# Masculine Behavior and Wellbeing amongst Men: Evidence from Pakistan

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**Abstract:**

The wellbeing of people is important for any nation and particularly that of men in a patriarchal culture where they are the fundamental actors. Masculinity is constructed through different patterns and roles of society; it is recognized as different characteristics, assumptions and behaviors associated with men. Pakistan is a patriarchal society and masculine behavior plays an important role in creating and maintaining this social role. This article assesses masculine behavior and its effects on the general wellbeing among Pakistani men. For this study 400 male participants were selected from different professions (Doctors, Teachers, Lawyers, and Engineers). Masculine behavior scale (MBS) was used to measure the behavior of men and scale of general wellbeing (SGWB) was used to measure their wellbeing. However, this study finds that masculine behavior varies with different professions, age, marital status and education and masculine behavior also has an effect on general wellbeing of men.

**Keywords:** Pakistan, restrictive emotionality, inhibited affection, success dedication, self-reliance

## INTRODUCTION

The overall wellbeing of people is important for any nation and particularly that of men in a patriarchal culture where they are the fundamental actors. Men and women in a given society perform and cooperate according to their gendered identities however, if the traditional masculine behaviors are affecting the welfare and prosperity of men then they need to be addressed because the behavior of men will ultimately impact women and society in general. Certain masculinities

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preserve and promote discontented performances which hinder progression. However, to achieve prosperity they must be dismantled.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of masculinity can be traced back to the work of Connell in 1997. He attached masculinity with multiple types of masculinities that society develops, according to its culture and history. He also stated that the construction of masculinity setup men according to their work and organization policies (Wedgwood & Nikki, 2009). Moreover, Kimmel (2008) also highlighted that masculinity has characteristics of dominancy, leadership, expert, control, value, freedom, and issue solver. Men have societal pressure to fulfill the masculine stereotype and usually men believe that being a male is a disadvantage because many expectations are associated with them due to their gender. So they feel restless, anxious and angry due to their stereotype masculine roles (Robb, et. al., 2017). Another study investigated that sex behavior varies from society to society and human behavior changes from learning, so that men learn behavior from peer groups or from their society (Biller& Borstelmann, 1967). It is indicated by the gender role strain paradigm, that masculinity is certainly not a fixed element and there is no single standard for this concept. Thus, traditional roles of masculinity are built contrastingly for men in distinctive social classes, ethnic gatherings, territorial cultures and life stages.

The social construction of masculinity was supported by the pro feminist men scholars (Kimmel & Messner, 2007; Connell, 2005, Levant 1996; Pleck, 1995). The construct of masculinity cannot be theorized in isolation and it must be linked with the social fabric. Society constructs the standards for masculinity according to which men perform their gender roles. There are some assumptions underlying this belief that masculinity is a socially constructed phenomenon. Firstly, masculinity is performed according to the social identity by men. Secondly, all men do not experience masculinity in the same way. Thirdly, all men conceptualize and express masculinity differently at different ages of their lives. Fourthly, multiple masculinities are located in different socio-cultural contexts (Kimmel & Mesnner, 2007). Moreover, (Scher, 1990) explained, how society sets standards of masculinity that drive men to conform to them to be men in any society. So, in every culture there are some stereotypical expectations to be performed to conform to masculinity and if a man fails to perform the standard masculinity then it turns into gender role conflict (O'Neil, 1981).

Previous literature argued that male role has five components including; anti-femininity, success, aggression, sexuality, and self-reliance (Doyle, 1989). Another study concluded that the above themes are more likely to be stereotypically associated with men's life than women's. Moreover, Snell (1989) argued that success dedication deals with dedication towards success of individual's life, restrictive emotionality is related to feeling emotions privately and not showing it publicly, inhibited affection is related to man having feelings of love for loved ones; and self-reliance is related to being independent.

## THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF MASCULINITY

There are theories based on several assumptions like; multiple masculinities established under different social classes, ethnic groups, religion, caste and geographical locations. Since Masculinity can be linked with different times and spaces so the masculine ideology is fluid rather than fixed. It is difficult to define the masculine ideology as to what is masculine? Some masculine ideologies are

traditionally defined at a given time in history and culture (Thompson and Pleck, 1986) which includes the cultural norms, that define the acceptable behaviors of men as well as describe what it means being a man. Male scholars have identified some universal expected behaviors of men that include men being breadwinner, head of family (Abreu, Goodyear, Campos, & Newcomb, 2000; Pleck, 1987), anti-femininity (Pollack, 1998), heterosexual (Connell, 2005), homophobic (Kimmel,1995), prestigious, tough and strong (Thompson and Pleck,1986). The above mentioned masculine traits are considered "normal masculine behavior" and although these traits have been derived from the Western cultures but the same behavior of being a man are followed by the Asian men. These masculine traits are included in traditional and hegemonic definition of masculinity that is widely acceptable (Kimmel, 2004).

Social constructionist theory by Addis and Mahalik (2003), offered a social constructionist perspective to understand the development of masculinity. The social construction of masculinities explained that men learn the masculine behavior and attitude from the society or from the environment in which they grow up, as well as how men live their lives with in a social context. It also emphasized the impact of cultural or societal norms and social interactions in shaping role expectations and masculine behavior. The advantage of social constructionist perspective is that it recognized the contextual nature of masculinity, which allowed changes according to time and situations. It also recognized that, although a men's experience of his masculinity might be an internal phenomenon, it has been an ongoing process through which man defines and understands that masculinity is socially and culturally grounded.

## Wellbeing and Masculinity

According to King et. al. (2014), it has been documented that wellbeing has a dynamic nature apart from being multidimensional and can be predisposed to personal and cultural factors. Young men are more socially active than the older men. Men agree that they are reluctant to tell their feelings, they rarely tell their real feelings to any one due to the societal pressure or the norms which are associated with them like being emotionless, feeling less or men do not cry, emotionally strong and many more (Robb, et. al., 2017). Help-chasing and obsessive expression are implied as feminine thus numerous men may favor more activity arranged adapting styles which can incorporate more regrettable wellbeing practices (Sloan, et. al, 2015). Thus a pressure to maintain and obey the traditional masculine roles may affect men's abstract wellbeing (Pietraszkiewicz, et. al., 2017). Marriage also plays an important role in the wellbeing of a man. Single, divorced, widowed and alone men have lower well-being as compared to committed and married man (Binder, 2013). A person's well-being also relies upon different elements (e.g., confidence, good faith, optimism, self-esteem or other identity characteristics) to socio-statistic, (for example, age, gender, education, or marital status), financial, (for example, salary, status, or joblessness), situational, (for example, wellbeing, social connections), and even institutional factors (Binder, 2013).

As Pakistan is a patriarchal society and since masculine behavior plays an important role in making of such societies, it is important to analyze how and why these behaviors are constructed. The outcomes of this research can be a valuable addition to the literature with some new dimensions and context; this research might be significant and helpful for other men who belong to different professions, then the professions included in this study. This study will also help men to understand

themselves well. It might be a source of awareness for men and women about the reasons behind the present masculine behavior in Pakistan.

In the present study social construction of masculinities provided a conceptual framework for exploring the masculine behavior of men, to observe the effect of masculine behavior on men's wellbeing, in the light of social constructionist theory. Nature of masculinity changes according to time and situation therefore in present study four professions were identified for which it was assumed that masculinity will be different according to role and responsibilities required by these professions. Following hypotheses were developed on the basis of previous literature.

**Hypothesis 1 (H1):** Masculinity predicts general well-being across younger and older adults.

**Hypothesis 2 (H2):** There are differences in masculine behaviors between younger and older adults.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Participants and Procedure

A total of 400 men ages ranged between 20 to 46 years participated in this study. Two age brackets were constructed whereby men with an age range of 20 to 35 were clustered as younger adults while men with an age range of 36 to 46 were clustered as older adults. The cross-sectional survey design was used for this study. Ethical considerations were observed while conducting the study. After approval from the Board of studies, the researchers conveniently selected educational and professional institutes for data collection, and participants were recruited through stratified sampling. The purpose of the research and the questionnaire was explained to the participants. Informed consent was obtained and participants were assured confidentiality.

**Table 1**

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N=400)

| Demographic characteristics | F | % |
|---|---|---|
| Age | | |
| 20-35 (younger adults) | 286 | 71.5 |
| 36-46 (older adults) | 114 | 28.5 |
| | | |
| Education | | |
| Bachelors | 55 | 13.8 |
| Masters | 118 | 29.5 |
| M.Phil. | 80 | 20 |
| PhD | 47 | 11.8 |
| Professional Studies | 100 | 25 |
| Marital Status | | |
| Single | 262 | 65.5 |
| Married | 138 | 34.4 |
| Profession | | |
| Engineer | 100 | 25 |
| Teacher | 100 | 25 |
| Doctor | 100 | 25 |
| Lawyer | 100 | 25 |

Note. f = Number, % = Percentage.

