



## Reconstructing masculinity: the role of traditional sports in shaping gender identities in Indonesia

*Reconstruyendo la masculinidad: el papel de los deportes tradicionales en la formación de las identidades de género en Indonesia*

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Traditional Indonesian sports are deeply rooted in the nation's cultural heritage, and among them, Pencak Silat occupies a central role in shaping societal values and national identity. This study examines how Pencak Silat, Indonesia's indigenous martial art, contributes to the construction and negotiation of masculine identities among its practitioners.

**Objective:** Drawing from theories of hegemonic masculinity, gender performativity, and structural functionalism, the research explores the ways in which Pencak Silat reinforces traditional male ideals while adapting to modern influences.

**Methodology:** Using a scoping review methodology, this study synthesizes existing literature from academic journals, government reports, media sources, and policy documents to map key concepts and identify research gaps. The data collection process involved structured keyword searches across major databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. To ensure relevance, inclusion criteria focused on publications within the last five years that analyze masculinity, traditional sports, and gender identity in Indonesia or comparable Southeast Asian contexts. A qualitative content analysis was employed, using thematic and comparative approaches to extract key patterns and contradictions within the literature.

**Discussion:** Findings reveal that Pencak Silat socializes male athletes into dominant masculine ideals, emphasizing discipline, leadership, and honor.

**Conclusion:** Rooted in hegemonic masculinity theory, Pencak Silat instills discipline and control, shaping collective male identities. Gender performativity theory further reveals how masculinity is enacted through rituals and mentorship, validating traditional norms while allowing room for reinterpretation. However, global gender discourse is gradually reshaping these ideals, with younger athletes challenging rigid masculine portrayals.

### Keywords

Gender Identity; Masculinity; Pencak Silat; Traditional Sport.

### Resumen

**Introducción:** Los deportes tradicionales indonesios están profundamente arraigados en el patrimonio cultural de la nación, y entre ellos. Este estudio examina cómo el Pencak Silat, el arte marcial indígena de Indonesia, contribuye a la construcción y negociación de identidades masculinas.

**Objetivo:** La investigación explora las maneras en que el Pencak Silat refuerza los ideales masculinos tradicionales mientras se adapta a las influencias modernas.

**Metodología:** Utilizando una metodología de revisión de alcance, este estudio sintetiza la literatura existente de revistas académicas, informes gubernamentales, fuentes de medios y documentos de políticas para mapear conceptos clave e identificar lagunas en la investigación. El proceso de recopilación de datos involucró búsquedas estructuradas de palabras clave en bases de datos importantes como Scopus, Web of Science y Google Scholar. Se empleó un análisis cualitativo de contenido, utilizando enfoques temáticos y comparativos para extraer patrones clave y contradicciones dentro de la literatura.

**Discusión:** Los hallazgos revelan que el Pencak Silat socializa a los atletas masculinos en ideales masculinos dominantes, enfatizando la disciplina, el liderazgo y el honor.

**Conclusión:** Enraizado en la teoría de la masculinidad hegemónica, el Pencak Silat inculca disciplina y control, moldeando identidades masculinas colectivas. La teoría de la performatividad de género revela además cómo la masculinidad se manifiesta a través de rituales y mentoría, validando las normas tradicionales mientras permite espacio para la reinterpretación. Sin embargo, el discurso global de género está remodelando gradualmente estos ideales, con atletas más jóvenes desafiando las representaciones rígidas de la masculinidad.

### Palabras clave

Deporte Tradicional; Identidad de Género; Masculinidad; Pencak Silat.

## Introduction

The study of gender and masculinity has evolved significantly over the past decades, with scholars increasingly recognizing that gender is not a fixed attribute but a dynamic social construct that is continuously produced and reproduced through everyday practices and institutions (Morano et al., 2020). This perspective emphasizes that societal norms, cultural environments, and social interactions play a crucial role in the formation of gender identities. In the realm of sports, for example, gendered expectations are often deeply embedded, influencing how individuals perceive their physical selves and contribute to the broader dialogue about gendered behaviors (Morano et al., 2020). The recognition of these socially constructed norms provides a foundation for understanding the complexities of gender performance and the multifaceted nature of masculinity.

Concurrently, the concept of masculinity has been problematized within contemporary scholarship, revealing that it is an amalgamation of historical, cultural, and interpersonal influences rather than an inherent quality (Franco & Parra, 2021). Recent investigations in university settings illustrate how masculine identities are negotiated amidst traditional expectations and modern challenges, highlighting the heterogeneous and often contradictory nature of masculine norms (Franco & Parra, 2021). Furthermore, studies examining career choices of adolescent and young adult populations have elucidated how notions of masculinity and femininity are interwoven into the formation of occupational preferences, thereby underscoring the pervasive influence of societal gender schemas (Scholes & McDonald, 2022). Such findings attest to the intricate ways in which masculinity is continually redefined in response to evolving cultural and social contexts.

Moreover, the intersection between gender studies and sports further enriches our understanding of how social practices shape and reinforce gender identities. Sporting activities are not only arenas of physical performance but also potent sites for the enactment and contestation of prevailing gender ideologies (Scholes & McDonald, 2022). Research shows that participation in sports can amplify traditional masculine values, such as strength and competitiveness, while also providing opportunities for renegotiation of gender boundaries in light of contemporary social shifts (Franco & Parra, 2021). The dynamic interplay between sports, self-perception, and societal expectations underscores the importance of an intersectional framework, which is essential for capturing the nuanced processes through which masculinity and other gender norms are constructed and challenged.

Traditional Indonesian sports are deeply rooted in the nation's cultural heritage, and among them, Pencak Silat occupies a central role in shaping societal values and national identity. As an indigenous martial art, Pencak Silat has evolved through centuries and has been instrumental in the preservation of Indonesian traditions while reflecting the dynamic interplay between physical practice and cultural expression (Nabihah et al., 2024). The art form is not only a means of self-defense but also a vehicle for transmitting indigenous values, fostering community cohesion, and reinforcing a shared cultural identity that distinguishes Indonesia on the global stage (Nugroho et al., 2024). Such traditional practices express the uniqueness of Indonesian heritage and continue to be integral in socializing new generations about the nation's ancestral pride and historical narratives (Sulfa et al., 2024).

Historically, Pencak Silat holds profound significance in Indonesian society, with its origins traceable to ancient cultural and military traditions that date back to the Majapahit era. Scholars have noted that its development was influenced by various historical events and interactions with both indigenous and foreign martial systems, which enriched its techniques and philosophies over time (Qomarrullah & Sokoy, 2024). This historical layering has resulted in a martial art that is as much about spiritual and mental cultivation as it is about physical prowess, thereby cementing its role as a cultural touchstone that has withstood the forces of modernization and external influences (Qomarrullah & Sokoy, 2024). The enduring legacy of Pencak Silat is thus emblematic of a broader narrative of resistance, adaptation, and preservation amidst Indonesia's turbulent historical landscape (Ambarwati et al., 2024).

