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The Multidimensional Nature of Masculinity: Empathy and Resilience in Balochistan, Pakistan

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Abstract

Masculinity is often conceptualized as incompatible with emotional sensitivity, yet its relationships with empathy and resilience remain underexplored in collectivist contexts. This study examined the associations among masculinity, femininity, empathy, and resilience among adolescents and adults in Balochistan, Pakistan. Using a cross-sectional correlational design, 154 participants completed the Bem Sex Role Inventory, Brief Resilience Scale, and Empathy Assessment Scale. Pearson correlations indicated that masculinity was positively associated with empathy, $r = .323$, $p < .001$, and resilience, $r = .172$, $p = .033$. Femininity was positively associated with empathy, $r = .507$, $p < .001$, but was not significantly associated with resilience, $r = .015$, $p = .856$. Resilience was not significantly associated with empathy, $r = .019$, $p = .819$. These findings suggest that masculinity and femininity may relate differently to empathy and resilience in this sample. However, because the study was cross-sectional and correlational, the findings should be interpreted as associations rather than causal effects. The results support a culturally sensitive understanding of gender-role

orientation and suggest that masculinity should not automatically be treated as incompatible with empathy or resilience.

Keywords: Masculinity, Femininity, Empathy, Resilience, Gender-Role Orientation

1. Introduction

In Pakistan, the patriarchy and binary gender norms that clearly assign men and women to distinct roles have an impact on its societal structure. The idea of masculinity is multifaceted and varied, influenced by a variety of factors such cultural norms, familial background, and individual experiences (Jabeen, 2018). The best way to answer the question, "What is masculinity?" is by stating that it is made up of the behaviors, languages, and customs that are typically associated with men and, therefore, culturally characterized as non-feminine and that exist in particular cultural and organizational contexts (Itulua-Abumere, 2013). In Pakistani society ‘men’ are believed to be strong, capable of protecting their family, especially women, and be emotionally detached. Therefore, masculinity has two aspects: it can be positive in that it gives men certain identity symbols, and it can be detrimental in that it signifies that men are not the "Other" (Feminine). According to Itulua-Abumere (2013), biological predispositions or genetic coding do not simply produce masculinity and male behaviors.

Pakistan and the United Kingdom differ in their social and institutional contexts, making cross-cultural comparisons useful for examining whether gender-role beliefs operate similarly across settings.

Societies with weaker gender stratification are more likely to have egalitarian gender ideas, which contradict severe patriarchy. Because Pakistan and the United Kingdom have different levels of gender segregation, studying how masculinity relates to in nations or different cultures can help identify which gendered ideas are culturally unique and which are universal. In less gender-egalitarian communities, there are stronger disparities between 'masculine' and 'feminine' behaviors, as well as higher pressure to adhere to rigid gender stereotypes (de Visser et al., 2022).

Furthermore, Pakistan's being more collectivist culture may enforce social conformity more than the UK's more individualistic society (Asghar et al., 2020). According to research conducted in the United Kingdom, those with less egalitarian gender attitudes perceive greater distinctions between masculine and feminine behaviors, place a higher value on hegemonically male behavior, and believe feminine activities impair men's masculinity (de Visser &

McDonnell, 2013). However, there has been little research that uses the same measurements across countries.

2. Masculinity in Context of Pakistan

Gender norms in Pakistan are shaped by family structures, social expectations, and unequal access to autonomy and resources. Research on Pakistani women has shown that gender norms influence personality, life opportunities, and health-related experiences (Rizvi et al., 2014). These conditions may also affect how individuals respond to adversity because access to social and material resources can influence coping and resilience. Power plays the most significant role in shaping Pakistani masculinity and masculinity in different regions. So as to maintain masculine status that include safeguarding women's integrity, factors like patriarchal gender relationship and social honor provides power that acts as a binding force. A survey conducted in Pakistan reported that men and women held particular views about masculinity and men's social roles (Aurat Foundation, 2016).

