ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

GENDER REPRESENTATION IN PAKISTANI X DISCOURSE: A CORPUS-ASSISTED STUDY OF MALE AND FEMALE USERS

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Abstract

This article examines gender representation in Pakistani X discourse through a corpus-assisted analysis of 4,000 public posts, comprising 2,000 female-authored and 2,000 male-authored tweets. Guided by corpus-assisted discourse studies and social actor representation, the study investigates how women and men are represented and how lexical and collocational patterns construct gendered meanings in Pakistani digital discourse. The analysis focuses on frequent gender-related lexical fields, hashtags, collocations and concordance patterns. The findings show that female-authored posts more strongly foreground women's collective agency, rights, safety, dignity, violence, harassment and feminist mobilisation. Women are represented not only as victims or survivors but also as protesters, citizens, workers and claim-making social actors. Male-authored posts display a more ambivalent pattern: they include support for women's empowerment and responsible masculinity, but also foreground men's rights, #MenToo, false allegations and male grievance. Across both subcorpora, gendered meanings are repeatedly constructed around honour, control, choice, responsibility, empowerment, safety and patriarchy. The study argues that Pakistani X functions as a contested digital space where gender is negotiated through activism, resistance, moral argument and counter discourse. It contributes to gender discourse studies, Pakistani digital media research and corpus assisted analysis of social media discourse in Pakistan's contemporary online public sphere.

Keywords: *gender representation; Pakistani X discourse; corpus assisted discourse studies; social actor representation; female-authored posts; male-authored posts; digital gender discourse*

1. Introduction

Digital platforms have become influential spaces where gendered identities, roles and social relations are publicly discussed, challenged and redefined. X, formerly Twitter, is particularly important because its short form, hashtag based and interactive structure enables users to participate in public debates through repeated lexical choices, evaluative expressions and ideological alignments. In Pakistan, gender related discourse on X frequently emerges around issues such as women's rights, honour, harassment, feminism, patriarchy, family, safety, empowerment and social responsibility. These themes are not merely descriptive; they contribute to the discursive construction of women and men as social actors within wider cultural and political debates.

Corpus assisted discourse studies offer a useful methodological way for examining such patterns because they combine quantitative attention to recurrent linguistic forms with qualitative interpretation of discourse in context (Baker, 2006; Partington et al., 2013). Rather than relying on isolated examples, a corpus-assisted approach allows the researcher to identify repeated words, collocations and concordance patterns through which gendered meanings are produced across a larger dataset. In addition, social actor representation provides a relevant analytical lens for examining how women and men are included, evaluated, collectivised, individualised or positioned in discourse (van Leeuwen, 2008). This study applies these perspectives to Pakistani X discourse by analysing two comparable subcorpora: 2,000 female-authored posts and 2,000 male-authored posts.

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1.1 Problem Statement

Although gender remains a prominent topic in Pakistani digital debate, systematic linguistic research on how male and female users represent women and men on X remains limited. Public commentary often describes Pakistani online gender discourse in broad terms such as activism, backlash, feminism or moral conflict. However, such descriptions do not sufficiently explain the specific lexical and collocational patterns through which gendered meanings are constructed. There is therefore, a need to examine how recurring linguistic choices represent women, men, rights, responsibility, honour, violence and social norms in Pakistani female-authored and male-authored posts.

1.2 Research Gap

Previous studies have explored gender and power in discourse (Lazar, 2005), gendered communication in digital platforms (Herring & Stoerger, 2014), and the role of Twitter/X in producing public affiliation and social meaning (Zappavigna, 2012). Corpus based studies have also shown that gender representation can be investigated through frequency, keywords, collocation and concordance analysis (Baker, 2014). However, relatively less attention has been given to Pakistani X discourse through a comparative corpus assisted design that distinguishes between female authored and male authored posts. The gap is especially visible in relation to how lexical and collocational patterns construct gendered meanings within Pakistan's socio-cultural context.

1.3 Objectives

This study aims to:

1. examine how women and men are represented in Pakistani X discourse;
2. identify the lexical and collocational patterns through which gendered meanings are constructed in Pakistani female-authored and male-authored posts**.**

1.4 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How are women and men represented in Pakistani X discourse?
2. What lexical and collocational patterns construct gendered meanings in Pakistani female-authored and male-authored posts?

1.5 Significance

This study is significant for gender discourse studies, corpus assisted discourse analysis and Pakistani digital media research. It contributes empirical evidence to debates on gender representation by showing how women and men are repeatedly constructed through language in Pakistani X discourse. The study also demonstrates how corpus assisted methods can support critical discourse interpretation by connecting lexical patterns with social meanings. By comparing female authored and male authored posts, the study provides insight into how gender is negotiated differently by users positioned within the same national digital space. Contextually, it highlights Pakistani X as a contested arena where gender is shaped through activism, resistance, cultural values, moral argument and counter discourse.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews previous scholarship relevant to gender representation, social media discourse, Pakistani gender debates, corpus assisted gender studies and social actor representation. The review situates the present study within feminist discourse studies and corpus assisted discourse analysis by examining how gendered meanings are constructed through repeated lexical, collocational and representational patterns. It also discusses empirical studies on digital feminist activism, hashtag discourse and Pakistani gender discourse to identify the research gap addressed by this article.

