

**REDEFINING MASCULINITY:
ROLE OF POSITIVE MASCULINITY**

A thesis submitted in the partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

IN PSYCHOLOGY

(clinical)

SUBMITTED BY:

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UNDER THE SUPERVISION AND GUIDANCE OF

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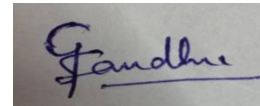
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Redefining masculinity: Role of positive masculinity**” submitted by Gurpreet Kaur (Enrollment No. 862302061) for the partial fulfillment of the degree of **Masters of Arts in Psychology submitted in Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Patiala** is a Bonafide work completed under the supervision of Dr. Kriti Vyas, Assistant Professor, Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Patiala and that no piece of this venture has been submitted for the honour of any other degree.



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I, Gurpreet Kaur (862302061), student of M.A. Clinical Psychology (2023-2025), declare that the work being presented in the thesis entitled, “**Redefining masculinity: Role of positive masculinity**” in the partial fulfillment of the degree of **Masters of Arts in Clinical Psychology, Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of**

Engineering & Technology, Patiala, is an original record of my own research work carried out under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Kriti Vyas, Assistant Professor, Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Patiala. The content in the dissertation has not been submitted to any other university or institute for the award of any other degree.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how young men perceive and internalize masculine identity, focusing on the shift from traditional to positive masculinity. While previous research often highlights negative traits like aggression or emotional suppression, this study emphasizes strengths-based approaches using the Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity (PPPM) model (Kiselica & Carlson, 2010). Through focus group discussions and psychometric scale development, the research examines evolving definitions of masculinity and their implications for male well-being. Previous research has primarily emphasized the negative traits associated with masculinity, such as strength, aggression, toughness, and emotional suppression. In contrast, this study highlighted the principles of The Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity

(PPPM) model (Kiselica & Carlson, 2010). This model concentrates on addressing the challenges and harmful effects of restrictive masculinity, focusing on strengths and providing a balanced and positive perspective on masculinity. This study explored the concept of positive masculinity by conducting Focus group discussions (FGDs) with young males. The Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) identified four themes and respective sub-themes: The definition of masculinity, factors contributing to positive masculinity, the bridge between traditional and positive masculinity, and the impact of positive masculinity. Findings highlight the evolving concept of masculinity and its positive effect on males' well-being. Study 1 aims to gather information about the perception of male participating in the conducted focus group discussion, to see and measure impact of positive psychology/positive masculinity model. And from the derived factors and defined understanding from study 1, in study 2 author constructed a psychometric scale to access the understanding of an individual towards positive masculinity. The construction of a psychometric scale involves a systematic, multi-stage process to ensure reliable and valid measurement of psychological constructs. First, the construct of interest is clearly defined, grounded in theoretical frameworks, and relevant literature is reviewed to determine the scale's necessity and potential domains towards assessment of positive masculinity. After establishing the construct, a comprehensive pool of 55 items is developed, using 5 scale Likert-type response formats. These initial items are generated based on literature, expert opinion, and from the understanding and factors derived through focus group discussion (from previous study)

Subsequently, the item pool undergoes expert review for content validity, where subject-matter specialists rate each item's relevance and clarity. Poorly performing items are either revised or discarded. After which a pilot test follows, typically on a sample representative of the intended population, to evaluate item performance and initial reliability statistics. Next, statistical analyses—such as exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses—are conducted to assess the dimensionality and internal structure of the scale. Items that do not load well on the intended factors are further refined or removed. The resulting scale is subjected to additional psychometric testing, evaluating internal consistency (e.g., Cronbach's alpha), test-retest reliability, and various forms of validity (construct, convergent, discriminant).

Finally, the scale is standardized, and scoring norms are developed, ensuring its applicability for research or clinical purposes. Throughout, the process is iterative,

with ongoing refinement based on empirical findings and expert feedback, ensuring that the final instrument demonstrates measurement properties and finally called as (-----)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Masculinity is the quality of manliness — habits and traits that society considers to be appropriate for a man. Traditionally, certain careers, such as the military and firefighting, have been linked to masculinity. However, these perceptions are evolving as more women enter these fields. Traits commonly associated with masculinity include physical strength, a muscular build, and facial hair. The word "masculinity" originates from the Latin *masculus*, meaning "male," derived from *masculus*, which signifies "worthy of a male." But Is it true that masculinity belongs only to men? When we talk about masculine or feminine energy, we're not just referring to gender. These energies are qualities or traits that exist within all individuals, regardless of their biological sex. Some people may naturally express more masculine energy—like strength, logic, and assertiveness—while others may lean more into feminine energy—such as empathy, creativity, and nurturing. But both energies coexist in everyone in different proportions.

From an Indian philosophical perspective, this balance is beautifully captured in the concept of Shiva-Shakti. It is said that Shiva (the masculine) is powerless without Shakti (the feminine), and Shakti is formless without Shiva. In other words, true power and completeness come from the union of both masculine and feminine energies. Neither is superior, and neither can exist in its full potential without the other.

With this understanding as a foundation, this study explores how the PPPM model—or what's also known as the TMI (Traditional Masculinity Ideology)—manifests in Indian households and society. It seeks to examine how these gendered energies play out in real-life dynamics, beyond just the surface-level assumptions of what it means to be "masculine" or "feminine" in a traditional Indian context.

Traditionally, certain careers, such as the military and firefighting, have been linked to masculinity. However, these perceptions are evolving as more women enter these fields. And with the encouragement and engagement of women in certain field as a factor is helping in evolving and understanding the concept of positive masculinity, such as co-education, working with or under female colleague. Aligning with this, the

concept of the study redefining masculinity: role of positive masculinity, revolves around framework of Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity model,

1.1 Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity (PPPM) Model

Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity model given by Kiselica and Englar-Carlson (2010), which centres on identifying and enhancing male strengths within clinical contexts. Unlike traditional, problem-oriented approaches, the PPPM model incorporates resilience, relational skills, and values such as loyalty and courage to engage male clients more effectively.

The model is built on the premise that traditional masculinity, often viewed negatively in psychological literature, contains strengths and positive attributes that can be leveraged in therapeutic settings. The authors critique traditional, deficit-based frameworks that pathologize masculinity, suggesting they may alienate male clients and reinforce resistance to therapy.

The core of PPPM model focuses on combining positive psychological values such as emphasizing resilience, strengths, and virtues with a deeper understanding of masculinity. The authors highlighted several positive traits commonly linked to masculinity such as courage, heroism, loyalty, protective towards others, and focus on solving problems. It suggests that recognizing and valuing these traits, can help build a stronger therapeutic relation with men, encouraging trust, and active participation in the therapeutic process.

The PPPM model outlines several practical strategies for working with boys and men including:

1. **Affirming Male Strengths:** Therapist and psychologists, are positive towards active recognizing and validating the strengths of men bring to therapy, such as their commitment to their families.
2. **Challenging Gender Norms Thoughtfully:** The model also addresses how rigid adaptability to stereotypical gender norms can enforce emotional expression and well-being. Therapists, and psychologists, are encouraged to help their male clients exploring healthier, more fluid forms of masculinity.

3. **Balancing Empathy and Challenge:** The PPPM model has highlighted maintaining a balance between creating a supportive therapeutic environment and gently challenging clients to step outside their comfort zones.
4. **Engaging in Gender-Sensitive Psycho-education:** This study recommend implying psycho education about the complexities of masculinity into therapy to help male clients better understand their behaviours, emotions and relationships.

This study focuses on the importance of cultural activeness, noting that the expression of masculinity varies across societal contexts. This study encourage therapists to be thoughtful of these differences and to imply their therapies. the PPPM model seeks to reduce stigma and resistance towards therapy among men by focusing on strength based approach, while promoting psychological growth and positive relations. This positive framework offers clinicians a road-map for focusing the psychological needs of boys and men while highlighting positive underlying aspects of masculinity. And on the other side the alternative concept giving base to this concept for rationalization is Traditional Masculinity which focuses on hegemonic belief in men, evidencing from the study,

1.2 Traditional Masculinity Ideology

Traditional Masculinity Ideology Stable Over Time in Men and Women? investigates the stability of traditional masculinity ideology (TMI) across time and between genders. The research examines whether adherence to traditional masculine norms—such as emotional restraint, dominance, and self-reliance—remains consistent or fluctuates due to societal, cultural, or personal factors. Using available data, the study evaluates shift from TMI among both the genders(male and female), highlighting major differences in how these beliefs are internalized and expressed. The outcomes suggests the dynamic nature of masculinity ideology, emphasizing the impact of evolving societal attitudes on gender specific expectations.