Men's perception of masculinity as follows:

- Men should maintain sexual potency.
- A male provides for the family and does not rely on a woman's income.
- A guy must govern his wife, prioritize his parents' needs over his wife's, take decisions.
- Harassment of marginalized groups is considered normal behavior among guys.
- Men's attire differs from women's, with a focus on minimizing feminine characteristics to maintain a distinct identity.

Women's perception of masculinity

- Men should earn, make all the decisions, are trustworthy.
- Have a desire to control.
- Men use violence in personal relationships.
- Men often blame women for infertility and avoid discussing their own sexual capacity (Aurat Foundation, 2016).

2.1. Resilience and Masculinity:

The Resilience is the capacity to adjust to hardship and regain equilibrium after trauma (Lasota et al., 2020). Resilient individuals typically possess an internal locus of control and an optimistic outlook (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004), with high resilience associated with better mental health and life satisfaction (Konaszewski et al., 2021). Individual resilience

development is mostly impacted by gender role. Male stereotype affecting resilience that include failure, pressurizing male status in society leading to decrease in social support and appreciation (Burt, 2022). Adaptive behavioral and cognitive strategies facilitate males cope resilience which helps them avoid mental and psychological distress (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013; Sharp et al., 2023).

2.2. Empathy and Masculinity

Empathy associated with Masculinity is considered to be contradicting idea based on approach of conservative cultural gender norms contexts. Western culture also revolves around the same contradicting ideas where it associates masculinity with emotional restriction, which provides gap to this study to address empathy in a South Asian collectivist culture specifically in province of Balochistan, with respected masculine roles directly challenging gender norms. Riess (2017) defines empathy as an intricate skill, that enables people to recognize emotions, connect on an emotional and cognitive level, understand viewpoints, and distinguish between their own and other people's sentiments. It facilitates prosocial conduct and is influenced by prior experiences and motivation. Men are expected to conform to social roles (Schroeder, 2004), but women are perceived as more sympathetic due to socialization in gender role orientation (Baron-Cohen et al., 2005). However, encouraging social empathy can help men adopt caring beliefs, counteracting negative beliefs about masculinity (Azizan & Mydin, 2022).

Cultural expectations related to masculinity has different meanings in various cultural context. Although being associated with emotional restriction and self-reliance it cannot be generalized, because in collectivist contexts roles like safeguarding family, taking responsibility are associated with masculine identity. However, limited research has examined masculinity, femininity, empathy, and resilience together in Pakistan.

The present study addresses this gap by examining whether these constructs are statistically related among participants from Balochistan.

3. Literature review

Masculinity influences men's emotional functioning, often linked to toughness and independence. Challenges to masculinity can cause men to defensively suppress emotional empathy, and some studies find an inverse association between empathy and masculinity. Masculinity is increasingly understood as a social construct influenced by cultural factors (Peretz & Lehrer, 2019).

Resilience is best understood as a multidimensional process rather than a fixed personality trait. It may involve individual coping, emotional regulation, social support, and access to material or community resources (Ungar, 2018; Windle, 2011). Consequently, a person may show resilience in one area of life while experiencing vulnerability in another. Masculinity shapes how resilience is manifested. Gender-sensitive treatments emphasizing social support increase resilience in men (Robinson et al., 2015). Men navigate hegemonic norms alongside mental health vulnerabilities, making masculinity dynamic (Oliffe, 2023). Some masculine attributes, such as emotional control and self-reliance, may improve coping capacities, and meaning in life mediates the effect of resilience on men's distress.

Masculine norms emphasizing stoicism can limit empathy (Robinson et al., 2015). Resilience training increases emotional intelligence in adolescent boys, which is crucial for therapies fostering emotional involvement without undermining male identity (Ghahramani et al., 2022). Reflective functioning in men with mental health problems is corelated with personal growth and resilience (Kealy et al., 2021).

