

## Gender Role Differences in the Preferences of Values Among University Students

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<p><b>Article History:</b></p> <p><b>Received:</b> 19 Apr 2019</p> <p><b>Accepted:</b> 15 May 2019</p>	<p><b>ABSTRACT</b></p> <p>The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of gender roles on the preferences of values among postgraduate students studying in Baha Uddin Zakariya University Multan. The sample consisted of 256 students; 126 male and 130 female students who were selected through convenient sampling technique. The Allport-Vernon Study of Values Questionnaire measuring six personal values and Bern Sex Role Inventory measuring masculinity and femininity were used. The data were analyzed on SPSS-21 employing Pearson Correlations and t-test. The findings revealed the significant relationships among gender roles and personal values. Results showed that males were found more political, social and economic while females were found more religious, theoretic and aesthetic. Correlation analysis depicted that masculinity was more related to political, social and economic values and femininity was more related to religious, theoretic and aesthetic values. The study findings have the significant implications for students' teachers and parents in the manner that understanding of gender roles and preferences of values will help them to understand their expected roles and behaviors in daily activities.</p> <p><b>Key Words:</b> Femininity, masculinity, aesthetic, religious values, social values</p>
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### 1. Introduction

Values are the products of socialization, which plays one of the most important roles behind the personality development of human child. Values reflect the culture of a society and are widely shared by the members of the culture. A man and the culture of his society can be known by knowing his values. Although, values are a concept adapted by human beings to function properly according to the set customs of the society one lives in (Kopelman, Prottas, & Tatum, 2004). Some values may be shared almost universally by

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human beings and others are very specific in accordance with the culture one lives in. Values are developed relatively early in the process of primary socialization and are most of the time constant and unchangeable. Simply put, an individual's existence in a society is completely based on his/her values because one's existence is governed by values (Woodhill, & Samuels, 2003).

Allport's early work (1931) on identification and measurement of dimensions of primary values is significant. The outcome of his contributions to the field of personality values is the initial publication of Allport–Vernon–Lindzey Study of Values (SOV) (Vernon & Allport, 1931) and its third edition (Allport, Vernon, & Lindzey, 1970) that had a substantial impact on psychological research and practice. Based on the seminal work of Spranger (1928), the SOV identifies six value orientations, which briefly are as follows:

- Theoretical (the discovery of truth: empiricism, intellectualism)
- Economic (that which is useful: resourceful, practical affairs)
- Aesthetic (form and harmony: grace, artistry in life)
- Social (love of people: altruism, sympathy, caring)
- Political (power in all realms: influence, leadership)
- Religious (unity of life: comprehension of life's meaning)

Allport was of the view that people have individual differences in values. Several demographics such as gender, age, race, and income have impact on preferences of values; however, gender roles are more dominant in describing the values. Gender role is a social role. It is a set of expectations associated with the perception of masculinity and femininity (Goldstein, 2001). The two terms of 'sex role' and 'gender role' are generally used interchangeably, but this traditional interchange is quite misleading and confusing. Sex refers

to the biological part persons belong to, while gender refers to the social role which is ascribed to people by society regardless of sex either the male or female (Bem, 1995).

Gender role contains many dimensions. Gender role of any one can be tailored through actions, preference of work, material in use, clothing, social connectivity and other aspects of life (Ali, Krantz, Gul, Asad, Johansson, & Mogren, 2011). Gender is described as the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and values so on that a certain cultural group refers to an individual's realizing and acceptance of gender roles (Hutson-Comeaux & Kelly, 2002). People have different degree of "maleness" and "femaleness," or masculinity and femininity (Ethan, Zlatan, & Sabrina, 2015). If a person evaluates the other person then he or she can put the other person to be evaluated on side of feminine, means more women alike, while others may be fitted to masculine side more; means more men alike, and there is possibility that some are viewed as in between the two who possess both masculine and feminine characteristics (Cameron, 1992). Gender roles hold the different values and are characterized by the different personality traits that are determined by person values. The gender role could have the connection with following six values;

### **1.1 Gender and Theoretical Value**

Under this value, one individual is basically pertained to the knowing of reality and truth. Person proposes a cognitive' attitude towards achieving this goal, looking only to identify and to argue. In this context, the person doing under this theoretical value explores the primary truth and conflict, disapproving condition of beautification or usefulness. Women as compared to men have been found more theoretical just because of their closeness of nature to reality and truth.

### **1.2 Gender and Economic Value**

The individual with economic value emphasis heavily on the value of usefulness. The value of economic gradually leads to the daily life affairs of the world of business; for

instance, the productivity of goods, marketing, and its consumptions. In doing so, an individual of economic value is concerned with earning wealth and money. Economists have suggested that income has significant psychological impact on wellbeing. Previous research shows different relationships between income and wellbeing for men versus women, and this difference may be related to psychological factors such as needs, desires, and role (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002).

