Understanding Learning through Gendered Lenses: A Qualitative Sociological Study of Educational Experiences and Achievement

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ABSTRACT
This study scrutinizes learning achievement through gendered lenses, emphasizing how educational experiences are socially constructed and shaped by gender norms, roles, and power relations. Adopting a qualitative research design, the study conducted an interpretive analysis of peer-reviewed literature that explicitly addressed gender and learning achievement. Thematic analysis revealed recurring patterns in how gendered dispositions, access to cultural and social resources, and institutional practices influence students' engagement, participation, and recognition in educational settings. Intersectional perspectives highlighted that gender interacts with other social categories, such as class and race, producing differentiated learning experiences and outcomes. Drawing on feminist theory and Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, and field, the study demonstrates that learning achievement is not an individual attribute but a socially mediated process shaped by structural, cultural, and relational factors. The findings underscore the importance of inclusive educational practices that recognize and address the nuanced ways gender structures learning opportunities and achievements.

Keywords: Gender, Learning Achievement, Feminist Theory, Intersectionality, Sociological Analysis, Higher Education

Introduction
Learning is not a neutral or uniform process; rather, it is deeply embedded within social structures, cultural meanings, and power relations that shape how knowledge is accessed, interpreted, and valued (Lorber, 1994; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Among these structuring forces, gender occupies a central position, influencing educational experiences, classroom interactions, and trajectories of academic achievement (Butler, 1990). Sociological scholarship has long emphasized that gender is not merely a biological attribute but a socially constructed and continuously negotiated identity that operates through norms, expectations, and institutional practices (Bourdieu, 1990;

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Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Within educational settings, these gendered dynamics affect students' self-perceptions, participation patterns, subject preferences, and relationships with teachers and peers, thereby producing differentiated learning outcomes (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2000). Understanding learning through gendered lenses requires moving beyond aggregate measures of achievement to examine the lived experiences through which students engage with education (Shoaib, Iqbal, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2026a, 2026b; Shoaib, Shahzadi, Shamraiz, & Abdullah, 2026a, 2026b). Qualitative sociological inquiry is particularly well suited to this task, as it captures the meanings students attach to their educational journeys and reveals how gender intersects with everyday practices, interactions, and symbolic boundaries within schools and universities (Shoaib, Ahmed, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2026a, 2026b, 2026c). Classrooms function as gendered spaces where curricula, pedagogical styles, assessment practices, and informal peer cultures often reproduce dominant gender norms, whereas simultaneously offering possibilities for resistance and transformation (Ali, Abdullah, & Shoaib, 2026; Shahzadi, Shoaib, Baneen, & Abdullah, 2026; Shahzadi, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2026). These micro-level processes are crucial for understanding how academic achievement is constructed, sustained, or constrained across different gendered positions (Ahmed, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2026a, 2026b; Ali, Abdullah, & Shaoib, 2026).

This study adopts a qualitative sociological approach to explore how students interpret and navigate their educational experiences within gendered social contexts and how these interpretations shape their learning and achievement. By foregrounding students' voices and narratives, the research seeks to illuminate the subtle and often taken-for-granted ways in which gender structures learning opportunities, aspirations, and outcomes. In doing so, the study contributes to broader sociological debates on education, inequality, and identity, and offers critical insights for developing more inclusive and reflexive educational practices that recognize gender as a central dimension of learning rather than a peripheral variable.

Study Context

Despite extensive research on learning outcomes in higher education, there remains a significant gap in understanding how gendered social constructs shape students' educational experiences and achievements (Ahmed, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2026; Waris, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025; Waris, Shoaib, Sharif, & Abdullah, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c). Traditional approaches to educational assessment often overlook the nuanced ways in which gender identities, roles, and expectations influence participation, engagement, and performance in academic settings (Shoaib, Waris, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025b; Shoaib & Zaman, 2025; Shoaib, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025). In Pakistan, where socio-cultural norms strongly inform gendered behavior and access to educational resources, these dynamics become even more pronounced (Shoaib, Waris, & Iqbal, 2025b, 2025c; Shoaib, Waris, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, Waris, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025a). However, quantitative studies provide statistical insights into gender disparities in achievement, they fail to capture the lived experiences, perceptions, and social interactions that inform how students navigate learning environments (Shoaib & Ullah, 2025; Shoaib, Waris, & Iqbal, 2025a; Shoaib, Waris, & Iqbal, 2025a, 2025b). This gap limits the ability of educators, policymakers, and institutions to design interventions that are responsive to the gendered realities of students' educational journeys (Shoaib, Shamsher, & Iqbal, 2025; Shoaib, Tariq, & Iqbal, 2025a, 2025b; Shoaib, Tariq, Rasool, & Iqbal, 2025). Therefore, there is a pressing need for a

qualitative sociological investigation that explores how gender constructs shape learning experiences, strategies, and outcomes in tertiary education, offering deeper insight into the intersection of identity, social expectations, and academic achievement.

