اينستيتوت ڤڠاجين اسيان

as

INSTITUTE OF
ASIAN STUDIES

Changing Notions of Masculinity among Young Malay Men in Brunei Darussalam

T.P.M. Adi Nabil Fadzillah
Chang-Yau Hoon

Universiti Brunei Darussalam

Authors

YAM Tengku Putra Muhammad Adi Nabil Fadzillah is a graduate majoring in Sociology and Anthropology at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. This paper was developed from his final-year thesis under the guidance of Associate Professor Chang-Yau Hoon.

Contact: adinabil179@gmail.com

Dr Chang-Yau Hoon is Director of Centre for Advanced Research and Associate Professor at the Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. Prior to this, he was Assistant Professor of Asian Studies and Sing Lun Fellow at the School of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University (SMU), where he won the SMU Teaching Excellence Award in 2012 and SMU Research Excellence Award in 2014. He is also Adjunct Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia in Perth and International Fellow at King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) in Vienna. He is the author of *Chinese Identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Culture, Media and Politics* (2008) and co-editor of *Chinese Indonesians Reassessed: History, Religion and Belonging* (2013), *Catalysts of Change: Ethnic Chinese Business in Asia* (2014), and *Contesting Chineseness: Ethnicity, Identity and Nation in China and Southeast Asia* (2021).

Contact: changyau.hoon@ubd.edu.bn

Changing Notions of Masculinity among Young Malay Men in Brunei Darussalam

T.P.M. Adi Nabil Fadzillah
Chang-Yau Hoon

Abstract:

This paper explores various notions of masculinity among young Malay men in Brunei Darussalam. Using interview data from 16 male and female informants, it elucidates other forms of self-expressions and identities in contrast to the stereotypical and traditional notion of masculinity. While the data attest to the normative values and ways of being men recognized by the mainstream society and institutions in Brunei, it also found a significant "modern" approach and perception of expressing different notions of masculinity. This pilot study sheds light on the norms and values that define and shape masculinity among young Malay men within their socio-cultural contexts of contemporary Brunei Darussalam.

List of IAS Working Papers

1. King, Victor T., Culture and Identity: Some Borneo Comparisons. Working Paper No. 1 Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2012.

2. Evers, Hans-Dieter and Solvay Gerke, Local Knowledge and the Digital Divide: Focus on Southeast Asia. Working Paper No. 2. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2012.

3. King, Victor T., Borneo and Beyond: Reflections on Borneo Studies, Anthropology and the Social Sciences. Working Paper No. 3. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2013.

4. King, Victor T., UNESCO in Southeast Asia: World Heritage Sites in Comparative Perspective. Working Paper No. 4. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2013.

5. Purwaningrum, Farah, Knowledge Transfer Within an Industrial Cluster in the Jakarta Metropolitan Area. Working Paper No. 5. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2013.

6. Evers, Hans-Dieter, Ndah, Anthony Banyouko & Yahya, Liyana, Epistemic Landscape Atlas of Brunei Darussalam. Working Paper No. 6. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2013.

7. Carnegie, Paul J., Is the Indonesian Transition a Model for the Arab Spring? Working Paper No. 7. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2013.

8. Lian, Kwen Fee, Citizenship Regimes and the Politics of Difference in Southeast Asia. Working Paper No. 8. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2013.

9. Purwaningrum, Farah, Ariff Lim, Syamimi, Evers, Hans-Dieter & Ndah, Anthony Banyouko, The Governance of Knowledge: Perspectives from Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia. Working Paper No. 9. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2014.

10. Facal, Gabriel, Hyper-centralization of Political Power and Fragmentation of Local Authority Networks in Banten (Indonesia). Working Paper No.10. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2014.

11. Hussainmiya, B.A. and Mail, Asbol Haji, "No Federation Please-We Are Bruneians": Scuttling the Northern Borneo Closer Association Proposals. Working Paper No.11. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2014.

12. Abdul Hakim, Mufidah. Pengangun as Ritual Specialist in Brunei Darussalam. Working Paper No.12. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2014.

13. Bensaoud, Mariam. Between R2P and the ASEAN Way:The case of Myanmar's Cylcone Nargis. Working Paper No.13. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2015.

14. Abdul Razak, Nurul Umillah Binti, Anuar, Adira Rehafizzan Binti, Pg. Mohd Sahar, Dk. Siti Nurul Islam Binti & Matsuni, Nur Hidayah Binti. Domestic Maids in Brunei: A Case Study. Working Paper No.14. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2015.

15. Ibrahim, Zawawi. From Island to Nation-state Formations and Developmentalism: Penan Story-telling as Narratives of 'territorialising space' and Reclaiming Stewardship. Working Paper No.15. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2015.

16. Bui, Cuong The. Social Stratification in the Southeast Region of Viet Nam. Working Paper No. 16 Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2015.

17. Sagoo, Kiran. Reconsidering Ethnicity: Classification and Boundary Formation. Working Paper No. 17. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2015.

18. Ibrahim, Zawawi. Disciplining Rock Music and Identity Contestations: Hybridization, Islam and New Musical Genres in Contemporary Malaysian Popular Music. Working Paper No.18. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2015.

19. Shui, Kong Ho. Digital Memoir of the South China Sea. Working Paper No. 19. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2015.

20. Ullah, AKM Ahsan; Yusof, Yusnani Mohamed; D'Aria, Maria. How safe is Safe? 'Safe migration' in Southeast Asia. Working Paper No. 20. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2016.

21. Oishi, Mikio. Co-existing Differences: Towards an East Asian Way Of Incompatibility Mangement. Working Paper No. 21. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2016.

22. Carnegie, Paul J. Of Social Imaginary and Violence: Responding to Islamist Militancy in Indonesia. Working Paper No. 22. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2016.

23. Rosidi, Imron. Being Active Consumers: Indonesian Muslim Youth Engaging With Korean Television Dramas. Working Paper No. 23. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2016.

24. King, Victor T. Convergence and Divergence: Issues of State and Region in Tourism Development in Malaysian Borneo, Brunei Darussalam and Indonesian Kalimantan. Working Paper No. 24. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2016.

25. Dhont, Frank, Marles, Jane E. & Jukim, Maslin. Memories of World War II: Oral History of Brunei Darussalam (Dec. 1941-June 1942). Working Paper No. 25. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2016.

26. Chu, Ta-Wei. Contestation between Riparian People and States: The Sesan River Hydropower Projects, Cambodia. Working Paper No. 26. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2016.

27. Nugroho, S. Post-Authoritarian Discourses of "Indonesia" in Television Commercials. Working Paper No. 27. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2016.

28. Hamdi, Muhammad Faiz Zul, Abdullah, Norhidayah, and Narudin, Hazimatula Diyana. Space, Place, and Identity: How Migration have Transformed Kampong Ayer. Working Paper No. 28. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2017.

29. Chin, Wei Lee. Tourism, Communities, and Quality of Life Indicators in Bali. Working Paper No. 29. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2017.

30. Jetin, Bruno. "One Belt-One Road Initiative" and ASEAN Connectivity: Synergy Issues and Potentialities. Working Paper No. 30. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2017.

