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TOPIC:

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE ON FEMALE EDUCATION, PROBLEMS FACED BY FEMALE HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS AND ITS IMPACT ON THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

AUTHORS:

- 1- Professor Ashfaque Ahmad Shah, PhD 'University of Baltistan Skardu, Gilgit-Baltistan, Email ID: multanxa@gmail.com Orcid ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9834-6322>
- 2- Zunaira Fatima Syeda, PhD, University of Sargodha, Department of Education, Sargodha, Email ID: neerasalman@gmail.com Orcid ID:<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9823-8572>
- 3- Ghazanfar Ali, University of Sargodha, Department of Education, Sargodha, Email ID: ghazanfar.ali@uos.edu.pk Orcid ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4698-7296>

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**ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE ON FEMALE EDUCATION, PROBLEMS FACED BY
FEMALE HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS AND ITS IMPACT
ON THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

Ashfaque Ahmad Shah,

Zunaira Fatima Syeda,

Ghazanfar Ali,

ABSTRACT:

Purpose of the study is threefold; firstly, to report from Quran and Hadith the evidence of female education, particularly higher education; secondly, to investigate the problems faced by female higher education students; and lastly, to study the impact of these problems on their academic achievement. It is a descriptive study employing qualitative-quantitative approach. Qualitative part includes evidences from Quran and Hadith highlighting female (higher) education followed by the quantitative part containing purposefully administered survey on female higher education students. In this survey, the problems faced by the female students (according to their own perception) at an institute of higher education are carefully recorded along with their academic achievement in the form of grade point averages (GPAs). A questionnaire based on the work of Demise and coworkers (n.d) has adapted. After experts' review it was modified accordingly. This questionnaire was administered to a convenient sample of 104 female students from various departments of an institute of higher education. Although nonparametric statistic (Spearman rho and Kruskal-Wallis) was suitable to the type of data the researchers had after the questionnaire survey; nevertheless, parametric statistic (Pearson r and ANOVA) was also calculated and presented (using SPSS) in order to have a comparative look on the two different types of statistics. The discourse concluded with highlighting Islamic perspective on female (higher) education, recording the female students' perception on the problems faced by them, and confirming that these problems had no impact on their academic achievement. However, the researchers were apprehensive of the fact that the sample is very small; therefore, recommending the survey on an increased sample size for future researchers. Similarly, an investigation at more institutes of higher education would also be interesting as an extension to this study.

KEYWORDS: *Female students, higher education, academic achievement, education in Islam, Problems*

INTRODUCTION: This paper introduces the notion of obligation of *the quest for the sciences* (تحصيل علم) upon Muslims specially women. It is not an event but a perpetually continuous process. It is restricted to neither basic nor higher education level, but an all-inclusive process. It is undeniably obligatory to all the Muslim men and women.

Islamic Republic of Pakistan is the only country established in the name of Islam. According to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, we the Muslims of subcontinent needed an independent sovereign state where we could practice golden principles of Islam. It is a laboratory to experience and enjoy the validity of eternal principles of Islam in modern day ever changing world of science and technology. *Objectives Resolution* clearly delineates that any policy (and practice) contradictory to the teachings of Islam cannot be permissible in Pakistan. This is a state where actual policies as well as practices are necessarily to be made cognizant of golden eternal principles of Islam.

Islam is the only religion insisting upon the mass education. The *sciences* (علوم) are the very essence of Islam. It emphasises upon education and training for the development and progress of human society incessantly. Men and women being equally important and equally responsible in this struggle are ought to be participating with equal zeal and zest in order to play their very specific roles. It is fortunate enough that higher education in Pakistan, particularly since last two decades, has witnessed a quantum growth in quantity as well as quality. It is no less than good news that female participation at higher education at present is remarkably conspicuous. Contributing to its increasing acceleration it is important to identify the factors impeding female higher education. This milieu ascends researchers' interest to study the difficulties faced by the female students at higher education level in Pakistan.

Purpose of the study is threefold; firstly, to report from *Quran* and *Hadith* the evidence upon female education, particularly higher education; secondly, to investigate the problems faced by female higher education students; and lastly, to study the impact of these problems on their academic achievement at universities and the institutes of higher education in Pakistan.

EVIDENCE FROM QUR'AN : Islam is indeed the religion of the science (علم). Very first revelation of Allah upon the holy prophet Muhammad (صلی اللہ علیہ وآلہ وسلم) advised humanity to read (اقرا).

أَفْرُوا بِاسْمِ رَبِّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ
O خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلْقٍ
O الَّذِي عَلَمَ بِالْفَلَمِ عَلَمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ
Recite in the name of your Lord Who created; created man from a clot of congealed blood. Recite: and your Lord is Most Generous, Who taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know. (Al-'Alaq, 96: 1-5)

The According to Islamic references, men and women (biologically, psychologically, and sociologically) are alike; and the underlying notion of complementarity prevails all through the Qur'anic references on the creation of human beings and the reproduction.