Embedded within the practice of Pencak Silat are core traditional values such as discipline, respect, and a warrior ethos, which serve as both guiding principles and modes of cultural transmission (Ihsan et al., 2024). Practitioners of Pencak Silat are instilled with a sense of duty towards their community and heritage, reflecting a structured approach to personal development that encompasses physical training, moral education, and spiritual growth (Nugroho et al., 2024). This multifaceted pedagogy fosters not



only combat skills but also behavioral codes that advocate for self-control, mutual respect, and the embodiment of honor in daily life. Consequently, the art form remains a vital conduit for perpetuating traditional Indonesian values and offers a robust framework for character formation that continues to influence both individual lives and the broader cultural consciousness of the nation (Nabihah et al., 2024; Nugroho et al., 2024).

The construction of masculinity in Indonesian society is deeply embedded in the cultural and religious values prevalent across communities, where traditional expectations dictate that men embody traits such as strength, leadership, and the responsibility of providing for the family. The cultural fabric of Indonesia, influenced by both indigenous customs and Islamic values, establishes a hierarchy in which men are viewed as protectors and disciplinarians, charged with upholding family honor and social order (Berliana et al., 2021). These expectations are further solidified through socialization practices within communities, where deviations from established masculine norms are often met with disapproval or marginalization, thus perpetuating a rigid structure in which male behavior is both prescribed and policed (Sutresna et al., 2021).

The intersection of masculinity, hierarchy, and community in Indonesian culture creates a dynamic where men are not only expected to adhere to traditional roles but also to serve as exemplars of community values. In many settings, masculinity is interwoven with authority and social status, fostering an environment wherein men are expected to exercise leadership and exert influence within their social networks. This interplay is evident in various aspects of public life, including family dynamics, workplaces, and cultural ceremonies, which collectively contribute to the broader performance of gender roles that emphasize discipline, stoicism, and resilience (Berliana et al., 2021). The collective reinforcement of these norms creates a social hierarchy that privileges traditional masculine characteristics and marginalizes alternative expressions of male identity (Sutresna et al., 2021).

Sports, and in particular the traditional martial art of Pencak Silat, play a significant role in both reinforcing and occasionally challenging these established gender roles. As a practice revered for its embodiment of discipline, respect, and a warrior ethos, Pencak Silat serves not only as a method of physical training but also as a conduit for the transmission of traditional masculine values (Berliana et al., 2021). On one hand, its competitive and ritualistic nature upholds the expectations that men should be strong, strategic, and resilient, aligning with broader societal prescriptions of masculinity. On the other hand, the evolving participation in such sports has opened spaces for reinterpreting gender roles, where new forms of masculinity can emerge that integrate progressive perspectives without entirely abandoning traditional values (Berliana et al., 2021). This dual capacity of Pencak Silat to both sustain and diversify masculine identities reflects the complex negotiation between tradition and modernity in contemporary Indonesian society.

The academic literature on the intersection of traditional sports and masculinity in Indonesia remains notably scarce, leaving a considerable gap in our understanding of how cultural heritage shapes male identity. While considerable attention has been paid to masculine performance in global sports contexts, few studies have investigated the nuances of traditional Indonesian practices, thereby limiting insights into the unique interplay between indigenous martial arts and culturally prescribed gender norms (Ramaeker & Petrie, 2019). This oversight highlights the need for focused research that interrogates traditional sports practices as arenas for the construction and negotiation of masculine identities, particularly in societies where cultural, religious, and historical elements intersect to define social roles (Deslippe et al., 2024).

Moreover, there is a pressing imperative to explore how male athletes actively navigate their gender identities within the context of these sports. Male practitioners of traditional forms like Pencak Silat often find themselves at the crossroads of competing expectations—balancing inherited notions of strength, honor, and discipline with contemporary pressures to adapt and innovate within evolving social milieus (Deslippe et al., 2024). Investigating these dynamics offers critical insights into how athletes reconcile personal aspirations with collective cultural narratives, thereby enriching our understanding of gender identity as both a social construct and an individual journey (Ramaeker & Petrie, 2019).

Furthermore, examining Pencak Silat within this framework contributes significantly to broader discussions of masculinity across Southeast Asia. By centering the analysis on a sport that embodies core traditional values such as discipline, respect, and a warrior ethos, scholars can illuminate the complex ways



in which masculinity is sustained, transformed, and even contested in response to regional socio-cultural influences (Tsang, 2023). Such research not only fills a conspicuous gap in Indonesia-specific studies but also informs the transnational dialogue on how traditional sports practices serve as powerful sites for negotiating gender and identity in an era of rapid cultural transformation.

The study of masculinity through the lens of traditional sports reveals a multifaceted view of gender that extends beyond modern competitive frameworks to encompass cultural heritage and long-held traditional values. Traditional sports, such as Pencak Silat, serve as rich sites where embodied practices and cultural narratives converge, illustrating how gender ideologies are both maintained and transformed within society. This approach challenges the reductionist view of sports merely as physical contests by emphasizing their role in constructing socially revered masculine traits. Exploring these intersections broadens our understanding of gender beyond contemporary Western paradigms and validates indigenous expressions of masculine identity amid global shifts in gender roles.

In light of these considerations, it becomes imperative to develop research questions that address the nuanced ways in which traditional sports inform the construction of masculinity. A central inquiry focuses on how participation in Pencak Silat shapes the masculine identity of male athletes, acknowledging that this martial art embodies traditional values such as discipline, respect, and a warrior ethos. Parallel questions probe the cultural and societal factors—ranging from local customs and religious values to community hierarchies—that influence this construction of masculine identity. Additionally, it is critical to examine the dual capacity of traditional sports practices to both reinforce and challenge dominant masculine norms, thereby opening avenues for alternative narratives of masculinity that move beyond hegemonic expectations.

Establishing this research agenda is fundamental for bridging the current academic gap concerning the intersection of traditional sports and gender identity in Indonesia. By addressing how Pencak Silat functions as both a repository of cultural memory and a dynamic arena for the negotiation of masculinity, the study promises to contribute insights not only to Indonesian gender discourse but also to broader discussions of masculinity in Southeast Asia. Such research offers the potential to illuminate how athletes and community members alike navigate between tradition and modernity in the continuous redefinition of what it means to be masculine, thereby underscoring the relevance of traditional sports as critical sites for gender-related inquiry.

