

Perceptions of Female Students Regarding Male Student Attitudes at Higher Educational Institutions

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Abstract: The study examines female students' perceptions of male student attitudes at the University of Swabi, focusing on gender bias, academic sexism, stereotype threat, and classroom climate, aiming to promote gender equality. The problem statement highlights the need for a comprehensive investigation into female students' perceptions of male student attitudes at the University of Swabi. The objectives of the study are to examine female students' perceptions, identify gender-based biases, and explore the impact of male student attitudes. The research questions are framed to investigate these aspects in detail. The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to gender equality in education, enhance student well-being, improve academic performance, nurture healthier social dynamics, promote respect and diversity, inform policy formulation, and ultimately create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment. The findings from the study reveal important patterns in female students' perceptions and experiences at the University of Swabi. In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the perceptions and experiences of female students regarding gender-related issues at the University of Swabi. It offers recommendations to further improve the gender-related climate on campus, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and inclusive educational environment.

Keywords: Female Students, Male Students, Higher Educational Institution

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Introduction

Background of the Study

The perceptions of female students regarding the male student attitude within university settings are of utmost importance in understanding the dynamics of gender relations and promoting inclusive educational environments. This research aims to investigate the perceptions of female students at the University of Swabi concerning the attitudes displayed by male students. By examining these perceptions, this study seeks to shed light on the experiences, challenges, and potential barriers faced by female students within the university context. Furthermore, it aims to provide insights into the impact of male student attitudes on the overall educational environment and the potential implications for gender equality and inclusivity at the University of Swabi.

In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the significance of gender dynamics within educational institutions and the need for gender equality in academic settings. The University of Swabi, as a center of higher education, plays a crucial role in shaping the experiences and opportunities available to its students. Understanding the perceptions of female students regarding the attitudes displayed by male students can provide valuable insights into the prevailing cultural and social norms, power dynamics, and potential areas of improvement within the university community.

This research aims to explore the multifaceted dimensions of female students' perceptions, examining various aspects such as gender bias, academic sexism, stereotype threat, and classroom climate. By delving into these aspects, this study seeks to uncover the impact of male student attitudes on female students' experiences, academic engagement, and overall well-being. The findings of this research can inform policy initiatives, interventions, and institutional practices aimed at creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for all students at the University of Swabi, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of gender equality within the university and beyond (Iqbal, [2012](#)).

Overall, this research aims to address a significant gap in the existing literature and provide a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions of female students regarding the male student attitude at the University of Swabi. Through its findings, this study intends to contribute to the ongoing discourse on gender dynamics within educational institutions and provide evidence-based recommendations for promoting gender equality, inclusivity, and a supportive educational environment for all students.

Problem Statement

Gender dynamics within educational institutions have garnered increasing attention in recent years due to the imperative of promoting gender equality and fostering inclusive environments. The University of Swabi, as a pivotal hub of higher education, is no exception to this discourse. The perceptions of female students concerning the attitudes exhibited by their male counterparts play a pivotal role in understanding the intricate dynamics of gender relations within the university setting. These perceptions can provide insights into the prevailing cultural and social norms, power dynamics, and potential challenges faced by female students. Despite the recognition of these issues, a comprehensive investigation into the perceptions of female students regarding male student attitudes at the University of Swabi remains a significant gap in the existing literature (Borman, [2005](#)).

This research problem addresses the lack of in-depth exploration into the multifaceted dimensions of female students' perceptions of male student attitudes within the University of Swabi. It aims to uncover the nuanced elements such as gender bias, academic sexism, stereotype threat, and classroom climate and how these elements collectively impact female students' experiences, academic engagement, and overall well-being. By delving into these dimensions, this study intends to shed light on potential barriers hindering the establishment of an inclusive educational environment that nurtures gender equality and equitable participation.

Understanding the perspectives of female students regarding male student attitudes is crucial not only for enhancing the quality of education but also for fostering an environment that supports the growth and development of all students. The insights gained from this research can inform targeted policy initiatives and interventions aimed at dismantling gender-based barriers and, in turn, enhancing gender equality and inclusivity at the University of Swabi. Moreover, the findings of this study have the potential to resonate beyond the university context, contributing to broader discussions on gender dynamics within educational institutions.

