

# Exploring Culturally Relative Elements of Feminism among University Students

Zubair Manzoor<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Saleem<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD Scholar, Department of Applied Psychology, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

<sup>2</sup>Professor & Chairman, Department of Applied Psychology, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

Correspondence: [zubairmanzoor89@gmail.com](mailto:zubairmanzoor89@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

**Aim of the Study:** Feminism, a term that encompasses a vast, intricate, and controversial spectrum, represents both an intellectual and social crusade that strives to acknowledge, fathom, and dismantle the pervasive problem of gender inequality.

**Methodology:** This qualitative study was designed to explore the culturally relative elements of feminism. The participants were recruited through purposive sampling technique by using screening questions and after interviewing nine (N=9) participants [04 online; 05 Physical], saturation point was achieved. Nature of the study encouraged us to go for in-depth interviews that lasted from 45-60 minutes on average. Before starting the data collection, a formal protocol of study was approved from the departmental research committee. The data were recorded and transcribed by three veterans of qualitative research; memos were also furnished along with the data. Reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyze the data through the lens of Tracy (2010). This study sheds light on the primary concerns of feminists, which are focused on achieving gender equality and empowering women.

**Findings:** Through the exploration of culturally relative factors, the study revealed that gender inequality remains a prevalent issue within the feminist movement. Additionally, findings of the study highlighted the ultimate goal of feminists is to secure freedom and equality in their lives, irrespective of their cultural background.

**Conclusion:** These conclusions underscore the continued importance of feminist discourse and activism in promoting gender equality, and provide valuable insights into the cultural nuances of feminist theory and practice. Study also discussed limitations and future directions of the study.

**Keywords:** Feminism, Cultural Elements, Freedom, Equality, Qualitative Study, Pakistan.

## Introduction

Feminism is a broad, complex, and disputed term that refers to both an academic and political movement aimed at identifying, understanding, and dismantling gender inequality. Various varieties of liberal,

## Article History

Received:  
January 09, 2023

Revised:  
March 22, 2023

Accepted:  
March 28, 2023

Published:  
March 30, 2023

Marxist/socialist, radical, and poststructuralist feminist thinking have emphasized how sexual differentiation and the social construction of gender distinctions are inextricably intertwined with concerns of power as an intellectual movement. Feminism has grown and waned as a political movement, evolving through distinct eras of action and accomplishment. Understanding the history of feminism is critical to understanding how women come to identify as feminists. Feminism is a movement to eliminate sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.

Feminism developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, in the context of industrial society and liberal politics, and was concerned with women's access to and equal opportunities (Krolokke & Sorensen, 2006). In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the term "First Wave Feminism" was frequently used to European and North American feminist groups. They struggled for women's ability to vote and involvement in the workforce. Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) is credited as the founder of the First Wave of Feminism. In 1792, she published 'A Vindication of Woman's Rights.' Wollstonecraft claimed that if women were given the same education and opportunities as men, they would be equal in every way. She is speaking out against a gender inequity (Langan-Fox et al., 2000).

In the 1960s and 1970s, it first became popular. It emerged at a moment when feminists of all races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, classes, religions, and cultural origins were banding together to fight and abolish gender-based oppression (Krolokke & Sorensen, 2006). The second wave of feminism arose from the works of Juliet Mitchell, a British feminist who advocated for radicalism based on economic and social conditions (Legan et al., 2000). They fought for reproductive rights, legalized abortion and birth control, gender equality, political and economic equality, and sexual liberty (Kontou, 2008).

Women's concerns were proposed in three phases by third wave feminism: a) female empowerment as individual change, b) the simple solutions of systemic women's economic difficulties, and c) the depiction of political issues as deserving of scorn. Third-wave feminism emphasized individual empowerment (Rockler, 2006). Human rights, economic exploitation, and political dominance were all concerns for Western feminists (Narayan, 1998).

Hooks (2000) stated that there are "as many types of feminism as there are women. When we explore the many ways in which women may embrace feminist principles and live out their feminist identities, we must appreciate and recognize each woman's understanding of feminism and how she lives out her feminist experiences (Allen & Baber, 1992). Feminists claims that feminism is manifested in a variety of ways by women, as evidenced by a variety of discourses (Alcoff, 1988; Allen & Baber, 1992; Frieze & McHugh, 1998; Krolokke & Sorensen, 2006).

