

ISSN-1813-9892

**Biannual**

**JOURNAL OF  
GENDER &  
SOCIAL ISSUES**

Spring 2014, Vol. 13, Number 1



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## **The Impact of Class Background on South Asian Marriages: A Study of Dowry Practices**

### **Abstract**

*Giving and receiving dowries is a tradition among South Asian families. The practice of dowry in the context of class background has received relatively little attention in the UK. This paper examines the experiences of South Asian women of different class backgrounds in Birmingham, with a focus on their attitudes towards receiving or giving dowries and what role dowry plays in class mobility and maintenance. The case study design with the use of a qualitative method approach investigates the attitudes and experiences of women who belong to different class backgrounds. Data obtained from these interviews were subjected to the grounded theory approach. The findings show that attitudes toward the continuity of dowry practices differed according to the social class in which the women were in. There is also evidence that women have different experiences according to their family background, education, social class, cultural background and their religion.*

**Keywords:** Social class, Marriages, Dowry, Social burden, Cultural pressure, Religion

### **INTRODUCTION**

The practice of paying brides a price or dowry for the purpose of marriage is notably common and recognized as part of Indian culture. It is also true to say that this tradition has existed for a long time in other parts of the world, including Europe and Africa, according to anthropologists. However, the ideology of dowry has proved a complex undertaking due to variations in understanding and practices among

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#### **Iffat Abbas**

(MS Social Research, University of Birmingham, UK)  
Lecturer Department of Social sciences, BZU, Multan.  
Email: iffatabbasmalik@yahoo.com

families in different parts of India. The practice has recently undergone considerable changes, including legal reforms, even though the original rituals are still respected among modern and well educated people (Bhopal. K, 1999; Bhacho. P, 1985; Caldwell, J. C., Reddy, P. H., & Caldwell, P, 1983).

South Asian women receive dowries at the marriage ceremony. These are gifts that may consist of clothes and jewelry (gold, silver, etc) to the bride herself, and household items such as TVs, fridges and furniture, for their new house. The groom and groom's family are given clothes, jewelry, watches, a car, bikes and cash, among other things (Bhopal, 1999).

Among Muslim families in India, Pakistan and other parts of the Middle East, the customs of payment relating to marriage are almost the reverse. A bride price (called "Mehr") is normally fixed at the time of the negotiations by the family of the bride, which in most cases is settled in terms of cash payment and would be amicably sanctioned as a refund to be made by the bride's family in the event of a failed relationship and eventual divorce from the husband. The bride price is usually higher when the bride belongs to an above average social class and is a virgin or has not previously been in a relationship.

A peculiarity of South Asian cultures is their strong and distinctive class differences. These differences are addressed at an everyday level by an individual's attitudes, appearance, living style, work and background. People with similar income probably have similar living styles and thus other aspects of their lives will also overlap (Reid, 1998). The importance of dowry practice among South Asian communities has been given different explanations in the context of social research. It presents the status of the bride's family and also of the groom's family who receives the dowry. Beyond this, the amount of dowry represents the family background of the bride. A large dowry shows that the bride belongs to relatively high class in the community. It also demonstrates that a part of the inheritance can go to the daughter.

Dowry is a practice that exists in many societies and religions (Harrell and Dickey, 1985). In South Asian culture it is a custom which is practiced from generation to generation. It is also practised among various castes and social classes. Dowry is exercised even among South Asian communities which have migrated to Western societies (Bhopal, 1999; Goody, 1971; Caldwell, Reddy and Caldwell, 1983;

Srinivasan and Lee, 2004; Waheed, 2009; Jhutti, 1998; Rao, 1993).

Various religions perceive and have different expectations and definitions of dowry. Among Hindus, traditionally the upper caste practises the “kanyadhan”, the literal meaning of which is the gifts which are given by the bride (Srinivasan and Lee, 2004, p.1108). In the Sikh religion, the dowry is given to a daughter at the time of her marriage. It is framed in two parts. The first is “daj” (dowry) and the second is “affinal” (gifts). The “daj” is commonly related to the bridal gifts and “affinal” gifts refer to the gifts from the groom and his family (Jhutti, 1998, p. 175). Among Muslims, the dowry is called the “jahz” but this word among Muslims has many other variations. The “jahz” is practised at the time of a daughter’s marriage and commonly a variety of gifts are presented by the bride’s parents to the bride (Waheed, 2009, p.53).

### **The Enduring Importance of the Dowry**

In the growing literature on dowry, evidence shows that its importance is rising over time. Rao (1993) states that South Asian dowries now account for up to fifty percent of a household’s assets, and this has been increasing for the last four decades. Rao used Rosen’s implicit market model and data from six Indian villages and the Indian census; the results show that the population growth has caused a marriage squeeze and consequently, a surplus of women in the marriage market has played an important role in the increase in dowries (Rao, 1993, p.666).

The public exhibition of dowry is common among South Asians. Wilson (2006, p.105) illustrate that “marriages between different castes normally forbidden but in these marriages the condition is that the parent of the women paid the huge dowries to acknowledge her rise in status”. Similarly, Liddle and Joshi (1986, p.58) explain that the “in- marrying system is very common among caste based societies which mean they will in general not marry outside their own caste and sub-caste. There are expectations, notably of women marrying ‘up’ to man of a higher caste”. They further describe that in the “caste based societies the upper caste never tried to impose their strict rules of conduct on the lower castes; in fact they forbade the lower castes from following the upper caste lifestyle, and used the differences to distinguish the lower orders from themselves”. In- marrying and dowry practice among caste based societies, particularly among Hindus, is very common. Anderson (2003, p.273; 2007; 2010) examines dowry payments in two societies: caste-based

and non-caste-based. She argues that increasing price of dowry once terminated in those endogamous societies; the reason is that these societies eventually broke down.

Goody (1973, p.17) contends that usually the parents of the bride give the dowry to their daughter. The dowry is a part of the girl's parental inheritance. He further explains that most families marry among families of equal status and wealth. This is a reason that increases the gap between rich and poor. Caplan (1984, p.216) explains the practice of bride groom price among the Christians in Madras on the basis of the class and caste system. He states that bride groom price is only practised among families who have an affiliation with the caste system; if they marry out side the caste then they do not pay the bridegroom price. He concludes that this is evidence that bridegroom price is a means to enhance class position, as well as to maintain the boundaries of endogamy. Wessel (2006, p.511) explains that when a woman marries, the women's parents and family give her all the essentials of a dowry. The main purpose of giving a dowry to the daughter is to marry well in accordance with her social class. Dowries from the girl's families may play an important role in the enhancement of the groom and his family income and status. The giving of a large dowry may enhance the groom's family status (Srinivasan and Lee, 2004, p.1115).

The practice of dowry does exist in South Asian culture and that women face harassment due to dowry before or after marriage. Some researchers argue that this violence has increased in India. In the cases where a husband or husband's family is not satisfied with the dowry payment, they may cause trouble for the wife and abuse her (Suran et al, 2004, p.5; Srinivasan and Lee, 2004). Husband and wife exchange goods, income and services within the household and all household members have access to these resources that available for husband and wife. Because of the sexual hierarchy in the family, these resources cause conflict between the family members, especially between husband and wife (Whitehead, in Young, Wolkowitz & McCullagh, 1981, p.88). Dowry exists among all social classes and this practice also causes domestic violence and physical and psychological abuse of the wife. These physical abuses cause the dowry deaths and betrayal of the wife and psychological abuse causes "depression, low self-esteem, fear, loneliness, guilt and shame".Rastogi and Therly (2006, p.73) explain that

As it is assumed that dowry problems are not very severe among Muslims" (Waheed, 2009, p.48), in spite of the fact that many Muslim women have been

victimized (Suran et al, 2004). It therefore becomes very important to explore this controversy regarding dowry among Muslims.

The size of the dowry may have two effects on the bride's status; first, the dowry may increase the income and wealth resources of the material household and it may have an impact on the bride's welfare in her marital life, and second, a larger dowry is a source of pride for the groom and his family" (Srinivasan & Bedi, 2007; Rao, 1997; Zhang and Chan, 1999).

### **Research on dowry in the UK**

Dowry is also found to be practised in the UK among south Asian communities that are composed of people belonging to different religions and caste systems. They are part of diverse social and cultural backgrounds and belong to different regional and language groups (Ghuman, 1994, p.15).

Although there is a wealth of literature available on dowry practices that is based on studies carried out in Bangladesh (Suran et al, 2004) and India (Anderson, 2003) little attention has been paid to studying the phenomenon of dowry practices among South Asian communities in the UK. This research examines the phenomenon by investigating class background, the role of dowry in class maintenance and mobility, and Sparkhill women's personal experiences of giving or receiving dowries, which may have an influence on their attitudes towards dowries. This research also addresses the question of the description of dowries among Sparkhill South Asian women in order to understand and see the variations between different cultures and different class backgrounds.

The key questions to be addressed in this study are:

1. How do the participants perceive dowry practices in the context of their personal experiences and their class and cultural backgrounds?
2. Relating to the participants, what are the social impacts of dowry giving and receiving among different classes of South Asian communities in Birmingham?
3. In what ways do the participants feel the giving and receiving of dowries helps or inhibits social class

mobility?

4. How do these findings relate to previous and future studies on the topic of dowry?

## METHODOLOGY

In this study, social class is measured according to the participant's father's occupation through the Registrar General scheme (1971). This consisted of five occupational groups: "Professional Occupations", "Intermediate Occupations", "Skilled Non-manual Occupations" and "Skilled Manual Occupations", "Partly Skilled Occupations" and "Unskilled Occupations" (Crompton, 1998, p.59).

Social class is measured in various ways. The Office of National Statistics has maintained a register journal in which occupation is used to group people of the same class. Occupation is also the best indicator for measuring material and non-material rewards in social settings. This also helps to see other factors in society; for example, education and voting behaviour (Crompton, 1998). To investigate a woman's class background in this study, a woman's father's occupation is used that provide information about social mobility on the basis of dowry practices among South Asian communities belonging to different social class backgrounds in Birmingham.

The parameters for this study are to explore the attitudes and experiences of South Asian women in the context of class background. To explore this phenomenon, Birmingham has been selected because it is an ethnically and culturally diverse city. Within Birmingham, Sparkhill has been chosen because the area has a large population of ethnic minorities of South Asian communities. The makeup of the Asian ethnic community as a percentage of the population is shown in Table 1;

**Table 1: Ethnic groups in the Sparkhill population**

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Spark hill</b>
Indian	10.4%
Pakistani	45%
Bangladeshi	3.8%

*Source: 2001 census of population*

**Table 2: Religion profile of Sparkhill**

Religion	Sparkhill
Hindu	5.3%
Muslim	54%
Sikh	3.3%

*Source: 2001 census of population*

Within case study design, semi-structured interviews are employed to study underlying social phenomenon. Semi-structured interviews are a useful tool to gather in-depth information. The research participants were located through the snowball method. In this method, the participants are located through personal contacts and sometimes a research participant identifies other potential participants (Bryman, 2008). In this research the researcher conducted eight semi-structured interviews with South Asian married women who were born and live in Sparkhill and whose forefathers might have migrated from Pakistan, India or Bangladesh. Among the women interviewed, three were Hindu, three were Muslim and two were Sikh. The women that were researched belong to the age group of 20-40 years old. This particular age group was selected because it indicates marital status and is also useful to investigate varying patterns of dowry practices.

Grounded theory is used for the grounded analysis of data because it directs the data analysis process in a consistent and coherent way. (Denscombe , 2007, p.88). Although data is continuously analyzed during the fieldwork actual data analysis starts after the data collection is completed. The data is analyzed in relation to particular themes that emerged from the data. These themes were coded and categorized according to grounded theory in the relation to women's responses on dowries.

To see alternative explanations and differences, a constant comparative approach was also used in addition to grounded theory with regard to the women's personal experiences of marriage and dowries and how these experiences might have an impact on their attitudes towards giving or receiving dowry in relation to different class and religious backgrounds. In order to make this systematic, NVivo is used, which facilitates the data analysis process and provides deep and enriched information.

## ANALYSIS

### **Dowry in practice among sparkhill south Asian women**

In this part, I will examine the various definitions and descriptions of dowry need by the participants and analyze this from a sociological perspective. This also provides insights related to the continuity of this practice among the South Asian communities in Birmingham. In the response to dowry definition and dowry description, respondents provided a variety of answers.

One Hindu woman replied that:

“For me, dowry is those things that parents give to their daughter at her wedding eve e.g. dresses, jewelry, household things etc” (Hindu, 1. Class, II)

This kind of definition and perception is current among the South Asian communities and there is evidence that the dowry is related to the women and that a bride receives the dowry at the time of her marriage from her parents (Bhopal, 1999; Jhutti, 1998; Waheed, 2009).

Anderson (2007) explains that the marriage payments come in two forms: the payment that is transferred from the bride's family to the groom's family is usually called the dowry and the payment that is transferred from the groom's side to the bride's is called the bride price. Bride price occurs in two thirds of societies. Anderson further explains that dowry play a more significant role in Europe and Asia (p.152).

