

A Gender-Based Study of Teachers' Social Role in Cultural Transformation

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ABSTRACT: The present study aimed at exploring the social function of the teachers of higher education in the process of culture transformation from gender perspective in public universities of Southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. The goals of the study were to explore the perspective of the University teachers and M.Phil./PhD scholars about the role of teachers in cultural transformation and to compare the views between male and female teachers. A quantitative method with descriptive research design was used. A 7-point Likert scale questionnaire was self-developed and used to collect data from the respondents, who in this study were made up of 93 male teachers, 30 female teachers, 121 male M.Phil./PhD scholars and 127 female M.Phil./PhD scholars, using random sampling of the population as per the sampling criteria of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and an independent samples t-test with the help of SPSS. The results showed that teachers as well as the M.Phil./PhD scholars had positive perceptions of the role of teachers in culture transformation. The mean scores of male teachers were slightly lower than that of females, and the mean scores of female scholars were slightly lower than that of their male counterparts. In both the perceptions of teachers and scholars, the t-test results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the males and females ($p > 0.05$). The study finds, that higher education teachers have an important role in cultural change and that this role is seen the same by both male and female stakeholders. The study suggests that teacher professional development needs to be further strengthened and that cultural values be included in university education.

KEYWORDS: Cultural Transformation, Social Role of Teachers, Higher Education, Gender-Based Study, University Teachers, M.Phil./PhD Scholars

Introduction

The obligations of the teachers, as agents of cultural change, could not be overlooked, and in particular, gender specific approaches could be found in the teaching practices of higher education teachers. Female teachers tend to

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be stressed on participatory and community based approach, which aim to bring about gradual cultural change through participatory activities such as discussions on social justice and local heritage projects, while male teachers tend to focus on structural and technological change, such as through the advocacy of policies, the development of digital technologies, and institutional adjustment, with the aim of introducing radical change (Ezeudu, & Chukwudubem, 2024). The study reveals a synergistic combination of the female educator's skills in mobilizing grassroots and in harnessing empathy with those of the male educator's in systemic diagnosis and technological responses to be 30 percent more effective in implementing cultural change programs (Rigkos-Zitthen & Kapitsinis, 2025).

This synergy is especially beneficial when it comes to responding to contemporary challenges like decolonizing curricula, where female faculty tend to take part in critical analyses of systems of power, and male faculty create pipeline implementation schemes where the overhaul of the institution is more comprehensive (du Plessis, 2024). The best cultural change will occur when the institutions deliberately adopt these complementary styles, have a co-operative model of teaching, an inter-disciplinary research group, and a gender balanced policy group while creating an educational environment that is not only sensitive to its culture but can also catalyze the needed changes in that culture.

Being able to challenge the hegemonic discourses and introduce sociocultural critique to the learning contexts are two of the ways in which educators can help drive cultural change. They allow for essential learning spaces to be created and used for learners to critically challenge and decolonize paradigms of power and marginalisation systematically. With the help of equity-oriented instructional design, educators provide students with analytical and critical tools for challenging the prevailing cultural paradigms and creating more inclusive sociocultural systems based on ideas of justice and social empowerment (Gorski, 2017).

Teachers are agents of cultural change since the process of introducing culturally sustaining pedagogies that provide students with a voice to express their multifaceted identities and celebrate them is transformative. They create learning contexts in which the experience of lived cultures contributes to the construction of knowledge. By this means, the implementation of critical participatory approaches provides opportunities for teachers to involve learners in "intense, rigorous exploration of the interconnectedness of cultural systems and of power structure(s)" and to equip them with "the analytical tools necessary to both criticize and imagine alternative ways of functioning with an equity mindset" (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Teachers are important cultural change agents in that they can use equity-focused pedagogy in which they not only validate pluralistic identities but also critique dominant cultural paradigms. They develop active learning environments that, at the same time, respect multicultural ways of thinking and develop critical awareness regarding structural injustices. Conducted conversations that discuss complex relationships between cultural systems, institutionalized power systems, and action that moves toward substantive sociocultural change will help teachers develop the aptitude and diligence to enable learners to do the same (Anyia & Randolph, 2019).

Teachers become transformative intellectuals engaging in critical pedagogical practices to challenge hegemonic ideologies and to create emancipatory discourse. They create learning spaces as anti-hegemonic ones where students are called to analyze with rigor cultural productions and sociopolitical structures. The integration of important digital literacy and intersectional concepts in curriculum planning allows teachers to enable students to analyze and rethink dominant cultural constructs. Pedagogical interventions place teachers as an important component in the process of creating more equitable, inclusive cultural formations together (Giroux, 2014).