The "Aurat March", which was more liberal or secular in its manifestation, gathered under the banners and labels "Hum Auraten" (Us Women). In 2018 women gathered from each corner of the country marched the roads to tell Pakistan and the rest of the world that everyone should respect women's space in private and public circles. The idea of "Aurat March" came into action for the first time when a gather of women challenged to end sexual harassment and savagery within the cities of Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad on worldwide Women's Day 2018. They first did so by mobilizing their networks and to raise them voice against violence that minor protest has evolved ever since, counting transgender to claim for better assurance of women by enforcement of existing laws. This movement also started raise awareness among the masses and to alter the mindsets and states of mind of individual (Batoool et al., 2021).

This liberal feminism has been criticized not only by religious and political figures but a huge mass of general public too (Azeem, 2019). This backlash against "Aurat March" surfaces the conflict regarding women empowerment and rights across the country. As a result of these unnecessary conflicts, Pakistan has been ranked second worst state in the world-by-World Economic Forum by publishing Gender Gap Report in 2018 and it further shows women status in workplace in a capitalist state (Azeem, 2019).

In the past decade, there are several women rights movements and bills passed which progressed for the freedom of women in Pakistan. The most notable progress that has been achieved over the past decade in passing pro-women legislation in Pakistan is Honor Killing Bill in March 2015, the Sexual Harassment Bill in 2010, the Domestic Violence Bill in 2013, the Acid Control Bill in 2010, and the Acid Attack Bill in 2011, (Serez, 2017), all protecting women from what was previously culturally acceptable male-inflicted violence. These bills were all passed due to the persistence of female legislators and women's rights groups. So, we can say that Pakistani feminists have affected serious, demonstrable change over the past decade. Despite legislative progress, Pakistani society is still overwhelmingly conservative and anti-Western (Cheema, 2012). Further, it is also reported through research that the freedom and availability of adequate rights have a significant effect on the psychological, mental and social well-being of women. Although there was a smaller number of studies have been conducted in Pakistan which focused on the issues of family life among females in association with their psychological health (Nadeem & Abbas, 2009).

### ***Objectives of the Study***

1. To understand feminism in Pakistani context
2. To explore the factors of culturally relative feminism with special reference to Pakistan

### ***Research Questions***

1. How can you elaborate feminism?
2. What do you think your orientation of feminism differs from other feministic orientations? If so, please explain the major differences.

### ***Method***

The aim of the study was to explore the factors of relative feminism among male and female students at university level. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain data to attain deep understanding of the problem focused and exploration of the factors of culturally relative feminism. Reflexive thematic analysis was utilized by following the guidelines of Braun and Clark (2019) to analyze the interviews.

### ***Study Participants and Recruitment***

Participants were approached on the basis of personal contacts of the researcher. At first total of 23 participants were approached to participate in this qualitative inquiry. Three screening questions were asked to recruit best suitable participants for interviews. The questions are as:

1. Are you a feminist?
2. Do you think men and women are not treated equally?
3. Do you think women are less empowered than men?

Those who answered "yes" to the screening questions were further selected for interviews. Total nine participants were selected from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur. All the participants belonged to different cities in Pakistan. Participants were adults with feministic orientation and taken purposefully with age range from 18-29 years. Seven of the participants were females and two were males.

### ***Inclusion Criteria***

Students who were enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate programs in The Islamia University of Bahawalpur were considered for data collection. Students who accepted being feminist and had no issue with being feminist were added in the study.

### ***Exclusion Criteria***

Family members, friends and close relatives who could change their views during the data collection, were excluded from the study.

Table 1: *Demographics of Participants*

<b>Participant ID</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>City</b>
P1	26	F	Chishtian
P2	23	F	Islamabad
P3	28	F	Peshawar
P4	25	F	Lahore
P5	24	F	Sukkur
P6	26	M	Arifwala
P7	26	M	Faisalabad
P8	25	F	Skardu
P9	24	F	Quetta

### ***Procedure***

Sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique. Research problem was briefly explained to all recruited participants. They were informed about the selection and purpose of conducting the research. Voluntary participation was ensured by providing a consent form to all the participants. All the participants were formally invited. The venue and timing for the interview was decided according to their ease and availability. Some participants couldn't make time for the physical interviews, so online interviews through WhatsApp (free online platform for messages and calls) were conducted with them. Throughout the data collection, professional and warm relationship was maintained between participants and researcher so they could feel at ease and relaxed and share their experiences with researchers openly. Personal information of the participants has been kept confidential.

