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Emotional Experiences of Men in Working Life in the Context of Gender Roles: Loading Updated Masculinity Roles



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Abstract


The transformation of labor force participation is reshaping gender roles. This study aims to understand the emotional experiences of urban working men in relation to their personal, family, work and social lives. The research was conducted using a phenomenological design based on a qualitative approach. In-depth interviews were conducted with 19 participants, and the data were analyzed using MAXQDA software to identify 254 codes, 24 sub-themes and four main themes. The four main themes were: the personal sphere; the family sphere; the work sphere; and the social sphere. The research focuses on the daily life experiences of working men, revealing their emotional responses to changing gender role expectations. The findings demonstrate that gender roles are reproduced in a multi-layered manner and that emotional vulnerability plays an important role in this process. Participants avoid expressing their emotions in the personal sphere, take on the roles of “son” or “father” in the family sphere, experience emotional states characterized by tolerance, competitiveness and a focus on finding solutions in the work sphere and are exposed to the image of a strong, emotionally reserved and protective man in the social sphere. Conversely, participants who are aware of the pressure that these roles exert on individuals have begun to develop a more critical attitude toward traditional perceptions of masculinity.


Keywords


Gender roles • Masculinity roles • Male universe • Crisis of masculinity



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Emotional Experiences of Men in Working Life in the Context of Gender Roles: Loading Updated Masculinity Roles

It can be argued that human history has undergone transformations that can be broadly classified as hunter-gatherer, agrarian and industrial capitalist societies from the Stone Age to the Internet Age under the influence of changing social conditions in history (Chase-Dunn & Lerro, 2016).

It would not be wrong to say that one of the most important topics for debate about social change and transformation is gender roles. Biological sex is nature. However, social gender, the social status and roles assigned to women and men, is cultural. It is a human invention. Therefore, it can change from society to society and over time (Gültekin, 2013). Gender roles are essential for individuals to participate in social life. These roles, which are given meaning by society, guide individuals throughout their lives and influence their decisions about their own lives (Şenol, 2022, p. 381). These roles, which are now perceived as natural in the agricultural society that has lasted for thousands of years, are rapidly reproduced in the ever-changing urban lifestyle. However, the transformation of social reality/practice does not mean that social perception is also transformed.

Due to the disadvantaged situation inherited by women, the literature on gender roles is dominated by studies that prioritize women. Studies show that there is no change in the traditional roles of women who work outside the home all day (Vatandaş, 2007). A similar situation can be observed in important areas of social life such as working life (Pekel, 2019; Erikli, 2020) and education (Sayılan, 2012; Berber, 2021). On the other hand, social change affects all gender roles. For this reason, the phenomenon of masculinity in the context of gender is an issue that needs to be examined (Zeybekoglu, 2013).

In Topuz and Erkanlı's metaphorical analysis of the meanings attributed to women and men, the concept of woman is defined as 'fragile, in need of attention and care, passive and dependent, complex and difficult to understand, altruistic, expected to give happiness, hardworking and responsible, ensuring the continuity of life', and the concept of man is defined as ; "active-managing-directing, protective-careful-possessive, combative, takes responsibility for his family, acts with logic, does not show his emotions, can use physical power, unpredictable-maverick, glorified, demands attention and selfish" (Topuz & Erkanlı, 2016). Throughout history, being a man has meant not being a woman. For this reason, men who grow up in this tradition obey a law of masculinity that says that all kinds of words and actions that are likely to be feminine should be avoided (Diamond, 2006). The effects of internalized gender roles on individuals last a lifetime, and efforts to conform to society's gendered expectations can have negative psychological and social consequences for individuals (Saygan & Uludağlı, 2021). Therefore, the fact that social transformations allow women to enter public life, especially working life, which is traditionally dominated by men, also has psychological and social effects on their aspirations.

In patriarchal social life, men have responsibilities to fulfill. He has to fulfill all these responsibilities, and in doing so, he must protect and reinforce his place in the male world. Voicing his problems is considered appropriate because it is seen as feminine. This situation puts him in the "impossible masculinity clamp of patriarchy", in a sense victimizing and isolating him (Çelik, 2016). On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic process has also had a deep impact on men. In particular, due to the loss of jobs and income, they found it difficult to fulfill the responsibility of "taking care of the household" that comes with traditional gender roles, and this situation caused them to experience an emotionally more tense and angry period and a crisis of masculinity (Firat et al., 2021). In this context, there is a growing need for academic studies on men.

In this context, the transformation of gender roles creates various emotional tensions and dilemmas in the daily lives of urban male workers. However, the literature has not sufficiently explored how these experiences are lived and interpreted. This constitutes the problem of the study. The study aims to reveal the subjective meanings of the emotional experiences of urban working men in personal, family, work, and social areas in the context of gender roles, using a phenomenological approach.

Studies on Gender-Based Masculinity Roles and Debates

Gender studies in Türkiye have grown rapidly in recent years. However, it would not be wrong to say that these studies are largely conducted in the context of gender perceptions or women, or at least they do not focus on masculinity roles (Güneş & Yıldırım, 2019; Erikli, 2020; Bilgin & Tuncay, 2020; Güzel, 2020; Saygan & Uludağlı, 2021; Çelebi, 2022; Bardakçı & Oğlak, 2022; Albayrak, 2024).

The concept of masculinity began to be discussed academically in Türkiye in the 1990s, but has not received much attention since then (Şahin, 2018). Until recently, the question of what masculinity is and how it should be analyzed in relation to gender-based power has not been seriously discussed (Sancar, 2016). Initially studied as a singular characteristic, research on masculinity is now shifting toward examining the various ways in which it is expressed. Literature exists on topics such as men and work, men and war, men and sports, and men and crime (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009). Of these areas, economic conditions are one of the most influential factors in the formation of masculinity (Itulua-Abumere, 2013). Kandiyoti's (2016) study reveals the connection between gender policies in Türkiye and populism based on the division between "us" and "them", neoliberal employment and conservative family policies. In this context, the field study focuses on the manifestations of masculinity in society, the family and working life.

In Türkiye, the number of gender studies that focus directly on masculine roles is relatively limited. However, in recent years, with the proliferation of new communication technologies, discussions about masculinity on social media platforms have become the focus of academic attention. Studies conducted in this context make important contributions to the field by examining how different forms of masculinity are represented in online environments, how hegemonic discourses are reproduced in digital space, and how social media reflect the crisis of masculinity. Indeed, representations of masculinity in online communities conceptualized as the 'male universe', masculine discourses on platforms such as Instagram and YouTube and discussions on Twitter are the main focus of existing studies. These studies are crucial for understanding how gender inequalities and perceptions of masculinity are constructed and transformed in new media environments.

In one of the studies conducted in this context, Elgün (2020) aimed to explore and describe the forms of masculinity in the male universe in Türkiye with a qualitative approach. The study analyzed 138 posts and 50 hyperlink texts of various dates in 2019 on the blog site www.erkekadam.org using thematic analysis method. The striking findings of the study are that the site presents hegemonic masculinity (emotionally strong, alpha mentality, entrepreneur, etc.), subaltern masculinity (emotionally weak, feminine, submissive, etc.) and masculine lifestyle prescriptions for men on various topics. The site is an online platform that represents a community rather than a personal diary with several content producers and constructs subaltern masculinity while reproducing hegemonic masculinity.

A similar study was carried out by Öztürk (2021). This study focuses on the discourses through which hegemonic masculinity is constructed on social media and aims to reveal the emerging forms of masculinity. In this context, masculine discourses were discussed through the hashtag #erkekyerinibilsin, which appeared on Twitter between June 5 and 7, 2020. Using the method of critical discourse analysis, 2014 tweets were analyzed and 218 posts containing masculinity discourses were thematically evaluated. The results of

the study show that the masculine language dominant in the male universe is transferred to Twitter, that hegemonic masculinity is established through the exclusion and humiliation of subordinate masculinity, and that it relies on anti-feminist discourse.