Collectively, the literature recommended that masculinity is not a fixed or globally negative construct. Its psychological significance varies throughout cultures and social settings, and its correlation with resilience and empathy may vary depending on how rigid or flexible male standards are. Because of that, context-specific research in Balochistan is beneficial. It can also indicate whether the correlations reported in international research are also found in Pakistan and whether local gender expectations influence empathy and resilience differently than in western findings.

Resilience and empathy are generally positively correlated across demographics. Resilient individuals often exhibit higher empathy in professional (Acosta-Martínez et al., 2024).

3.1. Purpose of the Current Study:

Within Pakistan's patriarchal system, masculinity is dominant, yet resilience and empathy are also desirable traits. This study examines these relationships in Balochistan, Pakistan, adopting a feminist perspective to clarify how these traits interact within masculine identity.

3.2. Hypothesis:

This quantitative study aims to assess how masculinity is related to empathy, and resilience. We have developed our study hypotheses by doing a thorough literature review in order to

accomplish this purpose. Thus, the following 5 directional hypotheses guide this investigation in light of other research studies:

- H1: Masculinity will be significantly related to empathy.
- H2: Masculinity will be significantly related to resilience.
- H3: Femininity will be significantly related to empathy.
- H4: Femininity will be significantly related to resilience.
- H5: Resilience will be significantly related to empathy.

4. Methodology

4.1. Sample Characteristics:

The present study employed a convenient sampling technique to recruit participants from the province of Balochistan, Pakistan. Data was collected from different institutes, organizations, schools, universities of Quetta Balochistan. Participant were introduced to the purpose of research, consent of all the participants involved was taken during the whole process respectively. A total of 154 individuals participated in the study, comprising 94 males (61%) and 60 females (39%) (M = 1.38, SD = 0.487). Participants' ages ranged from 12 to 65 years, categorized into three developmental stages (Santrock, 1997): adolescence (12–20 years), early adulthood (21–39 years), and middle adulthood (40–65 years). The sample included 22 adolescents, 126 early adults, and 6 middle adults (M = 24.47, SD = 5.471). Regarding educational attainment, participants were classified into five categories based on years of formal education completed: 10 years (n = 2; 1.3%), 12 years (n = 7; 4.5%), 14 years (n = 35; 22.7%), 16 years (n = 89; 57.8%), and 18 years (n = 21; 13.6%) (M = 3.8, SD = 0.698). All participants were educated, and able to understand the study materials. All information about sample characteristic is given in table1. The sample is primarily young adult, male with moderate to high educational backgrounds, and is representative of the accessible population in the region section.

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

	N	Percentage	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Gender			1.38	.487
Male	94	61%		
Female	60	39%		
Education level			3.8	.698
10 years	2	1.3%		
12 years	7	4.5%		
14 years	35	22.5%		
16 years	89	57.8%		
18 years	21	13.6%		
Age			24.47	5.471
12-20 years	22	14.3%		
21-39 years	126	81.8%		
40-65 years	6	3.9%		

4.2. Data collection instruments:

4.2.1. BEM Sex Role Inventory (BSRI)

Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974) is used to measure masculinity. a well validate 60-item instrument designed to assess gender-related personality traits over a 7-point Likert scale. The scale's reliability was confirmed through its Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.9$). Masculinity and femininity were examined as separate continuous subscale scores instead as mutually exclusive categories. Higher scores indicated greater endorsement of the corresponding traits.

4.2.2. Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)

Brief Resilience Scale (BRS; Smith et al., 2008), is a concise 6-item self-report measure, rated on a 5-point Likert scale which measure resilience. The scale's reliability was confirmed through its Cronbach's alpha value which ranged from 0.8 to 0.91.

4.2.3. Empathy Assessment Scale (EAS)

Empathy Assessment Scale (EAS; Malakcioglu, 2022) is a 13-item scale with 5-point Likert scale to measure the cognitive and affective components of empathy. The reliability of EAS was acceptable (Cronbach alpha ($\alpha = 0.845$).

In the present study, internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The observed alpha coefficients were reported separately for the pilot and main samples in Tables 2 and 3.

