

Female Learners' Perceptions of Male Lecturer: A Case Study of Education Faculty at Kandahar University

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Abstract- This study aims to explore female learners' perceptions towards male lecturer gender. A major problem with this kind of study is low capacity of female lecturers and a large number of female learners who learn at Kandahar University. The attempt here is to find out female learners' perceptions of male lecturers and the challenges that female learners are faced against the male lecturers. The total number of participants in this study were 80, in which the whole participants are female from Educational faculty and the participants were selected randomly. The results of the statistical survey examined that female learners feel nervousness, have lack of confidence in front of male lecturers, and cannot share the questions freely with them. The study had also found that female learners talking to male lecturer feel increased heartbeat due to nervousness.

Index Terms- Female learners, Perceptions, Male lecturers

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a key to the development of a country and plays a vital role in building human competencies and economic growth through knowledge, skills and creative strength of a society. UNICEF (2016) estimated that 3.7 million children with no access to schools in Afghanistan in which sixty percent of them are girls. In Afghanistan, education is largely delivered along gender lines, with very few mixed-gender schools, and lack of girls and female lecturers, provide a significant barrier to education for the 2.2 million girls who are still left behind from education. Furthermore, providing education to girls, instead of this, brave lecturers are the key for making a difference in the development trajectory of their country. This will prepare girls to enter the workforce, take part in civic life and regain control of their futures. Although the UNESCO (2012) reported that female lecturers should be recruited locally to encourage girls' school enrolment, the lack of girls' education until recent times meant very few women are qualified to become lecturers.

Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of men and women as it varies from society to society, while most people are born either male or female and they are taught appropriate norms and behaviors that how they should interact with others of the same or opposite gender within households, communities and workplaces (Phillips, 2005). According to World Health Organization (2002), gender is used to describe those characteristics of women and men, which are socially constructed. Appleby (2014) states that patterns of gender are clearly an affective part of the educational construction, as gender has always been associated with language teaching and learning. Lecturer's gender, according to Francis (2007), female lecturer has significant effect on achievement mean scores of pupils in science and male lecturers were more effective than their female lecturers.

Moreover, gender and teaching are achieving increasing attention in the field of higher education and the significance of lecturer gender seems even more crucial in an environment based on gender (Taqi, Salwa, Akbar, and Nada, 2015). However, Francis (2007) suggested that lecturer/student gender matching is unnecessary, claiming that it does not really lead to effective teaching and better academic performance and instead prioritized the individual abilities of a lecturer. However, there has been some concerns that woman and girls continue to face multiple barriers based on gender and its intersection with other factors, such as age, ethnicity, poverty, and disability, in the equal enjoyment of the right to quality education (Brown, 2000).

Accordingly, Maceoby and Jackline (1974) asserted that gender differences also contribute to variation in academic performance. With regard to teaching gender, Shakti (2011) suggests that the increasing participation of women in teaching has been one of the major factors for reducing the gender gap in schools and colleges. Moreover, recruiting more female lecturers can promote girls' education and reinforce gender equality in schools in terms of achievement level (Francies & Skelton, 2005). Accordingly, female lecturers have crucial role to increase enrollment and retention of female learners, and female lecturers are viewed both as role models and caretakers (UNESCO, 2000). Additionally, according to Carrington & Mcphee (2008), learners perform better when taught by

lecturers of the same gender. On the other hand, it is possible in some cases that same gender lecturers have negative effect on achievement (Antecol, 2015). In addition, there is a strong relationship between language learners' achievement as well as their attitudes and motivation towards language and the gender of their language lecturer (Lavin, 2012). Also, Mora's (2013) conclusion seems that female learners who were taught by female lecturers had better test scores. Likewise, Lavy (2004) asserted that female lecturers may have a smaller positive effect on male learners and a larger effect on female learners. Recruiting more female lecturers can promote girls' education and reinforce gender equality in schools in terms of achievement level (Francis & Skelton, 2005).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A major problem with this kind of study, there is low capacity of female lecturers compared to the number of female learners who learn at Kandahar University. Like most of the developed countries, statistics for Kandahar University show that number of males in the teaching profession outweighs the number of females. Recently, there have been several arguments that female learners' underachievement in higher education is due to male dominance in the teaching profession. The highlighting argument for this that lack of female role models could have negative consequences for the achievement of female learners. It points out if the argument is accurate that immediate steps are necessary to ensure gender equity in higher education. Dee (2007) argues that it is more likely that a student chooses someone as a role model who is similar to him/her as the same gender. An observation, on the other hand, demonstrated that male lecturers may control indiscipline and disobedience at the adolescent stage more easily than the female lecturers (Wheatly & Jones, 1999). Due to the discussion explained above, it is logical to call for policy recommendations that were put forward in developing countries.

