

MAN+ MODEL**A definitive, non-summarized, soul-forward and index-journal-ready paper (fully developed)**

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Correspondence: Dr. Ignacio Bonasa AlzuriaReceived: 20 April 2026; Accepted: 25 April 2026; Published: 05 May 2026***Citation:** Ignacio Bonasa Alzuria. MAN+ MODEL A definitive, non-summarized, soul-forward and index-journal-ready paper (fully developed). AJMCRR. 2026; 5(5): 1-11.**Abstract**

This paper presents MAN+ as a fully developed leadership framework that redefines “masculinity at work” as a trainable capability set rather than a gender identity claim. In many organizations, traditional masculinity scripts (invulnerability, dominance, status competition, emotional suppression, performance at any cost) operate as hidden governance systems: they shape how leaders decide, how teams communicate, how conflict is managed, how errors are treated, and what is considered “strong” or “weak.”

MAN+ proposes an alternative script grounded in sustainable performance and human dignity. The model is structured around four operational dimensions: M (Mindful), A (Accountable), N (Nurturing), and “+” (Purpose). Each dimension is defined as a cluster of observable behaviors supported by established streams in organizational psychology and leadership research (e.g., emotional intelligence, psychological safety, engagement, ethical leadership). The paper integrates MAN+ with the 4A activation framework—Learning, Attitude, Soul, Action—so the model is not merely descriptive but implementable.

Beyond conceptual definition, the paper provides: (i) a rationale for why masculinity scripts function as management variables; (ii) a detailed development of each MAN+ dimension including behaviors, typical failure modes, micro-practices, and cultural levers; (iii) an operationalization matrix (behaviors → indicators → tools) and measurement options; (iv) an implementation playbook across phases; (v) three developed organizational scenarios illustrating application; and (vi) a research agenda with testable propositions. The aim is to offer an academically defensible, practically usable, and culturally resonant model that helps organizations move from “performance at any cost” to “performance with meaning.”

Keywords: MAN+; leadership development; new masculinity; psychological safety; emotional intelligence; ethical leadership; engagement; organizational culture; well-being; purpose; 4A model.

Introduction: When Masculinity Becomes a Management Variable

Something is breaking inside organizations. Not always on dashboards, but in corridors, meetings, late-night emails, and the quiet exhaustion people carry home. Leaders are better trained than ever, and yet teams report fatigue, cynicism, fear of speaking up, and a thinning sense of meaning. This tension is often framed as a “well-being problem,” a “culture problem,” or a “generational problem.” MAN+ begins with a different hypothesis: in many workplaces, masculinity scripts function as invisible management systems.

By “masculinity scripts,” this paper refers to culturally reinforced expectations about what counts as strong leadership—expectations frequently associated with invulnerability, dominance, emotional distance, high-status competition, and a belief that intensity equals excellence. These expectations may appear “normal,” even “professional,” yet they shape core organizational mechanisms: decision-making under pressure, feedback dynamics, conflict resolution, tolerance of misconduct, and the treatment of error.

When a script becomes the default definition of strength, it becomes a governance mechanism. It determines who gets promoted, which behaviors are rewarded, what emotions are permitted, and how power is exercised. In that sense, masculinity is not merely a social topic; it becomes a management variable.

The purpose of this paper is not to moralize masculinity, nor to frame it as a problem “belonging to men.” The purpose is to operationalize a transformation: to move from rigid scripts that create hidden costs to a capability set that generates sustaina-

ble performance with dignity. MAN+ is offered as that capability set.

The paper is written to serve two audiences at once. For scholars, it provides a conceptual model that is defensible and testable. For practitioners, it provides an implementation pathway and a language to intervene in culture without triggering ideological polarization. The model’s central claim is pragmatic: leadership can be strong without being harsh; decisive without being violent; ambitious without being dehumanizing; and demanding without being destructive.