Therefore, the central research problem revolves around exploring the perceptions of female students at the University of Swabi regarding the attitudes displayed by male students and understanding how these perceptions influence their academic experiences and overall well-being. This research problem addresses the need for empirical evidence to inform evidence-based recommendations for promoting a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for all students, thereby contributing to the advancement of gender equality not only within the university but also in the broader societal context.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the perceptions of female students towards the attitudes of male students at the University of Swabi.
2. To identify any potential gender-based biases or stereotypes in the interactions between female and male students.
3. To explore the impact of male student attitudes on the academic and social experiences of female students at the University of Swabi.



Research Questions

1. How do female students at the University of Swabi perceive the attitudes of their male counterparts in various academic and social settings?
2. Are there any observable gender-based biases or stereotypes in the interactions between male and female students at the University of Swabi?
3. What is the potential influence of male student attitudes on the academic engagement and social experiences of female students at the University of Swabi?

Significance of the Study

Understanding the perceptions of female students regarding male student attitudes at the University of Swabi holds significant importance for several reasons:

1. **Gender Equality in Education:** Investigating these perceptions contributes to the broader discourse on gender equality and inclusivity within educational institutions. It sheds light on potential disparities in treatment and opportunities, allowing for informed interventions.
2. **Student Well-being and Empowerment:** The study's findings can impact the emotional and psychological well-being of female students. Addressing any negative attitudes can foster a more supportive and empowering environment, enhancing the overall experience of female students.
3. **Academic Performance:** Male student attitudes may influence the academic performance of female students. Positive attitudes and interactions can create a conducive learning environment, enhancing academic engagement and outcomes.
4. **Social Dynamics:** Understanding how male student attitudes are perceived by their female counterparts can help in nurturing healthier social dynamics on campus. Positive interactions can foster collaboration, friendships, and a more inclusive campus community.
5. **Promoting Respect and Diversity:** Addressing any gender-based biases or stereotypes can contribute to creating a respectful and diverse campus culture. This is crucial for nurturing well-rounded individuals who are prepared to engage with diverse perspectives in their future endeavors.
6. **Policy Formulation and Implementation:** The study's insights can serve as a basis for developing policies and programs that promote gender equity, discourage discrimination, and ensure a safe and supportive educational environment for all students.

In conclusion, examining the perceptions of female students regarding male student attitudes at the University of Swabi has wide-ranging implications for fostering gender equality, improving student experiences, and creating a harmonious and inclusive campus environment.

Literature Review

Gender dynamics in educational settings have garnered significant attention in recent years, with a growing interest in understanding how male and female students perceive and interact with each other. This literature review aims to explore the perceptions of female students towards the attitudes of male students, potential gender-based biases or stereotypes in their interactions, and the impact of male student attitudes on the academic and social experiences of female students at the University of Swabi (Iqbal, [2012](#)).

Female students showed more favorable attitudes toward gender discrimination than males, possibly due to greater awareness of inequality. Tisdell (2002) found that 57% preferred sending sons to school over daughters. In Turkey, more than half of females reported discrimination, compared to just over 20% of males. Women also reported more gender-based inequality (87%) than men (24%). Almost half of university students experienced gender-based discrimination (Borman, [2005](#)).



There were no significant differences in attitudes towards gender discrimination between undergraduate and graduate students, suggesting that education level alone doesn't dictate these views. Social norms, reflected in how we choose toys for children, also shape perceptions of inequality. Cultural stereotypes contribute to gender role perceptions, but age didn't significantly impact attitudes toward gender discrimination. Research by Simulja (2014) supported this, showing no clear link between age, employment, and views on gender inequality. Educational decisions made between ages 10 and 20 seem influential, possibly disconnecting them from later experiences of gender inequality. Interestingly, Ongen and Aytac (2013) found that young adults are less affected by discrimination, while middle-aged and elderly individuals exhibit more diverse perceptions of discrimination based on gender, race, and ethnicity.