Owing to what has been explained in the preceding discussion, it is logical to appeal for policy recommendations that were put forward in the western countries. As such, female learners' perceptions towards male lecturers related study is expressively essential before implementing such policies. Hence, the purpose of this study is to examine if the male lecturer has any impact on female learners performance in higher education.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To find out female learners' perceptions towards male lecturer.
- To identify the challenges that female learners are faced against the male lecturers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are female learner's perception towards male lecturer?
- What are the challenges that female learners are faced against male lecturers?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a large volume of previous studies regarding gender's value on academic achievement of female learners learning such as Carrington & Macphee (2008), Francis, Skelton reported that the gender of lecturers had little apparent effect on the academic motivation and engagement of either boys or girls. Female learners, in particular, value lecturers who were consistent and supportive regardless of their gender. However, research in Holland confirmed that lecturer's sex does not affect the achievement, attitudes, or behavior of female learners' (Driessen, 2007). It has been observed in Nepal by Gurung (2018) that female learners have better scores when taught by both female and male lecturer. This also implies that whatever subject when male or female lecturers teach, it had no specific impact of gender on female learners. Not only that, but male lecturers provided more opportunities for their female learners to interact in class, treat their learners more respectfully, and grade them fairly. According to Luschei's (2011) argument, there is evidence that learners of female lecturers perform comparatively better than those of male lecturers.

Regarding gender differences in teaching profession and its impact on learners' performance, Awan & Azeem (2017) concluded that male lecturers can control well the boys whereas female learners felt comfortable with female lecturers. To be more precise, male lecturers focus on academics, while female lecturers focus on supportive attitude. Concerning male lecturer, Wood (2012) found that male lecturers tend to get more respect from female learners simply because they are men. However, Peter and Horn (2006) suggested the effect of male lecturers on learners where male lecturers may serve as positive role models for female learners seeking to fill the void of absent fathers, often looking up to them and mimicking their behaviors. Furthermore, these behaviors are believed to increase student motivation and engagement, thus increasing their level of academic achievement and the likelihood of them completing college. Nonetheless, McGrath & Sinclair (2013) described female lecturers as being best at supporting female learners in successful situations, providing favorable comments and praises.

According to Awan & Aqsa (2015) who demonstrated that increasing the number of women lecturers has to be accompanied by other strategies to promote girls' education. In some conservative communities, parents will not permit their daughters to be taught by a male lecturer because parents may rather prefer female lecturers over male. Even in some areas, according to the authors, the presence of male lecturers necessarily voided girls' enrolment. Similarly, a study carried out by Aliakbari & Jamalvandi (2011) revealed that Iranian female learners preferred female lecturers not because of their professional capabilities but for a feeling of comfort and rest in a female lecturer class. Whereas, this hypothesis has found little empirical support by Canes & Rosen, (1995) which found that the

percentage of faculty who are female in an institution is significantly associated with the probability that female learners obtain an advanced degree.

According to the Afghan MoE (2011) who found that lack of female lecturers can cause and affect low participation of girls in a Higher Education. In particular, emphasis has been placed upon equality of access to schooling for girls, and more recently, upon the influence of gender role stereotypes in higher dropout rates for girls (Gordon, 1995). In addition, a research conducted in South Africa by Mutekwe, Modiba & Maphosa (2012) where female respondents asserted that one of the major problems they faced was male teachers' love proposal which triggered to failure of the respective course and hate school or dropout unless they accepted the proposal. Likewise, a study by Jegede (2007) found that female students revealed higher anxiety toward male lecturers in learning of Chemistry subjects. The author further stated that female learners feel unrelaxed when asking or suggesting some items. As per challenges, Madara & Cherotich (2016) found in a carried out study that female learners undeniably encountered frequent gender-related challenges and even harassment from male lecturers. Similarly, Lahelma (2000) conducted a study in the Finish context at the University of Helsinki where female learner shared their concern regarding male lecturers and suggested that male lecturers have to very sensitive in terms of having relationship with their female learners.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The quantitative method of research was used for this study to identify the challenges that female learners are faced against the male lecturers: A researcher who uses quantitative approach, generally has a very clear idea about what is being measured before they start measuring it, and their study is set up with controls and a very clear outline (Keith, 1998). According to Yin (2003), case study is used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political and related phenomena. Thus, it identifies variables to study and relate those variables in questions or hypotheses by using statistical standards of validity and reliability and employ statistical procedures for analysis.