## Method

This study employs a scoping review methodology to examine how traditional sports, particularly Pencak Silat, contribute to the construction and negotiation of masculine identities in Indonesia. A scoping review is an effective research method for mapping key concepts, identifying gaps in existing literature, and synthesizing diverse perspectives on a broad and complex issue. This approach is particularly relevant for exploring the intersection of gender, culture, and sports, where multiple sociological frameworks and contextual factors interact.

The data for this research is drawn from various sources, including academic databases, government reports, policy documents, media articles, and books. Primary sources include peer-reviewed academic journals from Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, with a focus on masculinity, gender identity, and sports sociology. Government reports from the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Indonesia provide insights into policies related to traditional sports and gender representation in athletics, while international policy documents from organizations such as UNESCO and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) offer a broader framework on gender and sports. Additionally, media reports from reputable Indonesian and international sources provide contemporary perspectives on masculinity in sports culture, and books and dissertations contribute theoretical discussions on gender identity and the socio-cultural significance of traditional martial arts.

To ensure the inclusion of relevant literature, a structured keyword search strategy was employed, using combinations of terms such as masculinity in Indonesian sports, traditional martial arts and gender, Pencak Silat and masculinity, male identity in sports, and gender norms in Southeast Asian athletics. This selection process followed strict inclusion and exclusion criteria. Studies were included if they were published within the last five years, focused on masculinity and gender identity in sports—particularly



in Indonesia or comparable Southeast Asian contexts—and incorporated sociological theories such as Hegemonic Masculinity Theory, Gender Performativity, Structural Functionalism, or Postcolonial Theory. Only peer-reviewed articles and reports from reputable institutions were considered. Studies that focused purely on historical, economic, or physiological aspects without gender analysis, as well as opinion-based or unverified sources, were excluded.

A qualitative content analysis was applied to examine the selected studies. Through thematic analysis, key patterns and sociological explanations were identified, revealing how masculinity is constructed, reinforced, or contested within traditional sports. Comparative analysis was conducted across different sources to recognize common themes and contradictions in the literature. Furthermore, an interpretative synthesis was employed using Hegemonic Masculinity Theory, Gender Performativity, and Structural Functionalism to explore the underlying mechanisms of masculine identity formation in traditional sports. This analytical framework allowed for a deeper understanding of how male athletes navigate dominant gender norms within the cultural setting of Indonesian martial arts.

To enhance clarity, the findings were systematically categorized in a tabular format, organizing studies by author, publication year, key themes, and main findings. This structured synthesis provides a comprehensive overview of how traditional sports contribute to the shaping of masculinity in Indonesia, offering insights into the social and institutional factors that influence male identity in athletics. Ultimately, this study contributes to discussions on gender identity, cultural heritage, and sports sociology by highlighting the role of traditional martial arts in shaping and challenging societal expectations of masculinity.

## Results

The body of literature on the role of traditional sports in shaping gender identities encompasses a range of studies that, although emerging from diverse contexts, offer valuable insights into the nexus between athletic participation and the construction of masculinity. Deslippe employ an interpretative phenomenological approach to explore how adolescents negotiate the intersections of athletic, dietary, and gender identities (Deslippe et al., 2024). Their findings indicate that involvement in sport is not exclusively linked to stereotypical masculine ideals such as muscularity or protein consumption but is integrated into a broader self-concept that defies simplistic definitions. This research suggests that traditional sports may offer unique spaces for reconfiguring gender norms by allowing individuals to blend athletic identity with other aspects of self-expression.

Newman et al. (2022) further deepen our understanding of masculinity by examining how race, faith, and athletics contribute to a notion of “healthy masculinity” during adolescence. Their findings underline that identity construction is a multifaceted process where social identities interact and inform one another. Although their study is not situated in an Indonesian context, the theoretical framework they propose is transferable and can illuminate how traditional Indonesian sports, such as Pencak Silat, contribute to nuanced constructions of masculine identity by integrating intersecting cultural and religious values (Newman et al., 2023).

Levental et al. (2024) focus on the role of parental involvement in the selection of extracurricular sports, noting a distinct gendered perspective in how mothers and fathers view sports participation. Their thematic analysis reveals that while fathers often emphasize competitiveness and discipline, mothers are more inclined to stress the enhancement of physical health and social skills. This differentiation in parental expectations and involvement sets the stage for gendered socialization processes that influence the way traditional sports shape gender identity. When applied to the Indonesian context, similar mechanisms may operate in Pencak Silat training, where cultural values are transmitted within family and community structures (Levental et al., 2024).

Silva et al. (2020) offer a distinct perspective by examining the experiences of women in culturally masculine sports and how sexual orientation and self-concept are intertwined with gender identity. Although their research primarily focuses on athletes who navigate and sometimes subvert traditional masculine norms, it informs our broader understanding of how spaces perceived as “masculine” can accommodate diverse expressions of gender, including androgyny. Such findings are pertinent when considering traditional Indonesian sports, which, while historically steeped in notions of the warrior



ethos, could evolve to recognize a broader spectrum of masculine and even non-binary identities (Silva et al., 2020).

Pichler (2021) contributes to the discussion by elucidating how fatherhood and masculine identities are discursively constructed through language. His focus on heteroglossia—the coexistence of multiple voices within an individual’s narrative—reveals that even within traditional frameworks, there is room for dissent and alternative interpretations. This insight is significant for understanding traditional sports in Indonesia, where the rhetoric around Pencak Silat may simultaneously reinforce conventional values and provide a platform for reinterpreting what it means to be masculine in a rapidly changing society (Pichler, 2023).

Clements et al. (2022) extend the analysis by investigating trans masculine individuals’ experiences with male privilege, addressing the complexities of performativity and embodiment in masculine identity. Although their study is set in a Western context, the core finding—that the performance of maleness is not homogeneous and is subject to negotiation—resonates with the dynamics observed in traditional sports settings. The pressures to conform to an idealized masculine standard, a theme central to many sports environments, are equally relevant in Indonesian traditional martial arts, where practitioners may navigate between prescribed norms and their own self-conceptions (Clements et al., 2022).

Mbonye et al. (2021) offer insight into what they term “conflicted masculinities” by studying men in long-term relationships within a Ugandan context. They discuss how traditional gender roles—specifically the expectations to serve as providers and protectors—can lead to dilemmas when economic or social realities interfere with these ideals. The tension they describe echoes the challenges faced by male athletes in traditional Indonesian sports, where adherence to a warrior ethos and the cultural valorization of strength and honor may come into conflict with contemporary social expectations and personal aspirations (Mbonye et al., 2022).