31. Maier, Hendrik M.J. Silent the Sea, Writing the Shores – Traveling over the South China Sea. Working Paper No. 31. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2017.

32. Hoon, Chang-Yau. Between Hybridity and Identity: Chineseness as a Cultural Resource in Indonesia. Working Paper No. 32. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2017.

33. Forbes, Vivian Louis. Re-framing the South China Sea: Geographical Reality and Historical Fact and Fiction. Working Paper No. 33. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2017.

34. Oishi, Mikio. Absorbing External Shocks: ASEAN's Approach to Regional Stubility. Working Paper No. 34. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2017.

35. King, Victor T. Emerging Tourisms and Tourism Studies in Southeast Asia. Working Paper No. 35. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2017.

36. Hassan, Noor Hasharina. Housing Matters: The Value of Housing. Working Paper No. 36. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2017.

37. Rahman, Md Mizanur. Beyond Skilled Immigration: The Making of New Immigrant Enterprises in Canada. Working Paper No. 37. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2017.

38. Ibrahim, Faizul H. Kitchen Anthropology: Understanding Food, Cooking and Eating in Bruneian Middle-Class Families. Working Paper No. 38. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2018.

39. Haji Mohamad, Siti Mazidah. The Performance of Religiosity on Social Media: Three Future Research Directions. Working Paper No. 39. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2018.

40. King, Victor T. Tourism and Leisure in Thailand: Erik Cohen and Beyond. Working Paper No. 40. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2018.

41. Munakata, Mizuki & Franco, F. M. A comparative analysis of the Portrayal of Rainforests and People in Tourism Promotional Videos. Working Paper No. 41. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2018.

42. Sahrifulhafiz, Nur Shawatriqah Binti Hj Md. & Hoon, Chang-Yau. The Cultural Identity of the Chinese-Malays in Brunei: Acculturation and Hybridity. Working Paper No. 42. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2018.

43. Knudsen, Magne. Agrarian transition and smallholder success through local networks: A case study from Mindanao. Working Paper No. 43. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2018.

44. Huesca, Eliseo Jr. & Fiesta, Margie D. Everyday Voices in Marginal Places: Political Anxiety, Resistance, and Mass Support under Duterte's Martial Law. Working Paper No. 44. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2018.

45. Abdul Samad, Nur E'zzati Rasyidah. Malay Traditional Marriage Ceremonies in Brunei: Continuity and Change. Working Paper No. 45. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2018.

46. Chattoraj, Diotima & Gerharz, Eva. Difficult Return: Muslims' ambivalent attachment to Jaffna in Post-Conflict Sri Lanka. Working Paper No. 46. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2019.

47. Samad, Nur E'zzati Rasyidah binti Haji Abdul. Malay Traditional Marriage Ceremonies in Brunei: Continuity and Change. Working Paper No. 47. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2019.

48. Jaidin, Izzati. Ageing and Malay Muslim Women in Brunei. Working Paper No. 48. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2019.

49. King, Victor T. The Construction of Southeast Asia as an Academic Field of Study: Personages, Programmes and Problems. Working Paper No. 49. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2019.

50. Haji Kifli, Hajah Siti Norfadzilah Binti. Halal Certification in Brunei. Working Paper No. 50. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2019.

51. Belezaire, Cordelia. Rethinking the Limits of Public Service Labour Casualization in Developing States. Working Paper No. 51. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2019.

52. King, Victor T. 'Wild Borneo': Anthropologists at War in the Rainforest. Working Paper No. 52. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2020.

53. Kwen Fee, Lian. Retracing the Political Construction of Race and Ethnic Identity in Malaysia and Singapore: Career of a Concept. Working Paper No. 53. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2020.

54. Wahab, Mahfuzah Abd. Performative Mimicry and Postcolonial Exoticism: A Re-Politicising of the Female Body in the Work of Cheryl Lu-Lien Tan and Amir Falique. Working Paper No. 54. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2020.

55. Carnegie, Paul J. On Constitutions and Power:An Anatomy of Indonesian Reforms 1999-2002. Working Paper No. 55. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2020.

56. Hazimah, Mahirah Nazatul and Kwen Fee, Lian. The Iban of Melilas, Ulu Belait: From Migrants to Citizens. Working Paper No. 56. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2020.

57. Chan, Jennifer, K.L. and King, Victor T. Covid-19 and Tourism in Southeast Asia. Working Paper No.57. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2020.

58. Ibrahim, Zawawi. The Anthropology of Remembering and Memory as Ethnography: Reflections on a Fishing Village and Firth's *Malay Fishermen* Working Paper No.58. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2020.

59. Franco, F. Merlin, Samuel, Godson, Francis, T. Mutualism between Humans and Palms: The Curious Case of the Palmyra Palm (Borassus flabellifer L.), and its Tapper. Working Paper No.59. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2020.

60. Tong, Chee Kiong and Lee, Cheuk Yin. From Periphery to Center to Periphery: Chinese Studies in Southeast Asia, 1960-2000. Working Paper No.60. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2020.

61. Rosdi, Ade Roddiane bin Haji Mohd and Carnegie, Paul J. Illegal Fishing and the Challenges of Maritime Co-ordination in Brunei's EEZ. Working Paper No. 61. Gadong: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam 2021.

Changing Notions of Masculinity among Young Malay Men in Brunei Darussalam

T.P.M. Adi Nabil Fadzillah
Chang-Yau Hoon

Introduction

Masculinity is generally defined as qualities or attributes that characterize men. The term adopts the idea that one's behavior results from the type of person one is. A masculine person is generally seen as one who has the "typical" quality of being dominant rather than subservient, strong rather than feeble, hardly able to express or show emotions and other attributes suggesting an ideal (read: muscular) physique. While on the contrary, men who do not embody such qualities are perceived as "unmasculine" (Connell, 1995). What is regarded as masculine qualities and roles are considered representative and expected of boys and men. Essentially, when a pattern is unfailingly presented, the perspective towards a notion is altered and consequently, normalized. Such roles can be seen in both Western and Asian popular culture, through the use of broad stereotypes and masculine archetypes: *James Bond, IP Man* and *Bohsia* are some film examples where the male lead possesses masculine traits that are portrayed as the ideal depiction of men; as opposed to men in corsets, heels and makeup portrayed in the film *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) or the more recent androgynous Korean pop idols that defy the normative meaning of masculinity. Nonetheless, such contrasting representations are interesting because the distinction between what is masculine and unmasculine is now blurred. This confirms Connell's (1995) assertion on how different emerging types of masculinity are prevalent in contemporary society.

This paper examines different notions of masculinity among young Bruneian Malay men, including how they conform to socially constructed gender roles, and how playing according to these roles could be beneficial or detrimental to them. It explores the ways in which hegemonic and heteronormative masculinity define the lifestyle and behavior of Malay men in Brunei. The case study of Brunei is unique due to the socio-cultural forces of a religiously conservative society compared to liberal societies in the West (for example see Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 2010). The paper attempts to answer the following research questions:

How do young Malay men in Brunei conceptualize and articulate concepts of masculinity? What are the societal expectations of an ideal man in Brunei? To what extent has traditional masculinity in Brunei transformed and evolved amidst forces of modernization and globalization? Using interview data from 16 male and female informants, the paper highlights the correlation between Malay culture and Islamic religion in defining masculinity – largely characterized by hegemonic masculine – in Bruneian society among young Malay men.