4.3. Statistical Analysis

SPSS 18 was used to analyze data. Participants' demographics and scores for empathy, resilience, masculinity, and femininity summarized by descriptive statistics, while Pearson's correlations looked at linear associations among these constructs

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

Mean and Standard deviation scores of scale, BEM Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), and Empathy Assessment Scale (EAS) are reported in table.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Pilot Testing

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
Brsitotal	56	202.00	328.00	259.6333	36.27432	.876	60
Brstotal	56	13.00	29.00	19.8929	3.29009	.66	6
Eastotal	56	13.00	57.00	43.5357	7.92227	.77	13

Note: brsitotal = BEM sex role inventory scale, brstotal = Brief resilience scale, eastotal = Empathy assessment scale, the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.876 and 0.77 indicates high internal consistency with strong reliability whereas 0.66 indicate moderate internal consistency with moderate level of reliability.

The table presents descriptive statistics for three variables, each measured across a sample of 56 participants. Masculinity and femininity (brsitotal), shows a minimum value of 202 and a maximum of 328, with an average (mean) score of 259.63 and a standard deviation of 36.27. This suggests that most participants scored around 259 on this measure, but there is a considerable spread in the data, as indicated by the relatively high standard deviation. Resilience (brstotal), ranges from a minimum of 13 to a maximum of 29, with a mean of 19.89 and a standard deviation of 3.29. This indicates that participants' scores are more tightly clustered around the mean compared to the first variable, with less variability in responses. Empathy (eastotal), also has a minimum value of 13 and a maximum of 57, with a mean score of 43.54 and a standard deviation of 7.92. This reflects a moderate spread of scores around the mean.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of Main Study

	N	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Skewness**		**Kurtosis**		**Cronbach's alpha**
	Statistic	**Statistic**	**Statistic**	**Statistic**	**Statistic**	**Statistic**	**Std. Error**	**Statistic**	**Std. Error**	
Eastotal	154	29.00	65.00	45.6788	7.30324	.087	.207	-.286	.411	.789
Brstotal	154	11.00	30.00	18.7226	3.55985	.380	.207	-.094	.411	.50
Bsrimastotal	154	63.00	134.00	93.4672	14.22769	.279	.207	.016	.411	

bsrifemtotal	154	60.00	123.00	94.2263	15.09333	-.355	.207	-.833	.411	.862
Valid N (listwise)	154									

Note: brsimastotal, brsifemtotal = BEM sex role inventory scale subscale of masculinity and femininity, brstotal = Brief resilience scale, eastotal = Empathy assessment scale. High internal consistency and strong reliability are indicated by Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.789 and 0.862, whereas poor internal consistency and moderate reliability are indicated by values of 0.5.

Main variables from a sample of 154 individuals are summarized in the descriptive statistics table, which offers information about their distribution and traits. The mean score for empathy (eastotal) is 45.68, with a standard deviation of 7.30, indicating considerable participant variability. The skewness is 0.087, indicating a nearly symmetrical distribution, and the kurtosis of -0.286 suggests a slightly flatter distribution than normal. Resilience (brstotal)has a mean of 18.72 and a standard deviation of 3.56, with a skewness of 0.380, pointing to a mild positive skew, and a kurtosis of -0.094, indicating a distribution close to normal. Masculinity (bsrimastotal) reports a mean of 93.47 and a standard deviation of 14.23, with a skewness of 0.279, suggesting a slight positive skew, and a kurtosis of 0.016, which is very close to the normal distribution. Femininity (bsrifemtotal) has a mean of 94.23 and a standard deviation of 15.09, with a negative skewness of -0.355, indicating that the distribution is slightly skewed to the left, and a kurtosis of -0.833, suggesting a flatter distribute on than normal.

