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GENDERED DIMENSIONS OF CITIZENSHIP LEARNING: FEMALES UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' LIVED EXPERIENCES IN PAKISTAN

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Citizenship Education, Female Students, Pakistan, Grounded Theory, Gender Inequality, Higher Education, Patriarchy	This grounded theory study examines the gender dimension of citizenship learning in Pakistani universities. This study relies on in-depth interviews with 24 female students from two public universities in Punjab to explain how women construct citizenship identities in patriarchal families, gender ideologies popularized by religion, culture, and legal policies. Systematic open, axial, and selective coding results in data analysis that displays the core category of conditional citizenship navigation as the primary process through which female students acquire the citizenship knowledge and are accommodating, negotiating, or resisting various forms of control over their gender. The results indicate that strategic compliance, selective resistance, and collective organizing are action–interactional strategies employed by female students to pursue citizenship learning in the limited situations. This study shows dynamics of universities as paradoxical spaces that contribute to the development of citizenship awareness while reinstating patriarchies that restrict women’s civic agency. This study makes valuable contribution to the theory of conditional citizenship navigation, which applies to studies on citizenship formation of marginalized groups in the context of structural diverse constraints.
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INTRODUCTION

Citizenship education in higher education is a crucial aspect that enables young women to develop an awareness of their rights, duties, and the state’s activities in complex sociopolitical environments (Naseem, 2010; Shah, Bashir, Nadeem & Ibrahim, 2025). The gendered aspects of the citizenship learning should be subjected to systematic enquiry in Pakistan, where female university enrolment

is expected to grow exponentially. The experiences of female students are unique in the sense that they face a combination of the patriarchal system, religious systems, and the institutionalisation of their citizenship patterns (Kousar & Brett, 2020). This study has focused on the female university students in Pakistan in the context of constructing, negotiating, and enacting citizenship because of their pursuit of higher education in institutions. This study helps in understanding the role of gender in the citizenship learning process in Pakistani universities. Thus, almost half of the student body is composed of the women, and there are structural constraints to its full civic engagement (Morley & Crossouard, 2015).

The Pakistani context also has certain problems, which relate to citizenship construction of female students, including the economic autonomy, awareness of the political rights, conservative opinions, and traditional vision of manhood, and knowledge of cultural and religious standards (Kadiwal & Durrani, 2018). Although, quantitative benefits of female enrolment are well achieved, no research has been conducted to find out the qualitative aspects of citizenship learning phenomena that exist in which female university students analyse and reflect on their position as citizens both inside and outside institutions of higher education (Kousar & Brett, 2020). The Strauss grounded theory as applied in this research was used in developing a substantive theory on the voices, experiences, and meaning-making processes of female university students on the subject of citizenship learning. The safety and the specter of violence are recurring themes in the literature and shape female students' civic learning in fundamental ways (Shah, Bashir, Nadeem & Ibrahim, 2025). This study provides insights into how the construction of citizenship identities in the higher educational institutions is a processual, operative, contextual, and gendered experience for the female students at the multiple Pakistani universities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender & Citizenship in Pakistani Higher Education

Pakistan citizenship education is known to be of complex intertwining of colonial past, nationalism and struggles between gendered power dynamics which place women in the mythological position of ensuring the cultural authenticity yet not as autonomous political agents (Khan & Taela, 2023; Kousar & Brett, 2020). Educational discourse in Pakistan is gendered identification that increases inequalities through the curricula, textbooks, and pedagogical practices and denies women the full citizenship rights (Naseem, 2010). In this connection, educational institutions continue to increase women's opportunities for formal education and replicate biased systems and patriarchal relations that restrict women's actions and political awareness (Rauf & Muhammad, 2024). The Pakistani universities have to grapple with paradoxical requirements in which female students are inspired to acquire higher education. However, they are at same time encouraged to maintain conservative gender roles, which limits their socialisation and participation in the civic activities (Kadiwal & Durrani, 2018).