Conceptual Clarifications: Masculinity as Script, Not Identity

The conversation about masculinity often collapses into identity debates. In organizational life, that collapse is unhelpful. MAN+ reframes masculinity as a script: a learned behavioral pattern that can be observed, named, and changed. A script is not destiny; it is code. And code can be rewritten.

This framing matters for three reasons.

First, organizations change through behavior. Even when values are aspirational, culture is ultimately “the way we do things here,” meaning repeated behavior reinforced by incentives and social approval.

Second, scripts are distributed. A masculinity script can be enacted by anyone regardless of gender, and a new masculinity script can be embodied by anyone regardless of gender. The construct is about conduct, not chromosomes.

Third, capability framing avoids polarization. When organizations attempt to “talk about masculinity” as identity, the conversation can quickly become defensive. When organizations talk about

“capabilities that reduce burnout and increase trust,” the conversation becomes actionable.

Therefore, throughout this paper, “masculinity” refers to a patterned set of workplace behaviors historically associated with masculine norms. MAN+ proposes a new script: not the elimination of strength, but its evolution.

Why Old Scripts Produce Hidden Organizational Costs

Traditional masculinity scripts can produce short-term output, especially in crisis or high-stakes environments. The problem is not that they never work; the problem is their hidden cost structure. Like borrowing from the future, they often finance immediate results by depleting trust, energy, and meaning.

This paper highlights five recurring cost clusters:

- 1) Psychological safety collapse. When leaders equate strength with dominance, people speak less. Questions disappear. Errors are hidden. Innovation slows. Teams become polite on the surface and afraid underneath (Edmondson, 1999).
- 2) Emotional illiteracy and reactive leadership. Emotional suppression does not eliminate emotion; it drives it underground. Under pressure, suppressed emotion surfaces as irritability, aggression, impatience, or withdrawal. Decision quality decreases because the leader loses internal clarity (Goleman, 1995).
- 3) Blame cultures and accountability gaps. When invulnerability is required, admitting error is punished. Leaders protect status, not learning. Teams manage optics instead of outcomes. This increases execution risk and reduces trust.
- 4) Burnout and performance volatility. Performance at any cost creates unsustainable work-

loads and “hero cultures.” The system relies on over-functioning until it breaks. Burnout becomes chronic, engagement becomes fragile, and retention declines (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Schaufeli et al., 2002).

- 5) Ethical drift. When results justify behavior, small integrity compromises become normalized. Over time, the organization becomes efficient at delivery and poor at dignity. Reputation risk increases, and internal cynicism spreads (Brown & Treviño, 2006).

MAN+ targets these costs not by preaching “be nicer,” but by upgrading the leadership operating system.

The MAN+ Model: Definition, Logic, and Full Development (M–A–N–+)

MAN+ is a mnemonic, operational model designed to be memorable, measurable, and culturally transformative. It defines four capability clusters that collectively rewrite the leadership script:

M — Mindful: presence, self-mastery, and clarity under pressure.

A — Accountable: responsibility, repair, and coherence.

N — Nurturing: care with standards, development, and psychological safety.

+ — Purpose: meaning, ethical direction, and long-term impact.

The model is “plus” because leadership is not only about competencies; it is about direction. Competence without purpose can be efficient and empty. MAN+ insists that sustainable strength includes meaning.

Below, each dimension is developed deeply with:

definition, behavioral markers, common failure modes, micro-practices, and cultural levers.

M — Mindful (Presence and Self-Mastery)

Mindful leadership is not a wellness trend. In MAN+, mindfulness is a performance capacity: the ability to stay present, emotionally integrated, and cognitively clear in high-pressure environments. Mindfulness is the foundation of every other dimension, because without awareness there is no choice—and without choice, leadership becomes reaction.

Definition. Mindful means: (i) awareness of internal states (emotion, bias, urgency), (ii) regulation of impulses, and (iii) relational presence (being “with” people, not merely “over” them). It is self-mastery applied to leadership.