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2.1 Gender Representation in Discourse

Gender representation in discourse concerns the linguistic processes through which women, men and other gendered subjects are constructed, evaluated and positioned within social texts. Discourse does not simply describe gendered realities; rather, it participates in producing them by assigning social roles, forms of agency, moral value and institutional visibility to gendered actors. Feminist critical discourse studies have consistently argued that language is central to the reproduction and contestation of gendered power relations (Lazar, 2005). This means that the representation of women and men in discourse must be examined not only through explicit references to gender, but also through recurring evaluative labels, metaphors, role descriptions, collocational patterns and assumptions about social norms.

The study of gender representation has been shaped by the view that gender is socially and culturally produced rather than biologically fixed. Butler's (1990) theory of performativity is relevant here because it explains gender as a repeated social performance that becomes recognisable through everyday acts, signs and meanings. In discourse, such performance is visible through repeated linguistic choices that normalise particular versions of femininity and masculinity. For instance, women may be represented through associations with care, vulnerability, morality, domesticity, resistance or victimhood, while men may be represented through authority, protection, violence, responsibility, leadership or dominance. These patterns become socially meaningful when they recur across different texts and contexts.

Empirical studies of gender and discourse have shown that representation is often unevenly distributed. Sunderland (2004) argues that gendered discourses operate through recurring ways of talking about women and men, often making certain roles appear natural or commonsensical. Mills (2008) similarly notes that sexism in language is not limited to overtly offensive terms; it can also be embedded in routine forms of description, address, evaluation and exclusion. Such work is important for the present study because Pakistani X discourse contains both explicit gender related vocabulary, such as women, men, feminism and patriarchy, and more culturally embedded terms, such as honour, family, respect, safety and responsibility. These terms require interpretation as part of broader gendered meaning-making.

2.2 Gender and Social Media

Social media has transformed the ways in which gendered meanings are circulated, challenged and amplified. Platforms such as X allow users to participate in public debates through short posts, hashtags, reposts and replies. Zappavigna (2012) argues that social media discourse is strongly affiliative because users build alignment and community through shared hashtags, repeated evaluative phrases and stance-taking practices. This is particularly relevant to gender discourse, where hashtags such as #MeToo, #AuratMarch, #WomenEmpowerment and #Patriarchy can function as markers of solidarity, resistance, critique or ideological opposition.

Research on computer mediated communication has demonstrated that online gender discourse is shaped by platform affordances, anonymity, visibility, audience design and interactional norms (Herring & Stoerger, 2014). Digital spaces may provide women and marginalised users with opportunities to narrate experiences of harassment, discrimination and exclusion; however, these same spaces may also intensify backlash, trolling and misogynistic abuse. Jane (2014) describes online misogyny as a recurrent feature of digital culture, where women's public speech is often met with harassment, threats or ridicule. Thus, social media should not be understood as an automatically liberating space, but as a contested arena in which gendered power relations are reproduced and resisted.

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Empirical studies on digital feminist activism have shown that social media can enable collective voice and political visibility. Mendes, Ringrose, and Keller (2019) examine how girls, women and some men use digital platforms to respond to rape culture, sexism and harassment. Their work shows that digital feminist activism involves both empowerment and vulnerability: users can document experiences and build solidarity, but they may also encounter hostility and emotional labour. Similarly, Jackson, Bailey, and Foucault Welles (2020) demonstrate that hashtag activism allows marginalised groups to produce counter-narratives and challenge dominant public discourses. These studies are relevant to Pakistani X discourse because gender-related hashtags often serve as spaces of affiliation, mobilisation and contestation.

Studies on #MeToo further show the importance of analysing gender discourse through recurring online patterns. Manikonda et al. (2018) analysed #MeToo discourse across Twitter and Reddit and found that social media enabled users to share experiences, express empathy and sustain public attention around sexual violence. Field, Bhat, and Tsvetkov (2019), in their analysis of #MeToo portrayals, found that women were often represented sympathetically, but men continued to be positioned as powerful social actors in media discourse. These findings suggest that digital gender discourse can challenge existing power relations while also reproducing elements of them. This insight is important for the present study, which examines how Pakistani female- and male-authored posts represent both women and men.