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نُطْسٍ وَجَاءَتِهُ وَجْهَةٌ مِنْهَا رُوْجَهَا لِيُسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا[ۚ] فَلَمَّا تَعَشَّشَاهَا حَمَّلَتْ حَمَّالًا حَنِيفًا فَمَرَّتْ بِهِ[ۖ] فَلَمَّا
أَثْقَلَتْ دُعَوَا اللَّهَ رَجَّمَهَا لَعْنَ أَتَيْتَنَا صَالِحًا لِنَكْوَنَ مِنَ الشُّكْرِينَ
It is He (Allah) Who created you from a single being, and out of it He made its mate, that he may find comfort in her. And when he covers her, she bears a light burden and goes about with it. Then, when she grows heavy, they pray to their Lord: If You bestow upon us a healthy child, we will surely give thanks. (Al-A'raf, 7: 189)

The Qur'an evidenced many references of creation, reproduction, and the biological likeness of all the human beings – men and women.

فَاطَّرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ[ۖ] جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَ مِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا يَدْرُوُهُمْ فِيهِ[ۖ] لَيْسَ كَمِيلَهِ شَيْءٌ[ۖ] وَهُوَ
السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ
The Originator of the heavens and the earth, He has appointed for you pairs of your own kind, and pairs also of cattle. Thus does He multiply you. Naught in the universe is like Him. He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. (Ash-Shura, 42: 11)

These references are to invite human beings to believe in *truth* (حق) and not in falsehood (باطل). Seeking knowledge is the way towards the *truth*.

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَيْنَ وَحْقَدَةٍ وَرَقَبَّمُ مِنَ الطَّيْبَاتِ[ۖ] أَفِي الْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ

وَيَنْعَمِّسُ اللَّهُ هُمْ يَكُفُّرُونَ

And Allah has given you spouses from your kind, and has granted you through your spouses, sons and grandsons, and has provided you wholesome things as sustenance. (After knowing all this), do they still believe in falsehood and deny Allah's bounty. (Ash-Shura, 16: 72)

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالثَّقِيلَاتِ وَالْقَنِيتَاتِ وَالصَّدِيقَاتِ وَالصَّدِيقَيْنَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالصَّابِرَيْنَ وَالْحَسِيعَاتِ وَالْحَسِيعَيْنَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَيْنَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالصَّائِمَيْنَ فُرُوجُهُمْ وَالْحَفْظَتِ وَالذَّكَرِيَّنَ اللَّهُ كَثِيرًا وَ الدَّكْرِيَّتِ لَا إِعْدَادَ اللَّهُ كَفُّرَ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

Surely, the men who submit (to Allah) and the women who submit (to Allah), the men who have faith and the women who have faith, the men who are obedient and the women who are obedient, the men who are truthful and the women who are truthful; the men who are steadfast and the women who are steadfast, the men who humble themselves (to Allah) and the women who humble themselves (to Allah), the men who give alms and the women who give alms, the men who fast and the women who fast, the men who guard their chastity and the women who guard their chastity, the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember Allah much: for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and a mighty reward. (Al-Ahzab, 33: 35-40)

EVIDENCE FROM HADITH : Both men and women are equally responsible for their deeds and are answerable to Allah. The holy prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) set the science (علم) as an obligation upon both Muslim men and women persuasively.

طلب العلم فريضته على كل مسلم وMuslimah (سنن ابن حajar)

Our intention to cite a few references from the Qur'an and Hadith is to determine that the quest for the sciences is equally important and inevitable for both men and women; and this quest is not restricted to a particular stage or phase of life; rather, it emphasises upon the continuity from birth to death.

اطلبوا العلم من المهدى الى اللحد

Abu SA' id Khudri (رضي الله تعالى عنـهـ) reports that once a woman asked the holy prophet Muhammad (صلـى اللهـ عـلـيـهـ وـآلـهـ وـسـلـمـ) : "Men have gone ahead of us (in terms of acquisition of knowledge). Therefore, appoint a special day for our benefit as well." The Holy Prophet (صلـى اللهـ عـلـيـهـ وـآلـهـ وـسـلـمـ) fixed one day for them. He (صلـى اللهـ عـلـيـهـ وـآلـهـ وـسـلـمـ) would meet them on that day, advise them and educate them about commandments of Allah Almighty." (Sahih Bukhari)

Abu Musa Al-Ashari (رضـى اللهـ تـعـالـى عـنـهـ) reports that the holy prophet Muhammad (صلـى اللهـ عـلـيـهـ وـآلـهـ وـسـلـمـ) said "He who has a slave-girl and teaches her good manners and improves her education and then manumits and marries her, will get a double reward; and any slave who observes Allah's right and his master's right will get a double reward." (Sahih Bukhari)

Aishah Binte Abu Bakr (رضـى اللهـ تـعـالـى عـنـهـ), the youngest wife of the prophet Muhammad (صلـى اللهـ عـلـيـهـ وـآلـهـ وـسـلـمـ), is honoured with reporting more than 2000 Hadith. She has been teaching eminent scholars (<https://www.whyislam.org/women-in-islam/the-importance-of-girls-education-in-islam/>; accessed on June 13, 2017) including men and women. Undeniably, she is an epitome of female higher education.