1.3 Positive Masculine Role Norms

McDermott (2019) in his study investigated the idea of positive masculine role norms to the framework of the Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity (PPPM). In search of positive masculine role norms: testing the positive psychology, their study tested how positive aspects of masculinity like resilience, emotional expressiveness, and

relational skills, can be resultant into psychological frameworks to promote male well-being. The study focused on the validity of the PPPM framework by identifying and measuring positive masculine traits which align with social functioning and psychological health, while challenging hegemonic views of masculinity. The key concept which is highlighted by the author is that the potential of the PPPM approach to improve mental health outcomes for the betterment of men, by redefining masculinity. This study added to the expanding research on the masculinity by emphasizing the value of strength-based approach.

1.4 Positive Masculinity Paradigm

Berke, D. S. (2018). Masculinity, Emotion Regulation, and Psychopathology: A Critical Review and Integrated Model. In this paper, Berke (Year) offers a comprehensive review and improvised model to test the relationship of masculinity, emotion regulation and psychopathology and their correlation relationship. This study critically assessed how traditional masculine standard played role in mental health outcomes in men. This research argued that the rigid gender expectations hinder effective emotion regulation and contribute to various psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety and substance abuse. The author underline how men struggle to express or process emotions due to societal expectations, which resulted in harmful coping mechanisms and complex mental health issues. This model had aimed to reduce the psychological costs of traditional beliefs and promote improvised well-being. Berke . D. S (2018) highlighted the importance of therapy and implications that challenges traditional masculine norms while implying emotional fluidity and resilience.

1.5 Positive Masculinity and Gender Role Socialization.

In this research, Cole. et. al. (2019) examines the interplay of gender role socialization and men's positive functioning. The authors explored both the positive and negative aspects of masculinity and introduced an approach that recognized male strengths in the context of gender role socialization. This study is revolved around the PPPM framework, which improvised resilience, responsibility, and emotional connection as key positive traits of masculinity. The study highlighted on whether traditional masculine roles such as risk-taking and providing, can contribute to stress, they also foster qualities like endurance, heroism and leadership. Additionally, it also examines the benefits of positive male role norms, such as empathy, emotional openness, and

leadership qualities. The author pointed criticisms of positive masculinity, which included concerns about reinforcing gender stereotype, and supported for a balanced approach which incorporates both gender-specific and human strengths. It was concluded that by emphasizing the importance of understanding masculinity in a positive way and promoting positive well-being among men. It suggested therapeutic practices and society should focus on nurturing adaptive behaviours that align with male well-being.

1.6 Positive Masculinity

The chapter Masculinity as a Valued Aspect of Humanity from The Palgrave Handbook of Male Psychology and Mental Health, highlighted the importance of redefining masculinity in a more positive way by recognizing its contributions to individual well-being and societal progress. The authors proposed a "positive masculinity" framework that had recognized traits like strength, courage, and leadership as valuable aspects of human specifying men. They stated towards integrating positive psychology to imply a more balanced understanding of masculinity, showing how men can thrive when they are acknowledged. The chapter also explores the practical positive implications for therapies, stressing the importance of male supporting approaches that had addressed the specific psychological challenges that men often face.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity Model

The study of Kiselica and Englar-Carlson's (2010) had centered on their development of the Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity (PPPM) model of psychotherapy with males. The existing literature in the psychology of male and masculinity has largely focused on two existing major challenges: raising awareness about how traditional forms of masculinity negatively impacted males and their relationships with other gender and to help them by developing the supportive psycho-therapeutic approaches to help them recover from dysfunction associated with these masculinities.

Kiselica and Englar-Carlson(2010) argued for the expansion of the above body of work by introducing a strengths-based framework which had started not from deficits but from identifying, affirming and building upon male strengths. From principles of positive psychology, the PPPM model emphasizes health, positive masculine traits and virtues as fundamental base as approach towards therapeutic work with male clients. This study had contradicted with previous deficit-focused or pathology-based approaches which often frame masculinity in terms of dysfunction or traditional masculinity.

The PPPM framework outlines core principles supporting therapy that helps males identifying and embracing positive masculinity and its traits, by redefining masculine identity. The framework acknowledged that masculinity had shaped by cultural and contextual factors such as society, race, religion and capability, which in turn influenced how masculine strengths are developed and expressed, while promoting prosocial attitudes and behaviors. The alternative evidence based studies aligned with this model suggest that traditional masculine norms have both positive and negative psychological values. For example, qualities like risk-taking behaviour and self-reliance may relate to strengths such as endurance and grit, while emotional control may sometimes suppresses certain positive traits like courage or resilience. It reinforces the PPPM's improvised view point that masculinity is not pathological but that it contains both strengths to build upon and supportive encouraging environment.

Overall, the PPPM model demands for a balanced, modern sensitive approach towards male psychotherapy. It encourage the implications for future research and therapeutic practice in enhancing positive masculinity as psychological growth rather than merely correcting and focusing deficits or dysfunctions.

2.2 Critical review and integrated model

Berke, Reidy, and Zeichner's (2018) study had presented a critical review and integrated model which had connected masculinity, emotion regulation and men's psycho pathological behaviour. This study identified a pronounced gender disparity in rates of externalizing psychopathology among males including behaviors such as aggression, substance use disorders, and antisocial personality disorder. Instead of this, the previous researches had inappropriately pointed on how masculinity as a dynamic social construct had influenced the development, expression and continuation of these mental health problems.

The study showed that masculinity is not a rigid trait but varies across context, time, and individual differences, which had complicated the investigation of its impact on male mental health. Alongside, emotion regulation—defined as the process of modulating emotional experiences to meet environmental demands—is similarly complex and dynamic. Difficulty regulating emotions emerges as a transdiagnostic risk factor implicated across a wide range of psychiatric disorders and behavioral problems.

Integrating these domains, Berke et al. developed a cross-cutting framework showcasing how masculine norms shape male emotional regulation strategies and thereby influence psychological issues. The authors emphasized the ways in which traditional masculine norms promoted emotional suppression, especially of vulnerable emotions like sadness and fear, while normalizing anger as an acceptable expression. These norms contributed to the reliable behaviour of men on maladaptive strategies such as impulsive aggression, which are encouraging mental health problems.

This study highlighted on various empirical studies showing that men who experience masculine discrepancy stress a sense of falling short of masculine ideals exhibit greater difficulties in emotional stability. For example, these men tend to suppress emotions incongruent with masculine norms, which may increase the risk for intimate relationship issues and other externalizing social behaviors. Difficulties in specific emotion regulation domains, such as emotional clarity and impulse control, significantly predict the frequency of aggressive behaviors.

Berke et al.'s blended model broadened the understanding beyond psychological pathological views by highlighting the complex, context-dependent ways in which masculinity influences emotional processes. It addresses intervention of approaches

which simultaneously address harmful masculine norms and improve male emotion regulation skills.

2.3 Complex interplay

This research study focuses on gender role socialization and men's positive functioning, as reviewed by Cole (2018), had explored the complex interplay between conformity to masculine norms, gender role conflict, and psychological well-being. The core of research had made a shift from deficits and pathology toward revolution of positive masculinity and positive well-being.

This study had participants concluding 389 college men found a positive correlation between conformity to masculine norms and gender role conflict, in which they had confirmed that rigid dependance on traditional masculine roles often causes psychological distress and issues. Majorly, gender role conflict was linked to decreased psychological well-being, suggesting that internal struggles with masculine expectations undermined men's positive functioning. However, not all masculine norms contributed negatively; some might have enhanced male psychological strengths.

This refined understanding of masculinity had helped previous research differentiating pathways of masculine self-worth: “contingency threat” and “contingency boost” where affirmations of masculinity enhance positive self-evaluations. Traits such as perseverance, bravery, and adaptability have been linked to positive masculine norms, while dominance showed divergent effects on independence and well-being. These findings prompted a shift beyond a solely deficit-based view towards recognition of adaptive potential within masculinity, supporting psychological growth and social functioning.

Theories like Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, Snyder's hope theory, Ryff's model of psychological well-being, and self-determination theory underpin this research, giving the context on how gender socialization influences male inner resources and motivation. Depending on how strictly masculine norms were internalized or experienced alongside gender role conflict, these models provided a foundation for exploring how these norms could be both sources of conflict and resilience. Broader literature collaborates that masculine ideology is shaped by influential agents such as parents, peers, schools and media, which reinforce certain

gender norms—often pressuring males to demonstrate manhood through risk-taking, emotional restriction, or dominance, sometimes at the cost of well-being. Meanwhile, preventive and intervention efforts that engage positive male role models and promote emotional intelligence provide help for cultivating healthier masculinity and reducing harmful gender role conflict.

Moreover, a culturally embedded perspective acknowledges that masculinity is complex and shaped by intersections with race, class, sexual orientation and other social identities. Positive masculinity paradigms promote development of prosocial attitudes and behaviors that are beneficial for men and their communities.

