

Redefining Masculinity: The Shift in Male Character Portrayals on OTT Platforms

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Abstract

The study explored the changing characterisation of masculinity on Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms and its role in societal perceptions and male identity. By shaking off the shackles of "hegemonic masculinity," these platforms ushered in more inclusive and subtle representations of masculine characters that resonated with cultural shifts in gender equality. A descriptive-exploratory methodology was adopted that combined a quantitative and qualitative approach in the data collected from 200 participants across various demographic segments in India. Analysis revealed that redefined masculinity indicated significant correlations with the way it influenced audience perceptions ($R^2 = 0.275$) and male identity within the context of society ($R^2 = 0.394$). The results, therefore, pointed toward an increasing acceptance of diversified identities by males, especially in urban areas and among younger segments who were exposed to various progressive media narratives. Besides improving audience engagement, these changes also led to increased emotional open-mindedness and self-discovery among men. However, deep-rooted cultural resistance lingered, especially in the lesser-exposed demographics. The study emphasised the power of media in transforming gender and encouraged content creators to feature diverse and progressive representations of masculinity. Future studies tracked longitudinal changes, incorporated perspectives from non-binary populations, and included qualitative insights to fully understand these concepts as they continued to evolve. The study added to the ongoing discussion on gender inclusivity and provided actionable recommendations for media and societal stakeholders.

Keywords: redefined masculinity, OTT platforms, gender norms, male identity, cultural shifts

1. Introduction

Masculinity is a set of role, behaviour, and qualities that are traditionally linked with men in a community. It includes such features as strength, assertiveness, leadership, and emotional stoicism. Modern points of view regard masculinity not in the form of the strict stereotypes but in the form of such traits as empathy, vulnerability, emotional expression, and cooperation. The common characteristics include physical strength, self-reliance, leadership, courage, and stoicism. The modern-day discourse recognizes the fact that masculinity is a social construct that is shaped by societal expectations and norms (UNGEI, 2024). Masculinity can therefore be seen to go beyond the biological determinism, and in the case of gender role, it dictates acceptable behaviour, looks and emotional temperament. Conventionally, these expectations include such aspects like strength, self-sufficiency, and calmness (Anthony and Aiyappan, 2023). Masculinity is not a fixed entity, preventing men from embracing it because it is hardwired into them; rather, the strength and expression of masculinity are socially, culturally, and historically constructed (Sangra, 2021). The term "gender identity" describes the deep internal perception of one's gender, which might or might not match the sex assigned at being born. This concept includes an individual's personal comprehension of their gender, encompassing their perception of their own body and the expression of their gender through diverse modalities such as behaviour, attire, and language. This establishes the form the male self-identity takes and how the participants' own understanding is shaped by portrayals of males in advertisements (Rashmi & Sood, 2021). While gender roles in advertising are still conventional to some extent, that is, the pictures of masculinity and femininity are changing. Advertising profoundly impacts men's views on masculinity and gender roles, perpetuating conventional gender stereotypes. This may restrict the demonstration of vulnerability and emotional transparency. Advertising campaigns can foster progressive representations of diverse masculinities; however, they may also induce

conformity pressure and restrict personal growth (Rai, 2024).

The media has produced a consistent representation of men and maintained "hegemonic masculinity" over time, characterised as linear, superficial, and conforming to conventional standards of masculinity. Unrealistic depictions of males perpetuate bias toward other genders, resulting in detrimental effects on men as well (Kluczyńska, 2021). Nevertheless, the emergence of Over the Top (OTT) platforms presents a significant advantage since they contest such portrayals (Sooraj & Krishna, 2024). These platforms delineate the fundamental assumption of the theory of social construction of reality, which facilitates the formation of new masculinities that challenge 'hegemonic masculinity.' Over the last decades, the popular media have transformed masculinity representation dramatically, and the emergence of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+, have helped to reshape the traditional concepts of masculinity (Agarwal, 2022). Male characters have become more varied, subtle and sensitive to emotions than before.