Shifa bint Abdullah narrates that: “One day I was sitting with Hafsa (رضي الله تعالى عنها) when the prophet (صلى الله عليه وآلہ وسلم) came along and said, “why you do not teach her (i.e. Hafsa) the cure for the diseases just as you have taught her reading and writing”. (Abu Daud and Ahmad in Musnad)

In another Hadith reported in the compilation of Abu Daud: “Whoever brings up three daughters, teaches them good manners and skills, marries them (to good men) and treats them well, for him is promised paradise”. (Abu Daud)

Ibn-i-Abbas (رضي الله تعالى عنه) reports that the holy prophet Muhammad (صلی الله علیہ وآلہ وسلم) said “If a daughter is born to a man and he brings her up affectionately, shows her no disrespect and treats her in the same manner as he treats his son, Lord will reward him paradise” (Ibn-i-Abbas (رضي الله تعالى عنه); <http://www.studylecturenotes.com/social-sciences/education/399-importance-of-women-education-in-islam>; accessed on June 13, 2017)

Abdullah Ibne Massod, (رضي الله تعالى عنه) reports, similarly, that the holy prophet Muhammad (صلی الله علیہ وآلہ وسلم) said: “If a daughter is born to a person, and he brings her up, treats her in the arts of life, I shall myself stand between him and the hell fire.” (Abdullah Ibne Massod, (رضي الله تعالى عنه);

Salman (n.d.) writes in one of his brief notes on women education in Islam.

“In the socio-regional context of the early Muslim community, however — where writing was still not widespread — it would have been largely associated with prominent, public roles. Moreover, learning to write was seemingly the highest level of formal education at the time. Yet, the earliest reports indicate that women were not prohibited from learning it. According to the Muslim historian Al-Baladhuri (d. 297 AH/892 CE), at the beginning of Islam, only 17 Muslim men knew how to write. However, significantly, five women did as well: Al-Shafaa bint Abdallah (رضي الله تعالى عنها), Hafsa (رضي الله تعالى عنها), Umm Kulthum bint Uqbah (رضي الله تعالى عنها), Aisha bint Saad (رضي الله تعالى عنها), and Karima bint al-Miqdad (رضي الله تعالى عنها). If contextualized today — we could assume that this would not preclude women from higher education, such as universities. Education is seen as one of the pivotal factors in determining the economic, social and political advancement of a society and if, those making up over fifty per cent of that society, are denied such a basic fundamental right then a bright future for such society is not established”. Salman (n.d.)

This very brief and direct rationale introduces the notion of obligation of the quest for the sciences (تحصيل علم) throughout the life span of individuals, particularly Muslims, is not restricted to neither basic nor higher education level; but it is undeniably an unending process for men and women in their entire period of life and, conclusively, it is obligatory to all. Having reached upon the inference of importance of the quest for the sciences (تحصيل علم) for women to higher level, it appears logical to investigate into the prevailing practices. The researchers are interested to study the difficulties faced by female students at higher education level in Pakistan - an Islamic country where actual policies and practices should be cognizant of golden principles of Islam.

LITERATURE REVIEW : Demise, Shinebaum and Melesse (2002) enlist violence, harassment and lack of security as bigger problems faced by female higher education students. Lack of facilities and assertiveness, workload, and academic performance were the problems faced by female higher education students to a lesser extent (Demise, Shinebaum and Melesse, 2002). Interestingly, they observe that females are found well aware of gender discrimination as compared to their male counterparts. They suggest raising awareness, ensuring guidance & counselling, providing greater academic support and improving educational facilities for greater academic success of female higher education students.

Taplin and Margaret (2000) report abortive expectation, delayed access to course materials and personal/family problems are mainly responsible for halting their academic progress among female higher education students in distance education.

According to Saunders, Davis, Williams and Cribbs (2002), dropout and/or suspension are also dependent upon positive self-perceptions among both male and female students. They report that “both male and female students with more positive self-perceptions have stronger intentions to complete the current [academic] year”.

Mayya and Roff (2004) identify that female students are academically more vulnerable; therefore, greater attention is needed for their success in (higher) education. Kursat and Cagiltay (2005) describe that female students are underprivileged in their access to computers at home and their male sibling have advantage to exploit. This leads to sense of deprivation among female students which may affect their academic achievement. Contrary to this, probability of academic success (in Mathematics) is gender independent (Yuksel and Sahin, 2008), although, female students reported significantly higher mathematics anxiety than males.

By many studies, (Saunders, Davis, Williams, Williams and Cribbs, 2002) male students are lagging behind their female peers educationally; females rate of high school completion is higher and they are greater in proportion to go to college and graduate school. Compared to their male counterparts females with greater self-efficacy were found advantageous in their academic achievements in terms of grade point averages (Saunders, Davis, Williams and Cribbs, 2002).

Considerable research is available on the effect of family income on students' academic achievement. From early education to higher education similar findings have been noticed. Lower family income predicts lower academic achievement. And students from comparatively well-off families have better academic achievement. This effect is true for both male and female students. Tollar, Carillo and Morote (2010) record similar results. They conclude that family income is blameable for suspension and dropout.

METHODOLOGY : This section deals with methodology and procedure of the study. It includes the illustration of population, sample, and construction of the instrument and administration of the instrument as well. All the female higher education students of University of Sargodha, Pakistan are included in the population. For the sampling purpose convenient sampling method was used. The sample of the study constitutes 104 students from various departments of University of Sargodha.