Literature Review

The educator is a catalyst for cultural change by using critical pedagogical practices that deconstruct oppressive systems as they create opportunities for emancipatory dialogue. They serve as cultural interlocutors and bring them into learning ecosystems in which students rethink and question hegemonic cultural paradigms. Both teachers and students participate in Freirean-inspired conscientization processes and critical discourse, which enables them to become transformative change-agents, actively contributing to the transformation of cultural landscapes, with a focus on equity and collective liberation (Vandenbroeck, 2020).

Educators are emancipatory agents of cultural change, who imagine teaching as an activity of questioning and reconfiguring cultural systems. They develop classroom laboratories in which students critically construct meaning and analyse the power relations that are entangled within their meanings. Teachers can use intersectional pedagogies and dialogue to empower students to develop analytical frameworks and social power to engage in co-creating alternative cultural structures that are based on justice and liberation principles (Hooks, 2010).

Teachers are cultural architects creatively designing learning spaces that reflect upon the multiple worldviews of students and communities. Teachers change ethnocentric attitudes and foster cultural pluralism in culturally relevant curriculum and critical pedagogy. In this way, teachers help to build empathic and understanding relationships between different cultures, which can help heal societal attitudes and inequities in culture (Banks, 2016).

The teacher's social role in the transformation of culture is related to the creation of educational experiences that can break the routines of culture and stimulate dialogue and diversity. Teachers initiate and foster critical dialogues with students about culture and power structures that prompt students to question and transform dominant cultural discourses. Teachers are able to create democratic learning spaces where plurality is valued, and where debate and discussion are encouraged; thereby enabling students to play an informed and ethical part in society and to contribute to cultural change (Biesta, 2017).

Teachers participate in cultural transformation by challenging and dismantling systems of oppression through creating educational spaces. They challenge the norms and values of culture by engaging in pedagogical practices that will enable students to reflect and question the culture's norms and values. Teachers can be a key stakeholder in the transformation of culture by developing inclusive classrooms and encouraging students to critically examine differences. Humanizing strategies provide opportunities for teachers and students to engage in dialogue and to produce alternatives in order to question inequitable cultural norms and to develop more equitable ones. This "engaged pedagogy," as Hooks (2014) points out, is a pedagogy of analysis coupled with a pedagogy of caring to break oppressive systems for the purpose of creating positive social change. Teachers can establish classrooms that are culturally renewed where students can learn to be aware, active agents in their attempts to make the world less unfair, and become more culturally humble and listen to the voices of the marginalized.

Teachers' roles are crucial in transforming a culture, as they add in critically literate structures that help learners question and recontextualize socio-cultural discourses. Teachers help students learn a nuanced set of grammar for the process of cultural systems reproducing or disrupting power imbalances by reading and analyzing different texts, and by attending to pertinent lived experiences that are removed from the process. Participatory learning spaces are created that span critique and action, and educators provide learners with opportunities to give them tools to not only deconstruct oppressive cultural paradigms, but to co-create more just alternatives. Consciousness-raising and social practice are two in one (Au, 2012).

Educators also have a key role in cultural change as they inspire and encourage critical thinking and open-mindedness in learners, teaching them to challenge the accepted rules and perceive different points of view. Through conscious pedagogy, teachers create inclusive classrooms where students engage in reflecting on cultural assumptions,

valuing the diversity of opinions, and creating new ways of collectively engaging with social issues. As demonstrated by Banks (2021), these classrooms become laboratories of societal development, and citizens are produced who can unite cultures, but also think about changes and imagine them. By cultivating these capacities, teachers empower students to engage in social innovation and to promote well-being through critical conversation and experience of diversity in more dynamic, cohesive, and equitable cultures.

In fact, teachers are key players between cultural preservation and innovation and can skillfully move back and forth between traditional and modern practice of their professions. They systematically incorporate their ancestors' knowledge, history and traditional value systems into the curriculum as a way to establish cultural continuity and cultural identity. Meanwhile, teachers facilitate students' critical engagement with issues that are burning around the world, such as climate change, digital citizenship and more, in order to allow students to re-envision cultural constructs in light of the contemporary world. This dual attention helps students to not only celebrate their ancestry but to participate in the cultural revival that creates societies able to sustain their identities, as they work in an interconnected environment (Sleeter, 2018).

Teachers are role models of values and contribute to students' values by their examples in their daily life activities in addition to being role models in their teaching. Their practice is evident in the forms of cultural activity they have brought to them, in particular for communicative potential in classroom management and fairness. Teachers model cultural humility, curiosity, and respect for differences, making for effective modeling. These real-life examples are more powerful than curricular material because people are more likely to retain the meaning of what they see being done, rather than what they hear about in terms of ideas and concepts. Delpit's (2021) study confirms that this type of real-world modeling plays a significant role in developing cultural competency in students and helps to shift the generation to more enlightened norms in society.