2.3 Pakistani Gender Discourse

Empirical studies on Pakistani feminism and Aurat March have shown that public gender debate in Pakistan is marked by both feminist mobilisation and strong opposition. Sarwar and Huma (2021) examine perceptions of Aurat March and argue that the movement has generated significant public debate about women's empowerment, rights and social constraints. Their study indicates that Aurat March has become a symbolic site where competing understandings of feminism, morality and Pakistani culture are articulated. Aslam et al. (2025) similarly argue that the Women March has contributed to the reshaping of gender norms and feminist activism by foregrounding bodily autonomy, patriarchal control and women's public visibility.

Other Pakistan-focused studies have examined how digital platforms mediate feminist activism and backlash. Jafri (2025) discusses women's online activism in Pakistan in relation to religious patriarchy and intergroup tension, showing that digital feminist discourse often encounters opposition from conservative and anti-feminist groups. Recent discourse-based studies of #AuratMarch tweets also suggest that Twitter/X is used to construct resistance against patriarchal structures and to articulate demands for justice, dignity and equality. These studies are important because they show that Pakistani online gender discourse is not uniform; it consists of competing positions, including feminist solidarity, cultural anxiety, religious critique, nationalist argument and counter-feminist response.

In Pakistani X discourse, hashtags such as #AuratMarch, #MeToo, #Feminism, #WomenEmpowerment, #Patriarchy, #MenToo, #HonorKilling and #GenderDiscrimination bring together these competing voices. Therefore, the Pakistani context provides a rich site for investigating how women and men are represented through recurring lexical and collocational patterns.

2.4 Corpus-Assisted Gender Studies

Corpus-assisted discourse studies provide a systematic way of examining linguistic patterns across large datasets. Baker (2006) argues that corpus techniques such as frequency counts, keywords, collocation and concordance analysis can reveal repeated patterns that may remain unnoticed in close reading. However, corpus assisted discourse analysis does not treat

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numerical frequency as sufficient in itself; rather, it uses quantitative patterns as entry points for qualitative interpretation. Partington, Duguid, and Taylor (2013) similarly emphasise that corpus-assisted discourse studies are concerned with the relationship between repeated linguistic patterns and social meanings.

Corpus methods have been widely used in gender studies because they allow researchers to examine how gendered categories are repeatedly represented across texts. Baker (2014) demonstrates that corpus linguistics can be used to study gendered language use, sexist and non-sexist language, personal advertisements, media representations and the construction of boys and girls through language. Such studies show that gender representation often emerges through patterns of association rather than isolated terms. For example, words referring to women and men may collocate with different adjectives, actions, social roles or evaluative descriptions, thereby constructing different gendered meanings.

Recent corpus assisted studies of digital gender discourse further demonstrate the usefulness of corpus methods for analysing online texts. Studies of Twitter/X discourse on #MeToo and gender equality have used keywords, sentiment, n-grams and thematic analysis to identify patterns of solidarity, hostility, identity construction and backlash. Reyes-Menendez et al. (2020), for example, used textual and sentiment analysis of #MeToo tweets to examine how social identity and public attitudes were constructed through user-generated content. Such studies support the methodological direction of the present article because they show that social media gender discourse can be productively analysed through a combination of corpus tools and discourse interpretation.

2.5 Research Gap

The reviewed literature establishes that gender representation has been extensively examined in discourse studies, feminist critical discourse analysis, computer-mediated communication and corpus-assisted research. Studies by Lazar (2005), Sunderland (2004), Mills (2008), Herring and Stoerger (2014), Zappavigna (2012), Baker (2006, 2014), and van Leeuwen (2008) provide strong theoretical and methodological foundations for analysing gendered meanings in discourse. Empirical studies on digital feminist activism and hashtag activism, including Mendes et al. (2019), Jackson et al. (2020), Manikonda et al. (2018), Field et al. (2019), and Reyes-Menendez et al. (2020), further show that social media is a significant space for gendered identity construction, solidarity, backlash and public contestation.

In the Pakistani context, studies on Aurat March and women's online activism, including Sarwar and Huma (2021), Aslam et al. (2025), and Jafri (2025), demonstrate that digital platforms have become central to feminist mobilisation and anti-feminist response. However, much of this research remains movement-specific, qualitative, thematic or focused mainly on feminist activism. Comparatively less attention has been paid to corpus-assisted analysis of Pakistani X discourse that systematically compares female-authored and male-authored posts within the same national context. There is also limited research on how lexical and collocational patterns construct gendered meanings across both supportive and oppositional gender discourses.

Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by combining corpus-assisted discourse analysis with social actor representation. It examines how women and men are represented in Pakistani X discourse and identifies the lexical and collocational patterns through which gendered meanings are constructed in female-authored and male-authored posts. In doing so, the study contributes to gender discourse studies, Pakistani digital media research and corpus-assisted analysis of social media discourse.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies

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This study is grounded in Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS), an approach that combines corpus linguistic techniques with discourse analysis. CADS is based on the assumption that repeated linguistic patterns are socially meaningful and that large-scale textual evidence can strengthen critical interpretation (Baker, 2006; Partington et al., 2013). Rather than treating frequency as an end in itself, CADS uses frequency, keywords, collocations and concordance lines as entry points into discourse interpretation.