It is a descriptive study employing qualitative-quantitative approach. Qualitative part includes evidences from *Quran* and *Hadith* highlighting female (higher) education followed by the quantitative part containing purposefully administered survey on female higher education students. In this survey, the problems faced by the female students (according to their own perception) at an institute of higher education are carefully recorded along with their academic achievement in the form of *grade point averages* (GPAs). A questionnaire (unidimensional scale) based on the work of Demise and coworkers (n.d) has adapted. After experts' review it was modified accordingly. This questionnaire was administered to a convenient sample of 104 female students from various departments of an institute of higher education. Although nonparametric statistic (Spearman rho and Kruskal-Wallis) was suitable to the type of data the researchers had after the questionnaire survey; nevertheless, parametric statistic (Pearson r and ANOVA) was also calculated and presented (using SPSS) in order to have a comparative look on the two different types of statistics.

Reliability coefficients at pre and post pilot testing are given below in Table 1

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha	Items
Pilot Testing	0.823	29
Actual Reliability	0.887	29

This table shows that the reliability coefficient was improved from pre to post pilot testing.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics – Pilot Testing (N=36)

Perspective on Female Higher Education (PFHE)	Mean
1. I feel anxiety in Mathematics subject.	3.33
2. I face problems in social and learning strategies.	2.81
3. I face problem due to lack of security during my education at university.	3.03
4. I face problem due to lack of facilities during my work.	3.61
5. I think female students feel more work pressure than male students.	3.75
6. I think there is gender discrimination in our society.	3.86
7. I get less financial support for my work.	2.69
8. I feel shy to ask questions in the class with male teachers.	2.56
9. I have no proper access to computer at my home.	2.64
10. My parents do not give proper attention and support during my studies.	1.64
11. My parents give more importance of my brother than me in education.	2.06
12. I think lack of female teachers affects girls' participation rates to higher education.	3.06

13. My parents do not willingly get their daughter taught by male teachers.	2.14
14. I prefer separate educational institutions for girls.	3.28
15. I feel separate curriculum is important for girls.	3.28
16. I have faced problem due to lack of transport facilities during my education.	3.47
17. I feel inadequate hostel facilities is a problem for girls.	3.61
18. I think mostly girls are to leave after initial enrolment because of lack of facilities.	3.39
19. I think the distance from home to school is creating disturbance in my studies.	3.36
20. The financial problems create hurdle in my studies.	3.11
21. My Physical health creates problems in my studies.	2.75
22. Shortage of separate institutions create problem in my Education.	2.78
23. The Ignorance of my parents has an impact on my Education.	2.28
24. The burden of household activities prove hurdle in my studies.	2.81
25. The heavy syllabus creates problem for me.	3.33
26. Lack of proper scientific laboratory system is problem for me.	3.75
27. Use of improper teaching method is a problem for me.	3.61
28. I think the syllabus is not related with my practical life.	2.81
29. Strict classroom environment have negative impact on my Education.	3.08

A five point rating scale (of Likert) questionnaires was developed by reviewing the previous researches, especially in line with that of Demise, Bawm and Kassahun (n.d). However, it was modified after experts' opinion before being available to be used as a tool of research for the present study. The questionnaire comprised structured form. This tool seemed more appropriate because it was easy to respond.

After the initial construction of the research instrument it was subjected through the pilot testing. For this purpose, at first step, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts to determine its validity; although it is not enough for scale, it is being taken as a limitation. They were also requested to check carefully its wording and its organisation; and to give some suggestions for the modification. At the second, the questionnaire was administered on a small sample.

This table shows the values for mean and standard deviation of the questions in pilot testing. On the basis of revealed data and opinion of experts, the questionnaire was revised and a final version was developed and now it has 29 items and the reliability of the data was 0.887 at 0.05 alpha levels.

The researcher made personal visits to the different departments of an institute of higher education for the data collection. The questionnaires filled by the students were entered into computer and the data set was made available for the analyses.

RESULTS : This section deals with the analyses of the data and presents the results. The table below includes frequency response on the scale of 5 (Likert scale), along with mean and median.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of the Sample (Frequency, Median and Mean)

