



The Effect of Toxic Masculinity on Father Involvement in Parenting in The Toba Batak Tribe

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the Effect of Toxic Masculinity on Father Involvement in Parenting in the Toba Batak Tribe. From the results of research and data analysis conducted on Toba Batak fathers, the following conclusions can be drawn. The results of the study indicate that there is a significant negative influence between toxic masculinity and father involvement in parenting. This means that the stronger the values of toxic masculinity held by a father, the lower his involvement in childcare, both emotionally, physically, and communicatively. The majority of Toba Batak fathers in this study were in the moderate category in terms of involvement (father involvement), especially in the aspects of engagement and accessibility. However, involvement in the aspect of responsibility was relatively higher, which indicates that fathers tend to focus more on fulfilling economic needs than emotional closeness with children. Most respondents also had a moderate level of toxic masculinity, with the most dominant aspects being violence, misogyny, and greed. This indicates that traditional masculinity values still strongly influence the way fathers play their roles in the family. This study shows that the tendency towards toxic masculinity behavior contributes 20.7% to father involvement in parenting, while the remaining 79.3% is influenced by other factors.

Keywords : Toxic Masculinity, Father Involvement, Parenting, Batak Tribe

INTRODUCTION

As a vast country encompassing thousands of islands, Indonesia boasts a rich cultural heritage. This diversity is reflected in its customs, languages, and stunning natural beauty. Social life in Indonesia is inseparable from the influence of culture and traditions. One cultural aspect that remains relevant and influences social dynamics in Indonesia is patriarchal culture.

Rokhmansyah (Husnah, Novianafari, & Sholihat, 2023) explains that patriarchy is a structure that positions men as individuals who dominate and hold the primary authority in all matters. Simply put, patriarchy refers to a social system in which men have a dominant position or greater power than women. We can see the dominance of men's roles in various

social fields, such as education, economics, social, and politics. One of the tribes that adheres to this culture is the Toba Batak tribe from North Sumatra. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the Batak tribe makes up 44.75% of the ethnic population in North Sumatra, and 25.62% of that population is from Tapanuli/Toba.

The Toba Batak people have a social system that places men in the primary role within the family, with the expectation that they will become strong and responsible leaders. The patriarchal culture adopted in this society is not necessarily negative, but rather a system of values that has been passed down through generations and shapes patterns of social interaction within the family. These values reflect the significant responsibility for men in the family, especially in economic matters and customs. In line with research by Gultom et al. (Fiqrunnisa, Yuliadi, & Saniatuzzulfa, 2023) it was revealed that patriarchy in Toba Batak society contributes to significant gender inequality, particularly in terms of access to education, employment, and participation in decision-making. However, in some cases, high expectations for men to demonstrate assertiveness and control can lead to behavioral patterns that limit their emotional expression. Research conducted by Novalina et al. (2021) explains that this culture has a significant impact on men's mental health, where they feel pressured to demonstrate power and control.

Data from the North Sumatra Gender and Child Information System (SIGA) shows that cases of violence against women and children remain high, with 1,495 cases of violence against women and children reported, with men being the most frequent perpetrators (999 cases). This violence occurred within marital relationships (218 cases), by parents (210 cases), and within the household (838 cases) (SIGA, 2023). Furthermore, a report from Katadata noted that the number of divorces due to economic problems in North Sumatra reached 465 cases in 2023 (Suryadi, Soriha, & Rahmawati, 2018).

Several cases that occurred in North Sumatra also show the impact of toxic masculinity in the family. A man in Medan hit and strangled his wife because he felt his wife was too supportive of the family's decisions rather than his own (Detik, 2024), a case of domestic violence in Tarutung, where a father abused his own daughter until she suffered serious injuries (Kimberley Kimberley & Dewi, 2024). Then the case in Medan, where a father threatened his child with a machete because of a family conflict. The case in Padangsidimpuan, where a father addicted to alcohol and drugs committed domestic violence to the point of raping his child. A case of domestic violence by a member of the North Sumatra Regional Police. Finally, a North Sumatra Regional Police officer was reported by his wife for acts of violence, which reflects male dominance in the family and the use of violence as a form of control.