An exploration of the interconnectedness of education reveals that women's education holds equal importance to that of men within the context of Islamic beliefs. Islamic teachings emphasize the collective responsibility of acquiring knowledge, and it is evident that Islam places equal emphasis on education for both genders. Regrettably, the prioritization of girls' education has been lacking in Muslim societies, resulting in notably low levels of female literacy in Muslim civilizations. Furthermore, the establishment of a conducive framework to facilitate higher education pursuits for women has seen no substantial efforts. (Borman, 2005).

Furthermore, various factors exert influence on the level of education attained by girls. These factors encompass elements such as poverty, parental educational backgrounds, cultural and traditional norms, parental attitudes, commuting distance to schools, teacher attendance, the absence of essential school facilities, and inadequate teaching resources, as highlighted by Abukari in 2014.

In economically disadvantaged households, it is often more prevalent for women to be tasked with caring for younger siblings or contributing to family businesses. Due to the challenging financial circumstances, some impoverished families prioritize the education of their male children over their female counterparts. Consequently, girls' education experiences a considerable setback. A noteworthy correlation between household income and student attendance was identified by the PIHS in 2000. Many parents, particularly those with large families and limited resources, prioritize sending their sons to school ahead of or more frequently than their daughters. Given their families' dire financial situation, children engage in various activities to keep themselves occupied.

Their academic career is destroyed because they must support their families. By engaging in particular activities on their own, both boys and girls can contribute to the stability of their families' finances (T. S. Ali et al., 2011). In most of Pakistan's rural areas, girls frequently work in agriculture-related fields. Because their mothers and other females are also active in agricultural-related responsibilities, they bring meals to their older relatives who are working in the fields and take care of their younger siblings. Along with these additional responsibilities, they also include cooking, firewood delivery, water carrying, cleaning, washing, sweeping, and animal care. Since girls will eventually be married off and their education would only benefit their husbands and the households they marry into, many parents and community members believe that investing time and money in their education is a waste. For their parents and families, investing in the education of girls is therefore seen as pointless and a waste of money. Parents provide their boys with every facility imaginable to enable them to accomplish these tasks because they assume that they will become the main source of income for their future families. They make every effort to educate their sons for this reason. In contrast, the girls' husbands are expected to pay for them; therefore, they do not need to get an education.

These acts have a serious detrimental effect on their daughter's academic success. Therefore, it is accurate to state that poverty is the primary cause of the educational difficulties girls experience (Hannum, 2003). Parental opinions are a crucial factor that adversely affects women's educational chances. The majority of parents in Pakistan's rural and poor communities have sad and negative views toward the education of their daughters. The education of girls is unimportant to them. Because they would not benefit from investing time and money in the education of girls, they feel that doing so is a waste. Additionally, they consider it to be against their culture and heritage. The parents of a family will select their boys when deciding if a boy or girl will receive an education.



Parents who are old. Parents frequently prevent their daughters from engaging in certain activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Awan, [2011](#)). In Pashtun tradition and culture, women are expected to assume the roles of mothers and wives completely, according to Herz and Sperling (2004). Women are seen as nurturing people who should look after the family home and the kids. Additionally, it is expected that they will submit.

Additionally, she has stressed how even educated women are barred from traveling to bazaars and other public places and are discouraged from attending festivals and other activities, which is seen to be socially and culturally inappropriate (Jacob, [1986](#)).

Abadi (2022) draws attention to the negative effects that social norms and cultural restrictions have on the better raising of women. Social and family conditions that hinder women from having respectable employment and obstruct the paths to peace and prosperity will have an influence on the social fabric of the entire country.

Lack of economic means, the burden of home religious misinterpretations, and a lack of educational resources are obstacles to women's empowerment and education in northern Pakistan (Voigt, [2020](#)). Shah (2015) emphasizes In Chitral, where female students face many challenges, women's issues and challenges in higher education are pervasive. Due to social stigmas, financial constraints, and a lack of access to educational institutions, women face challenges in their educational endeavors.

