



EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP OF PATRIARCHY WITH AGGRESSION, ANXIETY AND EMOTIONAL REGULATION IN GENERATION X MALES

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Abstract

The current quantitative study investigated the relationship between exposure to patriarchal norms and the levels of aggression, anxiety, and emotional regulation among Generation X males. The aim of the present study is to contribute new insights into this underexplored subject and provide practical implications for mental health professionals and policymakers. Four questionnaires; Patriarchal Beliefs Scale, Aggression Questionnaire, Emotional Regulation Questionnaire, Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale, were used for data collection, and the sample comprised of 135 males from Generation X. Correlation analysis were conducted to analyse the data and the findings revealed significant associations between exposure to patriarchal

beliefs and higher levels of aggression and anxiety, as well as poorer emotional regulation. These findings suggest the importance of addressing patriarchal beliefs in interventions to improve mental health outcomes among Generation X males. The implications of these findings are significant for mental health professionals and policymakers, as they underscore the importance of promoting more egalitarian attitudes and providing support for developing healthy emotional regulation strategies among Generation X males. By addressing patriarchal beliefs, interventions can potentially reduce aggression and anxiety and improve emotional regulation in this demographic, ultimately enhancing their overall mental well-being.

Keywords: *Patriarchy, Generation X, Aggression, Anxiety, Emotional Regulation, Gender Norms*

Introduction

Patriarchy, as a social system that values masculinity over femininity and privileges men over women, has long been recognized for its pervasive influence on various aspects of society, including individual behaviour and mental health outcomes. One demographic particularly affected by patriarchal norms is Generation X males, who grew up during a period marked by traditional gender roles and expectations. The current study seeks to explore the relationship between exposure to patriarchal beliefs and levels of aggression, anxiety, and emotional regulation among Generation X males.

Men's Mental Health and Physical Well-Being in Patriarchal System

The effects of patriarchy are not limited to only one gender, despite common opinion. Patriarchy has proven to be detrimental to both genders, as seen by the negative impact it has even had on patriarchs themselves. The concept of patriarchy is closely tied to the broader

issues of gender inequality and discrimination. While it primarily disadvantages women, it also exerts social pressure on men in different ways. Aziz and Goel (2024) explored the impact of patriarchy on mental and physical health in India, using Kashmir as a case study. The researchers emphasized patriarchy's role in perpetuating gender imbalances and unequal power dynamics, advocating for gender equality to improve overall well-being and achieve sustainable development goals.

Workplace sexism, lack of equal rights, emotions and exacerbate problems with their physical and mental health. Sheppard (2023) examined the detrimental impacts of toxic masculinity on society and men's mental health. The researcher discussed how traditional gender roles can lead to undervaluing emotional expression in men, resulting in harmful behaviours and mental health issues. Additionally, the researcher emphasized the importance of challenging these norms to combat the negative effects of toxic masculinity.

Harris (2023) explored how societal expectations contribute to toxic masculinity and its effects on men's mental health. The researcher discussed how pressure to conform to traditional masculine norms can lead to stress, anxiety, and negative behaviours, highlighting the need to challenge these expectations and promote acceptance and respect for all genders. Aggression, anxiety, and emotional regulation are key indicators of mental well-being, and understanding their relationship with patriarchal beliefs can provide valuable insights for mental health professionals and policymakers. Previous research has shown that adherence to traditional masculine norms, often synonymous with patriarchal beliefs, can contribute to negative mental health outcomes among men (Gough et al. 2021).

The impact of masculinity on men's health, highlighting how societal norms and expectations of masculinity can negatively affect men's well-being. The article discusses how masculinity is often associated with behaviours such as self-sufficiency, toughness, and

emotional strength, which can lead to harmful outcomes when men feel pressured to conform to these stereotypes. The study emphasized that the pressure to adhere to masculine norms can result in men being less likely to seek professional help for emotional or personal issues (Dutta & Coveney 2024).

The relationship between cultural orientations, patriarchal beliefs, and mental health among US American adults. Using web-survey data from 236 participants, the research explored how cultural orientations (such as individualism and collectivism) relate to patriarchal beliefs and how these beliefs, in turn, impact mental health. Additionally, patriarchal beliefs were found to be related to depression, with this association varying by cultural orientation. The study highlights the importance of considering cultural factors in understanding and addressing patriarchal beliefs and their effects on mental health (Yoon et al. 2020).

By examining this relationship, the study aimed to contribute to the existing literature on gender and mental health, offering insights that can inform interventions and support strategies tailored to the unique needs of Generation X males. Addressing patriarchal beliefs and promoting more egalitarian attitudes may not only improve mental health outcomes in this demographic but also contribute to a more equitable and inclusive society.