One of the most pronounced changes in characterizations of male characters in OTT platforms is that it is no longer the traditional model of an "Alpha Male", in which masculinity was associated with physical abilities, emotional control, aggression, and dominance (Arya, 2023). Modern heroes played by men are becoming more complex, vulnerable and multifaceted. Besides the representation of gender, the representation of gender diversity is becoming more common on OTT platforms, and non-binary and gender-fluid characters are becoming more common, as is the depiction of more flexible masculine identities (Al Falaq and Puspita, 2021). The idea of "flawed" characters has been embraced by the contemporary television series, including *Breaking Bad*, *The Mandalorian*, *The Queen's Gambit*, and *Mindhunter*, and it represents complex characters with a moral grey area. These shows challenge traditional ideas of masculinity and allow viewers to reflect on the aspects of self and choice-making in their stories. The emergence of these imperfect heroes underscores the significance of a nuanced depiction of masculine (Maina et al., 2022). OTT platforms have profoundly redefined masculinity by introducing diverse, complex, and emotionally astute male characters that contest traditional gender norms, thereby facilitating further evolution towards more nuanced and inclusive representations of manhood (Gürkan, 2022).

1.1 The Evolution of Masculinity in the Media

The evolution of masculinity is vital for today's society; it is also essential to take a check at history. For most of the twentieth century, manhood was defined by roles assigning men the role of supporters, defenders, and decision-makers (Kusuma & Kumar, 2024). There were many themes that related to masculinity, tying in strength, and emotionless qualities to men, as well as how men must approach problems and stress in their lives (Agarwal & Patnaik, 2023). Early masculinity was once a silent ideal and remiss in normal series and movies, with no freedom to express sentiments. John Wayne, the strong, silent cowboy of the Silver Screen, was the epitome of the masculine role for American males, to take bullying without complaining and to fight without flinching (Chakravorty & Agarwal, 2023). Through the twenty-first century, masculinity has had its fair share of criticism and transformation from one culture to another and from one society to another.

Improvement of gender balance has led to obliteration of the clear-cut differences between a man and a woman, causing males to rethink what it means to be a man (Eswaran, 2023). It is no longer that there is just one way of being a man, and instead, there is a range of masculinity that every man embodies. This presents how media representation has been instrumental in; Not only has media representation been instrumental in the unpacking and destabilising of masculinity. Social media, especially Instagram, YouTube, and podcasts, have empowered accounts that promote realness rather than conformity to cultural set standards (Haynes, 2024). Musicians, like Harry Styles, who promote androgyny in fashion, and actors like Terry Crews, eager to show that it is good to be emotionally sensitive and seek therapy, are examples of the new male prototype who does not impose hegemonic masculinity on himself (McKee, 2020). This cultural change means that different types of masculinities, from the more thoughtful and introspective to the more assertive and flashier, are being gradually tolerated in society.

1.2 From Stereotype to Depth: A Shift in Male Character

The way that masculine traits are portrayed in literature and media has seen considerable evolution during the last several decades. It is a change that is projected on a societal wide scale, encompassing the development of gender roles, the need to have more inclusive stories and an increased realization of the importance of diverse and multi-dimensional characters. Traditional male stereotypes were widespread in literature, film, and other media, in which males are rigidly defined personas accepted by society (Mithi et al., 2022). They can be generalised into six main archetypes: Stoic Hero, Strongman, Provider/Protector, Rebel, Womaniser and Villain. These archetypes were confining the emotional depiction of men as they were focused on describing a single character (Sweet, 2017).