My sample suggests that dowry and bride price exists among Sparkhill South Asians. The dowry and bride price co-exist and they practice both dowry and bride price at the time of marriage.

Muslim woman answered:

“In my point of view, dowry is those things that parents and in laws give to bride at the eve of marriage” (Muslim, 2. Class, II).

For her, dowry is a combination of gifts from the parents and from the in-laws.

The other interesting factor is that dowry seems or is perceived to be something which the groom and groom's family demand from the bride's family.

“For me, dowry is the demand of those things that [the] groom and groom's family demands from the bride's family at marriage, e.g house, car and household things” (Hindu, 3 Class, IV).

This quotation shows that the dowry is related to those things that the groom and groom's family demand from the bride's family at the time of marriage. This response was quite surprising for me and when I asked the question related to the things which she received from her parents she replied: “*we called these things “Bhaint”, it means gifts” (Hindu, 3, Class, IV)*. This provides the clear justification that for her dowry is not the things that the bride's parents give their daughter at the time of her marriage; it is the things that the groom and groom's family demand from the bride's family. The definition of dowry from a sociological perspective and in practice among Sparkhill South Asian women of different class backgrounds is differently perceived.

### **Continuity in Dowry Practice**

Beyond the variety of definitions that the respondents present, they also show their intentions to continue this practice. Those who define dowry as the things which the groom and groom's family demand from the bride's family were against this practice.

“I am against dowry, I dislike it and it should not be given.....if [the] groom or groom's family demand dowry I will never ever marry my daughter in that family because it seems that they are insulting a woman”.(Hindu, 3. Class, IV)

Bhopal (1997, p.488) also finds that South Asian women feel that dowries are an oppressive and degrading practice for them. Those women who define dowry as these demands are more likely to feel that dowries are degrading. We can say that this factor is also related to the individual's own perception of dowry and it is very important to explore the individual perceptions in relation to dowry practice.

On the other hand, those who define the dowry as gifts which the parents of the bride give her for her happiness and for her new life or home were in favour of this

practice and want to continue it.

“I want to give them dowry as much as I can. For me, dowry is a good thing because it helps after marriage in spending life” (Muslim, 1. Class, IV)

In this quotation the respondent, who belongs to the working class, is in favour of the practice of dowry; for her it is good practice and she wants to continue it. The working class wants to continue the dowry practices to maintain their cultural goodwill and to achieve cultural self-betterment (Weininger, in Wright, 2005, p.94). We can see that her personal experience of receiving dowry and her class background have an impact on her decision to continue this practice, as at the time of her marriage her parent gave her a large dowry and according to her it was very helpful for her in starting her new life. We can say that the definition and personal experiences of receiving dowries also have an influence on the giving of dowries. There is also some evidence that demonstrates that the women who dislike this practice may still want to continue it because of their personal experiences. As one Muslim woman said:

“I want to give my daughter everything at the time of her marriage because I know it is our cultural custom and I know that’s how I was treated in the context of dowry, so I will give her everything” (Muslim, 3. Class, IIIA).

Even though she dislikes the practice and does not want to continue it, her personal experiences are too influential on her and she realises that a big dowry may enhance the wellbeing of the bride’s married life, so she wants to continue this practice.

Bhopal (1999, p.98) suggests that South Asian parents want to continue the practice of dowry and they want to give dowries to their daughters according to their status and, most importantly, according to the expectations of the groom and the groom’s family. The common factors found in the data indicate that dowry is typically given to the brides of all class origins at the time of marriage and relate to the women among South Asian communities. Another important aspect my data presents is that all the Sparkhill South Asian women were against the demand for dowry, even those preferring one otherwise. This informs us about the participants’ viewpoint that the demand for dowry is disliked among Sparkhill South Asian women of different class

backgrounds but its practice is considered relatively good by them.

**Is Dowry a Burden (among Sparkhill South Asian families)?**

The comprehensive review of the literature reveals that dowry is practised in many countries of South Asia, such as India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Individuals perceive dowry in different ways depending on their situation; for example, when the parents of a bride give a dowry to their daughter to make her happy, they see dowry as an expression of love and care, but when it is demanded by the groom's family, the bride's parents might perceive it as a burden.

**Dowry as Demand**

Traditionally, dowry consists of a number of household goods that are given by the bride's parents to their daughter depending on their financial situation and the affordability of the goods, but making demands in the name of dowry might not be liked in South Asian society. The notion of demand is interesting as some participants define dowry as something that is demanded. According to them, anything that is given by the parents to their daughter for her happiness and satisfaction of themselves a gift except those things that are demanded by the groom's family.

The data suggests that dowry is something that is demanded at the time of marriage in the shape of household essentials among Sparkhill South Asian communities. One participant said in the interviews *“According to me, any kind of demands that [the] groom or groom's family demand from the bride's family [is] called dowry”* (Hindu, 2. Class, IV). Another participant said that

*“For me, dowry is the demand of those things that [the] groom and groom's family demands from the bride's family at marriage, e.g house, car and household things”* (Hindu, 3 Class, IV).

These two interviewees' are defining dowry in the same way; however, looking at these quotations critically, one might think that there is a religious and class impact on both of these interviewees' accounts as both are Hindu women and both belong to Class IV, “Partly skilled” (Registrar General, 197, in Crompton, 1998, p.59). I would not strongly claim that there is definitely a religious and class background playing a role because of the following interviewees who are Muslim and belong to the “Skilled non-manual” group (Registrar General, 1971, in Crompton, 1998, p.59)

class IIIV said that “*We define dowry as the thing which [are] demanded of [the] groom or groom’s family from the bride’s family at the time of marriage*” (Muslim, 3. Class, IIIA).

The above quotation gives voice to the notion of the demands being made by the groom’s family before or after marriage. When something is demanded before or after the marriage, the bride’s family might be pressurized to fulfill it in order to maintain their social class position in society.

“Before my marriage my mother-in-law called my father and demanded lot of sweets for [the] “*valimah*” function. My father was rich.....that’s why he brought sweets of different types in different quantities”(Muslim, 2. Class, II).

This excerpt is taken from the interview with a woman whose father belongs to the “Intermediate Class” (Registrar General, 1971, in Crompton, 1998, p. 59). He was able to fulfill these types of demand in the name of dowry. The ease of fulfilling these demands is visible from the quotation. In this way, it can be said that Muslim respondent 2, who belongs to class I “Intermediate Class”, did not face any trouble in fulfilling the groom’s and groom’s family’s demands, but how can the other class background fathers do all this?

A Class IIIA (Skilled non-manual) man will perceive such demands as burden some and might take out a loan in order to satisfy the groom’s family and spend his remaining life in paying this back. The quotation below talks about the troubles faced by the bride’s father, who was a pensioner (Skilled non-manual, Class, IIIV) and could not afford the high demands from the groom’s side.

“My father paid installments of my dowry for five years” (Muslim 3 Class, IIIA.)

This interviewee is the same woman who defines dowry as something that is demanded. Once the groom’s family makes demands at the marriage, it might be useful to say that dowry is a burden, especially when the bride’s family cannot afford it.

Ebrey (2003, p.77) states that demands for large dowries sometimes cause delays or make it impossible for girls to marry. “Demands for excessively large dowries were

making it impossible for girls to marry, or were forcing their families to sell the land or borrow money to pay for them.” These high demands for dowries are seen as burdens for the girl’s family. Dowry is also a problem that exists among ordinary families.

There is other evidence which suggests that although the definition and description of dowry are different, in practice the dowry seems to be a kind of demand or duty and is seen as a burden for the bride’s family, and at least one Hindu woman has differently defined this dowry practice and has a different experience of receiving dowry.

Dowry may seem to be combination of demands and duty. Among South Asian families dowries are exercised according to the situation and according to the family background. Parents of brides have to give the dowry even if the groom and groom’s family do not demand it. The reason is that they have strong cultural boundaries and dowry is seen as a custom among them which they want to practise and they also want to continue this practice to maintain their identities as South Asian. South Asian people see the dowry as being part of their unique South Asian identities (Bhopal 1999, p.97).

In line with the literature, the data suggests that South Asian parents in Sparkhill felt that giving a dowry to their daughters is a duty and they have to do their duties even in the shape of demands. When asked the question on their importance and why dowries are given in their culture, one Sikh woman who belongs to the “Intermediate Class” (Registrar General, 1971, in Crompton, 1998, p.59) answered:

“I think it is like a duty which they have to do. Every parent has to give the dowry to their daughter because of cultural and people pressure” (Sikh, 1. Class, II).

Parents have to give dowries to their daughters for many reasons; as this woman said, there is cultural and personal pressure. Bourdieu (1986) explains that all social groups want to maintain their class solidarity and relationships. In their social services individuals want to continue the exchange or exclude those things which they perceive are right or wrong to maintain their class through occasions, places and practises. So the parents of the bride feel that they have to practice the dowry and they feel that giving dowry to their daughters is a duty.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that for these research participants the demanding of dowry and perception of dowry as a burden in the context of demands or duty seem to depend on the family's financial position, as one respondent (Muslim, 2 Class, II) commented that at the time of her marriage the groom's family demanded a lot of sweets. When the interviewee talked about the demands for sweets, at the same time she said "*My father was rich.....that's why he brought sweets of different types in different quantities*" (Muslim, 2. Class, II). It is evident from the excerpt that her father provided the sweets to the groom's family because it was their duty in the shape of social pressure and they had to do so. The other reason may be the welfare of the daughter in her marital life. On the other hand, the respondent (Muslim, 3 Class, IIIV) whose father belongs to the "Skilled non- manual" class IIIV and was not able to fulfill the demands made by the groom's family reports that her family have been struggling for five years to pay back the loan taken out for her dowry. Although another respondent's family background and class are different and there were no dowry demands by the groom's family, her parents gave her a dowry because of cultural pressure and felt that it was their duty to practiced the dowry and give one to their daughter at the time of her marriage. According to one respondent (Hindu 2 Class, IV), her father, who belongs to the "Partly Skilled class"(Registrar General, 1971, in Crompton, 1998, p.59) had many other responsibilities related to his children was facing difficulties in fulfilling the demands of the groom's family at the time of his daughter's marriage.

A part from the financial affordability, if the above four quotations (Muslim, 2 Class, II; Muslim, 3, Class, IIIA; Hindu, 2, Class, IV and Sikh, 1, Class, II) are analyzed in the context of social class, it reveals that the four interviewees have experienced dowry differently depending on their class, religion and family background. The data suggests that in Sparkhill among the South Asian communities, dowry practices exist and are experienced as a burden or pressure for the bride's family at the time of marriage. We can say that women who belong to different class backgrounds and religions also have different experiences of receiving dowry among the South Asian communities in Sparkhill, Birmingham.

### **Dowry: Pride or Shame?**

Pride and shame are cultural instruments employed by the members of a community to encourage or discourage certain behaviours or actions in the society. Dowry is a

social and cultural practice that might cause either shame or pride for the social actors. In this part, I will discuss how dowry can make someone proud or ashamed among the members of a community. These societal rewards have an influence on the married life of the bride, as when the groom or groom's family receives a dowry, they feel proud and it might be a source of satisfaction for the bride and bride's family and leads to the bride's marital wellbeing. On the other hand, if the groom and groom's family do not receive a dowry, they might be ashamed within their society and it might cause resentment or even abuse for the bride and bride's family after marriage.

In particular, the practice of dowry informs others about the identity of the individual; for example, his/her religion, cultural background and social status in society. The practice of dowry is a tool that might be practiced to exhibit one's social status. It not only informs about a bride's and groom's social status, but also confirms it.

People have to keep up with social and cultural traditions in order to be proud of their high social status in society. Other community members also have some expectation regarding dowry depending on the social status of the bride's family; for example, society expects that a rich man's daughter will bring a good size dowry.

“My parents are richer than my in-laws. My mother-in-law was expecting that I am a daughter of [a] rich man I would bring many things in the shape of dowry” (Muslim, 2. Class, II).

In this case, when expectations are not met, the bride and bride's family are sometimes humiliated or even punished. They are made to feel ashamed by community and the woman is abused and blamed in her husband's house.

“My mother-in-law teased me by showing and comparing the dowries of other girls with that of mine” (Muslim, 2. Class, II).

This quotation shows that the husband's family made the bride feels ashamed for not bringing dowry according to their expectations.

All the above discussion shows how a smaller dowry can cause shame and abuse for the bride. However, how can what constitutes an insufficient or sufficient amount of dowry be measured? This is an interesting notion; another research project was conducted on it by Suran et al (2004, p.12) on the relation of dowry and abuse in

rural Bangladesh. They explain that the amount and size of dowry is dependent on the wealth of the bride's family and the bride's family financial position and this plays an important role in the perception and expectation of the dowry size.

There is also evidence that shows that among South Asian communities domestic violence related to dowry practice exists and that women are faced with violence related to dowries. The data suggests that the violence related to dowry among the Sparkhill South Asian women is psychological rather than physical. One Muslim woman said that:

“Yeah, there were some comments. After I got married she [mother in law] said to me my parents did not give this, did not give that” (Muslim, 3. Class, IIIA).

