Nexus Between Socio-Cultural Factors and Women's Social Mobility: A Case Study of District Rajanpur (Pakistan)

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Abstract

The attitude of men toward women has a substantial impact on the social mobility of women, affecting a variety of domains, including education, employment, and political participation. Women's exploitation and discrimination are often seen as a barrier to national success. Women lack a voice, independent opinions, and the right to make life decisions. Gender prejudices are frequently perpetuated by societal norms and cultural beliefs, which severely restrict the opportunities for women to advance in both social and economic contexts. Pakistan has widespread gender inequality in all aspects of life. Pakistani society's patriarchal framework and persistent sociocultural norms limit women's mobility, employment opportunities, and inheritance rights. The primary purpose of this study was to check the women's social mobility in district Rajanpur. The study's main objective was to study the relationship between sociocultural factors affecting men's attitudes towards women's social mobility. The theoretical framework consists of the social role theory and masculinity theory. Multistage sampling technique was used to obtain348 respondents from the 3976 registered households using the structured interview schedule. Data was analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-26). The correlation results present a negative correlation between social factors and women's social mobility; cultural factors and women's social mobility have a negative correlation. This study suggested that social media should present the positive role of educated women and the government of Pakistan should take some serious steps for technical educational programs for women in southern Punjab to improve women's social mobility.

Keywords: Cultural Factors, Social Factors, Men's Attitude, Women's Social Mobility.

Introduction

In Western culture, the positive attitude toward promoting gender equality in income, education, and job opportunities is the main cause of women's higher social mobility in western countries (Breen et al., 2018).

Pakistan comes in 161st out of 191 countries on the Gender Inequality Index. Third-world and developing countries establish national boundaries based on ethnicity and geography to justify inequity (Purfield et al., 2016). In South Asian countries, women experience feelings of insecurity regarding their professions due to the direct correlation between men's attitudes and their cultural context (Mangar, 2012). Shiraev and Levy (2020) explained that the hereditary approach to gender discrimination is prevalent in numerous societies, where gender discriminatory practices

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are established through various socially constructed cultural norms.

The conventional notion of patriarchy oppressing women within four borders by employing power causes forced working and domestic violence due to power and interest conflicts (Sultana, 2021). Various studies have explored this relationship between the rigid attitude of men toward women's social mobility (Jayachandran, 2020; Aloud, 2020; Bursztynet al., 2020). Patriarchy is a pervasive social system seen in all cultures worldwide and is the primary obstacle to women's freedom of movement (Meraj & Sadaqat, 2016).

Pakistani culture is primarily characterized by men's dominance, social class, feudalism, kinship, and social order. In Pakistan, families and social classes improve the socioeconomic status of women within society (Iqbal et al., 2012; Abbas et al., 2018). In Pakistani culture, especially in rural areas of Southern Punjab, there is a clear division between men and women, with each gender having its own set of norms, obligations, and behaviors (Khan, 2020).

The attitudes of men and women are influenced by family and society, which shape their attitudes, employment status, mobility, and social position. Men's attitudes influence women's leadership and social mobility. Socialization by family, peers, and the community shapes men's attitudes (Luke, 2021). According to culture and society, males are hard workers and breadwinners, while it is the primary responsibility of women to take care of the family. Traditional culture holds that men safeguard women's respect and restrict them from leaving the house (Eagly & Karau, 2019). Gender roles in society make men and women socially different from each other. Sexual orientation in society is represented by sex, and gender is shaped by how people interact with each other (Atakan, 2014). People of different genders have different views around the world. Men and women have equal work opportunities, but women work harder than men. It's important to remember that gender affects not only social norms but also religious ones. However, every society has its distinctive culture and social and cultural step-up (Bennett, 2022). Women are typically assigned gender roles from birth that are based on traditional customs and societal norms, primarily focused on the tasks of nursing, accommodating, and reproducing. These notions are firmly ingrained in the cultural fabric of society, resulting in the curtailment of women's other rights and freedoms (Delavande & Zafar, 2013).

Women encounter gender disparities in many aspects of life, encompassing educational entitlements, property rights, limited decision-making authority, and involvement in economic affairs, directly presenting women as a weaker part of society (Ullah, 2018). Female members of households are prohibited from pursuing higher education despite the crucial role education plays in family and national development (Alam, 2011).

