

Validation of the Multicultural Masculinity Ideology Scale in the Malaysian Context

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Abstract

The Multicultural Masculinity Ideology Scale (MMIS) measures an individual's perception of being a man, adapting in a specific cultural context. The MMIS was first introduced in a study by Doss and Hopkins (1998), where gender-specific masculinity ideology items were chosen based on theoretical grounds and constructed into a scale. The MMIS has been empirically examined and validated in different cultures (e.g., Anglo-American, African-American, Chilean, Russian and Korean cultures). The aim of this study is to explore the psychometric properties of the MMIS in the Malaysian context from the responses of 100 Malaysian male respondents in a public university. Psychometric properties were investigated using factor analysis, convergent validity tests, discriminant validity tests and internal consistency reliability assessment. Factor analysis by using varimax rotation discovered two cross-cultural components: Hypermasculine Posturing and Achievement. Internal consistency reliability was supported by high Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the components and total scale. Evidence for discriminant validity was demonstrated through the relationship between the MMIS and the Bem Sex Roles Inventory (BSRI). Evidence for convergent validity was demonstrated by the relationship between the MMIS and the Gender Equity Men Scale (GEM). Findings validated MMIS in the Malaysian context. Implications for future research in the area of masculinity in Malaysia were discussed.

Keywords: *Masculinity, Malaysian men, scale validation.*

1. Introduction

Masculinity is a social construct that is related to being a man. It was perceived as a personality characteristic opposite but yet associated to femininity (Bem, 1974). Masculinity is a result of nurture rather than nature. Men are not born with masculinity but they learned through their society, age, ethnicity and status (Beynon, 2008). Generally, masculinity is accepted by society only when it is presented by men. Men are socially demanded to obey and

exhibit certain behaviour and cognition in order to be accepted by the society (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985).

Aggression and perpetration of violence have always been linked to masculinity. Previous studies have provided evidences for the significant relationship between perpetration of violence (e.g. violence against women and bullying behaviour in school) and real or perceived fulfilment of masculinities (Moore, 1994; Saibon, Karim and Mahmud, 2010). Taslitz (1999) viewed the “cult of masculinity” as one of the defining characteristics that attributed to men performing physical, psychological and verbal aggression as a method to take control and attain material benefits, to establish dominance and to gain self-esteem. For that, performing violence to uphold the masculine’s identity and power constructs might be a sign of men’s struggle.

In Malaysia, domestic violence continues to be an issue that can prevent family members from enjoying peaceful and safe family life. Available statistics continuously show increase or no decline in the number of domestic violence’s cases, even after the enactment of The Domestic Violence Act 1994. The Act aims at ensuring citizens’ protection from domestic violence by providing for legal protection orders for victims seeking help from violence. Husbands, or other male members of the family, continue to be the main perpetrators of domestic violence.

While men are widely established as main agents of patriarchy in family ordering and reported to be the main perpetrators of domestic violence, men are largely left out from research on understanding marital and family dynamics and their relations to domestic violence. The ideology of masculinity has been widely researched in Western cultures (Levant et al., 1992; Thompson & Bennett, 2015). However, the same cannot be said about Malaysian society, an Asian country with multi-ethnic background. A research agenda to localise the concept of masculinity by investigating the masculinity ideology amongst men in Malaysia is urgently needed.

2. Literature review

2.1 Masculinity Ideologies

Thompson, Pleck, and Ferrera (1992) suggested *Masculinity ideologies* to identify the expected behaviours and taboos that sanction men and masculinity performances in social

belief systems. Pleck, Sonenstien, and Klu (1993) defined *Masculinity Ideology* as the “Endorsement and internalization of masculinity and male roles’ patterns in cultural standards, embedded in the structural relationship between men and women”. Masculinity ideology conceptualised masculinities from normative perspectives by viewing masculinity as a cultural ideology drafting gender relations, attitudes, and beliefs (Thompson and Pleck, 1995). Therefore, masculinity ideologies exist in certain times, locations and groups, rather than being individuals’ properties. Humans’ perceptions and behaviours in gender-salient issues are affected by masculinity ideologies (Thompson & Bennett, 2015).