Behavioral markers (observable):

- Pauses before responding to provocation; asks clarifying questions instead of escalating.
- Names emotions without dramatizing them (“I’m concerned,” “I’m frustrated by the delay”).
- Maintains respectful tone under pressure; does not use humiliation as a tool.
- Practices deep listening: paraphrases, checks understanding, invites dissent.
- Separates facts from interpretations; uses structured thinking in uncertainty.

Common failure modes (what Mindful is not):

- Stoic suppression: pretending not to feel, then exploding later.
- Performative calm: silence that masks contempt.
- Hyper-control: micromanagement driven by anxiety.

- “Fast certainty”: making quick decisions to escape discomfort rather than to solve problems.

Micro-practices (weekly training):

- 1) The 10-second leadership pause: before responding, inhale, name the emotion, choose the intention.
- 2) Three-lens thinking: facts / interpretations / options—spoken aloud in meetings.
- 3) Listening ratio practice: speak less than 40% in difficult conversations.
- 4) “Signal” questions: “What am I missing?” “Where could I be wrong?” “What’s the risk if we don’t hear dissent?”

Cultural levers:

- Normalize speaking about pressure and uncertainty without shame.
- Reward leaders who invite dissent and revise positions when needed.
- Build meeting rituals: 60-second check-in, explicit permission to disagree.

Why it matters. Mindful leadership reduces organizational anxiety and prevents culture from being governed by reactivity. It increases decision quality, conflict hygiene, and psychological safety (Goleman, 1995; Edmondson, 1999).

A — Accountable (Responsibility and Repair)

Accountability is leadership’s moral spine. In many cultures shaped by invulnerability, leaders avoid accountability because it threatens status. MAN+ reframes accountability as strength: ownership of impact, commitment to repair, and coherence between words and actions.

Definition. Accountable means: (i) taking responsibility for decisions and consequences, (ii) admitting

error without defensiveness, (iii) repairing trust through action, and (iv) aligning behavior with stated values.

Behavioral markers:

- Uses “I” language for responsibility: “I made that call; I missed that risk.”
- Makes repair concrete: “Here is what I will do by Friday to fix it.”
- Tracks commitments publicly; closes loops.
- Holds others accountable without humiliation: behavior-focused, not identity-attacking.
- Protects truth-tellers; does not punish bad news.

Common failure modes:

- Blame shifting: “If they had...”
- Image management: apologizing without changing behavior.
- Punitive accountability: using accountability as control, not responsibility.
- Double standards: demanding from others what leaders do not model.

Micro-practices:

- 1) The “repair sentence”: “I own X, I understand impact Y, I will do Z by date D.”
- 2) Commitment ledger: visible commitments reviewed weekly.
- 3) After-action reviews: focus on learning and improvements, not scapegoats.
- 4) Values-to-decisions check: one-minute ethical check before critical decisions.

Cultural levers:

- Make repair admired, not shameful.
- Separate “responsibility” from “humiliation.”
- Install systems where learning is safer than hiding.

Why it matters. Accountability transforms power into trust and increases execution reliability. It reduces politics and accelerates alignment. Ethical leadership research shows that fairness, role modeling, and integrity shape culture and misconduct risk (Brown & Treviño, 2006).

N — Nurturing (Care With Standards)

Nurturing is the most misunderstood dimension. Many leaders fear that care will reduce performance. MAN+ defines nurturing as strategic care: building people and systems that sustain excellence without depletion. Nurturing is not softness; it is durability.

Definition. Nurturing means: (i) developing people, (ii) protecting psychological safety, (iii) setting high standards with dignity, and (iv) designing sustainable workload norms.

Behavioral markers:

- Gives feedback that is specific, respectful, and growth-oriented.
- Coaches rather than crushes; corrects without humiliation.
- Pays attention to workload and energy; challenges “hero culture.”
- Recognizes effort and progress; not only outcomes.
- Builds inclusion: ensures voices are heard, especially dissenting ones.