Ata and Topçu (2021) also analyzed ten popular accounts on Instagram that produce masculinity-focused content in Turkish. Posts up to April 31, 2020 were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative research method. The results showed that masculinist (8/10) accounts were dominated by masculinist (6 of them were radical) discourses, and two of them were dominated by male liberationist discourses. While hegemonic and toxic representations of masculinity were prominent in masculinist accounts, the crisis of masculinity was attempted to be overcome through anti-feminism and the glorification of hegemonic masculine values.

İşler-Sevindi and Akalın (2022), on the other hand, analyzed the social movement known as 'The Red Pill' (TRP) in English literature and the Red Pill in Türkiye. According to the study, the Red Pill movement bases the roles of men and women on biological and evolutionary foundations, advocates that men achieve success by being "alpha", and criticizes modern feminism, which it defines as the "feminine imperative." This study examines the movement from three positions (natural/evolutionary, consequentialist and critical) and discusses its compatibility with critical theory. The results show that the Natural/Evolutionary and Consequentialist positions of the movement are incompatible with Critical Theory, while only the Critical position, which criticizes the political status quo, may be partially compatible.

Studies in the English-language literature also focus on similar issues, in particular the ideologies of masculinity in online platforms called the *manosphere* and the effects of these ideologies on gender roles and relationships with women are often analyzed. The concept of the *manosphere* offers a valuable theoretical framework for understanding how contemporary forms of masculinity are constructed, reproduced, and experienced in digital environments. These online spaces not only reflect existing masculine discourses but also actively generate new ideological structures that reinforce traditional, patriarchal, and often anti-feminist understandings of manhood. In this context, the manosphere is significant because it demonstrates that masculinity is not only shaped within physical domains such as family, work, or society, but also within virtual spaces that influence how men make sense of their emotional and social experiences. The studies referenced in this research contribute to explaining how online representations of masculinity correspond with the emotional pressures and expectations that men face in everyday life. Therefore, the manosphere serves as a contemporary conceptual tool for identifying how masculinity resists and restructures itself during ongoing social transformations. Some prominent publications in this area are discussed below:

Vallerga and Zurbruggen (2021) analyzed 227 posts from The Red Pill and Incel forums within the manosphere using reflexive thematic analysis. They found that both communities held views based on gender essentialism and evolutionary psychology, categorizing women as deceitful and manipulative and men as alpha/chad, beta and intelincel. While Red Pill members focused on achieving Alpha status, the Incel forum focused on despair and tendencies toward violence against women.

Botto and Gottzen (2024) analyzed the processes of joining and leaving The Red Pill by examining the Reddit posts of 30 former 'redpillers' men. They found that young men joined the community because of their vulnerability to norms of sexual success and heterosexual masculinity, but that the Red Pill ideology increased rather than decreased these vulnerabilities. It was also found that leaving the community did not necessarily mean a complete purge of misogynistic beliefs.

Iacoviello et al. (2021) aimed to examine men's perceptions of how traditional masculinity norms are valued by the general society and other men and women. The findings of the study showed that men perceived traditional masculinity to be valued by other men, but not by the general society or women. It

was also found that men's level of personal adoption of traditional masculinity was related to how they perceived the value that their reference groups placed on these norms.

As the reviewed literature clearly illustrates, masculinity is no longer a fixed and uncontested category; rather, it is constantly reconstructed and debated across both offline and online contexts. Especially within digital environments such as social media platforms and the *manosphere*, evolving masculine identities are shaped through discourses that reflect the tension between traditional norms and contemporary social realities. However, despite these valuable insights, most existing studies focus on the discursive representations of masculinity, while the lived emotional experiences of men in everyday life remain underexplored. In this sense, the current study contributes to the literature by shifting the focus from digital narratives to real-life contexts and by exploring how men emotionally experience and negotiate gender roles in personal, familial, occupational, and societal domains. Thus, the aim and research questions of this study are well grounded in existing scholarship and respond to a meaningful gap in the field.

Method

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, specifically using a phenomenological research design, which is appropriate for exploring how individuals make sense of their lived experiences. Phenomenology focuses on the subjective meanings that individuals attribute to their experiences and seeks to uncover the essence of a phenomenon as perceived by those who experience it (Moustakas, 1994).

In this context, the emotional experiences of urban working men, particularly in relation to the gender roles socially assigned to them, constitute the central phenomenon under investigation. The study follows the interpretive (hermeneutic) phenomenological tradition, rather than the descriptive phenomenology, as it not only seeks to describe these experiences but also to interpret the meanings that participants assign to them in their specific social and cultural contexts (van Manen, 1990).

By engaging deeply with participants' narratives through semi-structured in-depth interviews, the study aims to reveal how men emotionally negotiate their identities within the domains of personal life, family, work, and society. This design allows the researcher to capture the rich, nuanced, and context-dependent nature of emotional experiences that are often hidden or underexplored in traditional gender studies. Thus, the phenomenological approach is well-suited to the aim of understanding the lived realities of masculinity beyond theoretical abstraction or purely discursive analysis.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following main research question:

- How do urban working men emotionally experience and make sense of the gender roles assigned to them in personal, familial, occupational, and societal domains?

Supporting sub-questions included:

- What emotional tensions or conflicts do men encounter in fulfilling traditional masculine expectations?
- How do men respond to the shifting definitions of masculinity in contemporary urban life?
- In which contexts do men feel emotionally restricted or supported in expressing their inner experiences?

Data Collection Tools and Techniques

The primary method of data collection was semi-structured in-depth interviews, which allowed for flexibility in probing emerging themes while ensuring consistency across participants. An interview guide

was prepared around four main domains (personal, family, work, and society), and open-ended questions encouraged participants to freely reflect on their emotional lives. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with informed consent.

In addition to the interviews, unstructured non-participant observations were conducted in natural settings such as workplaces and social environments where the researcher had ethical access. These observations aimed to contextualize the verbal data and to note the behavioral expressions of emotional restraint, role performance, or gendered interactions. While not systematically coded, observational notes were used during the interpretation to deepen the insight and ensure consistency in the emerging themes.

Original Value of the Study

Unlike previous studies in the literature, instead of examining discourses in online environments, this study takes a phenomenological approach to men's emotional experiences in personal, family, work and social settings. In this context, the study aims to make an original contribution to the literature by analyzing how men experience and make sense of gender roles through real-life practices.

Reliability and Ethics of the Study

In-depth interviews and observations were conducted in places where the participants felt comfortable and safe. The relationship with the participants was never broken during the data collection process. Participants were given the opportunity to make changes during the data collection process in terms of topics they wished to add or remove from the interviews. In this way, an attempt was made to obtain as much interview data as possible from the participants. Once the study was completed, it was submitted for peer review by an expert in qualitative research. The study was initiated following the approval of the Bandırma Onyedli Eylül University Health Sciences Non-Interventional Research Ethics Committee, dated 16/12/2024, with meeting number 2024-11 and application number 2024-267.

Sample

The population of the study consisted of men working in Bandırma, and snowball sampling was used as the sampling method. After reaching the first participants, other people suggested by them were contacted (Baltacı, 2018, p. 246). Although purposive sampling might have been appropriate to ensure maximum variation across sectors, snowball sampling was chosen due to the difficulty of accessing participants willing to discuss their emotional experiences in depth, a topic often considered sensitive among men. This method enabled the researcher to build trust through referrals and reach individuals who might not have volunteered independently.

