Research Paper

Gender Stereotypes, Societal Pressure and Emotional Expression among Men

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ABSTRACT

Men used to be taught to suppress their feelings and refrain from talking about their emotions. So, Men today find it difficult to communicate their feelings in a healthy way, which negatively affects their mental health. The aim of the study was to understand why men find it difficult to express their emotions. Participants in this study were from 18- 60 years old and were from India. There were 167 male participants. Depression, anxiety, stress, and emotional expressivity were assessed using the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale - 21 (DASS Scale -21) and the Emotional Expressivity Scale. The results of the study show that emotional expressivity and stress, depression, and anxiety are significantly correlated. The results also indicate that there was no statistically significant difference between the various relationship status groups in terms of emotional expressivity, stress, or depression.

Keywords: *Cultural Expectation, Emotional Expression Emotional Repression, Men, Mental Health*

Men have been taught to suppress their emotions and prioritize stoicism, self-reliance, and toughness. From an early age, boys are often discouraged from expressing their feelings and are taught to "man up" or "be a man" when faced with difficult situations. This societal expectation often leads, men struggling to articulate their emotions or even understand them. Additionally, there are cultural and societal expectations for men to exhibit traditionally masculine traits such as strength, control, and independence, and the expression of vulnerability or sensitivity is often viewed as a sign of weakness, which can lead to feelings of shame or inadequacy. Furthermore, men may also fear that expressing their emotions will make them appear less competent or incapable in their personal or professional lives. This fear can be especially prevalent in male-dominated fields or environments where there is a perceived need to constantly display strength and control.

Socialization: Men are taught to suppress their emotions from an early age, as they are taught that expressing vulnerability is a sign of weakness. This conditioning is reinforced by societal expectations of what it means to be a "real man." According to a study by Addis and

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Mahalik (2003), men may view expressing their emotions as unmanly and may worry that it could threaten their status as a man.

Fear of Discrimination: Men are worried that expressing their emotions will lead to bias. If they show vulnerability, they may be afraid of appearing weak, unsuccessful, or unmanly. Men who have experienced emotional distress may have felled ashamed and rejected, according to Wong and Rochlen's findings, which can prevent them from seeking help or addressing their issues. (2005).

Lack of emotional intelligence: Some men may struggle with expressing their emotions because they lack emotional intelligence skills. Emotional intelligence involves the ability to recognize and regulate one's own emotions, as well as the ability to understand and empathize with others' emotions. According to a study by Brackett and Mayer (2003), emotional intelligence is essential for effective emotional expression.

Relationship dynamics: Men's ability to express emotions can also be influenced by their relationships. For example, if a man grew up in a family where emotions were not discussed openly, he may struggle to express his emotions in his romantic relationships. According to a study by Birditt and Fingerman (2005), men who have close, supportive relationships with their partners are more likely to express their emotions.

Brain and Emotions: Men and Women
Men and women's brains express emotions identically, however there are some slight distinctions in how the brain interprets and reacts to emotions. The amygdala, prefrontal cortex, and insula are the parts of the brain that both men and women use to process emotions, according to research. In contrast to men, women typically have more limbic system activation, which is involved in processing emotions. According to studies, women often have more connections between their left and right hemispheres than men do, which may help explain why they are able to experience emotions more fully and nuancedly than males.

Overall, there may be some differences in how these processes are mediated by the brain, even though the fundamental neurological processes underlying emotional expression are comparable in men and women.

METHOD
This study used a survey research design. A survey is a technique for gathering information from a sample of people using uniform questionnaires. 167 male volunteers make up the sample for this study. Participants were found through social media, mailing lists, and other appropriate places. Age and relationship status diversity in the sample are both important. A standardised questionnaire is used to gather the data. The DASS Scale and the Emotional Expressivity Scale are used for the questionnaire. All participants are asked for their informed consent. By eliminating all identifying information from the data gathered, confidentiality and anonymity would be guaranteed.

Objective
- To study the relationship between emotional expressivity and depression, anxiety, and stress
- To find the difference in levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among different relationship statuses.

- To find the difference in levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among different age.

Hypothesis

Ho[1]: There is no significant relationship between emotional expressivity, depression, anxiety, and stress

Ho[2]: There is no significant difference in levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among different relationship statuses.

Ho[3]: There is no significant difference in levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among different age.