The value of economic directly affects the economic decision making that is differently reported by men and women (Diener & Oishi, 2000). Underlying factors impacting the relationship between well-being and both personality and income for men and women are rooted in economic values as well (Kandler et al., 2010). Given the differentiation of gender roles in society it is possible that men will show a stronger effect of income on well-being than women. Gender is a prime candidate in such an equation of economy and wellbeing because males and females are differentiated in the societal roles they are expected to fulfill (Eagly et al., 2000).

### **1.3 Gender and Aesthetic Value**

The person of aesthetic value puts more consideration on value of harmony and form. The individual sees his or her life as a series of events by evaluation every single event in the context of significance, consistency, grace, or appropriateness. Every individual takes the impression in terms of its enjoyment for own self. It doesn't mean that the person must be creative but is expected to perceive the world and life as artistic piece of work at his level (Chamorro-Premuzic, Furnham, Reimers, 2007).

Fechner's more (1876) lasting contribution to the study of aesthetics opened the door to the study of individual aesthetic preferences (McManus, Cook, & Hunt, 2010). More recently, Kraaykamp and Van Eijck (2005) reported that Openness was positively associated with a preference for more complex and stimulating genres, particularly literary novels and literature. McManus and Furnham (2006) examined demographic and

personality predictors of engagement with a range of aesthetic activities, including engaging with performance art, engaging with visual arts, engaging with literature, engaging with classical music, and engaging with popular music. Of the personality variables included in their study, they reported that openness was positively associated with engagement in these activities. More broadly, engagement with aesthetic activities was found to be more strongly associated with openness that was further mediated by gender role.

#### **1.4 Gender and Social Value**

This value of social considers the highest degree of love of people. Hence the two aspects of love; altruistic or philanthropic are the main concerns of Study of Values, people of social value appreciate others. They are themselves very polite, kind, supportive, and altruistic. The people with this value of social are more likely to report the economic, theoretical, and aesthetic beliefs as passive and insensate or inhuman because they consider the value of love as the only valuable aspect of human relationship. Gender differences in personality traits explained that women are often found to be more agreeable than men (Costa et al., 2001). This means that women, on average, are more nurturing, tender-minded, and altruistic more often and to a greater extent, than men. Buss (2008) also identified that women are more concerned with successfully raising children and therefore are more cautious, agreeable, nurturing, and emotionally and socially involved. Gender norms are shaped by socio-cultural influences, such that women and men are expected to serve different roles in society and are therefore socialized to behave differently from one another (Eagly & Wood, 2005).

#### **1.5 Gender and Political Value**

The political people take interest in power. Political individuals are not bound to the actions of political realm, though the leaders place more focus on power in any area of

life. Since the efforts and competitions are in-built in all areas of life, several thinkers have debated upon power that it is the most unique and vital motive of an individual.

The burgeoning field of gender and political behavior shows gender differences in voting behavior and participation across democracies. In contemporary elections, women tend to support leftist parties more than men in many countries. Men and women political behavior is different, but women still trail men in important participatory attitudes and activities such as political interest and discussion. After enfranchisement, women traditionally participated less than men in democracies around the world. In recent decades, women have made great strides in voter turnout. Burns, Schlozman, and Verba (2001) demonstrates that women are least engaged with the stages of the political process. Since the 1970s, studies of political behavior show that men are more interested in politics and more frequently discuss politics, tune into public affairs programs on television, read newspapers, and report reading stories about political events (Burns et al., 2001).

### **1.6 Gender and Religious Value**

The religious value is highly focused on value of unity. In fact, relating to mystical aspect, people try to know the world as a unity or whole and seek to experience it as one bind. Spranger interpreted the person of religion value as an individual who is consistently focused on seeking the satisfaction from his or her experiences and life events. Women's generally greater level of religiosity has been observed by scholars for decades (Gallup & George, 2002). Initially, some scholars assumed women were universally more religious across all religions and cultures. This assumption was likely reinforced by the early concentration on patterns of religious behavior in predominantly European and North American countries with large Christian populations. Hoffmann (2018) detected different patterns of gender differences and found that women generally were more religious than men.