## Measures

Two scales were used including Masculine Behavior Scale (MBS) developed by Snell (2013) and Scale of General Well-Being (SGWB) by Longo, Coyne, and Joseph (2017). The Masculine Behavior Scale (MBS) was used to assess patterns of masculine behavior in men. It includes four subscales; 1) Success dedication, 2) Restrictive Emotionality, 3) Inhibited Affection, 4) Exaggerated Self-Reliance and control. Participants were instructed to rate the 20 items on a 5-point Likert scale. Responses range from (+2) Agree, (+1) slightly agree, (0) neither agree nor Disagree, (-1) slightly disagree to (-2) disagree. The reliability of the MBS was .84.

The Scale of General Well-Being (SGWB) was used to measure the general wellbeing (happiness, vitality, calmness, optimism, involvement, awareness, acceptance, self-worth, competence, development, purpose, significance, congruence and connection). It consists of 14 items which are rated on a Likert scale. Responses range from 1 = not at all true, 2 = a bit true, 3 = somewhat true, 4 = mostly true, and 5 = very true. The reliability of the scale is .86 confirming the high level of interrelationships between the items.

## Statistical Analysis

All data obtained from participants was analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 23. A variety of analysis was run to test the hypotheses. A Pearson correlation was used to analyze the correlations among general well-being and masculine behavior factors (success dedication, restrictive emotionality, inhibited affection, self-reliance). Hierarchical regression was conducted to assess if general well-being was predicted by masculinity and its subdomains. An independent sample t-test was run to examine masculinity across younger and older adults. One-way ANOVA was also conducted to appraise participants from different professional backgrounds to gauge its subsequent impact on masculinity.

## RESULTS

### Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis of Measures

The reliability of the masculinity and general well-being scales was evaluated by comparing the Cronbach Alpha, Mean and Standard Deviation for each scale.

**Table 2**

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis of Masculine Behavior Scale (MBS) and Scale of General Well-Being (SGWB) (N=400).

| Scales | k | M | SD | α | Range | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | *Actual* | *Potential* |
| Masculine Behavior Scale | 20 | 11.41 | 11.43 | .78 | -31 to +40 | -40 to +40 |
| Success Subscale | 05 | 4.69 | 3.80 | .66 | -10 to +10 | -10 to +10 |
| Emotionality Subscale | 05 | 1.60 | 4.60 | .69 | -10 to +10 | -10 to +10 |
| Affection Subscale | 05 | 1.97 | 4.29 | .64 | -9 to +10 | -10 to +10 |
| Self-Reliance Subscale | 05 | 3.15 | 3.92 | .56 | -10 to +10 | -10 to +10 |
| Scale of General Well-Being | 14 | 50.15 | 10.87 | .90 | 16 to 70 | 14 to 70 |

Note. k= number of items, *M*= mean, *SD*= standard deviation, α= Alpha Cronbach level.

The descriptive statistics for the measures of the research are given in Table 2.It is evident that the Alpha Coefficients for all variables are in the acceptable range that is, they fall between the minimum score of .56 and a maximum score of .90.Cronbach Alpha values can range between 0 and 1, and .60 is considered the lowest acceptable value for social sciences (Snell, 2013). A lower Cronbach Alpha score for the Self-Reliance scale may perhaps be a result of the usage of an indigenous sample as Snell (2013) too reported the lowest Alpha value of .69 for this scale showing an inherent propensity towards lower value inclination. The range of actual and potential scores is also available in the table. The widest range of scores is available in the Masculine Behavior Scale (MBS) with an actual range of -10 to +10 for the Success, Emotionality and Self-reliance subscales along with an actual range of -9 to +10 for the Affection subscale.

**Correlation Analysis between Masculinity and General Well-being**

Pearson's Correlation was used to assess the relationship between the variables. Results can be observed in Table 3.