In this study, CADS is used to identify lexical and collocational patterns related to gender representation in Pakistani X posts. Keywords and frequent gender related terms help to identify dominant lexical fields, while collocations reveal repeated associations around terms such as women, men, honour, feminism, patriarchy, harassment, rights, safety and empowerment. Concordance analysis then allows these patterns to be interpreted in context. This approach directly supports the second research question, which asks what lexical and collocational patterns construct gendered meanings in female authored and male authored posts.

3.2 Social Actor Representation

The second theoretical component is van Leeuwen's (2008) model of social actor representation. This framework examines how discourse represents individuals and groups through categories such as inclusion, exclusion, activation, passivation, individualisation, collectivisation, nomination and categorisation. In gender discourse, these categories are useful for analysing how women and men are positioned as actors within social events and ideological debates.

For example, when women are represented as protesters, survivors, workers or citizens, they are activated as social agents. When they are represented primarily as victims of violence or objects of protection, they may be passivated. Similarly, men may be individualised as specific perpetrators or collectivised as a broader social group associated with patriarchy, responsibility or allyship. This framework enables a structured interpretation of the first research question: how women and men are represented in Pakistani X discourse.

3.3 Analytical Model

The study combines CADS and social actor representation in a three stage analytical model. First, the two subcorpora are examined for frequent and salient gender related lexical items. Second, selected node words are analysed through collocation patterns to identify the semantic associations that construct gendered meanings. Third, concordance lines are qualitatively examined to interpret how women and men are represented as social actors.

The model therefore moves from lexical patterning to discourse interpretation. CADS identifies repeated linguistic evidence, while social actor representation explains how such evidence constructs women and men in relation to agency, responsibility, victimhood, resistance, morality and cultural norms. This integrated model is appropriate for a corpus-assisted study because it avoids purely impressionistic interpretation while also avoiding a purely statistical account of gender discourse.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study uses a corpus-assisted qualitative discourse analytical design. It is corpus-assisted because it examines frequency, lexical recurrence, collocation and concordance patterns in a structured dataset. It is qualitative because the interpretation of these patterns focuses on representation, social meaning and cultural context. The design is comparative, as it examines female-authored and male-authored Pakistani X posts in relation to the two research questions.

4.2 Data Source and corpus Description

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The data consists of Pakistani X posts dealing with gender-related discourse. X was selected because it is a prominent digital platform for public debate, hashtag activism, political commentary and social contestation. The dataset includes posts related to gender issues such as women's rights, feminism, patriarchy, honour, harassment, empowerment, gender equality, masculinity, #MeToo, Aurat March and related public controversies. The study focuses on public posts only.

The corpus consists of two comparable subcorpora. The first subcorpus contains 2,000 Pakistani female-authored X posts, while the second contains 2,000 Pakistani male-authored X posts. Together, the corpus contains 4,000 posts. The two-subcorpus structure allows comparison between female and male users within the same national context. The corpus is designed to examine how gendered meanings are constructed through repeated lexical and collocational patterns rather than through isolated posts.

4.3 Sampling

The study uses purposive sampling. Posts were selected because they contained gender-related hashtags, keywords or discourse topics relevant to the research questions. Relevant hashtags included, but were not limited to, #AuratMarch, #Feminism, #WomenEmpowerment, #MeToo, #Patriarchy, #HonorKilling, #GenderRepresentation, #GenderDiscrimination, #Men, #Masculinity, #MenToo and #BoysWillBeBoys. Purposive sampling is appropriate because the study does not aim to represent all Pakistani X discourse; rather, it focuses specifically on gender-related discourse.

4.4 Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Posts were included if they were publicly available, Pakistan related and relevant to gender discourse. Posts were also included if they contained explicit references to women, men, feminism, patriarchy, honour, harassment, safety, rights, empowerment, gender roles or related issues. Posts were excluded if they were irrelevant to gender, consisted only of links or advertisements, contained insufficient textual content for analysis, or were duplicates. Non-relevant spam, promotional material and repeated automated content were removed during cleaning.

4.5 User Gender Categorisation

User gender categorisation was based on available profile indicators such as self-identification, pronouns, gendered names, profile descriptions and contextual cues. The study treats gender categorisation as an analytical requirement rather than as an absolute identity claim. Where user gender was unclear or ambiguous, posts were excluded from the gender-comparative dataset. This procedure was adopted to reduce misclassification and to maintain consistency between the female-authored and male-authored subcorpora.

4.6 Data Cleaning

The data was cleaned before analysis by using python. Duplicate posts, irrelevant material, spam-like entries, broken text and link-only posts were removed. Hashtags were retained because they are meaningful in X discourse and often function as markers of stance, affiliation and topic. Usernames and identifying details were removed or anonymised to protect privacy. Basic normalisation was applied where necessary, but original wording was preserved as far as possible because spelling variation, code-mixing and hashtag forms are meaningful features of digital discourse.