The sampling process began with initial participants known to the researcher, who then recommended others from their networks. This approach was particularly useful in navigating the relatively close-knit social networks within the city, and the interviews continued until thematic saturation was reached. As shown in [Table 1](#), the sample of this study consisted of 20 male participants aged between 22 and 30 years with varying levels of education and professional experience. Their educational backgrounds ranged from primary school to master's degree, with the majority holding a bachelor's degree. Participants were employed in diverse sectors including trade, public service, industry, and service. Work experience ranged from 1 to 15 years. This demographic diversity contributed to the validity of allowing the findings to be grounded in the experiences of individuals from different socio-economic backgrounds. However, the responses of Participant 1 were excluded from the analysis due to insufficient content. For this study, an ethics committee decision dated 26.12.2024 and protocol number 2024 -270 was obtained from the Bandırma

Onyedi Eylül University Health Sciences Non-Interventional Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Age	Education Level	Sector	Experience
Participant 1	30	Primary School	Trade	15 years
Participant 2	24	Bachelor's Degree	Trade	1 year 6 months
Participant 3	30	Bachelor's Degree	Public Sector	8 years
Participant 4	24	Associate Degree	Public Sector	4 years
Participant 5	28	High School	Public Sector	6 years
Participant 6	27	Master's Degree	Service	8 years
Participant 7	25	Bachelor's Degree	Public Sector	3 years
Participant 8	24	Bachelor's Degree	Service	9 years
Participant 9	28	Associate Degree	Industry	3 years
Participant 10	25	Associate Degree	Trade	5 years
Participant 11	27	Bachelor's Degree	Trade	10 years
Participant 12	25	Associate Degree	Trade	5 years
Participant 13	28	Bachelor's Degree	Service	4 years
Participant 14	24	Bachelor's Degree	Public Sector	1 year
Participant 15	26	Bachelor's Degree	Service	3 years
Participant 16	25	Bachelor's Degree	Public Sector	6 years
Participant 17	22	High School	Trade	6 years
Participant 18	26	Associate Degree	Public Sector	5 years
Participant 19	24	Bachelor's Degree	Service	1 year
Participant 20	25	Associate Degree	Trade	12 years

Bandırma was selected as the research site due to its unique socio-economic structure. As a port city with industrial and service sectors, it offers access to men working in diverse occupational contexts. Its demographic diversity, fueled by internal migration and the coexistence of various lifestyles, further enriches the sample. Moreover, the city's manageable size facilitated the use of snowball sampling by allowing effective monitoring of social connections and ensuring the feasibility of in-depth qualitative data collection.

Working men were preferred as participants due to the societal expectations placed upon them and the central role that employment plays in the construction of masculine identity. The interplay between traditional masculine norms—such as competition, control, and success—and emotional experiences in the context of professional life provides meaningful insights into the emotional world of contemporary men.

Limitations of the Study

As this research was conducted with a limited number of working men in Bandırma, it is difficult to generalize the results. Although qualitative methods provide in-depth information, the validation of the findings in large masses is limited. The participants' ability to express themselves, the specificity of the research to a certain period of time, the limited diversity of the participants' profile and the involvement of the researcher in the process are the main limitations of the study.

Data Collection Process

A semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool and was audio-recorded with the consent of the participants. The interviews were conducted between 14 January and 15 February 2024, at locations preferred by the participants, and lasted on average 45-60 minutes. Interviews continued until data saturation was reached. Interviews continued until data saturation was achieved. In this study, saturation was defined as the point at which no new codes or themes emerged from the data, and the participants' responses began to repeat previously identified patterns. The researcher observed that after approximately the 17th interview, the incoming data no longer contributed new insights, and subsequent interviews largely confirmed the existing thematic structure. Therefore, after conducting 20 interviews and confirming the recurrence of information, it was concluded that data saturation had been reached.

Data Analysis

In this study, thematic analysis was employed to interpret the qualitative data. This method was chosen to identify, analyze, and report patterns of meaning within participants' experiences. The analysis followed the systematic steps outlined below:

- **Familiarization with the Data:** Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim. The researcher thoroughly read and re-read the transcripts to become immersed in the data.
- **Generating Initial Codes:** Meaningful segments of the data were identified and assigned initial codes through a line-by-line analysis.
- **Searching for Themes:** The codes were examined to detect patterns and grouped into sub-themes and overarching themes based on conceptual similarity.
- **Reviewing Themes:** The coherence and distinctiveness of each theme were evaluated, and necessary revisions were made to ensure internal consistency.
- **Defining and Naming Themes:** Each theme was clearly defined and labeled to reflect its essence and relevance to the research question.
- **Producing the Report:** The finalized themes were reported and supported with illustrative excerpts from the interview data.

The thematic analysis was conducted using the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis software. As a result of this process, 254 codes, 24 sub-themes, and 4 overarching themes were identified, demonstrating the depth and rigor of the analysis.

Evaluation Of The Findings: Working Urban Young Men's Emotional Experiences Of Gender Roles

Because of transcribing the interviews and analyzing them in MAXQDA, 254 codings were made. After these codings, it was found that the emotions experienced by men in relation to gender perceptions were grouped under 4 themes. These are the personal domain, family domain, work domain, and social domain. The data related to these themes were analyzed by sorting them from the personal domain to the social domain.

Table 2*Theme, Sub-theme and Code Frequencies*

Theme	Sub Theme	Sub Theme	Code Frequency
Emotional Experiences of Masculinity Related to the Personal Area	Gender roles they experience emotionally	Don't show your feelings!	34
		Look strong!	16
		Don't run away from the competition!	3
	Application statuses for emotional support	I get support from friends or family	14
		I deal with it within myself	5
Emotional Experiences of Masculinity in Relation to the Family Sphere	Emotions imposed by the family		24
	Emotions attributed to the family	Strong bond	13
		Weak bond	4
Emotional Experiences of Masculinity in the Field of Work	Relationship style in the work environment		2
	Be tolerant!		19
	Focus on the solution!		11
	Be open to the competition!		6
	Communicate clearly and concisely!		4
Emotional Experiences of Masculinity in the Social Sphere	Emotions believed to be attributed to the role of masculinity by society	Be strong	14
		Son/Be a father	8
		Hide your feelings	6
	Reactions to the Emotions Believed to be Imposed on the Role of Masculinity by Society	Negative reactions	55
		Positive reactions	14
		Indifferent reactions	1

Emotional Experiences Of Masculinity Relating To The Personal Area: Be A Man!

Two sub-themes emerged in men's dominant emotional experiences in their personal domains. These are; the gender roles they experience emotionally and the status of their request for emotional support.

Gender roles they experience emotionally

Don't show your feelings! Ironically, the most dominant emotion that men experience in relation to gender roles is 'not showing their feelings'. All participants agreed that the most dominant emotion they experienced as men was not showing their emotions.

P 10: Expressing my feelings... This is actually not a way I use a lot.

P 12: I have difficulty in expressing my emotions, even most of the time I cannot express them; I live inside myself.

P 13: I think that many men have difficulty sharing their feelings and thoughts like me.

P14: I do not think that men can express themselves emotionally.

Men in particular state that they do not believe that expressing negative emotions is part of the role of masculinity. The participants think that men should be problem solvers and therefore the masculinity of someone who brings problems and talks about his problems can be questioned. According to gender

roles, it is the man who should find solutions. They believe that if they share their feelings, their trust in them will be damaged. For this reason, even the thought of expressing feelings can cause anxiety for some participants.

P 17: When I express my feelings, I think it is generally called anxiety in daily life, I hesitate too much.

P 12: When I try to express or explain something, I feel like a weak, helpless, helpless person because this is what they have taught me since I was little. If I tried to express myself about something, they used sentences like 'Don't make everything a problem, find a solution'.

In order to be able to speak free from this anxiety, they state that they need to be under an 'intense stimulus' that can relax their will. This stimulus can be a persistent and reassuring friend or substances such as alcohol.