The Data and Methods
This study employed a qualitative research design grounded in an interpretive analysis of published research to explore the relationship between gender constructs and learning achievement in educational contexts. Using purposive sampling, peer-reviewed studies were selected based on their conceptual and empirical relevance, with inclusion criteria requiring explicit attention to gender and learning achievement (such as academic performance, participation, recognition, or perceived success). Relevant literature was systematically retrieved from major academic databases and analyzed through thematic analysis. This process involved iterative coding and categorization to identify recurring patterns, meanings, and connections in students' gendered learning experiences. The resulting themes were synthesized to draw conclusions, offering a theoretically informed understanding of how learning achievement is socially constructed and influenced by gendered structures, interactions, and institutional practices.

Results and Discussion
The study findings outline that family support is essential for students to attain their academic goals, upper class families understand the values of education that's why they support their children to engage in education (Shoaib, Shamsher, & Iqbal, 2025). However, the study finding examine that the students from lower economic families also face stress, anxiety and depression for financial problems (Mason, 2019). Moreover, the argument study reveals that the students face class intersectionality face different types of challenges like lack of confidence, emotional burden and they feel loneliness which effect their learnings (Shoaib, Rasool, Zaman, & Ahmed, 2025). Besides, the study asserts that the socio-economic background has an impact on learning achievements it's impossible to eradicate these challenges (Shoaib, Rasool, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025). In a nut shell, the study findings show that the achievement gap reduce by reducing intersectionality of class and gender through the support of society and change the traditional education system (Shoaib, Rasool, & Zaman, 2025c). Contently, the study findings examine that the students also have unequal access for online learnings lack of access for internet and technology to perform lab experiences (Shoaib, Rasool, & Zaman, 2025a).

 The study findings outline that in south Asia girls' education neglect because of poverty low income class prefer boys' education because they become breadwinner foe their families (Ellis, 2018). Moreover, the study findings outline that intersectionality in different countries based on ethnicity and the color of people, discrimination between white people and black people (Shoaib, Rasool, & Zaman, 2025b). Besides, the argument study reveals that in different universities the feminist research on intersectionality and gender discrimination of education. Nonetheless, the study of Fresnoza-Flot (2017) asserts that in lower class people neglect the girls' education in the fear of harassment. However, the arguments of the study that families don't allow to girls go to school for education (Shoaib, Rasool, Kalsoom, & Ali, 2025). Nonetheless, the study findings show that social identity theory explain the intersectionality on education on the basis of gender (Shoaib, Rasool, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025b). In a nut shell, the study of Gill (2024) indicated that lack of teachers and teaching method also effect the leaning achievements of students. Contently, the study findings outline that

poverty is a main reason of lower class students they don't achieve their goals they don't have resources for education (Shoaib, Rasool, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a).

The study findings outline that in western countries different programs work on poor students' education and they provide funds and scholarships for the education of low income students (Shoaib, Rasool, & Iqbal, 2025b). Moreover, the study findings examine that the intersectionality and discrimination of gender and class have deeply impact on student's education and their future (Harris, Kleiber, Goldin, Darkwah, & Morinville, 2017). Besides the argument of the study reveals that the intersectionality has different social factors which effect the students learning goals (Shoaib, Rasool, & Iqbal, 2025a). However, the study of Hovorka (2015) asserts that different areas have traditional cultural of education they don't prefer to give school and universities education to their children's. Nonetheless, the study findings show that poor families face different challenges like lack of transport, low budget of fee and lack of access of internet (Hunt & Antin, 2019). In a nut shell, the study of Jha and Wharton (2023) indicates that in different families' girls forcefully leave their study because of their early marriages, females also face this challenge in our society. Contently, the study findings examine that mostly girls stay at their home because their families are focus on their marriage not at their education (Shoaib, Rasool, & Iqbal, 2025c).