4.7 Analytical Procedure

The analysis followed four stages. First, frequent gender-related lexical items were identified in both subcorpora. Second, selected node words were examined through collocation analysis to identify recurring associations around key terms. Third, concordance lines were analysed qualitatively to examine how gendered meanings were constructed in context. Fourth, female-authored and male-authored patterns were compared to identify

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similarities and differences in the representation of women and men. The interpretation focused on agency, evaluation, responsibility, victimhood, resistance, cultural norms and ideological positioning.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Although the data was drawn from public X posts, ethical care was maintained throughout the study. Usernames, profile details and identifying information were removed. The analysis focuses on discourse patterns rather than individual users. Tweet examples, where used, are anonymised and coded according to subcorpus categories. The study avoids exposing private identity information and does not attempt to make claims about individual users' intentions. The ethical approach is consistent with digital discourse research that treats public data as analysable while still requiring anonymisation, contextual sensitivity and minimisation of harm.

5. Findings and Analysis

The findings are based on two comparable Pakistani X subcorpora: 2,000 female-authored posts and 2,000 male-authored posts. After tokenisation, the female-authored subcorpus contained 57,725 raw tokens, while the male-authored subcorpus contained 56,316 raw tokens. For the lexical tables, function words, usernames, URLs, tweet markers and common location words were excluded, while hashtags were retained because they function as important markers of topic, stance and affiliation in X discourse. The analysis follows the research questions by first examining how women and men are represented and then identifying the lexical and collocational patterns through which gendered meanings are constructed.

5.1 Overall Lexical Patterns

The overall lexical distribution shows that both subcorpora are strongly centred on gendered social actors, but they foreground them differently. In the female authored subcorpus, the most salient lexical field is women related discourse. Terms such as *women, woman, girls, aurat, sisters,* and *daughters* occurred 1,550 times, or 268.5 occurrences per 10,000 tokens. In the male-authored subcorpus, the same field occurred 1,115 times, or 209.1 per 10,000 tokens. This indicates that women remain central in both subcorpora, but they are more densely foregrounded in female-authored posts.

Table 1

Distribution of Major Gender-Related Lexical Fields in Female-Authored and Male-Authored Pakistani X Posts

Lexical Field	Female n	Female per 10,000 Tokens	Male n	Male per 10,000 Tokens
Women-related terms	1,550	268.5	1,115	209.1
Men-related terms	369	63.9	897	168.2
Feminist mobilization	430	74.5	230	43.1
Patriarchy	180	31.2	207	38.8
Violence/harassment	659	114.2	565	106.0
Rights/equality/empowerment	715	123.9	538	100.9
Safety/dignity/consent	589	102.0	567	106.3
Care/responsibility/family	535	92.7	560	105.0

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Note. Frequencies are based on 2,000 female-authored posts and 2,000 male-authored posts. Function words, usernames, URLs, tweet markers and common location terms were excluded from the main lexical-field counts.

By contrast, men-related terms are much more frequent in the male-authored subcorpus. Terms such as *men, man, boys, mard, husband,* and *brothers* occurred 897 times in the male-authored corpus, compared with 369 occurrences in the female-authored corpus. This suggests that male-authored discourse gives greater lexical visibility to men as a gendered category, often through discussions of masculinity, responsibility, rights, false allegations and male conduct.

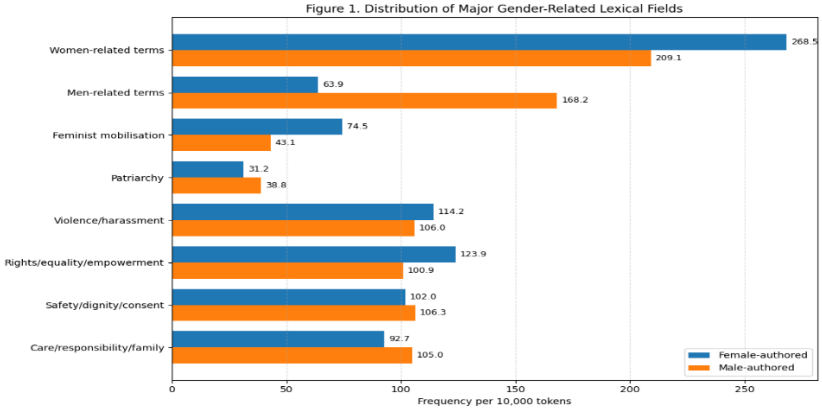


Figure.1 *Gender-Related Lexical Fields in Female-Authored and Male-Authored Pakistani X Posts*

The hashtag distribution further clarifies these patterns. In the female-authored subcorpus, #women, #womenempowerment, #auratmarch and #genderequality are prominent, suggesting an emphasis on women's visibility, feminist mobilisation and equality. In the male-authored subcorpus, #men, #patriarchy, #mentoo and #menrights are more visible, indicating that male-authored discourse is more likely to construct men themselves as explicit subjects of gender debate.