Common failure modes:

- Paternalism: care that disempowers.
- Avoidance: “being nice” by not addressing performance issues.
- Sentimental leadership: empathy without structure.
- Burnout blindness: praising overwork as loyal-

ty.

Micro-practices:

- 1) Two-part feedback: standard + support (“Here is the bar; here is how I’ll help you reach it.”)
- 2) Weekly energy scan: what is draining us? what restores us?
- 3) Psychological safety prompts: “What’s risky to say?” “What are we afraid to admit?”
- 4) Development minutes: every meeting includes one growth moment (learning captured).

Cultural levers:

- Promote leaders who develop others, not only those who deliver numbers.
- Track retention and internal mobility as leadership KPIs.
- Make respect the price of admission: no performance exceptions.

Why it matters. Nurturing leadership increases engagement and retention, reduces burnout, and builds learning cultures (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). It supports psychological safety, which is a known precursor to team learning and innovation (Edmondson, 1999).

+ — Purpose (Meaning, Ethics, and Direction)

The “+” is the soul of the model. Without purpose, leadership becomes efficient execution without meaning. Purpose in MAN+ is not a slogan; it is a decision criterion that aligns performance with dignity and long-term impact.

Definition. Purpose means: (i) connecting goals to meaning, (ii) using ethical clarity as a compass, (iii) prioritizing long-term impact over short-term vanity metrics, and (iv) making work “worth it” for human beings.

Behavioral markers:

- Explains the “why” behind decisions; links tasks to outcomes and values.
- Makes ethical trade-offs explicit; rejects “any cost” logic.
- Protects what matters under pressure (people, integrity, learning).
- Builds narrative: where we are going, who we are becoming, why it matters.

Common failure modes:

- Mission washing: inspirational words without operational change.
- Instrumental purpose: purpose used as manipulation for output.
- Cynicism: treating meaning as “soft stuff” while people suffer.
- Short-termism: sacrificing culture for quarterly numbers.

Micro-practices:

- 1) Purpose check: “If we win this quarter but lose trust, is it a win?”
- 2) Values-to-action mapping: one value → one weekly behavior.
- 3) Storytelling practice: leaders tell “meaning moments” monthly.
- 4) Ethical red lines: define non-negotiables (respect, honesty, non-violence).

Cultural levers:

- Embed purpose in OKRs (impact metrics alongside output metrics).
- Recognize leaders who protect dignity under pressure.
- Create rituals of meaning: reflection, gratitude, service.

Why it matters. Purpose increases motivational

quality and resilience. Self-determination theory makes new behavior possible.

emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as foundations for sustainable motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Purpose gives direction to those needs, helping organizations move beyond compliance to commitment.

Soul. In Ignacio Bonasa’s definition, “Soul” is operational: coherence + dignity + care + truth + purpose. Soul ensures that MAN+ is not a technique for optics, but a culture for human flourishing.

Integration With 4A: Learning–Attitude–Soul–Action as the Activation Engine

MAN+ defines what to become; 4A defines how to become it. The 4A framework—Learning, Attitude, Soul, Action—functions as the activation engine that turns MAN+ from a concept into a lived culture.

Action. Action turns values into habits: conversations, decisions, boundaries, rituals, and measurable commitments. Action is where the model becomes results.

The combined sequence is: Learn (see) → Attitude (choose) → Soul (align) → Action (embody).

Learning. Leaders identify their inherited scripts, see the organizational costs, and learn new behavioral options through practice, reflection, and feedback loops.

Operationalization: Behaviors, Indicators, and Measurement Options

To reach index-journal standards, a conceptual model must be operationalizable. MAN+ can be translated into measurable variables without reducing it to simplistic metrics by focusing on observable behavior and triangulating indicators.