Respondents' personal experiences give us clear information regarding psychological violence related to the size of dowry.

Just as dowry can cause shame, it also causes pride for the bride and bride's family; one of the interviewees talked about this in the following ways:

“If a woman [is] brought more things in a dowry she is considered honorable in the society and she feels proud that she comes from a rich family” (Muslim, 1 Class, IV).

One Muslim woman who supports the dowry practice explains that the dowry is cause of women social position in her in-laws as a large dowry provides or enhances the position of women in the family and South Asian society. The amount of dowry also shows the family background and status of the bride's family. We can say that at the time of marriage in the Sparkhill South Asian community this practice is a tool to confirm and make the society realize what the status of the family is and which family belongs to which social class. All this influences the ordinary members of the community, who perceive social class on an everyday basis as appearance, way of living and consuming patterns (Ride, 1998).

South Asian communities have some expectation regarding the size of the dowry. These expectations depend on the bride's father's financial position and social status. If these expectations are not sufficient for them they claim for this and this claim is related to the way they feel ashamed that they are not able to fulfill their

expectations. In the same way, if the South Asian society feels satisfied with this, they are rewarded by feelings of pride. And these rewards (shame and pride) are for the bride and bride's family. Other researchers also demonstrate that the amount and size of dowry play an important role in the welfare of the bride (Bhopal, 1997, 1999, 2009; Zhang and Chan, 1999).

The literature and the data itself also provide some evidence that suggests that in this specific area of Sparkhill members of the South Asian communities have also received these rewards related to dowry from their communities and this also shows that they still have strong cultural boundaries, so it is not easy for them to break these boundaries even if they want to.

**Is dowry payment perceived as class shift and maintenance among the Sparkhill South Asian community?**

In this research I have tried to focus on the respondent's father's occupation to measure the respondent's social class. To establish whether people who belong to different class backgrounds have different experiences of receiving or giving dowries and also if the dowry is playing or having any role in the class shift and maintenance in the South Asian communities, I used the Britain Registrar General Class scheme which is based on occupation. Women were asked about their fathers' occupations (Crompton, 1998, p.59).

With this I have tried to understand how these South Asian women perceive their social class and how they perceive which class they belong to before and after marriage. This direct question related to individual social class is also important to explore if dowry is playing any role in the class shift and maintenance or if dowry is perceived as class shift and maintenance.

Respondents were asked about what class they felt they belonged to before or after marriage or at the time of marriage. Five women responded that they belonged to the middle class and also defined their class on the basis of income and their family financial position:

One respondent replied;

“My father has a better financial position’.....I feel I am in[a] lower class now because my father had a quite a good earning” (Hindu, 2 Class, IV).

This interviewee is defining her class on the basis of her father's income and financial position. This quotation gives us the information that she perceives that her class has shifted after marriage and she feels that she belongs to a lower class now because of her financial position. It is not this woman alone who defines her class on the basis of her father's income and family financial position: in fact, other participants also perceive their class on the same basis of income and financial position of the family in their interviews. One Sikh woman replied similarly that *"before marriage and after marriage I can say that I [am] in the middle class I don't want to say that I am too poor or I am too rich"* (Sikh, 2. Class, IIIA). This quotation also demonstrates the point made in the previous quotation that the interviewee measures or sees her social class on the notion of poor or rich and measures her social class on the basis of the financial position of her family. Wright (2005, p.184) explains that "classes are social categories that generate subjectively salient experiences which shape the identities used by people to locate those categories within a system of economic stratification.

These respondents' provide evidence to support the literature that among South Asian communities marriage is a means of social mobility and that South Asian women feel that their class and status is changed due to marriage. Hamilton and Hirszowicz (1993, p.198) explain that "social mobility is a process in which people change their class and status position this changes either upward or downward in the hierarchy.

In the literature and data itself, the dominating factor to measure class has been the occupation and financial position of the family, but there is evidence that education can also be taken as a class measurement as two of the interviewees mention education as a crucial factor in measuring class. It is very interesting to see the way interviewees talk about this factor. There is a quotation given below in which an educated woman defines her class before and after marriage on the basis of her parents' education and her in-laws' education.

"My parents are financially strong but not educationally so, in this way I belong to [the] poor class. Still I belong to a poor class because my in-laws are also not educated" (Muslim, 2. Class, II).

Among Sparkhill South Asian women dowry has no significant role in class mobility and maintenance, and that level of education has played an important role

in the perception of class mobility and maintenance and also to establish individuals' social class membership.

After exploring respondent's class backgrounds pre- and post-marriage on the basis of father's occupation some important factors have appeared. First, the majority of women who define their class on the basis of income are less educated. On the other hand, those who define, and perceive, their class on the basis of education are more educated. The data itself indicates that on the basis of occupation these two respondents' class is shifting to the upper level, but personally they felt that their class had shifted to a lower level or stayed at the same level after marriage. We can say that in the Sparkhill South Asian community, education and individuals' personal experiences may impact on their views and perception of their social class at an everyday level.

Although dowry may have no prominent role in class shift and maintenance, it might play a role in the maintenance of the family background and family status for the new married couple.

“Dowry that was given by my parents helped me a lot in spending life after marriage. I remember that my father gave me 2 thousand [pounds] so that I could buy anything that I needed.” (Muslim, 1 Class, IV).

This quotation suggests that the amount of dowry has an impact on a couple's wellbeing and living style and in the context of social class it may maintain class status according to the family's class background. A member of the same class helps the new family in the building and maintenance of their social class status. She further stated that “*[if] the families are financially strong they give more dowries to their daughter and if they are not they give according to their status*” (Muslim, 1. Class, IV). This quotation shows that for her dowry is given according to the family's financial position and status. This gives some indication that if the dowry is given according to the financial position and status of the family it may also help to maintain the family status and also helps to maintain the class background of the family. This also gives us evidence that Sparkhill South Asian women perceive that the amount of dowry may maintain or even enhance their social class in society. Individuals want to maintain their status and class in society. They may perceive that dowry at the time of marriage is a good way of showing the family status. Giving or

receiving dowry may also maintain family status among South Asian communities. Dowry is a way of showing and enhancing the family's status (Bhopal, 1999, p.97).

When the new married couple starts their life they are also a part of the family and the family does not want to lose class status in society so they give a dowry in the form of material and non-material household goods which may help the newly married couple to start their new life. It may also help to maintain their class according to the family's class background in society. The amount of dowry also shows the family background and status of the bride's family. We can say that at the time of marriage this practice is a tool to confirm to society what the status of this family is and which family belongs to which social class background.

## CONCLUSION

Exploring dowry practice and investigating class mobility and maintenance, the data of this research shows that dowry among South Asian women is likely to have different definitions and perceptions.

Women's perception of dowry and class also vary according to their education, religion, and family background. As Crompton (2008) explains, the term class is perceived and used in different ways between laymen and academics. Similarly, the results of this study demonstrate that some of the women studied relate class with family income; however, others perceive that class is based on education.

From the in depth data collected, despite the limited size of the sample used for this research, it appears that the understanding of dowry varies between the Sparkhill South Asian women. The perception of dowries has an impact on their attitude towards giving and receiving dowry and the continuity of this practice. In this study women's personal experiences on receiving dowry also influence their attitudes towards giving dowries to their own children. That personal experience provides a clear indication of the continuity of this practice and the demand for dowry by in-laws is disliked but the dowry is considered relatively good among South Asian communities in Birmingham.

Furthermore, this study indicates that dowry is a cultural practice and Sparkhill South Asian parents have to exercise this practice at the time of their daughter's marriage to maintain their social identity, social class and status in the community. The results of this research are in line with the findings of some other researchers.

Bhopal (1997, 1999, 2009), Goody (1973), and Welles (2006) note that dowry is a way of showing family class and status at the time of marriage.

The practice of dowry persists in all social classes in South Asian communities (Srinivasan, 2005; Caplan, 1984; Ebrey, 2003). The dowry payment is a cause of brides' welfare or abuse (Waheed, 2009; Srinivasan and Lee, 2004; Suran et al, 2004). This study shows that a large dowry plays a significant role in a bride's pride in society and the welfare of a bride's married life in Sparkhill South Asian culture.

The data demonstrates that giving dowry to the daughter is a duty and the bride's family has to perform this duty whether it is demanded by the groom's family or not. This research finding is similar to the results of Manushi (1993), Ebrey (2003) and Bhopal (2009), who found that South Asian parents want to maintain their identities through practising dowry, even if dowry payment is an economic burden for them.

Although this study has some limitations in the religion and dowry relationship, religion can be important in the practice of dowry as the data illustrates that there are some differences between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, women in their perception of dowry in their religion. However, this research found that dowry is a cultural practice rather than a religious one. All the respondents demonstrate that in their religion there is no concept of demand for dowry, but the dowry practice still exists in their culture and families. On the contrary, evidence in some research shows that in the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh religions there is a concept of dowry (Srinivasan and Lee, 2004; Waheed, 2009; Jutti, in Menski, 1998).

The result of this limitation this study does not asked the question related to the "Mehr" to the Muslim respondents, which is very important to see the attitude of Muslim women towards dowry practice and also to see the difference between dowry and "Mehr" among the sample of Muslim women in sparkhill South Asian community. However, I feel that this study does work as a good in- road or foundation for further study on this topic.

This research can be extended to include the attitude and experiences of the groom and groom's family. The results of this research provide the base for further research in the area of dowry practice. A comparative study can be conducted to establish the perception of South Asian men and women on dowry practices in the UK. Secondly, it would be important to explore this practice in cross religion marriages in South Asian communities. This may provide knowledge related to the continuity of this

practice and the importance of this practice in the different religions and cultures.

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## **Identity as Pakistani: A Study of College and Madrasah Students of Baltistan**

### **Abstract**

*The research discusses the Pakistani identity of college and madrasah students in Baltistan. The study aims at understanding structures and significant components of Pakistani, identity in youth of Baltistan. It also identifies conflicts collisions and contradiction as well as convergence in Pakistani identity in college and madrasah students. It also explores political cultural and religious elite's views about identity issues and conflicts as well as their take on changes in these identities over time. The analysis of data produced during focused group discussions and in-depth interviews was conducted by reducing it into categories. The differences between identities of madrasah students and that of college students were explored besides observation that these identities have significant features in common.*

**Key Words:** *Identity, College, Madrassah Students*

### **INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

The present research focuses on Pakistani identity of madrasah and college students in Baltistan region in north of Pakistan. The identity has been discussed in geo-political, cultural and religious context of the community and the region.

Contemporary societies were not the only ones to focus on the term identity as research topic it has also been focus of theorizing tradition in social sciences for a few decades now. Judith A. Howard., (2000) has reviewed the literature on social psychology of identities and has commented that in earlier more stable societies identity was not only a non-issue but it also was assigned rather than selected or

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**Salman Haider**

Department of Gender Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women University.

**Dr. M. Aasir Ajmal**

Department of Psychology, Government College University, Lahore.

adopted (Howard, 2000). Identifying the increase in the quality and the quantity of changes that are taking place due to a number of factor e.g. technological development of communication media etc. it has been claimed that the need of answering the identity questions has increased many times. Verkuyten (2004) also is in agreement with Howard when he says that questions of identity are profound and pressing in the postmodern and global eras.

There are a number of cognitive processes that come into play while these identities are constructed, maintained or changes. Attribution processes i.e. judgment of causality and responsibility are particularly important. One of the important questions that have been addressed by the researches is about the bias of attributional processes in favor of in-group identification and adherence. Numerous studies have shown a pattern of in-group favoritism i.e. the positive behavior of the in-groups members are internally attributed while the negative behaviors are attributed to the external factors. On the other hand fewer studies have supported out group discrimination. Islam & Hewstone (1993) for example has exhibited the opposite attributional pattern towards out-group members. The researches in consonance with social identity theory have reported that the salience of the social categorization intensifies these attributional patterns.

The cognition structures and processes are combined in Moscovici's (1981) theory of social representation. According to his viewpoint knowledge structures are shared by the groups. They originate and develop through social interaction and communication (Augoustinos & Innes, 1990). This approach has re-conceptualized the schema which till then have been seen as conservative resistance to change and cognitive in nature. Conceptualizing schema in social terms increases its flexibility and makes it more grounded in social interaction.

Laboratory experiments have been central to the establishment of these theories and it is crucial to validate these in sociologically meaningful contexts. A number of studies in this tradition have been conducted with members of real groups with real conflicts between them. Spears et al (1997a, b) have asserted that the categorization and identification processes need to be studied in real life contexts as cognitive perception is meaningfully ordered by groups and their collective life. Doosje & Ellemers (1997) have asserted that cognitive and interactional processes are entwined and that identity management strategies are often put to use for manipulating group comparisons for the function of social identification.