The concept of toxic masculinity is a growing culture of men refusing to participate in domestic work such as housework or childcare. The most obvious difference in parenting between mothers and fathers is that fathers, on average, spend less time with their children than mothers. In Toba Batak families, the father's role is crucial as a breadwinner and a traditional practitioner. Fathers are responsible for instilling cultural values in their

children, both in daily life and at formal events. However, negative behaviors, such as spending time outside the home, can also affect family dynamics (Hidayati & Sari, 2020)

To obtain initial data, researchers conducted interviews with several fathers in North Sumatra. One of them was a father with the initials J, aged 56: "For me, I give my son more freedom than my daughter... if he wants permission to go out to play, let him, as long as he can take care of himself. It's different with my daughter, I have to keep a close eye on her. I'm worried if I let her go out there, and if my daughter looks sad, I always tell her, 'Boys shouldn't cry, it's embarrassing if a girl sees him crying, because I don't like seeing my son look weak, then when it comes to housework, my mother and I have divided it up, tasks like cooking and cleaning the house are my daughter's responsibility."

The interview with respondent J above shows differences in the treatment of boys and girls. Respondent J gives boys more freedom to play outside. Conversely, he feels the need to closely monitor girls because he is worried about their safety if they are allowed to play outside. The respondent also revealed that he forbids boys from crying, saying that crying is a sign of weakness and can embarrass them in front of girls. This is one form of toxic masculinity parenting, which assumes that men must always be strong and not show emotion. Another form is differentiating jobs related to independence, such as cooking and cleaning the house, which are considered women's responsibilities. This statement aligns with the findings of Williams' (Purba, Surbakti, Sari, & Panjaitan, 2024) research, which explains how patriarchal social norms shape gender role expectations within the family, inhibiting men from expressing emotions and causing inequality in the division of household chores.

Then the researcher also conducted an interview with the father with the initials M, aged 52 years. "Hmmm....all this time, I'm the one who makes decisions, the mother just goes along with it... because my decisions as the head of the family are absolute in my opinion and I know what's best for my family."

Interviews with a respondent with the initials M revealed that he held a traditional view of masculinity, where he felt he was the head of the family with absolute authority in decision-making. This view reflects a tendency toward toxic masculinity, which indicates dominance and a sense of superiority, where he feels entitled to determine what is best for his family without involving his wife's opinion. This attitude can lead to an authoritarian parenting style that inhibits emotional engagement between father and child. This is in line with the findings of Shafer et al. (maryam Sobari, 2022) which showed that the higher the level of traditional masculinity a father adheres to, the lower his involvement in childcare.

This phenomenon can be found in various aspects of daily life. One example is seen in the film "Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap," where the character Pak Domu portrays a father who considers showing affection to his children a sign of weakness. He prefers to appear as a dominant figure, expecting his family members to always follow his opinion. This attitude not only creates an emotional distance between father and child but also negatively impacts the child's overall development (Andriyani, 2020).

Then the researcher conducted an interview with a father who has an eldest son, a father with the initials JS, aged 47. "When my son was little, I did limit my son when he played, once I forbade him from touching girls' toys like playing with cooking and playing

with dolls. And maybe several times every time I saw him want to play, I always reminded my son, I always said that boys should not play with dolls or they would be called sissies. I also always taught him to be strong. This is because he will be the one responsible for protecting his sisters from people with bad intentions out there."

The interview with a respondent with the initials JS showed that the respondent restricted his son from playing with toys considered feminine, such as dolls and cooking utensils, arguing that it was inappropriate for boys to do so. He reminded his son that playing with such toys could make him considered a "sissy," reflecting a negative stigma against feminine expression. Furthermore, the respondent emphasized the importance of strength in his son, teaching him that he must protect his sisters from external dangers. This view suggests that boys are burdened with expectations to always be strong and responsible, which is a form of toxic masculinity behavior. In this way, the respondent reinforces patriarchal norms that limit boys' freedom of expression and emotional development. This finding aligns with research by Wicaksono and Nur (2023), which states that toxic masculinity is shaped by social norms that require men to meet certain standards of masculinity, where leadership and protection roles are considered men's responsibilities.

The researcher also interviewed the last father with the initials S, aged 45. "Honestly, I feel less involved. I spend most of my time working. My wife takes care of the children. I feel like my job is just to earn money to cover food and education costs for them, so sometimes I don't really pay attention to how they're doing in school or their daily lives, because I think that's their mother's business, because she's better at those things. However, sometimes I also feel like my children are distancing themselves from me and becoming closer to their mother. When they need something or want to talk, they prefer to talk to their mother rather than me." (Primasari & Keliat, 2020),

Through interviews with respondent S, he admitted to feeling less involved in raising his children, as most of his time was spent working and earning a living. The respondent believed that his role was limited to providing financial support, while his wife played a greater role in caring for the children. The respondent believed that the children's education and daily life were the responsibility of their mother, whom he considered more skilled in these matters. He also realized that his children were increasingly distancing themselves from him and closer to their mother, which shows the impact of the lack of father involvement in parenting. This is in line with the statement of Mauluddia (2024) who emphasized that there is still a view that considers the obligation to raise children entirely the responsibility of a mother. This is also in line with the findings of Brandth & Kvande (Putri, Pratiwi, & Ismaya, 2020), which show that traditional masculinity norms still limit men's roles in parenting. Greater father involvement in parenting can help reduce traditional masculine stereotypes and encourage the emergence of the concept of caring masculinity.