P 19: Men usually do not tell sad things. Men usually tell such things when they are drunk or something. You know, something other than his own will should encourage him to tell.

K 6: If there is a negative and problematic situation, I don't like to tell my family about it too much; I withdraw into my own shell.

However, they cannot see the reflection of positive, joyful emotions or angry emotions as a violation of gender roles. Nevertheless, these emotions are shared with some uneasiness.

P 19: I don't share my sad feelings. But even when I tell about my happy feelings, there is always a doubt in me

P 20: If I am angry, okay, I don't retreat at all. If someone behaves offensively toward me, I don't have the attitude that I should retreat, I should take it in stride.

P 6: I am a person who can express my positive emotions very easily, but cannot express my negative emotions.

P 7: I am generally more comfortable and open in expressing my positive emotions. However, when it comes to negative or complex emotions, I prefer to show a more closed attitude.

P 10: For example, if I am very happy, I am happy to share it with my whole environment; because I believe that it multiplies as it is shared.

Another noteworthy reason for not showing emotions is the belief that men's emotions will be ignored. Even the participants who were inclined to share their feelings expressed that the reason for not sharing their feelings was their belief that 'even if they are shared, they will not be cared'.

P 12: It's one of our shortcomings: As men, our feelings are seldom recognized.

P 20: No one actually listens to men when we look at them. After all, they will say, 'You are a man, you will do it'. I mean, you cannot even bawl your eyes out because there is even a saying that men don't cry. You cannot lean on anyone's shoulder either, you are the mountain. To be honest, there is no other mountain that a mountain can lean on. That's why men cannot explain their feelings much.

Look strong! The second most dominant emotion experienced by men in relation to gender roles is to appear strong. In a way, looking strong polishes the role of masculinity in society. Because looking strong polishes the feminine aspects that may appear in everyday life. In the interviews, it is understood that

behind the desire to appear strong is the fear of appearing weak, i.e. feminine. Any emotion other than the reinforcement of power would contradict the social roles of masculinity. For this reason, men feel the need to present a strong image to their interlocutors at all times.

P 2: You must be strong when I cry my heart out because you are a man. Men at work do not cry, they bring money home, and they are not fragile. Men always work under the most difficult conditions, and their life risks are not important.

P 20: In other words, it is not essential for men to express their feelings. Because whatever you do is not enough. Because you must be strong, you must be strong, you must take care of your family, you must take responsibility.

P 18: I think that men are burdened with too much responsibility in this society because they think that they should always be strong. Of course, it is men who do this to men. In short, we try to be as indestructible and strong as possible, working on the principle that I have to do everything, I have to do everything right.

P11: Society in general expects men to be strong and emotionally in control. Stereotypes such as “men don’t cry” limit the way men express their emotions and make it difficult for them to share their feelings, especially their fragile or sensitive feelings.

P13: I think we are reluctant to share our emotional difficulties with anyone because it makes us look weak.

P14: But since men in general are always trying to remain cold and appear strong, this is partly due to animal impulses.

P16: It seems that the perception of emotions as weakness will not change in the near future.

For this reason, even partially emotional speeches are expressed aggressively. The intention here is the man’s attempt to balance his image by presenting his strong side with his weakness to his interlocutor. For this reason, expressing and solving the problems encountered can suddenly create verbal or physical conflict.

P 17: But for example, if they are going to express their feelings in a society, they say it more dominantly and sharply, because they do not like the feeling of being made fun of.

P 4: Because it is seen as weakness, instead of talking to a person with this problem, they can resort to different methods; they can fight or talk behind their backs, but they cannot express themselves.

P 6: Because it is seen as weakness, instead of talking to a person with this problem, they can resort to different methods; they can fight or talk behind their back, but they cannot express themselves.

P 7: I feel a slight stress or anxiety when expressing my emotions, because I don't want to appear more vulnerable, especially in situations where I feel vulnerable.

P 8: Sometimes I get angry when expressing my feelings.

Don't run away from the competition! The third dominant emotion of gender roles for men is not to avoid competition. The participants believe that expressing their feelings and appearing weak will have fatal consequences in the competition between men. Possible defeats in rivalries can make life difficult not only for themselves but also for the people they are responsible for. For this reason, they feel obliged not to avoid competition and at the same time maintain their strong image.

P 2: In that environment, in your business sector, you may have competitors, you may have enemies, and there may be people who wish you ill. Inwardly, you want to behave in a proper way when you are upset, but we have to behave in a different way because of the logic that there are friends and enemies; they should not see you fall, because they will kick you when you fall.

P 13: For example, we do not go and share an incident we have experienced at work with our family. Because they might think that our business life is going badly and that we are deficient in this regard. Likewise, we do not share a problem we have in our family life with our colleagues because they may use this situation against us.

It is thought that appearing strong will trigger success and appearing weak will trigger failure processes. For this reason, it is seen that the understanding that weak sides should never be shown to anyone is dominant.

P 4: I mean, it's not friendship, it's more of a business friendship. This situation, of course, makes it difficult for people to express their feelings because when you really express your feelings, the other person can use it.

P 12: Most men are like that: The moment he shows his weak side, he either loses or is defeated.

P 2: There are friends and enemies. We have to behave differently because of the logic that they will kick you when you fall.

Application statuses for emotional support

In the world of men, where it is believed that they should not show their emotions, appear strong and avoid competition, 2 sub-themes are observed when we look at the statuses that men use for emotional support. These sub-themes are as follows: I get support from friends and family, and I manage within myself. Although some of the participants considered seeking professional support, they stated that they eliminated this preference because they thought that 'sufficient honesty and trust' could not be established. Professional psychological help is a last resort.

P 4: I make decisions within myself, I say 'I'm going to see a psychologist, I'm going to see a psychiatrist, I'm going to take medication if necessary'. I have experienced these situations. Sometimes I even feel that my hair is falling out because of boredom, but the people who support me in these situations are not professionals.

P 17: When I want to get support, as far as I see in my environment, I always see that psychologists are very successful. I have never seen anyone who has gone here and not been able to overcome their problem, but I have never been to a psychologist. I am a very quiet person and I do not tell my problems to anyone easily.

P9: When I have a psychological need, I first try to get support from my close circle or family. If that fails, I seek professional help.

I get support from friends or family: For almost all of the participants, discussing their problems with friends who have proven their reliability and sincerity is perceived as a 'psychological support'.

P 19: If we say getting support, my friends.

P 5: When I need support, I first share it with Gökhan, who I think knows me very well and has been my colleague and colleague for 5 years.

P 7: First of all, my close friends.

In this context, participants with strong family ties resorted to their mother, father or older siblings.

P 20: When I need support, my priority is of course my sister.

P 11: When I need support, I first apply to my family.

I deal with it within myself: For a quarter of the participants, the status from which men can get emotional support is themselves. These participants are very skeptical that others can help them with their emotional problems.

P 12: I cannot get support from anyone.

P 13: I do not prefer to get support from anyone, because I think that if I tell my friends or the people around me about the issue I will get support for, they will think that I am weak. In order not to show this weakness to anyone, I try to deal with it myself, I solve it myself, I always stand on my own feet.

P 3: I mostly try to deal with it on my own.

P 9: If I want to get support, I start with myself.

Emotional Experiences Of Masculinity In Relation With The Family Sphere: Be A Son/ Father!

The family environment is an area where gender roles are most strongly felt. When a man enters the family sphere, it is seen that the feeling of 'being a man' in his personal sphere is replaced by the roles of 'being a son if he is single and a father if he is married'. There is a direct relationship between the sense of masculinity experienced in the personal sphere and the roles of the son or father.

The codings made under this theme were grouped under two sub-themes. These are the sub-themes "Gender roles assigned by the family to the working man" and "Gender roles assigned by the working man to his family."

