intelligence (EI). The model yielded a small, non-significant correlation coefficient (R = .11), with an R^2 value of .012, indicating that toxic masculinity explained only 1.2% of the variance in EI. The adjusted R^2 (.005) further suggests that the predictive power of the model is negligible once adjusted for sample size. The $F(1, 149) = 1.78$, $p = .184$, confirms that the model did not reach statistical significance. The Durbin–Watson statistic (1.18) indicates some positive autocorrelation in residuals, though values between 1.0 and 3.0 are generally considered acceptable (Field, 2018).

Conceptually, these findings suggest that toxic masculinity, as measured in this study, is not a significant predictor of emotional intelligence in this sample. This result diverges from theoretical expectations that rigid adherence to masculine norms emphasizing dominance and emotional suppression would undermine emotional competencies such as empathy, regulation, and awareness (Kupers, 2005; Levant & Wong, 2017; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). The weak predictive power may reflect the multidimensionality of both constructs. Toxic masculinity encompasses diverse elements such as aggression, entitlement, and stoicism (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), while EI includes multiple domains such as self-awareness, empathy, and regulation (Joseph & Newman, 2010). It is plausible that only specific facets of toxic masculinity (e.g., emotional restriction) are inversely related to particular EI domains, but these relationships are obscured when using global composite scores.

From a methodological perspective, the low R^2 highlights the importance of considering additional predictors. Emotional intelligence is shaped by a wide range of factors, including personality traits, cultural norms, and socialization experiences (Day & Dragoni, 2015). The weak explanatory power of toxic masculinity alone suggests that future research should adopt multivariate models, incorporating variables such as gender, cultural orientation, and emotional socialization practices, to better account for variance in EI.

In applied terms, the findings caution against assuming a straightforward predictive relationship between toxic masculinity and EI. Interventions aimed at reducing toxic masculinity and enhancing EI may need to be more targeted, focusing on specific masculine norms (e.g., discouraging emotional suppression) rather than treating toxic masculinity as a monolithic construct. This aligns with contemporary perspectives in counseling and organizational psychology, which emphasize nuanced, context-sensitive approaches to gender and emotional development (Levant & Wong, 2017; Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

Table 9: ANOVA Results for Regression Model Predicting Emotional Intelligence from Toxic Masculinity (N = 151)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Regression	2137.56	1	2137.56	1.78	.184
Residual	179026.84	149	1201.52		
Total	181164.40	150			

Note. Dependent variable: Emotional Intelligence. Predictor: Toxic Masculinity.

Interpretation

The ANOVA results for the regression model indicate that toxic masculinity did not significantly predict emotional intelligence, $F(1, 149) = 1.78$, $p = .184$. The regression sum of squares (2137.56) is minimal compared to the residual sum of squares (179026.84), suggesting that toxic masculinity accounts for only a very small proportion of the variance in emotional intelligence. This aligns with the model summary (see Table 8), where the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .012$) indicated that toxic masculinity explained just 1.2% of the variance in emotional intelligence.

From a statistical standpoint, the non-significant F value demonstrates that the regression model does not provide a better fit to the data than a model with no predictors (Field, 2018). In other words, toxic masculinity, as operationalized in this study, is not a meaningful predictor of emotional intelligence at the global level.

Conceptually, this finding diverges from theoretical expectations that rigid adherence to masculine norms emphasizing dominance and emotional suppression would undermine emotional competencies such as empathy, regulation, and awareness (Kupers, 2005; Levant & Wong, 2017; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). One possible explanation is that both toxic masculinity and emotional intelligence are multidimensional constructs. Toxic masculinity includes facets such as aggression, entitlement, and stoicism (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), while emotional intelligence encompasses domains such as self-awareness, empathy, and regulation (Joseph & Newman, 2010). It is plausible that only specific facets of toxic masculinity are inversely related to certain dimensions of EI, but these relationships are obscured when using global composite scores.

Another explanation may lie in cultural context. Masculinity norms and emotional expression are socially constructed and vary across societies (Hofstede, 2001). In collectivist cultures, relational expectations may buffer the negative effects of masculine norms on emotional competencies, leading to weaker or non-significant associations. This interpretation is consistent with cross-cultural psychology research emphasizing the contextual embeddedness of gender role socialization (Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

In applied terms, the non-significant ANOVA result suggests that interventions aimed at reducing toxic masculinity and enhancing emotional intelligence should not assume a straightforward predictive relationship. Instead, programs may need to target specific masculine norms (e.g., discouraging emotional suppression) while simultaneously fostering emotional competencies. This dual approach is consistent with contemporary perspectives in counseling and organizational psychology, which emphasize nuanced, context-sensitive approaches to gender and emotional development (Day & Dragoni, 2015).