Attitude. Leaders shift from defensiveness to openness, from control to responsibility, from harshness to firm compassion. Attitude is the inner stance that

Operational Matrix (MAN+ → Behaviors → Indicators → Tools)

Dimension	Observable behaviors (examples)	Indicators (examples)	Development tools (examples)
M Mindful	Pause before reacting; deep listening; emotional naming; structured thinking	Decision quality; conflict escalation rate; trust in leader	EI training; coaching; meeting rituals; reflection practice
A Accountable	Own mistakes; repair; close loops; protect truth-tellers; fair standards	Execution reliability; perceived fairness; accountability climate	After-action reviews; commitment ledger; ethics checks
N Nurturing	Growth feedback; coaching; workload hygiene; inclusion; recognition	Engagement; retention; burnout risk; psychological safety	Mentoring; development plans; safety prompts; workload redesign
+ Purpose	Explain why; align values; ethical trade-offs; long-term impact	Meaning at work; alignment; reputational risk reduction	Purpose OKRs; narrative work; non-negotiables; service rituals

Measurement options (research-ready)

- Psychological Safety: team-level scales (Edmondson, 1999).
- Engagement: UWES or similar constructs

(Schaufeli et al., 2002).

- Burnout risk: MBI-based or equivalent indicators (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).
- Ethical leadership perceptions: validated scales

(Brown & Treviño, 2006).

- 360-degree leadership assessments mapped to MAN+ behaviors.
- Hard indicators: turnover, absenteeism, incident reports, escalation frequency, rework rates.

A practical approach is triangulation: combine survey data (perceptions), behavioral observation (meeting dynamics), and hard outcomes (retention, incidents).

Implementation Playbook: From Executive Alignment to Cultural Rituals

Implementation fails when it becomes a speech. MAN+ implementation succeeds when it becomes a system. The following playbook is designed as an organizational pathway.

Phase 1 — Diagnosis (name the current script)

Objective: identify how the current masculinity script shows up in leadership behavior. Methods: interviews, focus groups, climate surveys, incident logs, and language analysis (how people talk about error, pressure, and dissent). Output: a map of hidden costs and priority behaviors.

Phase 2 — Executive alignment (exemplar power)

Objective: top leadership embodies MAN+. Without role modeling, change collapses. Practices: executive workshops, personal commitments, public repair moments, and coaching focused on Mindful and Accountable behaviors under pressure.

Phase 3 — Manager training (turn the model into conversations)

Objective: equip managers with scripts for feedback, conflict, decision-making, and workload design. Format: micro-habits weekly, role-plays, su-

pervision, and measurable commitments.

Phase 4 — Cultural rituals (install the new normal)

- 60-second check-in at the start of key meetings (Mindful).
- Post-mortems without blame (Accountable + Mature learning).
- Monthly ‘meaning moment’ storytelling (Purpose).
- Meeting norms: no interruptions, dissent invited (Respect levers inside MAN+).
- Workload hygiene reviews (Nurturing).

Phase 5 — Measurement and reinforcement (make it stick)

Objective: track progress and reinforce the new script. Measures: safety, engagement, burnout risk, retention, and conduct incidents. Reinforcement: promotion criteria and performance systems include MAN+ behaviors.

Three Developed Organizational Scenarios (Vignettes)

Scenario A — The Brilliant but Toxic Leader

Context. A high-performing director delivers numbers but leaves a trail of fear. Meetings are tense. People avoid speaking up. Turnover in the team is rising. The leader’s identity is fused with invulnerability: admitting error equals weakness.

Diagnosis through MAN+. The script is “dominance = leadership.” Mindful is missing (reactivity), Accountable is distorted (blame), Nurturing is absent (people are instruments), Purpose is reduced to quarterly results.

Intervention.

- M: introduce pause protocols; coach the leader

on emotional triggers and listening ratio.

- A: implement a commitment ledger and repair practice; require public closure of commitments.
- N: introduce feedback standards and psychological safety prompts; define ‘no humiliation’ as non-negotiable.
- +: connect targets to a broader narrative and ethical red lines; stop “results at any cost.”