The theory of gendered citizenship recognises the fact that citizenship is not a unitary category, but an ideology, a stance in relation and practice, that assigns men and women a position in the polity at the cost of others, where there are power diverse dynamics involved (Behl, 2019; DeWolf, 2021). The

negotiating aspect of citizenship of women in Pakistan has been established over family institution long enough; women are not considered as people having rights, instead, they are people who, due to their inability to manage their finances, to invest, take part in particular political processes, feel rather limited (Rahim, 2024; Weiss, 2014). In this connection, the higher education is one of the potentially transformative fields where the women as a study group encounter novel ideas, varying opinions, and can consider critical thinking on citizenship. Nevertheless, institutional cultures often reflect the larger societal gender norms & values through which women learn about civics (Rashid & Asif, 2024).

Citizenship Learning as Gendered Process

As a cognitive, affective, and behavioral process, the citizenship learning helps individuals acquire knowledge about political structures, shape civic attitudes, and learn how to be active participants in democratic processes (Muhammad, 2019; Muhammad & Brett, 2015; Rauf & Muhammad, 2024; Westheimer & Ladson-Billings, 2024). The citizenship learning among female students in Pakistan context is presented within the context of gendered institutional conditions where the formal school curriculum, informal peer interactions, and institutional practices convey messages about the role of women as citizens and appropriate conduct. Studies indicate that female students do not experience citizenship education in the same way as male students and frequently face messages that focus on domestic sphere roles rather than participating in politics & acting morally rather than politically (Naseem, 2010).

The female university students share their life experiences to demonstrate how citizenship learning is enshrined within daily gender norms, family, religious interpretations, and institutional demands. Learning citizenship identities in female students can be achieved by navigating the limitations of movement, regulation of behaviour and attire, the hybrid roles of family demands, marriage, and professional choices, as well as institutional barriers to role of leaders (Rauf & Muhammad, 2024). The literature portrays female university students in Pakistan as situated citizens: they arrive at, and shape, higher education spaces with civic aspirations that are mediated by strong social constraints. This understanding of citizenship is configured in the way that is not abstract, in which legal status is a materialized, and practical reference that signifies power dynamic as well as inequality (Rashid & Asif, 2024).

Theoretical Perspectives on Gendered Citizenship

A feminist reading of citizenship challenges liberal conceptualization that have traditionally relied on existing universal, gender-neutral conceptions of citizenship, arguing that citizenship is innately gendered in both theory and practice (Young, 2017). The dichotomy between society's private and professional spheres leads to women being relegated to domestic sphere, while men are primarily involved in politics, excluding their experiences, issues & efforts from citizenship debates (Pateman, 2018). The gendered citizenship in postcolonial settings, such as Pakistan, intersects with religious, ethnic, and class identities, forming a complex pattern that includes and excludes women alongside other forms of inclusion and exclusion, constructing women in relation to the state and civil society (Shah et al., 2025).

The views of critical citizenship education emphasise the importance of examining that how power is reproduced over educational institutions, thus limiting transformative learning and perpetuating social inequality (Arthur & Bohlin, 2005; Freire, 2018; Johnson & Morris, 2010). In case of female students in Pakistan, critical citizenship education entails recognising and challenging gendered forms of oppression, awareness of the systemic injustices, and agency, which introduce an oppressive situation to change. However, the institutional degree of opposition to critical pedagogies and the pressures of wider society to adhere to traditional gender roles lead to a contradiction between the potential for transformations as well as the reproductive role of citizenship education in Pakistani universities' curricula.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Straussian Grounded Theory Approach

This research implements the Strauss grounded theory methodology to develop an effective theory on gendered citizenship education amid Pakistani female students in higher education institutions (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Straussian grounded theory stresses systematic data analysis methods that consist of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, which allows researchers to identify categories, develop relationships between categories, and synthesize theories based upon empirical data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It is particularly appropriate method to investigate social processes that are comparatively complex or when existing theories cannot elucidate the phenomena in the particular environment, such as in the specific cultural context that can also be applied to gendered citizenship learning in Pakistani higher education (Morse, Bowers, Charmaz, Clarke, Corbin, Porr & Stern, 2021).