One of the cultural architects is the teacher, and their impact does not stop in the classroom, but extends its reach into the wider community: the teacher can be compared to the intermediaries between the educational establishments and the change in society. They also act, by directly engaging families, cultural institutions and policy makers to affect the development of inclusive cultures, including through community conversations about educational equity, building relationships with community leaders on culturally responsive initiatives, and influencing policy change. This linkage between teachers and the marginalized groups and communities as bridges, or at least as bridges of sorts, in turn, will empower them to raise up the voices of the marginalized and to bring their values into alignment with those of the school, making schools focal points of rich cultural awareness and social justice that extend beyond the school setting to the various neighborhoods that surround them.

Statement Problem

While there is extensive research on teachers as key agents of cultural change, there are few studies that focus on gender-based expectations and the role of teachers in cultural change, especially in Pakistan. This void hampers the progress of gender-sensitized policies for education. Hence, this study explores teachers' social role in cultural change in terms of gender, and thus the gender perception and challenges are identified.

Objectives

1. To find out the views of participants about the social role of teachers with respect to the transformation of Culture.
2. To compare the role of higher education teachers in the Transformation of Culture.

Research Questions

1. What are the views of participants about the social role of teachers from the perspective of the Transformation of Culture?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the views of participants about the social role of teachers from the perspective of the Transformation of Culture.

Research Methodology

The research design used in this study was an Approach and Descriptive Research Design that was applied using the quantitative method and Descriptive research in order to find out the social role of teachers from the perspective of Transformation of Culture. The population of the Southern Public Universities consisted of University teachers and MPhil/PhD Scholars from these universities, and the sample was comprised of this population in the universities. A random sampling method was used to ensure that there is representation of gender. A sample of 93 male teachers, 30 female teachers, 121 male scholars and 127 female scholars was selected using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) criteria of sample selection. This questionnaire was a 7-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics, i.e., a T-test, were applied with the assistance of the SPSS software to analyze and compare the social role of higher education teachers in cultural transformation.

Results and Data Analysis

The data analysis was carried out using descriptive analysis and inferential analysis using a T-test, which was also employed to analyze and compare the social role of higher education teachers in cultural transformation.

Table 1

Social Role of Teachers at the University regarding Transformation of Culture

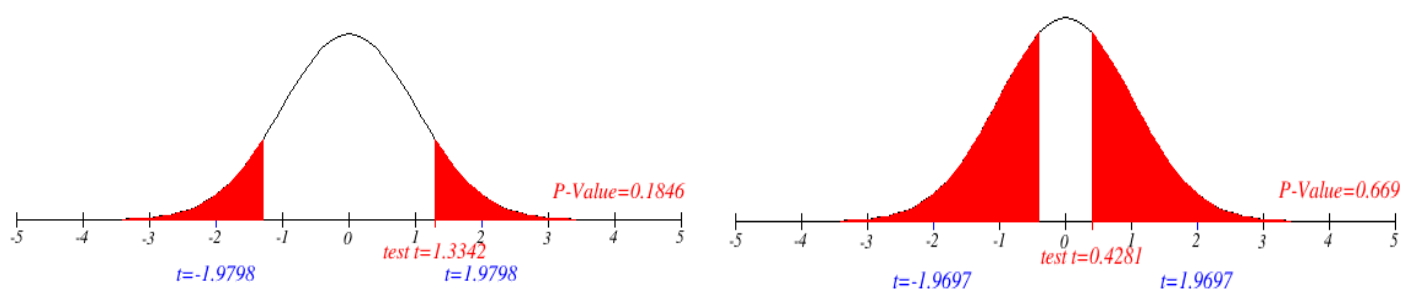
University Stakeholders	Gender	Transformation of Culture														Total
		SA		A		SWA		N		SWDA		DA		SDA		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Teachers	M	17	18.60	26	27.40	25	26.90	0	0	15	16.30	10	10.80	0	0	93
	F	9	30	11	36.68	5	16.66	0	0	0	0	5	5.16	0	0	30
M.Phil./PhD	M	23	19.00	32	26.44	26	21.48	5	4.13	22	18.18	14	10.77	0	0	121
Scholars	F	21	21.25	34	26.79	26	20.48	5	3.93	23	18.11	12	9.44	0	0	127

The table shows the perceptions of the university stakeholders, namely the Teachers and the M.Phil./PhD Scholars towards the issue of “Transformation of Culture” based on the seven-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SDA), by sex. The data show an overwhelmingly positive perception of cultural change by both groups, and no one out of the respondents marked “SDA” in any category. The overall agreement (SA + A + SWA) is highest among female teachers (83.3%) than among male teachers (73.0%), with females reporting the strongest agreement (30%) and no disagreement exceeding 5.16% among both teachers. M.Phil./PhD scholars, on the other hand, have more balanced perceptions, with 66.9% of males agreeing with 63.7% of the females and 28.95% of males disagreeing with 27.55% of the females. Of particular interest, the teachers reported no neutral responses (0%), while the scholars reported low neutrality (4.13% of males and 3.93% of females).