The role of a man is becoming more varied in the past few decades. Examples of media evolution involve movies such as *Rocky* and *The Godfather*, published in 1976 and 1972 respectively; TV serieses, such as *Breaking Bad*, *Mad Men*, *Ted Lasso*, and *The Sopranos*; and books by such famous authors as Jojo Moyes and Khaled Hosseini. The movies *Rocky* and *The Godfather* address the masculine crises when men face their inner problems and self-doubt (Sooraj et al.,

2023). TV shows like *Breaking Bad*, *Mad Men* and *The Sopranos* have added to the portraying complex male characters who struggle with addiction, trauma or even immoral doubt. According to the study, male characters face serious emotional unrest and psychological maturation, challenging the definition of the concept of masculinity in modern society (Sangra, 2021). The evolving character of masculine characters has had a substantial effect on the perception of masculinity by the audience. This is not a strategy that can reinforce stereotypes but promote more diverse representations of masculinity (Salter and Blodgett, 2017).

This change builds emotional sincerity, compassion, and multiplicity in the character, potentially disrupting the sexist ideals, eventually promoting more positive, inclusive conceptions of masculinity (Peter and Raj, 2021). The shift in the representations of the stereotypically masculine to more detailed, complex ones is a response to the cultural changes of stereotyping in terms of gender, mental health and personal identity.

1.3 Masculinity in the Age of Social Media

In recent decades, masculinity has evolved a lot, and social media has played a big role in it. TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter are abundant among young people and influence, disrupt, or reassert hegemonic masculinity. From the emotive, emotional, and vulnerable side of masculinity to the creative and self-care aspects, has been made possible by social media (Salter & Blodgett, 2012). The pressure of “perfection” has also been turned up several notches on social media, with influencers giving the world well-curated lifestyles to admire and aspire to as men. The speaking culture of men’s exercising and building muscles often leads to pathogenic comparison and body dysmorphia (McKee, 2020).

Social media has also fostered negative cultures like toxic masculinity and progressive masculinity. The toxic forms of the masculinity groups that have been linked to promoting gender roles are the “man sphere” communities. It has also reformulated progressive masculinity, resulting in social movements that call women to free themselves from traditional gender roles in which men enslave them – He for She and other similar men’s campaigns (Rai, 2024). Machismo in influencers is another way of giving a personal brand to the content; male influencers discuss parenting, mental health, or video games. On the other hand, there have been major concerns that through the use of social media, the channel disseminates ultra-masculine principles, including that of the ‘alphaholics, the dominative, aggressive, and materially successful male (Gürkan, 2022).

Such principles, therefore, become rather dangerous as they caricature models of what a man is supposed to be. Mental health is intersecting with the ways that masculinity is approached and performed through social media (Arya, 2023). Social media frequently presents unrealistic standards of masculinity, resulting in a skewed perception of manhood. This may compel men to adhere to idealised male physiques and lifestyles, adversely affecting their mental health. In spite of such pressures, social media has created an opportunity to advocate mental health in men by organizing communities, where men can talk about issues and offer each other support, thus creating solidarity and allowing men to express their feelings freely. Nevertheless, most men find it difficult to display the real sense of self-image as per the demands or need to represent a specific kind of themselves on the World Wide Web. What it means to be a man in a social media age is not an easy question to answer (Al Falaq & Puspita, 2021). Facebook and Twitter simultaneously construct and deconstruct traditional norms of masculinity because it provides an avenue to voice cultural male sexualities, but at the same time, they also increase pressure to conform to an international standard of masculinity. So, then it stands that the definition and management of masculinity will continue to progress as the digital age advances (Eswaran, 2023).