Emotions imposed by the family: It can be seen that whether or not the man has a family under his responsibility is critical in terms of what is expected of the man. If a man is single, he has the status of a son. In a sense, he is seen as a surrogate father. In this context, the son is expected to represent the father (family) well, not to be a burden even if he does not contribute to the family, and most importantly, to give confidence that he will do his part if necessary. In this context, it can be seen that those who have a higher socio-economic status than their fathers (father: old, deceased, disabled, uneducated, etc.) take over this role from their fathers. Failure to be a son is labeled as 'spoilt, unfaithful'. This label is a very serious punishment. To tarnish the status of a son in the family is to tarnish the individual's personal perception of masculinity and the image of masculinity in society.

P 2: You know how they say, 'Well, if something happens to the father, the male child will manage the family'.... Even though you are 24 years old, you are still young in their eyes. In this case, you are sometimes met with skepticism by them when you take responsibility. However, when you break all those doubts one by one and run things properly, then they believe that you have grown up, that you can manage things, that you can run the house and that you are the leader.

P 10: I cannot say that I play a very active role in the family. Because I am still the unmarried middle child of the family, and the eldest person in our house, my father, is still alive and still working, I do not have any heavy responsibilities. The only thing my family expects from me is that I should be a moral and honorable person who is suitable for them and who will not let outsiders say anything against our family.

P 11: My role in the family is more of a supportive and reassuring role in financial matters. I take care to be a solid pillar for my family; I stand by them especially in decision-making processes and provide guidance when necessary.

P 12: According to my father, the human psyche does not break down, depression is just nonsense; the conversations I have about my thoughts and my inner troubles are 'spoilt', this is the word that triggers me the most. So, it's listed under spoilt.

P 13: I have no other responsibilities at home except for working.

P 14: I have never tried to impose my responsibilities on their lives, nor have I ever done so. I went to school myself, bought my house and car with my own money; I try to solve almost everything myself.

P 15: As for my roles in the family, we are trying to be good sons. I obey my mom and dad; there is nothing extra apart from that.

P 18: I think that in every home and in every environment, I think that a man should bear this responsibility, because you think that you can find peace with the trust you give to the people around you.

P 19: At the moment, as I said, I only have a responsibility for my mother to live more comfortably.

Emotions attributed to the family: When we look at the emotions that men attribute to their families, we see that they fully adopt their families' expectations of them. The participants attribute meaning to their families only from the perspective of being a son or a father. Family is the most reliable and closest. Family is the place where you always belong. In other words, it is the place where we should take the most responsibility. In other words, it is the place where masculinity, sonship and fatherhood should be best played out.

P 10: They are always the closest to us.

P 5: My ties with my family are very strong; they trust me unconditionally and I trust them.

P 11: I have a very close emotional bond with my family; we really care and support each other. The bond I share with them is based on trust, love, and mutual respect.

P 2: Family is everything. He accepts you in every way, good and bad.

P 20: My family is my everything...

It can be seen that one-third of the participants had weak ties with their families and two-thirds had strong ties. In both cases, the participants are loyal to the algorithm mentioned in the first paragraph. Only the participants with strong family ties performed their roles as men, sons and fathers with love and enthusiasm, while those with weak ties performed their roles as men with more neutral feelings.

P 3: We have a relationship with little emotional display, thinking that the less we see each other, the more we will love each other.

P 7: Even though we are not very close, I believe that we always feel each other's back; this makes us feel comfortable.

P 8: I am not very attached to my family. This is generally the case in my family; everyone thinks of themselves first. I am like this, but so are the others. They first fulfill their own needs, focusing on their own priorities and themselves. Then they think about the other members of the family.

Emotional Experiences Of Masculinity In The Field Of Work: Be Tolerant

As the data in the previous section shows, in the family, it is the status of being married or single that determines whether a man performs gender roles voluntarily or by force. Similarly, in the context of emotional experiences related to the workplace, it is the formal or informal relationships between employees at the workplace that determine whether a man voluntarily or involuntarily performs gender roles. Participants feel more secure in work environments where informal relationships predominate, while they feel anxious and stressed in environments where formal relationships predominate.

In the context of the first theme, the fact that the mission of the organizations is focused on 'corporate interest' develops formal forms of relationships. In this case, men's roles of showing their feelings, appearing strong and being competitive become rigid. The fact that the job description of institutions is oriented toward 'institutional + personal interest' develops informal forms of relationships. In this case, men's roles of showing emotions, appearing strong and being competitive were softened.

K 2: I have also worked in a corporate company; people there are always cold toward each other and communicate at the required level. 'Let me do my job, let me go.' Sometimes people even undermine each other behind each other's backs. While looking at each other with hatred, you may have to work together in the same environment; you may harbor a grudge. I mean, at the simplest level, you can respond to people like a robot rather than like a.; sometimes to the customer, sometimes to your colleagues. But when I was working in a shop, I had a brother whom I loved very much. He was also my boss at the same time. He said to me: 'Son, your shop is yours; talk to people like A., make them feel your sincerity, because this is what tradesmanship is. You need to be patient, you need to relax, you need to control your emotions. In this way, people feel that they are valued because you approach them as yourself. You are given unlimited authority, you are not under any pressure, you do your job with love; you go to work every day waking up happy, not hating it. Naturally, as the roses bloom on your face, you reflect this to people; you show a smiling face to customers, you establish sincerity, you make new friendships.

In both cases, the gender roles expected from men were the same. Therefore, the sub-themes are the same. These sub-themes are; be tolerant, focus on solution, be open to competition, communicate clearly and openly in the business context.

Be tolerant! The most dominant emotion/role experienced by the participants in their working life is being a tolerant man. Participants emphasize that they felt they had to tolerate the boss (and his relatives), colleagues, customers and working conditions.

P 12: I generally do not express my feelings in order not to spoil customer relations. But pure anger arises inside me, and I keep it inside because I cannot express this anger.

P 13: In some periods, I can be exposed to too much mobbing and workload.

P 14: It is more of a tense environment and even though we try to suppress this tension and not reflect it to people, we take on the task of being like a sponge.

P 16: Because we cannot feel emotions; we are expected to work like robots.

P 18: The hierarchical system in the military order is often psychologically and physically exhausting. In short, I became a robot in uniform.

Because in the case of intolerance, the status of being a son, being a father and therefore being a man can be jeopardized. As a man, it is seen that the approval received from the family is directly proportional to the tolerance that can be shown in the field of work.

P 2: For the sake of earning a living, you sometimes have to suffer the boss; even his son and wife. Of course, this situation annoys me and causes me stress and anger. I want to beat the boss because he uses offensive sentences and behaviors.

P 20: I would like to express (my problems with my workplace), but I would like to say whatever comes to my mind, but I cannot. I need a job, I need money.

Focus on the solution! In the interviews, the second most important emotion of the participants in the workplace is focusing on the solution. Focusing on the solution supports men's other emotions (also sub-themes) in the workplace. In other words, focusing on the solution makes it easier to endure, helps to be competitive, and enables correct communication in the context of work. Delaying the solution is a risk of masculinity roles. Because as the solution is delayed, the risks of not being able to tolerate, compete and communicate increase. For this reason, while the participants should focus on the solution, they consider tolerance, competition and interaction that are not directed toward the solution as a great loss. Therefore, even though it is the second theme, it is seen that the sub-theme that makes the other sub-themes meaningful in working life is focusing on the solution.

P7: I mostly try to act solution-oriented.

P 6: If we cannot agree with a calm language, I raise my tone of voice and focus on solving the problem.

P 14: The emotional problems I encounter in business life are always to console others; we always have a life to make others happy in this way.

P 15: In business life, when you get angry, you argue. Of course you argue by paying attention to your tone, because you should not say things that cannot be taken back.