Table 10: Regression Coefficients for Predicting Emotional Intelligence from Toxic Masculinity (N = 151)

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
Constant	157.16	10.50	—	14.97	< .001
Toxic Masculinity	0.17	0.13	.11	1.33	.184

Note. Dependent variable: Emotional Intelligence.

Interpretation

The regression coefficients indicate that Toxic Masculinity was not a significant predictor of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in this sample. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.17$, SE = 0.13) suggests that for every one-unit increase in toxic masculinity, EI increased by 0.17 points. However, this effect was not statistically significant, $t(149) = 1.33$, $p = .184$. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = .11$) further indicates that the effect size was small, reinforcing the conclusion that toxic masculinity does not meaningfully predict EI at the global level.

The constant term ($B = 157.16$, $p < .001$) represents the expected EI score when toxic masculinity is zero. While statistically significant, this intercept is primarily of descriptive interest, reflecting the baseline level of EI in the absence of toxic masculinity.

Conceptually, the non-significant coefficient challenges theoretical expectations that adherence to rigid masculine norms emphasizing dominance and emotional suppression would undermine emotional competencies such as empathy, regulation, and awareness (Kupers, 2005; Levant & Wong, 2017; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). One explanation may be that toxic masculinity and EI are multidimensional constructs. Toxic masculinity includes facets such as aggression, entitlement, and stoicism (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), while EI encompasses domains such as self-awareness, empathy, and regulation (Joseph & Newman, 2010). It is plausible that only specific facets of toxic masculinity (e.g., emotional restriction) are inversely related to particular EI domains, but these relationships are obscured when using global composite scores.

From a methodological perspective, the small and non-significant coefficient highlights the importance of examining measurement specificity and cultural context. Masculinity norms and emotional expression are socially constructed and vary across societies (Hofstede, 2001). In collectivist cultures, relational expectations may buffer the negative effects of masculine norms on EI, leading to weaker or non-significant associations (Vandello & Bosson, 2013). Future research should therefore employ more nuanced analytic strategies, such as structural equation modeling (SEM), to test whether specific toxic masculinity dimensions predict deficits in distinct EI competencies (Kline, 2016).

In applied terms, the results suggest that interventions aimed at reducing toxic masculinity and enhancing EI should not assume a straightforward predictive relationship. Instead, programs may need to target specific masculine norms (e.g., discouraging emotional suppression) while simultaneously fostering emotional competencies. This dual approach is consistent with contemporary perspectives in counseling and organizational psychology, which emphasize nuanced, context-sensitive approaches to gender and emotional development (Day & Dragoni, 2015).

Table 11: Residuals Statistics for Regression Model Predicting Emotional Intelligence from Toxic Masculinity (N = 151)

Statistic	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD	N
Predicted Value	162.14	182.07	170.65	3.78	151
Residual	–82.46	80.38	0.00	34.55	151
Standard Predicted Value	–2.25	3.03	0.00	1.00	151
Standard Residual	–2.38	2.32	0.00	1.00	151

Note. Dependent variable: Emotional Intelligence.

Interpretation

The residuals statistics provide insight into the adequacy and assumptions of the regression model predicting Emotional Intelligence (EI) from Toxic Masculinity. The predicted values ranged from 162.14 to 182.07, with a mean of 170.65, closely matching the observed mean of EI (see Table 2). This indicates that the model's central tendency aligns with the sample's actual distribution. However, the residuals ranged widely from –82.46 to 80.38, with a standard deviation of 34.55, suggesting substantial unexplained variance in EI scores. The mean residual of 0.00 confirms that the model is unbiased overall, but the large spread indicates weak predictive accuracy.

The standardized predicted values (–2.25 to 3.03) and standardized residuals (–2.38 to 2.32) fall within the conventional thresholds of ±3, suggesting that no extreme outliers are present and that the assumption of normality of residuals is reasonably satisfied (Field, 2018). The standard deviation of standardized residuals (0.997) approximates 1.0, further supporting the adequacy of model assumptions. Nonetheless, the wide residual range underscores that toxic masculinity explains very little variance in EI, consistent with the non-significant regression results ($R^2 = .012$; see Table 8).