**Table 3**

Pearson Correlation of Age, Masculinity and General Well-Being (N=400).

| | Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Age | - | -.12* | -.13** | .024 | -.09 | -.14** | -.01 |
| 2. | Masculinity | - | - | .59** | .69** | .75** | .72** | -.01 |
| 3. | Success | - | - | - | .10* | .18** | .45** | .34** |
| 4. | Emotionality | - | - | - | - | .46** | .23** | -.31** |
| 5. | Affection | - | - | - | - | - | .37** | -.09 |
| 6. | Self-Reliance | - | - | - | - | - | - | .11* |
| 7. | General Well-Being | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

**Note.** For age, Younger adults= 1, Older adults = 2

*p<.05 **p<.01Pearson Correlation results revealed several significant correlations among study variables. Masculinity yielded significant positive correlations with all its subscale variables including success ($r$= .59), emotionality ($r$= .69), affection ($r$= .75), and self-reliance ($r$= .72). On the contrary, masculinity yielded a significant negative correlation with age ($r$= -.12) implying that younger age was associated with more masculinity than older age. General well-being yielded a significant positive correlation with Success ($r$= .34) and Self-Reliance ($r$= .11) but a negative correlation with Emotionality ($r$ = -.31) dimensions of masculinity.

Regarding correlations among subscales of masculinity, significant correlations were observed too. Success showed significant positive correlations with emotionality ($r$ = .10), affection ($r$= .18), self-reliance ($r$= .45). However, a significant negative correlation was seen with age ($r$= -.13). Results also revealed that emotionality showed significant positive correlations with affection ($r$= .46), and self-reliance ($r$= .23). Affection manifested a significant positive correlation with self-reliance ($p$= .37).

**Hierarchical Linear Regression Analysis**

Hierarchical Linear Regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the prediction of general well-being from three models. The first model identified the prediction of general well-being with age and marital status. The second model examined the prediction of general well-being with

masculinity and its four subdomains (a) success, (b) emotionality, (c) affection and (d) self-reliance. The last model identified the interaction of age with the four subdomains of masculinity and its impact on general well-being. Results are summarized in Table 4.

**Table 4**

Hierarchical regression analysis as analysis predicted from General Well-Being, Age, Marital Status and Masculinity (N=400)

| | General Well Being | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Predictor* | *B* | *SE* | β | $\Delta R^2$ |
| Step 1 | | | | .002 |
| Age | -.70 | 1.48 | -.03 | |
| Marital Status | 1.19 | 1.40 | .05 | |
| Step 2 | | | | .238 |
| Success | .99 | .15 | .35** | |
| Emotionality | -.87 | .13 | -.37** | |
| Affection | -.11 | .14 | -.04 | |
| Self-reliance | .04 | .16 | .01 | |
| Step 3 | | | | .026 |
| Age x Success | .29 | .44 | .17 | |
| Age x Emotionality | -.34 | .32 | -.21 | |
| Age x Affection | -.31 | .36 | -.19 | |
| Age x Self-reliance | 1.19 | .43 | .70*** | |

*Note.* B = Unstandardized coefficient, SE = Standard error, β = Standardized coefficient, $\Delta R^2$ = R square change,
   **$p< 0.1$, ***$p< 0.001$

Table 4 shows the impact age and marital status have on general well-being. In Step 1, the $R^2$ value explained that age and marital status caused a variance of 0.2percent in general well-being with $F(2,397) = .357$, $p = ns$. The findings revealed that age and marital status did not significantly predict general well-being in our sample. In Step 2, success, emotionality, affection and self-reliance predicted 24percentof the variance in the outcome variable i.e. general well-being $F(6,393) = 30.82$, $p < .001$ yielding a significant . Moreover, it was revealed that success (β = .35, $p < .01$) significantly positively predicted general well-being while emotionality (β = -.37,$p < .001$) significantly negatively predicted general well-being.  This partially proves H1 showing how domains of masculinity predict general well-being.

Findings related to the interaction between age and masculine behaviors in Step 3 revealed that the overall model was significant F (10,389) = 14.14, $p < .001$ explaining 2.6percent variance in general well-being of the participants.  It was observed that age and self-reliance interaction significantly positively predicted general well-being (β = .70, $p < .001$). Whereas the interaction between age, success, emotionality as well as affection did not significantly contribute to the wellbeing of men.