Be open to the competition! The third emotion experienced by men in working life is being open to competition. Men perceive competition as a trend. Competition is constant. Sometimes it can be lost, but in the end, the advantages should always outweigh the disadvantages. To be in a trend that fails in competition is to "starve."

P 2: You have to keep up with technology; you always have to push your limits because you cannot fall. If you fall in this sector, it is very difficult to get up. Therefore, you should always be cautious, follow innovation and be ambitious.

P 20: (In working life) it is humiliating for me to be seen as a loser or a silent person.

P 10: If you cannot market, you will starve, and at a more advanced level, you will sink. You must market in order not to sink.

P 17: I don't have as much difficulty as when I express my feelings toward the society because as far as I have experienced, if you live it and they see it, they come down on you more and even if I feel that I cannot do it, I do it even if I am forced to.

Communicate clearly and concisely! It is observed that men are not reluctant to express their personal feelings in their professional relationships in working life. On the contrary, it is seen that open and clear forms of communication are preferred in working life.

P 8: (In working life) I am not a person who has difficulty in communicating; I can openly talk to someone when I have a problem.

P 11: When expressing my emotions in the work environment, I primarily give importance to professionalism; I prefer to handle the situation calmly and approach it in a solution-oriented manner rather than reflecting my emotional reactions directly.

P 16: I can express my thoughts more easily.

Emotional Experiences Of Masculinity In The Social Sphere

When the participants' statements about the roles that society assigns to the role of masculinity are coded, three sub-themes emerge. These are the sub-themes of being a son/being a father, being strong and hiding your feelings. However, while participants gave shorter and more general answers to the personal questions in the first section, they gave longer and more specific answers to the questions under this heading. It is thought that this is because they are reluctant to express their feelings about their gender roles. Under this heading, it can be seen that they gave more open answers because they had to evaluate someone other than themselves.

Emotions Believed to be Attributed to the Role of Masculinity by Society

Be a son/Be a father! Participants stated that the most basic expectation created by the society on men is to be a son or a father. Participants who did not talk much about this in the personal sphere expressed more clearly what they meant by being a son or a father. What is meant here are responsibilities such as giving confidence, being a protector, being a provider, being a problem solver, representing the family well, and thinking about the family before oneself.

P 10: To be a breadwinner, to protect the family from external dangers, not to make promises to the family in any way, to be strict on the outside and warm on the inside, not to have eyes on the outside in case of being married or in a relationship, to be honorable and honorable.

P 12: Actually, these are the roles that should be. These are roles such as men being self-confident, being masters, being respectable and hardworking, being harmonious, but in our country

P 16: Protective and general father role. A man who is the breadwinner, who is loyal to his family, or who appears to be loyal to his family and makes it permanent. If you choose to be someone who does not fulfill these conditions, you may be labeled as a punk if you are a teenager or an irresponsible person if you are an adult.

P 17: Society has imposed roles on men such as being a protector, decision maker, and breadwinner.

P 18: Of course, the instinct of protection is my idea, nothing else. Of course, I try to attribute many positive thoughts such as reassurance, protection, making me feel peaceful to myself and try to implement them.

P 3: In societies like ours, men are often raised to be responsible due to their upbringing.

P 7: The expectations of the male role have given me resilience in coping with problems and I think it has enabled me to take on some responsibilities.

Be strong! The other emotion that society attributes to men is to be strong. Participants believe that a man who does not look strong will not be respected by society.

P 13: They always want them to be strong in all circumstances, to be able to stand on their own feet, to always be there for everyone's problems and troubles, and to always be financially strong.

P 15: If you become a man, you always have to be strong, you always say 'No problem'. You will not tell anyone about any problem or any distress.

P 19: The role of masculinity and what kind of expectations are there, you know, going about your business, dealing with problems, not being a crybaby, standing strong.

P 2: We men, because of our social upbringing, you know, men have to stand strong, you know, you have to stand strong, you have to not reflect your problems. You must behave in the best way on your most difficult day.

P 6: The masculinity role that society expects from me is to be strong, to stand on my own feet, to have financial/spiritual freedom and to be respected.

P 9: Society expects me to be strong, not to be fragile, and not to reflect my psychological problems to the outside.

Hide your feelings! Participants think that society looks down on men who show their emotions. According to the participants, society condemns men's expressions of emotion, especially those that are likely to make them appear weak. Society tolerates, in moderation, positive or aggressive expressions of emotion that make men look strong. This situation causes men to be introverted and pretend to be strong despite problems they cannot solve.

P 5: When you feel the worst, men should not show their emotions; they should always stand upright and be strong.

P 10: Society always expects men to be emotionally withdrawn.

P 6: As I mentioned in the previous question, we need to be strong; we should not show our emotions. If we do, it should be in a strong and manly way. When we are offended, this may be the reason for our aggression.

P 15: I have a brother whose cat once jumped out of a window and died. He asks permission from the company. He says to the company: 'I cannot come today, my cat died'. Then, the following conversation takes place: 'Look, Burak is also very emotional, see, his cat died and he couldn't come to work.' Therefore, men are expected to be more emotionless than women.

P 7: Since they try to apply the 'emotionless, tough, strong father' figure in films or in the past to their lives in the same way, they cannot express their emotions openly; with discourses such as 'men do not cry,' 'you have become a big man'.

P 14: Even your masculinity is questioned when you display a behavior different from what is expected emotionally.

Reactions to the Emotions Believed to be Imposed on the Role of Masculinity by Society

The reactions of the participants to the emotions attributed by the society to the masculinity role were categorized under 3 sub-themes. These are the negative, positive, and indifferent sub-themes.

Negative reactions (direct): Approximately four-fifths of the participants reacted negatively to society's perception of masculinity. Participants stated that they were uncomfortable with not being able to express their feelings, having to appear strong, having to constantly find solutions, and carrying the responsibilities of being a son and father such as protection, care, security and representation alone. Participants described this situation as 'imposition', 'robotization', 'excessive pressure' and "slavery."

P 10: On the one hand, it's kind of like slavery. From the time you are born until the time you die, everything you do is imposed on you by the people born before you... Furthermore, when you want to go out of these molds, you are very likely to face great reactions. In fact, when we all go out, even at home, we see that such men are constantly criticized by the elders.

P 16: I think unnecessary responsibilities are placed on our shoulders. I think that society imposes on us the idea that men should fulfill financial responsibilities and the obligation to provide basic facilities arising from the protection instinct.

P 18: The fact that men want to be solution-oriented in relationships, business life, family life or even at any moment brings them to the forefront and brings the thought of 'I am here, I will take care of it'. I think this is an unnecessary burden of responsibility, nothing else.

P 11: A negative aspect of these roles is that they can sometimes prevent me from freely expressing my own emotions. Being under emotional pressure can cause emotional fatigue and stress eventually.

P 3: I think that society does whatever it needs to do to protect and sustain itself and assigns roles to men as a requirement of this. The idea it creates in me is that this causes excessive pressure.

P 4: The roles imposed on men by the society, I think too many roles are imposed on men in our society.

P 5: Men bring money home; men protect the home; men protect women; men have to feed the household.

P 6: In other words, there is a perception that we have to constantly work, earn money and provide for the household. We are expected to save money, marry a woman who fits our family, and continue our lives in this way.

P 9: We see that mostly men are forced to be brave; not everyone must be brave, not everyone must be assertive. Men are always expected to do something like that, you know, the 'don't break what you hold on to' mentality, but not everyone has to be like that. What else can it be? There are stereotypes of 'men don't cry, men don't do this, men don't do that'; not that I cry a lot, but our tears have dried up over a long period of time.

P 10: I think emotions have no gender. In a country where society expects men to be very tough, I am not surprised that violence against all kinds of living beings is very high.