Socialization, Gender Roles and Different Forms of Masculinity

Gender roles and expectations are learned and culturally imposed through a variety of social processes, predominantly through socialization. According to Ferrante (2008: 278), "socialization is a life-long process by which people develop a sense of self and learn the ways of society in which they live". Socialization is learned through a direct or an indirect process, that is by observing and conveying societal values. For example, an indirect socialization is learned through observing portrayals of gendered roles in films or books, while a direct socialization is learned through the formal teachings and reinforcements from the family. A study on the socialization of children by Fagot (1985) illustrated the differences in ways male and female are socialized since childhood. She examined how teachers communicate and respond to children's behaviors according to their gender based on masculine (assertiveness) and feminine (gentleness) traits. The study is an illustration on how socialization is used as a mechanism to perpetuate normative gender ideals. In his study on masculinity in Brunei, Idris (2017: 34) reflected on his own experience as a Bruneian Malay man: "Based on personal experience and observations, this cultural norm of 'boys should be strong and should not cry' seems to be shared amongst the Malay community. This led me to consider the importance of socialization and acculturation and the extent to which 'deep' learning might be associated with adult behaviors amongst Malay men in Brunei".

While primary institutions such as religion, family and education play an important role in constructing normative masculinity, mainstream media representations are indispensable in reinforcing ideas about the hegemonic ideals of what it means to be a man in a society. The dominant representations of "heroic" male characters in popular media have often been associated with traits like strong, domineering, aggressive and violent. These images are consequential – they could shape social attitudes towards gender roles and normalize certain behaviors that the media promote as masculine.

The concept of masculinity has evolved across time, culture and individual (Kimmel, 2010). Granted, the notion of being a "man" varies across and within culture, race, class,

sexuality and other related factors. Thus, masculine identity formation is crafted in the wider socio-cultural and economic context of one's own society (Dasgupta, 2000). Within this context, certain men have more influence than others depending on their position of power. For example, hegemonic masculinity, or what is regarded as the "ideal" men in Western societies include being white, middle-class and heterosexual. In contrast, the non-white, working-class and non-heterosexual men often occupy the margins of masculinity. This shows that within the wider discourse of representation, some men are found to be disenfranchised as they are in a lower power position in the masculinity hierarchy due to their lack of certain capital.

Connell (1995) highlights four main patterns of masculinity that are prevalent in society: hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalized. They will be discussed below in addition to notions of toxic and soft masculinity. Taking Gramsci's concept of hegemony in analyzing cultural dominance in social class, hegemonic masculinity is defined as a form of masculinity that connotes legitimacy of patriarchy, which asserts the superiority of men and the inferiority of women (Connell, 1995: 77). Hegemonic masculinity that reproduces male power and dominance is embedded social structures and ideologies that support the gender order in favor of men. Male figures in Bollywood films are ideal examples of portrayals that exhibit the hegemonic masculinity, associated with them adjectives such as "strong" and "successful" (Madaan et al., 2017). Although it might not be the most prevalent kind of masculinity, hegemonic masculinity is culturally prized and expected as normative in most societies. This also centers in the traditional masculine qualities of being a heterosexual, physically and emotionally strong, and the ability to dominate, to control and succeed at all cost.

On the contrary, subordinate masculinity refers to men that do not conform or embody attributes opposite to hegemonic masculinity such as physical weakness and being emotionally sensitive. Men who lack the attributes of traditional masculinity, including effeminate and non-heterosexual men are examples of men who exhibit subordinate masculine identity (Connell, 1995: 78). Thirdly, complicit masculinity is a kind of masculinity in which a man may not fit into the normative mold of hegemonic masculinity, but do not do much to challenge it either. Since they are not defying the terrain of gender inequality that exists in the society, they are complicit in the overall subordination of women and men that do not conform in the normative dialogue (Connell, 1995: 79). In other words, they receive benefits simply by being men.

10

Marginalized masculinity stems from the hegemonic structure of class and "race", which relates to the inherent relation between masculinity and legitimacy/authorization (Connell, 1995: 81). This type of masculinity is a form of masculinity in which a man does not have access to the hegemonic masculinity because of certain unchangeable or inherited characteristics such as "race" and skin color. Although marginalized, they are still subject to the normative roles of hegemonic masculinity. In America, men of color are examples of men that exhibit marginalized masculinity, in a sense that they are expected to be emotionally and physically strong, assertive and to succeed at all cost, but they cannot access the privilege of hegemonic masculinity because they are not white. For the marginalized groups, the notion of "passing" assumes the micro-privileges that benefit them by performing hegemonic masculinity in hopes to gain patriarchal privileges and dominance within their group (Alexander, 2006; Cheng, 1999). Thus, performing hegemonic masculinity by the marginalized groups are seen as "passing" behavior that distracts from their own disadvantaged reality; their visible social markers such as race and ethnicity. While black men can be as patriarchal as white men, they do not have the institutional power and privilege of white men (Staples, 1979; Wallace, 1979), so they can only dominate women within their own group.

While hegemonic masculinity centers around the discourse of men's position in society, toxic masculinity stems from the cultural norms of male aggression, violence, sexism and homophobia, which can be harmful not only to women but also men in general. Such representation of cultural aggression includes phrases such as "boys don't cry", "boys don't play with dolls", "man up!", "don't be a sissy" and so on. A recent study by the American Psychological Association in 2018 posited that socialization for confirming to traditional masculinity ideology can negatively affect men's mental (O'Neil, 2008, 2015; O'Neil and Renzulli, 2013) and physical health (Courtenay, 2011; Gough & Robertson, 2017). For instance, it is found that, boys who exercise toxic masculinity have been affected in their psychological development and behavior, leading to conflict and strains in gender roles (Pleck, 1981; O'Neil, 2008; O'Neil & Renzulli, 2013). This conflict can be detrimental to boys and men as it may result in personal restrictions, devaluation, or violation of others or self (American Psychological Association, 2018).

Finally, soft masculinity is an emerging type of pan-East Asian masculinity coined in Jung's (2010) study of contemporary masculinity represented in popular culture in South Korea. This type of masculinity is a product of the transcultural flows of the combination of East Asian masculinities, particularly South Korea's *seonbi* (traditional *wen* masculinity/scholar-corporate-official) and Japan's *bishonen* (pretty boy) masculinities and the

global metrosexual masculinity. Here, the traditional notion of masculinity characterized by notions of competitiveness and conformity are replaced by a softer and feminine-friendly masculinity, which prioritize establishing connections and relationships (Ainslie, 2017). A man who lacks in aggressiveness, competitiveness, sexual dominance and conformity may be considered as embodying soft masculinity. This new form of masculinity has gained increasing presence in Southeast Asia, popularized by K-Pop idols who are known to be sensitive towards women, and have feminized appearance such as soft facial features, colored hair and make-up.