### ***Data Collection***

In-depth interviews were conducted to collect data from participants. Responses of the participants were recorded with their permission. Notes were taken during the interviews so no information and nonverbal cues can be missed from the recording. Interviewer was trained for the data collection so they can get the maximum information from the participants. At first step, interview was started with easy and short questions to build some rapport with participant. Slowly the researcher started asking more direct and in-depth questions that were mainly for the detailed collection of information. Lastly, some simple questions were asked to light up the tension and interviews were concluded with a note of thanks to the participants (Mayan, 2019). Interviews were carried out till the point of saturation.

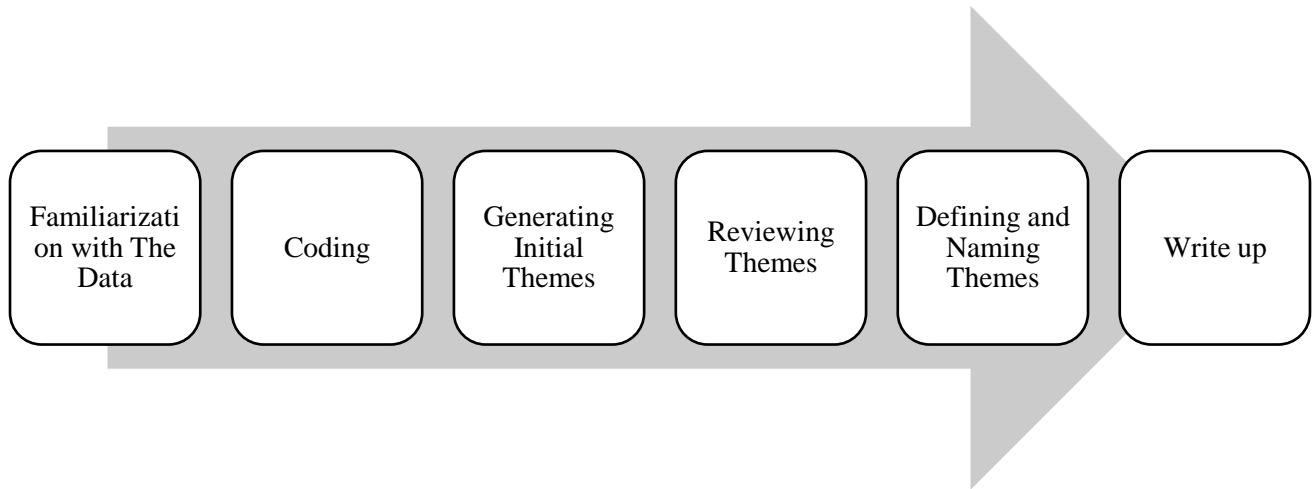
### ***Data Transcription***

Responses of participants were transcribed manually, and this process followed the guidelines set forth by Humble (2015). To ensure the soundness of the transcribed data, it was read and re-read multiple times. Furthermore, the transcribed responses were translated and back-translated in order to attain the utmost accuracy and clarity of meaning. To further guarantee the legitimacy of the transcriptions, they were revised with the consultation of qualitative experts. Additionally, to eliminate any potential subjective interpretation or bias, the transcribed data and accompanying memos were compared for consistency.

### ***Data Analysis***

After the completion of data collection, reflexive thematic analysis was employed. Initial codes were generated following the guidelines by Braun & Clark (2019).

Figure 1: *Data analysis steps*



Initially, the transcribed data was thoroughly reviewed multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of its contents. Following the first read-through of all interview transcriptions, a systematic coding process was initiated by the researcher. All possible information was coded, leading to the generation of an extensive list of codes. The codes were then further reviewed and refined, allowing for the identification of underlying similarities and differences, which facilitated the formation of coherent themes. These themes were subjected to a thorough review, including a careful examination of corresponding codes and transcripts. The most appropriate names were then assigned to each theme based on the underlying codes. The final step of the analysis process involved presenting the themes and discussing their implications within the context of the present study.

### ***Rigor Criteria***

The researcher took care to ensure rigor by adhering to the eight "big-tent" criteria of Tracy (2010). The researcher carefully established credibility by employing various modes of data collection; physical and online interviews. A detailed description of the research context and methods used in the study was provided to maintain transferability. Audit trail for dependability and engaging in reflexivity & bracketing was taken care for conformability. Authenticity, critical analysis of research, ethical, and meaningful findings on the culturally relative elements of feminism among university students were also checked.

### ***Ethical Consideration***

In feminist research, it is important to consider issues of power dynamics, potential coercion, and the impact of societal oppression on the individual's decision to participate. Participants' personal safety was mainly focused. No offensive and over-sensitive language was used. Researcher did not use any question that could mean anything offensive to the feminists.