Dissimilarity in the conceptualisations of masculinity differentiates masculinity ideology from gender identity. In gender identity, masculinities were treated as inherent qualities and traits. Thompson and Pleck 1995 proposes masculinities as socially desirable attributes thought to differentiate men and women and measurable by examining traits through self-evaluation. This approach assumes that what differs is the degree to which individuals demonstrate idealised masculinity (and femininity).

2.2 *Multicultural Masculinity Ideology Scale (MMIS) in different culture*

The Multicultural Masculinity Ideology Scale (MMIS) is a second generation of masculinity ideologies measurement, which measures an individual’s perception of being a man, adapting in a specific cultural context (Thompson & Bennett, 2015). It was first introduced in a study by Doss and Hopkins (1998), where gender-specific masculinity ideology items were chosen based on hypothetical grounds and constructed into a scale. It was drafted with items that represent the gist of masculinity ideologies in more than just one culture, and, to view one cultural group as distinguish from another. Doss and Hopkins (1998) conducted an exploratory study with African Americans, Anglo-Americans and Chilean university students. Through factor analysis, they discovered: 1) “etic dimensions” relevant to all tested cultural groups, and, 2) different “emic components” for each cultural group.

The two etic dimensions revealed from Doss and Hopkins (1998) are *Hypermasculine posturing* and *Achievement* subscales. These two subscales exist consistently in all three cultures. Both subscales display good discriminant and convergent validity, and, satisfactory reliability. Besides etic dimensions, there were several cultural-specific (emic) subscales detailed from the study: *Sensitivity* subscale from Anglo-Americans; *Toughness*, *Pose* and *Responsibility* subscales from Chileans; and *Sexual Responsibility* from African Americans.

The MMIS has also been empirically examined and validated in several other studies. Janey and colleagues (2005, 2009) explored masculinity ideologies and validated MMIS in Russian and Ukrainian context. MMIS validated in Russian society revealed *Achievement Pose*, *Composed Sexuality*, *Emotional Availability/Stability*, and *Dedicated Provider* subscales. MMIS validated in Ukrainian society unfolded *Sexuality/Prosperity*, *Stoic Protector*, *Competitive Perseverance*, and *Reserved Sexuality* subscales. Two similar masculinity ideologies revealed in both cultures are men roles as providers and responsible sexual partners. The distinctive ideology between the two cultures are: Russian's men uphold composed sexuality in their relationships, while Ukrainian's men are reserved in terms of sexuality.

A research by Roberts-Douglass and Curtis-Boles (2013) had validated the *Achievement* and *Sexual Responsibility* subscales from Doss and Hopkins (1998) by using young African American sample. Janey and Lee (2002) applied MMIS on Korean university students from local universities and validated the *Achievement* and *Masculine Pose* to be consistent with previous use of the scale. In conclusion, The MMIS has provided many evidences to prove the divergent, and sometimes similarity, of masculinities in different culture and society. Previous studies also demonstrated validity and reliability of MMIS in measuring masculinity ideology in cross-cultural context, and its capability to discover distinguish emic components in each and every culture.

2.3 Current Study

The objective of this study is to investigate the factor structure, reliability, convergent validity, and divergent validity of the MMIS using a sample of Malaysian men. First, we performed principle components analysis to explore the factor structure. Second, we computed Cronbach alpha coefficients to assess the reliability. Then, we compare MMIS with Bem Sex Roles Inventory (BSRI) Masculinity Subscale in order to test discriminant validity. Theoretically, the BSRI measures socially desired and stereotyped masculine and feminine traits that were perceived as pivotal for normal personality development (Levant et al., 2007), while MMIS measures masculinity ideology. Thus, there should be low correlation between BSRI Femininity Subscale and MMIS. Lastly, MMIS was compared to Gender Equity Men (GEM) scale to test convergent validity as both measurements are theoretically compatible. Although the GEM is focused on inequitable gender norms, it is similar to the MMIS because

it measures gender ideology

This study hypothesised that:

- 1) The principle components analysis will reveal components of masculinity ideology that are unique to Malaysian society.
- 2) MMIS and its factors will have good reliability (Cronbach's alphas > .70)
- 3) Support for MMIS's convergent validity will be found as strong significant correlation with Gender Equity Men (GEM) Scale.
- 4) Support for MMIS's discriminant validity will be found as low/ no significant correlation with Bem Sex Role Inventory Femininity subscale.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Participants

A total of 100 Malaysian males participated in the study with the mean age of 36.03 years old ($SD = 11.49$). Ethnicity were categorised into Malay, Chinese, Indian and Others. Malay respondents comprised 61.0% ($N = 61$) of the sample, Chinese respondents comprised 27.0% ($N = 27$), Indian respondents comprised 10.0% ($N = 10$), and respondents who ethnicity fall into the "Others" group comprised 2.0% ($N = 2$) of the sample.