Review of the existing literature revealed the importance of values and gender role in one's life. Hence the studies conducted in western countries have presented strong connection between gender roles and values preferences. It was expected that eastern cultures could have different outcomes, therefore, the present study was planned to examine the gender differences in values preferences. This study is an extension to the currently available literature focusing the differences in the preferences of values by men and women in Pakistani society because the existing literature lacks the investigations particularly in the context of Pakistani society. To see the relationship of masculinity and femininity with values was another objective of the present study. It was hypothesized that women will prefer theoretical, religious, and aesthetic values while men will more likely to show their interest in economic, social, and political values in Pakistani sample. It was further assumed that masculinity will be more linked to social, economic, and political values; and femininity will be more associated with theoretical, religious, and aesthetic values.

## **2. Method**

- **Participants**

The participants of this study were 256 postgraduate students aged between 23-29 years ( $M=26.03$ ,  $SD=3.1$ ) selected through convenient sampling technique from Baha Uddin Zakariya University Multan. Of this sample, 49% were male and 51% were female adults; 41% were from nuclear family system and 59% were from joint family system. The inclusion criteria of the study required students enrolled in postgraduate university program or above for at least one semester. All the participants were single in marital status and were living in Urban areas of Multan City.

- **Instruments**

Following scales were used to obtain the information regarding students' preferences of values and their characteristics of masculinity and femininity.

## **2.1 Study of Values**

To measure the values, the Study of Values (Allport-Vernon, 1970) was used. It is one amongst the earlier developed and rationally well-structured measures assessing personal values based on obvious and clear behavioral preferences. This questionnaire analyzes the six categories of values of personal preferences such as economic, theoretical, political, aesthetic, religious and social rated on 5-point Likert scale. The internal reliability of the scale has satisfactory alpha coefficient of .83.

## **2.2 Bem Sex Role Inventory**

Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974) containing 60-items is a self-reported measure that assess instrumental and expressive characteristics. Instrumental is composed of ambitious, analytical and assertive, while expressive is composed of affectionate, gentle, and loyal characteristics. Twenty gender-typed items measure each subscale. There are 20 neutral additional items for adaptable, conscientious, friendly characteristics. Responses are obtained on a 7-point Likert scale where they answer how well each trait true for them. The seven categories for response are: never, rarely, a little bit, neither true nor untrue, to a large extent, most of the times, and always. The score of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 is given to the checked category. Responses to items no. 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, 29, 32, 35, 38, 41, 44, 47, 50, 53, 56, and 59 are summed and divided by 20 to obtain a score on the femininity scale, while responses to items no. 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 37, 40, 43, 46, 49, 52, 55, and 58 are summed and divided by 20 to obtain a score on masculinity scale. The internal consistency of the scale was found .91 alpha coefficient.

### **2.3 Procedure of Data Collection**

Employing convenient sampling technique, the participants of the study were approached at three departments (Psychology, Sociology, and Philosophy) of Baha Uddin Zakariya University, Multan during their break time. The survey method was used to collect the data on two questionnaires measuring personality values and gender roles along with demographic information sheet. Prior collecting the data, informed consent was obtained from each participant individually. They were briefed about how to respond the items on questionnaires and were assured that their responses are anonymous and will be kept confidential. Data were then analyzed on SPSS-21.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

To analyze the data, the descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and independent sample t-test were performed on SPSS-21.

**Table 1** -Means, Standard Deviations and t-values for the Scores of Male and Female students' Preferences on Values (N=256)

Values	Male Students (N=126)		Female Students (N=130)		T	P	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Theoretical	38.98	5.77	40.49	5.93	-1.99	0.04*	0.34
Economic	44.75	6.97	37.53	4.73	6.03	0.00**	0.42
Aesthetic	40.25	7.90	46.80	4.35	-5.10	0.00**	0.37
Social	38.02	6.04	36.24	5.44	2.17	0.02*	0.32

Religious	34.82	5.50	41.53	5.36	-6.17	0.00**	0.42
Political	43.73	7.13	36.59	5.00	5.77	0.00**	0.38

*df* = 254, \**p* < 0.05, \*\**p* < 0.001

Table 1 shows the comparison between the male and female students' preferences of their values. Findings revealed the significant differences in choosing values by male and female students. Results indicated that female students were found high on theoretical ( $t=1.99^*$ ), aesthetic ( $t=5.10^{**}$ ), and religious ( $t=6.17^*$ ) values than male students while male students scored high on economic ( $t=6.03^*$ ), social ( $t=2.17^*$ ) and political ( $t=5.77^{**}$ ) values than female students.

**Table 2** - Correlation Matrix among Masculinity, Femininity, and Values ( $N=256$ )

Variables	M	SD	Masculinity	Femininity
Theoretical	39.70	5.86	.25*	.36**
Economic	41.14	5.85	.56**	.17
Aesthetic	43.52	6.12	.15	.44**
Social	37.13	5.74	.61**	.32**
Religious	38.17	5.43	.21*	.39**
Political	40.16	6.06	.57**	.23*

\**p* < 0.05, \*\**p* < 0.001

Table 2 shows the descriptive analysis and correlation coefficients for the scores of six values with masculinity and femininity. Correlation analyses indicate the significant relationships among all variables. Findings suggest that masculinity was more related to political, social and economic values and femininity was more related to religious, theoretic and aesthetic values.