Table 2

Most Frequent Gender-Related Hashtags in Female-Authored and Male-Authored Pakistani X Posts

Rank	Female-authored hashtags	N	Male-authored hashtags	n
1	#women	255	#men	259
2	#womenempowerment	175	#patriarchy	184
3	#auratmarch	169	#women	140
4	#genderequality	132	#womenempowerment	109
5	#patriarchy	109	#honorkilling	103
6	#metoo	91	#metoo	99
7	#matriarchy	87	#auratmarch	98
8	#femininity	76	#feminism	67
9	#honorkilling	75	#genderdiscrimination	54
10	#genderdiscrimination	72	#mentoo	52

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5.2 Representation of Women

Women are represented through three dominant patterns: as collective political actors, as victims or survivors of violence, and as rights-bearing citizens. In the female-authored subcorpus, women are frequently activated as protesters, organisers, survivors, workers, students and claim-makers. Lexical items such as *march, demand, solidarity, protest, rights, justice,* and *voice* show that women are not represented only as passive subjects but also as agents of public resistance. Posts referring to Aurat March repeatedly construct women as collective actors who occupy public space and challenge patriarchal structures.

At the same time, women are also represented as affected social actors in relation to violence, harassment, forced conversion, marital rape, honour killing and public insecurity. The frequent occurrence of the violence/harassment lexical field shows that gender representation is strongly shaped by narratives of harm. However, these narratives do not merely victimise women; they often connect victimhood with demands for accountability, justice and social change. For example, female-authored posts frequently move from the representation of women as harmed bodies to women as political subjects who demand recognition.

In the male-authored subcorpus, women are also visible, but their representation is more mixed. Some posts support women's rights, safety and empowerment, while others frame women in relation to privilege, false allegations or contested claims to rights. The presence of #womenempowerment and #genderequality suggests supportive discourse, but the simultaneous presence of #mentoo and #menrights indicates a competing discourse in which women's rights are sometimes positioned against men's concerns.

5.3 Representation of Men

Men are represented less frequently in the female-authored subcorpus, but when they appear, they are often connected with responsibility, violence, entitlement, patriarchy or the need for behavioural reform. The collocational environment around *men* includes words such as *empathy, boundaries, value,* and *responsibility,* suggesting an emphasis on transforming masculine conduct. In several female-authored posts, men are represented as actors whose behaviour must be questioned, particularly in relation to harassment, violence and control over women's bodies.

In the male-authored subcorpus, men are represented more explicitly and more diversely. They appear as allies, accused actors, victims of false allegations, rights-bearing subjects, and participants in debates on masculinity. The frequent presence of #men, #mentoo, #menrights, #menempowerment, #boyswillbeboys and #mardkabacha indicates that male-authored discourse often constructs men as a distinct social category requiring recognition. Some posts challenge harmful masculinity by rejecting the excuse of "boys will be boys" and calling for maturity, accountability and respect. However, other posts construct men as disadvantaged or unfairly treated, especially in relation to women's rights discourse and #MeToo.

This dual pattern is important. Male-authored discourse does not operate as a single anti-feminist block. Rather, it contains both reformist and defensive masculine positions. Men are sometimes represented as responsible allies who should share care work, respect consent and support women's safety. At other times, they are represented as aggrieved actors who claim that gender discourse marginalises men or damages male reputations.

5.4 Female-Authored vs Male-Authored Patterns

The comparison shows that female-authored posts are more strongly oriented toward feminist mobilisation, women's collective agency, rights and safety. The higher frequency of women-related terms, #AuratMarch, #genderequality, #womenempowerment and survivor-related vocabulary suggests that female users construct gender discourse as a struggle over

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
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public voice, bodily autonomy and institutional accountability. Female-authored posts also show stronger links between women and political action through terms such as *march, protest, demand,* and *solidarity*.

Male-authored posts, by contrast, show a more ambivalent pattern. They include supportive discourse around women's empowerment and equality, but they also foreground men as a category through #men, #mentoo, #menrights and #menempowerment. The male-authored corpus therefore constructs gender discourse not only as a women's rights issue but also as a debate over masculinity, male responsibility and male grievance. This difference is central to the study: female-authored discourse tends to foreground women's structural vulnerability and agency, while male-authored discourse more frequently introduces competing claims about men's position within gender debates.

Nevertheless, both subcorpora share several lexical concerns. Terms related to *respect, consent, dignity, safety, care work,* and *responsibility* occur in both datasets. This suggests that Pakistani X discourse contains a shared vocabulary of gender reform, even when users differ in how they position women and men within that reform.