P 20: Buy a house, buy a car, then look after the children, buy your wife's hair color, buy clothes for your wife, then find a wife, have children, get it? Take all the responsibility on yourself, and then you don't care what happens. Let's say this is the father of the house. Let's go back to the man in the

corner, on the sofa, in his pajamas, with the remote control in his hand. Abi, I swear, this is the role we're expected to play.

P 19: I mean like this, men don't break down easily, they don't become crybabies, I mean, a man should always stand upright, I mean, no matter what the problem is, he will take care of his job, you know? He should not be affected by those problems. First of all, there is definitely such a thing. I mean, protective behaviors, I think there is such a thing. OK, no one needs to be protected by men, I agree, but the society definitely expects, I mean wants, that men should be protective.

P 12: Men cannot be weak; you cannot be sad. You must stand up straight and look after your family and your surroundings; you can't be happy because you shouldn't spoil that tough image. There is always an effort to stand upright, but what are you going to prove to whom? After all, we are all made of flesh and bones, and we all have a mind and a heart. No matter how callous we say we are, we have a soul and we can only live it within ourselves; we always live within ourselves to face these difficulties, to stand firm. Let us not stand firm for once, let us be patted on the head for once. Let's not be on our side, let everyone be on our side a little bit. I mean, I think in this way.

P 13: What I can say negatively is that it puts a huge burden on our shoulders. This burden is not only about men; it definitely puts a dreadful burden on everyone.

P 14: From a negative point of view, it is incredibly tiring to look strong, to keep on doing it all the time. It makes me incredibly tired not being able to achieve anything easily.

P 15: For example, the male breadwinner, for example, is one of the heaviest burdens. Or the expenses incurred at the wedding are put on the male side. Most of the time they say, 'You are a man, you are getting a girl'... Emotional behaviors that are accepted in society for men: a man cannot say 'I am weak', he cannot say 'I am tired'. Is there an accepted emotional behavior for men?

P 17: If I give an example of a negative behavior, there is a belief in society that men cannot cry because they have to be strong. When I used to cry when I was little, my father used to send me away immediately because he could not even tolerate me crying. So I would go and cry in another room.

Positive reactions (indirect and conditional): It was observed that one-fifth of the participants reacted positively to the perception of masculinity in society. However, when we look at these positive reactions, we see that they are conditional or express positive results in their own personal development, not in relation to the social roles of masculinity. In other words, the first group of participants stated that they believe they should have masculine roles, but that it is almost impossible to fulfill traditional masculine roles under changing social conditions. The second group of participants stated that social roles motivated them, gave them goals and provided them with behavioral packages.

P 12: The roles are logical, but I think that what is imposed on them is exaggerated.

P 7: These roles sometimes help me gain a strong personality, even though I contradict myself now (because she was complaining about these roles).

P 10: As for the positive aspects, as I said before, there is no need to think too much. We are taught what, how, where and when to do, where to speak and where to keep silent, and we live happily in our stable lives.

P 11: I can say that social roles have developed my sense of responsibility as a positive effect in my life.

P 13: I definitely think it has more positive features. At least it teaches us to stand on our own feet.

P 14: From a positive point of view, always being in competition develops people. You always have a rival, there is always someone who wants to be stronger than you, someone better than you; if you try to keep up with this, you progress at a certain level.

P 15: I think it increases the possibility of holding on to life for men. Because you must work all the time.

P 19: I mean, it gives you a perspective.

P 3: The positive aspects of social roles in my life give me the opportunity to sustain my own life and protect myself.

Indifferent reactions: Only a participant stated that he did not care about the expectations of the society regarding masculinity roles.

P 8: The roles attributed to men by society do not affect me much; because I am a person who thinks of myself first in daily life. I prioritize myself.

Discussion: Updated Masculinity Roles Are Being Imposed

Examining discussions in the literature reveals that academic interest in masculinity generally focuses on virtual platforms where the concept of masculinity is debated. This article, however, focuses on the reality experienced and perceived by ordinary men in their daily economic lives, a topic that is rarely mentioned in the literature. According to the study by Boratav, Fişek and Ziya (2017) titled 'The States of Masculinity in Türkiye', participants' perceptions of masculinity are shaped by the responsibilities expected of them by their families and society. In this context, the results of this study are similar to those of Boratav, Fişek and Ziya (2017). In addition to these discussions, the article examines negative reactions to the definition of masculinity that emerged in participants' statements (from the individual to society).

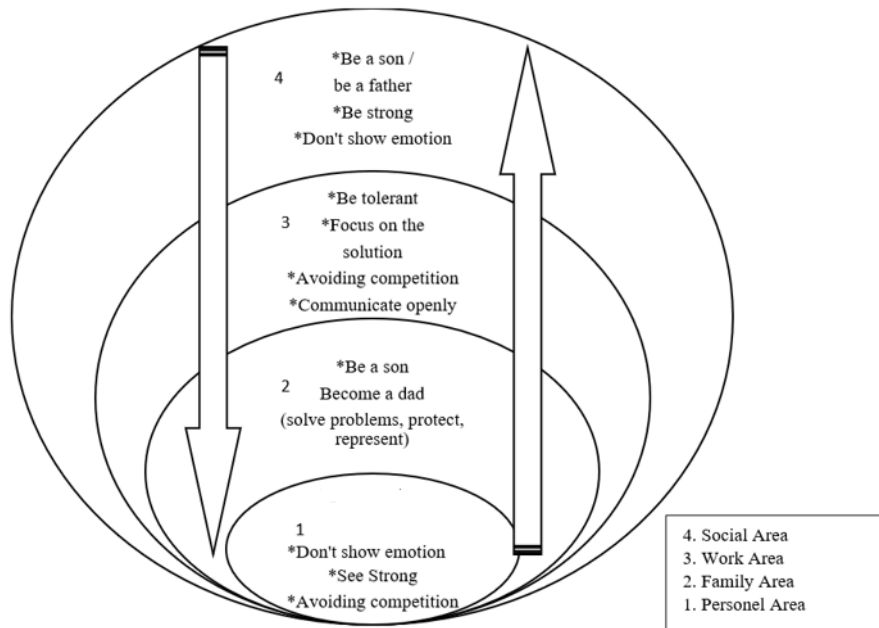
Masculinity is acquired and maintained through public actions. This situation causes those who want to carry the status of masculinity to experience more anxiety compared to women. (Vandello & Bosson, 2013). Despite the serious efforts made regarding women's rights during the process of Turkish modernization, which was inherited from the Ottoman Empire, it can be seen that the process carries a masculine imagination. Many privileges in the state and public life are given to men (Sancar, 2014). Bourdieu states that these privileges trap men. This is because men are forced to prove their masculinity under all circumstances, in a state of tension and competition (Bourdieu, 2014, p. 69). The crisis of masculinity is now evident not only in academic works but also in popular discourse (Özbay & Balıç, 2004). In this context, Sancar (2016, p. 114), Şahin (2018, p. 111) and Coward (1999, p. 52) all refer to crises experienced by men in their respective studies. This study shows that this trend continues. Many privileges defined as male privileges are perceived by participants as sources of tension. The article study reveals that four-fifths of the participants reacted negatively to society's perception of masculinity. While participants experience new social roles in the post-modern era, from the individual to society, they are observed to try to remain faithful to traditional masculine roles, which exert pressure from society onto the individual. This situation is particularly evident among young male participants, as it places them in crises across the 'personal, family, work and social domains'. Consequently, the data in the article aligns with the existing literature on the trajectory of masculinity.

The results of the study can be summarized under two headings. First, the perception of social masculinity experienced by the sample in the context of the fields in which they were involved was clearly revealed. Second, the sample reacted strongly to traditional gender roles and were in search of a 'new masculinity role'.