5.2. Correlation Analysis

Table 4: Correlation Coefficient for BEM sex role inventory scale subscale of masculinity and femininity, Brief resilience scale, Empathy assessment scale.

		femtotal	**mastotal**	**eastotal**	**brstotal**
femtotal	**Pearson correlation**	1	.446**	.507**	.015

	Sig.(2-taled)		<.001	<.001	.856
mastotal	**Pearson correlation**	.446**	1	.323**	.172*
	Sig.(2-taled)	<.001		<.001	.033
eastotal	**Pearson correlation**	.507**	.323**	1	.019
	Sig.(2-taled)	<.001	<.001		.819
brstotal	**Pearson correlation**	.015	.172*	.019	1
	Sig.(2-taled)	.856	.033	.819	
	N	154	154	154	154

Note: (*) correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). (*) correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed).

The Table 4 presents Pearson correlations among femininity, masculinity, empathy, and resilience for 154 participants. Masculinity was significantly and positively correlated with empathy, $r(152) = .323$, $p < .001$, and resilience, $r(152) = .172$, $p = .033$. Femininity was significantly and positively correlated with empathy, $r(152) = .507$, $p < .001$, but was not significantly correlated with resilience, $r(152) = .015$, $p = .856$. Resilience was also not significantly correlated with empathy, $r(152) = .019$, $p = .819$. Thus, H1, H2, and H3 were supported, whereas H4 and H5 were not supported. These findings indicate associations among the variables but do not establish causal relationships.

6. Discussion

This chapter is all about to discuss how often masculinity empathy, resilience and femininity traits are studied separately, our focus is to study their relationship and discusses five hypotheses that were tested.

A significant positive correlation between masculinity and empathy ($r = .323$, $p < .001$) is found in our study, confirming H1 that participants those scored higher in masculinity also reported higher empathy scores.

This finding might not be at odds with such Western contexts where previous studies have revealed a negative association between masculinity and empathy. For example, in countries such as Pakistan, there is a strong collectivist ethos, and men are often expected to be caretakers who protect their families' interests and look after their physical and psychological wellbeing. Indeed, this notion of masculinity may well entail the capacity for empathy, which recent studies have actually demonstrated to be the case. Masculinity is not a homogenous construct, and men can espouse "strong" traits that allow them to remain emotionally open to others without jeopardizing their "tough" exterior (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Oliffe, 2023).

Emphasis on how gender norms, morals and values cultivate individual's worldview has been long standing debate in cross- cultural research, that also puts lights on perspective that how collectivists consider a man to be the provider of the family, personality that includes roles deeply rooted to take control in every aspect of traditional family life. Sociologists and historians keep pointing to this same pattern that collectivist cultures, the breadwinner model hasn't really faded away. Men are still expected to be the ones who provide for their families—not just financially, but socially too (Janssens, 1997). Understanding the viewpoint, Thebaud's (2010) research provides an example of how traditional Japanese households view women' wages as supplemental and identify men with the roles of stability, financial provision, and family honor.

Empathetic development in an individual has been associated with cultural norms in various researches that also supports how emotional as well as cognitive empathy positively aligns with collectivistic culture (Duan et al., 2009) which also supports the finding of research conducted across 63 countries showing higher level of empathy has been seen more in men belonging to collectivistic countries than that of individualistic countries (Chopik et al., 2017).

It is tempting to read the link between masculinity and empathy (H1) as evidence that family and interpersonal duties shape how masculine traits come through, but we did not measure collectivism directly, so this remains a plausible reading of the context rather than a firm conclusion.

Between masculinity and resilience, a significant positive but weak correlation was found ($r = .172$, $p = .033$), supporting H2 which suggests that individuals who uphold greater masculine traits reported greater resilience.

This finding can be supported by the previous research which states that specific elements of traditional masculinity such as self-reliance, perseverance, and emotional control, function as flexible coping mechanisms in response to specific stressors (Mahalik & Di Bianca, 2021). Traits of masculine identity which are beneficial to engage in goal-directed behaviors, responsible decision-making, and persistence in the face of challenges can be advantageous to men who embrace a less rigid masculinity (Oliffe et al., 2023). This strategy offers the ability to motivate oneself and maintain psychological wellbeing.