5.5 Collocation-Based Representation

Collocation analysis provides further evidence of how gendered meanings are constructed. In the female-authored subcorpus, *women* frequently co-occurs with *march, dignity, opportunity, rights, safety,* and *support*. These collocates construct women as collective actors who seek recognition, protection and participation. The collocation of *women* with *march* is particularly important because it links gender representation with public mobilisation.

In the male-authored subcorpus, *women* frequently co-occurs with *men, empowerment, property, rights, police,* and *safety*. This pattern suggests that women are often discussed comparatively in relation to men or institutionally in relation to protection and empowerment. The strong co-occurrence of *women* and *men* in the male-authored corpus indicates a relational framing in which gender discourse is frequently organised as a comparison between male and female positions.

The node *men* also shows contrasting patterns. In female-authored posts, *men* collocates with *empathy, boundaries, value,* and *responsibility*, constructing masculinity as something that requires ethical reform. In male-authored posts, *men* collocates with *women, empowerment, rights,* and *responsibility*, but also with #MenToo-related vocabulary. This indicates that men are represented both as accountable social actors and as subjects of counter-claim.

Table 3

Collocational Tendencies of Selected Gender-Related Node Words

Node word	Female-authored collocational tendency	Male-authored collocational tendency
Women	*march, dignity, opportunity, rights, safety, support*	*men, empowerment, property, rights, police, safety*
Men	*empathy, boundaries, responsibility, violence, harassment*	*women, rights, responsibility, #MenToo, #MenRights*
honour/honor	*choice, control, killing, family, women*	*choice, control, killing, victims, women*
feminism/Aurat March	*solidarity, movement, equality, protest, demand*	*march, women, opposition, rights, cultural contestation*
Patriarchy	*control, policing, silence, violence,*	*tone-policing, rules, control,*

ISSN E: 2709-8273
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Node word	Female-authored collocational tendency	Male-authored collocational tendency
	resistance	*responsibility, backlash*
harassment/#MeToo	*women, victims, survivors, accountability, silence*	*women, false allegations, misuse, suicide, accountability*

Note. Collocational tendencies indicate recurring semantic associations around selected node words rather than isolated word meanings.

The collocational pattern around *honour/honor* is particularly revealing. In both subcorpora, it appears with *choice, control,* and *killing*, showing that honour is not represented as a neutral cultural value. It is frequently recontextualised as a mechanism of control over women's lives. The repeated phrase "honor means respecting choice, not controlling lives" shows an attempt to redefine honour away from patriarchal ownership and toward consent and autonomy.

5.6 Concordance-Based Analysis

Concordance analysis confirms that gendered meanings are constructed through repeated evaluative patterns rather than isolated lexical items. The following concordance patterns are representative of the wider corpus.

Table 4

Representative Concordance Patterns in Pakistani X Gender Discourse

Pattern	Example excerpt	Interpretation
Women as collective actors	*"When one woman resists, we all rise"*	Women are represented through solidarity and collective agency.
Women as harmed subjects	*"marital rape, medical negligence"*	Gendered violence is linked with patriarchal culture and institutional failure.
Women as rights-bearing citizens	*"women being actively deprived of the right to vote"*	Women are positioned as citizens whose political rights require protection.
Men as accountable actors	*"stop using #BoysWillBeBoys"*	Masculinity is framed as requiring responsibility and behavioural reform.
Men as aggrieved actors	*"Women have more Rights than Men"*	Male-authored discourse includes counter-claims around male disadvantage.
Honour as control	*"honor means respecting choice"*	Honour is resignified as consent rather than ownership or control.

The concordance evidence shows that women are most often constructed through a tension between vulnerability and agency. They appear as targets of violence, harassment and exclusion, but they are also represented as speakers, marchers, survivors, organisers and rights-bearing citizens. Men, by contrast, are constructed through a tension between responsibility and grievance. They are represented as actors who must change, but also as subjects who sometimes claim exclusion or unfair treatment within gender-rights discourse.

Overall, the findings show that Pakistani X discourse represents gender as a contested social category. Female-authored posts more consistently foreground women's agency, rights, safety and resistance, while male-authored posts combine support for gender equality with stronger attention to men's identity, masculinity and counter-discursive claims. Lexical and collocational patterns therefore reveal that gendered meanings in Pakistani X discourse are constructed through recurring associations between women and rights, men and

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
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responsibility, honour and control, feminism and mobilisation, and patriarchy and social reform.

6. Discussion

6.1 Gender as a Culturally Negotiated Category

The findings show that gender in Pakistani X discourse is not represented as a fixed identity category but as a culturally negotiated social meaning. Women and men are constructed through recurring associations with honour, safety, responsibility, rights, family, violence, empowerment and public morality. This supports the view that gender is discursively produced through repeated social meanings rather than merely reflected through language (Butler, 1990; Lazar, 2005; Sunderland, 2004). In both subcorpora, terms such as *honour/honor*, *choice*, *control*, *respect*, *safety* and *dignity* indicate that gender representation is embedded in Pakistani cultural debates over family authority, bodily autonomy and social respectability.

