

## Pakistani Women Take Facebook with A Pinch of Salt; Men Go Overboard

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**Abstract:** *The growing popularity of social networking sites among people has resulted in the blurring of the distinctions between offline and online people's identities. Peoples are frequently enticed to publicly express themselves on social media in ways that reveal their personality. The study looked at how the Pakistani people used language to (re)construct their gender identities on Facebook. The researcher used qualitative approach in this study and selected 60 posts of male and female for analysis. The findings of the study shows females are more concerned with establishing social interactions and displaying closeness to others while still adhering to societal standards and expectations. Males posting prefer to discuss issues linked to personal and individual activities, while females prefer to discuss relationships and social perspectives. In reality, the current study suggests that an individual's identity is constantly formed and reshaped by their social, cultural, and technical surroundings.*

**Key Words:** Pakistani Women, Facebook, Social Networking

### Introduction

The use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) has increased dramatically in recent years, with online social networking being a relatively new genre. Users of online social networking services may communicate with a broad network of friends and family through computer. According to [Boyd and Ellison \(2007\)](#), social networking sites are web-based services that allow users to create a public profile inside a particular platform, share links with other users, and examine and evaluate their own list of affiliations as well as those established by other participants within the process.

Language and the way one communicates with others both contribute to one's identity. It is defined by one's personality characteristics, attitudes, opinions, roles, and connections ([Huffaker & Calvert, 2006](#)). The creation of

identity also includes construction of various public identities that are presented in line with cultural and societal restrictions ([Harter, 1998](#)). As a result, an individual's identity is obviously shaped by their function as a member of a certain gender. Gender identity is formed via a collection of actions and beliefs that determine what it means to be a woman and a man ([Lemish, 2008](#)). People use social media to develop and sustain social relationships with others, regardless of their age, nationality, race, color, area, sex, or faith ([Boyd & Ellison, 2007](#)). The vast range of resources available for online communication, such as audios, videos, pictures, text, and gifs, contributes to social media's appeal. These, on the other hand, provide a way of communication that allows for the abolition of traditional gendered social relationships.

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The link between individuals' personalities in everyday life and what is displayed on the internet has emerged as an attractive new study subject. According to [Guta and Karolak \(2015\)](#), the internet provides users with new opportunities to express their personalities via the employment of a variety of strategies. Individuals in internet contexts were found to reflect more elements of the self, according to [Bargh et al., \(2002\)](#). Users tended to design their online identities differently than their offline identities in order to showcase different aspects of their personalities.

Facebook has become ingrained in the lives of many individuals. Facebook, as a social networking site with the most members, has allowed people to keep up with what their friends are up to, share significant events, and be more active online. It has provided people with a platform to develop a detailed profile that serves as their primary method of presenting oneself to an online audience (Bobkowski, 2008, p.6). The user has the right to choose what to say and what not to say ([Rybas & Gajjala, 2009, p.24](#)). The user is attempting to construct his identity during the profile creation process. There is a chance for them to build and re-build their identity. Despite the fact that Facebook offers numerous social features, photography has always been a big part of it. Many people use Facebook to communicate about themselves to others, thanks to the ability to upload photos to their personal page. The ability to create a profile on a social networking site allows individuals to exhibit various aspects of their identity ([Boyd, Ellison, 2007, p.1](#)). An individual may establish their own profile page on Facebook and post as many photos as they wish. An individual can use this to establish an identity that he or she may wish to share with their friends. It's crucial to know if Facebook permits users to represent themselves. Present yourself online with a website, forum, or social network platform that needs to be carefully chosen to perceive text, images, graphics, and audio. It's not by mistake. [Miller and Arnold \(2003\)](#) suggest that care should be done to profile individuals and make conscious

judgments on how they arrange and identify their behaviors and behavior. Online social networking platforms act as a representation mechanism of personal involvement in a social setting. This notion of online existence blurs the distinction from one to the other. The online profile substance is the user, and each profile is accessible 24 hours a day.

It can be believed that during the last decade, several of Facebook's social networking platforms have lost and gains in prominence. Facebook is an essential part of regular expression and necessary for much social communication and self-exposure. The online community allows individuals to write in, and their accounts provide an incentive for vocabulary, images, and the media to form the expected perception. According to [Ivcevic and Ambady \(2012\)](#), there is a general agreement that online social networking sites are a convenient and efficient place to express their identities and pursue print management. Indeed print management seems to be a significant feature for social networking sites.

[Papacharissi \(2011\)](#) argued that "self-presentation" is perceived as a mechanism that develops through adding, contrasting, modifying, or explaining human identification in multiple situations: social, cultural, economic, and social. Therefore, the main questions of the studies.