The paper begins with an introduction to *Redefining Masculinity: The Shift in Male Character Portrayals on OTT Platforms*, along with the challenges. The literature review explores existing studies on the changing landscape of masculinity in Media, Masculinity, and technology: the influence of digital culture and Cultural variations and global perspectives on masculinity, emphasising the gaps related to the study. And then the paper presents the objective and the hypothesis of the study. In the methodology section, the study outlines a descriptive-exploratory approach employed to gather quantitative and qualitative data. The results are presented through statistical analyses that support the relevance of the objectives and hypothesis. The paper concludes by offering recommendations to enhance the support for Shift in Male Character Portrayals on OTT Platforms.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 The Changing Landscape of Masculinity in Media

The body of study in general was composed of multiple studies that focused on the role of media-constructed masculinity, assuming male behaviour within various contexts. Giaccardi et al (2017) analysed that watching television, sports, and movies was related to a better conformity to traditional masculinity norms and, in turn, an escalation of risky behaviours including sexual risk-taking, alcohol and drug use, and risky driving. Similarly, Cleland (2018) examined empirical research demonstrating a shift towards inclusivity in attitudes among certain players and fans, both those attending games in person and those participating in football-related discussions online, as well as within print and digital media. However, changes in the cultural and social factors of the males involved in the sport at a later time

marked diversity and led to the questioning of hegemonic masculinity. Grunander and Lilja (2024) added to the existing literature by engaging with a qualitative study that explored how masculinity in crisis was constructed in Swedish news media, which revealed that although media messages redefined masculinity and depicted men as inferior beings in comparison with women, it corresponded to the role of increasing gender equity but also spoke about the regressive move where some men reacted in terms of women leaving men behind.

At the same time, Buschmeyer and Lengersorf (2016) considered the concept of hegemonic masculinity and its uses in past gender investigations. Scholars argued that the concept of a vertically structured, rigid masculinity that posited hegemonic masculinity at the pinnacle required recasting – and they proposed a flat, horizontal model of masculinity that concerned the emergence of other, novel forms of masculinity. All these works indicated the changing cultural and social relations of masculinity and its impact on male conduct in local and imported media products and in society.

2.2 Masculinity and Technology: The Influence of Digital Culture

The study addressed distinct expressions of masculinity across cyberspace and real-life environments, focusing on how media technologies and cultural constructs had perpetuated machismo. Díaz-Fernández and García-Mingo (2024) studied the Spanish online forum “Forocoches”, analysing how this ‘masculine bar’ weeded out women, enforced a foreclosure of mockery and a reign of trolling, and established a masculinist digital culture. Through their analysis, they demonstrated specific ways in which the affordances of the platform supported the performance of trolling masculinities and the promulgation of hegemonic masculinity. In a similar analysis, Ging (2019) examined the masculinities that were accrued through the manosphere, particularly through a consideration of the Red Pill, antifeminist, victim narrative that portrayed men as the oppressed victims of modern gender relations. The study revealed that the manosphere generated updated conduct for masculinity, such as beta masculinity and uncles, that destabilised hegemonic masculinity in the digital environment. Those themes were further discussed in other settings, such as the gay dating application environments.

Rodriguez et al. (2016) examined how hegemonic masculinity continued to dominate gay dating apps despite the emergence of more progressive forms of masculinity. They classified the type of interactions they referred to as “mascing,” where gay men assumed masculine behaviours and also looked for masculine-partnered men, giving some form of male superiority in those venues. Within the video game medium, Braithwaite (2016) considered the phenomenon of ‘Gamergate’, an online movement sold as the ‘ethics in journalism’ but was inarguably a strongly gendered hostility pelting some male video game journalists. This pattern demonstrated how geek masculinity was performed through social media and how heterosexual white male gamers became victims of social justice warriors, highlighting issues of gender, privilege, and identity politics in the online environment. Cheryan and Markus (2020) named the phenomenon of ‘masculine defaults,’ which, as a form of prejudice, concealed and predetermined women to be in positions and occupations that were not assigned to them. Their study indicated the need to remedy the various biases for the goal of inclusiveness.