PFHE	1	2	3	4	5	Median	Mean
1.	20(19.2)	29(27.9)	9(8.7)	22(21.2)	24(23.1)	3.00	3.01
2.	23(22.1)	30(28.8)	16(15.4)	28(26.9)	7(6.7)	2.00	2.67
3.	29(27.9)	31(29.8)	13(12.5)	21(20.2)	10(9.6)	2.00	2.54
4.	12(11.5)	19(18.3)	16(15.4)	39(37.5)	18(17.3)	4.00	3.31
5.	13(12.5)	12(11.5)	13(12.5)	41(39.4)	25(24.0)	4.00	3.51
6.	9(8.7)	15(14.4)	15(14.4)	35(33.7)	30(38.8)	4.00	3.60
7.	27(26.0)	27(26.0)	27(26.0)	15(14.4)	8(7.7)	2.00	2.52
8.	32(30.8)	29(27.9)	20(19.2)	17(16.3)	6(5.8)	2.00	2.38
9.	34(32.7)	26(25.0)	9(8.7)	17(16.3)	18(17.3)	2.00	2.61
10.	57(54.8)	23(22.1)	12(11.5)	6(5.8)	6(5.8)	1.00	1.86
11.	55(52.9)	23(22.1)	6(5.8)	10(9.6)	10(9.6)	1.00	2.01
12.	29(27.9)	30(38.8)	17(16.3)	17(16.3)	11(10.6)	2.00	2.53
13.	42(40.4)	34(32.7)	13(12.5)	8(7.7)	7(6.7)	2.00	2.08
14.	24(23.1)	25(24.0)	16(15.4)	15(15.4)	24(23.1)	3.00	2.90
15.	23(22.1)	21(20.2)	21(20.2)	26(25.0)	13(12.5)	3.00	2.86
16.	21(20.2)	23(22.1)	9(8.7)	34(32.7)	17(16.3)	3.00	3.03
17.	9(8.7)	15(14.4)	23(22.1)	31(29.8)	26(25.0)	4.00	3.48
18.	12(11.5)	18(17.3)	25(24.0)	32(30.8)	17(16.3)	3.00	3.23
19.	16(15.4)	23(22.1)	15(14.4)	25(24.0)	25(4.0)	3.00	3.19
20.	33(31.7)	36(25.0)	10(9.6)	19(18.3)	16(15.4)	2.00	2.61
21.	27(26.0)	26(25.0)	16(15.4)	24(23.1)	11(10.6)	2.00	2.67
22.	33(31.7)	26(35.0)	13(12.5)	18(17.3)	14(13.5)	2.00	2.56
23.	44(42.3)	21(20.2)	14(13.5)	11(10.6)	14(13.5)	2.00	2.33
24.	32(30.8)	16(15.4)	24(23.1)	21(20.2)	11(10.6)	3.00	2.64
25.	16(15.4)	27(26.0)	16(15.4)	27(26.0)	18(17.3)	3.00	3.04
26.	15(14.4)	15(14.4)	14(13.5)	31(29.8)	29(27.9)	4.00	3.42
27.	14(13.5)	18(17.3)	16(15.4)	31(29.8)	25(24.0)	4.00	3.34
28.	30(28.8)	24(23.1)	17(16.3)	30(19.2)	13(12.5)	2.00	2.63
29.	22(21.2)	22(21.2)	15(14.4)	26(25.0)	19(18.3)	3.00	2.98

In order to explore the relationship between the academic problems of female higher education students and their academic achievement at an institute of higher education the research question and hypothesis have been mentioned in Section 1. Table 3 presents frequencies on the scale 1 to 5 along with the median and mean values for all 29 statements. The students strongly disagree over two statements: firstly, “*My parents do not give proper attention and support during my studies*”; and secondly, “*My parents give more importance of my brother than me in education*”. Female higher education is not being suffered

reportedly despite the fact that parents are illiterate. Being taught by male teachers is not troublesome for their parents; and they themselves do not feel shy asking male teachers any questions. Female higher education students say that do not any feeling of insecurity. The students report that they have no financial, social and learning problems. They further insisted that financial problems are not a hurdle in their higher education.

Following table explains the correlation of female higher education perspective with their academic achievement measured in terms of their Grade Point Averages (GPAs)

Table 4: Spearman Rho and Pearson r (higher education perspective and GPAs)

Perspective on Female Higher Education (PFHE)	Spearman Rho	Pearson r
1. I feel anxiety in Mathematics subject.	-0.031 (0.76)	- 0.072(0.47)
2. I face problems in social and learning strategies.	-0.156 (0.11)	- 0.144(0.15)
3. I face problem due to lack of security during my education at university.	-0.109 (0.27)	-0.145(- 0.14)
4. I face problem due to lack of facilities during my work.	-0.092 (0.35)	- 0.113(0.25)
5. I think female students feel more work pressure than male students.	-0.040(0.69)	- 0.043(0.66)
6. I think there is gender discrimination in our society.	-0.096 (0.33)	- 0.123(0.21)
7. I get less financial support for my work.	-0.251 (0.01)	- 0.268(0.06)
8. I feel shy to ask questions in the class with male teachers.	-0.043(0.67)	- 0.053(0.59)
9. I have no proper access to computer at my home.	0.089 (0.37)	0.105(0.21)
10. My parents do not give proper attention and support during my studies.	-0.017(0.86)	- 0.015(0.89)
11. My parents give more importance of my brother then me in education.	-0.063 (0.52)	- 0.063(0.52)
12. I think lack of female teachers affects girls' participation rates to higher education	-0.098 (0.32)	- 0.115(0.25)
13. My parents do not willingly get their daughter taught by male teachers.	-0.092 (0.35)	- 0.119(0.21)
14. I prefer separate educational institutions for girls.	0.060 (0.55)	0.075(0.45)
15. I feel separate curriculum is important for girls.	-0.116 (0.21)	- 0.123(0.22)
16. I have faced problem due to lack of transport facilities during my education.	-0.114 (0.24)	- 0.115(0.25)
17. I feel inadequate hostel facilities is a problem for girls.	0.048 (0.63)	0.074(0.45)