Variables

The variables that will be measured in this study are:

1. **Dependent Variable:** Levels of Depression, Anxiety, Stress, and emotional expressivity
2. **Independent Variable:** Demographic variables (i.e., Age and Relationship Status)

Sample and Techniques

Non-probability convenient sampling technique was incorporated in the study

Sample Distribution

N= 167	Males	
	Young Adulthood	**Middle Adulthood**
Age	**18 -39 years**	**40 – 65 years**
Relationship Status	Single, Committed, Married, Divorced and Separated	Single, Committed, Married, Divorced and Separated

Tools for study

- **Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale - 21 (DASS Scale-21):** Three self-report scales are combined to form the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale - 21 Items (DASS-21), which is used to measure depression, anxiety, and stress. The seven items on each of the three DASS21 scales are further broken down into corresponding subscales. The dysphoria, hopelessness, life-value downgrading, self-deprecation, lack of interest or involvement, anhedonia, and inertia scales are currently used to assess depression. The anxiety scale measures situational anxiety, situational arousal, skeletal muscle effects, and subjective anxious affect. Arousal levels over the long term are impacted by the stress scale. It evaluates one's mental acuity, jitteriness, and propensity for becoming quickly agitated or irritated. It evaluates impatience and irritability as well.

- **Emotional expressivity scale:** The Emotional Expressivity Scale (EES), a self-report instrument, was created and validated by Kring et al. (1994). Regardless of the type of emotion being expressed or how it is being expressed, this scale defines emotional expressiveness as the overall outward expression of emotion. (i.e., verbal, or facial). The EES, which is based on the general idea of emotional expressiveness, measures the intensity of expressed emotions across a range of channels. A higher score on the EES, a 17-item checklist graded on a 6-point Likert scale, indicates a higher level of emotional expression.

Analysis of the Data
Correlation and Anova was incorporated using SPSS software.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ho[1]: There is no significant relationship between emotional expressivity and depression, anxiety, and stress

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Table between Depression, Anxiety, Stress, and emotional expressivity

Variable	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1.Emotional Expressivity	166	3.583407	0.870923	-			
2.Stress	166	7.65	3.640	.001**	-		
3.Depression	166	7.67	4.325	.001**	.001**	-	
4.Anxitey	166	7.25	3.614	.001**	.001**	.001**	-

P<0.01**.

According to Table 1, The provided correlation Matrix, Emotional Expressivity has a significant positive correlation with stress (r =.219, p =.001) and a significant negative correlation with depression and anxiety (r = -.274, p =.001).

Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between emotional expressiveness and depression, anxiety, or stress can be rejected. Instead, we can draw the conclusion that Emotional Expressivity is strongly linked to stress, anxiety, and depression.

Ho[2]: There is no significant difference in levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among different relationship statuses.

Table 2 Anova test between the level of depression, anxiety, and stress among different Relationship status

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Emotional Expressivity	Between Groups	1.249	4	.312	.406	.804
	Within Groups	123.904	161	.770		
	Total	125.154	165			
Stress	Between Groups	112.245	4	28.061	2.179	.074
	Within Groups	2073.489	161	12.879		
	Total	2185.735	165			
Depression	Between Groups	44.935	4	11.234	.595	.667
	Within Groups	3041.842	161	18.893		
	Total	3086.777	165			
Anxiety	Between Groups	156.882	4	39.220	3.160	.016
	Within Groups	1997.992	161	12.410		
	Total	2154.873	165			

From the above table 2 that is, Anova table, the null hypothesis is that there is no significant difference between the means of the groups being compared. To determine whether to reject or accept the null hypothesis, we need to look at the F-statistic and its associated p-value.

For the variable "Emotional Expressivity," the F-statistic is 0.406 with a p-value of 0.804. Since the p-value is greater than the conventional alpha level of 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, which means that there is no significant difference in emotional expressivity scores between the different relationship status groups.

For the variable "Stress," the F-statistic is 2.179 with a p-value of 0.074. Since the p-value is greater than the conventional alpha level of 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, which means that there is no significant difference in stress scores between the different relationship status groups.

For the variable "Depression," the F-statistic is 0.595 with a p-value of 0.667. Since the p-value is greater than the conventional alpha level of 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, which means that there is no significant difference in depression scores between the different relationship status groups.

For the variable "Anxiety," the F-statistic is 3.160 with a p-value of 0.016. Since the p-value is less than the conventional alpha level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis, which means that there is a significant difference in anxiety scores between the different relationship status groups.

Ho³: There is no significant difference in levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among different age.