2.3 Cultural Variations and Global Perspective on Masculinity

Altogether, these works focused on the relation of gender/masculinity and social power, and opened a useful analysis about how masculinity was constructed, policed, and resisted in various cultures and settings. Schmitt et al. (2017) investigated cross-nationally sex differences in personality and found that such differences increased as the levels of gender inequity rose. The concepts of gender differences that involved the ecological viewpoint were much more helpful in exploring the international differences in personality. This work demonstrated how cultural sociology, particularly gender equity, impacted the personalities and actions of individuals. In a broader cultural perspective, Connell (2020) expressed concerns regarding traditional masculinity as a structure, noting that masculinity was a practice in social cultures. She insisted that masculinities were cultural productions of gender relations, and while the broad knowledge of gender narratives was universal, the performing of masculinity was a product of the sociopolitical cultural context of race and class. Nagel (2019) built on this by demonstrating how sexuality, or more specifically masculinity, was a fundamental building block of nationalism. Both nationalist ideologies routinely shaped patriotic masculinity as a figure of national potency, and sexualized militarism rebuilt gender dynamics using the sexualized ‘enemy’ and the emasculated ‘other’ respectively.

The works on masculinity by different authors made some profound revelations on how masculinity was formed and imposed in existing social culture and media, and also revealed some research gaps. For instance, Giaccardi et al. (2017) pointed out the effects of media influence on masculinity and risky behaviours but called for research that concerned changes over time. The authors suggested that the study should have provided more insights into how these masculinities intersected in everyday life, along the same lines as the above hierarchical characterisation of masculinities (Buschmeyer & Lengersdorf, 2016). The studies showed how it was necessary to comprehend masculinity across the world as proposed by Schmitt et al. In 2017, a study was conducted regarding how gender norms were changing across the world and how they affected men’s identity. Nagel (2019) briefly pointed out masculinity and nationalism, noting that there was much more to be studied regarding political ideologies. The reviews suggested that to fully understand masculinity, it was necessary to address these study deficits and to take into account current and future culture, technology, and politics.

3. Objectives

- To evaluate the impact of redefined masculinity on audience perception and male identity in society.
- To provide recommendations for content creators on further developing inclusive and progressive representations of masculinity.

4. Hypothesis

H1: Redefined masculinity has a significant impact on audience perception and male identity in society.

H2: Content featuring inclusive and progressive representations of masculinity receives higher audience acceptance and fosters greater engagement, encouraging content creators to adopt such portrayals more widely.

5. Research Methodology

The research study mainly utilised a quantitative research design with a little bit of qualitative contributions to give contextual insights. The study was interested in the case of OTT viewers in India and how the perception of redefined masculinity is associated with the perception of the audience and male identity. The experiment was conducted in India. The research design was a cross-sectional survey, which involved the collection of data at one time. Thus, the results show statistical correlations but not causal relationships existing between redefined masculinity and the dependent variables. The design can be used to explore relationships but not to draw a causal conclusion. In addition to this, it makes use of a stratified random sampling procedure, which allowed for the identification and recruitment of two hundred participants in an acceptable manner.

This study is both descriptive and exploratory in character, and the data gathering process is carried out with the use of a structured questionnaire that was produced by the researchers themselves. The questionnaire was grouped into three parts (1) demographics, (2) perception in terms of redefined masculinity in OTT content, and (3) indicators of audience perception and male identity. The answers were calculated on a five-point Likert scale, with Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree (1-5). The tool was first subjected to test on its relevancy and clarity and then sent out at last.

The research used primary and secondary sources of information to acquire information on the key determinants which comprise redefined masculinity, audience perception, and male identity in society. Quantitative data is handled with the help of Microsoft Excel and SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics software provides highly advanced statistical analysis of all levels of proficiency, and it has a better flexibility and usability than traditional software), and the analysis of this data is achieved with the help of such tools as Mean, SD, and Regression analysis.