The study findings outline that intersectionality in higher education is common in different countries on the basis of gender, class and ethnicity (Shoaib, Kausar, Ali, & Abdullah, 2025). Moreover, the study findings outline that in south Korea the intersectionality in labor market, people prefer male as compare to female for labor market (Shoaib & Kausar, 2025). Besides, the argument of the study reveals that social identity among transgender also create gender discrimination in all fields (Kuper, Wright, & Mustanski, 2018). However, the study of Kuper et al. (2018) asserted that gender and class intersectionality become cause of stress and depression of students. Nonetheless, the study findings show that social identity theory, it identified social role based on gender male and female play different role in society (Shoaib, Iqbal, Rasool, & Abdullah, 2025). In a nut shell, the study indicated that the intersectionality of class and gender are almost interconnected which effects the tertiary education of students (Shoaib, Iqbal, & Iftikhar, 2025). Contently, the study findings examine that some government policies are play their essential role for the girls' education (Shoaib, Batool, Kausar, & Abdullah, 2025).

The study findings outline that high income class of student have access of smartboards in classroom, access of technology and online tools (Shoaib & Bashir, 2025). Moreover, the argument of the study reveals that low income class students face challenges like less access to get books and they don't have good trained teachers they all impact on their learning achievements (Shoaib, Ali, & Kausar, 2025). Besides, the study of McGovern (2021) asserts that intersectionality and the critical race theory explain the social factors of disparities of class and gender. However, the study findings show that boys get good marks in higher education because their gender, access of resources and family intention (Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025b). Nonetheless, the study of Montoya (2023) indicates that the gender disparities in academic achievement have been continuously introduced by different studies. In a nut shell, the study findings include that different investigations and researches explore that males are generally do better in different subjects as compare to females in writing and reading (Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025c). Contently, the study findings outline that somehow different agencies support the education and create some possibilities for lower income family background students (Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a).

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The study findings outline that the intersectionality in education at tertiary level have strong foundation and attached in cultural norms (Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025c). Moreover, the study findings outline indicates that the males experience good things in their education but females face hurdles in getting education (Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025b). Besides, the argument of the study reveals that middle class transgender students also face the challenges of gender disparities (Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a). However, the study of Nicholas, Ganapathy, and Mau (2013) asserts that in Malaysia students of tertiary level face the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, class and gender. Nonetheless, the study findings show that students move from one country to country for higher education face transnational and intersectional problems for immigration and migration (Nowicka, 2024). In a nut shell, the study of Ozkaleli (2018) indicates that in Turkey different organizations work on equity and try to overcome the problems of intersectionality. Contently, the study findings outline that the class intersectionality in tertiary level of education have impacts on student's emotions and they feel their education is not necessary as like their class background (Petersen, 2012).

The study findings outline that parental participation in equal educational for male and female children and equal resource accessibility for all children are related by socio-economic status of parents (Shoaib, Ahmed, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025). Besides, the argument of the study reveals that upper class students are involved in extracurricular activities and all of that improve educational results and they have resource to achieve their learning goals (Shoaib, Ahmed, & Usmani, 2025b). Nonetheless, the study findings show that some students face lack of ability to receive high-quality of education, and requirement to contribute in household income (Shoaib, Ahmed, & Usmani, 2025a). The study findings outline that different organizations work on gender roles, and social class construction among local workers in international political spheres (Shoaib, Ahmed, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025). The study findings outline that the tertiary level education effects by race, class, and gender intersectionality (Shoaib, Ahmed, & Iqbal, 2025). Besides, the argument of the study reveals that in certain societies, learning for females overlooked, especially among low-income families (Shoaib & Abdullah, 2025). Nonetheless, the study findings show that the pressure to excel might lead to emotional issues or school dropouts for girls if they not perform well in their academics (Shoaib, 2025a). Contently, the study findings outline that pupils from rich homes are generally encouraged to enhance softer abilities such as interaction and innovation (Shoaib, 2025b).

The study findings outline that grades, numbers and learning successes include analytical thinking, innovation, social skills, and behavior modification (Larijani, Shoaib, & Abedi, 2025). Moreover, the study findings outline that selective populations have less opportunity to develop communication and soft skills (Iqbal, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025). Besides, the argument of the study reveals that the emotional intelligence and overthinking are critical aspects in learning achievements and success for pupils (Ali, Shoaib, & Kausar, 2025). However, the study of Strand (2014) asserts that to achieve fairness, educational activities must include the interaction of gender and class. Nonetheless, the study findings show that funding for need base students and teacher campaigns all contribute to filling the educational gap and promote higher education for all (Ali, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a). Contently, the study findings outline that every students of tertiary level of education in Pakistan have right to get education without any disparity of class and gender they achieve their learning goals (Ali, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025b).