The primary obstacle to the education of women within the family and community is the patriarchal mindset of men, as parents prioritize the education of their sons over their daughters (UNDP, 2018). Only 25% of Pakistani women work, which is concerning for the government. The conventional patriarchy in urban and rural Pakistan hinders women's empowerment by controlling their mobility and economic resources (World Bank, 2019). More than 60 million women are living below the poverty. The government's efforts and programs have proven ineffective in raising the literacy rate in district Rajanpur, which now stands at 33.75%. Pakistani societies and family structures are founded upon the principles of multiculturalism and multi-religiosity, promoting that the primary factor contributing to the low literacy rate in rural regions is patriarchy (Latif, 2009).

Women have no equal opportunities as men, have low economic status and power, and can't go to school in rural areas as boys. As a result, women are deprived because men control all resources (Munir & Kanwal, 2020). Women play the least important role in Pakistan's economic development, which is because their mobility is restricted due to their male family members and rigid culture (Tahir et al., 2021).

Objective of the Study

1. To study the relationship between sociocultural factors affecting men's attitudes towards women's social mobility.

Problem Statement

Women's social mobility remains a problematic subject in many nations. Sociocultural elements that reinforce gender stereotypes affect men's views on women's social mobility. Cultural norms often hinder women's education, employment, and leadership. Women's social mobility is limited by patriarchy, which discourages women from holding high-status and decision-making jobs. Religious beliefs can support gender inequality and hinder men's acceptance of women's social and professional advancement in various countries. Higher education and gender equality notions can influence men's perspectives on women's social mobility, while lower education frequently correlates with more traditional gender roles. Stereotypical and limited media portrayals of women might perpetuate negative sentiments toward their social mobility. Egalitarian households tend to support women's social mobility, which can influence men's opinions on gender equality. Competitive job markets may cause men to resist women's participation if they think it threatens their jobs.

Review of Literature

Social mobility work is associated with Sorokin (1927), who presents a unique idea of social mobility. The social mobility of women is deeply rooted in a country's culture about men's positive attitude (Sepulveda, 2023).

Jafree (2023) studied Pakistani society based on a collective family attitude rather than an individual orientation. However, because society is very patriarchal, this family orientation usually means what men want. Patriarchal rules and values are organically embedded in all cultures; in literary terms, patriarchy refers to the father's reign (Akgul, 2017). Men perceive women as lesser family and society members, requiring men's care and safety (Tadros, 2020).

There is a strong "inside-outside" dichotomy, with women being limited to the inside space of home and household. This is reflected in the idea of purdah (literally "curtain"), which refers to women covering their faces and the practice of keeping men and women separate, as well as the idea of *"Chardevari"* (four walls), which refers to how women are confined, their role in society, and their modesty (Naveed, 2023). This scenario limits women's mobility and access to school, work, training, and social services, resulting in low family and governmental investment in women (Rasool et al., 2023).

Nausher et al. (2023) studied that Pakistani women face daily prejudice and violence, especially if their husbands are impoverished and uneducated. Middle and lower-class violence is expected in a patriarchal culture, where men rule women and deny them agency. Men mistreated women physically, psychologically, and emotionally in many countries. Many experts argue that spouses abuse their wives because men have an edge in social, political, cultural, and economic activities (Agha & Agha, 2021).

Honor holds significant social value in Pakistani society, organizing most interpersonal interactions. Individuals are seen as family representatives, and failures can result in the entire family's loss of face or honor. Women face pressure to uphold family honor and prevent activities threatening family and community stability (Fayyaz, 2023).

Naz et al. (2022) described that different social groups, regions, and the gap between rural and urban areas have different views on women's rights. This is because of unequal economic growth and the effects of tribal, feudal, and capitalist social structures on women's lives. Local customs in rural and tribal areas give men much control over women's lives. Pervaiz and Akram (2018) explained that in some cases, women are traded to settle disagreements, sold, or bought to marry,

which is against Pakistani law and Islamic teachings. Women in the upper and middle classes, on the other hand, have more access to education and jobs and more power over their lives.