Early works by Tajfel and Turner (1994) has remained more focused on the psychological motivation of group membership yet the self-categorization theory presented by Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell (1987), has concentrated more on the cognitive foundations of social identity (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Turner, 1994). As opposite to the binary distinction between personal and social identity established in the social identity theory, self-categorization theory theorizes self at personal, intergroup, and interspecies levels and presents a more noticeable fluidity in identity formation as individuals constantly shift between an individual and a social identity (Monroe, Hankins, & Van Vechten, 2000; Oakes et al., 1994). Individuals are theorized to be more likely to think of themselves as members of some social groups when the group membership maximizes the similarities between oneself and other group members and the differences with the members of other groups (Turner et al., 1987; see also Huddy, 2001; Kinnvall, 2003; Monroe et al., 2000)

Mainly based on psychological experiments, social identity theory and self-categorization theory have made some significant comments regarding the inclination among individuals to think more positive about themselves and their groups as opposed to other groups. Also important is the approach that these theories account for the psychological processes of redefining the self in terms of group norms and the related stereotypes about specific social groupings (Monroe et al., 2000). The strength of these theories has also been identified in Reicher & Hopkins work through observing the efforts made to elucidate the behavior of larger collectivities rather than the small groups studied in laboratory (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001).

Symbolic interaction approach studies both the structure of the identities and the process of interaction through which these identities are constructed maintained and changed. The structural approach in this tradition emphasizes the concept of role identities, role being the whole of the character that a person develops when he or she occupies at certain social position. The approach explicitly links the social structures to the person (Stryker, 1980). The role identities of a person are hierarchically organized in accordance to their salience to the self and the degree of our commitment to them. This salience and commitment is described as dependent upon our relation to particular other people.

The second approach deals with the process of construction of identity and its

negotiation. Negotiation among the identities of people is fundamental to developing definition of the situations (Goffman, 1959). These negotiations result in self presentation and/or impression management (McCall & Simons 1978). These social constructions made through the symbolic interactions within the social space are with social and material consequences. This tradition also discusses the interactive mechanisms for identity formation (Cahill, 1998)

The constructionist literature on identity discusses language as the space where identities are constructed, negotiated and communicated in direct interactions as well as discourse creation through some media (McAdams 1995). The fundamental assertion of the approach is that people actively produce their identities through their talk. Many ethnographic studies have studied these constructions in everyday interactions. Identity talk revolves around two sets of norms. One of these sets concerns respect for situated identities and a pledge to basic moral percept. The other set of norms deals with the failure of people in following the basic moral principle through various attributional tactics (Hunt et al 1994). Hunt and Miller (1997) have examined the construction of identity in sorority women through interviews. They focused on their talk about personal appearances. The data revealed normative order shaping the dress and appearance in the women. These women communicate and maintain identities through rhetoric of review that offers the criteria for decisive judgment of appearance.

Many researches in the symbolic interactionist tradition have studied the identity struggles, especially the ones managing the stigma of social inequalities. Anderson et al (1994) identifies two of the stigma avoidance strategies used by the homeless population. In-group strategies used by within the peers include drinking, cheap entertainment, hanging out, and positive talk about identity. On the other hand the techniques used with the out group i.e. domiciled others, to reduce the impact of stigma includes, defiance, passing as the domiciled others by appearing like them, covering by minimizing the impact of stigma, and collective action, as in homeless movements. Cherry (1995) and Tewksbury (1994) have studied the AIDS patients and exhibited the way in which these patients perform identity and employ language to control the unwanted social consequences attached with their marginalized status.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The objectives of the study were

- To understand the structures and significant components of Pakistani identity in college and madrassa, students of Baltistan.
- Identifying the points where Pakistani identity has conflict, collision, or contradiction as well as where it overlaps or converge with other identities in Balti youth.
- Studying the way cultural, political and religious elite looks into identity issues and conflicts.

**Sample**

Sample of the thirty five students from both formal and religious institutions Madrassas and college students with an age ranging from 16 to 22 years took part in the focus group discussion arranged to meet the objectives of study. Students from madrassas were usually of rural background while students of college were from urban back ground. Students from madrasa were having formal education in humanities as private candidates while college students were from humanities and sciences but were not getting religious education in any formal settings.

Sample also included cultural, political and religious elite of the community. Researcher tried to bring as many perspectives as possible in the debate to have a fuller picture. Seven in depth interviews were conducted with the local religious cultural and political elite of the community.

**Instrument**

Group discussion schedules were prepared after review of relevant literature and informal discussions with madrassa and college students and teachers. The discussion schedules included various topics that identified definitions structure and boundaries of identities. Points of conflict and overlap were also identified and were discussed by the participants. Guidelines for every interview varied according to the areas of specialization of the respondent for example literary figures and politicians clerics etc.

**Procedure**

Four focus groups discussions were carried out, two from madrassa and two from college students separately. Maximum number of participants in focus group

discussion was ten while minimum was 8. The discussion were moderated by the researcher himself. Discussion mostly took place in Urdu and in case a Balti term was used it was noted and clarified after or during the discussion. The interviews were conducted by the researcher in various settings of convenience for interviewees.

### **Analysis**

Textual analysis was conducted using data reduction techniques and was used for theory building for structure of Shiite Muslim identity.

### **DISCUSSION**

The community strongly believes that religion is inseparable from politics. State is accepted and the religious identity is not para or supra state.

“it is not possible to have one leader. There are 62 Muslim (majority) countries in the world. It is not possible to unite them all. But we believe that after the appearance of the Imam there will be one government in the world...but as far as state system is concerned the world is much dispersed. Some infallible Imam will govern the world, we believe in it and hope for it but it appears impossible.”

The role of state is instrumental in implementing the political and economic systems that find their roots in religious identity. It is identified that the religious order needs a state for its implementation and the efforts at individual level cannot implement the religion in full.

“Islam and politics are inseparable they go together. The government power is needed to implement the orders of Islam. For example we cannot abolish the interest with out government.”

The state in its current form is seen as Muslim state though not a true Islamic one. The community rationally analysis the demographic situation of the country and does not see any chances of a Shiite Islamic revolution. It prefers not to indulge into any adventure for installing a religio-political system identified as the system of demographic minority community among the Muslims i.e. Shiites.

“There are duties of Muslims (towards changing the system with an Islamic one) but

if the situation is like the one we have in Pakistan we don't think the religious scholars can do anything. If you have the people who can work you can get fruit of the efforts. And if you can get the fruit then it is all right. But if you will fight just for dying it is of no use. It depends on the situation...one should try his utmost to incline the people towards it (establishing Islamic system). He should try to tell people the reality and when they are inclined towards it he will get a chance to govern.”

It prefers to restrain itself to safeguarding the religion and expresses resolve to resist the state only if it intrudes into the religious affairs of the community.

“We can preach though we can't fight. It is impossible to bring a revolution like Khomeini here. But if government starts pushing you to the wall you can fight for your rights. I don't think you can try for revolution it will be destructive for us.”

It is identified that chances of establishing a True Islamic system in a state where Shiites are a demographic minority are thin yet the community identified certain differences between a democracy and an Islamic system and suggested certain changes that can make the democracy more Islamic. These modifications are embedded in current religio-cultural order of the community that gives authority to its religious elite by giving them the power of interpreting the religious scripture and the injunctions contained in it.

“It (Islamic system) is a consultative system, different from the democracy. As in democracy you can do anything, make your own party group and organization. Islam has not given such a system. In Islam you can do this in a smaller circle. Because (in Islam) you have to believe in Allah and his Prophet and you are not allowed to believe in any other thing. In democracy you can do anything. Everything is controlled by people. The power of making a decision lies with the Mujtahids, and Koran.”

The content of collective identity as Pakistani in the madrassa and the college students of Gilgit-Baltistan chiefly consists of individual's role as a citizen especially his responsibility of obeying the rules and laws made by the state and the constitution of the country. Resisting the international pressure on the country was also considered a duty of the citizen by the madrassah students.

“acting completely according to laws. Paying taxes, Celebrating the (National) days, trying to safeguard against pressures of global powers.”

On the other hand the state is considered responsible for safeguarding religious freedom and providing the economic security. Celebrating the days of national importance with enthusiasm and respecting the national flag were also described as important parts of the identity. Another role associated with the state is that of the protector of religion against others at international level. Religion and not the constitution is described as the basic criteria according to which of rights for the religious minorities (Christians, Hindus, etc) living with in the state boundaries should be granted. The clause of the constitution that inhibits the religious minorities of the country from holding the key posts in the state machinery is described as a natural out come of Muslim majority in the state. Students reject the democracy where majority is the only authority for being the Western system. They say that the present system is neither western nor Islamic but is somewhere in between the both. This mix is accepted with grumble. The grumble signifies both the sense of loss for Islamic system (not the nostalgia but the System in Iran) and the disliked task of following the West.

The students from the colleges as well as from the madrasahs pointed out that they do not enjoy the equal status as Pakistani like the other citizens of the country though the economic security and religious freedom was available.

“yes we are (Pakistani). Some are full Pakistani others are half. We are half (Pakistanis). We are 30% to 40% Pakistani.”

The politics was described by the madrassah students as something dirty and loathsome for being synonymous with corruption and nepotism. The clerics were considered members of a holy subset within the community which should not disgrace itself by taking part in this politics. The students from the madrassas believed at the same time that one should not separate politics and religion.

There can be a disagreement about Pakistan (if they join politics). So they say that you should vote for a person who gives you your rights. According to Islam our political representative is the one who can give the rights to the society. Politics have been disfigured. America did this.

The state is seen as a benefactor though it is claimed that the constitutional status the region deserved, bringing the region at par with other parts of the country, has not been granted to Gilgit-Baltistan.

“It is a responsibility of the government to defend religious rights and to provide economic rights. We are enjoying religious rights. As far as economic rights are concerned, we are not down trodden. We are getting food. You get a flour bag for Rs 3000 in Punjab we are getting it for Rs 800. Some rights are being provided. Any ways we are deprived of basic constitutional rights. There is no one in Pakistani assembly to discuss our problems”.

At the time of division of subcontinent for creation of Pakistan the region was divided in various small princely states and a part of it was being controlled by the state of Kashmir. The local people and the Scouts won freedom from Dogra Raja of Kashmir and annexed Baltistan with Pakistan. The Rajas of the princely states also annexed their states with Pakistan. The annexure of the states and various parts of the region known as Gilgit-Baltistan today started on November 16, 1947 with the annexure of Gilgit with the newly established state of Pakistan and was completed in 1951 after the annexure of Tangir and Darail according to Mr. Qasim Naseem a political scholar and a prominent journalist of the region.

“The freedom movement of Gilgit-Baltistan started in 1947. Gilgit won freedom on November 1, 1947. Then a provisional government of Gilgit with the name of Islamic Republic of Gilgit was established. In the first cabinet meeting of the government, though it was already planned that the area would be annexed with Pakistan, a letter was drafted in which Government of Pakistan was told that we wanted to annex the region with them. (The message was sent) in the form of letters and telegrams. In response to that letter, the provisional government remained in power for fifteen days, Sardar Aalam Khan came here as the representative of Pakistan Government and took over the charge from the president of the provisional government. After that the story of freedom struggle moves further. Hunza and Nigar annexed themselves with Pakistan in the end of November. On 14<sup>th</sup> August 1948 Baltistan won its freedom and was annexed with Pakistan. Then the present Gilgit-Baltistan which has six no seven

districts now, the annexation was completed in 1951 When Darail and Tangair were annexed with Pakistan. ”

On the other hand Government of Pakistan claims that it took the control of the region through Karachi accord from the Government of Azad Kashmir (Pakistani administered Kashmir). The political elite of the community vehemently contested this claim and said that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan do not accept the accord for the region was annexed with Pakistan through various bilateral agreements and the state of Kashmir was never a party to these agreements of annexation. Mr. Qasim Naseem rejecting the Karachi Accord said,

“Karachi Accord, people of Gilgit-Baltistan do not recognize it...when after the war of freedom we got the region free a provisional government was established there. For sixteen days it worked as a free state. Show me if Kashmir was ever involved in it (at that time). Then all the annexation accords signed with Pakistan Hunza did it, Nigar did it, Gilgit did that, derail did, Tangair did it, show me if Kashmir was ever there. (Did they say) we are annexing it for now but will reconsider when Kashmir issue is resolved.”

The accord is also rejected for the non representative nature of the parties that signed it. The political elite of the community claim that no representative of the region was among those who signed the accord and the ones who signed also had reservations about it.

“The region (the accord was about) was not represented there. three people signed it. First one is Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, president of Muslim Conference (a political party of Kashmir). He wrote a dissent note under the accord that his signature shows his consent for the clauses that are about Muslim conference. I have nothing to do with the clauses regarding Baltistan. Second is Sardar Ibrahim (former president of Azad Kashmir). As far as he is concerned there are a number of books of Kashmiri writers on record about him. Among there is Mohammad Saeed Asad who wrote in his book “Baltistan ki Aaeni Haysiyat” (Constitutional Status of Baltistan). There is M. R. Shahid. He is a journalist. He wrote a book “Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. It is clearly written in both the books that whenever the

journalist asked Sardar Ibrahim about Karachi Accord he said that he had not signed the accord and his fake signature were attached with the accord. Third one (who signed the Karachi Accord) was Mushtaq Gurmani he was minister without portfolio (in Government of Pakistan). Our annexation document was signed by Sikandar Mirza...Governor General and Karachi Accord was signed by a minister without portfolio. What is the legal status of the document (of Karachi Accord)?”