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The study findings outline that the impact of education of tertiary level nonverbal communication on student assessments of teaching quality and the significance of age, class and gender (Ali, M. Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025b). Moreover, the study findings outline that the benefits of independent education and academic success in an online learning (Ali, Shoaib, Iqbal, & F. Abdullah, 2025a). Besides, the argument of the study reveals that some studies have observed at the effect of nonverbal communication on teacher quality and student assessments of instructors in different institutions (Ali, Shoaib, & Ali, 2025). However, the study of Al-Abdullatif (2020) asserts that the pupils ranked instructors with higher nonverbal closeness as having better teaching abilities and general friendliness in higher education institutions (Ahmed, Shoaib, & Zaman, 2025). Nonetheless, the study findings show that the intersectionality viewpoint is based on color and race and the interaction of students' race, gender, and sexuality (Shoaib, Zaman, & Abbas, 2024). In a nut shell, the study of Asafo-Adjei, Mensah, Klu, and Swanzy-Impraim (2023) indicates that the intersectionality perspective tries to find psychoanalysis problems and cultural sensitivity of different societies. Contently, the study findings outline that the evaluating observable learning in higher education instructors practices the technology in classrooms (Shoaib, Shehzadi, & Abbas, 2024).

The study findings outline that in Indonesian university the leaders have experiences and perspectives on gendered in-role behaviors among higher education students (Shoaib, Ali, & Abbas, 2024). Moreover, the study findings outline that a lot of previous researches have focused on certain mechanisms of higher education of females (Shoaib, Abdullah, Naqvi, & Ditta, 2024). Besides, the argument of the study reveals that the understanding a lot of forms of tertiary level of education signs and their influence on teaching methods and quality of education (Shoaib, 2024d). The study findings outline that this intersectional approach seeks to extend education and cultural sensitivity of traditional education for females (Shoaib, 2024c). Moreover, the study findings outline that intersectionality of higher education in different countries have critical situation base on race, feminism, class and gender (Shoaib, 2024a). However, the study of Borg (2015) asserts that the disparities of people that continue gender, racial, and sexual stereotypes and inequities for education and other resources. Nonetheless, the study findings show the problems of race, gender, and sexual orientation face low income families in almost every country (Shoaib, 2024b). Contently, the study findings outline that most of the economists have try to engage with the demands of intersectional studies, which recognizes the interconnected nature of race ethnicity gender and class (Ali, Zaman, & Shoaib, 2024).

The study findings outline that the disparities based on class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality effects the educations of students and ultimately effects the lives and futures of students (Shoaib, Usmani, & Abdullah, 2023). Moreover, the study finding outline that the socio-economic background and intersectionality have impacts on learning goals of the students (Shoaib, Shehzadi, & Abbas, 2023). Besides, the argument of the study reveals that some researches after different studies they believe that we are all in together to face the intersectionality of class, gender, ethnicity and race (Shoaib, Rasool, Anwar, & Ali, 2023). However, the study asserts that parents are more interested in the early marriage of females rather than their education (Shoaib, Mustafa, & Hussain, 2023). Nonetheless, the study findings show that students face some intersectionality base issues in their classroom and also face difficulty to achieve their study goals (Shoaib, 2023c). In a nut shell, the study indicates that in some area females also face health problems on the base of intersectionality (Shoaib, 2023b). Contently, the study findings that some homes environments motivate to students to get higher education and they inspire from their

parents (Shoaib, 2023a).

The study findings outline that some females face the problems of homelessness and they face the issues of intersectionality of class, gender, color (Shoaib, Usmani, & Ali, 2022). Moreover, the study findings outline that intersectionality of gender is almost common in every country different fields (Shoaib, Mustafa, & Hussain, 2022). Besides, the argument of the study reveals that in different families' students feel depression because on unequal access of resource on the base on their gender (Shoaib, Anwar, & Rasool, 2022). However, the study asserts that lifetime impacts on student's life because they face the issues of intersectionality (Shoaib, Anwar, & Mustafa, 2022). Nonetheless, the study findings show that different kinds of programs are work for graduation education for all students (Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, & Abdullah, 2022). In a nut shell, the study indicates that different teachers have different types of attitude to interact with students and solve their classroom problems (Shoaib & Ullah, 2021a). Contently, the study findings outline that in higher education institutions pupils face different class culture and complexities of gender (Shoaib & Ullah, 2021b).