Informed consent from the participants was taken so that there would be no privacy issues. Participants were allowed to withdraw/ refuse without any fee being paid. They had the choice to participate voluntarily. Their identities were kept confidential and their information was kept secret. Their privacy and confidentiality were respected and their data was carefully used for research purpose only. Participants were free to voice their thoughts and ideas without being interrupted.

## Findings and Discussion

### *RQ1: How can you elaborate feminism?*

Table 2: *Themes and Their Categories for RQ1; Feminism*

<b>Equality</b>	<b>Women Empowerment &amp; Resistance</b>
Equality (4)	Empowerment of women (3)
Equal Rights (3)	Standing for oneself (3)
Equal Human Rights (3)	Freedom (2)
Basic Human Rights Advocacy (2)	Respecting women
Equal opportunities (2)	Women rights
Gender Equality	Response to restriction of women rights
Right to make decisions	Demanding the power
Rights given by religion	Saying No to misogyny
	Challenging Gender Stereotypes
	A Dire Need
	Survival Mechanism

## Themes

- 1) Equality
- 2) Women Empowerment and Resistance

To operationalize feminism in Pakistani culture, two main themes were identified from the data: "equality" and "women empowerment and resistance."

### *Equality*

Gender equality, is a state in which men and women have equal rights and opportunities. Women's and men's conduct, goals, wants, and needs are equally appreciated and favored (Gobezie, 2011).

Participant 01 said,

*“Feminism screams equal rights. The equal rights for survival. As a Pakistani, I view feminism as a law for humans that is needed for the survival of women. It is not something difficult, it's treating women with the same perspective as men, giving them the same name, success, rights and respect in the society as men get.”*

According to a study most feminists think that "men and women should have equal rights and similar chances in life without being valued differently". Like this participant 02 said,

*“Feminism is to understand the women as a human being give her right as much as a citizen or any other human have.”*

Another participant explained the same thing a little differently,

*“Feminism means different things to different people as people have different interpretations but personally to me, it is about the fight and advocacy for equal human rights for women as well as for other marginalized groups such as trans-genders and queer people (P-03; F, 28).*

## ***Women Empowerment and Resistance***

Women's empowerment is described as "a woman's ability to make strategic life decisions," which, according to feminists, would reduce gender disparities and sex inequality (Hayes & Franklin, 2016). Participant 1 says,

*“Feminism is a fight, it is an ideology, it is speaking up about things and not accepting misogyny. It is using your voice and demanding the power you deserve. Feminism is a goal, a goal that by this fight, by speaking up, by standing up for myself, as a woman, I will get the equal rights that I deserve.”*

The expansion of civil society and participatory development approaches were advocated as tools for achieving social inclusion and therefore empowerment (Friedmann 1992; Narayan, 1998). It meant reclaiming control of one's life in connection to family, community, and society for women (Jejeebhoy, 2000).

*“We are demanding that society, treat us as a woman, and as other human beings on the planet, and give us equal rights, despite of whatever the gender is (P-1; F).”*

Feminism also challenges gender stereotypes, as a participant said,

*“This is a stereotype that feminists are trying to be men. Their actions and their fights are to be like a man. But no. Why would an individual want to change the gender? It is absurd to even think about (P-3; F, 28).”*

On another occasion, participant again said,

*“Feminism fights against those men and women that negate men and women (and other people on gender spectrum) their birth right of self-determination which to me is the complete and unconditional freedom to make their own life decisions as they choose themselves (P-3; F, 28).”*

Feminist stereotypes participants were asked by Berryman-Fink and Verderber (1985) to list the words, thoughts, and phrases that came to mind when they heard the term "feminist." The term feminism has a neutral to slightly favorable meaning, according to the researchers. Feminists, for example, were seen as educated, motivated, informed, and compassionate. They were regarded as assertive, opinionated, powerful, and nonconformist, however. It's worth noting that, while the average feminist viewpoint is neutral to somewhat favorable, feminist attitudes differ both across and within individuals (Hall & Rodriguez, 2003). Present study also highlighted some misconceptions about feminism,

*“One thing that I would like to state here is that a lot of people (men and women) assume feminism is against men or feminists hate men which is completely wrong. As a feminist I do not hate men for being men, in fact in my personal life, majority of the people I really admire happen to be males” (P-3; F, 28).*