Notions of Masculinity in Asian Societies

The discourse on masculine hegemony centers on the ideal attributes or success recognized and valued in Asian society. In a study that investigates the different notions of masculine traits among men from East Asian region, Ng et al. (2008) found that having careers and wealth are ranked the most important attributes among men in China and Malaysia, while being a family man, a man of honor and being in control were regarded as important masculine attributes to those in Korea, Japan and Taiwan. Among the 10,934 Asian men interviewed, the results show significant masculinity traits in career, wealth, control, honor and family (Ng et al., 2008).

While similar form of hegemonic traits on masculinity have been observed across various Asian societies, there are also differences in the notion of masculinity within these cultures and societies due to their diversity. For example, in ancient imperial times, the fundamental structure of Chinese masculinity is based on the dichotomy of *wen* and *wu*, a concept considered to be the highest ideal of Chinese maleness. These two archetypes reside in the terrain of moral demands, self-restraint and resistance. According to Louie (2002), *wen* refers to the attainment of literature and cultural knowledge, while *wu* refers to the attainment of martial arts and other physical strengths. A man is only considered great if he attains one of the two archetypes. Another example is Japan's "salaryman" or referred to as white-collar workers. In the post-World War Two Japanese culture, "salaryman" was considered as the new masculine. These workers, or sometimes referred to as "corporate soldiers", were expected to value work and loyalty in the corporations where they worked (Dasgupta, 2000). Within this domain, male employees were often represented as the corporate ideal and masculine ideal. The salaryman masculinity is still prevalent in contemporary Japanese society.

A study on violence in marriages by Hayati et al. (2014) found a shift in masculinity among men in the rural Java, Indonesia. The study suggests a significant shift from traditional masculine values to a more egalitarian conjugal role. These traditional masculine beliefs include placing men in higher position (or status) in society, as well as in the family, education and

religion, thereby privileging them in the gender hierarchy. In fact, these men believe that they hold the higher power over women and children, viewing themselves as the leader and head of the family and marriage institution. Thus, the power relationship in the marriage has not only benefitted them but also validated their position in the institution. This can be seen in the case of the "traditionalists" cited in the study who used the Quran as a way to justify their dominant position in the society and claimed that domestic violence could be justified to "tame" their wives. Such instance shows how some men in Malay society tend to amalgamate customary laws (*adat*) and religion as a justification for dominance, patriarchy and male privilege (Peletz, 1994; Goh, 2012: 172). However, Hayati et al.'s study noted a shift in masculinity values among rural Javanese men who hold the belief that marriage should not be a site for men to control women, but rather an institution to achieve family aspirations. They are also cognizant of how contemporary society is beginning to celebrate women's positions, which shows a shift in power relations between the genders.

Another Indonesian notion of masculinity that challenges hegemonic masculinity is found among the Bugis, an ethnic group from South Sulawesi. Instead of the universally recognized two genders, the Bugis acknowledge five genders, including men, women, *calabai*, *calalai and bissu* (Graham, 2004 & 2016). The Bugis interpret the other three genders as feminine men, masculine women, and non-binary, respectively. For example, the *calabai* are born males who embrace feminine traits, but who do not consider themselves as women nor do they wish to be one. The *calabai* occupy a specific role in Bugis society, especially in wedding organization and preparation. These examples show the diversity of concept and practice of gender and masculinity in historical and contemporary Asia.

In the context of contemporary Brunei, gender identity, role and expression including masculinity are largely defined by the national philosophy of Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB). MIB is a revered national ideology that represented an amalgamation of Islamic values, Brunei Malay culture and Monarchic traditions. In juxtaposing the idealized Bruneian masculinity from global or western masculinity, Idris (2017: 203) argues that the main distinguishing factor is the cultural role that heavily influences Bruneian masculinity, in particular, the teachings of MIB. Through various state institutions, the teachings of MIB are promulgated and legitimized as a unified ideology with the adoption of Islamic values into the national identity. With this, Malayness is intricately tied to Islam under MIB. This is also reflected in the performance of gender roles among Bruneian Malay individuals according to fixed and assigned gender scripts imposed by the society. Anyone who deviates from such scripts could be regarded as un-Bruneian and thus a menace to the national identity (Naimah, 2002).

In general, Malay men in Brunei are assigned the role of "guardians of Islamic principles and Malay culture" (Saunders, 1994: 87), while women are expected to play a supportive role to bolster the Malay Muslim patriarchal system. Traditionally, Malay men are the breadwinners and decision makers while women are expected to be the obedient and submissive wives. In addition, other characteristics unique to the Bruneian context include the expectations of Malay men to fulfill spiritual obligations, family responsibilities and obligations as a son to support ageing parents, and as a grandfather to help take care of their grandchildren while their parents are at work (Idris et al., 2019). Such gender scripts and societal norms have been maintained and perpetuated by state, educational, cultural and religious institutions.

Borrowing West and Zimmerman's concept of *doing gender,* Ho (2019) argues that gender binary and Malayness go hand-in-hand in the everyday interaction in Brunei. In order to subscribe to the gender binary that exudes Malayness, a set of deeds and doings as simple as speaking Bruneian Malay and dressing in Malay clothes are expected. By performing Malayness in this way, the cultural hegemony of the MIB identity can be validated and maintained. For example, when it comes to clothing etiquette of men and women, "appropriate" attire is one that follows the Islamic way (Chuchu 2005: 12). Cross dressing is not only considered socially unacceptable but is also a chargeable offence under the Sharia Penal Code Order of 2013. In the case of a Bruneian civil servant charged for cross dressing at a public place, the prosecutor invoked the moral argument that his "actions were a reflection of moral decadence as it damages the Malay traditional way of life and religion … If this is not dealt with, it can lead to the spread of social disorder such as homosexuality, free sexual relations, drug abuse and so on" (*Brunei Times*, 11 March 2015). This shows that individuals are discouraged to embody different types of masculinity outside the heteronormative ideals as the authorities often exercise control over the constructions of masculinity within the state in order to maintain Malayness and its masculinity hegemony.

Methodology

This study deploys a qualitative approach for data collection. Through selective sampling, sixteen participants aged between 20 to 26 years old were recruited: nine were male and seven were female. All participants were middle class Malay Muslim Bruneians. To gain insights into the perceptions of participants on notions of masculinity, in-depth interviews with open-ended questions were conducted. Some interviews were carried out face-to-face in person, others were done through video calls via online social applications such as *WhatsApp* and

FaceTime due to the pandemic of COVID-19. The duration of each interview session lasted between 60 minutes and 120 minutes. The interviews were conducted in both English and Malay, depending on the preference of individual participants. The data were transcribed, reviewed and analyzed, which included interpreting responses, summarizing and categorizing significant responses under three specific themes: attributes of masculinity, expected societal roles of men and determining factors (religion, culture, media and others). We adapted the masculine traits and attributes posited in Ford et al. (1998), and the data from the other two themes were directly extracted from the responses of the participants respectively.