2.4 Critical Positive Masculinity

The corpus on Critical Positive Masculinity (CPM), as expressed by Lomas (2013) and his colleagues, offers a detailed framework for studying male psychology and masculinities that balanced optimism with analytical understanding of persistent gender based power dynamics. CPM emerged as a response to prevailing portrayals of masculinity as a monolithic set of “toxic traits” that reflect men primarily as “damaged and damage-doing” (Mac an Ghail & Haywood, 2012). Instead, it recognizes the diversity and complexity of masculinities, acknowledging that men can actively resist, redefine, or negotiate traditional masculine norms to foster healthier, more constructive ways of being male, including practices conducive to mental and social well-being.

The field of positive psychology giving an influence, CPM pointed out the evidence demonstrating male ability to adopt positive masculine identities and behaviors, for example, those brought up in urban "communities of practice" like meditation groups, which promote norms such as abstinence, emotional openness, and relational intimacy. Such local systems enable men to develop more adaptive masculine practices and identities, highlighting the capacity for positive behavioral transformation within masculinity.

However, CPM remains firmly pointed to the Critical Studies on Men (CSM) tradition, showcasing that even positive forms of masculinity are embedded within

social hierarchies and power relations, and may still have deleterious consequences for marginalized groups, including subordinated men and women. For instance, while meditation communities may foster healthier masculinity, they can still reproduce forms of hierarchy, exclusion, and marginalization within their own social systems. Moreover, men attempting to enact these positive masculine practices outside supportive contexts frequently face social censure and conflict due to dominant hegemonic masculine norms in broader society. This tension illustrates the complex dialectic between agency and structure within CPM.

Thus, CPM offers a critical, non-fatalistic, and non-naïve outlook: it neither dismisses masculinity as inherently pathological nor ignores the ongoing patriarchal and hegemonic structures that shape gendered behavior and power. Instead, it provides a framework to explore the productive possibilities of masculinity, while maintaining vigilance about gendered inequalities, aiming toward a more just and equitable gender order.

The paradigm contributes to masculinity studies by:

- Challenging negative stereotypes of men and masculinities.
- Incorporating insights from positive psychology to identify and promote positive masculine strengths and practices.
- Integrating critical feminist and queer theory perspectives to problematize power and privilege inherent in gender relations.
- Highlighting the context-dependent nature of masculine identities and behaviors, including the challenges men face in negotiating conflicting hegemonies.
- Providing a hopeful but realistic vision for therapeutic, social, and cultural interventions that encourage healthier, non-harmful masculinity.
- This balanced approach aligns with contemporary social constructionist theories (Connell, 1995) and offers valuable implications for research and practice focused on fostering positive male development while addressing systemic gender inequities.

2.5 Hegemonic psychology

The literature on "The modernity/coloniality of being: Hegemonic psychology as intercultural relations" critically examines how mainstream psychological theories and practices are entwined with the legacies of colonialism and modernity, shaping intercultural relations in ways that perpetuate domination and marginalization. This scholarship applies a decolonial lens to reveal how hegemonic psychology, grounded in Western modernist assumptions, reproduces a worldview centered on the "independent self," abstracted from context and embedded within colonial histories and power relations.

Adams, Estrada-Villalta, and Gómez Ordóñez (2018) argue that the dominant psychological sciences are deeply influenced by the "modernity/coloniality of being," a concept highlighting that the epistemic and ontological dimensions of modern Western identity—such as notions of unlimited growth, progress, and individual autonomy—are inseparable from colonial violence and domination. This coloniality is not merely historical but persists in current psychological frameworks and intercultural encounters, especially between Global North and Global South communities.

This study discusses a conservative or "closed-system" mentality common in many communities in the Global South areas, which standard psychology often pathologizes. Decolonial viewpoint challenge this pathological behaviour by recognizing these mentalities as adaptive and meaningful in socio-historical contexts, that contrast with the Western ideology of unlimited availability and individualism.

This core of literature builds upon critiques from colonial and postcolonial studies, showcasing how race, culture and psychological concepts are historically and politically constructed within global hierarchies. This requires for decolonizing psychology by:

- Acknowledging the colonial origins and biases in psychological knowledge and practice.
- Highlighting the need for epistemological plurality and context-sensitive approaches to mental health.
- Emphasizing reflexivity and ontological parity in intercultural psychological research and interventions.

- Challenging the universalizing claims of Western psychological frameworks and fostering dialogue that values indigenous and marginalized knowledges.

Furthermore, this core of literature points psychology within a comprehensive socio-political issue, where colonization's psychological legacies impact self-concept, psychological distress, and interpersonal functioning across generations. It advocates for an essential social science approach to community psychology, one that redefines static notions of culture and incorporates historical, geopolitical, and power analyses to promote emancipatory action.

Related academic work points to ongoing issues, inclusive of the difficulty of overcoming ingrained hegemonic epistemologies and the risk of reproducing colonial binaries even in supposedly rejecting colonial influence. Nonetheless, this evolving field underscores the urgency of reconceptualizing psychology as an intercultural application that attends to power, context, and the coloniality embedded in knowledge production.

In sum, this literature review reveals a growing academic movement aiming to:

- Expose and dismantle the coloniality inherent in hegemonic psychology.
- Facilitate more equitable and culturally just intercultural relations.
- Propose decolonial methodologies and epistemologies that acknowledge the enduring impact of colonial histories on mental health discourse and practice.

These insights provide a critical foundation for thesis work investigating the intersections of psychology, colonial history, and intercultural dialogue, emphasizing the need for transformative approaches that both recognize and challenge the modernity/coloniality that shapes contemporary psychological sciences and their global applications.

2.6 Mindful Masculinity

Dave Smallen's study "Mindful Masculinity: Positive Psychology, Mindfulness and Gender" (2019) critically explored how positive psychology and modern mindfulness practices intersect with masculinity, therefore, providing important insights to understand how men negotiate gender identity in the context of mental health and well-being.

This research had stated about mindfulness—especially from the fame form termed as “McMindfulness” with generalization at broader sociocultural and gendered frameworks, highlighting how mindfulness is often commercialized, potentially limiting its transformative potential. He had challenged the mainstream how the mindfulness practices may unintentionally reinforce normative masculine ideals by emphasizing individual responsibility, self-regulation and control, which align with hegemonic masculinity’s validation of autonomy and emotional restraint.

At the same time, Smallen acknowledged the potential of mindfulness and positive psychology to promote emotional awareness, self-compassion and psychological flexibility within males as these traits were traditionally discouraged by rigid masculine norms. Drawing on feminist and critical masculinity studies, he suggested that mindfulness-based interventions can be re-imagined supporting men in resisting restrictive gender expectations and cultivating more embodied, relational and emotionally integrated masculinities.

This view was complemented by Evident and qualitative research on male meditators which illustrated how men use mindfulness practices to reconstruct their gender identities in ways that combine traditional and non-traditional masculine traits, balancing strength with vulnerability and emotional openness. For example, interviews with male meditators show they draw on multiple discourses including traditional masculinity, feminist/queer perspectives and personality traits to negotiate feelings and behaviors that challenge dominant masculine norms.

Smallen’s work contributed to a growing body of research which called for gender-sensitive mindfulness and positive psychology approaches. This included identifying how dominant gender norms impacted mental health outcomes like emotional repression, limited help-seeking and elevated suicide rates among men. He argued for more nuanced, critical applications of mindfulness which avoided reproducing hegemonic masculinity and instead foster transformative, inclusive models of masculine well-being.

In general, this scholarship enhances the understanding of the capabilities and constraints of mindfulness and positive psychology in supporting healthy masculinity. It offers a groundwork for thesis research examining how mindful practices can be used to promote male emotional participation, adaptability and

identity development while also addressing gender based social and structural inequalities.

2.7 Traditional Masculinity Ideology (TMI)

Borgogna and McDermott (2022) investigate the durability across time of Traditional Masculinity Ideology (TMI), a concept reflecting conformity to societal norms about how men are expected to think, feel, and act. Using the Masculine Role Norms Inventory (MRNI), they address a critical gap in masculinity research by empirically examining whether TMI functions as a stable individual difference trait over time in both men and women. Prior literature has mostly treated TMI as a relatively enduring schema that influences men's identity and behavior; however, longitudinal evidence has been scarce.

Their study contributes to theoretical debates surrounding masculinity by assessing the intra-individual consistency and potential shifts in TMI endorsement across varying time intervals. This is important because traditional masculinity norms, often characterized by dominance, antifemininity, emotional control, and self-reliance, have been linked to both negative psychosocial outcomes (e.g., poor emotion regulation, risk behaviors) and as a mechanism maintaining gender hierarchies (Levant et al., 2007; Mahalik et al., 2003; Connell, 1995).