6. Results

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the respondents

Sr. no.	Demographic Profile		Frequency	%
1	Gender	Female	60	30%
		Male	140	70%
	2	Age group	18-24 years	42
25-34 years			70	35%
35-44 years			54	27%
Above 45 years			34	17%
3	Geographical Location	Rural	48	24%
		Semi-urban	64	32%
		Urban	88	44%
		Doctorate	27	13.50%
4	Educational Background	High school or equivalent	36	18%
		Other	63	31.50%
		Postgraduate degree	34	17%
		Undergraduate degree	40	20%
		Corporate/Business Professional	30	15%
		Government Employee	46	23%
		Media/Entertainment Professional	38	19%
		Other	37	18.50%
		Student	49	24.50%
5	Occupation	Married	51	25.50%
		Single	149	74.50%
6	Marital Status	High Income	81	40.50%
		Low Income	41	20.50%
7	Income Level	Middle Income	78	39%

The demographic profile of the sample shows the following distribution: Gender: 30% of the respondents are female, while 70% are male. Age: The largest group is between 25-34 years (35%), followed by 18-24 years (21%), 35-44 years (27%), and 17% are above 45 years. Geographical location shows that 44% of the respondents are from urban areas, 32% from semi-urban areas, and 24% from rural areas. In terms of educational qualification, most of them possess other educational qualifications (31.5%), followed by 18% with high school or equivalent education, and followed by postgraduate qualifications 17%, undergraduate qualifications 20%, and doctorate qualifications 13.5%. Occupation-wise, there are students 24.5%, government servants 23%, media/entertainment professionals 19%, and other occupations 18.5%, and corporate/business professionals 15%. Most are single (74.5%), and 25.5% are married individuals. Lastly, it is found that the distribution of income is almost equally balanced with 40.5% in high, 39% in medium, and 20.5% in low categories.

6.1 H1: Redefined Masculinity Has a Significant Impact on Audience Perception and Male Identity in Society

6.1.1 Impact of Redefined Masculinity on Audience Perception

Table 2. Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.525 ^a	0.275	0.272	2.95512
a. Predictors: (Constant), Redefined masculinity				

Table 2, which summarises the model, shows that there is a moderate positive correlation with Redefined Masculinity and the dependent variable ($R=0.525$), suggesting that the model is moderately correlated. Given that the model describes 27.5% of the difference in the dependent variable ($R^2 = 0.275$), this indicates moderate explanatory power. Although the adjusted value is still quite low, the model's explanatory power is confirmed by the Adjusted R^2 of 0.272. Based on the model's predictive quality, which is satisfactory but could benefit from additional adjustments, the Standard Error of the Estimate is 2.95512. The lack of goodness of fit could be because more predictors are needed.

Table 3. ANOVA Table

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	656.601	1	656.601	75.189	.000 ^b
	Residual	1729.079	198	8.733		
	Total	2385.680	199			
a. Dependent Variable: Audience perception						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Redefined masculinity						

The results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) table show that the regression successfully explained the variation in audience perception. The model's high level of significance (F-statistic 75.189, p-value 0.000) shows that Redefined Masculinity is a useful predictor of Audience Perception. Even though the model accounts for a large portion of the alteration (Regression Sum of Squares: 656.601), there is still some unexplained variance (Residual Sum of Squares: 1729.079). The model demonstrates a statistically significant but moderate level of explanatory strength.

Table 4. Coefficients Table

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.310	1.246		5.065	.000
	Redefined masculinity	0.603	0.070	0.525	8.671	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Audience perception						

The unstandardized coefficient of 0.603 in the coefficients table 4 shows that Redefined masculinity significantly affects Audience perception; this means that for every unit increase in Redefined masculinity, Audience perception goes up by 0.603 units. Redefined masculinity has a moderate impact on Audience perception, as suggested by the standardised coefficient (Beta) of 0.525. Thanks to the statistically significant relationship confirmed by the t-value of 8.671 and the p-value of 0.000, Redefined Masculinity is a key predictor of Audience Perception in the model.