Inadequate housing alternatives for female teachers and students, a lack of financing, a staffing shortfall, and a frail monitoring and support system are the main barriers to women's education in northern Pakistan (Kanji & Ali 2006). Girls' education is a problem that begins at home.

Yousaf and Schmiede's ([2017](#)) examination of the barriers and problems experienced by women in academic fields was their main emphasis. Building more educational facilities is essential if we want to close the gender education gap. Despite comprising nearly half of the world's population, women do not have the right to an education, according to the report.

Abubakar Nazeer Chaudhry (2019) highlights the ways in which social conventions and cultural restraints have an adverse impact on women's better upbringing. The social fabric of the entire nation will be impacted by societal and familial circumstances that prevent women from having decent jobs, obstructing pathways to peace and prosperity. experience (Hannum, [2003](#)).

Women who want to pursue higher education encounter many obstacles, including the pressure of household duties, job harassment, sociocultural misunderstandings, and financial limitations. (Voigt, 2020) Women's education and empowerment in northern Pakistan are hampered by a lack of economic resources, the burden of household religious misinterpretations, and a lack of educational resources. (Maarit Iljergren, 2002).

Methods and Procedure

Nature of the Study: The present study was descriptive in nature, in which the researcher collected data concerning the current status of the subject of the study.

Population of the Study: All the female students studying in the Departments of Social Sciences at the University of Swabi comprise the population of the study. The number of female students was 100.

Sampling of the Study: Out of the total population, 50 female students were randomly selected from the University of Swabi.

Research Instrument: A close-ended questionnaire containing 20 items on a Likert scale was used as a tool for gathering information on the extent of problems faced by female students at the tertiary level, which was assessed and validated by the students themselves. The structured items measured the individual responses to clarify the objective responses and, at the same time, increase the preparation of recommendations for the study.



Data Collection: The researcher personally met with the sampled students for data collection and distributed the questionnaire among the respondents.

Analysis of Data

The collected data was analyzed by using the percentage as a statistical tool.

Table 1

Male students at the University of Swabi treat female students with respect and equality.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Frequency	8	12	18	47	15
Percentage	8	12	18	47	15

Table 1 showed 62% of the participants agreed that male students at the University of Swabi treat female students with respect.

Table 2

I feel comfortable interacting with male students on campus.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Frequency	9	22	24	33	12
Percentage	9	22	24	33	12

Table 2 showed 45% of the candidates agreed that they feel comfortable interacting with male students on campus.

Table 3

I have personally witnessed male students displaying respectful behavior towards female students.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Frequency	8	16	30	34	12
Percentage	8	16	30	34	12

Table 3 showed that 46% of the students agreed that they had personally witnessed male students displaying respectful behavior towards female students.

Table 4

There are enough opportunities for female students to voice their concerns about gender-related issues on campus.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Frequency	11	21	17	39	12
Percentage	11	21	17	39	12

Table 4 shows that 51% of the subjects agreed that there are enough opportunities for female students to voice their concerns about gender-related issues on campus.

Table 5

I believe that gender-related programs and activities on campus positively impact female students.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Frequency	11	24	17	39	12
Percentage	11	24	17	39	12

Table 5 showed 62% of the students agreed that they believe that gender-related programs and activities on campus positively impact female students.



Table 6

I have positively participated in gender-related programs or events on campus.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Frequency	9	18	21	40	12
Percentage	9	18	21	40	12

Table 6 showed 52% of the respondents agreed that they have positively participated in gender-related programs and events on campus.

Table 7

I am aware of the university's policies regarding gender equality and harassment prevention.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Frequency	12	15	14	45	14
Percentage	12	15	14	45	14

Table 7 showed 59% of the respondents agreed that they were aware of the university's policies regarding gender equality and harassment prevention.

Table 8

The university provides adequate support and resources for addressing gender-related concerns.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Frequency	9	22	24	33	12
Percentage	9	22	24	33	12

Table 8 showed that 64% of answerers agreed that the university provides adequate support and resources for addressing gender-related concerns.