Another participant said,

*“One thing I said in terms of sex people think feminism means women want either man should be demolished from the world or they want world domination but this isn't true, we acknowledge that there are two basic genders male and female” (P-8; F, 25).*

**RQ2: What do you think your orientation of feminism differs from other feministic orientations? If yes, please explain the major differences.**

Table 3: Themes and Their Categories for RQ2; Culturally Relative Factors of Feminism

Issues and Problems	Freedom	Empowerment of Women	Equality
<b>Inequality</b>	Decision Making (8)	<b>Self-worth</b>	Treatment (3)
Right to choose (7)	Economic (3)	<b>Recognition</b>	Opportunities (4)
Power dynamics (2)	Choice (3)	Consoling Women	Rights (5)
Respect (3)	Women's Freedom (3)	To Learn self-worth	Education 8
Career choices	Mental	Women's empowerment	Wages 3
Political choices	Ideology	Recognition	
<b>Gender Issues (3)</b>	Work	<b>Overcoming Fear and Baseless Traditions</b>	
Opposite gender interaction,	Freedom as relief	Eliminating fear	
Misogyny, Objectification, Discrimination	Freedom from fear	No fear of being stared at	
Roles	Social; objectification, (2) societal labels, stereotypes, victim blaming	To oppose baseless traditions	
Segregation	Misconceptions about Freedom	Standing up for themselves	
Superiority complex		<b>Overcoming Collectivism and Patriarchy</b>	
Socialization		Overcoming collectivism	
Stereotypes		To oppose patriarchy	
<b>Unjust Male Domination and Control</b>		Safety & survival	
Comparison with men		<b>Beauty Standards and Self-Acceptance</b>	
Dependence over men		No pressure of Beauty standards 3	
Unjust male domination			
Unreasonable control 4			
Workplace Discrimination (2)			
Low social & political positions for women			
<b>Domestic Violence and Mental Health Issues</b>			
Domestic violence			
Harassment			
Mental Health Issues			
<b>Response to misogyny and Sexism</b>			
Sexual Objectification (2)			
Objectification			
Response to misogyny			
Sexual oppression			
Sexualisation			
Judgment towards feminism			

## Themes

- 1) **Issues and Problem;** Inequality, Gender Issues, Unjust Male Domination and Control, Domestic Violence and Mental Health Issues and Response to Misogyny and Sexism



- 2) **Empowerment of Women;** Self-worth and Recognition, Overcoming Fear and Baseless Traditions, Overcoming Collectivism and Patriarchy, Safety Survival, Beauty Standards and Self-Acceptance
- 3) **Freedom**
- 4) **Equality**

### ***Issues and Problems***

***Inequality.*** In Pakistani culture the biggest issue is inequality,

*“The issue here is that women are not considered to be equal by a lot of men and women (by the way those women are socially conditioned to believe this) and men deny women equal rights (P-3; F, 28)”*

***Gender Issues.*** Gender inequality in developing nations is extensively established, whether in terms of early childhood investments, labor market wages, educational achievement, or asset ownership (Sen, 2001). Participant 3 says,

*“I think it's a violation of human rights. If one person is being paid less than the other for the same amount of labor and skill just because of their gender then it's a serious form of bigotry and hatred against that gender. It's a form of exploitation. It's a social crime and it must be (as it already is in some parts of the world) a legal crime.”*

Gender discrimination in resource allocation and usage is prevalent in the workplace, especially in developed countries (Crosby, 1984; Ensher et al., 2001; Greenhouse, 2004). Females have limited access to resources in higher education, yet there is evidence that when access is provided, females will take advantage of the possibilities (Singh, 2002).

### ***Unjust Male Dominance and Control***

*“I argue that women's bodies are controlled through violence, objectification and social institutions such as law medicine, and religion (P-2; F, 23).”*