The Straussian version of grounded theory uses a paradigm model as an analytical means to clarify the context, processes, social interactions, and consequences of the most basic phenomena, which permits a systematic search of the conditions that encompass social events, social experiences, and action-interaction (Jones & Alony, 2011). In this study, the paradigm model helped the researchers conceptualise the relation between the causal conditions (sociocultural norms, family backgrounds, and institutional contexts) as well as evaluates gender-responsive pedagogies will strengthen both academic understanding and practical efforts to foster inclusive citizenship learning in Pakistani universities. the core phenomenon of citizenship learning (the strategies that female students use to negotiate gendered constraints), the intervening conditions that predetermine their excellence and choice of a strategy, and the consequences of their experiences with learning citizenship (Walker & Myrick, 2006).

Research Participants and Context

The participants were sampled from two public universities within province of Punjab, including one women's university and one co-educational institution. The study participants were 24 women enrolled in undergraduate and graduate degrees in different disciplines, such as education, social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities. Participants were of age (19-27 years), was found to be equal in terms of urban and semi-urban backgrounds, different socioeconomic statuses, and family types (nuclear & extended). the sampling was performed until theoretical saturation was met, and

further data did not help uncover new conceptual insights (Charmaz, 2024; Patton, 2015; Walker & Myrick, 2006).

Data Collection Procedures

In-depth, semi-structured interviews became the main technique of the data collection and gave the participants the chance to use their own words to describe their experiences, opinions, views and comprehension of citizenship learning (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Flick, 2022). Part of the interview questions were related to citizenship experiences, both formal education and informal learning in terms of peer contacts and campus life experiences, sense of rights and responsibilities, experiences of participating in civic life, negotiating institutional demands that are gendered, and thinking in terms of factors operating upon citizenship identities (Smith, 2006). The interviews were conducted in Urdu, with some participants choosing to use English, and lasted approximately between 40 and 70 minutes. With informed consent, all interviews were recorded (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

Data Analysis Process

The analysis was conducted in three stages and utilised grounded theory procedures (Bryant & Charmaz, 2019; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Open coding phase meant that transcripts of interviews would be analysed line by line so as to yield the concepts and form first categories that captured the various facets of the citizenship learning experience of the female students. The open coding phase resulted in numerous open codes: family boundaries on participation, discussing rights with peers, fear of being evaluated, the institutionalisation of gender, and enabling the negotiability about the appearance in open (Morse et al., 2021). This was followed by axial coding that involved exploration of the relationship between the categories assisted by paradigm model, to form causal conditions, contextual variables, intervening conditions, action-interaction strategies and consequences of the central phenomena.

The final analysis step was selective coding, which involved combining all the categories into one central one that described the whole process as observed in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The type of citizenship that was the most prominent was conditional citizenship navigation, created by comparative examination and theoretical memo-writing, which is the core way female students constructed citizenship identities by extending themselves under the gendered limitations, family expectations, and institutional norms. The theoretical integration entailed refining the substantive theory through the development of relationships between all categories to ensure consistency and explain strength.

FINDINGS OF STUDY

Core Category: Conditional Citizenship Navigation

The core category that emerged from the data analysis was conditional citizenship navigation, which is the central social process. Female university students in Pakistani setting form and execute citizenship identities in response to circumstances of the gendered limitations, family policing, and institutional control. In this linking, conditional citizenship navigation explains how female students

acquire citizenship knowledge and the opportunities offered by higher education and negotiate, accommodate, or resist various types of the gendered control that restrict their civic agency. This is defined as a process of continuous risk and opportunity identification, strategic self-representation, selective involvement in the civic processes, and internalizing the burden of gendered expectations (Rahman, 2010).

Citizenship among female students was not a condition of being, but rather a status granted after demonstrating morality, family honour, and providing worthy services to showcase their academic success and ethical behaviour. This conditional characteristic was expressed by one of participants, who said, "We must demonstrate that we have earned the right to be here; we will not abuse our liberty, and education will not corrupt our principles." These contingencies condition the learning of citizenship as a localised process in which female students are taught to assert some rights at the expense of others, to participate in the activities of the public sphere in which they are supposed to participate but not others, and to form civic identities that are consistent with hegemonic gender norms and values.