Afridi et al. (2023) studied that Pakistani culture is organized by gender and the social value of gender is set by patriarchal values ingrained in local traditions and society. Patriarchal rule over women is shown by strict rules about behavior, strict gender roles, family and related relationships, and a strong belief that female virtue is linked to maternal honor.

Butt and Park (2023) explained that low literacy rates are seen to be the leading cause of poverty and gender-based violence in rural areas, which has an immediate impact on women's social, political, and economic engagement. Rasool et al (2023), girls' educational institutions in the country are deteriorating. Societal conventions and caretakers' attitudes do not endorse girls' education. Girls frequently abandon their education due to poverty.

Gopang (2023) explained that lack of skills, job market prospects, and cultural restrictions hinder women's ability to compete for resources, leading to social and economic reliance. Many women are employed in low-productivity sectors like agriculture, casual wage labor, and unpaid work, leading to poverty due to gendered asset distribution and salary gaps. High unemployment and foreign migration of men are driving women to work, particularly in urban areas (Pervaiz & Akram, 2018).

Galiani (2007) found that individuals' social mobility is enhanced when they achieve financial independence. Furthermore, it is recommended that women be provided with equal educational opportunities to improve their personal growth. Torche (2014) stated that social mobility in industrialized countries differs across regions due to academic, income, and job status variations. These factors directly influence social and income mobility within countries (Zulfiqar, 2022).

Bettio and Verashchagina (2009) said that past work has shown that women are limited in the workplace by discrimination based on their gender among men and women. Bourdieu (2011) explained that social and cultural elements bind economic considerations to pass on parental status. Parental economic variables boost family and women's social mobility.

Shaheen et al. (2022) described that the men in Pakistan have total control over their families and all other social and cultural issues. They have authority since they take care of everyone. In the cultural context, women are supposed to follow all instructions mindlessly. Scholars of religion also stress blind obedience. Hasan and Alumbarak (2016) said that if a woman has a job or a business, it would be hard for her to move if her family didn't support her. Choudhry et al. (2019) said that sociocultural factors have a significant effect on how men see women, making it harder for women to move around, a common problem in Pakistan's rural areas.

Hussain (2020) analyzed that society stigmatizes girls' education while not boys. This stigma implies personal deficiencies in seeing a female succeed in school. This stigma begins when power dynamics shift. Zulfiqar (2022) studied that the most critical intervention is a mental shift that views funding for women's education as a means of enhancing women's status and advancing the nation. The illiterate woman is unable to defend their fundamental rights. Only educated women will experience reduced inequality, allowing them to lead more fulfilling lives and participate more effectively in society (Rabia et al., 2019).

Theoretical Framework
Social Role Theory

Focusing on the social role theory presents the central theme of gender roles in a cultural context because social roles are attached to the social expectations in society. According to the theory of social roles, men and women are socialized, and their roles are assigned based on their gender, which cannot be changed (Eagly & Wood, 1991).

According to the Social Role Theory, gender roles are the product of societal expectations and the distinction between men and women in the division of labor. Under this idea, history and

culture are significant in determining the roles and duties allocated to men and women. These elements, in turn, influence the behavior and attitudes of both genders. Throughout history, for instance, men have usually been allocated positions that involve physical strength and economic provision, while women have traditionally been saddled with the responsibility of providing care and household duties (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Wood, 2019; Hsu et al., 2021). The processes of socialization, in which individuals acquire and internalize the behaviors and attitudes that are regarded proper for their gender, are responsible for reinforcing these roles. Over time, these roles become institutionalized, which results in the notion that inequalities between the genders are inherent rather than the result of social construction; because of this, men and women develop distinct sets of abilities, interests, and behaviors that follow their respective positions in society, which contributes to the perpetuation of gender inequality (Breda et al., 2020; Tomasello, 2020; Khalid et al., 2020). The result of Brown and James' (2020) study shows that women as considered as second sex in society, and gender roles are expected by women at the family and societal levels.