The study findings outline that there is widespread sexuality and class inequality in science learning students even between the best-grade students of higher education institutions (Shoaib, Rasool, & Anwar, 2021). Moreover, the study findings outline that inequality of male and females in science subject fewer than a third of engineering students and a fifth of university students are female (Shoaib, Iqbal, & Tahira, 2021). Besides, the argument of the study reveals that at the moment, the ruling group is the one that most closely look like the historical standard of a scientist males of white class rather black class (Shoaib, Fatima, & Jamil, 2021). However, the study asserts that this is a critical social justice problem the insufficient number of students graduating from science and in artificial intelligence (Shoaib, Ali, & Akbar, 2021). Nonetheless, the study findings show that it has the ability to affect countries' economic affordability and family social mobility effected the education of students (Shoaib, Ali, & Naseer, 2021). In a nut shell, the study indicates that understanding the lab experiences and goals of women in science subjects is critical to maintaining gender equality in science subjects (Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, & Shaukat, 2021). Contently, the study findings outline that myths about gender in science contribute to the gender disparity that exists in the subjects and the departments of the united state universities (Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, Rasool, et al., 2021).

The study findings outline that pupils established the ideas about their own gender and the resolutions connected with their study goals (Shoaib, Ahmad, Ali, & Abdullah, 2021). Moreover, the study finding outline that young and passionate students to science-related fields develops, the activities must occur throughout start to build motivation in education at online platform (Shoaib, Abdullah, & Ali, 2021). Besides, the argument of the study reveals that the first step in educating interest is to establish situations that appeal to young females have interests in higher education (Shoaib, 2021). However, the study asserts that spending a range of informal and formal learning experiences, the sources of personal interest flourish (Shoaib, Abdullah, & Ali, 2020). Nonetheless, the study findings show that any problems influencing the percentage of females showing an interest in higher education but lack of opportunity to get admission in universities (Shoaib & Ullah, 2019). In a nut shell, the study indicates that universities overloaded or lack of resources in other conditions (Shoaib & Rafique, 2015). Contently, the study findings outline that they fail to provide the fundamental education at the tertiary level of education thus limiting pupils' chances of making important connections with the education (Rafique & Shoaib, 2015).

The study findings outline that home environment and parental interest in children's

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education and learning skills provide the motivation to children (Shoaib, Shaukat, Khan, & Saeed, 2013). Moreover, the study findings outline that in educational institutions teachers' abilities and pedagogical skills play a vital role in learning achievements of students (Shoaib, Latif, & Usmani, 2013). Besides, the argument of the study reveals that the educational institutional develop intersectionality and decolonialisation among online undergraduate students (Anwar, Shoaib, & Javed, 2013). However, the study asserts that low income and black middle class people face the intersectionality of class, gender, and race (Shoaib, Munir, Masood, Ali, & Sher, 2012). Nonetheless, the study findings show that in India students face a lot of problems of caste, class and gender intersectionality (Ali, Abdullah, & Shoaib, 2026).

Theoretical Insights
The theoretical framing of this study draws on sociological perspectives that conceptualize gender as a socially constructed and relational category, shaping educational experiences and outcomes rather than being a fixed biological attribute (Lorber, 1994; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Feminist theory emphasizes that gender norms, roles, and power relations are historically and culturally produced, influencing classroom interactions, curriculum content, and institutional practices in ways that systematically advantage some students whereas disadvantaging others (Butler, 1990). Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, and field further elucidate how gendered dispositions, access to cultural and social resources, and institutional structures shape students' engagement and academic achievement, demonstrating how broader social structures are embodied in learners' practices and aspirations (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Intersectional perspectives, particularly the matrix of domination, highlight that gender interacts with other social categories such as class, race, and institutional context to produce complex patterns of advantage and disadvantage in educational outcomes, which cannot be fully understood through single-category analyses (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2000). Collectively, these theoretical lenses position learning achievement as a socially mediated outcome shaped by normative gendered expectations, institutional dynamics, and intersecting structures of inequality, emphasizing the need to understand both individual agency and structural constraints in educational contexts.

Conclusion
This study highlights that learning achievement in educational contexts cannot be understood as a purely individual or merit-based outcome; rather, it is deeply shaped by gendered social structures, interactions, and institutional practices. Through an interpretive analysis of existing research, the study demonstrates that gender operates as a socially constructed and relational category, influencing students' experiences, participation, and recognition in learning environments. Feminist perspectives reveal how classroom norms, curricula, and teacher expectations often reproduce dominant gender roles, whereas Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, and field show how gendered dispositions and access to resources affect engagement and achievement. Intersectional analysis further underscores that gender intersects with other axes of inequality such as class, race, and institutional positioning producing differentiated opportunities and outcomes for students. Collectively, these insights suggest that academic success is not merely an individual accomplishment but a socially mediated process shaped by complex, interacting structural and cultural factors. By foregrounding the relational and contextual dimensions of learning, the study provides a foundation for

developing educational policies and practices that are more inclusive, equitable, and attentive to the nuanced ways gender shapes educational experiences and achievements.

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