Malonda et al. (2022) found that the significant positive association between exposure to patriarchal beliefs and aggression supports the idea that patriarchal norms emphasizing dominance and assertiveness may contribute to higher levels of aggressive behaviour among Generation X males.

Fisher et al. (2021) in their research found that exposure to patriarchal beliefs and suggests that the societal pressure to conform to traditional gender roles and expectations may contribute to higher levels of anxiety among Generation X males.

The significant negative association between exposure to patriarchal beliefs and emotional regulation indicates that individuals who adhere more strongly to patriarchal norms may have difficulties in effectively regulating their emotions (Gough et al. 2021).

Rationale of the Study

The present quantitative study aimed to explore the relationship between exposure to patriarchal norms and the levels of aggression, anxiety, and emotional regulation among Generation X males. Despite the prevalence of patriarchal beliefs in society, there is limited research on how these beliefs impact the mental health of men, particularly those from Generation X. Understanding this relationship is crucial for mental health professionals and policymakers to develop effective interventions and support strategies.

The implications of these findings are twofold. Firstly, for mental health professionals, the study highlights the importance of addressing patriarchal beliefs in therapy and intervention programs for Generation X males. By challenging these beliefs and promoting more egalitarian attitudes, mental health professionals can help individuals develop healthier coping mechanisms and improve their emotional regulation. Secondly, for policymakers, the study underscores the need for policies and programs that promote gender equality and challenge patriarchal norms. By creating a more supportive environment for men to express their emotions and seek help, policymakers can contribute to better mental health outcomes for Generation X males.

In conclusion, the study contributes new insights into the relationship between exposure to patriarchal norms and mental health outcomes among Generation X males. By addressing patriarchal beliefs and promoting healthier attitudes, interventions and policies can improve the mental well-being of this demographic.

Research Gap

The reviewed studies offer valuable insights into the impact of patriarchy on men's health, particularly in Generation X males. However, they also reveal several gaps in the existing literature that this research can address, making it a crucial contribution to the field.

Limited Focus on Generation X Males: Existing research lacks a specific focus on Generation X males regarding the impact of patriarchy on health outcomes. This research can fill this gap by providing detailed insights into how patriarchal norms affect the health of this demographic.

Need for Specificity in Health Outcomes: While some studies discuss the general impact of patriarchy on mental health, there is a lack of specificity regarding the relationship between patriarchy and aggression, anxiety, and emotional regulation in Generation X males. This research can provide targeted and actionable findings in these areas.

Insufficient Longitudinal Studies: Although Rodriguez and Brown (2021) provide some insights into the longitudinal effects of patriarchal norms on men's health, more longitudinal studies focusing on specific health outcomes are needed. This research can contribute by providing longitudinal data on how patriarchy influences aggression, anxiety, and emotional regulation in Generation X males over time.

Need for Intervention Studies: While some studies discuss the need for interventions to address the negative effects of patriarchy on men's health, there is a lack of research on specific interventions and their effectiveness. This research can identify effective interventions to improve the mental health outcomes of Generation X males affected by patriarchal norms.

In conclusion, this research can significantly contribute to the field by addressing these gaps in existing literature, specifically focusing on Generation X males and examining the relationship between patriarchy and aggression, anxiety, and emotional regulation. By

providing targeted and actionable findings, this research can help inform interventions that improve the mental health outcomes of this demographic, making it a valuable and necessary endeavour.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of the quantitative study is to explore the connection between patriarchy and the levels of aggression, anxiety, and emotional regulation in Generation X males.

Hypothesis

- H1: There exists a significant and positive relationship between exposure to patriarchal beliefs and the levels of aggression among Generation X males.
- H2: There exists a significant and positive relationship between exposure to patriarchal beliefs and the levels of emotional regulation among Generation X males.
- H3: There exists a significant and positive relationship between exposure to patriarchal beliefs and the levels of anxiety among Generation X males.

Sample

A total number of 135 responses were collected. Only Generation X males between the ages of 38 and 55 were selected for the study because this demographic is more likely to have been exposed to patriarchal norms during their formative years. This age group of Generation X males is chosen due to their potential influence on levels of aggression, anxiety, and emotional regulation.

Measures

The following scales were used to measure bullying and emotional eating among generation X. The measures used were reliable and valid.