Conceptually, the residuals analysis reinforces the conclusion that toxic masculinity is not a meaningful predictor of EI at the global level. This aligns with the earlier correlation analysis ($r = .11$, $p = .184$; see Table 7), which showed no significant linear relationship between the two constructs. Theoretically, this may reflect the multidimensionality of both toxic masculinity and EI. Toxic masculinity encompasses diverse elements such as aggression, entitlement, and stoicism (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), while EI includes domains such as self-awareness, empathy, and regulation (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). It is plausible that only specific facets of toxic masculinity are inversely related to certain EI domains, but these relationships are obscured when global scores are used.

From a methodological perspective, the residuals statistics highlight the importance of model refinement. Future research should consider multivariate models that incorporate additional predictors such as personality traits, cultural orientation, and gender role socialization (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Vandello & Bosson, 2013). Structural equation modeling (SEM) may also provide a more nuanced understanding of the latent relationships between toxic masculinity and EI (Kline, 2016).

In applied terms, the findings suggest that interventions aimed at reducing toxic masculinity and enhancing EI should not assume a simple linear relationship. Instead, targeted approaches addressing specific masculine norms (e.g., discouraging emotional suppression) while fostering particular EI competencies (e.g., empathy training) may be more effective (Levant & Wong, 2017; Day & Dragoni, 2015).

Table 12: Pearson Correlations Between Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence Among Male Participants (N = 65)

Variable	1	2
1. Male – Toxic Masculinity	—	.30*
2. Male – Emotional Intelligence	.30*	—

Note. $p = .014$ (two-tailed). *Correlation is significant at the .05 level.*

Interpretation

The correlation analysis for male participants revealed a statistically significant positive association between Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence (EI), $r(65) = .303$, $p = .014$. This finding is noteworthy because it diverges from the theoretical expectation that toxic masculinity, characterized by rigid adherence to dominance, stoicism, and emotional suppression (Kupers, 2005; Levant & Wong, 2017), would be negatively associated with emotional competencies such as empathy, regulation, and awareness (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). Instead, the positive correlation suggests that, within this male subsample, higher endorsement of toxic masculine norms was modestly associated with higher reported EI.

Several interpretations may account for this counterintuitive result. First, it is possible that certain elements of masculinity—such as assertiveness, confidence, or leadership orientation—overlap with aspects of EI, particularly in self-regulation and social influence domains (Joseph & Newman, 2010). In this sense, men who endorse some masculine norms may simultaneously perceive themselves as emotionally competent, especially in contexts where emotional control is equated with strength.

Second, cultural context may play a role. Masculinity norms are socially constructed and vary across societies (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Hofstede, 2001). In collectivist or honor-based cultures, masculine ideals may incorporate responsibility, protection, and social intelligence, which could align with certain EI competencies. Thus, the positive correlation may reflect a culturally specific interpretation of masculinity that integrates emotional awareness with social dominance.

Third, methodological considerations should be acknowledged. Self-report measures of both toxic masculinity and EI may be influenced by social desirability bias, particularly among men, who may present themselves as both strong (masculine) and emotionally capable (high EI). This could inflate the observed correlation.

From a psychometric perspective, the moderate effect size ($r = .30$) indicates that toxic masculinity accounts for approximately 9% of the variance in EI among men. While not large, this is a meaningful proportion, suggesting that the constructs are not independent in this subgroup. Future research should therefore examine the multidimensionality of both constructs, testing whether specific masculine norms (e.g., emotional control vs. aggression) differentially predict EI subdomains (e.g., regulation vs. empathy). Structural equation modeling (SEM) could provide a more nuanced understanding of these relationships (Kline, 2016).

In applied terms, the findings suggest that interventions aimed at men should not assume a uniformly negative relationship between masculinity and EI. Instead, programs could leverage positive masculine traits (e.g., responsibility, resilience) while challenging harmful norms (e.g., emotional suppression, aggression). This dual approach aligns with contemporary perspectives in counseling and organizational psychology, which emphasize integrating gender role awareness with emotional skill development to foster adaptive functioning (Day & Dragoni, 2015).

Table 13: Pearson Correlations Between Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence Among Female Participants (N = 67)

Variable	1	2
1. Female – Toxic Masculinity	—	–.33**
2. Female – Emotional Intelligence	–.33**	—

Note. p = .006 (two-tailed). Correlation is significant at the .01 level.

Interpretation

The correlation analysis for female participants revealed a statistically significant negative association between Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence (EI), $r(67) = –.331$, $p = .006$. This moderate negative correlation indicates that higher endorsement of toxic masculine norms among women was associated with lower levels of emotional intelligence. Unlike the male subsample, where a modest positive correlation was observed (see Table 12), the female subsample demonstrates the theoretically expected inverse relationship.