Findings

As mentioned above, the interview data were categorized into three themes: attributes of masculinity, expected societal roles of men and determining factors (religion, culture, media and others). Table 1 below shows the summarized responses of the interview from all sixteen participants:

Participants (P.), Age, Gender, Occupation	1. Attributes of masculinity	2. Expected societal role of men	3. Determining factors (religion, culture, media and others)
P.1 **25, Male, Student**	Physically fit, dominant, alpha-male, strong, independent, not showing emotions.	Leader: head of the family. Provider: provides financially, the breadwinner of the family.	Religion and Media: Participant defined masculinity by his surroundings, from his friends as well as films and books.
P.2 **22, Male, Student, Social media manager**	Assertive, leader, physically fit, more superior than women.	Leader: a father, head of the family. Provider: providing *nafkah* (financial support), teaching and fulfilling religious obligations within the family.	Religion and Culture: Participant defined masculinity by the way he was brought up; and socialization from family, friends and other institutions, including MIB.
P.3 **20, Male, Student**	Lack of emotions, macho, attracts women, facial hair and heterosexual.	Responsibility: expected to get married, have kids and have a good job, carry out and conform to gender-based roles. Provider: being successful, defined by having a job, wife and kids.	Religion and Culture: Participant learned about masculinity and gender roles through social institutions and MIB when growing up.

P.4 **23, Male,** **Unemployed**	Dominant, breadwinner, leader, acting tough, showing less emotions and physique.	Leader: decision maker Responsibility: conforming to gender-based roles. Provider: being financially stable.	Culture and Media: media taught the participant from a young age how a masculine male should look and act.
P.5 **25, Male,** **Student**	Strong, brave, different from being a woman, confident, strength and power.	Responsibility: hard work, having greater roles in society (than a woman), carry out gender-based roles.	Religion and Culture: participant juxtaposed Brunei culture to the West.
P.6 **23, Male,** **Student**	Physically fit, responsible for the family and financially independent.	Leader: head of their family. Provider: financially stable and is able to provide for the family.	Religion: Participant believes that religion teaches the right way for each gender to act.
P.7 **26, Male,** **Marine** **engineer**	Strong, assertive and confident.	Leader: in the family and in his profession.	Media: influenced mainly by Malaysian popular culture.
P.8 **24, Male,** **Unemployed**	Strong, fearless, charismatic and powerful.	Leader: head of the family, make decisions. Provider: offers protection for family. Responsibility: performing gender-based roles.	Media: popular culture such as films and social media.
P.9 **Male,** **Unemployed**	Authoritative, protective, tough, suppress feelings and confident.	Responsibility: to lead, provide and protect.	Media: participant's notion of masculinity is influenced by a sport idol.
P.10 **22, Female,** **Student**	Strong, not vulnerable, physically fit, macho, strong, well-mannered and respectful.	Leader: head of the family, perform religious obligations for the family. Responsibility: marry a good woman to carry the bloodline.	Religion and Culture: participant reflected on the masculinity of her father and male family members.

P.11 **22, Female,** **Student**	Physically fit, heterosexual, suppress emotions, dominant and strong.	Leader: leadership roles in the business industry. Provider: being the breadwinner of the family, responsible for the financial stability of the family, especially when married.	Religion and Culture: participant regards Bruneian culture as conservative, which informs her notion of masculinity.
P.12 **22, Female,** **Student**	Rough, aggressive-looking, tough, muscular bodies and alpha male.	Provider, Protector and Leader of the family	Religion, Culture and Media: participant distinguished the masculinity between Muslim-Malay men and Korean men (referring to K-Pop idols).
P.13 **24, Female,** **Student**	Physical and mental strength, emotionally stable, gentleman, respectful and protective.	Provider: being the breadwinner. Protector: knowing how to take care of themselves and others, especially their family.	Culture: participant mentioned how the Malay culture shaped her notion of masculinity.
P.14 **22, Female,** **Student**	Empathic, responsible, reliable, confident, compassionate, independent, strong, tall, fit, muscular, lean, tough and emotionally reserved.	Leader, Provider and Protector of the family	Culture: Participant mentioned the differences between Bruneian and Western culture in shaping and defining masculinity.
P15 **25, Female,** **Part-time** **student**	Confident, big, tall and muscular.	Leader, protector, provider: Finish school, find a good job, get married and support the family.	Religion and Culture: Participant mentioned the role of MIB in shaping Bruneians' perceptions of masculinity.
P.16 **20, Female,** **Student**	Physically and emotionally strong, bold, leadership qualities and independent.	Leader and Provider: lead the family and provide financial support.	Religion, Culture and Media: Participant mentioned religion, family education and popular culture in shaping and defining masculinity.

1. *Attributes of masculinity*

Under this theme, several notions and concepts emerged that reflected the participants' perceptions of masculinity. Traits and attributes such as being physically fit and capable, being assertive and emotionally tough, being heterosexual and take leadership in the family, being financially stable and independent, were all recognized as the normative ideals of masculinity.

The notion of *being physically fit* was identified by the majority of the participants, both male and female, associating the notion with manly attitudes, appearance and attractiveness. Participants' responses:

"The standard definition of masculinity is it would be like *abang sado* (Malay slang for someone with a muscular build)." P.11, Female, 22

"I think masculine is people who carry lift weights, I'm not saying women who lift weights are masculine, but it signifies masculinity." P.2, Male, 22

"I think physically, having a toned body, or a deep voice, rugged looks. And when we look at the word masculine, the first thing that pops up in my head is always the type of guys who'd go to the gym and have ripped toned bodies because in media taught us that from a young age on how a masculine male should look like" P.4, Male, 24

It was found that 10 out of the 16 participants also associated men's physicality with capability and strength to the meaning of masculinity. In addition, the expectations and idolization of the ideal bodies were also mentioned by both male and female participants.

"For someone to be masculine, the only thing that comes to my head is being strong… [are] able to do a lot of things, able to carry things... my father thinks so too." Female, 22

"Having those certain traits, like being strong and brave, different from women." Male, 25

"Because it's always been more about power, so if someone is strong, if someone knows how to hold themselves while taking care of other people, speaks in a certain tone, then they are seen as masculine." P.13, Female, 24

When asked about the ideal body, a male participant postulated how men are expected to look muscular and fit to be considered as masculine:

"If your body is just not built to make muscles that quick, you get really insecure. You're seen as less of a man." P.3, Male, 20

Another male participant mentioned how he looked up to men with good physique:

"I idolize them… because they have an ideal shape of body." P.6, Male, 23

Heteronormative codes were also found during analysis, referring to the physical aspects of heterosexuality or heteronormative ideals. Participants refer to heterosexuality as an indicator as well as means of showing macho-ness and the ability to attract women. Both male and female participants expressed how being or identifying as heterosexual is what defines masculinity in Brunei, though not all participants agreed.

"I grew up being told [that] a straight man has a deep voice and a 'manly' attitude." P.4, Male, 23

"Macho, facial hair that's something masculine… [and] the ability to attract women with your confidence... another definition of masculine to me is being straight, once you hit that like bisexual or homosexual mark… [you are] at the bottom." P.3, Male, 20

"Being masculine is what the Bruneian think of being macho, like you have to have this built body, that shows you as a true man.", P.10, Female, 22

"... to narrow it down in Brunei, being masculine is a heterosexual male." stated another 22-year-old female participant (P.11).