**Interaction effect of Age and Self-Reliance on General Well-Being**

Interaction effect of age and self-reliance was significant in predicting general well-being. Therefore, it was further analyzed by using Dawson Excel sheet (Dawson, 2014). Differences in self-reliance and its impact on general well-being between younger and older adults were observed. Results are summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1

*Graph showing interaction effect of age and self-reliance on general well-being.*
            Note: Low age: Younger Adults, High Age: Older Adults
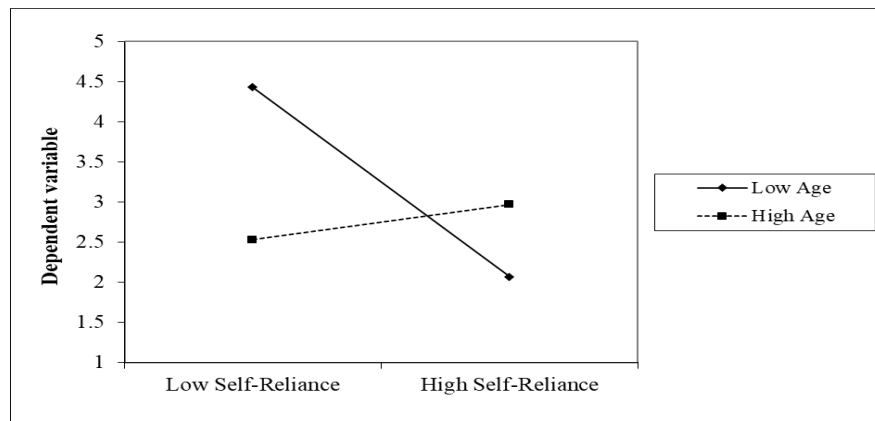


The graph shows that for younger adults, low self-reliance predicted higher general well- being and high self-reliance predicted low general well-being. On the contrary, for older adults, low self-reliance predicted low general well-being and high self-reliance predicted high general well-being. Conclusively, age had significant differences in self-reliance impacting general well-being differently in younger and older adults.

**Analysis of age related differences in Masculinity**

An Independent sample t-test was used to analyze the differences in the masculinity across younger and older adults. Results can be observed in Table 5.

**Table 5**

Independent Sample t-test comparing Masculinity across Younger Adults and Older Adults (N=400)

| Variables | Younger Adults (n= 286) | | Older Adults (n= 114) | | t(398) | p | 95% CI | | Cohen's d |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD | | | LL | UL | |
| Masculinity | 12.24 | 10.99 | 9.30 | 12.27 | 2.34 | .020 | .4.71 | 5.42 | 0.25 |
| Success | 5.01 | 3.84 | 3.89 | 3.59 | 2.69 | .007 | .303 | 1.95 | 0.30 |
| Emotionality | 1.53 | 4.66 | 1.77 | 4.47 | -.471 | .638 | -1.24 | .763 | 0.05 |
| Affection | 2.21 | 4.14 | 1.36 | 4.62 | 1.79 | .074 | -.082 | 1.78 | 0.19 |
| Self -Reliance | 3.49 | 3.95 | 2.28 | 3.71 | 2.82 | .005 | .367 | 2.06 | 0.32 |

*Note.* CI = confidence interval, LL = lower limit, UL = upper limit.

The Independent Sample t-test showed that there was an evident difference in masculinity (t(398) = 2.34, *p* = .020), success (t(398) = 2.69, *p* = .007) and self-reliance (t(398) = 2.84 , *p* = .005) in younger and older adults. For Masculinity, younger adults yielded a score of M = 12.24 compared to older adults who yielded a score of M=9.30 confirming H2. Whereas in success, younger adults yielded a score of M = 5.01 as compared to older adults who scored M = 3.89. Furthermore, in terms of self-reliance, younger adults also obtained M =3.49 in comparison to older adults who obtained M = 2.28. This demonstrated significant differences even though the Cohen's d score yielded for masculinity (*d* = 0.25), success (*d* = 0.30) and self-reliance (*d* = 0.32) had a small effect size. It was also observed that there were no significant differences in emotionality and affection of younger and older adults.

**One Way, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Masculinity Among Professionals**

One way, ANOVA was conducted to compare participants from different professions to observe its effect on masculinity as an additional finding. The independent variable was different professionals including: (a) engineers, (b) teachers, (c) doctors and (d) lawyers while masculinity and its subdomains were the dependent variables. Results are summarized in Table 6.