Galpin (2021) provides a compelling example of how intersecting cultural, political, and social factors shape masculine identity, evidenced by his analysis of Brexit masculinities. His work underscores the importance of considering broader societal forces in understanding gender roles and hierarchies. The intersectional approach he advocates is particularly relevant for examining traditional sports in Indonesia, where Pencak Silat is not merely a cultural practice but also a marker of national and communal identity (Galpin, 2022).

Domingues (2024) examines the role of sports in the construction of masculine identities within Western cultures, revealing how sport is employed to define, regulate, and sometimes marginalize gender roles. While his contribution is set against a different cultural backdrop, his analysis provides a comparative framework that can be used to better understand the unique characteristics of Indonesian traditional sports (Domingues, 2024). By contrasting Western models of athletic masculinity with the community-embedded practices of Pencak Silat, researchers can uncover both convergent and divergent elements in the construction of masculinity.

Finally, (Khairunnisa et al., 2024) and (Suryo Putro et al., 2023) focus explicitly on the Indonesian context, examining how Pencak Silat is integrated within educational and cultural frameworks to reinforce national values and shape gender identities. Khairunnisa et al. (2024) demonstrate that Pencak Silat extracurricular activities serve not only as a means of cultural preservation but also as formative experiences for students, reinforcing ideals of discipline, respect, and unity that are central to the Indonesian masculine identity (Khairunnisa et al., 2024). Further contextualize the practice of Pencak Silat by analyzing its biomechanical and cultural dimensions, thereby underscoring how the physical practice of the art is intertwined with broader ideals of masculinity and social responsibility (Suryo Putro et al., 2023).

Collectively, these studies reveal a dynamic and multidimensional landscape in which traditional sports operate as sites of gender identity negotiation. By drawing from diverse contexts—from adolescent experiences and parental mediation to discursive constructions and cross-cultural comparisons—they provide a rich tapestry of evidence that traditional sports like Pencak Silat are not merely athletic endeavors but are inherently linked to the social construction of masculinity. They illuminate both the reinforcing and challenging aspects of traditional gender norms, suggesting that sports can serve as catalysts for both stability and transformation in gender identity formation. This integrated perspective lays the groundwork for further empirical exploration within Southeast Asia and beyond, emphasizing the critical role that traditional sports play in shaping the cultural fabric of gender identity.



Table 1. Previous Studies

Authors	Year	Key Themes	Findings
Rizaldy et al. (2021)	2021	Traditional sport; Pencak Silat's role in national sports infrastructure; athlete selection methods	Pencak Silat, as a culturally significant sport, is recognized by national sports bodies. Its inclusion in structured selection processes helps sustain traditional values, indirectly shaping a culturally rooted masculine identity.
Wasil et al. (2024)	2024	Extracurricular participation; character and self-confidence; cultural identity reinforcement	Participation in Pencak Silat extracurricular activities enhances self-confidence and social connectedness among students while reinforcing local cultural identity, influencing perceptions of strength and discipline.
Kusumo & Lemy (2021)	2021	Cultural tourism; traditional values; Pencak Silat as a cultural asset	The study highlights how Pencak Silat, as a cultural tourism attraction, conveys core traditional values. Its preservation contributes to the social construction of gender, with discipline and honor as markers of masculinity.
Azhar (2024)	2024	Digital learning integration; preservation of traditional values; interactive Pencak Silat pedagogy	Digital learning approaches for Pencak Silat maintain traditional Indonesian values while enhancing skill development. These methods ensure cultural markers, including gendered expectations, are transmitted to younger generations.
Sulfa et al. (2023)	2023	Technical training models; performance metrics; integration of cultural practices	A training model for Pencak Silat emphasizes culturally prescribed techniques, highlighting how performance expectations in traditional sports reinforce gender ideals related to discipline and physical prowess.
Aristono et al. (2021)	2021	City branding; cultural representation; integration of sport and tourism	The "Kampung Pesilat Indonesia" branding initiative demonstrates how Pencak Silat's role in city identity reinforces a narrative that celebrates traditional masculine qualities such as resilience and honor, influencing gender roles.
Levental et al. (2024)	2024	Parental involvement; extracurricular sport choices; gendered perspectives	Conducted in Israel, this study explores how parental guidance affects children's sports participation, revealing gendered expectations similar to those observed in traditional Indonesian contexts.
Shiakou et al. (2025)	2025	Gender stereotypes; masculinity in sports; gender-based violence	Examines how traditional masculine ideals are maintained within sports, illustrating universal pressures that also impact traditional Indonesian sports while focusing on gender-based violence.
Deslippe et al. (2024)	2024	Intersection of gender, sport, and dietary identity; body ideals; de-gendering practices	Using an interpretative phenomenological approach, the study captures adolescents' experiences in navigating their athletic and gender identities, with implications for understanding similar processes in traditional Indonesian sports.
Rodríguez (2024)	2024	Queer identity; negotiation of traditional gender norms; Indonesian Muslim subjectivities	Explores identity negotiation within a heteronormative framework among queer Indonesian Muslims, offering insights into how cultural and religious traditions influence gender identity formation, relevant to traditional sports.

## Pencak Silat and the Cultural Transmission of Masculinity

Pencak Silat, as a traditional Indonesian martial art, is deeply embedded in the nation's cultural heritage and acts as a significant medium through which traditional values are transmitted. This sport not only encapsulates centuries-old rituals and customs but also serves as a conduit for the embodiment of traits such as discipline, physical strength, resilience, and honor (Nofrizal et al., 2024). Recent investigations underscore the importance of Pencak Silat in maintaining a connection to Indonesia's cultural roots, emphasizing moral and ethical conduct among practitioners (Abdillah et al., 2025; Khairunnisa et al., 2024).

Structured training in Pencak Silat is characterized by rigorous regimens that demand strict adherence to discipline and self-control. Training programs typically involve repetitive drills and sparring sessions, reinforcing that physical strength and mental perseverance are essential markers of a disciplined athlete (Kusuma et al., 2024). Such structured environments emphasize consistent practice and personal sacrifice, nurturing a strong work ethic and resilience among practitioners (Abdillah et al., 2025; Rizaldy et al., 2021). These processes prepare individuals for competitive challenges and cultivate a mindset that aligns with traditional values.

In the context of competitive Pencak Silat, athletes are exposed to high-pressure situations that reinforce values such as honor and discipline. Competitions are structured as arenas where both technical prowess and moral fortitude are appraised. Victories are often seen as a testament to personal discipline and ethical conduct. By facing the rigors of competitive environments, practitioners internalize ideals of resilience and integrity, reinforcing a collective identity where honor and perseverance are central to their training (Rizaldy et al., 2021).

