

‘The Emotionless Male’

‘An investigation into the changing experiences of the Australian male and their visible expression of emotion’

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Introduction

The role of emotion across gender has evoked significant discussion over the last 10 years. Males have been described as expressionless for generations and have hidden their emotional voice and feelings. Some would say rightfully so. After all, they are responsible for the harsh oppression of females and those they consider 'others'. So perhaps it's reasonable that males experience their own form of injustice through emotional oppression. But, that all said, what would happen if males were actually encouraged to express their emotions?

In my Personal Interest Project (PIP) I will discuss male emotional struggles and analyse the intergenerational challenges in the acceptance of male emotional freedom. I will stress societies silencing of male emotional development, how this clouds the perception of masculinity and obscurs a true sense of identity. Through primary and secondary research, I will reveal the hidden negative impacts of a patriarchal society on males, on a micro, meso and macro level.

I will discuss the injustices observed in both the lives of women and men, when it comes to emotional displays. Acknowledging the differing social views within the patriarchal society to bring light to both sides of the societal argument regarding emotions.

A variety of primary and secondary research methods have provided a framework for my PIP. Questionnaires, interviews and personal observations will be referenced throughout this report, providing evidence and credibility to the concepts discussed. The questionnaire respondents were Australian Generation X and Generation Z. An interview conducted with a professor from the University of Sydney, provided an academic perspective of male emotions. Personal observation has been a critical research method. As a female attending a co-educational school and having male family members, I will provide personal insights, grounding my research in real life scenarios.

A variety of peer-reviewed journal articles, critical reading material and news media articles has supported my theories and provided an important expert perspective of the male expression of emotion. This secondary research will accentuate the data gathered from my primary research, adding a layer of credibility as well as alternative views to this topic.

A comparison of gender is the cross-cultural focus throughout my PIP. The aim is to compare the emotional freedom of females to the repressed nature of males. This cross-cultural focus allowed me to assess the continuity and change of the PIP, examining the history of male emotion through different centuries and assessing changes between Generation X and Generation Z. Using the above mentioned research methods I will also assess the future of males' relationship with their emotions, hopefully finding a positive outlook.

Through this PIP I aim to demonstrate the disparity of emotional expression between males and females. Through comparison of emotional experiences and generational changes, I hypothesise that this disparity is caused by a lack of emotional health education and a perpetual intergenerational stereotype of male detachment.

This investigation has furthered my social and cultural literacy, enhanced my understanding of Australian males and their difficulties expressing emotions and how this issue continues to be rife.

Conclusion

As a result of this investigation I have gained a greater understanding of the important role the visible expression of emotion plays in maintaining a healthy, Australian male psyche. Australian culture has defined male expression of emotions as weak and undesirable. This in turn has placed a dangerous and unwanted stigma around male emotion and limited female power in society due to unfair, negative association with the stigmatized emotions. This stigma in turn has seriously affected the emotional development of many males in Australian society. Through extensive secondary and primary research, I have been able to evaluate the negative impacts of the emotionless male and how this should be prevented in the short-term future. This has assisted in my PIP journey, allowing me to target the historical and generational emotional issues that started with European colonisation and resulted in an Australian culture ignorant of the importance of emotion in the 21st century.

Through analysis of the harmful impacts Australian culture has on the male self perception my hypothesis was proven accurate to a great extent. Australian men continue to struggle to express visible emotion today due to male dominated historical influence that has also, unfortunately developed into intergenerational stigmas. This was evident due to the data that revealed similar emotional experiences across both Generation Z and Generation X males. There has not been a change in the emotional experiences of males and this is a problematic trend for the 21st century. My primary research was supportive of my hypothesis and was further enhanced through impressive collaboration with my secondary research. My two questionnaires were the most advantageous research method, they identified emotional stereotypes and assisted in how we should approach a path to developing a more emotional Australian male in the future.

Throughout the development of this report I have greatly enhanced my social and cultural literacy. This has allowed me to understand the importance of an emotional Australian male and how this will positively affect our future community. The male emotional expression should not be restricted by stereotypes but should instead allow them to create meaningful connections and experience the world through an emotional lens.