B. Population and Sampling

The population for this research study was 80 female learners of Education Faculty aged between 20 to 30 years old. According to Krejcie & Morgan (1970), for a population of 80, a sample size of 70 subjects is required. Hence, the researchers provided all 80 female learners with the survey questionnaire.

C. Instrument

The main instrument used in this survey research was a questionnaire. The researcher adopted and adapted questionnaire from different articles. As the participants were from different departments and were unable to understand English, therefore, it was necessary to translate the questionnaire into the Pashto language. The questionnaire had three parts: demographic information, part B: there were 10 items administered, related to female students' perception of male and female teachers and Part C: were 10 items regarding challenges that female learners faced with, based on Likert Scales. 1- Agree 2- Strongly Agree 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree.

D. Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

Considering the validity of the questionnaire, the researchers shared the questionnaire with the colleagues and received effective and constructive feedback. Also, the researchers measured the reliability of the questionnaire through (SPSS) software 21 version. Although, the permanency of the questionnaire and item's scales was Cronbach's Alpha, which means that the scale and items were reliable. The general reliability values between (.747) which is acceptable.

IV. FINDINGS

A. Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the respondents in categories of level of education, age and shift.

	Characteristics	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Level of Education:	Freshmen	37	46.3
	Sophomore	29	36.3
	Junior	8	10.0
	Senior	6	7.5
Age:	15-20	53	66.3
	21-25	25	31.3
	26-30	2	2.5
Shift:	Morning	48	60.0

Afternoon	32	40.0
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Table 1: Shows that there were eighty participants. Out of eighty 37 (46.3%) were freshmen, 29 (36.3%) sophomore, 8 (10.0%) junior and 6 (7.5%) senior students. According to their age, 15-20 years old were 53 (66.3%), 21-25 years old 25 (31.3%), and 26-30 years old were 2 (2.5%) students. Regarding the shift, 48 (60.0%) female learners were from morning shift, and 32 (40.0%) were from afternoon.

B. RQ 1: What are female learners' perceptions towards male lecturer gender?

Table 2: Indicates the female learners' perception towards male lecturer's gender

Female learners' perception towards male lecturers	Mean	Std. Deviation
I feel comfortable with male lecturers.	2.07	.74
I feel a greater sense of safety and security when there is male lecturer in the class.	1.98	.75
Male lecturers give us more opportunities to interact in the class.	1.96	.73
We are happy to have male lecturers at University.	1.92	.67
I don't mind whether male or female lecturer teaches us.	1.90	1.01
Male lecturers help female learners in every situation.	1.85	.90
Male lecturer act as a father or brother with female learners.	1.81	.71
Male lecturers support female learners.	1.70*	.70
We easily understand male lecturer's lecture.	1.66*	.69
Male lecturers respect female learners.	1.46*	.52

Likert scales: 1=Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3=Disagree, and 4= Strongly Disagree.

Table 2: Shows the mean scores for female learners' perception towards male lecturer's gender. All of the items had the mean scores between the ranges of one to two. The average level of the female learners' perception towards male lecturer's gender was in the range of "Strongly agree" and "Agree". Items that gained higher mean scores in this dimension were identified as "I feel comfortable with male lecturers." (M= 2.07, SD= 0.74), "I feel a greater sense of safety and security when there is male lecturer in the class." (M= 1.98, SD= 0.75) and "Male lecturers give us more opportunity to interact in the class." (M= 1.96, SD= 0.73). In addition, the three items with comparative lower mean scores were "Male lecturers support female learners." (M= 1.70, SD= 0.70), "We easily understand male lecturer's lecture." (M= 1.66, SD= 0.69) and "Male lecturers respect female learners." (M= 1.46, SD= 0.52). The result reveals that approximately all the respondents strongly agree and agree with the items of questionnaire. Therefore, we emerge the major findings from the above table that are strongly related with the female learners' perception towards male lecturers: 1) Male lecturers respect female learners. 2) Female learners easily understand male teachers' lecture. 3) Male lecturers support female learners.

C. RQ 1: What are the challenges that female learners are faced against male lecturers?

Table 3: Indicates the challenges that female learners are faced with male lecturers.

Challenges that female learners are faced with	Mean	Std. Deviation
Some male lecturers bother female learners.	2.96	.98
Male lecturers are against female learner's education.	2.86	.96
Male lecturer's behavior is not appropriate with female learners as with male learners.	2.78	.95
Male lecturers do not let female learners when they come late to the class.	2.68	1.05

Our parents do not feel safe to send us to the university where is male-dominated environment.	2.63	.93
Male lecturers have no significant impact on the educational performance of female learners.	2.60	.90
While I talk with male lecturer, my heart beats very fast.	2.26*	1.05
I cannot share the questions freely with male lecturers.	2.20*	.89
I do not have confidence in front of male lecturer when I present the presentation.	2.13*	1.04
I feel nervous when asking a question from male lecturer.	2.10*	.90

Likert scales: 1=Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3=Disagree, and 4= Strongly Disagree.