In his research, Situmorang (Arsyia Fajarrini & Umam, 2023) also emphasized the importance of fathers' role in childcare and in building a positive self-concept in adolescents. He explained that low paternal involvement can hinder children from developing a healthy self-concept. Fathers' emotional involvement is crucial because it helps children feel secure and valued, enabling them to grow into confident individuals. This phenomenon highlights

the importance of understanding how toxic masculine norms can negatively impact father-child relationships. Therefore, in this study, the researcher aims to analyze the impact of toxic masculinity on father involvement in parenting among the Toba Batak community.

METHOD

According to Sugiyono a research method is a scientific approach to obtaining data for specific purposes and benefits. This study uses quantitative research methods. According to Azwar (Lisa Astini, Nur Afni Safarina, & Ella Suzanna, 2022) research using a quantitative approach focuses on analyzing numerical data processed through statistical methods. This approach is generally applied in inferential research aimed at testing hypotheses, where conclusions are based on the probability of error in rejecting the null hypothesis. With quantitative methods, researchers can identify the significance of differences between groups or the relationship between the variables studied. Generally, quantitative research involves large samples. This study is expected to reveal the influence of the variables studied, particularly the impact of toxic masculinity on father involvement in parenting among the Toba Batak people.

Research subjects refer to the individuals, groups, or objects that are the focus of a study. These subjects are the parties who provide the information or data necessary to achieve the research objectives. Sugiyono (Polii, 2019) explains that research subjects are the attributes or characteristics of the object being studied, and the selection of subjects is based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. Therefore, the subject criteria used in this study are as follows:

1. The father of the Toba Batak tribe who lives in North Sumatra.
2. Aged 35-50 years.
3. Have children aged 10-17 years.
4. Marital status intact and living with wife and children.

Population is a general area consisting of an object or subject that has certain characteristics and qualities determined by the researcher to be studied and after that conclusions are drawn (Kawilarang, 2021), The population taken in this study were fathers living in North Sumatra, who have children aged 10-17 years. The subject must be an analysis unit that is part of the Toba Batak community living in North Sumatra with the required characteristics. According to data released by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2024, the number of married male population in North Sumatra reached around 70,630 people.

Sampling is a procedure in which researchers take a portion of a population to determine the desired characteristics and traits of the population. The sample in this study was a portion of the Ayah population, which is part of the Toba Batak tribe in North Sumatra.

Based on the sample determination using G*power 3.1.9.7, the number of samples with an effect size level of 0.3, α error prob of 0.05, and power (1 - β error prob) of 0.80 is 84 people. Therefore, in this study, 84 fathers from North Sumatra will be involved as respondents.

The sampling techniques applied in this study were purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is a sample selection method based on certain characteristics or criteria that have been determined in accordance with the research objectives (Rahman, 2019). Meanwhile, snowball sampling is a sampling method that begins with a small number of data sources, which then expands as the data collection process progresses. This method is used when the initial data is deemed insufficient to meet the research needs, so the researcher seeks additional informants through recommendations from previous respondents (Andaru, 2019). By using purposive sampling and snowball sampling, researchers can obtain relevant samples in accordance with the research objectives they wish to achieve.

In this study, the data collection technique used was a psychological scale. This method aims to measure variables predetermined by the researcher. Respondents were asked to select one answer that best suited their characteristics by marking a cross (x). Psychological scales are systematic procedures for data collection designed to uncover psychological constructs and concepts underlying various aspects of an individual's personality (Utami, 2019). In this study, the scales used included the Toxic Masculinity scale and the Father Involvement scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Subject Overview

The population in this study were Toba Batak fathers aged 35–50 years old and residing in North Sumatra. Data were collected using a scale distributed online via Google Form. Subject descriptions were reviewed based on age, income, education, district, occupation, child's age, and child's gender. Furthermore, assumption tests were conducted on the toxic masculinity and father involvement variables, including normality, linearity, and hypothesis testing (Wati, Venny, Tantama, & Dwi Putra, 2021).