18. I think mostly girls are to leave after initial enrolment because of lack of facilities.	-0.081 (0.41)	-0.90(0.36)
19. I think the distance from home to school is creating disturbance in my studies.	-0.119 (0.23)	- 0.120(0.22)
20. The financial problems create hurdle in my studies.	-0099 (0.32)	- 0.086(0.38)
21. My Physical health creates problems in my studies.	-0274 (0.01)	- 0.279(0.00)
22. Shortage of separate institutions create problem in my Education.	-0.254 (0.01)	- 0.241(0.01)
23. The Ignorance of my parents has an impact on my Education.	-0.080 (0.42)	- 0.084(0.31)
24. The burden of household activities prove hurdle in my studies.	-0.134 (0.18)	- 0.124(0.21)
25. The heavy syllabus creates problem for me.	-0.164 (0.01)	- 0.176(0.07)
26. Lack of proper scientific laboratory system is problem for me.	-0.196 (0.05)	- 0.188(0.06)
27. Use of improper teaching method is a problem for me.	-0.132 (0.19)	- 0.130(0.18)
28. I think the syllabus is not related with my practical life.	-0.186 (0.06)	- 0.163(0.01)
29. Strict classroom environment have negative impact on my Education.	-0.014 (0.01)	0.005(0.96)

They believe that lack of female teachers and separate higher education institutions is not curbing female students coming to university for further studies. They have access to computer at homes and their course outlines (referring to curriculum) are not divorced from their practical life.

However, there are certain problems reported to be faced by the students. These problems include lack of facilities, feeling of greater work pressure, inadequate hostel facilities, less laboratory facilities, improper teaching methods and the gender discrimination at large in the society.

In Table 4 the spearman rho values it is noted that the statement No. 7, 21, 22, 25 and 29 are showing significant difference ($P<0.05$); so null hypotheses are failed to be accepted. P values are given in the parentheses. Spearman rho is negative for all these statements which represent a negative correlation with the academic achievement measured here in terms of Grade Point Averages (GPAs). If α level is increased to 0.10 then statements No. 26 and 28 become significant and the null hypotheses could be failed to be accepted; however, at 0.05 these are insignificant. All other statements are insignificant and we accept our null hypotheses. Values for Spearman rho in all statements except statement no. 9, 14 and 17 are showing inverse correlation; however, the relationship is insignificant.

In table 4 the Pearson r values for the statement no 21, 22 and 28 are significant ($P<0.05$) so null hypotheses are failed to be accepted. If α level is increased to 0.10 then statements no. 26 and 28 become significant and the null hypotheses could be failed to be accepted. All other statements are insignificant and we accept our null hypotheses.

Analysis of variance (for GPAs of Female students and their perspective on higher education) both parametric and non-parametric is given below the Table 5.

Table 5: Kruskal-Wallis Test and ANOVA

Perspective on Female Higher Education (PFHE)	Kruskal-Wallis H	ANOVA
1. I feel anxiety in Mathematics subject.	1.441(4;084)	0.521 (4;0.72)
2. I face problems in social and learning strategies.	3.993(4;0.41)	0.896 (4;0.47)
3. I face problem due to lack of security during my education at university.	1.791(4;0.77)	0.635 (4;0.62)
4. I face problem due to lack of facilities during my work.	4.092(4;0.39)	1.252 (4;0.29)
5. I think female students feel more work pressure than male students.	2.422(4;0.66)	0.686 (4;0.60)
6. I think there is gender discrimination in our society.	1.501(4;0.83)	0.589 (4;0.67)
7. I get less financial support for my work.	7.645(4;0.11)	2.358 (4;0.06)
8. I feel shy to ask questions in the class with male teachers.	2.228(4;0.69)	0.673 (4;0.61)
9. I have no proper access to computer at my home.	1.867(4;0.76)	0.606 (4;0.66)
10. My parents do not give proper attention and support during my studies.	1.065(4;0.90)	0.166 (4;0.96)
11. My parents give more importance of my brother then me in education.	3.216(4;0.52)	1.092 (4;0.37)
12. I think lack of female teachers affects girls' participation rates to higher education	2.697(4;061)	0.793 (4;0.53)
13. My parents do not willingly get their daughter taught by male teachers.	1.887(4;0.76)	0.511 (4;0.73)
14. I prefer separate educational institutions for girls.	1.583(4;0.81)	0.396 (4;0.81)
15. I feel separate curriculum is important for girls.	4.282(4;0.37)	1.110 (4;0.36)
16. I have faced problem due to lack of transport facilities during my education.	6.166(4;0.19)	1.586 (4;0.18)

17.	I feel inadequate hostel facilities is a problem for girls.	1.678(4;0.71)	0.554 (4;0.61)
18.	I think mostly girls are to leave after initial enrolment because of lack of facilities.	2.031(4;0.73)	0.401 (4;0.81)
19.	I think the distance from home to school is creating disturbance in my studies.	2.346(4;0.67)	0.684 (4;0.61)
20.	The financial problems create hurdle in my studies.	5.673(4;0.23)	1.517 (4;0.20)
21.	My Physical health creates problems in my studies.	8.832(4;0.07)	(42.602;0.04)
22.	Shortage of separate institutions create problem in my Education.	6.895(4;0.14)	1.608 (4;0.18)
23.	The Ignorance of my parents has an impact on my Education.	0.757(4;0.94)	0.254 (4;0.91)
24.	The burden of household activities prove hurdle in my studies.	2.128(4;0.71)	0.568 (4;0.69)
25.	The heavy syllabus creates problem for me.	5.282(4;0.20)	1.306 (4;0.27)
26.	Lack of proper scientific laboratory system is problem for me.	7.248(4;0.12)	1.674 (4;0.16)
27.	Use of improper teaching method is a problem for me.	4.349(4;0.36)	1.288 (4;0.28)
28.	I think the syllabus is not related with my practical life.	4.824(4;0.31)	1.191 (4;0.32)
29.	Strict classroom environment have negative impact on my Education.	1.148(4;0.89)	0.322 (4;0.86)