Table 9

The University of Swabi actively promotes female empowerment and inclusivity in its academic and social environment.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Frequency	18	12	17	35	18
Percentage	18	12	17	35	18

Table 9 showed 53% of the students agreed that the University of Swabi actively promotes female empowerment and incivility in its academic environment.

Table 10

The university encourages female students to pursue leadership roles and opportunities.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Frequency	12	20	16	36	16
Percentage	12	20	16	36	16

Table 10 showed 52% of subjects agreed that the University of Swabi encourages female students to pursue leadership roles and opportunities.

Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Findings

1. Table 1 showed 62% of participants agreed that male students at the University of Swabi treat female students with respect.
2. Table 2 showed 45% of candidates agreed that they feel comfortable interacting with male students on campus.



3. Table 3 showed that 46% of students agreed that they had personally witnessed male students displaying respectful behavior towards female students.
4. Table 4 shows that 51% of subjects agreed that there are enough opportunities for female students to voice their concerns about gender-related issues on campus.
5. Table 5 shows that 62% of students agreed that they believe that gender-related programs and initiatives on campus positively impact female students.
6. Table 6 Showed 52% of respondents agreed that they actively participated in gender-related programs or events on campus.
7. Table 7 shows that 59% of respondents agreed that they were aware of the university's policies regarding harassment prevention.
8. Table 8 shows that 64% of the answers agreed that the university provides adequate support and resources for addressing gender-related concerns.
9. Table 9 Showed 53% of students agreed that the University of Swabi actively promotes female empowerment and inclusivity in its academic environment.
10. Table 10 Showed 52% of subjects agreed that the University of Swabi encourages female students to pursue leadership roles and opportunities.

Conclusion

The findings of this research provide valuable insights into the perceptions and experiences of students at the University of Swabi regarding gender-related issues and the campus environment.

More of the participants agreed that male students at the University of Swabi treat female students with respect. Less than half of the candidates agreed that they feel comfortable interacting with male students on campus. Less than half of the students agreed that they have personally witnessed male students displaying respectful behavior towards female students. Half of the subjects agreed that there are enough opportunities for female students to voice their concerns about gender-related issues on campus. A greater number of students agreed that they believe that gender-related programs and initiatives on campus positively impact female students. Half of the respondents agreed that they actively participated in gender-related programs or events on campus. Half of the replies agreed that they are aware of the university's policies regarding harassment prevention. A greater number of answers agreed that the university provides adequate support and resources for addressing gender-related concerns. Half of the students agreed that the University of Swabi actively promotes female empowerment and inclusivity in its academic environment. Most of the subjects agreed that the University of Swabi encourages female students to pursue leadership roles and opportunities. More of the opponents agreed that over the past few years, the University of Swabi has been supportive of female students' academic pursuits. Most of the subjects agreed that they have personally experienced empowerment in how male students treat female students during their time at the University of Swabi. Half of the cooperators agreed that they believe male students at the University of Swabi are supportive of female students' academic pursuits. Half of the participants agreed that male students actively engage in dialogue and discussion with female students in academic settings.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to further enhance the gender-related climate at the University of Swabi:

1. Conduct awareness campaigns and programs to improve the comfort levels of students when interacting with peers of the opposite gender.
2. Strengthen and diversify opportunities for female students to voice their concerns about gender-related issues on campus.
3. Increase student engagement in gender-related programs and events through targeted outreach efforts.
4. Continue to educate the campus community about harassment prevention policies and procedures.



5. Promote and expand initiatives that support female empowerment, leadership development, and academic pursuits.
6. Foster a culture of respectful behavior and inclusive dialogue in academic settings.
7. Enhance the safety and inclusivity of extracurricular activities and events.
8. Monitor and continually improve measures for preventing and addressing harassment and discrimination.
9. Provide ongoing support and resources, including counseling and support groups, for female students facing gender-related challenges.
10. Encourage faculty and staff to actively promote non-traditional fields of study for female students.



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