6.1.2 Impact of Redefined Masculinity on Male Identity in Society

Table 5. Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.628 ^a	0.394	0.391	2.15038
a. Predictors: (Constant), Redefined masculinity				

Through an R-value of 0.628, the model summary table 5 shows that Redefined masculinity has a moderate to strong connection with the dependent variable. With an R^2 value of 0.394, the model explains a moderate proportion of variance in male identity, indicating meaningful but not exhaustive explanatory power, dependent variable (39.4% of the total variance), since the remaining 60.6% is explained by other factors. Redefined masculinity appears to be a moderately effective predictor, according to the Adjusted R^2 value of 0.391. There is definitely space for improvement in fitting the model, as the model only makes moderately accurate predictions (Standard Error of the Estimate = 2.15038).

Table 6. ANOVA Table

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	596.498	1	596.498	128.996	.000 ^b
	Residual	915.582	198	4.624		
	Total	1512.080	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Male identity in society

b. Predictors: (Constant), Redefined masculinity

The ANOVA table revealed that the regression had a significant explanation of Male identity in society. The F-statistic is 128.996 with a statistically substantial p-value ($p < 0.001$), representing that the model significantly predicts male identity within the scope of the study. Regression Sum of Squares is 596.498, which tells us the variance explained by the model, and Residual Sum of Squares is 915.582, which represents the unexplained alteration. In summary, the model is statistically significant and captures well the relationship between Redefined masculinity and Male identity in society.

Table 7. Coefficients Table

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.709	0.907		8.504	.000
	Redefined masculinity	0.575	0.051	0.628	11.358	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Male identity in society

The coefficients table shows the relationship of Redefined masculinity with the dependent variable, Male identity in society. The unstandardized coefficient of Redefined masculinity is 0.575, implying that if other factors remain constant, for every one unit increase in Redefined masculinity, Male identity in society increases by 0.575 units. With a Beta value of 0.628, the standardised coefficient, we can see that Redefined Masculinity has a highly positive impact on male identity in popular culture. Highly statistically significant results were obtained for Redefined masculinity with a t-value of 11.358 and a p-value of 0.000. Because the expected value of male identity in society is zero when redefined masculinity is not present, the constant is 7.709.

7. Discussion

The result shows that male respondents (70%) were most dominant in the findings with the highest percentage of age range 25-34 years (35%) and urban localities (44%) which shows that there is a growing acceptance of the redefined masculinity among the young and urban population, which is probably by their increased exposure to progressive ideas due to education and media. Studies that were conducted in the past tended to adhere to smaller demographic groups. The professionals of the urban setting, Dey (2024), Rai (2024) and Lingnau (2023), paid less attention to the rural or semi-urban population. Contrary to Dey, who reported the low degree of acceptability of the redefined masculinity in the countryside, the outcomes of the current study shows the larger acceptability; semi-urban and rural respondents recorded it as well semi-urban (32%) and rural (24%) infer. It is the slow seeping out of contemporary ideas of masculinity across geographical setting. The present study is an improvement over the past works in that it uses a broader demographic range of variables like income, marital status and education level. This introduction offers a more multi-dimensional insight into the impact of re-defining masculinity to determine perceptions and identity. The comparatively higher R^2 values may suggest increasing receptiveness toward evolving gender norms, although the explanatory strength remains moderate.

There is a moderate relationship between redefined masculinity and audience perception, given that the R value is 0.525 and the R^2 is 0.275. This shows that redefined masculinity clarifies 27.5% of the variation in audience perception, and the results show that there is a high level of statistical significance ($p = 0.000$). Findings show that societal acceptance for developing gender norms is realised as variations in masculine standards only modestly influence how audiences respond to related issues. This would include Bose and Mishra (2024), Parmar & Pandit (2021) and Menon (2024), who found that the relationship between contemporary gender narratives and audience perceptions was lower ($R = 0.42$) and accounted for only 18% of the variance. It was stated in the study that change resistance is due to deep cultural norms.

The comparatively stronger association observed in the present study may reflect growing openness toward inclusive masculinity narratives. That might be due to better information campaigns through the media, campaigns of gender advocacy, or any sort of education that promotes people into a more inclusive society.