Cultural context is important in explaining this finding. In collectivist societies like Pakistan, masculinity is not only toughness or dominance of a men in a family but also, responsibility toward family and community (Aurat Foundation, 2016). As the only provider and protector, men are expected to efficiently manage hardships, which can strong their resilient behaviors (Thébaud, 2010).

However, the masculinity and resilience are positively related does not indicate that all men are equally beneficial. Excessive adherence to strong or privilege masculinity can also increase psychological distress, limit emotional expression, and demoralized looking for help (Mahalik & Di Bianca, 2021). The importance of "adaptive" or "positive" masculinity in recent studies show that, men took responsibilities, self-discipline, and care for others without rejecting emotional vulnerability (Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010; Mahalik & Di Bianca, 2021).

Masculinity and resilience correlation is significant with small magnitude. Which shows that the masculinity shows up only in small amount of portion of the variation in resilience, and other factors may also important—such as social support, socioeconomic conditions, coping strategies, and mental health.

Correlation between femininity and empathy was significant and positive ($r = .507$, $p < .001$), therefore H3 was also supported in that higher levels of empathy tend to correlate with gender-role orientation, and specifically with femininity.

Our finding fits into cross-culturally evident patterns, but tendencies are robust but contextually variable traits acquired through socialization and cultural influences (Christov-Moore et al.,

2014) Neurobiological and social explanations have been proposed for gender differences in empathy. Emerging research suggests that gender-role orientation may be related to psychological and interpersonal characteristics beyond biological sex (Yarnell et al., 2019). Recently, questionnaire and EEG measures have been used to suggest that women may report higher levels of empathic ability than men, although such sex differences can be variable depending on the measurement (Pang et al., 2023), which also supports the historical claim of gender role orientation that how female traits are more commonly associated with warmth, nurturance that foster higher empathy (Bem, 1974).

A very interesting finding related to gender-role orientation was demonstrated in research by Karniol et al. (2011) in which male those scored high in empathy were those who endorsed more feminine traits. This further supports your argument that the results you obtained were as a result of internalized gender-role orientations and not biological sex. To men, femininity in Pakistan is associated with caregiving, family solidarity, and empathy is a socially mandated responsibility for women, not a personal attribute (Aurat Foundation, 2016).

Significantly femininity and resilience were not correlated ($r = .015$, $p = .856$), which rejected the H4, expressive complications about relationship between gender roles and adaptive coping.

According to some researches empathy and resilience are positively related among adolescents, with both variables contributing to psychological well-being (Taylor et al., 2000; Vinayak & Judge, 2018). Women for example, frequently utilize emotion-focused and social coping strategies, which relys on networks for emotional regulation (Matud, 2004). In Lasota et al. (2022), in adolescents' gratitude and empathy were linked to resilience, with gender moderating the strength of these relationships.

However, the result of the current study found no significant link between femininity and resilience, which shows that feminine traits did not transcribe higher scores on the Brief Resilience Scale (which measures “bouncing back” from adversity). This may end to measurement issues, cultural variation, or the nature of the construct itself.

In psychological study, resilience is defined by traits like agentic, self-reliant, persistent, and problem solving—that overlap with traditional masculine norms (Mahalik & Di Bianca, 2021; Oliffe, 2023). This may somehowe explain why masculine traits correlated with resilience and feminine traits did not in this sample.

Pakistan as a collectivist society, feminine roles may intensify self-sacrifice and giving priority to family needs over personal coping (Aurat Foundation, 2016). Mobility, access to resources, and decision-making power, potentially influencing how they respond to adversity can also limit women autonomy in gender norms (Rizvi et al., 2014). Gendered expectations may have demoralized women from prioritizing their own well-being or seeking help for personal challenges, while social support can be protective.

Adding further complexity, Tamres et al. (2002) found in their meta-analysis study that the higher resilience outcome is reported more in women as compared to men, as they used more diverse coping strategies. Similarly, recent research shows that resilience is multidimensional and context-dependent, shaped by available resources, social roles, and cultural expectations (Windle, 2011; Ungar, 2018).