This study had magnified that endorsement of traditional masculinity is influenced by social and political factors, including political conservatism and religious norms, which uphold the gender differences (Iacoviello et al., 2021; Pines & Haselton, 2016).

Research further recognizes that masculinity norms are not static at the cultural level either; changing societal attitudes and gender roles suggest ongoing transformation of what constitutes masculinity, although this process is uneven and context-dependent (Baranov et al., 2019; Iacoviello et al., 2022). Understanding whether individuals' endorsement of traditional masculinity remains stable over time is essential for reconciling how masculinity adapts, or resists change.

Borgogna and McDermott's work is thus positioned within a broader literature that interrogates the psychological and sociocultural dynamics of masculinity, examining both its persistence and flux. Their findings have significant implications for interventions aiming to reduce rigid adherence to harmful masculine norms by

revealing the potential malleability in individuals' masculinity ideologies. This informs efforts to promote healthier, flexible masculinities aligned with social equality and men's well-being.

2.8 Research Gaps

Despite a growing body of literature addressing masculinity, several key gaps remain unaddressed, particularly within the Indian socio-cultural landscape:

Absence of Context-Specific Assessment Tools: There is a notable lack of validated psychometric instruments specifically designed to measure positive masculinity within the Indian cultural context. Existing scales often reflect Western norms and fail to capture the culturally embedded values, expressions, and experiences of Indian men.

Dominance of Deficit-Based Models: Much of the existing research on masculinity is rooted in deficit-based paradigms, focusing predominantly on the negative aspects of traditional masculinity—such as emotional suppression, dominance, aggression, and rigidity. This narrow focus has led to an under representation of strength-based perspectives that highlight the positive and adaptive traits associated with male identity.

Limited Reframing of Traditional Masculine Norms: There is insufficient exploration of how traditionally masculine attributes—such as resilience, leadership, and protectiveness—can be redefined or integrated within a positive framework. This gap hinders a more nuanced and balanced understanding of masculinity that recognizes the value of both traditional and evolving traits.

2.9 Objectives

In response to the identified gaps, the present research is guided by the following objectives:

1. To explore the contemporary perceptions of masculinity among young Indian men, particularly how they negotiate between traditional expectations and emerging positive masculine ideals.

2. To evaluate the relevance and applicability of the Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity (PPPM) model—developed by Kiselica and Englar-Carlson (2010)—in the Indian socio-cultural setting, assessing how its principles resonate with or diverge from local experiences of masculinity.
3. To develop and validate a culturally grounded psychometric instrument that accurately measures positive masculinity, incorporating elements such as emotional expressiveness, social responsibility, relational care, and resilience.
4. To contribute to the theoretical and applied fields of gender studies and clinical psychology by offering a reliable tool for practitioners, educators, and researchers to assess and promote adaptive masculine traits.

2.9.1 Research questions:

1. How do men perceive and define masculinity in their lives?
2. What factors leads to change in masculinity either into positive masculinity or traditional masculinity?
3. How do these attributes align with the PPPM framework of positive masculinity?
4. How are we borrowing from traditional masculinity to make it positive?
5. Impacts of PPPM model.

2.10 Hypotheses

Based on the literature review and initial qualitative findings, the following hypotheses were developed:

H1: Masculinity is perceived as a fluid and multidimensional construct, incorporating both traditional traits (e.g., strength, resilience) and emerging positive attributes (e.g., emotional openness, empathy, and care). The perception of masculinity among young men will reflect this hybridization.

H2: Traits aligned with the PPPM framework—such as empathy, responsibility, and emotional expressiveness—will significantly load onto the primary factors of the newly developed positive masculinity scale. These traits will emerge as core components of the positive masculinity construct.

H3: There will be a conceptual divergence between traditional resilience-oriented traits and emotional expressiveness, suggesting that these dimensions, although both valued, may function as distinct or even competing components within the structure of masculinity as perceived by the sample population.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study 1 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

3.1.1 Sample: The qualitative phase involved male participants aged between 18 and 25 years, 10-12 participants each FGD, comfortable with the use of English language

recruited from urban and semi-urban settings. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure diversity in educational and cultural backgrounds.

3.1.2 Design: It was semi- structured interview.

3.1.3 Procedure: In this recent study, authors seek to build on the foundation of positive masculinity by using the Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity (PPPM) framework, which highlights male strengths as a foundation for psychotherapy with boys and men. These strengths of masculinity include (a) male relational styles (e.g., developing relationships through activities), (b) male ways of caring (e.g., protection of loved ones), (c) generative fatherhood (e.g., helping each generation be more successful than the last), (d) male self-reliance, (e) male work ethic/providing role, (f) male courage and risk taking (i.e., when it does not cause harm to self or others), (g) group orientation, (h) humanitarian service through male fraternal organizations, (i) use of humor, and (j) male heroism (Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010). Deriving from these strengths, for study 1 we constructed **Focus Group Discussion** (focus group discussion) is a moderated group interview technique widely used in qualitative research, including the early stages of psychometric scale construction. In this context, focus groups serve to inform both the conceptualization and operationalization of psychological constructs, ensuring that scale items are meaningful, culturally relevant, and comprehensible to the target population in which author initially constructed a pool of items for interview, after this author targeted diverse and representative group with age range of 18 - 25 years, and conducted 3 FGD's with each group containing at least 10-12 participants. FGD's were audio-recorded, transcribed, and supplemented with field notes. An informed consent was prepared and was given to participants before initiation of FGDs. Every participant was provided with purpose of discussion and clear instructions:

1. One person will speak at a time,
2. There is no right or wrong answer, your opinions are valuable to us.
3. You are not obliged to agree with others, you are free to show disagreement but respectfully,
4. Speak clearly and loudly enough so that everyone (and the recorder) can hear,

Each discussion was audio-recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to thematic analysis following the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006):

1. Analysis of data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Preparing the report

Key Themes:

Theme 1- Definition of Masculinity:

For theme 1 participants offered a spectrum of definitions, revealing a clear understanding between Traditional Masculinity Ideology (TMI)—characterized by dominance, emotion suppression, and toughness—and the Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity (PPPM) framework, which emphasized emotional expression, empathy, responsibility, and integrity.

Theme 2- Factors Influencing Masculine Identity: Responses highlighted several socializing agents that shape masculine identity:

1. Societal expectations rooted in patriarchy
2. Parental upbringing
3. formal education and Co-education
4. Media influence, including portrayals in cinema, advertising, and social media.

Theme 3 - Reframing Traditional Traits Positively: Participants stated various ways in which traditional masculine traits could be reinterpreted positively. For instance, emotional restraint was viewed not as suppression but as emotional regulation, and physical strength was associated with protective responsibility rather than aggression, staying tough in difficult situations to be supportive pillar for other instead of male toughness.

Theme 4 - Impact of PPPM - Aligned Traits: Attributes such as empathy, accountability, and emotional expressiveness were perceived as valuable yet it remain underappreciated aspects of masculinity, signaling a shift in how young men wish to engage with their gender identity to be supportive for them and get emotional support from them.

Gained insights from the qualitative study and its thematic analysis (Study 1) provided the foundational content for the development of the psychometric scale in Study 2.

3.2 Study 2: Psychometric Scale Construction and Validation

After completing first study to redefine masculinity, as there is no questionnaire available to measure positive masculinity of an individual, earlier available questionnaires are oriented to traditional masculine norms, author decided to construct psychometric scale for assessment of positive masculinity in individuals. With derived understanding of participant of FGD's.

3.2.1 The Construct Of Positive Masculinity:

The examination of positive masculinity is essential to broaden our understanding beyond the deficits or problematic aspects commonly linked with traditional masculinity norms. With increasing societal focus on mental health, gender equity, and healthy gender role socialization, measuring positive masculinity offers a valuable lens for research, intervention, and policy aimed at promoting holistic male identity development. Despite its importance, there is a scarcity of reliable and valid psychometric tools specifically designed to measure positive masculinity in diverse populations. Existing scales often either focus on traditional masculine norms or on toxic masculinity without adequately capturing the positive traits and behaviors that constitute a healthy masculine identity. Therefore, there is a critical need to develop a scientifically grounded, psychometrically robust scale that can assess positive masculinity comprehensively.

3.2.2 Significance Of The Construct:

This study aims to construct such a scale, adhering to rigorous psychometric principles including clear construct definition, comprehensive item generation, expert validation, and empirical evaluation essentially oriented towards positive masculine ideology. The resulting instrument will facilitate research and applied work by providing a standardized measure to identify, assess, and promote positive masculine attributes. The scale initially assesses the perception of male with age range of 18-30 years.

3.2.3 Sample: The quantitative phase engaged a total of 408 male participants, aged between 18 and 30 years. Participants were recruited from diverse educational institutions and work sectors across urban and semi-urban regions of India. Inclusion criteria ensured that all participants identified as male and were fluent in English, the language in which the scale was administered.