**RQ 1:** What strategies were followed by each gender to express their attitude on facebook?

## Literature Review

People who perceive the term gender to be synonymous with the phrase sex frequently misunderstand it. Gender is socially and psychologically produced by family interaction processes, but sex is determined by biology (Rhami, 2015). This indicates that, although sex is a biological classification based mostly on reproductive capacity, gender is something that people act and do rather than something they own. Concerns about language and gender date back to the nineteenth century, when authors discussed two separate aspects of gender: its nature and

the relevance of gender prejudice (Rhami, 2015). They asked if men and women utilized language differently, how sexist language is formed and reflected, and how it may be reversed. [Bamman, Eisenstein, and Schnoebelen \(2014\)](#) examined the usage of language by teenagers on Twitter in their study on gender and language differences. According to the findings, there are discernible disparities in the language choices made by men and women based on the numerous linguistic traits used by young people. The high accuracy of linguistic characteristics suggests that language has a lot of gender-predictive potential.

Gender roles and stereotypes in Pakistan have previously been studied largely in contexts such as education and gender portrayal in the print and electronic media ([Ullah, Khan, Khan, & Ibrahim, 2016](#)). The majority of them have come to the conclusion that gender typecasting still exists in our society, as patriarchal ideology continues to be powerfully embedded in images of men and women in print and electronic media ([Raza & Liaqat, 2016](#)). For example, Rehman (2017) explores how social media has offered a forum for Pakistani feminists to organise various women-related functions and boost the exposure of the Pakistani feminist movement. However, the same internet venues also spread online hate speech directed towards these feminists, who are sometimes regarded as members of Pakistan's elite. In turn, [Zafar, Toor, and Hussain \(2019\)](#) believe that social media has been crucial for women entrepreneurs who have been denied access to public venues. It has provided them with access to "potentially vast markets, direct communications, and low-cost, quick information exchange and flexibility" ([Zafar et al., 2019, p. 886](#)). Despite its enormous popularity, the influence of Facebook on Pakistani society has received little attention. In Pakistan, there were 37 million Facebook users as of January 2020, with 79 percent of males and 21% of women, with those aged 18 to 24 being the largest user group.

Facebook postings can disclose numerous facets of an individual's identity in terms of

identity creation. While social media sites allow users to communicate with a broad network of friends and family through computers, they also allow them to create unique online identities (Lee 2008). Personality characteristics, attitudes, ideas, responsibilities, and connections all contribute to one's identity ([Huffaker & Calvert, 2006](#)). The function of an individual as a member of a specific gender is obviously determined by the development of identity, which is heavily influenced by cultural and social limitations. Gender identity refers to a person's sense of self as a member of a certain gender, and it is heavily influenced by socially acceptable femininity and masculinity norms ([Parkins, 2012](#)).

According to [Eisenlauer \(2013\)](#), Facebook users employ text automation characteristics to reduce discursive actions of self-positioning. Unlike self-authored texts, which may be read as quite plain and blunt identity performances, the usage of software produced language, such as that seen in status updates, allows Facebook users to claim various elements of their identities in more subtle ways ([Eisenlauer, 2013](#)). The purpose of this article is to see if the implications of the previous findings apply to the creation of online gender identity. Despite the growing interest in studying online communication patterns, academics think that more research is needed to analyze social networking communication such as Facebook in connection to gender ([Thompson & Lougheed, 2012](#)). As a result, the goal of this study is to bridge that gap by expanding the knowledge on gender biases in social network communication in Pakistani culture.

With the rise in popularity of the Society Wide Web and online social networks, gendered communication patterns have taken on new shapes in today's world. Electronic communication has blurred the lines between spoken and written communication, as well as the boundary between formal and casual language, and is growing more popular among individuals of all genders and ages (Naughton, 1999). Online language is currently seen as a distinct sort of discourse that is influenced by the users' ingenuity and invention ([Crystal,](#)

2001). Gender inequalities in online communication environments must thus be studied in order to identify parallels and contrasts between online and offline gender identities. Gender differences in face-to-face communication were found to be replicated in online communication, with women displaying more emotional interactions and males displaying more challenge individual communication (Parkins, 2012). According to the findings, women's online conduct is more interpersonally focused, demonstrating engagement and relationship maintenance, whereas men's online behavior is more individualistic and information-focused (Parkins, 2012). Male and female online language behavior was found to be similar to face-to-face encounters in terms of politeness tactics. Females tended to self-disclose and avoid friction in online discussion forums, according to Savicki (1996), whereas men preferred to adopt impersonal, fact-oriented language. Furthermore, women were more likely to apply politeness methods such as thanking, appreciating, and apologizing, as well as be disturbed by politeness breaches, whereas males appeared to be less concerned with politeness and more prone to violate expected behavior (Herring, 2000).