Redefined masculinity and social male identity are moderately to strongly related, according to the R value of 0.628 and the R^2 of 0.394. The results demonstrate a statistically significant correlation ($p = 0.000$) between shifting notions of masculinity and male identity, accounting for 39.4% of the total variation. The findings indicate a moderate to strong relationship. A highly significant positive effect is directed by the standardised beta value of 0.628, suggesting that redefined masculinity is changing the traditional notion of male identity. In comparison, Jaggi and Manohar (2019) and Sangra (2021) found results that were similar to these, with an R value of 0.60 and an R^2 of 0.36, which highlighted the fact that moves toward inclusive masculinity improve men's self-perceptions, emotional openness, and societal acceptance. Thus, these findings are all consistent with one another; not only does this bolster the validity of the current study, but it also illuminates the worldwide significance of redefined masculinity as a notion capable of bringing about transformation.

8. Conclusion

The findings suggest an observable shift in societal perceptions of masculinity within the sampled population. The redefinition of masculinity is now gaining wider acceptance, especially among younger and more urban populations. Prior studies were expanded to include semi-urban and rural respondents and provided a wider resonance of modern ideals of masculinity in various geographical contexts. The findings are consistent with the possibility of increasing societal openness toward evolving gender norms. Moderate to strong relationships established between redefined masculinity and both audience perception and male identity point to how contemporary transformations of masculinity meaningfully redefine how men conceptualise themselves and how audiences react to gender narratives. The comparatively increased values of R^2 can be attributed to increasing interest in the discourse of gender inclusivity.

Moreover, the observed relationship between redefined masculinity and male identity highlights its meaningful association within the context of this study. The favorableness of the outcome is supported by prior work, which not only boosts the validity of the study but also brings forth the significance of these developments to the entire world. This study will contribute to a greater understanding of how redefined masculinity is not only transforming male identity but also influences greater cultural narratives regarding gender roles. This type of knowledge is crucial as the norms of any society are constantly shifting and such research contributes to the achievement of such insight.

Although this study was also helpful in some ways, it also has certain limitations which are to be considered. The first one is that the sample is biased with males and this does not necessarily imply that the findings can be used to represent all genders. What also makes things complicated is the fact that the study was cross-sectional and we cannot see how perceptions towards masculinity have progressed within a time period. The other possible weakness is that the research is largely self-reported, which can be explained by such factors as personal interpretation or social desirability. Although the respondents are varied in terms of location and cultures, the study may not fairly represent some of the underrepresented regions and cultural backgrounds, which restricts the generalizability of the study. And finally, it might happen that the qualitative elements of perceptions and internalization of shifting masculinity ideals will be lost during the quantitative examination.

The results emphasize the increased acceptance of redefined masculinity which is primarily among the urban younger generation. Nevertheless, the current study also identifies a gap in studies which can be bridged through an opportunity to capture such evolving complexity through studies. The future research may employ longitudinal designs in which it is possible to determine the changes in the attitudes at a particular time thereby generating even a more vibrant picture of change trends and the way in which societal perception of masculinity are changing. In addition, a closer review of the effects of cultural and media discourse on masculinity would enable one to understand the role of outside influences in influencing such shifts. To promote inclusiveness and generalizability of the results, the non-binary perspectives might also be added, with the emphasis on the regions that were underserved. Finally, a more inclusive study of deviations in gender norms in society could be achieved through the integration of quantitative and qualitative methods and be able to discover more than just the statistical significance of changes, but also personal experiences behind the changes in a more detailed manner. Yet, since R^2 values are moderate, and the study is cross-sectional, these results are better understood as the indication of some associations and not ultimate societal change.

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Author contributions

Atreyee Dutta was responsible for the theoretical framework and data collection. Arijit Dutta contributed to data analysis and methodology, including statistical calculations. Both authors were involved in revising the manuscript and approved the final version.

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