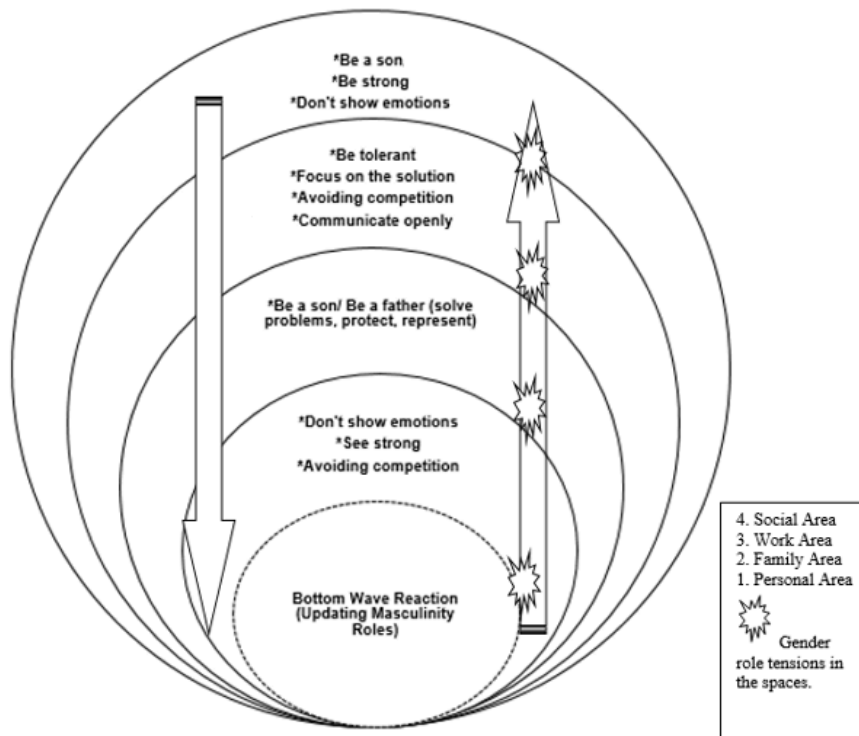
Because of the analysis of the findings, it is seen that the masculinity roles experienced by the participants in different social spheres (Figure 1) are reinforcing, consistent and strong. The study shows that this reinforcing, consistent and strong role experience works in two directions. The first is from outside to inside. Gender roles create masculinity in men's personal spheres through the social, work and family spheres. The second is from inside to outside. Through their personal spheres, men create masculinity in the familial, professional and social spheres.

Figure 1

Areas of Cohesion and Gender Roles



The second major finding of the study is that the practice of creating a gender-oriented environment from the outside to the inside is changing. Although social conditions are changing, the role of masculinity created by society from the outside continues in a traditional and customary way. However, under the influence of changing social conditions, the role of masculinity produced from the inside out is changing. This situation creates intense tension and stress for the participants. Participants who experience that the perception of masculinity that comes from the social sphere and is adopted in the personal sphere does not work are more likely to believe that masculinity is not a natural but a social production. For this reason, they began to experience the gender roles assigned to them as "pressure, imposition, slavery, etc.". It can be seen that all participants adopt gender roles that are oriented from the outside to the inside. Nevertheless, four-fifths of the participants complained about the gender roles they seem to have internalized.

Figure 2*Spaces (in Tension) and Emerging Gender Roles*

This situation is similar to the tensions women experienced in the domestic division of labor when they first entered the workforce. Studies conducted at the time show that even in families where both men and women work, traditional roles in the domestic division of labor persist (Waite, 1976; Bott & Spillius, 2014; Young & Willmott, 2023). In this situation and period, women play the gender roles they have traditionally internalized, but complain about them. As can be seen, women who entered the labor force intensively after the Second World War updated their gender roles from within and continue to do so. Similarly, with the changing social conditions in Türkiye, men have started to update their gender roles from the inside out. The study found that men do not want to seek professional help the problems they experience. In addition, men are reluctant to discuss their problems with friends and family and believe that they can solve most of their problems on their own. It is thought that this tendency makes young men more open to the suggestions that may come from social media.

The suggestion of the study is as follows. There are tensions in the process of externalization and internalization of gender roles of masculinity. Young men have difficulties accepting traditional masculinity roles from the inside out (currently orientated from the outside in). At this point, they experience crises in the personal, family, labor and social spheres. For this reason, it is seen that they are in a search to adapt the gender roles they will internalize to the changing social conditions. The study evaluates that today's search for the redefinition of masculinity is a grassroots movement.

In traditional definitions, it is seen that every society offers young men the virtues of being a 'gentleman', a 'gentlemanly', a 'heroic' man. Today, the set of virtues of masculinity presented from the outside to the inside does not work for men, but it is understood that they cannot find a new alternative. The participants are seen as having an identity crisis regarding the definitions of masculinity they are supposed to internalize. It should not be seen as a coincidence that one of the most popular topics on social media today is the emergence of masculinity alternatives and 'opinion leaders' that can be internalized, such as 'alpha male', 'red pill' and 'hunter male'. As can be seen in Figure 2, this sub-wave experiences tensions regarding gender

roles in the areas in which they are involved. This is because they believe that the traditional roles they tend to accept do not offer adequate solutions for the contexts of the current situation. For a healthier society, gender roles need to be rebalanced from the periphery to the center and from the center to the periphery. Otherwise, there is a risk that contrary to the social consensus, the pathological social roles of masculinity created in closed “masculine universes” will become permanent.

For this reason, it is seen that there is a need to propose alternative definitions of masculinity to men who are searching for gender roles that they will internalize, that are directed from the outside in, that they can use in changing social conditions and with which they will be in harmony rather than in tension. all stakeholders in the social consensus, such as academia, private and public institutions and non-governmental organizations, should seriously address this issue and offer alternatives. It is believed that discussions on masculinity will be as important soon as discussions on the redefinition of women in the personal, familial, professional and social spheres. For this reason, it is recommended that more academic studies be conducted on the new perception of masculinity in the context of gender.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the emotional experiences of urban working men in the context of socially constructed gender roles using a phenomenological research design. The findings revealed that these emotional experiences are shaped by a dynamic interplay of personal, familial, occupational, and societal expectations. The analysis, organized around four main themes (personal space, family space, work space, and social space), demonstrates the complexity of how masculinity is lived and felt in everyday life.

In the personal space, participants frequently described a sense of emotional suppression and difficulty in self-expression, revealing the internalization of norms that discourage vulnerability in men. In the family space, a tension emerged between traditional provider roles and evolving expectations around emotional presence and involvement in parenting. The work space often became a site of both affirmation and emotional strain, as men navigated expectations of competitiveness, control, and success while struggling with burnout and isolation. Finally, in the social space, participants expressed a dual pressure: on the one hand, to conform to dominant masculine ideals, and on the other, to adapt to shifting social discourses that challenge traditional gender norms.

These findings underscore that masculinity is not a fixed identity but an ongoing emotional and relational negotiation shaped by social structures and cultural discourses. Importantly, the study contributes to the literature by shifting the focus from discursive representations of masculinity in digital spaces to the lived emotional realities of men in real-life contexts. It reveals that the transformation of gender roles is not only structural but also deeply affective, as men experience ambivalence, anxiety, and resistance while attempting to reconfigure their identities.

This research suggests the need for more inclusive discussions on masculinity that acknowledge men’s emotional struggles and support healthier, pluralistic models of being a man in contemporary society. Future studies could expand this analysis to include diverse class or ethnic identities to better understand the intersections shaping the male emotional experience.



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Ethical Approval For this study, an ethics committee decision dated 26.12.2024 and protocol number 2024 -270 was obtained from the Bandırma Onyedi Eylül University Health Sciences Non-Interventional Research Ethics Committee.

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