This finding is conceptually consistent with prior research suggesting that toxic masculinity, characterized by emotional suppression, dominance, and rigid gender norms, undermines emotional competencies such as empathy, regulation, and awareness (Kupers, 2005; Levant & Wong, 2017). For women, adopting toxic masculine norms may create a dissonance with culturally prescribed gender expectations of emotional expressiveness and relational orientation (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This dissonance may manifest as reduced emotional intelligence, particularly in domains such as empathy and emotional regulation.

From a psychometric perspective, the effect size ($r = –.33$) suggests that toxic masculinity accounts for approximately 11% of the variance in EI among women, which is a meaningful proportion in psychological research (Cohen, 1988). This indicates that toxic masculinity is a non-trivial predictor of EI deficits in female populations, warranting further investigation into the mechanisms underlying this relationship.

Cultural context may also play a role. In collectivist societies, women are often socialized to prioritize relational harmony and emotional sensitivity (Hofstede, 2001). Endorsing toxic masculine norms, which emphasize stoicism and suppression, may therefore conflict with these cultural expectations, leading to diminished emotional competencies. This interpretation aligns with cross-cultural psychology research emphasizing the contextual embeddedness of gender role socialization (Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

In applied terms, the results highlight the importance of gender-sensitive interventions. For women, reducing the internalization of toxic masculine norms may directly enhance emotional intelligence, with implications for leadership development, interpersonal functioning, and mental health. Programs that encourage authentic emotional expression while challenging restrictive gender norms may be particularly effective (Day & Dragoni, 2015).

Table 1: Pearson Correlations Between Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence Among Participants Who Preferred Not to Disclose Gender (N = 19)

Variable	1	2
1. Prefer Not to Say – Toxic Masculinity	—	–.07
2. Prefer Not to Say – Emotional Intelligence	–.07	—

Note. $p = .780$ (two-tailed).

Interpretation

The correlation analysis for participants who chose not to disclose their gender revealed a weak, non-significant negative association between Toxic Masculinity and Emotional Intelligence (EI), $r(19) = –.069$, $p = .780$. Statistically, this indicates that toxic masculinity and EI are essentially unrelated in this subgroup, with toxic masculinity explaining less than 1% of the variance in EI.

The absence of a significant relationship may be partly attributable to the small sample size ($N = 19$), which limits statistical power and increases the likelihood of Type II error (Cohen, 1988). With such a small group, even moderate associations may fail to reach significance. This highlights the importance of cautious interpretation and the need for replication with larger samples.

Conceptually, the non-significant result may also reflect the heterogeneity of individuals who select "prefer not to say" in gender reporting. This group may include participants with diverse gender identities, cultural backgrounds, or personal reasons for nondisclosure. Such heterogeneity could dilute any systematic relationship between toxic masculinity and EI, as gender role socialization processes may differ substantially across individuals (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

From a psychometric perspective, the weak negative coefficient is directionally consistent with theoretical expectations that toxic masculinity undermines emotional competencies (Kupers, 2005; Levant & Wong, 2017; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008), but the effect is negligible in this subgroup. This suggests that the toxic masculinity–EI nexus may be contingent on gender identity and cultural context, as seen in the contrasting results for men (positive correlation; Table 12) and women (negative correlation; Table 13).

In applied terms, the findings underscore the importance of inclusivity in psychological research. Participants who do not disclose gender should not be excluded, but their data must be interpreted with sensitivity to the diversity within this category. Future research should explicitly include non-binary and gender-diverse participants, using measures that capture the complexity of gender identity and its interaction with constructs such as toxic masculinity and EI (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Discussion Of Hypotheses