The political elite claimed that relationship of the regional political elite and civil body are stronger with Pakistani people and organizations and institutions than with Kashmiri's and they present it as an evidence of the regions political inclination,

“Sardar Atiq (Prominent political leader of Kashmir) visited us once otherwise nobody from Kashmir ever visited the region. It was a strange situation when we visited the region he was having a political office he and all the other political delegation who visited the region used to say that you are a part of Kashmir. I was in a member of a student organization than. When our delegation went to meet him he said that you had been knocking the wrong door (Pakistan) for last forty five forty six years. I remember I had a newspaper with me in which an advertisement by Azad Kashmir Public Service Commission had been published that certain posts were vacant in certain institution and only the domicile holders of Azad Kashmir could apply for the seats. I said if Gilgit-Baltistan is your part why only the Azad Kashmiri people are eligible and why the people of your part cannot apply for these posts. Then you have universities and good educational institution and we have a degree college only. Are the doors of your universities open for us? There they give admission to the domicile holders of Azad Kashmir only. On the other hand in Punjab University, Quaid-i-Azam University, Karachi University, Dera Ismail Khan University they have allocated seats for us. So how can you say we are knocking at the wrong door?... They are not in contact with the political leadership here. They are neither interested in the culture nor are interested in knowing the situation of the region.”

The political elite identified that the constitutional status of the region has been a hostage to the foreign policy of Pakistan especially the Kashmir dispute and the stance of Pakistani state on it. They do not identify the political actors responsible for depriving them of the constitutional status at par with other geographical regions of the state,

“We cannot say that certain people or government is responsible for our plight. The background (of the constitutional status of the region) is that when Pakistan was made Kashmir dispute became a problem. In 1948 there was a war there and India took the dispute to United Nations. After a debate India and Pakistan consented that local bodies of Kashmir should decide which country they wanted to join. It was decided at that time that Pakistan will withdraw its army and other forces (forces made up of tribal people of Pakistan). As India was holding the area it had to withdraw seventy percent of its forces and thirty percent had to remain in the region for maintaining law and order. Certain powerful people of Pakistan feared manipulation (of the plebiscite) in the presence of Indian army. So they presented the accord (Karachi Accord) in the United Nations Organization claiming that Gilgit-Baltistan is also a part of Kashmir so plebiscite should also be held in the region...as Kashmir is an important pillar of Pakistani foreign policy. This policy has been formed on these lines since Quaid-i-Azam said that Kashmir is the life line for Pakistan. All the governments, democratic or military, have focused Kashmir. So our national security has always been hindering and we cannot make it a clear cut province (of Pakistan). Because we have presented a demand and if we make it a province India will get a chance to say that it will keep the rest (of Kashmir)...it is the basic problem...we cannot blame a party or a specific group. It has been a part of our foreign policy.”

Though the political elite claimed that the constitutional status of the region is the most important political issue yet the electoral politic in the region has not focused upon it and the cultural identity of the region has not been translated into a political identity,

“I will say political identity was not focused (by the local

politicians)...it has been a big mistake...emotions, national security, or whatever had been the reason for taking the decision (of declaring Gilgit-Baltistan a part of Kashmir) we have been suffering through it for sixty two years now. Now we can say it was wrong. I would say it is the cause of almost all of our problems...but you will not find any movement for our rights. Demands are put forward when ever elections are held but after election everything is forgotten for five years...I would say our senior politicians will not be able to identify the real issue. Our core problem is constitutional but only a few people know about it...in 2004 we called an All Parties Conference in the press club here (on the issue). It was successful otherwise no political party or even Gilgit-Baltistan legislative assembly discussed it. Neither had they done their home work upon it. I agree that there is no thinking (about the issue) at political level.”

The elections for the local bodies of the region have remained non party based till 1994. The changes in Pakistani legislation introduced in 1994 initiated party based elections in the region. The political parties working in Pakistan also contest elections from the region though the local politics since now has revolved more around personalities and religious inclinations,

The elections till 1994 were non party based. As it is small region the people were nominated on and were voted for on the bases of their cast, clan or religious sect. prominent personalities were an important factor. Clerics also were important the vote bank of those supported by the clerics used to increase. The people who remained on good positions in past or who were related to or were close to the royal families, this factor was also important. After the reforms of 1994 party based votes were casted like the other parts of the country. Though the factors which played their from 1979 to 1994 are still important but now lection is party based.

Other than the culture of the region and structural requirement of the system lack of representation at national level is also claimed to have played its role in encouraging personality based politics. Fida Nashad a prominent politician for member of legislative council and former deputy chief executive of the region said,

Voting is personality based in the region because voting for political party does not suit them. We have no representation in National assembly or Senate. If we vote for Peoples party it will not increase a single seat of the party in National Assembly. If we oppose the party it will also not matter. So the people here vote for honest capable and experienced candidate, the one who they think understands political matters.

The prominent personalities of the region contest the elections for local bodies on agendas of infrastructural development and the politics for the constitutional rights of the region is not a major election issue,

“Before the assembly, the Gilgit-Baltistan council was mandated with approving the local developmental schemes. Council had all the powers to identify and approve the schemes that were funded by the annual budget given to the Northern Areas by the federal government...mostly the region is underdeveloped so the agenda was to end this lack of development. It was a tool the candidates had. They used to give hundreds of thousand rupees for school electricity and roads and the people used to vote for them looking at the development they made in the constituency.”

In 1999 the role of the council was changed from development to legislation and development was handed over to lower level bodies of the region. The move was resisted by the local politicians fearing that they would loose political control and popularity,

After 1999 they were given the powers to legislate and development was taken back. They protested against it a lot...they said people vote for us in the name of the development. Law making was something new for them, secondly most of the subject they were handed over (for law making) were about taxation. They knew if they would legislate it would harm them...we can say that 50% of the times they (the politicians) use, especially the major parties Muslim League and PPP, the reforms in political process and judiciary etc for asking for votes while 50% of the times development is still used as a tool.

The political elite also identified that the voting trends in the region are changing and there is a gradual increase in party vote. Commenting upon the voting trends in the region the former deputy Chief executive said,

Yes it will change. They have given a setup that is closer to provinces. If a complete provincial setup is introduced it (the trend) will change. There are various political parties and I have observed that the graph of religious parties is very low. There is no candidate of religious parties in many constituencies. Peoples Party and Muslim League are contesting the elections on level grounds.

Commenting upon the role of religious clerics in politics the political elite identified that they had a prominent role in regional politics and were actively involved in it but the role is changing and religious elite has taken a back seat. The political elite described various reasons for the changing roles fear of increasing sectarian tension in the region was claimed to be a reason of changing role of clerics in politics,

In Past religious parties contested the elections with full fervor. It increased the sectarian tensions here. The people and the clerics in Baltistan are peaceful. That's why people want that election should be contested from the platform of national political parties and not from religious parties.

Intra-community tensions were also claimed to have played an important role in declining participation of clerics in politics, Qasim Naseem, a prominent political commentator discussing the only party based election contested by the clerics from the platform of a religious party said,

in past (when elected representatives were not there) they had a consultative role. Government used to consult our clerics and Rajas....so the clerics kept themselves in as an alternative leadership. But in 1994 the (first) party based elections of assembly council were contested with fervor by a religious party, Tehrik e Nifaz e Fiaqh e Jafira, along with other political parties. They fully used the mosques and religious pedestal in this election. The religious slogans were used in a manner that I would say that people were made to vote (for the religious party) by force though it is a democratic right that has to be used with free will. Religious values were brought in and the vote

was made the standard for (going to) hell or heavens. We can say that the clerics used their position in all the right and wrong ways. Negative effects of this election were clearly seen. The most important side effect of the election was that though their (religious party's) candidates won the election yet the others independent candidates, candidates from PPP and Muslim League also belonged to the same community, were from the same region, from what ever party they were they used to respect the clerics. So it was obvious that the candidates from PPP and Muslim League separated themselves (from the clerics). It created tension and disturbance in the community. then the clerics thought that they had taken a wrong decision and it created problems in the society. Now they try not to get involved directly.

The clerics commenting upon their refraining from direct involvement in electoral politics from the platform of a religious party in spite of the belief that religion is inseparable from politics said that not taking part in elections from the platform of a religious party is a considered political decision. Some of them identified that they had no distinctly different plan after winning the election in 1994 and it made them reconsider the decision.

A political commentator Qasim Nasim said that the rights for the region were demanded on the basis of religious cum sectarian identity of the people from Baltistan yet the trend has changed and now the cultural identity of the region is presented as the basis of the political demands i.e. constitutional status at par with other federating units of the country.

The religious dimension has there in past unfortunately a constitutional problem was raised on sectarian basis. The Shiite community used to demand five provinces here while the Sunni community used to demand annexing the region with Kashmir or with Hazara and Kohistan for making it a province. It was there in the past but now thanks God that things have changed. People think that these demands create problems instead of solving them. Gilgit-Baltistan has its own identity and geography and people keep the ground realities before putting their demands forward.

The political demands emerging from the perceived or real status as discriminated community in Pakistan and the strong bonding of the community have shaped the present role of the religious community. The failure in achieving the rights of the community while contesting for them as a religious group has pushed the elite to take a step back loosing the leadership to present political elite which though is Shiite in their beliefs yet does not lead the community as religious one and presents the political demands as the demands of a community with distinct culture living in a distinct geographical unit.

The other important factor that pushed the religious elite to its present indirect role was the strong bonding among the community. The local elections in 1994 were contested by the religious elite from the platform of a religious party, Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Fiqah-e-Jafria. These elections divided the community and weakened the control of the religious elite. The religious elite by contesting the election from a religious platform not only divided the community but also created a strong opposition, consisting of influential individuals of the community, for themselves in the community.

The clerics which make the religious elite of the community describe their indirect participation i.e, either participation as individual or from non-religious parties, in the electoral politics as a political strategy. The students from the madrassahs describe this indirect role of religious elite in terms of prejudice against the community in the country though they believe that politics and the religion should not be separated. Political elite says that the religious leaders avoided direct participation in the electoral politics to avoid sectarian confrontations in the region. The clerics have been, for at least a decade now, either taking part in election from main stream parties with no apparent religious agendas or restricting themselves to the role of a preacher and ask people to vote for honest and right candidates.

Pakistan, the state ruling the area, for almost sixty year has brought changes to the local government system bring more and more autonomy to the area and making the local government more and more representative of the people. These changes have been identified by the political elite of the region though the demand of constitutional status at par with other federating unit of the country has remained there,

After the annexation, as there was no access to the region, Frontier

Crimes Regulation (F.C.R) was implemented there. As you know with F.C.R. there was not freedom of speech or that of association till 1974. The Mr. Bhutto visited the region and introduced reforms. He abolished the F.C.R. and the feudal system, an oppressive system. then he established courts for the first time here. Before that one person was the head of police and the courts. We could not appeal against his powers or challenge him any where. After 1974 districts were made and reforms were introduced there...the Legal Framework Order and Local Government Orders were implemented and the system of local bodies was introduced. Though our Northern Areas Council was established in 1970 but before this (local Government Order) the members were nominated and not elected. Elections started in 1979. From 1979 to 1994 non party based elections were held. In 1994 the reforms were introduced by Benazir Government and the first party based elections were held...Since 1994 the Northern Areas Legal Framework Order (L.F.O.) was there. Gilgit-Baltistan is still no where in the constitutional framework of Pakistan. Neither it has been (declared as a part of Pakistan) in the 1973 constitution of Pakistan nor it is (declared) as a part of Azad Kashmir (Pakistani administered area of disputed territory of Kashmir). In 1999, it was the era of Mian Nawaz Sharif, L.F.O. was amended and a legislative council was made. Then Came General Musharaf in 2000 he gave the office of speaker to our legislative council. Before this (amendment) the (Pakistani) Minister of Kashmir used to chair the session of the council as he was the chairman. The in 2003 the office of deputy speaker was introduced. In 2007 the name of L.F.O. was changed to Northern Areas Good Governance Order...and our legislative council was declared as legislative assembly...besides this the basic rights given in (the constitution of) Pakistan were replicated there in the Good Governance Order and the courts were some what upgraded. Now a supreme appellate court has been established. Chief courts had two members and a chairman who has been re-designated as chief justice. So it is the current package known as Gilgit-Baltistan empowerment and Good Governance order. For the first time office of Chief Minister has been introduced. Who will have ministers in place of formerly taken advisors. Then a new forum known as Gilgit-

Baltistan Forum has been introduced. There will be fifteen members and the chief minister will head it. Six members will be nominated by the federal capital while six will be taken from Gilgit-Baltistan. A Gilgit-Baltistan consolidated fund has been established. We will have an election commissioner for the first time. Before this an officer with the rank of Assistant commissioner (Officer of junior level in Pakistani establishment) was the election commissioner here. For the first time they have sent him from Pakistani election commission. So these are the basic feature of (political) development since freedom.