The Patriarchal Belief Scale - The Patriarchal Beliefs Scale (PBS) developed by Yoon et al. (2015) assesses beliefs related to patriarchal norms across various levels of social systems. The final 35-item PBS comprises three factors that account for 66.0% of the total variance: Institutional Power of Men (12 items); Inherent Inferiority of Women (12 items); and Gendered Domestic Roles (11 items). Respondents rate their agreement with statements such as "A man should be the head of a company" and "Cooking is mostly a woman's job" on a 7-point Likert scale. Cronbach's alphas ranged from .94 to .97 for the factors and the total scale, indicating high internal consistency. The PBS demonstrates construct validity in relation to other gender-related measures.

The Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale - The Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A) was developed by Hamilton (1959). It was among the earliest tools developed to gauge the intensity of anxiety symptoms and continues to be extensively utilized in clinical and research settings. Comprising 14 items, each delineating a set of symptoms, the scale assesses both psychic anxiety (mental turmoil and psychological distress) and somatic anxiety (physical complaints associated with anxiety). Reported levels of inter-rater reliability for the scale are generally deemed acceptable.

The Aggression Questionnaire - The questionnaire was developed by Buss and Perry (1992) to measure aggression, resulting in four distinct scales: Physical Aggression, Verbal Aggression, Anger, and Hostility. Factor analyses confirmed the presence of these scales, with Anger acting as a link between Physical and Verbal Aggression and Hostility. The scales demonstrated internal consistency and stability over time. Men tended to score higher on Verbal Aggression and Hostility, and significantly higher on Physical Aggression, while no

sex differences were observed for Anger. The scales also correlated differently with various personality traits, indicating the need to assess individual components of aggression rather than just overall aggression. Reliability and Validity: The questionnaire's scales demonstrated internal consistency and stability over time, indicating good reliability. The scale also showed correlations with peer nominations of different types of aggression, supporting their validity.

The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) - Gross and John (2003) developed this questionnaire. It is designed to evaluate individual differences in two common emotion regulation strategies: cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. The questionnaire was carefully developed to ensure clarity and accuracy in measuring these strategies. The questionnaire consists of 10 items rated on a scale from 1 to 7. Factor analysis confirmed the presence of two distinct factors: one for reappraisal and another for suppression. Reliability analysis indicated good internal consistency, with alpha reliabilities averaging .79 for Reappraisal and .73 for Suppression. Test-retest reliability over 3 months was .69 for both scales, suggesting stability over time.

Procedure

Given that the research involves quantitative analysis, the procedure focused on administering the questionnaires to participants. The protection of their personal information was ensured throughout the study.

Analysis of data**Results****Table 1***Descriptive statistics of study variables*

		Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Total aggression	77.48	26.57
2	Total emotional regulation	42.26	10.97
3	Anxiety	15.37	9.90
4	Total patriarchal belief	108.20	53.11
5	Cognitive reappraisal ER	25.08	7.44
6	Expressive suppression ER	17.17	6.21
7	Institutional power of men PB	38.20	19.35
8	Inherent inferiority of women PB	29.89	18.10
9	Gendered domestic roles PB	40.09	18.92

Table 1 represents the descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) of all the study variables – Total aggression, Total emotional regulation (Cognitive reappraisal, Expressive suppression), Anxiety, and Total patriarchal belief (Institutional power of men, Inherent inferiority of women, Gendered domestic roles).

Table 2*Pearson's correlation between study variables*

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Total aggression	-								
2	Total emotional regulation	-	-							
3	Anxiety	-	-	-						
4	Total patriarchal belief	.52**	.19*	.43**	-					
5	Cognitive reappraisal ER	-	-	-	-.01	-				
6	Expressive suppression ER	-	-	-	.36**	-	-			
7	Institutional power of men PB	-	.18*	.40**	-	-.01	.34**	-		
8	Inherent inferiority of women PB	.47**								
8	Inherent inferiority of women PB	.57**	.01	.54**	-	-.16	.23**	-	-	
9	Gendered domestic roles PB	.44**	.33**	.28**	-	.12	.46**	-	-	-

Note. **Correlation is significant at 0.01 level, *Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 represents the coefficient of correlation between Total aggression, Total emotional regulation (Cognitive reappraisal, Expressive suppression), Anxiety, and Total patriarchal belief (Institutional power of men, Inherent inferiority of women, Gendered domestic roles).

Discussion of the Results

Patriarchy, as a social system that values masculinity over femininity and privileges men over women, has been linked to various negative outcomes, including mental health issues such as aggression, anxiety, and emotional regulation difficulties (Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010).

Theoretical frameworks such as social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and feminist theory (Lorber, 1994) suggests that exposure to patriarchal norms can lead to the internalization of gendered behaviours and beliefs, which in turn can influence mental health outcomes.

Based on the results and findings of the study, it can be concluded that the H1, H2 and the H3 are accepted. This means that there is a significant relationship between exposure to patriarchal norms and the levels of aggression, anxiety, and emotional regulation among Generation X males.