Table 5 shows the results of Kruskal-Wallis Test and ANOVA that were conducted to evaluate the differences among the respondents for each of the five points on the Likert scale (for their perspective on higher education and their GPAs). Degree of freedom i. e. 4 and the P values are given in the parentheses. Kruskal-Wallis Test values for all the statement are strongly insignificant (P value is greater than 0.05) so we accept the null hypotheses. If α level is increased to 0.10 then only the statement No. 21 becomes significantly different and the null hypothesis could be failed to be accepted.

In table 5 the results of ANOVA test shows that the values for statement No 21 are significant as (P value is smaller than 0.05) so null hypothesis for this statement could be failed to be accepted. If α level is increased to 0.10 then statements No. 7 becomes significant and the null hypotheses could be failed to be accepted. All other statements are insignificant and we failed to reject our null hypotheses for these statements.

DISCUSSION : Interest in female (higher) education in Islam has been an unmistakable topic of study. For socio-political and practical reasons is not overemphasised. Salman (n.d.) writes in one of his brief notes on female education in Islam.

"In the socio-regional context of the early Muslim community, however — where writing was still not widespread — it would have been largely associated with prominent, public

roles. Moreover, learning to write was seemingly the highest level of formal education at the time. Yet, the earliest reports indicate that women were not prohibited from learning it. According to the Muslim historian Al-Baladhuri (d. 297 AH/892 CE), at the beginning of Islam, only 17 Muslim men knew how to write. However, significantly, five women did as well: Al-Shafaa bint Abdallah (رضي الله تعالى عنها); Hafsa (رضي الله تعالى عنها), the daughter of Umar (رضي الله تعالى عنها), and wife of the Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم); Umm Kulthum bint Uqbah (رضي الله تعالى عنها); Aisha bint Saad (رضي الله تعالى عنها); and Karima bint al-Miqdad (رضي الله تعالى عنها). If contextualized today — we could assume that this would not preclude women from higher education, such as universities. Education is seen as one of the pivotal factors in determining the economic, social and political advancement of a society and if, those making up over fifty per cent of that society, are denied such a basic fundamental right then a bright future for such society is not established". Salman (n.d.)

Quantitative survey in present study explains that female higher education students do not feel insecure. This finding is contrary to what Demise, Shinebaum and Melesse (2002) have revealed in their study; they proclaim that violence, harassment and lack of security are bigger problems faced by female higher education students.

We find that the financial problems are not a hurdle in their higher education of female students. Present study discloses that the respondents are not facing any financial problems, therefore, there academic achievement being hampered becomes out of question. This finding (e.g. Tollar, Carillo and Morote, 2010) supports heavily studied and proven relationship of academic achievement and family income.

Unlike the findings of Taplin and Margaret (2000) i.e. 'personal/family problems', our respondents are not facing such social problems at all. Kursat and Cagiltay (2005) describe that female students are underprivileged in their access to computers at home; whereas, our data evidence no such deprivation among participants.

However, there are certain problems reported to be faced by the students. Some of these problems include lack of facilities, feeling of greater work pressure, inadequate hostel facilities and less laboratory facilities. Other researchers have also found that lack of facilities and assertiveness, workload, and academic performance among the problems faced by female higher education students, but in fact, to a lesser extent (Demise, Shinebaum and Melesse, 2002).

Demise, Shinebaum and Melesse (2002) observe that females are found well aware of gender discrimination. Our study reveals accordingly the gender discrimination at large in the society. Academic success is gender independent (Yuksel and Sahin, 2008). We too find that the academic achievement of (female) students is independent; particularly it is independent of the problems faced by them. No relationship in the academic achievement and the problems faced by the female students at the institute of higher education in Pakistan.

CONCLUSION : Purpose of the study is threefold; firstly, to report from *Quran* and *Hadith* the evidence upon female education, particularly higher education; secondly, to investigate the problems faced by female higher education students; and lastly, to study the

impact of these problems on their academic achievement at universities and the institutes of higher education in Pakistan.

Bearing in mind the importance of female higher education in Islam, the researchers are interested in studying the problems faced by female higher education students in Pakistan; and henceforth the impact of these difficulties on their academic achievement. Higher Education students of University of Sargodha are accessible population. Out of this population, 104 students were conveniently selected as a sample for the study. An instrument developed by the researchers is used for surveying female students in this study. The GPA of the previous semester of the students is also recorded. Instrument is five point rating scale i.e. Likert scale having 29 items. The data collected are analysed in the light of objective of the study.