Though local autonomy has been gradually been granted yet the people of the region are not represented at all on higher levels i.e. in Pakistani legislative bodies at national level where they can strive for the equal constitutional status and other political rights. The political elite identified that the people from the area have up till now ignored their rights and no movement for the rights of the people from Gilgit-Baltistan was launched.

The politicians see bureaucracy and the foreign policy as hurdles in changing of constitutional status of the region. They lament the exploitation of the resources of the region by the bureaucracy and the politicians of Pakistan who appoint these bureaucrats. They propose appointment of local people at key bureaucratic posts and demand representation in the national legislature.

The bureaucracy here considers itself as the rulers. Leave the common people aside they do not give the importance to their representatives as they do in other parts of the country. The representatives from here are elected the same way they are elected in other parts of the country. The (Federal) government sends some one from Punjab, Frontier (now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Sind, Baluchistan, as Minister to rule us. He has got all the powers. He brings deputy commissioner (highest administrative official of a district) Inspector General (Senior Most police official of region) and bureaucracy of his own choice. They rule Gilgit-Baltistan for their own benefit.

The politicians also claimed that the legislative rights given to the local assembly are also restricted by the powers of the federal minister that looks after the region on

behalf of Federal Government. They said that no law enacted by the local legislative assembly could be implemented without the ascent of the minister. They identified that not assenting to the laws passed by the local assembly is almost a trend in the federal ministers.

Another important aspect of the national identity of Gilgit-Baltistan is the absence of the enemy. This lack of enemy has its historical roots. The region at the time of partition was being ruled by the Dograh Raja of Kashmir. According to the political elite the people from the area fought and drove the forces of the state out of the areas to annex the region with Pakistan. The Dograh Raja of Kashmir annexed the Kashmir state with India and the state of Kashmir as Dorga run princely state lost its existence. With this annexure the Balti community lost their most important political other in the division saga of subcontinent.

The political elite also recognized that the constitutional status of the region has remained hostage to the foreign policy of Pakistan particularly the conflict between Pakistan and the neighboring country India on the disputed area of Jammu and Kashmir yet they remain silent about the actors responsible for the situation. This silence is presented as the love of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan for Pakistani state.

Acceptance and popularity of Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, is also an important part of the national identity in Gilgit-Baltistan. Urdu is a language spoken in the far flung areas of the region. Urdu poetry is one of the passions of urban youth. Literary sitting where poetry is read and new works are presented are held at regular basis in the cities. A number of organizations that promote Urdu based literary activities are present in the cities. The acceptance of Urdu is presented as the evidence of the love of Balti community for Pakistan by the cultural elite of the region though a sublime pain of losing the cultural space to Urdu lurks some where beneath the words.

The relationship that exists is between the community and the state and not between the individual and the state. This history of the relationship between the state and the community has played an important role in forming the identity of people from Gilgit-Baltistan as Pakistani.

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## **Gender Differences in Self-handicapping: The Role of Self-esteem and Fear of Negative Evaluation**

### **Abstract**

*The subject of self-handicapping is highly significant issue particularly in the area of educational psychology because it serves to identify and anticipate negative behaviors of students. The current study examined the role of self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation in relation to gender differences in self-handicapping. 219 postgraduate university students; 102 males and 117 females with age range of 20-26 years old provided data on self-handicapping, self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation. Analysis of gender differences showed that male reported high scores on self-handicapping, self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation. Employing the correlation and Regression analysis, results indicated the positive relationship of self-handicapping with self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation. Computing Three-way ANOVA, findings demonstrated the main effects of gender, self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation on self-handicapping. Results pertaining to gender differences combined with self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation further suggested the significant interaction effects on self-handicapping. The results implied that male students having high self-esteem and with higher fear of negative evaluation were more likely to be self-handicapped than female students with low self-esteem and fear of to negatively evaluated.*

**Key words:** *Fear of failure, Gender, Self-handicapping, Self-esteem, University students*

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### **Sarwat Sultan**

Department of Applied Psychology  
Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan

### **Frasat Kanwal**

Department of Applied Psychology  
Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan

## INTRODUCTION

When people come to this believe that they may fail in a particular task, they do start to produce hurdles and justifications to explain their failures. This concept is bedded as self-handicapping. Several situations can be evidenced to this concept from daily routine of one's life. For instance, if individuals expect their poor performance on tasks, they make causes like attending parties and spending time in other activities so that they could shift the actual cause from themselves in case of real failure (Ntoumanis, Taylor, & Standage, 2010).

Self-handicapping refers to the process where people refrain from attempts when anticipate a failure in the result of tasks. In this way they also protect their self-esteem (Kolditz & Arkin, 1982). Jones and Berglas first speculated the term self-handicapping, and explained self-handicapping as a process of hurdles arrogated by the people in expectation of failing task (Feick, & Rhodewalt, 1997). People do self-handicap just in the situation when believe they will fail. For instance, A student when expect that his performance will be bad in exam, then he/she might establish a reason for his/her potential failure by explaining his/her fellows that he/she was not well in the morning of the exam.

Self-handicapping is a very common behavior amongst people across the multi fields. In educational and organizational field, students and employees take part in self-handicapping to keep away them from feeling sorry and low if they are not doing best in classroom and in company respectively. Educational psychologists can understand the students' behaviors by examining what self-handicapping is and why students do it, and also can help students in knowing their problems in positive way (Elliot, & Church, 2003).

People move away from trials and produce abstractions in the way to achievements, and save feelings of self-images of abilities and competence. Two methods better explain the self-handicapping; behavioral and claimed self-handicaps. In behavioral handicapping, people in actually creates hurdles and problems to success (Leary, & Shepperd, 1986) such as drugs taking (Bordini, Tucker, Vuchinich, & Rudd, 1986), the choice of unrealistic tasks (Greenberg, 1985), and resistance to exercise efforts (Harris, & Snyder, 1986). In this method people make a goal more difficult for themselves in fear of not successfully attaining that goal. They explain the cause of failure in the obstacles rather than in their competencies. In claimed self-

handicapping, people come up with justifications for their potential failures, and complain for the causes of their failures. People simply report about an existence of hurdle such as by claiming that they were ill, or were very nervous (Smith, Snyder, & Handelsman, 1982).

The underlying causes for the use of self-handicapping are different among people (Rhodewalt, 1990). People's propensity to engage in self-handicapping is mainly to protect one's self-esteem. Self-handicapping can be considered as a mean of maintaining self-esteem, self-enhancement, and impression management. Empirical studies have focused on the outcomes of self-handicapping and have postulated that self-handicapping assist in keeping positive mood (Zuckerman, & Tsai, 2005), even after bad performance and failure (Drexler, Ahrens, Anthony; & Haaga, 1995). Therefore, self-handicapping can process the regulation of feelings in the course of preserving one's self-esteem (Garcia, 1995). Fear of negative evaluation which is more sensitive to dishonor and embarrassment towards failure (McGregor, & Elliot, 2005) prompts self-handicapping behavior (Chen, Chen, Lin, Kee, & Shui, 2009; Elliot, & Church, 2003; Ntoumanis, Taylor, & Standage, 2010).

Previous researches have explored a number of individual differences that determine self-handicapping. Factors like problems with one's self-esteem (Harris & Snyder, 1986), and fear of negative evaluation (Berglas & Jones, 1978) promote this behavior in individual when experience less competent of their ability to get success. Empirical studies have also identified a gender difference in this behavior. Men have been found higher in self-handicapping than women. Arkin and Oleson (1998) have reported that self-handicapping is more likely to be used by males and female alike, but are differ in use of behavioral self-handicapping. There are also some researches that provided no differences in the behavior of self-handicapping employed by both males and females (Rhodewalt & Hill, 1995), and some have revealed that females are more self-handicap than males (Feick, & Rhodewalt, 1997). A large number of researches have postulated that self-handicapping is more likely to be used by males than females (Harris & Snyder, 1986; Hirt, Deppe, & Gordon, 1991; McCrea, Hirt, 2001).

However, the explanation for gender differences is subtle yet (Arkin & Oleson, 1998; Rhodewalt, 1990). In Pakistan, men and women use self-handicapping and therefore, various explanations for these gender differences have been described repeatedly in the past, aiming at knowing the assumption that males are more

engaged in self-handicapping than females. One reason might be considered that women experience less threatened when expect potential failure (Harris, Snyder, Higgins, & Schrag, 1986). In other words women do not use self-handicapping even when are desired to show publically their abilities (Rhodewalt, 1990). Accord to this notion, women in Pakistan also is less likely to experience self-handicapping.

A second possible justification roots in the notion that men are more likely to have higher self-esteem than do women (Feingold, 1994; Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999). Individuals with high self-esteem may involve in behavioral self-handicapping. However, both individuals who are high or low in self-esteem also demonstrate the increased self-handicapping behavior (McCrea & Hirt, 2001; Tice, 1991). A third reason lie in the fact that women do not give much importance to academics domain, thus don't do as behaviorally self-handicap (Swim & Sanna, 1996). However, research to date has examined that men are more behaviorally handicap than women (Kimble, Funk, & DaPolito, 1990), and this is the reason that women use claimed handicapping even in the academic domain (Hirt et al., 1991; Rhodewalt, 1990).

Taking a considerable account in the explanation of self-handicapping, the present research looked into the factors that ascertain self-handicapping in academic domain. Although a great number of researches has demonstrated the explanations for self-handicapping, but still to date, there is a paucity of empirical proves to interpret these justifications. Therefore, the main objective of this article is to provide an evidence for intriguing gender difference in self-handicapping, and to rule out the influence of two individual differences out of several factors in terms of self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

A sample of 219 bilingual postgraduate students studying in semester system from Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan participated voluntarily in this study. The mean age of participants was 22.57(3.72) with a range of 20-26 years. Sample size was determined using Raosoft online sample size calculator. All the participants were approached at the campus from the three departments of faculty of social sciences; psychology, sociology, and philosophy using convenience sampling

technique. Among them 102 were male and 117 were female; 137 were urban and 82 students were rural.

**Measures**

The following original measures were used to achieve the objectives of present study.

**Self-Handicapping Scale (SHS)**

Self-Handicapping Scale is designed to identify people likely to self-handicap and engage in other excuse-making behavior. The scale used in this study is adapted by Martin (1998) from the original scale of Midgley et al., (1996). Adapted version has 11 items that are responded to using a 7-point Likert-type rating scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree). High scores on items reveal greater tendency towards self-handicapping. Alpha reliability coefficient is .92.

**Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RES)**

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE; Rosenberg 1965) is a 10-item scale to measure global self-esteem. Items were designed on Gutman scale presented with four response choices indicated as strongly agree to strongly disagree. The higher scores show the higher level of self-esteem.

It is a highly reliable measure with an alpha coefficient of 0.85.

**Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE)**

Fear of negative evaluation was measure using the subscale of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). It is a 33-item self-reported questionnaire (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Subscale of fear of negative evaluation comprises of eight items. It is a 5-point scale ranging from *strongly agree* (scale point 1) to *strongly disagree* (scale point 5) the middle point being neutral (scale point 3). To obtain a total score, two items are reverse scored. Higher scores show the higher level of fear of negative evaluation. The complete version of FLCAS has the split-half reliability of 0.88.

**Procedure**

The participants in their classrooms were given a set of questionnaires measuring

their self-handicapping, level of self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation along with a demographic variable sheet. The participation of the students was entirely voluntarily after obtaining their consent to participate. They were instructed how to fill the questionnaires, and were assured about the confidentiality of their responses. They were requested to answer every item as truly as they could. They were also allowed to ask questions in case of any ambiguity in the questionnaire items. The data was then statistically analyzed using SPSS-17.

## RESULTS

To compare the gender differences in all study variables, independent sample t-test was computed (1). To analyze the objectives, zero-order correlation was measured to see the relationship among variables (Table 2). Multiple regression analysis was done by using the standard or simultaneous regression analyses to check the dependency of self-handicapping upon self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation (Table 3). The effect of gender along with two independent variables of self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation was also computed through three-way ANOVA using 2(Gender; male & female)  $\times$  2(Self-esteem; low & high)  $\times$  2(Fear of negative evaluation; low & high) (Table 4).

**Table 1:** Means, Standard Deviations and *t*-values for the Scores of Self-handicapping, Self-esteem, and Fear of Negative Evaluation

Scales	Male Students (N=102)		Female Students (N=117)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Self-handicapping	41.33	9.41	35.16	10.02	2.34	0.01*
Self-esteem	32.76	7.66	29.61	6.01	-1.99	0.04*
Fear of negative evaluation	98.47	12.28	79.69	13.07	3.18	0.00**

df. = 217, \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

**Table 2:** *Descriptive Data and Correlation Matrix for the Scores of Self-handicapping, Self-esteem, and Fear of Negative Evaluation*

	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
1. Self-Handicapping	52.54	4.61	-	.61*	.73***
2. Self-Esteem	30.01	3.71		-	-.63**
3. Fear of Negative Evaluation	109.02	14.3			-

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$

Table 2 shows the mean, SD, and correlations for the scores of self-handicapping, self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation. Results indicate that self-handicapping is significantly positively related with self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation. Findings further reveal a negative relationship between self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation.