3.2.4 Procedure:

Item Generation:

Initial pool of items and content Validity Check: An initial pool of 55 items was generated based on thematic generation from the FGDs (Study 1) and an extensive review of relevant literature on masculinity and positive psychology before experts review. The items aimed to capture dimensions such as emotional expression, responsibility, relational strength, and resilience. After the generation of items, a google form was created which was provided with the initial pool of items. Panel of nine relevant experts from psychology and gender studies, such as Psychologists, subject experts, and research scholars, were asked to review items to assess clarity, cultural relevance, and alignment with the construct of positive masculinity, and provide with suggestions.

Based on expert feedback, some items were modified and some items were removed as advised, and the final draft of items was obtained of 41 items, which was further given to the participants.

3.2.5 Pilot Testing: A pilot study was carried out with a small group of participants to evaluate their understanding of the items and the consistency of their responses with the help of online circulation of google form. Minor linguistic and semantic adjustments were implemented to enhance clarity and increase participant engagement.

Main Data Collection and Analysis: The refined scale was administered to the full sample (N = 408), via online google form. The instructions were clearly mentioned for participants: Read each statement carefully and select the option from the scale that best reflects your opinion.

1. **Strongly Disagree** = You completely disagree with the statement.
2. **Disagree** = You somewhat disagree with the statement.
3. **Neutral** = You neither agree nor disagree.
4. **Agree** = You somewhat agree with the statement.
5. **Strongly Agree** = You completely agree with the statement.

There are no right or wrong answers—please answer honestly based on your personal experience.

After data collection the data was analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with Oblique Promax rotation to identify underlying factor structures. Promax, an oblique rotation method, was chosen to allow for potential correlation between factors.

3.2.6 Statistical Analysis: For this study, Statistical analysis was conducted via 5 tests, which are Exploratory Factor Analysis Results (EFA), Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, Chi square value and Reliability Tests, Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's Omega

3.2.7 Tools Used:

In study 2, for data assessment google form has been used and for statistical analysis, tools like, Microsoft Excel, SPSS and JASP, has been used for data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Study 1 Result

The first phase of the research aimed to explore how Indian men (aged 18–25) perceive and define masculinity in today’s socio-cultural landscape. Thematic analysis of the FGDs revealed a multifaceted understanding of masculinity, ranging from traditional, hegemonic ideals to emerging notions aligned with the Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity (PPPM) framework.

The analysis followed Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-phase approach and generated four themes categorized into **definition of masculinity**, **factors leading shift in masculinity**, and **drivers of change** that influence young men’s conceptualizations.

4.1.1 Theme 1- Definition of masculinity

Positive Masculinity Traits

Participants identified a range of attributes that align with a strengths-based, pro-social conception of masculinity. These attributes are consistent with emerging literature in PPPM and were reported as desirable yet underrepresented in dominant masculine discourses.

Participants responses underlined:

1. Participant A: Men can also be expressive can be emotionally stable and expressive whatever he wants to do.
2. Participant B: In an empathetic way, we need to understand the other person's feelings.
3. Participant C: Voice is heavier in male comparative to females and strength also.

Emotional Openness: A recurring theme was the redefinition of emotionality as a strength rather than a weakness. Participants expressed a desire for the freedom to articulate emotions such as sadness, fear, and affection without facing stigma or judgment. This stands in contrast to the emotionally restrictive norms typically associated with traditional masculinity.

Responsibility: Participants frequently referred to a sense of moral and social responsibility as a defining element of positive masculinity. This included accountability toward family, contributing positively to the community, and acting as dependable individuals in both personal and professional contexts.

Empathy and Relational Strength: Emotional intelligence, especially in relational settings, was highlighted as a masculine strength. Participants emphasized the value of being able to understand and support others, particularly in friendships and romantic relationships, suggesting a broader, more inclusive model of masculinity. positive masculinity is defined as being responsible for caring for one's family, showing empathy towards loved ones, and being able to understand and respond to others' emotions.

Traditional Masculinity Traits

While there was clear momentum toward more inclusive and emotionally intelligent expressions of masculinity, many participants also acknowledged the persistence of traditional masculine ideals in their environments.

According to the participants, definitions reflecting traditional masculine ideals emphasize that a man should be powerful and dominant. They believe that men should suppress their emotions, and they possess greater strength compared to women.

1. Participant A: Person should be emotionally strong as well, as in a society also prefer a man to hide their emotions and not to express it easily in front of others.
2. Participant B: Being more masculine by the society is to be more powerful.

Suppression of Emotion: Emotional suppression was noted as a common expectation placed on men, often learned during childhood and reinforced by social norms. Expressing vulnerability was seen as inconsistent with being a “real man.”

Aggression and Dominance: Participants discussed how physical strength, assertiveness, and dominance were often equated with masculinity, especially in peer groups and competitive settings. These traits were often viewed as socially rewarded but personally limiting.

Hegemonic Masculinity: Participants acknowledged societal pressures to conform to hegemonic ideals—marked by heterosexuality, financial independence, control, and emotional restraint—regardless of individual differences or preferences.

4.1.2 Theme 2 - Factors Influencing Change in Masculine Identity

Participants identified several **cultural and interpersonal forces** that influence whether individuals gravitate toward more traditional or positive models of masculinity.

Reinforcers of Positive Masculinity (PPPM-aligned):

Social Media: Platforms such as Instagram and YouTube provided space where alternative masculinities gained visibility often through influencers, mental health advocates and social campaigns.

Education: Exposure to modern educational setting and co-education was linked with enhanced awareness and embracing of emotional expressiveness and empathy.

Literature and Media: Modern literature, novels and cinema portraying refined and ideal male characters have challenged stereotypes and expanded what is considered acceptable as masculine behaviour.

Reinforcers of Traditional Masculinity (TMI-aligned)

Societal Norms and Upbringing: Participants highlighted how rigid gender roles and gender stereotypes and inter-generational transmission of values continued to reinforce traditional masculine ideology, especially in family and societal backgrounds.

Cultural Expectations: Community standards, often shaped by caste, religion, or regional identity, were identified as sources of pressure to maintain traditional masculine norms.

4.1.3 Theme 3 – Reframing Traditional Masculine positively: Participants shared how conventional masculine traits can be understood in more constructive ways. For example, instead of seeing emotional restraint as a form of suppression, it was framed as a method of managing emotions effectively. Likewise, physical strength was linked to the role of being a protector rather than an aggressor—highlighting the importance of resilience in challenging times to support others, rather than showcasing dominance or toughness.

4.1.4 Theme 4 - Impact of Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity (PPPM)

Participants responded while highlighting the impact of Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity (PPPM) model with improved well-being and better relationship

Participants response:

Participant A: It's quite simple: If I keep suppressing my emotions, my mental health is bound to deteriorate. But if I express them, I feel like things might improve in some way.

Participant B: Some people have the privilege of being able to express themselves without fear of judgment, but others don't. I'm fortunate to have that safe space now, though earlier, I didn't have it either.

4.2 Study 2 Result

For study 2 (psychometric scale construction) (N=408) were considered. And exploratory factor analysis, reliability (McDonald's Omega, Cronbach's alpha and test-retest reliability), Pearson-moment correlation, KMO-Bartlett's test was conducted on the data set.

4.2.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis

To better understand the underlying structure of the scale used to measure positive masculinity, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was carried out. The goal was to group related items together and identify meaningful dimensions within the responses. The EFA (with Promax rotation) revealed three distinct factors with eigenvalues (> 1), describing for cumulative 47.0% of total variance.

4.2.2 Data Suitability: Before running the factor analysis, the data was tested for suitability. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test showed an overall value of 0.944. This means the data set was adequate for conducting a factor analysis. All the individual MSA (Measure of Sampling Adequacy) scores for the items were also well above acceptable levels — in the range of 0.90 to 0.96 — indicating that each item contributed meaningfully to the analysis.