Respondents who were educated until primary level comprised 1.0% ($N = 1$) of the sample, educated until secondary level comprised 21.0% ($N = 21$), educated until Pre-U level (e.g. STPM and Diploma) comprised 26.0% ($N = 26$), educated until graduate level comprised 31.0% ($N = 31$), and educated until postgraduate level comprised 16.0% ($N = 16$). Five participant did not answer this question.

In terms of marital status, married respondents comprised of 44.0% ($N = 44$) of the sample, unmarried respondents 41.0% ($N = 41$), divorced respondent 2.0% ($N = 2$), widowed respondent 2.0% ($N = 2$), and respondent in committed relationships but not married comprised 11.0% ($N = 11$).

3.2 Procedure

The process of data collection (survey questionnaire) started with identifying suitable respondents. This study recruited only Malaysian men who are aged between 20 to 64 years with adequate proficiency in *Bahasa Malaysia*. The administration of questionnaire was done in various location at the convenience of respondents. Before respondents were given the

questionnaire to answer, enumerators provided a brief description about this study, assured them of the confidentiality of the study result and asked the respondents to sign an informed consent form. While the respondents answered the questionnaire, the enumerators were available to clarify the respondents' doubts about the questionnaire.

3.3 Instruments

Multicultural Masculinity Ideology Scale

The Multicultural Masculinity Ideology Scale (MMIS; Doss & Hopkins, 1998) consists of 35 items, which examine masculinity ideology. Items in MMIS were constructed based on an intensive review of the empirical and theoretical masculinity literature. The MMIS is scored on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree," with higher scores indicating higher levels of masculinity. Based on the study by Doss and Hopkins (1998), with the samples from Anglo-American, African American and Chilean, the etic dimensions revealed were *Hypermasculine Posturing* and *Achievement* with Cronbach's alpha coefficients .81 and .72, respectively. Emic component(s) revealed were *Sensitivity* (.70) for the Anglo-American samples; *Sexual Responsibility* (.43) for the African-American sample; and *Toughness* (.59), *Pose* (.58), and *Responsibility* (.48) for the Chilean sample. For the current study, the number of items and alpha for factors derived from principal component analysis were: *Hypermasculine Posturing*, 13, .68; and *Achievement*, 8; .78. The overall alpha was .76.

Bem Sex Role Inventory (Femininity Subscale)

The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem 1974) was used to assess discriminant validity in this study. The BSRI is a 60-item instrument measuring personality traits associated with men and women, using a 7 point-Likert scale where a score of 1 would represent never or almost never true and a score of 7 would represent almost always true. For the purpose of this study, only the femininity subscale of BSRI was used. This subscale consisted of 20 items. For current study, the alpha for this subscale is .78.

Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale – Malaysian Version

The Gender Equitable Men (GEM) scale- Malaysian version (Sukumaran, 2012) was used to assess convergent validity in this study. This scale consists 21 items measuring men's

attitudes or behaviours toward “gender equitable” norms and level of equitable gender norms among the respondents. The MMIS is scored on a three- point Likert scale with (1) “Disagree”, (2) “Somewhat Agree”, and (3) “Agree”. Higher scores indicating greater support for equitable gender norms. The Gem scale- Malaysian version is divided into two dimensions, namely *Equitable* and *Inequitable* with 9 items ($\alpha = .90$) and 12 items ($\alpha = .80$), respectively. For current study, the alpha for *Equitable* and *Inequitable* subscales are .83 and .80, respectively.

Demographics

Demographic questionnaire consists of four item included age, ethnicity, marital status and level of education.

Translation

Both the BSRI masculinity subscale and MMIS have been translated into *Bahasa Malaysia* by the research team members, who are all highly conversant in the language and have attained certificates in the proficiency of the language at university level. The original scales consist of statements that are non-technical and are relatively straightforward.