Table 3: Shows the mean scores for the challenges that female learners are faced with the male lecturers. All of the items had the mean scores in the range of two. The average level of challenges that female learners are faced with the male lecturers was in the range of “Agree”. Items that gained higher mean scores in this dimension were specified as “Some male teachers bother female learners.” (M= 2.96, SD= 0.98), “Male lecturers are against female learner’s education.” (M= 2.86, SD= 0.96) and “Male lecturer’s behavior is not appropriate with female learners as with male learners.” (M= 2.78, SD= 0.95). Meanwhile, the three items with comparative lower mean scores were “I can’t share the questions freely with male lecturers.” (M= 2.20, SD= 0.89), “I do not have confidence in front of male lecturer when I am presenting the presentation.” (M= 2.13, SD= 1.04) and “I feel nervous when asking a question from male lecturer.” (M= 2.10, SD= 0.90). The result indicates that the participants agree with all items of questionnaire. Thus, we take out the major findings from the above table that are the big challenges of female learners against male lecturers: 1) Female learners feel nervousness when they ask from male lecturer. 2) Female learners do not have confidence in front of male lecturer when they present the presentation. 3) Female learners cannot share questions freely with male lecturers. 4) While female learners talk to male lecturers, their hearts beat very fast.

V. DISCUSSION

The result from the survey revealed that male lecturers respect female learners, and have a better attitude and behavior when female learners ask questions or talking about lesson or an activity. This finding is supported by Gurung (2018) that male lecturers giving their female students more opportunity to interact in the class, treat their students more respectfully, and grade them fairly. Also, the findings of this study indicated that female learners are satisfied with male lecturers and easily understand male lecturers’ lecture. Female learners also stated that they learn hurriedly from male lecturers rather than female lecturer. The result also demonstrated that male lecturers encourage female learners to participate in each academic activity in the class that they perform continually as like male learners accomplish. These findings corroborate with previous literature by Peter and Horn (2006) who suggested the effect of male lecturers on learners where male lecturers may serve as positive role models for female learners often looking up to them and mimicking their behaviors. Furthermore, these behaviors are believed to increase student motivation and engagement, thus increasing their level of academic achievement and the likelihood of them completing college.

Moreover, the current study found that female learners feel nervous in front of male lecturer when they are offering or presenting the presentation, as well as, female learners feel anxious and their heart beats so fast while female learners are talking to male lecturers concerning lesson. This finding is in harmony with Liu’s (2006) study who revealed that female learners feel their heart beating when they are going to be called on in the English class to do an activity. In addition, the results of the study revealed that female learners do not have confidence towards male lecturer, that it caused them to derivate in every activity and hinder their academic achievement which has negative impact on learners learning. As part challenges, female learners indicated that they cannot join the questions independently with a male lecturer, that it might have a negative impact on their achievement. Not only that but, learners with low self-confidence usually look away from instructors to avoid being called on. The findings of the current study are consistent with those of Al-sibai (2004) who declared that female learners feel uncomfortable and panic in front of male lecturers when using the language orally because they are concerned about being criticized or disapproved of, or they tend to perform less successfully.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

It could be implied that even the female learners at Education Faculty feel comfortable, the ministry of higher education and especially Kandahar University need to employ female lecturers to avoid male dominant environment. Since, this study was limited to only one faculty, and could not be generalized to other faculties and universities in Afghanistan, therefore, further research in other public and private universities would be useful. In addition to that lecturers of Education Faculty are recommended to create a supportive and encouraging classroom environment that encourages female learners to speak and participate in oral communication activities without fear or inhibition. Male lecturer should encourage female learners in every academic achievement and give a sense that they can openly ask questions and perform any activity.

VII. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present study was to find out female learners' perceptions towards male lecturer's gender and the challenges that female learners are faced against the male lecturer. The researcher collected the data through the survey, in which the female learners manifested that male lecturers respect female learners and female learners' are satisfied with male lecturer that they can easily understand the lecture, and male lecturers encourage female learners in every academic section. The study also found the challenges female learners faced with such as feeling nervousness and having lack of confidence when asking a question concerning the lesson from male lecturer. Thus, female learners cannot share the questions freely and their heartbeats very fast while talking to male lecturers which effects somehow on their academic achievement.

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