When asked if appearance and how one dresses affected how they define and view other men, the majority of the participants agreed that appearance does not give off much indication, not as well as mannerisms do.

"Yes, I'd say that. How people look and how people dress… but then if you want to look at it in the most general sense, people would look at appearance, but if you would want to look at it in a deeper sense, you need to get to know that person first, to know like if they are masculine or feminine." P.2, Male, 22

"For me fifty-fifty, sometimes for me it's how they act or think that shows... that lets me know if he's masculine. Attire wise not really. Appearance is just initial." P.1, Male, 25

"I feel like it doesn't really show how masculine you are. I just think it only shows how open you are to wearing whatever you want." P.3, Male, 20

Findings also showed similar notions from female participants:

"No, appearance and how one dresses affects how one express themselves but it doesn't affect how you define masculinity, K-Pop is good example because the way the male [idols] dress, that challenges the traditional masculinity [but] if the guys in Brunei dress up just like the K-Pop idols they won't receive the same positive response." P.11, Female, 22

"I don't think so, a man can wear a dress and still be masculine." posited a 25 year-old female participant (P.15).

Lastly, the traditional notions of masculinity were also found to be changing. Some male participants expressed new forms, meanings and concepts of masculinity when asked whether they view themselves as masculine:

"I wouldn't say so, I think I'm half masculine half feminine…. Yes, hybridity." asserted P.2, 22 years old.

"I define myself as androgynous, personality wise... as I am often told I have both masculine and feminine traits." P.4, 24 years old.

"I would say I'm somewhere in between. I find feminine energy really inspiring, you need to embrace your inner femininity to be a better man." P.8, 24 years old

"I'm not considered as traditionally masculine, but I want to [challenge] that tradition. I don't think men should conform to societal expectations." P.3. 20 years old

2. *Societal expectations*

Expected masculine roles was also a prevailing theme that contributed to the meanings and ideas of masculinity. Aspects of familial obligations such as being the leader, provider and protector were mentioned by both male and female participants. Male participants especially, stated that these expectations and roles were taught to be recognized and valued as future obligations to lead their families. The same participants were also asked if they conform to the expected roles and what it meant for them to fulfill mentioned roles.

"Usually, the most important thing that they would expect is to be the person that is responsible… The person who provides; a breadwinner... For me, it's what I've been taught. If you have a family and when you have children, usually, I have the responsibility to show my children on how to be responsible and how to handle things, especially things like this, real life situation type of things." P.1, Male, 25

"[It's] important to be responsible for their family. To be financially independent enough to make a living with a family… because every woman would want to feel secure with someone who is capable of being responsible… [I would feel] insecure, less confident because society's standards expect me to." P.6, Male, 23

"[My parents expect] me to get married, and to get kids, but first they expect me to get a good job that will make them look good, like a lawyer or doctor, these traditional jobs any Asian family wants you know. And their whole view on happiness is having these necessary things: a job, wife, kids." P.3, Male, 20

Similarly, female participants also mentioned familial responsibilities that are expected of men:

"Men are expected to have leadership roles, being the breadwinner and usually expected to be in the business industry, basically just a good job." P.11, 25 years-old

Another female participant (P.10) agreed stating:

"You're expected to be able to lead [your] family, provide for the family, protect the family and so on and so forth. These roles are reinforcing the ideas of men as being sort of like protectors, per say, for others."

The same participant disagreed on the societal roles expected from men. In her own words:

"I don't necessarily believe that this is all there is to what masculinity can be. Traditional notions usually limit the possibilities of what others can do, but because we're in a contemporary age where different ideologies are emerging, I think that having a broader spectrum within masculinity itself should be considered. People my age would agree."

Further disagreements on the enforcement of societal expectations and roles as well as masculine attributes were also mentioned by male participants.

A 24-year-old male participant (P.8) stated that: "[It is] still the traditional male role as the provider and protector. The male ideology has not changed much in recent times… I think society has unrealistic and unhealthy expectations for men."

"Men cannot express their feelings and must act tough all the time. If they express their feelings they are seen as weak. As a man, I am expected to be tough. Comments and criticisms should not hurt my feelings. But sometimes it does hurt." P.9, 23 years-old.

"If a male individual dresses so well, they would be perceived as 'gay'. But if they don't dress well, they would be perceived as a slob and aren't masculine." P.4, 23

Along with the disagreements, two male participants voiced out their thoughts on the traditional masculinity and the hegemonic ideals in Brunei:

"It's toxic once it affects other people and yourself…. A lot of pressure mentally…. that's a real struggle a lot of men don't talk about…. A lot of men don't admit that they're hurting because it's seen as less masculine for some reason masculinity is something very important to have because socially if you're not a certain type of man people won't accept you to their circle." P.3, Male, 20 years old

A 22-year-old male participant (P.2) recounted the time he was catcalled in public:

"I tend to wear something different, I wear something that people don't see as normal for men to wear like maybe floral overalls…. I wore it to the mall in Brunei, and I got catcalled, not even by men, but women too…. I guess it's because of how I dress, because it's so different…. I guess it's not normal for them to see men wearing it? So, they're like '*kacau, kacau*' (let's tease) you know? I was alone during that time so I guess it was their opportunity to like, they were in a group so they felt they had more power against me. That's what I feel."

3. *Determining factors*

When asked what contributed to participants' notions on masculinity, three factors were specifically mentioned: Religion, culture and media.

> "Correct me if I'm wrong but in Islam they say that as a husband and a son, you are expected to have all of those responsibilities, responsibilities to your parents, future wife and family that you have to be the one who can carry those responsibilities, to be the breadwinner, to carry all the religious acts for the wife and kids." P.1, Male, 25 years old

"MIB taught us… that men should have short hair and if you have long hair you're impersonating a woman... I guess it does play a big part in showing what masculinity is." P.2, Male, 22 years old

When asked regarding participants' hobbies and idols, male participants were found to idolize both male and female figures, including singers, football stars and athletes.

> "[Referring Noh Salleh, a Malaysian singer] He is the epitome of masculinity. I would like to be as successful as he is in work and in life." P.7, 26 years old.

> "A retired ex-navy seal, by the name of David Goggins… He's the type of person who I look up to. Sometimes in a way he showed that to disregard any emotions and just do it." P.1, 25 years old

> "In terms of resilience, Taylor Swift. In terms of, not being afraid to be unique, Lady Gaga…. She reminds us all we can be whatever we want, we can have different phases in our life, it doesn't define our entire career." P.3, 20 years old

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings show the notions of masculinity among the participants, which reflect the behaviors, lifestyles and hegemonic ideals of young Malay men in Brunei. The norms and values of these young men are recognized within their socio-cultural contexts in defining and shaping masculinity. As "hegemonic masculinity is supported by an alliance of cultural ideal and institutional power" (Goh, 2012: 172), we found that collective societal expectations on men in Brunei are promoted by institutions, families and peers in reinforcing gender scripts

and meanings of masculinity. The results from this study show the existence of masculine hegemony among Malay men in Brunei.