Causal Conditions: Patriarchal Structures & Gender Ideologies

Several causal circumstances constitute the key phenomenon of conditional citizenship navigation, and patriarchal families and gender ideologies form core contextual factors. Thus, the participants underscored male control over them, subordination of women, limited women's mobility & division of labour based on gender, which introduced women as the main caregivers in the domestic sphere and men as the leading players in activities in public arena. Such family arrangements have far-reaching effects on female students' learning of citizenship, as they restrict access to opportunities for the civic engagement, exposure to the alternative political views, and prioritise family duty over political involvement.

Another important causal condition is religious and cultural understanding of gender roles, where participants are exposed to many, rather than conflicting messages regarding appropriate feminine behaviour, the roles women are supposed to play, limits of reasonable participation in public. Most participants reported that selective religious readings were used to limit mobility of women, their political participation, and training in interaction with unrelated men, amid other factors, limiting opportunities for learning citizenship. One of them stated that they employed religion to declare that women should not be in politics, leadership. When read about themselves, they discovered that there were women who had been leaders and scholars in history of Muslims. This example proves how gender ideologies can donate to developing epistemic boundaries, thus conditioning chances of the citizenship.

Contextual Conditions: Institutional Environments & Policies

The contextual conditions of institutions are vital and mediate female students' citizenship learning experiences. The students at women's university shared stories of gendered spaces, women-friendly institutional cultures, and relative liberation from the male gaze and harassment, creating sources of citizenship education, such as leadership training, open classroom learning, and club membership. The universities should pair curricular reforms with tangible safety measures and with platforms

that legitimize women's participation (student councils, civic forums, community-based projects). Still, at same time, these institutions promoted gender segregation, did not expose themselves to co-educational situations, and in some cases imposed paternalistic policies in the name of safeguarding female students.

Students in co-educational institutions outlined various contextual circumstances, such as exposure to male counterparts and faculty, access to gender-neutral academic, social lives, and opportunities for cooperative civic participation across gender boundaries. Still, these students were also exposed to gender discrimination, sexual harassment, male domination over student politics, and high-level responses that tended to blame the female instead of dealing with systemic gender inequalities. According to one of the participants, "During a student council meeting where we raised our voices, male students told us that we were being too emotional and aggressive and should remain within our boundaries. Even teachers sometimes play sides with them." Citizenship learning is also defined by institutional contexts that either provide, limit freedom of civic agency & political participation of female learners.

Intervening Conditions: Family Support & Economic Resources

Intervening conditions such as varying degrees of family support, financial resources, and personal experiences of inequality can enhance or limit conditional citizenship navigation. The students with families that were friendly to their involvement in issues on campuses and civic functions, and also those who had politically minded parents, indicated higher freedom in being able to participate in matters of campuses, civic events & political affairs. University enabled such students to experience empowerment as regards to citizenship building, where they attributed support, their families gave them to learn civics. Still, those with restrictive family members were constantly monitored, their involvement in campuses was limited, and they had little time to learn about citizenship, which was significantly constrained.

Another essential intervening condition is economic resources; therefore, students from wealthy backgrounds have greater access to citizenship learning opportunities, like international exposure, access to technologies, and assurance of immediate employment. Students with low socioeconomic status explained that financial constraints restricted their involvement on campus, forced them to take on part-time jobs, and pressured them to prioritise economic survival over civic action. The citizenship education that is genuinely gender-sensitive must shift beyond the token mentions of women to interrogate that how gender norms are reproduced through pedagogy, assessments, and institutional culture. One respondent said, "I desire to be a member of the social work society, but I have to tutor at night to meet my fees. Therefore, when you have hard time in university, citizenship becomes a luxury."