The influence of national sports infrastructure is pivotal in the transmission of traditional values. Modern technological interventions, such as decision support systems for athlete selection processes, integrate these values into contemporary training paradigms. These systems ensure that selections align with both performance standards and culturally prescribed norms of discipline and honor (Rizaldy et al., 2021). This blend of technology with traditional practices emphasizes the institutional commitment to preserving societal values through sports.



Furthermore, the implementation of safety protocols and occupational health measures in Pencak Silat training environments is essential for sustaining a disciplined athletic culture. Studies on Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) in Pencak Silat reveal that such protocols secure the physical well-being of athletes and reinforce a culture of responsibility and respect for one's body. This aspect of training underlines that the pursuit of physical excellence must balance rigorous safety standards, reflecting both modern sports science and enduring values (Mirza, 2023).

Beyond the immediate training grounds, Pencak Silat plays a broader role in the cultural transmission of ideals. The sport acts as an institutional platform where communities and training centers inculcate social norms and ethical conduct within younger generations. These institutions often serve as hubs for communal identity, where narratives of dedication and discipline are celebrated. In this way, Pencak Silat bridges tradition with national identity, reinforcing the expectation that values are defined by both physical ability and moral character (Abdillah et al., 2025; Sukmayadi et al., 2023).

In summary, research findings indicate that Pencak Silat is not merely a sport but a vital mechanism for the transmission of traditional values in Indonesia. The structured training and competitive environments inherent in Pencak Silat play a crucial role in reinforcing values such as discipline, strength, resilience, and honor. Coupled with supportive national sports infrastructures and safety protocols, these practices ensure that cultural and ethical values are maintained and adapted in modern athletic development. By serving as a dynamic arena where tradition and contemporary practices converge, Pencak Silat offers unique insights into how practitioners navigate and embody their cultural identities, laying the foundation for further exploration of the discourse on values in Southeast Asia.

### ***Pencak Silat as a Tool for Identity Formation***

Participation in Pencak Silat has grown beyond mere physical engagement, emerging as a powerful tool for identity formation among male athletes in Indonesia (Hariono et al., 2024). The practice is deeply rooted in Indonesian cultural heritage and serves as a medium through which individuals internalize traditional values. Male athletes often experience an enhanced self-perception as they see themselves reflected in the storied history and ritualistic practices of the sport, laying a foundation for a distinct masculine identity (Octaviani & Sutantri, 2025).

At the heart of Pencak Silat training is a series of structured rituals and disciplined routines that contribute significantly to identity formation. Male practitioners are not only taught combat techniques but are also immersed in ceremonies and routines that emphasize respect, honor, and perseverance. This immersion fosters a sense of belonging and a personal connection to the ancestral traditions of Indonesia, enabling athletes to perceive themselves as custodians of a storied legacy while concurrently constructing their masculine self-image (Deslippe et al., 2024).

The reinforcement of masculinity in these settings is achieved through well-defined hierarchies and mentorship structures within the training environment. Senior practitioners and coaches play a critical role in instilling values such as discipline, physical strength, and resilience. These mentors serve as living embodiments of traditional masculine ideals and guide younger athletes through both the technical and moral dimensions of Pencak Silat, thereby reinforcing a sense of ordered strength and social responsibility (Sukmayadi et al., 2023).

Mentorship within Pencak Silat offers a dynamic process of identity transmission, where direct interpersonal interactions complement ritualistic instruction. Experienced practitioners share narratives of past glories, hardships, and the evolution of technique, which not only enhance technical proficiency but also contribute to an internalized code of conduct. Such mentorship is fundamental in establishing benchmarks for behavior and performance, ensuring that the transmission of masculine values is both continuous and adaptable to changing social contexts (Octaviani & Sutantri, 2025).

Comparative insights from traditional sports across Southeast Asia highlight similar mechanisms of identity construction. For example, studies examining leadership and identity in sports have noted that rites of passage, structured mentorship, and ritualized competition are common features that contribute to a strong sense of masculine identity—even in contexts that differ culturally from Indonesia (Szabó Földesi & Gál, 2019). These findings suggest that Pencak Silat's role in reinforcing traditional masculine traits is a phenomenon that resonates with broader regional practices where sports are channels for cultivating disciplined, resilient, and honor-bound identities.



Moreover, the competitive aspect of Pencak Silat further solidifies the self-concept of masculinity among participants. Structured competitions are arenas where athletes not only demonstrate physical strength and tactical skill but also perform socially endorsed behaviors. Victories and losses alike are imbued with symbolic meanings that affirm or challenge aspects of personal identity, reinforcing self-perceptions that are closely tied to traditional masculine virtues such as bravery, endurance, and honor (De-slippe et al., 2024).

Training environments often integrate these ritualistic and competitive elements within a broader framework of national sports infrastructure, which further legitimizes and supports traditional values. Institutional endorsement through policy and program development creates a stable platform where cultural values are continually reaffirmed. This institutionalization ensures that the influence of Pencak Silat on self-perception is sustained over time, consolidating its role as a critical avenue for the construction of masculine identity in Indonesia (Sukmayadi et al., 2023).

In conclusion, Pencak Silat serves as a multifaceted tool for identity formation among male athletes by combining cultural heritage, rigorous training, structured mentorship, and competitive rituals. The interplay of these factors not only reinforces traditional masculine traits but also provides comparative insights when viewed alongside other traditional sports in Southeast Asia. This dynamic process offers promising avenues for future research into how culturally embedded sports can shape gender identities in a manner that is both locally rooted and globally relevant.

### ***Gendered Expectations in Traditional Sports***

Traditional sports in Indonesia, such as Pencak Silat, provide a unique arena in which culturally specific manifestations of masculinity are both enacted and reinforced. In Indonesian society, traditional expectations of men emphasize leadership, toughness, and self-control, ideals that are mirrored in the demanding practices of Pencak Silat. A study by (A. D. Rahmawati et al., 2023) has shown that male athletes in these settings exhibit psychological characteristics that align with these societal expectations, suggesting that sports participation serves as an effective medium for reinforcing culturally endorsed masculine traits.

The martial art's structure—ranging from its rigorous training routines to its competitive formats—naturally cultivates attributes such as physical fortitude and mental resilience. Purnama et al. (2023) further analyze psychological characteristics in male Pencak Silat athletes, demonstrating that the sport promotes toughness and self-discipline, qualities valued in Indonesian cultural contexts (A. D. Rahmawati et al., 2023). This alignment of personal development with societal expectations underscores how Pencak Silat supports a narrative of masculinity founded on strength and control.