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis test used in this study is a simple *linear regression* using the SPSS software program for windows 26. Data analysis aims to see "The Effect of Toxic Masculinity on Father Involvement in Parenting in the Toba Batak Tribe". The data tested first meets the assumptions of normality and linearity (Na'immatusholilah, Hartatiana, & Sartika, 2021). H_a is accepted if the significance value is <0.05 or there is an influence of *toxic masculinity* on *father involvement* in parenting in the Toba Batak tribe and if H_0 is accepted if the significance value is >0.05 or there is no influence of *toxic masculinity* on *father involvement* in parenting in the Toba Batak tribe.

Table 1. Hypothesis Test Results

Model Summary ^b		R	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of
Model	R	Square	R Square	Error of

				the Estimate
1	,455a	,207	,198	9,13456
a. Predictors: (Constant), Toxic Masculinity				
b. Dependent Variable: Father Involvement				

Based on the analysis of the table above, it is known that *Toxic Masculinity* and *Father Involvement* have an R Square of 0.207 . From these results, it can be concluded that *Toxic Masculinity* has an influence on *Father Involvement* of 20.7%, while the remaining 79.3% is influenced by other factors.

Table 2. T Results

Model	Coefficients		Std.	t	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients			
(Constant)	106,963	6,829		15,663	,000
Toxic Masculinity	-,603	,130	-,455	-4,629	,000
a. Dependent Variable: FATHER INVOLVEMENT					

Based on the results of the regression analysis, the equation obtained is: $Y = 106.963 - 0.603X$. This means that for every one point increase in the *Toxic Masculinity level* , the *Father Involvement score* is predicted to decrease by 0.603 points. The results of the hypothesis test show a significant effect (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05), so Ha is accepted: The higher the *Toxic Masculinity level* , the lower the *Father Involvement* .

Discussion

Based on the results of the hypothesis test conducted in this study, it was found that there is a statistically significant negative influence between *toxic masculinity* on *father involvement* in parenting in the Toba Batak tribe. This is indicated by a significance value of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$), which means the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. The R Square value of *Toxic Masculinity* and *Father Involvement* is 0.207. From these results, it can be concluded that *toxic masculinity* contributes 20.7% to the variation of *Father Involvement* in

parenting. This means that there is an influence of *toxic masculinity* on *father involvement* in parenting in the Toba Batak tribe (Musthofa, 2020).

In other words, traditional masculine values are often associated with *toxic Masculinity* can limit fathers' involvement in childcare, both emotionally, physically, and communicatively. Fathers who hold these values tend to express less affection openly, limit emotional interactions with their children, and prioritize their role as breadwinner over direct involvement in childcare. This finding aligns with Kupers' (Sihombing, 2022) theory, which states that men are often driven to appear dominant, avoid tenderness, and view emotions as a form of weakness.

Furthermore, these findings are supported by research by Petts et al. (Roduma Manalu, 2023) which found that fathers who hold traditional masculine values are less emotionally and physically involved in childcare. They focus more on authority and financial responsibility, but are less sensitive to their children's emotional needs. This suggests that rigid masculine views can limit fathers' full involvement in their children's lives.

The descriptive analysis results show that the majority of respondents have moderate levels of *toxic masculinity*. This is particularly evident in the violence aspect (82.1%), misogyny (81%), and homophobia (71.4%). This means that most fathers still hold traditional views about the roles of men and women. Regarding *violence*, for example, some fathers still resort to methods such as shouting or verbally punishing their children. Meanwhile, regarding *misogyny*, they believe that girls should be more obedient, help with housework, and are not suitable to be leaders. These results align with research by Closson et al. (2025), which shows that men with unequal gender views are more likely to commit violence against their partners. These findings reflect the role of traditional masculinity and beliefs about male superiority in relationships. can create a pattern of dominance in the family, which indirectly also has an impact on parenting styles and relationships within the family.

Regarding *greed*, 23.8% of respondents indicated a tendency to dominate within the household. For example, fathers made decisions alone without consulting other family members. This aligns with Xu's (Simanjuntak, Affendi, & Laksemi, 2019) finding that the majority of men exhibit dominant tendencies within the household, including decision-making without involving their partners, which can impact the quality of children's attachment.

Meanwhile, the results of *father involvement* show that the majority of fathers are moderately involved (63.1%), while 21.4% show higher involvement, and 15.5% show lower involvement. This means that many fathers are physically present at home but not truly involved in their children's daily activities. For example, some fathers rarely play with their children, rarely listen to their children's stories, or don't participate in their children's important activities.