The present study was focused on knowing the relationships of gender roles with values. To see the gender differences in preferences of values was another objective of the current study. Data were analyzed to test the hypotheses of the study. The first hypothesis stated that male and female students will report different preferences in their values, was supported by the present findings. It was assumed that female will show their more interest in the values of theoretical, aesthetic, and religion while male students will demonstrate their more preferences for the values of economic, social, and political. Findings about theoretical value were found supportive and consistent with the previous literature. Females were found higher on the theoretical value than males. Gidengil, Blais, Nadeau, and Nevitte (2001) provided that women are more leftist in their issue preferences and, specifically, more supportive of feminist values, welfare state, and social spending and less supportive of market-based solutions than men.

Findings related to preferences regarding economic value by both men and women indicated that male respondents scored higher on economic value that clearly showed the greater interest of male students in economic value. The supportive reasons for this finding might be located in the report presented by (Bem, 1974) wherein males have been presented as more focused on obtaining economic resources to provide for a family while females have been found more oriented towards behaviors related to nurturing, with more of a focus on domestic rather than work-related activities. Diener and Biswas-Diener's work (2002) is also in line with the present findings who argued that male gender role emphasizes economic success as well as the ability to procure the resources that it purchases.

Present study hypothesized that female students will be more aesthetic compared to male students. This assumption was found supportive by the present findings and females were found with more value of aesthetic than male respondents. This finding is similar as reported in literature review. Several studies have confirmed the present findings for Pakistani sample in the consistent way. For instance, Furnham and Walker (2001a) presented that women are more with openness to experience personality trait and show

more aesthetic sense in all daily routine activities ranging from domestic to even workplace.

Social value and gender role differences when were correlated, findings suggested that females expressed more social interest as compared to males. These findings can be reasoned that from a socialization perspective, people learn their appropriate gender role through parenting, social exchanges, and interactions with surrounding institutions and their hierarchies. Nicholson and de Waal-Andrews (2005) further added that women tend to be more oriented towards social activities, social exchange, and social regulation than men. The results are also in line with the work of Lippa (2010) who demonstrated that men and women prioritize different issues, and feminist values and social spending appear to be more important to women.

The assumption that female students will value the religion orientation more than female students was also found significant and supportive. Results indicated that female participants were found more religious valued as compared to male participants. This finding is in tune with the findings of the study conducted by Devine (2013) who reported that women remain more engaged in religious activities than men. Voas, McAndrew and Storm (2013) also reported the similar findings that women generally tend to be more religious than men in many societies. They found that women are less likely than men to work in the labor force; a social role that some studies find is associated with lower levels of religious commitment. Scholars note that a focus solely on home management, which involves more attention and time spent raising children and caring for sick or elderly relatives, appears to encourage stronger religious commitment and more frequent religious activity.

Findings pertaining to the gender role differences in terms of political value suggested that male students rated high on political value compared to female students. These findings are in consistent with the findings reported by Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer (2012) that men reported greater political interest, discussion, political knowledge, and attention to news about politics. Kellstedt, Peterson, and Ramirez (2010) also provided the

similar findings that men and women often react differently to policy shifts and political issues. They elaborated that when government spending rises, both men and women's attitudes become more conservative—men's more rapidly than women.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Findings of the present study affirmed the similar patterns of preferences of different values by men and women in Pakistan as well. Study bore the significant findings in terms of gender roles and personal values. Feminine gender role was found connected with the preferences of theoretical, aesthetic and religious while masculinity gender role was found more associated with economic, social, and political values. The findings revealed the significant gender differences in preferences of values. It is concluded that Pakistani sample also revealed that males are more oriented towards economic, social, and political functioning while females are found with more aesthetic, theoretical, and religious aspects of livings.

#### **5. Limitations and Suggestions**

Despite significant findings of the present study, the study has also encountered with some limitations. First, the sample size was small. So, to increase research generalizability, the sample size should be increased. Second, for the present study only students of the Baha Uddin Zakariya University were approached, more meaningful findings could be obtained if students of other Universities were also included in the sample. Third, this domain has not been much explored in Pakistan, the present research calls attention to overall need for further research in this area. There is need to encourage the researchers to explore this important area, which has great influences on individual's life orientation. The research can be more meaningful if other values are also studied because it will provide a better understanding. Fourth, Scales used in present study should be translated into Urdu according to the local language of participants.

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