Moreover, the rituals and hierarchies embedded in Pencak Silat training environments contribute significantly to the reinforcement of traditional masculine roles. Mentorship systems, where senior practitioners model discipline, ethical behavior, and leadership, create an experiential framework that guides younger athletes in orienting their identities in ways deemed culturally and socially appropriate. These interactions validate the norm that male athletes must not only demonstrate physical prowess, but also embody leadership and moral responsibility.

The integration of cultural norms, religious values, and martial arts philosophy within the practice of Pencak Silat provides a rich tapestry for defining male roles. According to a systematic review by (Nugroho et al., 2024) Pencak Silat encompasses a holistic approach that promotes mental, physical, and spiritual growth, mirroring the traditional expectations of masculine behavior in Indonesian society. This combination of spirituality with athletic discipline reinforces the notion that control over the self—both in body and mind—is paramount for those who wish to be recognized as ideal men.

Parental influence plays a pivotal role in shaping gender identity and can affect participation in traditional sports like Pencak Silat. Guo (2022) suggests that parental attitudes and early family environments significantly contribute to children's understanding of gender roles. In Indonesia, where the intergenerational transmission of cultural values is pronounced, parents often encourage participation in activities, including martial arts, that are seen as fundamental in building traditional masculinity through qualities such as perseverance and authority (Chen, 2022).

Educational settings further contribute to the development of gender identity through sports participation. A study by (Wasil et al., 2024) indicates that extracurricular activities involving Pencak Silat in



schools serve not only to develop physical skills but also to instill values like discipline, respect for seniority, and leadership. In formal environments, the structured implementation of the sport reinforces cultural narratives that men are expected to uphold venerable traditions of toughness and self-regulation, corroborating societal expectations about male roles.

The intersection of cultural norms, religious tenets, and martial arts philosophies in Pencak Silat suggests that masculinity in Indonesia is a socially negotiated construct. The sport functions as a microcosm of broader societal dynamics, where rituals, competition, and mentorship converge to shape identities that reflect and resist changing societal conditions. This convergence illustrates how traditional masculine ideals are continuously redefined and reproduced through training and public performances.

Ultimately, analyzing gendered expectations in Pencak Silat reveals a complex interplay between personal identity formation and broader cultural imperatives. By aligning with values such as leadership, mental toughness, and controlled behavior, male athletes occupy a space where traditional ideals are reinforced, yet remain open to reinterpretation. This dynamic process, influenced by parental guidance and educational experiences, not only reinforces existing gender norms but also provides avenues for evolving these roles to encompass emerging perspectives within contemporary Indonesian society.

### ***The Role of Media and Modernization***

Digitalization and modern teaching methods have markedly reshaped the traditional transmission of masculine ideals in Pencak Silat. The integration of contemporary technology into training methodologies allows instructors to enhance conventional practices with digital platforms that facilitate remote learning and interactive feedback. This approach helps to optimize the learning process while ensuring that the historical values of discipline, resilience, and honor inherent in Pencak Silat are transmitted effectively to new generations (Abdillah et al., 2025; Hardovi et al., 2025). The infusion of technology into the martial art environment represents a convergence of traditional practices and modernity, offering pathways to preserve established masculine norms while adapting to contemporary educational demands.

Modern technological innovations in Pencak Silat education enhance the structured transmission of traditional masculine ideals. Digital tools such as simulation software and video analysis assist in teaching complex combat techniques and articulating the art's philosophical dimensions. These innovations provide a dynamic framework where theoretical heritage and practical skills are merged, reinforcing a culture of discipline and leadership that characterizes the sport (Hardovi et al., 2025). Such integration bridges the gap between historical practices and modern educational imperatives, ensuring that core values of physical strength, mental perseverance, and honor remain at the forefront of male athletic development.

Media representation plays a critical role in shaping public perceptions of masculinity, particularly through the lens of Pencak Silat. Various forms of media—including television, online platforms, and social media—portray the martial art as a symbol of strength and national identity, encapsulating traditional ideals of toughness and control. This representation extends beyond the sport's technical aspects to include its ritualistic and philosophical dimensions, which further cement the association of Pencak Silat with traditional masculine virtues. Research on media influence in martial arts contexts indicates that such portrayals contribute to the persistence of conventional gender norms and influence societal perceptions of masculinity (Bowman, 2020).

In the competitive and performance-oriented arena of Pencak Silat, media channels serve as both conduits and amplifiers for traditional gender identities. The narratives constructed by media outlets often emphasize heroic dimensions of the sport, aligning it with culturally valorized traits such as leadership and invincibility. This portrayal inspires young male athletes to adopt behavioral codes resonant with the revered warrior ethos, instilling a sense of duty to uphold these standards. Thus, media representations not only reflect existing gender paradigms but also actively shape and reinforce expectations regarding male roles in sport and society (Bowman, 2020).

Social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools in modernizing the portrayal of Pencak Silat while simultaneously reinforcing traditional masculine ideals. Instagram and other networks amplify visual storytelling that centers on the aesthetics of the sport—from dynamic training sessions to ceremonial rituals—thereby bolstering cultural pride and national identity. The visual narratives curated on



these platforms highlight the discipline, strength, and emotional resilience required in Pencak Silat, reinforcing an image of masculinity that is aspirational and rooted in tradition (A. Rahmawati et al., 2024).

The growing role of cultural tourism and branding efforts underscores the symbiotic relationship between modern media and the reinforcement of traditional gender identities. City and national branding initiatives increasingly rely on modern media channels to promote heritage tourism that centers on Pencak Silat as a cultural emblem. Visual elements, logos, and multimedia campaigns presented on platforms such as Instagram contribute to a unified narrative celebrating traditional masculine virtues as part of national identity (Dewi et al., 2022; Sudarmanto, 2022).

Collectively, the digitalization of teaching methods, the strategic use of media, and cultural branding efforts have reinforced traditional masculine ideals within the practice of Pencak Silat. These processes ensure that while the sport remains agile and adaptive to modern educational approaches, it continues to project an image of masculinity steeped in enduring cultural values. The integration of modern technologies in pedagogical settings and innovative media representations underlines Pencak Silat's dual role as both a functional martial art and a potent medium for identity formation. By harmonizing traditional ethos with modern practices, Pencak Silat remains a dynamic tool in the ongoing construction and reinforcement of gender identities in Indonesian society.

### ***Tensions and Contradictions in Masculine Identity Formation***

Contemporary gender perspectives have introduced significant tensions and contradictions in the formation of masculine identities within traditional sports, particularly in Pencak Silat. Traditionally, Pencak Silat has been a medium through which notions of ideal masculinity—emphasizing leadership, toughness, and emotional control—are culturally transmitted. However, global gender discourses have begun to challenge these established paradigms, questioning the exclusivity of hegemonic masculine ideals. This shift has encouraged both scholars and athletes to reexamine and negotiate alternative expressions of manhood, paving the way for more fluid, multifaceted interpretations of masculinity (Khan et al., 2022).