### ***Domestic Violence and Mental Health Issues***

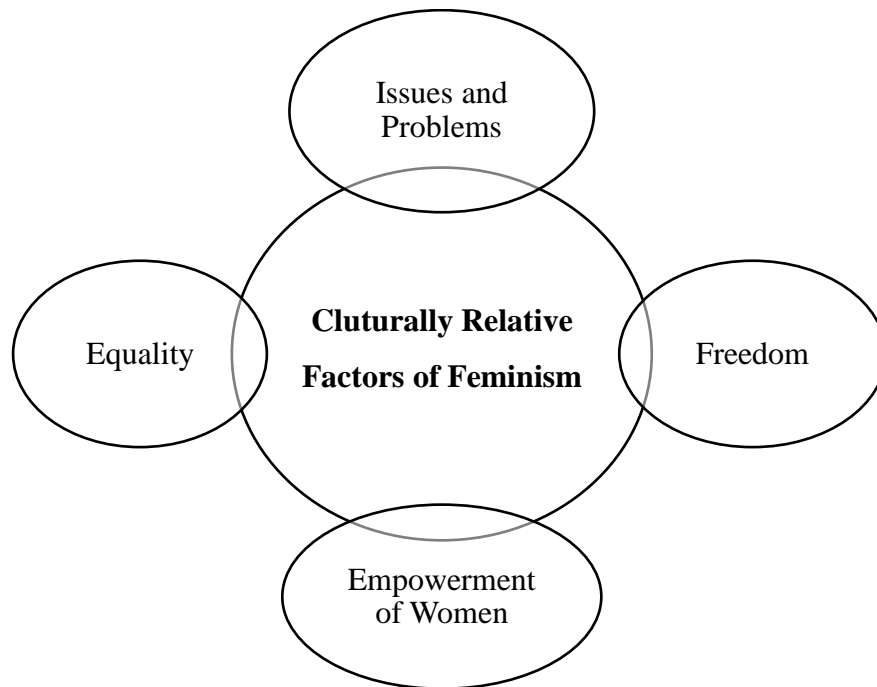
*“I have witnessed domestic violence against women in my extended family, some of my male relatives do not allow their women to get an education, not going outside of the house without their permission let alone make their own decisions and witnessing all of this has led me to be a part of the feminist movement. (P-3; F, 28)”*

### ***Response to misogyny and Sexism***

*“As a feminist I believe that oppression is rooted in sexuality, according to them, sexism is the oldest form of oppression (P-2; F, 23).”*

**Figure 2**

*Culturally Relative Factors of Feminism*



### ***Empowerment of Women***

Empowerment is about change, choice and power. Power structures, such as who has it, where it comes from, and how it is exerted, have a direct impact on the choices that women are able to make in their life. As a result, empowerment is a transformation process in which groups or individuals with no or little authority develop the power and capacity to achieve more control, efficacy, social justice, and the ability to make decisions that affect their life (Cheston & Kuhn, 2002; Peterson et al., 2005).

**Self-worth and Recognition.** Empowering women means giving them the recognition and letting them know their self-worth. According to the United Nations Development Fund for Women “Developing a feeling of self-worth, a conviction in one's ability to obtain desired changes, and the right to govern one's life,” (Cheston & Kuhn, 2002).

*“Women empowerment means freedom of women in every way of life. Freedom of women from the vicious grips of social, economic, political, caste and gender-based violence discrimination (P-2; F, 23).”*

Another participant said,

*“It is about trying to make up for all the miseries that women individually as well as collectively had to go through across the globe and over the centuries (P-3; F, 28).”*

**Overcoming Fear and Baseless Traditions.** Overcoming illogical fears given by the society and not being afraid of rejecting baseless traditions is an important step of being empowered. Participant 03 says,

*“The common people of this country are of a radical mindset and they are this way because they've been socially conditioned for decades to blindly follow the customs and traditions without questioning or rationalizing so they do not think critically and rationally. They see anything that opposes their traditions and customs as a threat to their culture.”*

### ***Overcoming Collectivism and Patriarchy***

*“Those who have adapted themselves according to patriarchy and now they are comfortable living that way because they have internalized patriarchal beliefs (P-3; F, 28).”*

Participant 03 also said,

*“Our society is collectivistic to a large extent and collectivistic societies always have problems with individual freedom. As feminism advocates for the rights of individual and personal choice, so a collectivistic culture feels threatened and therefore it opposes the movement.”*

**Beauty Standards and Self-Acceptance.** In Pakistan there are different beauty standards without them women are said to be unfit for society. They feel pressurized to act according to these standards

*“Men (and some women) have objectified all parts of a woman's existence from her body to her clothes, from her gait to her gestures, from her voice to any form of self-expression. It is very disgusting and it must stop (P-3; F, 28).”*

### ***Freedom***

Feminist believe that in male dominant societies, where women are oppressed, there is a dire need for awareness of their own rights. They have freedom to practice their choices and live their lives according to own will conceptually, freedom can be described as the liberty to choose and speak, express own opinion, to travel, to work, to marry a person according to own will, to be protected from the law against discrimination and trafficking (Veenhoven, 2014).