Table 3 Anova test between the level of depression, anxiety, and stress among different age

Variable	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Emotional Expressivity	Between Groups	19.225	32	.601	.754	.822
	Within Groups	105.929	133	.796		
	Total	125.154	165			
Stress	Between Groups	344.043	32	10.751	.776	.795
	Within Groups	1841.692	133	13.847		
	Total	2185.735	165			
Depression	Between Groups	475.762	32	14.868	.757	.818
	Within Groups	2611.015	133	19.632		
	Total	3086.777	165			
Anxiety	Between Groups	437.243	32	13.664	1.058	.397
	Within Groups	1717.630	133	12.915		
	Total	2154.873	165			

From the above table 3, we interpret the results regarding the hypothesis, we can focus on the F-value and significance level for each variable in the "Between Groups" row.

For the variable "Emotional Expressivity," the F-value is 0.754, and the significant level is 0.822. This means that there is no significant difference in levels of emotional expressivity among different age groups.

For the variable "Stress," the F-value is 0.776, and the significance level is 0.795. This means that there is no significant difference in levels of stress among different age groups.

For the variable "Depression," the F-value is 0.757, and the significance level is 0.818. This means that there is no significant difference in levels of depression among different age groups.

For the variable "Anxiety," the F-value is 1.058, and the significance level is 0.397. This means that there is no significant difference in levels of anxiety among different age groups. Therefore, based on the reported results, we can conclude that there is no significant difference in levels of stress, depression, and anxiety among different age groups, which supports the hypothesis.

DISCUSSION

The results of the correlation analysis suggest that emotional expressivity is positively correlated with stress, depression, and anxiety, and that these three variables are highly related to each other. This finding is consistent with previous research that has found a relationship between emotional expression and mental health outcomes. However, it's important to note that correlation does not imply causation, and further research is needed to determine the directionality and underlying mechanisms of these relationships. The results of the ANOVA analysis indicate that there is no significant difference in emotional expressivity, stress, or depression scores between different relationship status groups. However, there is a significant difference in anxiety scores between these groups. These findings suggest that being in a relationship may not necessarily have a direct effect on emotional expressivity or mental health outcomes, but may be related to anxiety levels. Further research could explore the specific factors related to relationship status that may contribute to anxiety.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the correlation analysis, it can be concluded that emotional expressivity is positively correlated with stress, depression, and anxiety, indicating a moderate positive relationship. Additionally, stress, depression, and anxiety are positively correlated with each other, suggesting a strong relationship among these variables. However, it is important to note that correlation does not imply causation, and further research is needed to establish causal relationships between these variables. Regarding the ANOVA results, there was no significant difference in emotional expressivity, stress, and depression scores between the different relationship status groups. However, there was a significant difference in anxiety scores between the groups. These findings suggest that relationship status may not play a significant role in emotional expressivity, stress, and depression, but may have an impact on anxiety levels. Overall, these results highlight the importance of addressing emotional expressivity, stress, depression, and anxiety in individuals, regardless of their relationship status, and developing strategies to manage anxiety levels in individuals who may be impacted by their relationship status.

Finding

According to the study, there is a moderately positive correlation between emotional expressivity, stress, depression, and anxiety. Additionally, there is a strong positive correlation between stress, depression, and anxiety, indicating a positive relationship between these variables. It is crucial to keep in mind that correlation does not necessarily imply causation and that more investigation is required to establish causal links between these variables. The study found no statistically significant difference in the emotional expressivity, stress, or depression scores between the various relationship status groups, which raises questions about the influence of relationship status on emotional openness and

mental health outcomes. However, there was a significant difference in anxiety scores between the groups, indicating that relationship status may have an impact on anxiety levels but not on emotional expressivity, stress, or depression.

Implication of the Study

The study first draws attention to the pressure that society places on men to repress their emotions and adhere to stereotypically masculine ideals, which can make it challenging for them to express their emotions and seek emotional support when necessary. This indicates a need for greater knowledge and instruction about emotional expression and the expectations that society has of men.

Then the study contends that emotional expression is associated with stress, depression, and anxiety in a positive way, which emphasises the significance of emotional control and the need for assistance when dealing with emotional distress. This finding also points to a need for those experiencing emotional difficulties to have greater access to mental health resources and support.

Finally, the finding of the study is that the relationship dynamics can affect emotional expression emphasises how crucial healthy connections and transparent communication are for encouraging emotional expression and support.

Suggestion for Further Studies

Online communication platforms have grown in popularity, men may now have more ways to express their emotions and look for social support. Future research may examine how men's emotional expression and mental health outcomes are impacted by online communication.

Cultural expectations surrounding masculinity, it can be difficult for men to express their emotions in the workplace. Future studies could examine how men's emotional expression and mental health outcomes are impacted by workplace culture and suggest methods for fostering more supportive work environments.

Most of the research on men and emotional expression has been cross-sectional, which means that variables are assessed at a single point in time. Studies that track men over time may be able to shed light on how emotional expression develops and how it affects mental health outcomes.

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