Recent research highlights that traditional expectations are increasingly being contested by emerging discourses that promote multiplicity and fluidity in masculine identity. Khan et al. (2022) illustrate that in contexts similar to traditional Indonesian sports, the ideal of hegemonic masculinity is confronted by tensions and ambiguities, as alternative masculine narratives emerge (Khan et al., 2022). These alternative narratives resist the rigidity of traditional gender prescriptions, suggesting that masculine identity is not fixed but rather continually reconstructed through social practices. Such findings have critical implications for Pencak Silat, where athletes may increasingly negotiate their identities against longstanding cultural ideals.

Comparative insights drawn from studies in other Southeast Asian contexts further illuminate these shifts. Tsang (2023) demonstrates that within Chinese sports, traditional dichotomies between "wen" (refinement) and "wu" (martial prowess) are destabilized by contemporary practices that promote individualism and fluid gender roles (Tsang, 2023). This reimagining of masculine identity, marked by a departure from strictly defined roles, resonates with similar dynamics observed among Pencak Silat practitioners. Younger athletes, influenced by global trends and digital discourses, increasingly embrace a version of masculinity that accommodates both strength and sensitivity, thereby challenging entrenched cultural norms.

Global gender discourse has also influenced the reinterpretation of masculinity within ideologically diverse frameworks. Rao & Jamil (2024) argue that postmodern interpretations of Islamic masculinity allow for the coexistence of traditional roles with more progressive, context-driven expressions of manhood (Rao & Jamil, 2024). In Indonesia, where Islamic values permeate cultural practices including Pencak Silat, these insights are particularly salient. The integration of postmodern gender theories encourages athletes to reconsider traditional expectations, facilitating a dialogue between established martial virtues and more egalitarian conceptions of masculinity.

Within the microcosm of Pencak Silat training environments, mentorship and hierarchical structures further contribute to the reconfiguration of masculine ideals. Schubert et al. (2021) provide examples of alternative masculinities that emerge in communicative acts opposing traditional blame discourses.



Such alternative expressions challenge the conventional narrative by allowing athletes to voice and negotiate identities that diverge from the expected stoic and authoritative mold. These interactions between mentors and mentees create an environment in which traditional masculinity is not merely reproduced but is also critically interrogated (Schubert et al., 2021).

The practical implications of these tensions are evident in sports intervention programs aimed at addressing crises in adolescent masculine identities. Geng (2023) examines how sports interventions, traditionally designed to instill discipline and resilience in young male athletes, are now being reevaluated to consider broader aspects of identity formation (Geng, 2023). His analysis underscores that rigid disciplinary practices may inadvertently exacerbate crises in adolescent masculinity, highlighting the need for more inclusive and flexible approaches that accommodate alternative masculinities. This evolving pedagogical landscape is prompting stakeholders to reexamine the core values underpinning traditional sports training.

The interplay between traditional masculine ideals embedded in Pencak Silat and contemporary global gender discourses creates a dynamic environment marked by negotiation, contradiction, and gradual transformation. While traditional Pencak Silat often emphasizes values such as strength, honor, and control—traits historically aligned with hegemonic masculinity—emerging narratives from younger athletes and urban training centers suggest a growing openness to more inclusive and emotionally expressive forms of masculinity (Sulfa et al., 2024). For example, some instructors now integrate discussions on mutual respect, emotional regulation, and gender sensitivity into their teaching, reflecting a subtle yet meaningful shift. However, these changes are not uniformly accepted and often generate tension within traditional communities. This evolving landscape highlights the need for further empirical investigation to explore how modern athletes in Indonesia actively challenge, reinterpret, or reconcile traditional masculine norms within their sporting practices. Such research is vital not only for understanding the transformation of gender identities in traditional sports but also for informing pedagogical approaches that honor cultural heritage while embracing societal change (Esteban Salvador et al., 2022).

### ***Theoretical Interpretations of Findings***

Drawing on multiple theoretical frameworks, recent research on Pencak Silat has illuminated how traditional sports contribute to the construction and reinforcement of masculine identities in Indonesia. In particular, hegemonic masculinity theory offers an interpretative lens to understand dominant male identities, while gender performativity theory explains the enactment and performance of masculinity in these sports. Moreover, structural functionalism helps to elucidate how traditional practices such as Pencak Silat maintain societal stability by reproducing established gender roles. Together, these perspectives provide a comprehensive theoretical foundation for understanding the interplay between cultural preservation, sports policy, and evolving gender dynamics in Indonesian traditional sports (Geng, 2023; Khan et al., 2022).

From a hegemonic masculinity perspective, Pencak Silat represents more than a form of physical exercise—it is a social institution that articulates the dominant norms associated with “ideal manhood.” In this context, the sport reinforces qualities such as leadership, strength, and self-control that are emblematic of the prevailing masculine ideology. (Khan et al., 2022) discuss how dominant masculine narratives are embedded within traditional sporting practices and how these narratives compel practitioners to internalize and embody cultural expectations. As a result, male athletes in Pencak Silat come to see themselves as custodians of an inherited legacy of strength and honor, which not only defines their athletic identity but also informs broader social roles in Indonesia (Khan et al., 2022).

Complementing this view, gender performativity theory underscores how masculinity is continuously enacted through routine behaviors within sports settings. In Pencak Silat, the ritualistic training sessions, ceremonial practices, and hierarchical mentoring relationships are not merely pedagogical devices; they are performative acts that repeatedly construct the “masculine self.” These performances, whether in demonstrations, competitions, or everyday practice, serve as embodied expressions of culturally sanctioned behaviors. As athletes repeatedly engage in these practices, they reinforce both their own masculine self-perceptions and the broader social expectations of what it means to be a man in Indonesian society (Geng, 2023).



Structural functionalism provides an additional dimension by explaining how Pencak Silat contributes to social stability through its reinforcement of traditional gender roles. By institutionalizing a set of normative behaviors that emphasize order, duty, and respect, traditional sports such as Pencak Silat help maintain continuity within the social system. This theoretical perspective suggests that the sport's role in transmitting cultural values is not incidental; it serves a pivotal function in ensuring that societal expectations—particularly those related to gender—are sustained across generations. In this way, Pencak Silat acts as a social glue, integrating individual behaviors with collective cultural norms and thereby fostering broader social cohesion (Esteban Salvador et al., 2022).