Resilience needs to be adapted to gendered and cultural dynamics because the null femininity role may promote societal adherent and empathy without increasing personal coping strategies.

Correlation between resilience and empathy was not found significant ($r = .019$, $p = .819$), contradicting the prior literature related to the two variable resulting in rejection of H5.

Resilience has been considered as one of the most desirable traits to cope with distress (Windle, 2011) whereas empathy is associated with ability to maintain and form social connection, recognizing, understanding other feelings and behaviors (Decety & Cowell, 2014), supporting these claims a research findings proved that empathy can actually facilitate one to develop resilience (Acosta-Martínez et al., 2024).

The same study found that among medical students, greater levels of resilience were associated with increased levels of clinical empathy. Acosta-Martínez et al. (2024) interpret this finding as demonstrating that highly resilient individuals do not necessarily 'shut down' emotionally as a result of their experiences and continue to be able to connect with other people on an emotional level.

However, recent studies have begun to question the strength and nature of the relationship between resilience and empathy. Our finding of no significant relationship fits with those studies in that they begin to show that there may be some conditions under which both traits might actually score lower together. Elam and Taku (2022) found that posttraumatic growth was unrelated to empathy but negatively related to one's resilience.

They argue that the tendency towards greater posttraumatic growth may undermine one's empathy by 'reducing' the likelihood that a person will 'engage emotionally with others'. This could happen if an individual who has developed some key psychological adaptations (e.g., self-sufficiency and autonomy) associated with increased levels of resilience finds that those very adaptations lessen their empathic responses to emotional events in others.

A similar argument could be made from the perspective of emotional regulation. Highly resilient people, when faced with potentially overwhelming or threatening situations, are likely to deploy more effective emotion-regulation strategies than their less resilient counterparts (Waugh et al., 2011). As a result, they might be less likely to empathize deeply with others in similar situations as they are likely to have already 'moved past' the emotions being experienced by others. Southwick and Charney (2018) offer another potential explanation for the finding which highlights some potentially important cultural differences between Western and Eastern societies. The former tend to value close personal relationships, whereas the latter tend to place a premium on familial bonds (Aurat Foundation, 2016). According to Elam and Taku (2022), one manifestation of this difference is that Pakistani society puts much greater value on males being providers and protectors for their families, which in turn builds their own resilience. However, it constrains their options in terms of sharing their emotions with others, hence diminishing their empathy. Similar culturally specific gender roles are also prevalent in Pakistan which constrain women's autonomy and mobility, access to economic resources, and voice in public (Rizvi et al., 2014). This may affect their ability to develop resilience and empathy as adaptive mechanisms for dealing with life's challenges.

Finally, the finding of our study is also congruent with Ungar's (2018) argument that resilience is multifaceted and includes individual and social-ecological dimensions (Ungar, 2018). If social aspects of one's resilience are likely to facilitate greater pro-social behaviors, including empathy, but individual aspects (e.g., emotional regulation) may actually undermine it, then the overall relationship may depend on the balance between the two. In the context of our study, the lack of a significant relationship may reflect this complexity.

Overall, the finding of our study, namely, lack of significant relationship between resilience and empathy, supports a more nuanced theory of the relationship between the two. Our finding highlights the importance of distinguishing between different aspects of individual adaptation.

7. Conclusion

Using Bem Sex Role Inventory, Empathy Assessment Scale, and Brief Resilience Scale, the present study aimed to test five hypotheses (H1-H5) about the role of masculinity and femininity in empathic abilities and resilience in the sample of adult population in Balochistan, Pakistan. The results demonstrated that masculinity was positively associated with levels of empathy and resilience, which can be explained by the fact that in collectivist cultures masculine roles can include nurturing functions. In contrast, femininity was positively correlated only with empathy, not resilience, and empathy and resilience were not related to each other. The study contributes to the understanding of the complexity of gender roles by examining different aspects of gender in men and women, which can be used for developing gender-sensitive interventions in mental health settings.

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