## Methodology

The current study looks on how young Pakistani people use Facebook status updates to establish their identities. It also looks at how male Facebook users' online linguistic behavior differs from female Facebook users,

assuming that there are gender disparities in how men and women express themselves in language (Lakoff 1975). The study employs a qualitative approach, in which collected Facebook status samples are analyzed in terms of the frequency of occurrence of certain gender-related parameters proposed by Lakoff (1975) and Tannen (1990), as well as the impact such parameters may have on how one's identity is represented. In this study, 60 Facebook statuses made by 30 males and 30 females in the first quarter of 2016 were studied. Pakis Facebook users aged 20 to 30 years were selected as the subjects because social networking is thought to be more prevalent among young individuals (Hargittai 2008). They are all upper-middle-class people with at least a Bachelor's degree. They are all graduates of Pakistani private institutions, and the most of them speak English fluently. This sample was selected because it reflects Facebook users who are able to publicly express their opinions in proper English.

The respondents were recruited using a convenience sample strategy, since they were picked from a specified demographic of users in the researcher's Facebook friends list, and consent to linguistically analyze the Facebook statuses they made during the first quarter of 2021 was given. Because some Facebook users adopt virtual online genders that are different from their actual ones, the researcher picked individuals from her friend list rather than random users she didn't know in order to be assured about each user's gender (Huffaker & Calvert, 2006).

## Results

Table 1

Topic of Post	Male post	Female post	Significance/P Value
Social Relationships	14 (46.67%)	18 (60%)	* < 0.0001
Opinion/ Advice	16 (53.33%)	12 (40%)	* 0.0002
	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	
<b>Use of Adverbs</b>			
Positive	15	29	
Negative	19	2	
Neutral	2	34	
<b>Use of Adjectives</b>			
Positive	44	59	

Topic of Post	Male post	Female post	Significance/P Value
Negative	20	20	
Neutral	10	22	

The above table describe that the total posts are included for the analysis are 60 (male posts: 30 and female posts: 30). The posts were related on social relationships and opinion or advices. According the findings 14 (46.67%) posts of male and 18 (60%) was consisting on social relationships. The p value is  $* < 0.0001$  showed that relationship is statistically significant. The table also describes that the 16 (53.33%) post of male and 12 (40%) of female posts on opinion or advices. The p value is  $*0.0002$  showed that relationship is statistically significant. In female postings on social experiences, the primary themes include expressing thanks to friends and family, emphasizing the value of love between partners or friends and family, and criticizing undesirable social behaviors such as interfering in people's lives. This suggests that females are more concerned with establishing social interactions and displaying closeness to others while still adhering to societal standards and expectations. Table also shows that Females have a substantially larger inclination to employ adjectives and adverbs to produce a more evaluative discourse, as seen by the data above. Females outnumber males in the use of positive adjectives and adverbs, while males use more negative adjectives and adverbs. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Thelwall et al. (2009), who discovered that female Facebook comments contained more positive emotion terms than male comments.

### Conclusion

The current research addresses a need in the literature on gender identification in online environments, particularly in the context of Pakistani society. The findings of the study

back with prior research on gender language variations in online and offline communication situations, particularly in terms of the themes of interest favored by each gender, as well as the posture elements and engagement methods employed by each. Sixty status posts were included for analysis.

Men posting prefer to discuss issues linked to personal and individual activities, while females prefer to discuss relationships and social perspectives, according to data analysis of Facebook status updates made by 30 male Pakistani FB users and 30 female Pakistani FB users. Males had more self-centered attitudes in terms of language posture traits and engagement techniques, whereas females had greater interaction with others and a preference for positive politeness methods that create social solidarity. The data research also reveals how each gender creates their online persona. Females like to show themselves as sensitive persons who value social relationships and solidarity, whereas males want to portray themselves as powerful, forceful, and autonomous. Also, males' reluctance to discussing female relatives on Facebook illustrates the impact of cultural norms on gender identity, since Pakistani society has a propensity to hide female ties from public life as a method of experiencing masculine protection and domination. In reality, the current study suggests that an individual's identity is constantly formed and reshaped by their social, cultural, and technical surroundings, making it necessary to examine the process of identity building across cultures and historical periods.

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