**Table 3:** *Standard Regression Model showing impact of Self-esteem and Fear of negative evaluation on Behavior of Self-handicapping*

Predictors	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	5243.50	182.56		2.15	.032
Self-esteem	.511	.037	.751	3.63	.042*
Fear of Negative Evaluation	.712	.043	.601	4.82	.000***

$R^2 = 0.71$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.44$ , ( $F(2, 216) = 33.27$ ,  $p < 0.001$ )

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$

The value of  $R^2 = 0.71$  presented in Table 3 indicates that dependent variable of self-handicapping is 71% explained by both independent variables of self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation. A significant  $F$ -value for the standard regression model ( $F(2, 216) = 33.27$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) also demonstrate that model predicts the outcome variable significantly well. Examination of  $t$ -values also is indicating that independent variables are significantly contributing in the prediction of dependent variable.

**Table 4:** Three-way ANOVA of Participants' 2(Gender; male & female)  $\times$  2(self-esteem; low & high)  $\times$  2(fear of negative evaluation; low & high) for their Scores on Self-handicapping behavior

Source Main Effect	F	p	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power
Gender	14.12	.000	.863	.731
Self-esteem	8.579	.022	.493	.463
Fear of Negative Evaluation	11.39	.046	.644	.594
	5.376	.611	.018	.107
Interaction				
Gender * Self-esteem	21.83	.000	.672	.747
Gender * Negative Evaluation	7.439	.016	.584	.479
Self-esteem * Negative Evaluation	4.271	.026	.369	.252
Gender * Self-esteem* Negative Evaluation				

Results in Table 4 are showing the main and interaction effects of gender, self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation. Examining the eta, observed and F-values, it is demonstrated that three variables are significant predictors of self-handicapping when are entered independently in the model of analyses. Interaction effect of all three variables is also significant except one of them when gender is combined with self-esteem.

## DISCUSSION

In this study, a review of the literature related to self-handicapping aroused the need of exploring the gender differences in self-handicapping in relation with the role of individual's self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation. Results indicated the significant gender differences in terms of self-handicapping, self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation. Male students were found with higher self-handicapping, self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation as compared to female students (Table 1). Thus it was assumed that both individual factors might serve as the root cause of these gender differences. Findings suggested that self-handicapping is significantly positively correlated with self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation (Table 2).

These findings implies that when individuals experience high level of self-esteem and high level of fear to be negatively evaluated, are more likely to self-handicap as well.

Several previous researches are in consistent with the present findings. Rhodewalt and Fairfield (1991) reported that usually individual tend to handicapping just for the sake of their high self-esteem because in this way they can reduce the burden of expected failure. In a further study, Martin Seligman and colleagues also provided the evidences for how self-esteem remains intact when participants do self-handicapping. They explained in their experimental findings that people due to their high self-esteem engaged in self-handicapping, and this also create a positive effect on participants. The reason might be the way they attributed their failure to an external factor, thus they remained safe from shame as they did not internalize the failure.

In spite of two distinctive forms of self-handicapping, it is vital to look into the gender differences in self-handicapping. Hirt, Deppe, and Gordon (1991) examined the students' preferences for both types of self-handicapping prior to their exams they reported that both gender were found engaged in claimed self-handicapping, but behavior handicapping was found in men only. Though the present study has not used these two types of handicapping but here it is considerable to understand the gender differences. Many investigations into the tendency of self-handicapping have demonstrated the findings that are in line with the findings of present study.

Present study is also in line with other many researches in presenting the findings that men do more self-handicapping as compared to women. Such as Hirt et al., (1991) have found that men are more likely to be self-handicapped than women. Therefore, the overall direction of findings strongly proposed that women generally do not use self-handicapping. Rhodewalt (1990) also in the review of literature posited and admitted that this gender difference is the most popular and consistent finding in the literature of self-handicapping.

It was also found in the present study that behavior of self-handicapping is regressed upon self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation. Results in Table 3 showed that level of self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation are the significant positive predictors of self-handicapping among students. These findings suggested that students having high level of self-esteem and having greater fear for their negative

evaluation are more prone to apt self-handicapping. These findings are also in tune with the findings of Elliot & McGregor (2001) who reported that when students have fears that they might be failed in a given task, and don't have confidence in their abilities, then set performance goals in the classroom which in turn resulted into adopting the self-handicapping.

Rhodewalt & Vohs (2005) also described that a student with the strong belief of not having abilities, may take his exams or class test with a non-serious attitude, and thus try to avoid hard work due to the expected failure. To avoid the embarrassment of being unsuccessful, the student goes wrong to enough preparation for his exam. In this way he may not get the permanent ease, but he may depict his uncertain abilities that ultimately result in greater self-handicapping.

When data was subjected to the three-way analyses to see the main and interaction effects of gender, self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation on self-handicapping, the findings revealed the significant effects of gender, self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation. However the results for interaction of variables showed that gender was insignificant when was grouped with self-esteem, but was significant when was interacted with fear of negative evaluation. It means there is no difference in men and women with different levels of self-esteem in self-handicapping. Furthermore, the interaction of self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation was found significant. The overall findings suggested the significant main and interaction effects of all three variables that is adequate to state that self-handicapping is significantly positively explained by gender, self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation.

#### **LIMITATIONS & SUGGESTIONS**

Over all findings presented that self-handicapping behavior facilitates people to externalize failures by allowing justifications for failings. The present study have explored the role of only two variables of self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation, so the more avenues are opened to research out in future. Study has discussed the findings based on data collected only from university students, therefore these findings cannot be generalized to the students of other educational set up such as schools or colleges where the academic environment could be different from that of universities. A comparison of this kind would be a more significant addition in the literature of self-handicapping.

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## Gender Differences in the Salient Identities of Adolescents

### Abstract

*The study examined gender differences in the salient identities of adolescents. It was expected that adolescent boys will score high on collective, social and personal identity whereas adolescent girls would score high on relational and physical identity. A purposive convenient sample of 100 adolescents with a distribution of 50 boys and 50 girls with an age range of 13-16years was drawn from two private schools. Aspect of salient identity questionnaire (Cheek, Smith & Tropp, 2002) was administered to measure the personal, social, collective and relational identities and figure rating scale (Stunkard, 1983) was used to investigate physical identity of adolescents. MANOVA was used to see the effect of adolescents' gender on salient identities. Results indicated significant effect of gender on salient identities of adolescents. Girls significantly scored higher on relational identity whereas boys significantly scored higher on collective identity and were also significantly dissatisfied with their physical identity. Results also indicated that social identity and personal identity is equally important for both adolescent boys and girls. This study has important implications for developmental psychologists, educationists, parents and adolescents.*

**Keywords:** Gender, Salient, Identity, Adolescents.

### INTRODUCTION

Human beings spend most of their time in knowing themselves. Identity formation is

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**Ms. Noor-ul-Ain**

GC University, Lahore

**Dr. Syeda Salma Hasan**

Assistant Professor

Department of Psychology, GC University, Lahore.

the continuous process of life which goes from birth to death. It neither begins nor ends in adolescence (Santrock, 2002). Adolescence is an exciting period of life and involves the first significant transformation of the individuals' sense of self at a time when they are intellectually able to understand the reason of vital changes (Steinberg, 1996). In adolescence, identity specially related to physical, social, cognitive, development advance to the point at which they can synthesize their childhood identity (Santrock, 2002). Erikson (1968) considers adolescence as a central period to search for identity as well as to face the crisis in this regard. He considered identity as a "psychological moratorium" "a gap between the security of childhood and autonomy of adulthood" (as cited in Santrock, 2002, p.382).

Identity is the general picture that one has about oneself (Santrock, 2002). According to Tajfel (1974), identity is all about the roles and group categories which are personally meaningful to the individuals. According to social psychologist, Deaux (1993) each one of us have "packages" of our own identity, in terms of both the categories that are important to us and the meaning that we attach to others.

An individual defines himself or herself in different ways. Identity information involves how we process information about society and how we remember and evaluate this information about others and ourselves. Our self-schemas include not only the schemas of our current self but also the possible selves (Myers, 1996). From sociological perspective, it involves all the meanings that are related to oneself based on gender identification. In turn, these meanings help to engage in gender related behavior (Burke, 1980) and also influence other aspects of identity. Identity is the self-portrait composed of many components such as physical, personal, social and relational and collective identities.

A Salient identity of adolescents' is physical identity as they experience many physical changes in this developmental phase of life. It deals with person's own body image. Females are more conscious and concerned about their body figure than boys (Pliner, Chaiken, & Flett, 1990). Specifically, the Western society emphasizes slim body for women; average and muscular body type for men is considered as an "ideal" (Sheffield, Tse, & Soffrnoff, 2005). Obesity is a stigma for teenage girls rather than for boys. It has been observed that obese girls receive more peer rejection. Similarly, Phan and Tylka (2006) found that Asian women are susceptible to pressure from their community to reach thin ideal; since these women see their bodies in the light of community standards for ideal figure, and if they do not reach

ideal body shape, they are afraid that this would negatively affect their relationship with their loved ones. However, since these socially endorsed ideals, especially for women, are so difficult if not impossible to achieve. When they do not achieve western ideal of beauty, they might develop dissatisfaction with their bodies (Cash, 2002). On the other hand Shepeliak (2006) found that women are more satisfied with their upper torso than men. Regarding the ideal body image of men Fallon and Rozin (1985) indicated slight discrepancy between their current and ideal body image. Men prefer to have larger and broader body shape.

Defining “Who I am” in terms of personal attributes is a personal identity. It defines an individual in terms of personal traits such as optimistic, pessimistic, friendly, hostile, and polite and so on. It is the personal identity which makes us unique individuals. According to Bem sex role inventory (1974), the traits of males are aggressive, ambitious, analytic, athletics, assertive, competitive, dominant, self-reliant and so on whereas traits of females are affectionate, cheerful, loyal, sympathetic, gentle, sensitive, warm to the needs of others (Limpman-Bluman, 1988., Rosener, 1990). A person with a masculine identity is expected to behave in a more domineering, competing, and an independent way. It is not the behavior which is important but the meanings and value to those behaviors (Ashmore, Del Boca, & Wholers, 1986).

Human beings also highly value their Social identity the “We” aspect of self-concept. It is the part of the answer to “who am I?” that comes from our group membership, for instance, our race, religion, nationality, caste, academic major and so forth. It is the circle that includes “us” and excludes “them”. We value our own groups and this enhances our social selves (Tajfel,1981). Self-concept is a major focus of social psychologists because it helps to organize our social behavior. Studies indicate that not only genetics of an individual helps to develop a unique personality and self-concept, but social experiences also play an important role in reshaping of an identity. Through social identity we can explore the roles we play, the social identities we form, the comparison we make with others, our success and failures, the surrounding culture and how other people judge us (Myers, 1996). Social identity has different types; however, these identities are interrelated and often take the characteristics of each other. Brewer and Gardner (1996) postulated two different forms of social identity, i.e., collective identity and relational identity.

‘Collectivistic identity’ involves depersonalized relationship with others by virtue of

common membership in a symbolic group. Collective identities do not require interpersonal knowledge or interaction but rely on shared symbols and cognitive representations of the group as a unit of personal relationship within the group for instance Muslims, Asians, etc (Etzioni, 1968; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). In contrast, 'relational identity' is personalized; incorporated dyadic relationship between self and closer one's. Women are more likely to share rewards when they interact with others than men and they may sacrifice themselves in order to help others (Leventhal & Anderson, 1970; Major & Deaux, 1982).

Previous literature regarding social self has indicated that men are more social than women. Maddux and Brewer (2005) reported that women are more "relationally interdependent" whereas men are more "Collectively interdependent" and these differences in self definition are associated with gender differences in motivation, emotions, cognitions, and social decision making. Gilligan (1990) was one of the psychologists who views that women and girls define themselves as responsible and caring for others and themselves. Kashmia and Hardie (2000) study found that women are higher on relational identity than men. On the other hand Sandu and Tung (2006) does not support the extensive previous literature that Indian girls identity is affected by their husband's and family.

A lot of research work has been done in west on physical, personal, social, collective and relational identities of adolescents and there is a need to address the gender differences in salient identities of adolescents with reference to Pakistani culture. Keeping in view the previous literature the following hypotheses were formulated.

### **Hypotheses**

1. Adolescent girls would be more conscious about their physical identity than adolescent boys.
2. Adolescent boys would score high on collective identity, social identity and personal identity than adolescent girls.
3. Adolescent girls would score high on relational identity than adolescent boys.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Sample**

Sample of the study consisted of 100 adolescents with an equal distribution

of boys and girls; age range of adolescents was 13-16 years. These adolescents were selected from two different educational institutions.