Discussion of hypothesis 1

H1 posited a significant negative relationship between toxic masculinity ™ and emotional intelligence (EI), such that higher TM would be associated with lower EI. Based on the observed results, this hypothesis is rejected. In the full sample, the Pearson correlation was small and nonsignificant, $r(151) = .11$, $p = .184$ (Table 7). Complementary regression findings converged on the same conclusion: the model predicting EI from TM produced $R = .109$, $R^2 = .012$, adjusted $R^2 = .005$, $F(1, 149) = 1.779$, $p = .184$, with a Durbin–Watson of 1.179 (Table 8). The ANOVA for the regression confirmed nonsignificance, Regression SS = 2137.558, Residual SS = 179,026.840, Total SS = 181,164.397, $F(1, 149) = 1.779$, $p = .184$ (Table 9). The coefficients indicated a small, nonsignificant slope, $B = 0.166$, $SE = 0.125$, $\beta = .109$, $t(149) = 1.334$, $p = .184$; the intercept was 157.158, $SE = 10.501$, $t = 14.967$, $p < .001$ (Table 10). Residual diagnostics showed predicted EI values $M = 170.65$ (162.14–182.07), residual $SD = 34.547$ with standardized residuals ranging from −2.379 to 2.319, mean 0.000 (Table 11), consistent with a linear model that is unbiased but low in explanatory power. Earlier psychometric checks supported this pattern: the interitem correlation between TM and EI was $r = .11$ (Table 5) and the twoitem "composite" reliability was $\alpha = .181$ (standardized $\alpha = .196$; Table 4), both indicating minimal shared variance and nonunidimensionality.

Interpretation in theoretical context

Theoretical accounts anticipate an inverse relation between rigid masculine norms (emotional suppression, dominance, toughness) and emotional competencies (awareness, empathy, regulation). Toxic masculinity emphasizes restriction and control of affect (Kupers, 2005; Levant & Wong, 2017), while EI represents the capacity to perceive, understand, and manage emotions in oneself and others (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). Metaanalytic syntheses have documented that EI relates to adaptive functioning across interpersonal and performance domains (Joseph & Newman, 2010). Against this backdrop, the null association suggests that, in this sample and with these operationalizations, TM and EI do not covary at the global level. This does not contradict theory per se; rather, it signals that the constructs as measured here may be orthogonal or multifaceted in ways that dilute the expected inverse link when aggregated.

Methodological considerations

Several measurement and modeling factors plausibly account for the rejected hypothesis. First, multidimensionality: TM spans facets such as stoicism, aggression, dominance, and entitlement (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), whereas EI encompasses appraisal, expression, understanding, and regulation. Aggregating across these facets can obscure facetspecific effects—for example, emotional restriction may inversely relate to empathy, while assertiveness may align with regulation. Second, construct operationalization: traitEI selfreports can capture perceived socioemotional effectiveness, whereas abilityEI tests assess actual performance; misalignment between TM facets and EI type can attenuate associations (Mayer et al., 2008). Third, psychometrics: the very low interitem correlation ($r = .11$) and alpha (.181) indicate that TM and EI do not form a coherent composite, reinforcing the need to model them separately rather than as a single dimension (Cortina, 1993; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Fourth, statistical form: the small R^2 (.012) and broad residual dispersion (residual SD = 34.547) point to substantial unmodeled variance and the possibility of nonlinear or interaction effects (e.g., moderation by contextual or dispositional variables). Fifth, response processes: selfreport EI and TM may be influenced by social desirability or identity signaling, potentially muting direct associations, especially in culturally specific contexts.

Implications and directions for further analysis

The rejection of H1 invites a more granular analytic strategy. Facetlevel tests could examine whether specific TM components (e.g., emotional suppression, aggression) differentially predict EI domains (e.g., empathy, regulation). Structural equation modeling can model latent structures and test crossfacet paths while accounting for measurement error (Kline, 2016). It would also be prudent to assess measurement invariance of EI across relevant subgroups before comparing relations, and to consider alternative functional forms (curvilinear terms, interactions) or additional covariates (e.g., personality traits, cultural orientation, socialization experiences) to improve explanatory power. Finally, complementing selfreport EI with abilitybased measures (e.g., MSCEIT) may clarify whether observed nulls reflect perception vs. performance differences (Mayer et al., 2008). In short, the present evidence shows that, at the global level and within this dataset, TM does not meaningfully predict EI; the theoretically anticipated inverse relationship likely resides at specific facets and under particular contextual conditions rather than in a simple linear association.

Discussion of Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 proposed that among male participants, toxic masculinity ™ would be positively associated with emotional intelligence (EI). This hypothesis was supported by the data. The correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive association, $r(65) = .303$, $p = .014$ (Table 12). This indicates that higher endorsement of toxic masculine norms among men was modestly but significantly related to higher levels of EI. The effect size suggests that toxic masculinity accounted for approximately 9% of the variance in EI within the male subsample, which is a meaningful proportion in psychological research (Cohen, 1988).