Action-Interaction Strategies: Negotiating Gendered Constraints

The female students also used various strategies to overcome gender-based restrictions and access citizenship education and civic participation. Strategic compliance was one of the main strategies employed by students, who outwardly imitated to gender expectations in terms of dress, behaviour, movement, and the construction of spaces for civic learning and participation, all within acceptable

limits. Participants reported that they paid great attention to self-presentation, selected activities that they considered respectable as women, and shaped civic activities in a manner that supported their family values. According to one student, "I told my father that I am attending a seminar on social work that sounds right, although it could also be about the political participation of women." Selective resistance was another strategy according to which a student dismissed certain gendered restrictions while accommodating other restrictions through a strategic selection of battles based on an estimation of their consequences and likelihood of success. The participants discussed necessity to promote more extended opening hours in libraries and provide chance to wear a dress code and eliminate discrimination policies in the institution without being overtly confrontational especially based on family rules.

They were also keen on the need to protect the interests of other students, and at the same time be aware of their own consequences. The existence of selective resistance in the present case suggests a high degree of knowing power relations and critical thinking about opportunities to facilitate the learning goals of citizenship within limited circumstances. Collective organizing as an approach to realizing allowing became evident when female students joined together to build caring structures, share resources, and advocate for improving citizenship prospects on a large scale. The participants also recalled the way they formed the study groups to discuss political issues, the way they formed social media networking to exchange information, created societies of women's rights and way they organized events at campuses to find a solution to gender inequality issues. The collective approach strategies enabled female students to learn about citizenship as a cohesive group with reduced risk and increased voice.

Consequences: Transformed but Constrained Citizenship Identities

The conditional citizenship navigation has several effects, including the reconstitution of citizenship awareness, continued ambivalence regarding civic agency & reproduction of gendered citizenship models. Awareness of rights, growth in knowledge about political processes, and commitment to gender equality were found to be higher among participants who had received higher education than in their pre-university lives, indicating that, despite gendered limitations, universities enable meaningful learning about the citizenship. Without engaging in details as to gender discrimination, patriarchal societies, and why women have to be engaged in politics, students defended that the university experience. In this regard, this heightened consciousness is, however, not only correlating with an endless state of ambivalence toward civic agency but with restricted citizenship practices. Thus, most participants indicated their lack of confidence in their ability to bring about change, doubts about their interest in women engaging in politics, and acceptance of the gendered division of the civic labour.

One of the students said, "It makes me realise that women are not involved in the process of making decisions, but I am not sure whether I could modify something. Perhaps this will offer more chances for my daughter." This ambivalence highlights the limitations of consciousness-raising, which underscores the fact that citizenship learning alone cannot overcome structural barriers to women's full civic engagement. The discretionary character of citizenship journey also leads to the recreation of some gendered citizenship patterns, where female students internalise duty to manage gender

expectations, primary responsibility of upholding honour in the family, and self-control behaviour to meet traditional masculine norms. Despite growing understanding of criticality of consciousness and willingness to overcome certain constraints, students tend to recreate the logic of gendering citizenship, making women citizenship conditional, secondary, and constantly under control of men. This is paradox of increased critical awareness alongside maintaining process of accommodating gendered constraints as main outcome of citizenship education under the conditions of patriarchal learning institutions.

DISCUSSION

Gendered Citizenship as Conditional Navigation

This study sheds light on the substantive theory of the conditional citizenship navigation, in which female university students in Pakistan construct citizenship identities in intersecting institutions of patriarchal family structures, religious-cultural gender ideologies, and institutional regulations. This theory expands upon data related to citizenship education, demonstrating that learning about citizenship among marginalised populations, particularly in the patriarchal societies, is inherently shaped by mechanisms of conflicting expectations, the tactic of navigating gendered limitations, and conditional access to civic agency (Young, 2017). Instead of the direct progression to complete citizenship awareness and action, citizenship education among the female students entails zigzag trajectories marked by development and withdrawal, opposition and assimilation, empowerment, as well as inhibition.

The conditional aspect of citizenship navigation, evident in this research, challenges the principles of liberal theories of citizenship that assume citizenship is gender-neutral & universally applicable while demonstrating that citizenship is, in fact, gendered and positions men and women differently in the polity (Pateman, 2018). The perspectives of female students also demonstrate that citizenship is not an abstract legal category but a practice of life, embodiment, social structures, and cultural meanings (Westheimer & Ladson-Billings, 2024). In Pakistan, the women citizenship status is thus conditional, as it must be proven by exhibiting the respectable behaviour, which requires constant awareness of the standards of proper female behaviour in different situations and circumstances. It can be revoked under any circumstances in which it violates the diverse boundaries of acceptable feminine conduct.