The representation of women as protesters, survivors, workers, daughters, citizens and rights-bearing subjects confirms that female identity in the corpus is not limited to victimhood. Rather, women are activated as social actors who demand justice, mobility, safety and institutional accountability. This is consistent with van Leeuwen's (2008) argument that discourse assigns actors different degrees of agency, visibility and responsibility. The repeated association of women with *march*, *rights*, *empowerment* and *solidarity* also reflects the role of digital feminist activism in challenging patriarchal norms (Jackson et al., 2020; Mendes et al., 2019). In the Pakistani context, these findings resonate with studies of Aurat March as a contested but significant feminist intervention in public discourse (Aslam et al., 2025; Sarwar & Huma, 2021).

6.2 Differences between Female and Male Users

The comparison between female-authored and male-authored posts shows that both groups participate in gender discourse, but they do so through different lexical priorities. Female-authored posts more strongly foreground women's collective agency, safety, dignity, violence, harassment, rights and feminist mobilisation. This pattern suggests that female users tend to construct gender discourse as a struggle over public voice, bodily autonomy and social justice. Such findings correspond with previous studies showing that digital platforms allow women to share experiences, challenge silencing and form affective publics around gender-based injustice (Herring & Stoerger, 2014; Manikonda et al., 2018; Zappavigna, 2012).

Male-authored posts, however, show a more ambivalent pattern. They include supportive discourse around equality, women's empowerment and responsible masculinity, but they also contain counter-discursive patterns around #MenToo, #MenRights, false allegations and male disadvantage. This indicates that male-authored Pakistani X discourse does not operate as a single ideological category. Instead, it includes both reformist and defensive positions. Men are represented as allies, accountable actors, criticised perpetrators and aggrieved subjects. This complexity supports Jane's (2014) observation that digital gender discourse often contains both resistance and backlash. It also shows that gender debates on X are relational: discussions of women's rights frequently generate parallel claims about masculinity, male responsibility and male victimhood.

6.3 Pakistani X as a Contested Digital Space

Pakistani X emerges from the findings as a contested digital space where gendered meanings are repeatedly produced through affiliation, opposition and ideological negotiation. Hashtags such as #AuratMarch, #WomenEmpowerment, #Feminism, #Patriarchy, #MeToo, #MenToo and #HonorKilling function not only as topic markers but also as stance markers. This supports Zappavigna's (2012) view that hashtags create affiliation and evaluative

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
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alignment in social media discourse. The corpus shows that Pakistani X enables feminist mobilisation, survivor-centred discourse and critique of patriarchal structures, but it also enables backlash, moral contestation and competing claims about men's rights.

The corpus-assisted evidence further demonstrates that gendered meanings are constructed through repeated lexical and collocational patterns rather than isolated posts. This confirms the value of corpus-assisted discourse studies for identifying patterned meanings across large datasets (Baker, 2006, 2014; Partington et al., 2013). Overall, Pakistani X functions as a discursive arena where gender is debated through rights-based, moral, cultural, religious and political vocabularies. The platform therefore reflects not a single Pakistani gender ideology, but a struggle among competing interpretations of gender, power and social change.

7. Conclusion

This study examined gender representation in Pakistani X discourse through a corpus-assisted analysis of 2,000 female-authored and 2,000 male-authored posts. The findings show that women are represented as collective actors, survivors, citizens, workers and rights-bearing subjects, while men are represented as responsible actors, allies, perpetrators, reformable subjects and, in some male-authored posts, aggrieved social actors. Lexical and collocational patterns reveal that gendered meanings are constructed around repeated associations with *rights*, *safety*, *honour*, *violence*, *feminism*, *patriarchy*, *responsibility* and *empowerment*.

The study contributes to gender discourse studies by providing corpus-based evidence of how women and men are represented in Pakistani digital discourse. It also contributes methodologically by combining corpus-assisted discourse analysis with social actor representation. This integrated approach shows how frequency, hashtags, collocations and concordance patterns can be interpreted in relation to agency, evaluation and cultural meaning.

The study is limited to 4,000 public X posts and focuses only on Pakistani gender-related discourse. It does not claim to represent all Pakistani social media users or all forms of gender discourse in Pakistan. User gender categorisation was based on available profile and contextual indicators, which means that ambiguous cases had to be excluded.

Future research may expand the dataset, include other Pakistani languages, compare X with platforms such as Facebook, TikTok or Instagram, and examine intersectional dimensions such as class, religion, ethnicity and regional identity. Further studies may also compare Pakistani gender discourse with other South Asian digital contexts to identify shared and divergent patterns of gender representation.

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