*“It works on all spheres of life such as mobility, education, economic, political and legal rights, religious freedom, freedom in marital matters and social freedom (P-3; F, 28).”*

Participant 03 says,

*“It's about having equal access to economic resources and opportunities, it's about mental and ideological freedom too.”*

*“She should identify herself; she should know that what she is capable for, what is the best area in which she can do her best and she should be socially and economically independent (P-4; F, 25).”*

About freedom Participant 08 says,

*“Give lots of respect and treated as equal to men. Give equal opportunities like men to grow socially and economically. Give them the privilege of choosing their own path of life.”*

Participant 09 has similar but little different views of women freedom,

*“The day a woman will talk without the fear of being murdered by a male of her family or she is walking on the road and she has no fear of being stared at even if she is wearing abaya or hijab or jeans t-shirt whatever, when this day comes I would accept that women in our society are free. The day she is not pressurized that at a workplace she needs to look beautiful to get promotion or when she is not afraid that her son will not respect or the day when she has no threat that her daughter in law will come and take her place (P-9; F, 24).”*

## ***Equality***

The feminist concept of the term is far from sharing the same perspective when it comes to define gender equality. The feminist idea of gender equality, according to Sjoberg and Via (2010), is multifaceted, multi-dimensional, and fluid, and so may be interpreted in a variety of ways depending on the context, emphasis, and aims of studies (Kerin, 2012).

*“It is about ideologically and practically enabling and empowering women to make their own decisions and to have equal access to resources and opportunities of life, especially economic and legal ones (P-3; F, 28).”*

Liberal, cultural, and socialist feminisms, for example, provide various theoretical perspectives on gender equality. Most feminists think that "men and women should have equal rights and similar chances in life without being valued differently," according to a study from 2005.

*“Feminism is equality. Equality in terms of sex, in the terms of wages in terms of employment, in terms of respect and how to different genders interact with each other (P-9; F, 24).”*

## **Conclusion**

This qualitative research investigated culturally pertinent aspects of feminism among university students. According to the findings of this research, cultural differences appear to play a substantial part in the process by which students develop their understanding of and engagement with feminism. The study emphasizes the significance of recognizing and embracing varied cultural viewpoints within the feminist movement. It also emphasizes the necessity of addressing the issues that develop as a result of these disparities. The findings of this research shed light on the necessity of increased cultural sensitivity and knowledge within feminist discourse, as well as the significance of engaging in inclusive and intersectional feminist practices. In the end, this study makes a contribution to the expanding body of literature on the complexities of feminism as a worldwide movement, and it gives insights that might help shape efforts to promote gender equality and social justice across a wide variety of cultural contexts.

## ***Limitations and Suggestions***

There were a lot of people who said they were feminist but they did not pass the screening test. Recruiting right participants was a little tricky for this research. Some female participants were hesitant to give an interview to a male researcher, few of them withdraw from the interview because of this too.

Future research could investigate the similarities and distinctions between feminist perspectives and practices in various cultural contexts. A longitudinal study could be conducted to examine the evolution of students' understanding and practice of feminism over the course of their academic and professional careers. Intersectionality, or the intersection of multiple forms of oppression, is a fundamental concept in feminist theory. Future research might investigate how various forms of identity and oppression intersect with feminism among university students. Additional research on culturally relative elements of feminism among university students has the potential to deepen our understanding of feminist theory and practice and contribute to the promotion of gender equality and social justice as a whole.

## Acknowledgments

None


## Conflict of Interest


Authors declared no conflict of interest.

## Funding Source

The authors received no funding to conduct this study.

## ORCID iDs

Zubair Manzoor <sup>1</sup> <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9390-2163>

Muhammad Saleem <sup>2</sup> <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0230-1571>