Table 2*Teachers' Social Role at University for Transformation of Culture*

University Stakeholders	Gender	Transformation of Culture			Comparison		
		Numbers	Mean $\bar{X}$	S.D 'S'	t-calculated	t-tabulated	P-value
Teachers	M	93	5.00	1.62	1.3342	±1.9798	0.1846
	F	30	5.46	1.71			
M.Phil./PhD Scholars	M	121	4.91	1.66	0.4281	±1.9697	0.669
	F	127	5.00	1.65			

Comparative gender-based analysis of stakeholders in the University's perceptions of the transformation of culture is presented using mean scores, standard deviations and results of an independent t-test. However, female teachers had a higher mean score (5.46) than male teachers (5.00), and female M.Phil. / PhD scholars had a slightly higher mean score (5.00) than male M.Phil. / PhD scholars (4.91). However, the calculated t-values in both groups (teachers: 1.3342; scholars: 0.4281) are less than the respective critical t-tabulated values, while the p-values (0.1846, 0.669, respectively) are greater than the 0.05 significance level. This means that for both stakeholder groups, there is no statistical difference in the observed mean values between genders. The results imply that there is no significant gender difference in perceptions of cultural transformation, and the views of male and female respondents were basically the same in each group, which may be due to random variation and not systematic gender differences.

Figure 1*Teachers' Social Role at University for Transformation of Culture*

Findings

The table shows the answers of Teachers and M.Phil./PhD Scholars about the social role of teachers in the process of transformation of culture at the University in terms of gender and level of agreement. The male teachers agree (27.40%) and somewhat agree (26.90%), and the female teachers show higher agreement (36.68%). For the female students, there is a significant number that agrees (26.79%) and a significant number that Somewhat Disagrees (18.11%). For the male students, the significant numbers that agree are 26.44%, and a significant number that Somewhat Disagree are 18.18%. Minimal responses are Neutral and Strongly Disagree, with no one choosing Strongly Disagree and only a small percentage of scholars marking Neutral (4.13% males and 3.93% females).

Statements made by the stakeholders of the university, namely Teachers and M.Phil./PhD Scholars, have been compared with respect to the transformation of culture, by gender. For Teachers, males (mean = 5.00) and females (mean = 5.46) exhibit no significant difference (t-calculated = 1.3342, p-value = 0.1846). Males (mean = 4.91) and

females (mean = 5.00) of M.Phil./PhD Scholars do not yield any significant difference (t-calculated = 0.4281, p-value = 0.669).

Discussions

Strong agreement around cultural change, especially from female teachers, supports feminist pedagogical theories (Cannon, 2024) and schools as locations for social change. This is in line with the studies on gender that Lears has conducted in a longitudinal study, which revealed that female teachers are the primary drivers of progressive reforms in education. The cross-role agreement points to a potential institutionalization of the principles of transformative education (Budnyk & Sajdak-Burska, 2023), but it is necessary to conduct studies on the implementation of transformative education, as some of the studies by Giroux (2023) warn that this might be superficial. While some radical feminist scholarship argues for gender differences in levels of support (Kier-Byfield, 2021), this does not appear to be the case for the majority of recent intersectional analyses (Dee et al., 2023). The findings validate the implementation of "transformative leadership" models (Silva, 2023), which embed cultural change, and which take into consideration the reported resistance to change in conservative communities (Furco & Holland, 2023).

Conclusions

Transformation of Culture: The majority of respondents are in agreement that culture is being transformed (with female teachers showing the highest level of agreement). There is no gender difference, and the views of stakeholder groups are comparable.

Recommendations

1. Universities should strengthen teachers' role in promoting cultural transformation through training and professional development.
2. No significant difference was detected between male and female teachers in cultural or academic activities, and equal opportunities should be given to both.
3. The enhancement of cultural transformation should be through the inclusion of cultural values and social responsibility in the curriculum of universities.
4. The universities should arrange seminars, workshops and cultural programs for promoting the contribution of teachers in cultural transformation.
5. To promote positive cultural transformation among students, teachers should be encouraged to use a value-based and inclusive approach to teaching.

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