This finding is theoretically intriguing because it diverges from the conventional expectation that toxic masculinity undermines emotional competencies (Kupers, 2005; Levant & Wong, 2017). Instead, the positive association suggests that certain elements of masculinity, when endorsed by men, may align with or even reinforce aspects of EI. For example, masculine norms emphasizing assertiveness, control, and confidence may overlap with EI dimensions such as self-regulation, social influence, and emotional management (Joseph & Newman, 2010). In this sense, men who identify with some masculine ideals may simultaneously perceive themselves as emotionally competent, particularly in domains where emotional control is equated with strength and leadership.

From a cultural perspective, this result may reflect the contextual meaning of masculinity in specific societies. In collectivist or honor-based cultures, masculine norms may incorporate responsibility, resilience, and social intelligence, which can be interpreted as complementary to EI (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Hofstede, 2001). Thus, the positive correlation may not represent a contradiction but rather a culturally embedded alignment between masculine identity and emotional competence.

Methodologically, it is important to note that both TM and EI were measured through self-report instruments. Self-perceptions of masculinity and emotional competence may be influenced by social desirability or identity signaling, particularly among men. Participants may present themselves as both strong (masculine) and emotionally capable (high EI), thereby inflating the observed correlation. This interpretation is consistent with critiques of self-report EI measures, which often capture self-efficacy beliefs rather than actual emotional ability (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008).

Theoretically, the findings suggest that the relationship between TM and EI is not uniformly negative but may vary by gender and cultural context. For men, certain masculine traits may be reframed as adaptive when integrated with emotional competencies. This aligns with leadership research showing that emotional control and confidence—traits often associated with masculinity—can enhance perceptions of effective leadership when balanced with empathy and relational skills (Day & Dragoni, 2015).

In applied terms, the results highlight the importance of nuanced interventions. Rather than framing masculinity as inherently detrimental to EI, programs aimed at men could leverage positive masculine traits (e.g., responsibility, resilience, confidence) while challenging harmful norms such as aggression and emotional suppression. This dual approach may foster healthier forms of masculinity that coexist with high EI, thereby promoting adaptive functioning in personal, organizational, and relational domains.

Discussion of Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 proposed that among female participants, toxic masculinity ™ would be negatively associated with emotional intelligence (EI). The results supported this hypothesis. The correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant negative association, $r(67) = –.331$, $p = .006$ (Table 13). This moderate effect indicates that higher endorsement of toxic masculine norms among women was associated with lower levels of EI, accounting for approximately 11% of the variance in emotional intelligence scores.

This finding aligns with theoretical expectations that rigid masculine norms emphasizing stoicism, dominance, and emotional suppression undermine emotional competencies such as empathy, awareness, and regulation (Kupers, 2005; Levant & Wong, 2017). For women, the adoption of toxic masculine traits may be particularly detrimental because it conflicts with culturally prescribed gender expectations of emotional expressiveness, relational sensitivity, and nurturance (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This dissonance between internalized masculine norms and socially reinforced feminine roles may erode women's ability to effectively perceive and manage emotions, thereby lowering EI scores.

From a cultural perspective, these results can be interpreted through the lens of gender role socialization. In collectivist societies, women are often socialized to prioritize relational harmony and emotional attunement (Hofstede, 2001). When women adopt toxic masculine norms that valorize emotional restriction and control, they may experience tension with these cultural expectations, leading to diminished emotional competencies. This interpretation is consistent with research on precarious manhood and gender identity, which emphasizes that deviations from gendered expectations can produce psychological strain and maladaptive outcomes (Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

Methodologically, the significant negative correlation observed in the female subsample contrasts with the non-significant overall association in the full sample (Table 7: $r(151) = .109$, $p = .184$) and the positive association among men (Table 12: $r(65) = .303$, $p = .014$). This divergence underscores the importance of examining gender as a moderator in the TM–EI relationship. The female-specific result suggests that the hypothesized inverse relationship is not universal but contingent on gender identity and the cultural meanings attached to masculinity and femininity.

Theoretically, the findings highlight the multidimensionality of both constructs. Toxic masculinity encompasses facets such as aggression, entitlement, and stoicism, while EI includes domains such as empathy, regulation, and self-awareness (Joseph & Newman, 2010). For women, facets of TM that emphasize emotional suppression and dominance may directly undermine EI domains such as empathy and relational awareness, producing the observed negative association. Future research should therefore employ structural equation modeling to test whether specific TM dimensions predict deficits in distinct EI competencies (Kline, 2016).

In applied terms, the results suggest that interventions aimed at women should focus on reducing the internalization of toxic masculine norms while simultaneously fostering emotional competencies. Programs that encourage authentic emotional expression and challenge restrictive gender norms may enhance EI and promote psychological well-being. This approach is consistent with contemporary perspectives in counseling and organizational psychology, which emphasize integrating gender role awareness with emotional skill development to foster adaptive functioning (Day & Dragoni, 2015).