Table 4.1: Kaiser-meyer-olkin (KMO) Test

	MSA
Overall MSA	0.944
1. I express my feelings with my family	0.954

2. I express my feelings with my friends.	0.955
3. I feel relieved when I express my emotions.	0.953
4. I feel empowered when I express my emotions.	0.942
5. Being emotionally expressive is my strength.	0.943
6. Being emotionally expressive boosts my confidence.	0.949
7. Showing my emotions makes me	0.960
18. Being patient is essential for my masculine identity	0.915
19. As a man, I can face challenges with determination.	0.915
20. I feel that solving problems constructively is essential for masculine identity	0.900
24. As a man, I can freely hug my loved ones	0.942
30. As a man, I am fine working under female leadership	0.947
33. I value positive masculinity because it means treating others with respect	0.957
34. I believe fathers should provide social emotional support to their child	0.938
35. I believe men should contribute to childcare responsibilities at home	0.921
36. I believe a father should help the next generation live a better life	0.918

37. I like to volunteer in community service programs or NGOs	0.943
38. I show up for the men and boys in my life when they need support	0.921
39. I enjoy working in groups with my colleagues	0.951
8. I can express many emotions, including sadness, frustration, joy, and fear.	0.960
10. I feel being emotionally expressive helps me build strong relationships	0.973
11. For me, crying is a natural behavior.	0.952
12. My male friends appreciate me for expressing my painful emotions like sadness, frustration, grief, shame, etc.	0.952
14. As a man, I reach out for support when times are tough.	0.959

4.2.3 Bartlett's test of sphericity: It showed $\chi^2(276) = 4425.40$, $p < .001$, confirming that the items were significantly correlated to proceed with factor analysis.

Table 4.2: Bartlette's test of sphericity

Bartlett's Test

χ^2	df	p
4425.400	276.000	< .001

Bartlett's test

4.2.4 Chi-Square Test: To assess the overall fit of the model, a chi-square goodness-of-fit test was conducted. The result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(207) = 373.61$, $p < .001$.

Table 4.3 Chi-squared test

Chi-squared Test

	Value	df	p
Model	373.614	207	< .001

Chi-squared test

4.2.5 Factor Loadings: After extracting the factors which were not loading, factor loadings were examined to assess how well each item represented the underlying factor. Three factors were identified, each factor holding its uniqueness as shown in table

Table 4.4: Factor Loadings Table of Items

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Uniqueness
7. showing my emotions makes me stronger	0.790			0.451
6. Being emotionally expressive boosts my confidence.	0.785			0.412

5. Being emotionally expressive is my strength.	0.771			0.422
14. As a man, I reach out for support when times are tough.	0.771			0.444
1. I express my feelings with my family	0.715			0.537
4. I feel empowered when I express my emotions.	0.702			0.476
8. I can express many emotions, including sadness, frustration, joy, and fear.	0.698			0.494
12. My male friends appreciate me for expressing my painful emotions like sadness, frustration, grief, shame, etc.	0.694			0.561
11. For me, crying is a natural behavior.	0.604			0.641
2. I express my feelings with my friends.	0.586			0.655

24. As a man, I can freely hug my loved ones	0.559			0.609
3. I feel relieved when I express my emotions.	0.524			0.576
10. I feel being emotionally expressive helps me build strong relationships.	0.508			0.589
35. I believe men should contribute to childcare responsibilities at home.		0.805		0.453
36. I believe a father should help the next generation live a better life		0.741		0.539
38. I show up for the men and boys in my life when they need support		0.718		0.479
34. I believe fathers should provide social emotional support their child.		0.635		0.563
33. I value positive masculinity because it means		0.628		0.545

treating others with respect.				
37. I like to volunteer in NGO		0.598		0.591
30. As a man, I am fine working under female leadership.		0.583		0.631
39. I enjoy working in groups with my colleagues		0.476		0.585
20. I feel that solving problems constructively is essential for masculine identity.			0.733	0.450
19. As a man, I can face challenges with determination			0.615	0.484
18. Being patient is essential for my masculine identity.			0.598	0.544

Note. Applied rotation method is promax.

Factor Characteristics

Factor 1: Emotional Expressiveness and Strength

This factor comprised items reflecting the belief that expressing emotions is a sign of strength and contributes to personal well-being and relationships. Items such as “Showing my emotions makes me stronger”, “Being emotionally expressive is my

strength”, and “I express my feelings with my family” loaded highly on this factor, with loadings ranging from **0.508 to 0.790**. These responses reflect a perspective that embraces emotional openness as a masculine quality, suggesting that items are well explained under this factor.

Factor 2: Responsible Masculinity and Social Contribution

Items under this factor emphasized responsibility, caregiving, and community-oriented behaviour as part of masculine identity. Statements like “I believe men should contribute to childcare responsibilities at home” and “I like to volunteer in community service programs” showed factor loadings (e.g., **0.598 to 0.805**). These results indicate that participants associate positive masculinity with nurturing roles and social responsibility.

Factor 3: Constructive Masculine Identity and Respect

The third factor revolves around values of patience, respect, and constructive problem-solving as masculine traits. For instance, “Being patient is essential for my masculine identity”, “As a man, I am fine working under female leadership”, and “I value positive masculinity because it means treating others with respect” were strongly associated with this factor, with loadings between **0.583 and 0.733**. This factor reflects a shift away from dominance-based masculinity to one grounded in mutual respect and emotional intelligence.

Overall, the factor structure supports a multidimensional understanding of positive masculinity. Instead of a singular focus on toughness or stoicism, the results show that men may view emotional openness, caregiving, and respectful collaboration as integral to their identity. This aligns with emerging research in psychology promoting healthy, adaptable forms of masculinity that foster both personal and relational well-being.

4.2.6 Factor Extraction

Based on the eigenvalues, and explained variance, three distinct factors were identified. Together, these factors explained about 47% of the total variance in the dataset:

Factor 1: 25.3%

Factor 2: 15.4%

Factor 3: 6.2%

Table 4. 5 Factor Characteristics

Factor Characteristics

	Eigenvalues	Unrotated solution			Rotated solution		
		SumSq. Loadings	Proportion var.	Cumulative	SumSq. Loadings	Proportion var.	Cumulative
Factor 1	9.248	8.724	0.363	0.363	6.082	0.253	0.253
Factor 2	2.462	1.949	0.081	0.445	3.705	0.154	0.408
Factor 3	1.099	0.597	0.025	0.470	1.483	0.062	0.470

Factor characteristics

4.2.7 Correlation Analysis

After identifying the three factors, Pearson’s correlations were used to explore how these factors correlate with each other, and with overall PM-TOTAL (positive masculinity) score, and to other external variables (relevant alternate scale) labeled F1 to F7 and F-TOTAL.

4.2.8 Co-Relation Relationships Among PM Factors

There was a moderate positive correlation between PM Factor 1 and PM Factor 2 ($r = .500$, $p < .001$), suggesting they share some common ground but represent distinct aspects. PM Factor 1 was strongly correlated with the total PM score ($r = .659$, $p < .001$), and PM Factor 2 was very strongly correlated with it ($r = .888$, $p < .001$), indicating both contribute significantly to overall positive masculinity. PM Factor 3 was only weakly and negatively related to the total score ($r = -.281$, $p < .001$) and showed very weak and negative correlation relationship with the other two factors.

Table 4.6 Pearson- Moment Correlation Between Pm-factor And Pm-total

Pearson's Correlations

Variable		PM Factor 1	PM Factor 2	PM Factor 3	PM total
1. PM Factor 1	Pearson's r	—			
	p-value	—			
2. PM Factor 2	Pearson's r	0.500	—		
	p-value	< .001	—		
3. PM Factor 3	Pearson's r	-0.049	-0.012	—	

Pearson's Correlations

Variable		PM Factor 1	PM Factor 2	PM Factor 3	PM total
	p-value	0.319	0.810	—	
4. PM total	Pearson's r	0.659	0.888	-0.281	—
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001	—

4.2.9 Connections with Other Variables (F1– F7 and TOTAL)

Among the external variables, Factor 3 stood out for having a moderate positive correlation with F7 ($r = .389$, $p < .001$), which might suggest some shared characteristics related to that of its specificity.

Table 4.7: Pearson-Moment Correlation between F-factors and PM-factors and PM-Total and TOTAL

Pearson's Correlations

Variable		PM Factor 1	PM Factor 2	PM Factor 3	PM total	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	TOTAL
1. PM Factor 1	Pearson's r	—											
	p-value	—											
2. PM Factor 2	Pearson's r	0.500	—										
	p-value	< .001	—										
3. PM Factor 3	Pearson's r	-0.049	-0.012	—									
	p-value	0.319	0.810	—									
4. PM total	Pearson's r	0.659	0.888	-0.281	—								
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001	—								
5. F1	Pearson's r	0.060	0.059	-0.090	0.116	—							
	p-value	0.229	0.236	0.069	0.019	—							