Our findings suggest that Bruneian men are expected to conform to societal roles that center on responsibilities like career, culture, honor, religion, and the ability to provide for the family. This corroborates with the study by Ng et al. (2008), which shows similar collective responsibilities that imposes masculine norms and values among Asian men. Similar to observations on Malay masculinity in Malaysia (Khoo, 2005), our informants expressed that having a family and becoming a "protector" and "provider" in the form of a husband and father is an important means of defining oneself as a masculine man in Brunei. Furthermore, scholars who have conducted studies of masculinity among Muslim men in Australia and the United Kingdom found that the ability to provide for their wife and family, and to gain community and professional recognition give them a sense of masculine pride and a source of meaning to life (Dwyer et al., 2008; Roose, 2016). These men often regard Islam as a key identity marker from which they drew inspiration to work and study hard towards their educational and career aspirations (Dwyer et al., 2008).

On the other hand, our study suggests that some men showed disagreements on the hegemonic ideals as they recognize the negative impacts from the normative expectations associated with the ideals. According to the findings, some male participants voiced out their concerns over the narrow and homogenous definition of the attributes of a man. One reason for this could be linked to Connell's (1995) notion of marginalized masculinity. Connell contends that men living in the margin are often seen as inferior because they are not part of the majority. While her concept referred primarily to the intersection between class and race in America, the dissonance found in the present study may suggest other factors such as alternative expressions of sexuality outside the heteronormative spectrum.

Our findings also show that culture, religion and media are the main contributing factors in defining masculinity among Malay youth in Brunei. Most of the participants, both male and female, asserted that MIB has shaped their ideas of masculinity, including reinforcing gender scripts and bodily gestures in the ways a man should act, speak and dress. For instance, it is argued that the ideal external identity (*identiti luaran*) of a Malay Bruneian is regulated by cultural and religious norms; for example, a person is not permitted to wear clothing that mirror the opposite gender (Chuchu, 2005; cf. De Sondy, 2014). In the Malay society, where the gender roles between men and women are strictly separated, effeminate men are frequently regarded as homosexual or gay as any digression from the gender dictum is perceived as emasculation (Goh, 2012). In our findings, a male participant recounted the time when he was

verbally harassed at the mall for wearing what was considered feminine. This attests to Goh's (2014) argument on heteronormative obligations of Malay men in Malaysia – when they are not fulfilled or practiced, gender scripts are imposed in order to maintain *Malayness* and its masculine hegemony. And under such regime, social values are enforced on some (nonconforming) men more than the others. Hence, it is problematic for individuals who try to embody different types of masculinity outside the heteronormative ideals, due to the religious and ethnic obligations from the state in enforcing Islam and Malayness. This in turn gives the authorities the power to exercise control over the constructions of masculinity in order to maintain the Malayness and its masculine hegemony (Goh, 2014).

Gill et al. (2005: 38) argue that there is an emergence of a new kind of representational practice in mainstream popular culture, which depict "male bodies in idealized and eroticized fashions, coded in ways that give permission for them to be looked at and desired". This signifies a shift from the conventional media practice of objectifying the female body to the male body, which has now also become an "object of the gaze rather than simply the bearer of the look (Gill et al., 2005: 39). This new form of objectification points to an under-discussed issue of commodification and sexualization of the male body promoted by popular culture and the media (Prud'homme, 2015). Evidently, in our study, the media has been one of the defining tools for participants in their outlook on masculinity. The fetishization of muscles is manifested in our informants' perception on the ways in which muscular physique is seen as a social marker of masculinity.

On the other hand, a male participant, who is an avid fan of the Korean popular culture, stated how his androgynous (or what people perceive as "feminine") appearance and style of fashion was heavily influenced by Korean boy bands. Nonetheless, it is not just the physical body that attracted their admiration but also the personality and perceived roles and responsibilities of the male idols that impressed them. The commonalities that are found in these male celebrities are their success in career, marriage, family and religious life. They are perceived and praised as leaders, a family-man as well as being culturally and religiously competent by fans and the media. For example, Malaysian singers, Noh Salleh has been a constant admiration for fans for performing religious deeds such as reciting and learning the Quran (KL Press, 2019). According to two male participants, men who they idolize are seen as an important figure and essential for being successful in their career and future aspirations.

It can be argued that heteronormativity and its associating privileges dominate the masculine hegemony in Brunei as the findings show the existence of toxic masculinity within the Malay society. The results show how male aggression, forms of harassment, and

homophobia are to some extent, recognized and exercised among men and women; to perpetuate dominance, power and control over other men that are not recognized within the standards of normative masculinity in Brunei. The male participants who expressed their dissention on societal expectations and gender scripts only affirm how toxic masculinity can harm the mental health and well-being of men who live in the margin of masculinity.

Traditional notions of masculinity are found to have evolved and transformed in Brunei, and new forms of masculinity have emerged. Results in this study show how some participants who expressed disagreements with the traditional concept of masculinity have also incorporated new forms and meanings of masculinity to their understanding and practice. Our findings suggest a shift in the conceptualization of masculinity among the younger generation compared to their predecessors. Young Bruneian men are seen to increasingly embody forms of soft masculinity, not necessarily in physical attributes or bodily techniques, but in the ways that they challenge traditional gender scripts and possess a heightened awareness on the potential negative consequences of hegemonic and toxic masculinity. This is notwithstanding their unwitting conformity to traditional notions of masculinity due to societal pressures and expectations.

This study has provided preliminary discussions on the various notions of masculinity among young Malay men in contemporary Brunei. While the hegemonic ideals of masculinity based on gender, societal and familial roles dominate the Brunei society, new forms of masculinity are emerging and are becoming more accepted among the younger generation. The discussions on notions of masculinity in Brunei alluded to various contradictions between the negotiation between traditions and modernity that are at work in tandem: on one hand, our informants cited the importance of traditional gender roles and normative gender expectations informed and regulated by religion and culture, they are, nonetheless, also influenced by global forces of fashion, media, popular culture and idealization of the male physique including the fetishization of muscles and physical fitness.

Some of our informants from this generation have demonstrated awareness of the harmful ways over how traditional or toxic masculinity can be detrimental to men, women and society. Our study shows that notions of masculine identity do not exist in a single narrative. It is perhaps more apt to regard masculinity as *masculinities*, which are constantly being negotiated and redefined across and within culture, society and individual. This study suggests the following areas for further research on masculinity in Brunei: the intersections between masculinity and social class, religiosity and education; the role of women in maintaining hegemonic and normative masculinity; the relations among body image, health and self-

esteem; and the ways in which Bruneians exercise agentive power to resist or conform to hegemonic masculinity.

References

Ainslie, M. J. (2017). Korean soft masculinity vs. Malay hegemony: Malaysian masculinity and Hallyu fandom. *Korea Observer* 48(3): 609-638.

Alexander, B.K. (2006). *Performing Black Masculinity: Race, Culture, and Queer Identity*. Lanham: AltaMira Press.