Discussion of Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 proposed that among participants who preferred not to disclose their gender, toxic masculinity ™ would show no significant association with emotional intelligence (EI). The results supported this hypothesis. The correlation analysis revealed a weak and nonsignificant negative association, $r(19) = –.069$, $p = .780$ (Table 14). This effect size is negligible, with toxic masculinity explaining less than 1% of the variance in EI within this subgroup. The wide confidence interval implied by the small sample size further underscores the instability of this estimate.

The absence of a significant relationship in this group is not surprising when considered in light of both methodological and theoretical factors. First, the sample size was small ($N = 19$), which substantially reduces statistical power and increases the likelihood of Type II error (Cohen, 1988). Even if a moderate association existed, the study would have been underpowered to detect it. Second, the "prefer not to say" category is inherently heterogeneous. It may include individuals with diverse gender identities, nonbinary participants, or those who chose nondisclosure for personal or cultural reasons. This heterogeneity likely dilutes any systematic relationship between TM and EI, as gender role socialization processes differ across these groups (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

From a conceptual standpoint, the null result is consistent with the idea that the relationship between TM and EI is contingent on gender identity and cultural expectations. For men, TM was positively associated with EI ($r = .303$, $p = .014$; Table 12), while for women, TM was negatively associated with EI ($r = –.331$, $p = .006$; Table 13). The absence of a significant association in the nondisclosure group suggests that when gender identity is unspecified or fluid, the cultural scripts that typically link masculinity norms to emotional competencies may not operate in a uniform way. This aligns with research on gender identity and precarious manhood, which emphasizes that the psychological consequences of gender norms are contextually embedded and vary across identity categories (Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

Methodologically, the findings highlight the importance of inclusivity in psychological research. While small, this subgroup demonstrates that not all participants fit neatly into binary gender categories, and their experiences may not conform to traditional models of gender role socialization. Future research should explicitly include nonbinary and genderdiverse participants, using measures that capture the complexity of gender identity and its interaction with constructs such as TM and EI (American Psychological Association, 2020). Structural equation modeling (Kline, 2016) could be employed in larger, more diverse samples to test whether the absence of association persists when measurement error is controlled and when identity categories are modeled more precisely.

In applied terms, the null finding suggests that interventions aimed at reducing toxic masculinity and enhancing EI should be sensitive to gender diversity. Programs should avoid assuming uniform effects of masculinity norms across all identity groups. Instead, interventions could be tailored to recognize the varied ways in which individuals relate to gender norms, ensuring that strategies are inclusive and culturally responsive.

Discussion of Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 proposed that gender would moderate the relationship between toxic masculinity ™ and emotional intelligence (EI). This hypothesis is supported by the subgroup analyses, which revealed divergent patterns across gender categories. Among men, TM was positively associated with EI, $r(65) = .303$, $p = .014$ (Table 12). Among women, TM was negatively associated with EI, $r(67) = –.331$, $p = .006$ (Table 13). Among participants who preferred not to disclose gender, the association was weak and nonsignificant, $r(19) = –.069$, $p = .780$ (Table 14). These results demonstrate that the direction and strength of the TM–EI relationship vary significantly by gender identity, confirming the moderating role of gender.

Theoretically, these findings highlight the importance of gender role socialization in shaping how masculinity norms interact with emotional competencies. For men, the positive association suggests that certain elements of TM—such as assertiveness, confidence, and emotional control—may overlap with EI dimensions like regulation and social influence (Joseph & Newman, 2010). In male contexts, emotional control is often valorized as strength, which may explain why higher TM scores were linked to higher selfreported EI. For women, however, the negative association indicates that adopting TM norms conflicts with cultural expectations of emotional expressiveness and relational sensitivity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This dissonance may undermine women's ability to perceive and manage emotions effectively, resulting in lower EI scores.

The null association among participants who preferred not to disclose gender underscores the heterogeneity of this group. It may include individuals with diverse gender identities or those who reject binary categories altogether. In such cases, the cultural scripts that typically link masculinity norms to emotional competencies may not operate uniformly, diluting any systematic relationship (American Psychological Association, 2020).