Institutional Roles in Gendered Citizenship Learning

Research results point to contradictory spaces in form of universities that simultaneously enhance and limit the learning of citizenship among female students (Morley & Crossouard, 2015). On the one hand, tertiary education provides citizenship knowledge, exposes students to varying opinions, gives them access to participate in civic life, and creates a critical awareness of gender inequalities. Participants traced their experiences in the universities to the fact that they had reformulated their views regarding rights, politics, and gender relations, and that the university may act as a driver in terms of citizenship development. Equally, higher institutions tend to recreate patriarchal systems through gender separation policies, sex-based discrimination, patriarchal institutional governance

structures, and cultural institutions, where they accuse women of gender-based violence instead of hierarchical inequalities.

This paradox indicates a larger conflict within Pakistani society regarding women's education and role, that is, investing in women's education but not willing to give them full civic equality with men. In this connection, the universities markedly increase women's knowledge and credentials and continue the gendered hierarchies that constrain women in the leadership, reduce women political participation, and reproduce gendered ideologies that position women as junior citizens. Female students deal with such contradictions by employing the advanced approaches, such as compliance strategies, selective resistance, and organising, as well as demonstrating that they can act within the structural constraints.

Family Structures & Citizenship Learning

Family structures represent essential causes and intervening variables that significantly influence the female students' citizenship learning experiences and results. The subjective experiences of the participants involved a description that how patriarchal family control, division of labour along gender lines, lack of mobility, and monitoring of actions limit access to civic processes, reduce the exposure to political activities, and prioritise family commitments over continued action in state. In this linking the political capabilities of the family structures to determine the process of citizenship learning underscore the importance of diverse relations in private sphere in defining engagement in the public sphere, which the liberal citizenship theory assumes to be independent of each other (Young, 2017).

However, families cannot be considered homogenous units of support, education, and progressive orientation; the implementation of latter gives rise to differentiated citizenship-learning conditions for students of different genders. Female Students from educated and supportive families have more opportunities to enjoy the reimbursements of their citizenship, have increased freedom to exercise their opportunities, and are fortified to engage in politics that therefore legitimize women public participation. This difference suggests that changing family structures & gender ideologies within families is a crucial way to enhance women's development in citizenship. However, to bring about such change, systemic interventions are needed, such as gender-equal education policy, women's economic empowerment, law-making in favour of women & cultural change to confront patriarchal gender ideologies.

CONCLUSION

The grounded theory study sheds light on gendered aspects of citizenship learning among female students at two Pakistan universities, demonstrating that women shape their citizenship identity by seeking conditional ways of navigating through paternalistic families, gender ideologies based on religion and cultural factors, and institutional policies. Substantive theory of conditional citizenship navigation suggests that female students' citizenship learning involves strategic compliance with gender expectations, selective nonconformity to certain constraints, collective organising to support one another and transformed but constrained citizenship identities. The female students have shown extraordinary agency in acquiring citizenship education despite various mechanisms of gendered

regulation; however, structural hindrances that prevent women from being equal citizens with full rights still exist.

Universities have become spaces of contradiction, increasing the knowledge and consciousness of citizenship as well as recreating patriarchal structures that limit women's civic agency. This is why institutions need to be transformed through explicit citizenship education that reflects gender, policies that prohibit discrimination and harassment, and pedagogical practices fostering critical consciousness and transformative agency. In this regard, along with universities, it is necessary to act on the systemic level, which consists of the introduction of legal acts to protect the rights of women, economic policies to increase their financial autonomy, and an alteration in culture that perceives the citizenship of women as conditional and secondary in diverse contexts. It is only comprehensive transformation of family set-ups, institutional processes, legal environment, and culture that will bring about the shift in the aim of learning citizenship among the female students into full-scale and active citizens.