Masculinity Theory

Traditional gender roles are typically reinforced by masculinity, resulting in opposition to the social and professional advancement of women. The resistance stems from the desire to uphold male authority and control, which are fundamental to conventional masculine beliefs. The idea examines how these views might be expressed through job discrimination, opportunity disparities, and societal prejudices. The concept of interrelation in masculinity theory elucidates how men's reactions to women's mobility are influenced by additional elements such as race, socioeconomic status, and cultural heritage. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics is essential to tackle obstacles that hinder women's upward social movement effectively and to advocate for gender equality actively (Wedgwood, 2009).

The central assumption of masculinity theory encompasses a range of attributes, behaviors, and roles traditionally associated with boys and men (Buschmeyer & Lengersdorf, 2016). It is a socially constructed concept that varies across cultures and historical periods. Theories of masculinity often focus on how gender norms and expectations shape male identities and behaviors (Borkowska, 2020; Reeser, 2020). One fundamental assumption is that masculinity is not a fixed or innate quality but is continuously produced and reproduced through social interactions and cultural practices. Masculinity is also defined in contrast to femininity and different varieties of masculinity, and it is also assumed that masculinity is relational. Certain masculinities are privileged over others, and this relational component underlines these power dynamics (Horlacher, 2020; Reeser, 2023). The idea of "multiple masculinities" proposed by Connell implies that racial, socioeconomic, and sexual orientation elements shape different conceptions of manhood in other contexts. This diversity and complexity of male identities is reflected in the fact that these various masculinities can exist alongside, compete with, and interact with one another (Ahmed et al., 2021).

Research Methodology

This study was conducted in District Rajanpur, Punjab, Pakistan. There are three tehsils in district Rajanpur: tehsil Rajanpur, tehsil Jampur, and tehsil Rojhan. Tehsil Jampur was selected randomly, and five rural union councils (Kot Tahir, Kotla Dwan, Bokhara, Nowshera, and Rasulpur) were selected randomly over nineteen union councils. Further five villages were selected from each union council for the data collection. The researcher used multistage sampling to obtain the sample of 348 male households over 3976 chosen as the targeted population within the study area. The data was collected through a well-structured interview schedule, including 91 questions. Overall, the tool's reliability was calculated to check the internal consistency of the tool, and the reliability of the tool was calculated from a lower 0.783 to a higher value of 0.891.

The data was analyzed through SPSS-26.

Research Hypothesis
1. Ho: Social factors do not significantly correlate with women's social mobility.
2. Ho: Social factors do not significantly correlate with women's social mobility.
3. Ho: Men's attitudes do not significantly correlate with women's social mobility.

Results and Discussion

A response rate is the proportion of actual responders to the number of people expected to respond to the survey, indicating how well the data obtained covered all sample items (Holtom et al., 2022). To check the relationship between sociocultural factors affecting men's attitudes toward women's social mobility, the researcher obtained data from 348 households. The socio-demographic profile of respondents contains several factors to represent the sample group fully. Age distribution indicates the age groups represented, helping you understand generational requirements and opinions (Yusifov & Akhundova, 2022). Gender composition shows how many men and women responded, allowing us to examine gender-based attitudes and behaviors. Educational attainment shows respondents' education from elementary school to postgraduate degrees. It may damage their social and economic status. Income and employment status reveal respondents' financial positions and job fields, revealing affluence and job security (Mohajan, 2020). Marital status and household makeup reflect how people live and manage their families, which might affect how they interact and seek aid (Knott et al., 2022). Different ethnic and cultural origins allow academics to study how culture affects human behavior and attitudes (Smock & Schwartz, 2020). The frequency distribution of this study is described as (n=331, 95.1%) men were head of their household. More than one-third (n=112, 32.2%) of the respondents were skilled labor and their monthly income was Rs. 20000-60000 in the study area. According to the study, one-third (n=252, 72.4%) of the respondents preferred endogamy marriage. Due to male dominancy (n=297, 85.3%) of the respondents owned the land, while a few (n=51, 14.7%) of the women owned the land.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis measures and analyses the degree and direction of a link between two or more variables. This strategy helps researchers understand how one variable affects another. Most correlation measures use the Pearson correlation coefficient, which spans from -1 to 1. A coefficient around 1 implies a high positive connection, indicating one variable rises when the other rises. A coefficient around -1 implies a high negative correlation, indicating one variable increases while the other falls. Close to 0 coefficients indicate no linear relationship between variables (Makowski, 2020; Peck et al., 2020; Mardia, 2023).