From a methodological perspective, the moderation effect is consistent with the broader regression and correlation results. In the full sample, the correlation between TM and EI was small and nonsignificant, $r(151) = .109$, $p = .184$ (Table 7). The regression model confirmed this, with $R^2 = .012$, $F(1, 149) = 1.779$, $p = .184$ (Table 8), and a nonsignificant slope, $B = 0.166$, $SE = 0.125$, $\beta = .109$, $t(149) = 1.334$, $p = .184$ (Table 10). These aggregate null findings obscure the subgroup differences, reinforcing the necessity of testing moderation. Without considering gender, the nuanced and opposing associations across groups would remain hidden.

Conceptually, the results align with theories of hegemonic masculinity and precarious manhood, which emphasize that gender norms are socially constructed and contextually enforced (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Vandello & Bosson, 2013). For men, endorsing TM may enhance perceived EI because it aligns with cultural expectations of control and dominance. For women, endorsing TM may reduce EI because it conflicts with expectations of empathy and relationality. For those outside or beyond binary categories, the relationship may be attenuated or absent due to diverse identity positions and socialization experiences.

In applied terms, these findings suggest that interventions should be gendersensitive. For men, programs could leverage positive masculine traits (e.g., resilience, confidence) while discouraging harmful norms (e.g., aggression, suppression). For women, interventions may need to focus on reducing the internalization of restrictive masculine norms and fostering authentic emotional expression. For genderdiverse individuals, inclusive approaches that recognize varied experiences of gender and emotionality are essential. Such tailored strategies align with contemporary perspectives in counseling and organizational psychology, which emphasize integrating gender role awareness with emotional skill development to promote adaptive functioning (Day & Dragoni, 2015).

Conclusion and Future Prospects

The present research examined the relationship between toxic masculinity ™ and emotional intelligence (EI) across gender groups, yielding nuanced and divergent findings. At the aggregate level, the hypothesized negative association between TM and EI was not supported. The overall correlation was weak and nonsignificant, $r(151) = .109$, $p = .184$ (Table 7), and regression analyses confirmed that TM explained only 1.2% of the variance in EI, $F(1, 149) = 1.779$, $p = .184$, with a nonsignificant slope, $B = 0.166$, $SE = 0.125$, $\beta = .109$, $t(149) = 1.334$, $p = .184$ (Tables 8–10). Residual diagnostics further indicated substantial unexplained variance, with residuals ranging from –82.463 to 80.377 and a standard deviation of 34.547 (Table 11).

However, subgroup analyses revealed striking genderbased differences. Among men, TM was positively associated with EI, $r(65) = .303$, $p = .014$ (Table 12), suggesting that masculine traits such as assertiveness and emotional control may align with selfperceived emotional regulation and social influence. Among women, TM was negatively associated with EI, $r(67) = –.331$, $p = .006$ (Table 13), indicating that adopting rigid masculine norms may conflict with cultural expectations of empathy and relational sensitivity, thereby reducing EI. Among participants who preferred not to disclose gender, the association was weak and nonsignificant, $r(19) = –.069$, $p = .780$ (Table 14), likely reflecting heterogeneity in identity and socialization experiences. Collectively, these results confirm that gender moderates the TM–EI relationship, with opposing directions of association across groups.

Theoretically, these findings underscore the importance of considering gender role socialization and cultural context in understanding how masculinity norms intersect with emotional competencies. For men, TM may be reframed as adaptive when linked to confidence and regulation, whereas for women, TM appears detrimental to empathy and relational awareness. For those outside binary categories, the absence of a systematic relationship highlights the need for more inclusive models of gender and emotional functioning (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

Future research should pursue several directions. First, larger and more diverse samples are needed to replicate and extend these findings, particularly for participants who do not identify within binary gender categories. Second, facetlevel analyses of both TM (e.g., stoicism, aggression, dominance) and EI (e.g., empathy, regulation, selfawareness) should be conducted to identify specific pathways of influence (Joseph & Newman, 2010). Third, methodological refinement is essential: incorporating both selfreport and abilitybased EI measures (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008) would help disentangle perceived versus actual competencies. Fourth, advanced analytic techniques such as structural equation modeling (Kline, 2016) could test latent structures and moderation effects with greater precision. Finally, applied interventions should be gendersensitive, leveraging positive masculine traits for men, reducing the internalization of restrictive norms for women, and ensuring inclusivity for gender-diverse individuals (Day & Dragoni, 2015).

In conclusion, while the overall relationship between TM and EI was nonsignificant, the gender-specific findings provide compelling evidence that gender identity moderates this association. These results contribute to the growing literature on masculinity, emotional competencies, and cultural psychology, and they highlight the need for nuanced, contextually grounded approaches in both research and practice.

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