The students strongly disagree over two statements: firstly, "*My parents do not give proper attention and support during my studies*"; and secondly, "*My parents give more importance of my brother than me in education*". Female higher education is not being suffered reportedly despite the fact that parents are illiterate. Being taught by male teachers is not troublesome for their parents; and they themselves do not feel shy asking male teachers any questions. Female higher education students say that do not any feeling of insecurity. The students report that they have no financial, social and learning problems. They further insisted that financial problems are not a hurdle in their higher education.

They believe that lack of female teachers and separate higher education institutions is not curbing female students coming to university for further studies. They have access to computer at homes and their course outlines (referring to curriculum) are not divorced from their practical life.

However, there are certain problems reported to be faced by the students. These problems include lack of facilities, feeling of greater work pressure, inadequate hostel facilities, less laboratory facilities, improper teaching methods and the gender discrimination at large in the society

Finally, the researchers find no association in the academic achievement and the problems faced by the female students at University of Sargodha, Pakistan.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Although no correlation has been found between academic achievement and the problems faced, nevertheless, we suggest raising awareness, ensuring guidance & counselling, providing greater academic support and improving educational facilities, as proposed by Demise, Shinebaum and Melesse (2002), so that greater academic success of female higher education students would have been ensured importantly.

The following recommendations may be helpful for future researchers

1. Due to limited time and facilities, the researcher took the sample only from one institute of higher education. It is recommended that future researchers would conduct their research at wider level.
2. It is recommended to include more variables for better understanding on the link between Academic problems and the achievement of the female students at higher education.

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Appendix A

Female Higher Education Students' Academic Problems

We are conducting a survey titled “A survey of the problems faced by female higher education students and their academic achievement”. Your kind contribution to this study is highly demanded. We assure you that the information provided by you will be kept confidential and will not be used other than research purposes. Although, there is no risk at all to the participants of this study; however, you have the right to refuse to participate in this research and you may withdraw your data at any stage of the research. If you agree to participate, kindly sign this form and respond the following questionnaire.

Thanks in advance.

The Researchers

Signature of

the participant

Name (optional): Roll No..... Department

Name:

Residence: i. Urban ii. Rural **Total Marks (and GPA) in Previous Semester:**

Family Income (per month): i. Below 7,500 ii. Upto 15,000 iii. Upto 30,000 iv. Upto 60,000 v. Upto 120,000 vi. More than 120,000

1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree,5=Strongly Agree

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. I feel anxiety in Mathematics subject.					
2. I face problems in social and learning strategies.					
3. I face problem due to lack of security during my education at university.					
4. I face problem due to lack of facilities during my work.					
5. I think female students feel more work pressure than male students.					
6. I think there is gender discrimination in our society.					
7. I get less financial support for my work.					
8. I feel shy to ask questions in the class with male teachers.					
9. I have no proper access to computer at my home.					
10. My parents do not give proper attention and support during my studies.					
11. My parents give more importance of my brother then me in education.					
12. I think lack of female teachers affects girls' participation rates to higher education.					
13. My parents do not willingly get their daughter taught by male teachers.					
14. I prefer separate educational institutions for girls.					
15. I feel separate curriculum is important for girls.					
16. I have faced problem due to lack of transport facilities during my education.					

17.	I feel inadequate hostel facilities is a problem for girls.
18.	I think mostly girls are to leave out after initial enrolment because of lack of facilities.
19.	I think the distance from home to school is creating disturbance in my studies.
20.	The financial problems create hurdle in my studies.
21.	My Physical health creates problems in my studies.
22.	Shortage of separate institutions create problem in my Education.
23.	The Ignorance of my parents has an impact on my Education.
24.	The burden of household activities prove hurdle in my studies.
25.	The heavy syllabus creates problem for me.
26.	Lack of proper scientific laboratory system is problem for me.
27.	Use of improper teaching method is a problem for me.
28.	I think the syllabus is not related with my practical life.
29.	Strict classroom environment have negative impact on my Education.

Appendix B

Academic Achievement (GPA in Previous Semester)

21.	12	2.79	15.	213	3.68	19.	920	3.68
22.	20	3.47	16.	51	3.10	20.	918	3.43
23.	134	2.40	17.	1	2.89	21.	9	3.43
24.	113	3.38	History			22.	79	3.50
25.	7	3.67	18.	711	3.29	23.	325	3.68
26.	59	2.30	19.	613	2.75	24.	1	3.68
27.	27	2.14	20.	42	3.03	25.	4	3.27
28.	49	2.83	Biological Science			26.	7	3.75
29.	926	2.90				27.	60	3.43
30.	448	2.67				28.	238	3.68
31.	10	2.60				29.	158	3.53
CS&IT			Business Administration			30.	12	3.40
32.	6	2.98	21.	1	3.23	31.	5	3.40
33.	5	3.28				32.	49	3.31
34.	926	3.11				33.	221	3.70
35.	3	2.53				34.	29	3.90
36.	24	2.51				35.	27	3.10
37.	6	2.80				36.	25	2.92
38.	929	2.71				37.	20	3.62
39.	47	3.10				38.	142	3.02
40.	43	3.00				Total 104 (students)		
41.	54	3.88						
42.	36	2.67						
43.	21	3.43						
44.	8	3.28						
45.	9	3.18						



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