Pearson's Correlations

Variable		PM Factor r 1	PM Factor r 2	PM Factor r 3	PM total	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	TOTAL
6. F2	Pearson's r	-0.094	0.093	0.091	0.024	0.684	—						
	p-value	0.057	0.062	0.067	0.628	< .001	—						
7. F3	Pearson's r	0.075	-0.013	-0.031	0.037	0.826	0.581	—					
	p-value	0.130	0.801	0.533	0.451	< .001	< .001	—					
8. F4	Pearson's r	0.058	0.013	-0.092	0.067	0.865	0.681	0.852	—				
	p-value	0.241	0.795	0.064	0.178	< .001	< .001	< .001	—				
9. F5	Pearson's r	0.106	-0.018	-0.036	0.025	0.779	0.511	0.787	0.782	—			
	p-value	0.032	0.715	0.474	0.618	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—			
10. F6	Pearson's r	-0.095	0.074	-0.009	0.045	0.714	0.810	0.632	0.725	0.633	—		
	p-value	0.056	0.138	0.854	0.363	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—		
11. F7	Pearson's r	-0.105	-0.087	0.389	-0.234	0.658	0.617	0.650	0.706	0.687	0.683	—	
	p-value	0.035	0.078	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—
12. TOTAL	Pearson's r	0.016	0.017	0.045	0.028	0.940	0.771	0.903	0.946	0.852	0.828	0.899	—
	p-value	0.750	0.737	0.362	0.574	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001

The TOTAL(F-TOTAL) variable is representing a combined or overall external score which showed very strong correlations with most of the F variables. For instance:

F3: r = .903

F4: r = .946

F5: r = .852

F7: r = .899

All these were statistically significant at $p < .001$, suggesting that these external dimensions align closely with the overall structure of the questionnaire. These correlation findings help show which aspects of masculinity are connected and which ones stand alone. They also offer insight into how well the scale connects with related relevant scale and behaviors outside of the core PM factors.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of Study 1 - Focus Group Discussion

The focus group discussions in Study 1 provided rich qualitative insights into young men's evolving definitions of masculinity. Thematic analysis revealed four major themes: the definition of masculinity, factors contributing to its change, traditional masculinity's influence on positive traits, and the impact of the PPPM model. In FGD, participants acknowledged both Traditional Masculinity Ideology (TMI) and Positive Masculinity traits, alternatively drawing contrasts between the two TMI and PPPM. The definition of TMI was associated with emotional suppression, aggression, and toughness, while the definition and understanding towards PPPM defined traits emphasizing emotional expressiveness, responsibility, and care. This contrast demonstrated that masculinity is not a static concept but rather a fluid spectrum influenced by both internal beliefs(hegemonic) and external social conditioning(external factors).

From the thematic analysis, findings showcased that upbringing, hegemonic beliefs, and societal expectations reinforcing traditional masculinity and its ideology, whereas exposure to education, social media, and literature encourages a shift toward more positively oriented and positively aligned masculinity traits. The interplay confirms previous existing literature suggesting that masculinity is socially constructed and culturally mediated (McDermott, 2019; Berke, 2018).

An important observation was how participants attempted to combine traditional strengths with emotional vulnerability, signaling a move toward a hybrid model of masculinity. This supports the PPPM approach that validates traditionally masculine strengths (e.g., protection, responsibility, courage) while encouraging emotional flexibility and relational depth.

5.2 Discussion of Study 2 - Psychometric Scale Development and Validation

This study aimed to redefine masculinity by understanding, adapting and elaborating on its positive dimensions through the development of a psychometric tool constructed from the dimensions and concept of Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity (PPPM) model. The declaration from Study 2 contribute to the growing core of literature asserting a strengths-based perspective on masculinity, moving away from problem-oriented paradigms that have traditionally emphasized emotional suppression, dominance, and stoicism.

Three Factors of Positive Masculinity Scale

The Exploratory Factor Analysis introduced three distinct factors stating different aspects as, Emotional Expressiveness and Support-Seeking, Social Responsibility and Nurturance and Resilient Masculine Identity, together accounting for 47% of the total variance. This highlights a multidimensional nature of positive masculinity, reinforcing the notion that masculinity is not a huge concept but comprises of various psychosocial dimensions.

Factor 1, Emotional Expressiveness and Support-Seeking, emerged as the most significant component, explaining 25.3% of the variance. This factor encapsulates emotional openness, interpersonal vulnerability, and strength derived from emotional expression. Such findings align with the PPPM model's emphasis on validating emotional expression as a masculine strength (Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010). This

challenges the Traditional Masculinity Ideology (TMI), which often discourages men from displaying vulnerability.

Factor 2, Social Responsibility and Nurturance (15.4% of variance), reinforces the PPPM assertion that traits such as caregiving, mentorship, and community involvement are vital markers of adaptive masculinity. Items reflecting generative fatherhood, emotional availability, and equitable domestic partnerships point to an evolving narrative where masculine identity includes care, empathy, and prosocial behavior.

Factor 3, Resilient Masculine Identity, though accounting for a smaller portion of variance (6.2%), encapsulates traditionally valued attributes such as determination, patience, and constructive problem-solving. Interestingly, this factor had a negative correlation with the total PM score ($r = -0.281$, $p < .001$), suggesting that while resilience is a vital trait, it may be perceived as distinct—or even in tension with—more emotionally expressive dimensions in modern masculinity.

Inter-factor Correlations and Theoretical Implications

The moderate positive correlation between Factor 1 and Factor 2 ($r = 0.500$, $p < .001$) indicates that emotional expressiveness and social responsibility often co-occur, further supporting the argument that prosocial and emotionally intelligent behaviors are integral to contemporary masculine identity. However, Factor 3's lack of significant correlation with the other two factors ($r < 0.05$) and its negative correlation with the PM total suggests a bifurcation within the construct of masculinity. This implies that internal resilience traits, while beneficial, may be conceptualized separately from the relational and emotional strengths that dominate the PPPM framework.

These findings resonate with Berke's (2018) integrated model, which highlights the psychological tension men face when navigating emotion regulation within the confines of traditional gender roles. The data suggests that for many participants, embracing vulnerability and emotional expression may feel inconsistent with their internalized notions of stoic masculinity.

Relevance to Focus Group Findings

The quantitative results for psychometric scale construction (study 2) are strongly supported by the qualitative data obtained in (Study 1). The codes generated under themes such as "emotional expression," "responsibility," and "caring" reflect the participants' shifting views on masculinity, aligning with the derived factors. Similarly, the emerging codes of "upbringing," "societal expectations," and "hegemonic beliefs" that reinforce TMI were recited in the structure of Factor 3, which remains disconnected from the overall PM framework in correlation terms.

Bridging Traditional and Positive Masculinity

The study provides a compelling narrative that traditional and positive masculine attributes are not mutually correlated and can be integrated thoughtfully. The presence of resilience and determination in Factor 3 indicates that traditional traits still hold remain significant. However, their low correlation with the overall construct of positive masculinity shows the need to reinterpret these traits within more emotionally attuned frameworks.

The participants' response also reflects this statement. Statements such as "a man should share his emotions" and "stand straight even in tough situations" combines emotional vulnerability with resilience—a hybrid model aligned with modern psychosocial needs.

Cultural and Social Context

The Indian social and cultural context further underlines the significance of these findings. Traditional Indian masculine ideology has historically emphasized control and suppression over emotional expression. However, through education, media exposure and evolving gender norms, a shift is showing its resemblance and existence. The emergence of emotional expressiveness and social care as dominant factors in this study indicates a progressive transition in how masculinity is being conceptualized by younger Indian men.

5.3 CONCLUSION:

This qualitative study, utilizing focus group discussions (FGDs) and thematic analysis, provides insights into young male's understanding of masculinity. The findings reveal a dual perspective, where masculinity is perceived through both positive and traditional lenses. Positive masculinity is linked to traits such as empathy,

emotional stability, responsibility, and care for loved ones, focusing on a shift towards healthier and more inclusive masculine identities. In contrast, traditional masculinity is correlated with dominance, emotional suppression, and physical strength, reflecting societal expectations and stereotypes that reinforce hegemonic masculinity.

Factors such as social media, education and literature are identified as key drivers of the shift towards positive masculinity, while upbringing of individuals, societal norms, emotional unavailability and stereotypes continue to spread traditional masculine ideals. The study highlights the dynamic nature of masculinity, showing how certain traditional traits are being redefined within a positive framework.

These findings show the importance of creating safe supportive environments that challenge outdated gender stereotypes while promoting emotional well-being and adaptive masculinity. The results highlight the need for societal efforts to balance traditional masculine strengths with modern, empathetic traits to nurture healthier masculine identities.

5.4 LIMITATIONS:

Limited Available Resources: The study focuses on young men aged 18–25, which may fail to reflect the perspectives of men from other age groups and diverse cultural backgrounds.

Focus on Social and Cultural Influences: While factors like social media, education and upbringing are explored many other factors, such as economic status, mental health, or peer pressure are not addressed.

Lack of longitudinal analysis: The study provides a snapshot of perceptions without examining how these views might change over time or in different life stages.