Empirical findings from recent studies indicate that participation in Pencak Silat significantly shapes male identity through structured mentorship, disciplined training, and competitive performance. Male athletes in this traditional martial art frequently report that the rigorous training regimen instills not only physical strength and resilience but also an enduring sense of honor and duty. These experiences contribute to a self-perception that aligns with traditional masculine ideals while also validating the sports' role as a medium for cultural transmission. The interplay of ritual, hierarchy, and performance in Pencak Silat thus emerges as central to understanding how dominant male identities are both constructed and perpetuated (Oh, 2024).

The broader implications of these findings extend beyond the domain of sports into the realms of cultural policy and social governance in Indonesia. Pencak Silat, as an expression of traditional masculinity, also serves as a vehicle for cultural preservation and national identity. Its integration into educational curricula and community programs reinforces long-held gender roles while simultaneously promoting social stability. Policymakers may therefore consider how the organized promotion of traditional sports can contribute to broader social objectives, such as the preservation of cultural heritage and the reinforcement of community values in an increasingly modernized society (Esteban Salvador et al., 2022; Geng, 2023).

At the same time, these theoretical interpretations highlight the need for greater gender inclusivity within traditional sports. While hegemonic masculinity dominates the narrative in Pencak Silat, emerging global gender discourses and alternative expressions of male identity challenge these monolithic constructions. Future research should aim to explore how Pencak Silat—and traditional sports more broadly—can evolve to incorporate more fluid and inclusive understandings of masculinity without sacrificing their cultural and historical essence. Investigations into the experiences of athletes who negotiate these tensions, as well as comparative studies with other traditional sports in Southeast Asia, would offer valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of gender identity (Geng, 2023; Khan et al., 2022).

In conclusion, applying hegemonic masculinity theory, gender performativity theory, and structural functionalism to the study of Pencak Silat provides a robust framework for understanding how the sport shapes and reinforces masculine identities. The evidence suggests that Pencak Silat is instrumental not only in transmitting traditional values such as discipline, resilience, and honor but also in sustaining societal expectations of male behavior in Indonesia. However, as global gender discourses increasingly advocate for more flexible and inclusive understandings of gender, there is a compelling case for reexamining traditional practices and adapting sports policies to reflect evolving norms while preserving cultural heritage. Future research should thus delve deeper into these tensions, aiming to foster a more inclusive sporting environment that recognizes and integrates the diverse expressions of masculinity within contemporary Indonesian society.

## Discussion

The theoretical interpretations of our findings reveal the multifaceted role of Pencak Silat as an instrument for both reinforcing and challenging traditional masculine identities in Indonesia. Drawing from hegemonic masculinity theory, the sport serves as a cultural institution through which dominant male ideals—emphasizing leadership, toughness, and self-control—are both articulated and upheld. Male practitioners of Pencak Silat are socialized into a framework where these traits are not only celebrated on the mat but also expected in broader societal contexts, thereby validating longstanding gender norms and practices.



In applying hegemonic masculinity theory, we observe that the training environment in Pencak Silat institutionalizes traits associated with idealized manhood. Ritualized routines, hierarchical mentoring systems, and formal competitions contribute to the establishment of a masculine ethos that prizes discipline and honor. Research has shown that traditional training materials, such as the pocket books developed for junior high school learners in Pencak Silat, mediate cultural values and reinforce these dominant masculine narratives (Raibowo et al., 2023). The sport, therefore, functions as a vehicle for the transmission of established norms, ensuring that young practitioners internalize and replicate virtues associated with traditional masculinity.

Gender performativity theory offers additional insights by highlighting how masculinity is not an innate quality but rather a set of behaviors enacted through daily practice. In Pencak Silat, the repeated performance of specific gestures, postures, and routines—integral to the art's ritualistic nature—creates a script for masculinity that athletes follow and continually re-inscribe. This performative aspect is evident in the way athletes embody ingrained expectations during training and competition, thus reiterating a social script that validates the hegemonic ideal. Their self-conceptions as resilient and honor-bound practitioners result from this constant, embodied reenactment of culturally prescribed behaviors.

Structural functionalism further explains the stabilizing role of Pencak Silat within Indonesian society. By maintaining traditional gender roles through systematic training methods and institutionalized rituals, the sport contributes to overall social cohesion and continuity. This theoretical perspective posits that established gender roles serve a critical function by promoting order and predictability in social life. In this context, Pencak Silat's institutional practices, which interweave physical, moral, and spiritual dimensions, play an essential part in sustaining a cultural order that favors continuity and collective identity.

While our findings illustrate how Pencak Silat reinforces traditional masculine ideals, they also point to emerging opportunities for pedagogical innovation. Modern educational approaches that integrate digital tools and inclusive values—though still limited in practical application—hold potential to respect cultural traditions while accommodating new social realities (Widad & Bambang Ferianto Tjahyo Kuntjoro, 2023). These approaches remain more aspirational than fully realized in the current landscape of traditional sports instruction in Indonesia (Sinaga et al., 2023).

To understand the extent to which athletes are challenging hegemonic masculinity within Pencak Silat, more in-depth qualitative research is necessary. Exploring how modern practitioners negotiate, resist, or reinterpret inherited gender norms in their daily practice would offer richer insights into the evolving nature of masculinity in traditional sport. Such studies could highlight not only acts of conformity but also subtle forms of resistance and identity rearticulation.

Moreover, caution must be exercised in attempting to extrapolate these findings to Western or European societies. The sociocultural, religious, and historical contexts of Indonesia are distinct and deeply intertwined with the values embedded in Pencak Silat. As such, these insights may not be directly transferable to societies with different traditions and gender ideologies. A comparative study across cultural contexts is therefore necessary to determine the broader applicability of our conclusions, as well as to explore whether similar dynamics of masculinity construction exist in other traditional sports globally.

## Conclusions

This study highlights how traditional sports, particularly Pencak Silat, shape masculinity in Indonesia by reinforcing values like leadership, resilience, and honor. Rooted in hegemonic masculinity theory, Pencak Silat instills discipline and control, shaping collective male identities. Gender performativity theory further reveals how masculinity is enacted through rituals and mentorship, validating traditional norms while allowing room for reinterpretation. However, global gender discourse is gradually reshaping these ideals, with younger athletes challenging rigid masculine portrayals. While Pencak Silat serves as both a sport and a cultural vessel, its institutionalization may restrict more fluid expressions of masculinity. Media, education, and policy frameworks continue to reinforce these norms, though moderni-

zation and digitalization offer opportunities for broader gender inclusivity. Future research should explore how evolving societal expectations interact with cultural traditions to foster diverse masculine identities while preserving Indonesia's rich heritage.

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