American Psychological Association. (2018). *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Boys and Men* https://www.apa.org/about/policy/boys-men-practice-guidelines.pdf

Brunei Times. (2015). Bruneian Civil Servant Fined $1,000 for Cross Dressing. 11 March. https://btarchive.org/news/national/2015/03/11/bruneian-civil-servant-fined-1-000-cross-dressing

Cheng, C. (1999). Marginalized masculinities and hegemonic masculinity: An introduction. *The Journal of Men's Studies*, *7*(3): 295-315.

Chuchu, J. (2005). Penghayatan "Bersepadu Memperkasa Mandiri Bangsa" Dalam Konteks Falsafah Negara [An Assessment on "United in Empowering the Nation" in the Context of National Philosophy]. Paper presented in Seminar Sempena Hari Kebangsaan ke-21. http://www.bruneiresources.com/pdf/nd05_falsafah.pdf

Connell, R. W. (2005). *Masculinities* (2nd ed.). Berkeley, California: University of California Press.

Courtenay, W. H. (2011). *Dying to be men: Psychosocial, environmental and biobehavioral directions in promoting the health of men and boys.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Dasgupta, R. (2000). "Performing Masculinities? The 'Salaryman' at Work and Play", *Japanese Studies, 20*(2): 189-200.

De Sondy, A. (2013). *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic.

Dwyer, C., Shah, B. & Sanghera, G. (2008). From Cricket Lover to Terror Suspect – Challenging Representations of Young British Muslim Men. *Gender, Place and Culture, 15*(2): 117-136.

Fagot, B. et al. (1985). Differential Reactions to Assertive and Communicative Acts of Toddler Boys and Girls. *Child Development 56*(6):1499–1505.

Ferrante, J. (2008). *Sociology: A Global Perspective* (7th ed.). Belmont, California: Thomson Wadsworth.

Ford, J. B., Voli, P. K., Honeycutt Jr, E. D., & Casey, S. L. (1998). Gender role portrayals in Japanese advertising: A magazine content analysis. *Journal of Advertising*, 27(1), 113–124.

Gill, R. et al. (2005). Body projects and the regulation of normative masculinity. *Body and Society, 11*(1), 37-62.

Goh, J. N. (2012). The homosexual threat: Appraising masculinities and men's sexualities in Malaysia. In J. Hopkins and J.C.H Lee (eds.), *Thinking Through Malaysia: Culture and Identity in 21st Century* 167-186. Petaling Jaya: SIRD.

Goh, J. N. (2014). Fracturing interwoven heteronormativities in Malaysian Malay-Muslim masculinity: A research note. *Sexualities, 17* (5/6): 600-617.

Gough, B. & Robertson, S. (2017). A review of research on men's health. In R. F. Levant & Y. G. Wong (eds.), *The Psychology of Men and Masculinities* 197– 228. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Graham, S. (2004). It's Like One of Those Puzzles: Conceptualising Gender Among Bugis, *Journal of Gender Studies*, 13(2): 107-116.

Graham, S. (2016). What we can learn from an Indonesian ethnicity that recognizes five genders. *The Conversation*, 17 June. https://theconversation.com/what-we-can-learn-from-an-indonesian-ethnicity-that-recognizes-five-genders-60775.

Guy-Ryan, J. (2016). In Indonesia, Non-Binary Gender is a Centuries-Old Idea. https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/in-indonesia-nonbinary-gender-is-a-centuriesold-idea.

Hayati, E., Emmelin, M., & Eriksson, M. (2014). "We no longer live in the old days": a qualitative study on the role of masculinity and religion for men's views on violence within marriage in rural Java, Indonesia. *BMC Women's Health, 14*(58). https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1472-6874-14-58

Ho, H. (2019). Women Doing Malayness in Brunei Darussalam. *SARE: Southeast Asian Review of English*, 56(2): 47-165.

Idris, D. R. (2017). Health help-seeking by men in Brunei Darussalam: masculinities and 'doing' male identities across the life course. Durham theses, Durham University. http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/12438/

Idris, D. R., Forrest, S., Brown, S. (2019). Health helpseeking by men in Brunei Darussalam: masculinities and 'doing' male identities across the life course. *Sociology of Health and Illness, 41*(6): 1071-1087.

Jung, S. (2010). *Korean masculinities and transcultural consumption: Yonsama, Rain, Oldboy, K-Pop idols*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Khoo, G. C. (2006). *Reclaiming Adat: Contemporary Malaysian Film and Literature*. Singapore: National University of Singapore Press.

Kimmel, M., & Messner, M. (2010). *Men's lives* (8th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

KL Press. (2019). Noh Hujan Baca al-Quran, Mizz Nina Tolong Checkkan Bacaan [Noh Hujan Recites the Quran, Mizz Nina Assists]. August. https://www.klpress.dnqj.my/blog/2019/08/03/noh-hujan-baca-al-quran-mizz-nina-tolong-checkkan-bacaan/

Louie, K. (2002). Theorizing Chinese masculinity: Society and gender in China. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Madaan, N. et al. (2018). Analyze, Detect and Remove Gender Stereotyping from Bollywood Movies. *Proceedings of Machine Learning Research, 81*: 1-14.

Naimah S. T. (2013). Brunei Darussalam: Royal absolutism and the modern state. *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia* 13: Monarchies in Southeast Asia. https://kyotoreview.org/issue-13/brunei-darussalam-royal-absolutism-and-the-modern-state/

Ng, C. J., Tan, H. M., & Low, W. Y. (2008). What do Asian men consider as important masculinity attributes? Findings from the Asian Men's Attitudes to Life Events and Sexuality (MALES) Study. *Journal of Men's Health, 5*(4): 350–355.

O'Neil, J. M. (2008). Summarizing 25 years of research on men's gender role conflict using the Gender Role Conflict Scale: New research paradigms and clinical implications. *The Counseling Psychologist, 36*(3): 358–445.

O'Neil, J. M. (2013). Gender role conflict research 30 years later: An evidence-based diagnostic schema to assess boys and men in counseling. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, *91*(4): 490–498.

O'Neil, J. M. (2015). *Men's gender role conflict: Psychological costs, consequences, and agenda for change.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

O'Neil, J. M., & Renzulli, S. (2013). Introduction to the special section: Teaching the psychology of men: A call to action. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 14*(3), 221–229.

Peletz, M. G. (1994). Neither reasonable nor responsible: contrasting representations of masculinity in a Malay society. *Cultural Anthropology*, *9*(2): 135-178.

Pleck, J. H. (1981). *The Myth of Masculinity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Pope, H., Phillips, K.A. and Olivardia, R. (2002). *The Adonis Complex: How to identify, treat and prevent body obsession in men and boys*. Freepress.

Prud'homme, J. (2015). Popular culture and the male body: a new challenge. *Public Discourse: The Journal of Witherspoon Institute,* July. https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2015/07/15310/

Roose, J. M. (2016). *Political Islam and Masculinity: Muslim Men in Australia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Saunders, G. (1994). *A History of Brunei*. London: Routledge.

Sharman, J. (1975). *Rocky Horror Picture Show.* 20th Century Fox.

Staples, R. (1982). *Black Masculinity: The Black Male's Role in American Society.* San Francisco: Black Scholar Press.

Wallace, M. (1979). *Black macho and the myth of the superwoman.* New York: Dial Press.