Theoretical Implications

This research has a substantive theory on the dimensions of citizenship learning in a gendered sense, which builds on existing work on citizenship education, feminist citizenship theory, and postcolonial higher education. The conditional citizen learning as the concept offers an analytical approach to comprehend the manner in which marginalised people construct citizenship identities within the condition of structural restriction, and the concept can have theoretical tools that can be applied to other settings when citizenship is produced differently across the lines of gender or race and class or across other social divisions. This theory disputes essentialist ideas about citizenship as a universal condition and emphasizes citizenship as the process, negotiated and contested practice (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Another methodological implication of this study is that it demonstrates usefulness of Straussian grounded theory in the study of complex social processes in culturally specific contexts (Charmaz, 2006). In this connection, the systematic analytical steps, such as open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, enabled rigorous analysis of the experiences of female students, while maintaining the sensitivity of the theoretical aspect of the analysis and allowing for unexpected findings that privilege already-advantaged groups. The curricula, campus safety, family expectations, and wider political-economic realities together produce a gendered civic terrain where agency is possible but often circumscribed. Consequently, paradigm model is mainly useful in elucidating the interaction of various conditions, strategies & outcomes in structuring the citizenship learning processes (Jones & Alony, 2011).

Policy Implications

The results suggest several practical policy implications for advancing citizenship learning among female students in Pakistan higher education. Universities may engage in explicit civic education concerning the gender aspects of citizenship, offer safe grounds for female students to engage in political activities, and confront gendered ideologies of patriarchy. There should be institutional policies that are prescriptive against any form of the discrimination based on gender, where anyone

would be held accountable for sexual harassment, promote female representation in governments, as well as abolish the paternalistic policies in the name of safeguarding female students in higher educational institutions.

Education policies should be designed to have gender-equitable citizenship education at all levels of education, including feminist views on curriculum making, offer teacher training on the use of critical citizenship pedagogy, and put in place a monitoring system to determine gender equity in learning outcomes of citizenship education (Naseem, 2010). These policies should be supplemented with more extensive legal and social shifts, such as implementing the women's constitutional rights, creating more economic opportunities to empower women financially, legally protecting victims of gender violence, changing the role of gender in the population, together with emphasizing public awareness campaigns.

Pedagogical Implications

This paper also highlights that female students should be empowered in terms of critical citizenship pedagogies that allow them to view gendered power relations, recognise structural inequalities, develop a collective actor, and learn to act in transformative way of civic agency (Freire, 2018). The faculty members are likely to foster classroom communities that indorse critical discourse related to gender and citizenship, incorporate feminist scholarship into the citizenship education curriculum, facilitate connections amid academic learning and civic participation & promote gender-equitable practices in classroom interactions. Gender pedagogies can consider the lived experiences of female students, acknowledging gendered restrictiveness that can legitimize understandings, visions and assist them in formulating the critical perspective, workable approaches to negotiating and shifting patriarchal systems.

Limitations & Future Research

This study is also limited because it focused on female students in Punjab province, which may not be representative of other regions in Pakistan where culture, ethnic composition, and gender norms differ. Gendered citizenship learning among Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Gilgit-Baltistan students should be further researched to produce a more in-depth picture of differences between regions in terms of female citizenship learning. The research also employs interview data, which offered substantial information about participants' perspectives, but it does not give us any information on what practical activities participants were involved in on a daily basis of citizenship practices or institutional policies, or classroom relations or interactions (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Fetterman, 2019; Walker & Myrick, 2006). The future ethnographic enquiries can contribute to the formulation of knowledge about way gendered processes of citizenship learning occur in the facets of university life.

The study was limited to the perceptions of female students only and not male students on civic learning, and no comparative analysis was conducted on the gendered learning experience among the students. Further studies comparing the citizenship learning achievements of female and male students have potential reveal how gender differentially affects citizenship education experiences and outcomes. Longitudinal studies with post-university continuation of study of female students

may address how citizenship selves gained during higher education change when women navigate post-university contexts of employment, marriage, and family making (Bryant & Charmaz, 2019). This type of research provides information on the long-term effects of gendered citizenship learning in university settings.

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