System levers. HR and executives must remove performance exceptions: the organization’s message must be ‘numbers do not buy immunity.’

Expected outcomes. Reduced incident reports, improved safety scores, stabilized retention, improved quality of execution (less rework due to hidden problems).

Scenario B — The Burned-Out Silent Team

Context. A team is overloaded. They deliver, but with chronic exhaustion. People stop raising risks because there is no capacity to respond. The masculine script here is “heroism”: overwork equals loyalty.

Diagnosis. Mindful is low (no pause), Accountable is blurred (priorities unclear), Nurturing is violated (workload harm), Purpose is diluted (work feels meaningless).

Intervention.

- M: install weekly energy scan and prioritization pauses.
- A: define explicit priority rules; stop hidden work; close loops.
- N: redesign workload and normalize recovery; pair high standards with support.
- +: rebuild meaning: what do we protect, for

whom, and why?

Expected outcomes. Lower burnout risk, improved engagement, improved delivery predictability, fewer errors from fatigue.

Scenario C — Innovation Blocked by Fear

Context. The organization claims it wants innovation but punishes mistakes. People play safe. Meetings are performative. The script is “certainty = strength” and “error = shame.”

Diagnosis. Mindful is absent (fear drives fast certainty), Accountable is punitive (blame), Nurturing is missing (no safety), Purpose is rhetorical (posters, not practice).

Intervention.

- M: leaders model uncertainty: “Here is what we know and don’t know.”
- A: post-mortems without blame; focus on system learning.
- N: psychological safety norms; protect dissenters.
- +: align innovation to purpose and ethics: why innovation matters beyond competition.

Expected outcomes. Increased idea flow, higher learning speed, improved cross-team collaboration, reduced fear-based silence.

Discussion: Contributions, Critiques, and How to Defend the Model

Contributions. MAN+ contributes by translating an often vague cultural debate into an operational capability model. It makes masculinity actionable without turning the organization into an ideological battlefield. It also provides a bridge between well-being and performance: human dignity becomes a

strategic driver.

Potential critiques and responses.

- 1) “It is ideological.” Response: MAN+ is behavior-based and grounded in established organizational constructs (EI, safety, engagement, ethical leadership).
- 2) “It is too soft.” Response: the model includes standards and responsibility; nurturing is strategic, not permissive.
- 3) “It’s gendered and exclusionary.” Response: MAN+ is a mnemonic label; the construct is universal and applicable to anyone. The aim is to rewrite a workplace script, not define identity.
- 4) “It cannot be measured.” Response: the paper provides operationalization options and validated constructs for triangulation.

Positioning. MAN+ can sit alongside transformational, authentic, servant, and ethical leadership frameworks by offering a distinct lens: masculinity scripts as hidden governance. It invites leadership development programs to address not only skills, but cultural code.

Limitations and Research Agenda

Limitations. This paper is conceptual-applied. It does not present original empirical data. Cultural variations may affect how masculinity scripts manifest. Finally, acronyms can be misused as slogans if not supported by systems.

Research agenda.

- Scale development: build and validate a MAN+ behavior scale (factor structure, reliability).
- Longitudinal designs: examine MAN+ interventions’ effects on burnout risk, engagement, retention.

- Multi-level modeling: test mediators such as psychological safety and ethical climate.
- Intervention trials: pre-post and quasi-experimental studies in organizations implementing MAN+.
- Cross-cultural studies: examine script differences by sector, country, and organizational maturity.

Conclusion: Strength Reimagined

MAN+ proposes that the future of leadership is not harder, louder, or more invulnerable. It is deeper. Strength is reimagined as presence, responsibility, care, and meaning. Organizations that adopt this shift can achieve what the current era demands: sustainable performance without human depletion.

If leadership is the art of influencing people toward outcomes, then the quality of leadership is ultimately measured not only by what gets done, but by what it costs to get it done. MAN+ offers a path to outcomes that do not require losing the human being in the process.

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