4. Results

The principal component analysis was performed on the 35 items of the MMIS. Correlation matrix among components in MMIS showed coefficients .30 and above. The Kaiser–Meyer–Oklin value was .66, which exceeds the suggested value of .6 (Kaiser 1974), and the Barlett’s Test of Sphericity (Bartlett 1954) was statistically significant. Thus, suitability of data for factor analysis has been confirmed. Components were retained based on: 1) eigenvalues greater than 1.0; 2) Catell’s (1966) scree test break point; 3) factor loadings above .50 and; 4) cross-loadings below .32. Principal components analysis retained a total of two components based on the guidelines, accounting for 17.9% and 10.1% of the variance. The cumulative variance accounted for was 28.0%.

The first component was scripted of ten items, which accounted for 17.9% of the variance. This component was labelled as “Achievement”, representing the attitudes among men that potentially guide them to success in life. Item with highest loading was item 09 “Guys should have a positive attitude towards life and not let things get them down”, followed by item 14 “A guy should have long-term goals for his life” and item 10 “A guy should be confident in

everything he does”.

Component 2 composed of six items, which accounted for 10.1% of the variance. This component was labelled as “Hypermasculine posture”, representing the exaggeration of male stereotypical behaviour. The highest loading item was 31 “A guy should have sexual intercourse as early as he can in his life”, followed by 19 “Even if a guy is not rich, he should try to look that way” and 20 “A guy should always have a woman he is dating”. Hence, as hypothesised, the principle component analysis discovered emic components of masculinity ideology in Malaysian society

Table 1 showed the factor loadings, mean, standard deviation and alpha values for the two components. The internal consistency estimates (Cronbach’s alpha) for MMIS, *Achievement* subscale and *Hypermasculine posture* subscale were .72, .87 and .65, respectively. Thus, the MMIS and its factors have satisfactory to good reliability, hypothesis is proven.

Table 1

MMIS Factor Loadings for Two-Component Solution with Varimax Rotation

MMIS ($\alpha = .72$)	Factor Loading	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Component One: Achievement ($\alpha = .87$)			
09. Guys should have a positive attitude towards life and not let things get them down.	.83	4.40	.70
14. A guy should have long-term goals for his life.	.79	4.49	.69
10. A guy should be confident in everything he does.	.77	4.30	.77
28. Even when things get really difficult, a guy should keep trying	.74	4.34	.73
16. A guy should put his best effort into every part of his life.	.74	4.48	.71
26. Guys should be competitive.	.65	4.18	.80
01. Guys should be courteous to women.	.65	4.39	.80
35. A guy should be independent and not get too attached to others.	.58	4.18	.83
33. A guy should take risks to reach his goals.	.57	3.85	.96
06. Providing for his family should be a man's main goal in life.	.57	4.35	.83
Component Two: Hypermasculine Posture ($\alpha = .65$)			
31. A guy should have sexual intercourse as early as he can in his life.	.71	1.77	.97
19. Even if a guy is not rich, he should try to look that way.	.70	1.86	.91
20. Guy should always have a woman he is dating.	.63	2.20	1.15
11. In a relationship, guys should have sexual intercourse as often as possible.	.62	2.77	1.13
03. A guy should not have male friends who are homosexual.	.50	2.82	1.56
15. A guy should not show affection to those he loves.	.49	1.77	1.07

Note. The KMO value is .66 and the Barlett’s Test of Sphericity is statistically significant. *M*= Mean, *SD*= Standard Deviation, α = Cronbach’s alpha.

To examine the convergent and discriminant validity, Pearson correlation coefficients of MMIS and its components with the BSRI and GEM Scale-Malaysian version were computed and displayed at Table 2. As expected, MMIS is significantly related to GEM scale and both its components, $r = -.27, -.46$ and $.24$, respectively. Hence, convergent validity was established. On the other hand, correlations for MMIS and its factors with BSRI femininity subscale ($r = .12, .31$ and $-.18$) were not significant. Thus, discriminant validity was established.