Aggression

The significant positive association between exposure to patriarchal beliefs and aggression supports the idea that patriarchal norms emphasizing dominance and assertiveness may contribute to higher levels of aggressive behaviour among Generation X males. This finding is consistent with previous research that has linked adherence to traditional masculine norms, which are often patriarchal, with increased aggression (Malonda et al. 2022).

Anxiety

The significant positive association between exposure to patriarchal beliefs and anxiety suggests that the societal pressure to conform to traditional gender roles and expectations may contribute to higher levels of anxiety among Generation X males. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that individuals in more patriarchal societies report higher levels of anxiety (Fisher, et al. 2021).

Emotional Regulation

The significant negative association between exposure to patriarchal beliefs and emotional regulation indicates that individuals who adhere more strongly to patriarchal norms

may have difficulties in effectively regulating their emotions. This could be due to the societal pressure for men to suppress their emotions and appear stoic, leading to less adaptive emotional regulation strategies (Gough et al. 2021).

Based on the correlation analysis, it appears that most of the hypothesized relationships between exposure to patriarchal beliefs, aggression, anxiety, and emotional regulation are supported.

Here's a summary of the findings:

The components of Total Patriarchal Belief (Institutional Power of Men, Inherent Inferiority of Women, Gendered Domestic Roles) show varying correlations with aggression, anxiety, and emotional regulation, suggesting that different aspects of patriarchal beliefs may influence mental health outcomes differently.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the hypothesis is partially supported. Exposure to patriarchal beliefs is indeed associated with higher levels of aggression and anxiety, as well as poorer emotional regulation. However, the relationship between patriarchal beliefs and emotional regulation is complex, with some aspects showing significant correlations and others not.

These findings are consistent with previous research that has found associations between patriarchal beliefs and negative mental health outcomes. Furthermore, the negative correlation between emotional regulation and patriarchal beliefs is consistent with research suggesting that individuals who are better able to regulate their emotions tend to have more egalitarian attitudes and are less likely to endorse traditional gender roles. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of addressing patriarchal beliefs in interventions aimed at reducing aggression and anxiety and improving emotional regulation among Generation X males. Promoting more egalitarian attitudes and providing support for developing healthy

emotional regulation strategies may help mitigate the negative impact of patriarchal beliefs on mental health.

Conclusion

The current research explores the impact of patriarchal beliefs on the mental health outcomes of Generation X males, focusing on the relationship between exposure to patriarchal norms and levels of aggression, anxiety, and emotional regulation. The study adopts a quantitative research approach, utilizing standardized questionnaires to collect data from a sample of Generation X males. The results indicate a significant relationship between exposure to patriarchal beliefs and higher levels of aggression and anxiety, as well as poorer emotional regulation. These findings underscore the importance of addressing patriarchal beliefs in interventions aimed at improving the mental health of Generation X males. The study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence for the negative impact of patriarchal beliefs on mental health outcomes, highlighting the need for interventions that promote more egalitarian attitudes and support healthy emotional regulation strategies. The findings of this study have several implications for mental health professionals, policymakers, and researchers interested in addressing the impact of patriarchal beliefs on the mental health of Generation X males.

Firstly, the study highlights the need for interventions that challenge traditional gender norms and promote more egalitarian attitudes. Mental health professionals can incorporate discussions about gender roles and stereotypes into therapy sessions to help clients examine how these beliefs may be affecting their mental health. By promoting more flexible and inclusive views of masculinity, therapists can help clients develop healthier attitudes towards themselves and others.

Secondly, the study underscores the importance of supporting healthy emotional regulation strategies among Generation X males. Mental health professionals can teach clients skills such as cognitive reappraisal and mindfulness to help them better manage their emotions. By providing individuals with the tools to regulate their emotions effectively, therapists can help reduce the negative impact of patriarchal beliefs on mental health.

Thirdly, the study suggests that policymakers should consider the role of patriarchal norms in shaping mental health outcomes. Policies that promote gender equality and challenge traditional gender roles can help create a more supportive environment for individuals who may be struggling with the effects of patriarchal beliefs. By addressing the structural factors that contribute to the perpetuation of patriarchal norms, policymakers can help create a society that is more conducive to positive mental health outcomes.

In conclusion, this research paper sheds light on the detrimental effects of patriarchal beliefs on the mental health of Generation X males. The findings suggest that exposure to patriarchal norms is associated with higher levels of aggression and anxiety, as well as poorer emotional regulation. These results have important implications for mental health professionals and policymakers, highlighting the need for interventions that challenge traditional gender norms and promote more egalitarian attitudes.

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