**Table 6**

One Way ANOVA comparing Masculinity across different professionals (N=400).

| Variable | Engineers (n=100) M (SD) | Teachers (n=100) M (SD) | Doctors (n=100) M (SD) | Lawyers (n=100) M (SD) | F (df) | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Masculinity | 13.56 (10.90) | 9.84 (11.60) | 10.75 (11.29) | 11.47 (11.76) | 1.93 (3, 396) | .124 |
| Success | 4.75 (3.89) | 3.77 (3.39) | 4.06 (3.58) | 6.18 (3.90) | 8.44 (3, 396) | .000 |
| Emotionality | 2.61 (4.27) | 1.84 (3.83) | 2.64 (4.21) | -.69 (5.22) | 12.66 (3, 396) | .000 |
| Affection | 2.63 (4.06) | 1.98 (4.17) | 1.37 (4.21) | 1.89 (4.67) | 1.46 (3, 396) | .226 |
| Self-Reliance | 3.57 (3.22) | 2.25 (3.56) | 2.68 (4.25) | 4.09 (4.30) | 4.67 (3, 396) | .003 |

Note. F=ratio of mean squares, df=degree of freedom, p= significance level

Results for the one way, ANOVA showed that there are significant differences across various professionals regarding masculinity and its subdomains. Success had significant differences across professions F (3,396) = 8.44, *p* = .000 with lawyers having the highest (M=6.18) and teachers having the lowest (M= 3.77).  Similarly, significant differences were also observed in Emotionality F (3,396) = 12.66, *p* = .000 whereby doctors procured the highest mean (M=2.64) while lawyers the lowest (M= -.64). Self-reliance manifested variances F (3,396) = 4.67, *p* = .003 whereby lawyers secured the highest (M= 4.09) compared to the teachers (M=2.25) who had the lowest value. No significant variances were observed in overall masculinity and its subdomain of affection.

**DISCUSSION**

The study of masculine behavior emphasizes on the effects of masculine behavior on wellbeing of men. In this study masculinity showed significant positive correlations with all its subscale

variables including success, emotionality, affection and self-reliance. On other hand, masculinity showed a significant negative correlation with age implying that younger age was associated with more masculinity than older age. General well-being yielded a significant positive correlation with Success and Self-Reliance but a negative correlation with Emotionality dimensions of masculinity. In gender role conflict (GRC) O'Neil (1981) described that there is a relationship between men's gender role conflict (restrictive emotionality, inhibited affection behavior, success, power and competition) and negative attitude towards help seeking which shows that men who are successful, do not show their emotions and affection and are reluctant to seek help, because they like to be self-reliant.

The results also revealed that age and marital status did not significantly predict general well-being in our sample. Moreover, it was revealed that success positively predicted general well-being while emotionality negatively predicted general well-being. This partially proves H1 showing how domains of masculinity predicted general well-being. Snell, William, Miller, Rowland, Sarah& Julita (1989) study on "Men's and Women's Emotional Disclosures" explored that male students are reported less willing to discuss emotions and feelings as compared to female students and success dedicated men do not discuss their emotions and feelings with others, which shows that success dedication plays an important role in men's restrictive emotionality and inhibited affection. Moreover, this showed that dedicated men, have qualities of inhibited affection and restrictive emotionality (Jabeen, 2018).

It was observed that age and self-reliance interaction significantly positively predicted general well-being. For younger adults, low self-reliance predicted higher general well- being and high self-reliance predicted low general well-being. On the contrary, for older adults, low self-reliance predicted low general well-being and high self-reliance predicted high general well-being.

**CONCLUSION**

This study aims to provide information on relationship of wellbeing and masculine behavior of different professions and age groups of men. The present study indicates that masculine behavior varies from profession to profession and age to age. Many masculine stereotypical behaviors are false which are associated with men and many of them are true. This study also indicates that men learn the masculine behavior from the environment in which they live and from what they see. The present study also revealed that masculine behavior changes with age. The behavior of students is totally different from the men who are independent and dominant. The interesting finding of the present study is that age and self-reliance both are the major predictors of the general wellbeing of a man from different professions. Moreover, Younger adults have low self-reliance and higher general well- being and high self-reliance predicted low general well-being. On the contrary, for older adults, low self-reliance has low general well-being and high self-reliance predicted high general well-being.

Overall the findings of the study indicate that general well-being of man vary from profession to profession and age to age.

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