**Table 1:**

Demographic characteristics of girls n= 50 and boys n=50

Variables	Boys	Girls
<b>Age</b>		
13 years	9 (18%)	18(36%)
14 years	24 (48%)	24 (48%)
15 years	12 (24%)	7 (14%)
16 years	5 (10%)	1 (2%)
<b>Grade</b>		
IX	33 (66%)	32 (64%)
X	17 (34%)	18 (36%)
<b>Family System</b>		
Nuclear	19 (38%)	29 (58%)
Joint	27 (54%)	17 (34%)
Single	4 (8%)	4 (8%)

**Instruments:**

1. *Aspects of Salient Identity Questionnaire* (AIQ IV; Cheek, Smith, & Tropp, 2002). It was used for measuring different salient identities of adolescents. It consisted of 45 items. AIQ-IV subscales measuring personal, social, relational, and collective identity. Personal identity subscale includes the items such as “My personal goals and hopes for the future”, “My feeling of being a unique person being

distinct from others". Social identity subscale consists of items such as "My reputation what others think of me" "the ways the other people react to what I say and do". Relational identity subscale includes items for instance "having close bond with others" "being a good friend to those I really care about" and collective identity includes items such as "My religion", "Being a part of many generations of my family", and "My feeling of belonging to my community". Higher the score the more salient the identity on these subscales. The responses were elicited on 5-point Likert scale. Coefficient alpha reliability of the scale was .78. Test retest reliability with three-week interval was .74.

2. *Figure Rating Scale* (Stunkard, 1983). It was used for measuring physical identity. It consists of nine figures of male and females. Subjects selected the figure, which was closely related of their own current figure. The scale also indicated the level of dissatisfaction with their current figure scale ranging from 1 to 9, with 1 being the thinnest body type and 9 being the largest, most obese type. Body dissatisfaction was calculated by subtracting ideal body figure from current body figure.

### **Pilot Study**

Pilot study was conducted on 10 adolescents (5 boys and 5 girls) to identify the difficult items in a questionnaire and total time taken by the subjects for the completion of questionnaire.

### **Procedure**

Prior to data collection permission was taken from the institutions. The data was collected from 50 girls and 50 boys from two different institutions. Purposive convenient sampling technique was used for drawing the sample. Standardized scales measuring different dimensions of identities were administered. The meanings of items were also explained to the respondents. Scoring was done with the help of scoring key. Independent group design was followed in this study. The participants cooperated well in this study.

### **Statistical analysis**

- Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used for measuring the effect of gender on the salience of identities.

- Graphic representation indicating means of salient identities of adolescent girls and boys

**RESULTS**

**Figure 1.1**

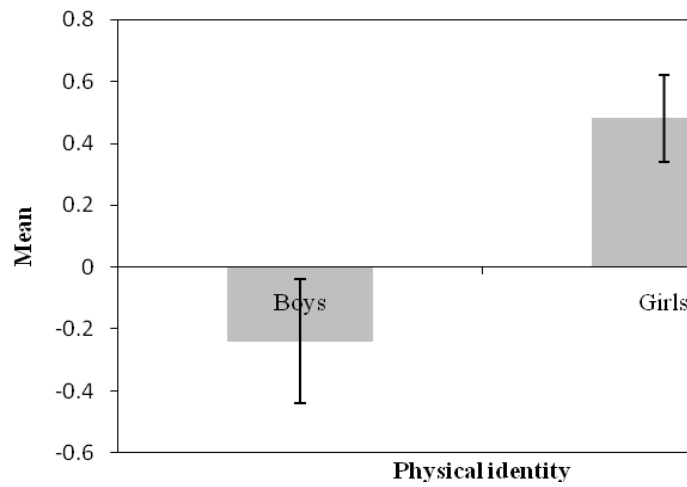


Figure shows gender differences in terms of satisfaction with figure

**Figure 1.2**

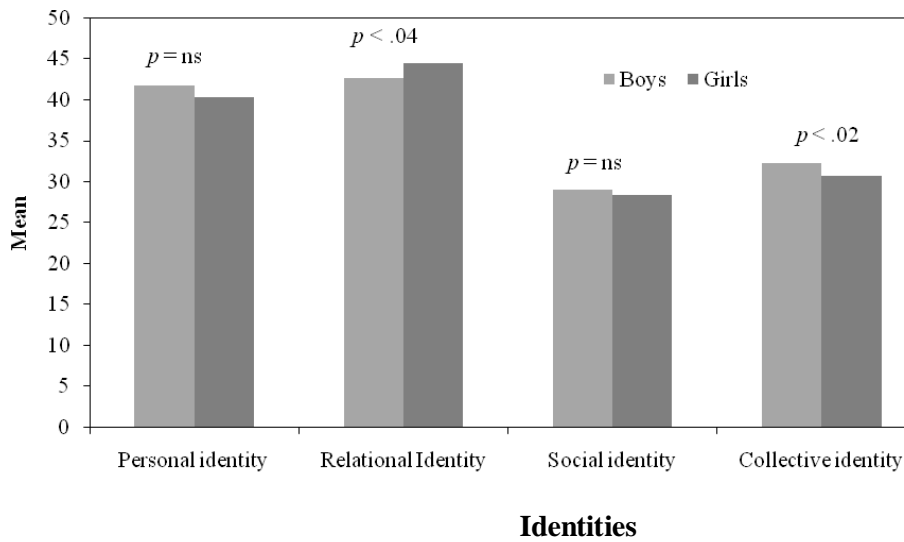


Figure shows gender differences in terms of different dimensions of identity

**Table 2**

Variables	Groups	N	M	SD	F(1,98)	p	CI 95%	
							LL-UL	n <sup>2</sup>
<b>Physical Identity</b>	Boys	50	-.2400	1.42	8.605	.004**	-.124-.364	.081
	Girls	50	.4800	.99				
<b>Personal Identity</b>	Boys	50	41.66	4.23	2.326	.130 <sup>ns</sup>	40.02-41.87	.023
	Girls	50	40.24	5.04				
<b>Social Identity</b>	Boys	50	28.92	3.33	.702	.404 <sup>ns</sup>	27.91-29.33	.007
	Girls	50	28.32	3.81				
<b>Relational Identity</b>	Boys	50	42.66	4.15	4.163	.044*	42.68-44.35	.041
	Girls	50	44.38	4.27				
<b>Collective Identity</b>	Boys	50	32.18	3.49	5.099	.026*	30.69-32.08	.049
	Girls	50	30.60	3.49				

Significant Differences between boys and girls in terms of Physical, Relational and Collective Identity.

*df=98, p<.05\*, p<.01\*\**

Manova Analysis indicates that boys ( $M = -.24$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ) scored low than girls ( $M = .48$ ,  $SD = .99$ ) on Physical identity,  $F(1, 98)$ ,  $p < .01$ . Girls ( $M = 44.38$ ,  $SD = 4.27$ ) significantly score high than boys ( $M = 42.55$ ,  $SD = 4.15$ ) on relational identity,  $F(1, 98)$ ,  $p < .05$ . Boys ( $M = 32.18$ ,  $SD = 3.49$ ) significantly scored high on collective identity,  $F(1, 98)$ ,  $p < .05$ , compared to girls ( $M = 30.60$ ,  $SD = 3.49$ ). Boys and girls do not differ significantly in terms of personal identity and social identity.

## DISCUSSION

The study was carried out to explore gender differences in salient identities of the adolescents. Adolescence is a critical period in which adolescents try to understand themselves as a separate individual. It has been observed that adolescents explore

many identities and they identify themselves with various groups and some adolescents define themselves by their personal attributes i.e., “who they are?” Previous literature has shown gender differences in terms of physical identity, social, relational, and collective identity.

Findings of our study indicated that boys are significantly dissatisfied with their physical identity than girls. They perceive more discrepancy between their current figure and ideal one that is how they aspire to look like. The findings contradict with the extensive previous literature regarding gender differences in physical identity. Most of the studies have indicated that adolescent girls are more dissatisfied with their appearance and they invest more energy and time to achieve their ideal figure perception. Women are more likely to be conscious and concerned about their body figure than men (Pliner, Chaiken, & Flett, 1990). Findings also contradict with Phan and Tylka (2006) study which reported that Asian women are susceptible to pressure from their community to reach thin ideal; since these women see their bodies in relationship to their community, and if they do not reach ideal body shape, they are afraid that not having an ideal body shape can negatively affect their relationships with the loved ones.

Prevos (2005) also reported that women are dissatisfied with their current figure, as they perceive it broader than their ideal one. On the other hand, our study has indicated that adolescents' boys are more dissatisfied with their current figure. One reason perhaps could be that Pakistani adolescent boys want to look stronger, muscular and aspire to have a strong body built than to have a fragile and weak body posture. The adolescents boys included in our sample also had less muscular bodies and therefore they showed more dissatisfaction with their present body image. Our findings strongly support Fallon and Rozin (1985) study which indicate that ideal body figure for boys are muscular and they perceive more discrepancy between their current and ideal figure and it also supports Shepeliak (2006) that girls are more satisfied with their upper torso than boys. The findings of our study indicates the changing trends regarding the physical identity that nowadays boys have also become conscious about their looks and physique whereas teenage girls have always been sensitive about their physical identity.

Secondly, findings of present study have indicated no significant gender differences in personal identity. Keeping in view the findings, we can say that adolescent boys and girls perceive themselves as unique people distinct from others and they are

equally satisfied with their personal evaluation of their private self about how they define themselves as “who they are”. This study indicated that for both adolescents girls and boys their personal schemas, attributes, future aspirations, their emotions, feelings, thoughts and ideas, their dreams, their fears and anxieties are equally meaningful for them and effect their identity as “who am I ?”.

Thirdly, findings show no significant gender difference on social identity of adolescent boys and girls. The findings strongly support Tajfel (1981) that we use group membership to define our social selves. Findings of our study indicated no significant gender differences in terms of social identity of adolescents. This shows that social identity is equally important for both adolescent boys and girls. We can say that adolescent boys and girls are concerned the way the people react to their talk and what impression they leave on them. From the results we can infer that their identification with their group enhances their social self-esteem, pride, and self worth. This thing may lead to more positive appraisal of their group identity. In short, membership with a group provides adolescents a sense of belongingness and raises their self-esteem.

Fourthly, findings have shown significant gender differences in terms of relational identity in adolescents. Findings have indicated that relational identity occupies a more significant place in the lives of girls than boys. Findings support Helgeson (2005) point of view that females invest energies to maintain and strengthens their intimate and affiliative bonds. The possible reason for scoring high on relational identity of women could be that they are raised in a way to depend on others and try to secure themselves by relating and showing compliance to their significant others. The findings support Gilligan (1990) that girls are caring about themselves and others. On the basis of our findings we can say that girls value their connectedness with their significant others parents, siblings and friends. In an Asian culture, it has been observed that women are supposed to take care of their families and therefore building and strengthening healthy relationships are more meaningful to them.

Lastly, results have indicated significant gender differences in terms of collective identity. For adolescents' boys collective identity is more significant. Previous studies support our findings as they reported that boys are high on collective identity, and associate themselves strongly with different groups. Previous studies significantly correlate with the current study findings on the collective aspects of identity. Brewer and Gardner (1996) reported that relational self is more important

for women and collective self is more important for men. The findings also support Maddux and Brewer (2005) that men are “collectively interdependent”. On the basis of our findings we can say that boys give more importance to their race, religion, ethnic background, language, regional accent, and to their citizenship as compared to girls. The reason behind such findings is that Pakistani culture is a collectivistic culture in which an individual defines himself with reference to his collective identity.

## **CONCLUSION**

On the basis of our findings we can conclude:

1. Adolescent boys and girls do not differ significantly in terms of personal and social identity. We can say social and personal identities are equally important for both adolescents’ boys and girls.
2. Significant gender differences were observed in terms of physical identity, relational identity and collective identity of adolescents. Adolescent boys are significantly dissatisfied with their Physical identity. For adolescents girls’ relational identity is more important than adolescent boys. Adolescent boys scored high on collective identity which indicates that collective identity has significant value in the life of adolescent boys as compared to adolescents’ girls.

In sum, adolescence is a period in which an individual gets complete picture of one’s personality by exploring salient identities. Family and culture play an important role in understanding of “who am I?”

## **Limitations**

- Sample was restricted to only two public institutions
- Only adolescents of 13-16 years were included in the study
- Adolescents in the study belonged to urban areas

## **Suggestions:**

- Comparison in terms of family system and urban and rural area adolescents’ girls and boys can give clearer picture of adolescents’ identities.

- Comparison of salient identities of early, middle, and late adolescents can portray more informative picture.

### **Implications of the study:**

Salient identities of adolescents have always been an important area of investigation for developmental psychologists. Since decades ago, Hall (1891) described the adolescents as a period of storm and stress. Erikson (1968) has given very comprehensive view of identity formation in adolescence. Adolescent girls and boys both experience pubertal changes and they become conscious about their physical appearance. Society assigns them different roles which to some extent develop a sense of “self”. The identity issues have been widely investigated in Western culture context. Very scarce research is being done regarding the salient identities of adolescents’ in our culture. Therefore, this study could be helpful for the social psychologists, parents, and adolescents’ in providing information about the salient identities of adolescents. This study portrays a very surprising picture regarding salient identities of Pakistani adolescents which contradicts with the findings of the western studies on physical and personal identities of the adolescents.

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