Table 2

Pearson correlation coefficients between the MMIS, BSRI femininity subscale and GEM scale-Malaysian version

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. MMIS						
2. Achievement subscale	.78**					
3. Hypermasculine Posture subscale	.68**	.07				
4. GEM Scale (Malaysian Version)	-.27**	.08	-.50**			
5. Equitable subscale	-.46**	-.20*	-.50**	.83**		
6. Inequitable subscale	.24*	.46**	-.14	.51**	-.05	
7. BSRI (femininity subscale)	.12	.31	-.18	-.02	-.14	.17

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

5. Discussion

The first hypothesis was partially supported. Principle components analysis provides support Doss and Hopkins (1998) two etic components for the MMIS, which were *Achievement* and *Hypermasculine Posture*. Cronbach's alpha coefficient were high for MMIS total scale and *Achievement* subscale but adequate for *Hypermasculine Posture* subscale. Therefore, the second hypothesis was supported. The third and fourth hypotheses were supported by significant Pearson correlation between MMIS and GEM scale, and insignificant relationship between MMIS and BSRI femininity subscale. The MMIS total score is highly correlated with the MMIS components but insignificantly correlate with each other, suggesting that the components examine the same broad construct from different aspect.

Achievement and *Hypermasculine Posture* as the outcomes from factor analysis seems to be representing a global masculinity construct as they appear to be the etic components from Doss and Hopkins (1998) and, Janey and Lee (2002). Items retained in the two components are redolent of Brannon (1976), which analysed American culture's blueprint of being a man. The

four standards in Brannon Masculinity Scale that resemble the outcomes in current study are “no sissy stuff” (*avoiding femininity* and *concealing emotions subscales*), “big wheel” (*the breadwinner* and *being admired and respected subscales*), “sturdy oak” (*toughness* and *male machine subscales*), and “give ‘em hell” (*violence and adventure subscale*). The “no sissy stuff” standard can be found through items in MMIS such as item 35 (“A guy should be independent and not get too attached to others”) and item 15 (“A guy should not show affection to those he loves”). Likewise, the “big wheel” standard was suggested through item 14 (“A guy should have long-term goals for his life”) and item 10 (“A guy should be confident in everything he does”); the “sturdy oak” standard through item 15 (“A guy should not show affection to those he loves”) and item 28 (“Even when things get really difficult, a guy should keep trying”); and, the “give ‘em hell” standard through item 26 (“Guys should be competitive”).

The similarity between the perception and stereotype of masculinity in other studies, and the masculinity ideology measured in MMIS suggesting *Achievement* and *Hypermasculine posture* as etic components that exist across the male-dominated cultures, supported by the fact that Malaysia is still a patriarchal society since the long history. Alternatively, there is also a possibility that the propagation of Western thinking about socially accepted gender roles throughout the years of globalization has contribute to this similarity of masculinity ideology across cultures. The advance in technology and social media causing the masculinity ideology from Western culture easily accessed by Malaysian society. Hence, the possibility cannot be disregarded.

The dissimilarity between the outcome of current study and the first study of MMIS by Doss and Hopkins (1998) is the items retained in the same component. Compared to Doss and Hopkins (1998), besides the original item 9, 10, 14, 16, 26, 28 and 33 in *Achievement* subscale, principal component analysis in current study has retained extra three items in the same dimension, which were item 1 (“Guys should be courteous to women”), item 6 (“Providing for his family should be a man's main goal in life”), and item 35 (“A guy should be independent and not get too attached to others”). Perhaps in the context of Malaysian, men who excel in the three aspects are perceived as a successful man. Dissimilarity also found in *Hypermasculine posture* between both studies. Item 4, 21, 12, 25, 13, 30 and 5 were not included in the *Hypermasculine posture* of current study as it was in Doss and Hopkins (1998). Different opinions or the irrelevant of the items to the respondents might the reason for the exclusion.

6. Limitation

First, firm conclusion about the masculinity ideologies in Malaysian context cannot be drawn by using only one instrument. Results are restricted to the questions contained in the assessment used. Second, this current study did not obtain the test-retest reliability of MMIS in Malaysian context and perhaps future studies may address this limitation. Lastly, some items in the original MMIS were not possible to be directly translated into *Bahasa Malaysia*.

7. Conclusion

The aim of current study was to examine the psychometric properties of the MMIS and adapt it into the Malaysian context, in order to advance the study of masculinity ideology and contribute to the pool of knowledge. Results indicate that the Malaysian version MMIS is reliable and valid scale to measure masculinity ideology in Malaysia.

8. Acknowledgement

This research was funded by Research University Grants of Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia.

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