## References

- Alcoff, L. (1988). Cultural feminism versus post-structuralism: The identity crisis in feminist theory. *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, 13(3), 405-436.
- Allen, K. R., & Baber, K. M. (1992). Ethical and epistemological tensions in applying a postmodern perspective to feminist research. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 16(1), 1-15.
- Azeem, T. (2019). Pakistan's Women Marched for Their Rights. Then the Backlash Came. What Made the Aurat March Controversial?. *The Diplomat*.
- Batool, S. M., & Malik, A. A. (2021). Bringing the Focus Back: Aurat March and the Regeneration of Feminism in Pakistan. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 22(9), 316-330.
- Berryman-Fink, C., & Verderber, K. S. (1985). Attributions of the term feminist: A factor analytic development of a measuring instrument. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 9(1), 51-64.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative research in sport, exercise and health*, 11(4), 589-597.
- Cheema, M. H. (2012). Beyond beliefs: deconstructing the dominant narratives of the Islamization of Pakistan's law. *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, 60(4), 875-918.
- Cheston, S., & Kuhn, L. (2002). Empowering women through microfinance. *Draft, Opportunity International*, 64, 1-64.
- Crosby, F. (1984). The denial of personal discrimination. *American behavioral scientist*, 27(3), 371-386.
- Ensher, E. A., Grant-Vallone, E. J., & Donaldson, S. I. (2001). Effects of perceived discrimination on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and grievances. *Human resource development quarterly*, 12(1), 53-72.
- Friedmann, J. (1992). *Empowerment: The politics of alternative development*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Frieze, I. H., & McHugh, M. C. (1998). Measuring feminism and gender role attitudes. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 22(3), 349-352.
- Gobezie, G. (2011). Empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming in rural microfinance. *SEEP Network*.
- Greenhouse, S. (2004). Woman sues Costco, claiming sex bias in promotions. *New York Times C*, 3.
- Hall, E. J., & Rodriguez, M. S. (2003). The myth of postfeminism. *Gender & Society*, 17(6), 878-902.

- Hayes, B. E., & Franklin, C. A. (2017). Community effects on women's help-seeking behaviour for intimate partner violence in India: gender disparity, feminist theory, and empowerment. *International journal of comparative and applied criminal justice*, 41(1-2), 79-94.
- Hooks, B. (2000). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. Pluto Press.
- Humble, Á. (2015). Guide to transcribing. *Mount Saint Vincent University*. [www.msvu.ca/site/media/msvu/GuideTranscribing.pdf](http://www.msvu.ca/site/media/msvu/GuideTranscribing.pdf).
- Jejeebhoy, S. J. (2000). Women's Autonomy in Rural India: Its Dimensions. In *Determinants and The Influence of Context, IUSSP seminar paper on Female Empowerment and Demography, ic c'roce*.
- Kerin, E. (2012). Confronting Gender Equality (Publication No. SIMV07) [Master Thesis, Lund University].
- Khan, A.W., Safdar, G., Ashraf, M. (2018). Effects of Mobile Phone Usage on Social Behaviours of University Students: A Case study of Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan. *Global Media Journal Pakistan Edition*, 11(1), 1-26.
- Kontou, T. (2008). Introduction: women and the Victorian Occult. *Women's Writing*, 15(3), 275-281.
- Krolokke, C., & Sorensen, A. S. (2006). *Gender communication theories and analyses: From silence to performance* (No. 50). Sage.
- Langan-Fox, J., Code, S., & Langfield-Smith, K. (2000). Team mental models: Techniques, methods, and analytic approaches. *Human factors*, 42(2), 242-271.
- Nadeem, M. S., & Abbas, Q. (2009). The impact of work life conflict on job satisfactions of employees in Pakistan. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 4(5), 63-83.
- Narayan, U. (1998). Essence of culture and a sense of history: A feminist critique of cultural essentialism. *Hypatia*, 13(2), 86-106.
- Peterson, N. A., Lowe, J. B., Aquilino, M. L., & Schneider, J. E. (2005). Linking social cohesion and gender to intrapersonal and interactional empowerment: Support and new implications for theory. *Journal of community psychology*, 33(2), 233-244.
- Rockler, N. R. (2006). "Be your own windkeeper": Friends, feminism, and rhetorical strategies of depoliticization. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 29(2), 244-264.
- Safdar, G., Khan, A.W. (2020). Digital Media Use and Cultural Aspiration Among Female of Pakistan: A Study of Three Public Sector Universities. *Journal of Research & Reviews in Social Sciences Pakistan*, 3(2), 941-956.
- Serez, A. (2017). Feminism in Pakistan: Dialogues between Pakistani Feminists. *Laurier Undergraduate Journal of the Arts*, 3(1), 4.
- Singh, J. K. (2002). *Women and Management in Higher Education: A Good Practice Handbook: Follow-up to the World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, 5-9 October 1998)*. Unesco.
- Sjoberg, L., & Via, S. (2010). Conclusion: The interrelationship between gender, war, and militarism. *Teoksessa Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives. Toim. Laura Sjoberg & Sandra Via. Santa Barbara: Praeger*, 231-239.
- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative inquiry*, 16(10), 837-851.
- Veenhoven, R. (2014). *Freedom and Quality of Life*. In: Michalos, A.C. (eds) Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research. Springer, Dordrecht. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5\\_1085](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_1085)