5.5 IMPLICATION:

Implications of Study 1 (Focus Group Discussions – Thematic Analysis)

Study 1 provides qualitative insights into how young Indian men understand and experience masculinity in a rapidly evolving socio-cultural landscape. Several key implications are:

1. Need for Culturally Grounded Models of Masculinity

The derived outcomes suggest that Western models of masculinity do not fully capture the complex aspects of masculine identity in India. Participants gave responses that combined both traditional and modern values, indicating the need for context-specific frameworks, such as a culturally adapted PPPM model.

2. Recognition of Emerging Positive Masculinity Norms

There was a shift in masculine ideals among younger generations as empathy, responsibility and emotional openness were identified as valued traits. This shows a generational change toward more emotionally intelligent and prosocial masculine identities.

3. Continued Influence of Traditional Masculinity Ideologies

Despite progressive shifts, traditional norms such as emotional suppression, dominance and hegemonic ideals still exert a strong influence, especially in family and community settings. This shows the co-existence and tension between old and new masculinity narratives.

4. Influence of Socialization Agents

Social media, education, and literature were found to be powerful tools in shaping new masculinities, while family and cultural norms often linked to reinforced traditional ideals. This suggests an opportunity to leverage educational and digital platforms to promote healthier masculinity testimonies.

5. Foundation for Scale Development

The derived outcomes from FGD (Study 1) have provided conceptual understanding and cultural basis for the development of the Positive Masculinity Scale, ensuring that all the items of psychometric scale were meaningful, relevant.

Implications of Study 2 (Scale Construction and Validation)

Study 2 aimed to use the derived themes from Study 1 into a valid and reliable scale measuring positive masculinity ideology of an individual. The results have both theoretical and applied implications.

1. Contribution to Measurement Tools in Indian Context

The validated scale represents one of the first psychometric instruments designed specifically to measure the understanding and the concept of positive masculinity among Indian men, filling a critical gap in indigenous psychological assessment.

2. Support for a Multidimensional Model of Masculinity

The introduction of three distinct but related factors Emotional Expressiveness & Strength, Social Responsibility & Nurturance, and Resilient Masculine Identity supports a multidimensional understanding of masculinity. This challenges the binary view of masculine traits as either “traditional” or “non-traditional,” offering a more integrative paradigm.

3. Reframing Resilience and Toughness

Resilient Masculine Identity, the third factor, was negatively correlated with the total scale, suggesting that traditional traits such as toughness and emotional stoicism may conflict with more adaptive, pro-social traits. This impacts how resilience is conceptualized and taught in mental health and educational settings.

4. Potential for Use in Research, Education, and Interventions

The scale can be implemented at schools and universities to assess masculine identity in counselling, gender sensitization programs, and research on gender roles, providing a practical tool for both academicians and practitioners.

5. Foundation for Longitudinal and Cross-Cultural Studies

from study 2 the validated and a reliable scale has been introduced for future researchers to measure the understanding and changes in masculine identity over time or to compare masculinity constructs across different cultures, regions, or demographic groups within India with under-aligned positive aspects.

Overall Implication

In Conclusion, both studies indicate that masculinity in India is undergoing a transition — neither entirely bound to tradition nor fully aligned with Western models. Young men are trying to understand and conceptualize new roles and identities and the magnified lens of a positive masculinity framework through which these identities can be better understood, supported and nurtured.

CHAPTER 6

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APPENDIX:

INITIAL POOL OF ITEM:

Emotional Expressiveness & Connection

1. I openly express my feelings with my family.
2. I openly express my feelings with my friends
3. I feel relieved when I express my emotions.
4. I feel empowered when I express my emotions.
5. Being emotionally expressive is my strength.
6. Being emotionally expressive boosts my confidence.
7. Being emotionally expressive increases my resilience.
8. I can freely express my sadness.
9. I can accept my vulnerable feelings.
10. Being emotionally expressive helps me build strong relationships.
11. I feel a sense of inner peace after expressing my emotions.
12. For me, crying is a natural behavior.
13. My male friends appreciate me for expressing my vulnerable emotions.
14. My female friends appreciate me for expressing my vulnerable emotions.

Strength, Resilience, & Emotional Balance

15. As a man, I reach out for support when times are tough.
16. Being resilient makes me a strong male.
17. Being emotionally expressive is a sign of my masculine identity.
18. I value my vulnerabilities as a male.
19. Being patient is essential for my masculine identity.
20. As a man, I can face challenges with determination.
21. I feel that solving problems constructively is essential for masculine identity.

Caregiving, Affection & Responsibility

22. As a man, I show care for my loved ones.
23. As a man, I have the responsibility to support my family financially.
24. As a man, I have the responsibility to support my family emotionally.
25. I provide nurturing support to my family.
26. As a man, I am empathetic towards my loved ones.
27. Being empathetic is a sign of my masculinity.
28. I see kindness as my strength.
29. As a male, I can freely hug my loved ones.
30. As a male, I can sacrifice my needs for my loved ones.

Ethical Leadership, Integrity & Confidence

31. As a man, I can accept my mistakes.
32. I value self-assurance as a positive masculine trait.
33. I can manage disagreements with my colleagues/friends cordially.
34. As a man, I strive to lead with honesty.
35. As a man, I strive to lead with integrity.
36. I can collaborate with my female counterparts to work on a project as a man.
37. I can efficiently work under women's leadership.
38. As a male, I should always be a leader.

Growth, Learning, & Positive Role Models

39. I see positive male role models in literature as influential in shaping masculinity.
40. I see positive male role models in the media as influential in shaping masculinity.
41. I feel that learning about gender equality has helped me develop a healthier sense of masculinity.
42. I value the influence of supportive mentors on my understanding of manhood.
43. I value the influence of male role models on my understanding of manhood.
44. I see co-education as a factor that has broadened my views on gender roles.
45. I see co-education as a factor that has broadened my views on masculinity.
46. I recognize that positive social influences shape my understanding of masculinity.
47. I recognize that my peers shape my understanding of masculinity.
48. I recognize that my mentors shaped my understanding of masculinity.

Evolving & Healthy Masculinity

- 49. I see masculinity as a flexible concept.
- 50. I see masculinity as an evolving concept.
- 51. I value modern masculinity for encouraging self-expression.
- 52. I value modern masculinity for encouraging emotional well-being.
- 53. I appreciate healthy masculinity for including collaboration.
- 54. I appreciate healthy masculinity for including emotional intelligence.
- 55. I appreciate healthy masculinity for including respect for others

SECOND DRAFT OF ITEM POOL(AFTER EXPERT REVIEW)

- 1. I express my feelings with my family
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
- 2. I express my feelings with my friends.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
- 3. I feel relieved when I express my emotions.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
- 4. I feel empowered when I express my emotions.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
- 5. Being emotionally expressive is my strength.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
- 6. Being emotionally expressive boosts my confidence.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
- 7. Showing my emotions makes me stronger.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

8. I can express many emotions, including sadness, frustration, joy, and fear.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

9. I can accept my uncomfortable feelings like anxiety, anger, guilt, and loneliness.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

10. I feel being emotionally expressive helps me build strong relationships.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

11. For me, crying is a natural behavior.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

12. My male friends appreciate me for expressing my painful emotions like sadness, frustration, grief, shame, etc.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

13. My female friends appreciate me for expressing my painful emotions like sadness, frustration, grief, shame, etc.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

14. As a man, I reach out for support when times are tough.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

15. Being resilient makes me a strong man.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

16. Being emotionally expressive is a sign of my masculine identity.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

17. I appreciate my weaknesses as a man.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

18. Being patient is essential for my masculine identity.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

19. As a man, I can face challenges with determination.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

20. I feel that solving problems constructively is essential for masculine identity.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

21. As a man, I am responsible for supporting my family financially.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

22. As a man, I provide care & nurturance to my family.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
23. Being empathetic is a sign of my masculinity.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
24. As a man, I can freely hug my loved ones.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
25. As a man, I can sacrifice my needs for my loved ones.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
26. As a man, I can accept my mistakes.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
27. I can manage disagreements with my colleagues/friends cordially.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
28. As a man, I strive to lead with ethical principles.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
29. As a man, I do not hesitate to collaborate with my female counterparts to work on a project.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
30. As a man, I am fine working under female leadership.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
31. I see masculinity as an evolving concept.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
32. I value modern masculinity for encouraging self-expression.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
33. I value positive masculinity because it means treating others with respect.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
34. I believe fathers should provide social emotional support to their child.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
35. I believe men should contribute to childcare responsibilities at home.
Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree
36. I believe a father should help the next generation live a better life

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

37. I like to volunteer in community service programs or NGOs

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

38. I show up for the men and boys in my life when they need support

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

39. I enjoy working in groups with my colleagues

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

40. When I'm going through a tough time, joking around with other men helps me cope and feel supported.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree

41. I use humor to show my friends that I care about them, even if it's in a playful or teasing way.

Strongly Disagree 1- 2- 3 -4 -5 Strongly Agree