Table 1: Correlation analysis of multiple variables

Factors	Correlations						
	EDU	**SOCF**	**CULF**	**ECOF**	**RELF**	**ATT**	**MOB**
EDU	1						
SOCF	-.344[**]	1					
CULF	-.415[**]	.465[**]	1				
ECOF	.036	.225[**]	.143[**]	1			
RELF	.167[**]	-.127[*]	-.101	.293[**]	1		
ATT	-.651[**]	.705[**]	.917[**]	-.707[**]	.951**	1	
MOB	.698[**]	-.867[**]	-.851[**]	.901[**]	.819	-.972[**]	1

1. Ho: Social factors do not significantly correlate with women's social mobility.
   H1: Social factors have a significant correlate with women's social mobility.

To understand the relationship of social factors towards women's social mobility. Pearson correlation was calculated as (r = -.867**, P=.000) two tails are statistically significant. It also shows a negative correlation between social factors and women's social mobility. The results of the correlation tables show that the alternate hypothesis is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected. Many other social factors hindered the women's social mobility in the study area. Brown and James (2020) also explained in their study that social factors directly influence the social mobility of women because these external factors directly affect men's attitudes toward women's social mobility, especially in rural areas. The study results of Rafiq & Mohy-ud-Din (2018) and Connor et al. (2021) also explained that women's mobility has been restricted by the economic inequality that hindered their mobility.

2. Ho: Cultural factors do not significantly correlate with women's social mobility.
   H1: Cultural factors have a significant correlation with women's social mobility.

To check the relationship of cultural factors towards women's social mobility.
Pearson correlation was calculated as (r = -.851**, P=.000) two tails are statistically significant. It also shows a negative correlation between cultural factors and women's social mobility. The results of the correlation tables show that the alternate hypothesis is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected. Many other cultural factors hindered the women's social mobility in the study area. If the cultural factors increase, then the women's social mobility decreases. The findings of Khalid et al. (2020) also show that social factors have restricted education, job opportunities, women's empowerment, and decision-making at domestic levels toward their social mobility. The results of the Nausher et al. (2023) study also explained that cultural factors had limited the gender role in the social mobility of women in Punjab, Pakistan.

3. Ho: Men's attitudes do not significantly correlate with women's social mobility.
   H1: Men's attitudes do not significantly correlate with women's social mobility.

To study the relationship of men's attitude towards women's social mobility. Pearson correlation was calculated as (r = -.972**, P=.000) two tails are statistically significant. It also shows a negative correlation between men's attitudes and women's social mobility. The results of the correlation tables show that the alternate hypothesis is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected. Many other factors hindered the women's social mobility in the study area. If the men's rigid attitude increases, women's mobility decreases. The result from the study of Awan and Shoaib (2023) shows that uneducated men directly hinder social mobility in the name of family honor, and it is found that there is a direct correlation between men's attitudes and women's social mobility. Another study by Ahmed et al. (2021) showed that the patriarchal system in the family also directly hinders women's women mobility, especially in southern Punjab, because before and after marriage, women are dependent on the income of men. It has also been found that there is a direct relationship between men's attitudes and women's social mobility.

Conclusion

This study was conducted in the district of Rajanpur to check the social and cultural factors that have affected men's attitudes towards women's mobility. From the uni-variate research findings, the respondents' demographic profile indicates the patriarchal culture in the study area. The results of the correlation also suggest that social factors have a negative correlation with women's mobility because men are socialized and treated at domestic and social levels as power. As social factors increase, women's mobility decreases. Moreover, cultural factors have directly hindered the mobility of women. Finally, men's men are directly affected by social and cultural factors,

which were the leading cause of the limited mobility of women in district Rajanpur.

Recommendations

The government should take some steps to ensure the primary and higher education of girls and women. Literacy education programs and technical education should be started at the village level for women's empowerment. INGOs and local NGOs should also promote the awareness and importance of women's development. The media must play a positive role in promoting women's positive roles through advertisements, dramas, and movies.

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