This finding aligns with research by Ragita and Fardana (2021), which showed that paternal involvement influences adolescents' emotional maturity, although the effect is not significant. This means that the more involved a father is in their child's life, the more emotionally mature the child will be, but this is certainly not the only factor. Another study

by Khofifah and colleagues (2023) also found that paternal involvement influences adolescents' emotional regulation, although the effect was only about 3.2%.

A closer look reveals that most fathers fall into the moderate category of parental engagement (78.6%) and accessibility (82.1%). However, in terms of responsibility, 36.9% of respondents indicated greater responsibility, particularly regarding their children's economic needs. However, this responsibility is not always accompanied by presence and attention in their children's daily activities. This suggests that although many fathers are already breadwinners, their involvement in their children's emotional and social lives is still minimal. Therefore, children may feel like their fathers are "there but not fully present." This emotional involvement is crucial for helping children develop a sense of security, self-confidence, and the ability to manage their emotions effectively.

Judging from the age data, the majority of respondents in this study were between 35 and 50 years old. Both age groups tended to exhibit moderate levels of toxic masculinity, with fathers also exhibiting moderate levels of parenting involvement. These findings suggest that age is not always a determining factor in a father's involvement in childcare. Research by Wijayanti and Fauziah (Tampubolon & Tampake, 2023) revealed that father involvement is often influenced by deeply embedded traditional cultural roles, where fathers are positioned more as breadwinners than as emotionally active caregivers. Meanwhile, Suhadra et al. (2023) found that most fathers exhibit moderate levels of involvement, and that this involvement is not necessarily related to age, but rather to workload and perceptions of gender roles.

Based on interviews with several fathers, it can be concluded that the persistence of patriarchal values and traditional masculinity is reflected in the way they treat their children and carry out their roles as fathers. One father admitted to giving his son more freedom than his daughter when it comes to playing and doing activities outside the home. He also forbade his son from crying, as he considered it weak and embarrassing. Another father stated that he made all important family decisions without involving his wife, as he felt he was the head of the family with absolute authority. Meanwhile, another father said that he forbade his son from playing with toys considered "feminine," such as dolls and cooking utensils, for fear that it would interfere with the child's gender identity. They also revealed that their primary role was to work and earn a living, while childcare was considered the mother's responsibility.

The results of this interview also align with research by Shafer et al. (2019), which states that fathers with a high level of adherence to traditional masculine norms tend to be less emotionally and physically involved in childcare. This suggests that the *toxic masculinity* values ingrained in fathers influence their parenting practices. These values create a rigid mindset and parenting attitude, making them emotionally distant, and less sensitive to their children's needs. In such situations, children often draw closer to their mothers because they feel more emotionally secure. This leads to an awkward and distant relationship between father and child. This pattern can foster an authoritarian parenting style and further reinforce the unequal division of roles within the family between men and women.

In conducting this study, the researchers recognized several limitations. First, data collection was conducted online, so the researchers could not directly accompany

respondents while completing the scale. This could have caused respondents to fill out the questionnaire hastily or lack understanding of the statements, which may have affected the accuracy of their responses. Second, this study only focused on two variables: *toxic masculinity* and *father involvement*. However, father involvement can be influenced by other factors such as education level, childhood experiences, parenting confidence, work pressure, and partner support. Third, the scale used has not been standardized nationally. Despite content validation, the results may not be representative of the entire population and still have limitations in terms of long-term consistency (Siburian, 2022).

Therefore, although this study has successfully demonstrated the influence of *toxic masculinity* and *father involvement* in parenting, the researchers recommend further research. Future research should utilize a mixed-methods approach to further understand the emotional experiences and interactions between fathers and children, rather than simply looking at numerical data. Furthermore, future research should also consider the social and cultural contexts that play a significant role in shaping a father's role and mindset within the family.

CONCLUSION

From the results of research and data analysis conducted on Toba Batak fathers, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The research results show a significant negative relationship between toxic masculinity and paternal involvement in parenting. This means that the stronger a father's toxic masculinity values, the lower his involvement in childcare, both emotionally, physically, and communicatively.
2. The majority of Toba Batak fathers in this study were moderate in terms of father involvement, particularly in terms of engagement and accessibility. However, their involvement in terms of responsibility was relatively higher, indicating that fathers tend to focus more on meeting economic needs than on emotional closeness with their children. Most respondents also had moderate levels of toxic masculinity, with the most dominant aspects being violence, misogyny, and greed. This suggests that traditional masculine values still strongly influence how fathers play their roles within the family.
3. This study shows that the tendency towards toxic masculinity behavior contributes 20.7% to father involvement in parenting, while the remaining 79.3% is influenced by other factors.

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